



American Flamingos



BAHAMAS

BIRDING & CONSERVATION ON ANDROS,
GREAT INAGUA AND ABACO ISLANDS

with Matt Jeffery | December 7-15, 2018

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Discover Andros Island, the largest island in the Bahamas, and only location in the world for the critically endangered Bahama Oriole.
- Learn about conservation work affecting species protection from Bahamas National Trust and other organizations.
- Learn about Audubon's work to safeguard Piping Plovers on their wintering grounds
- 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 Bluehole National Park - deep sinkholes where endemic fish have evolved to adapt to the freshwater.
- Search for the newly described island endemic, Inagua Woodstar, and witness how waterbirds coexist with salt production.
- On Abaco learn about the Bahama (Cuban) Parrot and the conservation strategy needed to save this ground nesting bird.

*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.

For more information or to enroll, visit holbrook.travel/flywaybahamas17 or contact Debbie Sturdivant Jordan at 866-748-6146 or debbie@holbrooktravel.com

WHAT MAKES FLYWAY EXPEDITIONS DIFFERENT?



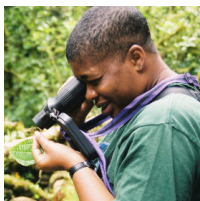
UNIQUE ITINERARIES

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.



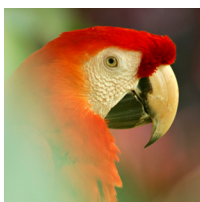
SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESSES

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, Great Inagua and Abaco Islands

The Bahamas is a country of over 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 ft. This Flyway expedition focuses on three very different islands that collectively provide an excellent representation of the country's birdlife, including all six of the endemics and many West Indian in The Bahamas. 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



Great Lizard Cuckoo by John Hamman

DECEMBER 7 - ANDROS ISLAND

Midday arrival into Andros Island from Nassau. Enjoy a welcome reception and orientation of the island. Andros Island is the largest island in the Bahamas, but with a small population and low density. 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. The island is composed of coppice in the south and a mixture of coppice and pine forests to the north. There are a few small towns on the island, but the general countryside is rural or uninhabited.

Later this afternoon we look for the threatened Bahama Oriole around town and should see the two hummingbirds: Cuban Emerald and Bahama Woodstar. There is good hardwood forest in the immediate area that can harbor many species such as the Thick-billed Vireo, La Sagra's Flycatcher, Red-legged Thrush. From here we will explore other sites with coppice and pine forest, and check for West Indian Whistling Ducks (rare), Least Grebes, Clapper Rails and other wetland birds in nearby ponds. *Overnight at Love at First Sight Hotel (D)*

DECEMBER 8 - ANDROS ISLAND

We will spend most of the morning birding in the coppice and pine forest to the north of Andros Town in the 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. We have free time this afternoon before dinner and an evening

talk on National Audubon Society's IDB bird-based tourism project in Bahamas and local efforts in conservation. *Overnight at Love at First Sight Hotel (BLD)*

DECEMBER 9 - ANDROS ISLAND

Today we spend the morning birding the pine forests at the north end of the island, focusing on birds such as the Bahama Swallow, Bahama Mockingbird, Loggerhead Kingbird, and other species missed thus far. We continue our expedition by boat to the world-famous Joulter Cays, eight miles from the tip of Andros. We take in the scenery and island birds along with a picnic lunch then return back to our hotel. *Overnight at Love at First Sight Hotel (BLD)*

DECEMBER 10 - GREAT INAGUA ISLAND

After breakfast we fly to Great Inagua Island. Inagua is the third largest island of the Bahamas, and the southernmost. Lacking the forests found on the other main islands, its wetlands are recognized as internationally important by the Ramsar Convention. They are home to the world's largest colony of American Flamingos, which was protected and brought back from near extirpation through the National Audubon Society's efforts to hire the first wardens, kickstarting the environmental movement.



Bahama Mockingbird by Laura Gooch

Upon arrival, we will search for the island endemic, Inagua Woodstar. This southern island has many avian delights and we will spend time looking at the thousands of American Flamingos, along with numerous shorebirds, Roseate Spoonbills, Reddish Egrets, White-cheeked Pintails, Bahama Parrots and Burrowing Owls. Depending on the season, huge numbers of shorebirds inhabit the wetlands and beaches, including the threatened Snowy Plover. Inagua is also home to the hummingbird Inagua Woodstar, found only on this island and its sister Little Inagua, as well as the Bahama Parrot. *Overnight at The Main House (BLD)*

DECEMBER 11 - GREAT INAGUA ISLAND

Today we have a full day to see flamingos, take the ring road around the salt pans and spend more time in the Inagua National Park that comprises most of the island. During the afternoon, we will have an optional tour of the Morton Salt Works operation. The island's economy is based on the Morton salt works that harvests over a

million tons of salt annually in a way that creates foraging habitat for flamingos. *Overnight at The Main House (BLD)*



West Indian Woodpecker by Dominic Sherony

DECEMBER 12 - ABACO ISLAND

This morning we have time to further explore Great Inagua before our afternoon flight 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 we check into the Abaco Beach Resort, then proceed to the pine forest a short drive to the south. Here we will look for Olive-capped and Bahama warblers along with many of the other Caribbean specialties seen previously. We will make a special attempt to get good views of the West Indian Woodpecker, which is confined to this island and Cuba. *Overnight at Abaco Beach Resort (BLD)*

DECEMBER 13 - ABACO ISLAND

In the morning we will drive to the southern part of the island to look for the Bahama Parrot. These parrots uniquely nest in limestone holes in the ground. We connect with our friends at the Bahamas National Trust, learning about their conservation programs, and possibly participating in a citizen science project on predator control. We'll also learn about challenges of the area, including forest fires. *Overnight at Abaco Beach Resort (BLD)*

DECEMBER 14 - ABACO ISLAND

After breakfast, our morning will include birding with children from the local area and learning about island education. After lunch, we participate in other outreach programs. Free time this afternoon before our farewell dinner and discussion on future projects on the Islands. *Overnight at Abaco Beach Resort (BLD)*

DECEMBER 15 - DEPART

Depart for Nassau and flights home. (B)

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



MATT JEFFERY is the Deputy Director of the International Alliances Program. Matt has been with Audubon since 2006 and has more than 15 years of experience in the environmental conservation field. He has been working extensively in the Bahamas where he helped lead expeditions that discovered large populations of the endangered Piping Plovers. He helped lead efforts to protect the Jouter Cays

from development (winter home to more than 10% of the Atlantic Piping Plover population) and alongside BNT has brought environmental education to every school on the island of Andros. Matt has also worked closely with and managed projects across several countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, including Mexico, Panama, Belize, Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Paraguay. His focus and passion is to create local capacity that can improve the management and protection of Important Bird Areas (IBAs) to save critical habitats for our Neotropical migrant bird populations.

PROGRAM PRICING

\$3,800 (8 participants)

Cost includes accommodations, activities, and meals as indicated in the itinerary, private vehicle transportation unless otherwise noted in itinerary, non-alcoholic beverages with meals, internal flights (\$700), and local guides in each region for duration of program. Trip begins in Nassau; does not include international airfare or gratuities. Holbrook can assist with flights to Nassau if desired. *Single occupancy arrangements are offered at additional cost.*

THE FINE PRINT

Price is based on double occupancy. With the maximum of 10 participants the cost will be \$3,600 per person. A \$200 per person deposit and enrollment form are required to hold your space. Non-refundable final payment is due no later than September 3, 2018. Traveltrip cancellation insurance is strongly recommended. For more information call Travel Insured at 800-243-3174 or visit travelinsured.com. Holbrook Travel's agency number is 15849.

FOR MORE INFO OR TO ENROLL

Visit holbrook.travelflywaybahamas-dec18 or contact Debbie Sturdivant Jordan at 866-748-6146 or debbie@holbrooktravel.com