



THE BEACHES & MOUNTAINS OF
PACIFIC MEXICO
San Blas (SW Nayarit) & El Tuito (NW Jalisco)
25 February to 5 March 2017

\$3,820 single & \$3,490 double
Maximum of 6 participants

In the spring of 2008, our friends Chuck and Dorothy Gates took us to this awesome place on the Pacific Coast of Mexico that they had been raving about for years. The town of San Blas, in the Mexican state of Nayarit, lies halfway between Mazatlan and Puerto Vallarta. Traditionally a Mexican tourist town, San Blas has attracted birders for several decades for the fascinating combination of a diverse avifauna and an authentic Mexican birding experience. Sipping a cerveza or fresh jugo at sunset while sitting at the "fort" that overlooks the town, you may see Short-tailed Hawk cruising by at eye level and Blue-footed Booby soaring along the seashore. A boat tour through mangrove tunnels will put you eye-to-eye with Boat-billed Heron and Common Potoo. And the woodlands and jungles above town showcase such west-Mexican endemics as Mexican Parrotlet, Citreoline Trogon, Purplish-backed Jay, Happy Wren, Rufous-backed Thrush, and Black-throated Magpie-Jay.

More recently, we started exploring to the south and noted that habitat diversity changes quickly with latitude, especially in the tropics. Through our participation in the Vallarta Bird Festival, we found Rancho Primavera, a lovely private estate nestled among the oak woodlands of the southern Sierra Madre and just outside the historic town of El Tuito. The Ranch property itself boasts more resident endemics, including: West Mexican Chachalaca, Russet-crowned Motmot, San Blas Jay, Blue Mockingbird, and Black-vented Oriole. Woodpeckers on the property include the giant Lineated and Pale-billed, plus the endemic Golden-cheeked Woodpecker. Habitats surrounding the ranch host still more endemics, just a few of which include Mexican Woodnymph, Golden Vireo and Rusty-crowned Ground-Sparrow. And in case you get overwhelmed with resident Mexican birds, the abundance of wintering North American songbirds will make you feel right at home! Escape with us to Pacific Mexico, and wrap yourself in a warm, laid-back birding paradise.

*Your host and lead guide,
Steve Shunk*



The endemic
Golden-cheeked
Woodpecker

TOUR SUMMARY

Our tour begins and ends in Puerto Vallarta, with its beautiful historic old-town now seemingly lost among the glitz and glamour of resorts for the beach-bound tourist. Since we seek an authentic Mexico experience, we will quickly leave the shiny resorts behind, heading northward around Banderas Bay. Once we leave the busy tourist regions, we may stop along a side road to sift through flocks of wintering orioles and buntings. The trees and shrubs along these local cobblestone streets may produce our first Ivory-billed Woodcreeper or a busy flock of White-collared Seedeaters. We should encounter plenty of raptors on the drive, including the common Gray Hawk. We will arrive in San Blas for dinner, where we will spend our first four nights.

The charismatic little fishing village of San Blas will serve as our base for exploring four primary habitat types: dry tropical jungle, mangrove swamp, shrimp pond, and open beach. The jungles occupy the foothills of the Sierra Madre, where we may hear the tooting of Colima Pygmy-Owl interrupted by the haunting call of Collared Forest-Falcon. Higher elevations may produce a Fan-tailed Warbler among a mixed flock of more familiar North American warbler species. Pale-billed Woodpecker will be chiseling away at the largest trees, while Squirrel Cuckoo dashes through the canopy. We will visit several locations between the jungle and lower transitional habitats, where we could encounter a hungry flock of endemic Mexican Parrotlets in a fruiting fig tree or a flock of gregarious Purplish-backed Jays.

The highlight of the mangrove swamps is our boat trip up the Rio San Cristobal and La Tovar. Travelling through tunnels of mangroves, we will watch for Boat-billed Heron and Northern Potoo staring at us from a few feet away. We may see a Limpkin or Rufous-necked Wood-Rail feeding in a muddy cove—giving wide berth to a loafing crocodile—and raptors may include Snail Kite or Laughing Falcon. Bare-throated Tiger-Heron will dwarf the tiny Green Kingfisher, and a “Mangrove” Yellow Warbler may whistle at us from overhead.

The shrimp ponds surrounding the town of San Blas will be worthy of a daily stop or two to scan through the shorebirds and waders and to watch the Mangrove Swallows feeding over the water. Collared Plover will be one of our target species here, with Northern Jacana skulking along the grassy shoreline. Common Black-Hawk or Harris’s Hawk may be roosting around the fringes of the ponds, with Wood Stork, White Ibis, and Anhinga representing some of the common large waterbirds.

A visit to Peso Island (actually the tip of a small peninsula) just across the river from downtown San Blas will allow views of an offshore seabird rookery, where Blue-footed and Brown Boobies nest. Peso Island is also an excellent place to see Crane Hawk at close range, plus Rufous-bellied Chachalaca skulking in the trees and Blue-black Grassquit on the grassy fringes of the beach. We could run into both Elegant and Citreoline Trogons and flocks of Tropical Parulas feeding in the stunted scrubby canopy.

Other species we may encounter in various habitats around San Blas include: Orange-fronted Parakeet; Great Kiskadee; Bronzed Cowbird; Painted and Varied buntings; Ruddy-breasted Seedeater; and the endemic Elegant Quail and Sinaloa Crow. A stay in San Blas could be one of your most memorable birding experiences ever; but, we have only just begun our Mexican adventure!

After breakfast on our final morning in San Blas, we will allow some time to explore the town square, with its authentic artisanal wares and delicious local foods. Heading south from San Blas, we may enjoy an early lunch in Sayulita before passing through Puerto Vallarta into the state of Jalisco. Once through the small cliff-side towns of Mismaloya and Boca de Tomatlan (actually the mouth of the Horcones River), we will head inland to the heart of Cabo Corrientes. Just 10 minutes from the 16th century pueblo of El Tuito is our home for the next four nights, Rancho Primavera.

Staying three full days at Rancho Primavera will give us ample time to explore the trails, ponds, and feeding stations on this amazing 200-acre private ranch. Every morning will begin with feeder watching before breakfast, when the local flock of Black-throated Magpie-Jays may chase off the more abundant Grayish Saltators.



Common birds at the hummingbird feeders will include Cinnamon Hummingbird, Plain-capped Starthroat, and Streak-backed Oriole. Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl and Russet-crowned Motmot may call from the trees lining the driveway, while Pale-billed and Golden-cheeked woodpeckers work the large snags nearby. Common flycatchers on the property include Tropical and Thick-billed kingbirds, and Vermilion and Social flycatchers, and we could see three different kingfishers (Green, Ringed, and Belted) at the largest pond on the property. Other pond dwellers may include Bare-throated Tiger-Heron, Wood Stork, and Black-bellied Whistling-Duck.

After our morning birding and breakfast at the patio, we might make short drives up the Bioto or Provincia Roads. A broad array of habitats—from coastal thorn scrub to highland pine forest—will give us an excellent sampling of the region's diversity. Bioto may produce both Elegant Trogon, Sinaloa Wren, White-fronted Parrot, Golden Vireo, Scrub Euphonia, and Red-crowned Ant-Tanager, as well as up to 4 woodpecker species, including the endemic Gray-crowned Woodpecker.

Provincia will take us to higher elevations, where Grace's Warblers can be common, plus Colima Pygmy-Owl, Painted Redstart, Fan-tailed Warbler, Black-headed Siskin, and Brown-backed Solitaire.

In addition to the awesome local birding, we will allow time to explore the 16th century town of [El Tuito](#). We will plan for one taco dinner in town, and we will wander the lovely town square to admire the local shops and architecture. If desired, we may even visit a local art gallery and raicilla-tasting bar on the edge of town. (*Raicilla is a local tequila-like spirit made from smoked green agave.*)

After our final breakfast at Rancho Primavera, we will head back toward Puerto Vallarta, but not before a productive stop at the Vallarta Botanical Gardens. Here we will enjoy more excellent looks at San Blas Jay, Yellow-winged Cacique, Masked Tityra, and Stripe-headed Sparrow, with a chance for the tiny endemic hummingbird, the Mexican Woodnymph. After an early lunch at the Hacienda de Oro café, we will continue north to Puerto Vallarta, arriving at the airport by 1 p.m. for afternoon departures.

BASIC DAILY ITINERARY

Saturday, February 25: Arrive in Puerto Vallarta by 3 p.m.; drive northward into Nayarit. Various birding stops en route to San Blas. Dinner and night in San Blas.

Sunday, February 26: Morning birding at Peso Island; lunch in town and afternoon at shrimp ponds and surrounding shoreline habitats. Dinner and night in San Blas.

Monday, February 27: All day birding with local guide. Morning at Tecuitata, lunch at Aticama, and afternoon along the "Birders' Highway". Dinner and night in San Blas.

Tuesday, February 28: All day birding with local guide. Morning at Chacalilla, lunch in San Blas; afternoon break then evening boat ride at La Tovar. Dinner and night in San Blas.

Wednesday, March 1: Morning walk around San Blas, then drive through Puerto Vallarta and into Jalisco. Dinner and night at Rancho Primavera.



Thursday, March 2: Morning birding around Rancho Primavera; lunch in Tuito, and afternoon birding at Rancho Primavera. Dinner and night at Rancho Primavera.

Friday, March 3: Morning birding the Provincia Road; afternoon at Rancho Primavera. Dinner and night at Rancho Primavera.

Saturday, March 4: Morning birding the Bioto Road. Return for casual afternoon at the ranch; evening and dinner in El Tuito. Night at Rancho Primavera.

Sunday, March 5: Leave Ranch Primavera after breakfast, then birding and early lunch at Vallarta Botanical Gardens. Return to airport by 1 p.m.

DAILY ACTIVITIES

In general, our daily birding experiences on this tour are rather casual, moving at a leisurely pace and spending plenty of time just watching the birds. Most birding sites are either walking distance from our lodging or a short drive away. We will typically start each morning with an early breakfast, followed by a birding outing of a few hours. On some days we may go birding early and enjoy a later breakfast. At Rancho Primavera, you will want to be up before sunrise to greet the day with hot coffee and amazing birding at the productive feeding stations. We may take an afternoon break to avoid the heat of the day, followed by evening birding before dinner; on longer day-trips, we will bird through the afternoon. Each day will involve plenty of walking along quiet rural roads and well-used trails, but individual walks will be relatively short.

We will keep a trip list of birds encountered (reviewing each night), but in the field we will not just tick birds and move on. We want you to get excellent looks at our desired species and to learn about their natural history and ecology in the local habitats. This particular tour will appeal to birders with a wide range of skill and ability levels, including novice birders. As with any group birding experience, those birders with more advanced skills will likely see and identify more of the anticipated species, while less experienced birders can be guaranteed excellent looks at many potential “life-birds.” Your lead guide, Stephen Shunk, is a patient, experienced educator, and he will work diligently to help each participant learn bird identification, as well as general natural and cultural history of the region.

You will have two U.S. guides throughout the tour, and a local guide on several days. We will travel in a large minivan, with ample room for luggage and for each participant to have a window seat. We will take a maximum of six participants, allowing everyone to have their own window seat. This is a non-smoking tour. We will stay in non-smoking hotels and eat in non-smoking restaurants.

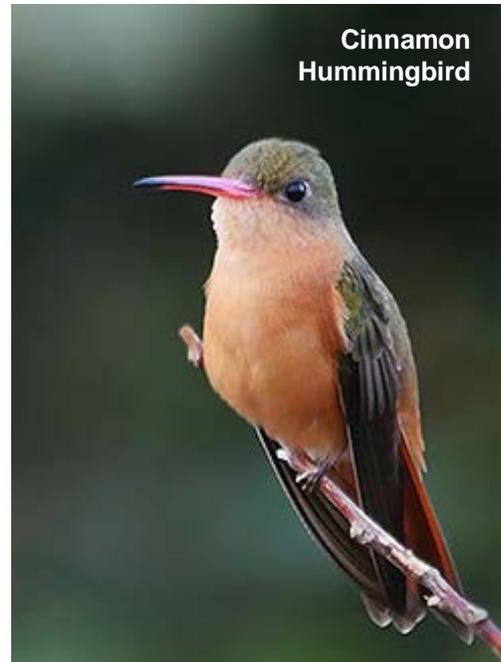
CLOTHING & EQUIPMENT

We are traveling and birding on the dry side of tropical Mexico, and your clothing and gear should allow you to be comfortable in warm, dry weather. Average highs will typically be in the low 80s F, with average lows in the upper 50s F. We may have misty fog on some mornings, but otherwise we do not usually encounter precipitation. You should be prepared to be outside for most of the day in warm, sunny weather. Sun protection and lightweight clothing are the norm. We will probably encounter mosquitoes in a handful of locations, as well as tiny biting flies, so you should bring your favorite chemical repellent or insect-proof clothing.



**The endemic
Black-vented Oriole**

We recommend that you bring your own binoculars and field guide. If you wish to borrow a pair of binoculars for the trip, please let us know in advance. We will have at least one spotting scope available for the group, though we will mostly be birding in dry jungles of the Pacific Slope. We carry an extensive birding library for reference and learning. We encourage you to take photos as souvenirs, but this is not a photography tour. If you wish to focus on photographic opportunities, we ask that you remain sensitive to the group's needs and the tour schedule. Ensuring that everyone gets their binoculars on a bird will take precedence over shooting photos, and it may not be practical to stop just for photographs.



Cinnamon
Hummingbird

LODGING, MEALS & REFRESHMENTS

We will spend our first four nights at Hotel Garza Canela, just a few blocks from the San Blas “harbor” and the town square. The second half of the trip includes four nights at the private Rancho Primavera, about 10 minutes outside El Tuito. Both locations have comfortable hotel-style rooms. Garza Canela has air conditioning in the rooms, and the Rancho Primavera rooms do not need a/c. The tour fees include lodging for both single and double occupancy. If you are traveling with a birding partner and wish to share a room, we should be able to accommodate you at both locations. If we are unable to place you with a roommate, you will be responsible for the single tour rate.

Your tour fee also includes all meals, snacks, and non-alcoholic beverages from dinner on Saturday, January 25, through lunch on Sunday, February 5. Most breakfasts will be casual sit-down meals, though we may have one or two in the field. Lunch stops will take us to delicious local eateries. Breakfasts and dinners at Rancho Primavera will be home-cooked meals at the lodge. In San Blas, dinners will allow us to sample more of the best local restaurants. All meals should appeal to birders with varied food preferences, including vegetarians, but it may be difficult to accommodate the most restrictive diets. If you maintain such a diet, remember that appropriate foods may not be available at restaurants or even in local grocery stores. To prepare for these contingencies, you may wish to bring some foods that will satisfy your personal preferences. In addition to main meals, we typically provide snack foods and beverages in the field.

The survey included in your registration materials asks for your dietary restrictions and preferences. While we cannot honor every food and drink request, the more detailed your response, the better we can serve you. If you do not provide us with any food feedback, we will assume you eat almost anything!

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Your trip fee includes ground transportation from Puerto Vallarta International Airport (PVR). If possible, please arrive at PVR by 3 p.m. on Saturday, February 25, to allow us ample time for a leisurely drive to San Blas. Depending on your flight schedule, you may wish to arrive a day early. In this case, the resort hotels at Nuevo Vallarta are the most convenient for us to pick you up directly (the same for drop-offs, in case you wish to stay longer after the tour). We will return to PVR by 2 p.m. Sunday, March 5, for 4 p.m. or later departures. If you need assistance with travel, we recommend Caribbean Journey, based in Atlanta. They service travel throughout Latin American and the Caribbean, and they will help you book your very best flight option: www.caribbeanjourney.com. They can also help you with any pre-trip or post-trip lodging needs in the Vallarta area.

TOUR FEE

Your tour fee includes the following: four nights lodging in El Tuito, four nights in San Blas; all meals and non-alcoholic beverages from dinner on Saturday, February 25, through lunch on Sunday, March 5; transportation from Puerto Vallarta (PVR) airport; service related gratuities; and the services of two U.S. guides and at least three days with local guides.

Not included are alcoholic beverages; trip insurance (strongly recommended); other personal expenses; and guides' gratuities, which are never expected but always appreciated based on your satisfaction with our skills and service.

2017 TOUR FEE:	\$3,820single/\$3,490double
<u>DEPOSIT:</u>	<u>\$100</u>
BALANCE due 12/1:	\$3,720single/\$3,390 double

NOTE: To provide you with the best possible service, this tour will run with minimum of 4 persons and a maximum of 6, with 2 U.S. guides plus our local guide.

REFUND POLICY: Your deposit is non-refundable. Our policy for international tours: If you cancel your reservation more than 120 days prior to the tour, you will be refunded any payments above your deposit. If you cancel between 119 and 90 days prior to the tour, you will receive a 50% refund of fees paid over the deposit. If you cancel less than 90 days prior, you forfeit your entire tour fee, unless you can fill your space with another birder. If you cancel at any time, your deposit is transferrable to any Paradise Birding tour at any time in the future. If we cancel the trip for any reason, your deposit and all payments will be refunded.

TOUR REGISTRATION

To reserve your spot, fill out the attached registration/release form and send it in with your non-refundable \$100 deposit to the address below, with the balance due 90 days prior to the start date. For more information, please call 541-408-1753 or e-mail steve@paradisebirding.com.

We look forward to seeing you in Mexico this winter!

Stephen Shunk, Paradise Birding
P.O. Box 547
Sisters, OR 97759

Phone: 541-408-1753
E-mail: steve@paradisebirding.com





Paradise Birding Tour Confirmation and Registration

Greetings! This form will confirm your registration on the following tour:

TITLE: _____ **DATE(S):** _____

Please complete and return to the address below, along with either your nonrefundable \$100 deposit or the complete tour fee. If you have already paid your deposit, your balance is due 90 days prior to the tour for domestic, 120 days for international tours. For your convenience, we happily accept VISA, Mastercard and American Express. Please also complete the Liability Waiver found on page two. THANK YOU!

Full Name: _____ Nickname (if any): _____

Mailing Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Sex: _____ Birth date: _____ Height: _____ Weight: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Alt. Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Paradise Birding T-shirt preference; please circle your size and color. We'll do our best to accommodate you!

Size: Small—Medium—Large—Extra Large—XX Large | **Color:** Unisex (Blue—Green) or Ladies (Lavender—Yellow)

Would you like to receive periodic emailed updates & birding tips from Paradise Birding? Yes No

Please tell us how you first heard about this Paradise Birding tour: _____

Roommate preference: *(If you will travel with a birding partner and wish to share a room, or if you are willing to share a room with another birder of the same sex, please indicate this here. If we are unable to match you with another birder, or where only single rooms are available, you will responsible for the single tour fee.)*

Dietary Preferences: *(Drink & food preferences. Please be specific. Our tours are often in remote regions without a wide variety of food choices, so we do our shopping for snacks and picnic lunches in advance. Also list any food allergies or dietary restrictions.)*

Medical Information: *(Please alert us to any medical or physical conditions that may affect you or your group's activities on an outdoor tour in remote locations; include any history of heart trouble, asthma, diabetes or epilepsy, as well as environmental and medication allergies. Please also include current prescription medications being taken. Use the back of this page or another sheet if necessary. NOTE: Anyone with an existing or potentially serious medical condition should consult a physician before participating in any outdoor or travel adventure.)*

Emergency Contact: *(Please include detailed contact information for the person or persons we should contact in case of an emergency.)*

Name(s) and relationship(s) to you: _____

Contact number(s): _____

Credit Card #: _____ Expiration Date: _____ or Check #: _____

Signature: _____ Charge/Check Amount: \$ _____



HIKING AND BIRD WATCHING PARTICIPANT AGREEMENT and RELEASE and ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RISK

In consideration of the services of PARADISE BIRDING LLC, their officers, agents, employees, volunteers, advertisers, and stock holders, and all other persons or entities associated with this business (hereinafter collectively referred to as PARADISE BIRDING LLC) I agree as follows:

Although PARADISE BIRDING LLC has taken reasonable steps to provide you with appropriate equipment and skilled guides so you can enjoy an activity for which you may not be skilled, we wish to remind you this activity is not without risk. Certain risks cannot be eliminated without destroying the unique character of this activity. The same elements that contribute to the unique character of this activity can be causes of loss or damage to your equipment or accidental injury, illness, or in extreme cases, permanent trauma, paralysis, or death. We do not want to frighten you or reduce your enthusiasm for this activity, but we do think it is important for you to know in advance what to expect and that you be informed of the inherent risks. The following describes some, but not all, of those risks:

- 1.) Accidents can occur on land. You could slip or fall during a hike, causing damage to equipment, personal injury, or even death. You could also otherwise be injured while hiking or visiting other land-based phenomena.
- 2.) You could suffer injuries or trauma during the land and air transportation portions of the trip, in vehicles or aircraft.
- 3.) Exposure to the natural elements can be uncomfortable or harmful. You should be aware that this exposure could cause hypothermia, sunburn, illness from drinking water or food, and/or dehydration.
- 4.) You will be staying at accommodations not owned or operated by PARADISE BIRDING LLC. You could suffer injury, damage to equipment, trauma, or even death while staying at these places.
- 5.) Errors on the part of PARADISE BIRDING LLC and its employees, including insufficient instruction or assistance.

I am aware that this birding tour, including related transportation and activities, entails risks of injury or death to myself. I understand the description of these risks is not complete and that other unknown or unanticipated risks may result in injury or death. I agree to assume responsibility for the risks identified herein and other risks inherent to a birding trip. My participation in this activity is purely voluntary and I elect to participate in spite of the risks.

I certify that I am fully capable of participating in this activity. Therefore, I assume full responsibility for myself, including my minor children, for bodily injury, death, and loss of personal property and expenses thereof as a result of those inherent risks and dangers and of my negligence in participating in this activity.

I agree that if any portion of this agreement is found to be void or unenforceable, the remaining portions shall remain in full force and effect. In the event that I file a lawsuit against PARADISE BIRDING LLC, I agree to do so solely in the state of Oregon, and I further agree that the substantive law of that state shall apply in that action without regard to the conflict of law rules of that state.

I have read, understood, and accepted the terms and conditions stated herein and acknowledge that this agreement shall be effective and binding upon myself, my heirs, assigns, personal representatives and estate for all members of my family including any minors accompanying me. I acknowledge I am not relying on any oral, written, or visual representations or statements made by PARADISE BIRDING LLC, including those made in its brochure and other promotional material, to induce me to go on the birding tour. I also acknowledge that in any and all promotional material the use of the word "safe," "safe as possible," or the like does not mean, imply or suggest that this trip is without risk. I have also read and agree to comply with the PARADISE BIRDING LLC cancellation policy.

Photographic Release: PARADISE BIRDING LLC reserves the right to take photographs or film records of any PARADISE BIRDING LLC tour, program, or activity, and each trip member hereby agrees that PARADISE BIRDING LLC may use such photographs or film records for promotional, commercial, or any other marketing purposes, including Internet use.

Name (please print): _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

If under 18, parent or guardian signature: _____

Mailing Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Cell/Primary Phone: _____ Alt. Phone: _____

Name of Trip: _____ Trip Date: _____

Paradise Birding LLC | Stephen Shunk, Owner & Lead Guide

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