

Honduras: Emerald Valley Butterfly Festival With Naturalist Journeys & Caligo Ventures



January 4 – 10, 2022

w/ Pre- and Post-Tour Extensions

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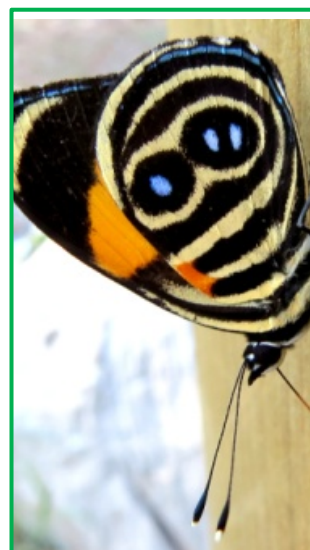
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Naturalist Journeys, LLC



*Emerald Valley
Lake Yojoa, Honduras*



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Lake Yojoa, Honduras



Tour Summary

7-Day / 6-Night Honduras Butterfly Festival w/ Robert Gallardo

\$TBD, from San Pedro Sula

Airport is Aeropuerto Ramón Villeda Morales (SAP)

With 4-Day / 3-Night Copan Pre-Tour Extension

& 4-Day / 3-Night Emerald Valley Post-Tour Extension

Join us for a unique adventure that blends a large variety of beautiful tropical butterflies with light bird watching. On many mornings we enjoy tropical birds and as the sun warms, we search for and photograph the winged gems around the species-rich Lake Yojoa basin (commonly referred to as the “lake”). Nearly 1,000 species have been documented around the lake with Emerald Valley alone harboring nearly 700. Although much progress has been made with the field work for the future *Guide to the Butterflies of Honduras*, participants can help the authors, Robert Gallardo and Olivia Diaz, by cataloguing and photographing yet more species.

Tour Highlights

- Enjoy six nights at Cerro Azul Meambar National Park, immersed in the lush forest
- See various species of clearwings, swallowtails, firecrackers, and many skippers in the mid-elevations at Cerro Azul Meambar, Bio Parque Paradise, and Emerald Valley
- Explore Lake Yojoa, home to over 500 bird species, surrounded by wetlands and rainforests
- Enjoy the unique Emerald Valley Butterfly Festival, which highlights a single site that harbors nearly 700 species of butterflies
- Observe both birds and butterflies with expert local guides
- Help support the Pro Nature Honduras Foundation

Explore the lake area as we visit different sites including Cerro Azul Meambar N.P, Bio Parque Paradise and Emerald Valley in search of colorful butterflies, hummingbirds, and showstoppers like the Keel-billed Motmot. The trip starts with an optional pre-tour to Copan Ruins to explore the stunning Maya site and ends with an optional post-tour for those who wish to continue searching for more butterfly species at Emerald Valley.

The festival is sponsored by the Pro Nature Honduras Foundation (Pro-HN) which strives to teach Honduran nationals on how to value and sustainably utilize their natural resources.

Copan Pre-Tour Extension

Sat., Jan. 1 Arrivals | Copan Ruins

Welcome to Honduras! Please plan to arrive into San Pedro Sula no later than 2:00 PM today. Upon arrival you are met by your guide, Robert Gallardo, and travel to the quaint town of Copan Ruins in the western corner of the country. The three-hour journey takes us across a landscape filled mostly with pine-oak forests. Upon arrival and check-in we dine at a local restaurant.

Accommodations in Copan Ruins (D)



Sun., Jan. 2

Copan | La Laguna Foothills

Awake to the sound of raucous morning bird calls ... there is no doubt you are in the Neotropics! We depart early this morning and venture into the nearby foothills for some bird watching, butterfly viewing, and scenic views of the nearby town. We have an open-air field breakfast that overlooks town as we start to see a flurry of bird activity. We should see an assortment of orioles, Turquoise-browed Motmot, White-throated Magpie-Jay, and be serenaded by wrens. We spend the entire morning stopping to explore parts of the road and walking smaller sections. As we gain altitude, the vegetation changes and we see different birds and butterflies. The warm air brings out butterflies such as Malachite, Rusty-tipped Page, various satyrs, sulphurs, and many skippers. Atop the pine-clad mountain at 4,000ft. we have a field lunch before descending to town. The remainder of the day is free to shop for souvenirs or relax. Tonight we enjoy dinner in town.

Accommodations in Copan Ruins (B,L,D)

Mon., Jan. 3 Copan | Maya Ruins

Today we are immersed in an ancient culture at the majestic Maya site of Copan Ruins. The elaborate artistry of the stelae and altars we encounter in this once-sprawling city is amazing. Many stelae were carved during Copan's golden age (711-736 A.D.) and one of the highlights is the Hieroglyphic Stairway, which preserves the longest written record of Maya history and describes the lineage of the sixteen rulers. This site is often likened to the "Paris of the Maya Kingdom" due to all its preserved glyphs. You take a guided tour with a local expert and then have the chance to visit the Sculpture Museum that houses a full-sized replica of the Rosalila Temple. Amid the ruins, we hope to see Rufous-naped Wren, Red-throated Parakeet, Cinnamon Hummingbird, Streak-backed Oriole, Turquoise-browed Motmot and Rufous-browed Peppershrikes in the lush vegetation. There is also an active Scarlet Macaw breeding and release program and we witness their bright colors as they light up the site.

After lunch today we visit a small archaeological museum, then the remainder of the day is open to shop and explore or to simply relax in this stunning realm of the Maya. Tonight we enjoy dinner in town again.

Accommodations in Copan Ruins (B,L,D)

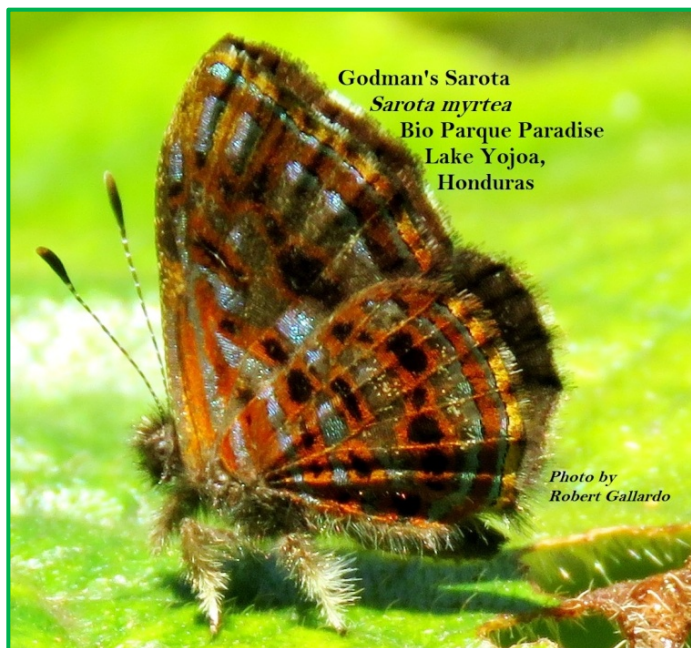
Tues., Jan. 4 Travel to Lake Yojoa | PANACAM Lodge

This morning after breakfast we pack up and make the return drive eastward; our drive this morning may include a stop at the airport to pick up other participants for the butterfly festival. We then drive southward toward the scenic Lake Yojoa before ascending a mountain to end up at the PANACAM lodge. This facility is situated at the edge of Cerro Azul Meambar N.P. and is the only place in the country where one can stay in comfort inside a national park. This cool mountain retreat is home for the next six nights. Relax, settle in, and if we have time we may go for an afternoon bird walk on the grounds. Dinner tonight is at the lodge as we settle in and get ready for the festival to begin!

Accommodation at PANACAM Lodge (B,L,D)

Emerald Valley Butterfly Festival

**Note: Festival organizers may switch daily destinations as a result of inclement weather.*



Wed., Jan. 5

Meambar National Park

Today there is an optional early morning bird walk before breakfast. This mid-elevation site is rich with species and we often see Elegant Euphonia, Lesson's Motmot, Blue-crowned Chlorophonia, Keel-billed Toucan, Collared Trogon, and Black-crested Coquette. If we find a fruiting fig tree they can often fill up with a huge variety of birds.

The butterfly festival officially starts today and all photos taken during the duration of the festival count toward a photography contest—fun! If our group is large we may split up into smaller groups so everyone has a chance to see and photograph the butterflies. There are numerous gardens filled with

porterweed, as well as trails where everyone can spread out. The porterweed often attracts a variety of swallowtails such as the splendid Green-celled Cattleheart and the rarer Green-patch Swallowtail. Sulphurs and skippers can also be seen at the porterweed. Inside the forest along the trails we can usually find the near-invisible Rusted Clearwing-Satyr.

We spend much of the day in the field, but also have the opportunity for some down time today to relax and simply enjoy the lodge grounds.

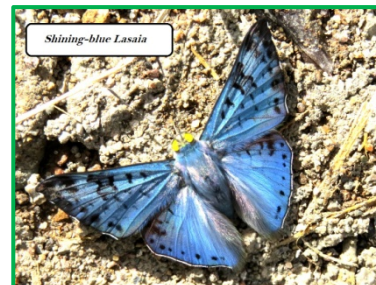
Accommodation at PANACAM Lodge (B,L,D)

Thurs., Jan. 6 Bio Parque Paradise

There is another optional early morning bird walk before breakfast today. Right after



breakfast we board our bus and descend to the lake and travel to the northwest corner. Our destination is a private property that encompasses more than 200 acres. It has a large shade coffee plantation and natural forest, as well as some porterweed and mistflower gardens. We spend the entire day here searching for butterflies such as Common Morpho, Tiger-striped Leafwing, Astala Eighty-Eight, a variety of sisters, and many more. We have lunch at Bio Parque. One very special butterfly that occurs here and is rare most everywhere else in the country is the tiny, yet beautiful Godman's Sarota and we make every effort to see it.



At the end of the day we return to PANACAM lodge where we enjoy dinner and recount the day's sightings.
Accommodation at PANACAM Lodge (B,L,D)

Fri., Jan. 7 Emerald Valley

Once again this morning we offer an optional early morning bird walk before breakfast. After breakfast we board our bus and descend to the lake, again travelling to the northwest corner. Our destination is another private property that encompasses 50 acres. Although this site has only been studied since mid-2016 it has already revealed an amazing 690 species which, at the time of this writing, represented 55% of the country's total butterfly species. Not only have more than 110 country records been found there, but also Honduras' second endemic species. The diversity is mind boggling and includes some of the rarest species in the entire region.

Robert and Olivia reside at Emerald Valley and have dedicated years in building up numerous butterfly gardens that harbor a wide variety of flowering plants. However, the star plant is the Blue Mistflower; a native species that Robert "discovered" behind their house in late 2017. It was on this plant where the endemic Emesis metalmark was discovered. It is the only plant he knows of that attracts species from all six families of butterflies and from both the forest canopy and the forest interior. One can often literally be surrounded by clouds of butterflies.

They have installed trails that weave in between the flower-filled gardens and additional trails that pass through the nearby forest. Hordes of butterflies descend upon the flowers and one easily becomes distracted while trying to photograph any given species. Lunch today is at Emerald Valley and dinner tonight is at our lodge.



Accommodation at PANACAM Lodge (B,L,D)

Sat., Jan. 8

Emerald Valley

Our morning walk routine continues today with an optional early morning bird walk before breakfast. Right after breakfast we board our bus and return to Emerald Valley. The hundreds of flowering plants scattered around the various gardens attract



different species throughout the day and provide a seemingly endless amount of joy and excitement as we search for and photograph butterflies.

Robert continues to be on the lookout for the more uncommon or rarer species so anyone nearby can see them. Today is the final day when photographs can be submitted to the contest. In the afternoon we return to our lofty lodgings at PANACAM.

Accommodation at PANACAM Lodge (B,L,D)

Sun., Jan. 9 Emerald Valley | Photography Contest Ceremony

After breakfast we board our bus and return to Emerald Valley for one final day at this butterfly sanctuary. The composition of species at Emerald Valley changes a little each day and literally with the passing of each hour. The more one looks, the more species can be observed. During our days at the various sites around the lake we hope to observe more than three-hundred species and if we're lucky, new species may be added to the Emerald Valley inventory or even a new species for the country.

At noon we have lunch, then announce the winners of the photography contest. There is a separate category for youth photographers and the ceremony is always filled with emotion as more Honduran nationals get involved in nature tourism appreciation each year.

We return to PANACAM early today to simply relax and enjoy the lodge grounds. We celebrate at tonight's dinner!

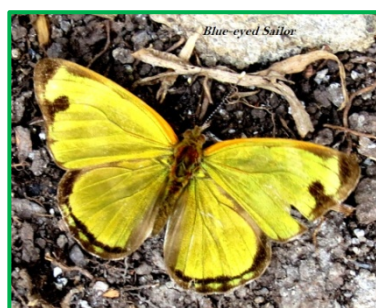
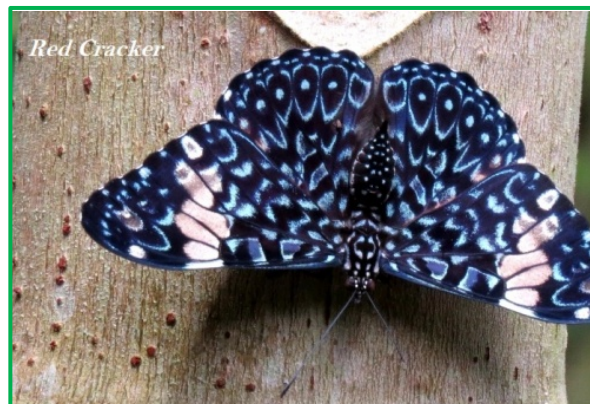
Accommodation at PANACAM Lodge (B,L,D)

Mon., Jan. 10 Departures | Optional Extension Begins

Today we say goodbye to the scenic Lake Yojoa and those not staying for the extension are transferred back to San Pedro Sula for int'l flights home. Please plan your departures no earlier than 2:00 PM.

For those wishing to look for and observe even more species, we have an optional four-day extension that begin today. (B)

Emerald Valley Post-Tour Extension



Mon., Jan. 10 – Wed., Jan. 12

Three Full Days in Emerald Valley

Three full days are being offered for additional butterfly watching and photography at Emerald Valley, especially for those who may come from far away or are eager to observe even more species.

As mentioned previously, the species composition changes constantly at Emerald Valley due to its proximity to rainforest, scrub and farmland as well as the fact that it is a mid-elevation site. During these three days we continue to search for more species at a leisurely pace. If there is interest, arrangements can be made for participants to return to Bio Parque Paradise. The list of uncommon to rare butterflies that can be encountered at Emerald Valley is long and the extra days there are sure to reveal more species and reward the patient observer.

Accommodation at PANACAM Lodge (B,L,D)

Thurs., Jan. 13 Departures from San Pedro Sula

This morning we pack up and depart for the San Pedro Sula airport for international departures. Please plan your flights out no earlier than 2:00 PM. (B)



Meet Robert Gallardo

Butterfly, orchid and bird authority of Honduras. An avid naturalist from childhood, Robert left his native California to join Peace Corps, finding a passion for tropical nature on arrival in 1993. He has authored two CDs, small field guides, and the authoritative [Guide to the Birds of Honduras](#) and is currently working on a field guide to the butterflies of Honduras. He resides at the scenic Lake Yojoa and spends much of his time afield.

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 tour is **\$TBD DBL / \$TBD SGL**, per person based on double occupancy from San Pedro Sula. The cost includes seven nights' accommodation, all meals as noted in the itinerary, airport transfers, land and boat transportation during the journey, professional guide services, park and other entrance fees, and miscellaneous program expenses. Not included in the tour cost is round-trip airfare to and from San Pedro Sula, personal expenses such as laundry, telephone, drinks from the bar, and gratuities for luggage handling or other services. Guide gratuities are at your discretion. Cost of the pre-tour extension is **\$TBD DBL / \$TBD SGL**. Cost of the post-tour extension is **\$TBD DBL / \$TBD SGL**.

Tour Notes & Pace

Weather and wind direction greatly impact bird migration and which locations offer the best birding for the day. Our goal is to visit all the locations and more during the trip, but days and locations will be arranged to accommodate the weather and local conditions.

Dining is casual at restaurants that feature regional foods, some picnic lunches, and a few restaurants that feature some international flair.

Pace is moderate; full days of birding and walks on sometimes wet, but established roads and trails; a typical walk is half a mile to two miles. You can opt to return to the hotel on several days if you would like a lighter pace.

Travel Information

Airport is Aeropuerto Ramón Villeda Morales (SAP)

In San Pedro Sula, Honduras. Plan to arrive no later than 2:00 PM on January 1 for the Copan pre-tour extension. If you are not taking the pre-tour extension, please plan to arrive no later than 2:00 PM on January 4. Please plan departures after 2:00 PM on January 10 or January 13 if you plan to stay for the post-tour extension.

Photo Credits

All photos by Robert Gallardo.

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