

# Belize Raptor Tour

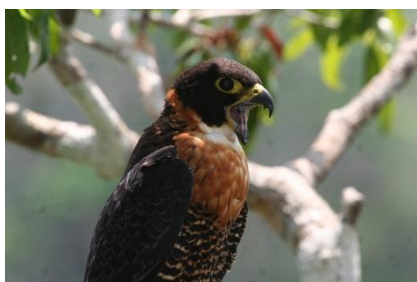
AUGUST 10-19, 2015



Let's  
go BIRDING



This tour will be like no other birding trip you have experienced! Along with observing new species, and exploring habitats throughout Belize, you will also enjoy an educational enrichment through a series of lectures, as well as participate in field research and the Annual Raptor-a-thon fundraising event. The trip will be focused on raptors (Birds of Prey), but will look for and appreciate all species and taxa. It will be co-led by **Lisa Myers of Let's Go Birding**, **Ryan Phillips, Founding Director of the Belize Raptor Research Institute (BRRI)**, and **Roni Martinez the Belize Raptor Research Institute President**, as well as local guides at each site. You will learn about the conservation efforts and research projects of BRRI and have a chance to observe nearly every species of raptor found in Belize. Proceeds from this tour will go to the conservation efforts of the Belize Raptor Research Institute, ultimately conserving species throughout the country and region. **Be part of our conservation efforts and join us on this unique lifetime experience.**



Orange-breasted Falcon  
*Mountain Pine Ridge*



Jaguar  
*Rio Bravo Conservation Area*



Harpy Eagle  
*Rio Bravo Conservation Area*

**Belize**, formerly known as British Honduras, is truly an amazing country and a gem of Central America. It is the only English speaking country in Central America with a human population of fewer than 350,000, making it quite unique. Nearly 70% of the country is in its original state with roughly 45% protected through National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Conservation Areas, Reserves & Archaeological Sites. Belize is a paradise for wildlife enthusiasts, birders, photographers, and all who appreciate the beauty of nature and since Belize is a country about the size of Massachusetts its compact making it easy to travel. It holds the highest density of the majestic jaguars and over 600 species of bird. Join us on this fantastic ecological tour focused on raptors for an opportunity to observe 40 species of raptors, over 300 species of birds, as well as everything else Belize has to offer.

## General Itinerary:

- Day 1:** Arrive, overnight near the airport
- Day 2:** Rio Bravo Conservation and Management Area
- Day 3:** Rio Bravo Conservation and Management Area
- Day 4:** Rio Bravo Conservation and Management Area
- Day 5:** Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary
- Day 6:** Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary
- Day 7:** The Belize Zoo and Mountain Equestrian Trails Reserve
- Day 8:** Mountain Pine Ridge Forest Preserve
- Day 9:** Caracol Archaeological Site and Chiquibul National Park
- Day 10:** Depart to airport



## Day 1 (August 10<sup>th</sup>, Monday): Belize City

Arrive in Belize City. Transfer to Biltmore Plaza Hotel near the airport. Those that arrive early, raptor viewing around Belize City for **Common Black-Hawk**, **Black-collared Hawk**, **Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture** and others. We will have a trip overview and introductions at the hotel.

Accommodation: Biltmore Hotel

## Day 2 (August 11<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday): Rio Bravo Conservation and Management Area

After breakfast we will depart to La Milpa Ecolodge and Research Center in the Rio Bravo. From Belize City we will take the Northern Highway through Orange Walk District to La Milpa Ecolodge, where



we will bird along the way and see much of the northern

part of the country. Along the drive we will look for White-tailed Hawks, Snail Kites, Aplomado Falcons and will make a stop at the Blue Creek rice fields for numerous water species. The drive will be about 4 hours, which includes birding stops.

We have a rare chance, once in the conservation area, to catch a glimpse of the elusive Jaguar, in which Rio Bravo is known to have the highest density in Belize, as well as Baird's Tapir. Evening Lecture on Rio Bravo. Optional owling after dinner for Mottled Owl, Black-and-white Owl, and Vermiculated Screech-Owl. Night-spotting safari after lecture.

Accommodation: La Milpa EcoLodge and Research Center.



## Day 3 (August 12<sup>th</sup> Wednesday): Rio Bravo Conservation and Management Area/ La Milpa Archeological Site

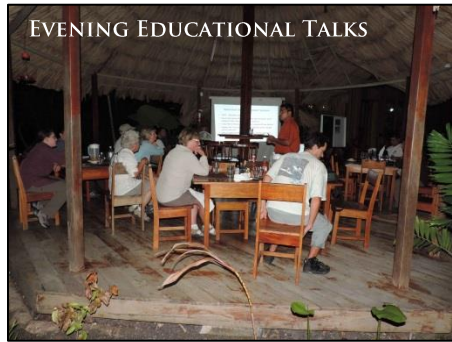
Early morning walk around the lodge for an introduction to neotropical birding. After a Belizean breakfast we will visit La Milpa Archeological Site in search of the rare **Crested Eagle**, which has been observed many times at this site. We will also search for **Bat Falcon**, **White Hawk**, **Double-toothed Kite**, and **Hook-billed Kite**. After lunch we will search for the **Ornate Hawk-Eagle**, which is arguably the most beautiful raptor in Belize, as well as visit a **Bicolored Hawk** nest and search for Crane Hawk, Collared Forest-Falcon, Barred Forest-Falcon, and Black Hawk-Eagle. Evening Lecture on Raptors of Belize. Night-spotting safari after lecture.

Accommodation: La Milpa EcoLodge and Research Center.



## Day 4 (August 13<sup>th</sup>, Thursday): Rio Bravo Conservation Area/Gallon Jug/Blue Creek RAPTOR-A-THON

Today is our big Raptor-a-thon day. Similar to a Walk-a-thon fundraising event where people walk miles to raise money for their cause, this event has us looking for as many raptor species as possible in a 24 hour window, but don't worry, we will not go out the entire 24 hours. However, our goal is to see 20 raptor species, while we have an opportunity to observe up to 40 species! The more species we observe, the more money we will raise for BRRI and the conservation of raptors.



We encourage all participants to find sponsors and receive pledges. After an early breakfast we will head through RBCMA to Gallon Jug in search of **Ornate Hawk-Eagle, Black Hawk-Eagle, Bat Falcon, Black-collared Hawk, Swallow-tailed Kite, Short-tailed Hawk, Great Black-Hawk and Double-toothed Kite**, just to name a few. After lunch at La Milpa we will visit the Blue Creek Mennonite Settlement outside of Rio Bravo, which has an array of habitats and high raptor diversity. The target species in Blue Creek are **Crested Caracara, Roadside Hawk, Gray Hawk, Aplomado Falcon, Osprey and Snail Kite**. After dinner we will go owling for **Mottled Owl, Black-and-white Owl, and Vermiculated Screech-Owl**.  
Accommodation: La Milpa EcoLodge and Research Center.

## Day 5 (August 14<sup>th</sup>, Friday): Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary



After breakfast we will depart for Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary. We will traverse over a large area of northern Belize, where we have opportunities to see **Great Black-Hawk, Aplomado Falcon, White-tailed Hawk, Crested Caracara & Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture**. With birding stops the drive will take us about 3 hours. We will check in and have lunch at Bird's Eye View on the lagoon. After lunch we will take a boat safari in search of **Black-collared Hawks, Snail Kites**, and a vast diversity of water birds including the endangered

Jabiru and Agami Heron. Evening Lecture Session on BRRI's research and conservation efforts.  
Accommodation: Bird's Eye View Lodge

## Day 6 (August 15<sup>th</sup>, Saturday): Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary

After breakfast we will bird the savanna habitat for specialty species, such as the **Rufous-browed Peppershrike, Yellow-headed Parrot and Laughing Falcon**. In the afternoon we will take a 2<sup>nd</sup> boat safari in search of birds we were unable to view the day before.

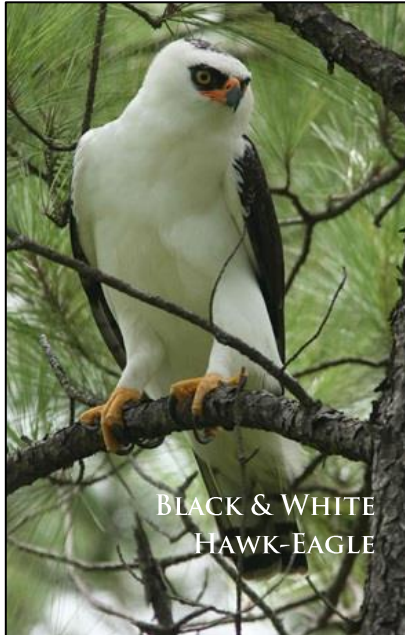
Accommodation: Bird's Eye View Lodge





## Day 7 (August 16<sup>th</sup>, Sunday): Belize Zoo and Mountain Equestrian Trail Private Reserve

After breakfast we will depart to the Mountain Pine Ridge area and visit the best little zoo in the world to get close views of Harpy Eagles and the wildlife of Belize. Once we reach the broad-leaved forest foothills we will search for **Gray-headed Kite, Hook-billed Kite, Black Hawk-Eagle, Short-tailed Hawk, Great Black-Hawk, and Plumbeous Kite**. We will check into the Mountain Equestrian Trails Lodge and have an evening free from birding.



BLACK & WHITE  
HAWK-EAGLE

## Day 8 (August 17<sup>th</sup>, Monday): Slate Creek Overlook and Greenhills Butterfly Ranch

Early morning birding before breakfast around the lodge grounds. After breakfast we will depart to the Slate Creek Overlook in the Elijio Panti National Park for a raptor spectacle. Our next stop will be the Greenhills Butterfly Ranch where we'll have a butterfly tour and we'll visit the hummingbird gallery.

Night lecture on the Scarlet Macaw Project.

Accommodation: Mountain Equestrian Trails Lodge

## Day 9 (August 18<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday): Mountain Pine Ridge and Caracol Archeological Site

We will start with any early breakfast before departing for **Caracol**, the largest Mayan site in Belize. Along the scenic drive to Caracol we will stop for all exciting finds, as we have a chance to observe a wide variety of species, including the endangered **Harpy Eagle, Double-toothed Kite, Plumbeous Kite, all three species of hawk-eagle**, and large flocks of southward bound migrating **Swallow-tailed Kites**. It is where we also have an opportunity to observe **Scarlet Macaw** and **Baird's Tapir**. We will spend the day in the field visiting various raptor sites to reach our trip goal of 30 diurnal raptor species. We will have a packed lunch at Caracol and will get back to the lodge around 5pm. During our farewell dinner we will compile our species lists and share our stories.

Accommodation: Mountain Equestrian Trails Lodge

## Day 10 (August 19<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday): Departure

Depart MET after breakfast for the Belize airport. Arrive at the international airport by 12:00pm.

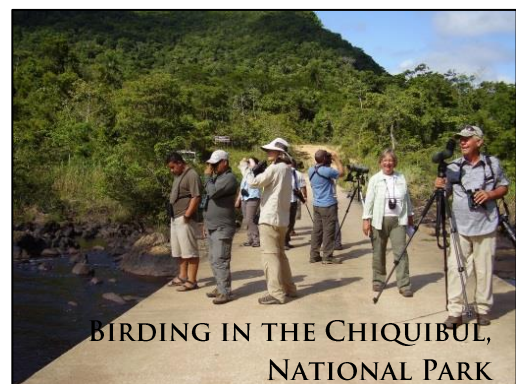
### Cost:

Double Occupancy: \$2,875 U.S. per person

Single Occupancy \$3,175 U.S. per person

### Cost Includes:

Room and board, 3 meals per day, transportation to and from the international airport, transportation during the workshop, entrance fees, guide fees, conservation fees and gratuity. Does not include airfare to Belize or adult beverages.



BIRDING IN THE CHIQUIBUL,  
NATIONAL PARK

**Participants:** 7-12 persons

**SIGN UP TODAY TO HOLD YOUR SEAT!!!!**

## Accommodations:

### Best Western Belize Biltmore Plaza Hotel (1 night)



Best Western Belize Biltmore is a full service Caribbean style hotel situated in the quiet and serene residential area of Bella Vista on the northern outskirts of Belize City. This Belize hotel is perfect for meetings and conferences, and easily accessible on the Mundo Maya route, between Mexico and Guatemala on the Northern highway. It is 3 miles from downtown Belize City and 7 miles from Phillip Goldson International Airport.

Website: <http://www.belizebiltmore.com/>

### La Milpa EcoLodge and Research Station (3 nights)



The La Milpa EcoLodge and Research Center lies nestled deep in the forests of northwestern Belize, 3 hours by road from Belize City and 1 hour by road from Orange Walk Town. This lodge is located only three miles from the third largest archaeological site in Belize. Programme for Belize's La Milpa EcoLodge and Research Center is promoted as the 'Birder's Paradise of Belize' for which it has become renowned and respected. La Milpa EcoLodge uses state-of-the-art "green technology", featuring 100% solar powered energy. Accommodations include private baths with hot and cold running water, and charmingly rustic and private thatched-roof cabanas.

Website: [http://www.pfbelize.org/tourism/?page\\_id=16](http://www.pfbelize.org/tourism/?page_id=16)

### Bird's Eye View Lodge (2 nights)



For more than 14 years, Bird's Eye View Lodge has been honored to serve bird watchers and nature lovers who have come to visit the Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary from as far away as the United States, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, England, Wales, Scotland, France, Germany, Austria, Holland, Venezuela, and South Africa! The family ran lodge is a haven for bird and nature enthusiasts. Located on the shores of the Crooked Tree Lagoon, they offer you exceptional Belizean birding.

Website: <http://www.birdseyeviewbelize.com/home.htm>

### Mountain Equestrian Trails Lodge (3 nights)



Mountain Equestrian Trails is a family run operation run by the Bevis family since 1989. The excellent staff at Mountain Equestrian trails are all from local villages and some have been with them for over 25 years. Their thatched roof cabanas are constructed from local hardwoods, stucco and covered by expert indigenous craftsman in the native style. Each room is decorated with Maya woven tapestries, locally made table & chairs, has a private bath with hot water and a deck overlooking the picturesque valley. Situated in beautiful broad-leaved rainforest near the Mountain Pine Forest Reserve with over 240 bird species on the property.

Website: <http://www.metbelize.com/>



## Meet our Co-Leaders:

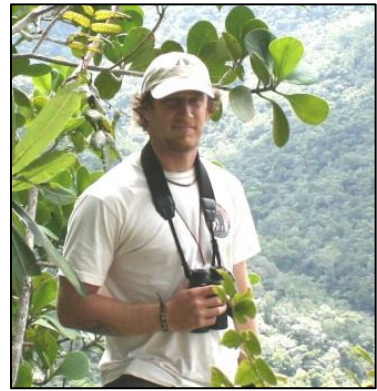
### **Lisa Myers**

Lisa is a San Francisco Bay Area native with a passion for birding. Lisa founded "Let's Go Birding" in 2004 as a way to provide fun and non-intimidating birding adventures for the beginning birder. The ultimate goal is always to attract more people into the bird world and as a result have a greater, positive impact on the environment and wildlife conservation. Lisa leads birding tours throughout Northern California and Costa Rica in addition to teaching a variety of birding classes through several venues. Lisa served on the Board of Directors for the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory and continues to help SFBBO with fundraising activities. Lisa also works with the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society and other bay area non -profits with their outreach. Lisa is a graduate of Chico State University with a degree in Public Relations, Communications.



### **Ryan Phillips**

Ryan is the Founder and Executive Director of the Belize Raptor Research Institute. The founding of BRRI represented the culmination of one of Ryan's lifelong goals of creating a conservation organization. After graduating from the University of California at Davis in Wildlife, Conservation Biology and Fisheries with a specialization in Ornithology he moved to Belize to work for The Peregrine Fund on the Harpy Eagle Restoration Project. He spent extensive time in Central America and has conducted research in Belize for 10 years. Ryan has been involved in many conservation projects and currently teaches in California at De Anza College in the Environmental Studies Department, as well as being the Co-Principal Investigator for the field projects of the Wildlife Corridor Technician Program.



### **Roni Martinez**

Roni, a native of Belize, worked as a natural history guide at Blancaneaux Lodge in Belize from 2004 until 2009. It was there that he developed a passion for birds and other wildlife, as well as their conservation. Roni became Blancaneaux's first Conservation Officer in 2009 and left this position in 2014 to pursue his career in wildlife conservation. Roni works with many different researchers and conservation NGOs, who share his same vision. Roni co-founded the Scarlet 6 Biomonitoring Team to protect the last remnant population of Scarlet Macaws in Belize. His work with other conservation organizations, such as serving as President of the Belize Raptor Research Institute, has been crucial in maintaining a proactive effort in conserving biodiversity and wildlife habitat in Belize.



## REGISTRATION:

Please contact BRRI to confirm that there is a space available for you on this tour. To register you need to fill out the registration form below and return it to BRRI with the required fee per person or the deposit per person as soon as possible to reserve your place on the tour. Tour is limited to the first 12 participants that make a deposit. Payments in full are due by June 1, 2014.



Mail to P.O. Box 110234 Campbell, CA 95011

Or

Email to Ryan Phillips at [belizeraptorresearch@gmail.com](mailto:belizeraptorresearch@gmail.com)

## Payments:

Upon registration a \$250 deposit is due to hold your place. 50% of the total tour cost is due by May 1<sup>st</sup> and the tour must be paid in full by June 1<sup>st</sup>.

## TERMS:

The Belize Raptor Research Institute (BRRI) and/or Let's Go Birding (LGB) reserve the right to alter this itinerary as necessary or to cancel the tour prior to departure, with full refund to participants. BRRI and LGB assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, or delay that may occur by reason of malfunction or as a result of sickness, weather, strike, or theft. BRRI and/or LGB reserve the right to decline to accept or retain any person as a member of this tour at any time. No smoking will be permitted in the van, or at meals, or with the group in the field.

## CANCELLATIONS:

Your deposit will be returned, minus a \$100 administration fee, if you have to cancel your reservation for unavoidable reasons prior to May 1, 2014. Full refund, minus the administrative fee, will be given after June 1, 2014 only if we can fill the vacated slot. If the slot cannot be filled, the Belize Raptor Research Institute and Let's Go Birding will return only that portion of the fee covering personal costs. You may want to consider purchasing travel insurance. **The tour is subject to cancelation if there are inadequate registrations.**



# Belize Raptor Tour 2015 Registration Form

(Registration limited to first 12 registrants)

Please register me (us) for the Belize Raptor Tour August 10-19, 2015

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE DAY \_\_\_\_\_ EVENING \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Enclosed is my check made payable to **Belize Raptor Research Institute** for the full amount of \$(US) 2,875 per person (Double occupancy) or \$(US) 3,175 per person (Single occupancy).

☐ Enclosed is my deposit of \$250 per person made payable to **Belize Raptor Research Institute**. I will send the remaining \$ 2,625. per person (Double occupancy) or \$2,925 per person (single occupancy) before June 1, 2015 and 50% of the total amount (\$1,313 double, \$1,462 single) before May 1, 2015

☐ I desire a single room. Single supplement fee of \$ 300.00 per person is also included.

My roommate will be \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I need a roommate. (If it is not possible to arrange a roommate, a single-supplement fee may be charged.)

EMERGENCY CONTACT:

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: DAY \_\_\_\_\_ EVENING \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**IF YOU HAVE ANY MEDICAL CONDITIONS THAT THE TRIP LEADER SHOULD BE AWARE OF, PLEASE INCLUDE THIS INFORMATION BELOW:**

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