



# Birding for Conservation Belize Tour 2017

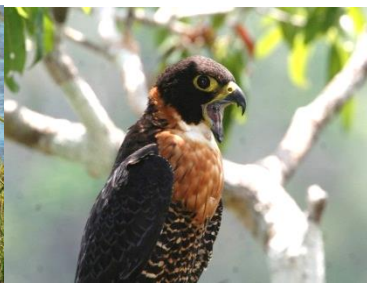
AUGUST 6-16, 2017



This tour will be like no other birding trip you have experienced! Along with observing new species, and exploring habitats throughout Belize, you will also enjoy an educational enrichment through talks and discussions about local research and conservation, as well as participate in the Annual Bird-a-thon fundraising event. The trip will be focused on Neotropical residents, but will look for and appreciate all species and taxa. It will be led by **Roni Martinez** the **Belize Raptor Research Institute President**, along with **Isael Mai** our **Raptor Watch Count Leader**, as well as several local **Audubon-trained guides** at each protected area. You will learn about the conservation efforts and research projects of BRRI and have a chance to observe nearly every species of raptor found in Belize. Proceeds from this tour will go to the conservation efforts of the Belize Raptor Research Institute, ultimately conserving species throughout the country and region. **Be part of our conservation efforts and join us on this unique lifetime experience.**



Jabiru  
*Hopkins Wetlands*



Orange-breasted Falcon  
*Mountain Pine Ridge*



Harpy Eagle  
*Bocawina Rainforest Resort*

**Belize**, formerly known as British Honduras, is truly an amazing country and a gem of Central America. It is the only English speaking country in Central America with a human population of around 350,000, making it quite unique. Nearly 60% of the country is in its original state with roughly 45% protected through National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Conservation Areas, Reserves & Archaeological Sites. Belize is a paradise for wildlife enthusiasts, birders, photographers, and all who appreciate the beauty of nature. Since Belize is a country about the size of Massachusetts, it is easy to travel around. It holds the highest density of the majestic jaguars and some 600 species of bird. Join us on this fantastic ecological tour for an opportunity to observe over 300 species of birds, immerse yourself in its culture and enjoy everything else Belize can offer.

## General Itinerary:

- Day 1, Sunday:** Arrive, transfer to Mountain Equestrian Trail
- Day 2, Monday:** Mountain Pine Ridge Forest Reserve
- Day 3, Tuesday:** Caves Branch and nearby orchards
- Day 4, Wednesday:** St. Herman's Cave Trail and Blue Hole
- Day 5, Thursday:** Dangriga Shoreline and Gra Gra Lagoon N.P.
- Day 6, Friday:** Bocawina and Hopkins Wetlands
- Day 7, Saturday:** Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary
- Day 8, Sunday:** Southwater Caye birding and snorkeling
- Day 9, Monday:** Bocawina, Zoo, Crooked Tree
- Day 10, Tuesday:** Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary
- Day 11, Wednesday:** Sunrise birding and departure to airport



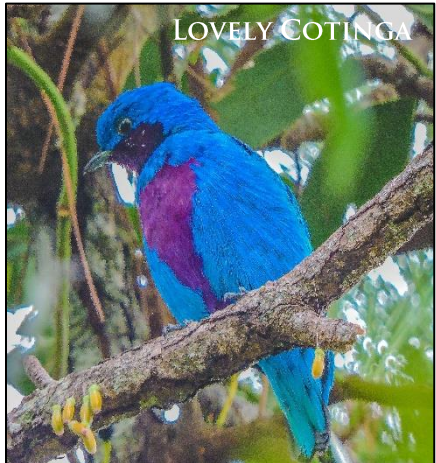
### Day 1 (August 6<sup>th</sup>, Sunday): Belize City

Arrive in Belize City. Transfer to Mountain Equestrian Trails at the foothills of the Maya Mountains. Those that arrive early, raptor viewing around Belize City for **Cinnamon Hummingbird**, **Black-collared Hawk**, **Northern Jacana** and others. We will have a trip overview and introductions at the lodge.

Accommodation: **Mountain Equestrian Trails**

### Day 2 (August 7<sup>th</sup>, Monday): Mountain Pine Ridge

Early morning birding before breakfast around the lodge grounds. After breakfast, we will depart to the Slate Creek Overlook in the Elijio Panti National Park for a raptor spectacle and possibly a **Lovely Cotinga**. Later that morning we will head to Rio Frio Cave where we can encounter several species of **Woodcreepers** and **Manakins** and **Tanagers**. Before leaving this pine forest, we will



search for **Stygian Owl**, **Rusty Sparrow** and **Rufous-capped Warbler**. Our next stop will be the Green Hills Butterfly Ranch where we'll have a butterfly tour and we'll visit the hummingbird gallery. Night talk on the Scarlet Macaw Conservation Project.

Accommodation: **Mountain Equestrian Trails**



### Day 3 (August 8<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday): Caves Branch Jungle Lodge and nearby orchards.

Early morning walk around the lodge for an introduction to neotropical birding. After breakfast, we will visit the nearby river and citrus orchards where we have a good chance of seeing **Orange-breasted Falcon**. We will also search for **Bat Falcon**, **White Hawk**, **Striped Cuckoo**, and **Hook-billed Kite**. After lunch, we will visit an old forest road in search for the **Ornate Hawk-Eagle**, which is arguably the most beautiful raptor in Belize. **Red-lore Parrots**, **Olive-throated Parakeets** and **Gartered Trogons** are also possible here. Along the way out, we will search for **Slaty-tailed Trogon**, **Collared Forest-Falcon**, **Barred Forest Falcon**, and **Black Hawk-Eagle**.

Accommodation: **Caves Branch Jungle Lodge**.





#### Day 4 (August 9<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday): St. Herman's Cave Trail and inland Blue Hole

After breakfast, we will head to the nearby St. Herman's Cave trail which is within a Belize Audubon Protected Area. It's a short walk at the edge of high forest and we have a good chance for **Nightingale Wren, Blue Ground-Dove, Squirrel Cuckoo** and **White-collared Manakins**. **Black Hawk-Eagle, Swallow-tailed Kite, Red-capped Manakin** and **Short-tailed Hawk** are also possible. Next, we will stop at the inland Blue Hole, the other section of this Protected Area. Here we will



seek **Royal Flycatchers, Lesson's Motmot, Sepia-capped Flycatcher** and **Golden-crowned Warbler**. After lunch, you have the afternoon free to relax, go cave tubing or hit the Piña Coladas and Pool. After dinner, we will go owling for **Mottled Owl, Black-and-white Owl**, and **Vermiculated Screech-Owl**.

Accommodation: **Caves Branch Jungle Lodge**.

#### Day 5 (August 10<sup>th</sup>, Thursday): Dangriga Shoreline and Gra Gra Lagoon

Today we will have an early breakfast, as we will depart for Dangriga. The sandy beaches of this southern coastal town are a good place for **Double-crested Cormorant, Brown Booby** and several species of **shorebirds, gulls and terns**. After the beach, we will visit the Gra Gra Lagoon a large wetland mixed with coastal mangroves. This habitat gives way to a diverse mix of birds. **Roseate Spoonbills, Common Black-Hawk, Tricolored Herons, White Ibis, Russet-naped Wood-Rail, Mangrove Warbler** and **Yucatan Vireo**. We will have lunch on the beach and keep looking for some local birds mixed with some of the migrants. Driving back to the lodge, we will make stops along the road in hopes for **Hook-billed Kite, White Hawk, Red-legged Honeycreepers** and **Yellow-winged Tanagers**.



Accommodation: **Cave's Branch Jungle Lodge**

#### Day 6 (August 11<sup>th</sup>, Friday): Mayflower Bocawina N.P. and Hopkins Wetlands

This is the **BIG BIRD-A-THON DAY!** Early morning birding. After breakfast and a bit of birding around Cave's Branch, we will pack and head south. Along the way, we will make a few stops for familiar species such as **Hook-billed Kite, Laughing Falcon** and, **Golden-hooded Tanager**. At Bocawina Rainforest Resort, you will have time to settle in and then get ready for more birding. Around the lush tropical garden around the cabanas, you can find **White-winged Becard, Green Honeycreepers, Passerini's Tanager, Violet Sabrewings** and **Gray-headed Tanagers**. After lunch, we will make a short trip to the nearby Hopkins Wetlands, where we will look for **Clapper Rail, Jabiru, Glossy Ibis** and perhaps the ultra-elusive **Spotted Rail**. We will end the night owling around the resort to end our big day.

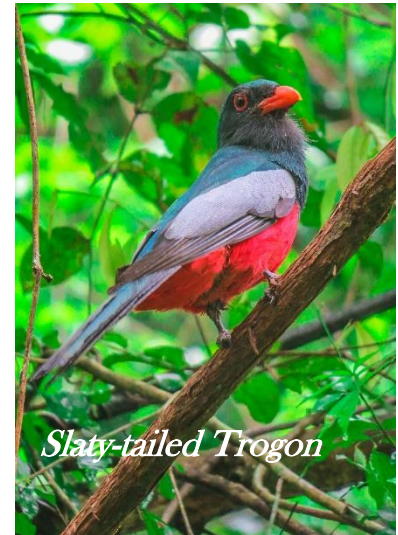
Accommodation: **Bocawina Rainforest Resort**

## Day 7 (August 12<sup>th</sup>, Saturday):

### Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary

After an early breakfast, we will depart to the Belize Audubon-managed world's first Jaguar Reserve. Here at the foothills of the eastern side of the Maya Mountains, we search the broad-leaved forest for **Gray-headed Kite**, **Tody Motmot**, **Crested Guan** and **Great Curassow**. Because of the ongoing and successful protection efforts to save the Scarlet Macaws on the western side of the Maya Mountains, they have been showing up in this reserve as well. On our way out we will keep vigilant for **Black Hawk-Eagle**, **Bicolored Hawk** and **Crimson-collared Tanager**. The abundant Heliconias on the drive out also offer good chances for **Stripe-throated Hermit** and **Long-billed Hermit**. Night talk on Raptor Research and Conservation.

Accommodation: **Bocawina Rainforest Resort**



*Slaty-tailed Trogon*



*Sandwich Terns at Southwater Caye*

## Day 8 (August 13<sup>th</sup>, Sunday) Southwater & Man-o-war Cayes & Snorkeling

We start with an early breakfast and then head out to Dangriga where our boat will be waiting. Along the way to Southwater Caye, we will keep on the watch for **Brown Noddy**, **Bridled Tern** and **Brown Booby**. After some birding on the island, get into your swimwear and jump into the warm Caribbean Sea to explore

with your guide, the abundant underwater life at the second largest barrier reef in the world! Don't like snorkeling? No problem. We will continue birding on the island. After lunch, we will visit a **Magnificent Frigatebird** colony where Brown Booby and sometimes even **Red-footed Booby** come in for a rest. Accommodation: **Bocawina Rainforest Resort**



## Day 9 (August 14<sup>th</sup>, Monday): Bocawina, Belize Zoo and Crooked Tree

After breakfast, we will depart for Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary. We will traverse over a large area, but will stop at the Belize Zoo where we have opportunities to see the critically endangered **Yellow-headed Parrot**, **Aplomado Falcon**, **White-tailed Hawk** & **Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture**.

With birding stops the drive will take us about 3.5 hours. Lunch will be at Cheers Restaurant, where

you can eat and look at **Vermilion Flycatchers** and **Buff-bellied Hummingbirds**. After lunch, we will head to Crooked Tree where a boat safari awaits us to search for **Black-collared Hawks**, **Snail Kites**, and a vast diversity of water birds including the endangered **Jabiru** and **Agami Heron**. Night talk on Yellow-headed Parrot Research and Conservation.

Accommodation: **Bird's Eye View Lodge**



## Day 10 (August 15<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday): Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary

We have time for coffee and some fruits before we head out on our second boat ride. This is good chance to spot **Sungrebe**, **Great Black Hawk**, and **Black-collared Hawk**. It is also our final chance for the elusive **Agami Heron**, **Boat-billed Heron** and both species of night herons. After so much excitement, we head for breakfast. The rest of the day, we will take a stroll through the savanna habitat for specialty species, like the **Yellow-lored Parrot**, **Rufous-browed Peppershrike**, **Yellow-headed Parrot** and **Yucatan Jay**. During the afternoon hours, we will sit by the lagoon side with a cold beer and scan for **Black-bellied Whistling Ducks** and **Ringed Kingfishers**.

Accommodation: **Bird's Eye View Lodge**

## Day 11 (August 16<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday): Crooked Tree and Departure.

Sunrise birding will be available around lodge grounds and nearby trail. The morning hours can be very productive along the lagoon-side trail. Depart to the airport after breakfast.

### Cost:

Double Occupancy: \$2,650 U.S. per person

Single Occupancy \$2,800 U.S. per person

### Cost Includes:

Room and board, 3 meals per day, transportation to and from the international airport, transportation during the workshop, entrance fees, guide fees, conservation fees and gratuity. Does not include airfare to Belize or adult beverages.

**Participants:** 8-10 persons

**SIGN UP TODAY TO HOLD YOUR SEAT!!!!**

## Accommodations:



### Mountain Equestrian Trails

Mountain Equestrian Trails is a family operation run by the Bevis family since 1989. The excellent staff at Mountain Equestrian trails are all from local villages and some have been with them for over 25 years. Their thatched roof cabanas are constructed from local hardwoods, stucco and covered by expert indigenous craftsman in the native style. Each room is decorated with Maya woven tapestries, locally made table & chairs, has a private bath with hot water and a deck overlooking the picturesque valley. Situated in beautiful broad-leaved rainforest near the Mountain Pine Forest

Reserve with over 240 bird species on the property.

Website: <http://www.metbelize.com>



### Ian Anderson's Caves Branch Jungle Lodge

Caves Branch Jungle Lodge has one primary theme - **Adventure!** For over 20 years of our existence, Caves Branch has been the catalyst for the most unique and thrilling adventures in the country of Belize. Our lodge has evolved from an extremely rustic Jungle River Camp with outhouses and river bathing to feature a stunning collection of 5 star luxury

Treehouses which are complete with rooftop decks and hot tubs to relax under the stars above.

Website: [www.cavesbranch.com](http://www.cavesbranch.com)



### **Bocawina Rainforest Resort**

Located in the southern district of Stann Creek is the Mayflower Bocawina National Park consisting of over 7100 acres of lush jungle, refreshing waterfalls and ancient Mayan sites. Nestled in the heart of this beautiful Belize National

Park is Bocawina Rainforest Resort & Belize Adventures; a spacious jungle eco-resort that runs on alternative energy and offers a wide range of adventure and cultural & wildlife tours in the property and around Belize! If you're looking for the best Belize vacation, tours and experience, this is the place for it!

Website: <http://www.bocawina.com>



### **Bird's Eye View Lodge**

For more than 14 years, Bird's Eye View Lodge has been honored to serve bird watchers and nature lovers who have come to visit the Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary from as far away as the United States, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, England, Wales, Scotland, France, Germany, Austria, Holland, Venezuela, and South Africa! The family ran lodge is a haven for bird and nature enthusiasts. Located on the shores of the Crooked Tree Lagoon, they offer you exceptional Belizean birding.

Website: <http://www.birdseyeviewbelize.com/home.htm>

## **Meet your Guides**

### **Roni Martinez**

Roni was born in Belize, worked as a natural history guide at Blancaneaux Lodge in Belize from 2004 until 2014. While there he developed a passion for birds and other wildlife, while serving as the Conservation Officer. In 2014 he left this position to pursue a wider career in birding and wildlife conservation. Roni works with many different researchers and conservation NGOs, who share his same vision. He co-founded the Scarlet Six Biomonitoring Team to protect the last remnant population of Scarlet Macaws in Belize. His work with other conservation organizations, such as serving as President of the Belize Raptor Research Institute, has been crucial in maintaining a proactive effort in conserving biodiversity and wildlife habitat in Belize.



### **Isael Mai**

Isael Mai is a local resident of San Antonio Cayo, Belize. In 2011, he graduated from Sacred Heart Junior College with an Associate Degree in Natural Resources management and from since then has been sharing a growing passion for conservation—primarily with endangered birds. Isael, an avid birder, has been working as a Field Biologist for Scarlet Six Biomonitoring Team protecting endangered Scarlet Macaws from poachers in the Chiquibul forest. Also, he has been the lead for other bird and wildlife surveys, which have been essential to Scarlet Six's growing wildlife database. In 2013, Isael was a volunteer at the Raptor Watch Project and in 2014 he was hired as the Count Leader due to his exceptional knowledge in raptor identification and research where he has been Count Leader for 3 years. Outside the raptor watch project, he assisted with various projects such as the Hook-billed Kite and Solitary Eagle Projects. Isael Mai just completed the Audubon Society's Bird Guide Certification Program and is a certified guide in Belize.



## REGISTRATION:

Please contact BRRI to confirm that there is a space available for you on this tour. To register you need to fill out the registration form below and return it to BRRI with the required fee per person or the deposit per person as soon as possible to reserve your place on the tour. Tour is limited to the first 10 participants that make a deposit. Payments in full are due by June 1, 2017.

Mail to P.O. Box 110234 Campbell, CA 95011

Or

Email to Ryan Phillips at belizeraptorresearch@gmail.com



## Payments:

Upon registration a \$250 deposit is due to hold your place. 50% of the total tour cost is due by May 1<sup>st</sup> and the tour must be paid in full by June 1<sup>st</sup>.

## TERMS:

The Belize Raptor Research Institute (BRRI) reserve the right to alter this itinerary as necessary or to cancel the tour prior to departure, with full refund to participants. BRRI assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, or delay that may occur due to malfunction or because of sickness, weather, strike, or theft. BRRI reserve the right to decline to accept or retain any person as a member of this tour at any time. No smoking will be permitted in the van, or at meals, or with the group in the field.

## CANCELLATIONS:

Your deposit will be returned, minus a \$100 administration fee, if you have to cancel your reservation for unavoidable reasons prior to May 1, 2017. Full refund, minus the administrative fee, will be given after June 1, 2017 only if we can fill the vacated slot. If the slot cannot be filled, the Belize Raptor Research Institute will return only that portion of the fee covering personal costs. You may want to consider purchasing travel insurance. **The tour is subject to cancelation if there are inadequate registrations.**

**IF YOU HAVE ANY MEDICAL CONDITIONS THAT THE TRIP LEADER SHOULD BE AWARE OF, PLEASE INCLUDE THIS INFORMATION BELOW:**

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## Birding for Conservation Belize Tour 2017 Registration Form

(Registration limited to first 10 registrants)

Please register me (us) for the Birding for Conservation Belize Tour for August 6-16, 2017

NAME\_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS\_\_\_\_\_

CITY\_\_\_\_\_STATE\_\_\_\_ZIP\_\_\_\_\_

PHONE DAY\_\_\_\_\_EVENING\_\_\_\_\_Email\_\_\_\_\_

☐ Enclosed is my check made payable to **Belize Raptor Research Institute** for the full amount of \$(US) 2,650 per person (Double occupancy) or \$(US) 2,800 per person (Single occupancy).

☐ Enclosed is my deposit of \$250 per person made payable to **Belize Raptor Research Institute**. I will send the remaining \$ 2,400. per person (Double occupancy) or \$2,550 per person (single occupancy) before June 1, 2017 and 50% of the total amount (\$1,200 double, \$1,275 single) before May 1, 2017

☐ I desire a single room. Single supplement fee of \$ 150.00 per person is also included.

My roommate will be \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I need a roommate. (If it is not possible to arrange a roommate, a single-supplement fee may be charged.)

EMERGENCY CONTACT:

NAME\_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: DAY\_\_\_\_\_EVENING\_\_\_\_\_Email\_\_\_\_\_