

# Butterfly Conservation Tour

Honduras-January 5-11, 2023

Extension to Pico Bonito Lodge-January 11-14

Sponsored by the Pro Nature Honduras Foundation (Pro-HN)

Butterfly diversity in many tropical countries is poorly known for any number of reasons and Central America is no exception. When Robert and Olivia began working on the Butterflies of Honduras in 2016, a mere 861 species were confirmed for the country. Due largely to their efforts, this list now stands at over 1,250, including four previously undescribed species. They have been working diligently on a butterfly guide that will include all six families. It will also utilize only material and photos that have originated solely from Honduras, making this a unique book in the region. They have previously self-published two volumes on the birds of Honduras, and the butterfly book will follow suit.

In order to cover all publishing related costs, the Pro-HN Foundation and the authors are organizing an international fundraising tour. There will be five teams, each led by people who *know* Neotropical butterflies. It will be run as a ‘fun’ competition to see which group records the most amount of species. Proceeds from the event will be utilized to publish the book.

We will visit numerous sites around the Lake Yojoa area including the species-rich Emerald Valley, which alone harbors nearly 700 species. It has consistently averaged 55% of the country’s total. This fifty acre mid-elevation forest harbors the endemic Eleanor’s Emesis (*Emesis eleanorae*-named after Robert’s mother) which will be placed on the IUCN Red List in 2022. At some point soon, this property will also attain the classification as an official site under the Alliance for Zero Extinction, due entirely to its butterfly composition and the Emesis metalmark.

The event is timed to take place during the annual blooming cycle of the Blue Mistflower, when the Foundation typically runs its annual Butterfly Festival. Emerald Valley and Bio Parque Paradise have several gardens filled with these ‘magical’ plants whose aroma brings butterflies down from the surrounding canopy and species that typically inhabit the forest interior. Day after day, these flowers attract a wide array of otherwise rarely seen species and provide a unique opportunity for one to delve into the realm on Neotropical butterflies.

The book is nearing completion and will feature more than 100 pages of color photographs, depicting a large percentage of the species known to exist in Honduras. The majority of the photos to be featured in the book will be of living individuals, complimented by images of mounted specimens on a separate website, making this a valuable resource across the region.

So, be sure to join us for this worthwhile event and support local conservationists.

The tour is being offered by the following companies:

Robert Gallardo arrived in Honduras as a Peace Corps volunteer in 1993 and has resided there ever since. After having set up numerous butterfly rearing facilities he dove head-first into birds and eventually became the country's leading expert on its avifauna. He eventually produced a CD on bird song, two lengthy volumes on its birds (English & Spanish), taught Honduran nationals on how to become professional bird watching guides in five formal courses and essentially pioneered avitourism in this little known country. After more than twenty years of undertaking bird related work he has now returned to his childhood passion of butterflies. He is the current President of the Pro-HN Foundation. He and Olivia reside at Emerald Valley where they hope to install the country's first Nature Center and a small eco-lodge.