



Natural Selections

BIRDING, WILDLIFE, AND PHOTO TOURS



Keel-billed Toucan

Birding the Lower Rio Platano, La Mosquitia, Honduras

8 Nights/9 Days

La Mosquitia is the expansive, remote region encompassing the easternmost part of Honduras along the Mosquito Coast, extending into Nicaragua. This mega-biodiverse mosaic of tropical rainforest, pine savannah, and wetlands comprises the largest wilderness in Central America, and is so remote that most areas are accessible only by water or air. The area is sparsely inhabited by Miskito, Pech, Rama, Sumo, Garífuna, Ladino, and Creole people, and contains The Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve, a World Heritage site. Perhaps you have heard of the legendary “Lost City”, an immense archaeological area in the jungles of Honduras? That is La Mosquitia.

This tour will take us east from La Ceiba, Honduras to the lower Rio Platano area of La Mosquitia, then following upriver as far as the Pico Dama and famous petroglyph area. Olbin Bejarano along with local assistants will guide us for 9 days; travel will be first by 4x4, then upriver by motorized pipantes. Once we leave La Ceiba, conditions will be rustic, and we will stay in local and indigenous villages, until returning on our final day to the La Ceiba area and our last night at the edge of Pico Bonito National Park.

Tour Overview

Day 1: Arrive San Pedro Sula (SAP), transfer to La Ceiba
Day 2: La Ceiba to Raista
Day 3: Raista to Las Marias
Day 4: Birding Las Marias
Day 5: Birding Pico Dama
Day 6: Rio Platano Petroglyphs
Day 7: Birding Wipatara
Day 8: Return to La Ceiba/Pico Bonito
Day 9: International flights home



Rio Platano Petroglyphs

8 Night/9 Day Itinerary:

Day 1, Arrive San Pedro Sula, transfer to La Ceiba:

After a 2.5-hour transfer from San Pedro Sula (SAP) airport, we'll spend the first night in La Ceiba, and leave early the following morning for Batalla, La Mosquitia.

Meals: Dinner
Lodging at Las Hamacas

Day 2, From La Ceiba to Raista:

Today we'll depart at 6:00 AM for an all-day drive to the village of Batalla, at the outer edge of La Mosquitia. Our vehicles will be 4x4 vehicles and we will travel on improved dirt roads that parallel the Caribbean coast line. We'll stop for lunch at the Garifuna community of Batalla, and from there board a motorized dugout, transferring from La Batalla to Raista via canals and waterways making up the lower reaches of the Rio Platano. We'll bird our way along the entire journey, and nearer to Raista, explore Laguna Bacala,

the Rio Tinto, and Laguna Ibans. We'll have dinner and spend this night in Raista.

This is an area of mixed mangrove forest with tropical rain forests surrounding the lagoons and river that we will cross. Closer to reaching Raista the forest becomes mixed pine savanna and mangroves and this habitat is very good for Green ibis, Black-collared Hawk, Black-throated Bobwhite, Black Crowned Antshrike, Collared Forest Falcon, Barred forest Falcon, Boat-billed Heron, Keel Billed Toucan, Collared Aracari, Gray Collared Becard, American Pygmy Kingfisher, Amazon Kingfisher, White-necked Puffbird, Gray-headed Kite, Aplomado Falcon, Black Rail, Slate-colored Seedeater, Scarlet-rumped Cacique, Rufous-necked Wood Rail, Ruddy Crake, Scaled Pigeon, and others.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Raista

Day 3, Birding by motorized dugout from Raista to Las Marias:

After breakfast at Raista, we'll depart for the native Pech village of Las Marias along the lower Rio Platano. Along the way we'll bird the network of waterways making up the lower river system, lined with grasslands, marshes, primary rain forest, and scrub forest. Avian targets along the way will be Gray Headed Chachalaca, Rufescent Tiger Heron, White Hawk, Plumbeous Kite, Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture, Southern Rough-winged Swallow, Tawny Crested Tanager, Carmiol's Tanager, White-winged Becard, Yellow-eared Toucan, White-fronted Nunbird, and more.

We'll arrive at around lunch time and enjoy our meal at Restaurante Doña Laura in Las Marias. Once we check in and get settled, the late afternoon will be spent birding the nearby trails leading into the forest from Las Marias.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Hostel Doña Laura

Day 4, Birding Las Marias:

Today will be a day of birding the rain forests and edge habitats between Las Marias and the small community of Wipatara. Primary tropical rain forest is abundant here, with a very high canopy and occasional views of the Rio Platano and micro basins generated by the nearby Río Tiro. This is an area of ultra-rich biodiversity, and many species of mammals (Tamanduas, Tapirs, Howler and Spider Monkeys), reptiles and amphibians inhabit the area. Terrain is flat, walking very easy, and notable birding targets are Yellow-throated Toucan, Mealy Parrot, Double-toothed Kite, Golden-crowned Spadebill, Semi-plumbeous Hawk, Uniform Crake, White-ringed Flycatcher, Green and Rufous Kingfisher, Tody Motmot, Bonze-tailed Plumeleater, Yellow-crowned Euphonia, Gray-capped Flycatcher, Lovely Cotinga, Keel-billed Motmot, and others.

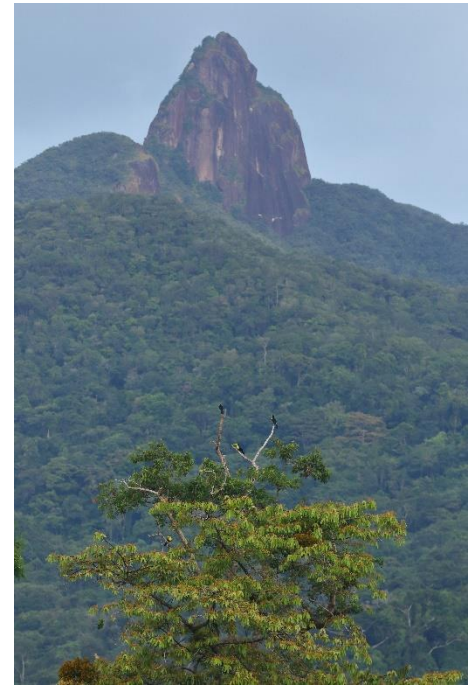
Crimson-collared Tanager



*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Hostel Doña Laura*

Day 5, Birding Pico Dama:

After breakfast at Las Marias, we'll depart via motorized pipante for the area surrounding the spectacular Pico Dama, one of La Mosquitia's most dramatic and recognizable mountain peaks, cloaked in primary rain forest. Walking here is moderately easy along various birding trails. Habitat here is open areas grading into broadleaf tropical rain forest with some areas of broken canopy, several streams along the trail and countless large trees. This is the area of greatest biodiversity along The Rio Platano and is a great opportunity to observe mammals. Target species here include Snowcap, Bronzy Hermit, Broad-billed Motmot, Rufous Motmot, Slaty-colored Grosbeak, Ocellated Antbird, Spotted Antbird, Blue Dacnis, Long-tailed Tyrant, Slaty Spinetail, Sunbittern, Snowy Cotinga, and others. We'll have



Pico Dama

lunch in the field, and return to Las Marias for dinner.

Tonight, we can arrange a (optional) night hike for those interested. What we encounter here after dark always varies, but is a great opportunity for birds like Black and white Owl, Mottled Owl, and Crested Owl. Nocturnal reptiles and amphibians can be fun and diverse, and mammals such as Four-eyed Opossum, Water Opossum, Woolly Opossum, Margay, Ocelot, Kinkajou, and Paca are occasionally encountered.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Hostel Doña Laura*

Day 6, Rio Platano Petroglyphs:

This morning, we'll journey via motorized pipante from Las Marias upstream to an area of spectacular pre-Colombian Petroglyphs along the Rio Platano. Our primary goal will be to observe species on the edges of the primary forest from our dugout, and then after lunch

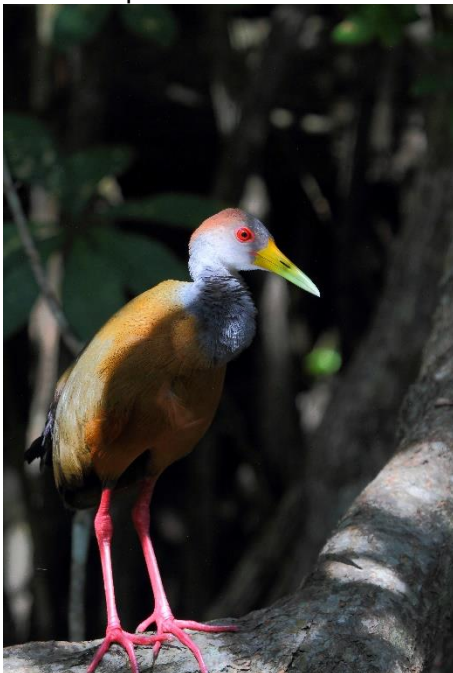
return to bird another walking trail in the vicinity of Pico Dama. Throughout, we'll be birding primary tropical montane forest, and open forest edges with scrublands. Target species include: Crested Eagle, Fasciated Tiger Heron, King Vulture, Fasciated Antshrike, Cinnamon Becard, White-ruffed Manakin, Checker-throated Stipplethroat, White-whiskered Puffbird, White-flanked Antbird, Sungrebe, Bicolored Antbird, Great Curassow, Crested Guan, Scarlet Macaw, and others.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Hostel Doña Laura*

Day 7, Birdwatching Las Marias and Wipatara. Transfer to Raista:

After an early breakfast at Las Marias, we'll depart for birding more of the forested areas around the community of Wipatara until 10 am, hoping for species we may have missed on day 4. Afterwards we'll return to the Las Marias to

Russet-naped Wood-rail



prepare our luggage, have lunch and depart for Madre Sola where we will spend the night.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Raista*

Day 8, Return to La Ceiba:

Today we'll return to La Ceiba using the same entry route along the coast and pass the town, arriving at Corinto Pearl Resort on the northern edge of Pico Bonito National Park. We'll spend the night here refreshing and getting organized for our international flights home the next day.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Corinto Pearl*

Day 9, Depart for SAP and flights home

Included in this itinerary:

All ground/water transfers from/to San Pedro Sula Airport (SAP), all meals beginning with dinner on arrival day and ending with breakfast on departure day, accommodations, soft drinks, snacks along the way, guide and entrance fees. As our destination is remote, accommodations are basic rooms with mosquito netting, limited electricity/wifi, and fans.

Not Included:

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



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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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