



Golden-hooded Tanager © Mick Thompson

Costa Rica Birding Highlights

Explore the incredible natural wonders of Costa Rica. Our journey will transport us to the must-see birding sites, including Monteverde, La Selva, Arenal and Carara National Park. Our expert local guide will lead us through diverse landscapes in search of three of the mainland endemic bird species, and an array of other avian Central American gems. We'll also learn how local conservation groups are protecting birds and their habitats for the future.

Dates: April 17 – 29, 2022 (12 days)

Itinerary: [Map](#)

Cost: \$3,185 (max 12 participants)

In-country Guide: Jose Pablo Castillo

Potential Species: 320

TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

- 🌿 Bird the world famous Monteverde cloud forest, and La Selva Biological Research Station.
- 🌿 Visit local conservation projects to learn how their work is protecting endemic and threatened species.
- 🌿 Explore Carara National Park located on the Pacific slope, renowned for its ecological diversity.
- 🌿 Search for iconic Macaws, Manakins, Tanagers, and of course, Resplendent Quetzals.



This program will involve early mornings, moderate-to-high intensity birding, with some rough terrain.

Day 1: Sunday, April 17 **Arrival in San Jose**

Welcome to Costa Rica! After a short drive to our hotel, we'll have the chance to experience the lush grounds. **Lesson's Motmot, Hoffmann's Woodpecker, Grayish Saltator, and Rufous-naped Wren** are common birds around the hotel. We'll attend a trip briefing and then enjoy our welcome dinner at the hotel's restaurant.

Overnight: Hotel Bougainvillea (3,200 ft)

Day 2: Monday, April 18 **Cabanis's Ground-Sparrow**

Depart after breakfast for the Sarapiquí region, located in the northeastern Caribbean lowlands. We'll stop at the Cabanisi Project to learn about the conservation status of Costa Rica's ENDEMIC **Cabanis's Ground-Sparrow** and the efforts to protect the species by a local non-profit organization. This species is threatened due to habitat loss caused by urban sprawl and other human activities. After observing the Ground-Sparrow in the wild we'll continue our journey and arrive at the La Selva Biological Station in the afternoon and will have time to bird the vicinity where we hope to find **Collared Aracari, White-collared Manakin, Red-throated Ant-Tanager, Brown-hooded Parrot**, among others. Dinner at the station.

Overnight: La Selva Biological Station (150 ft)



Great Curassow © Andy Morffew

Day 3: Tuesday, April 19 **La Selva**

Full day at La Selva Biological Station birding the road, grounds and trails. We'll be looking for the highly endangered **Great Green Macaw**, as well as **Snowy Cotinga, Rufous Motmot, Pied Puffbird, Great Curassow, Chestnut-colored Woodpecker, Fasciated Antshrike, Plain-colored Tanager** and more. La Selva protects a variety of habitats across more than 5,000 acres, known as one of the premier birding spots in the country, the station is also home to many other species of flora and fauna. As an active research facility, researchers and students alike publish more than 200 scientific papers each year! Dinner at the station.

Overnight: La Selva Biological Station (150 ft)

Day 4: Wednesday, April 20 **Arenal**

After breakfast head to the Arenal region. This morning we'll visit Bogarin Trails just outside the town of La Fortuna at the base of Arenal Volcano. Along the trails we'll look for, among others, **Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Uniform Crake, White-throated Crake, and Olivaceous Piculet**. After lunch at a local restaurant we'll head to the lodge, located a few minutes away, for more birding on the grounds and vicinity. We'll then check in to the lodge toward the end of the afternoon and later enjoy dinner.

Overnight: Arenal Observatory Lodge (2,000 ft)

Day 5: Thursday, April 21 Arenal

Early this morning we'll gather at the observation deck where we hope to see **Montezuma Oropendola, Emerald Tanager** and **Red-legged Honeycreeper**. After enjoying a hearty breakfast, we'll explore the various trails on the property that wind through the spectacular rainforest of the Caribbean foothills. Here we look for specialties such as **Yellow-eared Toucanet, Broad-billed Motmot, Spotted Antbird, Ocellated Antbird, Black-throated Trogon** and **Brown-billed Scythebill** to name a few. In the afternoon we'll continue birding around the grounds and surrounding areas in search of **Thicket Antpitta** and even the uncommon **Bare-necked Umbrellabird**.

Overnight: Arenal Observatory Lodge (2,000 ft)

Day 6: Friday, April 22 Monteverde

The group will start birding this morning along La Peninsula Road adjacent to Arenal Volcano National Park, for some specialties such as **Keel-billed Motmot, White-fronted Nunbird** and with luck, **Ornate Hawk-Eagle**. We'll then carry on with our journey up the Tilaran Mountain Range where Monteverde is located, stopping at key birding locations along the way.

Overnight: Hotel Montaña Monteverde (5,000 ft)

Day 7: Saturday, April 23 Monteverde

Monteverde was originally founded by Quaker families who moved there from Alabama in the 1950's, seeking a peaceful place to live and carry on with their lives. As part of their vision they protected the high-elevation cloud forest, forests that later became the reserves found in the area. We will spend the day visiting two different reserves in search of highland specialties, including the **Resplendent Quetzal**, perhaps the most iconic bird species in Central America. Other target species include **Northern Emerald Toucanet, Black-breasted Wood-Quail**, and another Costa Rican ENDEMIC **Coppery-headed Emerald**. Return to the lodge at the end of the day for dinner.

Overnight: Hotel Montaña Monteverde (5,000 ft)

Day 8: Sunday, April 24 Monteverde

This morning we will observe a bird banding session with the Monteverde Conservation Foundation. The Foundation is dedicated to the protection and restoration of habitat for endangered species, with the **Three-wattled Bellbird** as its flagship species. Unfortunately, due to its migration habits, we'll unlikely see this species at this time of year, but we should encounter **Prong-billed Barbet** and **Long-tailed Manakin**. We will visit a reforestation project and attend a brief lecture on the conservation work of the Foundation. In the afternoon we'll begin our drive to the Central Pacific region, arriving at our lodge towards the end of the day.

Overnight: Hotel Cerro Lodge (150ft)



Coppery-headed Emerald © Becky Matsubara

Day 9: Monday, April 25 Carara National Park

After an early breakfast we'll head out to Carara National Park located in the central Pacific region. Carara is one of Costa Rica's most important national parks due to its geographic location. The park sits right along the convergence zone between the dry north Pacific and the very wet south Pacific region. Here we will look for **Slaty-tailed Trogon**, **Streak-chested Antpitta**, **Rufous Piha**, and **Rufous-and-White Wren**. The park is also home to the second largest population of **Scarlet Macaw** in the country. In the afternoon we'll explore the areas adjacent to the lodge in search of dry forest species like **Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl**, **Lesser Ground-Cuckoo**, **Scrub Euphonia**, and **Double-striped Thick-Knee**.

Overnight: Hotel Cerro Lodge (150 ft)

Day 10: Tuesday, April 26 Carara National Park

We'll start with an early morning boat tour on the Tarcoles River where we have a chance to find water birds and mangrove specialties. Some possible sightings include **Roseate Spoonbill**, **Southern Lapwing**, **Mangrove Vireo**, **American Pygmy Kingfisher**, and one more of Costa Rica's four ENDEMIC species, the Endangered **Mangrove Hummingbird**. After this unforgettable experience we'll continue the journey to our hotel in the highlands of the Talamanca Mountain range. We'll explore the grounds in search of highland specialties such as **Long-tailed Silky Flycatcher**, **Black-thighed Grosbeak**, **Ochraceous Wren**, among many others. Dinner at the lodge.

Overnight: Sueños del Bosque Lodge (7,200 ft)



Resplendent Quetzal © Jorge Obando

Day 11: Wednesday, April 27 Savegre

We'll start the day with an early morning expedition to find the **Resplendent Quetzal**, regularly seen in the valley feeding on wild avocados and nesting in dead trees along the Savegre River. Throughout the day we will have the chance to find many highland species along the various trails and gardens of the hotel. This breath-taking setting is surrounded by highland oak forest and farmland. Some of the highland specialties here are **Slaty Flowerpiercer**, **Scintillant Hummingbird**, **Ochraceous Pewee**, **Dark Pewee**, **Collared Redstart**, **Black Guan**, and **Yellow-winged Vireo**.

Overnight: Sueños del Bosque Lodge (7,200 ft)

Day 12: Thursday, April 28 Los Quetzales National Park

Morning departure back to the Central Valley, with a stop at Los Quetzales National Park located at a higher elevation (11,400 ft) to look for **Volcano Junco**, **Timberline Wren**, **Black-and-Yellow Silky-Flycatcher**, and **Fiery-throated Hummingbird**. We'll then return to Alajuela and check in to the final hotel of the trip and enjoy our farewell dinner.

Overnight: Buena Vista Chic Hotel (3,000 ft)

Day 13: Friday, April 29 Alajuela

Transfer to the airport for onward travel.

LAND PRICE

\$3,185 per person, 10 people travelling

\$3,480 per person, 8-9 people travelling

Price includes full-time guide, accommodation in standard rooms, meals and non-alcoholic drinks, entrance fees and activities as outlined in this itinerary, private transportation (with A/C), arrival and departure transfers, fees and donations to local conservation NGO's, and a Costa Rica Bird & Wildlife Checklist. The price does not include international flight, travel insurance, alcoholic drinks and gratuities.

*For those interested, there is the optional 6-day extension to the Osa Peninsula where we should find the fourth and final mainland Costa Rican ENDEMIC species, the **Black-cheeked Ant-tanager**. See pages 6 - 8 for further details.*

REGISTER

To reserve your place on this trip, please contact:

Toby Ross

tobeross@gmail.com or (206) 552-3834

A \$300 deposit is needed to secure your place.

Further Details

Cost is based on double occupancy. Single rooms may be available for an additional cost of \$700pp. A \$300 per person deposit is required to reserve your space on this trip. This deposit is refundable until February 17, 2022 at which time final payment is due.

COVID-19

The Covid-19 pandemic has substantially affected the travel industry, and travelers rightfully have concerns. The safety of our trip participants is our highest priority. We have created a [Covid-19 policy](#) that we hope addresses some of the concerns. For the peace of mind and protection for participants and our in-country team, Alight Tours requires all trip participants to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 prior to the trip. All in-country birding guides and drivers we use will also be fully vaccinated.

Costa Rica Travel Restrictions

At this time (December 2021) Costa Rica is currently welcoming fully vaccinated tourists without the need for a negative coronavirus test nor quarantine period. For entry, travelers are required to complete a [Health Pass](#) form within 72 hrs of departure from the US. More information can be found [here](#), and on the US Embassy in Costa Rica [website](#).

This program is presented in partnership with Crescentia Expeditions, a small Costa Rican owned and operated travel company.



Pearl Kite © Joao Quental



Costa Rica – Osa Peninsula

EXTENSION

Explore Corcovado National Park which covers a huge portion of the Osa Peninsula with tropical lowland rainforest. This area located on the southern Pacific coast is described by National Geographic as “one of the most biologically intense places on Earth”. Warm and humid conditions prevail for most of the year providing excellent habitat for lowland rainforest specialties.

Dates: April 28 – May 3, 2022 (6 days)

Our itinerary: [MAP](#)

Cost: \$1120

In-country Guide: Jose Pablo Castillo

Potential Species: 100



This program will involve early mornings, moderate-to-high intensity birding, with some rough terrain.

Day 1: Thursday, April 28 **Los Quetzales National Park**

Morning departure to the Osa Peninsula, with a stop at Los Quetzales National Park located at a higher elevation (11,400 ft) to look for **Volcano Junco**, **Timberline Wren**, **Black-and-Yellow Silky-Flycatcher**, and **Fiery-throated Hummingbird**. We’ll continue driving south, arriving at the lodge in the afternoon. The lodge sits at an elevation of only 100 ft and is surrounded by lush gardens and rainforest. We can commonly see the regionally endemic **Charming Hummingbird**, **Red-lored Parrot**, **Gray-cowled Wood-Rail**, and much more around the grounds. Lunch will be at a local restaurant en-route, with dinner at the lodge.

Overnight: Danta Corcovado Lodge (100 ft)

Day 2: Friday, April 29 Corcovado National Park

Full day of birding around the grounds and vicinity of the lodge. We'll start the day with a short drive to Rincon River Bridge to try for **Yellow-billed Cotinga**, and hopefully **Turquoise Cotinga**, then return to the lodge for breakfast. The lodge protects a private reserve surrounded by Corcovado National Park and is an excellent example of sustainable tourism in Costa Rica. During the rest of the day we'll explore the lodge's trails and surrounding areas. **Fiery-billed Aracari, Golden-naped Woodpecker, Little Tinamou, Bronzy Hermit, and Black-bellied Wren** will be our target species here. We'll enjoy all our meals at the lodge's great, open-air restaurant.

Overnight: Danta Corcovado Lodge (100 ft)

Day 3: Saturday, April 30 La Gamba

Today we'll continue to a different area of the Osa Peninsula, this time around to the La Gamba area. After the 1.5hr drive, we'll freshen up and have lunch. During our time here we'll explore the grounds in search of Costa Rica's ENDEMIC, and Endangered **Black-cheeked Ant-Tanager**. Some of the other specialties of this region are **Baird's Trogon, Spot-crowned Euphonia, Black-striped Woodcreeper, Orange-collared Manakin**, and much more.

Overnight: Esquinas Rainforest Lodge (250 ft)

Day 4: Sunday, May 1 La Gamba

Full day birding around the lodge's grounds and trails. We'll also check adjacent La Gamba Biological Station and Piedras Blancas National Park. Dense lowland rainforest along the trails as well as more open habitat in the area offer chances for some specialties such as **Black-hooded Antshrike, Chiriqui Foliage-gleaner, Royal Flycatcher, and Riverside Wren**.

Overnight: Esquinas Rainforest Lodge (250 ft)

Day 5: Monday, May 2 Piedras Blancas National Park

After an early morning walk and breakfast, we'll begin our journey back to the Central Valley exploring the area adjacent to Piedras Blancas National Park en route, a famous hotspot where we can find **Brown-throated Parakeet, Ruddy-breasted Seedeater, Blue Ground-Dove, Pearl Kite** and others. We'll then continue on to the Central Valley via the coastal road, stopping for birding and lunch along the way. Arrival to the hotel at the end of the afternoon and farewell dinner will be at the hotel's fine restaurant.

Overnight: Buena Vista Chic Hotel (3,000 ft)

Day 6: Tuesday, May 3 San Jose

Transfer to the airport for travel back to the US.



Black-cheeked Ant-Tanager © Francesco Veronesi

Land Price

\$1155 per person, 6 people travelling

\$1045 per person, 8 people travelling

\$965 per person, 10 people travelling

Price includes full-time guide, accommodation in standard rooms, meals and non-alcoholic drinks, entrance fees and activities as outlined in this itinerary, private transportation (with A/C), arrival and departure transfers, fees and donations to local conservation NGO's, and a Costa Rica Bird & Wildlife Checklist. The price does not include international flight, travel insurance, alcoholic drinks and gratuities.

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Toby Ross

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A \$100 deposit is needed to secure your place.

Further Details

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Spot-crowned Euphonia © Charlie Jackson

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CUSTOMIZED NATURAL HISTORY, EDUCATIONAL & BIRDING TOURS

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