



## Natural Selections

**BIRDING, WILDLIFE, AND PHOTO TOURS**



Rufous-Winged Tanager

# The Spectacular Bird Diversity of Honduras

12 Nights/13 Days | Multiple Departure Dates

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Our Bird Diversity tour combines interior rain and cloud forests, the breezy Caribbean north coast, and along the way, La Muralla National Park, one of Honduras' best kept, and most bird diverse, secrets. Nearly 90% of Honduras' 760+ bird species have been recorded along this route and with luck, we hope to see at least half of these. We begin in the rain forests of Lake Yojoa, and Cerro Azul, ascending to the cloud forests of Santa Barbara National Park (including an area known for the country's endemic Honduran Emerald). From there, we travel to 2,000 meters pine-oak and cloud forests of Opatoro-Guajiquiro Reserve and La Tigra National Park, before heading northwest for the pristine and rarely habitats of La Muralla National Park and finally Pico Bonito National Park, and the breezy Caribbean north coast.

### Dates

We offer this tour to individuals and groups throughout the year, with November to June being the best period for weather and bird activity.

## Tour Overview

Day 1: Arrival San Pedro Sula Airport

(SAP, transfer to Panacam Lodge

Day 2: Panacam Lodge, Lake Yojoa

Day 3: El Cajon Reservoir, Honduran Emerald

Day 4: Opatoro Biological Reserve

Day 5, 6: La Tigra National Park

Day 7: Transfer La Tigra to La Muralla National Park

Day 8, 9: La Muralla National Park

Day 10: La Muralla National Park to Indura Lodge

Day 11: Lancetilla Botanical Gardens

Day 12: Laguna de Los Micos

Day 13: Departure San Pedro Airport

## 12 Night/13 Day Itinerary:

### Day 1, Transfer to Panacam Lodge:

Pick up at San Pedro Sula airport and transfer to Panacam Lodge.

Depending on our arrival time, we'll do some late-afternoon birding in the gardens of Panacam Lodge.

**Red-capped Manakin**



This afternoon we have our first chance for the regionally endemic Keel-billed Motmot, as well as Little Tinamou, Collared and Gartered Trogons, and Mayan Antrush. Violet Sabrewing and White-bellied Emerald hummingbirds are common delights at the feeders here.

*Meals: Dinner*

*Lodging at Panacam Lodge*

### Day 2, Birding Panacam Road and Lake Yojoa:

We begin the day with birding near the lodge for the handsome Prevost's Ground-Sparrow and muted Green-backed Sparrow, the first of many endemics of northern Central America possible on this itinerary. The edges of this broadleaf rain forest lead to Embalse de Yure, one of the best wetland spots in the area to try for Sungrebe and other water-loving

species. We will make a stop at Santa Elena, where Black-headed Siskins and Grace's Warblers are present in these tropical pine forest habitats. Along the way we also have a good chance for Spot-bellied Bobwhite and many other grassland species. After a full morning on Panacam Road we'll stop for lunch and afterwards make a visit to Finca Luna del Puente and the shore of Lake Yojoa.

Finca Luna del Puente is a secondary growth forest area with cacao, coffee and citrus plantations, and the numbers of birds here are simply amazing. Some of the highlights include, Green Jay, Northern Potoo, Green Jay, Tody Motmot, Slate-headed Tody Flycatcher, Great Horned Owl and many more.

After 3:00 pm we will head back to the lodge and relax by birding the very active hummingbird feeders at Panacam.

*Meals: Dinner*

*Lodging at Panacam Lodge*

### Day 3, Birding El Cajon Reservoir:

After an early breakfast, we will head for El Cajon Reservoir, just an hour away. The target of our search, the beautiful but critically endangered Honduran Emerald survives only in remaining pockets of tropical dry forest, as well as transitional pine forest in Honduras. The recent discovery of a population of these birds will have us birding transitional pine



White Hawk

forest for the Emerald, as well as other targets such as White-necked Puffbird, Berylline Hummingbird, Spot-bellied Bobwhite, Elegant Trogon, Lesser-ground Cuckoo and Lesser Roadrunner among others. After lunch, we'll pack up and drive southward through a landscape of pine-clad mountains to arrive at our next destination. We'll make a stop along the way for lunch at a then head up to the mountains of Marcala La Paz. Depending on the activity we may be lucky enough to spot Steller's Jay, a subspecies of the North American species which don't show the long crest as do their North American counterparts.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner  
Lodging at Hotel La Casona*

#### **Day 4, Birding Opatoro-Guajiquiro Biological Reserve:**

Today will be a full day of birding the Opatoro area. We depart at 5:30 AM for the Opatoro-Guajiquiro highlands, which feature the highest elevation forest accessible by road in Honduras, providing

opportunities to observe several northern Central America endemics that are difficult to see anywhere else within their range. High on the list of priorities will be the stunning Blue-throated Motmot, a species which occurs only in a narrow strip of mountains that stretch from southern Mexico to Honduras. Regional endemics that we will seek here include Fulvous Owl, Green-throated Mountain-gem, Black-throated Jay, Highland Guan, Black-capped Swallow, and Brown-backed Solitaire.

Other species here include; Highland guan, Buffy-crowned Wood Partridge, Resplendent Quetzal, Black-vented Oriole, Gray-breasted Wood-wren, Sparkling-tailed Hummingbird, Great Swallow-tailed Swift, Northern Flicker, Black Thrush and White-faced Quail-Dove.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner  
Lodging at Hotel La Casona*

#### **Day 5, Transfer from Opatoro-Guajiquiro to La Tigra National Park:**

After another morning in the Opatoro-Guajiquiro highlands to target any remaining species, we make our way around mid-morning to La Tigra National Park high above the city of Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras. We'll arrive our hotel in the early afternoon, and will soon begin focusing our attention on the road leading to La Tigra National Park, a mosaic of pine forest, pastures, gardens, and cloud forest. Large and noisy family parties of Bushy-crested Jay commonly frequent this area. Yellow-backed Oriole and Flame-colored Tanager, two strikingly colored birds, often accompany them, while brushy roadside edges provide habitat for the perky Rufous-browed Wren and dapper Blue-and-white Mockingbird. Flowering bushes attract a variety of highland hummingbirds such as the near-endemic Green-breasted Mountain-gem and more widespread White-eared Hummingbird.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner  
at Los Gloriales Inn*

### **Day 6, La Tigra National Park:**

Established in 1980 as the first national park in Honduras, La Tigra National Park protects a large tract of cloud forest in the mountain range above the bustling capital city of Tegucigalpa. After breakfast we'll ascend to this verdant forest cloaked in moss and blowing mist, and pursue a varied assortment of Mesoamerican specialties occur such as Singing Quail, Mountain Trogon, and Black Thrush. Forest clearings and brushy areas often feature an abundance of flowers which may attract some of the most distinctive and beautiful hummingbirds in Central America: Garnet-throated Hummingbird, Amethyst-throated Hummingbird, and the incredible Wine-throated Hummingbird. Finally, the spectacular Resplendent Quetzal, a bird venerated by the ancient Aztecs and Mayas due to its great beauty, also dwells in this forest. The subspecies found here is slightly larger with longer and broader 'tail streamers' than the one found in Costa Rica.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner  
Lodging at Los Gloriales Inn*

### **Day 7, La Tigra National Park to Olancho:**

After some early morning birding near our lodge for any outstanding species, we continue our journey north to the department of Olancho where we will be in position to see one of the most poorly known and most sought after birds in northern



**Lovely Cotinga**

Central America, the Ocellated Quail.

We'll arrive our hotel in La Union in late afternoon, and will bird along the way, looking out for species such as; White-tailed Hawk, White-breasted Hawk, Double-striped Thick-knee, Canivet's Emerald, Orange-billed Nightingale Thrush, Lesser Roadrunner and more.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner  
Lodging at La Muralla Hotel*

### **Day 8, Birding Olancho and La Muralla:**

La Muralla National Park is a remote, virtual island of transitional tropical forests, combining pine-oak, broadleaf, and pine forests in one, providing home for a rich mix

of eastern and western Honduran species. Access here is easy, and much of our birding will be along roads and ample trails, in areas very few birders have seen, and seeing birds that have rarely if ever seen people.

Thanks to the discovery of a large population of these birds in 2008 near La Union, the rare and highly sought after Ocellated Quail is now perhaps easier to see in Honduras than anywhere else within its limited range. We will focus our time here on obtaining views of this shy inhabitant of pine-oak woodland, searching proven sites where this species is most often recorded. With a bit of luck and skill, we stand a good chance of seeing this holy-grail bird. If we manage to see the quail well, we



Ferruginous Pygmy Owl

will move on to explore the nearby cloud forests of La Muralla National park for species such as Lovely Cotinga, Ornate Hawk-Eagle, Unicolored Jay, and the 'red-throated' subspecies of Green Parakeet.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner  
Lodging at La Muralla Hotel*

**Day 9, La Muralla National Park:**

Today we'll make an early departure and if needed, detour first for more looks at Ocellated Quail. Otherwise, we'll head straight for La Muralla National Park's transitional pine and cloud forest habitats.

La Muralla has a trail system that leads through pristine forests and providing some of the best chances for Mesoamerican targets such as; Unicolored Jay, Black throated Jay, Bicolored Hawk, and King Vulture. Mixed flocks of birds move among the lower sub-canopy and often include; Red-capped

Manakin, Slaty Antwren, Plain brown Woodcreeper, Mayan Anthrush, Stub-tailed Spadebill, Plain Antwren, Northern Nightingale Wren and many more. Walking slowly through these mountains offer chances to encounter mammals too, as this undisturbed area is home for great diversity of species including Jaguarundis, Pumas and Jaguars. Monkeys are often seen near the visitor's center, and gorgeous, rainbow-hued Spiny Lizards are often seen on snags on the edge on main road.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner  
Lodging at La Muralla Hotel*

**Day 10, Transfer to Indura and the Caribbean Coast:**

Today we'll make an early departure from our hotel towards the Caribbean beach town of Tela where our next lodge is based. We should arrive in time for lunch and can spend the remainder of the afternoon relaxing and/or

doing some light birding around the grounds and gardens of the luxurious Indura Lodge.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner  
Lodging at Indura Lodge*

**Day 11, Birding Lancetilla Botanical Gardens:**

Our first day at Indura will begin at 6:00 AM, with an early breakfast and a short drive to Lancetilla, just 10 minutes away. For the next several hours our guide will lead us throughout the gardens, spotting numerous bird species that are common in the early hours. Birding on the edge of the broad, flat entrance road will offer a great diversity of species.

Throughout the morning we will bird areas of tropical, secondary and gallery forest and plantation areas along the Lancetilla River, Along this route, diversity is the rule and examples of sightings include: Masked and Black-crowned Tityra, Blue crowned and Turquoise-browed Motmot, Tody Motmot, Keel-billed Toucan, Collared Aracari, Ferruginous Pygmy Owl, Black-cowled Oriole, Black-headed, Gartered, Collared and Slaty-tailed Trogon, Royal Flycatcher, Green, Shining and Red-Legged Honeycreeper, several species of Hummingbird including Crowned Woodnymph, Blue-throated Golden-tail, Violet Sabrewing, Purple-crowned Fairy, Stripe-tailed Hummingbird, Brown Violet-ear, Green Violet-ear and White-necked Jacobin.

We will have lunch along the beach



White-necked Puffbird

in Tela, and in the afternoon return to the arboretum in Lancetilla, where we learn about the 100 year history of the gardens while birding these beautiful, lowland tropical surroundings. Usual encounters here are Black-headed Trogon, Band backed Wrens, Northern barred Woodcreeper, and Sepia capped Flycatcher among others.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner  
Lodging at Indura Lodge*

**Day 12, Birding Laguna de Los Micos:**

After breakfast we'll depart for Jeanette Kawas National Park and a day of birding by boat of Laguna de Los Micos Wildlife Refuge holds many canals, mangroves and small islands which serve as a refuge for abundant flora and fauna, including over 200 species of tropical birds. This area is one of the main attractions of Jeannette Kawas National Park, and its home

to one of the most typical Garifuna villages in Honduras, (called Miami) where fishermen still ply the sea in dugout canoes and fish with cast nets. Some of our targets include the American Pygmy Kingfisher, Agami Heron, Sungrebe, Bare-throated tiger Heron, Gray-headed Kite and many more.

After all morning among the mangroves we return to Indura for lunch. Late in the afternoon we will spend time birding around the gardens and forests of Indura.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner  
Lodging at Indura Lodge*

**Day 13, Birding the grounds of Indura, and transfer to San Pedro Airport:**

*Meals: Breakfast*

**Included in this itinerary:**

In-country accommodations, ground transportation, tours, meals, soft drinks, guide and entrance fees.

**Not Included:**

Personal items such as alcoholic beverages, gift shop, laundry, etc. are not included.

**Travel insurance:**

We highly recommend purchasing travel insurance. In the event that you need to cancel your trip due to medical or other reasons, this insurance will protect you.



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