

Honduras: Butterflies & Birds

With Naturalist Journeys & Caligo Ventures



April 7 – 14, 2018

Copan Extension, April 14 – 17

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Join us for a unique adventure that blends birding with Honduras' delicate world of 900+ butterflies. Each morning we delve into tropical birdwatching and as the sun warms, we help field guide author Robert Gallardo catalog this next group of spectacular winged creatures.

Are your birding friends calling out smaller winged gems that you don't recognize? This is a great way to jump in if you want to learn your tropical butterflies!

Explore Cerro Azul Meámbar and Santa Barbara National Parks in search of colorful butterflies, hummingbirds, and showstoppers like the Resplendent Quetzal. Then, spend full days at the Omega Resort on Honduras' north coast, birding and butterfly watching in this beautiful spot. On a day-trip to more arid habitats, search for the endemic Honduran Emerald.

Join Robert for an optional post-tour extension to explore the stunning Mayan ruins of Copan.

Tour Highlights

- Enjoy four nights in lodgings at Cerro Azul Meámbar National Park, immersed in the lush forest
- Spot various species of clearwings, swallowtails, firecrackers, and many skippers in the mid-elevations at Cerro Azul Meámbar
- Explore around Lago Yojoa, home to nearly 500 bird species, surrounded by wetlands, rainforests, and two national parks
- Stop at a community-based ecotourism project, and explore the cloud forest looking for high-altitude species of butterflies and birds
- Indulge for three nights at the Omega Tours Resort near the Caribbean coast next to Pico Bonito National Park
- Hang banana baits, which often attract wood nymphs, leafwings, morphos, and owl's-eyes

Tour Summary

8-Day / 7-Night Honduran Butterfly & Birding Tour with Robert Gallardo

\$2750 from San Pedro Sula

Airport is Ramón Villeda Morales International (SAP)

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Sat., Apr. 7 Arrivals / Lago Yojoa

Welcome to Honduras! On arrival, you are met at the San Pedro Sula airport, and once all the group has arrived, we make the hour-and-a-half drive to the scenic Lake Yojoa.

We spend the first four nights in this beautiful region with ample time to explore the many varied habitats that surround the lake basin. Our accommodations are situated nearly 3,000 feet above sea level amidst a lush mid-elevation rainforest inside Cerro Azul Meámbar National Park.

Accommodations at Cerro Azul Meámbar NP (D)



Sun., Apr. 8

Cerro Azul Meámbar National Park

We spend our first full day exploring various trails within the rain forests and surrounding woods of the national park. Access to pristine mid-elevation forest like that found at Meámbar are few and far between in Honduras and this is where biodiversity is at its highest. We can expect to see various species of clearwings, swallowtails, firecrackers, and many skippers. From the canopy towers we may be able to observe species that are seldom seen near the forest floor. Just a few of the bird highlights include Black-crested Coquette, Green Jay, several woodcreepers, Elegant Euphonia, and Keel-billed Motmot.

Accommodations at Cerro Azul Meámbar NP (B,L,D)



Mon., Apr. 9

Cerro Azul Meámbar National Park

Today we spend a second full day around the lower perimeter of Meámbar National Park, where we hope to observe an array of different species. In these second growth habitats, butterflies are often seen feeding on *Hamelia* shrubs, a variety of asters,



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and wild *Ageratums*. The elevation affords us comfortable temperatures, while presenting a fascinating mix of species.

Birds we look for are Royal Flycatcher, Crested Guan, White-collared Manakin, White-winged Tanager, and Prevost's Ground Sparrow. Mixed flocks of tanagers compete with the butterflies for attention.

Accommodations at Cerro Azul Meámbar NP (B,L,D)

Tues., Apr. 10 Lago Yojoa

Our last full day at Lake Yojoa is spent in the highlands surrounding Santa Barbara National Park. Located on the western perimeter of the Lake, this is the country's second highest mountain, reaching over 8,000 feet. Here we visit a community-based ecotourism project known as the "Fountain of Life," and explore the perimeter of a cloud forest where we hope to see many species of high altitude butterflies. These include the Cloud Forest Monarch, Anna's Eighty-Eight, Broad-banded Page, Mexican Silverspot, Mexican Heliconian, several clearwings, and others.

Birds we hope to see include Blue-crowned Chlorophonia, Amethyst-throated Hummingbird, Green-throated Mountain-Gem, Ruddy Foliage-Gleaner, and maybe a Resplendent Quetzal.

Accommodations at Cerro Azul Meámbar NP (B,L,D)

Wed., Apr. 11 Omega Tours Resort / Pico Bonito National Park

Today we make our way to the north coast where we spend the last three nights of the main tour at the Omega Tours Resort. This small hotel is nestled at the base of Pico Bonito National Park amidst lowland broadleaf rain forest along the scenic Rio Cangrejal.



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Most species of butterflies are different at this site and two full days here are spent exploring their grounds and nearby trails. Here we hang banana baits which often attract many different species of wood nymphs, leafwings, morphos, and owl's-eyes. *Accommodations at Omega Resort (B,L,D)*

Thurs., Apr. 12 Omega Tours Resort / Pico Bonito National Park

We spend the entire day in the area in search of different species of clearwings, cattleheart, swallowtails, lowland metalmarks, sulfurs, and brush foots. Bait traps often attract fruit feeding butterflies throughout the day and can be checked at any time. Bird highlights include the Lovely Cotinga, Shining Honeycreeper, King Vulture, White Hawk, Band-tailed Barbthroat, Golden-hooded Tanager, and several euphonias. *Accommodations at Omega Resort (B,L,D)*



Fri., Apr. 13 Omega Tours Resort / Pico Bonito National Park

Our last full day is spent in the area, where we can explore different trails, revisit banana baits, or walk the periphery of the forest. A night light here also attracts hundreds of different insects and moths of all sizes, as well as beetles and other interesting insects. Rarer species of butterflies we search for include *Battus* Swallowtails, Orange Kite Swallowtail, the Clear-winged Mimic White, Dot-bordered Heliconian, Starry Cracker, Tiger Leafwing, and many others.

Accommodations at Omega Resort (B,L,D)

Sat., Apr. 14 Departures / Copan Extension

After breakfast we return to San Pedro Sula for international flights home or to continue on to Copan Ruins for the tour extension. *(B)*

Copan Ruins Extension

Our extension to the city of Copan Ruins in extreme western Honduras was designed to highlight the famous archaeological

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site. These ruins are considered the “Paris of the Mayan World” due to the great number of intricate carvings, tall stelae, and glyphs. On this extension, we also spend an entire day in the nearby foothills looking for birds and butterflies in an entirely different habitat than the main tour.

Sat., Apr. 14 Departures / Copan Ruins

After returning to San Pedro Sula to drop off and say goodbye to those not continuing on the extension, we travel on to town of Copan Ruins, where we settle in to our accommodations and enjoy some leisurely bird and butterfly watching on the hotel grounds as the sun sets.

Accommodations near Copan (L,D)

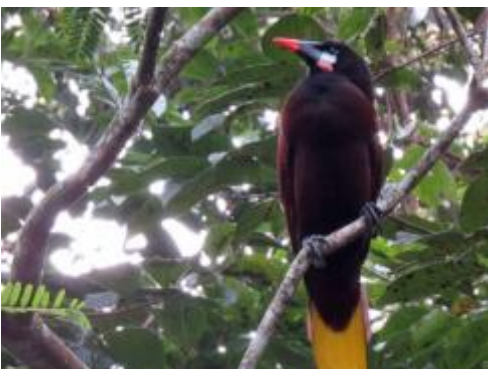
Sun., Apr. 15

Copan Ruins Archaeological Site



This morning we travel to the nearby archaeological site of Copan Ruins. We meet with an expert local guide and are given a guided tour of the main site. We continue to bird, as the ruins are surrounded by forest. The elaborate artistry of the stelae and altars we encounter in this once-sprawling city is amazing. Many were carved during Copan’s golden age (711 – 736 A.D.). One of the highlights is the Hieroglyphic Stairway, which preserves the longest written record of Mayan history and describes the lineage of 16 rulers — wow! People lived in and used the site for over 2000 years.

We also visit the on-site Sculpture Museum that houses original pieces that were delicate and full-size replicas of other structures.



One of the delights of Copan is that it is not fully excavated. Abundant nature gives one a feeling of how life may have been at the time. Amid the ruins, we hope to see White-throated Magpie Jay, Rufous-naped Wren, Green Parakeet, Cinnamon Hummingbird, Turquoise-browed Motmot, and Rufous-browed Peppershrike in the lush vegetation. Montezuma Oropendola and some all-too-tame and recently released Scarlet Macaw keep us entertained.

Accommodations near Copan (B,L,D)

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Mon., Apr. 16 La Laguna-San Francisco Route

This morning we travel into the nearby foothills to explore the local natural history. We have breakfast in the field and enjoy the early morning bird life. We start off in farmland and as we climb higher we enter broadleaf deciduous forest and eventually reach a cool pine-oak forest at 4,000 feet. Here we see different species of birds and butterflies not witnessed during the main tour. We look for fruiting mistletoe that attracts the lovely Elegant Euphonia and Blue-crowned Chlorophonia. We also hope to see Bushy-crested Jays, Collared Trogon, woodcreepers, orioles, an assortment of wood-warblers, and many other birds.

More common butterflies include sisters, wood nymphs, sulphurs, and an assortment of skippers. We have a light lunch in the field before returning to town. We then have the remainder of afternoon open to visit the archaeological museum in town, shop, or just relax.

Accommodations near Copan (B,L,D)

Tues., Apr. 17 Transfer to San Pedro Sula for Departures

We depart early this morning for San Pedro Sula and international flights. (B)

Cost of the Journey

Plan Ahead!

Protect yourself with [Allianz Travel Insurance](#). Their website will show a grid of tour cost and your age category for you to make selections. As of January 2017, Naturalist Journeys pays 100% of your flight carbon offset.

Cost of the Journey

Cost of the journey is \$2750 DBL / \$2995 SGL (limited availability) per person, from San Pedro Sula. Cost of the Copan Extension is \$995 DBL / \$1185 SGL, per person. Cost includes: all accommodations; all meals as stated in the itinerary; group airport transfers; ground transportation within Honduras; professional guide services; park, preserve, and other activity fees; and miscellaneous program

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expenses. Tour price does not include: roundtrip airfare to and from San Pedro Sula, or items of a personal nature such as laundry, portage, telephone charges, or alcoholic beverages. Gratuities for any local lodge guides in Honduras are not included; these are at your discretion, but highly appreciated and recommended. Please note that the cost of the journey is based on a minimum of 6 participants, with a limit of 12 persons; with fewer than 6 participants, a small surcharge of \$100 – \$300 dollars may apply.

Travel Information

Please plan to make air travel plans only after the minimum group size has been reached. Please arrive in San Pedro Sula at the Ramón Villeda Morales International Airport (SAP) no later than 2:00 PM on April 7. If you need to arrive a day early, we can help with hotel suggestions. Please plan outbound flights no earlier than 11:00 AM on April 14 or April 17 (if taking Copan extension). If staying on in Honduras we can help you make plans.

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Photo Credits

Thoas Swallowtail, Robert Gallardo (RG); Mountain Trogon, Naturalist Journeys Stock (NJS); Peleides Blue Morpho, RG; Blue-crowned Motmot, RG; Brown Butterfly, Steve Wylie (SW); Boa, RG; Blue-crowned Chlorophonia, RG; Collared Aracari, James Adams; Lago Yojoa, RG; Meámbar National Park Sign, NJS; Great Jay, Tom Dove; Anetia Thirza, RG; Crested Guan, Sandy Sorkin; Resplendent Quetzal, Greg Smith (GS); Cracker Butterfly, SW; Caligo Uranus, RG; White Hawk, RG; Copan, RG; Copan Ball Court, NJS; Montezuma Oropendola, SW; Scarlet Macaw, GS.

