

TECHNICAL REPORT

Techniques for Bird-watching Tourism in Nicaragua A Flight into the Future

SHORT COURSE FOR TOUR OPERATORS & NATURE GUIDES

Reserva Privada El Jaguar, March 2006



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TECHNIQUES FOR BIRD-WATCHING IN NICARAGUA A FLIGHT INTO THE FUTURE

SHORT COURSE FOR TOUR OPERATORS & NATURE GUIDES

By

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in collaboration with

CANATUR
CLUSA Nicaragua
Reserva Silvestre Privada Nebliselta El Jaguar

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Blue-gray tanager, an attractive and common bird at El Jaguar.

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Local guide Moises showing course participants a bird, during early morning field exercise.



Local guide Oscar showing Dr. Wayne Arendt a new bird species he observed during the course field exercise.

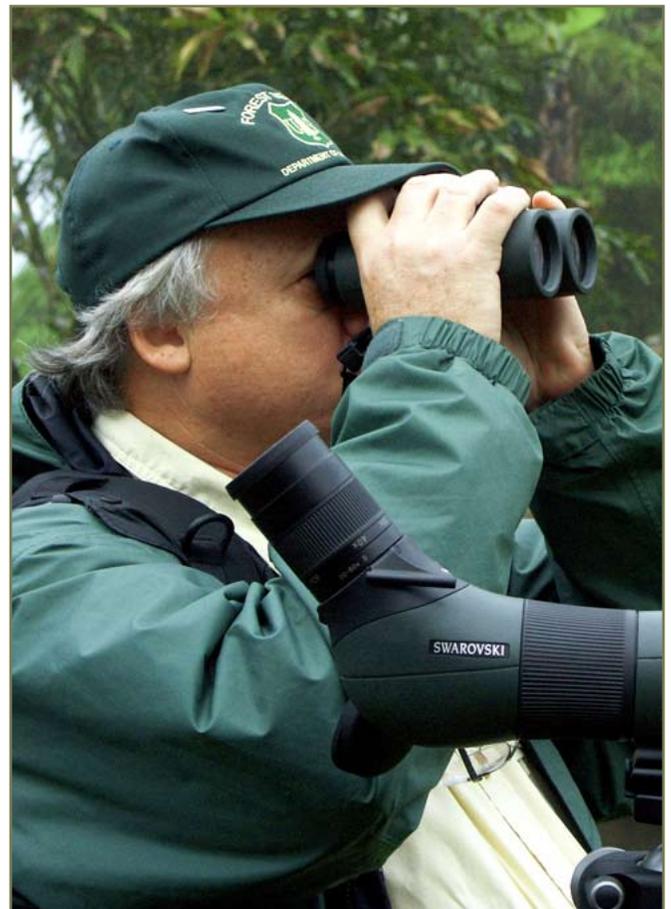
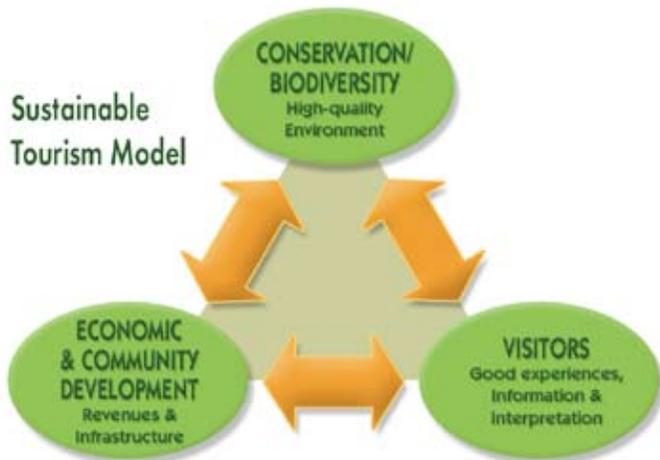
INTRODUCTION

USAID Nicaragua supports rural development programs to improve economic conditions and incomes of the rural poor. A key piece of this development strategy is to improve skills and knowledge of local tour operators and nature guides.

As part of USAID's goal of "Fostering Economic Growth from National Protected and Forested Areas" the USDA Forest Service is assisting the Government of Nicaragua by developing sustainable tourism training. The Forest Service is taking a sustainable tourism triangle approach that involves 1) Conservation of Biodiversity, 2) Economic and Social Development and 3) providing a Quality Visitor Experience. The outcome will be that the Nicaraguan Pacific Coast Region, and the Protected Areas in this region, will be recognized as a world-class tourism destination and serve as a model for sustainable tourism projects. By aligning outcome-based communications and interpretive planning with management goals, tourism will produce sustainable benefits for the environment, Protected Areas, local businesses, and locals and international visitors. The elements of this strategy consist of:

- Focusing on benefits as desired outcomes.
- Creating synergy between conservation/biodiversity, economic/social development, and quality visitor experiences. (*see Sustainable Tourism Model below*)
- Developing public-private partnerships between local NGOs involved with co-management, MARENA and the private sector.
- Working closely with INTUR and the tourism industry with all action items.

As part of this strategy, USAID provided financial support through the USDA PASA agreement (PASA No. 596-P- 00-01-00099-00) for US Forest Service advisors to design and teach this bird-watching short-course.



Marvin Torrez and Jerry Bauer during field exercise.

OBJECTIVES OF THE TRAINING

- To present an overview of bird-watching tourism and how it can contribute to sustainable tourism development in Nicaragua.
- To provide enhanced knowledge and skills to Nicaragua tour operators and nature guides for development of bird-watching tours (Avitourism).
- To increase participant knowledge about bird ecology and identification techniques.
- To help create a working network between Nicaraguan tour operators and protected area managers and local communities to enhance bird-watching tourism opportunities.



ALAS biologist demonstrating bird monitoring and banding techniques to course participants.

TRAINING COURSE DESCRIPTION

A two-day training course titled “Techniques for Bird-watching Tourism in Nicaragua, A Flight into the Future” was held in Jinotega from 8-10 March 2006. The course was taught by a team of “Tour Guides” (instructors) from the US Forest Service, International Institute of Tropical Forestry and Indiana University and local biologist. Specific advisor expertise consisted of: ornithology, tourism planning, parks management, interpretation, marketing & communication, photography and graphic design (see Appendix 1 for a short bio on each Instructor). This course covered bird-watching/guiding techniques for tour operators and guides, equipment needed for bird-watching, marketing techniques, information on who participates in bird-watching, where to go in Nicaragua, and examples of economic impact from bird-watchers (see Appendix 2 for a course agenda). The course was attended by 28 participants from the local tour operators, small hotels and eco-lodges, US Peace Corps Volunteers, local communities, and municipalities (see Appendix 3 for the participant list).

Classroom activities were structured around lectures on specific subjects, using previously developed training materials, manuals and visual aids. Several exercises were used to involve the participants in an interactive participation process. Visual aids were used to demonstrate specific techniques and show examples for Nicaragua and other countries. A CD was made with all course materials and given to the participants. This CD contains:

1. Course Agenda
2. Participant List
3. Technical presentations

4. Handouts in electronic format
5. Technical background information about bird-watching and economic impacts from this activity

In addition, one copy of the following materials was given to each participant:

1. Brochu and Merriman. 2003. Interpretación Personal, conectando su audiencia con los recursos patrimoniales.
2. The Ecotourism Society. 1995. Directrices para el Ecoturismo, una guía para los operadores de turismo naturalista. (The Ecotourism Society. 1995. Ecotourism Guidelines, for nature tour operators.)

The following books were used but not given to each participant:

1. Brochu, Lisa. 2003. Interpretive Planning.
2. Ham, Sam. 1992. Interpretación Ambiental, una guía para gente con grandes ideas y presupuestos pequeños. (Ham, Sam. 1992. Environmental Interpretation, a practical guide for people with big ideas and small budgets.)

A participant evaluation of the course was given when the training terminated. High scores, were given in all categories. One hundred percent of the participants rated the course as excellent (82%) or very good (18%). One hundred percent of the participants felt that the course surpassed (61%) or met (39%) their expectations; while 29% of the participants thought the course was sufficient in length, and 68% percent thought the course was too short. In their evaluations of the technical sessions 68% graded all sessions excellent, while 27% rated them very good (see Appendix 4).





Instructor Sandy Coria on an early morning bird watch.

Instructor Jorge Paniagua demonstrating “digiscoping”, the use of the spotting scope with SLR digital camera to capture high-resolution photographs of Nicaraguan avifauna. A technical session on equipment was presented as part of the course. This session discussed and demonstrated the use of quality equipment that serious bird-watchers expect to have available for birding tours.



Instructor Sergio Vilchez showing bird identification techniques to course participants.

EXPECTED RESULTS

Some of the expected results from this workshop are:

- The bird list of all species found in Nicaragua (Lista Patrón de Aves de Nicaragua) will be updated by ALAS and reprinted. The private sector will provide half of the financing for this publication and USAID through, the PASA, will provide the other half. This bird-list was originally published in 2000 and with new scientific data collected in the last few years it is now outdated.
- CANATUR and ALAS agreed to work together and develop a Memorandum of Understanding between the two organizations to develop bird-watcher tours in Nicaragua.
- Tour operators now understand how bird-watching tourism can and will contribute to sustainable tourism development in Nicaragua.
- Tour operators have a better understanding of El Jaguar Private Reserve and have a new interest in working with them to bring tourists to this and other private reserves.
- Course participants now have enhanced knowledge and skills for development of bird-watching tours (Avitourism).
- Participant knowledge about bird ecology and identification techniques was increased.
- The first steps were given to create a working network between Nicaraguan tour operators and protected area managers and local communities to enhance bird-watching tourism opportunities.
- During course field activities participants discovered four new bird species for the Jaguar reserve.

Samir Saenz, one of the participants, making field observation during field activities.





Course participants during classroom technical sessions.



PARTICIPANT COMMENTS

■ Excelente, gracias por la ayuda brindada y espero de ser de mucha ayuda para ustedes.

Juan Pablo Gutierrez Duarte, Grayline

■ Estuvo pijudo, creo que abre la mente.

Marvin Torrez ALAS

■ Felicitaciones porque su taller me encantó y espero que un próximo me inviten y así aprovecharlos.

Naxalia Mairena Castro, Hotel de Montaña Selva Negra

■ Estoy agradecido por darnos la oportunidad de ampliar mis conocimientos y es una forma muy importante e interesante estar con expertos como lo son ustedes y espero que si tienen otros talleres que me ayuden mas, les pediria que porfavor nos vuelvan a invitar.

Carlos Antonio Garcia, Hotel de Montaña Selva Negra

■ Fue muy importante ya que me di cuenta de muchas cosas que tenemos y que debemos cuidar y el servicio que debemos dar a los turistas que nos visitan y como mejorar nuestro servicio al cliente.

Alex Krandy Flores, Finca Esperanza Verde

■ Muchas gracias a todo el equipo de instructores, a Jerry, Wayne, Jeffrey, Cem ,Vicky, Sandra y Jorge por este importante taller. Logicamente gracias a AID por dar el apoyo económico para la actividad.

■ Considero que el taller fue un éxito, hubo mucho interes, espero con seguridad que de este taller salgan futuros guías de observación de aves al igual que un esfuerzo de parte de las Tour Operadoras, el Intur, Canatur por desarrollar esta bella y provechosa actividad ecoturística que nos ayude a obtener la sostenibilidad para seguir en el trabajo de la conservación.

Pomares Salmerón Belli, Reserva Silvestre Privada Montibelli

■ Personalmente les agradezco inmensamente haber invitado a Careli Tours, porque aprendí muchísimo, lo cual va a ser de mucha utilidad para brindar un mayor servicio a nuestros clients. Espero ser invitado en su próximo taller. Muchas Gracias.

Juan Carlos Mendoza, Careli Tours

■ I would like to be part of the certified interpreters, on the other hand, this workshop was more than perfect, I really really would like to have another course with the same team.

Marlon Rivera Guerrero, Gray line Tours.



Dr. Wayne Arendt

Wildlife Scientist, USDA-Forest Service, International Institute of Tropical Forestry.

Dr. Arendt is an ornithologist with more than 35 years of experienced conducting research in Latin America and the Caribbean. He has more than 100 scientific articles about bird ecology and behavior.



Dr. Cem Basman

Assistant Professor, School of Health, Physical Education and Recreation, Indiana University.

Dr. Cem Basman is an Assistant Professor with the Department of Recreation and Park Administration at Indiana University Bloomington. Dr. Basman teaches tourism, outdoor recreation and heritage interpretation at Indiana University. He is also a Certified Interpretive Trainer (CIT) and a Sanctioned Trainer for the Certified Interpretive Guide Program (CIG) from the National Association for Interpretation. Currently, he is conducting research in the area of sustainable recreation and tourism development in Nicaragua and Panama.



Lica Vicky Basman

Heritage Interpretation Consultant

Lica Basman operates her own consulting company providing expertise in the areas of heritage interpretation and recreation planning. She has many years experience working throughout the U.S. She is also a Certified Interpretive Trainer (CIT) and a Sanctioned Trainer for the Certified Interpretive Guide Program (CIG) from the National Association for Interpretation. She is also a member of the board of directors for the National Association for Interpretation.



Jerry Bauer

Scientific Biologist, USDA-Forest Service, International Institute of Tropical Forestry.

Ing. Bauer, Nicaragua Project Team Leader, is professional, conservationist with more than 30 years of experience in the Latin America and Caribbean region. Jerry provides expertise in interpretation and tourism promotion/marketing. He is an Adjunct professor with Department of Forestry, Southern Illinois University and an associate with the School of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation at Indiana University. Jerry is also a Certified Interpretive Guide Program (CIG) from the National Association for Interpretation.



Lica Sandra Coria

Lica Coria, Nicaragua Project Assistant, is an international consultant providing expertise in facilitation, project organization and management and tourism promotion/marketing. She has worked throughout Central America and the Caribbean with several international and local organizations.



Dr. Jeffrey McCreary

Dr. McCreary is a well-known scientist in Latin America, having worked more than 15 years in the region, mostly in Central America. He has taught at Nicaraguan universities, organized seminars and short-course, and conducted research and conservation activities in ten countries. Jeffrey was a US Fullbright scholar to Nicaragua in 2002.



Lic. Jorge Paniagua

Lic. Paniagua, Project Art Director and and Graphic Designer. His international experience includes several European countries, Nicaragua, Panama, Jamaica. He is an expert designer for web, multimedia, calendars, books, posters, etc. He has taught graphic design techniques to universities, local NGOs, local government agencies and provided consultancies to Government of Nicaragua, GTZ, AID, UNDP, World Bank, and other international organizations.



Biol. Marvin Torrez

Biol. Torrez is the lead scientist conducting long-term avian research at the El Jaguar field station. Biol. Torrez is an expert bird-watcher and knows the aviafauna of this region well.



Biol. Sergio Vilchez

Biol. Vilchez is the assistant scientist conducting long-term avian research at the El Jaguar field station. Biol. Vilchez is an expert bird-watcher and knows the aviafauna of this region well.



Jhonny, Oscar, Moisés

Jhonny, Oscar, and Moises are local community member nature-guides who work with El Jaguar in the development of their ecotourism program. Each of them knows the natural history of the area and are expert bird-watchers. They are all self-taught, but learning more and more as they gain more experience.





Opposite page: Instructors Sandy Coria and Jerry Bauer during a bird-watching hike on El Jaguar Reserve nature trail.

Course participants during field activities.

Day 1, Monday

- 3:00 – 5:00 pm Arrive and room check-in.
- 6:00 – 6:30 pm Dinner.
- 6:30 – 7:00 pm General course introduction, objectives, expectations, personal introductions, icebreaker – Guide Sandra Coria.
- 7:00 – 7:30 pm Introduction to El Jaguar Private Reserve – Guides Liliana & Georges Duriaux, owners.

Day 2, Tuesday

- 6:30 AM **Field Session #1** Early Morning Bird Watch.
Guides Sergio Vilchez/ Marvin Torrez / Dr. Wayne Arendt / Jeff McCrary / Local Guides Moises, Oscar, Jhonny
- 8:00 AM Breakfast
- 9:00 – 11:00 AM **Field Session #2** Introduction to bird monitoring techniques (mist netting).
Guides: Sergio Vilchez/ Marvin Torrez / Dr. Wayne Arendt / Dr. Jeff McCreary (handling birds, banding, equipment use binoculars, spotting scopes)
- 11:00 – 12:00 pm **Class Session #1** Birds: form, function, ecology, and identification. Guide Dr. Wayne Arendt
- 12:00 – 12:30 pm **Class Session #2** Nature and Wildlife-related Tourism – Guide Jerry Bauer
- statistics on birdwatching
 - statistics on nature tourism
 - expectations of tourists
- 12:30 – 2:30 Lunch
- 2:30 – 4:00 pm **Class Session #3** Equipment for birding – Guides Jerry Bauer / Dr. Jeff McCrary
- Ideas on type of equipment used- binoculars, spot scopes, tripods, cameras, playback & bird calls, field guides, site guides
- 4:00 – 5:00 pm **Field Session #3** Evening Birdwatch – Guides Sergio Vilchez/ Marvin Torrez / Dr. Wayne Arendt / Dr. Jeff McCrary / Local Guides Moises, Oscar, Jonny
- 5:00 – 6:00 pm Free.
- 6:00 pm Dinner.
- 7:00 pm Expert one on one discussions with participants.



Local guide Moises during bird observation.



Mrs. Duryaux presenting local guide Jhonny.



Course participants during field activities.

Day 3, Wednesday

- 6:30 AM **Field Session #4** Early Morning Bird Watch – Guides Sergio Vilchez/ Marvin Torrez / Dr. Wayne Arendt / Dr. Jeff McCrary / Local Guides Moises, Oscar, Jonny
- 8:00 AM Breakfast
- 9:00 – 11:00 pm **Field Session #5** Introduction to bird monitoring techniques (mist netting) – Guides Sergio Vilchez/ Marvin Torrez / Dr. Wayne Arendt (handling birds, banding, Equipment use (binoculars, spotting scopes)
- 11:00 – 12:30 pm **Class Session #4** How, Where, When, Why of bird-watching, Guide - Dr. Jeff McCrary
- Working with bird-watchers
 - Important birds for your site
 - Where to bird-watch in Nicaragua
- Class Session #5** Marketing bird-watching Tours, Guides - Jerry Bauer / Sandy Coria / Jorge Paniagua.
- Class Session #6** Profile of a bird-watcher, Guides - Jerry Bauer / Sandy Coria
- 12:30 – 2:30 pm Lunch
- 2:30 – 5:00 pm **Class Session #7** Heritage Interpretation, Guides - Cem Basman / Vicki Basman
- 5:00 – 6:00 pm **Field Session #6** Evening Bird Watch – Guides Sergio Vilchez/ Marvin Torrez / Dr. Wayne Arendt / Jeff McCrary / Local Guides Moises, Oscar, Jonny
- 6:00 pm Dinner
- 7:00 pm Expert one on one discussions with participants



Day 4, Thursday

6:30 AM	Field Session #7 Early Morning Bird Watch – Guides Sergio Vilchez/ Marvin Torrez / Dr. Wayne Arendt / Dr. Jeff McCrary / Local Guides Moises, Oscar, Jonny
8:00 AM	Breakfast
9:00 AM	Depart

Technical Presentations (audio-visual)

1	Birds, Form, Function, Ecology, and Identification Synopsis	Dr. Wayne Arendt
2	Nature and Wildlife-related Tourism, Why is it Important?	Jerry Bauer
3	Bird-watching Equipment, for the Well-equipped Bird-watcher	Jerry Bauer / Sandy Coria
4	Bird-watching Tourism, Who, What, When, Where, and Why	Dr. Jeff McCrary
5	Marketing Ecotourism	Jerry Bauer, Sandy Coria, Jorge Paniagua
6	Profile of a bird-watcher	Jerry Bauer / Sandy Coria
7	Thematic Interpretation	Dr. Cem Basman / Vicki Basman

Handouts (background information). PDF files given to participants

1	Why are Birds so Interesting
2	Mating Coloration
3	Economic of Birding
4	Binocular Basics
5	Birding Binoculars and Accessories
6	Chart of Binocular Specifications
7	The Advantages of Spotting Scopes over Binoculars
8	Heritage Interpretation
9	American Birding Association's Principles of Birding Ethics
10	Web-page References for Bird-watchers

Technical Information (background information) PDF files given to participants

1	The Economic Impact of the 2nd Annual Florida Panhandle Birding and Wildflower Festival.
2	Establishing a Birding-Related Business, A Resource Guide.
3	Birding in the United States: A Demographic and Economic Analysis, Addendum to the 2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, Report 2001-1.

APPENDIX 3

Training Course Participant List

	Nombre	Área
1	Silvana Rivera	Montibelli, <i>Private Reserve</i>
2	Pomares Salmerón	Montibelli, <i>Private Reserve</i>
3	Alex Acosta	Fundación Cocibolca, <i>NGO</i>
4	Samir Saenz	Fundación Cocibolca, <i>NGO</i>
5	Luis Falla	INTUR <i>Instituto Nicaragüense de Turismo</i>
6	Alex Colston	Eco Expedition, <i>Tour Operator</i>
7	Juan Carlos Mendoza	Careli Tours, <i>Tour Operator</i>
8	Marlon Rivera	Gray Line, <i>Tour Operator</i>
9	Pablo Gutiérrez	Gray Line, <i>Tour Operator</i>
10	Roger Solórzano	ViaNica, <i>Internet Portal</i>
11	Jorge Cruz	Selva Negra, <i>Private Reserve</i>
12	Carlos García	Selva Negra, <i>Private Reserve</i>
13	Natsalia Mairena	Selva Negra, <i>Private Reserve</i>
14	Jackson Hernández	La Sombra Ecolodge, <i>Private Reserve</i>
15	Pedro Javier Aráuz	La Sombra Ecolodge, <i>Private Reserve</i>
16	Julio Cruz	La Sombra Ecolodge, <i>Private Reserve</i>
17	Manfred Huerta	Ecolodge Apante Hotel, <i>Private Reserve</i>
18	Janeth Guzman	CANATUR, <i>NGO</i>
19	Alonso Saborío Bocuze	CANATUR, <i>NGO</i>
20	Nadhezda Morales	UCA <i>Universidad Centroamericana</i>
21	Alex Kraudi	Finca Esperanza Verde, <i>Private Reserve</i>
22	Lenin Pérez	Finca Esperanza Verde, <i>Private Reserve</i>
23	Jorge Cortedano	Finca Esperanza Verde, <i>Private Reserve</i>
24	Marisol Mena	ALAS, <i>NGO</i>
25	Marvin Tórrez	ALAS, <i>NGO</i>
26	Sergio Vílchez	ALAS, <i>NGO</i>
27	Orlando Galeano	ALAS, <i>NGO</i>
28	Mauricio Rivera	CLUSA

SUMMARY OF BIRD-WATCHING COURSE PARTICIPANT EVALUATION (1 being lowest score and 5 being highest score)						
Evaluación por Sesión	Calificación					
	1	2	3	4	5	total
	poor	needs improvement	good	very good	excellent	
Avistamiento de Aves	0	0	7	14	7	28
Ejercicio de Campo (monitoreo y anillado)	0	0	1	11	16	28
Forma, Función, Ecología e Identificación de Aves	0	0	1	4	23	28
Turismo en la Naturaleza y Vida Silvestre	0	0	0	6	22	28
Equipos para observación de aves	0	0	0	6	22	28
¿Qué, cómo, cuándo y dónde?	0	0	2	7	19	28
Mercadeo	0	0	0	4	24	28
Perfil del Bird-watcher	0	0	1	11	16	28
Interpretación	0	0	1	5	23	28
TOTAL	0	0	13	68	172	252
PERCENTAGE	0%	0%	5%	27%	68%	100.00%

EXPECTATIVAS DE LOS PARTICIPANTES		
El Contenido de este Taller...		
Sobrepaso	17	61%
Cumplió	11	39%
No Cumplió	0	0%
TOTAL	28	100%

LA DURACION DE ESTE TALLER...		
Corto	19	68%
Mucho	1	3%
Suficiente	8	29%
TOTAL	28	100%

En general la calidad del curso fue...		
Excelente	23	82%
Muy útil	5	18%
Algo útil	0	0%
No útil	0	0%
TOTAL	28	100%



Group photo of course participants and instructors.

Apoiando el desarrollo econ3mico de las 1reas Protegidas
y 1reas de Conservaci3n a trav3s del Desarrollo de Turismo Sostenible

La C1mara Nacional de Turismo, USAID/Nicaragua y el
Departamento de Agricultura de los E.U.A. se permiten invitarles al

**Taller sobre Aviturismo y su importancia
dentro del Turismo Sostenible en Nicaragua**

- Ing. Jerry Bauer • Dr. Jeff McCrary • Dr. Cem Basman •
- Dr. Wayne Arendt • Lic. Sergio Vilchez • Lic. Marvin Torrez •

Reserva Privada El Jaguar • Jinotega • 6 de Marzo al 9 de Marzo

Favor confirmar su asistencia antes del d1a 20 de febrero:

Arq. Judith Acevedo judithturismo2000@yahoo.com / Sandra Coria sandracoria@mac.com

(Los gastos de alojamiento y alimentaci3n, ser1n cubiertos por el Comit3 Organizador.)



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**Apoyando el Desarrollo Económico
de las Áreas Protegidas y Áreas de Conservación
a través del Desarrollo de Turismo Sostenible**



**Aviturismo en Nicaragua
Un Vuelo Hacia el Futuro**



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