Honduras

Escape to Central America



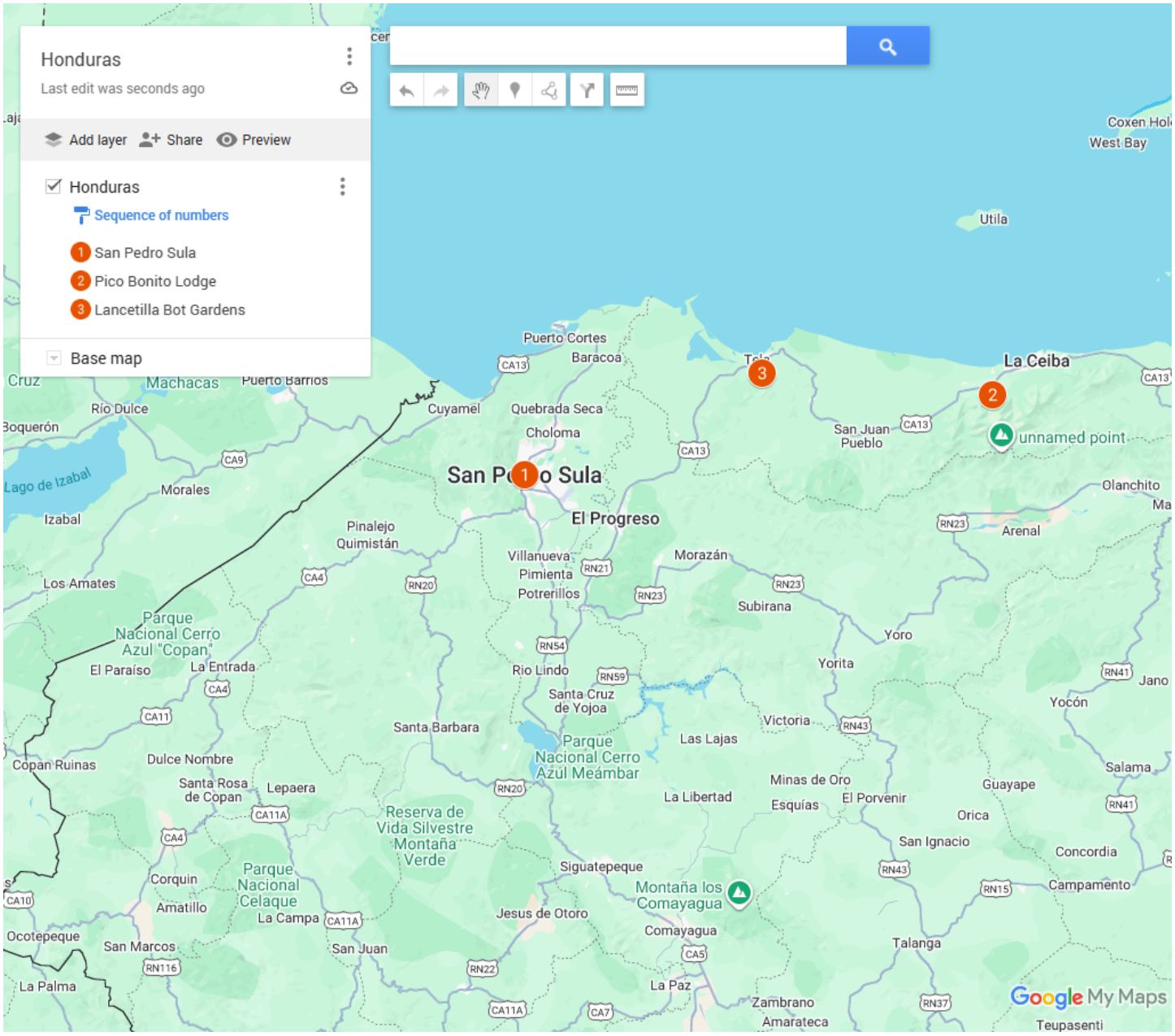
Honduran Emerald by Adam Riley

Honduras, one of Central America's best-kept birding and wildlife secrets. A biodiversity hotspot, it supports more than 700 bird species and various habitats including over 30 separate cloud forests. We will first take some time to explore one of the most remarkable eco-lodges on the planet: Pico Bonito! The bird list will be as impressive as the grounds and cuisine, where we can expect to find such gems as Keel-billed and Tody Motmots, Keel-billed Toucan, Lovely Cotinga, Chestnut-colored Woodpecker, Red-capped Manakin, White Hawk, King Vulture, Black-and-white Owl, and too many other fantastic species to list here! We shall also visit the Honduran Emerald Reserve in the Aguan Valley for one of the only true endemics to the region, the glittering little hummer after which the reserve is named.

The awesome birdlife is further augmented by the ease of travel, standard of lodge, super-friendly people and fine cuisine, making this a thoroughly enjoyable birding adventure for both hardcore and casual birders alike!

Itinerary & Map

Day 1	**Arrival in San Pedro Sula, transfer to Pico Bonito Lodge**
Days 2 & 3	**Pico Bonito Lodge area**
Day 4	**Day trip to Honduran Emerald Reserve**
Day 5	**Day trip to Lancetilla Botanical Gardens**
Day 6	**Pico Bonito Lodge to San Pedro Sula and final departures**



Birding sites in detail



Turquoise-browed Motmot by Adam Riley

Pico Bonito Lodge. The luxury eco-resort in the Parque Nacional Pico Bonito will be our base for the whole tour. Considered by National Geographic to rank among the world's top 50 eco-lodges and rated as a 'birder's paradise' by Audubon Magazine, Pico Bonito's well-manicured gardens and facilities offer us a chance to bird in absolute style!

Even while lounging in the hammocks on our wooden cabin decks or bathing in the alluring swimming pool, birds and other wildlife are always at hand. Around the lodge itself, we should enjoy close views of many interesting species including inquisitive pairs of Collared Aracari, numerous hummingbirds such as Band-tailed Barbthroat, Violet Sabrewing, Scaly-breasted Hummingbird, White-necked Jacobin, Brown Violetear, and Crowned Woodnymph visiting the abundant flowers, Central American Agoutis scurrying across the lawns and even some impressive Basilisk Lizards.

We will spend our time birding the lower reaches of the property. A canopy tower here offers panoramic views of the mountainous forest and with careful scanning, we hope to find the major target of the morning, the gorgeous Lovely Cotinga feeding amongst the treetops, as well as Keel-billed Toucan, Chestnut-colored Woodpecker, an impressive 5 species of euphonia, various tanagers and numerous other canopy-associated species. We will also scan the skies above for soaring raptors that could include White Hawk, Black Hawk-Eagle and the majestic King Vulture, and flocks of White-collared Swift.

Other species likely in the more open habit of the lower property and also in the lusher forested areas include Lesson's and Turquoise-browed Motmots, Pale-billed and Black-cheeked Woodpeckers, Wedge-billed and Cocoa Woodcreepers, Black-headed, Slaty-tailed, Gartered and Collared Trogons, Violet-headed Hummingbird, Purple-crowned Fairy, Mistletoe Tyrannulet, White-breasted Wood Wren, White-throated Thrush, Giant Cowbird, Red-throated Ant Tanager, Olive-backed, Scrub, White-vented and Yellow-throated Euphonias, Variable and Morelet's Seedeaters and an array of overwintering North American migrants including various vireos, warblers, buntings and orioles.



Keel-billed Toucan by Adam Riley

We will also tackle a few trails leading through primary rainforest in the upper reaches of the reserve. High on our priority list are two difficult species of motmot, namely Keel-billed and Tody, though we may have secured good looks of the former by this stage. Other interesting species we hope to find include the reticent Tawny-faced Quail,



Violet Sabrewing by Adam Riley

Great and Slaty-breasted Tinamous, Slaty-tailed Trogon and, if we are very fortunate, Grey-headed Piprites. We should also add to our growing mammal list, with noisy troops of Central American Spider Monkeys occurring here in good numbers.

Night birding in the area can also be rewarding, with possibilities including Middle American Screech Owl, Mottled and Black-and-white Owls, Great Potoo and further mammal prospects including chances for the intriguing Grey Four-eyed Opossum.

Honduran Emerald Reserve. Today sees us making a very early start for a full day's birding in the Rio Aguan Valley. Situated in the rain shadow of the coastal mountain range, the habitat here is uniquely dry with cactus and euphorbia dominating. The reserve was established to protect our major target of the day, Honduras' only endemic, the lovely little Honduran Emerald – one of Central America's rarest and most range-restricted birds. While incredibly local, this tiny glittering green hummingbird is fairly common here, and we anticipate excellent views of this special species as it goes about looking for its daily supply of nectar in any open flowers. Our ride into 'Emerald country' as it is known can be equally rewarding, as a surprising number of bird species inhabit this desert-like habitat. Along the way, we will also visit localised wet areas within this arid region. Short stops may well produce Double-striped Thick-knee, Lesser Roadrunner and Lesser Ground Cuckoo (though both these tricky species will require a lot of luck!), Northern Beardless Tyrannulet, White-lored Gnatcatcher, Cinnamon Hummingbird, Canivet's Emerald, Spot-bellied Bobwhite, Banded Wren, White-bellied Wren, Stripe-headed Sparrow and Altamira Oriole amongst others.

Lancetilla Botanical Gardens. Today we will depart early and drive to the lovely Lancetilla Botanic Gardens near the coastal town of Tela. Initially created as an agricultural research centre and experimental station by the United Fruit Company, the property rapidly expanded in size and importance and is now the world's second-largest tropical botanical garden, boasting an exceptional collection of tropical plants from Central America and elsewhere. This includes a substantial selection of orchids and ornamental plants and even a protected area of tropical broad-leaved rainforest. Of course, with all the incredible plants and diversity of ecosystems to be found here, the gardens are a magnet for both resident and migratory birds, and a walk around the manicured grounds here will certainly keep us very busy.



Lovely Cotinga by Adam Riley

Amongst the numerous Grey Catbirds, several colourful warblers may include Magnolia, Golden-winged and Black-and-white. We will also spend some time attempting to obtain decent views of the agoraphobic Ruddy Crake, for which this spot is rather renowned. Other expected species to look out for are Grey and Short-tailed Hawks, Plain Chachalaca, White-fronted and Red-

lored Amazons, Black-headed, Gartered, Slaty-tailed and Collared Trogons, Turquoise-browed Motmot, Short-billed Pigeon, Blue Ground Dove, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Great and Barred Antshrikes, Squirrel Cuckoo, Smoky-brown Woodpecker, Stripe-throated and Long-billed Hermits, Dusky Antbird, Long-billed Gnatwren, Yellow-bellied Tyrannulet and many other flycatchers and related species, Crimson-collared and Scarlet-rumped (Passerini's) Tanagers, Buff-throated Saltator, Orchard Oriole and Black-striped Sparrow.

Tour Grading & Key

Overall Ease		Mostly easy. Suitable for most birding / wildlife interest levels. Some early mornings & optional day trails.
Birding Ease		Mostly easy, a few trickier forest species. Garden & lodge birding typically provides good visuals of many species.
Accommodation		Very comfortable.
Walking / Trails		Mostly short walks on relatively flat ground. Some trails within forest can be narrow. Depending on weather conditions, some trails may be muddy & slippery.
Vehicles / Roads		Good quality roads. Most drives are reasonably short.
Photography		Good. Good feeders around the lodge. Photography more difficult within closed forest canopy.
Annoyances		Mosquitoes and tiny bloodsucking flies can be numerous at times.

Financial Arrangements and Important Notes

Tour dates, prices, single supplement, approximate flight costs and tour spaces are displayed on our website.

Tour inclusions:

- All meals from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 6;
- All lodgings;
- All ground transportation during the tour;
- All reserve entrance fees;
- All guiding services.

Tour exclusions:

- Visa fees;
- ANY flights;
- Any beverages (including mini-bar charges at hotels);
- Optional excursions;
- No tips or gratuities;
- Telephone calls, laundry, and other items of a personal nature.

Single Supplement: The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBL cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

Tipping: As noted above, gratuities are NOT included on this tour. If you feel that your leader/s have given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip them at your discretion.

- **Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing. The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates.**
- **Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registrations, a small group supplement will be offered to confirm the tour.**
- **Tour prices are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.**
- **The designated tour leader/s may be changed at short due to unforeseen circumstances.**
- **The itinerary is indicative only. Changes may need to be made to the order in which the tour is conducted, or some of the venues we visit closer to departure. We will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.**

- San Pedro Sula has a high crime rate (predominantly gang related). The airport is situated on the very eastern edge of the city. We depart and head further east form the airport, we do not travel through, visit, or stay in the city itself.
- It is important for the comfort of your fellow travellers that you do not over-pack. Kindly stick to 20kg (44lb) for check in luggage and 8kg (+-18lb) for hand luggage.
- It can be hot and humid with harsh sun in the lowlands, so please come prepared with hats and sun cream for protection. Humidity levels are high for much of the tour.
- Mosquitoes and tiny bloodsucking flies can be numerous at times, and it is advisable to pack a good supply of DEET or another effective insect repellent.
- Accommodation is very comfortable.

Arrival and Departure Details

The tour begins in San Pedro Sula on day 1 with a group transfer to our lodge and concludes after breakfast on day 6 with a transfer from Pico Bonito Lodge to the airport.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your Tour Confirmation package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

Ramón Villeda Morales International Airport, San Pedro Sula, Honduras (IATA: SAP) is the main port of entry and departure for international flights to Honduras.

Visa requirements differ by country, nationality of the traveller and duration and purpose of your intended stay. It may be necessary to obtain a visa or an electronic travel authorization in advance of your travel. It is therefore vitally important that you check with your travel agent/consulate/embassy for exact visa requirements.

DO NOT book any flights until the Rockjumper Team have officially confirmed the tour.