

# Cuban Endemic Birds with Arturo Kirkconnell

Bird Cuba with the co-author of The Field Guide  
to the Birds of Cuba



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May 4-13, 2018 or May 19-28, 2018

*If you've always wanted to travel to Cuba to pick up those 26 endemics, now is the time to go! JB Journeys is excited to offer these tours with Cuba's premier bird guide, Arturo Kirkconnell. Co-author of A Field Guide to the Birds of Cuba. No one has more experience and knowledge of the birds than the man who wrote the book.*

*You will visit bird hot spots like Viñales, Zapata Swamps (the Bay of Pigs), and the beautiful Keys on the northern coast.*

*We highly recommend a few extra days in Havana to see the old city, hear the music, feel the vibe! It's a great time to travel now and we know you'll love it!*

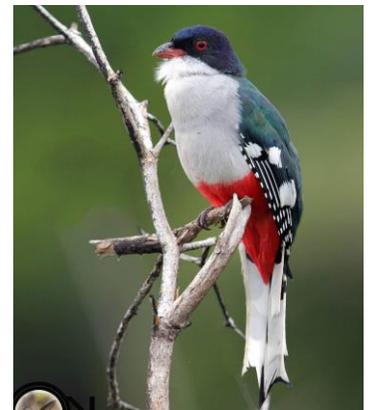
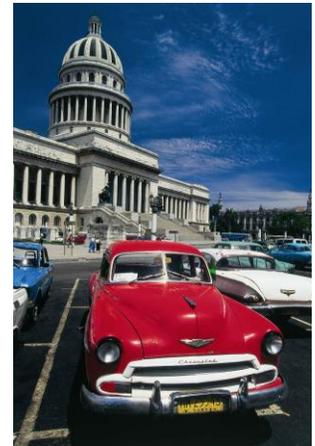
**Day 1.** Arrive at Havana airport. Transport by taxi (30 minutes) to old, historical section of Havana, where you will be lodged in a hotel comfortable private house ("casa Particular"), depending on your preference and group size. (D)

**Day 2.** After breakfast, depart for Viñales, Pinar del Rio province, birding along the way (Las Terrazas, La Guira). Lunch in Viñales. Overnight in Viñales in one of the local hotels (or casa Particular) of the region. (B,L,D)



Viñales, about 93 miles (150 km) west of Havana, is situated in Sierra de los Organos and is a delightful small town in a beautiful valley with a distinctive landscape of steep-sided limestone "mogotes". About 100 bird species have been reported from the area. Target species: **Cuban Grassquit, Cuban Solitaire, Olive-capped warbler**, and other endemics.

**Day 3.** After breakfast, depart to Zapata Peninsula, about 230 miles (380 km), with lunch on the way, arriving in time for dinner in Zapata. Overnight in the nicest house in Zapata, "Casa Luis," or Playa Larga Resort, depending on group size. In the afternoon, birding at Soplillar. Target species: endemic quail-doves and owls; also we will be looking for Nearctic migrants, such as Swainson's Warbler and Worm-eating Warbler. (B,L,D)



Zapata Peninsula is, undoubtedly, the best bird watching area in Cuba, and possibly the entire Caribbean region. It supports all but three of Cuba's avian endemics, as well as many other native species, both winter residents and transients, along with several summer and spring visitors (which breed in Cuba but return south in fall). Over 270 species have been reported in the area.

**Day 4.** Breakfast at 5:30 am, then depart to Bermeja (a fauna refuge with national significance), an open area with royal and cabbage palms, brush, and shrubbery, 7 miles (12 km) north of Playa Girón. This is *the* place to look for **Fernandina's Flicker**. Cuba's two endemic owls (**Cuban Pygmy-Owl** and **Bare-legged Owl**), **Cuban Nightjar**, **Bee Hummingbird**, **Cuban Parakeet**, **Cuban Trogon**, **Cuban Tody**, and all four quail-dove species (the two rarest species are frequently encountered) can also be seen here, as well as many Nearctic warblers. Lunch in the resort or house select for overnighting. Resume birding in the afternoon in Bermeja area. Birding at night as well. (B,L,D)



**Day 5.** Breakfast at 5:30 am. Depart for La Turba. This is a marsh habitat, where we will be looking for **Zapata Wren**, **Zapata Sparrow**, and **Red-shouldered Blackbird**. Lunch at Caleta Buena (optional), or our lodging place after 4:00 pm. La Salina in Zapata. This area has ideal feeding conditions for many waterbirds (flamingos, egrets, ducks, shorebirds), which come to feast on the fishes, crustaceans, and other invertebrates. (B,L,D)



**Day 6.** Travel day! Breakfast at 7:00 am, and then depart at 8:00 am to Camaguey city. The ride is about 240 miles (400 km), arriving in time for dinner. Lodging in a nice house or hotel. (B,L,D)

Located about 42 miles (70 km) southeast of Camaguey city, Najasa is a protected area of open country with many palm groves, and a mixture of semi-deciduous woods in the low foothills. About 120 species of birds have been reported, including several of special interest for the group: **Plain Pigeon**, **Cuban Parakeet**, **Cuban Parrot** (also known as Rose-throated Parrot), **Bare-legged Owl**, **Cuban Pygmy-owl**, **Cuban Palm Crow**, three species of woodpecker, and **Giant Kingbird**.



**Day 7.** Breakfast at 5:30 am. Depart for Najasa at 6:00 am. Lunch in La Belen reserve. Birding in the reserve. Among the birds that can be observed in the area are Northern Caracara, Limpkin, Northern Jacana, and many endemics, including the elusive **Gundlach's Hawk**. After lunch, depart for Cayo Coco, about 170 miles (280 km). Overnight in an all-inclusive Hotel in Cayo Coco. (B,L,D)

Cayo Coco is the second-largest key in Cuba (recently connected to the mainland by a rock-fill road). Located 42 miles (70 km) northwest of Morón, it is mostly covered by semideciduous forests; there are also mangroves, coastal shrub, patches of grass, and lagoons. A total of over 200 species has been reported, including many Cuban rarities with several new birds to add to our list: **Cuban Gnatcatcher**, a race of **Zapata Sparrow**, and **Oriente Warbler**. Also, other birds will be sought, including Western Spindalis and Cuban Bullfinch. There are many waders and one of the largest populations of American Flamingo in the Caribbean. In fall Merlin and Peregrine Falcon are not uncommon. Piping Plover is a winter resident on these keys.

**Day 8.** Breakfast at 7:00 am. Depart to Cayo Paredon Grande, about a 45 minutes' drive from Cayo Coco. Lunch and dinner at the hotel. Depart in the afternoon at 3:00pm to Cayo Guillermo. (B,L,D)

Your destination will soon become recognizable in the distance due to its black-and-yellow painted lighthouse. The main habitats of Cayo Paredón Grande are sandy-coast vegetation and mangroves. Well over 100 species have been reported in the area, including **Thick-billed Vireo** (a described endemic subspecies *cubensis*) and **Bahama Mockingbird** (very rare in this area), among them. There is a lighthouse where, during the fall migration, many North American warblers can be spotted. It is also an excellent area for **Mangrove Cuckoo**, **Cuban Gnatcatcher**, and **Oriente Warbler**.



Cayo Guillermo is situated 20 miles (34 km) northwest of Cayo Coco. This is a sandy key with xerophitic vegetation and lots of palms (*Coccothrinax* sp.). Over 80 species have been reported in this area. In this habitat is found the Bahama Mockingbird. Also, shorebirds, egrets, ducks, and rails can be observed at the internal lagoons.

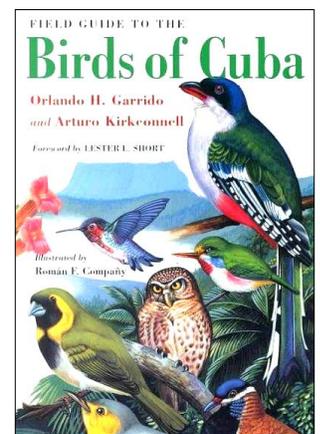
**Day 9.** We'll have an early breakfast before the long drive back to Havana, about 300 miles (540 km), with lunch and birding stop along the way. Overnight in Havana. (B,L,D)

**Day 10.** Departure and transfer to the airport. (B)

NOTE: *The order and sites visited may vary due to weather, road conditions, and other factors beyond our control.*



**Arturo Kirkconnell** was the longtime bird curator at the National Museum of Natural History of Cuba, in addition to being Cuba's top bird guide. He has written 77 scientific papers and is co-author of two birding books: *A Field Guide to the Birds of Cuba* and *A Birdwatchers' Guide to Cuba, Jamaica, Hispaniola, Puerto Rico and the Caymans*. Working with his son, Arturo Jr, he is working on an app for Cuban birds



# Cuban Endemic Birds with Arturo Kirkconnell

May 4-13, 2018 or May 19-28, 2018

- **Cost:** \$3995 per person in double occupancy, based on 8. (with 6: \$4195; with 4: \$4695)
- Single supplement \$350 (very limited) (singles are either a double on your own, or a smaller room for one person)

**To confirm your place, please send an email message or call, then complete the reservation form and return to JB Journeys with your deposit of \$500 per person. Final payment will be due March 1, 2018. Deposits for trips to Cuba are non-refundable.**

**Call with your credit card number to 512-217-4814 or 512-217-4836. Checks should be sent to JB Journeys, attn Barbara Baggett, PO Box 1052, Utopia, TX 78884.**

## **Included:**

- Transportation as listed by A/C van
- 9 nights hotel with taxes
- Excursions as listed with any entry fees
- Meals as listed in itinerary
- Bilingual birding guide throughout
- Local guides at parks or reserves

## **Not Included:**

- Airfare
- Meals not listed
- Alcoholic drinks
- Gratuities \*
- Insurance
- Cuban Visa\*\*

\* Gratuities in Cuba are more expected than suggested. Here are our recommendations of who to tip and how much:

- Guide - \$7-10 per person per day
- Driver - \$3-5 per person per day
- Local Guides (at parks or reserves) - \$1-3 per person
- Hotel maids - \$1-2 per room per night
- Bellmen - \$2 per service
- Restaurant meals - \$2-5 per meal

\*\*Cuban Visas are available from the airline OR we can obtain them for you in advance. We charge \$100 per visa, which is our cost.