

# Best of Belize | Species List

## March 20 – 28, 2024 | with Naturalist Journeys



**Compiled by guide Rick Weiman with local guides Rudy (Black Orchid), Eduardo (Lamanai) and Luis (Chan Chich). Our five wonderful clients included Nancy and Robert, Peter, Kay and Vivian.**

Our Naturalist Journeys Best of Belize Tour was an exciting bird- and nature-filled adventure. With night excursions on boats and safari vehicles; jungle and savanna walks, and river, lagoon and creek boat trips, we saw or heard 237 species of birds, 14 different mammals including Ocelot, Tapir and Kinkajou and 11 species of reptiles and amphibians. Among the birds observed or heard were every species of heron and egret on our checklist except one (Pinnated Bittern), nine species of woodpecker and 18 species of North American migratory warblers (plus two local warblers). Everyone was thrilled to see an Agami Heron at Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary, and then another on Dawson's Creek, a life bird for everyone on the tour including Rick.

At our final checklist meeting, we typically ask clients what their favorite bird and/or occasion was on the tour. The winning bird was unanimous: the Jabiru sighting from the boat in Crooked Tree where we watched it catch and eat an eel. If we had passed that spot 10 seconds earlier, we would have missed it. Second place went to the Purple-crowned Fairy bathing in Chan Chich Creek, simply a magical moment that was also captured on video by Rick, and another life bird for all of us.

The favorite moment or place visited was tough to decide, but several votes went to our night boat tour under a full moon on the New River with Eduardo at Lamanai. We witnessed a Mottled Owl calling, a pair of Kinkajous in the trees, Fishing Bats gliding over the water and Vivian got her life American Pygmy Kingfisher sleeping at eye-level only 20 feet from our boat.

### **Summary:**

**BIRDS (237 species were recorded, of which 13 were heard only and eight were Yucatan endemics. Details on the following pages.**

Details for all bird sightings and locations are contained in the eBird checklists tallied throughout the trip. The eBird Trip Report summarizes all the checklists including where each species was observed and where available photos, videos and sound recordings have been uploaded. You can view the eBird Trip Report by clicking on the link below. If you're new to eBird, be sure to click on "Show All Details" on the right side of the list as this will expand the report to show you where and when each of the birds was seen and how many.

<https://ebird.org/tripreport/217594>

The following is a list of additional mammal, reptile and amphibian species that were found during the trip.

## **MAMMALS (14 species recorded)**

**Southern Opossum** *Didelphis marsupialis*—Observed on our night safari drive at Chan Chich.

**Proboscis Bat** *Rhynchonycteris naso*—Spotted roosting under bridges on our Belize River and New River boat rides.

**Fishing Bat (also known as the Greater Bulldog Bat)** *Noctilio leporinus*—Multiple bats were observed fishing on our night boat tour excursion on the New River at Lamanai.

**Yucatan Black Howler Monkey** *Alouatta pigra*—Heard and seen multiple times on the tour, most often observed at Lamanai with fewer observations at Chan Chich.

**Central American Spider Monkey** *Ateles geoffroyi*—Quite common on the trails at Chan Chich Lodge.

**Yucatan Squirrel** *Sciurus yucatanensis*—Large gray-black squirrel observed at all Lamanai and Chan Chich.

**Central American Agouti** *Dasyprocta punctata*—Observed crossing trails at Lamanai.

**White-tailed Deer** *Odocoileus virginianus*—Quite common along the roads and cabins at Chan Chich.

**Kinkajou** *Potos flavus*—Two were spotted in the trees on our New River night boat excursion at Lamanai.

**White-nosed Coati** *Nasua narica*—One was seen on an early morning bird walk behind the lodge at Lamanai.

**Gray Fox** *Urocyon cinereoargenteus*—We had a quick glimpse of one crossing Ring Road by the Chan Chich Coffee Plantation on one of our jungle safari excursions.

**Baird's Tapir** *Tapirus bairdii*—Kay and Vivian saw one cross the main road near the lodge as they were walking back from the Sac Be trail.

**Ocelot** *Leopardus pardalis*—We spotted not one, but TWO on our night jungle safari excursion at Chan Chich.

**West Indian Manatee** *Trichechus manatus*—On our charter flight at about 1,000 feet altitude, our pilot pointed out five in a river on our way to the Belize airport. Their large, floating bodies were clearly visible from the plane. Very cool and unexpected!

## **REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS (11 species recorded)**

**Morelet's Crocodile** *Crocodylus moreletii*—Observed in several rivers and creeks on the tour.

**Asian House Gecko** *Hemidactylus frenatus* (1)—Very common, especially on the lit-up food menu board at Lamanai Outpost that attracted bugs and, thus, hungry geckos.

**Ghost Anole** *Anolis lemurinus*—One all-white camouflaged anole was seen on the side of a tree at Chan Chich.

**Green Iguana** *Iguana iguana*—Observed multiple times at Black Orchid, Lamanai and during our river tours in trees.

**Black Spiny-tailed Iguana** *Ctenosaura similis*—We saw one that lived in a fence post on a trail at Lamanai that was often sunning itself. It let us take many pictures, so seemed to enjoy the paparazzi.

**Brown Basilisk** *Basiliscus vittatus*—Several were spotted including a very photogenic one near the cabins at Chan Chich.

**Rio Grande Leopard Frog** *Lithobates berlandieri*—Seen on a night walk near a small pond at Lamanai Outpost.

**Mexican Tree Frog** *Smilisca boudinii*— Also seen at the pond on that same night walk.

**Green Vine Snake** *Oxybelis fulgidus*—It was a very productive pond as this snake was coiled in a tree next to it.

**Green-headed Racer** *Leptodrymus pulcherrimus*—One observed “racing” through the leaf litter at the Lamanai Archaeological Mayan ruins.

**Mesoamerican Slider** *Trachemys scripta venusta*—Several observed sunning on logs in the New River on our boat tours.

I would be remiss not to mention that we saw several small Fer-de-Lances (*Bothrops asper*), a venomous snake of Central and South America, dead on the roads, so they were definitely around. We never encountered one, however, which I think our group was fine with. On our night jungle safari at Chan Chich, our guide Luis also spotted a large Mexican Red-rump Tarantula (*Tliltocatl vagans*) walking along the road searching for prey.