

ITINERARY

GUATEMALA: SHADE-GROWN BIRDING

February 11-19, 2017

Temples of Tikal & Guacamayas Pre-trip Extension

February 6-11, 2017



A quizzical Collared Aracari takes a moment from snacking on fruit to watch the photographer. These small toucans are fairly common in lowland forests, as well as second growth, and even coffee plantations. Photo by guide Jesse Fagan.

We include here information for those interested in the 2017 Field Guides Guatemala: Shade-Grown Birding tour:

- a general introduction to the tour
- a description of the birding areas to be visited on the tour
- an abbreviated daily itinerary with some indication of the nature of each day's birding outings

Those who register for the tour will be sent this additional material:

- an annotated list of the birds recorded on a previous year's Field Guides trip to the area, with comments by guide(s) on notable species or sightings (may be downloaded from our web site)
- a detailed information bulletin with important logistical information and answers to questions regarding accommodations, air arrangements, clothing, currency, customs and immigration, documents, health precautions, and personal items
- a reference list
- a Field Guides checklist for preparing for and keeping track of the birds we see on the tour
- after the conclusion of the tour, a list of birds seen on the tour

Guatemala has a magical hold on those who visit—the land of the *quetzales*, where active volcanoes still shape the terrain and descendants of proud Mayans sell wares in bustling colorful markets. Our tour will combine the best of birding and cultural outings in the country.

Those on the extension will start the tour in the Mayan heart, Tikal, where our local guide, Miguel, will enrich our experience and understanding of this complex society. As we stare up at the temples and listen to his descriptions of what life was like in A.D. 800, it will be hard to ignore the croaking Keel-billed Toucan, the calling Tody Motmot, or the crashing sounds of Central American Spider Monkeys! Only at the ruins of Tikal, protected as a national park, can we quietly stalk an Ocellated Turkey or a party of Crested Guans among magnificent temples and palaces still mostly enveloped by forest. Only at Tikal can we visit a forested plaza and find it occupied by a band of White-nosed Coatis. Only at Tikal can we sit above the forest canopy at the top of a Mayan pyramid and watch White Hawks and King Vultures circling above and see unbroken forest in all directions to the limit of vision.



*A Field Guides group birding along a path at Tikal.
Photo by participant Max Rodel.*

Amid the splendor of secluded plazas and palaces and along the ancient Mayan causeways more than 300 species of birds have been recorded. Perhaps nowhere else in Middle America can we see so many parrots (of six species) so stunningly well—feeding, nesting, allopreening, calling, crawling, and flying! In fact, the large roost flights of parrots—still regular at Tikal—are a thrilling symbol of tropical wildness that has disappeared from most parts of Middle America. A stay at Tikal makes an ideal introduction to Neotropical birding, and our comfortable accommodations at the ruins give us the rare opportunity to watch the parrots fly out at dawn.

After two nights at Tikal we will transfer to the other side of the Petén, visiting the biological station, Las Guacamayas, located in the Mayan Biosphere Reserve within the Laguna del Tigre National Park. Despite its name “biological station” this is a lovely, very comfortable ecolodge situated along the San Pedro River, access to which is by boat. After departing Tikal we will make our way west, passing Flores, and then entering the marshes and lake/river system of Laguna del Tigre. With stops along the way we have chances of seeing hundreds of Wood Storks and other long-legged waders, and quite possibly Pinnated Bittern (rare). Upon arrival to the small community of Los Caballos we will transfer into our boat for the short 30 minute ride to Las Guacamayas. Over the next two days we will explore the surrounding water ways and forest trails with targets including the rare Agami Heron and wild (possibly nesting) Scarlet Macaws, a species all but extirpated from Central America.

The main tour promises great birding and a superb cultural experience. Our itinerary combines the best montane birding in the country with the colorful culture of today’s descendants of the ancient Tikal-period Maya. We will largely be visiting private reserves, many of which are active shade-coffee plantations with wonderful native forests within their properties. We will sample some great habitats where specialties are possible and see most of the goodies Guatemala has to offer—at an enjoyable and moderate pace. We have structured this tour in a way that maximizes birding in private lands, away from roads and traffic, while helping to support landowners who have made habitat conservation and ecotourism a priority for their lands.

Foremost among the many bird possibilities are a number of species restricted in distribution to the highlands of Guatemala and neighboring Chiapas, El Salvador, and Honduras. The list of these special and often difficult-to-find species includes Highland Guan, Black-capped Swallow, Bushy-crested Jay, Rufous-browed Wren, Black and Rufous-collared robins, Blue-and-white Mockingbird, Pink-headed Warbler, Bar-winged Oriole, and Black-capped Siskin (rare). In addition to these specialties, there are many more widespread but superb Central American species from Mountain Trogons and Emerald Toucanets to Black Hawk-Eagles and Spot-breasted Orioles. We will not lack for great birding, scenery, food, world-class coffee, or cultural experiences.

Among our many stops will be Finca Los Andes and Las Nubes, where we stand an excellent chance of seeing the spectacular Resplendent Quetzal (Guatemala’s national bird) and a host of other species of very limited range including the rare Azure-rumped Tanager, White-faced Quail-Dove, and the wide-ranging but difficult to see, Spotted Nightingale-Thrush. In the drier pine-oak forests above Antigua we’ll seek Pacific Parakeet, Blue-throated Motmot, Band-backed Wren, Blue-and-white Mockingbird, and Bar-winged Oriole among others. Finca Los Tarrales allows us access to the

highest diversity of habitats and bird species on this tour. Tarrales highlights from past tours have included Blue Seedeater, Tody Motmot, and Rufous-breasted Spinetail.



*A male Wine-throated Hummingbird flares his spectacular gorget. These tiny hummers are found from Chiapas to Honduras; the center of their range is southern Guatemala.
Photo by guide Jesse Fagan.*

Hummingbirds are a special treat, as the numbers and variety can be truly impressive; fortunately, some lodges and preserves have begun setting up hummingbird feeders. We have the possibility of finding such gems as Rufous and Violet sabrewings, Black-crested Coquette, Green-throated Mountain-gem, as well as Emerald-chinned, Azure-crowned, Blue-tailed (endemic subspecies), Garnet-throated, and Sparkling-tailed hummingbirds. Most of these tiny jewels have highly restricted ranges, but we will have a chance to see them against a backdrop of majestic volcanic peaks and fascinating native peoples.

The private reserves we will visit are a naturalist's paradise, and at the working farms we will be able to see, enjoy, and support places where nature is a part of the economic equation. We've all heard about shade-grown coffee and how it can be good for birds, but on this tour we will have the opportunity to see first-hand that when well managed, it can be great for birds. We were the first international birding tour company to offer these destinations in an itinerary, and we've been told that as a result of our involvement, there is much local interest in "avitourism" and that other birders have started to arrive. We have been involved in advising local tourism companies, private reserves, and the Guatemalan department of tourism (INGUAT) on how to foment birding tourism in the country, and have given instruction to local birding guides about how to guide foreign birders. We are proud of our involvement in Guatemala and want to show you what is an undiscovered gem for birding. The links between birding tourism and habitat conservation are strong on this tour, and this is

particularly exciting for us. Alternate cultural options, such as visits to Antigua, Chichicastenango, the ruins of Abaj Takalik, Lake Atitlan, and coffee-tours at the fincas will be available for those who want to share this superb country with a non-birding spouse or friend.

About the Physical Requirements & Pace: The lowlands of Tikal and Las Guacamays are sure to be humid and depending on the rainfall amounts, somewhat wet. On the Caribbean Slope, one should be prepared for the possibility of rain nearly every day despite this being the start of the "dry season." Bugs, of the mosquito and chigger variety, are around in the Caribbean lowlands. We will be walking on relatively flat ground during our time here, but we may scale a temple or two or need to step over tree roots and rocks. Trails could be slippery and muddy.

The highlands of northern Central America are rich with avian endemics, but as land has been altered through the centuries, some of these species have become scarce and difficult to find. The tour is designed to sample the highlands of Guatemala, to bird areas that have not been birded extensively and are off the beaten path but are comfortable and offer a culturally interesting view of Guatemala and its birds. We certainly want to see many of those birds, and to that end there will be early mornings and full days. **And keep in mind that very little of Guatemala is flat.** We will often be walking up or down trails while birding (walking sticks and sitting stools are particularly useful). In the dry season we should not encounter mud; it is more likely that trails will be dry and dusty. We will not be hiking at a fast pace, but at a "birders pace," and there will be afternoon rests after lunch on some days; **but you should be prepared to walk for several miles a day, much of that on a slope. You should have a positive attitude and be ready for some long field days.**

If you are uncertain about whether this tour is a good match for your abilities, please don't hesitate to contact our office; if they cannot directly answer your queries, they will put you in touch with the guide.

About the Birding Areas



Tikal National Park—During our stay at Tikal we'll bird all the available habitats, which include high forest, low forest (*escobal* and *tinta*), edge, *aguadas* (waterholes), and open sky! For relaxing, of course, we need only sit on the shaded side of a temple and watch the courtship and nest-building activities of a Montezuma Oropendola or the raptors getting up. One morning we might witness from atop one of the smaller temples the dawn parade of Ocellated Turkeys across the temple plaza or hear the dawn roars of the Yucatan Black Howlers and watch Keel-billed Toucans, Collared Aracaris, and many other species of birds sunning themselves in emergent trees in the first morning light. We'll make periodic visits to the Great Plaza, each time checking for the Orange-breasted Falcons that nested on the roof comb of Temple II before they mysteriously disappeared—but they've been back for the last three years. We'll offer an optional evening owling excursion for Guatemalan Screech-Owl, Mottled and Black-and-white owls, Yucatan Poorwill, and Pauraque—not to mention a long list of possible nocturnal mammals, including White-tailed and Red

Brocket deer, Common, Gray Four-eyed, and Central American Woolly opossums, and Kinkajou.

Among the many additional bird possibilities at Tikal are the following: Great and Thicket tinamous, Double-toothed Kite, White Hawk, Laughing and Bat falcons, Collared and Barred forest-falcons, Spotted Wood-Quail (rare), Gray-necked Wood-Rail, Ruddy Crake, Gray-headed Dove, Ruddy Quail-Dove, Olive-throated Parakeet, Brown-hooded, White-crowned, White-fronted, Red-lore, and Mealy parrots, Wedge-tailed Sabrewing, Purple-crowned Fairy, four species of trogons, Blue-crowned and Tody motmots, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, White-necked and White-whiskered puffbirds, Chestnut-colored, Lineated, and Pale-billed woodpeckers, Tawny-winged, Ruddy, Northern-Barred, and Strong-billed woodcreepers, Scaly-throated Leaf-tosser, Plain Antvireo, Black-faced Antthrush, Rufous Mourner, Red-capped and White-collared manakins, Thrushlike Schiffornis, Northern Royal Flycatcher, Stub-tailed Spadebill, Green and Brown jays, White-bellied Wren, Long-billed Gnatwren, Mangrove Vireo, Tawny-crowned Greenlet, Gray-throated Chat, Black-cowled Oriole, Yellow-throated and Olive-backed euphonias, Yellow-winged and Rose-throated (rare) tanagers, and Blue Bunting.

Las Guacamayas Biological Station is a very comfortable ecododge and research station located on the San Pedro River within the Laguna del Tigre National Park in the Petén region. This area of Guatemala still contains primary lowland forest mixed with lagoons, marshes, and river systems. All the large mammals (jaguars and tapirs) are present and it is one of the only sites in Guatemala where wild Scarlet Macaws can still be found. We will explore the water systems by boat where we can hope to find Sungrebe and Agami Heron, or Pinnated Bittern, Black-collared Hawk and Jabiru in the marshes, and in the upland areas by foot we will search for army ant swarms attended by Ruddy and Tawny-winged woodcreepers and Gray-headed Tanagers. In the evening, Mottled and Black-and-white owls are likely possibilities, and this is one of the few locations where Striped Owl has been seen regularly.

Antigua and Guatemala City—Our tour begins in an interesting and birdy area near Antigua, which is an approximately 45-minute drive from Guatemala City. Here is a mix of drier valleys and nice patches of highland forest, mainly oaks and pines but also moister cloudforest. It is in this highland habitat that some of the specialties of the trip are found. We will have access to private fincas here where birds abound. The species we will be looking for include: White-breasted Hawk, Highland Guan, Pacific Parakeet, Rufous Sabrewing, Green-throated Mountain-Gem, Amethyst-throated Hummingbird, Blue-throated Motmot, the small and dark *sanctorum* subspecies of Hairy Woodpecker, *mexicanoides* Northern Flicker, Gray-collared Becard, Black-capped Swallow, Bushy-crested Jay, Rufous-browed Wren, Black and Rufous-collared robins, Blue-and-white Mockingbird, Chestnut-sided Shrike-Vireo, Hooded Grosbeak, and Bar-winged Oriole. Birds of a more widespread range that are found here include some stunners like Mountain (Northern) Pygmy-Owl, Azure-crowned

Hummingbird, Collared and Mountain trogons, Emerald Toucanet, Band-backed Wren, Brown-backed Solitaire, Gray Silky-flycatcher, Crescent-chested, Red-faced, Chestnut-capped (the *delatirii* form of Rufous-capped Warbler), Golden-browed, and Hermit warblers, Slate-throated Redstart, Flame-colored and White-winged tanagers, Cinnamon-bellied Flowerpiercer, Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch, and Black-vented Oriole.

We will stay in Antigua, Guatemala's colonial capital until 1773 when it was destroyed by an earthquake. Antigua was once the cultural center of Central America, and now with its considerable charm, Spanish colonial architecture, and colorful Mayan culture, it is a center for tourism. It is known for its silver, jade, and ceramics, but of course Antigua coffee is among some of the world's best. One of the fincas we'll visit, Filadelfia, grows some wonderful Antigua coffee, and we'll be sure to try some while we are there



A lovely pair of Yellow-naped Parrots.
Photo by participants David and Judy Smith.

Retalhuleu Area—In the southwest there is an interesting mix of habitats from dry forest to humid tropical forest. The dry areas are at a lower elevation, while the more humid forest lies in the foothills of the mountains. The mix of habitats here means we have the chance to see a good diversity of birds, some widespread and others of a more restricted range such as White-bellied Chachalaca, Yellow-naped Parrot, and Rufous-naped (“Rufous-backed”) Wren. In the moister forest we may encounter Common Black-Hawk, Collared Forest-Falcon, Laughing Falcon, Pacific and Orange-chinned parakeets, White-fronted Parrot, Violet Sabrewing, Collared Aracari, many wintering North American warbler species, Red-legged Honeycreeper, Black-headed Saltator, and Spot-breasted Oriole. Drier forest sites allow us another chance for some of the above, and are also habitat for Turquoise-browed Motmot, Spot-breasted and Rufous-and-white wrens, the spectacular White-throated Magpie-Jay, Altamira Oriole, and many others. In addition, many species more typically associated with the moister Atlantic slope cross to the Pacific along the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and extend south along the Pacific slope to where we will be. There are many possibilities here, and there is as well the chance for discovery and surprise.

We will be visiting the Abaj Takalik ruins (featured in the May 2004 issue of *National Geographic*). In the local Quiché Maya language, Abaj Takalik means “Standing Stones.” This site was of importance in the Pre-Classic Maya era, from the 8th Century B.C. to the 2nd Century A.D. Here many artifacts show an influence from Olmec cultures from farther north in Mesoamerica.

Finca Las Nubes is one of the oldest operational coffee *fincas* in Guatemala. The farm's history dates back to the 1830's when an American pioneer, William Nelson, first settled down at the base of a hillock the local Mayan Indians called “Pecul” near the small village of San Francisco Zapotitlan and started growing coffee there. In 1875, the coffee plantation was documented in an historical set of photographs by the famous English photographer, Eadweard Muybridge. Coffee from Las Nubes is world famous and the different varieties are largely dependent on the different elevations at which they are grown. Las Nubes “Muybridge” is grown between 3500-4500 feet while Genuine “Las Nubes” is grown between 4500-6000 feet and born from original Bourbon and Typica trees. You will be able to learn about the entire coffee process from the planting of the saplings, the harvest and processing of the bean, to a cupping session at the end where you can savor the flavors of several different coffees (remember: aroma, body, acidity, and aftertaste).

Finca Las Nubes has a wonderful cloudforest preserve above their working farm. The forest is home to a number of cloudforest specialists and regional endemics including Spotted Wood-Quail, Resplendent Quetzal, Spot-crowned Woodcreeper, Emerald-chinned Hummingbird, Green-throated Mountain-gem, Spotted Nightingale-Thrush, Golden-browed Warbler, Cinnamon-bellied Flower-piercer, and Hooded Grosbeak. Both Ornate and Black hawk-eagles live on the property, but the farm has been little birded and we will almost certainly make some interesting discoveries during our visit. On several evenings we will spend some time owling at higher elevations.

Finca Los Andes is located on the south slope of the Atitlan Volcano and is active in coffee and organic tea production. The coffee grown here is certified as responsibly grown green coffee and is used in some of the specialty blends at

Starbucks. The finca runs a school and health clinic for their workers, and it's inspiring to see how well the people and the land are cared for. The finca itself markets coffee under the label Tangara, the genus of one of the local bird specialties, the Azure-rumped Tanager. Of course the coffee and tea are super, but to birders it's the gorgeous montane forest—the finca's version of the “back 40”—and the fantastic trail system that is energizing. Some of these forests have trees so old and huge that they resemble emergents from lowland forests.

There is a healthy population of the Resplendent Quetzal—the sacred bird of the Maya—here. The finca does a fantastic job of taking care of their special bird by monitoring the activity of the quetzals and setting up nesting boxes for them. But other birding specialties abound, including the already mentioned Azure-rumped Tanager. We will walk up the forest trails to the tanager observation area, sit in comfort and enjoy great birding while waiting for this rare tanager to show up at the “magic tanager tree.” Other goodies we hope to encounter here are Black Hawk-Eagle, Highland Guan, White-faced Quail-Dove, Emerald Toucanet, Green-throated Mountain-Gem, Scaly-throated Foliage-Gleaner, Scaled Antpitta, Spotted Nightingale-Thrush, and Blue-crowned Chlorophonia. Of course there are many more widespread species here as well and nightbirding often includes great views of Paraque and Mottled Owl. (Singles may not be available at Los Andes and we may have to share bathrooms.)

Finca Los Tarrales is located not too far from Finca Los Andes, on the flanks of the same mountain. However, the elevation and humidity profile differs and so does the bird life. The lodge itself is lower in elevation, and there we may enjoy great looks at Rufous-breasted Spinetail, Turquoise-browed Motmot, Spot-breasted Oriole, White-throated Magpie-Jay, Orange-fronted and Orange-chinned parakeets, Highland Guan, the handsome Long-tailed Manakin, perhaps the unobtrusive Tody Motmot, and the pretty White-eared Ground-Sparrow, as well as many wintering Neotropical migrants (this is Tennessee Warbler and Western Tanager central).



Lake Atitlan. Photo by participant Amy McDonald.

Lake Atitlan—Lake Atitlan has sometimes been called the most beautiful lake in the world. At 5100 feet, this large lake is ringed by volcanic peaks and scenic coves and offers some fun birding. The ever-changing clouds dapple purples and emeralds on the lake and surrounding slopes, and local fishermen pole their dugouts through the reed beds at the shallow margins. Bird possibilities in our short visit to the area include White-collared Swift (in huge, noisy flocks), Rufous Sabrewing, Azure-crowned, White-eared, and perhaps the petite Sparkling-tailed hummingbird (rare), Golden-olive Woodpecker, Black-capped Swallow, Band-backed Wren, Blue-and-white Mockingbird, Rufous-collared Robin, Rufous-capped Warbler, Slate-throated Redstart, Black-vented Oriole, Black-headed Siskin, and Rusty and Rufous-collared sparrows.

Among birders, Lake Atitlan has been most famous for its endemic flightless grebe, the *poc* (as the locals call it) or Atitlan Grebe. A larger, warier cousin of the Pied-billed Grebe—which breed on the lake—the *poc* inhabited cattails and reedbeds in sheltered inlets along the vegetated south shore. According to Anne La Bastille, who studied the grebe intensively, it may never have numbered more than 400 birds, but by 1929 there were only around 100 pairs. Following the introduction of bass into the lake in 1958 and 1960, the population declined to a low of around eighty birds in 1964, thereafter increasing gradually until 1973, when the total had recovered to an estimated 210. Later, changes in the lake level—and the continued diminution of its habitat—caused the *poc* to become increasingly rare. By 1978 it was exceedingly difficult to find. A researcher working on the lake during the mid-1980s was not able to locate the species for several years. Sadly, this vulnerable species has been declared extinct.

Lake Atitlan is not without other avian attractions, however. We'll seek two special birds here, both of which we're unlikely to see elsewhere. The Prevost's Ground-Sparrow, with its very odd plumage pattern, can be found in the brushy edges and hillsides of the caldera that holds Lake Atitlan. The other species of interest, much rarer than the ground-sparrow, is the diminutive Belted Flycatcher, which we'll need some luck to find. Such specialties as Blue-throated Motmot, Blue-and-white Mockingbird, and Chestnut-sided Shrike-Vireo (if we haven't seen these already), are among other possibilities.

Itinerary for Temples of Tikal Pre-trip Extension

Day 1, Mon, 6 Feb. Arrival in Guatemala. Our ground agent will be waiting for you at the airport in Guatemala City. Look for a sign with "Field Guides." From the airport you will be transferred to the hotel and we will rendezvous in the main lobby at 6:30 p.m. Dinner at the hotel and night in Guatemala City.

Day 2-3, Tue-Wed, 7-8 Feb. Guatemala City to Tikal. We will have a very early (like 5 am) departure from the hotel to catch the short flight to Tikal. Upon arrival, we'll shuttle over to our hotel, Jungle Lodge, get checked-in, and meet our local guide, Miguel Marin. Miguel is also a birdwatcher and knows the birds of the Tikal area. We will have these two days to bird areas around Tikal. Nights in Tikal.

Day 4-5 Thu-Fri, 9-10 Feb. Tikal to Las Guacamayas. We will depart Tikal in the morning and make the four hour drive (with birding stops) to Paso Caballos where we will transfer into a boat for the 30 min ride to the ecolodge. Two nights at Las Guacamayas.

Day 6 Sat, 11 Feb. Guacamayas to Guatemala City and on to Antigua For those on the extension, we will depart Las Guacamayas very early in the morning (most likely in the dark!) and return to Flores for our morning flight to Guatemala City. We will meet our driver at the airport and then visit Cayalá, a private park in the city where we can bird for a few hours before lunch. After lunch (and picking up the remaining clients arriving for main tour), we will transfer to the beautiful colonial city of Antigua. Night in Antigua.

Itinerary for Guatemala: Shade-Grown Birding

Day 1, Sat, 11 Feb. Arrival in Guatemala; to Antigua. For those arriving for the main tour, **please book flights to arrive into Guatemala City by 2 p.m.** Our ground operator will be waiting for you at the airport in Guatemala City. We will rendezvous and then transfer to Antigua where we will spend the night. Night in Antigua.

Day 2, Sun, 12 Feb. Birding the Antigua area. The main area we will bird today will be Finca El Pilar; located in the oak-pine zone, the finca offers many opportunities for finding endemics of the Guatemalan highlands. We will be looking for species such as Highland Guan, Blue-throated Motmot, Black-capped Swallow, Yellowish Flycatcher, Blue-and-white Mockingbird, Rufous-collared Robin, Bushy-crested Jay, and Bar-winged Oriole as well as a host of other great birds. We will have a nice lunch at Finca Filadelfia with some light birding on their grounds (Bushy-crested Jays are always around), but return in the late afternoon with a few hours to wander around Antigua. Our local guide will be happy to give a guided tour of this lovely colonial city this afternoon. Night in Antigua.

Day 3, Mon, 13 Feb. To Finca Las Nubes. We will start early today to get the most out of our morning. We'll visit Finca El Pilar for a picnic breakfast and some morning birding before leaving the Antigua area after lunch and heading to Finca

Las Nubes. This will take us several hours, so we don't expect to arrive until late afternoon. In the evening, we will head up into the forest for some owling. Note: this will be a long day! Night at Finca Las Nubes.

Day 4, Tue, 14 Feb. Fuentes Georginas. This will be an early morning departure for Fuentes Georginas. After birding in the highlands (Unicolored Jay, Black-capped Siskin, Pink-headed Warbler), we'll lunch in Reu and then visit Abaj Takalik. This lowland site can be incredible for migrant and winter resident flocks (both passerines and raptors) at this time of year. Several hundred migrating Swainson's Hawks along with Turkey Vultures over the site on a past tour were impressive! Yellow-raped and White-fronted parrots course through the treetops, and Lineated Woodpecker drums and calls from exposed branches. We will return to Finca Las Nubes in the late afternoon. Night at Finca Las Nubes.



*The beautiful Pink-headed Warbler is restricted to the highlands of Guatemala and nearby Chiapas. We will make an effort to find this lovely bird on Day 4.
Photo by guide Jesse Fagan.*

Day 5, Wed, 15 Feb. To Finca Los Andes. Another early breakfast at the finca and then we climb into two 4X4 vehicles to bird the higher forest trails. We'll spend a fantastic morning birding the upper trail system within the cloud-forest preserve at Finca Las Nubes. From where we park and begin walking, we will have good opportunities to encounter Spotted and Ruddy-capped nightingale-thrush, Golden-browed Warbler, Green-throated Mountain-gem, and Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch. We will take our time on the way up to the quetzal spot. We will of course want to see a quetzal, but other species we may encounter include Crested Guan, Ruddy and Scaly-throated foliage-gleaners, Yellowish Flycatcher, and Gray-breasted Wood-Wren. We will return to Finca Las Nubes for lunch and then pack-up and head for Finca Los Andes and do some afternoon birding on the grounds there. The house is in the lower part of the private reserve, and Highland Guans are heard right from the porch! The open areas here and the gardens will give us a chance to enjoy some of the more common edge species like Blue-tailed Hummingbird, which is easily found in the gardens. The montane forest in the higher parts of the reserve is where we will look for the Resplendent Quetzal, Blue-crowned Chlorophonia, and the superb Azure-rumped Tanager. The supporting cast includes Black Hawk-Eagle, Emerald Toucanet, White-faced Quail-Dove, Scaly-throated Foliage-gleaner, Scaled Antpitta, various forest thrushes, and wintering North American warblers. Night at Finca Los Andes.

Day 6, Thu, 16 Feb. Finca Los Andes and Finca Los Tarrales. This morning we'll depart early in the dark and climb to the forest edge; here we'll wait for the forest to come alive. We will be walking all morning looking for forest species like Blue-crowned Chlorophonia, Azure-rumped Tanager, the quetzal, Highland Guan, as well as, White-eared Ground-Sparrow and Tody Motmot. We will return for lunch and in the afternoon depart for Finca Los Tarrales. Night at Finca Los Tarrales.

Day 7, Fri, 17 Feb. Finca Los Tarrales. We'll spend today birding Finca Los Tarrales. Night at Finca Los Tarrales.

Day 8, Sat, 18 Feb. To Lake Atitlan and return to Guatemala City. After breakfast today we'll leave Finca Los Tarrales and take a prearranged boat to the other side of Lake Atitlan. (NOTE: The lake can be very rough during high winds. If this is the case, we will take the bus around the lake to Panajachel, approximately a one-hour drive.) We will stop near Panajachel and bird there for some of the morning. The exact spots we visit on our way back to Guatemala City will depend on timing and on what we have not seen thus far. Night in Guatemala City.

Day 9, Sun, 19 Feb. Departure. This morning you will be transferred to the airport for your morning flights home. Have a safe trip!

About Your Guide

Jesse Fagan (a.k.a. the Motmot or just “Mot”) has been passionate about birds since his teens, when he had an encounter with a flying Pileated Woodpecker. He has birded throughout the United States, including spending seven years in Texas, and since 1995 has been birding and for a time living in northern Central America. He is currently in the final stages of completing a field guide to the region (which will include the countries of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Belize), due to be published in 2015.

In addition, Mot has birded in or led tours to Mexico, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Peru, Brazil, Australia, New Zealand, Spain, Sweden, France, Morocco, and Madagascar. He also enjoys leading many of the Field Guides tours in the Caribbean. He likes to think he can bird anywhere at any time and still show you the birds, but most importantly, a good time. Jesse holds a B.S. and an M.S. in mathematics from Texas Tech University. He is currently living in Lima, Peru.

“Jesse Fagan has superb birding skills and was a pleasure to bird with—and he has a great sense of humor. All aspects of the tour went well, including the facilities.” J.B., Guatemala: Shade-Grown Birding

Visit <http://fieldguides.com/guides> for Jesse’s complete tour schedule; just click on his photo.

Financial Information

FEE: \$3950 from Guatemala City

FEE FOR EXTENSION: \$2050

DEPOSIT: \$400 per person

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: October 14, 2016

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): Main Tour: \$300; Extension: \$180 (Ensuite bathrooms and singles may not be available at Los Andes; the single fee is not applicable here.)

LIMIT: 8

Other Things You Need to Know

TOUR MANAGER: The manager for this tour is Sharon Mackie. Sharon will be happy to assist you in preparing for the tour. If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to call her!

ACCOMMODATIONS: Accommodations vary from nice hotels in Antigua and Guatemala City to more basic but comfortable lodging just outside the ruins of Tikal and a clean, pleasant “finca” out in the country. These fincas, (coffee and tea plantations) are family run, friendly, and very relaxing spots. Our first finca stop will be three nights at the historic Finca Las Nubes (Finca of the Clouds). This is one of the oldest operating fincas in Guatemala; its operations having begun in the mid 19th-century, it was photographed extensively by the famous Eadward Muybridge in the 1860s. Mario Castillo, the finca manager, has built 5 rooms above the main plantation house, each equipped with two beds (one with a large queen) and hot water. The patio outside the rooms is a great place to lounge in the hammock or sip a beer. The main plantation home (where some participants will be staying) is a large house with rooms for 2 or 3, each with several single beds. These rooms also have their own private bathroom with hot water, but the bathrooms are located outside the rooms. The main plantation-house patio is where we will eat dinner, do our checklist, and have a few drinks while watching the incredible star show each evening.

At Finca Los Andes, we will also be staying in the main family quarters that have recently been converted into an ecolodge. Because of its original design and purpose (which was not to support large groups of birders), we may need to share rooms and bathrooms. The main house is equipped with 5 rooms and 4 bathrooms plus an additional rooms off the main house (with their own bathroom), but only a 2-minute walk away. Each room is equipped with several single beds and all the bathrooms have hot water. **Expect to share a room and bathroom at Finca Los Andes!** We feel this small inconvenience is more than made up for by the kind hospitality of Olga, the finca owner, her great staff, delicious meals, and the wonderful birding we will experience on their cloudforest property. This is the best place for Azure-rumped Tanager, which likes the large fruiting fig trees found higher up on the property.

Our last finca, where we have two nights, is Finca Los Taralles, located to the south of Lake Atitlan. Each participant will have his/her own room and private bathroom with hot water. Andy, the finca owner, will be sure to make our stay a

pleasant and comfortable one.

All the rooms at the fincas are basic but clean and personalized. The staff of each finca will insure that your beds are made each day and you have clean towels. These are wonderful places to stay!

The Jungle Lodge Hotel in Tikal was established in 1956 by Mr. Antonio Ortiz Contreras (who discovered the Temple of the Inscriptions in 1951). The hotel, ideal for its location, is just a twenty-minute walk from the ceremonial center of Tikal; it has been under constant renovation in order to adjust to the modern standards of comfort and hospitality. The lodge is not equipped with air-conditioning, but each room has a fan. Expect temperatures to be warm during the day (when we are off birding), but cooling in the evening. Each room (bungalow) has two double beds, hot/cold water, and a private porch. There is a restaurant in the hotel.

At Las Guacamayas, the ecolodge has seven comfortable rooms with hot/cold water and electricity. Each room is personalized with its own bird name and colors. Some of the rooms have air-conditioning, and all have fans. There is a restaurant at the lodge serving delicious home-cooked meals. The grounds are excellent for birding.

DOCUMENTS: A current passport valid beyond the date of your return is necessary for US citizens to enter Guatemala. If you are not a US citizen, please check with the Guatemalan consulate nearest you for entry requirements. Information about consulates and entry requirements is generally available online or you can contact us and we will be happy to look this up for you. Passports should have an adequate number of blank pages for the entire journey. Some countries require a blank page for their stamp and as a precaution it is best to have one blank page per country you will visit or transit.

AIR ARRANGEMENTS: Please plan to arrive in Guatemala City by 2:00 p.m. on Day 1 for the main tour and by dinner time on Day 1 for the extension; flights home from Guatemala City can be booked for any time on Day 9. Contact our office for the best fares and schedules from your home city.

Field Guides is a full service travel agency and your tour manager will be happy to assist you with flights to join this tour. Field Guides does not charge a service fee for these services to clients booking a tour. However, we understand that tech-savvy clients often prefer to shop online or that you may wish to use mileage to purchase tickets. Regardless of which method you choose, your tour manager will be happy to provide assistance regarding ticket prices and schedules, along with rental cars and extra hotel nights as needed.

Please be sure to check with your tour manager prior to purchasing your ticket to make sure the flights you have chosen will work well with the tour itinerary and that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. Once purchased, most airline tickets are non-refundable and carry a penalty to change. Field Guides cannot be responsible for these fees. **Also, it is imperative that we receive a copy of your comprehensive flight itinerary—including any and all flights not covered in the tour fee—so that we may track you in the event of missed connections, delays, or other mishaps.**

LUGGAGE: Please be aware that many airlines have recently modified their luggage policies and are charging additional fees for checked bags. Updates could easily occur before your departure, so you may wish to contact your airline to verify the policy. Additional charges for bags on any flights, whether these are covered by the tour fee or not, will be the client's responsibility. **Please limit your bags to one medium-sized suitcase or duffel and a day pack. Laundry can be done at most of our lodging for a small fee.**

TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS: The tour fee is \$3950 for one person in double occupancy from Guatemala City. It includes all lodging from Day 1 through Day 8, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through dinner on Day 8, all ground transportation, entrance fees, and the guide services of the tour leader(s). Tipping at group meals and for drivers, porters, and local guides is included in your tour fee and will be handled for the group by your Field Guides leader(s). However, if you would like to recognize your Field Guides leader(s) or any local guide(s) for exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are optional and not expected.

The above fees do not include your airfare to and from Guatemala City, airport taxes, visa fees, any checked or carry-on baggage charges imposed by the airlines, any alcoholic beverages, optional tips to local drivers, phone calls, laundry, the optional outing to Antigua on Day 2, or other items of a personal nature.

The single supplement for the tour is \$300. (Ensuite bathrooms and singles may not be available at Los Andes.) If you do not have a roommate but wish to share, we will try to pair you with a roommate from the tour; but if none is available, you will be billed for the single supplement. Our tour fees are based on double occupancy; one-half the cost of a double room is priced into the tour fee. The single supplement is calculated by taking the actual cost of a single room and subtracting one-half the cost of a double room (plus any applicable taxes).

The fee for the **Temples of Tikal & Guacamayas Pre Tour Extension** is \$2050 for one person in double occupancy from Guatemala City. It includes all lodging from Day 1 through Day 5 (Day 6 is included in the main tour fee), all meals from dinner on Day 1 through lunch on Day 6, flights to and from Flores, all ground transportation, entrance fees, plenty of water, and the guide services of the tour leader(s). Tipping at group meals and for drivers, porters, and local guides is included in your tour fee and will be handled for the group by your Field Guides leader(s). However, if you would like to recognize your Field Guides leader(s) or any local guide(s) for exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are optional and not expected.

The above fee does not include your airfare to and from Guatemala City, airport taxes, visa fees, any checked or carry-on baggage charges imposed by the airlines, any alcoholic beverages, optional tips, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

The **single supplement for the extension** is \$180.

TOUR REGISTRATION: To register for this tour, complete the Registration/Release and Indemnity form and return it with a **deposit of \$400** per person. If registering by phone, a deposit must be received within fourteen days, or the space will be released. **Full payment** of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to departure, or **by October 14, 2016. We will bill you for the final payment at either 120 days or when the tour has reached sufficient subscription to operate, whichever date comes later.** Since the cost of your trip insurance and airline tickets is generally non-refundable, please do not finalize these purchases until you have received final billing for the tour or have been advised that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate by your tour manager.

SMOKING: Almost all of our clients prefer a smoke-free environment. If you smoke, please be sensitive to the group and refrain from smoking at meals, in vehicles, and in proximity to the group on trails and elsewhere.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Refund of deposit and payment, less \$100 handling fee, will be made if cancellation is received up to 120 days before departure. If cancellation occurs between 119 and 70 days before the departure date, 50% of the tour fee is refundable. Thereafter, all deposits and payments are not refundable.

This policy only applies to payments made to Field Guides for tour (and any services included in those fees). Airline tickets not included in the tour fee and purchased separately often carry penalties for cancellation or change, or are sometimes totally non-refundable. Additionally, if you take out trip insurance the cost of the insurance is not refundable so it is best to purchase the policy just prior to making full payment for the tour or at the time you purchase airline tickets, depending upon the airlines restrictions.

The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. The right is reserved to substitute in case of emergency another guide for the original one.

TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EMERGENCY INSURANCE: We strongly recommend you consider purchasing trip cancellation (including medical emergency) insurance to cover your investment in case of injury or illness to you or your family prior to or during a trip. Because we must remit early (and substantial) tour deposits to our suppliers, we cannot offer any refund when cancellation occurs within 70 days of departure, and only a partial refund from 70 to 119 days prior to departure (see CANCELLATION POLICY). In addition, the Department of State strongly urges Americans to consult with their medical insurance company prior to traveling abroad to confirm whether their policy applies overseas and if it will cover emergency expenses such as a medical evacuation. US medical insurance plans seldom cover health costs incurred outside the United States unless supplemental coverage is purchased. Furthermore, US Medicare and Medicaid programs do not provide payment for medical services outside the United States.

When making a decision regarding health insurance, Americans should consider that many foreign doctors and hospitals require payment in cash prior to providing service and that a medical evacuation to the United States may cost well in excess of \$50,000. Uninsured travelers who require medical care overseas often face extreme difficulties. When consulting with your insurer prior to your trip, please ascertain whether payment will be made to the overseas healthcare provider or whether you will be reimbursed later for expenses that you incur.

US citizens will receive from us a brochure regarding optional tour cancellation/emergency medical insurance. Our agent, CSA, will insure for trip cancellation and interruption, medical coverage, travel delay, baggage loss and delay, 24-hour accident protection, and emergency medical transportation. If you purchase the insurance when making final payment for the tour, and cover all non-refundable parts of the trip (including any non-refundable flights), pre-existing conditions are covered. The CSA brochure includes a contact number; you may also purchase your CSA policy on-line by visiting our website at www.fieldguides.com/travelinsurance.htm and clicking the link to CSA. Please note, once the

insurance is purchased it is non-refundable, so please check with your tour manager prior to making the purchase to assure the tour will operate as scheduled. Citizens of other countries are urged to consult their insurance broker.

RESPONSIBILITY: For and in consideration of the opportunity to participate in the tour, each tour participant and each parent or legal guardian of a tour participant who is under 18 agrees to release, indemnify, and hold harmless Field Guides Incorporated, its agents, servants, employees, shareholders, officers, directors, attorneys, and contractors as more fully set forth in the Release and Indemnity Agreement on the reverse side of the registration form. Field Guides Incorporated acts only as an agent for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, or other means, and assumes no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity caused by defect in such vehicles or for any reason whatsoever, including the acts, defaults, or bankruptcies of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. Field Guides Incorporated accepts no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. The tour participant shall bear all such losses and expenses. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely.

Participants should be in good health and should consult a physician before undertaking a tour. If you have questions about the physical requirements of a tour, please contact our office for further information. Participants should prepare for the tour by reading the detailed itinerary, the information bulletin, and other pertinent matter provided by Field Guides. Each participant is responsible for bringing appropriate clothing and equipment as recommended in our bulletins.

THE RECEIPT OF YOUR TOUR DEPOSIT SHALL BE DEEMED TO BE CONSENT TO THE ABOVE CONDITIONS. EACH TOUR PARTICIPANT AND EACH PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN OF A TOUR PARTICIPANT WHO IS UNDER 18 SHALL SIGN AND DELIVER THE RELEASE AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION.

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