



Conservation Birding with Atlanta Audubon
The Wood Thrush, shade-grown coffee, and Mayan temples

November 24 to December 3, 2018

Atlanta Audubon is thrilled to once again offer an international birdwatching trip. For 2018, we have selected Guatemala as our location and Cayaya Birding as our local tour operator. Guatemala was chosen because of its amazing avian life, containing many regionally difficult species, and since it is a location that strongly connects with our conservation programs. During this trip we will not only see many exciting and beautiful bird species, but we will also visit shade-grown coffee farms in the Pacific slope highlands and search for wintering Wood Thrush at Tikal National Park. Though the focus of the trip is birdwatching, there will be some time to enjoy Mayan ruins, local markets, and participate in a coffee harvesting tour.

Trip Overview

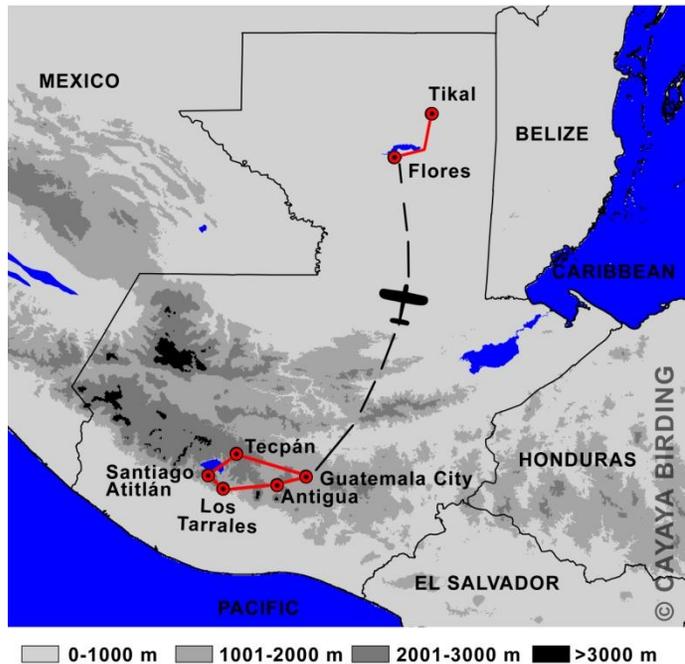
Day 1: Arrival in Guatemala City

We will arrive in Guatemala City on Saturday, November 24. Our local guides will arrange our pick-up at the airport and transfer to the hotel. The first night will be spent in Guatemala City.

Day 2: Guatemala City to Los Tarrales

Bright and early, we will depart for Tecpán (1.5 hr. drive). We still stop for breakfast en route and spend the morning birding around Tecpán.

This area is comprised of high-elevation (7,900 ft.) pine-oak forest. Here we will target the endemic Pink-headed Warbler as well as other species of interest including Rufous-collared Robin, Blue-throated Motmot, and Blue-and-white Mockingbird. After grabbing lunch in a nearby village, we will drive (2 hr.) to the Los Tarrales Reserve. Tarrales is located on the southern slope of the Atitlán Volcano and is a known birding hotspot. We will spend the late afternoon exploring around the lodge, with hopes of seeing White-bellied Chachalaca, Yellow-naped Parrot, Rufous-naped Wren, and Cinnamon Hummingbird. Dinner will be back at the Los Tarrales Lodge. We will spend the next two nights here.



Rufous-collared Robin

© Claudia Avendaño

Day 3: Los Tarrales

An early morning 4-wheel drive ride (45 min.) from the lodge will take us up the lower volcano slope to an elevation of 4,600 ft. Here we will hike in rainforests and shaded coffee farms, looking for Azure-rumped Tanager and other highland endemics. Some expected Nearctic-Neotropical migratory birds using the Tarrales shade coffee plantations as wintering habitat include: Tennessee Warbler, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Baltimore Oriole, and Wilson's Warbler. More than 350 bird species have been reported at Los Tarrales. After lunch back at the lodge, we will head out for more birding in the shade-grown coffee farms and the forest fragments that dot the landscape. Target birds for this afternoon include Tody Motmot, White-eared Ground-Sparrow, and White-winged Tanager.



OPTIONAL: Hike to the habitat of Horned Guan

Day 3 also offers a unique opportunity for those who are interested. Instead of partaking in the events above, up to three participants can opt to go on a search for the amazing Horned Guan. An early morning four-wheel drive ride (45 min.) from the Los Tarrales will take you to the starting point. At the beginning of the hike, we will be at an elevation close to 4,600 ft. From here, we will hike to an elevation of 8,200 ft. and into the habitat of the Horned Guan. This is a 3 to 4 hour hike (each way) on steep and often uneven terrain on the upper slope of the Atitlán volcano. This hike is strenuous, and it requires very good fitness. While the birding can be spectacular, especially the Guan itself, please think long and hard before committing to this opportunity. Adam will join whoever wants to pursue this trek. An additional cost applies (details below).

Day 4: Los Tarrales to Lake Atitlán

Another beautiful morning will be spent on the grounds of Los Tarrales. Today, we will likely focus our efforts on secondary forests and additional shade coffee farms. Focal birds will be species restricted to the Pacific slope such as Pacific Parakeet and Long-tailed Manakin. After lunch, we will proceed to the nearby town of Santiago Atitlán with a stop on the way to look for Prevost's Ground-Sparrow, Blue-and-white Mockingbird, and, with some luck, Slender Shear-tail and Sparkling-tailed Hummingbird. We will spend the night in a hotel in Santiago Atitlán, on the shores of Lake Atitlan.

Day 5: Lake Atitlán to Antigua Guatemala

After leaving the hotel, we will proceed closer to the Lake Atitlan in hopes of seeing Belted Flycatcher, Cabanis's Wren, and Rusty Sparrow among many others. Next, we'll proceed to Antigua where we will enjoy some down time in this gorgeous colonial town. Depending how the morning and early afternoon unfold, there will likely be some optional afternoon birdwatching. We will stay out until dark to look for nocturnal birds. Dinner and lodging will be back in Antigua.

Day 6: Antigua Guatemala

On day 6, we will drive to Cerro Alux (30 min.) for a visit to the pine-oak forest. Some expected highland specialties here are Blue-throated Motmot, Blue-and-white Mockingbird, Hooded Grosbeak, Crescent-chested Warbler, and Gray Silky-Flycatcher. After a tasty lunch nearby, we will continue on to El Pilar to spend the afternoon birding. El Pilar Reserve is primarily pine-oak forest but there are also shade-grown coffee farms as well as some more open areas. Tufted Flycatcher, Black-capped Swallow, Black-vented

Oriole, and Bar-winged Oriole will hopefully put on a show for us. Hummingbird feeders in this area attract eight different species, including Magnificent Hummingbird, Berylline Hummingbird, Rufous Sabrewing, and Azure-crowned Hummingbird. Fingers crossed!

Day 7: Antigua Guatemala to Tikal



Before sunrise, we will need to head to the airport for a domestic flight to Flores (50 min. flight). Our local birding and archeology guide will meet us at the airport in Flores to transport us to Tikal National Park (1.5 hr. drive). The rest of the day will be spent birding and exploring the environs of Tikal. Some target species here include Chestnut-colored Woodpecker, Tawny-winged Woodcreeper, Stub-tailed Spadebill, Mangrove Vireo, Yucatán Flycatcher, Rose-throated tanager, Green-backed Sparrow, and Gray-throated Chat. We will spend the night at hotel within the Tikal National Park, at the edge of the forest, giving us access to the grounds first

thing in the morning.

Day 8: Tikal

Today, we will spend the entire day exploring Tikal National Park, an ancient Mayan site surrounded by lush rainforest. More than 400 bird species have been recorded here. In addition to the amazing birdlife, the temples and adjacent communal areas will provide breathtaking scenery. Atlanta Audubon's focal conservation species for 2017-18, the Wood Thrush, is one of the most common migrant birds at Tikal. We hope to see many and be awed to see "our" spotted friends so far from "home". Other target birds at Tikal include Ocellated Turkey, Orange-breasted Falcon, and Black-throated Shrike-Tanager. Our guides at Tikal will combine birding with history of this ancient Mayan city.



OPTIONAL: Night birding in Tikal.

Day 9: Tikal

Another magical day birding around Tikal. This morning we will focus on some scrub habitat with the hopes of finding Mangrove Vireo, Northern Bentbill, and Pheasant Cuckoo. Additionally, we will target some swampy forests that harbor Gray-throated Chat and often one can come across a mixed flock containing ant-tanagers, Black-throated Shrike-Tanager, Lesser and Tawny-crowned Greenlet, as well as Ivory-billed, Ruddy and Northern Barred Woodcreepers.

In the afternoon, we will transfer back to Flores and catch our flight back to Guatemala City. We will spend the night in Guatemala City and enjoy our last evening abroad.

Day 10: Departure

Private transportation will take us from the hotel to the Guatemala City International Airport. Then it is back to the land of pimento cheese and fried green tomatoes.

Trip Specifics

Services included	Services not included
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One expert birding tour leader from CAYAYA BIRDING (fluent in English & Spanish) and a co-leader from Atlanta Audubon (Conservation Director Adam Betuel)• Bound checklist of the birds of Guatemala.• Accommodation in all destinations (double room with private bathroom, and hot shower).• Private terrestrial transfers as indicated in the itinerary in a comfortable bus with A/C (including pick-up/drop-off at the airport).• Domestic flight (Guatemala-Flores-Guatemala).• All meals. Each meal includes 1 non alcoholic drink.• All entrance fees to nature reserves.• Tips for hotels (except hotels in Guatemala City), transportation, local guides in nature reserves (Tarrales, Atitlán, Tikal), meals.• Taxes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Additional drinks and alcoholic beverages.• Tips for porters, hotels in Guatemala City, and main tour leader of CAYAYA BIRDING. You can tip the tour leader directly if you enjoyed the tour.• Travel insurance (STRONGLY recommended)• International flights and airport taxes.• Souvenirs and gifts• Snacks or other items desired during the trip. Some snacks will be provided on specific outings (days with very early mornings, some night drives).

Group Size Limit: 10

Guides:

- Adam Betuel - Atlanta Audubon Society
- Knut Eisermann or Claudia Avendaño – Cayaya Birding

Tour Price:

- Atlanta Audubon Members (or other regional Audubon chapter members) - **\$3,570**
- Non Members - **\$3,820**

** Exact final cost TBD. Hotel availability may have a minor effect on trip cost.

Single Supplement: \$300 (for a single room at all hotels).

Payments:

1. \$500.00 due to reserve spot on trip.
2. Half of cost (less \$500) due by May 1, 2018.
3. Full payment must be made by August 1, 2018.

Cancellation: In the event of tour cancellation due to weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other unforeseen emergency situation, a 100% refund will be given, less any expenses incurred by the tour operator. If notice of cancellation by the participant is received by August 1 2018, a refund of all payments (less a \$50 cancellation fee) made will be given. If notice of cancellation is received between August 2 2018 and 2.5 months before the departure date (September 1 2018), a 50% refund of the tour fee will be given. Thereafter, all deposits and payments are non-refundable.

Number of bird species expected: 225-250

Pace: Easy to moderate most of the time. Most days require an early morning start. Some areas require walking on an incline. Most drives are short to moderate (1 to 2 hrs. typical. See itinerary above for specifics) Hike for Horned Guan is strenuous.

Photography: Opportunities should be plentiful. Certain habitats are better than others for photography with the lowlands (Tikal and Los Trrales) being the best. Some locations will have feeders and fruit stations which hope to provide extended looks at many species. The highlands are often more difficult but efforts will be made for those interested in photography. As a reminder, birdwatching is the primary focus of this trip, not photography.

Climate: Altitude will make the temperatures in the highlands comfortable during the day but potentially quite chilly at night and first thing in the morning. Tikal will almost certainly be warm to hot and humid. Bringing multiple layers to cope with the temperature change is recommended.

Transportation within country: A coaster bus with air conditioning will be used. 4-wheel drive vehicles will also be used when necessary. Roads are typically in good condition but in some locations they can be unsurfaced and potentially rough.



Dietary restrictions: We can accommodate any dietary needs. Provide relevant information in registration forms.

Safety: Crime definitely occurs in Guatemala and regions of the nation are not safe to visit. Areas near the border with Mexico and parts of Guatemala City should be, and will be on this trip, avoided. Outside of these areas, crime in Guatemala is similar to what can be found in most of the world with pick-pocketing and petty theft being the most common. During this trip, we will be visiting well-known, safe locations with experienced tour guides. In a pre-trip gathering, Adam will outline tips to follow while on the trip. Traveling as a group, with experienced leaders, and a bit of common sense will make the chances of any issues remote. Below are a few links outlining the current travel warnings and concerns:

- <https://www.lonelyplanet.com/guatemala/safety>
- <http://traveltips.usatoday.com/safe-travel-guatemala-11224.html>
- <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/guatemala.html>

Electricity and water: Electricity is available in all major settlements, 110 volts AC (60 Hz) and American standard plugs are used. Some of our birding destinations will be in rural areas and possibly will have electricity only for a few hours. Tap water should not be used for drinking in Guatemala. Most of the hotels we will be visiting have mineral/bottled water-refill stations. The guides will provide bottle water in places where these stations do not occur.

Internet access: Most hotels offer access to the Internet via WiFi. Several cellular telephone companies offer dense coverage in most parts of Guatemala and offer roaming service to access the Internet with your phone.

Field Guides: Below are some options for fields guide of the region.

- Howell & Webb (1995): *A guide to the birds of Mexico and northern Central America*. Oxford University Press.
- Fagan & Komar (2016): *Peterson Field Guide to the Birds of Northern Central America*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt
- van Perlo (2006) *Birds of Mexico and Central America*. Princeton Illustrated Checklists.

Playback: Playback may be used for selected species (especially shy birds) and in a limited way to avoid a negative impact. We rely more on our experience and the local guide's knowledge to look for target species.

Accommodations: Comfortable with many on par with U.S. lodging. Lodges at nature reserves will be utilized in the highlands.

Examples of hotels and lodges for this tour

Guatemala City /Hotel Stofella: Wi-fi, restaurant. Located 10 minutes away from the airport, and within walking distance from numerous restaurants.



Atitlan Volcano / Los Tarrales Lodge: Nature reserve on the southern slope of the Atitlan Volcano, meals service with daily menu. Re-fill your water bottle for free in the dining area.



Antigua Guatemala / Hotel Las Farolas: Restaurant, Wi-Fi, garden. Re-fill your water bottle for free in the restaurant.



Tikal National Park / Hotel Jaguar Inn Tikal: Restaurant and bar, Wi-Fi in the restaurant area. Re-fill your water bottle for free in the restaurant area.



Links about locations we will visit

El Pilar: www.cayaya-birding.com/pilar.htm

Cerro Alux: www.cayaya-birding.com/alux.htm

Tecpán: www.cayaya-birding.com/rinconsuizo.htm

Los Tarrales: www.cayaya-birding.com/Tarrales.htm

Santiago Atitlan: <https://www.cayaya-birding.com/birding-santiago-atitlan.htm>

Tikal National Park: <https://www.cayaya-birding.com/Tikal.htm>

Optional hike to the habitat of Horned Guan in Los Tarrales Nature Reserve:

Very early morning four-wheel drive ride (45 min.) from the Los Tarrales lodge ascending the lower volcano slope to an elevation of 1,400 m. From there hike to an elevation of 2,200 to 2,600 meters to look for the Horned Guan. This is a 3 to 4 hours hike (each way) on steep and uneven terrain on the upper slope of the Atitlán volcano. The hike is very strenuous, and it requires very good body fitness. A maximum of 3 persons is recommended in the group to keep allow a good chance to find the Horned Guan.

Additional cost per person: \$95.00 for one participant, \$65.00 for two participants, \$55.00 for 3 participants.

CAYAYA BIRDING tour leaders: Knut Eisermann and Claudia Avendaño

Knut and Claudia are the founders of CAYAYA BIRDING and have been successfully leading birding tours in Guatemala in since 2003. They live in Guatemala, and when not showing Guatemalan birdlife to international birders, they conduct bird studies throughout the country, find new birding hotspots, and teach local birding guides. Among other research, they have been leading the identification Important Bird Areas (IBA) in Guatemala, studied the natural history of Azure-rumped Tanager, and the distribution and natural history of owls of Guatemala.

A list of publications is available at <https://www.cayaya-birding.com/bird-studies-guatemala.htm>

Knut and Claudia have ended a 30-year-CBC-hiatus in Guatemala. Since 2006, they have organized 22 Christmas Bird Counts in Tikal National Park, at Atitlán Volcano, and in Antigua Guatemala. The CBC at Aitlán Volcano is the longest running count in Guatemala, in December 2016 we ran the 10th edition. Through our Christmas Bird Counts we recruited many young people into the birding hobby. Over the years, some of them gained enough experience to become group leaders in the areas where they live, and we supported their training.

You can find reports and pictures of the CBC organized by CAYAYA BIRDING online at: <https://www.cayaya-birding.com/birdcount.htm>

Adam Betuel has birded throughout Central and South America over the course of the last 15 years. He has also lead trips for Atlanta Audubon to the Georgia Coast, Merritt Island Florida, Paraguay, and throughout the Atlanta Metro area. He is familiar with many of the birds expected to be found on this trip and has visited eastern Guatemala in the past. Adam will be present on this trip to assist with helping participants see the birds as well as serve as a contact between the group and local guide. He will be responsible for group logistics, making sure the group feels comfortable and informed, doing what he can to keep the group happy, and all other duties to ensure a fun and safe trip.



Send any questions, concerns, inquiries to Adam – adam@atlantaudubon.org