



*La Sagra's Flycatcher (Myiarchus sagrae) by John Hannan*



# BAHAMAS

## BIRDING & CONSERVATION ON ANDROS, ELEUTHERA AND ABACO ISLANDS

with Dave Ewert | March 9-17, 2018

### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Discover Andros Island, the largest island in the Bahamas, and the only location for the critically endangered Bahama Oriole.
- Learn about conservation work towards species protection from the Bahamas National Trust and other organizations.
- Bird the pine forests at the north end of Andros Island for the Bahama Swallow, Great Lizard-Cuckoo, and Bahama Warbler and take a boat trip to the newly-protected Joulter Cays.
- Experience the unique blue holes within Blue Holes National Park: deep sinkholes where endemic fish have evolved to adapt to the freshwater.
- On Eleuthera learn about efforts to protect the rare Kirtland's Warbler and its wintering grounds on the island.

For more information or to enroll, visit [holbrook.travel/flywaybahamas18](http://holbrook.travel/flywaybahamas18) or contact Debbie Sturdivant Jordan at 866-748-6146 or [debbie@holbrooktravel.com](mailto:debbie@holbrooktravel.com)



Supporting Audubon and its partners  
in advancing sustainable development  
in bird hot-spots

**Holbrook Travel** is a supporting partner in Audubon and its partners' conservation work in Latin America and in the Caribbean. One key aspect of that work is the strengthening of **bird-based tourism** as a conservation and sustainable development tool. The tours developed from this initiative are designed to help protect key target areas along the flyways for migratory and local species. Initial sites are located in **Belize, Colombia, Guatemala, Paraguay and the Bahamas**.

These areas were selected by intersecting bird hot-spots with key **Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas** (IBAs) where Audubon and their partners (Belize Audubon, Patrimonio Natural, Calidris, WCS, Vivamos Mejor, Guyra Paraguay and the Bahamas National Trust) are carrying out vital conservation work. By overlaying conservation work with the economic support that bird-based tourism brings, this program **strengthens local communities** and the **long-term conservation** of these areas.

Participants on these tours have a direct economic impact on local people and communities, help preserve IBAs, and nurture an emerging ecotourism industry. By visiting these sites with our trained guides, you **help protect threatened habitats** by supporting local conservation and local communities that benefit from tourism.

# WHAT MAKES FLYWAY EXPEDITIONS DIFFERENT?



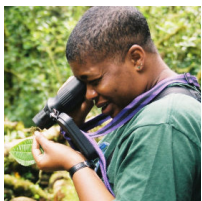
## UNIQUE ITINERARIES

These birding itineraries are unique in that they are designed to help strengthen and support tourism in bird hot-spots and support conservation and local economic development. The initial program is focusing on nine sites in Belize, Guatemala, Paraguay and the Bahamas. The project is helping communities, local tour operators, and tourism boards attract bird watching tourists to the selected destinations and associated businesses. Participants will see the conservation activities first-hand and engage with the local community during their tours.



## EXTENSIVE GUIDE TRAINING

Birding guides selected for the tours have taken part in comprehensive guide training in alliance with expert guides, local tourism authorities, and Audubon's local conservation partners. Guides are provided advanced levels of training which include bird identification, biology, ecology, and conservation alongside guiding ethics, group management, marketing, and business, plus basic English language where needed. Tours connect advanced regional guides with local guides to increase knowledge and capacity.



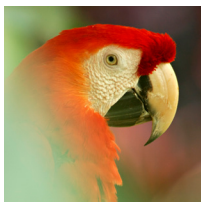
## SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESSES

The National Audubon Society project provides local guiding businesses with access to equipment, including binoculars, scopes, and guidebooks; improves trails and associated infrastructure; and offers basic business support such as marketing and customer service training. Participants on the tours will benefit from these improvements and help support the important economic incentive to promote conservation.



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Travelers will learn about targeted environmental education and outreach programs carried out by Audubon and its partners. These include programs at local schools, using local birdlife as a hook to engage youth, and courses for adult, community, and women's groups, and alternative livelihood programs. Tours may include a talk with community members or a school visit where participants can exchange their passion for birding.



## BIRD CONSERVATION

With greater local awareness and appreciation for ecosystems, the program supports priority endemic bird species including the critically endangered Scarlet Macaw, Resplendent Quetzal and Bahama Oriole, plus migrant species that rely on key migratory flyways like the Piping Plover, Wood Thrush and Buff-breasted Sandpiper, and other wildlife including the Jaguar, Maned Wolf and Rock Iguana.

*Photos by Greg Basco, Christa Dillabaugh, Pelin Karaca, and Martin Van Lokven*

## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

*Supporting Audubon and its partners in advancing sustainable development in bird hot-spots*

This bird-based tourism initiative is a key conservation tool being implemented by the National Audubon Society that links poverty reduction and economic development directly with nature conservation. By building capacity within communities, especially on the edge of protected areas or Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas, and working with tour operators and local organizations to drive an interested market to support the initiative, we all can make a vast difference for conservation and reduce the loss of habitat and birds. Holbrook Travel is a proud supporter of this work, having pioneered conservation, local guide training, and community outreach in Costa Rica. Together, we aim to create a network of community-based birding destinations across the hemisphere that offer skilled local birding guides, improved site interpretation and lodging, and related goods and services tailored to the birding community.



# Birding & Conservation on Andros, Eleuthera and Abaco Islands

*The Bahamas is a country of more than 700 islands, cays and islets, covering over 180,000 square miles of ocean with each major island full of avian surprises. Only a few islands are inhabited and all are flat, with the highest elevation at 206 feet. More than 300 bird species have been recorded in the Bahamas. This Flyway Expedition focuses on three very different islands that collectively provide an excellent representation of the country's birdlife, including several endemics and many migrants. We will have time to enjoy each island's unique features, the local hospitality and cultures of this tropical paradise, including opportunities for photography, swimming and perhaps snorkeling and fishing, especially during afternoons when birding is quiet. See and participate in the important local conservation work supported by Audubon and partners.*

## ITINERARY

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER



Western Spindalis (Spindalis zena)

### MARCH 9 - ANDROS ISLAND

Upon arrival in Nassau, take an internal flight to Andros Island. (Please arrive in Nassau by 1:30pm or plan a pre-night in Nassau. Flights to Andros depart Nassau at 7am and 3pm daily.) Andros Island is the largest island in the Bahamas, but with a small population. There are a few small towns on the island, but the general countryside is rural or uninhabited. It is a great getaway from the standard tourist destinations with a true feeling for the relaxed Bahamian way of life. The island is the only location in the world for the endangered Bahama Oriole. It has good forest where the Key West Quail-Dove, Great Lizard-Cuckoo, Bahama Yellowthroat and many other Bahamian specialties can be seen. Also look for the Bahama Woodstar and Cuban Emerald. The island is composed of coppice in the south and a mixture of coppice and pine forests to the north. Upon arrival on Andros Island, transfer to the Love at First Sight Hotel to check in. Late afternoon welcome and orientation. This evening attend a welcome dinner at Brigadier's in Davis Creek. *Overnight at Love At First Sight Hotel. (D)*

### MARCH 10 - ANDROS ISLAND

Early morning forest birding in Blue Holes National Park. Key West Quail-Doves are common in the coppice but it will take a bit of luck to see them on the road in the early morning. Most of the resident and migrant birds can be found along the road, including the amazing Great Lizard-Cuckoo, Bahama Yellowthroat, Cuban Pewee, Western Spindalis and Greater Antillean Bullfinch. Blue holes, collapsed sinkholes connecting to the ocean, are special sites in their own right—not particularly for birds but for the rare freshwater aquatic life that is bound by land around them and saltwater below. Many blue holes have endemic fish that have evolved to adapt to the freshwater and are confined to a single blue hole. Return to the hotel for breakfast and then continue forest birding. This afternoon, walk to Forfar Field Station for shore birding via kayak and a chance to snorkel in the North Marine Park. Return to the hotel for birding checklist review and dinner. *Overnight at Love At First Sight Hotel. (BLD)*

### MARCH 11 - ANDROS ISLAND

Early departure to Lowe Sound; board boat for a full day expedition to Joulter Cays. Have lunch and mini-tour of North Andros Island. Return to the hotel for evening birding checklist review and dinner. *Overnight at Love At First Sight Hotel. (BLD)*

### MARCH 12 - ELEUTHERA ISLAND

Fly to Nassau to connect to a flight to Eleuthera. The island of Eleuthera is approximately 110 miles long, and in places little more than one mile wide. Its eastern side faces the Atlantic Ocean, and its western side faces the Great Bahama Bank. The topography of the island varies from wide rolling pink sand beaches to large outcrops of ancient coral reefs. Look for Bahama Woodstar, Bahama Yellowthroat, Great Lizard-Cockoo, Western Spindalis and more. Upon arrival, transfer to the Pineapple Fields Resort. Evening birding in the lodge surrounds. Later have dinner and then review daily birding checklist. Evening talk about conservation issues. *Overnight at Pineapple Fields Resort, Governor's Harbor. (BLD)*

### MARCH 13 - ELEUTHERA ISLAND

Breakfast at the hotel, then transfer to Leon Levy Native Plant Preserve for early morning birding at the preserve. Welcome talk and full day exploration of the preserve. This afternoon take the scenic drive from Tarpum Bay to Rock Sound for a presentation on the conservation program and the issues involving the rare Kirtland's Warbler. Though the Kirtland's is still considered endangered, its numbers have been rising in the last decade thanks to efforts that include preserving its wintering grounds in the Bahamas.



Glass Window Bridge on Eleuthera Island

Visit Rock Sound for a brief walk to see the old study site and discuss the role of slash and burn agriculture and the Kirtland's Warbler (KIWA) habitat. Visit Symonette Goat Farm to see habitat and KIWAs. Discuss the food plants, fruiting and the role of a shallow water table in the late winter. Dinner at local restaurant. Evening discussion on remaining Kirtland's Warbler issues not yet covered and review birding checklist. *Overnight at Pineapple Fields Resort, Governor's Harbor. (BLD)*

### MARCH 14 - ABACO ISLAND

Transfer to airport, then fly to Nassau and on to Abaco Island. Abaco is the second largest and northernmost main island of The

Bahamas, stretching over 100 miles. Considered a great island for birding, it has a national park at the southern end established to protect its Bahama Parrot population. The Bahama Warbler and the West Indian Woodpecker are also key target birds, but many other specialty birds are found in the large pine forest, patches of coppice, mangroves, ponds and sandy beaches. Upon arrival transfer to Abaco Beach Resort, then enjoy birding along the shore. This evening have dinner and review daily birding checklist. *Overnight at Abaco Beach Resort. (BLD)*



West Indian Woodpecker by Dominic Sherony

### MARCH 15 - ABACO ISLAND

Early morning forest birding. Have breakfast at the resort. Connect with Bahamas National Trust and Friends of the Environment to learn about programs and possible participation in a citizen science project assisting with predator control or something similar. Have dinner and evening birding checklist review. *Overnight at Abaco Beach Resort. (BLD)*

### MARCH 16 - ABACO ISLAND

Morning birding with a local kids group or school. Have lunch, and then this afternoon, take part in a citizen science project or other outreach program. This evening farewell dinner and finalization of the birding checklist. *Overnight at Abaco Beach Resort. (BLD)*

### MARCH 17 - DEPART

Transfer to the airport for flights back to Nassau, New Providence and air connection back to the U.S. Please note flights should be planned after 11:00a.m. from Nassau.



Caribbean pine forest by Caleb Springer, USFWS

### ACTIVITY LEVEL

The islands are basically flat with almost no elevation gain, so walking is easy. All sites have roads for walking with a few good trails to get into the forest interior. Bring comfortable hiking/walking shoes; you may wish to bring an additional pair for walking through shallow water. Weather can be warm, and mosquitoes can be present depending upon the time of day, location and season. Much of the terrain is limestone, so hiking shoes with good support and a walking stick is advised for those who are not sure-footed.

## BAHAMAS NATIONAL TRUST

THE BAHAMAS NATIONAL TRUST (BNT) is a non-profit organization founded in 1959 by an Act of Parliament. It is mandated to provide the conservation and protection of The Bahamas' natural and historic resources, including its 32 national parks and additional protected areas. It has a thriving environmental education program and has worked on important projects such as creating marine reserves, reviving the American Flamingo population, managing the White-crowned Pigeon population, protecting the Piping Plover and its habitats, and restoring wetlands.

### MEET YOUR LEADER



#### DAVID N. EWERT

Dave Ewert is an Avian Conservation Scientist for the Migratory Bird Program of The Nature Conservancy; he has conducted science-based conservation work throughout the Great Lakes area. He works on winter habitat of the Kirtland's Warbler in the Bahamas, protection of stopover sites for migratory birds in the Great Lakes region, and Great Lakes coastline and island protection. Previously

Dave led Science and Stewardship Programs of the Michigan and Iowa Chapters of The Nature Conservancy, where he worked on fire management, invasive species, forest management, and other topics. He was an Assistant Professor at Central Michigan University prior to working with The Nature Conservancy.

Dr. Ewert received his BS from the University of Michigan, and MS and PhD from the City University of New York. He has conducted research widely throughout the West Indies and Central and South America.

### PROGRAM PRICING

**\$3,990** (8 participants)

Cost includes meals, accommodations, activities as indicated in the itinerary, in-country transportation including internal flights, local area bird guides, and Audubon (local chapter and IAP) donation.

Does not include international airfare, gratuities for guide or driver, or items of a personal nature. Holbrook can assist with your flight arrangements if desired.

### THE FINE PRINT

Cost is based on 8 participants in double occupancy rooms. A single room throughout the trip is available at an additional cost. A \$200 per person deposit and enrollment form are required ASAP to reserve your space on the trip. This deposit is refundable excluding a \$100 cancellation fee until December 04, 2017, at which time non-refundable final payment is due. Travel/trip cancellation insurance is strongly recommended. For more information call Travel Insured at 800-243-3174 or visit [www.travelinsured.com](http://www.travelinsured.com). Holbrook Travel's agency number is 15849.

### FOR MORE INFO OR TO ENROLL

Visit [holbrook.travel/flywaybahamas18](http://holbrook.travel/flywaybahamas18) or contact Debbie Sturdivant Jordan at 866-748-6146 or [debbie@holbrooktravel.com](mailto:debbie@holbrooktravel.com)