

## HONDURAS: WESTERN HIGHLANDS

FEBRUARY 21 – MARCH 1, 2007

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*Welcome to the Western Highlands of Honduras! For this fresh, new trip, we bring you an opportunity to remove the mystery surrounding this seldom-visited region of northern Central America. Your guide is Robert Gallardo, a former Peace Corps volunteer and naturalist extraordinaire who happens to be the de facto world authority on Honduran birds, butterflies, and orchids. He has designed this inaugural trip to combine exciting birding and scenery in a nine-day journey across the cool highlands of western Honduras. Very few visitors ever get to this area, where there is a wealth of natural beauty; those who do find they often have a whole reserve or lengthy trail system all to themselves!*

*The western highlands of Honduras are geographically very similar to parts of Guatemala and southern Mexico. Rugged mountains cloaked in a tantalizing diversity of forest-types characterize the landscape. The birdlife is rich here, and a number of species reach the southern end of their breeding or wintering ranges, such as Buff-collared Nightjar, Blue-throated Motmot, Slender Sheartail, Black-capped Swallow, Rufous-collared Robin, and Red-faced Warbler. The region is dominated by semi-arid pine/oak forest on lower foothills, humid highland pine/oak forest on the higher slopes, and cool broadleaf cloud forest on many of its peaks. Many of the larger tracts of forest are designated national parks.*

*Located in western Honduras, adjacent to the town of Gracias, Lempira, is the towering Celaque National Park, which contains the highest peak in the country at just over 9,000 feet. The park boundary covers almost 60,000 acres of highland pine/oak and cloud forest habitats and is home to a wide range of plants and animals. Numerous species of orchids can be seen along the route into the park. We will stay two nights at the quaint Guancascos Hotel located at the edge of the colonial town of Gracias.*

*We will bird a lower section of the park on two occasions, in search of a number of higher-elevation species that are typically not found on many of our other tours. Examples include White-breasted Hawk, Great Swallow-tailed Swift, Black-banded Woodcreeper, Gray-collared Becard, Flame-colored Tanager, and Black-vented Oriole.*

*Southeast of Gracias is the highland city of La Esperanza, at 6,300 feet. We will stay one night in the cozy cabins of Bosque del Llano de la Virgen. Situated amid a mixed pine forest, the area is full of birds. We'll watch for several species of hummingbird, Bushy-crested Jay, Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush, Olive Warbler, and many types of American wood-warblers that spend the winter here. Even the highly localized Golden-cheeked Warbler is possible.*

*Lying on the continental divide is Marcala, La Paz, located near two small villages of the Lenca tribe, one of the native Honduran tribes. We will stay two nights at the new La Casona country house. It is a working hacienda only recently converted into a lodging facility. Nearby is a large mountainous area where we will spend two mornings birding. We have an excellent chance at viewing the elusive Blue-throated Motmot, which inhabits cloud forests no lower than 5,000 feet.*

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*Other notable species also found here are Fulvous Owl, Amethyst-throated Hummingbird, Green Violet-Ear, Black-capped Swallow, Blue-and-white Mockingbird, Rufous-collared Robin, Prevost's Ground-Sparrow, and Cinnamon-bellied Flowerpiercer.*

*Our final birding site is La Tigra National Park, Honduras's first nationally protected area. Looming above the capital city, Tegucigalpa, the park protects a large tract of forest and is the city's principal source of drinking water. Adjacent to the park's entrance is Las Gloriales, a peaceful country retreat sitting at 5,000 feet, where we will stay for the last three nights. This cloud forest site promises some of the most exciting birding of the trip, and our searches should turn up some of the most sought-after and spectacular species in the American tropics. Among them are Singing Quail, Buffy-crowned Wood-Partridge, Resplendent Quetzal, Green-breasted Mountain-Gem, Scaled Antpitta, and Black-throated Jay.*

**February 21, Day 1: Arrival in Honduras; transfer to Gracias, Lempira.** Today your journey through the western highlands of Honduras begins! Tour participants should plan their flights to arrive in San Pedro Sula, Honduras no later than 2:30 p.m. We will board our transportation and spend the afternoon making our way to the city of Gracias, Lempira—gateway to Celaque National Park. After passing through the town of La Entrada, Copan, we will begin our ascent into the western highlands. Pine/oak forests dominate the landscape as we gain elevation, heralding exciting birds to come.

We will be staying at the quaint Hotel Guancascos, located at the edge of town just below an old Spanish fort. The small, terraced property is built on the side of a hill and offers fine views from the restaurant balcony. Flocks of birds containing wintering warblers, tanagers, orioles, and saltators often pass through the hotel gardens. Common species often seen soaring or flying by the restaurant balcony are Ruddy Ground-Dove, White-fronted Parrot, and occasionally raptors such as Red-tailed and Short-tailed hawks.

NIGHT: Hotel Guancascos, Gracias

**February 22, Day 2: Birding Celaque National Park.** The word “Celaque” in the Lenca language literally means “box of water,” as this mountain produces large amounts of crystalline water for thousands of people who live around the park. Celaque is western Honduras's largest national park and contains over 60,000 acres of highland pine/oak and cloud forest. The country's highest peak, at just over 9,000 feet, sits atop this mountain range, which for much of the year is cloaked in misty clouds. Broadleaf cloud forest dominates the upper reaches of the park from 6,000 to 9,000 feet.

We will devote the entire day to birding the lower section of the park entrance, which is composed of mostly old-growth pine/oak forest, with other broadleaf species mixed in. On our approach to the main gate, we'll pass through farmland and shade-grown coffee plantations. Here, we usually find Turquoise-browed and Blue-crowned motmots, flycatchers, and an assortment of orioles and wintering wood-warblers. The area around the main gate is often productive for Lesser Roadrunner and the beautiful Black-vented Oriole. This oriole has the strange disposition of being found almost exclusively around human dwellings, at least in Honduras.

By walking the road through the park's mature forests, we will likely encounter a number of tantalizing species, resident and migrant birds alike. We will be looking for Great Swallow-tailed Swift, Stripe-tailed Hummingbird, Mountain Trogon, Golden-olive Woodpecker, Tufted Flycatcher, Greater Pewee, Band-backed Wren, Brown-backed Solitaire, Olive Warbler, Painted Redstart, and Flame-colored Tanager. The Golden-cheeked Warbler is a bird rarely seen outside the United States, but they are regular in these woodlands in winter, and we have a good chance of seeing this special bird. Our searches should turn up a number of other wintering warbler species. Bushy-crested Jays and Yellow-backed Orioles usually flock together here, as well. Diligent searching may reveal a number of less-common highland species known from the park. Among the exciting possibilities are Black Swift, White-breasted Hawk, Strong-billed and Black-banded Woodcreepers, Gray-collared Becard and Red-faced Warbler.

We will have a boxed lunch along the scenic river and watch for American Dipper, a rare resident in Honduras. After lunch we will bird our way back to the park entrance and return to the hotel for dinner. After dinner we will drive to some nearby drier pine/oak forest in search of the Whiskered Screech-Owl and other nocturnal species.

NIGHT: Hotel Guancascos, Gracias

**February 23, Day 3: Morning at Celaque National Park; transfer to La Esperanza, Intibuca.** We will return to the park entrance this morning to search for any species we missed the day before. The forest here supports an impressive diversity of birdlife, and we are bound to turn up some exciting new finds. Band-tailed Pigeon, White-throated Swift, White-eared Hummingbird, Green Violet-Ear, White-winged Tanager, Rusty Sparrow, Black-headed Siskin, and Yellow-throated Brush-Finch are all species that we have good chances of finding.

After returning to town, we will have lunch at the hotel and then depart for La Esperanza, Intibuca. We will have a fairly lengthy, but leisurely, drive to look forward to this afternoon. Our route will see us on the highest highway in Honduras, taking us through the mountains and across several highland plateaus, which are mostly covered in more arid pine/oak woodland. We will make occasional rest stops en route and do some birding along the highway. We will check into our accommodations upon arrival in La Esperanza. The Cabañas Bosque del Llano de la Virgen are set amid a pine forest on the edge of town, for a most relaxing setting. This is an appealing place to spend a night, and we will use the remainder of the afternoon to bird around the grounds of the cabins or to simply relax and take in the fresh mountain air.

NIGHT: Cabañas Bosque del Llano de la Virgen, La Esperanza

**February 24, Day 4: Morning at La Esperanza; transfer to Marcala, La Paz.** We will begin the morning with a check of the pine forest surrounding the cabins. We are in prime habitat for a suite of highland species, and time in the field will give us opportunities to find White-eared Hummingbird, Tufted Flycatcher, Steller's Jay, Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush, and Olive Warbler. Upon leaving the city, we'll check a marsh for Sedge Wren, whose populations were recently discovered here. This little wren is quite local and uncommon in Central America. Buff-breasted Flycatcher, Rufous-collared Sparrow, and Black-headed Siskin are still more species we may add to our ever-growing list.

We'll continue across the highlands to the town of Marcala, site of the quiet country house "La Casona," where we will stay for the next two nights. The lodging facility sits on a higher-elevation plateau amid pine-barrens and is actually the gateway to the Opatoro/Guajiquiro Highlands. We'll spend the afternoon birding the lodge grounds, which support a number of more familiar species like Rock Wren, "Southern" House Wren, and Eastern Bluebird, as well as more highly sought-after species such as "Mountain" Pygmy-Owl, Buff-collared Nightjar, and Altamira Oriole.

NIGHT: La Casona, Marcala

**February 25, Day 5: Birding the Opatoro/Guajiquiro Highlands.** Today we'll travel up to one of the most scenic areas of Honduras, where we have access to elevations of over 6,300 feet. Above the city of Marcala are the Opatoro and Guajiquiro Highlands, areas named for two small Lenca villages that sit atop the highland plateau. The road actually traverses the continental divide and provides vista spots from which we can look out onto El Salvador.

We will be birding remnant cloud forest, some of which is old growth, in search of many highly desirable species, such as the prized Blue-throated Motmot. The Blue-throated Motmot can be a difficult species to locate throughout its range, let alone observe. Its cryptic green coloration, small size, and habit of perching in the sub-

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canopy usually render this species nearly invisible. We have found it to be fairly common in this area, however, and usually get good views of it. This bird is one of the signature species of the western Honduran highlands, and we will make every effort to find it.

We will bird from the road as well as along pathways leading into the cloud forest. Bird diversity is high here, and a number of the species we may find are some of the most alluring in all of northern Central America. Though the list of possibilities is extensive, we will be especially alert for the beautiful White-faced Quail-Dove, Barred Parakeet, Green Violet-Ear, Garnet-throated Hummingbird, Mountain Trogon, Emerald Toucanet, Spot-crowned Woodcreeper, Gray-breasted Wood-Wren, Black-headed Nightingale-Thrush, Slate-colored Solitaire, Black Thrush, Golden-browed Warbler, Elegant Euphonia, and Prevost's Ground-Sparrow. We may encounter pairs of the beautifully bicolored Blue-and-white Mockingbird in dense brush lining the roadsides. This highland species is localized in distribution, ranging only from southern Mexico to the cloud forests of western Honduras.

The Black-capped Swallow was once thought to be very rare in Honduras, but is actually fairly common here; we should encounter them at their nesting colonies along road cuts. We will spend most of the day in the highlands and have lunch in the field.

For those wishing to return to the cloud forest after dinner, we will head out to look for Fulvous Owl, whose range and habitat preference in Central America is limited.

NIGHT: La Casona, Marcala

**February 26, Day 6: Morning in Opatoro/Guajiquiro Highlands; transfer to El Hatillo.** This morning we will have breakfast at the hotel and head into the highlands once again. The surrounding forests are bursting with bird activity and diversity. We will want to search for any species we may have missed yesterday and spend just a little more time in this lovely environment. Violet Saberwing, Magnificent and Emerald-chinned hummingbirds, Resplendent Quetzal, Spotted Woodcreeper, Mountain and Rufous-collared thrushes, Brown-capped Vireo, Slate-throated Redstart, Blue-crowned Chlorophonia, and Crescent-chested Warbler are a sampling of what we may find.

We will keep an eye out for some of the rarer species known from the region, birds with highly limited distributions in western Honduras. Among the numerous possibilities are Maroon-chested Ground-Dove, Slender Sheartail, Wine-throated Hummingbird, Ruddy Foliage-Gleaner, Unicolored Jay, Spotted Nightingale-Thrush, and Slaty Finch.

We will have a picnic lunch in the highlands before descending into the Comayagua Valley and continuing south toward Tegucigalpa, then up to El Hatillo near the entrance to La Tigra National Park. We will spend our last three nights in the mountain retreat, Las Gloriales. Sitting at an elevation of approximately 5,000 feet, the facility features a shaded coffee plantation, native pines, and lovely gardens.

NIGHT: Hotel Las Gloriales, El Hatillo

**February 27, Day 7: Birding La Tigra National Park.** After some early morning birding around the hotel, we'll head to the western side of the park and bird the trails around the Jutiapa Visitor Center. Vistas along the road may provide views of soaring raptors like Swallow-tailed Kite, which feeds on cicadas and dragonflies.

Along the forest trails, we will be looking for special cloud forest species such as the Green-breasted Mountain-Gem (an endemic to central and eastern Honduras and northern Nicaragua). They can usually be found feeding on a variety of flowering bromeliads or shrubs alongside other highland hummingbird species, such as the Garnet-throated Hummingbird. Rufous-browed Wrens are typically found making their buzz-like calls in the bushes, while Mountain Trogon, Yellowish Flycatcher, Blue-hooded Euphonia, and Common Bush-Tanager inhabit the surrounding forest. Two species difficult to observe elsewhere in Honduras are found here, too:

Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrush and Black-throated Jay, both of which are usually found no lower than 5,000 feet.

We will have a picnic lunch at the visitor center and spend part of the afternoon birding nearby trails.

NIGHT: Hotel Las Gloriales, El Hatillo

**February 28, Day 8: Birding La Tigra National Park.** Today we will again bird La Tigra National Park, but this time we will be traversing the park on a four-mile walk. The hike will begin with a gradual elevation gain of about 800 feet, ultimately reaching an altitude of 7,000 feet. We'll then start the descent to El Rosario on the east side of the park. The cloud forest here is spectacular, and we may witness incredible views of forested valleys far below.

Our efforts should be rewarded as we search for a bounty of prized species, such as Singing Quail, Buffy-crowned Wood-Partridge, Scaled Antpitta, Azure-hooded Jay, Black Thrush, and Tawny-throated Leaf-tosser. Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch and an assortment of hummingbirds are found all along the hike. In Honduras, Singing Quail has been found at only two sites, and La Tigra is the best place to see it. Its loud, high-pitched, wavering song can be heard echoing through the forest. The Slate-colored Solitaire, with its beautiful flute-like songs, will be our companion for most of the hike.

We will have lunch at El Rosario, and then proceed down to San Juancito, where we will be picked up and taken back to Las Gloriales. The remainder of the day will be spent birding at the hotel or relaxing.

NIGHT: Hotel Las Gloriales, El Hatillo

**March 1, Day 9: Morning in El Hatillo; transfer to Tegucigalpa International Airport.** We will have time for some early morning birding around the hotel before having breakfast and departing. We will drop back down into Tegucigalpa and head to the airport for international departures. Participants may schedule homeward flights any time after 1:00PM today.

**TOUR SIZE:** This tour will be limited to 7 participants.

**TOUR LEADER:** Robert Gallardo

**Robert Gallardo** grew up in California, and from an early age he loved nature. He started collecting butterflies at age 11 and has continued that passion ever since. He began birdwatching while attending Humboldt State University and, after graduating, went to Honduras as a Peace Corps Volunteer. During his service, he was taken in by the splendor of Neotropical birds. During the last 11 years he has seen 85% of Honduras' species, and has recorded 11 new ones. He is a contributor to *North American Birds* magazine, and will soon be published in *Cotinga, Journal of the Neotropical Bird Club*. Robert resides in the charming little town of Copan Ruins in western Honduras with his wife Irma, where they own and operate a nature center.

**FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:** The fee for the main tour is **\$2,695** per person in double occupancy from San Pedro Sula, Honduras. This includes all meals beginning with dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 9, 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 from Tegucigalpa, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry or items of a personal nature.

The single supplement for this tour is **\$300**. 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.

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**TOUR REGISTRATION:** To register for this tour, complete the VENT registration form and return it with a deposit of **\$300** per person per tour (check or money order in U.S. dollars). If registering by phone, the deposit must be received within 10 days or space will be released. Full payment of the tour fee is due 80 days prior to the tour departure date.

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** Refunds are made according to the following schedule: If cancellation is made 80 days or more before departure date, the deposit less **\$75** per person is refundable. If cancellation is made between 80 and 60 days before departure date, the deposit is not refundable, but any payments covering the balance of the fee will be refunded. If cancellation is made fewer than 60 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 to protect yourself.

**If you cancel:**

80 days or more before departure date  
Between 80 and 60 days before departure  
Fewer than 60 days before departure date

**Your refund will be:**

Your deposit minus \$75.  
No refund of the deposit, but any payments on the balance will be refunded.  
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, as are other coverages such as terrorism protection; 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.

**AIR INFORMATION:** Please note that this tour **begins in San Pedro Sula and ends in Tegucigalpa, so please book your flights accordingly.** Also, due to the three hour drive from El Hatillo to Tegucigalpa on day 9, please do not book your return flight before 1:00PM. 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.

**BAGGAGE:** This tour has four hotel changes, an unavoidable consequence of geography and the natural areas we plan to visit. With this in mind, we suggest that for your own enjoyment and ease of travel you pack efficiently and do not bring excessively large luggage. We suggest one medium-size bag and a smaller bag/carry-on. There will not be any severely cold weather on this trip, so you will probably be happiest with less rather than more.

**CLIMATE:** For the month of February we can expect mild weather with daytime temperatures ranging from the mid 70s to around 90° F. Night time temperatures may range from around 60° to the 70s F. Chances of rain in this month are slim, but always possible.

**CLOTHING:** When preparing for a trip to the tropics, it is generally a good idea to pack lightweight field clothing. Clothing made from cotton is always a good idea, but most makers of outdoor apparel (Columbia, North Face, Patagonia, Ex Officio, etc.) make excellent lightweight, well-ventilated products from other materials, as well. Several t-shirts, both short and long-sleeved, are recommended. Many people prefer the designer style clothing with shirts made with lots of pockets and ventilated at the seams. Two or three pair of cotton pants is suggested, but again, the designer style clothing is very good, as well. Normally these types of

pants are segmented so that easy removal of the lower leg will readily turn any pair of pants into shorts. Denim, i.e., blue jeans, is acceptable, but is not as comfortable or well-ventilated. A pair of shorts or two is also recommended. Since this is a highlands tour, a warm sweater and a lightweight jacket in case of rain or early morning fog are essential for comfort in the mornings and on any night excursions. 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. We do not anticipate cold temperatures on this tour, but mornings and evenings have the potential to be chilly. A hat for protection from the sun is always advised.

**CONDITIONS:** Honduras is approximately 85% mountainous, and many of the areas that we visit during this tour are on uneven topography. Participants considering this tour should strongly take into consideration that the degree of difficulty of some of the trails along the tour route is above average. Some trails are moderately difficult, while others are more strenuous, but well built. The four mile hike to El Rosario on day eight is moderately strenuous to slightly difficult. While walking conditions are not overly difficult, prospective participants should assess their physical capabilities to the best of their ability before registering. **This tour is not suitable for those who have problems walking.**

Participants will never be expected to perform beyond their individual capabilities. This is important certainly from a health standpoint, but also for the sake of thoroughly enjoying one's time in Honduras. On all trails your tour leader will move at a rate most suitable for the group. Prospective participants suffering from known cardiac or pulmonary disorders should consult their physician before registering for this tour.

Transportation for the tour will be aboard an air-conditioned van or mini-bus. Although sections of the highlands roads are continuously being paved, we may experience periods of rough riding on stretches of unpaved roads. On several occasions we will be driving and birding along roads, making stops at places where the birding is known to be productive, or where trails go into good birding habitat.

Facilities for bathroom stops may be scarce on some backcountry roads; participants should expect to have to use "the bushes" on occasion.

Your tour leader will always have a supply of bottled water and snacks available to the group between meals.

**CURRENCY:** The unit of currency in Honduras is the Lempira and is valued at a rate of 18.89 to 1 U.S. Dollar (May 2006). Many locations where items are for sale in Honduras accept U.S. Dollars; however, it is not always easy to predict which vendors will accept dollars and which ones will not. Participants should also be aware that it can be difficult or impossible to get change for U.S. currency. Those participants wanting to travel with Lempiras should note that money is exchanged far more easily in the United States than in Honduras.

**DOCUMENTS:** A valid U.S. passport is required of all American citizens traveling to Honduras. We recommend that the passport be valid for at least six months beyond your intended length of stay.

**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, lip balm, flashlight, travel alarm clock, and a small umbrella (in case we should be caught in the rain).

**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

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everybody to drink bottled water. It will always be available either through the lodges where we stay or through your tour leader, who will have it on hand for the group. In Honduras fruits and vegetables are probably best avoided.

As standard precautions for travel, VENT recommends that tour participants stay up-to-date with Tetanus/diphtheria shots. Vaccinations for Hepatitis types A and B are strongly encouraged, as well. Type A vaccinations consist of a two-shot sequence, while Type B is a three-shot sequence. Please consult your physician or health care provider for more information.

Honduras is a country with known occurrence of malaria, although we will not be in areas of known outbreaks. We recommend participants consult their physician for more advice and any prophylactic prevention. The drug used to prevent and treat the form of malaria found in Central America is Cholorquine. The **Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta** is a good resource for information regarding malaria and its treatment. It can be contacted at (404) 639-3311 or [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

**SUGGESTED READING:** Our website at [www.ventbird.com](http://www.ventbird.com) offers an affiliated online store that carries a wide variety of items for birding and nature lovers including 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](http://www.amazon.com), and for those out-of-print and hard-to-find titles, [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com) or [www.buteobooks.com](http://www.buteobooks.com), which specializes in ornithology books.

***FIELD GUIDE*** – 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, published in 1995 by Oxford University Press: London, New York, Tokyo.

**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 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, motorcoach, 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 October 10, 2004, 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.