



HOLBROOK
TRAVEL



Cuban Tody by Bill Hebner

CUBA

BIRDING CUBA'S FOOTHILLS, WETLANDS AND COAST
with BirdsCaribbean | Led by Lisa Sorenson



November 3-13, 2018

holbrook.travel/birdscaribbean-cu18

Cuba's protected natural areas, geographic isolation, and limited development combine to create an ideal destination for birders. The country's diverse habitats support over 360 avian species, more than two dozen of which are endemic to the island. Join BirdsCaribbean on this 11-day program, where you'll have the opportunity to observe specialties like the Cuban Tody, Zapata Wren, and Oriente Warbler, and explore dry scrub, mangrove, wetland, and coastal ecosystems. Gain deeper insight during meetings with Cuban conservationists to discuss projects and governmental policies. During your travels, meet Cuba's friendly people and discover the rich history and culture for which the country is known.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Learn how an urban park in Havana is connecting locals with nature.
- Watch for target species like the Cuban Grassquit and Olive-capped Warbler and meet with residents at Las Terrazas, a community and reserve that is a model of sustainability and ecotourism.
- Go birding at La Güira National Park, several sites in the Zapata Swamp, and on Cayo Coco.
- Visit the limestone cave that was Ernest "Che" Guevara's headquarters during the Cuban Missile Crisis and an excellent place to spot Cuban Solitaire and Scaly-naped Pigeon.

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- Bilingual local guide
- Driver
- Accommodations
- Activities
- Private transportation
- Meals
- Beverages with meals
- Carbon offsetting



Bee Hummingbird by Ekaterina Chernetsova

ITINERARY

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

NOVEMBER 3 - HAVANA

Individual arrivals in Havana today. *Overnight at Hotel Ambos Mundos.*

NOVEMBER 4 - HAVANA

After breakfast, meet your guide, driver and Cuban ornithologist, who will accompany you throughout the entire program. Morning visit to Quinta de los Molinos and learn how this urban park is used to connect residents with nature. If possible meet with students participating in the Birds of the City project. Take a walking tour of Old Havana before dinner. *Overnight at Hotel Ambos Mundos. (BLD)*

NOVEMBER 5 - SAN DIEGO DE LOS BAÑOS

Depart for La Güira National Park in San Diego de los Baños. Along the way, stop for birding at Las Terrazas, a UNESCO-designated Biosphere Reserve, guided by Fidel Hernández from the Ecological Station of Las Terrazas. Target species are Cuban Grassquit and Olive-capped Warbler. Other notable species here are Cuba's national bird, the Toco-ro-ro, and the world's smallest bird, the Bee Hummingbird. Meet with community residents who helped save this site, now a model of sustainability and ecotourism. This afternoon arrive at La Güira National Park, 54,000 acres of mountain wilderness, picturesque valleys, and hidden caves, and home to species such as Cuban Solitaire, Cuban Tody, Cuban Bullfinch, and Cuban Pewee. *Overnight at Hotel Mirador. (BLD)*

NOVEMBER 6 - SAN DIEGO DE LOS BAÑOS

Early breakfast followed by morning birding at Cueva de Los Portales, a limestone cave adjacent to hills covered in lush vegetation. The cave is interesting both geologically and historically, famous for being Ernesto "Che" Guevara's headquarters during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. The area is renowned for being an excellent place to spot Cuban Solitaire, your target species, and Scaly-naped Pigeon. This afternoon visit the Viñales area, a tobacco farm and the home of Nils Navarro, world-renowned nature artist and author. *Overnight at Hotel Mirador. (BLD)*

NOVEMBER 7 - ZAPATA PENINSULA

Depart early for the long drive to the Zapata Swamp. The Zapata area consists of scrub, mangrove swamp, and coastline. Over 200 species have been recorded here including the endemic Zapata Wren and Zapata Sparrow. Also look for species such as the Cuban Blackbird, Cuban Green Woodpecker, Greater Antillean Oriole, and Cuban Emerald. Late afternoon birding if time permits. *Overnight at Hotel Playa Larga. (BLD)*

NOVEMBER 8 - ZAPATA PENINSULA

Depart after an early breakfast for the La Turba area, where you may find Zapata Wren and Zapata Sparrow. Have lunch in the town of Palpite, where a special visit with artists of the Korimacao Project has been arranged. The Korimacao Community Project consists of residents from Cuban communities who are given the opportunity to develop and improve their performing skills such as singing, dancing, and playing instruments. Learn about the program's development and interact with the talented artists. Afternoon birding at Salinas, an area frequented by many species of waterbirds that live in mangrove swamps, coastal lagoons, and woods. Over 165 indigenous and migratory birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and invertebrates are found here. Expect to see flamingos, Roseate Spoonbill, Glossy and White Ibises, herons, pelicans, Snail Kite, Peregrine Falcon, Cuban Black-Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, and others. *Overnight at Hotel Playa Larga. (BLD)*

NOVEMBER 9 - ZAPATA PENINSULA

After breakfast leave for the Bermejas site. Target species include the Cuban Parakeet, Cuban Pygmy-Owl, Bee Hummingbird, Cuban Green Woodpecker, Fernandina's Flicker, Cuban Trogon, Cuban Tody, and Cuban Grassquit. A mosaic of dry forest, swamp, mangrove and mud flats, the Zapata Peninsula is one of the best preserved ecosystems on the island. Other species you might encounter are the Bare-legged Owl, Blue-headed Quail-Dove, and Gray-fronted Quail. Have lunch at a local restaurant with Zapata-area conservationists, who will provide updates on projects underway to preserve Cuba's largest wetlands. In

the late afternoon, bird in the nearby Sopillar region of the reserve. Dine at a paladar and meet the owners, who provide insight about their entrepreneurial activities. *Overnight at Hotel Playa Larga. (BLD)*

NOVEMBER 10 - CAYO COCO

Early breakfast, then depart for the long drive to Cayo Coco. Afternoon birding on the hotel's grounds. *Overnight at Hotel Sol Cayo Coco. (BLD)*

NOVEMBER 11 - CAYO COCO

Morning visit to Cayo Guillermo, returning to the hotel for lunch. This afternoon visit Cayo Romano. The Cayo Coco area combines an ideal spot for observing Cuba's bird life with beautiful beach and snorkeling opportunities. Look for Oriente Warbler, Thick-billed Vireo, Bahama Mockingbird, and Cuban Gnatcatcher, in addition to a variety of waterbirds including the West Indian Whistling-Duck. *Overnight at Hotel Sol Cayo Coco. (BLD)*

NOVEMBER 12 - CAYO COCO

This morning visit Cayo Paredon Grande for birding, hopefully catching any species we missed in the cayos. Afternoon free to enjoy the area. *Overnight at Hotel Sol Cayo Coco. (BLD)*

NOVEMBER 13 - DEPARTURE

Morning at leisure before depart for the Camaguey airport in time for flight home. (B)

ABOUT YOUR LEADER



Lisa Sorenson is an ornithologist, conservation biologist, and executive director of BirdsCaribbean. She has been working in the region for 30 years, starting with field research on the White-Cheeked Pintail in the Bahamas for her PhD. Lisa coordinates many of BirdsCaribbean's programs, raises funds, mentors young Caribbean wildlife professionals, develops materials, and facilitates training workshops in conservation education, bird research and monitoring techniques, and bird guide training. She is passionate about the region's amazing and unique birds and habitats and has dedicated her life to their conservation. She has traveled to and worked with partners in nearly every country in the region and is looking forward to sharing her love of Cuba and its people with you.

PROGRAM PRICING

\$4,195 (based on 10-12 participants)

Includes all accommodations, meals, activities and entrance fees as indicated in the itinerary, in-country transportation, full-time guide for the duration of the program, bottled water on the bus, and carbon offset. A portion of the proceeds from this trip will support conservation efforts in Cuba and the Caribbean by BirdsCaribbean, a non-profit dedicated to the conservation of birds and habitats in the Caribbean.

Does not include international airfare, gratuities, alcoholic beverages, or other items of a personal nature. Holbrook can assist with your flight arrangements if desired.

THE FINE PRINT

Cost is based on 10-12 participants in double occupancy rooms. Single rooms may be available at an additional cost. A \$200 per person deposit and enrollment form are required to reserve your space on the trip. This deposit is refundable excluding a \$100 cancellation fee until July 31, 2018, at which time non-refundable final payment is due. Trip cancellation insurance is strongly recommended. For more information call Travel Insured at 800-243-3174 or visit www.travelinsured.com. Holbrook Travel's agency number is 15849.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO ENROLL:

Visit holbrook.travel/birdscaribbean-cu18 or contact Debbie Sturdivant Jordan at debbie@holbrooktravel.com or 866-748-6146