



Oriente Warbler by John Hannan



# CUBA

DELMARVA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

*with Bill Stewart* | February 18-28, 2018



*Cuba is home to diverse ecosystems, fascinating wildlife, and a rich cultural heritage. On this 11-day expedition to Havana and Western Cuba, you'll learn about ongoing conservation efforts from local experts as you explore wetlands, mangroves, and limestone caves. Bird at ecological treasures like Las Terrazas, La Guira National Park, and Zapata Swamp. Experience Cuba's cultural offerings through visits to local artists, farmers, and performers plus a walking tour of historical Old Havana and meals in paladares (restaurants run in private homes).*

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Seek out endemic species like the Cuban Trogon (Cuba's national bird), the Zapata Wren, Cuban Pygmy-Owl, and the diminutive Bee Hummingbird.
- Take a walking tour of Old Havana and see how urban parks connect residents with nature.
- Bird at Las Terrazas, a self-sustained ecological community named after the reforestation project initiated in 1967.
- Walk through the famous limestone cave where Ernesto "Che" Guevara and his men headquartered during the Cuban Missile Crisis.
- Visit the home and studio of Nils Navarro, a Cuban wildlife artist, and meet a Cuban family and tour their tobacco farm.
- Attend a special presentation by the Korimacao Community Project and discuss the program with the artists.
- Meet with Zapata area conservationists to learn about projects underway to preserve Cuba's largest wetlands.

# ITINERARY

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

## FEBRUARY 18 - HAVANA

Individual arrivals in Havana; no meals included on this day.  
*Overnight at Hotel Ambos Mundos.*

## FEBRUARY 19 - HAVANA

After breakfast, meet your guide, driver, and Cuban ornithologist, who will accompany you throughout the entire program. Morning visit to the Quinta de los Molinos to learn how this urban park is used to connect residents with nature. Take a walking tour of Old Havana before dinner. *Overnight at Hotel Ambos Mundos. (BLD)*

## FEBRUARY 20 - SAN DIEGO DE LOS BAÑOS

Depart for La Guira National Park in San Diego de los Baños. Along the way, stop for birding at Las Terrazas, a UNESCO-designated Biosphere Reserve, guided by Fidel Hernandez from the Ecological Station of Las Terrazas. Target species are Cuban Grassquit and Olive-capped Warbler. Other notable species here are Cuba's national bird, the Toco-ro, and the world's smallest bird, the Bee Hummingbird. Meet with community residents who helped save this site, now a model of sustainability and ecotourism. This afternoon arrive at La Guira National Park: 54,000 acres of mountain wilderness, picturesque valleys, and hidden caves, and home to species such as Cuban Solitaire, Cuban Tody, Cuban Bullfinch, and Cuban Pewee. *Overnight at Hotel Mirador. (BLD)*

## FEBRUARY 21 - SAN DIEGO DE LOS BAÑOS

Early breakfast followed by morning birding at Cueva de Los Portales, a limestone cave adjacent to hills covered in lush vegetation. The cave is known geologically and historically, famous for being Che Guevara's headquarters during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. The area is renowned for being an excellent place to spot Cuban Solitaire, our target species, and Scaly-naped Pigeon. This afternoon visit a tobacco farm and the home of the world-renowned nature artist and author Nils Navarro in Cuba's Viñales area. *Overnight at Hotel Mirador. (BLD)*

## FEBRUARY 22 - ZAPATA PENINSULA

Depart early for the long drive to the Zapata Swamp. The Zapata area consists of scrub, mangrove swamp, and coastline. Over 200 species have been recorded here including the endemic Zapata Wren and Zapata Sparrow. We will also look for species such as Cuban Blackbird, Cuban Green Woodpecker, Greater Antillean Oriole, and Cuban Emerald. Late afternoon birding if time permits. *Overnight at Playa Larga. (BLD)*

## FEBRUARY 23 - ZAPATA PENINSULA

Depart after early breakfast for the La Turba area, where you may find Zapata Wren and Zapata Sparrow. Lunch in the town of Palpite, and a special visit with artists of the Korimacao Community Project. The project consists of residents from Cuban communities who are given the opportunity to develop and improve their performing skills such as singing, dancing, and playing instruments. Learn about the program and interact with the talented students. Afternoon birding at Salinas, an area frequented by many species of waterbirds that live in mangrove swamps, coastal lagoons, and woods. Over 165 indigenous and migratory birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and invertebrates are found here. Expect to see flamingos, Roseate Spoonbill, Glossy and White Ibis, herons, pelicans, Snail Kite, Peregrine Falcon, Cuban Black Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, and others. *Overnight at Playa Larga. (BLD)*

## FEBRUARY 24 - ZAPATA PENINSULA

After breakfast leave for the Bermejas site. Target species include the Cuban Parakeet, Cuban Pygmy Owl, Bee Hummingbird, Cuban Green Woodpecker, Fernandina's Flicker, Cuban Trogon, Cuban Tody, and Cuban Grassquit. A mosaic of dry forest, swamp, mangrove, and mudflats, the Zapata Peninsula is one of the best preserved ecosystems on the island. Other species we might encounter are Bare-legged Owl, Blue-headed Quail Dove and Gray-fronted Quail. Lunch at a local restaurant with Zapata area conservationists who will provide updates on projects underway to preserve Cuba's largest wetlands. In the late afternoon, bird in the nearby Sopillar region of the reserve. Dine at a paladar and meet the owners, who will give insight about their entrepreneurial activities. *Overnight at Playa Larga. (BLD)*

## FEBRUARY 25 - CAYO COCO

Early breakfast, then depart for the long drive to Cayo Coco. Afternoon birding on the hotel grounds. *Overnight at Sol Cayo Coco. (BLD)*

## FEBRUARY 26 - CAYO COCO

Morning visit to Cayo Guillermo; return to the hotel for lunch. This afternoon visit Cayo Romano. The Cayo Coco area combines an ideal spot for observing Cuba's bird life with beautiful beach and snorkeling opportunities. Look for Oriente Warbler, Thick-billed Vireo, Bahama Mockingbird, and Cuban Gnatcatcher, in addition to a variety of waterbirds including the West Indian Whistling Duck. *Overnight at Sol Cayo Coco. (BLD)*

## FEBRUARY 27 - CAYO COCO

This morning visit Cayo Paredon Grande for birding, hopefully catching any species we missed in the cayos. Afternoon free to enjoy the area. *Overnight at Sol Cayo Coco. (BLD)*

## FEBRUARY 28 - DEPART

Leisurely departure to the Camaguey airport for flight back to the US. (B)

## LAND PRICING

**\$4,395** (10 participants and 1 leader)

Includes all meals, accommodations, entrance fees, and activities listed in the itinerary, private vehicle transportation unless otherwise noted in the itinerary, non-alcoholic beverages with meals, full-time guide, \$65 Cuban visa, donation to DOS, and carbon offset.

Does not include international airfare, gratuities, or items of a personal nature. Round-trip airfare from Philadelphia is estimated at \$425 and includes departure tax and mandatory Cuban health insurance.

## THE FINE PRINT

Price is based on double occupancy; single occupancy arrangements are offered at additional cost. A \$200 per person deposit and enrollment form are required to secure your space on the trip. This deposit is refundable minus a \$100 cancellation fee until November 15, 2017, at which time final non-refundable payment is due. Progress payments accepted. Travel/trip cancellation insurance is strongly recommended. For more information call Travel Insured at 800-243-3174. Holbrook Travel's agency number is 15849.



This program includes optional carbon offsetting with ClimateSafe. Learn more at [holbrooktravel.com/climatesafe](http://holbrooktravel.com/climatesafe)

## FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO ENROLL:

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