

ALVARO'S ADVENTURES
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Birding Guatemala's Petén and Atitlan Highlands Feb 1 – 13, 2021

Guided by Dorian Anderson and local guides.



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Guatemala is a fantastic country with a diversity of great habitats, from montane forests in the west, to lowland “jungle” in the northern Petén region. This tour mixes the highlands of the Chiapas-Guatemala Highlands Endemic Bird Area with that of the Petén lowlands, the home of the huge cities of the Classical Maya Period. There are many



Lake Atitlan

unique species of birds to be found here, and this is a wonderfully diverse itinerary that samples the highlights of this incredible country. This itinerary incorporates great montane birding opportunities in this scenic country and allows us to experience the wonderful and colorful living culture, of the Maya in the Atitlan Area. Here we shall stay in two private reserves, part of a new network of ecotourism sites which mix agricultural production with ecotourism. These sites are largely shade coffee plantations, which grow some of the world's best coffee

(Antigua is one of the undisputed top coffee areas for quality and flavor), with care to maintain the productivity of the land, as well as the birds and other wildlife which use it! You will see firsthand how economic development when done right can benefit people, and not leave the birds and creatures stranded without a place to live. We will sample superb birding habitats, usually within the private reserves, at a moderate and enjoyable pace. We will be birding largely away from roads and traffic, helping to support landowners who care about nature and habitat conservation, and we will be seeing habitats that could bring us into contact with most of the avian specialties this region has to offer. We will also be using local guides trained as birding guides, in other regions of the highlands part of an innovative National Audubon project to increase economic development and conservation through birding.

The Petén is an entirely different region altogether. Lowlands of limestone and miles and miles of extensive lowland forest. This is peppered with waterbodies, some of them quite large in fact, as well as Mayan archaeological sites and areas of the drier, shorter and regionally endemic Tintal Forest. Here it is a lowland tropical wonderland, with flocks of parrots, an assortment of varying tyrant flycatchers, antshrikes, toucans, motmots, puffbirds, tanagers, aracarís among others. In short, a lot of great birds to be seen. While we visit Tikal and concentrate some time here, we shall also be visiting some nearby areas that are both very rich in bird life, are incredible archaeological sites in themselves, which are also part of the National Audubon project that seeks to support local economies through birding tourism. We will go and bird where our economic effect

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has true conservation impact! Alvaro has been involved in this project for several years now, and has helped to create the training structure, and birding itineraries for this region.

Back to the highlands, many of the great birds we will be seeking are restricted to the highlands centered in southern Guatemala, but also reaching to adjacent Chiapas, Mexico, El Salvador and Honduras. The goodies are many, and they include the Highland Guan, Ocellated Quail, Fulvous Owl, Black-capped Swallow, Bushy-crested Jay, Rufous-



Turquoise-browed Motmot

browed Wren, Black and Rufous-collared robins, Blue-and-white Mockingbird, Pink-headed Warbler, Azure-rumped Tanager, Bar-winged Oriole, and Black-capped Siskin among others. There will be an option for those who are fit and have endurance to do a steep and difficult hike up a volcano in search of the rare but spectacular Horned Guan. Guatemala is a land of many motmots, and we may encounter Tody, Blue-crowned, Turquoise-browed (on next page) and the local Blue-throated – that's beaucoup motmots! We also will be in great areas to see the absolutely awesome Resplendent Quetzal and we will try hard to find one. We will not lack for great birding, scenery, food, world-class coffee, or cultural experiences.

Hummingbirds will make an impression on this trip, there is a great diversity as well as abundance. Many of the lodges now have hummingbird feeders, so species that were in the recent past quite difficult to find are now much more reliable. The Rufous Sabrewing, a local specialty was a heck of a difficult species to see but now you can see them at feeders! Other species we may encounter include the Violet Sabrewing, the showy Black-crested Coquette, Green-throated Mountain-gem, as well as tiny and local Emerald-chinned, Azure-crowned, Blue-tailed (endemic subspecies), Amethyst-throated, Garnet-throated, Sparkling-tailed, and Wine-throated hummingbirds! We will have a great chance to see these little gems, and hopefully enjoy great studies of them as well. There is nothing like seeing hummingbirds, but more so if you can get satisfying looks at them.

Part of the focus of this tour will also be to enjoy, study and learn about North American birds in their wintering areas. Guatemala is vital to northern migrants and has winterers both from the east and west of the continent. You may see a Western Tanager hobnobbing with a Baltimore Oriole; a Louisiana Waterthrush with a Townsend's Warbler, or a Hammond's Flycatcher near a Yellow-bellied! It is a superb place to not only enjoy these birds but learn about their identification and wintering ecology. What they do here is not what they do up north, although sometimes there are some great

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similarities. Seeing “our” birds in a different perspective adds immensely to a fuller understanding of their lives, and also how these birds unite people across borders.

Conservation Birding

This tour strives to mix birding, economic development and conservation. Alvaro's Adventures has been involved in various ways with Guatemala and trying to bring in more birders to this part of the world. First of all, the private reserves we will visit include Finca Los Andes, Finca El Pilar and Finca Los Tarrales. These are havens for the naturalist, and still working farms where we can experience, enjoy and support places where nature is part of the economic equation. This is where this shade-grown coffee production you have heard about will become a tangible reality to you. This way of growing coffee is excellent for birds, we will have the opportunity to see first-hand that when well-managed, it can be great for birds. Alvaro was at the forefront of getting Guatemala back in the eyes of birders some years ago. After being invited by the Guatemalan government to inform a process to help Guatemala bring its birding to international prominence, and to promote the sustainable model of birding in private reserves, it has been of great satisfaction to see more and more birders and tour companies adding Guatemala to their offerings. More recently Alvaro has worked with the International Alliances Program of the National Audubon Society to help in the creation of curricula, training plans, and developing both routes and itineraries in various countries, including Guatemala, to increase the direct economic benefit to local communities through birding. We will be part of this process and will incorporate local guides while visiting areas where local communities are throwing their hat into the birding and ecotourism model of economic development. We are hoping that through these efforts, forests and standing trees are worth more to the local people than clearings and open fields. The links between birding, tourism and conservation are particularly strong on this trip!

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The Birding Sites We Visit

Antigua and Guatemala City—Our tour begins in an interesting and birdy area, near Antigua which is approximately a 45-minute drive from Guatemala City. Here one finds a mix of dry valleys and good highland forest, mainly a mix of oaks and pines but also



Volcan de Fuego

moister cloud forest. It is in this highland habitat that some of the specialties of the trip are found. The species we will be looking for here include: White-breasted Hawk (sometimes considered a subspecies of the Sharp-shinned Hawk), Highland Guan, Pacific Parakeet, Rufous Sabrewing, Green-throated Mountain-Gem, Amethyst-throated Hummingbird, Blue-throated Motmot, “Guatemalan” Northern Flicker, Gray-collared Becard, Black-

capped Swallow, Bushy-crested Jay, Rufous-browed Wren, Black and Rufous-collared robins/thrushes, 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 *delatri* 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 Maya culture, it is a center for tourism. It is known for its silver and ceramics, but of course Antigua coffee is among some of the world’s best.

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TIKAL – Birding Tikal is absolutely magical. You will be at the premier classical period Mayan site, one of the most mystical and important cultural sites in the Americas! Some of the pyramids are over 200 feet tall, and yes you can climb them. But then



Tikal

imagine Yucatan Black Howler Monkeys, Keel-billed Toucans, Montezuma Oropendolas, Laughing Falcon or maybe a White Hawk going over. The unique Ocellated Turkey, one of the most fantastic looking

of American birds, is common here. Tikal is now history, but you have to picture that at one time perhaps 90,000 people lived here. This city was the most important in the region, and its control, political and military influence extended through a large region of Central America. It is considered by many as the most spectacular Mayan site that exists. This is a wonder of the world, but the icing is that there is so much forest, so many birds and so much wildlife right here in Tikal. Picture mornings with flocks of parrots flying by and stopping to sit in big emergent trees: they could be Olive-throated Parakeet, Brown-hooded, White-crowned, White-fronted, Red-lored, or perhaps Mealy parrots; there is amazing diversity here! Tinamous, motmots, aracaris, jacamars, puffbirds, leaf-tossers,



Russet-naped Wood-Rail

antthrushes, or the odd Northern Royal Flycatcher. There is a lot to see here. One particular specialty is the Orange-breasted Falcon, a rare tropical falcon that over time has chosen to nest in one of the Mayan Temples. These fantastic raptors are not only gorgeous, they are rare as they need large tracts of habitat to find food, and cliffs (or temples) to breed in. We will concentrate on finding a wide variety of birds while here, specifically the Orange-breasted Falcon and of course we will take time to learn about, study and learn about the

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site, the Maya and the history of this amazing place. During our time here we will be accompanied by an experienced archaeological guide.

Guacamayas and Paso Caballos. Paso Caballos is a Q'eqchí community located in a fantastic access point to Laguna del Tigre National Park. Paso Caballos has a population of 1,500 inhabitants. This community has signed agreements with the government and Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), to control agricultural fires, impact on the land, and regulation of migration of people from the outside, and prohibition of cattle in the area. In return, the government and WCS provide technical assistance, education, health and educational infrastructure. As such, the local community is invested in trying to promote ecotourism in their region and some members being trained as birding guides by the National Audubon Society and WCS.

This is an extremely rich and rewarding area to go birding. The wetland habitats along the shores of the Rio San Pedro Martyr are more extensive than in nearby areas frequented by birders. Access to the Guacamayas Research Station is by boat, as is the trip farther on to the El Peru Archaeological Site. This is an area of fantastic lowland tropical forest, a place where a Crested Guan may call from the trees, or where a Great Curassow may walk across the trail. Jaguars are here, although always a challenge to see. At least eight species of woodcreepers are found here, as well as huge Lineated and Pale-billed



Pink-headed Warbler

woodpeckers, several species of trogons, Blue-crowned Motmot and a myriad of wintering migratory warblers, tropical flycatchers and more distinctive species such as the entertaining Montezuma Oropendola. But the prize bird is the fantastic Scarlet Macaw, not common in the Petén, yet this is one of the best areas to find it.

Uaxactún A relatively small archaeological site only 12 miles north of Tikal, but for the birder and naturalist, the habitat here is different. Apart from second growth woodlands, there is short tinal forest, with specialties such as the Yucatan Jay, the “*albinucha*” form of the Carolina Wren that surely deserves Yucatan endemic status, Rose-throated Tanager and Gray-throated Chat. This spot is “off the beaten path” so it is still in the discovery stage but promises to have some interesting species due to its distinct habitat compared to nearby Tikal. The forest was a chicle and allspice concession that the local village decided to protect for its ecological value.

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Yaxhá This is an important archaeological site and is considered the third largest ancient Mayan city in the region. Although first described in 1904, and mapped in the 1970s, restoration of the site did not begin until the 1980s. The city comprised more than 500 structures, including nine temple pyramids. Nearly as important and as large as Tikal, fewer structures are excavated here, giving the impression that you are discovering the site as you visit! There are no crowds as in Tikal, so the birding is much more intimate, and the solitude is certainly advantageous for birding. On the quiet trails, you may run across one of the four species of tinamou, Great, Little, Slaty-breasted and Thicket or perhaps the hard to find Pheasant Cuckoo. In the mornings or evenings, from the top of the pyramids one can see a great flight of parrots, with flocks of Red-lored, White-fronted, Mealy, and White-crowned parrots. Goodies like the Rose-throated Tanager, Grey-throated Chat, and Tody Motmot may be found here. There are adjacent open habitats where the huge and uncommon Jabiru lives.

Finca Los Andes is on the south slope of the Atitlan Volcano and is a coffee and organic tea “finca”. 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 to see how well people are cared for and how well the land is cared for is inspiring to say the least. They sell their own coffee, Tangara, as it is a great place to see the Cabanis’s Tanager. The productive part of the finca is in the lower elevations, higher up is the forest which helps in maintaining the cloud cover over the finca, and water flow downslope.

There is a nice population of the Resplendent Quetzal—the sacred bird of the Maya—here, and a nest box program. Birds here include the above mentioned Cabanis’s Tanager. Other goodies we hope to encounter here are Black Hawk-Eagle, Highland



Long-tailed Manakin

Guan, White-faced Quail-Dove, Emerald Toucanet, Green-throated Mountain-Gem, Scaly-throated Foliage-Gleaner, Scaled Antpitta, Spotted Nightingale-Thrush, Black Robin, and Blue-crowned Chlorophonia.

Finca Los Tarrales is located not too distant from Finca Los Andes. However, the elevation and humidity profile differs and so does the bird life. The lodge itself is lower in elevation than Finca Las Nubes, and here we may enjoy great looks at Spot-breasted Oriole, White-throated Magpie-Jay, Orange-fronted and Orange-chinned parakeets, Highland Guan, the handsome Long-tailed Manakin (on left), perhaps the cute Tody

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Motmot, and the nice looking White-eared Ground-Sparrow, as well as many wintering Neotropical migrants (this is Tennessee Warbler and Western Tanager Mecca). Los Tarrales also offers us access to the highlands, where the Horned Guan is the real star of the show for those who are fit and strong enough to hike up the volcano. Most of us will elect to stay birding in the rich lowlands of Los Tarrales. For those who are in for adventure, the Horned Guan is nowhere easy to see, and it won't be easy for us either, it is by no means a sure thing even after the walk. We will climb the steep slopes above Los Tarrales, trying to keep the pace reasonable; but there is no way to get around the fact that it is a long climb beginning at a reasonably high altitude very early in the morning. But if one is successful, it will all seem worthwhile.

Lake Atitlan—Lake Atitlan has sometimes been called the most beautiful lake in the world. It is just above 5000 feet in elevation, nestled in the mountains. It seems that



Lake Atitlan

everywhere you look you see a volcanic peak! As you travel across the lake you see local fishermen in their dugouts pushing themselves along with poles through the reed beds along the shallow shores of the lake. Birds while we are here may include migratory ducks, such as Lesser Scaup among others. We also may find the fantastic Sparkling-tailed hummingbird and maybe the Slender Sheartail (rare) along with Golden-olive

Woodpecker, Band-backed

Wren, Blue-and-white Mockingbird, Rufous-collared Robin, Slate-throated Redstart, Black-vented Oriole, Black-headed Siskin, Rusty and Rufous-collared sparrows.

To birders Lake Atitlan has been most famous for its endemic Atitlan Grebe which sadly is now extinct. Known as the *poc* by the locals, it was a larger, warier cousin of the Pied-billed Grebe, which also is found here. According to Anne La Bastille (Mama Poc), 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 degradation of the habitat really hit the grebe hard, by the late 70s it was nearly gone, and by the mid-80s it could no longer be found! Sadly, this vulnerable species has been declared extinct.

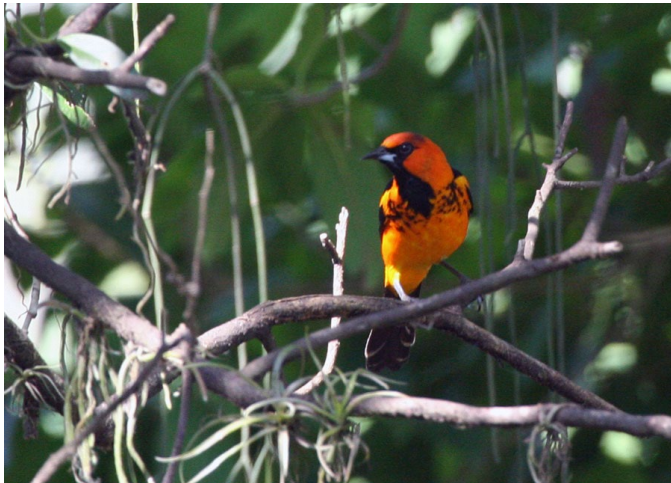
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About the Physical Requirements & Pace

The highlands of Guatemala are rich with avian specialties, great birds, migrants, and just a nice overall mix of Central American Species. Some birds are of course common, and many are scarce or difficult to find. We have put together a tour that samples the specialties of the Guatemala highlands well, one that allows us to see what our own birds



do in the non-breeding season while wintering in Guatemala, as well as to get acquainted with and learn about the biology of many common birds from this part of the world. Of course, we will not see all of the specialties, although our itinerary is designed to allow us the chance at most of them. Some of the areas we will be birding in are off the beaten path and we have chosen to concentrate on private reserves where we can be birding away from roadsides or other well-traveled sites. We aim to maintain

comfort, and maximize the chance to try local food, interact with people, perhaps visiting a local market and to really get to enjoy the non-birding aspect of this fantastic and culturally rich country. In order to fit all of this in during a short amount of time there will be some days with several hours of travel time in a tour bus, as well as a short internal flight. Most of our stays will be multiple nights at any one area. There are also many early mornings to get us into the birding areas when activity is high, but we also will have some times here and there to rest after lunch (siesta) and re-convene when activity is picking up again (mid-day tends to be when activity is slowest of course – for birds and birders!). In the highlands we will not be birding flat areas, there are slopes to walk up and down in order to bird the areas appropriately. For some a walking stick will make it more comfortable. It is the start of the dry season while we are there, so rain is not as likely, and we should not encounter mud on the trails (knock on wood). Much more likely is that it will be dusty and dry. We will keep our hiking to a slow and moderate pace, enough to see the forest, but also to stop and look at birds. You should be able to walk for several miles each day, sometimes with much of it on a slope in the highlands part of our trip. To rest you may want to take a folding stool, particularly when we are waiting for certain birds to appear; standing around can tire one out more than walking at times. In the Petén it is flat, but it is warmer and more humid than in the highlands. Sometimes the flat limestone can be slippery if it has been wet. Good walking shoes with a good grip will work, and again a walking stick can be useful for some.

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The optional **Horned Guan Hike** is quite difficult and even when you are in its habitat it can be difficult to find. In order to get to the area at a good and early time, this day may involve a very early start (4:30 or 5:00 a.m.). The hike to guan habitat is quite strenuous; Alvaro considers this one of the hardest hikes he has ever had to do to see a bird. The issue is that the trail is straight up, rather than switchbacks, and it is long. So rather than the footing being difficult, it is relatively steep and relentless. It is difficult! You need to be prepared to walk up a steep grade, a relentless steep grade without any flats and very little switchbacks. This can be tough on knees, particularly on the way down. The climb is several miles in length, and hundreds of feet in elevation gain, it takes several hours! The plan is not to race up the volcano and we will keep the pace as relaxed as possible, but even taken slowly, this is a tough hike due to the slope, the dusty nature of the trails and the elevation (starting at 6000 feet elevation). **This is not a walk to be tried by all of us.** For those who want to skip the hike, we shall offer some great birding lower down, in some very diverse forest.

Itinerary for Guatemala

Feb 1, 2021 (Day 1) – Arrival in Guatemala City.

Arrival in Guatemala, overnight in Guatemala City.

Feb 2, 2021 (Day 2) – Fly to Flores and on to Tikal.

We have a morning flight to Flores. After arrival in Flores we will transfer to Tikal. We will be birding after lunch in the entrance area of Tikal. Night at the Jungle Lodge in Tikal

Feb 3, 2021 (Day 3) – Tikal. This is a full day of magic!

To bird among the temples of Tikal is awe inspiring, to think about the environment, the people who built this city, the civilization that once was here and to see how the forest has reigned over this ruin until re-discovered is all amazing. Then to climb the temples, to see parrots and Montezuma Oropendolas go by and the miles of forest, well it is a day you won't forget. Local specialties here are the Orange-breasted Falcon the superb Ocellated Turkey. Optional owling tonight. Overnight at Jungle Lodge.



White-throated Magpie-Jay

Feb 4, 2021 (Day 4) – Uaxactún.

We will leave early to visit Uaxactún, with a box lunch. Uaxactún is an archaeological site only 12 miles north of Tikal. Visiting its unique tinal forest, we hope to find local specialties such as the Yucatan Jay and Gray-throated Chat. Overnight at Jungle Lodge.

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Feb 5, 2021 (Day 5) – Tikal – Las Guacamayas (Paso Caballos). We have another excellent morning of birding in Tikal before heading south. We will have a box lunch today on our way towards Paso Caballos. This is a newer birding site, now established as a birding destination. The area is home to over 260 species of birds, including the Scarlet Macaw, rare in the Petén. To access the Biological Station, we shall be transported by boat on a 20-minute trip along the San Pedro River. An optional night trip on the river may allow for some night birding, as well as observations of the Morrelet's Crocodile. Night at Las Guacamayas Biological Station.



Black-and-white Owl

Feb 6, 2021 (Day 6) – All day Paso Caballos. Within Laguna del Tigre National Park, we will bird the Guacamayas Biological Station. Part of our birding will be from a boat, if we are lucky we may find the Agami Heron. Great, Thicket and Little tinamous may be heard in the forest, and with luck we could find one of these skulkers. Tropical specialties abound here, such as Collared Aracari, Keel-billed Toucan, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, White-whiskered Puffbird, as well as good populations of parrots, forest dwelling flycatchers, Red-capped Manakin and plenty of other resident and migrant land birds. Night at Las Guacamayas Biological Station.

Feb 7, 2021 (Day 7) – Paso Caballos to Yaxhá, return to Guatemala City. This is primarily a travel day with a nice visit to Yaxhá. Not as well-known as Tikal, Yaxhá is an important archaeological site, which is gaining prominence as researchers delve

deeper into its history. The area is part of the Yaxhá-Nakúm-Naranjo National Park, which protects the archaeological sites, as well as a large expanse of forest. Here large flocks of parrots are common, and of many species, Red-lore, White-fronted, Mealy, and White-crowned, move through the area early and late in the day. There is diversity of habitats including the lake with waterbird and shorebird habitat, open savanna where Yellow-tailed Orioles may be found, as well as the expanse of forests with a diversity of woodcreepers, Slaty-tailed, Gartered and Black-headed trogons, hummingbirds, tanagers and others. We will board an afternoon flight back to Guatemala City from where we shall transfer to the gorgeous city of Antigua. Night in Antigua.

Feb 8, 2021 (Day 8) – Finca El Pilar to Finca Los Andes. This morning we visit Finca El Pilar, a private reserve with great pine-oak forest and excellent trails for birding immediately adjacent to Antigua. As well there are some well-kept and active

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hummingbird feeders. We will visit the feeders and walk the trails this morning looking for species such as Black-capped swallow, Blue-throated Motmot, Bar-winged Oriole, Hooded Grosbeak and Pacific Parakeets. A fantastic and relatively common species here is the awesome Gray Silky-Flycatcher. The feeders host Azure-crowned, Berylline and White-eared hummingbirds as well as Rufous Sabrewing, and Green-throated Mountain-Gem. We have lunch in Antigua and then depart for Finca Los Andes, arriving in the afternoon. If time allows we will bird around the main house. Night in Finca Los Andes.

Feb 9, 2021 (Day 9) – Los Andes Private Nature Reserve and coffee farm. We shall spend our entire day in Finca Los Andes, on the slopes of Volcan Atitlan. This is a spot where we can enjoy the Cloud Forest, and if we are lucky we may find the Resplendent Quetzal, Highland Guan, Spotted Nightingale-Thrush, Scaled Antpitta and other cloud-forest species. Los Andes is also a wonderful coffee producer! Night in Finca Los Andes.

Feb 10, 2021 (Day 10) – Los Andes – Los Tarrales Private Nature Reserve. After some morning birding at Los Andes we will transfer to another private reserve, Finca Los Tarrales which is actually just on the other side of the Atitlan Volcano from Los Andes. Los Tarrales has an exceptional bird list, with birds from lowland to highland habitats, and good access to various types of forest. The abundance of migratory birds here including Swainson's Thrush, Tennessee, Magnolia, Black-and-white warblers, Western Tanager and Orchard Oriole are impressive. It is a good place for raptors as well, including the Black Hawk-Eagle, and sometimes the gorgeous Black-and-white Owl. Morning and evening are great for commuting parrots with four species of parakeets and parrots typically seen. Night at Los Tarrales.

Feb 11, 2021 (Day 11) – Los Tarrales. Today most of us will continue birding the lower and upper trails at Los Tarrales, working on finding some great diversity of birds here. We will look for displaying Long-tailed Manakins. During lunch we will take some time to enjoy the feeders where Orchard, Altamira, Spot-breasted and Baltimore orioles come to feed along with Rufous-naped Wrens and Yellow-throated Euphonias. If there is interest, we shall offer an **OPTIONAL HIKE** to attempt to find the Horned Guan (at additional cost). This is a very difficult and strenuous hike, not for everyone. It is a climb up Atitlan Volcano. You will climb this impressive volcano searching for the Horned Guan starting pre-dawn (4 am) and with a packed lunch. This is a very hard climb, and most of us cannot make it, but if there are fit and willing participants, we can offer it as an option; the guan is by no means easy even once you are up there! Night at Los Tarrales.

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Feb 12, 2021 (Day 12) – Los Tarrales – Lake Atitlan and return to Guatemala City.

We will leave Los Tarrales today and make our way to Lake Atitlan where we will cross it



"Guatemalan" Junco

on boat. In the morning we shall visit El Rey Tepepul park in Santiago Atitlan. This is a 3500-hectare park, mostly forest with a wide altitudinal range. It is in the development stage, in particular for birding, but we do know that there are great birds to be found within the park. A newly paved road gives access to parts of this park. Thus far some nice birds have been found here including the Yellow-naped Parrot, Blue-crowned Chlorophonia, the gorgeous Azure-rumped Tanager, and perhaps even the rare and spectacular

Resplendent Quetzal. We will visit Panajachel on our way out of the Atitlan Basin, and stop in the pine-oak forests of Rincon Suizo to snack and bird while continuing to our last dinner in Guatemala City. We may find the "Guatemalan" Yellow-eyed Junco at Rincon Suizo (photo above). Night in Guatemala City.

Feb 13, 2021 (Day 13) GUATEMALA CITY – AIRPORT. Transfer to airport this morning and return home.

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Your Guide

Dorian Anderson Dorian Anderson started birding in Philadelphia at age 7 and since then has emerged as a well-known, and liked member of the American birding



community. Though a Ph.D. level Molecular Geneticist trained at Stanford, NYU, and Harvard, he abandoned that trajectory in 2014 when he undertook his Biking for Birds project, the first-of-its-kind North American bicycle Big Year. During that year, Dorian bicycled 18,000 miles around the United States birding, photographing, and blogging (<http://bikingforbirds.blogspot.com>). He visited 28 states, found 618 species, raised \$49,000 for bird conservation, and had the adventure of a lifetime - all without using a drop of petroleum. Since then, Dorian has been speaking publicly about that project, bird guiding, and honing his bird photography craft (<http://dorianandersonphotography.com>). He has been invited to join excursions to Sweden, Spain, Colombia, Belize, Guatemala, and Taiwan in the last few years, and those who have taken pelagic trips with Alvaro's

Adventures will undoubtedly recognize his enthusiastic and engaging personality from those boats. You can get a sense of Dorian from his birding blog, The Speckled Hatchback (<http://thespeckledhatchback.blogspot.com/>). His blend of birding, bird photography, adventure, and sense of humor should not be missed. He and his wife currently live in San Mateo, California.

Local guides will also be working with the group, throughout the trip.

Financial Information

FEE: \$4800 from Guatemala City

DEPOSIT: \$500 per person

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: Oct 5, 2020

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$600

HORNED GUAN (Optional): \$120 per person.

LIMIT: 10

Additional Information

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

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and entry requirements is generally available online or phone or e-mail Alvaro's Adventures and we can look this up. Passports should have an adequate number of blank pages for the entire journey.

AIR ARRANGEMENTS: Please plan to arrive in Guatemala City Feb 1, 2021. We are happy to make arrangements for an extra night for you if you decide to arrive a day early, and this is recommended. Flights back home at the end of the tour (for main tour or extension) can be booked for any time. There are direct flights to Guatemala City from various cities in the US.

Be sure to check with Alvaro's Adventures to confirm that the flights you have will work with our itinerary and to confirm that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. Once purchased, most airline tickets are non-refundable and carry a penalty to change. We are not responsible for these fees.

TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS: The tour fee is \$4700 for one person in double occupancy from Guatemala City. It includes all lodging from Day 1 through Day 13, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on Day 13, all ground transportation, entrance fees, tips for baggage handling and meal service, and the guide services of the tour leaders. The fee includes an archaeological guide during our time in Tikal. The price also includes the internal flight from Guatemala City to Flores.

The above fees do **not** include your airfare to and from Guatemala, airport taxes, visa fees, any alcoholic beverages, optional tips to local drivers, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

The single supplement for the main tour is \$600. 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.

TOUR REGISTRATION: To register for this tour, complete the enclosed Registration/Release and Indemnity form and return it with a **deposit of \$500** 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 Oct 5, 2020. 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: This is a non-smoking tour.

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

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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 Alvaro's Adventures 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 another guide for the original one. Where this is necessary, notification will be given to tour members, and they will have the right to cancel their participation and receive a full refund.

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.

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 Alvaro's Adventures, 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. Alvaro's Adventures acts only as an agent for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, or other means, and

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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. Alvaro's Adventures 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. Alvaro's Adventures 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. Alvaro's Adventures 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, and other pertinent matter provided by Alvaro's Adventures. 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.

6/2020