



Expedition Raptor

11-18 December 2010

Take part in a ground breaking conservation project and raptor research expedition with raptor biologist Ryan Phillips.



Hosted by Blancaneaux Lodge

Blancaneaux Lodge 'In the Field' Expedition Series 2010



The Mountain Pine Ridge, located in the heart of Belize, is a critical raptor (bird of prey) hotspot in Central America for both resident and migrant species. Extremely rare and endangered Neotropical raptors such as the elusive Solitary Eagle, Orange-breasted Falcon and Stygian Owl are fairly common and are amongst the 34 species of raptors that are found in the area. Mountain Pine Ridge is comprised of some of the oldest rock in Central America, while containing the largest intact submontane and montane pine forest in the region. With this uninhabited and unique habitat being cut by many ravine and canyon streams many eco-tones are formed, resulting in a high number of endemic species and a large concentration of raptors.

The Belize Expedition Raptor workshop is the first of its kind, designed to cover all aspects of raptors in the Neotropics and to raise awareness for raptor conservation, in collaboration with the Blancaneaux Lodge and the Belize Raptor Research Institute. With this 8-day workshop you will develop your knowledge of the raptors in Belize through presentations and field adventures while learning about natural history, identification, migration, survey techniques and conservation issues. We will be visiting various habitat types found in the region, which include broadleaf moist forest, unique river systems, transitional forest with large waterfalls, and submontane and montane pine forest. On our field adventures we should observe rare species such as the Solitary Eagle, Orange-breasted Falcon, Stygian Owl, Black-and-White Hawk-Eagle, Ornate Hawk-Eagle and King Vulture with possible glimpses of the majestic Harpy Eagle and Crested Eagle. Come join us on this 8-day adventure learning about these riveting creatures, while supporting raptor conservation. A percentage of the proceeds will support the field research projects conducted by the Belize Raptor Research Institute, a non-profit organization dedicated to helping conserve and learn about raptors throughout Belize.

Expedition Date: 11-18 December 2010

Cost based on Double Share: \$1830 US per person + \$156 US tax + \$122 Service Charge

Donation to BRRI: Included in the trip cost

Minimum Group Size: 10, Maximum Group Size: 16

What is included:

The Blancaneaux Lodge special 'conservation room and activity' rate.

All meals from dinner on Day 01 to breakfast on Day 8.

All lectures and activities as outlined in the itinerary below.

Round trip collective group transfers from Belize International Airport to Blancaneaux Lodge.

Accommodations on double share basis (we encourage single sign up's and will do our best to accommodate them for no additional charge)

Local taxes on meals and activities and lodge service charge.

Wifi internet access at the main lodge with own laptop

What is not included:

Spa treatments

Horseback riding

Tours and activities not listed in the itinerary.

Private transfers

Alcoholic or soft drinks

Laundry services

International departure tax

Enquiries and reservations: info@blancaneaux.com 1-800-746-3743,
501-824-4912. www.coppolaresorts.com



Expedition Raptor

7 nights/8 days based at Blancaneaux Lodge

Saturday Day 1: Arrive into Belize International Airport. Clear customs and met by your driver/guide from Blancaneaux Lodge. Two and a half hour overland transfer to Blancaneaux Lodge. On arrival there is time to settle in and enjoy the wonderfully relaxing atmosphere. The group will gather for pre-dinner drinks at the Jaguar Bar and after an early dinner Ryan Phillips will lead a round-table introduction so that everyone can be introduced to their fellow participants. Ryan will then brief participants on his background and give a general overview of expedition topics and timings.

Sunday Day 2: We'll take a leisurely breakfast to recover from the previous days travel. For those that wish there will be early morning birding before breakfast.

Morning Lecture: An introduction to Raptors of Belize; the BRRI and Break for lunch.

Afternoon Lecture: Afternoon trek to Howler Hill in order to observe a range of raptors in the field hopefully including kites and Hawk-eagles. General birding on this hike is exceptional as is the abundance of orchids. Blancaneaux Lodge also maintains motion sensitive cameras for jaguar research in this area.

Evening lecture: An introduction to raptor migrations through Belize.

Monday Day 3:

For early risers breakfast will be preceded by an optional early morning birding walk with our resident guides.

Morning Activity: Visit to 1000 Foot Falls that along with the nearby Bald Hills is the habitat of Orange-Breasted Falcon, King Vulture, Black-and-white Hawk Eagle and Solitary Eagle. Return to Blancaneaux Lodge for lunch.

Early Afternoon Lecture: Afternoon lecture on the Stygian Owl and the study conducted by Roni Martinez of Blancaneaux Lodge.

Afternoon activity: Field trip to the Stygian roosting site to view the owls and to collect pellets for analysis.

Evening activity: Night time owl surveys in forest surrounding Blancaneaux Lodge.

Tuesday Day 4: Breakfast.

Morning Lecture: Early morning lecture on the Solitary Eagle and how to survey for raptors.

Full-day Activity: We'll be heading out into the field to conduct point count surveys on Solitary Eagles. Hopefully we'll spot this extremely rare species and observe its field characteristics. We'll spend 2 hours at each point count station counting all raptors. Picnic lunch taken in the field.

Dinner at Blancaneaux Lodge.

Wednesday Day 5: Breakfast

Field Trip: A full day tour to the Maya site of Caracol in the Chiquibul National Park – one of Belize's best 'hot spots' for raptors. On arrival at the Caracol National Park rangers will describe the unique challenges they face in protecting and conserving the National Park. Caracol is home to resident spider monkeys and it is also sometimes possible to see the Keel-billed Motmot and Harpy Eagle using the temple tops as vantage points.

On our way back to Blancaneaux Lodge we'll stop at the Rio Frio Cave and the Rio On Falls.

Dinner at Blancaneaux Lodge.

Thursday Day 6: Breakfast

The morning is free to relax or take optional activities.

Lunch

Field Trip: An afternoon trail walk into the adjoining Noj Kaax Meen Elijio Panti National Park for an afternoon of birding and orchid spotting. The area has approximately 250 species of birds and it is possible to find about 50 species of orchid. We'll show you the nesting sites of Plumbeous and Swallow-tailed Kites and we'll keep our eyes peeled for new nesting sites. There is time to swim in waterfalls and enjoy the fantastic birding as we move between pine ridge, stands of palmetto and moist tropical broadleaf habitats.

Dinner

Evening Lecture: A short lecture on Hawk-Eagles of Belize and research being conducted by BRRI on Hawk-Eagles.

Friday Day 7: Early breakfast

Full Day Field Trip: We'll depart early for a full day trip to the Chullilo Dam and its reservoir. Upper Macal River that flows into the reservoir is the habitat of tapir, otter, Morelet's crocodile and Scarlet Macaw. Our National Park ranger guide will explain how the dam has both impacted the ecosystem and at the same time provided new habitat for wading birds. We hope to observe a wide range of raptors during the course of the day. We'll return in the late afternoon with time to freshen up before meeting for cocktails at the Jaguar Bar. Drinks will be followed by a farewell dinner at Blancaneaux Lodge's Montagna Restaurant.

Saturday Day 8: Breakfast.

Mid-morning transfer to Belize International Airport and depart for your international flight.

Extend your stay:

Take a pre or post-trip extension to Blancaneaux Lodge's sister properties Turtle Inn and La Lancha.

***Note:** The exact activities listed in the itinerary are subject to change without notice or recourse if deemed necessary by the trip organizers due to local weather conditions or other operational issues.