NatureScape Tours
Yucatan Peninsula: Birding the Land of the Maya
* = Rare

Impressive Mayan ruins—Chichen Itza’s magnificent El Castillo pyramid and Tulum atop its oceanfront perch—natural beauty & colorful birds are a few of the Yucatan’s attractions.

Great Tinamou
Little Tinamou
Thicket Tinamou
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck
Fulvous Whistling-Duck
Muscovy Duck
Wood Duck
Gadwall
Mallard
Blue-winged Teal
Northern Shoveler
Northern Pintail
Green-winged Teal
Ring-necked Duck
Lesser Scaup
Bufflehead
Red-breasted Merganser
Ruddy Duck
Plain Chachalaca
Crested Guan
Great Curassow
Black-throated Bobwhite
Spotted Wood-Quail
Singing Quail
Ocellated Turkey
Least Grebe
Pied-billed Grebe
Eared Grebe
American Flamingo
White-tailed Tropicbird
Jabiru
Wood Stork
Magnificent Frigatebird
Brown Booby
Neotropic Cormorant
Double-crested Cormorant
Anhinga
American White Pelican
Brown Pelican
Pinnated Bittern
American Bittern
Least Bittern
Bare-throated Tiger-Heron
Great Blue Heron
Great Egret
Snowy Egret
Little Blue Heron
Tricolored Heron
Reddish Egret
Cattle Egret

An artist’s palette of color shimmers on a male Ocellated Turkey. Just as showy are Northern Yucatan’s breeding colony of American Flamingos.
Green Heron
Agami Heron
Black-crowned Night-Heron
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron
Boat-billed Heron
White Ibis
White-faced Ibis
Roseate Spoonbill
Black Vulture
Turkey Vulture
Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture
King Vulture
Osprey
Gray-headed Kite
Hook-billed Kite
Swallow-tailed Kite
White-tailed Kite
Snail Kite
Double-toothed Kite
Plumbeous Kite
Black-collared Hawk
Northern Harrier

The delicate markings of an adult Bare-throated Tiger-Heron bring an understated beauty to this colorful heron.

Raptors are well represented across the Yucatan Peninsula with each habitat niche having its own specialties. Here are a few of my favorites: a male Hook-billed Kite soaring low over our heads; the secretive, yet colorful, Black-collared Hawk watches us from his hidden perch; and, following page, an elegantly patterned Laughing Falcon.
Black-and-white Hawk-Eagle
Barred Forest-Falcon
Collared Forest-Falcon
Crested Caracara
Laughing Falcon
American Kestrel
Merlin
Aplomado Falcon
Bat Falcon
Peregrine Falcon
Ruddy Crake
Clapper Rail
Rufous-necked Wood-Rail
Gray-necked Wood-Rail
Sora
Spotted Rail
Purple Gallinule
Common Gallinule
American Coot
Caribbean Coot
Sungrebe
Limpkin
Sandhill Crane
Double-striped Thick-knee
Black-bellied Plover
Collared Plover
Snowy Plover
Wilson’s Plover
Semipalmated Plover
Piping Plover
Killdeer
American Oystercatcher
Black-necked Stilt
American Avocet
Northern Jacana
Spotted Sandpiper
Solitary Sandpiper
Greater Yellowlegs
Willet
Lesser Yellowlegs
Whimbrel
Long-billed Curlew
Marbled Godwit
Ruddy Turnstone
Red Knot
Sanderling
Semipalmated Sandpiper
Western Sandpiper
Least Sandpiper
Pectoral Sandpiper
Dunlin
Stilt Sandpiper
Short-billed Dowitcher
Long-billed Dowitcher
Wilson’s Snipe
Wilson’s Phalarope
Laughing Gull
Ring-billed Gull

Rare birds are always a treat to find. Two specialties of the ‘Birding the Land of the Maya’ tour are: at Coba, an adult Spotted Rail shows off its stunning plumage; coastal mangroves hold one of region’s secretive rails—the charming Rufous-necked Wood-Rail.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bird Name</th>
<th>Bird Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Herring Gull</td>
<td>Caribbean Dove</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lesser Black-backed Gull</td>
<td>Ruddy Quail-Dove</td>
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<td>Kelp Gull</td>
<td>Olive-throated Parakeet</td>
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<td>Brown Noddy</td>
<td>Brown-hooded Parrot</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sooty Tern</td>
<td>White-crowned Parrot</td>
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<td>Bridled Tern</td>
<td>White-fronted Parrot</td>
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<td>Least Tern</td>
<td>Yellow-lored Parrot</td>
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<td>Lesser Roadrunner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scaled Pigeon</td>
<td>Groove-billed Ani</td>
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<td>Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Mottled Owl</td>
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<td>Mourning Dove</td>
<td>Common Pauraque</td>
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<td>Common Ground-Dove</td>
<td>Yucatan Poorwill</td>
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<td>Plain-breasted Ground-Dove</td>
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<td>Chimney Swift</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gray-headed Dove</td>
<td>Vaux’s Swift</td>
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After dark outings are always an adventure, one never really knows what might be encountered. The Yucatan Peninsula has a number of interesting nightbirds, a couple of owls and two endemic nightjars. A typical night’s birding might find (left to right): Vermiculated (Guatemalan) Screech-Owl, Mottled Owl and Yucatan Poorwill.
Humid forests produce a number of tropical bird families, without being overwhelming—conditions that make our Yucatan tour a perfect introduction to tropical birding! Clockwise from above/left: toucans—colorful Collared Araçari; woodcreepers—ant swarm following Ruddy Woodcreeper; ground antbirds—secretive Mexican (Black-faced) Antthrush; motmots—dapper Blue-crowned Motmot.
An odd flycatcher to be sure, Bright-rumped Attila is more often heard than seen. The Yucatan is home to a number of endemic birds, here are three named for the region: understated Yucatan Vireo, richly colored Cozumel Vireo and flashy Yucatan Jay.
Cave Swallow
Band-backed Wren
Yucatan Wren
Spot-breasted Wren
White-breasted (Carolina) Wren
“Southern” House Wren
“Cozumel” House Wren
Sedge Wren
White-bellied Wren
White-breasted Wood-Wren
Long-billed Gnatwren
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
White-lored Gnatcatcher
Tropical Gnatcatcher
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Eastern Bluebird
Veery
Gray-cheeked Thrush
Swainson’s Thrush
Wood Thrush
Clay-colored Thrush
White-throated Thrush
American Robin
Gray Catbird
Black Catbird
Tropical Mockingbird
Cozumel Thrasher
European Starling
American Pipit
Cedar Waxwing
Ovenbird
Worm-eating Warbler
Louisiana Waterthrush
Northern Waterthrush
Blue-winged Warbler
Golden-winged Warbler
Black-and-white Warbler
Prothonotary Warbler
Swainson’s Warbler

Endemic to the Yucatan Peninsula, Black Catbird is easily found on Cozumel Island and in coastal thickets on the mainland.

Gray-crowned Yellowthroat can be found in grassy thickets throughout the Yucatan. This one was outside our hotel in Coba.

Tennessee Warbler
Orange-crowned Warbler
Nashville Warbler
Gray-crowned Yellowthroat
Kentucky Warbler
Common Yellowthroat
Hooded Warbler
American Redstart
Cape May Warbler
Cerulean Warbler
Northern Parula
Magnolia Warbler
Bay-breasted Warbler
Blackburnian Warbler
Yellow Warbler
Chestnut-sided Warbler
Blackpoll Warbler
Black-throated Blue Warbler
Palm Warbler
Yellow-rumped Warbler
Yellow-throated Warbler
Prairie Warbler
Black-throated Green Warbler
Golden-crowned Warbler
Wilson’s Warbler
Yellow-breasted Chat
Bananaquit
Gray-headed Tanager
Black-throated Shrike-Tanager
Crimson-collared Tanager
Western Spindalis
Blue-gray Tanager
Yellow-winged Tanager
Green Honeycreeper
Red-legged Honeycreeper
Grayish Saltator
Buff-throated Saltator
Black-headed Saltator
Blue-black Grassquit
White-collared Seedeater
Thick-billed Seed-Finch
Yellow-faced Grassquit
Grassland Yellow-Finch
Olive Sparrow
Green-backed Sparrow
Botteri’s Sparrow
Chipping Sparrow
Lark Sparrow
Savannah Sparrow
Grasshopper Sparrow
Lincoln’s Sparrow
Rose-throated Tanager
Summer Tanager
Scarlet Tanager
White-winged Tanager
Red-crowned Ant-Tanager
Red-throated Ant-Tanager
Black-faced Grosbeak
Northern Cardinal
Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Gray-throated Chat
Blue-black Grosbeak
Blue Bunting
Blue Grosbeak
Indigo Bunting
Painted Bunting
Dickcissel
Red-winged Blackbird
Eastern Meadowlark
Yellow-headed Blackbird
Melodious Blackbird
Great-tailed Grackle

Shiny Cowbird
Bronzed Cowbird
Brown-headed Cowbird
Giant Cowbird
Black-cowled Oriole
Orchard Oriole
Hooded Oriole
Yellow-backed Oriole
Yellow-tailed Oriole
Orange Oriole
Altamira Oriole
Baltimore Oriole
Yellow-billed Cacique
Montezuma Oropendola
Scrub Euphonia
Yellow-throated Euphonia
Olive-backed Euphonia
Lesser Goldfinch
House Sparrow
Tricolored Munia

Tropical forests often hold surprisingly colorful birds, the Yucatan is no different: a common attendee at ant swarms, a male Red-throated Ant-Tanager hunts for his next meal; found in moist forests of the south, this male Black-faced Grosbeak enjoys a few ripe berries for breakfast; one of the flashier Yucatan specialties, a male Gray-throated Chat.

Just to prove that you are in the tropics, Black-mantled Howler Monkeys can be heard—and sometimes seen—in the humid forests of the region. An auditory and visual highlight!