



Cuban Trogon



Giant Kingbird



Blue-headed Quail-Dove



Cuban Black-Hawk



Bee Hummingbird



Western Field Ornithologists Cuba Bird Survey

October 26 – November 6, 2010*

12 day Program (*with optional extension in Havana)

EXCLUSIVE ITINERARY, RICH IN NATURE AND CULTURE

Western Field Ornithologists (WFO) is endorsing an exclusive, U.S. led and managed birding program to Cuba! The program is coordinated by the Caribbean Conservation Trust, Inc. (CCT) which is based in Connecticut. CCT staff have a fifteen year history of managing bird conservation programs in Cuba. This is the 3rd program that WFO has collaborated with CCT on since 2006.. Along with **WFO leader Jon Dunn**, our team will include **Dr. William Suarez**, paleo-ornithologist with the National Museum of Natural History in Havana, a bilingual Cuban tour leader, and local naturalists. They will guide you through rarely explored parts of Cuba, the Caribbean's largest and most ecologically diverse island nation.

Our program begins and ends in Havana, one of the most authentic colonial cities in the Americas. **A pre-trip and post-trip extension option** for up to 2 days and nights in Havana is available as well. The pre-trip option provides additional time in Havana, as well as a visit to the home and private ornithological collection of Orlando Garrido, Cuba's pre-eminent living naturalist and co-author of the *Field Guide to the Birds of Cuba*. We will also have an orientation to Havana, including a visit to Habana Vieja, the city's historic colonial center.

The following morning (Day 2 of the 12 day program) we will immediately depart for the countryside to visit national parks and reserves, returning later in the week to enjoy a final evening in Havana. **A post-trip extension option** for 1 additional day and night in Havana is available as well (with the pre-trip as a pre-requisite).

CCT designed this itinerary to take you to Cuba's best birding habitats located in beautiful national parks, diverse biosphere reserves, and unique natural areas. We will interact with local scientists and naturalists who work in research and conservation. In addition to birding, we will learn about the ecology and history of regions we visit. Finally, we can expect some degree of indulgence in the richness of Cuban music, dance, art, architecture, and history.

Cuba's Birds

Our itinerary provides opportunities to see many of Cuba's 30 endemic and potential endemic species, as listed below. This trip will also focus on the many neo-tropical migrant species that arrive in Cuba during fall migration.

Western Cuba is home to the **Guanahahcabibes Peninsula**, located at the far western tip of the island, is one of the last remaining wild places in the Caribbean. We will visit Guanahahcabibes National Park and a UNESCO administered biosphere reserve that covers more than 125,000 acres and provides habitat to 47 percent of all species and 44 percent of endemic species reported in Cuba. These figures include 192 species of birds belonging to 42 families, 11 of which are endemic and 84 migratory. A major migratory corridor, this peninsula lies parallel to the Yucatan Peninsula in eastern Mexico, and is adjacent to the Palancar Reef, the largest contiguous coral reef in the northern hemisphere, second in size only to the Great Barrier Reef. The territory also has historical value, including some of Cuba's most important aboriginal archaeological sites. The peninsula was Cuba's first significant protected area following the triumph of the revolution in 1959, and was declared a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO in 1987. The *Bee Hummingbird* and *Blue-headed Quail Dove* are primary targets here. Numerous with many other endemic, resident, and migratory species likely to be seen.

Cuba's Western Mountains include two of the country's most diverse and dramatic ranges: the Sierra de la Rosario, and the Sierra de los Organos. We will explore an area common to both ranges in search of western range endemic species such as the *Cuban Solitaire*. A highlight of the trip, we will visit the magical, unusually beautiful karstic landscape of *mogotes*-- the towering, lushly vegetated, flat-top limestone monoliths that dominate the Organos Mountains.

Other possible endemic species for western Cuba include *Cuban Blackbird*, *Cuban Grassquit*, *Cuban Green Woodpecker*, *Cuban Pewee*, *Cuban Pygmy-Owl*, *Cuban Tody*, *Cuban Trogon*, *Cuban Vireo*, *Gundlach's Hawk*, *Yellow-headed Warbler*, and *Cuban Blackhawk*. Plain Pigeon, Red-legged Honeycreeper, & Olive-capped Warbler are also likely.

We will explore the diverse wetland region of the **Zapata Peninsula**, Cuba's richest and most important birding destination located in the historic Bay of Pigs. Here, the best local guides will lead us through protected areas in Cienaga de Zapata National Park and other natural sites off the beaten track. The Zapata Peninsula covers more than 2800 square miles and features easily accessible, everglades-like ecology and habitat. Framed by the pristine Caribbean coastal environment of the Bay of Pigs, the peninsula features vast open swamp land, low coastal forests, sparkling white sand beaches, healthy and accessible coral reefs, and refreshing natural limestone pools called cenotes. *Grey-fronted Quail Dove*, *Zapata Wren*, *Zapata Sparrow*, *Fernandina's Flicker*, *Bare-legged Owl*, *Tawny-shouldered and Red-shouldered blackbirds*, Resident Stygian Owl, Cuban Parrot, Key West Quail-Dove, Ruddy Quail-Dove, Greater Flamingo, Wood Stork, Roseate Spoonbill, White Ibis, and a great variety of wading birds, are likely here.

Camaguey Province is our easternmost destination. The city of Camaguey provides the base for our efforts to track down Cuba's eastern endemic species (*Cuban Parakeet*, *Cuban Palm Crow*, *Giant Kingbird*, *Cuban Gnatcatcher*, *Oriente Warbler*, and *Cuban Meadowlark* among them). Colonial Camaguey's prosperity nearly proved to be its undoing, as it was a favorite of pirate raiding parties in the late 18th century. Consequently, the city was moved inland from the coast, and its design was characterized by a maze of narrow, cobbled streets to confuse persistent raiders. In addition to its proximity to excellent birding destinations, Camaguey offers a unique and authentic Cuban experience often overlooked by the tourist crowd.

Other species of interest that we will have opportunities to see throughout the program include:

Cuban Crow, Cuban Emerald, Cuban Bullfinch, Great Lizard-Cuckoo, La Sagra's Flycatcher, Loggerhead Kingbird, , Zenaida Dove, White-crowned Pigeon, Greater Antillean Nightjar, and numerous other migratory and resident species.

THE CONSERVATION PROJECT The U.S. Department of Treasury has provided a license for conducting bird conservation work in Cuba to the **Caribbean Conservation Trust, Inc.** (CCT), a U.S. based organization committed to the conservation of endemic and migratory birds and their habitats in the greater Caribbean region. The primary objective of CCT is to enhance the ability of North American and Caribbean ornithologists, naturalists, resource managers, conservation organizations, institutions, and local citizens to conduct research and initiate programs to help conserve the birds of the Caribbean and their habitats. CCT is dedicated to bird and habitat conservation through education and relationship building and, as a result of our work and research findings, are in compliance with U.S. Treasury licensure for travel to Cuba. Our current license is valid through November 30, 2010.

The Cuba Bird Survey Program

Your participation in this program will involve a simple bird and habitat survey. Each evening, the group will review and record a checklist of birds seen on that particular birding day. Data is compiled by the group, and submitted by the trip leader to CCT staff. Recorded trip totals are part of CCT's ongoing data bank of information on both migratory and resident species recorded in Cuba over several years. Significant findings are noted and submitted to North American Birds Journal. Our Cuban colleagues keep trip totals and notable information to support their ongoing research as well.

Program Leadership

Our program is designed and managed in the United States and is professionally staffed and field tested over 15 years in Cuba. We are dedicated to providing participants with informative nature oriented opportunities, good, wholesome food and comfortable accommodations, and highly skilled local leaders. Cultural and educational elements provide for an authentic and unforgettable "Cuban experience."

Jon Dunn , a tour leader for WINGS, has lived much of his life in California where he became a birder at age eight, a life-altering event triggered, he says, by the appearance of a bright male Hooded Oriole in his garden. Jon has extensive knowledge of the identification and distribution of North American Birds and has written or co-written numerous papers on these subjects that have appeared in a wide variety of journals. He has also long been interested in Asian avifaunas. Jon

has been chief consultant/editor for all five editions to the National Geographic Society's *Field Guide to the Birds of North America*, 1st to 5th editions, most recently published in 2006. He was co-writer and host of the two-video set *Large and Small Gulls of North America* in the Advanced Birding Video Series as well as co-author with Kimball Garrett of *Birds of Southern California, Status and Distribution* and *Warblers*. Jon is a member of the American Ornithologists' Union Checklist Committee, the ABA Checklist Committee and has served over 20 years on the California Bird Records Committee. Beyond birds, Jon has a keen interest in politics and history (his "hobbies"), and the cinema. Jon's most recent bird survey trip to Cuba was in November, 2006.

Cuban Specialists

Our primary Cuban naturalist will be with us throughout the program in the field and will assist in providing a broad overview of Cuban natural history as well as specific information relative to the flora, fauna, geology and other natural features of the environments we visit. Additionally, we will work with local naturalists from the national parks and biosphere reserves that we visit each day.

Dr. William Suarez

In addition to his training as a medical doctor, William is an expert on fossil birds, and currently curator of paleontology at the National Museum of Natural History (Cuba), where he has worked since 1996. William has published numerous scientific papers related to extinct species of birds, evidence of which has been found in Quaternary Period (beginning roughly 1.8 million years ago) cave and asphalt deposits of western Cuba. His research has contributed important information that was previously unknown with regards to both extinct birds (some representing new species for Cuba), as well as current species of birds found in Cuba. William is currently working on his second book, [A Field Guide To The Endemic Birds of Cuba](#).

A gifted field ornithologist, William has worked on numerous occasions with Orlando Garrido and currently works closely with Arturo Kirkconnell in field research scenarios throughout Cuba. William received grants from The Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C, in 2001, 2002, 2007, and 2010, and from the Museum of Natural History in New York in 2009, and from the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, Canada in 2007 and 2008. William is fluent in English, and his enthusiasm and natural ability with people, as well as his highly skilled and specialized ornithological perspective is greatly appreciated.

A Bilingual Cuban Guide will be at our service throughout the program. Along with a professional driver, he or she will be with the group each day to tell us about Cuban history, culture, arts and lifestyle. He/she will also deal with logistics, meals, translation, and other nuts-and-bolts aspects of the travel experience. In addition, we will rendezvous with local naturalists at various designated sites along the way.

Accommodations

Accommodations feature some of Cuba's most comfortable and interesting properties. Hotels and inns are staffed by friendly, helpful hosts and represent the best Cuba has to offer in the regions we visit. Our accommodations include modern European hotels, former colonial estates, refurbished vintage hotels, and simple beach-front bungalows. Further descriptive information will follow upon receipt of your reservation and initial payment.

Additional Details

Following program registration, we will provide all participants with a bird list as well as details with regard to travel to Cuba, including all of the basics you need to know about travel documents, customs, facts about Cuba, currency, health and safety, food, flights, and what to bring.

Physical Demands and Expectations

This program offers opportunities for ambitious birding, with early departure times on birding days, and occasional evening sessions. Most birding days provide for leisure time after lunch and before our afternoon birding sessions, and all accommodations have either a pool or beachfront access. Physical exertion will be light to moderate on most days, with the longest walks approximately 3 miles. Terrain is mostly flat and dry, with some hills present in western Cuba. All participants should be in reasonably good physical condition.

Be prepared for strong sun, with temperatures in the 70's - 80s. Mosquitoes can be bothersome in coastal forests. Rain in the dry season (late October to early May) is fairly unusual. Those with medical concerns should check with their physician before taking part in the program. Your health and well-being are very important to us!

Trip Costs, Terms, and Conditions

Land costs for the 12 day itinerary are \$4,400.00 per person all inclusive, for shared accommodations. Single supplements are \$400.00 per person. Cost for the Havana extension is \$225.00 per person sharing, or \$265.00 per single accommodation. The optional extension is offered for October 25th-26th, one day prior to the start of the program, and on November 6th-7th, following the end of the program. *Highly recommended.*

WFO -CCT Cuba Bird Survey Programs include the following:

All accommodations, meals, leader/guide services, most tips (guides, drivers, naturalists and restaurant and bell staff), airport/hotel transfers, ground transportation, bottled water, some drinks, admission fees (itinerary only), licensing fees, and program management services, provision of all pre- and post-program materials, an on-site U.S. program manager, a full-time Cuban bilingual guide, bilingual Cuban naturalist(s), and a full-time driver.

Not Included:

Travel to and from Havana, Cuba; items of a personal nature such as laundry, phone calls, beverages, bar and housekeeping tips, etc., and airport departure taxes, passport fees, or other fees not listed in the program.

Flights

CCT helps facilitate airfare directly to Cuba from Cancun, Mexico, through our partner travel agency in Toronto, Ontario. CCT will provide contact information for this agency upon receipt of your deposit. It is otherwise very difficult (and in some cases illegal for you to make these travel arrangements on your own. Airfare between Cancun and Havana in U.S. dollars at just under \$350.00 (as of May 2010). We can't be guaranteed of these prices for any specific period of time, and they are unlikely to go down. All departure and arrival times are in local time. The flying time between Cancun and Havana is about an hour and 10 minutes. Cancun is on *Central Standard Time* and Cuba is on *Eastern Standard Time*.

You may make your travel arrangements between the U.S. and Cancun on your own, or with our Canadian partner.

Whatever agency you choose to book domestic flights, it will be your responsibility to be sure that you arrive at your Cuba-bound departure airport at least 3.5 hours prior to that scheduled departure (to Havana).

Health and Travel Insurance Protection

Health Insurance. Participants are required to provide their own medical insurance. Recently, the Cuban government began requiring visitors to provide proof of insurance. Most private U.S.-based insurance is not valid in Cuba, although you should check with your company. From 1 May 2010, all travelers, including Cubans living abroad, are required to hold comprehensive travel insurance including medical insurance before travelling to Cuba. You will be expected to present a copy of your insurance on arrival in Cuba. Insurance should be valid for the full duration of your stay in Cuba and should cover medical evacuation by air ambulance. You should check any exclusions, and that your policy covers you all for the activities you want to undertake. You should be able to obtain a policy from Cuban insurance companies at your port of entry. For more details, please see the Cuban Foreign Ministry website's information for travelers to Cuba : <http://www.cubaminrex.cu/>. The Associated Press reports that individuals without state-authorized insurance may buy a policy from state-run Cubatur at a kiosk at the Havana Airport before being allowed into the country. They accept U.S. or Canadian dollars, Euros, British pounds and Swiss francs, though all prices are set in Cuban convertible pesos, pegged at US\$1.08. A policy covering medical expenses up to 7,000 pesos, or \$7,560, costs between 2 and 3 pesos (\$2.16-\$3.24) a day, depending on an array of factors. Travelers 70 or older or those planning to engage in high-risk activities will have to pay an unspecified additional premium.

Any U.S. citizen traveling internationally these days should consider travel insurance protection. Reasonably priced coverage is available to provide protection against financial loss due to trip cancellation or delay, as well as lost baggage. In addition, your U.S.-based health plan is prohibited by the U.S. Treasury Department embargo from directly doing business with any Cuban health facilities (e.g. hospitals and clinics). While traveling in Cuba, you are not directly covered by your U.S. health plan. You will have to pay out of pocket with cash for your any medical treatment administered in Cuba. Cuba has recently changed their regulations for travelers and require that each traveler individually purchase per diem health insurance when entering the country. This is a new law and we anticipate that it will cost about \$5.00 per day per individual to purchase. We will send updates on this.

Although uncommon, cancellations due to illness, accidents, work related schedule changes, and other un-planned or un-welcome events have happened. Other considerations include recent contractions in the airline industry, which have lead

to a reduction in the number of available flights domestically and internationally. Sometimes these reductions come on very short notice, which can result in missed connections or significant delay. Unforeseen events which you have little or no control over can also effect travel plans. All of these factors make trip cancellation insurance a very important consideration. For information about Travelex insurance, go to :

<http://www.travelex-insurance.com/index.asp?location=07-0067>

or call 1 800-228-9792. Be sure to use the agency location code 07-0067 to access coverage explicit to this program.

Payment

Regarding payment for the land portion of the tour, a **\$1,200.00** deposit is due as soon as possible to reserve space on these programs.

The full balance payment is due 75 days prior to the departure date. Details of individual invoices will be provided by Moreno Travel. We will provide information of your balance payment following receipt of your deposit and registration fees.

Cancellation and refund policy * :

Should it become necessary for you to cancel, all payments will be refunded after a deduction of our cancellation fee outlined below:

<u>Cancellations</u>	<u>Cancellation Fee</u>
More than 90 days prior to the tour.....	\$300.00 per person (land only)
89 - 60 days prior to the tour	\$1,200.00 per person (FULL DEPOSIT)
59 - 30 days prior to the tour.....	60% of the tour cost
29 - 21 days prior to the tour.....	75% of the tour cost
less than 21 days prior to the tour.....	NO REFUND

In the unlikely event that we must cancel the tour, a full refund less a \$150.00 processing fee for your license application will be forwarded to you, should cancellation occur after your license has been processed. *Please be aware that the stated refund policies apply only to the land portion of the trip, and that airlines may have different policies that exist beyond our ability to control. As with all international travel programs, we highly encourage trip cancellation and travel insurance policies. Moreno Travel and its agents and constituents reserve the right to make changes to the itineraries. Land/Air arrangements may be subject to price increases beyond our control.



Cuban Tody – A. Kirkconnell



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