

GUATEMALA



Photo by Lisa Palmese-Graubard

GUATEMALA

ZEISS Optics Experience - Birding in the Guatemala Highlands and Tikal
with Stephen Ingraham
December 8-15, 2019



This 8-day program combines some of Guatemala's best birding sites with opportunities to hone and improve photography skills. Visit archaeological ruins to examine how human history and natural resources have intersected throughout the centuries and enjoy birding in the varied ecosystems and altitudinal ranges of Los Trrales Reserve, and the volcano-rimmed lake at Santiago de Atitlán. With assistance from expert birder, Stephen Ingraham and seasoned guides, seek out a variety of birds and other wildlife while experiencing this special selection of Guatemala's ecosystems.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Go birding in some of the country's most impressive national parks and reserves, such as Parque Mirador del Rey Tepepul and Atitlán Reserve.
- Walk the lower and upper trails at Los Tarrales Reserve with opportunities to observe a variety of warblers, tanagers, and raptors.
- Meet with local members of Asociación Vivamos Mejor (AVM), a private nonprofit development organization committed to improving the quality of life of rural communities surrounding Lake Atitlán.
- Explore the history and architecture at the impressive Mayan complex in Tikal National Park archeological site.

SPECIAL PROMO: SAVE \$100!

Visit Costa Rica and Guatemala back-to-back! Join this trip and "Costa Rica: Point & Shoot Nature Photography with Stephen Ingraham" November 30 - December 8, 2019, and save \$100. See webpage for details.

ITINERARY

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

DECEMBER 8 - GUATEMALA CITY

Arrive at La Aurora International Airport in Guatemala City. After clearing immigration and customs, meet your guide at the airport and transfer to your hotel. Check-in starts at 3:00 pm. *Overnight at Hotel Radisson.*

DECEMBER 9 - LOS TARRALES RESERVE

Breakfast and orientation at the hotel restaurant then travel to Finca Los Tarrales, located on the slopes of the Atitlán Volcano. Here you will find lowland to highland habitats, and good access to various types of forest. Los Tarrales ranges in altitude from 700 to 3,500 m (2,300 to 11,500 ft) and is home to diverse wildlife, including more than 340 bird species. The reserve is part of the Atitlán Important Bird Area, and harbors 21 regional endemic bird species, including Horned Guan, Highland Guan, Azure-rumped Tanager, and Blue-tailed Hummingbird. The abundance of migratory birds here, including Swainson's Thrush, Tennessee, Magnolia, and Black-and-white Warblers, Western Tanager, and Orchard Oriole, is impressive. It is a good place for raptors as well, including the Black Hawk-Eagle, and sometimes the gorgeous Black-and-white Owl. During the two days you have here, you will have ample birding and photo opportunities on the lower and upper trails. *Overnight at Finca Los Tarrales. (BLD)*

DECEMBER 10 - LOS TARRALES RESERVE

Continue birding in the Los Tarrales Reserve. The reserve is private, self-sustained, and costs for its conservation are generated by income from multiple sources (coffee, ornamentals, and honey) and through tourism services. Sixty Maya K'achikel families live within the protected area, working in production of coffee and ornamentals, as forest rangers, and in tourism. Several enthusiastic and knowledgeable local guides will show you the bird and wildlife and explain the production of coffee and ornamental plants. Los Tarrales is also providing social services for the people living within the protected area. A private primary school is run in order to ensure the children's education where classes in nature, science, and conservation are included in the curriculum. *Overnight at Finca Los Tarrales. (BLD)*

DECEMBER 11 - SANTIAGO DE ATITLÁN

Following morning birding, transfer to the town of Santiago de Atitlán on the banks of the beautiful, volcano-rimmed Lake Atitlán arriving in time for lunch. In the afternoon, you'll have opportunities for birding in the area. Santiago de Atitlán is a hub of Maya culture and there may be an opportunity to meet with locals who are part of the Audubon bird tourism initiative. The National Audubon Society has partnered with Asociación Vivamos Mejor (AVM), a private nonprofit development organization committed to improving the quality of life of rural communities surrounding Lake Atitlán. AVM focuses on Sustainable Watersheds and Resiliency to Climate Change as a strategy for promoting sustainable development. *Overnight at Hotel Bambú. (BLD)*

DECEMBER 12 - SANTIAGO DE ATITLÁN

This morning visit Parque Mirador del Rey Tepepul, a 3,500-hectare park, mostly forested with a wide altitudinal range. Although new to the bird tourism scene, this park has great birds, including the Yellow-naped Parrot, Blue-crowned Chlorophonia, and the Azure-rumped Tanager. Bird tourism is also new to the San Juan La Laguna area. Seek out the rare and gorgeous Belted Flycatcher along the lower slopes of the volcano. You may also come across the Lesser Roadrunner and other dry forest species, such as Prevost's Ground Sparrow. *Overnight at Hotel Bambú. (BLD)*

DECEMBER 13 - TIKAL

This morning, board a boat to Panajachel for a visit to the Atitlán Reserve. This area is home to species like the Inca Dove, House Wren, Great-tailed Grackle, Bornzied Cowbird, Yellow-winged Tanager, Melodious Blackbird, and Vaux's Swift. Walk the trails for photographing opportunities, then travel back to Guatemala City for your late afternoon flight to Flores. Boxed lunch will be provided. Upon arrival in Flores head to Jungle Lodge, located next to the entrance of Tikal National Park. *Overnight at Jungle Lodge. (BLD)*

DECEMBER 14 - TIKAL

Early this morning, enjoy time to bird the area around the lodge. After breakfast, venture on a guided tour within the Tikal National Park archaeological site. As you learn about the history and architecture of

this impressive Maya complex the photo opportunities are extensive. 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. You'll have the opportunity to visit jungle trails and climb pyramids and temples at Tikal, where you'll encounter birds such as parrots and the Montezuma Oropendola, as well as the monkeys that call Tikal their home. 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 the lodge. *Overnight at Jungle Lodge. (BLD)*

DECEMBER 15 - DEPART

Early this morning, head to the Flores Airport for the flight to Guatemala City, and then check-in for your flight(s) home. (B)

LAND PRICING

\$2,295 (based on 10 participants)

Cost includes meals, accommodations, and activities as indicated in the itinerary, in-country transportation, internal flights, bottled water on the bus, full-time guide for duration of program, and carbon offset.

Does not include international airfare, tips/gratuities, alcoholic beverages, or items of a personal nature. Holbrook can assist with your flight arrangements upon request.

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.

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

Cost is based on double occupancy; for a single room throughout the trip, add \$230 per person. A \$200 per person deposit and enrollment form are required by September 04, 2019 to reserve your space on the trip. This deposit is refundable excluding a \$100 cancellation fee until October 23, 2018, at which time non-refundable final payment is due.

ABOUT YOUR LEADER



STEPHEN INGRAHAM was the Birding Product Specialist for ZEISS Sports Optics for 12 years. He is now the Senior Brand Ambassador for Birding. He travels extensively for ZEISS, both nationally and internationally. He has been birding and photographing birds for over 30 years. You can explore his work at weiw.lightshedder.com or follow his Pic for Today Blog at p4td.lightshedder.com

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO ENROLL:

Visit holbrook.travellingraham-gt19 or contact Sandy Schmidt at schmidt@holbrooktravel.com or 877-907-5360.