



# Costa Rica

## *Raptor Migration Spectacular*

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Tour Leader: Eric Ripma

October 17-26, 2026

## **Itinerary Overview:**

October 17: Arrival in San José, Costa Rica - Transfer to Hotel  
October 18: Drive to the Caribbean Coast with Birding Stops - Transfer to Caribblue Beach Resort  
October 19: Raptor Migration from Casa Calateas and Afternoon at Cahuita National Park  
October 20: Raptor Migration from Kèköldi Observation Tower  
October 21: Caribbean Coast and Angostura Reservoir - Transfer to Rancho Naturalista  
October 22: Rancho Naturalista and Surrounding Areas  
October 23: Rancho Naturalista, El Copal Reserve - Transfer to Hotel Quelitales  
October 24: Hotel Quelitales, Casona del Cafetal, Finca Cristina  
October 25: Irazú Volcano, Hotel Bougainvillea - Transfer to Hotel Bougainvillea  
October 26: Departure from San José, Costa Rica

## **Detailed Itinerary:**

### **October 17: Arrival in San José, Costa Rica - Transfer to Hotel**

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 of San José for the night. We'll do some birding around the property in the afternoon if time permits. Some highlights might include Mottled Owl, Lesson's Motmot, and Cabanis's Wren. 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*



*White Hawk*

### **October 18: Drive to the Caribbean Coast with Birding Stops - Transfer to Caribblue Beach Resort**

Depending on recent sightings we will decide where to stop to bird on this morning. Most likely we

will spend time at Nectar and Pollen Reserve which is located on the edge of a large tract of protected forest providing us a great chance to see many species. We'll spend some time at 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, Black-and-white Hawk-Eagle. On the way to the Caribbean coast, we'll have lunch at Guarumo Lodge where we'll enjoy delicious food and see some great birds. If time permits, we will make a couple of stops along the coast before arriving at our lodging.

*-Overnight: Caribblue Beach Resort*

### **October 19: Raptor Migration from Casa Calateas and Afternoon at Cahuita National Park**

Early this morning, we'll head to Casa Calateas and spend the first half of the day on their grounds enjoying the raptor migration. We'll start by birding the entry road where we may see such highlights as Purple-throated Fruitcrow, Black-chested Jay, and flocks of tanagers and warblers. After a quick breakfast at Casa Calateas, we'll take a short walk to the raptor platform. We'll spend the rest of the morning enjoying migrant raptors, hopefully in large numbers. Turkey Vultures, Broad-winged Hawks, Swainson's Hawks, and Mississippi Kites are the most numerous at this time of year. Both Peregrine Falcon and Merlin migrate through this area in small numbers as well.



*Turkey Vultures*

After lunch, we will visit the nearby Cahuita National Park for the rest of the afternoon. The boardwalk at this park provides easy access for birding this tropical lowland rainforest. We will be looking for many species such as Black-crowned Antshrike, White-flanked and Dot-winged Antwrens, Spot-crowned Antwren, Black-faced Antthrush, Ruddy-tailed Flycatcher, Brown-capped Tyrannulet, and Shining Honeycreeper.

*-Overnight: Caribblue Beach and Jungle Resort*

### **October 20: Raptor Migration from Kèköldi Observation Tower**

More than 3.5 million raptors fly across 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.

*-Overnight: Caribblue Beach and Jungle Resort*

### **October 21: Caribbean Coast and Angostura Reservoir - Transfer to Rancho Naturalista**

After some early morning birding on the grounds of our hotel, we will have breakfast, packup, and start our drive towards our next lodging, Rancho Naturalista! On the way, we will stop at a couple places along the beach to look for gulls, terns, and shorebirds. Once we have driven further west, we will stop at Angostura Reservoir. We will be looking for Snail Kite, Slaty Spinetail, Olive-crowned Yellowthroat, and a variety of waterbirds.

After lunch, we'll continue our drive to Rancho Naturalista. After we settle in, we will have the opportunity to enjoy the feeders where we could see a number of hummingbirds including White-necked Jacobin and Green-breasted Mango.

*-Overnight: Rancho Naturalista*

### **October 22: Rancho Naturalista 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-chest-ed 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.

*-Overnight: Rancho Naturalista*



*Black-crested Coquette*

### **October 23: Rancho Naturalista, El Copal Reserve - Transfer to Hotel Quelitales**

After spending another early morning on the grounds of Rancho Naturalista, we will begin our drive to Hotel Quelitales. On the way, we will make a stop at El Copal Reserve which offers incredible deep forest birding, beautiful hiking trails, and very active feeders. When we first arrive, we will spend some time birding around the main building and feeders. The activity here can be spectacular with many tanagers visiting the feeders and mixed flocks moving through the nearby trees. Some of the species we'll be looking for include Carmiol's, White-shouldered, Tawny-crested, Speckled, Emerald, and Black-and-yellow Tanager, White-vented and Tawny-capped Euphonias, Black-faced Grosbeak, and Ashy-throated Chlorospingus among other more common species. The forest trails offer great habitat and a chance to see species that don't visit feeders or more open habitats such as Yellow-eared Toucanet, Purplish-backed Quail-Dove, and Lattice-tailed Trogon, but all will take some luck to see.

By the late afternoon, we will arrive at Hotel Quelitales. If time allows, we may have a chance to look for Scaled Antpitta, which comes in on many afternoons when the owner feeds them.

*-Overnight: Hotel Quelitales*

### **October 24: Hotel Quelitales, Casona del Cafetal, Finca Cristina**

The grounds and gardens at Hotel Quelitales provide great birding in a beautiful setting, with delicious meals. We'll spend the morning birding on the property as well as a trail that leads into more forested habitats. Many species of hummingbirds visit the gardens and feeders, and we could see spe-

cialties such as Coppery-headed Emerald (endemic), White-bellied Mountain-gem, and Black-bellied Hummingbird among the more common Violet Sabrewings and Lesser Violetears. A viewing platform next to a waterfall will provide us with a chance to look for the unique Green-fronted Lancebill. We will also watch from a blind, where Black-breasted Wood-Quail, Scaled Antpitta, and Sooty-faced Finch are possible!



*Black-bellied Hummingbird*

For lunch, we'll visit Casona del Cafetal which provides views of Lake Cachí, access to second growth habitat, and coffee plantation habitat. A variety of birds are usually present including Green Ibis, Barred Antshrike, Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush, and the endemic Cabanis's Ground-Sparrow. In the afternoon, we will drive a short distance to Finca Cristina, a bird-friendly, organic coffee farm. In addition to learning about coffee and how it's grown, we will have a chance to see a number of species including White-eared Ground-Sparrow and Russet-naped Wood-Rail.

*-Overnight: Hotel Quelitales*

### **October 25: Irazú Volcano, Hotel Bougainvillea - Transfer to Hotel Bougainvillea**

After breakfast, we'll start our drive to Irazú Volcano where we will be visiting high elevation habitats for the only time on our tour. Most birds will be new for our trip and some of the highlights could include Fiery-throated and Volcano Hummingbirds, Resplendent Quetzal, Black-billed Nightingale-Thrush, Wrenthrush, Flame-throated and Black-cheeked Warblers, and Collared Redstart! By mid-morning we will make our way higher to area above the treeline. If you can take your eyes away from the amazing views, we should see some high elevation specialties such as Volcano Junco and Timberline Wren.

After lunch we'll drive back towards the airport to Bougainvillea Hotel where we will be staying for the night. We'll make one last birding foray around the gardens of the hotel where we will take onelast

walk on these beautiful grounds. In the evening, we will have a fantastic farewell dinner at the hotel.

*-Overnight: Bougainvillea Hotel*

### **October 26: 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.

*Cinnamon Woodpecker*



*Violet Sabrewing*



*Collared Redstart*



*Emerald Tanager*



## **Trip Details:**

### **Cost:**

Price per person (double occupancy), from San José, Costa Rica: \$5,499

Single Supplement: \$600

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 19, 2026).

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

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