



## Belize & Tikal Trip Report (Jan 30 - Feb 9, 2026)

[Link: Belize & Tikal Trip Report \(Jan 30 - Feb 9, 2026\)](#)

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Nine excited birders and photographers took part in Eagle-Eye's second Belize & Tikal adventure this year, along with leaders Jody and Nick. Throughout our eleven days together (Jan 30 - Feb 9) we explored amazing and diverse habitats, hiked beautiful mountain trails, strolled ancient Mayan cities, and shared a wealth of wonderful birds and other wildlife. **January 30-31: Belize City & Area** Meeting in beautiful Belize City, our group met for dinner and took a few minutes to get to know each other before diving right into the birding. The quiet road beside our hotel provided the perfect introduction to many birds that would become as familiar as our new companions over the next few days - Golden-fronted Woodpecker, Great Kiskadee, Morelet's Seedeater, Great-tailed Grackle, and Tropical Kingbird just to name a few. We also encountered neotropical migrants that had recently journeyed south just like us - Yellow Warbler and Yellow-throated Warbler along with Gray Catbird and Least Bittern. We also enjoyed great views of Cinnamon Hummingbird - the only ones we would see during the trip. Before heading out of the city, we stopped at the Belize Welcome Sign and Baron Bliss Lighthouse to have our only look for sea birds. We were rewarded with Magnificent Frigatebird, Brown Pelican, Sandwich Tern, and oodles of Laughing Gulls. We were also lucky to find a few species of shorebirds, including Sanderling, Ruddy Turnstone, Black-bellied Plover, and Spotted Sandpiper. Heading out of Belize City, we were treated by a soaring Jabiru (our only one for the trip). We stopped at Monkey Bay Wildlife Sanctuary for walks along the dirt road, which was unfortunately not very productive; however, we did find out first Red-legged Honeycreeper. **January 31-February 3: Jade Jungle Resort** After leaving Belize City, our home for the next few days was Jade Jungle Resort (formerly Pook's Hill) in the foothills of the Maya Mountains. The resort, with traditional thatch-roof cabanas, is situated on a 300-acre private reserve and surrounded by lush rainforest - a perfect place to explore and enjoy a diversity of birds and wildlife. Our time here was chilly, some might say cold! With record low temperatures for Belize, participants were happy for additional blankets and had to sleep with extra clothes on. Our time here was rewarded with banner birds like Common Squirrel-Cuckoo, Ivory-billed Woodcreeper,

Black-cheeked Woodpecker, Red-capped Manakin, Band-backed Wren, Montezuma Oropendola, and three species of trogon. A pair of White-whiskered Puffbirds were especially entertaining as they flew and sat cooperatively for us to enjoy. Those who came out after dark to enjoy a night walk were thrilled to find critters such as Red-rumped Tarantula, numerous spiders, and Common Pauraque. A day trip to Mountain Pine Ridge provided a stark change of habitat, and with it some new and exciting birds. Our time scanning for raptors was not overly productive, although we did see a White Hawk. The highlight of the walk to the overlook was finding tracks of the elusive Tapir. We shared lunch at Rio On Pools, with lovely 'romantic' views. After lunch we visited the Green Hills Butterfly Ranch where we found not only hundreds of colourful butterflies, but also nine species of hummingbirds at their feeders! Highlights included Wedge-tailed Sabrewing, Violet Sabrewing, Scaly-breasted Hummingbird, and Green-breasted Mango. Taking a break from the norm, we drove to Western Dairy only to find it closed since it was Sunday. We were treated however, by lovely looks at Vermilion Flycatcher.



*Our Group at Mountain Pine Ridge © Jody Allair*



*Dinner at the Jade Jungle Lodge © Jody Allair*



*Mayan Archaeological site at Jade Jungle © Jody Allair*



*King Vultures © David Axford*

After three nights at Jade Jungle Resort, we headed to Guatemala. Our first stop however, was Cahel Pech (pronounced 'Petch') atop the highest peak in San Ignacio. The site has a long settlement history beginning in the Early Preclassic (1200-900 BCE) and encompasses 22 acres/8.8 hectares. After a brief walk, we stopped for lunch at Benny's Kitchen, a favourite spot for tourists. Crossing the border into Guatemala, we made a stop at La Polvora wetlands where we found numerous Wood Stork, Roseate Spoonbills, Northern Jacana, Common Gallinule, Ringed Kingfisher, Black-bellied Whistling Duck, along with other waterbirds. We then made our way to Tikal and our home for the next few days.



*Slaty-tailed Trogon © David Axford*

**February 3-6: Tikal National Park** Tikal National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, preserves one of the most important archaeological sites in the Americas — the ancient Mayan city and temples of Tikal. One of the largest cities of the Mayan Classical period, it was inhabited for nearly a millennium until its abandonment ~900AD and had a peak population of nearly 100,000 people. While it may be most famous for its ancient Mayan ruins, Tikal National Park also protects a huge swath of pristine rainforest and is one of the best birding destinations in Central America. Strolls along the park's many trails produced great looks at prized species such as Great Curassow, Keel-billed Toucan, Russet-naped Wood-Rail, Least Grebe, Lineated Woodpecker, and many other species. A strange mix of bizarre and beautiful, Ocellated Turkeys are a regional endemic that is found quite easily in and around Tikal. Orange-breasted Falcon is one of the most anticipated birds of this trip, and Tikal is among the most reliable places to find it. We were fortunate to spot a male and female sitting atop Temple IV during our history tour with local guide Miguel – an iconic and very memorable encounter with such a special bird! Among the other wildlife of Tikal National Park, Central American Spider Monkeys were by far the most endearing. Troupes of these social critters were often spotted swinging through the trees. Other non-avian highlights included Black Howler Monkeys, and White-nosed Coati.



*Tikal National Park © Jody Allair*



*View from Temple 2 at Tikal © Jody Allair*



*Ocellated Turkey © Jody Allair*



*White-fronted Amazon © D Axford*

**February 6-9: Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary** After a wonderful time in Guatemala, we had a long travel day to our next destination, Birds Eye View Lodge in Crooked Tree, where we spent the last few days of our adventure. This lovely Creole community is surrounded by a large lagoon and expansive wetlands that simply abound with birdlife. The lodge and surrounding grounds themselves provided plenty of great birding and photography opportunities. Swarms of Mangrove Swallow and Gray-breasted Martin zipped around, six species of oriole (Hooded, Orchard, Baltimore, Yellow-back, Yellow-tailed, and Black-cowled) were visiting flowering bushes, brilliant Vermilion Flycatchers flitted along the fencelines, and Ruddy Ground Doves strutted along the roadside. Common Tody Flycatchers skulked in the hedges, and several mixed species flocks provided plenty of entertainment as we worked to pick out a diversity of migrant warblers and resident songbirds. Walking west into the pine savannah, we also found several highlights, such as: Yucatan Jay, Yucatan Woodpecker, Common Ground Dove, and a vocalizing Ferruginous Pygmy Owl. A surprise bird at the pasture on the west side of Crooked Tree was a distant Aplomado Falcon. There was never a dull moment - unless one wanted to sit and relax in this gorgeous setting, which there was also plenty of opportunity to do!



*Yucatan Jay © Nick Bartok*



*Birding the Savannah near Crooked Tree © Jody Allair*

Boat tours of the lagoon and creeks are always a highlight here, and we enjoyed two! We spotted dozens of Northern Jacana, White Ibis, Limpkin, Neotropic Cormorant, Anhinga and nine species of heron as we meandered down the waterways. Ringed, Belted, Green, and American Pygmy Kingfishers hunted along the water's edge, and we had a pair of Endangered Yellow-headed Parrots fly right over the boat. Black-collared Hawks and Snail Kites were among the numerous raptors we

encountered. Water levels were the lowest Nick had ever seen, which allowed us amazing looks at Agami Heron and Sungrebe. What a wonderful place to conclude our visit!



*Crooked Tree boat tour © Jody Allair*



*Agami Heron © Nick Bartok*



*Brown Pelican © Jody Allair*



*Great Blue Heron with Tilapia © Jody Allair*



*White-necked Puffbird © Jody Allair*

The sun set on another fantastic Eagle-Eye Tours adventure. Our group had an excellent time, finding 258 species of birds and plenty of other wildlife along the way. Added to the mix were the incredible ruins at Tikal, great food, amazing scenery, and lots of great people!



*Our group*

[Belize & Tikal birding tour species list Jan 30 - Feb 9, 2026 \(eBird\)](#)