

Great Kiskadee by Alexander Dzib

HOLBROOK
TRAVEL

MEXICO

BIRDING THE RUINS OF THE YUCATÁN

with Buena Vista Audubon

October 5 - 15, 2021



Buena Vista Audubon Society

Pack your binoculars and embark on an intense birding adventure to the environmentally diverse Yucatán Peninsula. Witness native birds soar above the stunning ruins of Hochob, Becán, Chacchoben, Uxmal, and other archaeological sites on this journey through the Maya world. Heads will turn at every point of this expedition as you look for a rainbow array of birds including hummingbirds, parrots, flamingos, raptors, and many more. From trail hikes to boat rides, birding enthusiasts will have an opportunity to participate in a variety of outdoor activities while learning about the history of the Maya and the birds that call the Yucatán Peninsula home.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Enjoy exceptional birding while visiting the walled city of Becán, once a Maya political, economic, and religious center.
- Watch for target species like the Hook-billed and Gray-headed Kites, Ornate Hawk-Eagle, and the magnificent King Vulture.
- Embark on a boat ride on Bacalar Lagoon, nicknamed the "Lake of Seven Colors."
- Search for avifauna in the Calakmul Biosphere Reserve, home to approximately 350 bird species.
- Go birding by boat through the Celestun River marshes and mangroves, home to herons, cormorants, and frigatebirds.

holbrook.travel/bvas-mx21

ITINERARY

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

OCTOBER 5 - COZUMEL

Upon arrival at the Cozumel International Airport, after clearing customs and collecting your luggage, you will be met and transferred to your hotel. Attend an orientation meeting and have dinner at the hotel. Check-in starts at 3:00 pm. *Overnight at Hotel Villa Blanca. (D)*

OCTOBER 6 - COZUMEL

This morning, meet for breakfast in the hotel restaurant at 7:00 am. Afterward, set out for birding at the San Gervasio archaeological site on the north side of the island. The site, whose pre-Columbian name means “flat rock in the place of the swallows,” was once a Maya religious center and administrative seat for the entire island. Watch for species like the Yucatan Vireo, Yucatan Woodpecker, Bananaquit, Cozumel Emerald, Green-breasted Mango, Ruddy Ground-Dove, Mangrove Cuckoo, and Cozumel Wren. Lunch at a local restaurant. This afternoon, transfer to Cozumel's south for more birding. Later, return to the hotel with time to freshen up before a lecture on the birds of Cozumel and extinct species. Dinner at the hotel. *Overnight at Hotel Villa Blanca. (BLD)*

OCTOBER 7 - CHETUMAL

Begin the day with early morning birding around the hotel gardens. After breakfast, check out and take the ferry from the pier in Cozumel to Playa del Carmen on the mainland; from there, continue south to Vigía Chico, an abandoned coastal village. The trip takes you through Sian Ka'an, a Biosphere Reserve and UNESCO World Heritage Site characterized by tropical forests, mangroves, savannas, and wetlands, with more than 300 bird species. Potential sightings include Ocellated Turkey, Jabiru, Great Curassow, Roseate Spoonbill, Gray-headed Chat, Orange Oriole, Scaled Pigeon, Yucatan Parrot, Bananaquit, Red-legged Honeycreeper, Rose-throated Tanager, Gray-headed Tanager, Snail Kite, and 15 heron species, plus wildlife such as howler and spider monkeys, tapirs, crocodiles, margays, and ocelots. Have lunch in the nearby town of Felipe Carrillo Puerto. In the afternoon, go birding around the large temples and platforms of the Chacchoben site and watch for Red-lored Parrot, Groove-billed Ani, Yucatan Jay, Yucatan Vireo, Black-headed Trogon, Pale-billed Woodpecker, and Red-crowned Ant-Tanager, among others. Continue to your hotel for check in. Dinner and overnight. *Overnight at Hotel Fiesta Inn. (BLD)*

OCTOBER 8 - CHETUMAL

After breakfast, take a boat ride around Bacalar Lagoon, known as the “Lake of Seven Colors” due to its different shades of blue. During the ride, you may see Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Neotropic Cormorant, Limpkin, Northern Jacana, Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture, and White-fronted Parrot. Return to the pier and visit the colonial Fort of San Felipe for more birding. Have lunch at a local restaurant, then return to the hotel for time at leisure to relax or watch for avian visitors in the hotel gardens. This evening, attend a lecture on birding in the Yucatán before dinner at the hotel. *Overnight at Hotel Fiesta Inn. (BLD)*

OCTOBER 9 - XPUJIL

Check out after breakfast and head further inland toward Xpujil, stopping for birding en route at the Noh-Bec site. Noh-Bec is a

community-owned tropical reserve located around the Noh-Bec lagoon. Some target species here include Brown-hooded Parrot, White-crowned Parrot, Lineated Woodpecker, Plain Chachalaca, Purple Gallinule, Pale-billed Woodpecker, Royal Flycatcher, Green Kingfisher, Greenish Elaenia, Boat-billed Flycatcher, Stub-tailed Spadebill, Collared-Trogon, Black-headed Trogon, Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl, and Blue Ground-Dove. Continue to Xpujil for lunch and then transfer about four miles west to Becán for a field trip in the ruins. This site was once the political, economic, and religious center of the area known today as Rio Bec. One distinguishing characteristic of Becán is the presence of moats and protective walls surrounding the city, features not commonly found in Maya architecture. The pyramids and temples in Becán were built in clusters around three main plazas and also include a small but well-preserved ball court. Some buildings still have remnants of the detailed facades that once graced their walls, giving insight into what the city must have looked like at its peak. A variety of warblers, tanagers, hummingbirds, and raptors can be seen here. Check in at the hotel this afternoon, with time for birding around the hotel's gardens. Keep your eyes open for Crested Guan, Great Curassow, Russet-naped Wood-Rail, and Thicket Tinamou. *Overnight at Chicanna Ecovillage Resort. (BLD)*

OCTOBER 10 - XPUJIL

Set out with a boxed breakfast for birding at Calakmul Biosphere Reserve this morning. Calakmul is part of the largest extension of tropical forest outside the Amazon Basin and is home to many endangered mammals and an impressive 350 bird species. Within the reserve is the Calakmul archaeological site; the top of the complex's great pyramid offers a good vantage point to look for soaring raptors, such as Hook-billed and Gray-headed Kites, Hawk Eagles, and the magnificent King Vulture, which is the symbol of Calakmul. Other possibilities include regional endemic species such as the Ocellated Turkey and Rose-throated Tanager, as well as vulnerable birds like the Great Curassow. Have a picnic lunch before returning to the hotel for more birding around the hotel gardens this afternoon before dinner. *Overnight at Chicanna Ecovillage Resort. (BLD)*

OCTOBER 11 - UXMAL

Early morning birding at the hotel. Check out and head to the ruins at Hochob, a small but interesting Maya site. Hochob is an excellent example of the Chenes architectural style, which flourished from about AD 100 to 1000 and is distinguished by smaller courtyards and ceremonial platforms and a lack of large pyramids. In the forests around Hochob you may be able to see Yucatan Bobwhite, Lesser Roadrunner, Indigo Bunting, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Yucatan Woodpecker, Turquoise-browed Motmot, Lesson's Motmot, and Fork-tailed Flycatcher. Enjoy a picnic lunch on site and then continue the drive north to Uxmal. Check in at your hotel with time for birding around the grounds before dinner. *Overnight at Hotel Maya Uxmal. (BLD)*

OCTOBER 12 - UXMAL

Morning birding at Uxmal site. Known as ‘the three times built,’ it is one of the most impressive and majestic Maya archeological sites in Yucatan. Its beauty is characterized by low horizontal palaces set around courtyards or quadrangles, which are decorated with highly detailed rich sculptures made from

thousands of small and perfectly polished stones set in geometric mosaics of perfection unmatched in the entire Maya area. The city encompasses 15 groups of buildings, spread from north to south. The city contains the Pyramid of the Magician, with its Plaza of the Birds, the Nunnery Quadrangle, the Ball Court, the Governor's Palace, the Great Pyramid, and the Palomar, and the North Group, the Old House, and the Graveyard. In the afternoon transfer to Hacienda Yunku for birding around the property. Return to Hotel Maya Uxmal for dinner and a lecture on birding in the Yucatan. *Overnight at Hotel Maya Uxmal. (BLD)*

OCTOBER 13 - CELESTUN

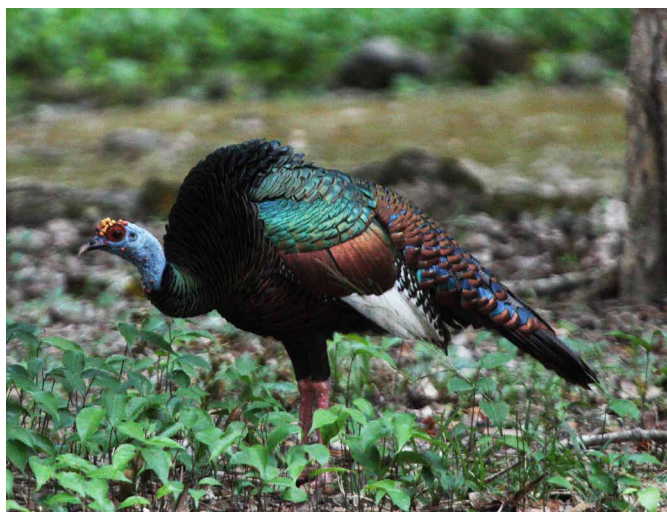
Begin the day with early morning birding, then have breakfast and check out. Depart for Celestún on the peninsula's northwestern coast, with a roadside stop for birding in the Chunchucmil community, where you may see Lesser Roadrunner, Russet-naped Wood-Rail, Northern Jacana, Squirrel Cuckoo, Caribbean Dove, and Blue-black Grassquit, among others. Upon arrival in Celestún, have lunch and check in at your beachfront hotel. There will be a chance to seek out some species that are endemic to the north coast, such as Yucatan Wren and Mexican Shearwater, as well as other species like Yucatan Bobwhite, Yucatan Woodpecker, Black Catbird, White-lored Gnatcatcher, Buff-bellied Hummingbird, Cinnamon Hummingbird, Mangrove Warbler, and Common Tody-Flycatcher. Next, listen to a lecture on local flamingo conservation efforts. Dinner at the hotel. *Overnight at Hotel Manglares Celestun or similar. (BLD)*

OCTOBER 14 - MERIDA

Today take a birding walk before breakfast. Transfer to the pier for a boat ride down the Celestun River. Target species are the elusive Rufous-necked Wood-Rail, Lesson's Motmot, Common Black Hawk, Yellow-tailed Oriole, Roseate Spoonbill, Boat-billed Heron, White Ibis. Also look for Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, American Pygmy Kingfisher, Bare-throated Tiger-Heron, and others. It may also be possible to see American Flamingos. Have lunch in town and then transfer to Merida. Check-in and farewell dinner this evening. *Overnight at Hotel Casa Balam. (BLD)*

OCTOBER 15 - DEPART

After breakfast transfer to the Merida International Airport for return flights home. (B)



Ocellated Turkey by Alexander Dzib

MEET YOUR LEADER



Stan Walens

Stan Walens began birding after graduate school and hasn't stopped for a minute since. His early years as a birder in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia involved owl population surveys and documenting hawk and warbler migrations. But once he moved to San Diego, he became an avid seawatcher.

He has collected almost-daily observations of seabird populations in San Diego County for nearly 40 years, and for over 25 years organized pelagic trips out of San Diego. His professional work as an archaeologist and psychological anthropologist focuses on the art, rituals, and religions of the indigenous cultures of North and Central America. He is a classical musician who plays 13 instruments, and during those rare moments when not birding, can be found listening to opera.

LAND PRICING

\$3,150 (7 participants)

Cost includes meals, accommodations, and activities as indicated in the itinerary, in-country transportation, full-time guide, all tips/gratuities, donation to Buena Vista Audubon, bottled water on the bus, and carbon offset.

Does not include international airfare, estimated at \$779 from San Diego, or items of a personal nature.

TRAVEL PROTECTION

Holbrook Travel purchases Travel Protection on behalf of all participants. These plans help provide coverage once the trip has departed and offer benefits for Baggage/Personal Effects, Accident & Sickness Medical Expenses, Emergency Evacuation and more.

Optional additional coverage is available in the form of the Group Deluxe Plan, which offers benefits for Trip Cancellation/Interruption, in addition to many other insurance benefits and non-insurance assistance services. If interested in this optional plan, we can provide you with rates and plan details.

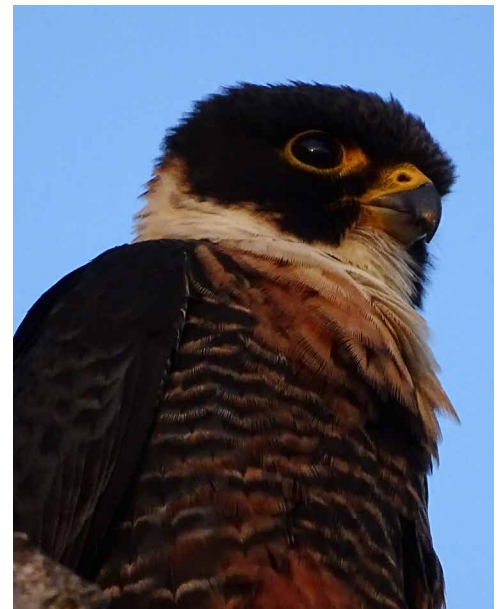
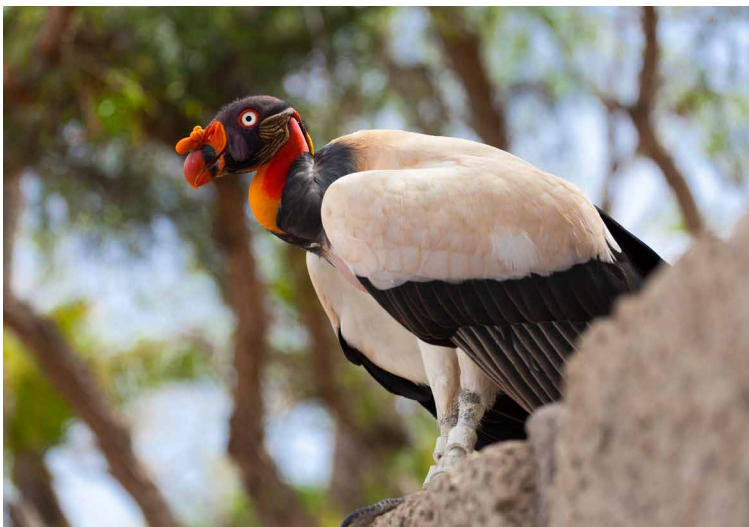
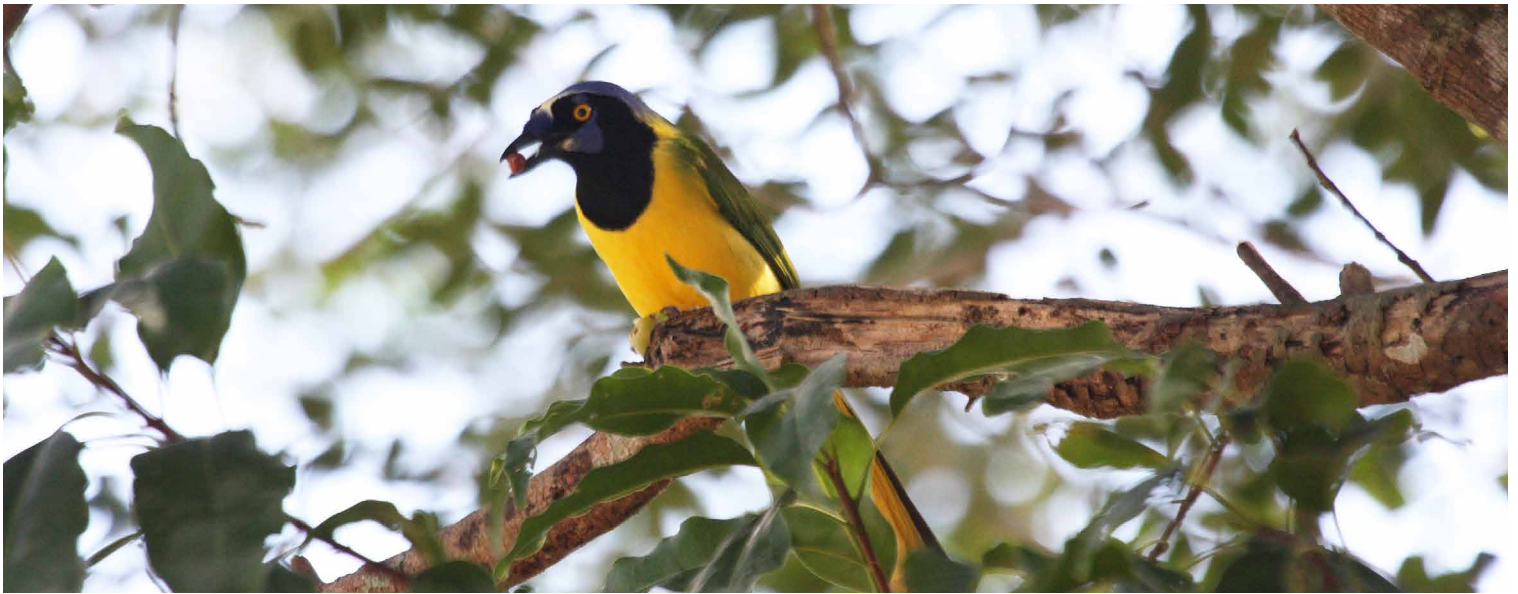
THE FINE PRINT

Cost is based on double occupancy; for a single room throughout the trip add \$355 per person. A \$200 per person deposit and enrollment form are required to reserve your space on the trip. This deposit is refundable excluding a \$100 cancellation fee until July 7, 2021, at which time non-refundable final payment is due.

Please note: itineraries may be subject to change due to protocols and adjustments related to the COVID-19 pandemic. For the latest information regarding our COVID-19 policies, please visit holbrooktravel.com/covid19



This program includes optional carbon offsetting with ClimateSafe. Learn more at holbrooktravel.com/climatesafe



FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO ENROLL

Visit holbrook.travel/bvas-mx21 or contact Debbie Jordan at debbie@holbrooktravel.com or 866-748-6146.

PHOTOS BY

Photos by Alexander Dzib, Maurizio Costanzo, and Debbie Sturdivant Jordan