



MEXICO: Oaxaca Valley

July 27-31, 2021

Tour leaders: Josh Engel with Jorge Montejo & Amy McAndrews

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We spent four nights in beautiful Oaxaca City, nestled in a valley in the foothills of the Sierra Madre. We were based in a lovely hotel that served delicious local food and had a gorgeous garden that featured birds like Gray Silky-Flycatcher, White-throated Towhee, and Berylline Hummingbird. Each morning we set out early to bird in one of the many great birding spots that surround the city. The rainy season had come and the normally dry countryside had greened up considerably.

The first morning we headed up the mountains into the higher elevation pine-oak forest. Here we found the Oaxacan endemic Dwarf Jay--the bird that particular area is most famous for--moving with a flock of Gray-barred Wrens, along with Red Warbler, a spectacular bird found only in Mexican highlands. We were also excited to find a Oaxacan Arboreal Alligator Lizard here. The second morning we visited scrubby fields and valleys east of the city. This is where we found birds like Boucard's Wren, Dusky Hummingbird, Bridled Sparrow, and Blue Mockingbird. For the third morning, we headed east again, this time to a lower elevation dry forest habitat. The stunning Orange-breasted Bunting put on a great show, along with Green-fronted Hummingbird, Russet-crowned Motmot, Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl, and a good diversity of butterflies. Our final morning was spent at Monte Alban, both seeing the ruins and seeing birds in the area, including Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush and Pileated Flycatcher.

In between birding, we managed to fit in some culture, learning about the local textile industry, visiting the historic city center, and walking around the pre-Colombia ruins of Monte Albán. And we ate a lot of mole!

Top 5 Birds as Voted by the Group

1. Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl
2. (tie) Dwarf Jay and Orange-breasted Bunting
4. (tie) Green-crowned Hummingbird, Blue Mockingbird, Black-vented Oriole, Cinnamon-rumped Seedeater, Gray Silky-Flycatcher, Blue-throated Mountain-Gem, and Crested Caracara



Birding outside of Oaxaca City (left). Rufous-capped Brushfinch (right). Photos by Josh Engel.

BIRD LIST. 119 species, including 10 heard only, 1 leader only and 21 Mexican endemics. Checklist follows Clements/eBird list, 2021 update. Names in parentheses correspond to eBird subspecies groups. H = Heard only; L = Tour leader only; * = Mexico endemic. Important subspecies groups in parentheses. Birdlife International threatened status: CR = Critically endangered; EN = Endangered; VU = Vulnerable; NT = Near-threatened.

Guans, Chachalacas, and Curassows (Cracidae)

West Mexican Chachalaca* (H)

Ortalis poliocephala

Grebes (Podicipedidae)

Least Grebe

Tachybaptus dominicus

Pigeons and Doves (Columbidae)

Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)

Columba livia

Band-tailed Pigeon

Patagioenas fasciata

Inca Dove

Columbina inca

Common Ground Dove

Columbina passerina

White-tipped Dove (H)

Leptotila verreauxi

White-winged Dove

Zenaida asiatica

Mourning Dove

Zenaida macroura

Cuckoos (Cuculidae)

Lesser Roadrunner (H)

*Geococcyx velox***Swifts (Apodidae)**

Chestnut-collared Swift

*Streptoprocne rutila***Hummingbirds (Trochilidae)**

Rivoli's Hummingbird

Eugenes fulgens

Blue-throated Mountain-gem

Lampornis clemenciae

Dusky Hummingbird*

Phaeoptila sordida

White-eared Hummingbird (H)

Basilinna leucotis

Green-fronted Hummingbird* (Green-fronted)

*Leucolia viridifrons***Plovers and Lapwings (Charadriidae)**

Killdeer

*Charadrius vociferus***New World Vultures (Cathartidae)**

Black Vulture

Coragyps atratus

Turkey Vulture

*Cathartes aura***Hawks, Eagles, and Kites (Accipitridae)**

White-tailed Kite

Elanus leucurus

Cooper's Hawk

Accipiter cooperii

White-tailed Hawk

Geranoaetus albicaudatus

Gray Hawk

Buteo plagiatus

Short-tailed Hawk

*Buteo brachyurus***Owls (Strigidae)**

Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl

*Glaucidium brasilianum***Trogons (Trogonidae)**

Elegant Trogon (H)

Trogon elegans

Mountain Trogon

*Trogon mexicanus***Motmots (Momotidae)**

Russet-crowned Motmot

*Momotus mexicanus***Kingfishers (Alcedinidae)**

Green Kingfisher

*Chloroceryle americana***Woodpeckers (Picidae)**

Gray-breasted Woodpecker*

Melanerpes hypopolius

Golden-fronted Woodpecker (Velasquez's)

Melanerpes aurifrons

Hairy Woodpecker (South Mexican)

Dryobates villosus

Falcons and Caracaras (Falconidae)

Crested Caracara

Caracara cheriway

Peregrine Falcon

*Falco peregrinus***Ovenbirds and Woodcreepers (Furnariidae)**

Spot-crowned Woodcreeper

*Lepidocolaptes affinis***Tityras and Allies (Tityridae)**

Rose-throated Becard

*Pachyramphus aglaiae***Tyrant Flycatchers (Tyrannidae)**

Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet

Camptostoma imberbe

Greenish Elaenia

Myiopagis viridicata

Pileated Flycatcher*

Xenotriccus mexicanus

Tufted Flycatcher (Mexican)

Mitrephanes phaeocercus

Greater Pewee

Contopus pertinax

Western Wood-Pewee

Contopus sordidulus

Cordilleran Flycatcher

Empidonax occidentalis

Black Phoebe

Sayornis nigricans

Vermilion Flycatcher

Pyrocephalus rubinus

Dusky-capped Flycatcher

Myiarchus tuberculifer

Nutting's Flycatcher

Myiarchus nuttingi

Great Kiskadee

Pitangus sulphuratus

Social Flycatcher

Myiozetetes similis

Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher

Myiodynastes luteiventris

Tropical Kingbird

Tyrannus melancholicus

Thick-billed Kingbird

*Tyrannus crassirostris***Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis (Vireonidae)**

Chestnut-sided Shrike-Vireo (H)

Vireolanius melitophrys

Golden Vireo* (H)

Vireo hypochryseus

Slaty Vireo* (H)

Vireo brevipennis

Dwarf Vireo*

Vireo nelsoni

Plumbeous Vireo (L)

*Vireo plumbeus***Shrikes (Laniidae)**

Loggerhead Shrike (NT)

*Lanius ludovicianus***Crows, Jays, and Magpies (Corvidae)**

Dwarf Jay* (VU)

Cyanolyca nanus

White-throated Magpie-Jay

Calocitta formosa

Steller's Jay

Cyanocitta stelleri

Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay (Sumichrast's)

Aphelocoma woodhouseii

Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice (Paridae)

Mexican Chickadee

*Poecile sclateri***Swallows (Hirundinidae)**

Northern Rough-winged Swallow

*Stelgidopteryx serripennis***Long-tailed Tits (Aegithalidae)**

Bushtit

*Psaltiriparus minimus***Kinglets (Regulidae)**

Golden-crowned Kinglet (H)

*Regulus satrapa***Treecreepers (Certhiidae)**

Brown Creeper

*Certhia americana***Gnatcatchers (Polioptilidae)**

White-lored Gnatcatcher

*Poliophtila albiloris***Wrens (Troglodytidae)**

Rock Wren

Salpinctes obsoletus

Canyon Wren (H)

Catherpes mexicanus

House Wren (Brown-throated)

Troglodytes aedon

Bewick's Wren

Thryomanes bewickii

Gray-barred Wren

Campylorhynchus megalopterus

Rufous-naped Wren

Campylorhynchus rufinucha

Boucard's Wren*

Campylorhynchus jocosus

Banded Wren

Thryophilus pleurostictus

Gray-breasted Wood-Wren

*Henicorhina leucophrys***Mockingbirds and Thrashers (Mimidae)**

Blue Mockingbird*

Melanotis caerulescens

Curve-billed Thrasher

*Toxostoma curvirostre***Thrushes and Allies (Turdidae)**

Brown-backed Solitaire

Myadestes occidentalis

Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush

Catharus aurantirostris

Russet Nightingale-Thrush*

Catharus occidentalis

Clay-colored Thrush

Turdus grayi

American Robin

Turdus migratorius

Rufous-backed Robin*

*Turdus rufopalliatus***Silky-flycatchers (Ptiliogonatidae)**

Gray Silky-flycatcher

Ptiliogonys cinereus

Olive Warbler (Peucedramidae)

Olive Warbler

*Peucedramus taeniatus***Old World Sparrows (Passeridae)**

House Sparrow

*Passer domesticus***Finches, Euphonias, and Allies (Fringillidae)**

Elegant Euphonia

Chlorophonia elegantissima

House Finch

Haemorhous mexicanus

Red Crossbill

Loxia curvirostra

Lesser Goldfinch

*Spinus psaltria***New World Sparrows (Passerellidae)**

Bridled Sparrow*

Peucaea mystacalis

Botteri's Sparrow

Peucaea botterii

Chestnut-capped Brushfinch

Arremon brunneinucha

Yellow-eyed Junco (Mexican)

Junco phaeonotus

White-throated Towhee*

Melospiza albicollis

Oaxaca Sparrow*

Aimophila notosticta

Spotted Towhee

Pipilo maculatus

Collared Towhee*

Pipilo ocai

Rufous-capped Brushfinch*

*Atlapetes pileatus***Troupials and Allies (Icteridae)**

Eastern Meadowlark

Sturnella magna

Black-vented Oriole

Icterus wagleri

Streak-backed Oriole

Icterus pustulatus

Audubon's Oriole (Dickey's)

Icterus graduacauda

Bronzed Cowbird

Molothrus aeneus

Great-tailed Grackle

*Quiscalus mexicanus***New World Warblers (Parulidae)**

Louisiana Waterthrush

Parkesia motacilla

Rufous-capped Warbler

Basileuterus rufifrons

Golden-browed Warbler

Basileuterus belli

Red Warbler*

Cardellina rubra

Slate-throated Redstart

*Myioborus miniatus***Cardinals and Allies (Cardinalidae)**

Hepatic Tanager

Piranga flava

Black-headed Grosbeak

Pheucticus melanocephalus

Blue Grosbeak

Passerina caerulea

Orange-breasted Bunting*

Passerina leclancherii

Varied Bunting

Passerina versicolor

Tanagers and Allies (Thraupidae)
Cinnamon-rumped Seedeater*

Sporophila torqueola



Orange-breasted Bunting. Photo by Josh Engel.



Oaxaca Arboreal Alligator Lizard. Photo by Josh Engel.