Costa Rica

Jewels

Tour Leaders: Eric Ripma and Jehudy Carballo

January 11-19, 2025
On this tour, we'll visit two of the most famous birding and wildlife observation locations in Central America, Rancho Naturalista and the Savegre Valley. In addition to an amazing list of birds, these areas will give us the opportunity to see a wide variety of other wildlife including mammals, butterflies, moths, reptiles, and amphibians!

**Itinerary Overview:**

January 11: Arrival in San José, Costa Rica and Transfer to Hotel
January 12: Transfer to Rancho Naturalista with Birding Stops
January 13: Rancho Naturalista
January 14: Birding at El Copal and and Angostura Lake
January 15: Hotel Quelitales and Transfer to the Savegre Valley
January 16: Savegre Valley
January 17: Los Cusingos Bird Refuge and Cerro de la Muerte
January 18: Talamancan Mountains and Transfer to San José
January 19: Departure from San José, Costa Rica

**Detailed Itinerary:**

**January 11: Arrival in San José, Costa Rica and Transfer to Hotel**

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 San José for the night. We’ll do some birding around the property in the afternoon if time permits. Some highlights might include Lesson's Motmot, 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: Hotel Bougainvillea or similar

**January 12: Transfer to Rancho Naturalista with Birding Stops**

We will start the morning by making a short drive to a coffee farm where we will spend a short time looking for the endemic Cabanis's Ground-Sparrow. After breakfast at our lodging, we will start our drive to Rancho Naturalista with a couple of great birding stops along the way. Our first stop will be at Nectar & Pollen Reserve. This reserve is located on the edge of a large tract of protected forest providing us a great chance to see many difficult species. We'll spend some time birding their hummingbird garden where over 8 species of hummingbirds, including the Green Thorntail are regular. While birding the feeders and forest we'll be looking for Rufous and Broad-billed Motmots, Rufous-winged and Smoky-brown Woodpeckers, Long-tailed Tyrant, and many tanagers. Raptors are one of the major highlights and we may see some uncommon species such as King Vulture, Black Hawk-Eagle, White Hawk, Bat Falcon, and if we get really lucky, a Black-and-white Hawk-Eagle.

After birding, we’ll continue our drive towards Rancho with a stop for lunch. At lunch, we’ll enjoy...
delicious, Caribbean style food and some great birding! Collared Aracari, Yellow-throated and Keel-billed Toucans, Chestnut-headed and Montezuma Oropendolas, and all three species of honeycreepers in Costa Rica make regular visits to the feeders. After lunch, we'll finish our drive to Rancho Naturalista.

-**Overnight: Rancho Naturalista**

![Yellow-throated Toucan](image)

**January 13: Rancho Naturalista**

Rancho Naturalista is one of the most famous birding lodges not only in Costa Rica, but in all of Central America. Over 450 species of birds have been seen on this property alone! One of the most sought-after birds at Rancho Naturalista is the beautiful Snowcap, a small purple hummingbird with a bright white cap. Other highlights at Rancho Naturalista include Tawny-chested Flycatcher, Lovely Cotinga, Black-crested Coquette, and many others!

We'll spend this morning birding around the lodge and nearby trails through this property. On the trails we'll be looking for Crested Guan, Gartered Trogon, Rufous Motmot, Lineated and Pale-billed Woodpeckers, White-collared Manakin, Bay Wren, and many species of warblers and tanagers. In the afternoon, after lunch, we'll bird off the property along a nearby river. Here we hope to find the stunning Sunbittern and Fasciated Tiger-Heron among others. We will enjoy some time watching the feeders at Rancho in the evening before having one of Rancho's gourmet meals for dinner.

-**Overnight: Rancho Naturalista**

![Snowcap](image)
January 14: El Copal Reserve and Angostura Lake

On one of our full days at Rancho, we will be exploring El Copal Reserve and Angostura Lake. This will allow us to visit some different habitats than those that are at Rancho Naturalista. El Copal offers incredible deep forest birding and beautiful hiking trails. We hope to find a mixed flock full of tanagers, a few of the antbirds that call this property home, and the Yellow-eared Toucanet. When we find a mixed flock, we’ll be looking for Carmiol’s, White-shouldered, Tawny-crested, Speckled, Emerald, and Black-and-yellow Tanager, Black-faced Grosbeak, and Ashy-throated Chlorospingus among other more common species. This is also a wonderful place to find White-faced Capuchins and Mantled Howler Monkeys.

Next, we’ll visit Angostura Lake. This will be one of our only opportunities to visit a lake on this trip, so we’ll see many species here that we likely won’t get on the rest of the tour. Some highlights might include Snail Kite, Least Grebe, Purple Gallinule, Limpkin, and Red-breasted Meadowlark.

- Overnight: Rancho Naturalista

January 15: Hotel Quelitales and Transfer to Savegre Valley

We’ll have an early departure on this morning in order to arrive early at Hotel Quelitales. When we arrive, we will head up to their blind where we will hope to see the Scaled Antpitta that the owner feeds. While we are birding from the blind, we might also see Chestnut-capped and White-naped Brushfinches, Sooty-faced Finch, and White-eared Ground-Sparrow. We will also spend some time birding the hummingbird garden where we hope to see White-bellied Mountain-gem, Coppery-headed Emerald (endemic), and Black-bellied Hummingbird among several other species. While birding the forested areas, we hope to find a mixed flock which might contain Red-headed Barbet, Scaly-throated Foliage-gleaner, Spotted Barbtail, Red-faced Spinetail, Slate-throated Redstart, White-winged Tanager, and Spangle-cheeked Tanager. After lunch we’ll make the drive to the Savegre Valley.

- Overnight: Savegre Mountain Lodge or similar
January 16: Savegre Valley

The Savegre Valley is home to numerous high elevation species including the extraordinary Resplendent Quetzal. In fact, it's one of the best places in the world to see this special species! Many of the species that can be found in this area are near endemics that can only be seen in the mountains of Costa Rica and western Panama. In the early morning, we'll visit a site to look for the Resplendent Quetzal. They are quite reliable at this site since they visit each morning to feed on the wild avocados. For the remainder of the morning, we'll spend time birding the trails above Savegre Mountain Lodge. Some species we may see include Ruddy Treerunner, Yellow-winged and Brown-capped Vireo, Ochraceous Wren, Black-faced Solitaire, Black-billed Nightingale-Thrush, Flame-throated and Black-cheeked Warblers, Collared Redstart, and if we're lucky an Ochraceous Pewee.

![Collared Redstart](image)

After lunch, we will visit Batsu Gardens. This location has a great garden, bird feeders, and some trails that will give us another chance to see many high elevation species and get some nice photos. White-throated Mountain-gems, and Volcano, Scintillant, and Talamanca Hummingbirds usually visit the feeders. The fruit feeders attract a variety of tanagers including Flame-colored and Silver-throated. Below the feeders, we will be looking for Large-footed Finch and White-naped and Yellow-thighed Brushfinches.

-Overnight: Savegre Mountain Lodge or similar

January 17: Los Cusingos Bird Refuge and Cerro de la Muerte

This morning, we'll leave early to drive lower down the Pacific slope to about 2,700 feet where we will bird at Los Cusingos Bird Sanctuary. Since this will be our only time on the Pacific slope and we'll be at a fairly low elevation, this will be our only chance to see many different species. Some of the specialties of the area include Baird's Trogon, Fiery-billed Aracari, Golden-naped Woodpecker, Black-hooded Antshrike, and Spot-crowned Euphonia. Other highlights could include White-crested Coquette, Charming and Snowy-bellied Hummingbird, and Orange-collared and Velvety Manakins.
After we're finished birding here, we will make a short drive to where we will have a home-cooked meal while watching some great feeders. We hope to see Streaked Saltator and Fiery-billed Aracari among many other species.

Afterwards, we'll bird in the paramo at 11,000+ feet in elevation. Here we will be looking for the Volcano Junco and Peg-billed Finch, both endemics to the highlands of Costa Rica and western Panama.

- Overnight: Savegre Mountain Lodge

**January 18: Talamanca Mountains and Transfer to San José**

We'll begin with some birding around the lodge grounds early this morning. After breakfast, we'll checkout before heading higher into the mountains where we'll bird along the Providencia Road. This is a good area for species such as Costa Rican Pygmy-Owl, Black-capped Flycatcher, and Timberline Wren. We'll also be targeting any species we may have missed up to this point. We'll stop at Paraiso Quetzal for lunch to watch their hummingbird feeders that are usually packed with Lesser Violetears, and Fiery-throated and Talamanca Hummingbirds. This is also a good spot to see both Long-tailed and Black-and-yellow Silky-flycatchers. After we've had our fill, we'll start our drive back to San José where we'll have a wonderful farewell dinner.

- Overnight: Hotel Bougainvillea or similar

**January 19: Departure from San José, Costa Rica**
**Trip Details:**

**Cost:**
Price per person (double occupancy), from San Jose, Costa Rica: $5,299  
Single Supplement: $900  
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 (October 13, 2024).

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

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