



ORIENTE WARBLER BY JOHN HANNAN

CUBA

Birding Cuba's Foothills, Wetlands and Coast

11 DAYS | Choose your dates | Best season to travel: **JAN - MAY; OCT - DEC**

Cuba's protected natural areas, geographic isolation, and limited development combine to create an ideal destination for birders. The country's diverse habitats support over 360 avian species, more than two dozen of which are endemic to the island. On this 11 day program, you'll have the opportunity to observe specialties like the Cuban Tody, Zapata Wren, and Oriente Warbler, and explore dry scrub, mangrove, wetland, and coastal ecosystems. Gain deeper insight during meetings with Cuban conservationists to discuss projects and governmental policies. During your travels, meet Cuba's friendly people and discover the rich history and culture for which the country is known.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Explore the country's pristine protected areas, including La Güira National Park, Las Terrazas Biosphere Reserve, and several sites within Zapata Swamp, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and Ramsar wetland.
- Seek out endemic species like the Cuban Trogon (Cuba's national bird), Cuban Green Woodpecker, Fernandina's Flicker, and the diminutive Bee Hummingbird, among others.
- Meet with Zapata area conservationists to learn about projects underway to preserve Cuba's largest wetlands.
- Visit the limestone cave that was Che Guevara's headquarters during the Cuban Missile Crisis and an excellent place to spot Cuban Solitaire and Scaly-naped Pigeon.

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

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



VIÑALES VALLEY BY GUILLAUME BAVIERE

ITINERARY

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

DAY 1 - HAVANA

Individual arrivals in Havana today. *Overnight at Hotel Sevilla or similar.*

DAY 2 - HAVANA

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

DAY 3 - SAN DIEGO DE LOS BAÑOS

Depart for La Güira 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 Hernández from the Ecological Station of Las Terrazas. Target species are Cuban Grassquit, Olive-capped Warbler, and Cuba's national bird, the Toco-ro-ro or Cuban Trogon. Meet with community residents who helped save this site, now a model of sustainability and ecotourism. This afternoon arrive at La Güira National Park, 54,000 acres of mountain wilderness, picturesque valleys, and hidden caves, and home to species such as the Cuban Solitaire, Cuban Tody, Cuban Bullfinch, and Cuban Pewee. *Overnight at Hotel Mirador. (BLD)*

DAY 4 - 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 interesting both 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 Nils Navarro, world-renowned nature artist and author, in the Viñales area. *Overnight at Hotel Mirador. (BLD)*

DAY 5 - 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. 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 Hotel Playa Larga. (BLD)*

DAY 6 - ZAPATA PENINSULA

Depart after an early breakfast for the Santo Tomás area, where you may find Zapata Wren and Zapata Sparrow. After lunch enjoy 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, Peregrine Falcon, Cuban Black Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, and others. *Overnight at Hotel Playa Larga. (BLD)*

DAY 7 - 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 you might encounter are Bare-legged Owl, Blue-headed Quail-Dove, and Gray-fronted Quail. Have lunch at a local restaurant with Zapata area conservationists who will provide updates on projects underway to preserve Cuba's largest wetlands.

Next, visit the town of Palpite, where a special visit with artists of the Korimacao Project has been arranged. The Korimacao Community 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's development and interact with the talented artists. Dinner out at a local paladar this evening. *Overnight at Hotel Playa Larga. (BLD)*

DAY 8 - CAYO COCO

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

DAY 9 - CAYO COCO

Morning visit to Cayo Guillermo, returning 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 Tryp Cayo Coco. (BLD)*

DAY 10 - CAYO COCO

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

DAY 11 - DEPARTURE

Early departure for the airport at Camagüey, Cienfuegos, or Santa Clara, depending on flight schedules. *(B)*

PROGRAM PRICING

\$3,745 (12 participants + 1 leader)

\$3,845 (10 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, or items of a personal nature are not included.

Valid for travel in 2020.

TRAVEL PROTECTION

Holbrook Travel purchases Travel Protection on behalf of all participants traveling in 2018 or beyond. 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. Final payments are due no later than 95 days prior to departure. Non-refundable final payment is due at 95 days prior to departure.