

## Nicaragua – Birds, Bats, Moths, Monkeys and more! Fiona Reid's Wildlife Encounters

Nicaragua is set to take over from Costa Rica as the best eco-tourist destination in Central America. It has everything that country has to offer, at much more reasonable prices and with far less tourism. On this one-week adventure, we are based at Finca Las Nubes ([www.fincalasnubes.com](http://www.fincalasnubes.com)) one of the most beautiful destinations I have ever seen. This totally organic farm has 800 acres of land, about 90% of which is forested. Trails lead off from our house into this beautiful forest, where we can see all three species of monkey (Central American Spider, Mantled Howler and White-faced Capuchin) two species of sloth, agouti, and many bats and other mammals. The birds here are very colorful: Keel-billed Toucans, Turquoise-browed Motmots and numerous parrots are easily seen, along with many other forest species. Here we will enjoy the freshest organic, home-grown fruits, meats, and vegetables, prepared for us in our own house, we can take explore the farm, plant a tree, milk a cow, or after a long day of birding, take advantage of the swimming pool. The views from the finca are unparalleled. We will use the wonderful Finca as our home, and take full-day or half-day trips to other habitats in Nicaragua in order to see a great diversity of wetland, dry forest, mangrove and humid forest species throughout western Nicaragua.



Our home base in Nicaragua, Casa Carol Ana, and the view to the Pacific Ocean

## Daily Itinerary

### Saturday March 15:

We will arrive into Managua at 1:15 p.m. (AA 928 from Miami). *Please do not book flights until the trip is confirmed as operating.* We will be met at the airport and taken to Finca Las Nubes. Here we will settle in to our very comfortable accommodations and take a short walk before dinner.

*Tonight and next 6 nights at Casa Carol Ana*

### Sunday March 16:

Today we start with some early birding before breakfast, exploring the clearings and open areas for birds, listening to Mantled Howler Monkeys calling, and watching for flocks of parrots flying overhead. After breakfast we will tour the farm and surrounding forest, looking for birds, frogs, and all kinds of wildlife. We will also make the acquaintance of a pet capuchin monkey whose best friend is a brocket deer! After a hearty lunch we will have some free time for a siesta or dip in the pool. Later we return to the forest to set up our moth lights and look for some of the more elusive forest denizens such as ant birds and wood-creepers. We'll have an early dinner prepared for us, and after dinner we will venture back to the forest with spotlights, cameras and bat detector, to look for tree frogs, snakes, and nocturnal mammals and see where the best bat activity is for setting nets on future nights. We will also observe moths, katydids and other amazing insects at our lights.



This large Nicaraguan sphinx moth, *Aphimoea walkeri*, has the longest proboscis of any living moth.

### Monday March 17:

After a hearty breakfast with fresh eggs from the farm and freshly squeezed tropical fruits, we will depart in our truck to explore some of the wildlife reserves along the shores of Lake Nicaragua. Our destination today is Reserva El Abuelo, located on the narrow strip of land between Costa Rica and Lake Nicaragua. This area is home to at least 40 species of bats including the Honduran White Bat. We will try to locate this species and we may be able to visit some caves and tunnels along the shores of Lake Nicaragua for other bats and cave-dwelling wildlife. About 190 species of birds have been reported in

this reserve, including 26 that are threatened or endangered, such as Yellow-naped and White-crowned Parrots, Bat and Laughing Falcons, Great Curassow, White Hawk, Swallow-tailed Kite, and Roseate Spoonbill. We can expect to see many birds of interest as well as a variety of lizards, butterflies, and mammals during our visit. We'll return to our wonderful farm in the mid-afternoon, in time for a refreshing swim. Later we will go out to set mist nets for bats in areas we selected the previous evening. After dinner you may choose to relax and have the bats brought to you for show and tell, before they are released unharmed, or you may want to come and see bats being caught and carefully untangled from the nets. We will also set our UV light up in a new location, in hopes of attracting a new selection of insects and possibly a hopeful frog or toad looking for an easy meal.



Honduran White Bats, *Ectophylla alba* roosting under their leaf tent

#### **Tuesday March 18:**

Today we will have an optional bird walk on the property, exploring trails we have not visited previously, or perhaps birding along the entrance road. After breakfast we will take a trip into San Juan del Sur. This is an interesting, laid-back beach town with a variety of stores and restaurants. We will check out some of the beaches, watch surfers and look for shorebirds, and perhaps take a swim in a quiet bay. We return to our lodge for lunch and some free time to relax. This afternoon we plan to meet with the owner of the property and learn more about his work reforesting the area, farming using permaculture and other organic methods. We can also visit the store where wooden toys and furniture are made. In the evening we will have another opportunity to net for bats and set up the moth light, for those who wish.

#### **Wednesday March 19:**

Today we have a full-day excursion to a Finca Java, a shade-coffee plantation and cloud forest zone 2-3 hour's drive north. This area is very rich in bird life, monkeys and other creatures, and a mecca for butterflies. Over 20 species of hummingbirds have been recorded, along with Black Hawk-eagle, Black Guan and four species of Tinamou. These are some wonderful lakes and ponds on the huge property, so you may want to bring a swimsuit to cool off. We'll have lunch on the farm and enjoy a cup of fresh-roasted bird-friendly coffee before we start our long drive homeward. Tonight we may have an evening at leisure to enjoy the sunset over the bay, but there is always the possibility to venture out in search of nocturnal creatures and setting up the UV light is easily done.

Central American Spider Monkey, *Ateles geoffroyi*

**Thursday March 20:**

After breakfast today we will head to the western shores of Lake Nicaragua in search of water birds and dry forest species. Depending on the interests of the group, we may head to the colonial town of Granada, or we could catch a ferry to Ometepe and hike the volcano on this large island in Lake Nicaragua. Either way, we should see a good diversity of birds, butterflies and other creatures of interest. We will head back home to Finca Las Nubes in the mid-afternoon. Tonight we may set high nets along the dirt road leading to the finca, in hopes of catching uncommon free-tailed bats, or we may pick a new spot in the forest to explore with nets and lights.

**Friday March 21:**

Today after a hearty breakfast we will set off to Mombacho Volcano. We will visit Montibelli Private Reserve on the lower slopes, a great place for dry forest species such as Lesser Ground Cuckoo, Long-tailed Manakin, and Cinnamon Hummingbird. Here we may find Variegated Squirrel and Gray Fox, or perhaps a Boa or Cascabel. Later we will hike a section of cloud forest on the slopes of the volcano and learn about this very different habitat. We will return for a late lunch and some free time to say our goodbyes and visit our favorite parts of the farm. In the evening we may have another night of batting, or a forest hike in search of nocturnal animals, and the moth light will be on for one last time.

**Saturday March 22:**

We pack our things and eat a leisurely breakfast before making our way back to the Managua airport for our flight back to Miami (AA 971 departs at 12:30 p.m.).

**Please Note:** this itinerary is subject to change based on weather, group interests, logistics and other factors. Every effort will be made to visit the places listed, but no refunds will be paid if conditions arise beyond our control.



**Cost per person, double occupancy: \$1,750.00**  
(US or Canadian \$\$ accepted at par) from Managua  
Single rooms are not available on this tour.

**Costs include:**

- All meals
- Accommodations for 7 nights
- All transportation (starting and ending at Managua Airport, according to itinerary)
- All entrance fees to parks and reserves
- Guiding services of Fiona Reid and local guides at private reserves

**Costs do not include:**

- International flights
- Transportation needed when not traveling with the group (late arrival etc.)
- Alcoholic beverages
- Tips to lodge staff and our driver
- Other services not specified in above itinerary

To reserve a space on this trip, please contact Fiona Reid at [Fiona.reid7243@gmail.com](mailto:Fiona.reid7243@gmail.com),  
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