



Violet Sabrewing by Karen Straus



## BIRDING GUATEMALA'S HIGHLANDS AND LAKE ATITLÁN with Seattle Audubon

February 8 - 18, 2018



### HIGH INTENSITY!

This program is for serious birders. Expect at least 6-8 hours of birding each day.

*Guatemala is a richly diverse cultural center and a lush and vibrant paradise for birders. Set in the heart of Central America, it is one of the New World's prime migratory corridors. See firsthand many of the species Audubon hopes to protect through its ongoing conservation efforts. Meet the folks with the National Audubon's Asociación Vivamos Mejor program based in Panajachel on Lake Atitlán. Learn about their training program for Guatemalans to become birding and nature guides. Under their guidance, you'll explore a variety of habitats, seek out rare and endemic species, and meet with locals who are part of the Audubon bird-tourism initiative in Santiago Atitlán, a hub of Maya culture. Enjoy the area's natural riches while supporting the community and protecting a diverse ecosystem.*

### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Bird the lower and upper trails at Los Tarrales, with the goal of seeing the Long-tailed Manakin's impressive courtship display.
- Visit Asociación Vivamos Mejor (AVM), a private nonprofit development organization committed to improving the quality of life of rural communities surrounding Lake Atitlán.
- Visit Corazon del Bosque Reserve for the chance to see Mountain Trogon, Spotted Woodcreeper, White-naped Brush-Finch, and with luck, the uncommon Pink-headed Warbler.
- Explore San Juan Laguna, a village known for its many women's cooperatives, and meet some of the entrepreneurs who weave traditional textiles there.

## Support Audubon and its partners to advance sustainable development in bird hot-spots

**Holbrook Travel** is a supporting partner in Audubon's conservation work in Latin America and in the Caribbean. One aspect of that work is the strengthening of **bird-based tourism** as a conservation and sustainable development tool. As part of our **Flyway Expeditions** series, this program is designed to help protect key areas along the flyways for migratory and local species. As a participant on this trip, you'll have a direct economic impact on local people and communities, help preserve IBAs, and nurture an emerging ecotourism industry.

Learn more at [holbrook.travel/flywayexpeditions](http://holbrook.travel/flywayexpeditions)

## ITINERARY

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

### FEBRUARY 8 - ANTIGUA

Arrive at La Aurora International Airport in **Guatemala City**. After clearing customs and immigration, meet our local representatives and transfer to Antigua, about an hour away, depending on traffic. This evening enjoy a welcome talk on the upcoming journey. *Overnight at Hotel Posada Don Rodrigo, Antigua. (D)*

### FEBRUARY 9 - LOS ANDES PRIVATE NATURE RESERVE

After breakfast, travel to **Finca El Pilar**, a private reserve with great pine oak forest and excellent trails for birding. Walk the trails looking for various species and visit the hummingbird feeders. In the afternoon, we continue to **Finca Los Andes**, on the southern slopes of the Atitlán Volcano. The cloud forest that lies between the tea gardens and the coffee fields are abundant in wildlife, especially birds, among them the elusive Resplendent Quetzal. Los Andes is also home to the rare Cabanis's Tanager, also known as the Azure-rumped Tanager. This small, blue, exquisite bird's highly localized habitat is shared by hundreds of local and migrating species, including a host of hummingbirds, orioles, flycatchers, trogons and motmots. Sixty percent of the reserve is original forest, most of it along the slopes of the dormant volcano. In 2001, Los Andes was declared a private nature reserve, and it is a founding member of Guatemala's Association of Private Nature Reserves. The Reserve works closely with the residents to promote self-sufficiency, health and education. Present programs for conservation include artificial nests for the Quetzals. The reserve has a reforestation program approved by INAB (The National Forestry Institute), as well as eucalyptus forests planted for firewood. Coffee and quinine prunings also supply lumber and firewood. Financial and technical assistance are provided to buy and install efficient wood burning stoves in the workers' houses. Los Andes has its own hydroelectric plant, which generates all the power used on the estate. *Overnight at Finca Los Andes. (BLD)*

### FEBRUARY 10 - FINCA LOS ANDES

Continue with birding at the reserve. The local residents are being trained as guides to provide them with an alternate source of income and hunting has been prohibited. Hummingbird feeders at the lodge may attract the Blue-tailed Hummingbird as well as Violet and Rufous Sabrewings. The rarer Wine-throated Hummingbird may also appear. We will drive in pickup trucks up to the higher forest above the tea plantations where a nice set of trails may allow us to find the Resplendent Quetzal. Tody Motmot and Emerald Toucanet, as well as deep forest species such as Singing Quail, Spotted Nightingale Thrush and Scaled Antpitta, are also present. After

dinner, there will be an optional walk for owling. *Overnight at Finca Los Andes. (BLD)*

### FEBRUARY 11 - LOS TARRALES RESERVE

Enjoy early morning birding around the lodge followed by breakfast. Afterwards we transfer to **Finca Los Tarrales**, located not too far from Finca Los Andes, on the flanks of the same mountain. However, the elevation and humidity profile differ and so does the bird life, with birds from lowland to highland habitats, and good access to various types of forest. Los Tarrales ranges in altitude from 700 to 3,500 m (2,300 to 11,500 ft) and is home to diverse wildlife, including more than 340 bird species. The reserve is part of the Atitlán Important Bird Area, and harbors 21 regional endemic bird species, including Horned Guan, Highland Guan, Azure-rumped Tanager, and Blue-tailed Hummingbird. The abundance of migratory birds here, including Swainson's Thrush, Tennessee, Magnolia, and Black-and-white Warblers, Western Tanager, and Orchard Oriole, is 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. During the two days we have here, we will be birding the lower and upper trails, working on finding a great diversity of birds. 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. *Overnight at Finca Los Tarrales. (BLD)*

### FEBRUARY 12 - LOS TARRALES RESERVE

Continue birding in the Los Tarrales Private Reserve. The reserve is private and self sustained; costs for its conservation are covered from income produced by multiple uses (coffee, ornamentals, and honey) and through providing tourism services. Sixty Maya Kaqchikel families live within the protected area, working in production of coffee and ornamentals, as forest rangers, and in tourism. Several enthusiastic and knowledgeable local guides show the bird and wildlife and explain the production of coffee and ornamental plants. Los Tarrales is providing social services for the people living within the protected area. A private primary school is run in order to ensure the children's education. Classes in nature, science, and conservation are included in the educational program. *Overnight at Finca Los Tarrales. (BLD)*

### FEBRUARY 13 - SANTIAGO, LAKE ATITLÁN

Following birding in the morning, we transfer to the town of **Santiago Atitlán** in time for lunch. In the afternoon, we will have opportunities to see a few new species. If we are lucky, we may

find the uncommon Slender Sheartail hummingbird or the unique looking Prevost's Ground Sparrow. Santiago Atitlán is a hub of Maya culture and there may be an opportunity to meet some locals who are part of the Audubon bird tourism initiative. The National Audubon Society has partnered with Asociación Vivamos Mejor (AVM), a private nonprofit development organization committed to improving the quality of life of rural communities surrounding Lake Atitlán. AVM focuses on Sustainable Watersheds and Resiliency to Climate Change as a strategy for promoting sustainable development. Along with our primary group guide, at each location we will be having a local guide involved in the project. *Overnight at Hotel Bambú. (BLD)*

## FEBRUARY 14 - SAN JUAN LA LAGUNA

This morning we enjoy birding at **Parque Mirador del Rey Tepepul**, a 3,500-hectare park, mostly forest with a wide altitudinal range. Although new to the bird tourism scene, this park has great birds, including the Yellow-naped Parrot, Blue-crowned Chlorophonia, and the Azure-rumped Tanager. In the afternoon, we transfer to **San Juan La Laguna**. San Juan La Laguna is a wonderful village with an incredible number of women's cooperatives and women's groups. The groups do fine weaving of textiles on the traditional back strap loom and to a lesser degree the Spanish floor loom. The village is also a hub for the use of natural dyed fabric. This afternoon we will have time to explore the village. *Overnight at Eco Hotel Uxlabil Atitlán. (BLD)*

## FEBRUARY 15 - SAN JUAN LA LAGUNA

Bird tourism is also new to the San Juan La Laguna area. We will seek out the rare and gorgeous Belted Flycatcher along the lower slopes of the volcano. We may also come across the Lesser Roadrunner and other dry forest species, such as Prevost's Ground Sparrow. Participants who are in excellent shape can try the hike to **Volcán San Pedro**. The hike to find the Horned Guan is very difficult and strenuous, and not for everyone, nor a guarantee to see the rare guan. *Overnight at Eco Hotel Uxlabil Atitlán. (BLD)*

## FEBRUARY 16 - PANAJACHEL

In the morning we will take a boat to Parque Tzankujil in **San Marcos La Laguna**, which has some very good dry forest. Various species of birds are seen here and not in wetter forest sites in the area. This area could give us a chance to find the showy Sparkling-tailed Hummingbird. This is a great spot for wintering warblers, resident orioles including the Bar-winged Oriole, the Bushy-crested Jay, and even the skulking Blue-and-white Mockingbird. We will bird the morning here, have lunch and then will transfer to **Panajachel**. This afternoon is free to enjoy some shopping or relax and take in views of Lake Atitlán from our hotel. Before dinner we will meet a representative of Asociación Vivamos Mejor and learn more about their work with local communities surrounding Lake Atitlán. *Overnight at Hotel Posada Don Rodrigo, Panajachel. (BLD)*

## FEBRUARY 17 - GUATEMALA CITY

This morning visit **Corazon del Bosque**, a reserve located higher up in the oak pine forest zone. The star bird at Corazon del Bosque is the gorgeous and uncommon Pink-headed Warbler. As we look for the warbler we may see Mountain Trogon, Spotted Woodcreeper, Yellowish Flycatcher, Rufous-browed Wren, Olive Warbler, Crescent-chested Warbler, White-naped Brush Finch and the local form of the Yellow-eyed Junco, which many consider a separate species: the Guatemalan Junco. After our visit, we head back to Guatemala City, stopping for lunch en route. We arrive in Guatemala City in

the late afternoon. Refresh, then enjoy our farewell dinner at the hotel. *Overnight at Hotel Radisson. (BLD)*

## FEBRUARY 18 - DEPART

Transfer to Guatemala City Airport to take your flight home. Breakfast will be available depending on your flight time. (B)

## MEET YOUR LEADER



**TOBY ROSS** is Science Manager at Seattle Audubon where he manages three citizen science projects engaging over 500 volunteers annually. Before joining Seattle Audubon, Toby lived and worked in Papua New Guinea ultimately creating

the first Conservation Area in the country and was also responsible for managing research projects on tree kangaroos and other native fauna. Previously, Toby has also worked extensively on islands in the West Indies and Mascarenes to conserve reptiles and birds through research and invasive species removal. Regretfully, he found birding later in life, but is now trying to make up for lost opportunities whenever possible.

## LAND PRICING

**\$2,550**

Cost includes meals, accommodations, activities as indicated in the itinerary, in-country transportation, full-time guide, local area bird guides, Audubon donation, and carbon offset.

Does not include international airfare, estimated at \$1075 from Seattle, gratuities for guide or driver, or items of a personal nature. Other departure cities available.

## THE FINE PRINT

Cost is based on 10 participants in double occupancy rooms, with 12 the price will be \$2,375. For a single room throughout the trip add \$325 per person. A \$200 per person deposit and enrollment form are required ASAP to reserve your space on the trip. This deposit is refundable excluding a \$100 cancellation fee until October 11, 2017, at which time non-refundable final payment is due. Travel/trip cancellation insurance is strongly recommended. For more information call Travel Insured at 800-243-3174 or visit [www.travelinsured.com](http://www.travelinsured.com). Holbrook Travel's agency number is 15849.



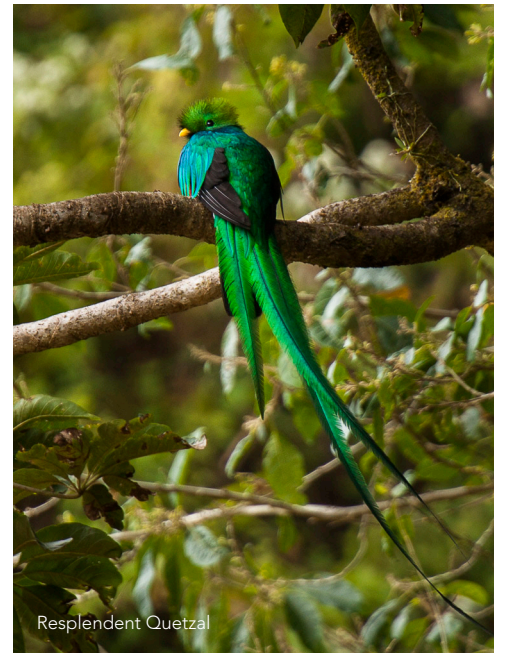
This program includes optional carbon offsetting with ClimateSafe. Learn more at [holbrooktravel.com/climatesafe](http://holbrooktravel.com/climatesafe)



Red-capped Manakin



White-collared Seedeater



Resplendent Quetzal

**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO ENROLL**

Visit [holbrook.travel/seattleaud-gt18](https://holbrook.travel/seattleaud-gt18) or contact Debbie Sturdivant Jordan at 866-748-6146 or [debbie@holbrooktravel.com](mailto:debbie@holbrooktravel.com)

**PHOTOS BY**

*Photos by Debbie Sturdivant Jordan and  
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