



Costa Rica

A Countrywide Adventure

Tour Leaders: Diego Quesada and Tyler Ficker

March 11-25, 2023

Our itinerary for this two-week trip allows us to see a wide variety of the habitats that occur in the incredible country of Costa Rica. From the Caribbean lowlands to the Pacific Coast and everywhere in between, we will see the very best birding that this country has to offer!

Itinerary Overview:

March 11: Arrival in San José, Costa Rica and transfer to Hotel Bougainvillea
March 12: Transfer to Sarapiquí with stops at Cinchona and Virgen del Socorro
March 13: Birding at La Selva Biological Station
March 14: Early morning at La Selva access road and drive to Arenal and birding at Peninsula Road
March 15: Birding at Arenal Observatory Lodge and surrounding areas
March 16: Birding at Sky Adventure Hanging Bridges and Arenal Observatory Lodge
March 17: Birding Bogarin Trail, drive to Medio Queso and birding the wetlands by boat
March 18: Birding by boat at Caño Negro Wildlife Refuge and transfer to Ensenada
March 19: Birding Ensenada Lodge
March 20: Birding at Cocorocas Salt Pans and transfer to Carara area
March 21: Boat tour in Tarcoles River and birding Bijagual Road
March 22: Birding Carara National Park and transfer to Highlands
March 23: Birding in the Highlands
March 24: Birding the Paramo and Providencia road and transfer to hotel in San José
March 25: Departure from San José, Costa Rica

Detailed Itinerary:

March 11: Arrival in San José, Costa Rica and transfer to Hotel Bougainvillea

You will be met by your guides outside the customs area of Juan Santa Maria International Airport in San José. From here we will make the drive to our hotel outside of San José for the night. We'll do some birding around the property in the afternoon if time permits. Some highlights might include Great Kiskadee, Lesson's Motmot, and Crimson-fronted Parakeet among others. We'll have a wonderful welcome dinner and plenty of time to relax before our adventures begin early the next morning.

-Overnight: Hotel Bougainvillea or similar

March 12: Transfer to Sarapiquí with stops at Cinchona and Virgen del Socorro

On the way to the Sarapiquí area, we'll stop at the Cinchona feeders and Virgen del Socorro Road. This middle elevation habitat hosts a great diversity of quality species that often travel in mixed flocks.



Coppery-headed Emerald

A few of the many target birds for the day are White Hawk, Northern Emerald-Toucanet, Silver-throated Tanager, and the endemic Coppery-headed Emerald.

-Overnight: Ara Ambigua Lodge or similar

March 13: Birding at La Selva Biological Station

La Selva is one of the best-known research stations for tropical studies, and the habitat that it protects is home to hundreds of resident and migratory birds. Our morning will be spent exploring this incredible property. Highlights could include Broad-billed Motmot, Gartered Trogon, Great Green Macaw, and many others. In the afternoon, we will visit Casa de Cope, a property owned by a local birder and artist that is very well-known in the country. We'll spend time birding with him on his property, taking full advantage of his knowledge of the local flora and fauna.

-Overnight: Ara Ambigua Lodge or similar

March 14: Early morning at La Selva access road and drive to Arenal, birding at Peninsula Road

Today, we will bird the access road to La Selva Biological Station and then make our way to Arenal. After lunch, we'll bird along the Peninsula Road at Arenal Volcano National Park and on the access road to Arenal Observatory Lodge. Potential highlights include Keel-billed Motmot, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Thicket Antpitta, and Bare-crowned Antbird.

-Overnight: Arenal Observatory Lodge



Great Curassow

March 15: Birding at Arenal Observatory Lodge and surrounding areas

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. We will keep birding the grounds in the afternoon as well since there is so much to see! Then, after dinner we'll head out for some owling in hopes of seeing Black-and-white Owl, Spectacled Owl, and more!

-Overnight: Arenal Observatory Lodge

March 16: Birding Sky Adventure Hanging Bridges and Arenal Observatory Lodge

Our day will again start at Arenal Observatory Lodge. After breakfast, we'll make a short drive to Sky Adventure Park. The trails here have hanging bridges above the canopy, perfect for spotting the

mixed flocks of birds that move around the treetops. We also hope to find a swarm of army ants, which would mean antbirds and other species following the swarm to feed on the insects that the ants scare up. Highlights we hope to see this morning include Ocellated Antbird, Spotted Antbird, Bicolored Antbird, and Ornate Hawk-Eagle. After we are finished birding here, we'll return to the lodge to enjoy more time at this beautiful property.

-Overnight: Arenal Observatory Lodge

March 17: Birding Bogarin Trail, drive to Medio Queso, and birding the wetlands by boat

The Bogarin Trails in La Fortuna will be our first stop for the day. The feeders here attract a good number of birds, and the trails are very good for North American migrants. Once we are finished at Bogarin, we'll drive to the Caño Negro area, stopping for a boat ride at Medio Queso Wetlands. The northern plains of Costa Rica encapsulate a great variety of ecosystems, and these wetlands near the Nicaraguan border are some of the most diverse in the country. They host a great deal of specialties, including Pinnated Bittern, White-throated Crake, Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture, and Nicaraguan Grackle.

-Overnight: Caño Negro Natural Lodge

March 18: Birding by boat at Caño Negro Wildlife Refuge and transfer to Ensenada

Before breakfast, we'll explore the gallery forest of Río Frío by boat. After a break for breakfast, we'll continue our boat trip along the north part of the wildlife refuge. Our bird list for the morning should be incredible! Some of the possible highlights are American Pygmy-Kingfisher, Black-collared Hawk, Sungrebe, and Agami Heron. After lunch, we'll head towards our next destination on the Pacific Coast. This will be a dramatic change of habitat, from evergreen forest to the deciduous tropical dry forest and wetlands. If time permits, we'll spend some time birding around La Ensenada Lodge upon our arrival.

-Overnight: La Ensenada Lodge

March 19: Birding Ensenada Lodge

Our morning will be spent birding the lodge's grounds. This area attracts a wide variety of dry forest species and will provide us with many new species for our list! This morning, we'll hope to see Snail Kite, Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl, Pacific Screech-Owl, Double-striped Thick-knee, and more! After lunch, we'll visit birding areas surrounding the lodge. We'll visit a variety of habitats and hopefully end up with quite a long list of species for the day. Once finished here, we'll return to the lodge for some more birding.

-Overnight: La Ensenada Lodge

March 20: Birding at Cocorocas Salt Pans and transfer to Carara area

After spending a bit more time birding the lodge grounds this morning, we'll visit Cocorocas Salt

Pans for shorebirds. This visit will need to be planned with the tide, so our schedule will be flexible to accommodate for this. Our next stop will be Cerro Lodge near Carara National Park where we will spend the next two nights. Target birds for today include Lesser Ground-Cuckoo, Streak-breasted and Spot-breasted Oriole, and Black Skimmer.

-Overnight: Cerro Lodge

March 21: Boat tour in Tarcoles River and birding Bijagual Road

The Tarcoles River is one of the best birding locations in the area, and we'll spend the morning exploring it by boat in a quest for wetland and mangrove species. We'll hope to see the endemic Mangrove Hummingbird while on the boat. Then we'll drive around on back roads for some of the specialties of the area such as Yellow-naped Parrot and Scarlet Macaw.

-Overnight: Cerro Lodge

March 22: Birding Carara National Park and transfer to Highlands

After breakfast, we'll visit Carara National Park, one the meccas for birdwatching in Costa Rica. While here, we'll hope to find many of the Pacific coast specialties like Baird's Trogon and Fiery-billed Aracari. Once finished exploring their many trails, our drive to the highland will begin with several birding stops along the way. We'll arrive at our hotel, Sueños del Bosque, in the afternoon and spend some time birding on their property.

-Overnight: Hotel Sueños del Bosque Lodge



Yellow-thighed Brushfinch

March 23: Birding in the Highlands

Hotel Sueños del Bosque is a beautiful property situated deep in the San Gerardo de Dota Valley high in the mountains. This region is home to numerous birds including the very special Resplendent Quetzal. In fact, it's one of the best places in the world to see this species! We'll spend the day exploring a variety of elevations in this area and enjoying all that beautiful Savegre has to offer. In addition to the quetzal, other highlight species include Black Guan, Dusky Nightjar, Barred Parakeet, Slaty Flowerpiercer, Long-tailed Silky-Flycatcher, and Yellow-thighed Brushfinch.

-Overnight: Hotel Sueños del Bosque Lodge

March 24: Birding the Páramo and Providencia road and transfer to hotel in San José

Today, we bid farewell to the San Gerardo de Dota Valley and make our way back to San José. Our first stop of the day will be in the paramo habitat along the PanAmerican Highway. This special habitat doesn't have a high diversity of species, but what it lacks in diversity it makes up for in quality.

We'll be hoping to see Volcano Junco, Timberline Wren, and Peg-billed Finch.

Once we are finished birding in the páramo, we'll make birding stops along the Providencia Road as we make our way back toward San José. This high elevation spot will allow us to look for anything we may have missed the last couple days. We'll end our tour by celebrating with a farewell dinner at our hotel in San José.

-Overnight: San Jose at Hotel Bougainvillea or similar

March 25: Departure from San José, Costa Rica

Trip Details:

Cost:

Price per person (double occupancy), from San José, Costa Rica: \$6,399

Single Supplement: \$1,050

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 (December 11, 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.

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