# Mexico

## Northwest - Sinaloa, Nayarit & Jalisco



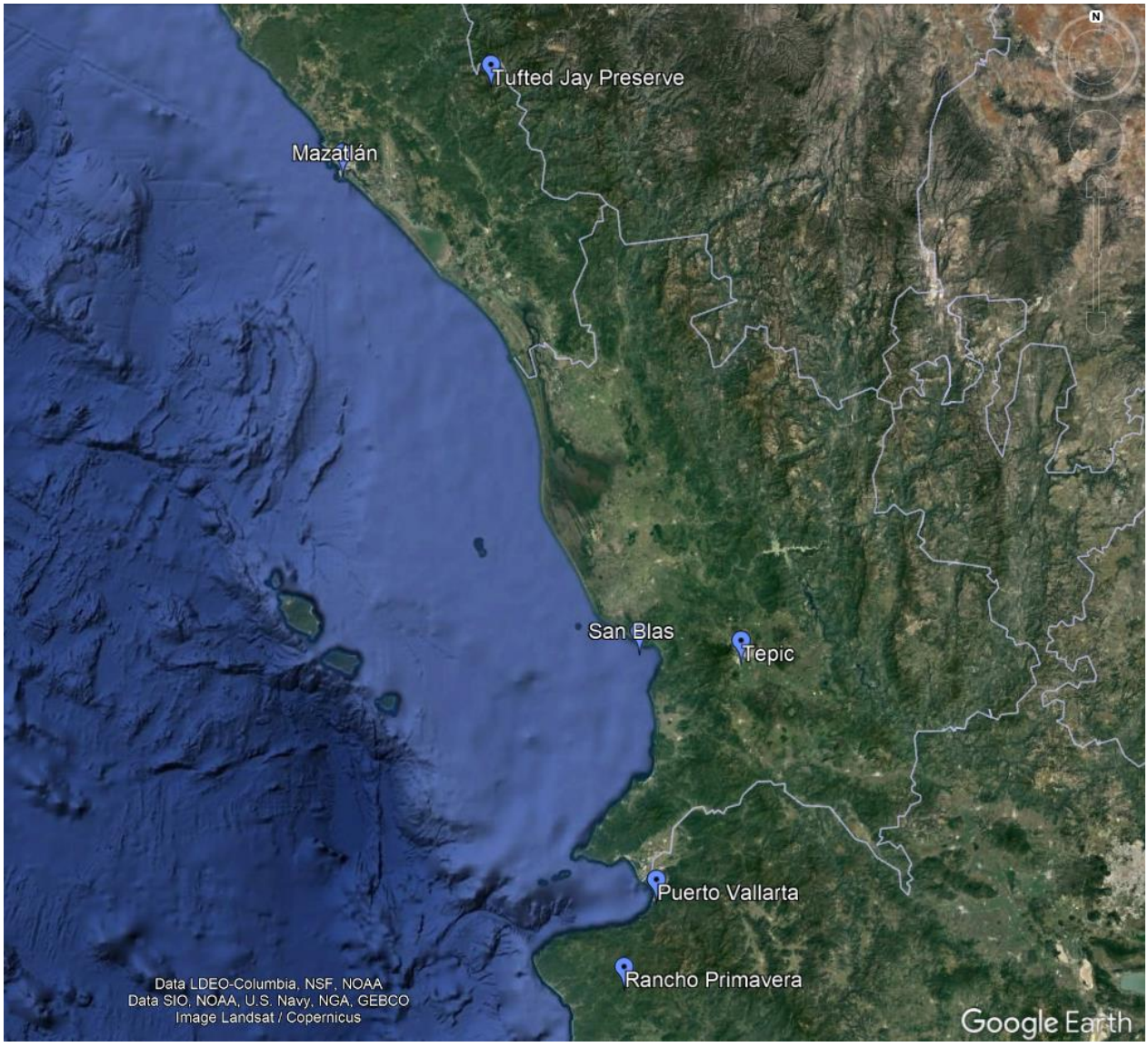
**Tufted Jay by Eric Antonio Martinez**

*We start our adventure in Mazatlán, Sinaloa on the eastern shores of the Gulf of California, where we'll be searching for dry woodland species such as Purplish-backed Jay, Elegant Quail and Mexican Parrotlet. We'll then traverse part of the famous Durango Highway into the Sierra Madre Occidental to reach the Tufted Jay Preserve, host to its incredible namesake as well as White-striped Woodcreeper, Red Warbler and superb Red-headed Tanager.*

*We'll then head south along the Pacific coast to the popular tourist town of San Blas in the state of Nayarit, to enjoy is remarkable birding diversity that include Mexican Woodnymph, Citreoline Trogon, Fan-tailed Warbler, Happy Wren, and Rufous-necked Wood Rail if we are very lucky. We conclude our two-week tour around Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco spending most of our time at the renowned Rancho Primavera. This exquisite privately owned property hosts several striking species such as Yellow Grosbeak, Yellow-winged Cacique, Blue Mockingbird and San Blas Jay.*

## *Itinerary & Map*

| | |
|---|---|
| **Day 1** | **Arrival in Mazatlán (Sinaloa)** |
| **Day 2** | **Mazatlán area** |
| **Day 3** | **Mazatlán to Tufted Jay Preserve via Durango Highway** |
| **Day 4** | **Tufted Jay Preserve** |
| **Day 5** | **Tufted Jay Preserve to Mazatlán** |
| **Day 6** | **Mazatlán to San Blas (Nayarit)** |
| **Days 7 & 8** | **San Blas area** |
| **Day 9** | **San Blas to Tepic** |
| **Day 10** | **Tepic to Puerto Vallarta (Jalisco)** |
| **Days 11 & 12** | **Rancho Primavera** |
| **Day 13** | **Rancho Primavera to Puerto Vallarta via Vallarta Botanical Gardens** |
| **Day 14** | **Final departure** |



## *Birding sites in detail*



**Purplish-backed Jay by Rene Valdes**

**Mazatlán area.** We'll spend time birding the dry thorny scrub on the outskirts of the city. We stand excellent chances of finding the striking Black-throated Magpie-Jay, and Purplish-backed Jay, Yellow-winged Cacique, Rufous-bellied Chachalaca whilst a little luck will be required for the endemic Elegant Quail, Sinaloa Crow, Black-capped Gnatcatcher and Mexican Parrotlet.

Several other more widespread species may include the near-endemic Broad-billed Hummingbird, Gila Woodpecker, stunning Variable Bunting, and Streak-backed Oriole, Bronzed and Brown-headed Cowbirds, Mexican Yellow Grosbeak as well as several warbler species such as Nashville, Black-throated Grey, Wilson's and Orange-crowned.

We'll also pay a visit to the coast, where some scanning should reveal Brandt's Cormorant, Blue-footed Booby, Red-billed Tropicbird and Magnificent Frigatebird, and several gulls including the attractive Heermann's, California, Laughing and Bonaparte's.

**Tufted Jay Preserve.** We'll then drive part of the famous Durango Highway into the Sierra Madre Occidental to reach the Tufted Jay Preserve. Home of the striking Tufted Jay, we hope to get a few sightings during or time here.

We'll also be hoping to find White-striped Woodcreeper, gorgeous Red and Olive Warblers, White-naped Swift, Green-striped and Rufous-capped Brushfinches, Red-headed Tanager, Blue Mockingbird, Grey Silky-flycatcher, and Yellow-eyed Junco whilst we have reasonable chances of bumping into Aztec Thrush and Eared Quetzal.



**Red-headed Tanager by Adam Riley**

**San Blas.** A once small fishing village, San Blas is now a well know tourist town. It has a range of habitats from seasonal lagoons, coast line and mangrove swamp to lowland forest. We'll take our time to bird several sites for key species here.

On the outskirts of town, we'll bird the drier scrub for Rufous-backed Thrush, White-throated Flycatcher and Mexican Parrotlet if we haven't connected yet. Whilst moving deeper into the tropical forests may elicit Citreoline and Elegant Trogons, endemic Golden-cheeked Woodpecker,



**Citreoline Trogon by Adam Riley**

Russet-crowned Motmot, endemic Sinaloa Wren, Rusty-crowned Ground Sparrow, Rose-throated Becard, Red-billed Pigeon, and chances for Red-breasted Chat.

A late afternoon boat ride through the mangroves will turn up many common and widespread egrets, herons, ducks, waders, terns and gulls, but is primarily to allow us an opportunity to search for the skulking Rufous-necked Wood Rail and Spotted Rail. As the night falls, we will cruise back through mangroves where we have a good chance of seeing Northern Potoo.

**Tepic.** We'll make the short journey up to Tepic, birding en route for Mexican Woodnymph, Sinaloa and Spotted Wrens. An owling trip may yield Cinerous Owl or Eared Poorwill.

**Rancho Primavera.** The unique, privately owned Rancho Primavera is positioned in the centre of the Cabo Corrientes peninsula, around an hour's drive south of Puerto Vallarta. The 200-acre former mango farm and cattle ranch has been restored to its original state, making it a fabulous birding destination. We'll spend our days searching for Golden-cheeked Woodpecker, Yellow Grosbeak, Yellow-winged Cacique, Blue Mockingbird, Stripe-headed Sparrow, Rufous-backed Thrush, Cinnamon-bellied Saltator, Cinnamon and Broad-billed Hummingbirds, San Blas and Green Jays, Colima Pygmy Owl, stunning Russet-crowned Motmot and Mexican Woodnymph. In recent times, this site has been a very reliable spot for Rosy-thrush Tanager.



**Fan-tailed Warbler by Forrest Rowland**

We will also pay a visit to the Military Macaw Reserve where we can admire this tricky species from close



**Red Warbler by David Hoddinott**

range at their nesting site. With a little luck, our evenings will be filled with squawking flyover Military Macaws whilst we keep an eye out for Great Swallow-tailed Swift overhead.

**Vallarta Botanical Gardens.** En route back to Puerto Vallarta, we will spend a morning birding the spectacular Vallarta Botanical Gardens. The gardens are replete with many outstanding examples of indigenous Mexican flora, and as a result, this is a great birding spot. We are sure to get great looks at San Blas Jay, West Mexican Chachalaca, Plain-capped Starthroat and Streak backed Oriole. We may also find the attractive Sparkling-tailed Hummingbird, Blue Bunting, Ivory-billed Woodcreeper or Elegant Trogon.

## *Tour Grading & Key*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Overall Ease** | ■ ■ ■ | Moderate. Suitable for most birding interest levels. Target driven tour. |
| **Birding Ease** | ■ ■ ■ | Moderate. Most species provide good visuals in open conditions. Several target species that can be tricky or require repeat efforts. Optional night birding |
| **Accommodation** | ■ ■ ■ | Medium to good |
| **Walking / Trails** | ■ ■ ■ | Mostly short walks on flat ground/roads/sandy trails. |
| **Vehicles / Roads** | ■ ■ ■ | Minibus vehicle. Reasonably good quality roads. Several long drives. |
| **Photography** | ■ ■ ■ | Reasonable to good, harsh lighting in some areas. |
| **Annoyances** | ■ ■ ■ | Sun can be harsh at times. |

## *Financial Arrangements and Important Notes*

Tour dates, prices, single supplement, approximate flight costs and tour spaces are displayed on our website.

Tour inclusions:

- All meals from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 14;
- All lodgings;
- Bottled water;
- All ground transportation during the tour;
- All reserve entrance fees;
- All guiding services
- Tips for local guides, drivers and services.

Tour exclusions:

- Visa fees;
- ANY flights;
- Any beverages (including mini-bar charges at hotels);
- Optional excursions;
- Special gratuities;
- Telephone calls, laundry and other items of a personal nature.

**Single Supplement**: The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBL cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

**Tipping**: As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, restaurants etc.) are included on this tour. However, this does NOT include your Rockjumper leader/s. If you feel that they have given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip them at your discretion.

- **Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing. The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates.**
- **Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registrations, a small group supplement will be offered to confirm the tour.**
- **Tour prices are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.**
- **The designated tour leader/s may be changed at short due to unforeseen circumstances.**
- **The itinerary is indicative only. Changes may need to be made to the order in which the tour is conducted, or some of the venues we visit closer to departure. We will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.**

- To ensure your comfort and that of your companions, please limit yourself to one medium-sized suitcase or duffel bag (20 kg / 44 lb) and one carry-on bag, as space in the vehicles is limited.
- Generally warm to hot, with high levels of humidity along the coast. Can be much cooler at high elevations. Rain is not expected.
- Mosquitoes and tiny bloodsucking flies can be present at times and it's advisable to pack a good supply of effective insect repellent.
- Accommodation varies from comfortable to good.

## *Arrival and Departure Details*

Day 1 of the tour has been set aside as an arrival day into Mazatlán. The tour will conclude in the morning of day 14 in Puerto Vallarta.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your Tour Confirmation package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

General Rafael Buelna International Airport (IATA: MZT) is the main port of entry for this tour, whilst Licenciado Gustavo Díaz Ordaz International Airport (IATA: PVR) is the main port of departure.

Visa requirements differ by country, nationality of the traveller and duration and purpose of your intended stay. It may be necessary to obtain a visa or an electronic travel authorization in advance of your travel. It is therefore vitally important that you check with your travel agent/consulate/embassy for exact visa requirements.

**DO NOT book any flights until the Rockjumper Team have officially confirmed the tour.**