

Dominican Republic

March 18-25, 2024

Itinerary:

Please plan to arrive in Santo Domingo on March 17. Rooms are reserved at The Crowne Plaza in Santo Domingo. There is no hotel shuttle, but it's only a 30 min taxi ride from the airport. Dinner and the hotel tonight are included in the tour cost.

Day 1 (March 18) - Salinas de Bani

In the early morning we will be met by our local guide at our hotel after which we'll start making our way west from Santo Domingo. We will do some morning birding on route at the Salinas de Bani salt pans and mangroves, frequented by species such as American Flamingo, White-cheeked Pintail, Smooth-billed Ani, the Caribbean subspecies of the Clapper Rail, and the "Golden Warbler" form of the Yellow Warbler. We will work the shore and other waterbirds here until lunch, which will be followed by an afternoon drive to Los Patos near the southern slope of Sierra de Bahoruco National Park, our birding destination for the next day. Overnight in Los Patos.

Day 2 (March 19) - Sierra de Bahoruco NP; Oviedo Lagoon

We'll do an early morning drive up the southern slope of Sierra de Bahoruco National Park for high elevation birding at the La Charca and Aceitillar pine forests, with species such as Hispaniolan Parrot, Golden Swallow, Hispaniolan Crossbill, and Antillean Siskin all possible. Once birding starts to slow down in the mid-morning, we'll work our way down the mountain towards lunch, followed by a brief afternoon visit to Oviedo Lagoon in Jaragua National Park to look for shorebirds such as Wilson's Plover and Gull-billed Tern, as well as all-time favorites such as Reddish Egret and Roseate Spoonbill. Overnight in Los Patos.

Day 3 (March 20) - Cachote Cloud Forest; Rabo de Gato Trail

We'll make an early morning drive up to the Cachote cloud forest to give us the best chance to see specials such as Greater Antillean Bullfinch, Hispaniolan Spindalis, Narrow-billed Tody, and the star of the day: the elusive Eastern Chat-Tanager. Then it is back down to Barahona for lunch, after which we will continue making our way to the area of Puerto Escondido where we will do some afternoon birding at the Rabo de Gato Trail to look for the likes of Ruddy, White-fronted, and Key West Quail-Dove, as well as Bay-breasted and Hispaniolan Lizard-Cuckoos, the island's three hummingbirds (Hispaniolan Mango, Vervain Hummingbird, Hispaniolan Emerald), and the small but fierce Broad-billed Tody. Overnight in Duverge.

Day 4 (March 21) - Zapoten Cloud Forest

A very early start to the day sees us drive up to Zapoten cloud forest for early morning high elevation birding in the pine forest. The main reason for getting up so early is to catch the highly restricted La Selle Thrush which is best seen right at dawn. But the cloud forest, possibly the best birding spot on the island, teems with special birds and we will also keep an eye out for Hispaniolan Trogon, Antillean Piculet, Hispaniolan Oriole, Hispaniolan Pewee, and Western Chat-Tanager as the day progresses. Given our early start, the day will be long, so trip participants will have some free time to rest at the hotel after lunch. This will be followed by late afternoon and night birding around Puerto Escondido, with the main targets being Least Poorwill and Hispaniolan Nightjar. Night in Duverge.

Day 5: (March 22) - Loma Charco Azul Trail; Lake Enriquillo

Another early day sees us doing some early birding at the Loma Charco Azul nature trail in Puerto Escondido to clean up on species we may have missed the previous day. Once done here we will head the shores of Lake Enriquillo National Park to look primarily for Hispaniolan Palm Crow. Once successful with the crow, we will have lunch and then embark on a 4-hour drive back to Santo Domingo, stopping by a White-tailed Tropicbird colony en route. Tonight, we'll stay at a comfortable and charming boutique hotel in the Colonial Zone of Santo Domingo. Night in Santo Domingo.

Day 6: (March 23) - Los Haities National Park

After breakfast we will depart from your hotel in Santo Domingo to drive 3 hours to Los Haitises National Park in far eastern Dominican Republic. Once we arrive here, we will enjoy a private boat ride through the region's mangroves and around the shores and small islands of the park in search of West Indian Whistling Duck and other waterbirds. Our boat ride will be followed by a typical Dominican lunch at the ecolodge where we will spend the night. After lunch you have free time to rest, =bird (Palmchat, Hispaniolan Woodpecker, Antillean Palm-Swift, and White-necked Crow are all possible on the property), or enjoy our overnight property on your own before we go looking for the Ashy Faced Owl at around 6 PM. Night in Los Haitises National Park.

Day 7 (March 24) - Santo Domingo

Breakfast at the lodge will be followed by morning birding to look for the Critically Endangered Ridgeway's Hawk (one of the world's rarest birds). Once we're done with birding here, we have head west back towards Santo Domingo, stopping en route at the charming coastal village of Sabana de la Mar for lunch and some shore birding. Once back in Santo Domingo we visit a Hispaniolan Parakeet roost in the Colonial Zone of the city before dropping you off at our overnight hotel. Night in Santo Domingo.

Day 8 (March 25) - Departure

After breakfast we will head to the airport for our flights home.

****Order of days in itinerary may change if logistically necessary***