



Big Island Hiking and Birding

November 10-17, 2019

Tentative Trip Itinerary

Day 1, November 10

Arrive at Kona International Airport early afternoon and head to Volcano Village, next to the outstanding wonders in Volcanoes National Park. We'll stop along the way for a ramble through the newly opened Kahuku unit of the park, where we'll meet both lava and rainforest ecosystems and hope for our first looks at native Apapane, one of several endemic Hawaiian honeycreepers we will seek on this trip. We'll check into our lodging at Volcano Inn then head out for a delicious meal at Ohelo Cafe. [Hike distance up to 3 miles, easy-moderate.]

LODGING: Volcanoes

Day 2, November 11

After a continental breakfast at the inn, we head out for several short hikes in the park today, including the Sulphur Banks and Crater Rim Trails, Pu'u Loa Petroglyphs and a visit to the end of Chain of Craters Road, where Noio (Hawaiian Black Noddies) nest in the seawall. Our day will include a scenic lunch at Volcano Lodge, situated dramatically along the rim of the Kilauea Crater. [Hike distance up to 5 miles, moderate.]

LODGING: Volcanoes

Day 3, November 12

Today we'll explore the south coast on a hike to Papakōlea (Green Sands) beach. The

green sand is created by a common mineral in Big Island lava called olivine, which stays deposited on this beach because it is heavier than the other components of the lava. It's name means 'plover flats,' after the Pacific golden plover whom we'll hope to see, in addition to various seabirds and marine mammals. In the afternoon, we'll head to the mid-elevation Kīpukapuauulu Trail, seeking the endemic Oma'o (Hawaiian Thrush) and possible looks at the charming Hawaiian 'Elepaio. [Hike distance 7+ miles, strenuous.]

LODGING: Volcanoes

Day 4, November 13

After a short morning ramble in the National Park, we'll check out of our lodging and head to Hilo for harbor birding and lunch in town. Our afternoon will be spent exploring the Hilo riverfront and then the slopes of Mauna Kea at Kipuna 21, in search of endemic 'Iwi and Amakihi, plus various colorful songbirds including the Yellow-fronted Canary and the Red-billed Leiothrix. Tonight, we check into the charming Kamuela Inn in Waimea. [Hike distance, about 4 miles, easy.]

LODGING: Waimea

Day 5, November 14

This morning, we'll head out in search of open country birds along Saddle Road, including Hawaiian Hawk and Erckel's Francolin. Our hike today will cover several miles of the rigorous Pu'u 'Ō'ō trail, where we'll hope for encounters with native Hawaiian honeycreepers 'Iwi, Akiapola'au and Akepa. Time permitting, we'll head into the dry mamane forest slopes to look for the critically endangered Palila. [Hike distance up to 8 miles, strenuous.]

LODGING: Waimea

Day 6, November 15

Today we enjoy a visit to Two-Step for (optional) snorkeling and sea turtle watching, and a hike along the coast through Pu'uhonua o Hōnaunau National Historical Park, home to some of the most significant traditional Hawaiian sites in the Hawaiian archipelago. [Hike distance about 3 miles, easy.]

LODGING: Kailua-Kona.

Day 7, November 16

Our final full day will be spent exploring the gorgeous north Kona coast, including a

hike along the wonderful bays and fish ponds of **Kaloko-Honokohau National Historical Park** before lunch, and a lava hike in **Kekaha Kai State Park** to seek out hidden wetlands and perhaps the most beautiful beach on the island at Makalawena Beach. We return to Kona for our final dinner together. [Hike distance up to 6 miles, moderate.]

LODGING: Kailua-Kona.

Day 8, November 17

Morning walk through town, breakfast and check out. Return to Kona International Airport for flights home.

Trip Leaders

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