



NORTHERN HONDURAS & The Lodge at Pico Bonito January 14 to 22, 2017 \$4,840 single/ \$4,040 double

Imagine awaking each morning in a bed so comfortable that you do not want to get up. Then imagine a chorus of bird sounds outside your bungalow so intriguing that you can barely get dressed fast enough to go see what on Earth is making those sounds. Now, imagine walking to breakfast and nearly being pummeled by two huge purple hummingbirds, while overhead you are surrounded by those exotic bird sounds that got you out of bed. As you reach the lodge, imagine seeing your friends just down the boardwalk enjoying their morning coffee, but no matter how hard you try, you cannot pull yourself away from the feeding platform standing just 15 feet away, where birds you have only seen in your dreams are eating bright red palm fruits for breakfast. Your friends frantically signal you to come sit down, and you manage to shuffle your feet enough to get down the walkway to your breakfast table, only to be surrounded by more exotic hummingbirds whizzing by your table.

And all this has happened within a mere 200 yards between your cabin and breakfast.

This is Pico Bonito! This place really exists, and seeing is believing, so get out your calendar and block out the end of January. This is not a long trip, and it is not far from home, but it will be one of the most memorable vacations of your life. Tropical birding has never been so easy—and so downright comfortable—as this extended week of birding around Pico Bonito Lodge. Come see for yourself!

*Your Host & Guide,
Steve Shunk*



Collared Aracari,
100 feet from the
lodge entrance!

TOUR SUMMARY

The Lodge at Pico Bonito lies about 20 minutes from the Caribbean coast of northern Honduras. Nestled in a lowland tropical rainforest, the lodge and grounds are immaculately maintained and specifically designed for nature lovers. The trails on the property course through an historic cacao plantation, now overgrown with native fruiting trees. From the high canopy to the dense understory, you can barely turn your head without seeing (and hearing) tropical birds, mammals, herptiles, and arthropods. Pico Bonito defines “Paradise Birding”!

Our 9-day Pico Bonito vacation begins and ends at San Pedro Sula airport, which is far removed from the city itself. As you exit baggage claim, you will be greeted by our two US guides, and our local guide and driver. We jump into the Pico Bonito van, equipped with snacks and beverages, for the 2-hour drive to the Lodge. After checking in and getting settled in our bungalows, we will meet back at the lodge for a casual afternoon of birding on the grounds.

Our birding agenda is designed so that we have full birding days alternating with slower days, allowing a perfect balance for those who want to bird all day, every day, and those who like to have an occasional break. In addition to exploring the trails on the Pico Bonito property, we will venture out to several nearby birding hotspots, exposing us to excellent habitat diversity within an hour's drive of the Lodge. Only one day will take us on a longer drive, to the dry side of the mountains in search of a whole different suite of birds, including the endemic Honduran Emerald—a handsome little hummingbird, and the only bird species endemic to Honduras.

On one day, we will take a very casual boat ride through mangrove-lined wetlands; on another day, we explore a world famous botanical garden; and on another day, we visit a hummingbird station just a few minutes from Pico Bonito, where we could see up to 5 new hummer species that are not found on the Lodge property.

Whenever the group is together, we will never be without our local guide. If you feel like taking a break from the group, you will have plenty of opportunities to relax on your own at the Lodge, watching the swarms of hummingbirds, the courting oropendolas, and the woodpeckers feeding right in front of the lodge deck. This is an outstanding trip for non-birding spouses (especially if you want them to get hooked on birding!) and nature/bird photographers, with photo ops around every corner and the time to dedicate to your photography without disrupting our birding agenda.

The itinerary below outlines our basic plan for 7 full days, with all 8 nights of the trip at Pico Bonito. We may shuffle the agendas for different days depending on the weather and our success at finding certain bird species. We will even allow opportunities for those who want a break from birding to take other guided trips around the region.

DAILY ITINERARY

This is a custom itinerary designed for Paradise Birding. We specifically requested that we not bird from dawn to dusk; that we occasionally take afternoon breaks; that we have non-birding and independent birding options on several days; and that our driving distances are kept to a minimum, whenever possible. These requests were made to help you thoroughly enjoy this very special place and to give everyone ample opportunity to see the unique birds of the region. So that you have the highest possible level of service, we also have made a commitment to dedicate 2 US guides to all our tours. Despite our casual approach, we still have a chance to see up to half of the nearly 550 species on the Pico Bonito bird list!

The daily schedule below will remain flexible and may change at your guide's discretion due to rain showers etc!



Jan 14—Guides meet guests at San Pedro Sula airport, followed by a 3-hour drive to the Lodge. Afternoon birding around the Lodge property.

Jan 15—All day birding the expansive Lodge property.

Jan 16—Morning birding Rio Santiago Nature Resort, afternoon around the Lodge.

Jan 17—All day birding at the coast; boat tour of Cuero y Salado Wildlife Refuge, then coastal estuaries.

Jan 18—All day birding at the lodge, including longer hikes to higher elevations; great day for optional activities, e.g. snorkeling, rafting, or bird sketching with Christine.

Jan 19—All day birding at the Rio Aguan Valley to see the endangered Honduran Emerald.

Jan 20 —Morning birding at Lancetilla Botanical Garden; afternoon at the Lodge.

Jan 21 —Pico Bonito Lodge birding, including additional trails, or flex day for rain makeup, etc.

Jan 22—Depart Pico Bonito, return to San Pedro Sula.

DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF EACH BIRDING DESTINATION

The Lodge at Pico Bonito

The lodge property consists of 400 private acres of land nestled between two virgin rivers that flow from the heights of the adjacent the 270,000 acre Pico Bonito National Park—one of Central America's largest wilderness areas. We'll explore the several mile long loop trail that ascends from the main lodge's gardens up into the tropical moist forest habitat and old growth hardwood forests. Along the way, we'll observe birds and wildlife from three 4-story observation decks that provide breath taking views out over the forest canopy where we may catch sight of the one of Central America's most sought after species—the Lovely Cotinga, as well as toucans, motmots, soaring raptors and many more. Then we'll descend into the 100-foot canyon to the sparkling waterfalls and natural swimming holes of the Coloradito river.

The habitats we'll explore at the lodge are home to over 420 species of birds, plus tropical amphibians and exotic mammals such as kinkajous, peccaries, coatis, agoutis and monkeys, as well as lesser known but equally intriguing leaf cutter ants, red-eyed tree frogs, termite nests on tree trunks, strangler figs, epiphytic orchids and colourful heliconia, and primeval looking tree ferns. You'll hear a cacophony of rainforest sounds like the buzz of cicadas, the bizarre voice of the oropendola, tapping of woodpeckers, dripping of rain, squawking of parrots flying overhead, barking of a White-faced monkey, croaking of frogs and the hum of hummingbirds zipping past your head.

While it is unlikely for us to see most of the shy and/or nocturnal animals, it is still thrilling to know that they pace these same trails (as evidenced by night vision remote trail cameras) and include anteaters, sloths, tayras, coati, as well as four native cats; the ocelot, margay, puma and jaguar.

In your free time, you might like to explore the easy, pebble pathways that meander through the Lodge's manicured gardens, by the pool, past the frog pond, around the butterfly garden and serpent house, old cacao plantation, above the roaring rivers and among the cabins. You'll enjoy watching the hummingbirds at the nectar feeders and a variety of fruit and nut-eating birds at the platform feeders and see other wildlife as well including agouti, basilisk lizard, iguana, butterflies and the occasional boa constrictor.

Rio Santiago Nature Resort

A short drive from our lodge is Rio Santiago Nature Resort, the self-proclaimed "Hummingbird Capital of Honduras," and named for the river that rushes along its border. It is a private 150 acre nature reserve with countless hummingbird feeders surrounding a comfortable, shaded veranda with lots of tables that are perfect for observing the nearly 20 hummingbird species that include Stripe-throated Hermit, Long-billed Hermit, Band-tailed Barbthroat, Violet Sabrewing, Magnificent

Hummingbird, Scaly-breasted Hummingbird, White-necked Jacobin, Purple crowned Fairy, Violet-crowned Woodnymph, Cinnamon Hummingbird, Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, Green-breasted Mango, White-bellied Emerald, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Brown Violet-ear, Stripe-tailed Hummingbird, Long-billed Starthroat, Black-crested Coquette, Violet-headed Hummingbird. We may also explore a loop trail through the rainforest.

Cuero y Salado Wildlife Refuge



A short drive from the Lodge will take us north towards the coast to the village of La Union. From here we travel in a small, motorized train along a historic narrow-gauge railway that leads through pastures and coconut plantations to the refuge headquarters located near the mouth of the Salado River. Here we will tour the bird and wildlife-rich estuaries of the Refuge in a small, motorized skiff.

Named for the Cuero and Salado Rivers, which meet the ocean here, this coastal Wildlife Refuge contains 35,000 acres of tropical wet and mangrove forests with an extensive network of estuaries and natural canals to explore. The bird list for the Refuge notes over 350 species while howler and white-faced monkeys, sloths, caimans, crocodiles, iguanas, and turtles are all common sights as well. Perhaps the Refuge's most famous inhabitant is the elusive and endangered West Indian Manatee, with a population of more than 50 individuals.

Along the railway and within the refuge itself are seen Laughing Falcon, Bat Falcon, Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture, Bare-Throated Tiger-Heron, Boat-billed Heron, Black-crowned Night- Heron, Black-collared Hawk, White-tailed Kite, Gray-headed Kite, Merlin, Gray-necked Wood- Rail, Sungrebe and Mangrove (Yellow) Warbler. Other species commonly found here include: Agami Heron, Mangrove Cuckoo, N. Jacana, Purple Gallinule, Mangrove Vireo, Prothonotary Warbler and Yucatan Vireo. Jabiru Storks are often seen here from the train during the winter months. Also at this time, we have the opportunity to visit an impressive Boat-billed Heron rookery, consisting of nearly two hundred individuals. Five Kingfisher species occur here including: Belted, Ringed, Green, Amazon and the dazzling, diminutive Pigmy Kingfisher.

Rio Aguan Valley and the Honduran Emerald Hummingbird

This is an all day excursion to the tropical dry forest habitat of the Rio Aguan Valley. Amidst this unique, highly endangered habitat, characterized by cactus, roadrunners and hot sun, Honduras' one endemic bird species, the brilliant green, Honduran Emerald Hummingbird, makes its home. While highly endangered, this hummingbird is happily quite common within its native habitat and can often be easily photographed or filmed at a close distance with minimum impact to the bird. Conservation of this species is supported by a portion of your tour fee, which Paradise Birding is donating to the efforts led by the [American Bird Conservancy](#).

Along the way we'll pass a variety of other habitats. Among the species we'll look for are: Hook-billed Kite, Thicket Tinamou, Double-striped Thick-Knee, White-fronted Amazon, Lesser Roadrunner, Lesser Ground-Cuckoo, N. Beardless Tyrannulet, Ash-throated and Nutting's Flycatchers, Long-tailed Manakin, White-lored Gnatcatcher, White-throated Magpie-Jay, Banded Wren, White-bellied Wren, Stripe-headed Sparrow and Altamira Oriole.

Lancetilla Botanical Garden

About an hour west of the Lodge, Lancetilla is the second largest tropical botanical garden in the world, boasting a dizzying array of plants from Central America and other tropical regions of the world. It was first established as an agricultural research center in 1926 and among its botanical treasures are significant collections of orchids and ornamental plants as well as an area of protected tropical broadleaf rainforest. Thanks to its diversity of natural habitats and planted gardens, it hosts an impressive mix of bird species found here-350 species to date. A typical day of birding here could yield the following:

Little Tinamou, Common Black Hawk, Laughing Falcon, Bat Falcon, Ornate Hawk-eagle, Ruddy Crake, Olive-throated Parakeet, White-crowned Parrot, Red-lored Parrot, Squirrel Cuckoo, Scaly-breasted Hummingbird, Violet Sabrewing, White-bellied Emerald, Black-headed Trogon, Violaceous Trogon, Collared Trogon, Turquoise-browed Motmot, Blue-crowned Motmot, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Collared Aracari, Keel-billed Toucan, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Smoky-brown Woodpecker, Lineated Woodpecker, Tawny-winged Woodcreeper, Streak-headed Woodcreeper, Great Antshrike, Barred Antshrike, Black-faced Ant Thrush, Ochre-bellied Flycatcher, Northern Bentbill, Common Tody Flycatcher, Bright-rumped Atilla, Masked Tityra, White-collared Manakin, Green-shrike Vireo, Long-billed Gnatwren, Blue-winged Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Black and White Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-breasted Chat, Orange-billed Sparrow, Black-striped Sparrow, Olivaceous Piculet, Red-throated Ant Tanager, Crimson Collared Tanager, Passerini's Tanager, Blue-Grey Tanager, Yellow-winged Tanager, Buff-throated Saltator, Yellow-billed Cacique, Scrub Euphonia, Yellow-throated Euphonia, Olive-backed Euphonia, and more.

Optional activities (on our free day)



On one of our days, you will have the option of additional explorations of the Lodge property with your birding guides, or of participating in a different activity of your choice including a nature sketching class with your co-leader Christine or an activity with Lodge staff that we can arrange for you including [snorkeling](#) (fee), [white-water rafting](#) (fee), visiting the [butterfly farm & serpent house](#), [rainforest night hike](#), or the [Unbelievable Falls hike](#) (links go to Pico Bonito's website with full descriptions of each activity). We will make arrangements for these activities once we arrive, it is not necessary to make your decision now.

ADDITIONAL TOUR DETAILS



ABOUT THE LODGE AT PICO BONITO: Named by National Geographic Traveler as one of the “Top 50 eco-lodges of the world,” the Lodge at Pico Bonito sits at the edge of a 400- acre Honduran rainforest, nestled between two wild rivers, with private cabins and an excellent restaurant and full-service bar, where you can dine inside or outside with a view of the lush gardens and pool. Their miles of hiking trails go up into the rainforest, skirting spectacular waterfalls and stopping at bird observation towers. The Lodge even has a butterfly rearing house & garden and reptile house. Their well-trained English- speaking guides will safely lead us

on our excursions. Tropical sounds fill the air, including parrots, monkeys, frogs, and the ever-present cicadas. The Lodge and surrounding area host a great diversity of microhabitats that make it especially rich in flora and fauna. It is world famous for its birding, and many birding tour companies make an annual pilgrimage to Pico Bonito. Learn more about the Lodge at www.PicoBonito.com.

LOCATION: All of our activities will occur within about two hours from The Lodge at Pico Bonito, which is located outside of La Ceiba, Honduras, on the northeastern coast, adjacent to Pico Bonito National Park.



ACCOMMODATIONS: The plantation style cabins are approximately 400 square feet with private bathroom and shower, louvered and screened windows, two ceiling fans, and private veranda with hammock. Cabins also have a CD player, alarm clock with radio, safe, iPod dock, and coffee maker with Honduran organic coffee. Outlets are 110v (same as in the US), and the property features complimentary Wi-Fi access (though the strongest signal is at the main lodge).

MEALS: We will take most of our meals at the Lodge’s full-service restaurant, where we may choose to dine inside or on the veranda overlooking the gardens, within earshot of the Corinto River, and with hummingbirds zipping around your table. Their diverse menu can easily accommodate dietary restrictions. They are open from 6am – 11 pm so you can duck in any time for a beverage or meal if you prefer to eat alone. Your retreat fee includes a generous meal allowance that includes choice of any meals and drinks from the menu (alcohol is not included). You can find a completed description of the restaurant and menu at: <http://www.picobonito.com/index.php/restaurant>. If you have very specific dietary needs, you may want to bring some of your own snacks with you.

TRAVEL INSURANCE: We strongly recommend that you purchase travel insurance with your airline ticket! This insurance covers costs associated with flight delays, trip cancellation, illness, medical expenses, lost baggage, and emergency transportation. If insurance is not offered when you purchase your ticket, we recommend Travelex Insurance Services. Also check to see if you are covered by any of your existing insurance programs or credit cards.

FLIGHT ARRIVAL /DEPARTURES: Airport transfers are included in your fee. If you decide to arrive early or stay beyond the program, you will need to arrange your own private transfer. Participants need to arrive at San Pedro Sula (SAP) no later than 2 p.m. and depart no earlier than noon. Before you depart, you will need to pay an International departure tax of about \$40.00 U.S./person, which can be paid in cash or by credit card.

CLIMATE & WEATHER: Daily weather is generally sunny and warm with temps in the 80s-90s and occasional afternoon or evening showers. The high humidity of the tropics will make it seem hotter than it is, especially for those of us who live in arid climates. However, we will take it easy on our strolls, and we will always have plenty of water, with opportunities to duck into the air-conditioned lodge or vans during our excursions off the property.

WHAT TO PACK: Everyone's traveling needs are different, but the list below includes items you definitely don't want to forget.

Documents: For U.S. citizens, a passport valid for six months beyond departure from Honduras is required, with one blank page for entry stamp. Non-U.S. citizens should check with their local consulate/embassy for instructions.

Clothing: When preparing for a trip to the tropics, it is generally a good idea to pack lightweight field clothing, preferably long-sleeved shirts and long pants for protection against bugs and sun. Ideal clothing incorporates synthetic fabrics that wick away moisture, dry quickly, resist wrinkles, stretch, and have sun and insect-protection qualities. Our favorite clothing retailers include Patagonia and REI. Shorts, skirts, or dresses are appropriate for lounging around at The Lodge and at dinner. A lightweight water-resistant rain jacket (or pocket umbrella) is essential. For footwear, we recommend a waterproof trail-walking shoe or light hiking boot. Athletic shoes will not keep your feet dry and may become soiled from muddy conditions. You'll also want a wide-brimmed hat and a swimsuit.

Other items not to forget: Medications, sunscreen (preferably waterproof, SPF 25 or above), camera, sunglasses, light daypack or fanny pack, mosquito repellent, headlamp or flashlight for the night hike, and binoculars (your guides will bring a couple of extra pairs and a spotting scope). Voltage is similar in Honduras, so you will not need electrical appliance adapters.

BAGGAGE: We suggest one medium-size or large bag and a smaller bag/carry-on. The Lodge at Pico Bonito provides excellent one-day laundry service. Your carry-on should have all of your necessities in case your checked bags get delayed. This may include a change of clothing, money, travel documents, toiletries, medicines, and any expensive equipment such as binoculars.



TRAIL CONDITIONS: Most of our time at the Lodge will be spent among the manicured gardens, along the entry road, and on trails into the surrounding woodland and rainforest. The main trail system into the heavier forest has some moderately steep grades, occasionally with well-made steps, but anyone in moderately good shape should be able to do this trail at a normal walking pace. 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 those with problems walking may want to stay Lodge during difficult hikes.

HEALTH: All water, fruits, and vegetables are safe for consumption at The Lodge at Pico Bonito. Bottled water will be provided for you on our excursions. If you are taking prescription medication or over-the-counter medicine, be sure to bring an ample supply to get through the tour safely, plus extra days in case of a delayed schedule. Please consult your physician, as necessary. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As standard travel precautions, you should always be current with tetanus shots, and you should strongly consider other optional inoculations. Mosquito-borne malaria does occur in some areas of Honduras, although we will generally not visit these regions. However, you should consult your physician regarding prophylactic medicines. 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).

CURRENCY: The unit of currency in Honduras is the Lempira. Most stores and shops in Honduras accept U.S. dollars, although you will get a better exchange rate on purchases made with the local currency. That said, you may easily get through the whole trip without needing Lempiras. If you choose to acquire the local currency, it is most easily done before you arrive in Honduras. The Lodge at Pico Bonito accepts major credit cards for personal expenses, alcohol, or on-site souvenirs.

LANGUAGE: No worries if you don't know Spanish! English is widely spoken in the places we'll visit, and all the staff at Pico Bonito, where we will spend a majority of our time, speak English quite proficiently.



TOUR FEE

	<i>\$4,840 single/ \$4,040 double</i>
<i>Deposit:</i>	<i>\$95</i>
<i>Balance Due October 22:</i>	<i>\$4,745 single/ \$3,945 double</i>

Your tour fee includes:

- Roundtrip transportation from San Pedro Sula airport
- Lodging at single or double occupancy; all transportation including driver, during the tour
- All meals and non-alcoholic beverages from dinner on Jan 22 through breakfast on Jan 30
- Snacks and beverages during travel days
- All taxes and service-related gratuities; and
- The instruction and leadership of 2 US guides and a dedicated local guide.

The fee does *not* include:

- Airfare to San Pedro Sula (SAP)
- Alcoholic beverages
- Travel insurance
- Souvenirs and personal items (such as telephone, laundry, spa services)
- Guides' gratuities, which are never expected but always appreciated based on your satisfaction with our service.

NOTE: Our tour fees are structured to allow the best possible client-to-guide ratio for an optimal birding experience; this tour will operate with 2 US guides and a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 8 participants.

REFUND POLICY: Your deposit is non-refundable. If you cancel your reservation more than 90 days prior to the tour, you will be refunded any payments above your deposit. If you cancel between 90 and 60 days prior to the tour, you will receive a 50% refund of fees paid over the deposit. If you cancel less than 60 days prior, you forfeit your entire tour fee, unless you can fill your space with another birder. If you cancel at any time, your deposit is transferrable to any Paradise Birding tour at any time in the future. If we cancel the trip for any reason, all payments will be refunded.

TO REGISTER OR GET MORE INFORMATION

To reserve your space, submit a non-refundable \$95 deposit with the registration forms found attached (or at: <http://www.paradisebirding.com/birding-tours-Honduras.html>).

Soon after receiving your registration form, we will send additional materials to help you prepare for the tour. Please feel free to contact us with any questions you may have.

We look forward to seeing you in Honduras this coming winter!

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