

Honduras:
Mayan Ruins, Motmots & Mountain Gems
January 10-19, 2022

DAY 1, Mon, Jan 10 - 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. ***Overnight at Hotel Clarion.***

DAY 2, Tue, Jan 11 - 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 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. Dinner at Hotel Clarion. ***Overnight at Hotel Clarion.***

DAY 3, Wed, Jan 12 - 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 & Collared Trogons, Northern Beardless Tyrannulet, Striped Cuckoo, Crested Bobwhite, Olivaceous Woodcreeper, Elegant Euphonia, Sharp-shinned (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 we often find **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, Laughing Falcon, Canivet's Emerald, Barred Antshrike, and Streak-backed Oriole.** ***Overnight at Hotel Clarion.***

Day 4, Thu, Jan 13 - Birding El Cajon Reservoir

After an early breakfast, we will head for the El Cajon Reservoir area, nearer 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 also home to **White-necked Puffbird, Berylline Hummingbird, Spot-bellied Bobwhite, and Lesser Roadrunner** among others. ***Overnight at Panacam Lodge.***

Day 5, Fri, Jan 14 - Birding the Lowlands of Panacam

We begin the day with some pre-breakfast birding near our lodge for the handsome **White-faced 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 species 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 Spinetail and Gray-crowned Yellowthroat**. In the evening, we will try to locate **Mottled Owls** which often call outside the Panacam Lodge restaurant. ***Overnight at Panacam Lodge.***

Day 6, Sat, Jan 15 - 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 Woodcreepers**, **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 **Black-faced Antthrush**, **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 **Steller's Jay**, a subspecies of the North American species which doesn't show the long crest as do their North American counterparts.

Overnight at Hotel La Casona.

Day 7, Sun, Jan 16 - 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; **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**. ***Overnight at Hotel La Casona.***

Day 8, Mon, Jan 17 - Opatoro-Guajiquiro to La Tigra National Park

After another morning in the Opatoro-Guajiquiro highlands to target any species we may still need, we make our way around mid-morning to La Tigra National Park and the bustling city of Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras. We'll arrive to 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** and **Band-backed Wren** 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**. ***Overnight at Los Gloriales Inn, Tegucigalpa.***

Day 9, Tue, Jan 18 - 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 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 **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. ***Overnight at Los Gloriales Inn, Tegucigalpa.***

Day 10, Wed, Jan 19 - La Tigra National Park; departure

After some early morning birding near the lodge for any outstanding species, we depart for the Tegucigalpa airport, a short 45 min drive away.