



# Texas Ornithological Society 2025 Guatemala Birding Feb 16-27



***See the Golden-cheeked Warbler and other Texas migrants in their winter territory!***

Join TOS for this unique birding tour to beautiful Guatemala. This itinerary offers the opportunity to bird areas not offered by other bird tour companies, guided by Guatemala's top birder, **John Cahill**.

But this is not just about birds and a list. Your participation in our tour benefits both **Texas Ornithological Society** and **Community Cloud Forest Conservation (CCFC)**, an environmental education program located near Cobán in central Guatemala. You will stay at the CCFC Center and see for yourself the work being done by the Cahill family, among which is the reforestation of the winter home of the **Golden-cheeked Warbler** and other threatened migrant birds.



In addition to fabulous birds – including the near mythical **Resplendent Quetzal** – Guatemala offers you an amazing history of birding and conservation.

First, begin birding while staying on Lake Atitlan, one of the most beautiful places in the world! You will bird around the preserve here, but also visit an area where **Dr. Alexander Skutch** began his studies of birds and plants. Here you may see a number of range-restricted birds that occur in this area such as Blue-throated Motmot, Black-capped Siskin, and what is possibly the most beautiful of all warblers, the Pink-headed Warbler.



Then work your way to the cloud forest, visiting several private reserves set up specifically for migrating birds. This area also gives Central Texas birders the possibility to see the **Golden-cheeked Warbler** on its wintering grounds in the very cloud forest where the species was first described back in 1860! You will spend three nights and days at CCFC's amazing environmental center, a totally off-the-grid structure and a marvel in engineering.

The tour ends in Tikal, perhaps the greatest of the Mayan cities, where information about Maya cultural and history will add to the experience. There are more amazing birds to see here as you walk among pyramids, like Keel-billed Toucan, Slaty-tailed Trogon, Ocellated Turkey, Tody Motmot, several species of parrots, and raptors including the rare Orange-breasted Falcon. It is also possible to see some cool mammals like Coatis, Agoutis, and Spider and Black Howler Monkeys.

**John Cahill**, the top birder in Guatemala, is your lead guide and he will be assisted by a local guide. Only in his 20s, John is part of the new generation of birders. Comments from prior tours refer to John as "the best bird guide ever". He is a birding rockstar and seems to know everyone in the country! [Read about John's Big Year here.](#)



You will have a chance to meet other members of the Cahill family while staying at the campus of [Community Cloud Forest Conservation](#), operated by Tara & Rob Cahill. CCFC focuses on environmental education for the local Mayan school population, based on Cornell Lab of Ornithology's BirdSleuth program. They also run a leadership training program for girls and young women from the surrounding Mayan communities in sustainable agro-ecology, nutrition, cooking, health and family planning, career and educational options, eco-tourism, and other life-skills, with the goal of helping them stay in school and continue their education. A further benefit of agro-ecology is re-forestation of the cloud forest.

In addition to donations to both organizations, a half-acre cloud forest restoration will be dedicated in the name of [Texas Ornithological Society](#), thus offsetting our in-country carbon output while enhancing bird habitat. This tour is an excellent example of sustainable tourism.

**Day 1, Feb 16, Sun:** Arrive Guatemala City mid-day. Transfer from Guatemala City to Lake Atitlan, approximately 2-3 hours, with some birding stops en route. 2 nights at Hotel Atitlan or similar.(L,D)

**Day 2, Feb 17, Mon: Tecpán** – Morning birding at Reserva Natural Atitlan. Lunch at Lake Atitlan. Afternoon birding at Caleras Chichavac Private Reserve and Rincon Suizo's Private Reserve. Overnight in Atitlan.(B,L,D)

*Bar-winged Oriole, Chestnut-sided Shrike-Vireo, Rufous Sabrewing, Slender Sheartail, Sparkling-tailed Hummingbird, Belted Flycatcher, Black-throated Jay, Red-faced Warbler, Garnet-throated Hummingbird, Cinnamon-bellied Flowerpiercer, Black-capped Siskin, Pink-headed Warbler, Mountain Trogon, Rufous-browed Wren, Blue-throated Motmot, Mountain Thrush, Hooded Grosbeak*



**Day 3, Feb 18, Tue: Tecpán to Guatemala City** - This morning you have another chance to look for target birds. Early afternoon head to Guatemala City. Overnight at San Carlos Hotel. (B,L,D)

**Day 4, Feb 19, Wed: Granados** – It's an early departure with breakfast on the road as you head to Granados in the Motagua Valley. Lunch in the cloudforest and arrive at Posada del Quetzal late afternoon. Total drive time approximately 4-5 hours, with birding stops along the way. 2 nights Posada del Quetzal. (B,L,D)

*White-lored Gnatcatcher, Russet-crowned and Turquoise-browed Motmots, Streak-backed Oriole, Stripe-headed Sparrow, Orange-fronted Parakeet, White-throated Magpie-Jay, Buff-collared Nightjar, Crested Bobwhite, Cinnamon Hummingbird, Varied Bunting*

**Day 5, Feb 20, Thu: Cloud Forest Birding** – Morning birding at Los Ranchitos Private Reserve about ½ hour away. Afternoon birding in pine-oak forest at Rio Escondido Private Reserve, which was created to protect migrating birds, such as the Golden-cheeked Warbler. Overnight Posada del Quetzal (B,L,D)

*Resplendent Quetzal, Unicolored Jay, Blue-crowned Chlorophonia, Azure-hooded Jay, Black-headed and Spotted Nightingale-Thrush, Violet Sabrewing, Highland Guan, Buff-breasted Flycatcher, Painted Redstart, Golden-cheeked Warbler*

**Day 6, Feb 21, Fri: Rubel Chaim/CCFC Center** – Morning birding at Los Ranchitos again. Afternoon drive to the CCFC agro-ecology center, approximately 1-1.5 hours. Bird around the Center, where you stay 3 nights.(B,L,D)



*Belted Flycatcher, Golden-cheeked Warbler, Guatemalan Pygmy-Owl, Emerald-chinned Hummingbird, Bushy-crested Jay, Brown-capped Vireo, Golden-winged Warbler, Ocellated Quail*

**Day 7, Feb 22, Sat: Laguna Chichoj** – Morning birding the Center. Afternoon birding Laguna Chichoj. (B,L,D)

*Golden-cheeked Warbler, Bushy-crested Jay, Ocellated Quail, Blue-crowned Chlorophonia, Tawny-throated Leaf-tosser, Ruddy Crake, Spotted Rail, Limpkin, Spot-breasted Oriole, White-throated Flycatcher, Gray-crowned Yellowthroat.*

**Day 8, Feb 23, Sun: Rubel Chaim** – Morning birding the cloud forests above the agro-ecology center. Afternoon free for touring the agro-ecology center campus. Overnight CCFC Center. (B,L,D)

*Golden-cheeked Warbler, Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrush, Chestnut-capped Brushfinch, Ocellated Quail, Resplendent Quetzal, Rose-throated Becard, Crimson-collared Tanager, Rufous-browed Peppershrike, Green-throated Mountain-Gem, Flame-colored Tanager*

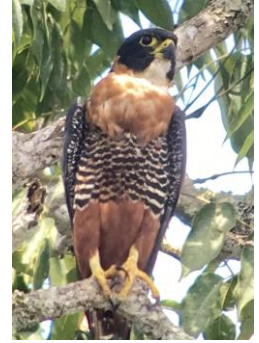


**Day 9, Feb 24, Mon: Cloud Forest to Rain Forest** – This is the longest day of driving, with a total of 7-8 hours, broken up with stops for birding. Morning birding Chajbaoc Private Reserve and in pine forest at Las Victorias National Park. Afternoon birding in rain forest in the Rosario National Park. Late afternoon/early evening, you arrive to Tikal, the fabulous Mayan city, for 2 nights at Jungle Lodge at the ruins. (B,L,D)

*Scaled Antpitta, Mottled Owl, Yellow-backed Oriole, Emerald Toucanet, Slate-colored Solitaire, Slate-throated Redstart, Rusty Sparrow, Lesson's Motmot, Grace's Warbler, Black-capped Swallow, Collared Trogon, Black-collared Hawk, Black-crowned Tityra, Olive-backed Euphonia, Golden-hooded Tanager, White-whiskered Puffbird*

**Day 10, Feb 25, Tue Tikal** – Full day birding the archeological site in Tikal National Park, including the famous abandoned airstrip. In addition to birding. One night you'll look for owls. Overnight Jungle Lodge. (B,L,D)

*Ocellated Turkey, Black-throated Shrike-Tanager, Slaty-tailed Trogon, Yellow-bellied Tyrannulet, Gray-headed Tanager, Tawny-winged Woodcreeper, Red-capped Manakin, Orange-breasted Falcon, Gray-necked Wood-Rail, Giant Cowbird, Montezuma Oropendola, Black-cowled Oriole, Bare-throated Tiger-Heron, Purple-crowned Fairy, Brown-hooded Parrot, Boat-billed Heron, White-bellied Emerald, Blue Bunting*



**Day 11, Feb 26, Wed: Tikal to El Remate** - A last morning of birding before the drive to El Remate on the shore of late Peten Itza, the drive about 1-1.5 hours. There may be time for some afternoon and evening birding around the grounds of our hotel, which offers a great place for a sunset! Overnight Casa de don David. (B,L,D)

**Day 12, Feb 27, Thu: Departure** – Very early this morning, you'll leave for Flores airport, and the flight from Flores to Guatemala City is included, which departs Flores around 8:00 am, arriving Guatemala City 9:00 am. You should schedule your international departure for 12 noon or later. (B)

*Note: The order and sites visited may vary due to weather, road conditions and other factors beyond our control.  
Hotels listed are valid as of printing but may change.*

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**LODGING:** We have selected a variety of lodging close to birding sites to reduce driving time

- Hotel Atitlan or Posada Don Rodrigo are quite nice with amazing views of the lake and volcanoes.
- Hotel San Carlos, Guatemala City is a pleasant hotel near the American Embassy
- Posada del Quetzal is a simple, local inn in the cloud forest of central Guatemala.
- CCFC Center is off-the-grid with composting toilets.
- Jungle Lodge in Tikal runs on a generator with power only mornings and afternoons.
- Casa de Don David is a quaint tourist hotel.

**NOTE:** All hotels have hot water showers but may not have hot water in the sink. Also, they may not have washcloths; if you are used to using one, we suggest you bring your own along with a Ziplock bag to carry it.

**NOTE REGARDING WIFI:** As you are traveling in remote areas, Wifi can be difficult. However, Hotel Atitlan, San Carlos, and CCFC all have good wfi. Posada del Quetzal, Jungle Lodge and Don David have wifi, mostly in main buildings. In case of emergency, you can give your loved ones contact at JB Journeys who can get in touch with your guides.

# Texas Ornithological Society

## 2025 Guatemala Birding

February 16-27

### COST:

- \$4,995 per person in double occupancy for TOS members with minimum 8 participants.
- With minimum 6, \$5,495.
- Non-members plus \$100 which includes a 1-year membership.
- Single \$395. Singles are very limited. *Rooms are either a smaller room or a double at single rate.*
- Minimum 6 to operate, maximum 10 participants.
- To confirm your spot, please [complete the reservation form on-line.](#)
- Deposit \$1000 to hold space; final payment will due Nov 15, 2024
- **Cancellation:** After 30 days, deposit is non-refundable. Once paid in full, from 90-60 days prior to departure, 50% penalty. Inside 60 days – non-refundable. Name changes may be allowed. There is no refund for unused parts of the tour. ***Travel insurance\*\* to include trip cancellation coverage in addition to medical coverage and medical evacuation is required. Your tour leader will request proof of insurance.***

### INCLUDED:

- Transportation as listed by van
- Local flight, Flores to Guatemala City, Feb 27
- 11 nights lodging with taxes included
- Services of local bilingual bird guide(s)
- Escorted by TOS board member
- Entry fees to parks, etc
- Meals as listed
- Basic gratuities for hotels, meals, & driver
- Carbon offset for in-country tour
- Donation to TOS & CCFC

### NOT INCLUDED:

- International airfare (into/out of Guatemala City)
  - Drinks
  - Gratuities to local guides\*(See suggestions)
  - Travel Insurance – **required \*\***
  - Personal expenses
- \*Suggested tipping for guides:*  
→ John Cahill your lead guide: \$15-20 per person/per day. Second local guide we suggest \$10-15 per person per day.

**TRAVEL INSURANCE** is required for this trip with Texas Ornithological Society. Please start here at [TravelGuard](#) but feel free to look elsewhere, like [Squaremouth](#), a comparison tool. We recommend trip cancellation coverage as well as comprehensive medical coverage that includes medical evacuation. MedEvac can be purchased separately as you'll see in TravelGuard's offerings.

Also, if you are paying for your trip by credit card, check with the card company to see if they cover any insurance for travelers.

**NOTE REGARDING FLIGHTS:** The itinerary is based on flights arriving Guatemala City airport by early afternoon on Day 1, ready for an immediate departure for Lake Atitlan. United, American, and Delta (among others) flights arrive by 1 PM. Later arrivals may incur an additional transfer fee. If you prefer to arrive a day early, we can arrange an overnight and pick up to meet the others on arrival day, at additional cost. The tour ends in Flores, the airport serving Tikal, and the flight from Flores to Guatemala City on Day 12 is included in your fee. You should plan your international departure flights from Guatemala at or after 12 noon. You will need to collect any checked bags and re-check for the international flight.