

ITINERARY
HOLIDAY IN HONDURAS
December 21-29, 2018



*The Honduran Emerald is not the most flashy hummingbird we'll see, but it is special, because it is a Honduran endemic. This tiny bird has an equally small range, but we will be visiting one of the best places to find it.
Photograph by participant Dominic Sherony.*

We include here information for those interested in the 2018 Field Guides Holiday in Honduras tour:

- a general introduction to the tour
- a description of the birding areas to be visited on the tour
- an abbreviated daily itinerary with some indication of the nature of each day's birding outings

Those who register for the tour will be sent this additional material:

- an annotated list of the birds recorded on a previous year's Field Guides trip to the area, with comments by guide(s) on notable species or sightings (may be downloaded from the website)
- a detailed information bulletin with important logistical information and answers to questions regarding accommodations, air arrangements, clothing, currency, customs and immigration, documents, health precautions, and personal items
- a reference list
- a Field Guides checklist for preparing for and keeping track of the birds we see on the tour
- after the conclusion of the tour, a list of birds seen on the tour

Honduras has been one of the best-kept secrets in the birding world for years, but the word is now out! Great birds abound **and there is even a new field guide for the region by your very own Field Guide's guide, Jesse Fagan!** This special Christmas trip visits two birdy sites in the north of the country, as well as the archaeological and bird rich area of Copan.

From San Pedro Sula, where most folks will first arrive into Honduras, we will drive east along the Caribbean coast and skirt the massive Cordillera Nombre de Dios which will be obvious to our south. This east-west running mountain range is covered in primary tropical forest and is home to several large mammals, including tapir, jaguar and puma. We will stay a couple of nights at the Corinto Pearl Lodge located at the base of this mountain range and make day trips to explore its rich avian diversity. Our lodge is set on 150 acres of forest adjacent to the Rio Corinto that flows from Pico Bonito National Park. The view here of the national park and lush Nombre de Dios mountains is spectacular.

Next, we will return west and south to stay at the fantastic Panacam Lodge in the Cerro Azul Meambar National Park and watershed. This comfortable lodge is situated within the foothill rainforest, and the national park borders Lake Yojoa, a large natural caldera lake famous for its fishing (and birding) and beautiful views. Panacam has excellent forest and several trail systems from which to discover the birds within. It is one of the best sites in Honduras for Keel-billed Motmot. And while the hummingbird feeders should keep us busy for a little while, other goodies we may see in the forest or along the entrance road include Black-faced Antthrush, Rufous-breasted Spinetail, several species of woodcreeper, Royal Flycatcher, Red-capped Manakin, Green Shrike-Vireo, Green Jay, Crimson-collared Tanager, and Chestnut-headed Oropendola, to name just a very few. The lodge checklist lists over 300 species! In addition, we will want to explore the lake. Just a short 20 minute drive from Panacam, we will visit several sites around Lake Yojoa looking and scanning for specialties like Snail Kite, Masked Duck, and, maybe, a crane or rail. Wintering warblers and tanagers will be around in good numbers along the lake edge. The mix of habitats here (water, marsh, patches of forest) means lots of birds. We will also visit a site nearby for the Honduran Emerald, Honduras' only endemic species, a hummingbird that inhabits dry forest valleys.

The final two nights of the tour will be spent in western Honduras in the department of Copan. Copan is a Classic period (5th to 9th centuries AD) Mayan site with some of the most impressive temples and preserved stela in the Mayan archeological world. We will be staying nearly on-site, with a chance for birding in the surrounding mountains and dense forest.

Panacam and Corinto Pearl Lodge are only a few hours drive apart on a paved highway. This makes our travel between sites easy. So, what does all this mean? Well, it means a fairly short, but sweet holiday tour with just three sites, staying at lovely lodges, in beautiful settings with lots of birds. See you in Honduras!



The Chestnut-headed Oropendola is one of the smaller members of this interesting group. They are found from southern Mexico through Central America, down to northern coastal Ecuador. Photograph by participant Stan Lilley.

About the Physical Requirements & Pace: Generally speaking, this tour is relaxed and comfortable, with a few exceptions (this *is* Honduras, and there are mountains and foothills where we will be birding). Walking will *generally* be on flat trails or roads, with a few exceptions. A couple of hikes on forest trails will require stamina and good balance. It gets hot, too. The road system in northern Honduras is fairly good, but we'll have a few bumpy, dusty rides to reach a couple of the birding locales. We tend to start fairly early, spend mornings in the field, have a sit-down lunch (and sometimes an afternoon siesta), and then go birding in the late afternoon. We'll also offer some optional night birding very near our accommodations. Overall, our goal is to enjoy the rich biodiversity and culture of Honduras at a pleasant pace and comfort level. The tour is designed with those goals in mind.

If you are uncertain about whether this tour is a good match for your abilities, please don't hesitate to contact our office; if they cannot directly answer your queries, they will put you in touch with your guide.

About the Birding Areas



The Corinto Pearl Lodge at (La Ceiba) and Pico Bonito National Park—Located just west of La Ceiba, the country's third largest city, the lodge sits at the base of the Cordillera Nombre de Dios, the large east-west running mountain range along the north coast, and is adjacent to the vast Pico Bonito National Park. The highest peak, the aptly named Pico Bonito (2434 masl or 7989 feet), rises some 600 masl (2000 feet) above the forested cordillera. The Corinto Pearl Lodge opened three years ago at the edge of Pico Bonito National Park and is set on 150 acres of forest adjacent to the Rio Corinto. At this time of year, the green canopy is punctuated by the brilliant yellow of flowering trees, which attract a number of birds, from Olive-throated Parakeets and Black-crowned Tityras to Baltimore Orioles and Montezuma Oropendolas. We'll watch for perched and soaring raptors including White Hawk and Bat Falcon and scan the treetops for the brilliant turquoise of a male Lovely Cotinga.

The birding on site is easy thanks to flat to rolling terrain, with nearby birding spots like Rio Santiago and Lancetilla.

Panacam Lodge, Cerro Azul Meambar National Park, and Lake Yojoa—The lodge is located within the watershed and protected area of the park. The lodge has grown considerably in structure and popularity over the years. Cabins were added several years back, and the lodge has a restaurant serving delicious food including fresh caught fish from Lake Yojoa. The rooms have hot water, a minibar, satellite tv, and a private patio area. Hummingbird feeders are set up along the restaurant and reception areas. The lodge itself is located within the Cerro Azul Meambar National Park which protects 79,000 acres (478 sq. km.) of forest and watershed ranging in elevation from 400 masl (meters-above-sea-level) to 2080 masl. Over three hundred species of birds have been recorded in and around the lodge grounds, plus more than 35 species of mammal that include Jaguar, Baird's Tapir, White-faced Coati, and White-faced Capuchin. Panacam is one site where we'll look to see the rare Keel-billed Motmot. Adding to its popularity as a birding lodge, it is ideally located for visits to Lake Yojoa (about a 20 minute drive). Lake Yojoa is an old caldera lake, 79 sq. km. in size, with an average depth of 15 m (50 ft.). It is straddled by two national parks, Cerro Azul Meambar NP to the east, and Santa Barbara NP to the west. Lake Yojoa is a popular fishing destination, and extremely important to both resident and migratory birds. It hosts over 400 species of birds including several rare rallids (Gray-breasted and Yellow-breasted crakes, Spotted Rail), Snail Kite, Masked Duck, and numerous mixed-species flocks along the lake edge.

Lancetilla Botanical Gardens (Tela)—Tela is a small, active, and colorful Caribbean town that is best known for the Lancetilla Botanical Gardens, located just a few minutes from the center of town. The botanical gardens were started in 1925 under the supervision of tropical botanist William Popenoe, who was working for the United Fruit Company. The name Lancetilla comes from a spiny palm tree, *Astrocaryum standleyanum*, which is endemic to the area. The botanical

gardens were handed over to the Honduran government in 1974 and now function as a tourist attraction and experimental garden. We will bird the entrance road for Great Antshrike, Cocoa Woodcreeper, and Slate-headed Tody-Flycatcher, while other birds we could encounter include Slaty-breasted Tinamou, Black-headed Trogon, Keel-billed Toucan, Collared Aracari, Pale-billed and Chestnut-colored woodpeckers, Black-crowned Tityra, and many species of North American wood-warblers, here on their wintering grounds.

Copan—Copan is one of the most impressive Classic period Mayan sites (5th to 9th centuries; though its occupation spans more than 2000 years). If you have been to Tikal, then you will not be disappointed with the representations here. Granted, the size of the site doesn't approach that of Tikal (which is massive), being just under 16 hectares (Tikal is 1600 hectares!), but the stela and ruins are impressive and well-preserved. Copan lies at higher elevation (700 masl or 2,300 ft.) and in a mountainous region in the Central American highlands which receive less rainfall than Tikal, and the vegetation is mostly pine forest. Unlike Tikal, where high rainfall and vegetative growth took its toll on the ruins, the ruins at Copan were largely preserved over the 1000+ years since its occupation. There will be numerous structures, stelae, temples, and the acropolis to explore here.

Itinerary for Holiday in Honduras



The Keel-billed Motmot is found from southern Mexico to northern Honduras, but it can be difficult to locate within this relatively large range. We'll stay at one of the best places to find this lovely bird, Panacam Lodge. Photograph by participant Kevin Heffernan.

Day 1, Fri, 21 Dec. Arrival in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, drive to Corinto Pearl Lodge. There are flights from Houston, Miami, and Atlanta that arrive in San Pedro Sula in the noon to early-afternoon time period. We will plan to depart the airport about 2:30 p.m. for the drive to Corinto Pearl Lodge. We should have some time in the late afternoon for some light birding on the grounds. Night at Corinto Pearl Lodge.

Day 2, Sat, 22 Dec. Corinto Pearl Lodge and Rio Santiago. We will explore the grounds of the lodge and make a visit to Rio Santiago Hummingbird Reserve. Night at Corinto Pearl Lodge.

Day 3, Sun, 23 Dec. Lancetilla Botanical Gardens. This morning we will drive west to the town of Tela and begin our birding along the entrance road to the Lancetilla Botanical Gardens. We will work our way to the visitor's center and gardens themselves and bird the area trails. After lunch we will head south to Panacam Lodge. Night at Panacam Lodge.

Day 4, Mon, 24 Dec. Panacam Lodge. We will start the day just after dawn with a coffee in hand, enjoying the hummingbird feeders and surrounding forest activity. After breakfast, we will drive a short distance down the entrance road and bird our way back up to the lodge all morning. We will lunch at Panacam, have a short siesta, and in the afternoon, bird the forest trails towards dusk. We will enjoy some nightbirding on the grounds near the lodge this evening. Night at Panacam Lodge.

Day 5, Tue, 25 Dec. Lake Yojoa. Happy Holidays! A repeat of yesterday morning per coffee in hand, watching hummingbird feeders pre-breakfast. We will pack up our things and head down to Lake Yojoa for a full morning of birding around the lake. We will lunch nearby and return to the lodge in the late afternoon. Night at Pacanam Lodge.

Day 6, Wed, 26 Dec. El Rancho. A fairly early departure for the site of El Rancho. Our target here will be the endemic hummingbird, Honduran Emerald. We will lunch in the area and return to the lodge in the afternoon. Night at Panacam Lodge.

Day 7, Thu, 27 Dec. Transfer to Copan. A bit of a sleep-in, then we'll enjoy some morning birding at the lodge, then we will pack up and make the long(ish) drive (approx. 4 hours) to the archeological site of Copan. We will check into our modern hotel nearby and see what time allows for; possibly some light birding. Night in Copan.

Day 8, Fri, 28 Dec. Copan. We will visit the Mayan ruins of Copan all morning, and after lunch bird a nearby forest patch. Night in Copan.

Day 9, Sat, 29 Dec. We will have an early morning departure for the airport at San Pedro Sula. Please do not schedule flights departing San Pedro Sula before 1 pm. Happy travels!!

About Your Guide

Jesse Fagan (a.k.a. the Motmot or just "Mot") has birded extensively throughout North America, and in 2016 published the [Peterson Field Guide to Birds of Northern Central America](#) (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt) with co-author Oliver Komar and illustrators Robert Dean and Peter Burke. In addition, Mot has experience in many other areas of Central and South America, Europe, and Africa. He likes to think he can bird anywhere at any time and still show you the birds, but most importantly, a good time. Jesse holds a B.S. and an M.S. in mathematics from Texas Tech University. He is currently living in Lima, Peru with his wife, Rocio.

"Jesse Fagan is an excellent guide: expert at bird findings, lots of fun, and nice with group management. He's always concerned and positive." M.D., Machu Picchu & Abra Malaga, Peru

Visit <https://fieldguides.com/guides> for Jesse's complete tour schedule; just click on his photo.

Financial Information

FEE: \$3850 from San Pedro

DEPOSIT: \$385 per person

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: August 23, 2018

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$700

LIMIT: 8

Other Things You Need to Know

TOUR MANAGER: The manager for this tour is Sharon Mackie. Sharon will be happy to assist you in preparing for the tour. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call her!

ACCOMMODATIONS: The Corinto Pearl Lodge has 20 detached cabins that are fully furnished and equipped with bed rooms, living areas, and small kitchens. All have AC. The Panacam Lodge is a very comfortable lodge with small personal cabins each with hot water, satellite tv, minibar, and a private patio. The hotel in Copan is modern and equally comfortable. Lodging and accommodations on this tour will be good to excellent.

DOCUMENTS: A current **passport** valid for six months beyond the date of your return is required for US citizens to enter Honduras. A visa is not required, but tourists must provide proof of return or onward travel.

If you are not a US citizen, please check with the Honduran consulate nearest you for entry requirements. Information about consulates and entry requirements is generally available online or you can contact us and we will be happy to look this up for you. Passports should have an adequate number of blank pages for the entire journey. Some countries require a blank page for their stamp and as a precaution it is best to have one blank page per country you will visit or transit.

AIR ARRANGEMENTS: Field Guides is a full service travel agency and your tour manager will be happy to assist you with flights to join this tour. Field Guides does not charge a service fee for these services to clients booking a tour. However, we understand that tech-savvy clients often prefer to shop online or that you may wish to use mileage to

purchase tickets. Regardless of which method you choose, your tour manager will be happy to provide assistance regarding ticket prices and schedules, along with rental cars and extra hotel nights as needed.

Please be sure to check with your tour manager prior to purchasing your ticket to make sure the flights you have chosen will work well with the tour itinerary and that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. Once purchased, most airline tickets are non-refundable and carry a penalty to change. Field Guides cannot be responsible for these fees. **Also, it is imperative that we receive a copy of your comprehensive flight itinerary—including any and all flights not covered in the tour fee—so that we may track you in the event of missed connections, delays, or other mishaps.**

LUGGAGE: Please limit your luggage to **one medium sized duffel or suitcase and a carry-on**. There are opportunities for laundry service at each of the lodges, which makes packing light easier. Please be aware that many airlines have recently modified their luggage policies and are charging additional fees for checked bags. Updates could easily occur before your departure, so you may wish to contact your airline to verify the policy. Additional charges for bags on any flights, whether these are covered by the tour fee or not, will be the client's responsibility.

TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS: The **tour fee** is \$3850 for one person in double occupancy from San Pedro Sula. It includes all lodging from Day 1 through Day 8, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on Day 9, all ground transportation, entrance fees, and the guide services of the tour leaders. Tipping at group meals and for drivers, porters, and local guides is included in your tour fee and will be handled for the group by your Field Guides leader(s). However, if you would like to recognize your Field Guides leader(s) or any local guide(s) for exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are optional and not expected.

The above fee does not include your airfare to and from San Pedro Sula, airport taxes, visa fees, any checked or carry-on baggage charges imposed by the airlines, any alcoholic beverages, optional tips, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

The **single supplement** for the tour is \$700. If you do not have a roommate but wish to share, we will try to pair you with a roommate from the tour; but if none is available, you will be billed for the single supplement. Our tour fees are based on double occupancy; one-half the cost of a double room is priced into the tour fee. The single supplement is calculated by taking the actual cost of a single room and subtracting one-half the cost of a double room (plus any applicable taxes).

TOUR REGISTRATION: To register for this tour, complete the Registration/Release and Indemnity form and return it with a **deposit of \$385** per person. If registering by phone, a deposit must be received within fourteen days, or the space will be released. **Full payment** of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to departure, or **by August 23, 2018. We will bill you for the final payment at either 120 days or when the tour has reached sufficient subscription to operate, whichever date comes later.** Since the cost of your trip insurance and airline tickets is generally non-refundable, please do not finalize these purchases until you have received final billing for the tour or have been advised that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate by your tour manager.

SMOKING: Almost all of our clients prefer a smoke-free environment. If you smoke, please be sensitive to the group and refrain from smoking at meals, in vehicles, and in proximity to the group on trails and elsewhere.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Refund of deposit and payment, less \$100 handling fee, will be made if cancellation is received up to 120 days before departure. If cancellation occurs between 119 and 70 days before the departure date, 50% of the tour fee is refundable. Thereafter, all deposits and payments are not refundable.

This policy only applies to payments made to Field Guides for tour fees (and any services included in those fees). Airline tickets not included in the tour fee and purchased separately often carry penalties for cancellation or change, or are sometimes totally non-refundable. Additionally, if you take out trip insurance the cost of the insurance is not refundable so it is best to purchase the policy just prior to making full payment for the tour or at the time you purchase airline tickets, depending upon the airlines restrictions.

The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. The right is reserved to substitute in case of emergency another guide for the original one.

TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EMERGENCY INSURANCE: We strongly recommend you consider purchasing trip cancellation (including medical emergency) insurance to cover your investment in case of injury or illness to you or your family prior to or during a trip. Because we must remit early (and substantial) tour deposits to our suppliers, we cannot

offer any refund when cancellation occurs within 70 days of departure, and only a partial refund from 70 to 119 days prior to departure (see CANCELLATION POLICY). In addition, the Department of State strongly urges Americans to consult with their medical insurance company prior to traveling abroad to confirm whether their policy applies overseas and if it will cover emergency expenses such as a medical evacuation. US medical insurance plans seldom cover health costs incurred outside the United States unless supplemental coverage is purchased. Furthermore, US Medicare and Medicaid programs do not provide payment for medical services outside the United States.

When making a decision regarding health insurance, Americans should consider that many foreign doctors and hospitals require payment in cash prior to providing service and that a medical evacuation to the United States may cost well in excess of \$50,000. Uninsured travelers who require medical care overseas often face extreme difficulties. When consulting with your insurer prior to your trip, please ascertain whether payment will be made to the overseas healthcare provider or whether you will be reimbursed later for expenses that you incur.

US citizens will receive from us a brochure regarding optional tour cancellation/emergency medical insurance. Our agent, CSA, will insure for trip cancellation and interruption, medical coverage, travel delay, baggage loss and delay, 24-hour accident protection, and emergency medical transportation. If you purchase the insurance when making final payment for the tour, and cover all non-refundable parts of the trip (including any non-refundable flights), pre-existing conditions are covered. The CSA brochure includes a contact number; you may also purchase your CSA policy on-line by visiting our website at <https://fieldguides.com/travelinsurance.html> and clicking the link to CSA. Please note, once the insurance is purchased it is non-refundable, so please check with your tour manager prior to making the purchase to assure the tour will operate as scheduled. Citizens of other countries are urged to consult their insurance broker.

RESPONSIBILITY: For and in consideration of the opportunity to participate in the tour, each tour participant and each parent or legal guardian of a tour participant who is under 18 agrees to release, indemnify, and hold harmless Field Guides Incorporated, its agents, servants, employees, shareholders, officers, directors, attorneys, and contractors as more fully set forth in the Release and Indemnity Agreement on the reverse side of the registration form. Field Guides Incorporated acts only as an agent for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, or other means, and assumes no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity caused by defect in such vehicles or for any reason whatsoever, including the acts, defaults, or bankruptcies of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. Field Guides Incorporated accepts no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. The tour participant shall bear all such losses and expenses. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely.

Participants should be in good health and should consult a physician before undertaking a tour. If you have questions about the physical requirements of a tour, please contact our office for further information. Participants should prepare for the tour by reading the detailed itinerary, the information bulletin, and other pertinent matter provided by Field Guides. Each participant is responsible for bringing appropriate clothing and equipment as recommended in our bulletins.

THE RECEIPT OF YOUR TOUR DEPOSIT SHALL BE DEEMED TO BE CONSENT TO THE ABOVE CONDITIONS. EACH TOUR PARTICIPANT AND EACH PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN OF A TOUR PARTICIPANT WHO IS UNDER 18 SHALL SIGN AND DELIVER THE RELEASE AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION.

5/18 JFF; peg