



Birding In The Clouds
EL TRIUNFO 2020



RoyalFlycatcher Birding & Nature Photography is a small company whose goal is to promote birding while promoting love and respect for nature through the encouragement of habitat conservation for local birds and wildlife, while supporting the local economy and culture. Our sustainable birding mission is to be the eco-friendliest Birding & Nature Photography tour company.

Encounter the great diversity of the birds of Chiapas while traveling all around Mexico and Central America with us. We offer birding and nature photography for wildlife holidays in the best habitats. Let our leaders share their enthusiasm and expertise to find the birds and wildlife--they love to share their knowledge. We can be your guides for a birding day-trip or for a multi-day tour. We can lead large and small groups, and groups of all skill levels.

For the past several years, RoyalFlycatcher has been working closely with an NGO in contributing to the conservation of several bird groups. We've also concentrated much effort in the training of local guides and educating tourism centers to appreciate and promote the biodiversity of the communities they represent. In addition, we support many local educational and environmental protection efforts in order to sustain the best habitats for the birds and wildlife.

Royal Flycatcher's guides have extensive experience, which includes leading birding and photography tours, teaching census techniques, bird-banding and monitoring various bird groups (such as shorebirds, raptors, owls, passerines, and water birds), and directing training workshops for local guides and monitors. We also are passionate about teaching locals about sustainable tourism.

If you have a destination in mind that is not listed, please contact us—we can work with you to develop the perfect custom itinerary.



The Biosphere Reserve El Triunfo

Located on the steep slopes of an extinct volcano in the mountains of Sierra Madre de Chiapas, El Triunfo Biosphere Reserve is one of the most biodiverse forest reserves in Mexico and worldwide. El Triunfo has been identified as a Pleistocene refuge, in which numerous plant and animal species survived the climate changes and extinction of the Pleistocene epoch. Considered a biodiversity hotspot, the reserve has ten vegetation types, including some of the best remaining stands of Central American cloud forest and the last expanse of Pacific Coast tropical evergreen forest. The cloud forest at El Triunfo--especially between 6800-7000' elevation around and above the clearing--is spectacular. It has multiple layers of vegetation high up into the canopy. El Triunfo is home to a number of mammal species, many of which are threatened. There are over 360 bird species, including the Horned Guan and the Resplendent Quetzal.

El Triunfo is open to birders and/or tourists only three consecutive months each year; few tourists visit per year even though it offers tremendous beauty and natural richness.

Itinerary

Day 1.- Pick up at the airport

sumidero Canyon-Jaltenango

Day 2.- Jaltenango-Finca Prusia-El Triunfo Station

Day 3.- El Triunfo Station- The Bandera Trail

Day 4.- El Triunfo Station-Pacific Lookout Trail

Day 5.- El Triunfo Station-Tuxtla Gutierrez

Day 5.- El Triunfo Station-Paval Camp

Day 6.- Paval Camp-Limonar

Day 7.- Limonar- Castañón

Day 8.- El Castañón-Tuxtla Airport



The Beginning:

Day 1.- Pick up at the airport –Sumidero Canyon-Jaltenango

The beautiful Sumidero Canyon is a deep, natural canyon located between Tuxtla Gutiérrez and Chiapa de Corzo. Formed millions of years ago, it is a geological fault where the Grijalva River lies, and it is considered to be one of the most spectacular places in México. The canyon walls are over 1300 meters high, and beautiful features can be appreciated all along them.

One of the main characteristics of the area is its diverse vegetation, which varies according to the altitude. On tours through the canyon, bromeliads, pine, and oak are abundant. Due to the slopes and greater humidity inside the canyon, mid-range and high mountain areas have developed where ceibas, apricots, and ocotes prevail. Around the springs, rivers, and streams, plants such as begonias, ferns, and mosses grow. Birds are the most common type of animal in the park with about 195 species documented. Six of these species are threatened and seventeen are subject to special protection.

Depending on time, we can spend approximately three hours visiting Sumidero Canyon and look for the best targets for this site. Red-breasted Chat, Belted Flycatcher, and Slender Sheartail are three of our targets, and the Sumidero Canyon is the best place to find them.

After our birding we'll depart for Jaltenango del Valle, a small town near the Biosfera Reserve El Triunfo. We will stay the night here.

Night: Hotel Finca Jaltenango

Targets Birds



Belted Flycatcher	Blue Grosbeak
Blue and White mockingbird	Varied Bunting
Fan-tailed Warbler	Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush
Gray collared Becard	Streak-backed Oriole
Blue Seedeater	Red-Breasted Chat
Pheasant Cuckoo	Violaceous Trogon
Rufous-browed Peppershrike	Russet-crowned Motmot
Black-headed Saltator	Slender Sheartail
Yellow Grosbeak	Banded Wren



Day 2.- Jaltenango-Finca Prusia-El Triunfo Station

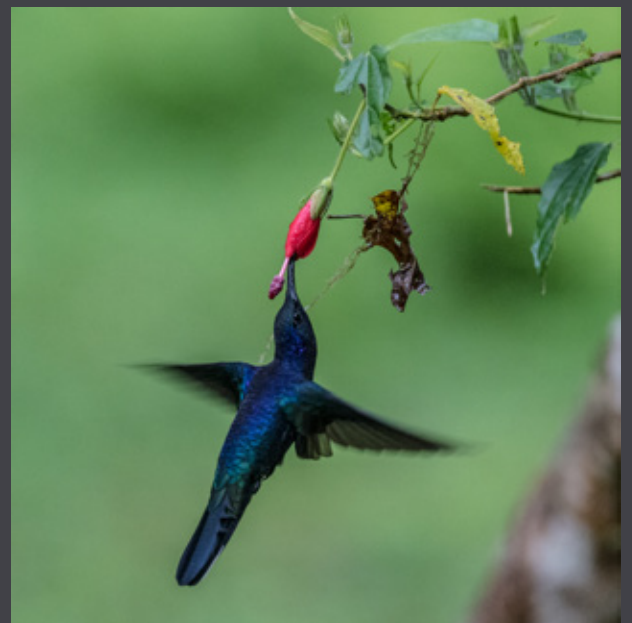
After an early breakfast, we'll depart Jaltenango for Finca Prusia. On the way, we will pass through several communities and make a couple of stops to see area birdlife. Several birds are likely to be spotted—such as Motmots, Flycatchers, Chachalacas, and Magpie-Jay. Finca Prusia is a small community with a large coffee farm that looks abandoned to partially inhabited, but that is a result from the 1994 social movement.

Here, we will leave the vehicle and meet up with local people that are part of our logistic team. Local horsemen will strap our packs and supplies onto the sides of their trusted pack mules for the trip up to the Triunfo Biological Station. Birders need to carry only their backpacks with water, lunch, and camera gear. The horses will carry all the camping equipment and ten days worth of meals (for tours with more than seven days across the Pacific slope). Along the trail, we'll have opportunities to see several target birds as we pass through different ecosystems; we'll also see several types of vegetation, from the coffee plantations to the cloud forest, through oak forests, humid forests, and others.

Night: Biological Station El Triunfo

Targets Birds

- Gren-throated Mountain Gem
- Azure-rumped Tanager
- Tody Motmot
- Scaly-throated Foliage-gleaner
- Resplendent Quetzal (Guatemalan)
- Northern Emerald Toucanet
- Lessons Motmot
- Emerald-chinned Hummingbird
- Violet Sabrewing
- Rufous Sabrewing
- Golden-brown Warble
- Green Shrike-Vireo
- Collared Trogon
- Long-tailed Manakin
- Black-hawk Eagle



Day 3.- Jaltenango-Finca Prusia-El Triunfo Station

For the next two days, the plan is go out birding early in the morning, after awakening to the amazing chorus of the cascade of birdsong! On day 3, we'll start our birding along the Palo Gordo Trail looking for the enigmatic Horned Guan, an endangered cracid whose entire world range is restricted to the isolated cloud forests in Chiapas and adjacent Guatemala.

After our hiking, we'll come back for lunch and take a break. In the afternoon, we will explore the Cerro Bandera Trail, where we will see the Resplendent Quetzal. The Resplendent Quetzal is considered one of the most beautiful birds in the Americas, if not the world. Its feathers were highly prized in pre-Columbian times.

During the night, we may be able to hear and/or see the Fulvous Owl. Other animals such as the Tapir and Gray Fox are also possible sightings.

Night: Biological Station El Triunfo



Targets Birds

Yellow Grosbeaks	Resplendent Quetzal (Guatemalan)
Flame-colored Tanager	White-faced Quail-Dove
Gray Silky flycatcher	The Blue-throated Motmot
Blue-thorated Motmot	Spotted Nightingale-Thrush
Blue-crowned Chlorophonia	Fulvous Owl
Northern Emerald Toucanet	Highland Guan
Black Thrush	Rufous-browed Wren
Mountain Thrush	Brown-backed Solitaire
Black-throated Jay	Paltry Tyrannulet
Singing Quail	Violet Sabrewing
Horned Guan	Eye-ringed Flatbill
Elegant Euphonia	...More



Day 4.- Jaltenango-Finca Prusia-El Triunfo Station

Early morning, we'll start out hiking with a spotlight on the trail. With good luck, we could see Tapir, Spider Monkey, Grey Fox and other interesting mammals. The goal is to get to the look-out before sunrise. It is an excellent vista point for the Pacific slope. We will feel the change in temperature and contemplate the song of the birds--the magic Quetzal and the Horned Guan singing through the clouds. Here, we'll also have the chance to see the Wine-throated Hummingbird. The males have extravagant magenta gorgets but the throats of the females are plain. These tiny hummers are resident in the highlands from southern Mexico (in Chiapas) south through Guatemala to northern El Salvador and Honduras. After our birding, we will return to the station for lunch and take a break and relax on the deck.

This evening, everyone must prepare their packs and belongings; in the morning, we will leave everything on the terrace—ready to go, so that the muleteers can prepare the mules and return to the Prussia farm where our vehicle will be waiting.

Night: Biological Station El Triunfo



Targets Birds

- Ruddy Foliage-gleaner
- Band-tailed Pigeon
- Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrush
- Spotted Woodcreeper
- Green-throated Mountain-gem
- Barred Forest-Falcon
- Chestnut-capped Brushfinch
- Flame-colored Tanager
- Unicolored Jay
- Fulvous Owl
- Hooded Grosbeak



Day 5.- El Triunfo Station-Finca Prusia-Tuxtla

In the early morning, after a cup of coffee and breakfast, we will depart El Triunfo and return to Finca Prusia. Our return will be more relaxed. We will carry our backpack with water, snacks, binoculars, and camera. The adventure continues with ample opportunities to see more birds wildlife, and beautiful flowers and vegetation! We will look for species that we did not see on previous days, such as the Cabanisi Tanager, the second most important bird of the tour, because of its very restricted range. It once readily showed in fair numbers on the Pacific slope and in the interior Sierra Madre (Finca Prusia Trail). We will have lunch on the trail while sitting on the forest floor of the Prussian Trail.

Upon our return, it may be possible to buy real local honey. This is an excellent place since the honey is 100% native and supports the local economy. The adventures that we offer are unique and so are all the places and people that we visit. Since the very beginning, we have operated under the belief that sustainable tourism can be beneficial to local communities, the environment, respecting both the culture and the environment.



Once we arrive at Prusia farm, we will take our vehicle and drive to Jaltenango del Valle and then on to Tuxtla Gutierrez, where our trip and our adventure ends.



Leader Guide

Alberto Martinez is a professional birding guide, biologist, field ornithologist and photographer. Born in Veracruz, Mexico, Alberto developed a passion for birds at a young age exploring around his hometown. He began to bird seriously in 1996 while attending the University of Veracruz where he received his B.S. in Biology. At this time, he started working for the Veracruz River of Raptors and in 2001 began to guide birders who came to watch the raptor migration. He has collaborated with international agencies such as HawkWatch International, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, Pronatura Sur, Pronatura Veracruz, the Conservation Leadership Program, SEO/Birdlife International, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain, Royal Flycatcher Birding Tours, Environmental Sustainability Leadership, Mass Wildlife, and Origenes Conservación de Especies y Espacios. Throughout his career he has specialized in leading birding tours, teaching census techniques, monitoring and capturing/banding different groups of birds (such as shorebirds, raptors, owls, passerines, and waterbirds) and directed birding workshops in order to train local guides and monitors. Currently, Alberto lives in San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas and coordinates projects that teach local people about sustainable tourism.





LINKS

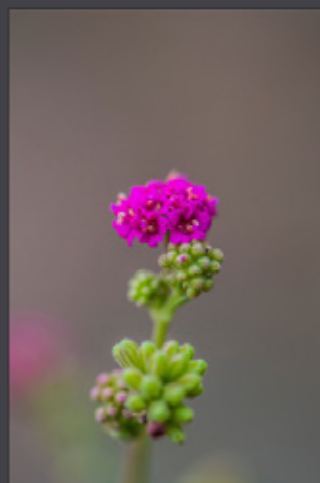
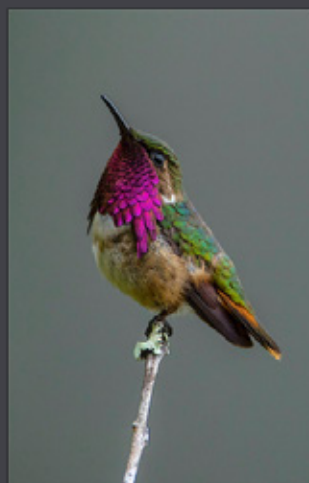
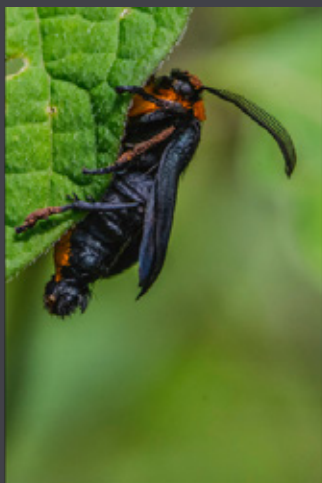
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<https://www.flickr.com/photos/albertohawk25/>

<http://www.bbc.com/earth/story/20160105-the-most-magical-forest-on-earth-lies-atop-a-mexican-mountain?ocid=fbert>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1m5Q64xGu0Q&t=231s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZosOjkUHtm0>



What to bring

Official ID such as Passport
Credit Cards, Debit Card, Cash in Pesos
(ATM available in Tuxtla and San Cristobal)
Binoculars
Camera
Flashlight
Hat, Insect repellent
Sunblock, Sunglasses, Umbrella and rain gear
Hiking sticks

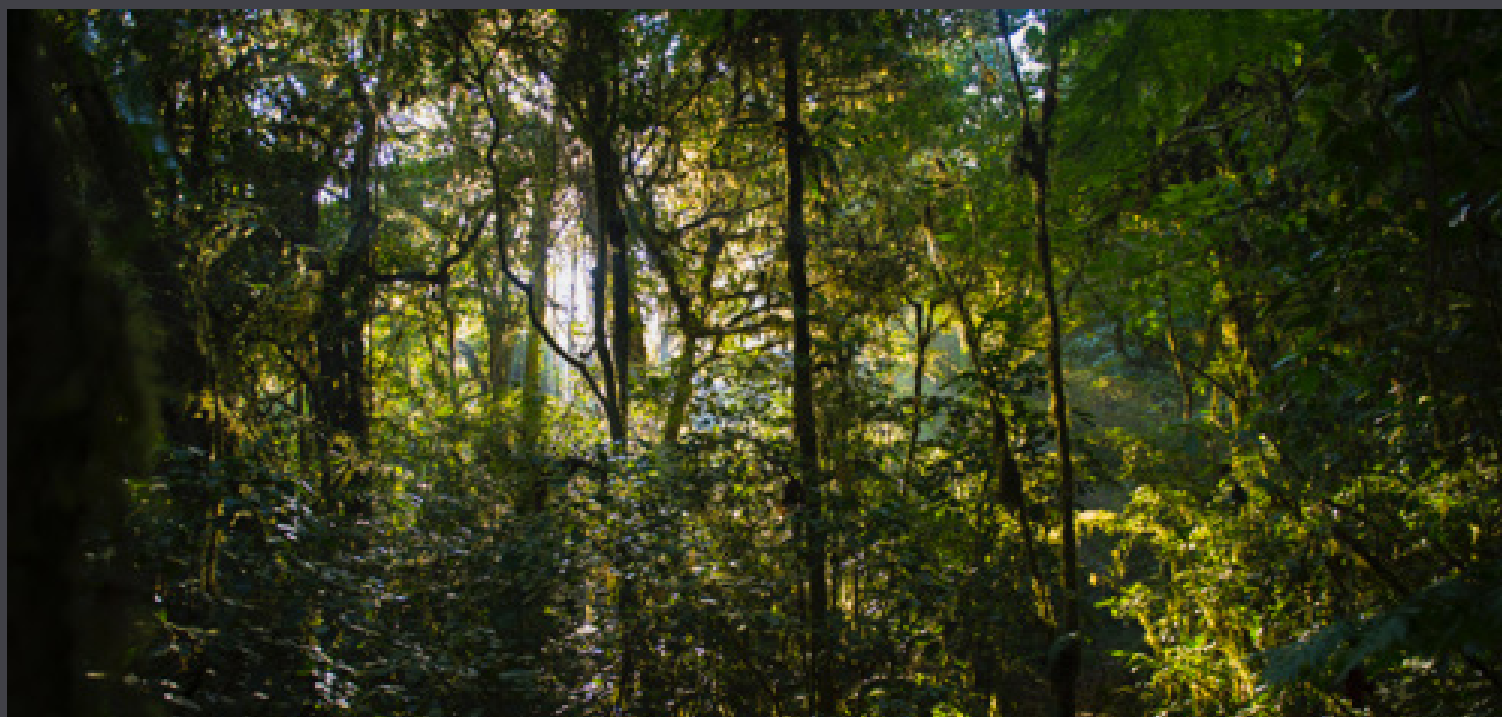
Day Pack Light-weight
walking/hiking shoes
winter clothing
Travel documents in your day pack
Personal prescription drugs First-aid kit
(should contain lip salve, Aspirin, Band Aids,
anti-histamine, Imodium or similar tablets for
mild cases of diarrhea)

Cost

Note: All the dates of the itineraries include arrival and departure dates. Comfortable and safe transportation with AC and driver are included.

Included: Lodging; food; transportation; entrance fees to parks, ruins, reserves; and birding guide.

Excluded: Alcoholic drinks, any items of personal nature.



In May of 2017 a dream came true for me. A birding trip to the famous El Triunfo Biosphere Reserve was arranged for me by RoyalFlycatcher Birding Tours. After reading "Fifty Places to GO BIRDING before you die" several years ago I was very keen to visit El Triunfo in the tropical highlands of southern Mexico. Birds of course were the priority but the possibility of seeing animals of an intact wilderness was very appealing too.

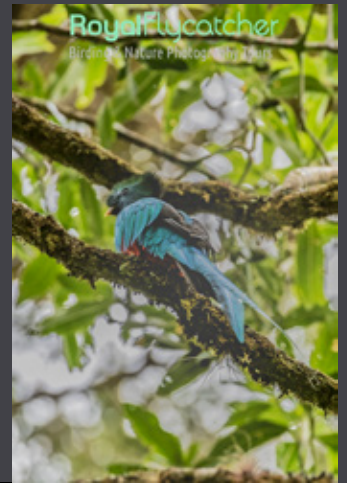
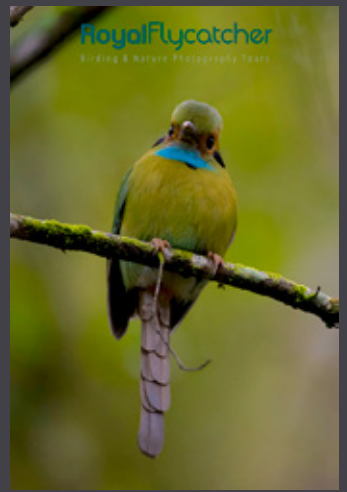
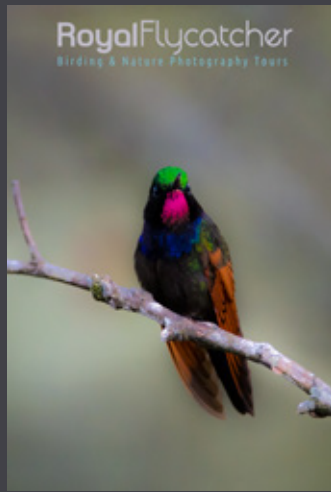
Alberto Martinez of RoyalFlycatcher had successfully put together a birding tour of Chiapas for me previously. When I heard he could get permission to enter the El Triunfo Reserve I immediately said, sign me up. The birds were fantastic; the colors of the tropical birds against the green of the cloud forest trees were stunning. Wispy fog hanging over the valley views added to the atmosphere of a magical forest. Walking the trails, seeing life birds on a daily basis, watching for elusive cats like jaguars made me feel privileged to be there.

When the sun went down, the magic continued with a new cast of sounds from owls, frogs, chirping insects and other denizens of the meadows and forests surrounding base camp. Overhead the night sky was filled by the Milky Way, each star crisp and distinct.

Accommodations at the base camp were simple, spotlessly clean, and comfortable. Food was very good and meals were generous. Would I go back again? You bet I would!



ROYALFLYCATCHER
Birding Tours & Nature Photography



RoyalFlycatcher Targets Birds

