



Costa Rica

Raptor Migration Spectacular

Tour Leaders: Diego Quesada and Eric Ripma

October 16-25, 2022

Costa Rica is well-known as one of the top birding countries in the world, but many birders don't realize that this wonderful country hosts an incredible migration of raptors. This tour will visit the amazing site of Kèköldi where millions of raptors pass overhead each autumn. We'll also bird at Costa Rican hotspots Rancho Naturalista and Arenal Observatory Lodge.

Itinerary Overview:

October 16: Arrival in San José, Costa Rica and transfer to Casona del Cafetal
October 17: Morning birding at Rio Perlas and Tapanti National Park, drive to Rancho Naturalista
October 18: Early birding at Rancho Naturalista, Valle del Rio Tuis, and surrounding areas
October 19: Birding at Angostura Reservoir and drive to the Caribbean Coast
October 20: Hiking up to the Kèköldi Observation Tower for raptor migration
October 21: Hawk watch from Casa Calateas, afternoon birding at Cahuita National Park
October 22: Drive to Arenal, stopping at Casa de Cope for birding
October 23: Full day birding at Arenal Observatory Lodge and surrounding areas
October 24: Transfer to San José, with a stop at Rey del Cocora Hummingbirds
October 25: Departure from San José, Costa Rica

Detailed Itinerary:

October 16 – Arrival in San José, Costa Rica and transfer to Casona del Cafetal

You will be met by your guides outside the customs area of Juan Santamaría International Airport in San José. From here we'll drive to our hotel outside San José for the night. We'll do some birding around the property in the afternoon if time permits. Some highlights might include White-eared Ground-Sparrow and Cabanis's Wren among others. We'll have a wonderful welcome dinner and plenty of time to relax before our adventures begin early the next morning.

-Overnight: Casona del Cafetal

October 17 – Morning birding at Casona del Cafetal and Tapanti National Park, drive to Rancho Naturalista

Today, we'll start with some early birding on the grounds of Casona del Cafetal to see some of the common species of Costa Rica's central valley. After breakfast, we'll visit Tapanti National Park, one of the hotspots for birdwatching on the eastern slope of the Talamanca mountain range. After a morning of birding in the park, we'll head to the Ujarras Valley for lunch at a local restaurant where we will aim to see a few more special species of the area. After lunch, we'll drive to our lodge in the Valley of Turrialba. Upon arrival at Rancho Naturalista, we'll settle into our rooms and then gather for one of the lodge's famous gourmet dinners!

-Overnight: Rancho Naturalista

October 18 – Early Birding at Rancho Naturalista, Valle del Rio Tuis, and surrounding areas

Rancho Naturalista is one of the most famous birding lodges not just in Costa Rica but in all of Central America. Over 450 species of birds have been seen on this single property alone! Our birding today starts at dawn by checking the insect light that attracts several species of forest birds. They come to the screen which is packed with moths and other insects, creating a spectacular pre-breakfast show. After breakfast, we'll spend the rest of the morning birding on the grounds and trails of the lodge. One of the most sought-after birds at Rancho Naturalista is the beautiful Snowcap, a small purple hummingbird with a bright white cap. We'll be sure to spend plenty of time searching for this special little bird. Other highlights at Rancho Naturalista include Tawny-chested Flycatcher, White-crowned Manakin, Black-crested Coquette, and many others!

Not far from Rancho Naturalista is the Valle del Rio Tuis. This wonderful spot hosts several species that can't be found on the lodge grounds. We'll spend the afternoon along this beautiful river looking for more target species. After dinner, we'll go out looking for owls and other night creatures such as Kinkajou and Olingo.

-Overnight: Rancho Naturalista

October 19 – Birding at Angostura Reservoir and drive to the Caribbean Coast

Angostura Reservoir is not far from Rancho Naturalista and is where our day will begin. This will be the first wetland and lake that we visit on this tour, so it should add many species to our trip list such as Snail Kite, Least Grebe, kingfishers, and many others. Once we have our fill of birding here, we'll make our way to the Caribbean lowlands.

The Caribbean lowlands of Costa Rica present favorable conditions for the air currents that carry migrating raptors. This is what helps to create the migration spectacle that we are hoping to see over the next few days. We'll also check the river mouths along this route for shorebirds.

-Overnight: Cariblue Beach and Jungle Resort or similar

October 20 - Hiking up to the Kèköldi Observation Tower for raptor migration

More than 3.5 million raptors fly cross Costa Rica's skies every year, forming large kettles, and as many as 17 different species of hawks, falcons, and vultures can be seen. The largest concentration occurs in the south Caribbean coastal areas near the border with Panama, where mountains that are situated close to the shore form a funnel.

This makes for an incredible visit to Kèköldi Indigenous Reserve, a conservation and research project managed by the members of one of the native communities of the area. The reserve has an observation tower on a strategic point on top of the ridge with panoramic views where we can appreciate the migration. Although it is quite a hike of approximately 1.5 miles up hill, the experience is well worth the effort.

Highlights for the day could include thousands of Broad-winged Hawks, Swainson's Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, King Vulture, Mississippi Kite, Purple-throated Fruitcrow, and many more!

-Overnight: Caribblue Beach and Jungle Resort or similar

October 21 - Hawk watch from Casa Calateas, afternoon birding at Cahuita National Park

After breakfast, we'll head to Casa Calateas and spend the morning at a lodge to enjoy the raptor migration from two different lookouts. There is also an access road that offers great birding. In the afternoon, we'll visit Cahuita National Park for some more birding and then round out the day enjoying the beach and ocean around our lodge. A visit to Puerto Viejo for dinner at a local restaurant allows us to immerse ourselves in the culture of the area.

-Overnight: Caribblue Beach and Jungle Resort or similar



Broad-winged Hawk

October 22 – Drive to Arenal, stopping at Casa de Cope for birding

After an early breakfast, we'll make our way to the next destination, Arenal Observatory Lodge. Along the way, we'll visit Casa de Cope, which is a property owned by a local birder and artist that is very well-known in the country. We'll spend time birding with him, taking full advantage of his knowledge of the local flora and fauna. Possible highlights on this property include White-necked Jacobin, Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer, White Hawk, and a good variety of tanagers visiting the feeders. From there, we'll head up to Arenal where we will settle into our lodge for the night.

-Overnight: Arenal Observatory Lodge

October 23 – Full day birding at Arenal Observatory Lodge and surrounding areas

The grounds and gardens around the Arenal lodge offer an amazing variety of wildlife. Our morning will start at the restaurant deck where there will be plenty of action at the feeders for us to enjoy. Great Curassows tend to make an appearance below the feeders each morning and sometimes throughout the day! After breakfast, we'll continue exploring the gardens and trails around the lodge. In the afternoon, we'll head to Peninsula Road which is part of Arenal Volcano National Park.

-Overnight: Arenal Observatory Lodge

October 24 – Transfer to San José, with a stop at Rey del Cocora Hummingbirds

After breakfast, we'll leave Arenal Observatory Lodge and make our way back to San Jose with birding stops along the way. One of our stops is at a wonderful conservation project with feeders and



Coppery-headed Emerald

wonderful views. This stop is a special place to find middle elevation species. After arriving at the hotel in the afternoon, we'll do some birding on the hotel grounds if time allows and then have our farewell dinner.

-Overnight: *Bougainvillea Hotel*

October 25 – Departure from San José, Costa Rica

If time allows, we'll do some early morning birding in the Bougainvillea Gardens. We'll then have breakfast before being transferred to the airport for our flights home.

Trip Details:

Cost:

Price per person (double occupancy), from San José, Costa Rica: \$4,099

Single Supplement: \$635

Minimum Participants: 6

Maximum Participants: 10

Price Includes:

2 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

Passport and Visa Fees

Alcoholic Beverages

Personal Items

Travel Insurance

Tips

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 16, 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:

Sabrewing Nature Tours acts only as an agent for the various independent suppliers that provide hotel accommodations, transportation, sightseeing, activities, or other services connected with this tour. Such services are subject to the terms and conditions of those suppliers. Sabrewing Nature Tours and their respective employees, agents, representatives, and assigns accept no liability whatsoever for any injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or any other incident which may be caused by the negligence, defect, default of any company or person in performing these services. Responsibility is not accepted for losses, injury, damages, or expenses of any kind due to sickness, weather, strikes, hostilities, wars, terrorist acts, acts of nature, local laws, or other such causes. All services and accommodations are subject to the laws and regulations of the country in which they are provided. Sabrewing Nature Tours is not responsible for any baggage or personal effects of any individual participating in the tours/trips arranged by Sabrewing Nature Tours. Individual travelers are responsible for purchasing a travel insurance policy, if desired, that will cover some of the expenses associated with the loss of luggage or personal effects.