



Tikal National Park by Laura Hare



GUATEMALA

EXPLORING MAYA BIOSPHERE RESERVE THROUGH BIRDING

8 days | Choose your dates

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Climb pyramids and bird the jungle trails around the Maya ruins of Tikal, where possible species include the Orange-breasted Falcon, Ocellated Turkey, and Montezuma Oropendola.
- Learn about ancient Maya culture at the lesser-known but equally important Yaxhá and El Perú archaeological sites, where fewer crowds mean more intimate birding opportunities.
- Bird the lowland tropical forest of Guacamayas Biological Station within Laguna del Tigre National Park, where wintering migratory warblers, tropical flycatchers, trogons, motmots, and the prized Scarlet Macaw are target species.
- Learn about the work the Wildlife Conservation Society Guatemala is doing with local communities to balance the needs of conservation and local economies.



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?



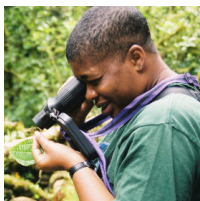
UNIQUE ITINERARIES

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.



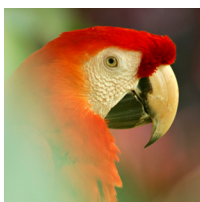
SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESSES

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.

Exploring Maya Biosphere Reserve through Birding

This 8-day program combines some of Guatemala's best birding sites with visits to archaeological ruins to examine how human history and natural resources have intersected throughout the centuries. We will be birding in famous and important Mayan archeological sites, largely in the Petén and Tikal regions of the north. Under the leadership of expert local guides, you'll have the chance to explore lowland tropical forest, savanna, tintal forest, a Ramsar wetland, river systems, and more, seeking out rare and endemic species while meeting with residents along the way. Birders who choose to take this tour will enjoy the Petén region's vast, natural riches while supporting local communities and protecting diverse ecosystems.

ITINERARY

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER



DAY 1 - GUATEMALA CITY

Arrive at La Aurora International Airport in **Guatemala City**, Guatemala. Our representative will be waiting for you at the airport in Guatemala City. After clearing immigration and customs, you will transfer to your hotel. Please book flights to arrive into Guatemala City by 4:30 pm. *Overnight at Hotel Radisson. (D)*

DAY 2 - LAGUNA YAXHÁ

This morning, return to the Guatemala City airport for the early morning flight to Flores in Guatemala's Petén region. Upon arrival, we will drive about two hours to **Yaxhá**, where we will visit some of the local families in this small town and hear firsthand about the challenges facing their community and the steps they are taking to improve. Not as well-known as Tikal, Yaxhá is an important archaeological site, which is gaining in prominence as researchers delve deeper into its history. The area is part of the Yaxhá-Nakum-Naranjo National Park, which protects the archaeological sites as well as a large expanse of forest. Here, large flocks of several parrot species move through the area early and late in the day, including Red-lore, White-fronted, White-crowned, and (less often) Mealy Parrots. The nearby lake provides habitat for waterbirds as well as shorebirds during migration; in open savanna along the shores of the lake, we may find

Yellow-tailed Orioles. In the forests of Yaxhá, we can find a diversity of woodcreepers, Slaty-tailed, Gartered, and Black-headed Trogons, hummingbirds, and tanagers. After lunch, we will then continue to our lodge to check in. *Overnight at El Sombrero Ecolodge. (BLD)*

DAY 3 - LAGUNA YAXHÁ

We will continue to explore the forest, savanna and archaeological sites of Yaxhá, seeking species that have eluded us thus far. Considered the third largest ancient Maya city in the region, Yaxhá comprised more than 500 structures, including nine temple pyramids. There are fewer crowds than at Tikal, making it advantageous for birding. On the quiet trails, you may run across one of the four species of tinamou—Great, Little, Slaty-breasted, and Thicket—or perhaps the hard-to-find Pheasant Cuckoo. For those who wish, tonight there will be an optional bird walk to search for nocturnal species. *Overnight at El Sombrero Ecolodge. (BLD)*

DAY 4 - TIKAL

Early this morning, we will enjoy birding around the lodge. After breakfast, we will continue with a field trip to the **Tikal National Park** archaeological site. Enjoy on-site instruction on the history and architecture of this impressive Maya complex. Archaeologists unearthed thousands of structures once swallowed by the Petén region's dense tropical jungle, and the city remains a testament to the masterful engineering of the Maya. We will have the opportunity to visit jungle trails and climb pyramids and temples at Tikal while enjoying the birds that fly over the vast expanse of forest, like parrots and the Montezuma Oropendola. Here we may find the rare Orange-breasted Falcon, the superb Ocellated Turkey, and a great many other tropical species. After lunch, visit the Tikal Museum (Museo Sylvanus G. Morley) to see its exquisite ceramics and artifacts excavated from Tikal. Tonight there will be optional owling near our lodge. *Overnight at Jungle Lodge Hotel. (BLD)*

DAY 5 - TIKAL

This morning we will transfer about three hours to **Paso Caballos**, a Maya Q'eqchí community with a population of around 1,500, at an access point to **Laguna del Tigre National Park**. This community has signed agreements with the government and Wildlife Conservation Society

Guatemala (WCS) for responsible land management in exchange for government and WCS assistance. As such, the local community is invested in trying to promote ecotourism in their region, and some members are being trained as bird guides by the National Audubon Society and WCS. To access the biological station, we will take a 20-minute boat trip along the San Pedro River, with birding along the way. This is a new area being explored and established as a birding destination, and is home to over 260 species of birds, including the Scarlet Macaw. Tonight, if we still have energy, an optional trip on the river may allow for some nocturnal birding, as well as observations of the Morelet's crocodile. *Overnight at Las Guacamayas Biological Station. (BLD)*

DAY 6 - PASO CABALLOS

Together with our group leader and local guide, we will bird the **Guacamayas Biological Station** within Laguna del Tigre National Park and visit **El Perú archaeological site**. Despite serious deforestation in the western Petén, the area of Laguna del Tigre National Park and El Perú-Waka' comprises fantastic lowland tropical forest, where Crested Guans may call from the trees or a Great Curassow may walk across the trail. At least eight species of woodcreepers are found here, as well as huge Lineated and Pale-billed Woodpeckers, several species of trogons, Blue-crowned Motmot, and myriad wintering migratory warblers and tropical flycatchers. The prize bird is the Scarlet Macaw; though not common in the Petén, at certain times of year this is among the best places to find it. Throughout our stay, we will learn about the work WCS Guatemala is doing with the local community. Laguna del Tigre National Park is the largest Core Zone of the Maya Biosphere Reserve (MBR) and the largest national park in Guatemala. Of the 16 ecosystems that form the MBR, 13 are represented in this park. It is also a designated Ramsar site due to the size, wealth, and characteristics of its wetland ecosystem. The east end of the park contains two of the country's most important Scarlet Macaw nesting sites. In the Perú site, WCS Guatemala has established a field station where the field team performs security activities, monitoring the reproductive success of the Scarlet Macaw and wildlife management. El Perú also has a cultural significance for the presence of the site El Perú-Waka', which was the principal royal city of Classic Maya in the western Petén. *Overnight at Las Guacamayas Biological Station. (BLD)*

DAY 7 - GUATEMALA CITY

This morning we will continue birding at the Guacamayas Biological Station. We will return to our lodge for lunch and check out from our rooms. In the afternoon, we will transfer to Flores Airport for our flight back to Guatemala City. Enjoy a farewell dinner at the hotel. *Overnight at Hotel Radisson. (BLD)*

DAY 8 - DEPART

Transfer to Guatemala City Airport for your flight home. Breakfast will be available depending on your flight time. (B)



PROGRAM PRICING

\$2,695 (12 participants and 1 leader)

\$2,895 (10 participants and 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.

Does not include international airfare, gratuities, or items of a personal nature.

Valid for travel in 2020.

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 Group Deluxe Travel Protection and provides protection in the event you need to cancel your program for a covered reason, leave your program early, are delayed going to or returning home from your program, or need to change or cancel your airfare, whether purchased through Holbrook Travel or independently. Contact your Holbrook Travel specialist for more details.

THE FINE PRINT

Rates are based on double occupancy for participants. 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.