

Coloring The Birds of Cuba



Produced by Halifax River Audubon
<http://www.halifaxriveras.org>
A Chapter of the National Audubon Society
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Reference Plates



Glossary

Bird of Prey - Bird that uses its talons to seize its prey.

Brackish - Waters that contain dissolved salt, but in lower quantities than seawater. Salt marshes, areas close to mangroves, and river mouths are considered brackish waters.

Dry Forest - Type of tropical ecosystem characterized by trees adapted to survive with little water due to short rainy seasons.

Communal - Birds that nest in large groups.

Crustacean - A large group of invertebrates with a pair of antenna and covered by a hard but flexible exoskeleton. Ex. crabs, shrimps and lobsters.

Ecosystem - The biological community (living things) of an area and the physical and chemical (non-living) factors of that environment. The members of this community depend on each other to survive.

Endemic - Referring to a species that can only be found in one place or specific geographic region.

Invasive Species - Species that have been introduced and that can affect the native species of the area.

Foraging - Term used to describe the process of looking for and capturing food for animals.

Fragmentation - When a natural area is divided and separated by urban development. Streets, urban development and commercial centers contribute to the fragmentation that displaces animals from the habitats they need to survive.

Habitat - Specific area in an ecosystem where an animal finds the ideal conditions to survive and reproduce. Ex.: Woodpeckers prefer dry palm trees to nest and find food.

Illegal species trafficking - The capture and transportation of animal or plant species from their original habitat to another place for monetary gain. Many animals die in the process of capture and transportation to satisfy the pet market.

Invertebrates - Animals that do not have a backbone or an internal articulated skeleton. Ex. insects, shells, starfish, and crabs.

Lichens - Organisms that look like plants but are a combination of an algae and a fungus. They grow in trees and rocks in mostly moist places.

Migratory - Animals that travel large geographic distances searching for food or to reproduce.

Native - A species that inhabits an established geographic region; outside of that region, it is considered invasive.

Omnivore - Organisms that can eat all kinds of food including plants and animals.

Onomatopoeic - Animals whose names sound like or produce the sound that they make.

Organisms - All the living things that inhabit the planet. Ex. plants, algae, animals, bacteria.

Population - A group of animals of the same species that live in a particular region.

Prey - Animal species that can be trapped by another for food.

Rainforest - Type of ecosystem with large density of trees that receives large amounts of rainfall throughout most of the year.

Resident - Organisms that lives in a region but can also be found in other areas.

Scavenger - Bird that eats dead animals.

Semi-deciduous Forest - This type of ecosystem is distinguished by trees that lose their foliage during the dry season.

Songbird - Bird that can sing a melody

Subspecies - An organisms that is descended from another species but that has unique qualities that make it a little different.

Swamp - Type of wetlands that contains large areas of floating vegetation.

Waders - Birds that get their food by entering shallow waters thanks to their large legs, flexible necks and sharp bills.

Wetlands - General name utilized to describe various types of ecosystems that are flat and accumulate water either temporarily or permanently. Ex. ponds, marshes, swamps.

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How to use this coloring book?

This book contains 32 illustrations of Cuban birds. Some birds are more common than others. Each bird includes a small narrative that will help you identify and remember the species. Follow the guide below to learn which are endemic, resident or migratory species. These symbols will be next to the specie name on each illustration.



★ Endemic - species that can only be found in Cuba.

○ Resident - species that live in the island, but can be found in other countries.

⇒ Migratory - species that lives temporarily in Cuba before migrating to another country.

In the inside front and back covers, you'll find color plates for each of the species depicted in the book for you to use them as a coloring guide. Additionally they will help you identify some of the species that live near you.

Use crayons, soft-pastels or coloring pencils and enjoy while learning about the birds of Cuba. This beautiful country is home to 350 bird species, of which 285 are residents and 21 are endemic. Without a doubt, Cuba is the big treasure of bird life in the Caribbean.



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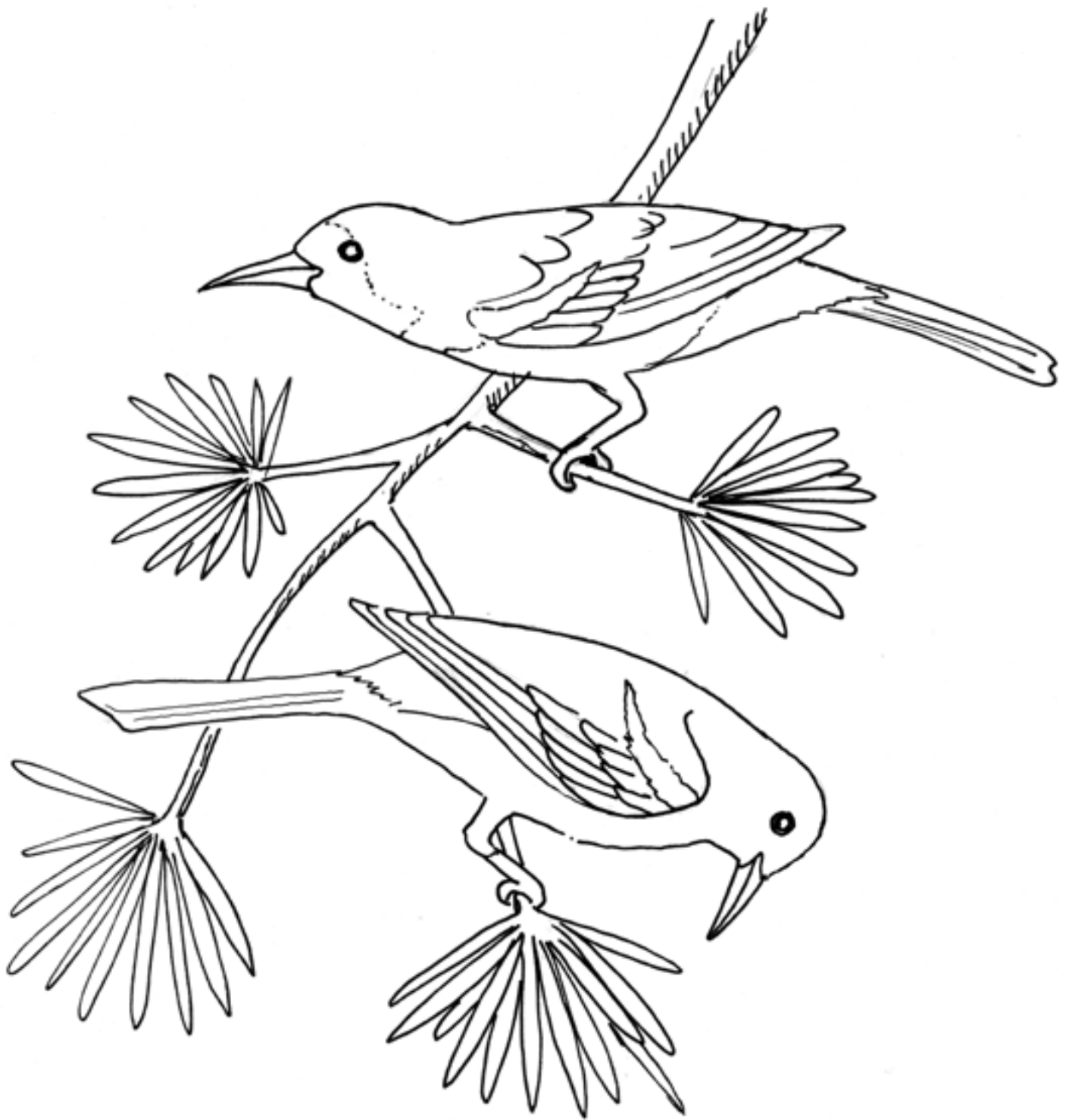
★ Cuban Trogon

This splendid bird is the national bird of Cuba. It can be found throughout the island and eats fruits and insects. Like other members of the trogon family, the Cuban trogon nests in cavities in trees, usually created by woodpeckers.



★ Cuban Bee Hummingbird

At only 2.5 inches long, the Cuban bee hummingbird is the smallest bird in the world. Like other hummingbird species, they feed on the nectar of flowers. It is an **endemic** species and difficult to find.



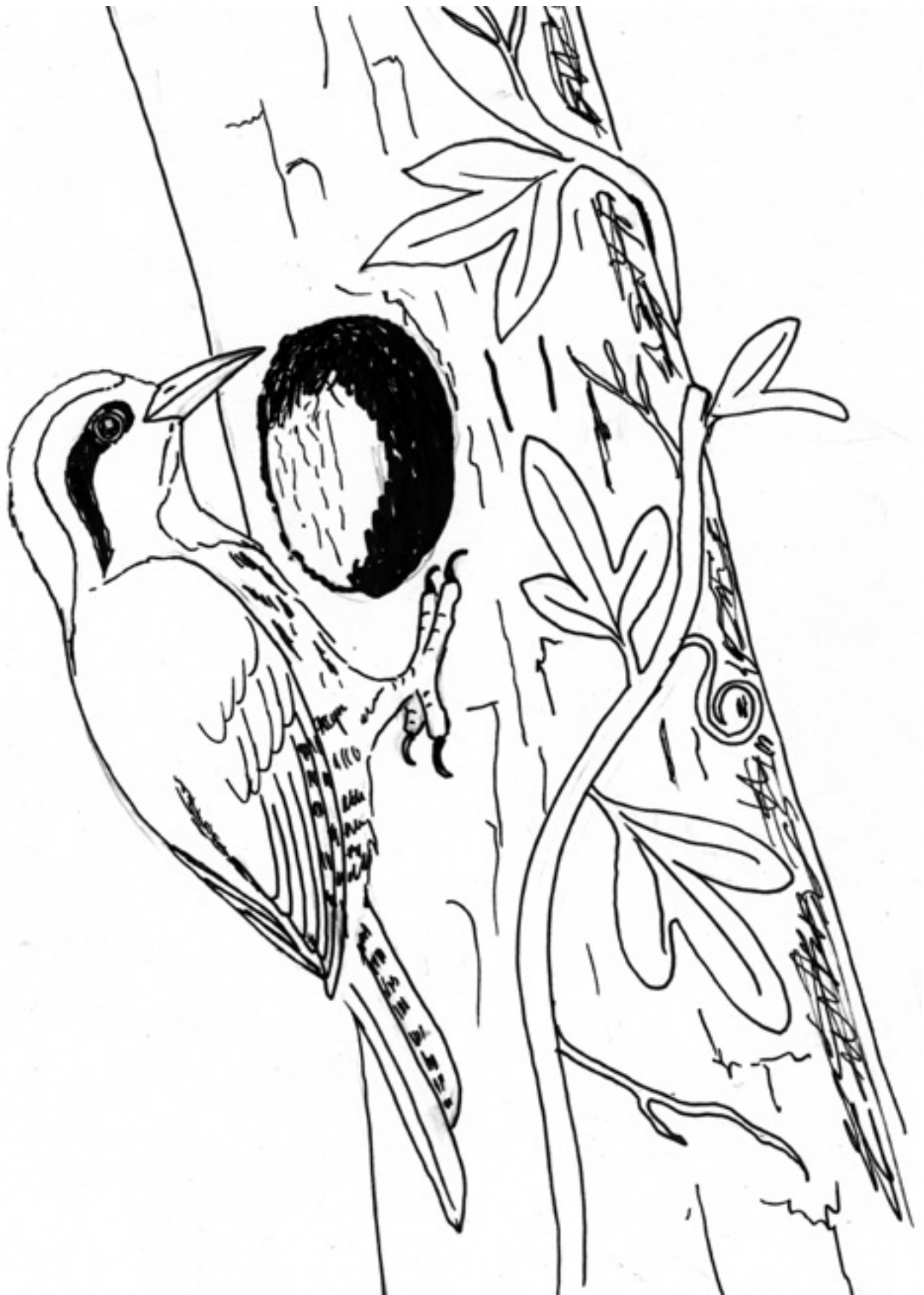
★ Cuban Oriole

The Cuban oriole is distributed throughout the whole island. They like eating insects and drinking nectar from flowers. It builds round nests in the leaves of palm trees, in which it deposits 2-3 eggs.



○ **Great Lizard Cuckoo**

Not the most graceful flyers, three **subspecies** of the great lizard cuckoo have been found on the island. It feeds primarily on lizards and insects. It prefers thick forests and bushes where it can be found jumping from branch to branch in search of food.



★ **Cuban Green Woodpecker**

The Cuban green woodpecker is the only Cuban woodpecker that makes a sound with its wings as it flies. This sound appears to be a method of communication between the pair during the breeding season.



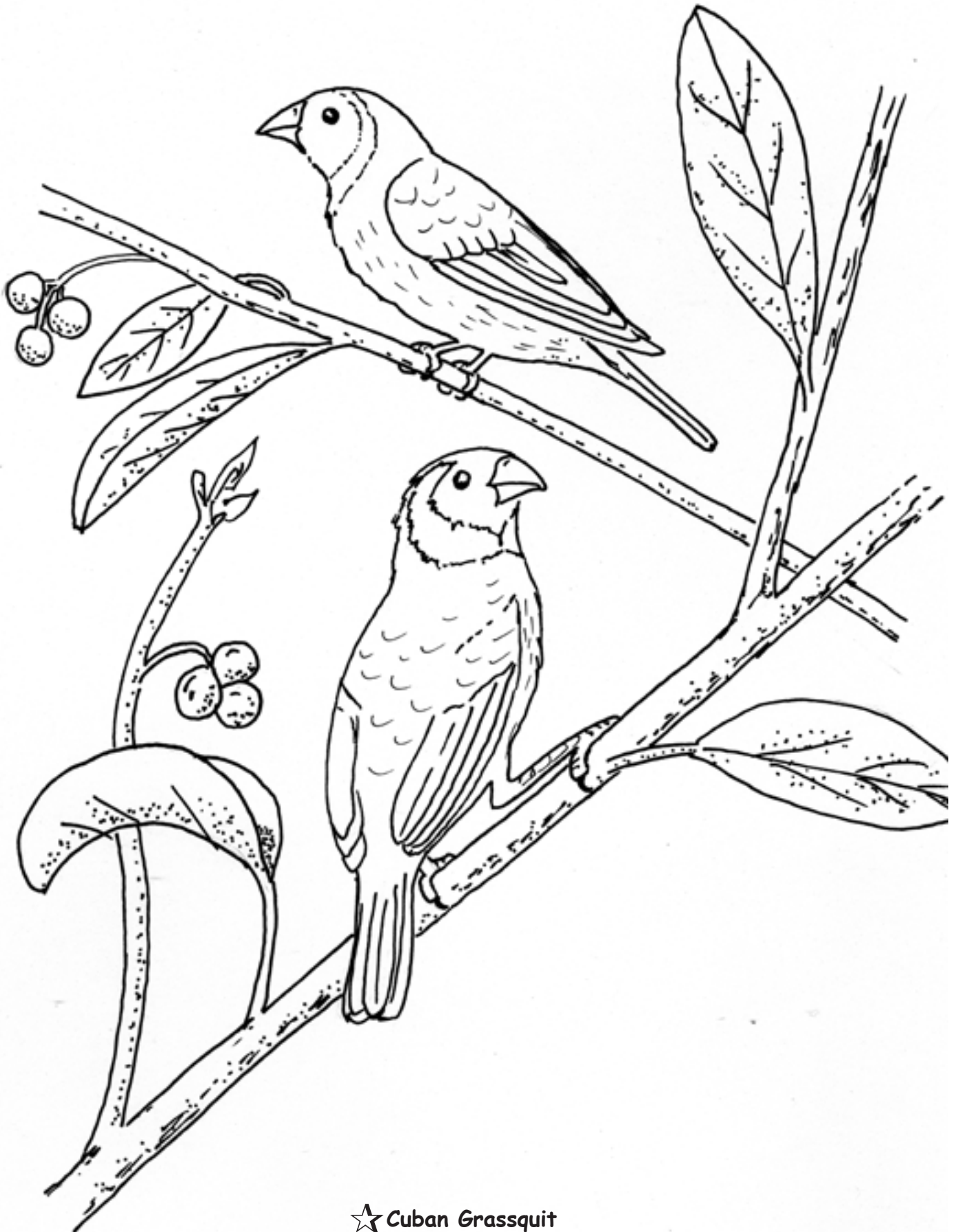
Cuban Parrot

This bird can be most often seen flying in pairs, though large numbers gather when it is time to eat. They eat mainly seeds and fruits. They tend to nest in the trunks of palm trees in nests built by the woodpecker.



★ Cuban Tody

This very colorful bird eats mostly insects and digs its nest in the banks of rivers and mountains. It tends to fly short distances and produces a peculiar sound while beating its wings.



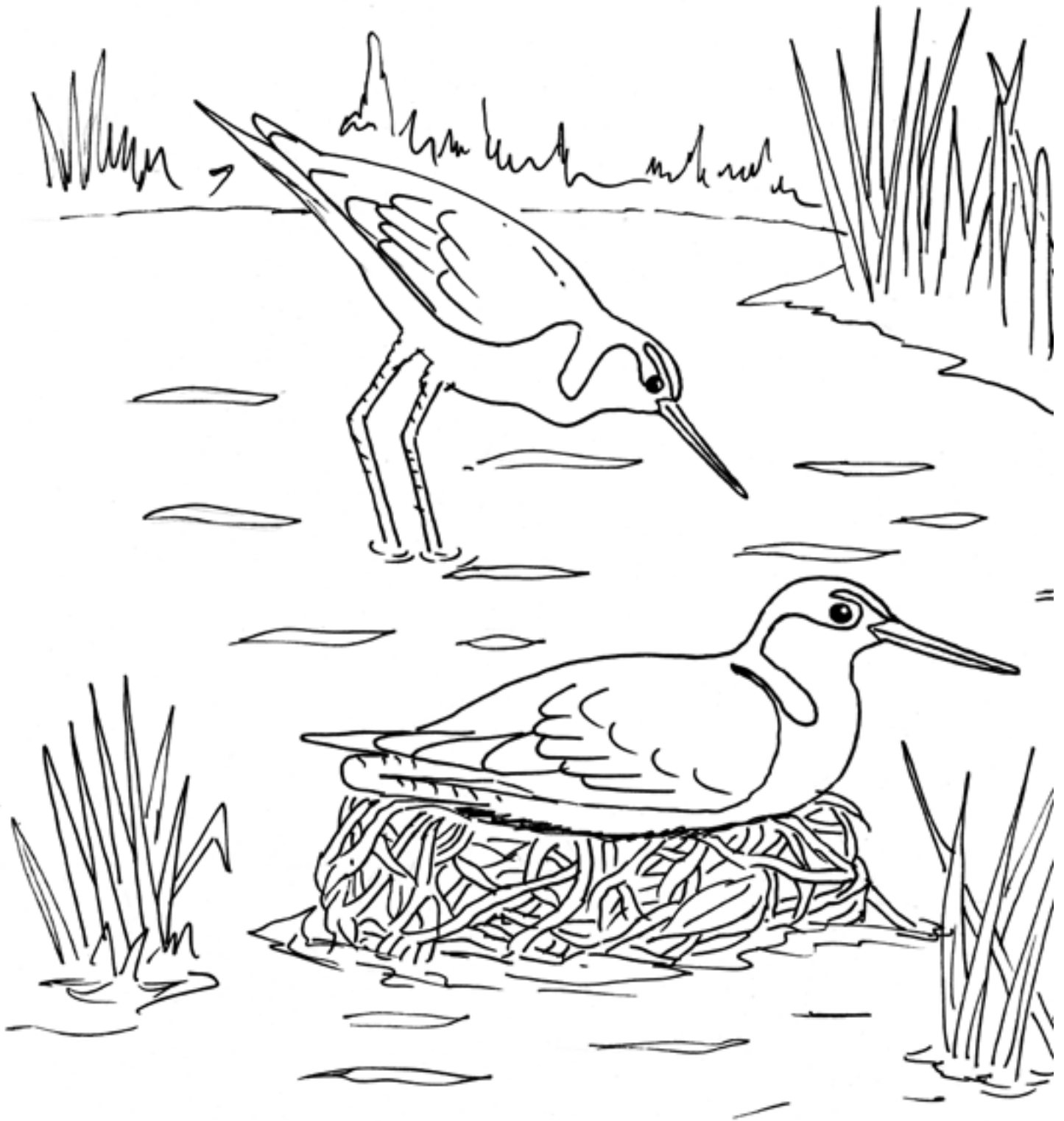
★ Cuban Grassquit

The Cuban grassquit is one of the songbirds that is endangered due to **illegal species trafficking**. It is highly desired by birders for its song quality.



★ Cuban Parakeet

The Cuban parakeet used to be found throughout the island; now, it can only be found in some interior areas and on the southern side of the country due to trafficking. They eat mostly fruits and flower buds. They frequently nest in dry palm trees and termite nests.



○ **Black-necked Stilt**

These **wading birds** can be found in shallow lagoons and salty ponds where they can be seen getting food with their long bills. They feed on invertebrates and small fish. They build a nest out of grasses and small twigs in or near water.



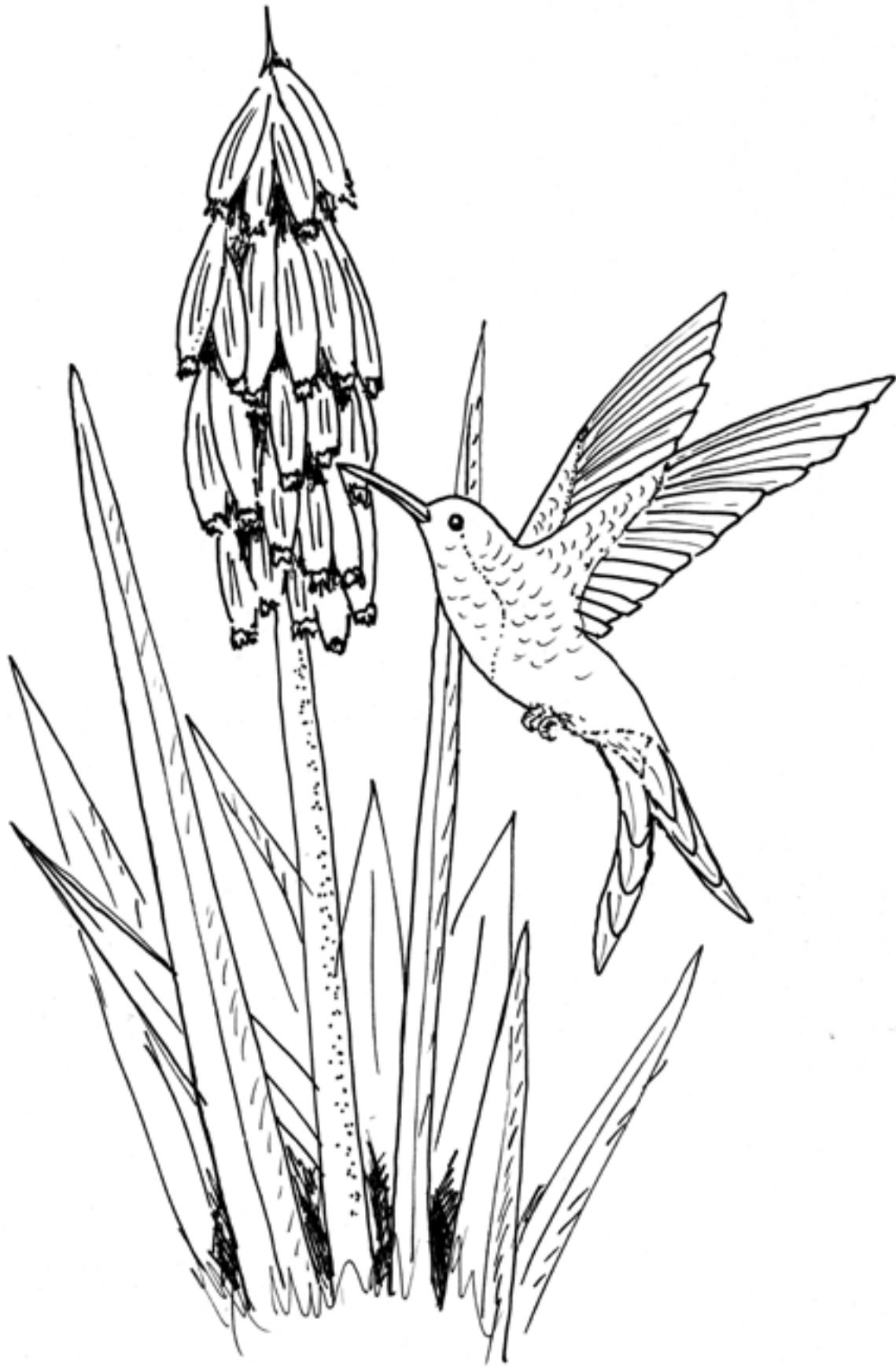
★ Blue-headed Quail-dove

The blue-headed quail-dove is one of the most beautiful birds of the country. Unfortunately, the sugar industry, illegal hunting and **invasive species** have contributed to the disappearance of the species. Now, it is endangered with a **population** of less than 1,500 doves.



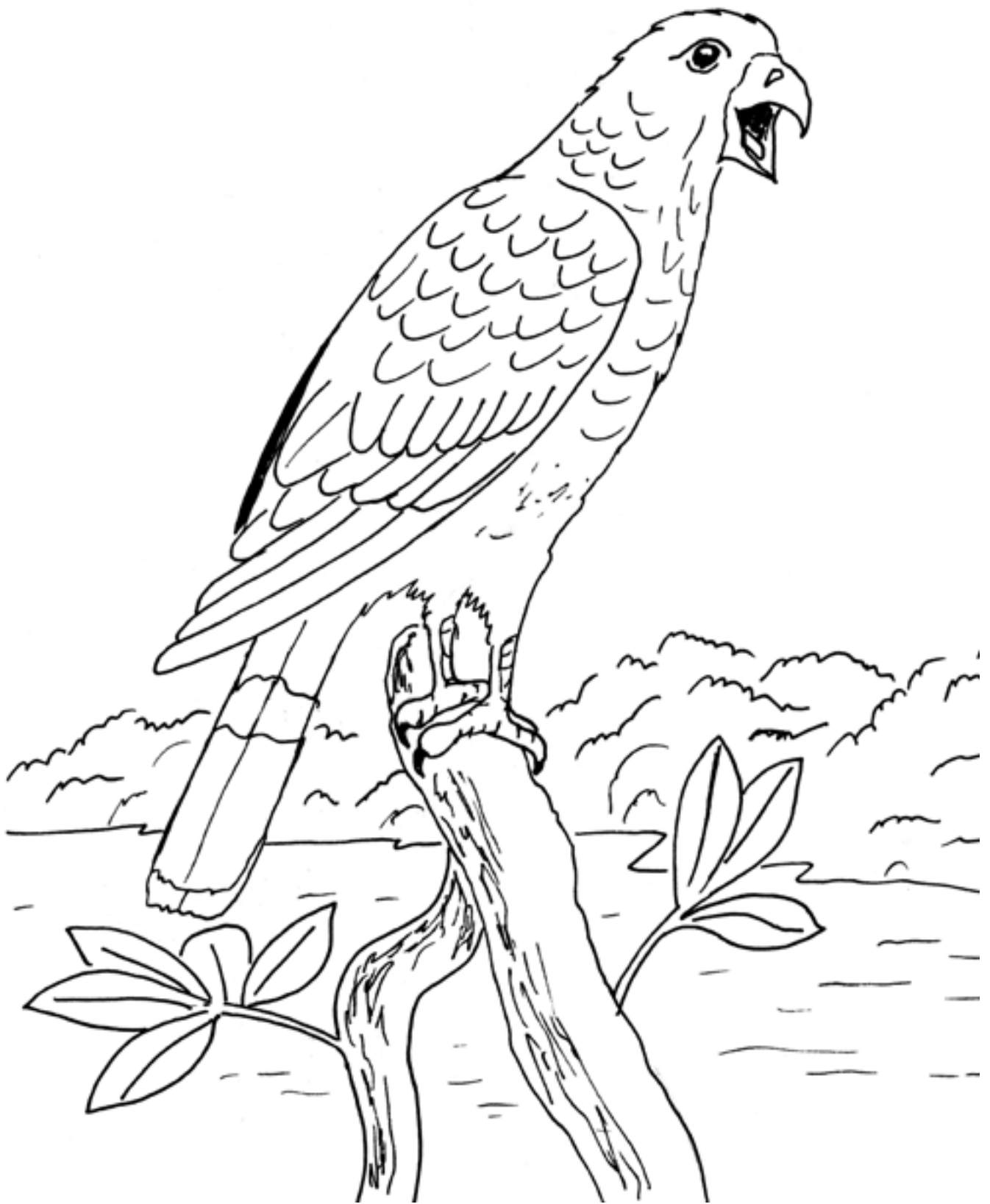
○ **Crested Caracara**

This **scavenger** is not very common in Cuba. Now, it can be found in Oriente, Cayo Coco and Isla de Pinos. It eats primarily dead, decomposing animals.



○ **Cuban Emerald**

The Cuban emerald is a species of hummingbird native to Cuba. Like the Cuban bee hummingbird, they feed on nectar and small insects they trap in flight. They build their nests in the shape of a cup utilizing spiderwebs, vegetable fibers, and lichens.



★ **Common Black Hawk**

This **bird of prey** is found in coastal areas and mangroves, where it specializes in catching **crustaceans** but also eats reptiles, fish and small mammals. Currently, the bird is common but threatened by the drainage and degradation of its preferred habitat.



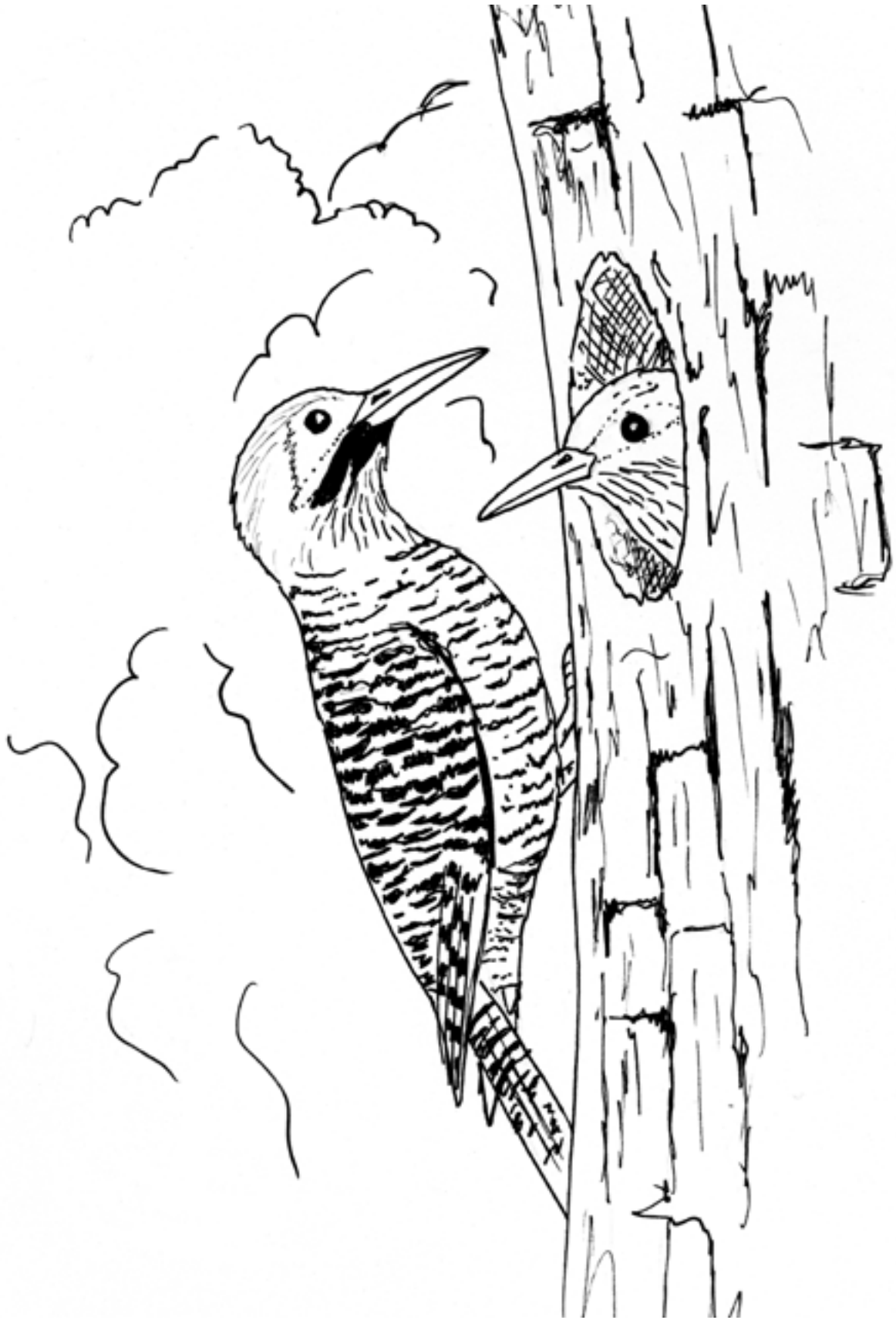
★ Cuban vireo

This small bird with an **onomatopoeic** name is quite common and can be found throughout the island. Its food consists of insects that it finds under the leaves of bushes and shrubs. It makes a nest out of grasses, spiderwebs, and lichens in which it lays three eggs.



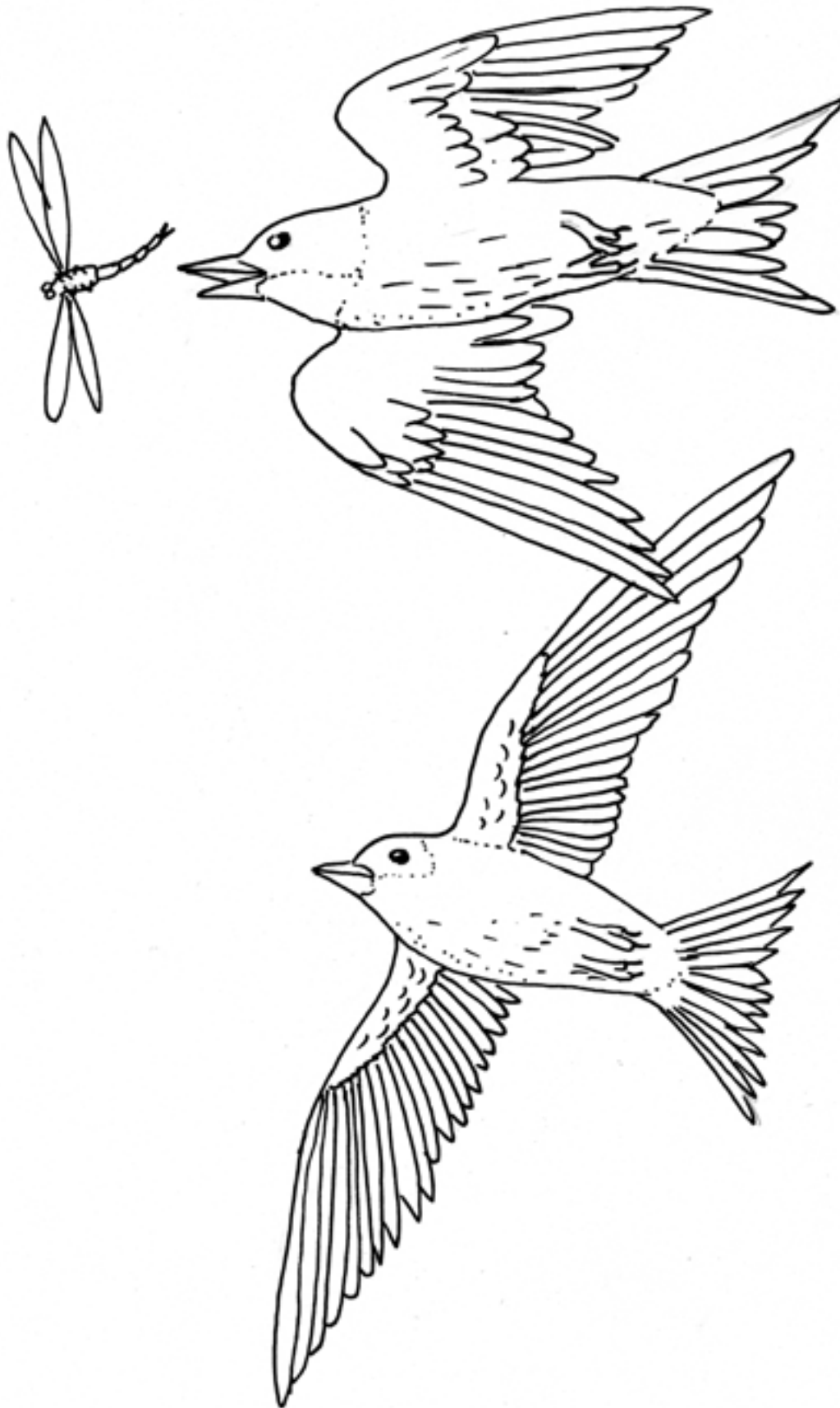
★ Cuban Gnatcatcher

The Cuban gnatcatcher is a common bird in some areas of eastern Cuba. Its distribution is not very wide and is threatened by the destruction and **fragmentation** of its habitat. It generally eats insects that it captures as it moves from branch to branch.



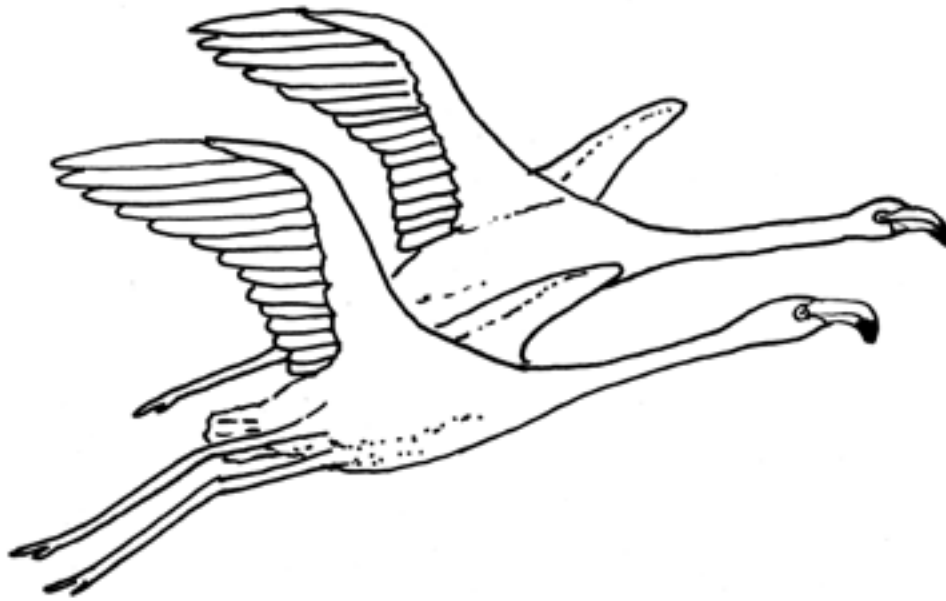
★ Fernandina's Flicker

On occasions, this flicker can be seen digging in the earth or turning over twigs in search of grubs. It is very rare and currently is threatened due to the destruction of **habitat**.



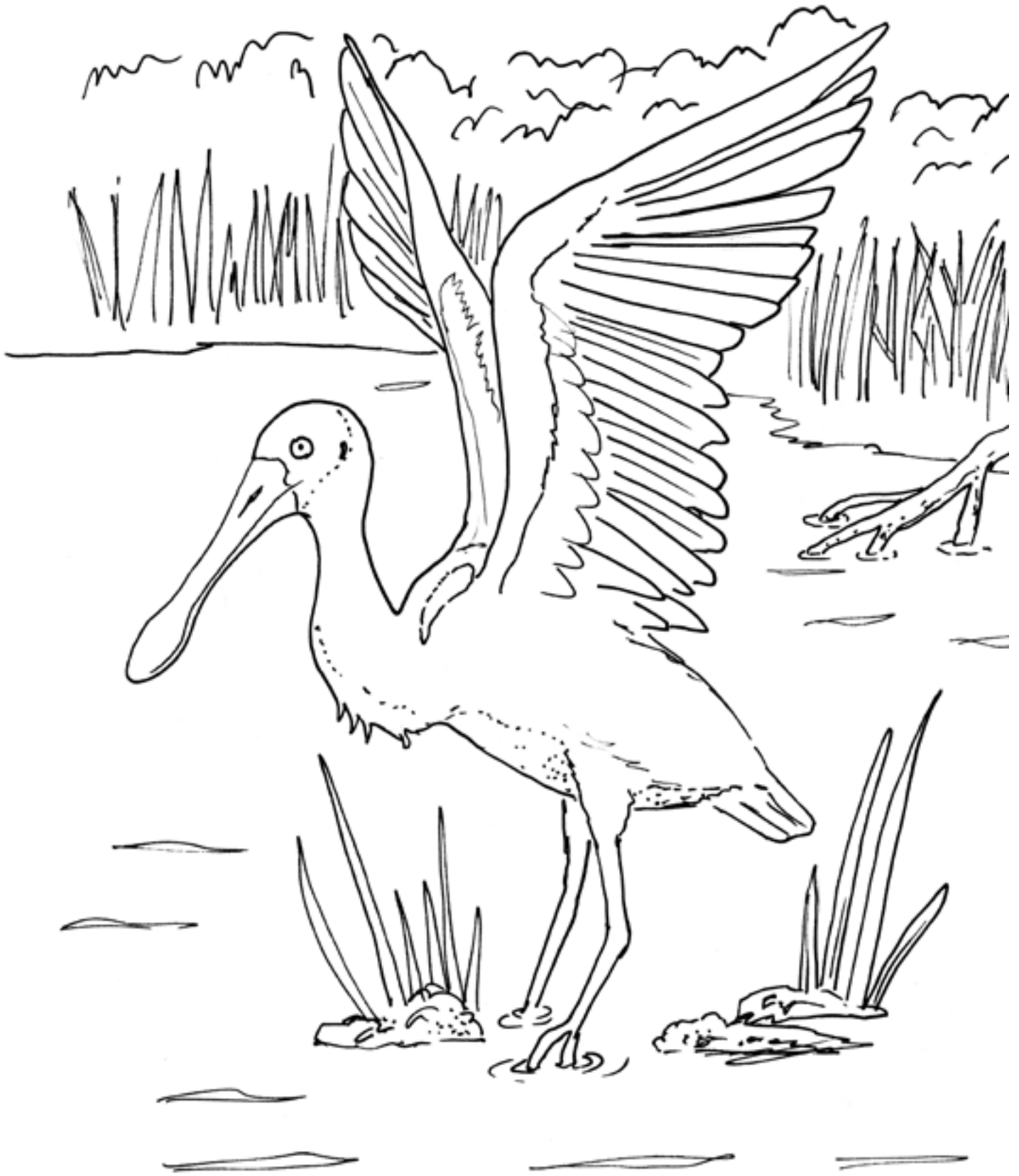
⇒ Purple Martin

This swallow is **migratory** and nests in the island in summer. It eats insects that it captures in flight and uses abandoned woodpecker nests.



○ Flamingo

The flamingo is the tallest bird that lives in Cuba. It can be found in shallow lagoons and **salt marshes** along the coast. They nest in large isolated groups in muddy areas of coastal **wetlands**. They lay one egg in a nest built with mud and marine plants.



○ Roseate Spoonbill

The roseate spoonbill is a common bird in coastal areas. Its foraging habits include using its spoon-shaped bill to capture organisms at the bottom of salt marshes. They nest in large groups in mangroves where they build nests out of twigs and raise 2-3 chicks.



○ **Red-legged Thrush**

The red-legged thrush is a medium sized bird that can be found throughout Cuba. It prefers **rainforests**, but also can be found in **dry forests** and even in urban parks. It eats small fruits and some insects that it finds under the leaf litter. The nest is made of leaves and twigs.



○ **Smooth Billed Ani**

The ani is common and can be found in fields and on the edges of country roads. They can be seen following in cows' footsteps and behind tractors that disturb insects. They are **communal** nesters and build nests of grass and usually very well hidden in the vegetation.



○ Snail Kite

This bird of prey is a specialist. It feeds exclusively on aquatic snails which it catches in its talons. It can be found in marshes and flooded fields. It is often seen flying in groups over lagoons in search of its **prey** which it eats quickly while perched on a branch.



○ **Western Spindalis**

The Western spindalis is a very colorful and quite common **songbird** in Cuba. It eats fruits and insects. It is part of one of the largest families of known birds such as tanagers. The members of this family are distributed throughout the Caribbean, Central and South America.



○ **White Crowned Pigeon**

This large dove can be found throughout the country but it prefers mangroves and **semideciduous forests**, where it nests in large groups. It eats fruits and can be seen flying in flocks in the morning, from the area where it nests to the forest, where it looks for food.



★ Zapata Wren

This bird is a endangered. It is difficult to find and is not a very skilled flyer. Its habitat is restricted to a small area in the Zapata Marsh. It is endangered because of the drying out of wetlands and the presence of invasive species such as the mongoose.



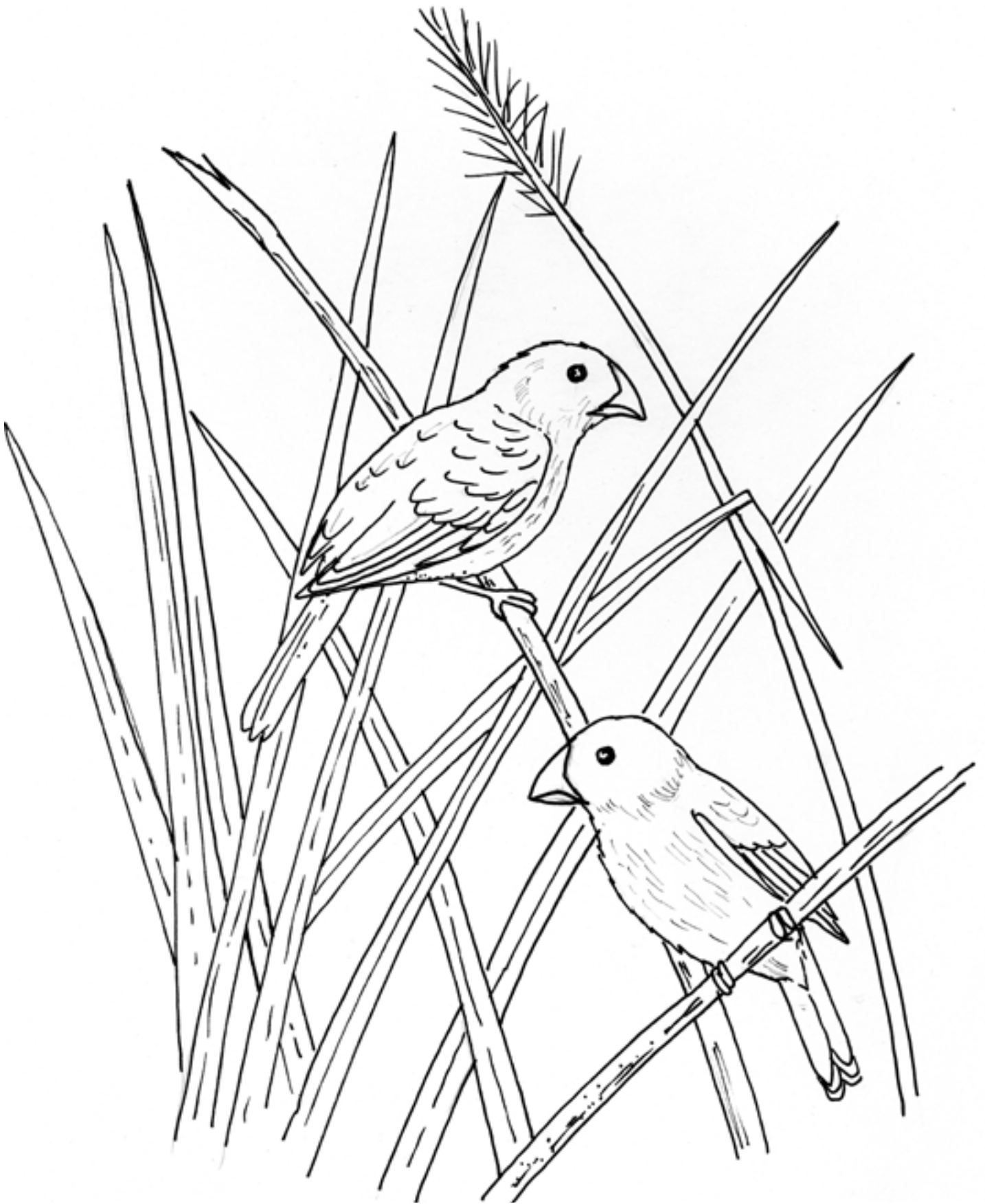
○ **Great Blue Heron**

The great blue heron is the largest heron species in Cuba and can be found in various **ecosystems**, including lagoons, marshes, rivers and beaches. Although they are omnivorous birds, they prefer to eat fish and amphibians that they capture utilizing their pointy beaks and long necks.



★ **Giant Kingbird**

Nowadays, the giant kingbird is difficult to find because its populations are small and scattered. It eats large insects, lizards, and even chicks of smaller birds. It can be found in dry prairies, high forests near rivers, and pine forests.



uban Bullfinch

The Cuban bullfinch is a very common **resident** in Cuba. It can be seen eating the small seeds of tall grasses in prairies and on the road side. The female can be identified by its light brown color, compared to the male's black feathers. Like the grassquit, it can often be found in captivity.



○ **Turkey Vulture**

The turkey vulture is a scavenger that can be found in all parts of the country. They are distinguished from other large birds by their V-shaped wings when in flight. They have an excellent sense of smell that they use to find dead animals or trash. They typically nest on the ground.

Reference Plates



I hope these plates will help you paint and learn the birds of Cuba and to instill the love for nature that all human beings should have.

Only then we could all continue to enjoy all the surrounding natural wonders.



About Halifax Audubon and their relationship with Cuba

Founded in 1923, Halifax River Audubon, in Daytona Beach, Florida, has been a leader in conservation, environmental education and the joy of birding for over 90 years. In December, 2014 we organized a birding trip to Cuba with the assistance of the Caribbean Conservation Trust. This twelve day trip was a thrilling experience and we learned much about the birds and the environment of Cuba. We were warmly welcomed by the Cuban people everywhere we went. This book is our way of saying thanks for the wonderful memories we brought back with us and reflects our hopes for the youth and the environment of the beautiful island of Cuba.

About the Author



Reinier Munguia is a Cuban-born naturalist. His passion for nature and animals can be seen through his paintings and photographs. He offers educational programs about nature and conservation and guides expeditions

to exciting destinations including the Galapagos Islands and the rainforests of Costa Rica, Panama and Puerto Rico.

Being a photographer allows him to capture in an instant the surrounding natural beauty. Reinier coordinates volunteers of a citizen science program that monitors nesting Bald Eagles in Florida.

Completing this coloring book was a great opportunity to learn more about the birds of Cuba.

