



Northern Emerald-Toucanet

COSTA RICA

Jewels

Tour Leaders: Eric Ripma and Jehudy Carballo

January 6-14, 2024

January 6 – Hotel Bougainvillea

After our whole group arrived, we took an impromptu, brief walk around the gardens of Hotel Bougainvillea in the late afternoon. We quickly found the typical roosting Mottled Owls that spend each day in a big patch of bamboo. And, we also had great looks at a couple of Lineated Woodpeckers. As we continued our walk, we all had a chance to become familiar with some of the common Costa Rican species such as Red-billed Pigeon, Great Kiskadee, Clay-colored Thrush, and Blue-gray Tanagers! After a delicious dinner at the hotel, we were all ready to start birding Costa Rica!

January 7 – Santo Domingo Coffee Farm, Nectar and Pollen Reserve, Guarumo Lodge, Rio Platanillo, Rancho Naturalista

We started our day with a short drive to a nearby shade-grown coffee farm to look for the endemic Cabanis's Ground-Sparrow. As soon as we got out of the van, we could hear a few singing close to the road! Unfortunately, they proved difficult to see, but eventually they gave brief looks to some of our group. While we were waiting for the Ground-Sparrows, we heard a Rufous-browed Peppershrike and within a couple of minutes it appeared in a nearby tree allowing for great looks! Other highlights included our only White-tailed Kites of the trip, a large flock of Baltimore Orioles, Melodious Blackbirds, a pair of Boat-billed Flycatchers, and good looks at a Chestnut-capped Warbler.

After breakfast at the hotel, we packed up and headed through the mountains to Nectar and Pollen Reserve, a private reserve located close to Braulio Carrillo National Park. In a few minutes a flock started to move through, and we picked up many great species! We saw many species of tanagers including Emerald, Bay-headed, Crimson-collared, Scarlet-rumped, and a couple of Dusky-faced. While we were watching the fruit feeders and flowers, I spotted an Ornate Hawk-Eagle fly in and perch in a nearby tree. Great scope views were had by all, and this became one of the favorites of the trip. Other highlights included great looks at Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer, King Vultures, Wedge-billed Woodcreepers, Black-cheeked Woodpeckers, and Olive-backed Euphonias. It was a great visit to this beautiful property.

After a short drive, we made it to Guarumo Lodge where we had lunch and spent some time at their feeders. The feeders were very busy with all three species of honeycreepers in Costa Rica, Yellow-throated Toucans, Collared Aracaris and much more! For the rest of the afternoon we drove to Rancho with a brief stop where we watched a couple of Torrent Tyrannulets! It was a great first day in Costa Rica.

Collared Aracari



Shining Honeycreeper



January 8 – Rancho Naturalista, Rio Platanillo,

We started our morning by birding along the entrance road to Rancho Naturalista. We came across a large flock, but the lighting made it difficult to see many of the birds well. However, we still managed good looks at Scarlet-thighed Dacnis, White-vented Euphonia, and Golden-winged Warbler. After breakfast, we took a longer walk up through the pasture to look for Lovely Cotingas. The cotingas weren't around on this morning, but we did see many other species including Keel-billed Toucans, Masked Tityra, and White-crowned Parrots. We spent the late morning watching the flowers at Rancho Bajo. As soon as we got out of the van, we saw a male Snowcap! It wasn't long before we saw a couple more. It was impressive to watch as one of the males did a display for a female, the female however, wasn't as impressed. A Black-crested Coquette and a couple of Green Thorntails also came into feed while we were visiting.

Snowcap



In the afternoon, we went back to a nearby river where we had much better luck with 2 Sunbitterns! We had great views as they foraged around the rocks as the rushing river roared past. We were even able to see their beautiful wing pattern as they flew down the river. We also had brief views of a Bare-throated Tiger-Heron along the river. Afterwards, we headed back up to Rancho Bajo for more looks at hummingbirds. The hummingbirds were rather slow, but we did come across a nice mixed flock that included Cinnamon Becard, Tropical Parula, and several species of tanagers. It was a great day of birding with over 100 species without traveling far from Rancho.

Green Thorntail



January 9 – Rancho Naturalista, El Copal, Angostura Reservoir

On this morning some of our group started at the moth light which attracts moths at night and then birds come into feed as it gets light. We had lots of activity here and once the Brown Jay flock moved through, we saw some tough-to-see species such as Fawn-throated Foliage-gleaner, White-breasted Wood-Wren, and several Red-throated Ant-Tanagers. After an early breakfast, we started our hour drive to El Copal Reserve. We started with a hike here and although the birding can be difficult in the forest, we ended up with a nice list. After lots of searching for a vocalizing Broad-billed Motmot, I finally spotted it high overhead and we were able to get nice scope views. We came upon several flocks and were able to see the beautiful Black-and-yellow Tanager, a flock of Black-faced Grosbeaks, White-ruffed Manakin, and several people got to see the rare Blue-and-gold Tanager. After a great lunch, we birded from the balcony which provides a great view of the surrounding forest. A small flock moved through and provided really close views when they decided to feed in a tree right next to us. Speckled and Emerald Tanagers and a Tawny-capped Euphonia were among the highlights.

Later in the afternoon we headed to Angostura Reservoir, but on the way, we stopped along the road and saw a couple beautiful Red-breasted Meadowlarks. Once we reached the reservoir, we added many new species! Snail Kites, Wood Stork, Northern Jacana, Southern Lapwing, Amazon Kingfisher, and Black-crowned and Masked Tityras were among the highlights. Afterwards, we headed back to Rancho and had a great dinner to end the day.

Speckled Tanager



Amazon Kingfisher



January 10 – Rancho Naturalista, Hotel Quelitales, Finca Cristina

Our morning started off back at the moth light with similar activity as the morning before. After most of our group headed back for breakfast, a couple of us had great looks at a Collared Trogon (luckily our whole group saw one later in the trip). While we were having breakfast everyone had great views of a Lesson's Motmot visiting the feeders. After our hour and a half drive to Hotel Quelitales, we headed up to the hummingbird feeding area. Due to our elevation gain to get to Quelitales, many of the birds were new for our trip. Black-bellied Hummingbirds buzzed around the porterweeds while Green-crowned Brilliants defended their feeders. After a wait, we had nice looks at a White-bellied Mountain-gem, a species that is only found in Costa Rica and Panama. Before having lunch, we watched a patch of porterweed for the endemic Coppery-headed Emerald. Eventually it visited and we had brief views before a Rufous-tailed Hummingbird chased it away. After a stop at Finca Cristina, where we bought lots of coffee and were given a couple large bunches of bananas, we continued our drive to the Savegre Valley where we would be staying for the next few nights.

Golden-olive Woodpecker



January 11 – Casa Monge, Savegre Mountain Lodge, Batsu Gardens

We started our morning watching a wild avocado tree. It wasn't long until our target bird arrived, the Resplendent Quetzal! After feeding on the avocados, they came and perched in the open for great views! While we were watching we also had good views of a feeding Black Guan and the rather plain (at least compared to the quetzals) Mountain Thrush. When we walked back to the van, we were surprised to find a couple of Northern Emerald-Toucanets along the road. We also saw our first Long-tailed Silky-flycatchers, another stunning bird of these highlands. After breakfast, we loaded into the Savegre trucks and drove up a steep road to some old-growth forest above the lodge. As soon as we arrived, Pablo (our driver for this whole tour) spotted a Collared Trogon! We all got good looks at this handsome bird. Our hike was a bit slow bird-wise, but it was a great hike nonetheless. We were able to see Gray-breasted Wood-Wren, Collared Redstart, and Black-billed Nightingale-Thrush well. And, when we got to the end, we found a small flock that included Yellowish Flycatcher and Flame-throated Warbler. After heading down the mountain and having a delicious lunch, we spent the afternoon at Batsu Gardens. The feeders were very active, and we saw our first Golden-browed Chlorophonia, Chestnut-capped, White-naped, and Yellow-thighed Brushfinches, and a couple more Northern Emerald-Toucanets! We headed back to our hotel and a few of us took a walk around the grounds where we had great views of Long-tailed Silky-flycatchers. After another delicious dinner, it was time to head to bed as all of our alarm clocks would be going off rather early the next morning.

Golden-browed Chlorophonia



January 12 – Los Cusingos, The Aracari Birding Deck, Mirador Valle del General, Los Quetzales National Park

We started our drive to Los Cusingos at 5 am since it would take us a couple of hours to get there. Once we arrived, we had breakfast that we had brought with us. While the breakfast was getting set up, we had our first highlight, a flock of Fiery-billed Aracaris. As we slowly moved through the property, we picked up a number of new birds. While birding the garden area we had a singing Blue-throated Goldentail, several Swallow-tailed Kites, our only Chestnut-collared Swifts, great looks at a White-crowned Parrot, a pair of Spot-crowned Euphonias, and a couple of Speckled Tanagers. The trails provided a chance to see some forest species such as Red-capped Manakin, Chestnut-backed Antbirds, and a Baird's Trogon! After spending the whole morning birding on this property, we took a short ride up the road (except for getting stopped for construction work) to the Aracari Birding Deck. Their homemade lunch was delicious, and the feeders were busy with birds! Several Gray-cowled Wood-Rails visited, a Lesson's Motmot provided great views, and Lineated and Red-crowned Woodpeckers made visits. After lunch we headed back up into the mountains with a stop at a roadside cafe. The target here was the Snowy-bellied Hummingbird which showed extremely well! On our way back towards Savegre, we stopped in the paramo habitat at around 11,300 feet. We had good looks at Timberline Wrens, Volcano Hummingbirds, a Sooty Thrush, and after some searching, the Volcano Junco! As it was getting dark, we headed back to Savegre with a stop for dinner. We only had one more day of birding left!

Volcano Junco



January 13 - Savegre, Waterfall Trail, Miriam's Restaurant, Providencia Road

We started out birding around the grounds of our hotel on this morning. We enjoyed great views of several Long-tailed Silky-flycatcher, Yellow-thighed and Chestnut-capped Brushfinches, and a couple of Black Guans. After breakfast, we birded along the nearby waterfall trail. We ran into a nice flock at the start of the trail and saw our only Brown-capped Vireo, Yellow-winged Vireo, both Sooty-capped and Common Chlorospingus, and Black-throated Green Warblers. Further along the trail we had great looks at Flame-throated Warblers, Spangle-cheeked Tanagers, Collared Redstarts, and several Ruddy Treerunners. On our way back to the van, we added a couple of Black-thighed Grosbeaks! After getting packed up at our hotel, we headed up to Miriam's for lunch and to watch their feeders. As soon as we arrived, we saw our first Large-footed Finches. Over the course of our visit, we had great looks at Northern Emerald-Toucanet, Hairy Woodpecker (Costa Rican), a pair of Yellow-bellied Siskins, and Yellow-thighed

Black-thighed Grosbeak



Brushfinches. After lunch we made a stop along Providencia Road. This high elevation forest can be great for a variety of high elevation species. Before long, we had our first Black-capped Flycatchers and a brief view of a Barred Becard. While we were picking through this small flock, we started to hear an Ochraceous Pewee, a rather rare resident of high elevation forests. After a long search, J finally spotted it, and we were all able to have some great scope views. Just a short walk up the road produced a few Fiery-throated Hummingbirds, which we had surprisingly missed up until this point. Unfortunately,

it was time to make our drive back to Hotel Bougainvillea for our flights out the following day. We ended our day with a great dinner and a birthday cake to celebrate Chris's birthday. It was a great end to a great trip! We ended our trip with 306 species with many highlights. There were many favorites from the trip, but the Sunbitterns, Snowcap, Ornate Hawk-Eagle, and Resplendent Quetzal made it on many of our lists for our favorite birds of the trip!

Ochraceous Pewee



Yellow-thighed Brushfinch

