



Field Guides Tour Report

Holiday in Honduras: The Lodge at Pico Bonito 2012

Dec 30, 2012 to Jan 4, 2013
John Coons & German Martinez

For our tour description, itinerary, past triplists, dates, fees, and more, please [VISIT OUR TOUR PAGE](#).

We all enjoyed a wonderful New Year's in Honduras at the Lodge at Pico Bonito. We covered a wide range of habitats during our stay starting with our train ride and boat trip on the Cuero y Salado estuary. Waiting to depart on the narrow-gauge railroad we saw a few Spot-breasted Orioles, a pair of Laughing Falcons, Mangrove Cuckoo, and our first Turquoise-browed Motmot. On the boat trip we enjoyed a close study of a Boat-billed Heron, a brilliantly colored Gray-necked Wood-Rail, a handful of kingfishers, a soaring Gray-headed Kite, and a troop of Mantled Howler Monkeys that proved their name when they started vocalizing. Back at the Lodge we had nice views of a Lovely Cotinga from the tower. We were entertained by the local Garifuna traditional dancers for a New Year's Eve celebration at dinner.



The lovely grounds of the Lodge at Pico Bonito. (Photo by guide John Coons)

New Year's Day 2013 found us birding the lodge grounds and adjacent trails in the morning. A Bright-rumped Attila entertained us before we worked our way into the forest. A couple of mixed-species flocks kept us busy before we zeroed in on a calling Keel-billed Motmot which we ended up seeing right overhead in the forest. We also located a Tody Motmot along the trail before heading back for a great lunch. That afternoon we decided to check out a new spot where we found a plethora of hummingbird feeders with an amazing number of birds visiting. Out of the hundred+ hummingbirds we tallied ten species including a Band-tailed Barbthroat, Scaly-breasted Hummingbird, and many large Violet Sabrewings. It was exhausting to try and keep up with the ultra-caffeinated action of the hummers. A Chestnut-colored Woodpecker and Gartered Trogon added to the excitement here.

With an early start the next morning we were off to the Aguan Valley in the rain shadow of the coastal mountain range. Arriving at the reserve which has been established to protect Honduras' only endemic bird, we walked into the odd cactus and euphorbia thorn forest and were soon rewarded with wonderful looks at an Honduran Emerald, a very local species. Although not one of the most stunning of the hummingbirds, the strange vegetation that it requires makes it quite unique. We saw 4-5 individuals during our short walk. A White-bellied Wren building a nest and a number of White-lored Gnatcatchers were the other specialties of the area. We had a great lunch at a nearby home before heading back to the lodge.

Our last full day found us heading out to the Lancetilla Botanic Gardens near the town of Tela. We were busy along the entrance road to the gardens with Olivaceous Piculets, Black-crowned Tityras, Black-cowled Orioles, and an encouraging number of North American migrants here on the wintering ground. We enjoyed a wonderful seafood lunch on the beach before heading back to the Lodge for another walk around.

I found the people of Honduras to be some of the friendliest I have encountered in the Americas. The staff at the lodge took great care of us and made sure we were comfortable throughout. It was a pleasure to travel with all of you and I look forward to the next time.

--John

KEYS FOR THIS LIST

One of the following keys may be shown in brackets for individual species as appropriate: * = heard only, I = introduced, E = endemic, N = nesting, a = austral migrant, b = boreal migrant

BIRDS

Tinamidae (Tinamous)

GREAT TINAMOU (*Tinamus major*) [a]

LITTLE TINAMOU (*Crypturellus soui*) – We had a quite close individual walking towards us. Then another started calling nearby and our close bird

turned and walked away. [*]

Cracidae (Guans, Chachalacas, and Curassows)

PLAIN CHACHALACA (*Oryzopsis vetaula*) – A few were along the roadside at Lancetilla.

Odontophoridae (New World Quail)

CRESTED BOBWHITE (SPOT-BELLIED) (*Colinus cristatus leucopogon*) – This is certainly the quail that were heard in the dense desert habitat at the Honduran Emerald Reserve. This form of Crest Bobwhite is sometimes split and called Spot-bellied Bobwhite. [*]

Ciconiidae (Storks)

WOOD STORK (*Mycteria americana*)

Fregatidae (Frigatebirds)

MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD (*Fregata magnificens*)

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

NEOTROPIC CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*)

Anhingidae (Anhingas)

ANHINGA (*Anhinga anhinga*)

Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

BROWN PELICAN (*Pelecanus occidentalis*)

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

GREAT EGRET (*Ardea alba*)

SNOWY EGRET (*Egretta thula*)

LITTLE BLUE HERON (*Egretta caerulea*)

CATTLE EGRET (*Bubulcus ibis*)

GREEN HERON (*Butorides virescens*)

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nyctanassa violacea*)

BOAT-BILLED HERON (*Cochlearius cochlearius*) – Nice views of this odd heron in the Cuero y Salado Reserve.

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

BLACK VULTURE (*Coragyps atratus*)

TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*)

LESSER YELLOW-HEADED VULTURE (*Cathartes burrovianus*) – We saw one from the small train on the way back from the Cuero y Salado Reserve.

Pandionidae (Osprey)

OSPREY (*Pandion haliaetus*)

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

GRAY-HEADED KITE (*Leptodon cayanensis*) – We saw one high overhead while we were on the boat trip in the estuary.

WHITE-TAILED KITE (*Elanus leucurus*)

DOUBLE-TOOTHED KITE (*Harpagus bidentatus*) – Pretty good looks at one that flew above us at Lancetilla.

BICOLORED HAWK (*Accipiter bicolor*)

WHITE HAWK (WHITE-SHOULDERED) (*Leucopternis albicollis costaricensis*) – We saw what was probably the same individual perched several times from the tower at the Lodge. This is truly a beautiful raptor.

ROADSIDE HAWK (*Buteo magnirostris*)

GRAY HAWK (*Buteo nitidus*)

BLACK HAWK-EAGLE (*Spizaetus tyrannus*) – Nina spotted this calling bird as it soared above the trees while on the trails at the Lodge.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

COLLARED FOREST-FALCON (*Micrastur semitorquatus*) – We heard this species a couple of times on our way to breakfast in the early morning light. [*]

CRESTED CARACARA (*Caracara cheriway*)

LAUGHING FALCON (*Herpetotheres cachinnans*) – There were two individuals calling then flying near La Union.

AMERICAN KESTREL (*Falco sparverius*)

BAT FALCON (*Falco ruficularis*) – We saw a distantly perched bird from the tower.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

GRAY-NECKED WOOD-RAIL (*Aramides cajanea*) – Great looks at a well-colored individual in the marsh.

Aramidae (Limpkin)

LIMPKIN (*Aramus guarauna*) – Pretty good views of one we saw from the train.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER (*Pluvialis squatarola*)

KILLDEER (*Charadrius vociferus*)

Jacanidae (Jacanas)

NORTHERN JACANA (*Jacana spinosa*)

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

SPOTTED SANDPIPER (*Actitis macularius*)

RUDDY TURNSTONE (*Arenaria interpres*) – We encountered a couple of individuals near the mouth of the estuary.

SANDERLING (*Calidris alba*)

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

LAUGHING GULL (*Leucophaeus atricilla*)

ROYAL TERN (*Thalasseus maximus*)

SANDWICH TERN (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*)

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) [I]

PALE-VENTED PIGEON (*Patagioenas cayennensis*)

RED-BILLED PIGEON (*Patagioenas flavirostris*)

WHITE-WINGED DOVE (*Zenaidura asiatica*)

INCA DOVE (*Columbina inca*)

COMMON GROUND-DOVE (*Columbina passerina*)

RUDDY GROUND-DOVE (*Columbina talpacoti*)

BLUE GROUND-DOVE (*Claravis pretiosa*) – We had a wonderful scope view of a pair at the Lancetilla Botanic Garden.

GRAY-CHESTED DOVE (*Leptotila cassini*)

Psittacidae (Parrots)

OLIVE-THROATED PARAKEET (*Aratinga nana*)

WHITE-CROWNED PARROT (*Pionus senilis*) – Herman had one scoped from the lodge one afternoon.

WHITE-FRONTED PARROT (*Amazona albifrons*) – A few fly-bys but we never had a perched bird.

RED-LORED PARROT (*Amazona autumnalis*)

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

SQUIRREL CUCKOO (*Piaya cayana*)

MANGROVE CUCKOO (*Coccyzus minor*) – Good views of one at La Union, where we boarded the train.

LESSER GROUND-CUCKOO (*Morococcyx erythropygus*) – One was flushed out of a shrub in the Honduran Emerald Reserve. Unfortunately, we could not relocate it.

GROOVE-BILLED ANI (*Crotophaga sulcirostris*)

Strigidae (Owls)

FERRUGINOUS PYGMY-OWL (*Glaucidium brasilianum*) – Herman spotted one tucked into the branches of a tree at the Lodge, then Betsy found another near the restaurant that had a Gray Catbird in its talons.

MOTTLED OWL (*Ciccaba virgata*) – We heard these nearly every morning but they were completely unresponsive in the evenings we tried to look for them. A few of us saw one fly in above us as we headed to breakfast one morning.

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

LESSER NIGHTHAWK (*Chordeiles acutipennis*) – A couple were flushed off the ground and one out of a tree in the Honduran Emerald Reserve.

Nyctibiidae (Potoos)

GREAT POTOO (*Nyctibius grandis*) – Herman showed us one on a day roost. The camouflaging is incredible.

Apodidae (Swifts)

WHITE-COLLARED SWIFT (*Streptoprocne zonaris*) – We saw a massive flight of several hundred individuals one afternoon.

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

WHITE-NECKED JACOBIN (*Florisuga mellivora*) – There were about 6-8 at the hummer feeders at Rio Santiago.

BAND-TAILED BARBTHROAT (*Threnetes ruckeri*) – One made a couple of appearances at the feeders at Rio Santiago.

LONG-BILLED HERMIT (*Phaethornis longirostris*) – There was one making regular visits to the feeder by the main lobby at the Lodge and another one or two at Rio Santiago.

STRIPE-THROATED HERMIT (*Phaethornis striigularis*)

PURPLE-CROWNED FAIRY (*Heliodytes barroti*)

SCALY-BREASTED HUMMINGBIRD (*Phaechroa cuvierii*) – Another uncommon hummingbird that was at the Rio Santiago feeders.

VIOLET SABREWING (*Campylopterus hemileucurus*) – A number of these large hummingbirds were visiting the feeders.

VIOLET-CROWNED WOODNYMPH (*Thalurania colombica*) – The second most numerous hummingbird at the Rio Santiago feeders, this was by far the most I have ever seen in one place.

WHITE-BELLIED EMERALD (*Amazilia candida*) – Only one came in at the feeders at Rio Santiago.

HONDURAN EMERALD (*Amazilia luciae*) – We had great views of 4-5 individuals in the unique cactus and euphorbia desert that this specialty calls home. We saw one feeding quite close to us on its signature food source, the flower of the pie de nino. [E]

RUFIOUS-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD (*Amazilia tzacatl*) – By far the most common hummingbird we saw. The numbers at the Rio Santiago feeders

were incredible.

CINNAMON HUMMINGBIRD (*Amazilia rutila*)

Trogonidae (Trogons)

BLACK-HEADED TROGON (*Trogon melanocephalus*) – We encountered more of these than any of the other trogons.

GARTERED TROGON (*Trogon caligatus*) – Previously known as Violaceous Trogon we saw one at Rio Santiago.

BLACK-THROATED TROGON (*Trogon rufus*) – This is one of the prettiest of the trogons.

COLLARED TROGON (*Trogon collaris*) – We saw a couple on the trails at the Lodge.

Momotidae (Motmots)

TODY MOTMOT (*Hylomanes momotula*) – Good views of this always great to see species. We heard it calling from way down the slope and managed to spot it from near the edge of the trail.

BLUE-CROWNED MOTMOT (LESSON'S) (*Momotus coeruliceps lessonii*)

KEEL-BILLED MOTMOT (*Electron carinatum*) – One of the real specialties of the area, we had wonderful looks at this species of quite limited range while on the trails at the Lodge.

TURQUOISE-BROWED MOTMOT (*Eumomota superciliosa*) – I think this is the best looking of all of the motmots.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

RINGED KINGFISHER (*Megaceryle torquata*)

BELTED KINGFISHER (*Megaceryle alcyon*)

AMAZON KINGFISHER (*Chloroceryle amazona*)

GREEN KINGFISHER (*Chloroceryle americana*)

Ramphastidae (Toucans)

COLLARED ARACARI (*Pteroglossus torquatus*) – A nest hole at the Lodge was far from consistent for seeing this bird. Henrik got some nice photos of the birds coming and going.

KEEL-BILLED TOUCAN (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*) – Several good sightings, especially from the tower.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

OLIVACEOUS PICULET (*Picumnus olivaceus*) – We watched two of these tiny woodpeckers working on a vine at the Lancetilla Gardens.

BLACK-CHEEKED WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes pucherani*) – Betsy photographed a pair at the lodge and didn't realize it until she went through the photos at home.

GOLDEN-FRONTED WOODPECKER (EAST MEXICO) (*Melanerpes aurifrons santacruzi*)

YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER (*Sphyrapicus varius*) – We found a wintering bird, a long way from its home, in the Lancetilla Gardens.

SMOKY-BROWN WOODPECKER (*Picoides fumigatus*)

CHESTNUT-COLORED WOODPECKER (*Celeus castaneus*) – Good views of one of my favorite woodpeckers along the entrance road at Rio Santiago.

LINEATED WOODPECKER (*Dryocopus lineatus*)

Furnariidae (Ovenbirds and Woodcreepers)

WEDGE-BILLED WOODCREEPER (*Glyphorhynchus spirurus*)

COCOA WOODCREEPER (*Xiphorhynchus susurrans*) [*]

STREAK-HEADED WOODCREEPER (*Lepidocolaptes souleyetii*)

Thamnophilidae (Typical Antbirds)

GREAT ANTSHRIKE (*Taraba major*) – Some of us managed to get a quick look at one in the viney tangle at Lancetilla.

BARRED ANTSHRIKE (*Thamnophilus doliatus*) [*]

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

YELLOW-BELLIED TYRANNULET (*Ornithion semiflavum*) – One of the smaller Central American passerines, we saw one in a flock at the Lodge and another at Rio Santiago.

OCHRE-BELLIED FLYCATCHER (*Mionectes oleagineus*)

SEPIA-CAPPED FLYCATCHER (*Leptopogon amaurocephalus*) – Two calling birds were seen along the road at Lancetilla.

PALTRY TYRANNULET (*Zimmerius vilissimus*)

YELLOW-OLIVE FLYCATCHER (*Tolmomyias sulphurescens*)

YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax flaviventris*)

BLACK PHOEBE (*Sayornis nigricans*)

BRIGHT-RUMPED ATTILA (*Attila spadiceus*) – Good views in the forest clearing at the Lodge one morning.

GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus crinitus*) – We heard two or three during our visit. [*]

BROWN-CRESTED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus tyrannulus*)

GREAT KISKADEE (*Pitangus sulphuratus*)

BOAT-BILLED FLYCATCHER (*Megarynchus pitangua*)

SOCIAL FLYCATCHER (*Myiozetetes similis*)

TROPICAL KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus melancholicus*)

Cotingidae (Cotingas)

LOVELY COTINGA (*Cotinga amabilis*) – We had a nice male a couple of times from the tower at the Lodge. Then Henrik and Nina saw another male at Rio Santiago. This is another of the specialties from the Pico Bonito area.

Pipridae (Manakins)

WHITE-COLLARED MANAKIN (*Manacus candei*) – We heard them snapping a lot and saw a few males.

Tityridae (Tityras and Allies)

BLACK-CROWNED TITYRA (*Tityra inquisitor*)

MASKED TITYRA (*Tityra semifasciata*)

Vireonidae (Vireos)

WHITE-EYED VIREO (*Vireo griseus*)

YELLOW-THROATED VIREO (*Vireo flavifrons*)

LESSER GREENLET (*Hylophilus decurtatus*)

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

BROWN JAY (*Psilorhinus morio*) – The marauding gangs were quite noisy in most of the open places we visited.

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*)

MANGROVE SWALLOW (*Tachycineta albilinea*)

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

SPOT-BREASTED WREN (*Pheugopedius maculipectus*)

HOUSE WREN (SOUTHERN) (*Troglodytes aedon musculus*)

WHITE-BELLIED WREN (*Uropsila leucogastra*) – A somewhat local species we saw a couple in the desert habitat of the Aguan Valley where we watched one make several trips to a nest.

WHITE-BREASTED WOOD-WREN (*Henicorhina leucosticta*) [*]

Poliophtilidae (Gnatcatchers)

LONG-BILLED GNATWREN (*Ramphocaenus melanurus*) – Normally a tough one to see well as it darts about, we had a very cooperative individual along the trails at the Lodge.

WHITE-LORED GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila albiloris*) – These were quite common in the Aguan Valley.

TROPICAL GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila plumbea*)

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

WOOD THRUSH (*Hylocichla mustelina*) – A handful were wintering in the forest around the Lodge.

CLAY-COLORED THRUSH (*Turdus grayi*)

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

GRAY CATBIRD (*Dumetella carolinensis*)

TROPICAL MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus gilvus*)

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

OVENBIRD (*Seiurus aurocapilla*)

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH (*Parkesia noveboracensis*) – There were sure a lot of these calling amongst the mangroves while we were on the Cuero y Salado boat trip.

BLUE-WINGED WARBLER (*Vermivora cyanoptera*) – There were a couple of these along the road near Lancetilla.

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER (*Mniotilta varia*)

KENTUCKY WARBLER (*Geothlypis formosa*)

HOODED WARBLER (*Setophaga citrina*)

AMERICAN REDSTART (*Setophaga ruticilla*)

MAGNOLIA WARBLER (*Setophaga magnolia*) – These were quite common in some habitats.

YELLOW WARBLER (NORTHERN) (*Setophaga petechia aestiva*)

CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER (*Setophaga pensylvanica*) – It was encouraging to see so many of these. I'll be looking for them again on the Texas Coast in a few months.

BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER (*Setophaga virens*)

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT (*Icteria virens*) – I was a bit surprised to see this species along the road edge at Lancetilla.

Thraupidae (Tanagers and Allies)

PASSERINI'S TANAGER (*Ramphocelus passerinii*) – This very colorful tanager was seen a handful of times along the entrance road to the Botanic Garden.

BLUE-GRAY TANAGER (*Thraupis episcopus*)

YELLOW-WINGED TANAGER (*Thraupis abbas*)

GREEN HONEYCREEPER (*Chlorophanes spiza*)

BUFF-THROATED SALTATOR (*Saltator maximus*)

Emberizidae (Buntings, Sparrows and Allies)

BLUE-BLACK GRASSQUIT (*Volatinia jacarina*)
WHITE-COLLARED SEEDEATER (*Sporophila torqueola*)
BLACK-STRIPED SPARROW (*Arremonops conirostris*)

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

SUMMER TANAGER (*Piranga rubra*)
RED-CROWNED ANT-TANAGER (*Habia rubica*)
RED-THROATED ANT-TANAGER (*Habia fuscicauda*)
BLACK-FACED GROSBEAK (*Caryothraustes poliogaster*) [*]
ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*)
INDIGO BUNTING (*Passerina cyanea*)

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

EASTERN MEADOWLARK (*Sturnella magna*)
MELODIOUS BLACKBIRD (*Dives dives*)
GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus mexicanus*)
BLACK-COWLED ORIOLE (*Icterus prothemelas*)
ORCHARD ORIOLE (*Icterus spurius*)
SPOT-BREASTED ORIOLE (*Icterus pectoralis*) – We saw a few individuals near the village of La Union. This is a bird I am rarely in the range of.
ALTAMIRA ORIOLE (*Icterus gularis*)
BALTIMORE ORIOLE (*Icterus galbula*)
CHESTNUT-HEADED OROPENDOLA (*Psarocolius wagleri*)
MONTEZUMA OROPENDOLA (*Psarocolius montezuma*) – These were fairly common and we saw a few trees with nests and heard their gurgling calls each day.

Fringillidae (Siskins, Crossbills, and Allies)

SCRUB EUPHONIA (*Euphonia affinis*)
YELLOW-THROATED EUPHONIA (*Euphonia hirundinacea*)
OLIVE-BACKED EUPHONIA (*Euphonia gouldi*) – Great scope views of one at the botanic garden.
BLUE-CROWNED CHLOROPHONIA (*Chlorophonia occipitalis*) [*]

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) [I]

MAMMALS

LONG-NOSED BAT (*Rhynchonycteris naso*) – We saw eleven of them lined up on a tree trunk during our boat trip.
MANTLED HOWLER MONKEY (*Alouatta palliata*) – We saw a family in the trees at the Cuero y Salado Reserve and got to hear them howling which is a remarkably loud sound.
BRAZILIAN RABBIT (*Sylvilagus brasiliensis*)
VARIEGATED SQUIRREL (*Sciurus variegatoides*)
CENTRAL AMERICAN AGOUTI (*Dasyprocta punctata*)
MARGAY (*Felis wiedii*) – Henrik and Nina saw this rarely encountered cat along with Herman near the lodge.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 180 bird taxa and 6 mammal taxa