

# High Lonesome Birdtours

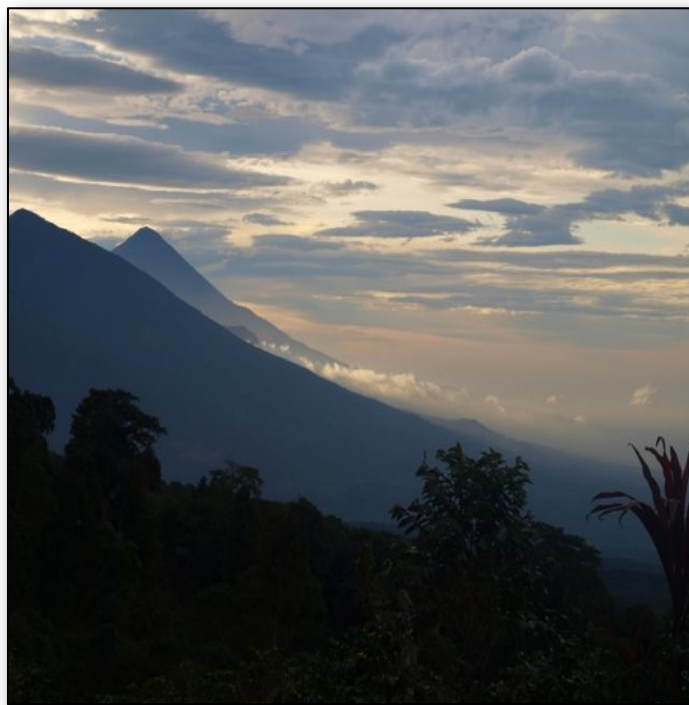
Small-Group Birding Adventures



## GUATEMALA

Prelude to new tour February 2012

## CLOUD FORESTS, VOLCANOS AND RUINS



*Volcanos and Cloud Forests of Guatemala*

I am alerting you to a trip I'm planning to put together for February 2012. We just returned from a 12-day scouting trip to Guatemala hosted by Bitty Portilla-Ramirez of Guatemala Nature Tours. We had dinner with Bitty and her delightful family the first night, and we spent a weekend with them traveling between several sights. Their hospitality made the trip especially enjoyable for us.

Although a relatively small country, Guatemala has a wide diversity of habitats ranging from the lowlands of Tikal to the volcanic region of the Pacific slope. We were able to easily access several cloud forests where some of the most interesting birds are found.



*Tikal*

*(Photo: Marianne Phillips)*

It is impossible to say which of the many sites we visited was most impressive. The world-renowned destinations of Tikal and Colonial Antigua were breathtaking and our local guides to these sites were extremely knowledgeable. New locations to us, such as Los Tarrales and Las Nubes were fascinating and bird rich. I will never forget my hike up the volcano to see the Horned Guan. What a challenge! We also especially enjoyed owling in Las Nubes for the Fulvous Owl. To be standing in the center of four or five singing owls was unforgettable. As a bonus, we had close looks at two Highland Guans.

Because we were spending much of our time exploring potential lodging and locations for the trip, we didn't have as much time to bird as we might have liked. Nevertheless, we still saw close to 200 tropical species. We had great looks at a number of range-restricted or near-endemic species including: Wine-throated, Amethyst-throated, Garnet-throated & Emerald-chinned Hummingbirds; Horned and Highland Guan, Pink-headed Warbler, Azure-rumped Tanager, , Blue-throated Motmot, Black-throated Jay, Bushy-crested Jay, Bar-winged Oriole, White-eared and Prevost's Ground-Sparrow amongst others.



*Pink-sided Warbler*  
(Photo: Renato Fernandez Ravelo)



*Antigua*  
(Photo: Marianne Phillips)



*Wine-throated Hummingbird*  
(Photo: Marianne Phillips)



*Violet Sabrewing*  
(Photo: Marianne Phillips)

On our scouting trip in July, it was not a good time of the year for Resplendent Quetzal, but they are known to be common and easily seen in the months of February and March. We hope to see the rare Belted Flycatcher at Laguna Lodge in Lake Atitlan as well.

Guatemala is also rich in flora and other fauna. Howler and Central American Spider Monkeys are common. We saw Coatimundis, Peccaries, Gray Fox and Morrelet's Crocodile. The warmth of the Guatemalan people, the delicious foods, the awesome scenery and especially the abundance of birdlife make this an exceptional destination for a

new trip by High Lonesome BirdTours. By the way, for you coffee lovers it doesn't get any better than Guatemala. We spent several nights in two different coffee "fincas" or plantations, and we sampled some great coffee!



*Horned Guan*  
(Photo: Amy McAndrews)

We are planning a 12 to 13-day trip early in February 2012. This is an excellent time to visit Guatemala. All of the migrants are present, and the resident birds are active and easier to find. We are going to combine a couple of five-star lodgings with stays at two of the most interesting coffee fincas. The fincas are fairly basic, but comfortable with en-suite bathrooms and hot water. We will also be visiting Tikal National Park, although, we may include that as an extension or a pre-trip depending on overall length of the main trip.

Here are links to some of the lodges we expect to stay in:

- [Tikal National Park: Camino Real](#)
- [Antigua, Casa Santo Domingo](#) or [El Convento Boutique Hotel](#)
- [Lake Atitlan, Laguna Lodge](#)
- Fincas:
- [Los Tarrales](#)
- Las Nubes: no formal website but lots of information on-line for it

We will visit a couple of other fincas for birding, but we won't stay at them.