

ITINERARY

GUATEMALA: SHADE-GROWN BIRDING

March 30- April 8, 2023

Temples of Tikal & Guacamayas Pre-trip Extension

March 25-30, 2023



Yellow-naped Parrots are one of the species we'll watch for in the lowlands near Finca Los Tarrales, where we saw a number of these rare parrots one evening as they gathered to roost. Photograph by participants David and Judy Smith.

We include here information for those interested in the 2023 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 pre-tour extension will visit 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 King Vultures circling above and see unbroken forest in all directions to the limit of vision.

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.

We will also stay on 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 among 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.



*We'll seek a number of wetland birds, including the spectacular Agami Heron, in the marches near Las Guacamayas.
Photograph by guide Jesse Fagan.*

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 Maya. We will largely be visiting private reserves, many of which are active 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 Tarrales, which allows us access to the highest diversity of habitats and bird species on this tour. Tarrales highlights from past tours have included White Hawk, Blue Seedeater, Tody Motmot, and Rufous-breasted Spinetail.

Hummingbirds are a special treat, as the numbers and variety can be truly impressive. We have the possibility of finding such gems as Rufous and Violet sabrewings, Green-throated Mountain-gem, as well as Emerald-chinned, Azure-crowned, Blue-tailed (near endemic subspecies; *guatemalae*), and Garnet-throated 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 Wine-throated Hummingbird is one of several endemics we will seek. Photograph by guide Jesse Fagan.

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 "aviturismo" 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. Further, your guide on this tour lived in Guatemala for two years and the region holds a special place in his heart. So much so, that he authored a field guide to the region, *PETERSON: Field Guide to Birds of Northern Central America*.

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.

All participants will be required to confirm they will have completed a full COVID vaccination course at least two weeks prior to the tour (which includes a booster for those eligible to have one). Having a vaccinated group will greatly diminish but not eliminate the possibility of the group and individual participants being adversely affected by COVID-19. **We are requiring all of our staff guides to be vaccinated, including getting the booster.** Note too, that many travel destinations are or soon will be requiring proof of vaccination for entry to bypass testing delays or quarantine, and that entry requirements for a destination can change at any time. Proof of a booster shot, too, may become a requirement for some travel destinations if they choose to declare that vaccinations do not last indefinitely. And having a booster means your risk is lowered and your travel plans and those of our group are less likely to be disrupted.

We want to be sure you are on the right tour! Below is a description of the physical requirements of the tour. If you are concerned about the difficulty, please contact us about this and be sure to fully explain your concerns. We want to make sure you have a wonderful time with us, so if you are uncomfortable with the requirements, just let us know and we can help you find a better fitting tour! Field Guides will not charge you a change or cancellation fee if you opt out within 10 days of depositing.

Physical requirements of this tour

- **TRAILS & WALKING:** You must be in pretty good shape to take this tour. Good amounts of walking at elevation (around Antigua), usually 2-3 miles in morning, 1-2 miles in afternoon, sometimes on dusty, uneven, and/or steep trails, and there may be obstacles such as tree roots or rocks at times. In Tikal, we may wish to climb a temple. Walking sticks are recommended for those who use them.
- **PACE:** Early morning starts, usually with 5:00-5:30 a.m. breakfast. On some days, we will bird through the day with a picnic lunch. On a few days, there will be an after-lunch break before an optional afternoon birding session. On some days, we will travel by vehicle to the next destination in the afternoon. There will be several nighttime excursions to look for birds and mammals, but we will usually return to the hotel by 10:00 p.m.
- **WEATHER:** Weather in Guatemala varies, depending on the location and elevation, from the high 40s in highest elevations in the early morning to the 90s in the Caribbean lowlands. Rain is always a possibility, but this tour begins at the start of the dry season.
- **ELEVATION:** Sea level to 7,000 feet; lodgings are below 7,000 feet.
- **VEHICLE SEATING:** So that each participant has equal opportunity during our travel, we employ a seat rotation system on all tours. Participants will need to be flexible enough to maneuver to the back of the vehicle on occasion. Those who experience motion sickness will need to bring adequate medication for the duration of the tour, as we are not able to reserve forward seats for medical conditions.
- **BATHROOM BREAKS:** Whenever possible, we use modern, indoor restrooms, but on occasion participants must be prepared to make a comfort stop in nature. Bring your hand sanitizer!
- **OPTING OUT:** Where we are staying multiple days in the same lodging, participants can easily opt to sit out a day or sometimes a half-day. This will not be possible on days when we are changing locations.

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 *tintal*), 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 ecolodge 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

Finca Los Tarrales is located on the flanks of Volcan Atitlan. The lodge itself is found at the base of the volcano, 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—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.



The lovely Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush is one of the birds we'll watch for in the coffee plantations and other second growth areas that we visit. Photograph by guide Jesse Fagan.

Finca Tamashan—This *finca* is located in the hot Pacific lowlands in the extreme southwest corner of the country near the Mexican border. It is a mix of tropical forest and second-growth with freshwater marshes including several ponds and lakes surrounded by heavy agriculture and sugarcane production. Over 250 species have been recorded here which includes a long list of migrant and wintering shorebirds and waterfowl. It is one of the few places in the country to find Giant Wren, which until 2014 when it was discovered by local birders, was thought to be a Mexican endemic. This is also the first spot where Brown-headed Cowbird was recorded in the country, which is to say, just about anything could show up here! Other target species include Snail Kite, Mangrove Cuckoo, Mangrove Vireo, and Morelet's Seedeater.

Refugio del Quetzal—This is a highland cloudforest site that is technically designated a municipal “park.” It is located in the Pacific highlands between Quetzaltenango and our hotel in Pajapita (about 1h 30m). We will spend a full day exploring this forest with the hopes of overlapping with some of the more emblematic and target species of the Guatemalan highlands including Highland Guan, Singing Quail, White-faced Quail-Dove, Green-throated Mountain-gem, Emerald-chinned Hummingbird, Resplendent Quetzal, Blue-throated Motmot, Scaled Antpitta, Black-throated Jay, Black-capped Swallow, Yellow-throated Nightingale-Thrush, Black Thrush, Hooded Grosbeak, and Azure-rumped Tanager.



The spectacular Ocellated Turkey is a specialty of the Peten region of Guatemala, where Tikal is located. The species is generally wary of humans, due to hunting over much of its range, but they are protected at Tikal, and so they have become quite easy to see there. Photograph by guide Jesse Fagan

Itinerary for Temples of Tikal Pre-trip Extension

Day 1, Sat, 25 Mar. 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.

Days 2-3, Sun-Mon, 26-27 Mar. Guatemala City to Las Guacamayas. We will have a very early (like 5 am) departure from the hotel to catch the short flight to Flores. In Flores, we will meet our vehicles for the four hour drive (with birding stops) to Paso Caballos where we will transfer into a boat for the 30 min ride to the Las Guacamayas Ecolodge. Two nights at Las Guacamayas.

Days 4-5 Tue-Wed, 28-29 Mar. Las Guacamayas to Tikal. We will depart Las Guacamayas in the morning and return to Flores. In Flores, we will meet our local guide, Miguel Marin, and make several birding stops before arriving at Tikal. Miguel is also a birdwatcher and knows the birds of the Tikal area. We will have two days to bird areas around Tikal. Nights in Tikal. .

Day 6 Thu, 30 Mar. Tikal to Guatemala City and on to Antigua For those on the extension, we will depart Tikal in the early morning 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.



We'll look for the lovely Pink-headed Warbler in the highlands. Photograph by guide Jesse Fagan.

Itinerary for Guatemala: Shade-Grown Birding

Day 1, Thu, 30 Mar. 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, Fri, 31 Mar. 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 and return in mid afternoon with a few hours to wander around Antigua. Our local guide will give a guided tour of this lovely colonial city this afternoon. Night in Antigua.

Day 3, Sat, 1 Apr. To Finca Los Tarrales. We will start early today to get the most out of our morning. We'll visit Finca El Pilar again for a picnic breakfast and some morning birding before leaving the Antigua area after lunch and heading to Finca Los Tarrales. This will take us several hours, so we don't expect to arrive until late afternoon. Night at Finca Los Tarrales.

Day 4, Sun, 2 Apr. Finca Los Tarrales. We'll spend today birding Finca Los Tarrales. Night at Finca Los Tarrales.

Day 5, Mon, 3 Apr. Finca Los Tarrales to Quetzaltenango (Xela). 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 1h 30m drive.) We will stop near Panajachel and bird there for some of the morning and have lunch. After lunch we will continue on to Xela. Time dependent, we will meet our local guide, and in the late afternoon and early evening, we will bird above Xela, staying out later for nightbirds. Night in Quetzaltenango.

Day 6, Tue, 4 Apr. Fuentes Georginas. This will be an early morning departure for Fuentes Georginas. After birding in the highlands (Unicolored and Black-throated jays, Black-capped Siskin, Pink-headed Warbler), we'll lunch near Xela and do some afternoon birding at a site close to Xela. . Night in Quetzaltenango.

Day 7, Wed, 5 Apr. Finca Tamashan. We will depart our hotel early and drive 1-hour to Finca Tamashin. We will bird this site and nearby all day. The habitat here is lowland Pacific tropical forest and second-growth. This area of Guatemala has been heavily altered for sugarcane production and farms, but patches of remaining forest and coastal marshes still exist. More than 250 species have been recorded from this site, but targets will include Sungrebe, Mangrove Cuckoo, Mangrove Vireo, Giant Wren, plus a large smattering of shorebirds and waterbirds. Night in Hotel Santa Fe Pajapita.

Day 8, Thu, 6 Apr. Refugio del Quetzal. Another early departure from the hotel for the 1h 30m drive to Refugio del Quetzal. This municipal park has a number of important cloud forest specialists including Emerald-chinned Hummingbird, Resplendent Quetzal, and Azure-rumped Tanager. We will spend most of the day here with a lunch nearby. Night in Hotel Santa Fe Pajapita.

Day 9, Fri, 7 Apr. Papajita to Guatemala City. We will make the long drive back to Guatemala City today. This trip will take us roughly 5h 30m so we will depart sometime after breakfast with the plan of getting to our Guatemala City hotel sometime in the early afternoon. Night in Guatemala City.

Day 10, Sat, 8 Apr. 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 a co-author of the recently published [Peterson Field Guide to Birds of Northern Central America](#) (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016), a field guide to the region which includes the countries of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Belize.

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

Financial Information

FEE: \$4325 from Guatemala City

FEE FOR EXTENSION: \$2550

DEPOSIT: \$425 per person

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: October 1, 2022

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): Main Tour: \$475 (Singles may not be available at Los Tarrales Lodge);
Extension: \$425 (Singles may not be available at Las Guacamayas Ecological).

LIMIT: 8

Special Note: Tour fees may be subject to change due to the global economic effects of COVID-19.

We have published the itinerary and price for this tour with the understanding that during these uncertain times we are likely to encounter unforeseen changes. Some of our tours may incur higher costs due to increases in currency exchange rate fluctuations or COVID-19 related fees imposed by countries and/or suppliers. Travel and hospitality companies all over the world have been adversely affected by the pandemic, and there is no guarantee that all of the lodging and transportation we have booked for this tour will still be available at the time of departure. We hope to maintain our services as indicated in our itinerary as well as our published tour fee. However, if changes are required, we will make every effort

to maintain the quality of the itinerary as it is published with the most appropriate substitutions available. Should any necessary changes or other unforeseen causes result in an increase in service rates to us, we reserve the right to pass on those increases in fees to the tour participant.

Other Things You Need to Know

TOUR MANAGER: The manager for this tour is Caroline Lewis. Caroline 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 modern hotels in Antigua and Guatemala City to more basic but comfortable lodging just outside the ruins of Tikal and clean, pleasant “fincas” out in the country. These fincas (coffee and tea plantations) are family run, friendly, and very relaxing spots. These are wonderful places to stay!

In Finca Los Tarrales, where we have two nights, the finca is located to the south of Lake Atitlan. Andy, the finca owner, will be sure to make our stay a pleasant and comfortable one. All the rooms are basic but clean and personalized. The staff will insure that your beds are made each day and you have clean towels.

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 \$4325 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, or other items of a personal nature.

The **single supplement** for the tour is \$475. (*NOTE: Single accommodations at Los Tarrales Lodge are limited and may not be available. If you must have a single, please contact your tour manager, to reserve your spot.*) 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 \$2550 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 \$425. (*NOTE: Single accommodations at Las Guacamayas Ecolodge are limited and may not be available. If you must have a single, please contact your tour manager, to reserve your spot.*)

TOUR REGISTRATION: To register for this tour, complete the Registration/Release and Indemnity form and return it with a **deposit of \$425** 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 1, 2022. 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.

TOUR REGISTRATION: To register for this tour, please [contact our office](#). Our office will be in touch with you by email by the next business day (Mon-Fri) with instructions on how to complete our new electronic registration form and medical questionnaire. (We are no longer accepting the paper version.)

Please mail your **deposit of \$425** per person, or see <https://fieldguides.com/payment-options/> for our Payment Options. **Full payment** of the tour fee is due 180 days prior to departure, or **by October 1, 2022. We will bill you for the final payment at either 180 days or when the tour has reached sufficient subscription to operate, whichever date comes later.**

Please note that if you are traveling on a tour **outside your country of domicile** (for example, outside the US for US residents), we will require **proof of travel insurance**. 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 180 days before departure. If cancellation occurs between 179 and 90 days before the departure date, 50% of the tour fee is refundable. Thereafter, all deposits and payments are not refundable and non-transferable.

Our cancellation 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 that 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 airline's restrictions.

The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure. In most such cases, full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. Note this exception, however: If you have been advised pre-tour that there is a non-refundable portion of your tour fee no matter the reason for Field Guides cancellation of the tour, that portion will not be refunded. 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. If you are traveling on a tour **outside your country of domicile** (for example, outside the US for US residents), we will **require proof of travel insurance**. Because we must remit early (and substantial) tour deposits to our suppliers, you acknowledge and agree that we will not issue a refund when cancellation occurs within 70 days of departure, and only a partial refund from 90 to 179 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 information from us 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, and emergency medical transportation. If you purchase the insurance prior to, or within 24 hours of making final payment for the tour, and cover all non-refundable parts of the trip (including any non-refundable flights and in some cases, other arrangements), pre-existing conditions are covered. You may purchase your CSA policy on-line by visiting our website at <https://fieldguides.com/trip-cancellation-insurance/> and clicking the link to CSA. The CSA webpage also includes a contact number.

Currently we are unable to offer CSA insurance policies to residents of New York and Hawaii. We have had clients provide positive feedback after acquiring insurance thru InsureMyTrip (<https://www.insuremytrip.com/>) in the past, and would suggest that company as an alternative. When purchasing insurance with a company other than CSA, you will want to understand whether the timing of your purchase will affect coverage before paying your first deposit. Insurance purchase requirements can vary from company to company, and such requirements could limit your options if you do not look into this until making your final payment for your tour. Please let us know if you have any questions about this.

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. You acknowledge and agree that Field Guides Incorporated is not responsible 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.

NCP 7/2020

7/18 JFF; peg
11/22 JFF; 12/22peg