Tiny Belize occupies the eastern side of the Yucatan Peninsula, the epicentre of the Ancient Mayan civilisation. Formerly known as British Honduras, it is the only English-speaking country in Central America. Several unique features make this a naturalist’s paradise. It is blessed with the world’s second largest barrier coral reef. The country is a core component of the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor linking North and South America. It contains a high diversity of forest, woodland and wetland habitats within a relatively confined area. It is the most sparsely populated country in Central America, and this reduced population pressure translates into large contiguous blocks of intact vegetation including primary rainforest. Importantly, Belize is also a world leader in biodiversity and natural resource conservation, with 37% of the land territory under formal protection. This is an extraordinarily high proportion, and results in this small country supporting over 600 species of birds, as well as the highest Jaguar population density in the world.
Our birding & wildlife tour seeks to make the most of this biodiversity, visiting the key Belize birding and cultural sites such as Caye Caulker and Crooked Tree Sanctuary, where water-birds of all sorts abound, and there is a great chance to get up close and personal with the spectacular Jabiru, the largest flying bird in the New World! Time spent in the submontane pine forests of the Pine Ridge Mountains affords us the opportunity for several highland specials including Black-headed Siskin, Rusty Sparrow, Solitary Eagle and King Vulture as well as a good chance of finding the tricky Stygian Owl and regal Orange-breasted Falcon. Our exploration of rainforest sites at Caracol, Cahal Pech and Chan Chich offers unforgettable possibilities for Ornate Hawk-Eagle, Keel-billed Toucan, Agami Heron and Jaguar. The awesome birdlife throughout the tour is augmented by the ease of travel, superb accommodation, friendly people and fine cuisine, making this a thoroughly enjoyable birding adventure for both hardcore and casual birders alike!

The tiny nation of Honduras is among Central America’s best kept birding and wildlife secrets. A biodiversity hotspot, it supports more than 700 bird species, playing host to over 30 separate cloud forests. Our extension includes birding the grounds and surroundings of one of the most spectacular eco-lodges on the planet: Pico Bonito Lodge! We have time to visit a wide array of habitats including the best tracts of lowland rainforests and the nearby lush, broad-leaved forest. The bird list will be as impressive as the grounds and cuisine, including such gems as Keel-billed and Tody Motmots, Keel-billed Toucan, Lovely Cotinga, Chestnut-colored Woodpecker, Red-capped Mannikin, and too many other fantastic species to list here! We will also take time to explore the Honduran Emerald Reserve, one of just two known sites for Honduras’ only endemic, the glittering little hummer after which it is named. The awesome Honduran birdlife is further augmented by ease of travel, luxury lodges, super-friendly people and fine cuisine, making this a thoroughly enjoyable birding adventure for both hardcore and casual birders alike!

THE TOUR AT A GLANCE...

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Day 1: Arrival in Caye Caulker. Today is set aside for our arrival in Caye Caulker. Situated in the heart of Belize’s famed barrier reef, the location allows guests to relax and experience the charms of the beaches, lagoon and coral reefs while awaiting the arrival of the other group members. Towards late afternoon we’ll visit the southern tip of the island, a well-known site for waders. We’ll scan for Laughing Gull, comical Brown Pelican, an array of sandpipers, Black Skimmer, Whimbrel, Anhinga, Double-crested Cormorant and Royal, Sandwich, Forster’s and Roseate Terns. We can also expect to see Magnificent Frigatebird soaring overhead on the prevailing sea breeze. The day will culminate in a convivial dinner at our beachside accommodation, where we’ll discuss our forthcoming adventure.
Day 2: Caye Caulker. This long, narrow island is surrounded by a shallow lagoon containing a multitude of coral reefs. The environment is highly dynamic, and in 1961 the island was split in two by a hurricane. The northern section is now virtually uninhabited housing the Caye Caulker Forest Reserve and protecting threatened coastal littoral forest remnants as well as fully functioning mangrove forest. Among the 100 or so bird species this area supports, our targets today will be a number of range-restricted species that are otherwise difficult on the mainland, such as White-crowned Pigeon, Cinnamon Hummingbird, Yucatan Woodpecker, Bananaquit, Clapper Rail, Yucatan Vireo, Caribbean Elaenia, the striking Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Olive-throated Parakeet, Rufous-necked Wood Rail and the near-endemic Black Catbird. A host of wintering warblers, including Mangrove, Myrtle, Audubon’s, Prairie, Tennessee, and Palm Warblers, will also be in our sights.

We plan to spend the morning exploring the northern section of the island, before returning to the southern section for lunch. The afternoon is set aside for optional pursuits, allowing the opportunity to enjoy the tropical surroundings. For those wishing to catch a glimpse of a distinctly non-avian highlight, an optional afternoon boat trip to find West Indian Manatee can be arranged. The lagoon provides a sheltered, safe environment in which to snorkel and drifting over healthy coral reefs with their spectacular array of darting denizens is a truly wonderful, bucket-list experience.

The unreformed land-lubbers among us will explore the island’s bird-life further, hoping to connect with additional rarities, missed specials and/ or better photographic opportunities.

Day 3: Caye Caulker to Pine Ridge Mountains via Belize City. Following an early breakfast, we depart Caye Caulker to explore the Maya Mountains in western Belize, where we will spend a full four days birding their range of habitats.

From Belize City we embark on a stunning drive that climbs from the humid lowlands into the scenic pine forests of the Mayan uplands. The route traverses an altitudinal gradient that supports several bird-rich habitats, and our journey will be interrupted by regular birding stops as we move from humid lowland forest, through more montane forest and woodlands to ultimately the unique sub-tropical pine forests that add crucial habitat heterogeneity to the overall tour. A major advantage of this area is that the birding sites are

Yellow-crowned Night Heron by Adam Riley

Lovely Cotinga by Adam Riley
located within relatively short distances from our accommodation, which translates into less time in the vehicle and more time looking through binoculars.

The 43 000ha Mountain Pine Ridge Forest Reserve was proclaimed in 1944 to manage and protect native Belizean Pine Forests. Occupying a granite massif, the landscape is one of beautiful rolling pine forest spread over smooth granite hillsides, and we have the chance to see half of all the species found in Belize. We have five main targets, all of them raptors: Orange-breasted Falcon; Stygian Owl; the montane Solitary Eagle; Black-and-White Hawk-Eagle; and King Vulture. Additional specials are the highly localized Rufous-capped Warbler and Rusty Sparrow, the insanely iridescent Blue and Indigo Buntings, Pine Siskin, Plumbeous Kite, Blue-black and Yellow-faced Grassquits, Yellow-backed Oriole and Golden-hooded Tanager. We’ll spend the afternoon birding this unusual landscape, hoping to also connect with Aplomado Falcon, Crimson-collared Tanager, Lovely Cotinga, Eastern Bluebird and Red-legged Honeycreeper. After another action packed day of birding, we shall retire to our comfortable lodgings.

Day 4: Caracol and Macal River. The ancient Mayan ruin of Caracol and its surrounding 60 000ha national park is the first destination on this day. The reserve protects an expansive mosaic of primary and ancient secondary rainforest where jungle and ruin have melded together over the preceding centuries to form a unique habitat. We’ll have the surreal experience of walking through the ruins of a once-bustling city, looking for the rare Keel-billed Motmot in overhanging branches while flocks of endangered Scarlet Macaw flit across the open areas.

Crested Guan, Great Curassow and the kaleidoscopic Ocellated Turkey are to be seen strolling about the network of pathways. Black-and-white Owl has been seen roosting in the surrounding trees, and we’ll keep an eye out for soaring Ornate Hawk-Eagle and King Vulture. Other possibilities include all four species of Trogon (Slaty-tailed, Black-headed, Gartered and Collared), Rose-throated Tanager, Dot-winged Antwren, Squirrel Cuckoo, the confiding White-whiskered Puffbird, Masked and Black-crowned Tityras and a range of wintering warblers, including Hooded, Kentucky and Golden-crowned Warblers.

We will also spend time birding the pristine rainforest habitat surrounding the ruins. The national park itself is nestled within a complex of protected areas dominated by the Chiquibul Forest Reserve, a vast contiguous block of rainforest. This will hopefully provide the opportunity to connect with the skulking Little and Great Timarous, Green Honeycreeper, hyperactive Stripe-throated and Long-billed Hermits, Ruddy Quail-Dove, Barred and the impressive Collared Forest Falcons, Keel-billed Toucan, Crimson-
collared Tanager, and the gorgeous Emerald Toucanet. We may also encounter the endangered Red-brocket Deer, raucous Yucatan Black Howler Monkey, Geoffroy’s Spider Monkey and any of five species of Belizean jungle cat.

After a refreshing lunch we’ll explore the magical Macal River. Its pristine and protected catchment gives rise to this sparkling clear and picturesque river. Lush jungle trees overhang the river banks, providing cover to hawking Black Phoebe and Social Flycatcher, Sungrebe and Mangrove Swallow as they forage. Iguana’s sun themselves on rocks, while Russet-necked Wood Rail, Uniform Crake and Green Heron skulk in the moist riparian undergrowth. This is prime habitat to connect with Ringed, Amazon and Green Kingfishers.

**Day 5: Rio Frio Cave, Thousand Foot Falls and King Vulture Falls.** Today we will explore the various natural landmarks in the area in an attempt to track down several main target species for the trip. We will search for King Vulture and Orange-breasted Falcon at the 1000ft Falls, and also near King Vulture Falls. Being a biodiversity hotspot, it is no surprise that Belize is rich in avian apex predators, and we also hope to see Short-tailed Hawk, White Hawk, Plumbeous Kite, Black-and-White Hawk-Eagle and Laughing Falcon. With great luck we may see the rare and little-known Solitary Eagle, a truly spectacular bird with exceptionally broad wings, providing maximum manoeuvrability in tall forest and rendering an almost tail-less shape, reminiscent of an avian stealth-bomber.

Rio Frio Cave is a large limestone cavern, open on either side and with a creek flowing through it. Jungle trails leading to the cave provide a chance to see Orange-billed Sparrow, the dazzling Yucatan Jay, Red-throated and Red-crowned Ant-Tanagers, Hepatic Tanager, the brightly coloured Green Shrike-Vireo and the striking Black-throated Shrike-Tanager.

**Day 6: Hidden Valley highlands.** We will spend a full day birding our diverse surroundings, and paying particular attention to the unique Caribbean Pine ecosystem. Only a decade ago nearly 80% of the forest was destroyed after a Southern Pine Bark Beetle invasion. To the country’s great credit, the intensive planting of millions of seedlings has reversed the damage, resuscitating this important ecosystem. Our days efforts should be rewarded with a number of otherwise difficult to rare species including the
impressive Black Hawk-Eagle, Acorn Woodpecker, stunning Green Jay, Azure-crowned Hummingbird, Grace’s and Rufous-capped Warbler, Rusty Sparrow, Cabanis’s Wren and Blue-headed Vireo. We’ll scan the various forest strata for White-fronted Amazon, White-bellied Wren, Tropical Gnatcatcher, Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, Purple-crowned Fairy, Spotted Wood Quail, and the impressive Pale-billed & Lineated Woodpeckers. This area is the most reliable site in Belize to see the rare Orange-breasted Falcon, and today gives us more time to locate this special bird. The reserve is also home to a number of shy cat species including Puma, Jaguar & Ocelot. Other mammals present include South American Coati and Baird’s Tapir. We shall make a special effort in the evening to find the elusive Stygian Owl, a reference to the River Styx of Greek Mythology but in this case referring to its dark and gloomy plumage.

**Day 7: Hidden Valley to Crooked Tree Lagoon via Cahal Pech.** We depart Hidden Valley early this morning and make our way to the Mayan archaeological site at Cahal Pech. Archaeologists believe Cahal Pech was established by Guatemalan Mayans during the Early Middle Pre-classic period, making it one of the oldest Mayan settlements in Belize. Excavations have revealed seven interconnected plazas and various buildings including two ball courts and a tall temple structure. The surrounding forest boasts a number of wonderful birds, including Lesser Swallow-tailed Swift, Pale-billed Woodpecker, beautiful Lesson’s Motmot, the magnificent Collared Aracari, and Rose-throated Becard.

After lunch, we will make our way north to the exciting Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary, a mosaic of lagoons, creeks, logwood swamps, broadleaf forest and pine savanna. The 8000ha reserve is located on the shores of Belize’s first Ramsar site, a wetland system with international protection under the Ramsar Convention, specifically because of its importance as a waterfowl habitat. We will be birding during the ‘dry’ season when the wetlands become a refuge for a huge influx of migratory water birds. We expect to arrive at our lodgings in the late afternoon, where we will turn our attention to the patches of surrounding broadleaf forest and pine savannah. Our focus now switches to the range restricted Yucatan specialties. Time permitting, we hope to get in a few hours of late afternoon birding followed by dinner and some night birding. A relaxed walk may produce Bat Falcon, Yucatan Bobwhite, the burly Great Antshrike, Yucatan Jay, Yucatan Woodpecker, Yucatan Flycatcher, Yucatan and Yellow-headed Amazons, Canivet’s Emerald, Grey-crowned Yellowthroat, Yellow-tailed and
Hooded Oriole, Green-breasted Mango, and endearing Rufous-browed Peppershrike. We also hope to see Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture, Snail Kite, Roseate Spoonbill, Wood Stork, Limpkin, Black-collared Hawk, Tropical Mockingbird and Buff-bellied Hummingbird. This evening after dinner, we will search for potoos, owls (such as the Ferruginous Pygmy Owl) and nighthawks during an evening birding expedition around the lodge.

**Day 8: Crooked Tree Lagoon to Chan Chich.** Early this morning we embark on a boat trip through the maze of lagoons and creeks. We can expect to see large numbers of waterfowl, as well as South and Central America’s tallest bird, the Jabiru. We expect to see some of these impressive locals as they begin nesting. With luck our boat trip will also produce much sought after and shy species such as Sungrebe, the unique Boat-billed Heron and the incomparable Agami Heron. Other possible species include Bare-throated Tiger Heron, Purple Gallinule, Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Rufous-necked and Russet-naped Wood Rails, American Pygmy Kingfisher and Laughing Falcon. Northern Jacanas abound on the lilypad-covered lakes, while we’ll scan patches of open water for Lesser Scaup, Least Grebe, Masked Duck, Black-bellied Whistling Duck and the beautiful Blue-winged Teal. Osprey and Black Vulture may be seen quartering the skies above the lagoon, while with luck we’ll see flocks of the endangered Yellow-headed Parrot flitting through the dense riparian forest. After a leisurely lunch we’ll depart for our next destination, Chan Chich, situated in the centre of huge block of protected primary rainforest.

**Days 9 to 11: Chan Chich.** This magnificent locality constitutes one of the largest tracts of intact, undisturbed and easily accessible lowland rainforest remaining in Central America. An astonishing 370-plus bird species have been recorded in this 15 000ha private reserve, and we can look forward to three full days of exploring. There are three main habitats at Chan Chich, namely: the open areas; the mosaic of secondary and primary rainforest; and pristine, tall-canopy lowland rainforest.

The open areas around the lodge facilities simulate natural forest gaps and clearings, and as such attract a different suite of species. Birding within the grounds, we can expect to see White-collared and Red-capped Manakin, an array of migrant warblers, White-collared Seedeater, Northern Royal Flycatcher (whose flaming crown, when extended, transforms it from drab and innocuous to an avian wonder), the diminutive Slate-headed Tody-Flycatcher, Rufous-tailed Flycatcher, Masked Tityra, Striped Cuckoo, Fork-tailed Flycatcher, Yellow-winged
Tanagers and mixed flocks of Yellow-throated and Olive-backed Euphonias.

The lodge is situated in the plaza of an ancient Mayan ruin, the highest structure of which dominates the surrounding area. This vantage point will be used to scan for Wood Stork, perched and exposed Bat and Laughing Falcons, King Vulture, Northern Mealy Amazon, Collared Aracari, Pale-billed, Smoky-brown and Chestnut-coloured Woodpeckers, Boat-billed Flycatcher, Barred Antshrike, the brash Band-backed Wren and soaring hirundines and raptors such as White Hawk and the elegant Swallow-tailed Kite. Enticing birds into the grounds is an integral part of the lodge design, and during meals we can also view activity at the bird-baths and bird feeders dotted around the garden. Slaty-tailed and Gartered Trogons and Rufous-tailed Jacamar are unperturbed by lodge activity, and Purple-crowned Fairy, White-necked Jacobin and Long-billed and Stripe-tailed Hermits feed between the cabins. A quiet session of armchair birding may also yield Bright-rumped Attila, Tropical Kingbird, Green-breasted Mango, conspicuous flocks of Montezuma Oropendola and Ochre-bellied Flycatcher. Nearby Gallon Jug contains expanses of farmland and coffee plantations that add heterogeneity to the habitats on offer.

We will also take the opportunity to slowly wander the myriad trails radiating out from the lodge. Of varying length, these wind through the surrounding mosaic of secondary and primary rainforest. The wide, well-groomed trails provide flawless access to a cross-section of microhabitats. As we traverse tree-shrouded Mayan ruins we hope to connect with Ruddy Quail-dove, the easily overlooked White-whiskered Puffbird, Red-lored Parrots and Rufous Mourner. A feature of birding in this area are the multi-species bird parties, as several species converge on a concentrated food source to feed cooperatively and increase vigilance against predators. The nucleus of these groups is usually the Black-throated Shrike-Tanager, with a supporting cast of Mangrove, White-eyed, and Yellow-throated Vireos, Lesser Greenlet, American Redstart, Black-and-white Warbler, Tropical Gnatcatcher and the Yucatan endemic Rose-throated Tanager.

The tall, closed-canopy forest provides more challenging birding. The stratified nature of forest translates into a large number of microhabitats and niches exploited by various species assemblages. The jungle canopy holds such gems as Lovely Cotinga, the spectacular Ornate Hawk-Eagle, Soaring White-tailed and Grey-headed Kites, Spotted Tanager, Great Curassow, Collared Aracari, the vocal but aloof White-necked Puffbird, and Keel-billed Toucan by Adam Riley

Ocelot by Adam Riley

Keel-billed Toucan by Adam Riley

Ocelot by Adam Riley
billed Toucan. We’ll observe foraging monkey troops for the opportunistic Double-toothed Kite. The immediate sub-canopy is home to hawking Keel-billed Motmot, Black-cheeked Woodpecker, and foraging Crested Guan. Mid-canopy specials include Sulphur-rumped and Ruddy-tailed Flycatchers, Northern Schiffrornis, the furtive Long-billed Gnatwren, Black-headed, Slaty-tailed and Gartered Trogons, Lesson’s and Tody Motmots, Chestnut-coloured Woodpecker, the striking Black-throated Shrike-Tanager, and dainty Yucatan endemic Grey-throated Chat. The darker forest understory supports skulking, shy species such as Stub-tailed Spadebill, Wood Thrush, Spot-breasted Wren, Buff-throated and Scaly-throated Foliage-gleaners, Black-headed Saltator foraging in dense tangles, and Tawny Woodcreeper. We will also keep a close eye (and ear) on the litter layer, hoping to view foraging Scaly-throated Leafgasser, the vocal but elusive Black-faced Antthrush and Dusky Antbird. Jungle streams may contain Agami Heron, American Pygmy Kingfisher, White-bellied Emerald, Long-billed Hermit, various parrots and Tody Motmot. Ant swarms are a key component of this habitat, sometimes attracting birds down from the higher forest strata. Up to 10 species may be recorded at a swarm, including Gray-headed Tanager, Red-throated Ant-tanager, and Tawny-winged, Ruddy, Olivaceous, Strong-billed and Northern Barred Woodcreepers.

The days may culminate in post-dinner excursions around Chan Chich to look for nocturnal denizens such as Northern Potoo, Vermiculated Screech, Black-and-white, Spectacled and Mottled Owls, as well as Pauraque. There is also the chance of seeing some of Belize’s five cat species, Puma, Ocelot, Margay, the sleek Jagarundi and the monarch of the jungle, the Jaguar. During our stay we may be fortunate enough to see other mammals such as White-tailed Deer, White-lipped and Collared Peccaries, Deppe Squirel, Yucatan Black Howler Monkey, Geoffroy’s Spider Monkey, Baird’s Tapir, Northern Tamandua, Grey Fox and a multitude of bat species.

Day 12: Chan Chich to Belize City and final departure. After a final dawn birding outing around along one of the more accessible trails we’ll enjoy a leisurely, hearty breakfast while making final adjustments to our checklist and reliving trip highlights over a strong cup of local coffee. This wonderful trip will conclude with a relaxed drive back to Belize City for our connecting flights home, or head onwards to our Honduran extension.
Honduras Extension

Day 1: Belize City to Pico Bonito Lodge via San Pedro Sula. After arriving in San Pedro Sula, we depart on a long drive to a luxury eco-resort in the Parque Nacional Pico Bonito - our base for the next 4 nights. 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 Barthroat, 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.

Day 2: Pico Bonito Lodge. Following an early breakfast, we will spend the morning 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 Turquoise-browed Motmot, 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 White-collared Seedeaters and an array of overwintering North American migrants including various vireos, warblers, buntings and orioles.
Breaking for lunch, we will then head off to 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, 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, in particular, 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.

**Day 3: Day trip to 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.

**Day 4: Pico Bonito to San Pedro Sula via Lancetilla Bot. Gardens and final departures.** 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.

Amongst the numerous Grey Catbirds, a number of 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 Passerini’s Tanagers, Buff-throated Saltator, Orchard Oriole and Black-striped Sparrow. Lunch will be had at a local restaurant, following which we will then continue with our explorations of the area until the late afternoon, when we will return to our lodge to freshen up before our final celebratory dinner together.

Day 5: Pico Bonito Lodge to San Pedro Sula and final departures. This morning our Honduran adventure comes to an end and we will transfer to the San Pedro Sula airport for our onward flights homeward bound.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:
Tour dates, prices, single supplement rates, approximate flight costs and spaces available for this tour are displayed on our website. Please see under IMPORTANT NOTES below.

This includes:
- All meals from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 12 of the Belize Comprehensive tour and from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 5 of the Honduras extension;
- All lodgings as per itinerary;
- Ground transportation mentioned in the itinerary;
- Reserve entrance fees;
- Gratuities for local guides and services; and
- Guiding services of local guides and Rockjumper tour leader.

This excludes:
- Any airfares;
- Any beverages;
- Special gratuities; and
- 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.

IMPORTANT NOTES:
a) Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is however 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 (usually 4 months before the tour.) The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates, which are also quoted in the respective fixed currency.
b) Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration a small party supplement will have to be charged.

c) Furthermore, these costs are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.

d) Lastly, we may be forced to change or alter the itinerary and / or the designated Rockjumper leader at short or no notice due to unforeseen circumstances; please be aware that we will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.

**Tipping:** As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, restaurants etc) are included on this tour. However, this does NOT include your Rockjumper leader. If, therefore, you feel that he has given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip him.

**Please note:**
- 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 throughout the trip is quite comfortable and a variety of western and local cuisines are available throughout the tour.

**ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE DETAILS:**
This tour **does not** include ANY airfares. The tour will begin with a welcome dinner at our hotel on the island of Caye Caulker on day 1. As day 1 is scheduled as an arrival day, you are free to arrive at any time. The tour will conclude after a morning transfer from Chan Chich to Philip S. W. Goldson International Airport, Belize City on day 12.

The Honduras Extension will begin in the late morning of day 1 in San Pedro Sula. The tour will conclude by midday in San Pedro Sula on day 5.

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.

**FLIGHTS:**
Philip S. W. Goldson International Airport, Belize City (IATA: BZE) is the main port of entry and exit for international flights to and from Belize. Ramón Villeda Morales International Airport, San Pedro Sula (IATA: SAP) is the main port of entry and exit for international flights to and from Honduras. Both are well serviced by international airlines. **Please DO NOT book any flights until you have consulted the Rockjumper office for confirmation on the status of the tour.**