

HONDURAS: THE LODGE AT PICO BONITO FEBRUARY 12-19, 2011

HONDURAS: COPÁN EXTENSION ARCHAEOLOGY & BIRDS FEBRUARY 18-23, 2011

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Welcome to Honduras! Here, in an overlooked corner of Central America, is a land of beautiful scenery, innumerable mountain ranges, and marvelous birding. This exciting new tour presents an opportunity to discover the richness of this little-known country through a single-site stay at the fabulous Lodge at Pico Bonito.

Situated along Honduras's picturesque Caribbean Coast lies impressive Pico Bonito National Park, characterized by rugged mountains that abruptly rise to over 8,000 feet above sea level. The park encompasses over 130,000 acres, contains pristine rainforest, and is home to a wide range of flora and fauna. Nestled at the base of the mountainous park is The Lodge at Pico Bonito, whose location and first-rate design combine high-quality accommodations and cuisine with great birding opportunities. In fact, two of Central America's most sought-after birds, the Lovely Cotinga and Keel-billed Motmot, reside here. The cotinga's metallic turquoise and purple colors shine bright against the forest backdrop. These birds are seen almost daily, sometimes feeding right around the lodge, while the elusive Keel-billed Motmot is found in the deeper rainforest nearby. With patience we stand an excellent chance of spotting these enigmatic species, along with a multitude of other resident birds and Neotropical migrants from the north. The attraction of staying at only one location will be obvious from the time we arrive. Over the course of more than five full days, we will immerse ourselves in our surroundings, getting to know the lodge area and its birds well.

Our activities during the week will also take us to sites away from the lodge. Nearby is Cuero y Salado Wildlife Refuge, a wetland reserve with extensive marshes, mangrove-lined lagoons, and winding waterways. Its biological importance lies in the range of mammals, birds, reptiles, and plants found here, many of which have become rare outside the reserve, including manatee, mantled howler, white-faced capuchin monkey, tamandua (lesser anteater), and American crocodile. Boat-billed Heron, Gray-necked Wood-Rail, Sungrebe, American Pygmy Kingfisher, and Spot-breasted Oriole are among the special birds found here. We will spend a morning at the Lancetilla Botanical Gardens near Tela, also along the north coast. The birding here is excellent and we will have the chance to see Great Antshrike, Black-headed Trogon, Turquoise-browed Motmot, and many others. A day trip to the dry Aguan Valley on the opposite side of the mountains will take us into a cactus/thorn-scrub ecosystem to look for the only bird endemic to Honduras, the endangered Honduran Emerald.

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The Lodge at Pico Bonito provides a perfect setting to familiarize oneself with Honduras. Tastefully decorated, comfortable rooms; a lovely restaurant serving excellent food; marvelous views of the surrounding mountains; and several miles of trails offer a sense of luxury and seclusion, all combining to make for a true week in paradise!

For those who wish to extend their stay in Honduras, this departure can be complemented with a short post-trip extension to mystical Copán, one of the great centers of Mayan civilization. Located in western Honduras, Copán is especially renowned for the remarkably intact stelae and sculptured decorations that adorn the site's ancient temples and other structures. For birders, Copán offers excellent opportunities for observing a number of birds not found in the Pico Bonito area.

February 12, Day 1: Arrival in San Pedro Sula, Honduras; transfer to The Lodge at Pico Bonito. Tour participants should plan to arrive in San Pedro Sula (SAP) by 3:00 p.m. today. Once our group is assembled we'll begin the journey to the Pico Bonito Lodge. The drive to Pico Bonito takes about 2 ½ - 3 hours and provides an interesting visual introduction to the Honduran countryside. Numerous hills and small villages are interspersed with river drainages and fruit plantations, offering tremendous variety in a compact area.

We will arrive at The Lodge at Pico Bonito in the late afternoon and have the remainder of the day to settle into our rooms or take an introductory walk around the lodge grounds. With an array of tropical plants lining the pathways, and the sight of Pico Bonito looming overhead, we think you will find the setting irresistible. Early in the evening we will gather for an official trip orientation, followed by a delicious dinner in the lodge's full-service restaurant.

NIGHT: The Lodge at Pico Bonito, La Ceiba

February 13-17, Days 2-6: The Lodge at Pico Bonito; Cuero Y Salado Wildlife Refuge, Lancetilla Botanical Gardens; and the Aguan Valley. Only minutes from the coastal town of La Ceiba, the Lodge at Pico Bonito is the only lodge in Honduras with Small Luxury Hotel status. Unobtrusive and elegant, the lodge is a model of privacy and superior design. Among the many amenities, participants will enjoy individual cabins that feature hardwood floors, private bathrooms, louvered and screened windows, ceiling fans, and a veranda with a hammock. The main public area offers an open-air environment with fine views of the beautiful gardens that decorate the lodge's rear entrance. The restaurant boasts excellent cuisine and a full-service bar, while a wonderful landscaped swimming pool offers views of the surrounding forest and gardens. For those wanting to take it easy, other diversions includes an outdoor veranda and a comfortable reading area, as well as a butterfly farm, reptile house and coffee plantation nearby.

From a natural history standpoint, part of what makes Pico Bonito so interesting is its location. Strategically situated between the coast and the mountains, birders have a choice of habitats to cover. We will have five full days, and parts of two others, to get to know Pico Bonito and nearby areas. Our itinerary will be flexible, ensuring that we have time to visit the region's best sites. Time spent exploring the lodge grounds, trails, and observation towers will be complemented by field trips to other areas offering different habitats and birds, including Cuero y Salado Wildlife Refuge; Lancetilla Botanical Garden; and the dry Aguan Valley. This north coast region is the most avian-rich part of the country and over half of Honduras's 800 bird species have been found here. An optional snorkeling trip is available through the lodge for those who wish to sample the near-shore marine ecosystem

The following paragraphs describe the major areas that will be visited.

(1) The Lodge at Pico Bonito

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Birds are often plentiful right around the lodge grounds, where an assortment of native and introduced trees entice fruit-eating and nectar-feeding species such as hummingbirds, warblers, honeycreepers, tanagers, orioles, oropendolas, and more. Around the cabins and reception area we may encounter Olive-throated Parakeet; White-crowned Parrot; Violaceous Trogon; Keel-billed Toucan; Collared Aracari; Blue-crowned Motmot; Violet-crowned Woodnymph; Long-billed and Stripe-throated hermits; Lineated and Black-cheeked woodpeckers; Boat-billed and Social flycatchers; Clay-colored Thrush; Olive-backed Euphonia; Yellow-winged Tanager; Black-headed Saltator; and Black-cowled Oriole. Short trails from the lodge provide access into the forest near the periphery of the national park, where a range of edge and deep forest species occur, including Slaty-tailed Trogon, Chestnut-colored Woodpecker, Buff-throated Foliage-gleaner, Sepia-capped and Ochre-bellied flycatchers, White-collared Manakin, White-breasted Wood-Wren and Black-throated Shrike-Tanager, among others. Many microhabitats are found within a compact area here, and the trails take us alternately through young secondary woodland and overgrown cacao plantations, beneath giant old-growth hardwood, past dense tangles of vines, and even to the edge of a rushing rocky river. The Lodge at Pico Bonito also boasts two solidly built birding towers and a viewing platform a short distance from the lodge.

The first tower, near the trailhead, affords commanding views of the rushing Coloradito River below, jagged mountain ridges above, and forest canopy around us. It is from here that the amazing Lovely Cotinga is seen with surprising frequency, feeding on fruiting trees in the area and keeping an eye out across the river valley for other males. If fortune is with us, we may spot several, sometimes even in the same tree! This lofty vantage point also provides wonderful opportunities for observing other treetop species. Several raptors occur here as well and can sometimes be seen soaring over the forest on sunny mornings, perhaps including White Hawk, Black Hawk-Eagle or even the King Vulture. One of the more fascinating spectacles is the sight of hundreds of White-collared swifts wheeling and careening over the river valley in huge roving flocks as they leave the vicinity of their roost sites behind the waterfalls plunging down the mountain slopes. The primary forest higher up on the ridges is the home of the Keel-billed Motmot, one of the greatest treasures of the Pico Bonito forests. This rare species is difficult to find almost anywhere else, but this area is home to several pairs, and for those able to hike up-slope our chances of seeing this special bird are good. We will spend considerable time searching for it, if necessary

We will also regularly check the lower lodge grounds and entry road. Unlike the heavy forest above, this area is more open and a patchwork of habitats, where secondary forest is interlaced with orchards, clearings, and brushy edges. The resulting birdlife is quite different. A sampling of birds often seen here includes Scrub, White-vented, and Yellow-throated Euphonias (and sometimes even the fabulous Blue-crowned Chlorophonia), Turquoise-browed Motmot, Pale-billed and Black-cheeked woodpeckers, Black-headed Trogon, Variable and White-collared seedeaters, and an interesting diversity of North American migrants on their wintering grounds. Indeed, a wide variety of “eastern” vireos, warblers, tanagers, buntings, and orioles are likely. At night it is not uncommon to hear Great Potoos issue their bizarre calls, while several species of owls are possible, including Vermiculated Screech-Owl and Mottled and Black-and-white owls.

NOTE: An optional half-day snorkeling trip to Cayos Cochinos is available through the lodge. For an additional \$130/person, the lodge provides transportation to the Cayos Cochinos, a group of 15 small remote islands about 10 miles from the shore of La Ceiba. Located on the world's second largest barrier reef, these islands are part of the Bay Islands of Honduras and have been designated a part of the protected biological reserve. The protected area covers approximately 190 square miles. The package includes transportation, equipment (fins, mask, and snorkel) and a fresh fish lunch at a Garifuna village on one of the islands.

(2) Cuero y Salado Wildlife Refuge

One morning we will journey out from the lodge to the mangrove-lined waterways of the coast. Our destination is the Cuero y Salado Wildlife Refuge, a coastal wetland encompassing grassy marshlands, tropical hardwoods, and mangrove forests. To get there, we will board a small train (called a “burra”) for a delightful ride through pastures, marshes, and coconut groves. The special appeal of this trip comes from the fact that the train and rail line are the originals, dating from the 1890s when the coastal lowlands were first developed for large-scale

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agriculture. Rather than building a network of roads to provide access and to get the crops out, the owners of the plantation installed a narrow-gauge rail through the agricultural lands all the way to the coast. The clackety-clack of the train, the livestock in the pastures, and the sight of men hard at work in their fields will surely remind us of a bygone era.

Birds abound, with sightings of Roadside Hawk, Ruddy Ground-Dove, Groove-billed Ani, and Great Kiskadee assured. The marshes often contain a nice assortment of wetland and pasture birds, perhaps including Bare-throated Tiger-Heron and other herons and egrets; Wood Stork, Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture, and Limpkin; even the stately Jabiru is occasionally seen here. Upon arrival at the refuge, we will board motorboats to explore the mangrove-lined lagoon. Here we may see mantled howler and white-faced capuchin monkeys, as well as crocodiles and turtles. Butterflies are present in profusion, and the neon male *Morpho cypris* is another common sight. Notable bird species include Boat-billed Heron, Anhinga, Common Black-Hawk, Sungrebe, Gray-necked Wood-Rail, Pale-vented Pigeon, and Spot-breasted Oriole. Five species of kingfisher are found here, running the size gamut from the giant Ringed to the intermediate Belted and Amazon, to the smaller Green, and finally to the diminutive American Pygmy. Gray-headed Kites are occasionally seen soaring overhead, while Gray and Roadside hawks and Laughing Falcons watch over the pastures and cultivated lands.

(3) Lancetilla Botanical Garden

On another day we will travel about an hour west of the lodge to the coastal town of Tela, gateway to the remarkable Lancetilla Botanical Garden. Established as an agricultural research center and experimental station in 1926 by the United Fruit Company, the gardens quickly grew in size and importance. Named after a small spiny palm native to Honduras's north coast, Lancetilla is today the second largest tropical botanical garden in the world. The garden boasts an outstanding collection of tropical plants from the Central American region and other areas of the world. Among its botanical treasures are significant collections of orchids and ornamental plants as well as an area of protected tropical broadleaf rainforest.

Lancetilla has also become a priority destination for birders due to the diversity of ecosystems and impressive mix of bird species found here. We will spend the early part of the morning birding our way along the entry road, where a preponderance of open space and forest edge offers good birding. Species often seen here include Little Tinamou (heard readily, but rarely seen), Ruddy Crake; Gray and Short-tailed hawks; Short-billed Pigeon; Squirrel Cuckoo; Red-lore Parrot; Black-headed, Collared, and Slaty-tailed trogons; Turquoise-browed Motmot; Stripe-throated and Long-tailed hermits; Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Great and Barred antshrikes; Dusky Antbird; Yellow-bellied Tyrannulet and numerous other flycatchers, Masked Tityra, Passerini's and Crimson-collared Tanagers, Black-striped Sparrow, and Buff-throated Saltator.

We will be away from the lodge for most of the day and will return in the middle to late afternoon.

(4) Aguan Valley

Lying on the south side of the Pico Bonito is the Aguan Valley. The sparse, almost desert-like, environment here is a direct result of the valley's location in the rainshadow created by the mountains to the north. Replete with cacti, succulents, and acacias, the Aguan Valley is quite unlike any other part of Honduras. It is also the best place to observe the endemic Honduran Emerald, a hummingbird that is one of the rarest and most localized birds in Central America. This glittery green sprite is Honduras's only endemic bird and survives on the nectar of cacti, bromeliads, and other flowering plants.

A full day of our itinerary is allotted for the trip to the Aguan Valley and back. This activity will require a 4:30 a.m. departure from the lodge, but we feel that it's worth it given the opportunity to experience one of the country's most unusual regions in addition to observing the country's only endemic bird.

The thorn-scrub forest characterizing the Aguan Valley is one of the most restricted habitats in Honduras, a spiny, prickly thicket of well-armed plants. This remarkable habitat is a wonderland of isolation, holding populations of species which are found only sparingly in Honduras but predominate further north. It is also one

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of only two sites where Honduras's sole endemic bird, the Honduran Emerald, survives. Even though the bird is actually fairly common within its habitat, its close ties to this unique ecosystem make it an endangered species, as much of the remaining native habitat has undergone rapid conversion to ranching and farming activities. Efforts have been under way since 2004 to form as large a reserve as possible to help protect the Emerald, as well as the unique plant community here, and in 2005 a newly formed Honduran Emerald Preserve opened, protecting more than 5,000 acres of land. The core of the preserve consists of an old Honduran military base; future funds will go to purchase adjacent properties to expand the preserve.

The changes in the local landscape will be instantly apparent upon entry into the preserve. Here the habitat is close to pristine in many places, and the Honduran Emerald is numerous. By imitating the call of the Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl, we can "toot" in numbers of Emeralds, as well as the owl itself! Our searches for the Emerald are bound to turn up a variety of other desirable and localized species. Besides the target bird, we have excellent chances of seeing White-fronted Parrot, Cinnamon Hummingbird, the "Salvin's" race of Canivet's Emerald (perhaps a separate species), White-lored Gnatcatcher, White-bellied Wren and Altamira Oriole. With luck and careful watching we may spot a Lesser Ground-Cuckoo or Lesser Roadrunner. Throughout the area Neotropical migrants are surprisingly numerous and diverse.

We will have lunch at a local restaurant before the drive back to The Lodge at Pico Bonito.

NIGHTS: The Lodge at Pico Bonito, La Ceiba

February 18, Day 7: Morning at Pico Bonito; afternoon transfer to San Pedro Sula (for some). We will have a final day at Pico Bonito, our activities dependent upon our success in finding some of the more special birds of the region. Perhaps we will walk the upper trail above the lodge a final time, or visit the observation tower for a final vigil for the Lovely Cotinga. Still another option might find us on the lower trail in front of the lodge in search of more forest birds that we may have previously overlooked.

Those participants departing San Pedro Sula the next day (February 19) on flights departing SAP **prior to 12 noon**, will transfer back to San Pedro Sula this afternoon and will overnight in a comfortable hotel not far from the airport. The following morning (February 19) participants are free to make their own way to the airport for departing flight home (taxi is approximately \$20).

Those participants continuing on the Copan Extension will transfer back to San Pedro Sula this afternoon and will overnight in a comfortable hotel not far from the airport.

Participants departing SAP the next day (February 19) on flights which **depart after 12 noon** will spend the final night at The Lodge at Pico Bonito.

NIGHT: The Lodge at Pico Bonito **OR** Metrotel Express, San Pedro Sula

February 19, Day 8: Departure for home. Participants departing San Pedro Sula on flights later than noon today will transfer from The Lodge at Pico Bonito directly to the airport after breakfast.

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Honduras is often referred to as an undiscovered treasure. Despite its remarkable natural history, a unique diversity of landforms, and a mixture of living cultures unmatched anywhere else in the region, Honduras has so far escaped the mass tourism associated with other parts of Central America.

This specially designed extension to the far western corner of the country centers on the mystical Mayan ruins of Copán, where a prominent slice of Honduras' unique biological and human heritage is on display. This tour is ideal for those who prefer a single-site stay while discovering the birds, habitats, archaeology, and varied cuisine of a delightful corner of the world. Our accommodation for this trip is the Hacienda San Lucas, a highly regarded eco-lodge built on the site of a 100-year old, family-owned property.

The archaeological site at Copán, in far western Honduras, is among the most renowned within all of ancient Mesoamerica. Identified as one of the great cultural centers of the Mayan civilization, Copán is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and has been christened the "Paris of the Mayan World." The remarkably well preserved portrait stelae, hieroglyphic stairway, temples, and other sculptures dating from the Classic period (5th-9th centuries A.D.) form a collection of art and artifacts of tremendous historical and anthropological significance. We will spend much of a day birding and touring the site and adjacent museum.

From a natural history perspective, the area surrounding Copán offers sensational biological diversity. Several distinct habitat zones come together in close proximity here, where one can find lowland, mid-elevation, and cloud forests along with pine/oak and semi-deciduous woodlands. A geographical positioning close to the Continental Divide lends the region to a mixing of Caribbean and Pacific slope biota. The bird list alone for this part of the country has surpassed 400 species (and counting) and makes Copán one of the more well studied areas in the country. Its orchid and butterfly diversity is also proving just as rich. Time in the field will undoubtedly produce some of some of Central America's most striking bird species including White-throated Magpie-Jay and Turquoise-browed Motmot, and an exciting assortment of parrots, toucans, woodpeckers, hummingbirds, flycatchers, warblers, tanagers, orioles, and more.

We will spend each night at the enchanting Hacienda San Lucas, only minutes above the town of Copán Ruins. The lodge, built entirely without electricity or heavy machinery, is a remarkable achievement in "green" construction. The charm of the place lies in its intimacy (eight individually designed rooms), renowned cuisine, and access to a system of private trails. There is even a Mayan ruin, Los Sapos, on the property. Hacienda San Lucas has been warmly received as one of Central America's top eco-lodges and publicized in many travel magazines and various online resources.

Each day we will venture out to enjoy the archaeological, cultural, and natural wonders that abound in the area. Visits to Mayan (and possibly non-Mayan) sites will appeal to both archaeology buffs and birders alike while a trip into the mountains will reveal a host of birds not found in the immediate vicinity of Copán. For good measure, we will enjoy some of the best cuisine found in the country. This is a trip that will open one's eyes to the sights, sounds and tastes of one of Honduras' premiere destinations.

February 18, Day 1: Arrival in San Pedro Sula, Honduras; transfer to Metrotel Hotel. Trip participants continuing from The Lodge at Pico Bonito tour will arrive at the Metrotel Hotel in San Pedro Sula by 5:30 p.m.

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Those taking Honduras: Copán as a stand-alone tour may plan to arrive in San Pedro Sula (SAP) at any time today

Upon arrival please make your way to the Metrotel Express hotel, located only minutes from the airport (taxi is approximately \$20). Participants will have the afternoon free today to relax in the comfort of their rooms or enjoy some of the hotel's many amenities.

This evening you will meet your tour leader in the hotel lobby at 6:00 p.m. for a tour welcome and orientation followed by dinner.

NIGHT: Metrotel Express, San Pedro Sula

February 19, Day 2: Morning transfer to Copán (including El Puente archaeological site); afternoon at Hacienda San Lucas. We will gather in the hotel lobby at 6:30 a.m. to meet and greet one another and outline the exciting activities we've planned for the days ahead.

Now your adventure begins! Following breakfast we will board a very comfortable coaster bus and settle in for the morning-long ride to the Hacienda San Lucas, located above the town of Copán Ruins in far western Honduras. The transit takes about three hours but will be broken up with a stop at El Puente archaeological site for our first opportunity to go birding and receive an introductory taste of Mayan history.

Upon leaving San Pedro Sula, we will notice immediate changes in the landscape, with hills covered in pine/oak forest and semi-deciduous woodland. Moving toward the western highlands, we will steadily gain elevation until reaching 2,000 feet in Copán where it is considerably cooler.

About an hour out of San Pedro Sula lies El Puente archaeological site near the town of La Entrada. "Discovered" in 1935 by Danish explorer, Jens Yde, the site contains 210 structures that include tombs, living quarters, and a large Mayan pyramid, although only the main ruins group has been restored. El Puente is one of the easternmost Mayan sites known to date and is one of the largest of several hundred found in the area. A small sculpture museum is also located here.

Our local guide will provide interpretation of the site's most important features while the grounds offer excellent birding opportunities. Many of the species typically encountered are representative of a drier forest botanical regime. Some of the birds occurring here are entirely tropical in nature, like White-fronted Parrot, Squirrel Cuckoo, and Cinnamon Hummingbird, while others are more widespread species whose ranges stretch to the southern United States including Crested Caracara, Groove-billed Ani, Golden-fronted Woodpecker, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, and Altamira Oriole. A variety of Neotropical migrants spends their winter amid the mix of ecosystems that characterize western Honduras. During our tour of the ruins we may encounter an assortment of swallows, warblers, grosbeaks, and orioles. American Redstart, Blue Grosbeak, and Painted Bunting are examples of the many possibilities.

Our journey to Copán will end with a mid-day arrival at the highly acclaimed Hacienda San Lucas, a 100-year old private property that now operates as a first-rate eco-lodge. Nestled high above the Copán River and overlooking the main archaeological site, the lodge provides an atmosphere of tranquility and charm.

Owned for many years by the Cueva family, the hacienda is situated on 300 acres of lush tropical forest. Flavia Cueva, owner of the property, has dedicated herself to promoting the value of sustainable development in an environmentally friendly way. The result is one of Central America's most special lodges. Open since 2000, and expanded in 2005, the hacienda has been lovingly restored by hand to its original design, using only local materials, labor, and techniques. Special attention was given to the landscaping and layout of the lodge to preserve the authenticity of the original structure. In fact, construction was based on the analysis of an

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archaeologist from the Institute of History and Anthropology to ensure that no destruction or desecration of any buried Mayan structures would occur.

Remarkably, the lodge was completed without electricity or the use of heavy modern machinery. Today, Hacienda San Lucas boasts 8 double rooms, each individually designed and decorated to ensure a sense of originality. All rooms feature two large hand-crafted double beds, private bathrooms with hot water, ceiling fans, and solar lighting. At night you'll enjoy the intimacy of your room by candlelight.

The ambience at Hacienda San Lucas is enhanced by its renowned cuisine where food is prepared in front of guests in an open kitchen. The full-service restaurant and bar serves a blend of local and traditional fare found nowhere else in the country. From homemade molé sauce, to special chicken and black bean dishes, to tasty salads, soups, desserts, and South American wines, we are sure you will delight in the restaurant's amazing offerings.

We will spend the remainder of the day exploring the property, watching for birds, and walking some of the trails out from the lodge. Bird possibilities are substantial. White-tipped Dove, Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl, Turquoise-browed Motmot, Blue-crowned Motmot, White-throated Magpie-Jay, and Altamira Oriole can be found almost daily right around the lodge. Other species occurring in the general area include Swallow-tailed Kite, Gray Hawk, Zone-tailed Hawk, Green (Red-throated) Parakeet, White-collared Swift, Collared Aracari, Olivaceous and Ivory-billed woodcreepers, Ochre-bellied Flycatcher, Gray-breasted Martin, Rufous-capped Warbler, Rusty Sparrow, Yellow-winged Tanager, and more.

There is even a Mayan archaeological site, Los Sapos ("The Toads"), on the grounds of the hacienda. For the Maya, the frog, or toad, was the symbol of regeneration and rebirth. Ancient pottery, female figurines, and other artifacts found here support the theory that the site was dedicated to women and fertility.

NIGHT: Hacienda San Lucas, Copan Ruins

February 20, Day 3: Copán archaeological site; exploring the town of Copán Ruins. We will dedicate the entire morning today to exploring the famous archaeological site of Copán, one of the best preserved of all ancient Mayan cities. We will arrive at the ruins complex as early as possible to maximize the morning birding potential, while later, our tour of the ruins will include the site's most important structures.

Situated near the Guatemalan border, Copán is the site of a major dynastic kingdom that flourished in the Maya Classic Era (5th-9th centuries A.D.). While not physically as large as some of the famous sites to the north (Tikal and Chichen Itza, for examples), the importance of Copán lies in its remarkably well-preserved hieroglyphic texts that adorn the site's ancient monuments and structures. The vast amount of inscriptions found here, which tell many stories of past rulers and significant events, has led scholars to surmise that the site was a center of great culture and literacy. The longevity of the carvings and other inscribed ornamentation is due to the fact that the stone used at this site is a highly resistant volcanic tuff (an ancient solidified ash) and not the erosion-prone limestone that characterizes most other Mayan sites. Copán remained unknown to the outside world until it was found in 1576 by a Spanish explorer. Declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1980, it is today one of the most spectacular cities of the ancient Mayan civilization.

The forest at the archaeological park grows around the ruins so that birds are readily found. Roadside Hawk, Blue-crowned Motmot, Social and Boat-billed flycatchers, Rufous-naped Wren, Yellow-throated Euphonia, Blue-gray Tanager, Grayish Saltator, and Chestnut-headed Oropendola inhabit the area along with Rose-throated Becard, Masked Tityra, Spot-breasted Oriole, and many others. An assortment of wintering warblers are also found here. By inspecting the trees in and around the archaeological park we are bound to locate such gems as Black-throated Green, Black-and-white, Chestnut-sided, and Magnolia warblers.

A nature trail that accesses a stand of deciduous forest will see us on the lookout for a mix of dry and wetter forest bird species. Plain Chachalaca, Red-billed Pigeon, Ruddy Ground-Dove, Green (Red-throated) Parakeet,

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Ivory-billed Woodcreeper, Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush, Rufous-browed Peppershrike, and Streak-backed Oriole are representative of the diversity of birds found here.

Around mid-morning our birding will be complemented by a guided tour of the archaeological park and recently remodeled Sculpture Museum. Among the top attractions are:

The Acropolis – This was the main seat of political and religious power, inhabited by the king and his governmental administrators, such as they were. The acropolis holds Copán's largest complex of pyramids, plazas, and palaces, largely contained in the East and West courts.

The Great Plaza – This enormous plaza, known for its collection of stelae and altars, contains some of Copán's greatest hieroglyphic treasures. The Temple of Inscriptions is situated toward the south end of the plaza and the Hieroglyphic Stairway, perhaps Copán's greatest structure, being to the east. Numerous stelae, many carved with animals or rulers, are found throughout the area.

Hieroglyphic Stairway - The Hieroglyphic Stairway, with its thousands of glyphs, is the longest ancient Mayan text known to archaeologists and tells the stories of the city's royal past and other important events.

Ball Court – Located adjacent to the Great Plaza, the ball court at Copán is among the largest ever found. The Mesoamerican ballgame was both sport and ritual for pre-Colombian peoples.

Sculpture Museum - The recently remodeled sculpture museum is the perfect place to end our ruins tour. We will see many examples of original carvings that were moved here to protect them from the elements. The museum also houses a full-size replica of the astonishing Rosalila temple, the only known Copán temple to have survived completely, down to the magnificent painted stucco ornamentation of its facade.

Following our morning of touring, we will have a lunch catered by Hacienda San Lucas right at the archaeological park! Afterward, depending on the weather, quality of birding, and our ability to see the most important archaeological features, we will have a couple of hours to explore the lovely cobble-stoned village of Copán Ruins. Among the attractions is a variety of shops, courtyards and plazas. The inner courtyard behind the central park holds a market that is a good place to see what local vendors bring in from the countryside to sell. A number of edible plants and flowers can often be found for sale here.

We will also offer an opportunity to view the incredible photographic exhibit, **Fragile Memories: Images of Archaeology and Community at Copán, 1891–1900**. At the end of the nineteenth century, expedition teams from Harvard University's Peabody Museum visited remote areas of Mexico and Central America, including Copán. The Peabody Museum holds the written and visual records of these early expeditions and recently completed a two-year project to digitize over 10,000 nineteenth-century glass-plate negatives. Following a 2009 exhibition at Harvard, the collection was recently donated to the town of Copán Ruins where it is on permanent display.

We will return to the hacienda in the late afternoon for some late birding or to freshen up before dinner.

NIGHT: Hacienda San Lucas, Copan Ruins

February 21, Day 4: La Laguna-San Francisco road, and Las Sepulturas archaeological site. This morning, we will venture to the wooded foothills south of the Copán Valley. We will pass through farmland, a Maya-Chorti village (La Laguna), and a wide variety of habitats including semi-arid scrub, pine/oak woodland, coffee fincas, humid pine/oak forest, and ravines with broadleaf trees. We will eventually arrive at an elevation of 4,000 feet at a point that overlooks the valley.

The rich mix of habitats along this route lends itself to a wide variety of bird species. Many outings can easily yield 80-90 species. Stops along the lower portion of the road should yield many species indicative of open

Honduras: The Lodge at Pico Bonito and Copan Extension, Page 10

country and drier forest ecosystems, among them, Lesser Roadrunner, Cinnamon Hummingbird, Canivet's (Salvin's) Emerald, Barred Antshrike, White-throated Magpie-Jay, Rufous-naped Wren, Spot-breasted and Streak-backed orioles, Rusty Sparrow, White-collared Seedeater, Lesser Goldfinch and a variety of wintering Neotropical migrants. Higher up, we will enter the pine/oak woodlands, where we will be especially alert for roving bands of Bushy-crested Jays and Yellow-backed Orioles, as well as White-breasted Hawk, Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl, Azure-crowned Hummingbird, Golden-olive Woodpecker, Ivory-billed and Olivaceous Woodcreepers, Grace's and Olive warblers, and lingering flocks of wintering warblers that could include Townsend's, Hermit, Black-throated Green, Wilson's, and even Golden-cheeked (rarely) warblers. There will be plenty here to keep us busy for an entire morning. In fact, we will likely return to this area the next day, in order to bird the upper portion of the road (which we likely not have sufficient time for today) at the optimal time of the morning

In the latter part of the afternoon we will visit Las Sepulturas archaeological site adjacent to the main ruins. This is where the ruling elite lived. The place derives its name from "recent" farmers who accidentally uncovered many tombs of the nobles who were buried next to their houses, as was the Mayan custom. This site was originally connected to the main plaza via an elevated road, called a *sacbé*, which some day may be fully excavated and opened to the public.

Although it is very close to the main site, Las Sepulturas receives comparatively few tourists. It can also be a good place to bird where there is potential for spotting Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl, Green-breasted Mango, Brown-crested Flycatcher, Rose-throated Becard, Spot-breasted Wren, Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush, Rufous-browed Peppershrike, Yellow-green Vireo, Gray-crowned Yellowthroat, and a variety of migrant wood-warblers including Hooded, Magnolia, Wilson's and Worm-eating warblers, as well as the resident Rufous-capped Warbler.

NIGHT: Hacienda San Lucas, Copan Ruins

February 22, Day 5: Birding the La Laguna highlands. After breakfast at the lodge we will venture again by four-wheel drive vehicle into the piney highlands of the La Laguna-San Francisco road. This time, we will begin birding farther up the road, allowing us to concentrate on the birds of the upper pine/oak zone, as well as those species found in the more humid ravines that are forested with broad-leafed trees. These hills are covered in native pines and oaks and are a safehaven for a myriad of migratory wood warblers and resident species. A sampling of birds that we might see includes Common Black-Hawk, White-crowned Parrot, White-collared and Vaux's swifts, Azure-crowned and Sparkling-tailed hummingbirds, Emerald Toucanet, Elegant Trogon, Black-banded Woodcreeper, Greater Pewee, Hammond's Flycatcher, Eye-ringed Flatbill, Plain Wren, Brown Creeper, Brown-backed Solitaire, Painted and Slate-throated redstarts, Rusty Sparrow, Hepatic and Flame-colored tanagers, Elegant Euphonia, Blue-crowned Chlorophonia, White-naped Brush-Finch, and Black-headed Siskin. We will also have more opportunities for seeing the Bushy-crested Jay, a species that has a limited distribution in central Guatemala, parts of El Salvador, and northern Nicaragua, but is found throughout Honduras. It is usually seen traveling in groups of up to 10 or more, often accompanied by Black-headed Saltators and Yellow-backed Orioles.

We will likely return to the hacienda for lunch, followed by a mid-afternoon siesta and a final bird walk on the lodge trails. Sunsets here are routinely spectacular, and this will be a nice opportunity for a relaxing "sundowner," followed by a final checklist session and a delicious farewell dinner.

NIGHT: Hacienda San Lucas, Copan Ruins

February 23, Day 6: Morning return to San Pedro Sula; departure for home or continue on to the Lodge at Pico Bonito. We will load up after breakfast this morning and depart for San Pedro Sula. For those not continuing on to Pico Bonito, our arrival at the airport will be timed to allow for a comfortable amount of time for check-in in advance of international flights, which depart around mid-day.

Honduras: The Lodge at Pico Bonito and Copan Extension, Page 11

TOUR SIZE: Honduras: The Lodge at Pico Bonito is limited to 14 participants; Honduras: Copán is limited to 14 participants.

TOUR LEADERS: David Wolf and a local leader; Kevin Zimmer and a local leader will lead the Copán extension.

David Wolf is a senior member of the VENT staff and one of our most experienced tour leaders. After birding the U.S. and Mexico for over a decade, an interest in the wildlife of Africa led him to Kenya in 1975, where he spent over a year studying the birds and other wildlife of the African continent. Soon after his return to Texas he began leading Rockport Wildlife Weekends for VENT, at that time a new company, and he hasn't looked back since. In addition to Africa, David has extensive birding and tour-leading experience in North America and the Neotropics, and has birded widely on all of the continents. He unites great birding skills with a wide-ranging interest in all aspects of natural history, which he shares readily with tour participants. David and his wife, Mimi, live on a small farm in Nacogdoches, Texas, with assorted horses, cats, and dogs. They have two grown children, Matt and Elena, and are now the happy grandparents of Reimer and Ellison Rose, Matt and Tiffany's children.

Kevin Zimmer has authored three books and numerous papers dealing with field identification and bird-finding in North America. His book, *Birding in the American West: A Handbook*, deals with finding and identifying birds in the western United States. Living in Alaska contributed to his affection for the Far North, where he has anchored VENT's tour program since 1986. For the past 20 years he has concentrated his attention on the Neotropics, particularly on Brazil, Costa Rica, Panama, Peru, and Venezuela. He has directed VENT's Brazil program since 1991. Kevin has a PhD in biology (research emphasis in Avian Evolutionary Ecology) from New Mexico State University, and is currently a field associate of Cornell's Laboratory of Ornithology and a Research Associate of the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History. He has authored numerous technical papers on the taxonomy, distribution, and behavior of Neotropical birds, particularly those of the Amazon basin. In 2003 he completed (with co-author Mort Isler) the major chapter on the *Thamnophilidae* (antbirds) for the prestigious *Handbook of Birds of the World* series. In 2006, he and Curtis Marantz coauthored a six-CD compilation of *Bird Voices of Alta Floresta and Southeastern Amazonian Brazil* (produced by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's Macaulay Library of Natural Sounds) that represents the most comprehensive set of commercially available bird recordings for any part of the Amazon Basin. He and Andrew Whittaker are currently at work on a comprehensive field guide to the birds of Brazil, to be published by Princeton University Press. Kevin lives in Atascadero, California with his wife Susan. Their daughter Marina completed her master's degree in psychology at Dominican University in May 2008. Recently married, she and her husband are now living in Napa, California.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:

Honduras: The Lodge at Pico Bonito

The fee for this tour is **\$3,495** per person in double occupancy. This includes all meals beginning with lunch on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 8, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare from your home to San Pedro Sula and return, extra hotel nights before Day 1 or after Day 7 or meals before Day 1 or after breakfast on Day 8, private transfer to the Lodge at Pico Bonito, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, phone calls, laundry, items of a personal nature, or the optional snorkeling trip.

The single supplement for this tour is **\$450**. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations, or if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you.

Honduras: Copán

Honduras: The Lodge at Pico Bonito and Copan Extension, Page 12

The fee for this tour is **\$2,195** per person in double occupancy. This includes all meals beginning with dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 6, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, and guide services provided by the tour leaders and local guides. It does not include airfare from your home to San Pedro Sula and return, extra hotel nights or meals before Day 1 or after Day 6, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, tips to local guides, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature.

The single supplement for this tour is **\$600**. **NOTE:** Single accommodations cannot be guaranteed due to the size of the lodge. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations and space is available, or, if space is available and you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you.

TOUR REGISTRATION: To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The deposit for the Pico Bonito Lodge tour is **\$500**, and the deposit for Copan is also **\$500**. If you prefer to pay your deposit(s) by check, your tour space will be held for 10 days to allow time for the VENT office to receive your deposit and completed registration form. If you prefer to pay your deposit using a credit card, your deposit must be made with MasterCard or Visa at the time of registration. The VENT registration form should then be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office. Full payment of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to the tour departure date

CANCELLATION POLICY: Cancellation Penalties and Refunds are based on the following schedule: if cancellation is made 120 days or more before the tour departure date, the deposit less \$250 per person is refundable. If cancellation is made fewer than 120 days before departure date, no refund is available. This policy and fee schedule also applies to pre-trip and post-trip extensions, as well as any transfers from one tour to another. ***We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance for your protection.***

If you cancel:

120 days or more before departure date
Fewer than 120 days before departure date

Your refund will be:

Your deposit minus \$250.
No refund available.

TRIP CANCELLATION INSURANCE: Application forms for optional coverage for baggage, illness, and trip cancellation can be obtained through the VENT office. We **strongly recommend** that you purchase trip cancellation insurance to protect yourself against losses due to accidents or illness. Check with your insurance agent regarding coverage you may presently have via other insurance policies that may cover illness during your trip. **Waiver for pre-existing conditions is available, however, stipulations apply, usually requiring the purchase of the insurance soon after registering. Contact the VENT office prior to registration for details. Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of \$50,000. CST #2014998-50.**

EXCHANGE RATE SURCHARGES: In the erratic global financial markets of today, it is difficult to predict foreign currency exchange rates over the long term or at the time of operation of a tour or cruise departure. Tour prices are based upon the rate of exchange at the time of itinerary publication. If exchange rates change drastically, it may be necessary to implement a surcharge. If a surcharge is necessary, every effort will be made to minimize the amount. In many cases, these additional foreign exchange rate surcharges are passed to VENT by its vendors and suppliers.

FUEL AND FUEL SURCHARGES: In the uncertain, often volatile oil market of late, it is difficult – if not impossible – to predict fuel costs over the long term, and more specifically, at the time of operation of this departure. Our prices are based upon the prevailing fuel rates at the time of itinerary publication. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, if the fuel rates increase significantly, it may be necessary to institute a fuel surcharge.

Honduras: The Lodge at Pico Bonito and Copan Extension, Page 13

AIR INFORMATION: Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements. **All requests for travel assistance (air tickets, additional hotels, etc.) must be received no later than 60 days prior to departure date. Within 60 days, arrangements must be made on your own.**

BAGGAGE: We suggest one medium-size piece of luggage and a smaller bag/carry-on. The Lodge at Pico Bonito provides **excellent one-day laundry service.**

CLOTHING: When preparing for a trip to the tropics, it is generally a good idea to pack lightweight field clothing that dries quickly. Shorts are appropriate for lounging around at The Lodge. A lightweight jacket or parka for rain is essential, and a warm sweater and thermal top are nice to have on hand in the event of a rare cool front. Copán is situated at about 2,000 feet in the cool western highlands. A sweater or warm jacket is recommended for the mornings and evenings. You will be glad for the added warmth in the event of a cold front, especially if we encounter rain. For footwear we recommend a good trail-walking shoe or light hiking boot. Athletic shoes are acceptable but will not keep your feet dry and can become soiled from muddy conditions.

CLIMATE & WEATHER: As Honduras is a country of great geographic diversity, the general climate pattern tends to be affected by local weather phenomena. The late winter is usually an outstanding time to visit as most of the cold fronts, typically more common in the December-January period, have passed through and the chances for rain are considerably diminished. February is generally characterized by mild sunny days with low precipitation, although rain can occur. Daytime highs may reach 85°F and feel hot around San Pedro Sula, the coastal area near Pico Bonito, and the Aguan Valley. The mornings around the lodge will be in the upper 60s/low 70s and reach into the low 80s during the day. Overcast skies are possible and, in the event of a late cold front, participants should be prepared for chilly, wet weather.

As we will travel from near sea level to 4,000 feet for the extension to Copán, participants will experience a range of temperatures from the upper 80s (°F) at San Pedro Sula, to the upper 50s in the Copán area. The western highlands (Copán) are typically much cooler and less humid than the lowlands. Morning overcast is a possibility. In the event of rain, participants should expect chilly wet weather. Daytime highs may reach 85° and feel hot around the Copán archaeological park.

CONDITIONS:

Pico Bonito:

Tour participants should expect a relaxing and fun trip to Honduras. Transportation for our time at Pico Bonito will be aboard Toyota Hiace vans. At Cuero y Salado Refuge, travel will be aboard sturdily built motorboats.

Much of our time at The Lodge will spent along the entry road and on easy trails and tracks into the surrounding woodland and overgrown plantations. The main trail system into the heavier forest has some ups and downs, including well-made steps, but anyone in moderately good shape should be able to do this trail. Those wishing to join the optional search for the Keel-billed Motmot should be prepared for a steep climb of about 1 – 1 ½ hours The bird observation towers are wonderful, but they have several decks of stairs that must be considered. On all of the trails your leader will move at a rate suitable for the group, but for those with problems walking or in poor health this tour may not be suitable.

In our many years of birding the tropics we have found that it is extremely important to get out early in the morning, when the birds are most active, and most days full breakfasts will be served very early, at either 5:30 or even 5 a.m. (except for the day trip to the Aguan Valley, when it will be at 4 a.m.).

Honduras: The Lodge at Pico Bonito and Copan Extension, Page 14

For those who choose the snorkeling option to Cayos Cochinos, the distance is about 10 miles offshore and travel is aboard a 26-foot outboard motor boat.

Copán:

Copán is located in Honduras' western highlands near the border of Guatemala. Elevations will range from near sea level in San Pedro Sula to 4,000 feet in the mountains above the Copán Valley. All nights will be spent at a single site, Hacienda San Lucas, from which we will base our activities. While this trip is a birding trip, a strong emphasis will be placed on archaeology and history as well. Copán is one of the great sites of the ancient Mayan world. To come here and not explore its rich history would not be doing the area justice. Participants should expect long, but fun-filled days that combine dedicated birding outings with visits to archaeological/cultural sites. We will travel with a local guide who knows the history of the region and who will provide interpretation at each of the sites we visit. Anybody not interested in non-birding activities should strongly consider whether this is the right trip.

Transportation between San Pedro Sula and Copán will be aboard a comfortable coaster bus. Once at Copán, some sites, such as the La Laguna/San Francisco Road will likely require the use of four-wheel drive vehicles to reach.

Hacienda San Lucas offers a private and intimate retreat with most of the amenities people prefer, including hot water, ceiling fans (air conditioning is not necessary at this elevation) and large comfortable rooms. The rooms are powered by solar energy. While this is sufficient most of the time, the light is not strong enough to read by at night, at which time the staff lights candles. Guests are encouraged to bring a small travel night light if you wish to read before going to bed.

Electricity is standard 110v outlets. Each bathroom has an outlet on regular electricity for charging toothbrushes, razors, camera batteries, and laptop computers.

Breakfast time will vary from 5:00–7:00 a.m., depending on the planned morning activities.; lunch between 12:00-1:00 p.m.; and dinner around 7:00-7:30 p.m.

Most walking will be over jeep roads and established trails. Our explorations of the archaeological sites will involve mostly level walking on open ground, although some stair climbing of the ruins themselves may also be involved. Nobody will be asked to do more than they are physically capable.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Electricity in Honduras is the same as in the United States 110v outlets.

International **departure tax** is approximately \$37.00 U.S./person (subject to change); **cash payment expected** (dollars are fine).

CURRENCY: The unit of currency in Honduras is the Lempira and, at the time of this publication (February 2010), it is valued at a rate of 18.89 to 1 U.S. Dollar. Most stores and shops in Honduras accept U.S. Dollars and there is almost no reason to change money into Lempira. If you choose to do so it is most easily done before you arrive in Honduras. The Lodge at Pico Bonito **accepts major credit cards** for any personal expenses incurred during your stay.

PASSPORTS AND DOCUMENTS:

PASSPORTS

A valid passport is required. Please check the expiration date on your passport. **If it is not valid for at least six months after your trip return date, we strongly recommend that you get it renewed.** You will also want to make sure that you have at least two blank pages in your passport for stamps.

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If you need a passport, you should get it well in advance of your trip departure date. For additional fees, a passport can be issued on an expedited basis. In the United States this can be done at the nearest passport office, most post offices, or the county clerk's office. You may also visit www.state.gov/travel/ for information on how to get or renew a passport.

As a safety measure, photocopy the first two pages of your passport. Keep the photocopies in a safe place, so if your passport is lost you will have proof of identification. Your passport should be signed and easily available at all times. You will need it for check-in at the airport on your first day of departure, so **do not pack it in your checked luggage.**

VISAS

Visas are not required for U.S. and Canadian citizens for entry into Honduras. Rules and regulations pertaining to non-U.S. or Canadian citizens may vary; citizens of non-U.S. and Canadian countries are advised to check with the consulate or embassy of Honduras.

EQUIPMENT: You should pack a pair of binoculars that are in good repair, along with a belt pack or day pack (for carrying books, sunscreen, extra film, etc.). As a precaution, it is a good idea to pack your binoculars, a change of clothing, toiletry items, medications, and travel documents in your airline carry-on bag. Your leader will have a spotting scope, but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so. Honduras is a country with considerable scenic beauty, so a camera is a good idea as well. In the tropics the sun can be intense at any time of year, so a hat (preferably wide-brimmed) is essential. Participants should strongly consider bringing such basic travel items as sunscreen, flashlight, travel alarm clock, and a small umbrella (in case we should be caught in the rain). A walking stick is handy for the optional hike into the ridgetop forest. If you take advantage of the snorkeling option, please be aware that the lodge provides fins, mask, and a snorkel as part of the package. You may bring your own equipment if you prefer.

HEALTH: Participants on this tour need to be prepared for a moderate amount of walking, some of it over uneven ground and up moderately steep trails. Your tour leader will never push you beyond your limits or subject you to excessively strenuous conditions, but tour participants with known cardiac or pulmonary disorders should seriously consider their ability to participate. Throughout our stay in Honduras, we encourage everybody to drink bottled water. It will always be available either through the Lodge at Pico Bonito or through your tour leader, who will have it on hand for the group. All water, fruits, and vegetables are safe for consumption at the Lodge at Pico Bonito.

If you are taking prescription medication or over-the-counter medicine, be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the tour safely. Please consult your physician as necessary. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medication.

As standard travel precautions, you should always be up to date with tetanus shots, and strongly consider inoculations against Hepatitis types A and B.

Honduras is a country with known occurrences of malaria. Although we will not be in areas of known outbreaks, we recommend participants consult their physician for proper prophylactic prevention. The drug used to prevent and treat the form of malaria found in Central America is Cholorquine. If your travel plans include visiting a country where yellow fever is known to occur before you enter Honduras, you will be required to show proof of vaccination against yellow fever.

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, which operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line (877) FYI-TRIP. You can check the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/travel. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/new_e.html (click on travel health).

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SUGGESTED READING: Our website at www.ventbird.com offers an affiliated online store that carries a wide variety of items for birding and nature lovers with a well stocked library of over 6,000 books. A portion of the sales from the store benefits the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. You might also want to visit such other online stores as www.amazon.com, and for those out-of-print and hard-to-find titles, www.abebooks.com or www.buteobooks.com, which specializes in ornithology books.

The most important field guide for your upcoming trip to Honduras is *A Field Guide to the Birds of Mexico and Northern Central America*, by Steve N.G. Howell and Sophie Webb, published in 1995 by Oxford University Press: London, New York, Tokyo. This is a large field guide. Your tour leader will be carrying a copy and will have it available for group use if you choose not purchase, or wish to carry, this large volume. There are also copies in the library at The Lodge at Pico Bonito.

Additional reference books which may be of interest are *A Field Guide to the Mammals of Central America and Southeast Mexico* by Fiona Reed; *A Swift Guide to the Butterflies of Mexico and Central America* by Jeffrey Glassberg; and *A Field Guide to the Amphibians and Reptiles of the Maya World* by Julian G. Lee.

TIPPING: Tipping (restaurants, porters, drivers, local guides) is included on VENT tours. However, if you feel one or both of your VENT leaders or any local guides or staff have given you exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are not expected and are entirely optional.

RESPONSIBILITY: Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc. (VENT) and/or its Agents act only as agents for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motor-coach, boat, or airplane and assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity which may be occasioned either by reason of defect in any vehicle or for any reason whatsoever, or through the acts or default of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT and its agents can accept 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. All such losses or expenses will have to be borne by the passenger, as tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. The right is reserved 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. 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 leaders on any tour. Where this is necessary, notification will be given to tour members. No refund will be made for any unused portion of the tour unless arrangements are made in sufficient time to avoid penalties. The prices of the tours are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect August 16, 2010, and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change therein. The right is reserved to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely. The airlines concerned and their agents and affiliates are not to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time passengers are not on board their aircraft. The passenger ticket in use by said airlines, when issued, shall constitute the sole contract between the airlines and the purchaser of these tickets and/or passenger. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for these tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airline Reporting Corporation.