

Naturetrek Guatemala 2023



A TRAVEL BOOK BY



Roland Rumm



Naturetrek Guatemala 2023

January 19 – January 31, 2023

FLAGS COLLECTED



A 13-day adventure by Roland



14

Footprints



1

Countries



13

Days



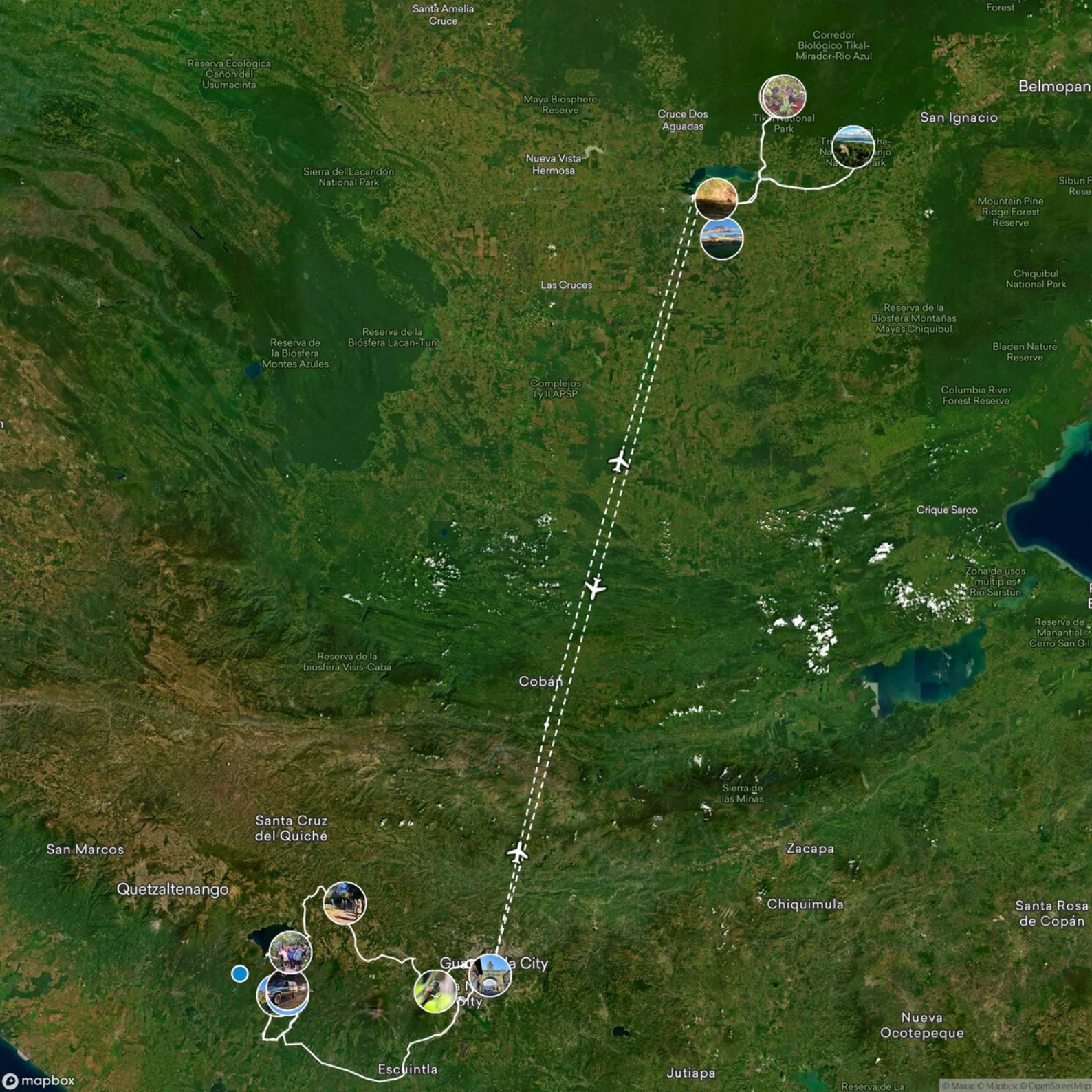
41

Photos



1,247

kilometers



Santa Amelia
Cruce

Reserva Ecológica
Cañón del
Usumacinta

Maya Biosphere
Reserve

Nueva Vista
Hermosa

Sierra del Lacandón
National Park

Cruce Dos
Aguadas

Tikal National
Park

Corredor
Biológico Tikal-
Mirador-Rio Azul

San Ignacio

Belmopan

Las Cruces

Reserva de la
Biosfera
Montes Azules

Reserva de la
Biosfera Lacan-Tun

Complejos
I y II APSP

Reserva de la
Biosfera Montañas
Mayas Chiquibul

Chiquibul
National Park

Mountain Pine
Ridge Forest
Reserve

Bladen Nature
Reserve

Columbia River
Forest Reserve

Crique Sarco

Zona de usos
múltiples
Rio Sarstún

Reserva de
Manantial
Cerro San Gil

Reserva de la
biosfera Visis-Cabá

Cobán

Sierra de
las Minas

Zacapa

San Marcos

Santa Cruz
del Quiché

Quetzaltenango

Chiquimula

Santa Rosa
de Copán

Guatemala City

Nueva
Ocotepique

Jutiapa

Escuintla

Reserva de La



Arrival to Guatemala



January 19, 2023 in Guatemala, La Aurora International Airport

After a long journey, the entire group arrived in Guatemala punctually. As we navigated through the busy afternoon traffic, we headed towards Antigua. We congregated for a delightful Guatemalan meal and retired to our rooms for a much-needed rest.

Time

4 pm

Partly cloudy

 21 °C

Altitude

1,513 m





Finca El Pilar



January 20, 2023 in Guatemala, Zanjón Niña Catalina

We began our day with a delicious breakfast at Posada de don Rodrigo before taking a short drive to the private Finca El Pilar. As soon as we disembarked from the bus, we were greeted by American Wood Warblers like the Tennessee and Townsend's Warbler. The weather was perfect and we had stunning views of the nearby volcanoes. We spent some time birdwatching around the Cabañas and spotted a Tropical Peewee, Acorn Woodpeckers, and a pair of Baltimore Orioles. We then took a trail and saw our first regional endemics such as Black-capped Swallows and Rufous-browed Wrens, and had a remarkable experience with a Red-faced Warbler that stayed with us for several minutes, while listening to the Highland Guans and Brown-backed Solitaires. After lunch by the hummingbird feeders in the lower part of the Finca, we had great views of the regional endemic Rufous Sabrewing and several other hummingbird species. We took a brief break at the hotel before taking a leisurely walk through the picturesque town of Antigua to conclude a wonderful first day of birdwatching in Guatemala.

Time

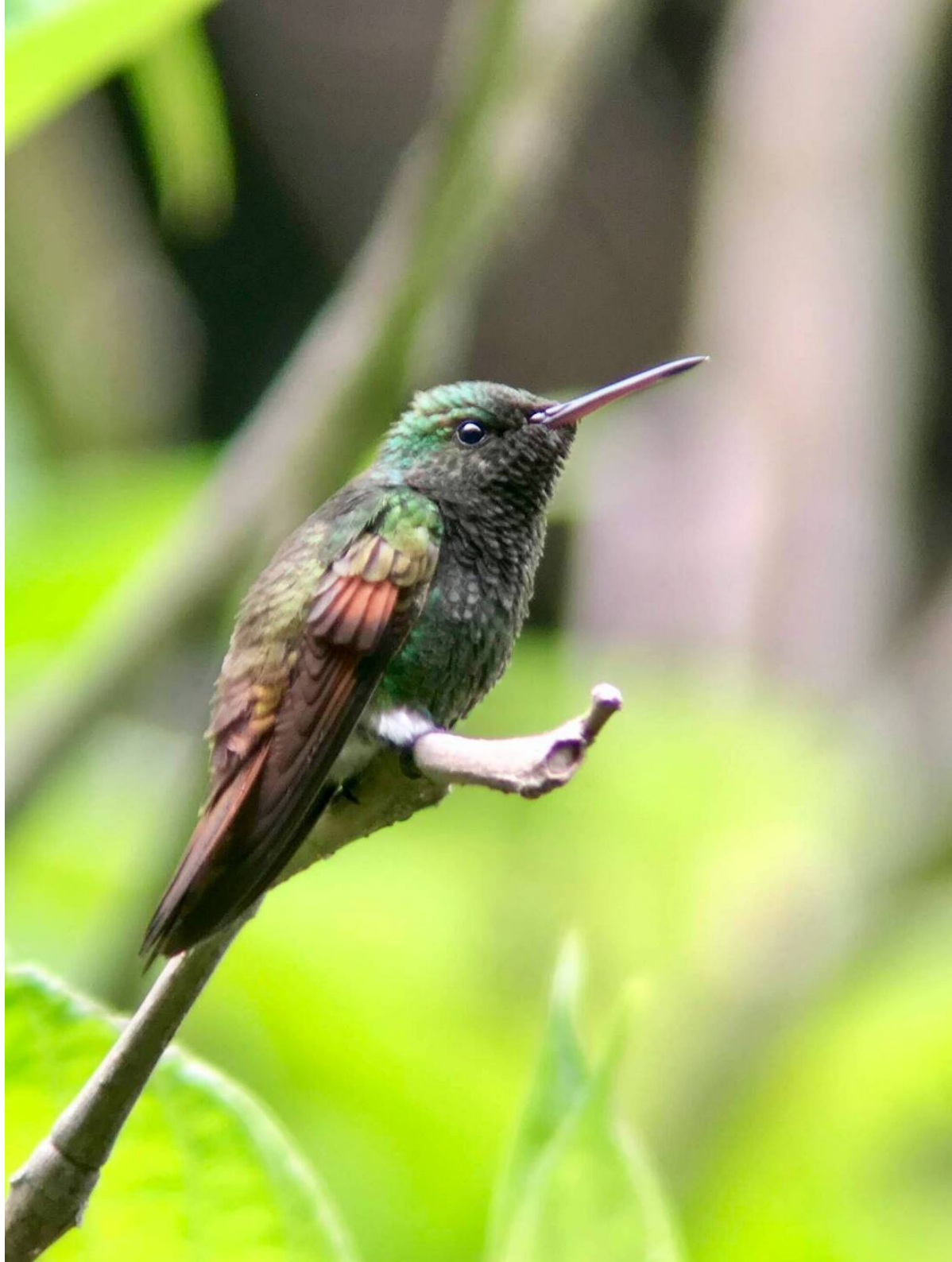
9 am

Partly cloudy

 18 °C

Altitude

2,033 m





Caleras Chichavac



January 21, 2023 in Guatemala, Cerro Santa Clara

We journeyed to Tecpan's Chichavac in pursuit of the elusive Pink-headed Warbler. After a one hour drive, we arrived at our birdwatching location. As we took a quick break for bathroom stops, we were greeted by the loud song of two Blue-and-white Mockingbirds that soon hopped into view, giving us all a great look at these elusive birds. However, as we were in search of the highly sought-after Pinkito, we continued down the trail. Along the way, we spotted several Centralamerican Steller's Jays, Band-backed Wrens, and a stunning Tufted Flycatcher. We eventually heard the faint chip of our target and, with a bit of effort, a beautiful Pink-headed Warbler emerged from the cypress trees into plain sight, eliciting awe from everyone. Throughout the morning, we added all the local specialties to our list and enjoyed great views of a cooperative Brown Creeper, a Yellow-eyed Junco, and a Spotted Towhee. After a satisfying lunch at Rincon Suizo, we made our way to Tarrales Lodge, where we would spend several nights. Upon arrival we quickly added lots of new species to the list like Yellow-napes Amazon, White-bellied Chachalaca and a very cooperative Ferruginous Pygmy Owl.

Time

9 am

Partly cloudy



15 °C

Altitude

2,513 m





Vesubio

 January 22, 2023 in Guatemala, San Jorge Quiacasicuán

We began our day by having breakfast at 5:30 am in the Tarrales lodge. Then, we boarded three 4-wheel drive vehicles to drive up the slopes of Atitlán volcano. After a 45-minute ride, we arrived at the abandoned village of Vesubio, where we were greeted by Lesser Goldfinches and a pair of Red-legged Honeycreepers. Our main goal for the day was to spot the Azure-rumped Tanager, which is only found in the Guatemalan foothills and a small part of Mexico. During a short hike, we stopped when we heard the chip sound of Sparrows, but were quickly distracted by the call of Blue-crowned Chlorophonias. To our surprise, we saw two pairs of them just a few feet away, feeding on berries. We continued to hike and heard the faint call of Azure-rumped Tanagers. At least two, and possibly more, came into sight. Although the blue rump was hard to spot, we were able to enjoy these rare birds. Soon after, we heard the distant call of an Ornate Hawk Eagle, we imitated its call and soon enough the beautiful raptor perched in a tree right in front of us, leaving us speechless. What a sight! We returned to the lodge for lunch and a rest during the hottest hours of the day. In the late afternoon we set out for another walk with the idea to find a Black-and-white Owl that had been recently spotted. We were successful in our search and were fortunate enough to find this majestic species during daylight and also saw other new species along the way. On our way back to the lodge, we were lucky enough to see a Northern Potoo while listening to a concert

of Common Paraques, Thicket Tinamous, and a Collared Forest Falcon. What an amazing day!

Time

7 am

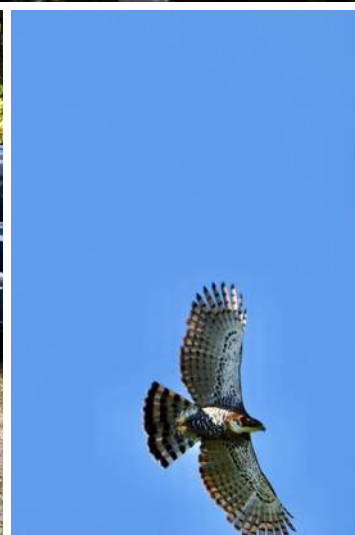
Clear day

☀️ 16 °C

Altitude

1,394 m







Finca Los Andes



January 23, 2023 in Guatemala, Cinco de Abril

Today we got up before the break of dawn and after a good cup of coffee we got onto our bus in order to drive to Finca Los Andes on the southern slopes of Atitlán volcano. After a rather long and difficult drive we made it there just in time for breakfast. What a stunning place it is. The British background of the Finca is undeniable and the fascination for natural history is very obvious. After breakfast we started out on a walk around the gardens before heading up into the tea and Macadamia plantations. After seeing some new species like Yellow-faced Grassquit and other Seedeaters we heard the beautiful call of a Black Hawk Eagle. Soon enough we spotted the majestic raptor and got some great views while it gently soared over our heads. Not too much later we were surprised by another raptor that is usually not easy to come by, the Great Black Hawk. After these two fantastic sightings we returned to the Finca for an absolutely superb lunch on the terrace. We birded a little while longer around the gardens, spotting a perched Broad-winged Hawk and a Violet Sabrewing before heading back towards Los Tarrales. But not without having a birding stop at the crazy gas station. This has been a very rewarding birding stop that often gives up several species that can't be found anywhere else on the tour. Shortly after arriving we found exactly one of those. A Ruddy-breasted Seedeater accompanied by two Painted Buntings that had been requested by Nick earlier this day. We enjoyed hundreds of Egrets and Herons flying into a roosting site while

behind us large flocks of Pacific Parakeets crossed the setting Sun. Again, an absolutely fabulous day in Guatemala!

Time

8 am

Clear day

☀️ 20 °C

Altitude

1,160 m







Bella Vista

 January 24, 2023 in Guatemala, San Jorge Quiacasiuán

After breakfast we got on the 4-wheel drive cars in direction of the southern part of the Finca called Bella Vista. Birding in the coffee plantation we got looks at White-bellied Emeralds while we were waiting for the star of the day. As soon as the sun started heating up the day we saw who we were waiting for. The beautiful King Vulture. The vulture gently soared over the canopy slowly gaining height in the early thermals until he reached enough altitude to cross over the ridge. We headed up to a lookout platform and shortly after arriving there we were rewarded with a second King Vulture who circled above us for several minutes. On the way back to the lodge we stopped for some Long-tailed Manakin that were not in the most cooperative mood. In the late afternoon once the heat cooled off we went for a walk on the lagoon trail where we encountered 22 of the very endangered Yellow-naped Amazons.

Time

7 am

Clear day

 19 °C

Altitude

1,057 m







Tarrales & Imap



January 25, 2023 in Guatemala, Islote Pachitúlul

Before breakfast we had a very special bird on the menu. The very shy Thicket Tinamou. We headed up to Tarrales' Tinamou hide and we're prepared for a wait. After a while Centralamerican Agoutis started to show up together with several White-tipped doves. A White-eared Ground-Sparrow gave us fantastic looks while waiting for the Tinamou. After about an hour the Tinamou gave its first appearance. Within another 20 minutes most of us had had a look at this shy bird. We birded La Rinconada coming up with some new species like Blue-throated Sapphire and Long-billed Starthroat. After lunch it was time to leave Tarrales behind. We got on the bus and started our drive up to lake Atitlán. There we stopped at the Imap to hopefully get a look at a Slender Sheartail. Initially the little hummer was nowhere to be found. From the observation platform we got several duck species including the uncommon Redhead. After a long search for the Sheartail we eventually heard it's fine chatter and managed to find an adult female feeding a chick. We continued on towards Santiago Atitlán where we would spend the night at the lovely Bambu Hotel.

Time

5 pm

Partly cloudy



19 °C

Altitude

1,568 m





Cerro Paquisis



January 26, 2023 in Guatemala, San Florencio

Today was the big day. Half of our group went on the adventure of finding a Horned Guan. Leaving at 4 am, long before dawn it was not going to be an easy day. It is by far one of the best opportunities to see a Horned Guan, but nevertheless it is a very tough hike. After several hours of hiking several high quality species like Wine-throated Hummingbird and Black Thrush were found and appreciated by everyone. But we had a target to find. During the late morning hours we encountered the mythical bird. And everyone got a quick look before the Guan flew away and disappeared for good. We continued up the mountain to look for a pair of Fulvous Owls that gave up great looks. After finding several other new species for the trip like Cedar Waxwings we started the long journey back to the Hotel. The mythical Horned Guan in our pockets. The rest of the group went on a short hike on the slopes of Volcan Toliman where we finally saw several Gray-Silky Flycatchers and also got great looks at Cabani's Wren at the Hotel. The afternoon was rather uneventful and everybody enjoyed the stunning surroundings of Lake Atitlán.

Time

10 am

Clear day

☀️ 24 °C

Altitude

1,079 m



Travel Day



January 27, 2023 in Guatemala, La Aurora International Airport

Today was mostly a travel day. Before breakfast we finally picked up a Black-vented Oriole in the garden of Hotel Bambú. We loaded our luggage onto the bus and off we went towards Guatemala City. We made it there in great time and had a delicious lunch at the Cabaña Suiza where we managed to lure in a curious Grace's Warbler. From here we went straight to the airport in order to fly to Flores. It was raining when we landed, but the weather was already great by the time we reached the jungle lodge.

Altitude

1,498 m



Tikal



January 28, 2023 in Guatemala, El Peten Airport

After breakfast, we began observing a whole new set of birds. The first on our list were 4 beautiful Great Curassow that helped themselves to a bonus breakfast near the employee kitchen. From then on, we had a classic Tikal day, packed with amazing birds like Brown-hooded Parrots, Ocellated Turkeys, Orange-breasted Falcon, Plain Xenops, Black-throated Shrike Tanager, to name a few. After a long walk through the ruins, we had lunch at the Meson and took a short break. In the afternoon, we went birding on the old runway. After spotting several Olivaceous Woodcreepers, we reached the pond and admired a group of Boat-billed Herons while three King Vultures flew overhead. On the way back to the Jungle Lodge, we were surprised by three Crested Guans who were busy chasing each other, oblivious to our presence. Love must be in the air. Just before dusk, we saw a pair of Common Pauraque singing their lovely song. Overall, a typical Tikal day, nothing less than amazing!

Time

7 am

Cloudy

 19 °C

Altitude

260 m







Tikal 2



January 28, 2023 in Guatemala, Temple II

For our second day in Tikal we took a pickup truck all the way in to temple four. It was still very foggy, and we took some time to find a Peanut head insect and a Yucatan Red-rumped Tarantula. Then we made our way over towards Mundo Perdido. As usual there was no one up on the pyramid, and as the fog lifted we enjoyed the awakening rainforest. As soon as the visibility was good enough we spotted one of the Orange-breasted Falcons on Temple 4 and soon after we had a rare visit of an absolutely gorgeous White Hawk. Also we observed several Scaled Pigeons and many species of Parrots, Toucans and Woodpeckers. Just before we began to climb down the pyramid, the Falcon gave us a great flight show while chasing after a flock of Scaled Pigeons. We birded our way back to the entrance, and had a great encounter with a Ruddy-tailed Flycatcher and several mixed feeding flocks led by Black-throated Shrike Tanagers.

In the afternoon we took a walk up the road towards Uaxactun, hoping to find an ant swarm. Sure enough shortly in to the walk we found a nice flock of Woodcreepers feasting on an ant swarm. We had a great show of Tawny-winged, Ruddy-, and Northern Barred Woodcreepers mixed with Red-throated Ant Tanagers. On the way back to the Jungle Lodge we heard several Scaly-throated Leaf-tosser to finish off the day. And once again,... Tikal!!!!

Time

10 am

Cloudy

 19 °C

Altitude

297 m







Yaxhá



January 29, 2023 in Guatemala, Laguna Yaxjá

After breakfast we left Tikal behind. What a busy two days it had been. But we had more birds to find. Before arriving in Yaxhá we made a stop along some fields and picked up several new species like Vermilion-, and Fork-tailed Flycatcher. At the gate we heard the sharp chip calls of Sparrows and were soon greeted by a very cooperative pair of Green-backed Sparrows. We had a lovely stroll through Yaxhá and had great views of birds that we had previously seen under much unfavorable conditions. A Smoky-brown Woodpecker hanging on a vine was completely unimpressed by our presence and was shortly followed by a White-bellied Wren. From the highest temple at Yaxhá we spotted a Bat Falcon and several King Vultures in the distance while we enjoyed a spectacular view over the lagoon.

After lunch at El Sombrero we took a boat across the lagoon scanning the shore for new species. We all had a wonderful time and returned with several Kingfisher, Anhinga and a flock of Black-bellied Whistling Ducks on our list. We drove back towards Flores in order to spend two more nights in Petén at the Villa Maya. A wonderful Hotel at the Petenchel lagoon.

Cloudy



30 °C

Altitude

283 m



NO PARARSE

NO SENTARSE



NOT STAND UP

NOT SIT DOWN



Ixpanpajul & Santa Ana



January 31, 2023 in Guatemala, El Bayal

After breakfast at the wonderful Villa Maya we headed to the Ixpanpajul Nature Park. Not knowing if we had many new birds left to find we started out on the lower trails. A short distance from the parking lot we came across a pair of Golden-crowned Warblers followed by a pair of Red-throated Ant Tanagers. Soon after we heard the squeaky call of several Black-faced Grosbeak. A rather hard species to come across. With some effort we managed to get some looks at the flock as it noisily passed through the forest.

After lunch at the Hotel Campestre we all needed a rest since the day had gotten rather hot. About an hour and a half before sunset we headed out towards to normally rather hot Savannah. The area turned out to be extremely birdy since it was a rather cool day, and we had a hard time keeping up with the many bird species that came through. We found several of the rarer species like Botteri's Sparrow and Olive Sparrow and also some of the flashier ones like Painted- and Indigo Bunting and Blue Grosbeak. A Striped Cuckoo was singing in the distance and made up for a wonderful soundtrack to a beautiful sunset over the Savannah.

Time

5 pm

Partly cloudy



28 °C

Altitude

214 m





Villa Maya



February 1, 2023 in Guatemala, Laguna Petenchel

Today was our last day in Petén and we had all morning to bird around the hotel grounds. Enjoying some of the species around the lagoon like Anhingas and Russet-naped Wood Rail we came across an absolute bonus bird that we did not expect to find. Perched high above the waterline on a branch we encountered a Sungrebe taking in the morning sun. We got the scope on it and everyone managed to have a good look before the rare bird fled off into the reeds.

At noon we all gathered for our last meal together before heading to the airport to take our flight back to Guatemala City. There we were greeted by Irene and Ana Paula who would take over for Roland on our last day of birding in Guatemala. It has been an absolutely wonderful trip with lots of fantastic birds, great company and lots of shared laughs surely to be remembered by everyone.

Time

9 am

Clear night

 20 °C

Altitude

126 m





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