



Costa Rica 101

Intro to Tropical Bird Photography

Tour Leader: Jamie Cunningham and
Diego Quesada

October 1-8, 2022

Have you thought about traveling to the tropics to photograph birds but don't know where to start?

This is the trip for you! Our group will travel to Costa Rica to photograph an amazing variety of bird species, all while in a beautiful and safe country. Costa Rica is one of the best places to introduce yourself to tropical species. Our travels will take us through numerous elevations and habitats that will offer a great diversity. We will visit numerous feeder setups, including private locations, which will give you a great chance to familiarize yourself with some of the new families of birds that are unique to Central and South America.

Itinerary Overview:

October 1: Arrival in San José and an Evening Photography Session

October 2-3: Cinchona Region

October 4-5: Caribbean Slope Region

October 6-7: Arenal Region

October 8: Departure from San José

General Overview

The leader will work extremely hard to get you into the right position to make incredible images. We will visit feeder sets up, spend some time working with species that don't come into feeders, and have private multi-flash instruction. While we will likely encounter a huge variety of species, as with all photo trips we will focus on quality over quantity. Photographing in the tropics provides unique challenges and your leader will make sure you are prepared for those situations. During the tour you will learn how to get the correct exposure, use different lighting situations to your advantage, and work with flash.

The potential species list is large but likely species include Keel-billed and Yellow-throated Toucans, Collared Aracari Scarlet and Great Green Macaws, a number of species of parrots and parakeets including Orange-chinned Parakeet and Brown-headed Parrot, numerous tanagers including Blue-gray, Palm, Golden-hooded, and Scarlet-rumped, 3 species of honeycreepers, upwards of 15 species of hummingbirds, and many more. We will spend some time looking for other wildlife like frogs, bats, snakes, sloths, and the coati. A night photography session will also provide some unique photo ops.

Equipment

Bring your longest telephoto lens and matching teleconverters as well as a tripod for this tour. A flash kit including speed light, bracket, off-shoe cord, Better Beamer and external battery pack will help you get the most from this trip as we will be learning to use fill flash to enhance our images. Bring a macro lens (or extension tubes) for the flowers, plants, insects and more. A shorter lens will come in handy for capturing the amazing landscapes of Costa Rica.

Environment

Even though we will be in the tropics, higher elevations can prove quite chilly in the mornings and evenings so it is smart to pack layers and maybe even a light pair of gloves. Parts of our trip will be in hot and humid areas, so light moisture wicking clothes and lightweight hiking pants are recommended. The rainforest certainly gets its name for one reason, rain. Expect a chance of rain every day, and plan on bringing a raincoat for you and rain cover for your gear. Many locations will have a covered area to photography from. Light waterproof hiking boots will suffice for footwear. While it varies by locations, mosquitoes can be a nuisance. Products with the active ingredient Picardin work better than products containing DEET without destroying your expensive gear. Sunscreen, sunhats, and other sun protection is recommended.

Physical Activity

Activity levels for this trip are moderate. Most walks to shooting locations are not strenuous but some light off trail hiking for short distances can be expected. Do keep in mind there are places that will be hot and humid and other locations that are at a higher elevation so they may seem more strenuous to those not accustomed to the elevation. We will keep an easy pace while reaching these spots.

Daily Schedule

Each morning we will start shooting quite early. Breakfast will be provided at our lodges. This will allow us to take advantage of the birds' most active time of day and the best light. A leisurely lunch and a short afternoon break will provide a needed break to refuel and recharge. On full sun days lunch will be a little earlier while on overcast days we will extend our morning session longer. In the afternoons we will head back out and work on making more images. Dinner will be at a reasonable hour as sunset is early year-round. Over dinner we will discuss the day's events and plan for the following morning. If the forecast is for heavy overcast or hard rain we may decide on a later start and have a more leisurely breakfast. In the event of an all-day downpour we will discuss and demonstrate image editing or share a slide program. There are also some unique opportunities shooting in rainy conditions, including many birds bathing and preening, which can make for some spectacular images.

**Please communicate any specific techniques you would like to learn. No species can be guaranteed, but we will do our best to locate target species through our partnership with local guides. Every effort will be made to ensure each participant comes away with many memorable images.



Likely Species on this Trip:



- Red-billed Pigeon
- Inca Dove
- White-winged Dove
- Groove-billed Ani
- Squirrel Cuckoo
- White-necked Jacobin
- Green Thorntail
- Green-crowned Brilliant
- Talamanca Hummingbird
- Purple-throated Mountain-gem
- White-throated Mountain-gem
- Volcano Hummingbird
- Violet Sabrewing
- Coppery-headed Emerald
- Blue-vented Hummingbird
- Rufous-tailed Hummingbird
- Southern Lapwing
- Green Ibis
- Roadside Hawk
- Gartered Trogon
- Broad-billed Motmot
- Rufous Motmot
- Northern Emerald-Toucanet
- Collared Aracari
- Keel-billed Toucan
- Yellow-throated Toucan
- Hoffman's Woodpecker
- Barred Antshrike
- Orange-chinned Parakeet
- Brown-headed Parakeet
- Common Tody-flycatcher
- Great Kiskadee
- Social Flycatcher
- Rufous-naped Wren
- Scrub Euphonia
- Rufous-collared Sparrow
- Montezuma Oropendola
- Tennessee Warbler
- Slate-throated Redstart
- Crimson-collared Tanager
- Scarlet-rumped Tanager
- Blue-gray Tanager
- Palm Tanager
- Golden-hooded Tanager
- Bay-headed Tanager
- Emerald Tanager
- Silver-throated Tanager
- Green Honeycreeper
- Red-legged Honeycreeper
- Shining Honeycreeper
- Slaty Flowerpiercer
- Bananaquit
- Buff-throated Saltator
- Grayish Saltator

Trip Details:

Cost:

Price per person (double occupancy), from San José, Costa Rica: \$4,199

Single Supplement: \$375

Minimum Participants: 4

Maximum Participants: 6

Price Includes:

Expert Guides

Ground Transportation in Costa Rica

All Lodging

All Meals

Park Entrance Fees

Price Does Not Include:

Airfare to and from San José, Costa Rica

Airport Taxes

Visa and Passport Fees (if applicable)

Alcoholic Beverages

Personal Items

Tips

Travel Insurance

Deposit:

A deposit of \$500 per person is required to hold your spot on this tour. The remaining balance is due no later than 3 months prior to the scheduled start date of the tour (July 1, 2022).

If you have any questions about this tour or would like to sign up for it, please contact Rob at info@sabrewingnaturetours.com, by phone at 317-324-8505, or register through our website at sabrewingnaturetours.com.

Responsibility/Disclaimer Statement:

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