



Natural Selections

BIRDING, WILDLIFE, AND PHOTO TOURS



Emerald Toucanet

This Best of Honduras birding tour combines rich elements of ancient Mayan Culture, pristine cloud forests, and the breezy Caribbean north coast. With a combined species count of over 650 of Honduras' 760+ bird species, the areas we will visit begin among tropical dry and pine forests at the World Heritage Mayan city of Copan, and move across wetlands and rainforests of Lake Yojoa, Cerro Azul, and Santa Barbara National Parks (including an area known for the endemic Honduran Emerald). From there, we ascend to 2,000 meter pine-oak and cloud forests of Opatoro-Guajiquiro Biological Reserve and La Tigra National Park before turning north to the rain forests and white-sand beaches of Punta Sal, Pico Bonito National Park, and the Caribbean north coast.

The Best of Honduras Birding

13 Nights/14 Days | Multiple Departure Dates

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 Copan
Day 2, 3: Copan
Day 4: El Cajon Reservoir, Honduran Emerald
Day 5: Santa Barbara National Park
Day 6: Panacam Lodge
Day 7: Opatoro Biological Reserve
Day 8: Opatoro to La Tigra National Park
Day 9: La Tigra National Park
Day 10: La Tigra National Park to Indura Lodge
Day 11: Lancetilla Botanical Gardens
Day 12: Laguna de Los Micos
Day 13: Rio Santiago Hummingbirds
Day 14: Departure San Pedro Sula Airport (SAP)

13 Night/14 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

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 Copan's spectacular Mayan ruins. This Late-classic Mayan archeological site is one 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 Motmots, 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: Breakfast, Lunch, 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 later move up 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, Crace's Warbler, Bush-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 find White breasted Hawk and Highland Guan.

Scarlet Macaw



In the afternoon (after lunch in town) we will visit the Las Sepulturas archeological site 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.

*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, closer to Panacam Lodge and the Lake Yojoa area.

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. A recent discovery of a population of these birds will have us birding transitional pine 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.

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

Day 5, Birding Santa Barbara National Park and Lake Yojoa:

We'll make an early departure for Santa Barbara National Park,



White Hawk

and a great taste of the beautiful, cloud forest bird species living in the surroundings of this park. Resplendent Quetzal, Pheasant Cuckoo, Flame-colored Tanager, Wine-throated Hummingbird, Bushy-crested Jay, Slate-colored Solitaire, Chestnut-capped Brush Finch, Blue and White Mockingbird and many others will be our targets.

Afterwards, we descend again to the shores of Lake Yojoa, the largest lake in Honduras, and the boardwalk at Los Naranjos archaeological site. This magnificent birding trail winds through secondary forest and edge habitat where we can find wetland species such as Northern Jacana, Bare-throated Tiger-Heron, and Ruddy Crane. White-throated Flycatcher, an Empidonax flycatcher with poorly understood migratory movements, also occurs on the marshy banks of the lake. We may also catch up with delightful Mesoamerican species such as Rufous-breasted Spine-tail, and Gray-crowned Yellowthroat. In the evening we will try for Mottled Owls which often call outside the

Panacam Lodge restaurant.

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

Day 6, Birding Cerro Azul Meambar National Park:

Today we explore lush, tropical rain forest along Panacam Lodge's trail system, and spend time in their observation tower. We'll keep 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 Antthrush, Stub-tailed Spadebill, White Hawk, and more. We will have time to bird the entrance road which is always active with the many Tanagers, Tityras, Toucans and Parrots that dominate the forest canopy here. Later that morning we will pack up and drive southward through a landscape of pine clad mountains to arrive at our next destination.

We'll 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-



Lovely Cotinga

faceted Quail-Dove.

*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 to target any outstanding 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
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



Violet-Crowned Woodnymph

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 10, La Tigra National Park, Transfer to Indura and the North Coast.

We'll spend time birding the gardens of Los Gloriales before breakfast, and afterwards, pack up and depart for the 5-hour ride to Indura Lodge, located outside the beach town of Tela.

This afternoon will afford time to relax, enjoy the beach, or do some light birding around the grounds at this wonderful resort.

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

Day 11, 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'll have lunch along the beach in Tela, and in the afternoon return to the arboretum at 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 (named 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.



Collared Aracari

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

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

Day 13, Birding Rio Santiago.

Rio Santiago Nature Resort is a 150-acre private preserve located 80 kilometers east of Indura. Its secluded, rain forest location and impressive numbers of hummingbird feeders has earned it the name of "Hummingbird Capital of Honduras". Throughout most of the year, Santiago's trails and main garden areas abound with bewildering numbers of some of Honduras' most well-known hummingbird species.

Rufous-tailed Hummingbird,

Cinnamon Hummingbird, Brown Violet-ear, Band-tailed Barb-throat, Violet Sabrewing, Crowned Woodnymph, Stripe-throated Hermit, Long-billed Hermit, Stripe-tailed Hummingbird, White-bellied Emerald, and Scaly-breasted Hummingbird are among the 20+ species that frequent Santiago's feeders. The trail system of Rio Santiago leads us into the forest home of Mesoamerican endemics such as Lovely Cotinga, Black-throated Shrike Tanager, Tody motmot, White Hawk, King Vulture, Cocoa Woodcreeper and many more.

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

Day 14, Birding the grounds of Indura, and transfer to San Pedro Sula 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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