



Chiapas, Mexico & TFFF Site Birding May 10-23, 2025



Come bird Chiapas with Eric Martinez, our Oaxaca based and most excellent birding guide, and GCBO's Executive Director Martin Hagne! Chiapas is one of the most beautiful states in Mexico! It has seven biosphere reserves making it one of the most diverse in terms of habitats. The reserves range from the sea level where we find mangroves, to the pines up in the mountains. Along with its gorgeous Sumidero Canyon and its limestone carsts formations, and the mangroves in the lowlands, we will sample some extraordinary birding! And of course, enjoy the culture and food of Chiapas.

Geography and Route

Our birding trip will cover 4 major areas: The central valley of Chiapas, The Sierra Madre of Chiapas also known as the Altos de Chiapas, the coastal plains, and the foothills of the Tacana Volcano. We will be visiting the cities of Tuxtla Gutierrez, San Cristobal de las Casas, Arriaga, Mapastepec, Tapachula, and the quaint town of Union Juarez.

Climate and Terrain

Tuxtla Gutierrez (Chiapas Capital city) is located in a valley at approximately 1650 ft, and temperatures in this valley of Chiapas go from 75 to 95 F.

The city of San Cristobal de las Casas is located in the central mountains at around 7,500 ft, and temperatures here go from the low 40 to low 70 F.

Arriaga, Mapastepec and Tapachula are located on the coastal plains where the elevation is close to sea level and the temperatures go from 80 to 95 F with higher percentages of humidity.

In general, the tour will involve easy walking on roads and good paths. Avoiding the hot hours of the day when we will take a break or travel to our next destination. When we are near San Cristobal and Union Juarez we will be at significant altitude so we'll take things easy.

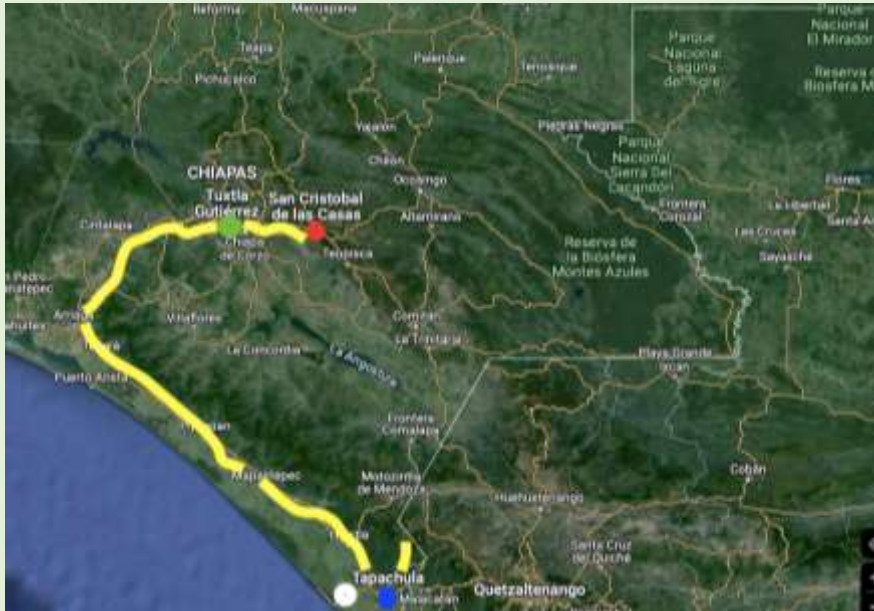
TFFF

GCBO's Tropical Forest Forever Fund donated funds to help purchase conservation easements for the El Zapotal and the El Silencio reserves on the Pacific coast of Chiapas in southern México in 2010. We will have the privilege to visit and bird the El Silencio preserve on our trip.

Flights

You will be responsible for booking and paying for your own flights. Flights are limited to Tuxtla Gutierrez International Airport, with no US carriers. AeroMexico will likely be your best bet. And it may have to be a late evening flight in on day one.

The green circle is the capital city of Tuxtla Gutierrez, the red is the city of San Cristobal de las Casas, in blue is the city of Tapachula, and in a white is the reserve of EL Silencio that GCBO have donated TFFF funds to in the past.



Itinerary

Day 1 - Sat, May 10

Arrival to Tuxtla Gutierrez International Airport - **Code TGZ**, and transferred in our van to our accommodations in the beautiful mountain city of San Cristobal de las Casas, where we will meet for a welcome dinner and go over our trip itinerary.

Overnight in San Cristobal de las Casas.

Days 2 - Sun, May 11 and Day 3 - Mon, May 12

The two days, the mornings will be spent exploring the mountains of San Cristobal. This area has some striking areas of pine and oak forests, and our main goal is to find the unique and striking Pink-headed Warbler and the beautiful Rufous-collared Robin. Other birds in the area include Blue-throated Motmot, Garnet-throated Hummingbird, Blue and White Mockingbird, White-naped Brushfinch, and with some luck we may find Black-capped Swallows in the area. On one night, if weather allows, we will try our luck for the rare Bearded Screech-Owl. During our non-birding time we will check out the historical parts of this 17th century city and some of its unique markets.

Day 2 we will spend it in San Cristobal.

Day 3 we will spend in Tuxtla Gutierrez.

Day 4 – Tue, May 13

Today stands to be another great day as we will be birding the Sumidero Canyon. The Canyon itself is a stunning geological formation, and we will take some time at the various miradores (overlooks) to admire nature's creation. Some of the species of this area include Belted Flycatcher, Flammulated Flycatcher, Banded Wren, Red-breasted Chat, Blue Seedeater, with chances for Singing Quail, Canivet's Emerald, and the rare Bar-winged Oriole amongst others.

Overnight in Tuxtla Gutierrez.

Day 5 – Wed, May 14

Today we will get up early in order to get to the Tapalapa Road. This area of cloud forest is about 2 hours from the city of Tuxtla and is an interesting road that offers access to some great areas of cloud forest. Some of the species of interest include Black-throated Jay, Black Thrush, Rufous-collared Thrush, Brown Capped Vireo, Yellow-throated Nightingale-Thrush, White-naped Brushfinch, and if we get lucky we may be able to find (or at least get flyby views) of Resplendent Quetzal.

Overnight in Tuxtla Gutierrez.

Day 6 – Thu, May 15

Today will be devoted to birding in the tropical rainforest west of Tuxtla Gutierrez, home of the restricted and skulky Nava's Wren. This bird is found only in the limestone foothill outcrops and caves along the base of the eastern Sierra Madre. We will also be watching for range-restricted species like Long-tailed Sabrewing, Stub-tailed Spadebill, White-bellied Wren, Yellow-winged Tanager, Montezuma Oropendola, Black-faced Grosbeak, White-winged, Crimson-collared and Golden-hooded Tanagers, which are all among the more colorful birds of the forest edge here. Other birds in the area include White-bellied Emerald, Collared Trogon, Keel-billed Toucan, Golden-olive Woodpecker, with chances for Green Shrike-Vireo. After birding we will drive to the town of Arriaga.

Overnight in Arriaga.

Day 7 – Fri, May 16

This morning we will begin our birding at La Sepultura Biosphere Reserve, near Arriaga, on the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. This area is an interesting and relatively arid area that hosts a huge number of fabulous endemic birds! We will spend the majority of the day birding here, searching for the main endemic birds such as Green-fronted Hummingbird, Citreoline Trogon, Russet-crowned Motmot, the striking Rose-bellied Bunting and the extraordinary Orange-breasted Bunting, with chances for Long-tailed Manakin. After birding and lunch, we will make a 3 hour drive to the town of Mapastepec.

Overnight in Mapastepec.

Day 8 – Sat, May 17

Today we will explore the outstanding lowlands and mangroves south of Mapastepec. This area hosts some extraordinary birds such as the striking Giant Wren, and White-bellied Chachalaca. Once at the mangroves we will take some small boats to explore these extraordinary mangroves that are home to a great amount of other species such as the rare and elusive Agami Heron, American Pygmy, Ringed, Green, and Amazon Kingfishers, plus a great number of other birds. At night, and if weather allows, we will go in search of Pacific Screech-Owl.

Overnight in Mapastepec.

Day 9 – Sun, May 18

Today we will be birding north of Mapastepec, in the low areas of the track that leads to the biosphere reserve of El Triunfo. This area is home to some outstanding birds such as White-faced Ground-Sparrow, Chestnut-capped Warbler, Long-tailed Manakin, Cabani's Wren, Turquoise-browed Motmot, Lesson's Motmot, and chances for White-eared Ground-Sparrow and Tody Motmot. After birding we drive to the large city of Tapachula to enjoy a nice dinner.

Overnight in Tapachula.

Day 10 – Mon, May 19

Today we will enjoy our morning at the El Silencio Reserve conservation easement. This area is part of the Pronatura Sur reserves and was established with the help of the GCBO TFFF grant in 2010. This area is a great example of tropical lowlands in Chiapas, where a great number of birds such as Yellow-naped Parrots, Giant

Wrens, White-bellied Chachalacas, and many water birds such as Purple Gallinule, Mangrove Cuckoo and Northern Jacanas all habitat in this unique gem south of Tapachula city. We will meet the manager who will explain the history of the reserve as well as explore the area with him. After a nice field lunch, we will start our drive to the mountain town of Union Juarez where we will spend a couple of nights to explore the surroundings.

Overnight in Union Juarez.

Day 11 – Tue, May 20

Today we will be exploring the town of Benito Juarez near the town of Union Juarez. This town is home to one of the most sought after endemics of the region, the unique and stunning Azure-rumped Tanager. This birds is found on the edge of canyons and ravines at mid elevation, and the slopes of the Tacana Volcano are indeed one of the places to look for this unique species. Other birds in the area include Blue-tailed Hummingbird, Emerald-chinned Hummingbird, Rufous and Violet Sabrewing, and chances for Blue-crowned Chlorophonia.

Overnight in Union Juarez.

Day 12 – Wed, May 21

We will be birding the cloud forest road above Union Juarez, which is a great place to end our birding adventure in Chiapas. We will look for Hooded Grosbeaks and Yellow Grosbeaks in this area. We also have chances to find Blue-throated Motmot, Ruddy Foliage-gleaner, Green-throated Mountain-gem, Yellowish Flycatcher, Grey-collared Becard, Guatemalan Tyrannulet, among many other exciting birds. After a nice lunch we will do some casual birding and get back to our hotel to rest as next day is a long driving day.

Overnight in Union Juarez.

Day 13 – Thu, May 22

Today we will have a nice breakfast and prepare for an 8-hour drive back to the capital city of Tuxtla Gutierrez. We will make stops along the road for toilet breaks and food, but our main goal is to reach our hotel in Tuxtla Gutierrez, enjoy dinner and prepare for next day departure.

Day 14 – Fri, May 23

Departure from Tuxtla Gutierrez International Airport - **Code TGZ.**

Trip Includes

- Bird Guide(s), including local guides as needed
- Vehicle, Fuel, Driver
- Hotels (Double Occupancy, Single available with additional fee)
- All meals and beverages (alcohol additional)
- Boat ride
- Fees to protected areas
- Water in the van

Trip Does NOT Include

- Airfare/Travel to meeting airport
- Tips to guides
- Alcoholic drinks
- Snacks
- Personal Incidentals

Trip Fee

DOUBLE: \$5,545.00

SINGLE: \$6,395.00

Max Participants 10**Our Guide**

Eric Antonio Martinez was born in Oaxaca, Mexico. At the age of eight his passion for birds was born, which led him to travel throughout his entire country in search of endemic birds and regional specialties. In 2008 he spent two seasons at the Long Point Bird Observatory in Ontario, Canada, monitoring bird migration; he also worked at the Navopatia field station in southern Sonora Mexico and was part of a bird banding team at the Pemex Bird Observatory in Veracruz Mexico. He now owns Mexico Birding Tours which is one of the few Mexican-owned birding companies, and leads tours in Oaxaca, Chiapas, Veracruz, the Yucatan peninsula, Baja California, and central México. Each year he spends a few weeks birding in Cuba with his Cuban wife Jilly and their daughter Dacnis.



