



OCELLATED TURKEY

# BELIZE & GUATEMALA

## Neotropical Birds and Mayan Ruins

**8 DAYS** | Choose your dates | Best season to travel: **OCT - JUL**

*In what are now the countries of Belize and Guatemala, the ancient Maya civilization once flourished, leaving behind cities, temples, pyramids, and observatories still standing, enshrouded in tree cover. Amid rainforests and valleys, archaeological sites tell the story of this culturally rich region while also providing habitat for a diversity of flora and fauna, including hundreds of bird species. Traverse fertile wetlands, savannas, Caribbean pine forests, mountainous terrain, and more while seeking out resident and migratory avifauna. Walk in the footsteps of the Maya, exploring their forests and cities, searching for the birds and other wildlife that once lived among them.*

### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Discover both concentrated flocks and rare sightings of avifauna in the Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary, such as the Bare-throated Tiger-Heron, Black-collared Hawk, and Neotropic Cormorant.
- Look for highlight species, such as the Orange-breasted Falcon, Stygian Owl, Ocellated Turkey, and King Vulture.
- Observe the present wildlife that live within the ancient structures of temples, altars, ball courts and residential buildings of the Cahal Pech Mayan ruins.
- Visit the Belize Zoo for up-close encounters with some of the country's native fauna, including a pair of Harpy Eagles.
- Bird in the rainforest reserve of Cerro Cahuí Protected Biotope.
- Seek out some of the 410 bird species that can be seen amid the Tikal archaeological site and surrounding national park.

### WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- Bilingual local guide
- Driver
- Accommodations
- Activities
- Private transportation
- Meals
- Beverages with meals
- Carbon offsetting



BIRDING IN BELIZE BY DEBBIE JORDAN



TIKAL

## ITINERARY

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

### DAY 1 - CROOKED TREE

Upon arrival in Belize City, after clearing customs and immigration, meet your guide and transfer to Crooked Tree. Arrive at Bird's Eye View Lodge and check in. Receive an orientation to the program before dinner at the hotel. This evening search for potoos, owls, and nighthawks during an evening birding exploration around the lodge. *Overnight at Bird's Eye View Lodge. (D)*



AMERICAN PYGMY KINGFISHER BY JAMES DIEDRICK

### DAY 2 - CROOKED TREE

Today, enjoy a full day of birding activities in the 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. Bird along the lagoon and its tributaries in search of Wood Stork, Jabiru, Bare-throated Tiger-Heron, Boat-billed Heron, Black-collared Hawk, Snail Kite, Neotropic Cormorant, Anhinga, Limpkin, and American Pygmy Kingfisher. After lunch, spend the rest of the afternoon birding in the sanctuary. The pine savannas provide an opportunity to see 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. *Overnight at Bird's Eye View Lodge. (BLD)*



HARPY EAGLE AT THE BELIZE ZOO BY LAURA HARE

## DAY 3 - SAN IGNACIO

Begin the day with early morning birding before returning to the lodge for breakfast. Afterward, check out and depart for San Ignacio, stopping en route at the Belize Zoo and Tropical Education Center, a refuge for wild animals since its founding in 1983. The organization was born from an effort to provide a safe haven for a number of wild animals that, ironically, had been used in the making of documentaries about tropical forests.

The zoo and its education center encompass 29 acres of tropical savanna and house more than 175 animals, representing 45 species native to Belize. Have lunch at a local restaurant before birding in the Cahal Pech ruins, one of the oldest known Maya sites in western Belize. Afterwards, continue to Crystal Paradise Resort to check in and have dinner. *Overnight at Crystal Paradise. (BLD)*

## DAY 4 - SAN IGNACIO

Early this morning, transfer with a boxed breakfast to Mountain Pine Ridge for a full day of birding. The oldest and largest protected forest in Belize, Mountain Pine Ridge Reserve spans 300 square miles and offers an alternative to the usual tropical forest ecosystems. Mountainous terrain and Caribbean pine forests serve as home to the Stygian Owl, King Vulture, Ocellated Turkey, Red-lore Parrot, and Lesson's Motmot, as well as the rarely seen Orange-breasted Falcon. After lunch at Hidden Valley Lodge, continue birding in the reserve before transferring back to your hotel. *Overnight at Crystal Paradise. (BLD)*

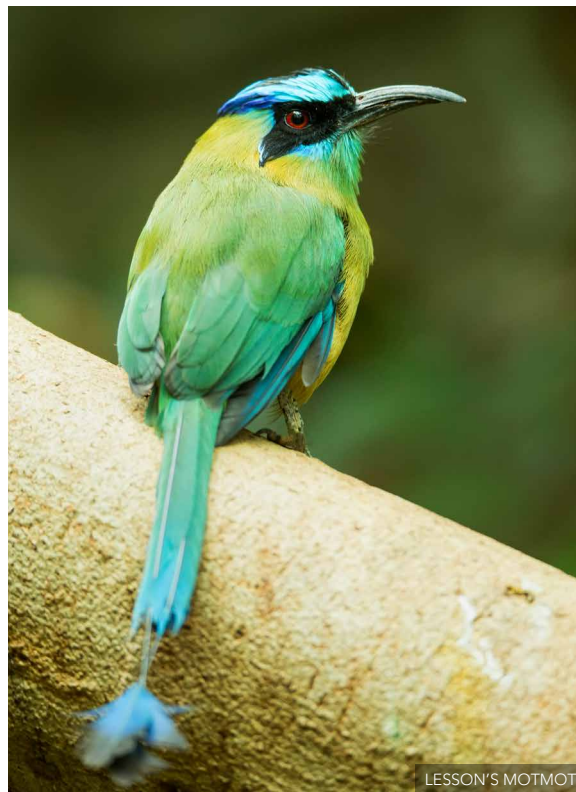
## DAY 5 - TIKAL

After breakfast, check out of the hotel and begin your transfer to Tikal, Guatemala. **Note:** *The journey includes a stop at the border between Belize and Guatemala to undergo Immigration/Customs procedures.* Once in Guatemala, stop to go birding along the trails at Biotopo Cerro Cahuí. Birds seen at this site include the Ocellated Turkey, King Vulture, Plain Chachalaca, Emerald Toucanet, Bicolored Hawk, Black Hawk-Eagle, and Yellow-breasted Chat. Then travel up to Tikal National Park. The 54,610 acres of rainforest in and around Tikal protect a wide range of

insects, birds, mammals, reptiles, and plant life. Some iconic wildlife found within the park includes spider monkeys, margays, ocelots, jaguarundis, tapirs, howler monkeys, Ocellated Turkeys, coatis, and giant anteaters. *Overnight at Jungle Lodge. (BLD)*

## DAY 6 - TIKAL

Enjoy a full day of birding in Tikal National Park. Tikal, the ancient city around which the park was formed, is one of the most famous Maya sites in Guatemala, with a long and mysterious history. The ruins are dominated by five enormous pyramidal temples, as well as an impressive network of causeways, aqueducts, and canals. An extraordinary backdrop for birding, Tikal is home to nearly 400 resident and migratory bird species. Recorded species include the Collared Aracari, Emerald Toucanet, American Pygmy Kingfisher, Eye-ringed Flatbill, Royal Flycatcher, Roadside Hawk, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, Lesson's Motmot, Stripe-throated Hermit, Crested Guan, Chestnut-colored Woodpecker, Golden-fronted Woodpecker, Montezuma's Oropendola, Brown-hooded Parrot, White-crowned Parrot, and Red-lore Parrot, among others. Tonight, there will be optional owling near the lodge. *Overnight at Jungle Lodge. (BLD)*



## DAY 7 - BELIZE CITY

Enjoy one last morning of birding before a late morning departure for Belize City, with lunch en route. Upon arrival, check in at your hotel and enjoy a farewell dinner. *Overnight at Radisson Ft. George. (BLD)*

## DAY 8 - FAREWELL!

Transfer to the international airport for flights back to the U.S. (B)

*Note: Binoculars are required for this program. We recommend wide-angle binoculars, something within the range of 7x35, 8x40, or even 10x50 with good light-gathering characteristics. Although light and comfortable, pocket binoculars don't work as well in low-light conditions.*

## LAND PRICING

**\$2,395** (12 participants + 1 leader)

Price includes accommodations, meals, entrance fees, and activities as indicated in the itinerary, private transportation unless otherwise noted in itinerary, non-alcoholic beverages with meals, local guides in each region for duration of program, and carbon offset.

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

Valid for travel in 2021.

## 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.

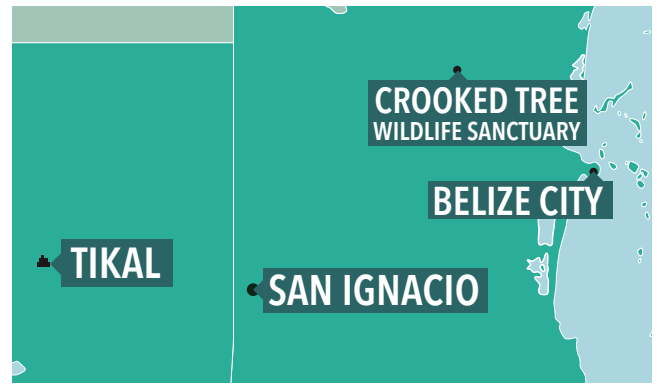
Optional additional coverage is available in the form of the Group Deluxe Plan, which offers benefits for Trip Cancellation/Interruption, in addition to many other insurance benefits and non-insurance assistance services. If interested in this optional plan, we can provide you with rates and plan details.

## 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.*



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



ACTIVITY LEVEL

3

MODERATE

## WHAT TO EXPECT

This program combines neotropical birdwatching with archaeological exploration, and is suitable for birders at all levels. It is moderately paced, with two-night stays in three different locations, plus a final night in Belize City. Daily birdwatching excursions are led by experienced local birdwatching guides, and last from 2 to 5 hours. You'll explore rainforests, wetlands, mountains, and tropical savannas; along paved and unpaved paths that have some hills and rocky, sandy, or uneven sections. The trails are not especially steep and the highest elevation, at Mountain Pine Ridge Forest Reserve, is 2,300 feet. A highlight will be birdwatching at Cahal Pech and Tikal. These ruin sites feature many steps and cobbled walkways that can be slippery. While Belize and Guatemala are always warm and humid, during the "dry" season (November–early May) there is less rain and average daily highs are usually below 85°F. There are two border crossings and several overland transfers of 1–5 hours in private, air-conditioned motorcoaches.

