Join Tampa Audubon Society birding in

CUBA

January 14–20/21, 2017

Western Mountains, Zapata Peninsula
Havana Extension optional

The Tampa Audubon Society is proud to work with Caribbean Conservation Trust for our next international birding tour to CUBA. We’ll chase birds in the western mountains for 2 days, then move south to the Zapata Peninsula for 3 days. We return to Havana for one evening, with an additional full day and night extension option.

Caribbean Conservation Trust has been managing birding and natural history tours and promoting conservation under US government authorization for 20 years. Our team will include acclaimed Cuban scientist Dr. Luis Diaz, curator of the National Museum of Natural History in Havana, a bilingual Cuban tour leader and local naturalists in 3 different birding regions. We will also be interacting with local scientists and naturalists who work in research and conservation.

The Itinerary

Our itinerary provides opportunities to see many of Cuba’s endemic species and subspecies, as noted below. This trip will also focus on the many neotropical migrant species that migrate south to Cuba in the fall, and are abundant in Cuba during the winter months. Other endemics are possible as well.

Day 1 After arrival in Havana we will visit the private ornithological collection of Orlando Garrido, Cuba’s greatest living naturalist. Sr. Garrido is a retired and venerable former Curator of Birds at the National Museum of Natural History in Havana, and co-author of the Field Guide to the Birds of Cuba as well as hundreds of scientific publications. Transfer to Hotel Moka (2 nights), nestled in the forest and foothills of the Sierra de la Rosario mountains 1 hour west of Havana for accommodation and dinner. Moka is a tranquil and comfortable small hotel that is part of Las Terrazas ecological community. This is the only region in which we will likely see the Cuban Solitaire, Cuban Grassquit, Giant Kingbird, & Olive-capped Warbler. Other potential endemic species for western Cuba include Cuban Oriole, Cuban Green Woodpecker, Cuban Pewee, Cuban Pygmy-Owl, Cuban Tody, Cuban Trogon, Cuban Vireo, Yellow–headed Warbler, Fernandina’s Flicker, & Great Lizard Cuckoo. (endemic species and endemic subspecies in italics).

Day 2 Morning birding local to La Guira National Park (slightly hilly, easy forest trails, 2+ miles) including Cave of the Portals, carved by the San Diego River which currently meanders through it. Lunch in San Diego de los Banos, with afternoon birding in the area, for Cuban Bullfinch, Cuban Pewee, Red-legged Honeycreeper and Red-legged Thrush (endemic subspecies) before returning to Moka.

Day 3 Morning birding in the area, looking for anything we’ve missed. After lunch depart for Zapata Peninsula, the largest wetland complex in the West Indies, and Cuba’s most prolific birding region. We will have 3 nights’ accommodations in the area’s best ‘casas particulares’ (private homestays) along the coast.

Day 4 Birding in Zapata National Park with local guides. Here is our best opportunity to see the endemic Bee Hummingbird (the world’s smallest bird), Fernandina’s Flicker, Bare-legged Owl, Cuban Parakeet, Cuban Parrot, Blue-headed and Gray-fronted Quail-doves, Key West and Ruddy Quail Doves. After lunch at Caleta Buena we’ll search for Red-shouldered Blackbirds and anything we missed in the morning.

Cuban Tody with lunch
Cuban Parrots waving bye
Day 5 After early breakfast we’ll walk along the swamp (dry walking) searching for Zapata Wren, Zapata Sparrow, Red-shouldered Blackbird, Tawny-shouldered Blackbird, warblers and migrants. After lunch and a break we’ll head to Las Salinas Wildlife Refuge for shorebirds, egrets, spoonbills, flamingos and Cuban Black-Hawk. An evening walk will search for Stygian Owl and Cuban Nightjar.

Day 6 Birding after breakfast in the National Park again, searching for any missed species. After lunch and a break we’ll head to Las Salinas Wildlife Refuge for shorebirds, egrets, spoonbills, flamingos and Cuban Black-Hawk. An evening walk will search for Stygian Owl and Cuban Nightjar.

Day 7 Breakfast, then depart for the airport and return flight, or for the Optional Extension, a guided ½ day orientation to Havana by private bus, a ride in one of the classic 1950’s cars, and a walking tour of Old Havana, the 4 colonial plazas and other historic buildings. Lunch and dinner at private Cuban restaurants included.

Day 8 Breakfast and depart for airport and return flight.

Additional Details
A bilingual Cuban Guide will be with us throughout the program. He/she will deal with logistics, meals, translation, and will tell us about Cuban history, culture, arts and lifestyle.

Dr. Mary Keith, President of Tampa Audubon, will be with us. Fluent in Spanish and an accomplished birder, this will be her second trip to Cuba with CCT.

Accommodations will be the best Cuba has to offer in the regions we visit. All are safe, clean and air-conditioned tourist facilities. Cuban standards may differ from those in the US.

Physical Demands will be light to moderate most days. The longest walks will be about 3 miles. Most walking is flat and dry, although there are some hills in the Western Mountain area. Temperatures will be in the 70 to 90°F range, with some rain possible. Some days may have early departures, but there will be leisure time after lunch or before evening walks.

COSTS

- Land costs for the 7 day trip are $3,350.00 per person for double rooms. **Current Tampa Audubon members receive a $100 discount with reservation made before Oct 10!** Single supplement is $450.00.
- Registration is first come, first reserved, with a MAXIMUM of 14 PEOPLE. With only 12 participants there will be an additional $175 per person small-group supplement.
- The one day/night HAVANA EXTENSION is an additional $295.00 per person double room, or $355.00 single room.
- Reservation forms must be accompanied by a check for $700 deposit payable to Caribbean Conservation Trust.
- Balance of payment is due by October 13, 2016. Ask for details regarding refund policy.

INCLUDED IN COSTS

- All accommodations
- All meals in Cuba, from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on last day of program
- Ground transportation, including airport transfers
- Guide services & full-time bilingual Cuban guide
- Bilingual Cuban naturalists
- Full-time driver
- Most tips
- Bottled water, and some drinks
- U.S. Dept. of Treasury authorization documents

NOT INCLUDED IN COSTS

- Travel to/from Havana—US (flights not currently known, estimated costs $425 to $525 round trip)
- Cuban visa—$75
- Cuban health insurance, required by law, ~$3/day
- Personal items (laundry, phone, bar, housekeeping)
- Airport taxes, $30 leaving Cuba
- US Passport fees

CCT will provide details on getting insurance, visa and other requirements as needed.

Please see full details at www.tampaudubon.org or contact Mary Keith, keithma1@juno.com.

For a glimpse of CCT in action, go to: http://video.pbs.org/program/counting-birds/ for a link to the film COUNTING ON BIRDS, a 2013 Public Broadcasting System (www.pbs.org) production which features a segment on CCT in Cuba as an example of how birders can contribute to ‘citizen science’ based bird conservation efforts.

Photos courtesy of Caribbean Conservation Trust

Registration: mail to Mary Keith, TAS, PO Box 320025, Tampa, FL 33679 with deposit of $700. Check made out to Caribbean Conservation Trust. Do NOT write Cuba on check.

Name: _______________________________ email: _______________________________
Address: _____________________________________________________________
City ___________ ZIP ____________________
Single _Double _Rooming with: _______________________________ Phone: ____________

You will receive a receipt for the deposit payment from TAS and CCT. Final payments will be made directly to CCT.