



APLOMADO FALCON BY JON NELSON



# BELIZE

## BIRDING AND NATURE IN THE TROPICS OF BELIZE

8 days | Choose your dates

### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Explore Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary to look for Jabirus, Northern Jacanas, Boat-billed Herons, and more.
- Enjoy a talk by a Belize Audubon Society representative about local efforts to promote bird-based tourism in conservation and development.
- Have lunch and discussion with members of a community-based project on Scarlet Macaw conservation.
- Set your sights on over 330 bird species in the Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary, exploring open and forested habitats.
- Watch for rare Blue and Slate-colored Seedeaters at Monkey Bay Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Examine the social and economic factors associated with engaging local people in conservation.

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*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?



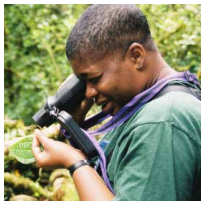
## UNIQUE ITINERARIES

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 and Nature in the Tropics of Belize

On this exciting 8-day expedition to Belize, set your sights on hundreds of neotropical species with the help of our expert guides. Enjoy birding in the pine savannas and wetland habitats of Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary, in the primary and secondary tropical moist broadleaf forest at Cockscomb Basin and Mayflower Bocawina National Park, and in private reserves, a Mennonite community, and along the Macal River Valley. This trip is a prime reflection of the birds the National Audubon Society hopes to protect through its ongoing conservation efforts. Participate in several talks with members of the local community about these efforts, the training programs, and other activities that promote birding tourism as a viable option for local economic development.

## ITINERARY

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER



NORTHERN JACANA BY FRANCESCO VERONESI

### DAY 1 - CROOKED TREE

Upon arrival in Belize City, after clearing customs and immigration, you will be met outside baggage claim and transferred to Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary. Established in 1984 to protect resident and migrant birds, the sanctuary is managed by the Belize Audubon Society and encompasses a network of inland lagoons, swamps, and waterways. During the dry season, tens of thousands of birds congregate here, taking advantage of abundant food resources in the wetlands. This evening, have dinner with a Belize Audubon Society representative and then hear a talk about developing bird-based tourism as a conservation and sustainable development tool in Belize. *Overnight at Bird's Eye View Lodge. (D)*

### DAY 2 - CROOKED TREE

Today, head out onto the extensive waterways of Crooked Tree's 44,000-acre Ramsar wetlands to see a mix of herons, ibis, Roseate Spoonbills, Northern Jacanas, Boat-billed Herons, and Jabiru. After lunch, explore the pine savannas on the search for near-endemics like the Yucatan Jay, Yucatan Woodpecker, and Yellow-lored Parrot, as well as Rufous-browed Peppershrike, Yellow-headed Parrot, Aplomado Falcon, and Canivet's Emerald. An evening walk will be available for those who hope to catch up with a Common Pauraque, Mottled Owl, or Tody Motmot. *Overnight at Bird's Eye View Lodge. (BLD)*

### DAY 3 - STANN CREEK

Spend the morning birding at Crooked Tree by boat (if water conditions allow). After lunch, set out for St. Herman's Blue Hole National Park, with a brief stop at Monkey Bay Wildlife Sanctuary to look for the rare Blue and Slate-colored Seedeaters. At St. Herman's Blue Hole National Park, meet with tour guides who support the park to discuss birding and conservation efforts in the region. In the late afternoon, explore Mayflower Bocawina National Park, located in the southern district of Stann Creek and consisting of over 7,100 acres of lush jungle, refreshing waterfalls, and ancient Maya sites. More than 200 avian species have been identified in the area, including Great Curassow, Crested Guan,

Keel-billed Motmot, and Great Tinamou. Check in at the Bocawina Rainforest Resort and enjoy a hearty dinner. *Overnight at Bocawina Rainforest Resort. (BLD)*

### DAY 4 - STANN CREEK

Depart early for a day of birding at Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary, a tropical moist forest sheltering an abundance of biodiversity—including 300-plus bird species. Walk along its extensive trail system on the lookout for trogons, tanagers, flycatchers, and maybe a glimpse of a Yellow-billed Caciique. The sanctuary is also recognized as the world's first designated jaguar reserve, so keen observers might even spot a paw print in the forest. In the late afternoon, return to the lodge and bird along the trails for various hummingbirds, woodcreepers, flycatchers, and tanagers, plus Pheasant Cuckoo, Green Honeycreeper, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Nightingale Wren, Green Shrike-Vireo, and White-winged Becard, among others. *Overnight at Bocawina Rainforest Resort. (BLD)*



GREEN HONEYCREEPER BY SANFORD M SORKIN

### DAY 5 - STANN CREEK

After an early breakfast, visit Red Bank Village to see the Scarlet Macaws that are rebounding in this region. Visit the Scarlet Macaw Bed and Breakfast for lunch and a discussion with representatives from this important community-based project focused on Scarlet Macaw conservation. This afternoon, continue birding within the 128,000 acres of forest in the Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary. *Overnight at Bocawina Rainforest Resort. (BLD)*

### DAY 6 - SAN IGNACIO

Spend the morning in the Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary exploring trails not covered in the previous days. In the afternoon, drive to Crystal Paradise Resort in the lush jungle alongside the beautiful Macal River. Crystal Paradise proudly combines Belizean family hospitality with nature. The resort was hand-built by the Tut family, using the ancient art of palm-thatched roofs that are in synch with the natural surroundings. After time to check in and get settled, bird along the lodge grounds to see Keel-billed Toucans, Lesson's Motmots, thrushes, Blue-gray Tanagers, and Red-throated Ant-Tanagers, which visit the feeders to feast on fresh papaya. A variety of hummingbirds also visit the feeders near



the dining room. This evening, after dinner at the lodge, explore the social and economic factors associated with conservation: engaging local people in conservation and the habitat protection process. Later, an optional night walk may yield Black-and-white or Spectacled Owls. *Overnight at Crystal Paradise. (BLD)*

## DAY 7 - SAN IGNACIO

A 45-minute drive north of Crystal Paradise through rolling green hills brings you to Spanish Lookout, a modern-day Mennonite settlement reminiscent of Pennsylvania farmlands. Several different habitats in the area—savanna, open farmland, and subtropical forest around the lake—make it a favorable birding destination. In the open land and pastures, it is easy to find Vermilion Flycatchers, Fork-tailed Flycatchers, Yellow-rumped Warblers, White-tailed Kites, White-tailed Hawks, Laughing Falcons, Eastern Meadowlarks, swallows, herons, and Jabiru, just to name a few. About 20 minutes beyond the community is Aguacate Lagoon Reserve, and in the forest around the lake, common sightings may include jacamars, trogons, puffbirds, Crested Guans, and Great Curassows. Other birds may include Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks, night herons, rails, and crakes. *Overnight at Crystal Paradise. (BLD)*

## DAY 8 - DEPART

After early morning birding, the group will transfer to the Belize City airport for flights back to the US. Please make sure flights depart after 12 pm. (B)

## PROGRAM PRICING

**\$2,575** (12 participants + 1 leader)

**\$2,695** (10 participants + 1 leader)

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.

International airfare, gratuities, and items of a personal nature are not included.

Valid for travel in 2021.



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

## 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. Refer to the Plan Document for more details.

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

A \$200 per person deposit and enrollment form is due to secure your reservation. This deposit is refundable until 95 days prior to departure excluding a \$100 cancellation fee. Non-refundable final payments are due no later than 95 days prior to departure.



ACTIVITY LEVEL

3

MODERATE

## WHAT TO EXPECT

Offered through the Audubon Society's Flyway Expeditions program, which advances sustainable development in bird hot-spots, this trip has a strong conservation focus and opportunities to engage with the local community. It includes two- and three-night stays in three locations, plus one night in Belize City. Daily birdwatching excursions (including several nighttime walks) are led by Audubon-trained local guides, and last from 2–5 hours. Visiting both national parks and private reserves, you'll explore pine savannas, lakes and wetlands, primary and secondary moist tropical broadleaf forests, farmlands, a botanical garden, jaguar sanctuary, and more. Your trails are mainly unpaved but well-maintained, with occasional steep inclines and elevation gains of up to 1,000 feet. Some paths can be slippery, rocky, or uneven. There are two boat excursions. Expect high humidity and heat, even in the cooler dry season (November–early May), when there is less rain and average daily highs are in the mid-80s. Overland transfers last 1–3 hours in private, air-conditioned motorcoaches.

