

Since the September LegacyLine Newsletter I have guided for 22 birders on an eight-day Norwegian Cruise Line sailing along the NW Mexican coast, traveled extensively for four weeks in Argentina with fifteen really fine people, and searched for uncommon wintering birds for eighteen days in the Mexican states of Sonora, Chihuahua, & Nayarit.

I also chased birds in Mexico for only the second time in nearly thirty years of listing Mexican species well, sort of; My stepson had some business to attend to in Puerto Penasco, Sonora. A few months earlier I had agreed to fly to Phoenix, rent a car, and drive into Mexico with him for two days; a short down-and-back trip. The day before I traveled Hal Opperman passed on to me a timely web-post from Rick Hoyer that participants of the Puerto Penasco CBC had turned up Glaucous Gull and Rusty Blackbird within the count circle. Shortly after lunchtime I dropped Alex off at his meeting place, and during the final four hours of daylight I enjoyed excellent views of an adult Tundra Swan, a breeding plumage male Barrow's Goldeneye, a third cycle Lesser Black-backed Gull [graelisii], and both of my original targets; Glaucous Gull and Rusty Blackbird. Most likely USA birders will underestimate the excitement this mix of birds generates for a Mexico Lister, so by comparison image an afternoon of birding in an Arizona canyon that turns up Plain-capped Starthroat, Blue Mockingbird, Crescent-chested Warbler, Flame-colored Tanager, and Yellow Grosbeak! It was a magical afternoon indeed, one that is likely not to be repeated for another thirty years.

#### 2009 SUMMARY

The year 2009 was brilliant, as the British say, for Legacy Tours. As usual most of my work took place in Mexico, where I once again saw over 800 species of birds while guiding for our clients [826 this year]. Highlights of the year include photographing Mexico's first confirmed White-winged Becard, adding another party of birders to the select few that have seen the enigmatic Short-crested Coquette, my tenth Horned Guan Trip into the El Triunfo Biosphere Reserve this decade, a seven-day whirl-wind trip for Martin Edwards [8,200+ species] to see Thick-billed and Maroon-fronted Parrots, Eared Quetzal, Tufted Jay, Sinaloa Martin, Aztec Thrush, and Worthen's Sparrow among his 13 new lifers, guiding for Ebbe Banstorp when he achieved a major milestone - the only person ever to see 900+ birds in Mexico and 800+ birds in the ABA Area, and of course the improbable afternoon of birding in Puerto Penasco this past week.

#### LOOKING AHEAD

2010 promises to be just as rewarding for Legacy Tours, and hopefully so for our clients. We continue to fill most of our trips early, with an occasional space coming open within the final few months before travel. I hope to have the calendar of available tours updated during the next month, but as of today that section lists only through the upcoming year.

We are scheduled to guide in Mexico ten times between January and October 2010 when a change pace will have me visiting Taiwan with fourteen adventurous souls. A national guide and tour escort from Taiwan International Birding will be our hosts for this Heritage-Style Birding Tour.

YUCATAN & COZUMEL FALL MIGRATION & REGIONAL ENDEMICIS There are two spaces yet available for our Heritage-Style Birding Tour to Northern Yucatan and Cozumel Island. The dates are from September 23rd through October 4th, 2010. This includes eleven days of birding amid Mayan ruins, sun-drenched coastline, and tropical forest trails. We will target all of the endemic species. The tour begins in Cozumel and ends in Cancun.

We give the tour a trip code of A [Comfortable & Enjoyable for anyone with an interest in nature]. I know it seems far off, but in reality it is not; the final two spaces will not be available for much longer it is just the way things go when we travel with small parties. Please check the calendar of tour on our web page for more information:

<http://www.legacy-tours.com/Tours.htm>

THANK YOU

Again, we sincerely want to end this year by thanking each and every one of you who have been part of the Legacy Tours story. In spite of the lousy economy and the concerns for travel in Mexico, this past year was our BEST YEAR EVER, with a number of new faces and many of our old [long-time] friends. I keep threatening to retire, or at least slow down, but the great joy I receive from guiding especially in Mexico keeps me saying; one more year! So I have agreed to custom-tour commitments into the 2012 travel year; beyond that we will reevaluate once again. What is most important now is that I express to you my gratitude for being part of a long-time dream of comprehensive birding in Mexico that leaves behind a Legacy above and beyond our personal bird lists.

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