

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Island Endemics

March 8 – 16, 2024

9 Days / 8 Nights

\$2995 group of 7 - 8

\$3395 group of 5 - 6

Single supplement \$300

Minimum group size is 5.

Maximum group size is 8.



The island of Hispaniola, which the Dominican Republic shares with Haiti, harbors more than 320 bird species, making this island a hotspot for birding in the Caribbean. In addition to 31 endemic species (the most in the region), many regional endemics, local specialties, and overwintering migrants can be found here, earning it the highest ranking of biological importance in a worldwide assessment of bird protection priorities.

Hispaniola is the most geographically diverse island in the Caribbean, featuring cloud forests, extensive pine stands, classic dry forest, limestone karst regions, thorn woodlands of acacia and cactus, sand dunes, mudflats, and mangrove swamps. The highest mountain in the Caribbean (Pico Duarte) can be found in the Dominican Republic, as well as an area that is more than 40 meters below sea level (Lago Enriquillo). On this comprehensive bird watching tour, we will visit many of the top birding sites in the country, featuring a wide variety of ecosystems and providing us opportunities to see or photograph all 30 of the endemic species found in the Dominican Republic (One of the 31 endemics found on Hispaniola can be seen only in Haiti).

Join us on this magical quest to find all of the endemics on the most endemic-rich island in the Caribbean, all while enjoying the beautiful scenery and unique food, music, and culture of the Dominican Republic.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Endemic species included in the itinerary are marked with *

Day 1, March 8: ARRIVAL

Arrive in Santo Domingo today and transfer to your hotel via taxi (self-pay). The group will meet for dinner at the hotel at 6:30 PM. If you arrive later than 6:30 PM, you will meet the group for the first time at breakfast at 7:30 AM tomorrow morning.

O/N Hotel Conde de Penalba or Hotel El Beaterio, Santo Domingo (D)

Day 2, March 9: SANTO DOMINGO TO BARAHONA

Our guide will pick us up at our hotel at 8:00 AM this morning. Our first stop will be the National Botanical Gardens in Santo Domingo. Once we've had our fill of the birding in the gardens, which should yield us common species such as **Hispaniolan Lizard Cuckoo***, **Mangrove Cuckoo**, **Vervain Hummingbird**, **Antillean Mango**, **Palm Chat***, **Black-crowned Palm Tanager***, **Red-legged Thrush**, **Antillean Piculet***, **Hispaniolan Woodpecker***, and **West Indian Whistling Duck**, just to name a few, we will leave the city to begin making our way to Sierra de Bahoruco, stopping at Las Salinas Salt Pans to do some shorebirding on the way.

O/N Hotel Loro Tuerto, Barahona (BLD)

Day 3, March 10: CACHOTE CLOUD FOREST, PUERTO ESCONDIDO

We will leave early to drive up to the Cachote Cloud Forest and spend the morning birding there. We hope to find some good species here, including the elusive **Eastern Chat-Tanager***. Among other possibilities are **Hispaniolan Trogon***, **Green-tailed Warbler***, **Hispaniolan Spindalis***, **Bicknell's Thrush**, **Rufous-throated Solitaire**, **Narrow-billed Tody***, **Western Chat-Tanager***, and **Hispaniolan Pewee***.

We'll have lunch in Garahona before driving to Puerto Escondido, where we'll enjoy an afternoon of birding on the nearby Rabo de Gato Trail, where we hope to encounter **White-fronted Quail-Dove***, **White-necked Crow***, **Narrow-billed Tody***, **Broad-billed Tody***, **Ruddy Quail-Dove**, and **Key West Quail-Dove**.

O/N Villa Barrancoli Birding Lodge (BLD)

Day 4, March 11: ZAPOTEN CLOUD FOREST

We'll have an early start this morning to drive up to Zapoten Cloud Forest for some morning birding, where we hope to find **LaSelle's Thrush***, **Western Chat-Tanager***, **Hispaniolan Trogon***, **White-fronted Quail-Dove***, **Bay-breasted Cuckoo***, **Hispaniolan Crossbill***,



Broad-billed Tody

Hispaniolan Spindalis*, **Antillean Siskin***, **Hispaniolan Emerald***, **Antillean Euphonia**, **White-winged Warbler***, **Green-tailed Warbler***, **Golden Swallow**, **Hispaniolan Pewee***, **Loggerhead Kingbird**, **Hispaniolan Parrot***, **Bicknell's Thrush**, and **Narrow-billed Tody***.

We'll drive back down the mountain for lunch, after which we'll have some time to rest or enjoy birding on our own on the property before heading back out later in the afternoon to look for crepuscular and nocturnal species such as **Ashy-faced Owl***, **Hispaniolan Nightjar***, **Least Poorwill**, **Least Pauraque***, and **Northern Potoo**.

O/N Villa Barrancoli Birding Lodge (BLD)



Hispaniolan Spindalis

Day 5, March 12: LOMA CHARCO

AZUL, LAKE ENRIQUILLO, CACHOTE

We'll have another day to bird in the area of Puerto Escondido. Activities for this day will depend on the species we've seen and those we are still missing. We will bird at the top sites in the area and go after any species that we might have missed previously. Some good possibilities include **White-fronted Quail-Dove***, **Antillean Siskin***, **White-necked Crow***, **Hispaniolan Oriole***, **Hispaniolan Parrot***, and **Bay-breasted Cuckoo***, to name but a few. We'll check in at an Air B'n B in the nearby town of Duverge. Each apartment has 2 bedrooms and 1 bathroom and will house

1 couple or 2 singles. There is a limited number of units available, so if we have a lot of people rooming alone in other places, we'll have to ask you to share an apartment in Duverge. We'll do some night birding in the early evening again to try for any species we missed

O/N Private apartments, 2 couples per apartment (BLD)

Day 6, March 13:

We'll have time for some early morning birding on the Loma Charco Azul Nature Trail, searching for **Flat-billed Vireo***, **Key West Quail-Dove**, **Ruddy Quail-Dove**, and **Bay-breasted Cuckoo***, among others. We'll leave Loma Charco to look for the **Hispaniolan Palm Crow*** at a nearby site off the shores of Lake Enriquillo. We'll have lunch on the road on our way back to Santo Domingo. We'll have lunch en route and should arrive in the capital at around 5:00 PM, at which time we'll check in at a comfortable hotel in the heart of the Colonial Zone. Our guide and driver will drop us off at the hotel, and we will have the rest of the evening to explore this historical area of the city on our own. The area is quite safe and there are always a lot of tourists from all over the world walking around. Special tourism police make sure visitors are safe as they explore the Colonial Zone. There is a good restaurant called Cafeteria Conde Penalba in the same building as our hotel where we can have dinner, or you can choose to have your evening meal at any of the fine restaurants in the area.

O/N Hotel Conde Penalba (BLD)

Day 7, March 14:

We will leave the hotel early to drive 3 hours to Los Haitises National Park. There, we will enjoy a private boat ride through the mangroves and around the shores and small islands of the park in search of **West Indian Whistling Duck** and other shorebirds and seabirds, followed by a typical Dominican lunch at the eco lodge where we will spend the night. After lunch, we will have a few hours of free time – you might want to do some birding on your own on the beautiful property or you might want to just rest and enjoy your surroundings. At around 6:00 PM, before dinner, we will look for the **Ashy-faced Owl***.

O/N Paraiso Cano Hondo (BLD)

<https://paraisocanohondo.com/en/>



Ridgeway's Hawk

Day 8, March 15:

We'll enjoy breakfast at the lodge before our morning of birding. We'll find many common and endemic species in the area, but our main target will be the **Ridgeway's Hawk***. We will have lunch in the village of Sabana de la Mar, where we'll have an opportunity to look for shorebirds nearby before starting our 4-hour drive back to Santo Domingo in the afternoon. We should arrive in the capital city between 5:00 and 6:00PM, allowing us some time to search for **Hispaniolan Parakeets*** in the Colonial Zone before going to our hotel in this historical district.

O/N Hotel Conde Penalba (BLD)

Day 9, March 16

Today you will take a taxi to the airport at a time that is convenient for your flight home.

End of tour (B)



Hispaniolan Lizard-Cuckoo

The price INCLUDES:

- All meals during tour (Dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on Day 9)
- Bottled water
- Private transportation during tour
- All entry fees to reserves in itinerary
- All Lodging
- Expert local bird guide during the entire trip
- Services of 2 **Cheepers!** Tour Leaders (Jim & Cindy Beckman)
- Pre-trip gift package, including customized checklist
- Post-trip electronic version of final checklist
- Post-trip photo collection on flash drive

The price does NOT include:

- International airfare
- Transfers to and from the airport
- Tips (Suggested tip is \$10 per person per day for birding guide, \$5 per day for driver)
- Items of a personal nature, such as extra drinks, snacks, alcoholic beverages, laundry, souvenirs, etc.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

Deposit of \$500 with registration. Balance is due on or before November 8, 2023.

Checks should be made payable to **Cheepers! Birding on a Budget** and mailed with the registration form to:

Cheepers! Birding on a Budget
Post Office Box 385
Spring Valley, OH 45370

CANCELLATION POLICY**Cancellation should be made in writing (email or snail mail)**

More than 6 months prior to departure – full refund of deposit

Between 4 and 6 months prior to departure – 50% refund of deposit

Less than 4 months prior to departure – No refund of deposit

If cancellation occurs after full payment is made, a refund will be given only if the vacant spot is filled.

Trip insurance is recommended.

You can compare prices offered by various trip insurance companies at these websites:

http://www.quotewright.com/?sub_id=6056

www.insuremytrip.com

Cheepers! Birding on a Budget LLC reserves the right to make changes in the itinerary if the need should arise due to unforeseeable circumstances such as weather, landslides, and other natural phenomena, as well as suggestions by local guides in order to take advantage of an unusual birding opportunity; please be aware that we will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible if the need to make changes arises. Lodging is subject to change based on availability.

Contact us:

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Snail mail: Cheepers! Birding on a Budget
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 Spring Valley, OH 45370

Phone: 937-862-4505 (Land line with robocall filter; Please state your name when prompted)
 937-974-0802 (Jim's cell)
 937-974-0803 (Cindy's cell)