

Endémicos Insulares, A.C.

Para el estudio y conservación de las Islas Mexicanas y las especies que en ellas habitan

Tour 1. September 30 – La Mancha/Quiahuixtlan/Playa Juan Angel

Note: Coffee drinkers please bring your own travel mugs! We will be providing a variety of snacks and drinks for breakfast and mid-afternoon hunger attacks, lunch will be at your own expense. Please print your own copy of a state bird check-list at http://www.endemicos.org/files/Veracruz_Bird_Check-list.pdf

05:15 – Departure from the motor lobby of the Hotel Galeria Plaza in Veracruz City.

07:00 – Arrive to La Mancha Biological Station, a field research station of the Instituto de Ecología, A. C. We will spend the morning birding La Mancha's diverse habitats: mangroves, coastal dunes, coastal lagoons, freshwater ponds, tropical forest remnants.

11:45 – Leave La Mancha for nearby restaurant.

12:00 – Lunch.

13:30 – Departure for Quiahuixtlan ruins.

14:00 – Arrive to the scenic Quiahuixtlan ruins, surrounded by tropical dry forests and with a wonderful view of the central Veracruz coastline. If there is good southbound migration this day, we will have an excellent vantage point.

15:30 – Departure for Playa Juan Angel.

16:00 – Arrive to the dry forests and coastal dunes of Playa Juan Angel. The Actopan River meets the ocean here and can be a good site for viewing migrating shorebirds, terns, and gulls.

19:00 – Departure for Veracruz City.

20:30 – Approximate arrival to Veracruz City.

The **Quiahuixtlan** archaeological site is the location of an old Totonac cemetery for secondary burials — the city of souls. From the lookout you can see the town of Villa Rica, the second site where Hernán Cortés founded Veracruz and burnt his fleet. To the north you can see the nuclear plant Laguna Verde. Thus, from Quiahuixtlan you can see three different epochs of Mexican history.

Your **reservation codes**, in most cases, contain your initials, the tour in which you are traveling, probable seat(s), and the date according to the religious **Maya calendar**, the Tzolk'in, founded upon the celestial movements of Venus.

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Tour 2. October 1 – Alvarado/Tlacotalpan

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06:00 – Departure from the motor lobby of the Hotel Galeria Plaza in Veracruz City.

07:00 – Arrive to Las Barrancas. Here we will spend the morning birding a mixture of seasonal wetlands, coastal savanna and tropical forest patches.

11:00 – Depart for Tlacotalpan for lunch.

12:00 – Lunch. During lunch we will have a view of the Papaloapan River and surrounding habitats, and more birding opportunities!

13:30 – Depart for La Piedra (perhaps some birding stops en route).

15:30 – Arrive to La Piedra, birding more coastal savanna, seasonal wetlands and forest patches.

18:30 – Depart for Veracruz City.

19:30 – Approximate arrival to Veracruz City.

The town of **Tlacotalpan** is a registered **UNESCO World Heritage Site**, due to the "urban layout and architecture of Tlacotalpan represent(s) a fusion of Spanish and Caribbean traditions of exceptional importance and quality... Its outstanding character lies in its townscape of wide streets, modest houses in an exuberant variety of styles and colours, and many mature trees in public and private open spaces." (UNESCO, 1998.)

The area around the Papaloapan River is known as "**la región de Sotavento**", characterized by flooding during the hurricane season and strong northern winds during the winter. Agriculture flourished here because of rain and floods, giving

rise to the prehispanic culture of "**remojudas**" that developed a very **unique style of pottery** which can be observed at the local museum in the town of Ignacio de la Llave.

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Tour 3. October 2 – El Mirador/Las Cañadas

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05:00 – Departure from the motor lobby of the Hotel Galeria Plaza in Veracruz City.

07:00 – Arrive to Las Cañadas, a 406 hectare community reserve preserving and restoring one of the last remnants of cloud forest in central Veracruz. We will spend the morning birding several trails/roads within the Las Cañadas reserve.

12:00 – Lunch at Las Cañadas.

13:30 – Depart for El Mirador.

14:15 – Arrival to El Mirador, a certified organic rustic shade coffee plantation surrounded by several large remnants of tropical montane forest.

18:00 – Depart for Veracruz City.

20:00 – Approximate arrival to Veracruz City.

Though available in Spanish only, you can read more about or peruse through pictures of the Las Cañadas reserve at www.bosquedeniebla.com.mx

This region is full of history, throughout this area Guadalupe Victoria (Félix Fernández) fought for the independence of Mexico for many years. Even in difficult times when his army, composed mainly of native and African Americans, had to be disbanded due to the increasing force of the Spanish Royal Army, Guadalupe Victoria never betrayed the cause of independence by accepting a Royal indult.

The perseverance of this idealistic man ultimately led to the treaties of Córdoba, giving independence to the American Septentrion, the largest region in the Americas ever freed from any European metropoli, from Costa Rica to the South, to the territories west of the Louisiana Purchase, and the northern limit of Oregon in the United States.

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Special Tour 7. October 3 – Central Veracruz Raptor Migration

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06:15 – Departure from the motor lobby of the Hotel Galeria Plaza in Veracruz City.

07:00 – Arrive to Playa Chalchihuecan to view early morning migration of falcons and accipiters along the coastline.

09:00 – Depart for Cardel/Hotel Internacional.

09:30 – Arrive to Cardel/Hotel Internacional, to observe raptor migration over the city from the vantage point of the hotel rooftop.

12:30 – Lunch.

13:30 – Continue watching migration from Hotel Internacional rooftop.

NOTE – Due to unpredictable migration movements, a flexible afternoon schedule is required. If the raptor migration moves inland, we will travel a short distance from Cardel to Chichicaxtle to continue viewing the migration.

17:00 – Depart for Veracruz City.

18:00 – Approximate arrival to Veracruz City.

Veracruz was selected as the locale for the **IV North American Ornithological Conference** due to the **spectacular concentration of birds of prey** during fall migration. Recent counts show that the largest global concentrations and overall number of migrating raptors pass through the central lowlands of this Mexican State. About 5 million raptors are registered during a season, of which up to 1 million can be recorded in just one day!

The **archeological site of Cempoala** is located just to the north of Cardel. In this prehispanic city, Cortés first encountered the **Mexica Empire** (they did not refer to themselves as Aztecs). When Cortés saw the gold ornaments of the higher class, he asked where he could find more of the metal. He explained to the Cempoalans that **Spaniards had a disease that could only be cured with gold.**

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Tour 4. October 8 – Las Minas/Los Humeros/Macuiltepetl

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05:00 – Departure from the motor lobby of the Hotel Galeria Plaza in Veracruz City.

07:00 – Arrive to Las Minas, a small community located amidst pine and pine-oak forest at approximately 2000 masl. We will spend most of our morning birding along short trails through the pines and along a spectacular canyon road in pine-oak forest.

10:30 – Depart for Los Humeros.

11:00 – Arrive to the high desert habitats of Los Humeros. Here we will visit two sites in search of local specialties.

12:30 – Depart for Perote for Lunch.

13:00 – Lunch.

14:30 – Depart for Macuiltepetl.

15:30 – Arrive to Macuiltepetl, an extinct volcano and city park located in the center of Xalapa, with wide winding trails wrapping around its edges up to the volcano's crater. This 42 hectare park houses resident cloud forest and a variety of migratory bird species.

18:30 – Depart for Veracruz City.

20:00 – Approximate arrival to Veracruz City.

The city of **Perote is the third oldest city in Mexico**. Perote used to be an obligatory stop for changing carthorses en route between the cities of Veracruz City and Mexico. Perote was well known to distinguished visitors and naturalists such as **Alexander von Humboldt**; in fact, the main street in town is named after this famous German naturalist.

From the city of Perote you can see “**El Cofre the Perote**”, a mountain whose upper limits were among the **first national parks** officially declared as such by the Mexican Government.

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Tour 5. October 9 – Los Tuxtlas

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04:45 – Departure from the motor lobby of the Hotel Galeria Plaza in Veracruz City.

07:00 – Arrive to Ruiz Cortines, a small community located in montane rainforest at approximately 700 masl. We will spend the morning birding several trails/roads looking for local specialty and migratory species.

11:30 – Depart for Catemaco.

12:15 – Lunch in Catemaco, with a beautiful view of Lake Catemaco.

13:45 – Depart for the UNAM Biological Station.

14:45 – Arrive to the UNAM Biological Station, a field research station of Mexico's largest university. Located in lowland rainforest, we will explore several trails/roads in search of resident and migratory bird species.

18:30 – Depart for Veracruz City.

20:45 – Approximate arrival to Veracruz City.

For more information on **Los Tuxtlas** visit www.tuxtlas.com . Los Tuxtlas is well known for its **high biodiversity**. The Field Station of the National University (UNAM) has more species of vascular plants than the United Kingdom. This Biosphere Reserve has many endemic subspecies of birds and the only bird species endemic to the State of Veracruz — the Tuxtla Quail-Dove or Paloma-Perdiz Tuxtleña.

Los Tuxtlas is a region surrounded by many **Olmec** archaeological sites. The Olmecs are one of the oldest civilizations of the Americas, they are known for their colossal heads carved from volcanic rock. Learn about this fascinating culture by visiting <http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/olmecs.htm>

The **oldest astronomical** event recorded in the Americas comes from a stele at La Mojarra, Veracruz, near Los Tuxtlas. It reports a solar eclipse, thus indicating a written tradition and mathematical sophistication. In fact, the **oldest written evidence in the Americas** comes from El Cascajal, Veracruz. Unfortunately, most of the knowledge generated by the ancient cultures of Mesoamerica was lost during the Spanish conquest.

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Tour 6. October 10 – Veracruz/Oaxaca border

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04:30 – Departure from the **motor lobby of the Hotel Galeria Plaza** in Veracruz City.

07:00 – Arrive to Camelia Roja, a small community located in lowland tropical rainforest. We will spend the morning birding along forest and second growth in search of resident and migratory bird species.

11:30 – Depart for Lunch in Tuxtepec.

12:15 – Lunch in Tuxtepec.

13:45 – Depart for Santa Maria Jacatepec.

14:30 – Arrive to Santa Maria Jacatepec for birding along the Santo Domingo River, and adjacent forest and second growth.

18:00 – Depart for Veracruz City.

20:30 – Approximate arrival to Veracruz City

The State of **Oaxaca** is known for archeological sites of **ancient cultures** such as the **Zapotecs, Mixtecs and Mixe**. These cultures were never under the Mexica rule and thus grew independently in many regards. If you have the time, you should visit sites in Oaxaca such as Monte Albán or Mitla. Oaxaca hosts near 800 bird species, the most of any state in Mexico. Oaxaca has also given Mexico the only hero that is acknowledged in every city and town throughout the country, no matter how small or remote — Benito Juárez.

Benito Juárez became president of Mexico during very difficult times. Being Zapotec he was the **first Native American elected president of a modern democracy in the Americas**. His legacy includes the Reform of the Mexican State to limit church influence and form a secular government. Together with Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada, the distinguished liberal from Veracruz, he proclaimed several of the Laws of Reform in the city of Veracruz, then capital of Mexico.

His most famous quote reads: “Among individuals, just as among nations, the respect to the rights of others is peace”.

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.Morning Tours. October 4-7 – State Park Arroyo Moreno

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06:10 – Departure from the **motor lobby of the Hotel Galeria Plaza** in Veracruz City.

06:30 – Arrive to the pier in downtown Boca del Río.

07:00 – Birding through mangroves, deciduous tropical forest and agricultural lands.

8:45 – Approximate return to the pier and minibus.

9:00 – Approximate arrival to the motor lobby of the Hotel Galeria Plaza.

The State Park Arroyo Moreno has been only recently declared a protected area. During your visit you will notice many needs and actions to make this a true protected area. Endémicos Insulares has crafted these tours as an initiative to demonstrate the potential of this area for ecotourism and to search for effective management schemes. By taking this tour, you are showing the people of Boca del Río the great potential of this site by providing an economic incentive for its preservation.

Muchas gracias for birding with us!

