



Santa Marta Parakeet by Luis Eduardo Uruña



# COLOMBIA

## NORTHERN COLOMBIA BIRDING TRAIL: A BIRDER'S PARADISE with Gloria Lentijo

February 23 – March 6, 2018

### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Be one of the few outsiders to explore birding-rich, remote regions of Northern Colombia led by expert local guides.
- Discover the Perijá Mountains, a "Holy Grail" for birders, one of the least explored areas in Colombia that will rival Santa Marta (once taxonomy is updated for an array of endemic species).
- Meet the indigenous Wayúu people in Riohacha and learn about their culture, represented in their weavings, ceramics, vegetation, and gastronomy.
- Go owling in the dry forests of Los Besotes Reserve.
- Enjoy a presentation about conservation and training initiatives at El Dorado reserve in the Santa Marta Mountains.
- Explore the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, home to more than a quarter of the country's 73 endemic species.
- Seek out the rare Blue-billed Curassow and other tropical moist forest birds in Tayrona National Park.

Visit [holbrook.travel/flyway-co18](http://holbrook.travel/flyway-co18)

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?



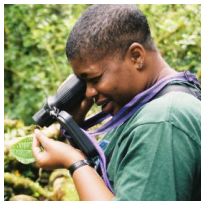
## UNIQUE ITINERARIES

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.



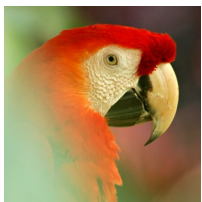
## SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESSES

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.

# Northern Colombia Birding Trail: A Birder's Paradise

With over 1,900 avian species — more than any other country in the world — Colombia is a birder's paradise waiting to be discovered. This 12-day program focuses on the country's northern highlights, including the Caribbean region and the Santa Marta Mountains, famed for their high level of endemic species. Explore high elevation mountains, dry forest, páramo and coastal habitats in search of an array of tropical avifauna, including flycatchers, hummingbirds, tanagers, toucans, and more. Throughout your journey, meet members of the local community and learn about conservation efforts to use birding as a sustainable development resource.

## ITINERARY

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER



Yellow-crowned Whitestart by Luis Eduardo Urueta

### FEBRUARY 23 - BOGOTÁ

Individual arrivals into **Bogotá**, transfer to the hotel. Dinner is on your own this evening. *Overnight at Hotel Habitel or similar.*

### FEBRUARY 24 - VALLEDUPAR

This morning transfer to the airport for your flight to **Valledupar**. After lunch, visit the lower parts of **Los Besotes Private Reserve**, about six miles from Valledupar. As the first Important Bird Area (IBA) in Colombia, Los Besotes is part of the Santa Marta Range. This forest is greatly threatened, and hosts many regional specialties. Over 210 species of birds have been found at Los Besotes. A possible highlight species here is the Blue-billed Curassow as well as the uncommon Military Macaw. Other species of note include Vermilion Cardinal, Glaucous Tanager, and the Golden-winged Sparrow. The Black-backed Antshrike is here in the lower elevations, as well as the Pale-legged Hornero, a form that is sometimes considered a regional endemic (Caribbean Hornero). Continue birding after dark with picnic dinner. *Overnight at Hotel Arawak Upar. (BLD)*

### FEBRUARY 25 - SERRANÍA DEL PERIJÁ

Begin the day with another morning exploring the dry forests of Los Besotes, before moving on to the **Perijá Mountains**. The drive is approximately an hour to reach the foothills, and from there the road becomes rougher and slower. If time permits, stop for birding once above 1,500m elevation along the drive up the mountain to the accommodation. We will be using 4x4 vehicles for our transportation. During drives, you may not be sitting with a guide, but all vehicles will be in radio contact and during the stops en route, birding will be done as a group. If you are prone to motion sickness, please make sure you have medication with you, as the roads will be rough on this day. Arrival to the cabins will be

in the evening. ProAves's **Chamicero del Perijá Reserve** started receiving tourists in May of 2015. It is a small and comfortable but basic accommodations surrounded by amazing montane forest. Please note that there are only five cabins at this site, so single rooms are not available. The Perijá Mountains (Serranía de Perijá) are like the Holy Grail for birders interested in Colombia's birds. This isolated offshoot of the Eastern Andes forms the border with Venezuela and it is one of the least explored areas in Colombia. *Overnight at Chamicero del Perijá Reserve. (BLD)*

### FEBRUARY 26 - SERRANÍA DEL PERIJÁ

Currently the Serranía de Perijá is considered to have four endemic species, the Perijá Metaltail, Perijá Thistletail, Perijá Sierrafinch and the newly described Perijá Tapaculo. This area has been out of reach for birders and scientists for decades until now. Many new discoveries await as birders and biologists increase their visits to Perijá. There is a spintail here that could be a new species and so far a resolution of what it is has not been reached. A unique-looking form of Lacrimose Mountain-Tanager is common in the higher areas, as well as another unique endemic that may one day be a full species, the local form of the Golden-bellied Starfrontlet. With luck the White-rumped Hawk or even Black-and-chestnut Eagle may fly through. The road that reaches the reserve continues into páramo habitats, where Rufous-breasted Chat-Tyrants abound, and Páramo Seedeater may be found as well as many Tyrian Metaltail and fewer of the stunningly purple-tailed endemic Perijá Metaltail. The ability to move from montane forest to páramo, and then down to foothill subtropical areas will give you many opportunities for excellent birding. Today spend a full day birding at the top of Sabana Rubia in the páramo. *Overnight at Chamicero del Perijá Reserve. (BLD)*

### FEBRUARY 27 - SERRANÍA DEL PERIJÁ

Today spend the day birding the elevations slightly above and below the cabins. Other bird species that can be seen in the area include Crested and Golden-headed Quetzal, Barred Fruiteater, Andean Condor, Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, Plushcap, and Buff-breasted Mountain-Tanager. *Overnight at Chamicero del Perijá Reserve. (BLD)*

### FEBRUARY 28 - RIOHACHA

After an early start head to **Riohacha**, birding downslope, arriving in the afternoon. Time permitting, we will visit **Los Flamencos Reserve**. Those who are feeling the rough roads might prefer to stay back and enjoy the beach across the road. During our stay at Riohacha, we will learn about the Wayúu indigenous people. Taroa Lifestyle Hotel in Riohacha is the first Wayúu Lifestyle Hotel in Colombia. Every space in Taroa Lifestyle Hotel is inspired by the Wayúu culture, which is represented in their

weavings, ceramics, vegetation, and gastronomy. The hotel is staffed with native Wayúu people. *Overnight at Taroa Lifestyle Hotel. (BLD)*

### MARCH 1 - RIOHACHA

Los Flamencos Sanctuary is an important coastal wetland and dry forest reserve created to protect a large population of the American Flamingo. This 17,000+ acre reserve of marshes, lagoons, and dry forest is also habitat to 185 other bird species (80 percent of which are migrants). We will explore the dry forest in the early morning and focus on the wetlands and shorebirds in the afternoon. We will visit the village of Camarones and meet with our local guide's family, visit their home and learn about their arts and crafts, especially the handmade, colorful bags (mochilas). *Overnight at Taroa Lifestyle Hotel. (BLD)*

### MARCH 2 - SANTA MARTA MOUNTAINS

Depart Riohacha this morning for the approximately one-hour drive to **Tayrona National Park**, extending 20 miles along rugged shore and rising inland to 900m in elevation atop the foothills of the **Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta**. It protects a range of habitats from dry scrub to humid tropical forest, which are excellent for neotropical migrants and a range of interesting resident species. If you are really lucky, it is possible to see the critically endangered Blue-billed Curassow during morning visits to the park, though very rare. With over 280 species of birds present here, one abundant bird that is easier to see here than anywhere is the Lance-tailed Manakin. Sometimes it can be found with its relative, the White-bearded Manakin. We will be birding in the area with our local guide and also learn about the local guide association Ecoturt and their training initiatives for local residents, using birding as a sustainable development resource. Continue the drive up the Santa Marta Mountains in the afternoon, stopping to bird along the way. Please note that roads will be rough in this section as well and we will be using 4x4 vehicles. *Overnight at El Dorado Eco Lodge. (BLD)*

### MARCH 3 - SANTA MARTA MOUNTAINS

Spend the next two days at the **El Dorado** reserve in Santa Marta Mountains. Today enjoy the feeders at the lodge as well as the forest above and below the lodge. The Santa Marta Mountains have been identified as the planet's single most important and irreplaceable site for threatened and endemic biodiversity by numerous scientific publications and every major international conservation organization. The range is home to over 600 bird species, including 19 endemics. Endemic Santa Marta Brush-Finches are easily seen in the garden. Black-fronted Wood-Quail often come to visit feeders at the lodge in the late afternoon. A dizzying array of hummingbirds visit the multitude of hummingbird feeders, including White-tailed Starfrontlet, Green Violetear, Brown Violetear, Sparkling Violetear, Violet-crowned Woodnymph, Tyrian Metaltail, Long-billed Hermit, Lazuline Sabrewing, and the Santa Marta Woodstar. This evening enjoy a presentation by the local NGO ProAves about the history of the reserve and the conservation efforts. *Overnight at El Dorado Eco Lodge. (BLD)*

### MARCH 4 - SANTA MARTA MOUNTAINS

Spend the day up in the highlands of **Cuchilla San Lorenzo** in order to see species not present at the lodge. The Cuchilla

de San Lorenzo are the most accessible spur off the main Santa Marta Range. Mountain birds stratify depending on elevation, so sampling a varied set of elevations provides the best chances for finding the most endemic birds. Many of the endemics are found primarily at higher elevations above the lodge, including Santa Marta Parakeet, Rusty-headed Spinetail, Santa Marta Antpitta, Brown-rumped Tapaculo, Santa Marta Bush-Tyrant, Santa Marta Mountain-Tanager, Yellow-crowned Whitestart and Santa Marta Warbler. *Overnight at El Dorado Eco Lodge. (BLD)*

### MARCH 5 - BOGOTÁ

After birding this morning around the lodge, check out and transfer to the airport in Santa Marta for a late afternoon flight to Bogotá. Please allow five hours for the transfer to the airport. Upon arrival, transfer to hotel for our farewell dinner. *Overnight at Hotel Habitel or Hotel Movich. (BLD)*

### MARCH 6 - DEPART

Transfer to the airport for flights back to the U.S. based on individual flight schedules.

## MEET YOUR LEADER



**GLORIA LENTIHO** is a biologist with a Master of Science degree in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation from the University of Florida, and more than 10 years of experience in research on conservation biology in rural landscapes of Colombia. Her research aims to understand how the use of participatory methods with communities can promote adoption of environmentally friendly practices, with an emphasis on birds. She has experience in evaluating the effects of educational and conservation projects, designing surveys and different types of indicators. She is interested in working to enhance capabilities in science, technology and innovation in Colombia.

## PROGRAM PRICING

**\$5,250** (based on 7 participants)

Cost includes accommodations, activities, and meals as indicated in the itinerary, in-country transportation, full-time guide, part-time apprentice guides, and a donation to National Audubon to support the program.

Does not include international airfare or gratuities.

## THE FINE PRINT

Price is based on double occupancy; a limited number of single rooms may be available at an additional cost. A \$200 per person deposit and enrollment form is due by October 26, 2017 to secure your reservation. This deposit is refundable excluding a \$100 cancellation fee until November 20, 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 [travelinsured.com](http://travelinsured.com). Holbrook Travel's agency number is 15849.