

CUBA HERPETOLOGY and NATURAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Cuba's Wild Western Peninsula, Western Mountains, Zapata Swamp with an extension option in Colonial Havana October 6 -14/15, 2018

The **Caribbean Conservation Trust (CCT)** is offering an exclusive U.S.-led and managed herpetology and natural history excursion to Cuba. The program is coordinated under U.S. government authorization through Connecticut-based CCT, which is proud of its **23 year history** managing bird conservation / travel programs in Cuba. In addition to American Herpetologist **Jeff Lemm** and **Dr. Luis Diaz**, Curator of Herpetology at Cuba's National Museum of Natural History, our team will include a bilingual Cuban tour leader and local naturalists who are experts in their respective geographic regions of Cuba. They will guide you through some of the best natural habitats in Cuba, the Caribbean's largest and most ecologically diverse island nation.

The Nature of Cuba

While this is designed primarily as an exploration of Cuba's reptiles and amphibians, there will be opportunities for birding on this trip, as well as opportunities to visit some of Cuba's most fascinating natural areas. Our focus expands to include a range of Cuban fauna and flora, and the ecology and history of regions we visit. At different intervals throughout the program we will hear from Cuban experts about the natural relationship of Cuban species of birds, reptiles, amphibians, mammals, as well as insects and other invertebrates such as mollusks and butterflies. We will enjoy opportunities to swim and snorkel as well, and perhaps encounter some of Cuba's interesting marine life in a safe, natural habitat.

Cuban Knight Anole



We will also indulge in informal discussions that expose the main problems of conservation in the Cuban Archipelago. Throughout the program our Cuban guide will answer your questions and offer explanations that reflect Cuban history, politics, as well as topics related to daily living in Cuba. These discussions may include information about the Cuban education and health care systems, housing, transportation, education, employment, and other topics that will help enhance a better understanding of how ordinary Cubans go about their daily lives.

Cuba's Reptiles and Amphibians

Cuba has an exquisite and unique herpetofauna. Amphibians are represented by 62 species, 95% of which are endemic to Cuba. The Reptile fauna contains 154 species, and 87.5% of endemism. Both groups constitute the most important part of the land vertebrate fauna in the island".

The Cuban Rock Iguana (*Cyclura nubila*), Cuban Boa (*Chilabothrus angulifer*), Pinar del Río Cliff Anole (*Anolis bartschi*), Western Giant Anole (*Anolis luteocularis*) Western Bearded Anole (*Anolis barbatus*), Cuban Giant Gecko (*Tarentola americana*), Broad-banded Trope (*Tropidophis feicki*), Giant Trope (*Tropidophis melanurus*), Cuban Giant Frog (*Eleutherodactylus zeus*), Western Bromeliad Frog (*Eleutherodactylus varians olibrus*), Cuban Colín Frog (*Eleutherodactylus eileenae*), Cuban Water Snake (*Tretanorhinus variabilis*), Western Giant Toad (*Peltophryne fustige*), Yellow-Striped Dwarf Frog (*Eleutherodactylus limbatus*), Cuban Stream Anole (*Anolis vermiculatus*), (*Tropidophis maculatus*, *T. melanurus*, *T. feicki*, *T. pardalis*), Cuban Spiny Anole (*Anolis loysianus*), Red-Fanned Rock Anole (*Anolis mestrei*)



Red-Fanned Rock Anole



5 Striped Grass Anole



Western Giant Anole



Cuban Giant Frog



Broad-banded Trope

Where we Travel

Our program begins in **Havana**, an unrivaled colonial city of the Americas. Our time in Havana will include a visit to the home and private collection of Cuban fauna of **Orlando Garrido**, Cuba's most prolific living naturalist, and author of The Field Guide To the Birds of Cuba., and dozens of papers related to herpetology in the region. This presentation will provide an introduction to some of the species you may encounter, and serve as an introduction to Cuba's diverse ecosystems and the abundant life within them.

At the end of the tour, we provide the option of a **tour of Havana**, including a guided walking tour of **Habana Vieja** (Old Havana), the city's historic colonial center, which was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1987. Havana abounds with historic sites, diverse architecture, museums, art galleries that underscore a cultural heritage and recently resurgent energy and verve that is uniquely Cuban. Following our private tour and lunch, you will have time to explore on your own or head back to our accommodations or quiet spot to reflect on your Cuban experience. A visit to Cuba's National Museum of Natural History is available as well.



We will venture from Havana to explore three very distinct geographic regions of the country chosen for their diverse ecological systems and natural beauty. In these distinct locations, you will visit Cuba's pristine national parks, remote biosphere reserves, and unique natural areas. We will interact with local scientists and naturalists who work in research and conservation and explore terrain exclusively selected for you by local insiders.

The **Guanahacabibes Peninsula**, located at the far western tip of the island, is one of the last remaining wild



Cuban Iguana (*Cyclura nubila nubila*)

In Arawak, the name of the area translates to "**place of the Iguana**". The peninsula was Cuba's first significant protected area following the triumph of the revolution in 1959, and in 1987 declared a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO. The endemic Cuban Rock Iguana, Cuban Boa, American Crocodile, and possibly 2 species of marine turtles are found here. Bee Hummingbird (world's smallest bird), Cuban Parrot, and numerous other birds and reptiles will be sought here (2 nights).

places in the Caribbean. A major migratory corridor and world class diving and snorkel destination, this peninsula lies parallel to the Yucatan Peninsula in eastern Mexico, and adjacent to the Palancar Reef, the largest contiguous coral reef in the northern hemisphere, second in size only to the Great Barrier Reef. The peninsula is home to many important aboriginal archaeological sites.



Cuba's Western Mountains include two of the country's most diverse and dramatic ranges: the **Sierra de la**



vegetated, flat-top limestone monoliths that dominate the Organos Mountains and **Vinales Valley** (pictured).

We will also explore the diverse wetland region of the **Zapata Peninsula**, Cuba's richest and most important birding

destination located in the historic **Bay of Pigs**. This peninsula is a **Ramsar Convention** (international conservation treaty) designated site, and is among the most important wetlands in the West Indies. Here, the best local guides will lead us through protected areas in **Ciénaga de Zapata National Park** and other natural sites off the beaten track. The Zapata Peninsula covers more than 2800 square miles and features easily accessible, everglades-like ecology and habitat. Framed by the pristine Caribbean coastal environment of the Bay of Pigs, the peninsula features vast open swamp land, low coastal forests, sparkling white sand beaches, healthy and accessible coral reefs, and refreshing



natural limestone pools called cenotes. *Cuban Black Hawk*, *Fernandina's Flicker*, *Bare-legged Owl*, *Tawny-shouldered* and *Red-shouldered Blackbird* are among the many birds we will hope to find (2 nights).

THE CONSERVATION PROJECT

The U.S. Department of Treasury has provided a license for conducting bird and habitat conservation work in Cuba to the **Caribbean Conservation Trust, Inc.** (CCT), a U.S. based organization committed to the conservation of endemic and migratory birds and their habitats in the greater Caribbean region. The primary objective of CCT is to enhance the ability of North American and Caribbean biologists, naturalists, resource managers, conservation organizations, institutions, and local citizens to conduct research and initiate programs to help conserve the birds of the Caribbean and their habitats. CCT is dedicated to species and habitat conservation through education and relationship building and, is in compliance with U.S. Treasury licensure for travel to Cuba. CCT's license authorizes the exploration of a wide range of environmental topics related to Cuban natural history.

Cuba's Birds

Due to its large land area and geographical position within the Caribbean, Cuba is the largest and most bio-diverse land mass in the West Indies, containing a high degree of endemic fauna and flora. Our itinerary provides opportunities to see many of Cuba's endemic species and subspecies of birds, as listed below. This trip will also focus on the many neotropical migrant species that migrate south to Cuba in the fall (endemic species and endemic subspecies in italics):

Bare-legged Owl, *Cuban Oriole*, *Bee Hummingbird*, *Blue-headed Quail-Dove*, *Gray-fronted Quail-Dove*, *Cuban Black Hawk*, *Cuban Blackbird*, *Cuban Bullfinch*, *Cuban Grassquit*, *Cuban Green Woodpecker*, *Cuban Parakeet*, *Cuban Parrot*, *Cuban Pewee*, *Cuban Pygmy-Owl*, *Cuban Solitaire*, *Cuban Tody*, *Cuban Trogon*, *Cuban Vireo*, *Fernandina's Flicker*, *Giant Kingbird*, *Gundlach's Hawk*, *Eastern Meadowlark*, *Cuban Nightjar*, *Red-shouldered Blackbird*, *Tawny-shouldered Blackbird*, *Yellow-headed Warbler*, *Cuban Crow*, *Cuban Emerald*, *Western Spindalis*.
Great Lizard-Cuckoo, *La Sagra's Flycatcher*, *Loggerhead Kingbird*, *Olive-capped Warbler*, *Stygian Owl*.

For a glimpse of our program in action, go to: <http://video.pbs.org/program/counting-birds/> for a link to the film **COUNTING ON BIRDS**, a 2013 Public Broadcasting System (www.pbs.org) production which describes the history of the Christmas Bird Count and features a segment on our program in Cuba as an example how birders can contribute to 'citizen science' based bird conservation efforts.

Program Leadership

Our program is designed and managed in the United States and is professionally staffed and field tested over 21 years in Cuba. We are dedicated to providing participants with informative nature oriented experiences with the help of our highly skilled local leaders.

Jeff Lemm is a zoo-based herpetologist from Southern California. His studies primarily focus on the conservation of the herpetofauna of the southwestern United States and on the critically endangered rock iguanas (*Cyclura* sp.) of the Caribbean. An avid field herper and photographer, Jeff has traveled the world extensively in search of reptiles and amphibians. Jeff has done a great deal of research in the Caribbean and studied rock iguanas in Cuba through the 1990's at the U.S. Naval Station at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. He has traveled through much of western Cuba on a variety of trips, most of which were reptile-related. On this unique, one-of-a-kind herping excursion (which happens to be one of the first Cuban herpetological tours offered to Americans), Jeff will be one of the full time herpetological guides accompanying the group throughout the trip.



Dr. Luis Diaz is the curator of herpetology at Cuba's National Museum of Natural History in Havana. Luis has authored Cuba's most comprehensive book on reptiles and has several ornithological publications to his credit. He is an excellent general naturalist and a talented illustrator. He is fluent in English and has a warm, engaging personality. He has been involved with research projects throughout the West Indies and has traveled on a scientific visa to the U.S. on several occasions. Luis will be with us throughout the program in the field and will provide an overview of Cuban natural history as well as specific information relative to herps, birds and other fauna, flora, geology, and other natural topics. Additionally, we will work with local naturalists from the national parks and biosphere reserves that we visit.



Our Cuban Naturalists

We work with a very competent team of professional biologists and general naturalists in Cuba. Our primary Cuban biologist will be with us throughout the program and will assist in finding and identifying reptiles, amphibians and birds, as well as providing a broad overview of Cuban natural history. He may share specific information relative to the flora, fauna, geology and other natural features of the environments we visit. We will meet other local naturalists as well, who will help with field identification in specific habitats we visit.

A Bilingual Cuban Guide will be at our service throughout the program. Along with a professional driver, he or she will be with the group each day to tell us about Cuban history, culture, arts and lifestyle. He/she will also deal with logistics, meals, translation, and other nuts-and-bolts aspects of the travel experience.

Accommodations

Accommodations feature a stay in Havana and 2 additional provinces. Our accommodations are staffed by friendly, helpful hosts and represent the best Cuba has to offer in the regions we visit, and may include refurbished vintage 4 star facilities, beachfront bungalows, and simple but comfortable private home stays. All accommodations are safe, clean, air-conditioned tourist facilities with private bathrooms, and professional staff. It should be noted that standards in Cuba differ from those in the U.S. and other developed countries.

Additional Details

Following program registration, we will provide details regarding to travel to Cuba, including all of the basics you need to know about travel documents, customs, facts about Cuba, currency, health and safety, food, flights, and what to bring. U.S. Government authorization documents and species checklist will be provided following receipt of your final balance.

Physical Demands and Expectations

This program offers opportunities for several days of casual but determined herp watching, birding, and sight seeing with options. There will be evening sessions for herps, and morning sessions as desired for birds and other fauna. Due to the climate, we will most likely avoid activity during mid day. Physical exertion will be light to moderate on most days, with the longest walks approximately 1.5 miles. Terrain is mostly flat and dry, with some hills present in western Cuba. All participants should be in reasonably good physical condition. Be prepared for strong sun, with temperatures in the mid 80s – 90s during summer in Cuba. Mosquitoes can be bothersome in the Zapata Region. In summer, rain may occur as well, so bring adequate rain gear. Those with medical concerns should check with their physician before taking part in the program. Your health and well-being are very important to us!



Banded Dwarf Boa

Registration, Trip Costs, Terms, and Conditions

Land costs for the 9 day program are \$ **3,250.00** per person for shared accommodations. Single supplements are an additional \$ **350.00** per person. The optional 1 day/night **Havana extension** is \$**225.00** per person sharing, with an additional \$ **45.00** single supplement and includes all meals, guide services, ground transportation. Trip costs are based on 10 fully paying participants. A lower number of participants may result in a small group supplement.

What is included:

CCT's Cuba Natural History Programs include the following: all accommodations, all meals in Cuba beginning with dinner on day 1, ending with breakfast on the last day of the program, guide services, most tips (guide, drivers, and restaurant and bell staff), airport/hotel transfers, ground transportation, bottled water, some drinks, admission fees (itinerary only), U.S. Department of Treasury authorization documents, and program management services which include the provision of all pre- and post-program materials, a full-time Cuban bilingual guide, regionally located bilingual Cuban naturalists, and a fulltime driver. Program fees include a donation to help support our conservation efforts in Cuba.



Yellow-Striped Dwarf Frog

Not Included:

Travel to Havana, Cuba (estimated at \$ 175 - \$ 225 round trip, from Fort Lauderdale); Cuban Visa (\$50); items of a personal nature such as laundry, phone calls, additional beverages, bar and housekeeping tips, etc., meals outside of itinerary, or other fees not listed in the program. Cost estimates are as of February, 2018 and are subject to change.

Flights

We fly between Florida to Havana with major U.S. carriers. We will provide all of the information necessary to make booking these flights simple & secure.



Endemic Fernandina's Flicker

Travel Insurance Protection

Any U.S. citizen traveling internationally these days should consider insurance protection. Reasonably priced coverage is available to provide protection against financial loss due to trip cancellation or delay, as well as lost baggage. Although uncommon, cancellations due to illness, accidents, work related schedule changes, and other un-planned or un-welcome events have happened. Unforeseen travel related events which you have little or no control over can also effect travel plans. All of these factors make trip cancellation insurance a very important consideration. For information about Travelex insurance, go to: <http://www.travelex-insurance.com/index.asp?location=07-0067> or call 1 800-228-9792. Be sure to use the agency **location code 07-0067** to access coverage explicit to this program. CCT's U.S. Department of Treasury issued OFAC license is on file with Travelex.

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Cuban Colin frog

Payment

Regarding payment for the land portion of the tour, a \$ 700.00 deposit is due as soon as possible to reserve space on these programs. This can be paid by PayPal, wire transfer, check or money order payable to:



Blue-headed Anole (*Anolis allisoni*)

Caribbean Conservation Trust
353 West Todd Street
Hamden, CT 06518



Cuban Crocodile (*Crocodylus rhombifer*)

Balance Payment and cancellation and refund policy *

Full payment is due 90 days prior to departure. You will receive a detailed receipt/invoice following receipt of your deposit and reservation form. All cancellations must be done in writing and are effective upon receipt in the CCT office. Should it become necessary for you to cancel, all payments will be refunded after a deduction of our cancellation fee outlined below:

- More than 90 days prior to the tour..... \$ 200.00 per person (land only)
- Fewer than 90 - 75 days prior to the tour... FULL DEPOSIT
- Fewer than 75 days prior to the tour..... NO REFUND (unless we can fill your place)

In the unlikely event that we must cancel the tour, a full refund less a \$100.00 processing fee for your license application will be forwarded to you, should cancellation occur after your license has been processed. ***Please be aware that the refund policies apply only to the land portion of the trip, and that airlines may have different policies that exist beyond our ability to control. Additional registration fees may apply. As with all international travel programs, we highly encourage trip cancellation and travel insurance policies.**

Caribbean Conservation Trust and its agents and constituents reserve the right to make changes to the itineraries. Land and air arrangements may be subject to price increases beyond our control.





Herps watching Adventure in Cuba

October 6 – 14/15, 2018

Day 1 October 6, 2018

U.S. – Havana – Soroa

Arrive Havana and head west to Soroa (1 + hour). This locality contains one of the more complex communities of amphibians and reptiles in Cuba, and a significant representation of the western species. Soroa is a beautifully forested area, with the famous waterfall of the river Manantiales. In this place we will try to find the Yellow-Striped Dwarf Frog (*E. limbatus*) and Blue-eyed Grass – Bush Anole (*A. alutaceus*). There is a huge population of the Cuban Stream Anole (*A. vermiculatus*). The Red-Fanned Rock Anole (*A. mestrei*) is very common on the abundant cliffs. Bull Frogs (*Lithobates catesbeianus*), a species introduced in the last century, are very common in the river. Many beautiful birds, and Pre-hensile -tailed Hutias (*Mysateles prehensilis*; a kind of arboreal rodent) are an interesting addition to this place. Accommodation (2 nights) at Villa Soroa.

Day 2

Soroa

Breakfast at the hotel. Morning visit to the nearby Soroa Orchidarium, a short walk from the hotel. The orchidarium dates back to 1943, and is known for its extensive collection of orchids which included thousands of specimens, including nearly all known Dendrobiums, both species and hybrids. By 1953 there were about 11 thousand plants distributed in 700 varieties and numerous ornamental plants of different genera and species, including Araceae, Amaranthaceas, Liliceas, Bromeliads and Meliaceae. A broad collection of Codiaeum orchids, also known as crotos, as well as Anthuriums, Begonias and other horticultural wonders can be found here. A variety of native plants and trees provide abundant habitat for resident species of birds and herps. Up to four species of the genus *Tropidophis* occurs in Soroa (*Tropidophis maculatus*, *T. melanurus*, *T. feicki*, and *T. pardalis*). If lucky, we will find the Cuban Spiny Anole (*Anolis loysianus*), and the rare Western Bearded Anole (*Anolis barbatus*), which at first glance, looks like a true chameleon. *Lunch and dinner in Villa Soroa.*

Day 3

Soroa - Guanahahcabibes National Park

Morning walk in the forest and along the streams in Soroa before departing for **Guanahahcabibes Peninsula** (3 hours). The peninsula is at the far western tip of Cuba, and is among the last remaining wild places in the Caribbean. This region includes a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, world class diving and snorkeling, and is our best chance for Cuban Rock Iguana and Bee Hummingbird, the world's smallest bird! Dinner & accommodation at Hotel Maria la Gorda (2 nights).

Day 4

Guanahahcabibes National Park

This morning we will drive along the coast and to La Bajada station – the park headquarters and gateway to protected habitat in search of **Cuban Rock Iguanas**, American Crocodiles, **Cuban Boa** (*Chilabothrus angulifer*), and various other herps & birds, including the endemic Bee Hummingbird. Afterwards we will have time to visit the park interpretive center with a local biologist. After lunch there is down time for relaxation, including swimming, snorkeling or diving (certified divers only). Early evening foray for herps and possibly nesting sea turtles caps off an exciting day. Accommodation on the beach at Maria la Gorda.

Day 5

Guanahahcabibes to Vinales Valley

Breakfast, continued exploration of natural areas within the national park, followed by a late morning departure to Vinales Valley (3 hours east). Depending on our arrival time, we may have time to explore some of Vinales enchanting forest for birds and herps. Dinner, accommodation in Vinales. Planned visit with Nils Navarro, Cuba's foremost wildlife artist, and former Curator of Herpetology at The Museum of Natural History, Holguin Province. Accommodation at private homestays in Vinales. At night we can find many interesting herps, for example the Cuban Giant Gecko (*Tarentola americana*), the Broad-banded Trope (*Tropidophis feicki*), the Giant Trope (*Tropidophis melanurus*), and the Cuban Giant Frog (*Eleutherodactylus zeus*). Western Bromeliad Frogs (*Eleutherodactylus varians olibrus*) and the Cuban Colin Frog (*E. eileenae*) may be heard calling high in the trees, with a sound resembling that produced by small bells. At night, in the rivers, is also possible to observe the Cuban Water Snake (*Tretanorhinus variabilis*), and the very common Western Giant Toad (*Peltophryne fustiger*).

Day 6

Vinales- Zapata Swamp

Breakfast and morning walk for birds & herps. Cuban Tody, Green Woodpecker, Cuban Trogon, Cuban Emerald are probable. Viñales is one of the most beautiful landscapes in Cuba. The magical, unusually beautiful karstic landscape of mogotes-- the towering, lushly vegetated, flat-top limestone monoliths dominate the Organos Mountains. The mogotes

contain a very high degree of endemic flora and fauna. Among the invertebrates there is a huge diversity of land snails. There are also many reptiles. The Pinar del Río Cliff Anole (*A. bartschi*) is a colorful lizard with tones of blue, green, and orange, which is endemic to the "mogotes". In some rivers we can find the Cuban Stream Anole (*A. vermiculatus*), a big lizard that resembles a baby crocodile. The Western Giant Anole (*A. luteogularis*) is one of the largest anoline lizards in the West Indies. Lunch in valley, and afternoon departure for Zapata Peninsula (4 + hours). Dinner, Accommodation in private home stays in Playa Giron. All rooms have a private bath, and houses are typically populated only by our group.

Day 7

Zapata Swamp National Park

The Zapata Swamp (Ciénaga de Zapata) is the biggest swamp in the Caribbean. There it is possible to find most of Cuba's endemic birds, and also the Cuban Crocodile (*Crocodylus rhombifer*). We will visit the Crocodile Breeding Centre, a facility created for both the Cuban Crocodile and the American Crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*). It will be also easy to observe the Cuban Slider (*Trachemys decussata*) and the beautiful Cuban Blue Anole (*A. allisoni*), males of this lizard species have a gorgeous coloration. Lunch at Cueva de los Peces, a beautiful flooded sinkhole with marine fishes in the middle of the forest. This cenote is connected to the sea via a large cave system, and is habitat to the Saw-scaled Curlytail (*Leiocephalus carinatus*) and the Cuban Striped Curlytail (*Leiocephalus stictigaster*). The Zapata's Giant Anole (*A. luteogularis calceus*) is also frequently seen in this locality. The Cuban Ameiva (*Pholidoscelis auberi*) is a very common lizard, always fast moving on the forest floor or along the coastal vegetation in search of insects. In the building walls are geckos of the genus *Sphaerodactylus* (Ball Fingered Geckos), particularly the Ashy Sphaero (*Sphaerodactylus elegans*) and the Jamaican Stippled Sphaero (*Sphaerodactylus argus*). The endangered and endemic Blue-headed Quail Dove can also be found here.

Other birds occurring here may include Cuban Parrots (*Amazona leucocephala*), Red-legged Thrush, and Cuban Oriole. A nearby diving and snorkeling shop provides the opportunity to visit a marvelous coral reef. At night we can visit the surroundings of Playa Girón, looking for toads. Two big species are there, the Eastern Giant Toad (*Peltophryne peltacephala*) and the locally endemic Florentino's Toad (*Peltophryne florentinoi*). The last species is very adapted to a live in extremely dry coastal conditions. Other nocturnal species include House Gecko (*H. mabouia*), a lizard that was introduced from Africa centuries ago during the slaves transportation. Dinner in the charming coastal community.

Day 8

Zapata – Havana

Breakfast, morning birding, herping options in select coastal habitat. Optional visit to Bay of Pigs museum. We will visit Caleta Buena late morning, searching the coastal forest for Richard's Banded Sphaero (*Sphaerodactylus richardi*), a nicely colored gecko and a local endemism. The forest is also the habitat of a different subspecies of the Cuban Giant Anole or Knight Anole: (*A. equestris juraguensis*). Banded Dwarf Boa (*Tropidophis semicinctus*). Caleta Buena is also a gorgeous natural rock walled inlet, with healthy corals and abundant tropical fish. Snorkeling gear is available for those interested. It is possible to see land crabs (*Gecarcinus ruricola*) in the surroundings of this locality, Lunch in Caleta Buena. Optional time for swimming, diving, or herps watching. Lunch locally, and late day return to Havana (3 hours). Farewell dinner at a charming private restaurant, lodging in a comfortable boutique accommodation (1 or 2 nights).

Day 9 October 14, 2018

Breakfast followed by transfer from our hotel to Jose Marti Airport for the flight home.

OR

Days 9 - 10

Havana extension (1 night)

Morning visit with Orlando Garrido, Cuba's most prolific living naturalist. Orlando is both an ornithologist and herpetologist, having discovered several anole species while working at Cuba's National Museum of Natural History, which he helped establish in the 1960s. The visit to his personal home and study will be followed by an exploration of the city with a walking tour in historic Old Havana, one of the best preserved Spanish Colonial cities in the New World. This **UNESCO World Heritage site** is loaded with a variety of museums, a thriving arts scene, and a full range of architectural examples of both renovated and neglected structures, many opulent or otherwise unique, representing 5 centuries of human habitation. Optional visit to the National Museum of Natural History. Late afternoon is open for self-exploration of this fascinating and historic small city. Dinner and hotel accommodation in Havana. Depart the next morning to the U.S.