



Rufous-naped Wren (*Campylorhynchus rufinucha*)
Photo by Karen Straus



GUATEMALA

BIRDING THE HIGHLANDS AND LAKE ATITLÁN WITH HAWKS ALOFT

January 26 – February 5, 2019



HIGH INTENSITY!
This program is for serious birders. Expect at least 6-8 hours of birding each day.

Guatemala is a richly diverse cultural center and a lush and vibrant paradise for birders. Set in the heart of Central America, it is one of the New World's prime migratory corridors. See firsthand many of the species Audubon hopes to protect through its ongoing conservation efforts. Experience National Audubon's Asociación Vivamos Mejor program based in Panajachel on Lake Atitlán, including a training program for Guatemalans to become birding and nature guides. Under their guidance, you'll explore a variety of habitats, seek out rare and endemic species, and meet with locals who are part of the Audubon bird-tourism initiative in Santiago Atitlán, a hub of Maya culture. Birders who choose to take this tour will enjoy the vast, natural riches while supporting the community and protecting a diverse ecosystem.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Bird the lower and upper trails at Los Tarrales, with the goal of seeing the Long-tailed Manakin's impressive courtship display.
- Visit Corazón del Bosque Reserve for the chance to see Mountain Trogon, Spotted Woodcreeper, White-naped Brush-Finch, and with luck, the uncommon Pink-headed Warbler.
- Explore San Juan Laguna, a village known for its many women's cooperatives, and meet some of the entrepreneurs who weave traditional textiles there.
- Visit Asociación Vivamos Mejor (AVM), a private nonprofit development organization committed to improving the quality of life of rural communities surrounding Lake Atitlán.

ABOUT YOUR LEADER

Gail Garber, Executive Director, discovered her passion for birds nearly 30 years ago. Since then, she has dedicated her life to avian studies, education, and other aspects of Hawks Aloft. She has traveled extensively for birding, including much of the U.S. as well as Canada, Venezuela, Honduras, United Arab Emirates, Kenya, and Tanzania. She has led birding tours to New Zealand, Ecuador, Costa Rica, and closer afield within the U.S. Garber is a popular speaker for adult programs throughout the Albuquerque area and at birding festivals in New Mexico and Colorado where she regularly leads raptor tours at various events, sharing her love of birding and conservation.

ITINERARY

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

JANUARY 26 - ANTIGUA

Arrive at La Aurora International Airport in Guatemala City, Guatemala. **Please schedule your flight to arrive no later than 2:00 pm.* You will meet our local representative outside the airport after clearing immigration and customs and transfer to Antigua, about an hour away depending on traffic. This evening enjoy a welcome talk on your upcoming journey. *Overnight at Hotel Posada Don Rodrigo-Antigua. (D)*

JANUARY 27 - LOS ANDES PRIVATE RESERVE

After breakfast, travel to Finca El Pilar, a private reserve with great pine-oak forest and excellent trails for birding. Walk the trails looking for various species and visit the hummingbird feeders. In the afternoon, continue to Finca Los Andes, at the southern slopes of the Atitlán Volcano. The cloud forest that lies between the tea gardens and the coffee fields is abundant in wildlife, especially birds, among them the elusive Resplendent Quetzal. Los Andes is also home to the rare Cabanis's Tanager, also known as the Azure-rumped Tanager. This small, blue, exquisite bird's highly localized habitat is shared by hundreds of local and migrating species, including a host of hummingbirds, orioles, flycatchers, trogons, and motmots. Sixty percent of the reserve is original forest, most of it along the slopes of the dormant volcano. In 2001, Los Andes was declared a private nature reserve, and it is a founding member of Guatemala's Association of Private Nature Reserves. The Reserve works closely with the residents to promote self-sufficiency, health and education. Present programs for conservation include artificial nests for the quetzals. The reserve has a reforestation program approved by INAB (The National Forestry Institute), as well as eucalyptus forests planted for firewood. Coffee and quinine prunings also supply lumber and firewood. Financial and technical assistance are provided to buy and install efficient wood-burning stoves in the workers' houses. Los Andes has its own hydroelectric plant, which generates all the power used on the estate. *Overnight at Finca Los Andes. (B)*

JANUARY 28 - LOS ANDES PRIVATE RESERVE

Today continue with birding at the reserve. The local residents are being trained as guides to provide them with an alternate source of income, and hunting has been prohibited. Hummingbird feeders at the lodge may attract the Blue-tailed Hummingbird as well as Violet and Rufous Sabrewings. The rarer Wine-throated Hummingbird may also appear. You'll be driven in pickup trucks up to the higher forest above the tea plantations, where a nice set of trails may allow you to find the Resplendent Quetzal. Tody Motmots and Emerald Toucanets, as well as deep forest species such as Singing Quail, Spotted Nightingale-Thrush, and Scaled Antpitta, are also present. Tonight after dinner, there will be an optional walk for owling. *Overnight at Finca Los Andes. (BLD)*

JANUARY 29 - LOS TARRALES RESERVE

Enjoy early morning birding around the lodge, followed by breakfast. Afterward, transfer to Finca Los Tarrales, located not too far from Finca Los Andes, on the flanks of the same mountain. However, the elevation and humidity profile differ and so does the bird life, with birds from lowland to highland habitats, and good access to various types of forest. Los Tarrales ranges in altitude from 700 to 3,500 meters (2,300 to 11,500 feet) 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. Morning and evening are great for commuting parrots, with four species of parakeets and parrots typically seen. During the two days you have here, you will be birding the lower and upper trails, working on finding some great diversity of birds. Look for displaying Long-tailed Manakin. During lunch take some time to enjoy the feeders where Orchard, Altamira, Spot-breasted, and Baltimore Orioles come to feed, along with Rufous-naped Wren and Yellow-throated Euphonia. *Overnight at Finca Los Tarrales. (BLD)*

JANUARY 30 - LOS TARRALES RESERVE

Continue birding in the Los Tarrales Private Reserve. The reserve is private and self-sustained; costs for its conservation are covered from income in the zone from multiple uses (coffee, ornamentals, and honey) and through providing tourism services. Sixty Maya Kaqchikel 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 show the bird and wildlife and explain the production of coffee and ornamental plants. Los Tarrales is 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. Classes in nature, science, and conservation are included in the educational program. *Overnight at Finca Los Tarrales. (BLD)*

JANUARY 31 - SANTIAGO, LAKE ATITLÁN

Following birding in the morning, transfer to the town of Santiago Atitlán in time for lunch. In the afternoon, you will have opportunities to see a few new species. If you are lucky, you may find the uncommon Slender Shearwater hummingbird or the unique-

looking Prevost's Ground-Sparrow. Santiago Atitlán is a hub of Maya culture and there may be an opportunity to meet some 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. Along with your primary group leader, at each location you will have a local guide involved in the project. *Overnight at Hotel Bambú. (BLD)*

FEBRUARY 1 - SAN JUAN LA LAGUNA

This morning enjoy birding at Parque Mirador del Rey Tepepul, a 3,500-hectare park, mostly forest 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 Azure-rumped Tanager. In the afternoon, transfer to San Juan La Laguna. San Juan La Laguna is a wonderful village with an incredible number of women's cooperatives and women's groups. The groups do fine weaving of textiles on the traditional back strap loom and to a lesser degree the Spanish floor loom. The village is also a hub for the use of natural dyed fabric. This afternoon you will have time to explore the village. *Overnight at Eco Hotel Uxlabil Atitlán. (BLD)*

FEBRUARY 2 - SAN JUAN LA LAGUNA

Bird tourism is also new to the San Juan La Laguna area. You will seek out the rare and gorgeous Belted Flycatcher at 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. Participants who are in excellent shape can try the hike to Volcán San Pedro. The hike to find the Horned Guan is very difficult and strenuous, and not for everyone, nor a guarantee to see the rare guan. *Overnight at Eco Hotel Uxlabil Atitlán. (BLD)*

FEBRUARY 3 - PANAJACHEL

In the morning take a boat to Parque Tzankujil to San Marcos La Laguna, which has some very good dry forest. Various species of birds are seen here and not in wetter forest sites in the area. This area could give you a chance to find the showy Sparkling-tailed Hummingbird. This is a great spot for wintering warblers, resident orioles including the Bar-winged Oriole, the Bushy-crested Jay, and even the skulking Blue-and-white Mockingbird. Bird the morning here, have lunch, and then transfer to Panajachel. This afternoon is free to enjoy some shopping or relax and take in views of Lake Atitlán from your hotel. Before dinner, meet a representative of Asociación Vivamos Mejor and learn more about their work with local communities surrounding Lake Atitlán. *Overnight at Hotel Posada Don Rodrigo-Panajachel. (BLD)*

FEBRUARY 4 - GUATEMALA CITY

This morning visit Corazón del Bosque, a reserve located higher up in the oak-pine forest zone. The star bird at Corazón del Bosque is the gorgeous and uncommon Pink-headed Warbler. As you look for the warbler you may see Mountain Trogon, Spotted Woodcreeper, Yellowish Flycatcher, Rufous-browed Wren, Olive Warbler, Crescent-chested Warbler, White-naped Brush-Finch, and the local form of the Yellow-eyed Junco, which many consider a separate species: the "Guatemalan Junco." After your visit, head back to Guatemala City and enjoy lunch at a local restaurant en route. Arrive in Guatemala City in the late afternoon. Refresh, then enjoy a farewell dinner at the hotel. *Overnight at Hotel Radisson. (BLD)*

FEBRUARY 5 - DEPART

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

LAND PRICING

\$2,565 (based on a minimum 10 participants)

Cost includes meals, accommodations, and activities as indicated in the itinerary, in-country transportation, bottled water on the bus, local guides in each region for the duration of the program, donation to Hawks Aloft, and carbon offset.

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

THE FINE PRINT

Cost is based on double occupancy; for a single room throughout the trip, add \$325 per person. A \$200 per person deposit and enrollment form are required by September 28, 2018 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. Travel trip cancellation insurance is strongly recommended. For more information call Travel Insured at 800-243-3174 or visit www.travelinsured.com. Holbrook Travel's agency number is 15849.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO ENROLL:

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