



CUBAN EMERALD BY LAURA GOOCH

CUBA

Cuba's Birding Hotspots

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

Get to know the birds of Cuba during this introductory Caribbean birding program. Cuba's geography makes it the perfect classroom to study island endemism and biodiversity while meeting with local residents for authentic cultural exchange. Together with your ornithologist guide, you'll have the opportunity to seek out and identify highlights like the Cuban Trogon—Cuba's national bird, known locally as the Toco-ro-ro—and the world's smallest bird, the Bee Hummingbird.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Discover La Güira National Park, 54,000 acres of mountain wilderness, picturesque valleys, and hidden caves, and home to species such as Cuban Solitaire, Cuban Tody, and Cuban Pewee.
- Watch for target species like the Cuban Grassquit and Olive-capped Warbler and meet with residents at Las Terrazas, a community and reserve that is a model of sustainability and ecotourism.
- Go birding at several sites in Zapata Swamp, a Biosphere Reserve and Ramsar wetland, and meet with area conservationists.
- Venture into 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 and ornithologist guide
- Driver
- Accommodations
- Activities
- Private transportation
- Meals
- Beverages with meals
- Carbon offsetting



BIRDERS BY DEBBIE STURDIVANT JORDAN

ITINERARY

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

DAY 1 - HAVANA

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

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. (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 and Olive-capped Warbler. 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 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 Ernesto "Che" Guevara's headquarters during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. The area is renowned for being an excellent place to spot Cuban Solitaire, your target species, as well as Scaly-naped Pigeon. This afternoon visit the Viñales area, a tobacco farm and the home of Nils Navarro, world-renowned nature artist and author. *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 like the 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

After an early breakfast depart for the Santo Tomás area, where you may find Zapata Wren and Zapata Sparrow. After lunch go 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. Dine at a local restaurant this evening. *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, and Cuban Tody. 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. Lunch at a local restaurant with Zapata area conservationists, who will provide updates on projects underway to preserve Cuba's largest wetlands. 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. Dine at a paladar and meet the owners who provide insight about their entrepreneurial activities. *Overnight at Hotel Playa Larga. (BLD)*

DAY 8 - DEPARTURE

Early departure for the airport in Havana for the flight back to the U.S. (B)

PROGRAM PRICING

\$2,865 (12 participants + 1 leader)

\$2,965 (10 participants + 1 leader)

International airfare, gratuities, and 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 upon booking and no later than four months prior to departure. 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. Cancellations received less than 95 days prior to departure are not refundable.



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