



Mass Audubon Tours
supporting conservation here and abroad

Bird Banding in Belize



December 1st – 9th, 2011
with Bill Gette

Mass Audubon is pleased to offer a very special opportunity to travelers and birders looking to take their understanding of the natural world to the next level. Available to the general public for the first time, travelers are invited on a journey to the Central American country of Belize to witness Massachusetts birds on their southern wintering grounds and to participate in an on-site bird banding program.

Working in collaboration with conservation partner the Programme for Belize (PfB), travelers will contribute to an important legacy of research while deepening their knowledge of aviary species, bird banding techniques, migration patterns, and much more.

During this 9-day trip, travelers will conduct banding operations at PfB's La Milpa Field Station located in the 260,000-acre Rio Bravo Conservation and Management Area in Orange Walk District. In conjunction with banding operations, travelers will also perform bird monitoring activities with PfB, conduct banding workshops for naturalist guides and educators, and provide community outreach programs.

Join Mass Audubon on this unique trip to Belize and participate in a rich tradition of cross-cultural and wildlife appreciation.

ITINERARY ~ BIRD BANDING IN BELIZE

Thursday, December 1

Arrive in Belize and transfer to La Milpa Field Station

Our program begins at the Goldson International Airport near Belize City at approximately 1:00 p.m. Here, we will meet our local guide and transfer immediately to the La Milpa Field Station. En route, we will pass through coastal lowlands and agricultural areas and then enter the tropical rainforest of the Rio Bravo Conservation and Management Area. We will make stops along the way to view many species of birds. Birds to be expected include Anhinga, Wood Stork, Northern Jacana, Roadside Hawk, Laughing Falcon, Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture, Groove-billed Ani, Ringed Kingfisher, Mangrove Swallow, and Melodious Blackbird. We will arrive at La Milpa in the late afternoon and will have time to explore our banding locations. *Lodging at La Milpa Field Station (D)*

Friday, December 2 – Tuesday, December 6

Bird banding operations at La Milpa Field Station

On Friday, we will set up mist nets and organize the banding station. We will be in full operation by noon.

Throughout the rest of our visit to La Milpa, we will operate the station from dawn to dusk, with breaks during midday. We will work in shifts to ensure that each person has opportunities to participate in the bird banding process. Participants will also have time to explore the area around the La Milpa Field Station, visit the partially excavated Maya archeological site near La Milpa, and take leisurely walks along the station's beautiful forest trails. We will also conduct night walks to look for nocturnal animals.

As part of our program, we will invite naturalist guides and researchers from PFB and other partner organizations to participate in a Bird Banding Workshop that we will conduct. This workshop will give us opportunities to work closely with, and learn from, Belizeans who are dedicating their lives to wildlife conservation and public education. PFB has indicated that one of their greatest needs is training in bird banding and monitoring protocols, so our workshop will make a significant contribution to bird conservation in Belize. During the week, we will also conduct community outreach programs that PFB will organize to demonstrate bird banding techniques and promote bird conservation.

More than 400 species of birds have been identified in the Rio Bravo Conservation and Management Area. These species include both resident, non-migratory birds and many Neotropical migrants. During our December 2010 banding program at La Milpa, we captured, analyzed, banded, and released 44 species of birds, including Ruddy Woodcreeper, Gray-headed Tanager, Red-capped Manakin, Olive-backed Euphonia, Blue Bunting, Bright-rumped Attila, and ten species of North American wood-warblers. With luck, we could capture a motmot or trogon.

During our December 2010 field trips around the La Milpa Field Station and in Orange Walk District, we saw 228 species of birds including Jabiru (a huge stork), King Vulture, Snail Kite, Black Hawk-Eagle, Bat Falcon, Ocellated Turkey, Purple-crowned Fairy, three species of trogons (Black-headed, Violaceous, and Slaty-tailed), Keel-billed Toucan, Collared Aracari, Rufous-crowned Peppershrike, Red-legged Honeycreeper, 18 species of wood-warblers, and many tanagers. The Rio Bravo area is a wonderful birding venue!

Note: Under guidelines provided by the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center (Bird Banding Laboratory), we will use our numbered, metal bands to band all species that migrate into the United States. We will use colored bands for non-migratory, resident species. *Lodging at La Milpa Field Station (B,L,D)*

Wednesday, December 7 – Thursday, December 8

Lamanai Archeological Reserve

By mid-morning, we will leave the La Milpa Field Station and drive to the world-famous Lamanai Archeological Reserve. We will have several hours on Wednesday and all day on Thursday to explore this wonderful Maya site and the area along the New River Lagoon. Among the many species of birds we expect to see will include Olive-throated Parakeet, Brown-hooded Parrot, Lineated Woodpecker, Pale-billed Woodpecker, Yellow-winged Tanager, Black-throated Shrike-Tanager, Black-cowled Oriole, and Yellow-billed Cacique. One evening, we will take a boat ride into the New River Lagoon to look for Morelet's Crocodile, Northern Potoo, and other nocturnal/roosting birds. *Lodging at Lamanai Outpost Lodge (B,L,D)*

Friday, December 9

New River Lagoon boat trip and Departure for Home

This morning, we will leave the Lamanai outpost Lodge by boat and cruise along the New River Lagoon to the Northern Highway. En route, we will have wonderful opportunities to see a wide variety of waders (with luck, a Boat-billed Heron) and kingfishers. From the landing at the Northern Highway, we will take a bus to Goldson International Airport for our return flights home.



About Your Guide: Bill Gette

Bill Gette is the Sanctuary Director of Mass Audubon's Joppa Flats Education Center and Wildlife Sanctuary in Newburyport. Bill, a skilled teacher and field naturalist, has been leading domestic and international natural history expeditions for the Society since 1986. He has led very successful programs throughout the United States and to Canada, Botswana, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Belize, Costa Rica, Mexico, Panama, Brazil, Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, and Antarctica. He led a Mass Audubon group to Bhutan in April 2008. Bill has taken a leadership role in bird research and public education about birds and bird conservation. He will be joined in leading this program with skilled local naturalists and guides in Belize.

PRICE: \$2285 per person, double occupancy. Single supplement is \$600.00.

This cost is based on a minimum of 14 persons.

Price Includes:

- All accommodations & meals
- All tips and gratuities to guides and drivers
- Group airport transfers
- All travel within Belize
- Park and preserve entrance fees

Does Not Include:

- Personal items, bar beverages, optional activities
- Passport fees, laundry, phone calls, or gift items.
- International airfare or airport departure tax

This program supports the Mass Audubon conservation work, Joppa Flats and the Belize Conservation Fund.



RESERVATION /APPLICATION FORM (2 SIDES)

Tour to: _____ **Travel dates:** _____

Passenger 1 Name as shown as passport: _____

Nickname for Name tag: _____ **Date of Birth:** _____

Passport number (1) (for international trips): _____ **Expiration date:** _____

Passenger 2 Name as shown as passport: _____

Nickname for Name tag: _____ **Date of Birth:** _____

Passport number (2) (for international trips): _____ **Expiration date:** _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip: _____

Phone: Home: _____ Work: _____ Cell: _____

Email address: _____

Room Preferences

____ I request single accommodations where available and will pay the single supplement.

____ I would like to be assigned a roommate. If one is not available, I will pay the single supplement.

Personal Information:

___ I/We are non-smokers. (If you are a smoker(s), please check here ___ and note that smoking is limited to outdoors in non-group spaces)

___ I have a food allergy (Yes / No). If Yes, please list: _____

___ I prefer a special diet (Yes / No). If Yes, please list: _____

___ I am allergic to medications, insects other: List _____
(you are required to carry your own Epi-pen and necessary medications)

___ Is there anything else we should know about your health that might impact your ability to participate comfortably on this trips? Please describe: _____

Deposit: Please find my enclosed **check** _____ or please **charge** _____ my credit card for the deposit:

VISA MC Card # _____ Exp. _____

Checks should be made payable to "Massachusetts Audubon Society"

Signature: _____

IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY, PLEASE NOTIFY:

Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Phone: Work/Daytime: _____ Home or Cell: _____

Release and Assumption of Risk

I would like to participate in the birding and nature tour named above (the "Tour") organized by Massachusetts Audubon Society, Inc. ("Mass Audubon"). I am aware that participation in a Mass Audubon tour involves risk, including, but not limited to, the hazards of living in and traveling over unpredictable terrain often in remote areas without adequate medical facilities, exposure to disease and infection, being subject to the forces of nature, and travel by airplane and motor vehicle.

In addition, I understand and acknowledge that, if I participate in the Tour, one or more of the risks described above or set forth here could result in or cause bodily injury or death to me or damage to personal property of mine: Physical exertion, Travel by foot, plane, train, auto, vans, bus, boat or other conveyance, Consumption of food and beverages, Civil unrest, terrorism, banditry, or criminal activity, High altitude, Inadequate medical facilities or service.

I acknowledge that I have received and read carefully information describing the Tour, including, but not limited to, the Terms and Conditions and the paragraph in the Terms and Conditions entitled "Your Responsibility". I acknowledge that the enjoyment and excitement of touring is derived, at least in part, from the inherent risks incurred by travel and activity beyond the accepted safety and routine of life at home or work, and that part of the reason I have decided to participate in the Tour is to experience this enjoyment and excitement. I further acknowledge that I have had the opportunity to discuss with my medical provider the medical risks involved in the Tour. I have also had the opportunity to research the Tour and to understand fully the risks involved.

Therefore, notwithstanding the risks of participating in the Tour set forth and as described above, and in consideration of Mass Audubon permitting me to participate in the Tour:

- (1) I agree to assume and accept all risks associated with this tour; and
- (2) I hereby release and forever discharge and covenant and agree not to sue, and agree to indemnify and hold harmless, Mass Audubon and its Directors, Officers, Employees and agents (collectively the "Releasees"), and each of the releasees from and against and in regard to any and all Claims, demands, actions suits, losses, costs, damages, and expenses and any and all liabilities and obligations, which I shall or may have against the Releasees or any one or more of them arising out of, or in connection with, my participation on the tour.

I agree that this release and Assumption of Risk shall be (a) binding upon me and my heirs, executors, legal representatives, successors, and assigns, and (b) deemed a contract made under seal under the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and shall be governed by, and construed and enforced in accordance with, the internal laws of said Commonwealth without regard to its principles of conflict of laws.

I have carefully read, understand, and voluntarily sign this release and assumption of Risk.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

TERMS & CONDITIONS

APPLICATIONS, RESERVATIONS, DEPOSITS: Early applications are strongly encouraged. Trip rosters usually must be finalized 4 months before departure! All applications must be accompanied by a completed reservation form and a \$500 deposit. Deposits can be by check or credit card (Visa or MasterCard). We reserve the right to decline your application. In the case of questionable health, we reserve the right to require a physician's certification to affirm you are capable of the activities. Final payment is due 90 days before the departure date. Final payment must be by check or money order.

RATES: All tour prices are based on double occupancy. If you would like us to find you a roommate, we will do our best, but cannot guarantee a share. If we cannot find a share, you will need to pay the single supplement. All forms and fares are accurate at the time of publication, May 2011, but are subject to change at any time prior to departure. It is our policy to only pass on the actual amount of any increases in airfares or land costs such as those increases due to the devaluation of the dollar. Rarely, a price increase may be called for if the group falls below the minimum, as listed in the itinerary.

FLIGHTS: You, the traveler, are responsible for booking and paying for your own international flights. Once you reserve your space, we will provide you with suggested flights and tell you which flights our leaders will take. You may book flights directly with the airline, online, or with a travel agent. Please be aware that most tickets are non-refundable, therefore you should not book your flight arrangements until you have checked with us to be sure the tour has the minimum number of participants for the trip to go. We ask that you provide us with your flight details so we can be sure to meet you at the airport upon your arrival.

PHOTOS: Mass Audubon reserves the right to make use of any photograph taken on the tour. We guarantee that no photos of a comprising nature will be used. If you have questions or concerns, please contact us.

TRIP INSURANCE: A brochure and application for optional trip cancellation, illness and baggage insurance will be sent to you upon registrations. We strongly recommend that you purchase trip cancellation insurance to protect yourself. Mass Audubon does provide Medical Evacuation Coverage as part of the tour price.

CANCELLATION Policy: If you need to change your booking, you must inform us immediately in writing. All cancellations must be done in writing and are effective upon receipt in the Massachusetts Audubon Travel Office. Cancellations received up to 121 days prior to departure will be refunded deposits less a \$300 per person fee. For cancellations between 120 and 90 days prior to departure, all deposits will not be refunded. There are no refunds for cancellations 90 days or less from departure. We strongly urge all travelers to purchase trip cancellation insurance. You will be sent information from the Massachusetts Audubon Society upon receipt of your deposit.

Your Responsibility: Although every precaution is taken to safeguard you and your belongings, group travel trips by their nature involve a certain amount of risk. Trip participants should understand that the domestic and international trips sponsored/operated by Massachusetts Audubon Society (Mass Audubon Tours) - hereafter collectively "M.A.S." - involve known and unknown risks. M.A.S. assumes no responsibility for injuries, death, financial losses or damage to clients' property caused by or occurring during participation in any of the travel trips sponsored/operated by M.A.S. Trip participants must assume responsibility for having sufficient skill and fitness to participate in the trips and activities offered or sponsored by M.A.S. Trip participants must also certify that they have no medical, mental or physical conditions which could interfere with their abilities to participate in the activities and/or trips they are participating in and they must assume and bear the cost of all risks that may be created, directly or indirectly, by any such condition. It is the responsibility of trip participants to have in place adequate insurance to cover any injury, damage or emergency transportation costs related to their travel and/or participation in trip activities and/or to bear the costs of such injury, damage or emergency transportation costs. Because of the risks associated with the travel trips sponsored by M.A.S. we urge all trip participants to supplement their own insurance with travel or vacation or emergency response types of insurance. M.A.S. requires that all trip participants acknowledge and assume these risks by reading and signing an M.A.S. Release and Waiver and Assumption of Risk contract prior to departure.

CONDITIONS OF TRAVEL: Travelers will be provided with an itinerary and trip preparation information. It is expected that travelers will read this information prior to trip departure. Travelers will be responsible for completing an application reservation form, including the personal information and a release of liability. (see attached) Travelers will be expected to abide by the terms set for in the invoice. During the tour, travelers are asked to respect and follow the directions of their guide and leader.