



## Natural Selections

**BIRDING, WILDLIFE, AND PHOTO TOURS**



Scarlet Macaw

# Honduras: Interior Highlands and Ancient Mayan Ruins

9 Nights/10 Days | Multiple Departure Dates

With records exceeding 520 of Honduras' 760+ bird species, the region encompassed by this Interior of Honduras tour offers birders a diverse variety of habitats and a rich mix of Mesoamerican endemics. We begin among the tropical-dry and pine forests overlooking the World Heritage Mayan city of Copan, move from there to the lush wetlands and rainforests of Lake Yojoa and Cerro Azul National Park, and finally ascend to the 2,000 meter pine-oak and cloud forests of Opatoro/ Guajiquiro Reserve and La Tigra National Park.

### 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: Arrive San Pedro Sula Airport (SAP), transfer to Copan  
Day 2, 3: Copan  
Day 4: El Cajon Reservoir, Honduran Emerald  
Day 5, 6: Panacam Lodge  
Day 7: Opatoro Biological Reserve  
Day 8, 9: La Tigra National Park  
Day 10: Departure San Pedro Sula Airport (SAP) or Tegucigalpa Airport (TGU) Days

## 9 Night/10 Day Itinerary:

### Day 1, Transfer to Copan:

Upon arrival at San Pedro Sula airport we travel to the town of Copan Ruinas, site of the ancient Mayan ruins. Late afternoon/evening arrival will have us settling into our hotel adjacent to El Rastrejon archaeological site before dinner at a restaurant in town.

*Meals: Dinner*

*Lodging at Hotel Clarion*

#### Emerald Toucanet



### Day 2, Birding the Mayan Ruins of Copan:

We will start with an early breakfast at our hotel and then head for a morning of birding the Mayan ruins and main acropolis. This Late-classic Mayan archeological site is one of the best places to mix birds and culture in Honduras; a large population of Scarlet Macaws (Honduras' national bird) resides here and throughout the Copan River Valley, and is very conspicuous. Other bird species easy to spot here include: Orange-fronted Parakeet, Red-throated Parakeet, Altamira and Spot-breasted Orioles, Turquoise-browed and Lesson's Motmot,

Rufous-capped Warbler and more. We'll have lunch in the town's center, and make a quick visit to the local museums before heading to Macaw Mountain Birding Rescue Center located 10 minutes out of Copan.

*Meals: Dinner*

*Lodging at Hotel Clarion*

### Day 3, Birding La Laguna Road:

Today we make an early departure for La Laguna Road, one of the birdiest places in the Copan River Valley, and a great mix of habitats offering a variety of species. We will begin in a dry scrub habitat and then move into pine-oak forest where we hope for encounters with Lesser Ground Cuckoo, Elegant Trogon, Northern Beardless Tyrannulet, Striped Cuckoo, Crested Bobwhite, Olivaceous Woodcreeper, Collared Trogon, Elegant Euphonia, White-breasted Hawk, Emerald Toucanet, Grace's Warbler, Bushy-crested Jay, and many more of the montane species of this area. The higher elevations of La Laguna road are a mix of pine and broadleaf forest where occasionally we often find White-breasted Hawk and Highland Guan.

In the afternoon (after lunch in town) we will visit Las Sepulturas Archeological Site. This important area, adjacent to the main ruins acropolis, was the largest residential area of Copan's Mayan civilization. Key bird species we may encounter here include; Orange-billed nightingale thrush, Rufous-browed Peppershrike, Rufous-capped Warbler, Laughing Falcon, Canivet's Emerald, Barred Antshrike, and Streak-backed and Spot-breasted Oriole.



White-necked Puffbird

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner  
Lodging at Hotel Clarion*

**Day 4, Birding El Cajon Reservoir:**

After an early breakfast, we will head for the El Cajon Reservoir area, adjacent to Panacam Lodge and the Lake Yojoa area.

The target of our search, the beautiful but critically endangered Honduran Emerald, was recently discovered in this remaining area of intergrade tropical dry and pine-oak forest in the “rain shadow”, or southern side of the mountains here.

This unique area, where cloud forested peaks and pine studded slopes give way to a more arid landscape, is home to White-necked Puffbird, Berylline Hummingbird, Spot-bellied Bobwhite, Elegant Trogon, Lesser-ground Cuckoo and Lesser Roadrunner among others.

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

**Day 5, Birding the Lowlands of Panacam:**

We begin the day with some prebreakfast birding near our lodge for the handsome Prevost’s Ground-Sparrow and muted Green-backed Sparrow, the first of many northern Central America endemics possible on this itinerary. Afterwards, we descend to the shores of Lake Yojoa, a large lake in the heart of Honduras. Here, we scan the edges for wetland species such as Northern Jacana, Bare-throated Tiger-Heron, and Ruddy Crake. White-throated Flycatcher, an Empidonax flycatcher with poorly understood migratory movements, also occurs on the marshy banks of the lake. We’ll walk the boardwalk at Los Naranjos Archaeological Site, winding through secondary forest and edge where we can catch up with some delightful Mesoamerican species such as Rufous-breasted Spine-tail and Gray-crowned Yellowthroat. In the evening, we will try to locate Mottled Owls which often call

outside the Panacam Lodge restaurant.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner  
at Panacam Lodge*

**Day 6, Birding Cerro Azul Meámbar National Park:**

Today we explore lush, tropical rain forest along Panacam Lodge’s trail system and from their observation tower, keeping a sharp eye and ear out for roving feeding flocks that may contain Cocoa and Northern Barred-Woodcreeper, Buff-throated Foliage-gleaner, and Golden-crowned Warbler as well as an assortment of migrant warblers. Abundance and diversity are widely recognized in this area, and we also have great opportunities of finding Mayan Anthrush, Stub-tailed Spadebill, White Hawk and more.

We will have time to bird the entrance road which is always very active with the many Tanagers, Tityras, Toucans and Parrots that dominate the forest canopy here.

Later in the morning we will pack up and drive southward through a landscape of pine clad mountains to arrive at our next destination. We will stop along the way for lunch and then head up to the mountains of Marcala La Paz. Depending on the activity we may be lucky enough to spot Stellers 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 7, 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 Woodwren, Sparkling-tailed Hummingbird, Great Swallow-tailed Swift, Northern Flicker, Black Thrush and White-faced Quail-Dove.



**Laughing Falcon**

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

### **Day 8, Transfer from Opatoro-Guajiquiro to La Tigra National Park:**

After another morning in the Opatoro-Guajiquiro highlands for 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 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 and Band-backed Wren 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  
Lodging at Los Gloriales Inn*

### **Day 9, 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 occurring such as



Masked Tityra

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 10, La Tigra National Park,  
Transfer to Airport:**

After some early morning birding near the lodge for any outstanding species, we make our departure for

the 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.

**\*For this itinerary there are two international arrival/departure options:**

- 1) Arrive San Pedro Sula (SAP), and depart Tegucigalpa (TGU). Tegucigalpa is the nearest airport (45 minutes from Los

Gloriales Inn) on our last day.

- 2) Arrive and depart San Pedro Sula. Most international flights leave San Pedro Sula mid-day or later, so a 5AM departure from Los Gloriales Inn is necessary to be at the San Pedro airport on time. Drive from Los Gloriales Inn to San Pedro is 4 hours.



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