

Honduras Delivers Wildlife Wow!

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Amidst a Caribbean spirit, laid-back Hondureños are a friendly bunch, especially those from La Ceiba. The small port city of about 170,000 Ceibeños, called “Ceiba” for short (pronounced “*say-bah*”), marks the jumping off point for north-coast eco-adventures.

Travelers tired of too-trodden paths will delight in the unspoiled beauty of Honduras’ north central coast. While its relaxed culture certainly charms, the abundant wildlife here really gives this area its zing.

Even birders who’ve searched years for the Lovely Cotinga, one of Central America’s most elusive birds, won’t be disappointed. This region boasts more Lovelies than anywhere else. In fact, stay at The Lodge at Pico Bonito in winter through early spring and you’ll likely spot a few males with brilliant metallic blue feathers before breakfast.

Expect to see plenty of other birds, too, as even with a land mass only slightly larger than the state of Virginia, Honduras provides refuge to nearly 800 species, including dozens of species of neo-tropical migrants.

Nestled under the watchful eye of its dramatic 8000 ft. (2438 m.) namesake, The Lodge at Pico Bonito has earned a reputation among those who enjoy eco-travel. This nature-lover’s paradise edges up to Pico Bonito National Park, which, at 414 sq. miles (1073 sq. km) is the country’s second largest national park. The park also makes for one of Honduras’s most wild and unexplored regions. A plethora of wildlife exists in the mountains beyond and, as you sit on the deck and take in the canopied jungle, just knowing jaguars still roam out there somehow soothes the soul.

Visit Cuero y Salado Wildlife Refuge, which hosts a radically different ecosystem than those of the Pico Bonito jungles. Formed where the Cuero and the Salado rivers meet against the Caribbean, this unique mangrove estuary system creates a special habitat for many species including the West Indian Manatee, which the World Conservation Union (IUCN) notes as “vulnerable” on its “Red List.”

From the lists below to interesting plants such as cacao (the plant chocolate comes from) to the region’s giant folklore-laden Ceiba trees, you’ll never be at a loss for animals to see or images to capture with your camera’s lens.

Wildlife you may photograph and/or see on the north coast of Honduras:

- Water Nutria
- Caiman
- Sloth

- Tepezcuintles
- Crocodile
- Basiliscus Lizard
- Iguana
- Boa Constrictor
- Bats (*Long-nosed & others*)
- White-faced Capuchin Monkey
- Mantled Howler Monkey
- Agouti
- West Indian Manatee
- Blue Morpho Butterfly

Birds you may photograph and/or see on the north coast of Honduras:

- Lovely Cotinga
- Keel-Billed Toucan
- Keel-Billed Motmot
- Emerald Toucanet
- Sunbittern
- Montezuma Oropendula
- White Hawk
- Jacana
- Anhinga
- Frigatebird
- Wood Stork
- Boat-billed Heron
- Collared Aracari

Adventure to Honduras' north central coast and discover for yourself the untamed beauty and incredible wildlife that await you. Its people aren't jaded from a constant onslaught of tourists and you can still blaze your own trails. Yet, enough of a path has been cleared so that you can comfortably enjoy the thrill of the jungles, seashores, and mangrove estuaries of this often-overlooked Central American jewel at comfortable eco-lodges.

When you're ready to adventure to Honduras, or other destinations with plenty of wildlife, check out www.ExploreinFocus.com. Award-winning wildlife photographer, Jeff Parker, leads small tours of like-minded folks who share an enthusiasm for nature, photography, and travel.

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