



Costa Rica

Mountains, Marshes, and Mangroves

Tour Leader: Frank Stetler

February 6-16, 2027

Itinerary Overview:

February 6: Arrival in San José, Costa Rica - Transfer to Hotel Bougainvillea
February 7: Mata Limon Mangroves and Cocorocas Salt Pans - Transfer to Ensenada Lodge
February 8: Boat Ride at Ensenada Mangroves and Birding Ensenada Reserve
February 9: Ensenada Reserve and Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve - Transfer to Monteverde
February 10: Santa Elena Reserve and Curi-Cancha Reserve
February 11: Monteverde and Boat Ride at Caño Negro Wildlife Refuge - Transfer to Caño Negro
February 12: Boat Ride at Caño Negro Wildlife Refuge and Los Chiles - Transfer to La Fortuna
February 13: Arenal Observatory Lodge and Peninsula Road
February 14: Sky Adventures Arenal and Papa's Place
February 15: Soda Cinchona and Slopes of the Poas Volcano - Transfer to Hotel Bougainvillea
February 16: Departure from San José, Costa Rica

Detailed Itinerary:

February 6: Arrival in San José, Costa Rica - Transfer to Hotel Bougainvillea

You will be met by your guides outside the customs area of Juan Santa Maria International Airport. 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 Mottled Owl, Lesson's Motmot, White-eared Ground-Sparrow, and more. We'll have a wonderful dinner and plenty of time to relax before our adventures begin early the next morning.

Overnight: Hotel Bougainvillea



Black-headed Trogon

February 7: Mata Limon Mangroves and Cocorocas Salt Pans - Transfer to Ensenada Lodge

After some early coffee and snacks, we'll make a short drive to a nearby coffee farm to look for one of four species that are endemic to Costa Rica, the Cabanis's Ground-Sparrow. After breakfast at the hotel, we will pack up and start our drive to the Pacific Coast. As we approach the coast, we will spend some time birding a side road through some forests and pastures. A few of the highlights could include Scarlet Macaw, White-throated Magpie-Jay, Turquoise-browed Motmot, Black-headed Trogan, and Long-tailed Manakin.

After lunch we will make a stop at Mata Limon Mangroves. This short stop will give us our first chance to find another Costa Rican endemic, the Mangrove Hummingbird. As we continue towards Ensenada Lodge, we will make one more stop at the Cocorocas Salt Pans. This location has great mudflat habitat close to the coast which results in great numbers of shorebirds. The mangrove and dry forest habitat surrounding the salt pans adds to the diversity of species that we will be looking for. Some of the many highlights could include Lesser Ground-Cuckoo, Mangrove Rail, Rufous-necked Wood-Rail, many species of shorebirds including Collared Plover, Elegant Tern, Black-headed Trogan, Turquoise-browed Motmot, Mangrove Vireo, and Streak-backed and Spot-breasted Orioles. We'll then head to Ensenada Lodge.

Overnight: La Ensenada Lodge



White-throated Magpie-Jay



Turquoise-browed Motmot

February 8: Boat Ride at Ensenada Mangroves and Birding at Ensenada Reserve

We'll begin our morning with an early boat ride across the bay and into some expansive mangrove habitat. Our boat tour through the mangroves will provide us with many opportunities for wad-

ers, shorebirds, and kingfishers. We'll also have a chance to see some mangrove specialties such as Mangrove Hummingbird, Cuckoo, and Vireo. Afterwards, we will bird Ensenada Reserve, the area surrounding our lodge. This area attracts a wide variety of dry forest species and will provide us with many new species for our list! Some highlights might include Turquoise-browed Motmot, Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl, Pacific Screech-Owl, Streak-backed and Spot-breasted Orioles, Canivet's Emerald, White-throated Magpie-Jay, Double-striped Thick-knee, Lesser Ground-Cuckoo, a variety of shorebirds, Yellow-naped Parrot, Northern Scrub-Flycatcher, Yellow Warbler (Mangrove), and more.

After a break for the midday heat, we'll spend the afternoon birding around the salt pans on the property. This area usually has a large diversity of shorebirds, waders, and ducks. It's also a good area to keep an eye to the sky and we could see Hook-billed and Plumbeous Kites, Crane Hawk, and Common Black Hawk. The surrounding forests are also great for many songbirds, and we'll look for any species we may have missed to this point. We'll end the day back around the lodge watching the sunset over the Gulf of Nicoya.

Overnight: La Ensenada Lodge



Purple-throated Mountain-gem

February 9: Ensenada Reserve and Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve - Transfer to Monteverde

After a morning walk around Ensenada Reserve and breakfast, we will start driving to higher elevations as we head to Monteverde. After lunch, we'll visit the Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve which will add many high elevation species. Birding along the road into the park provides a great vantage point to look for Ornate Hawk-Eagle. The dense forest edge can be a great place for singing Black-breasted Wood-Quails, nesting Red-faced Spinetails, Azure-hooded Jay, mixed tanager flocks, and more. In the reserve, we will be searching for more dense forest species such as Zeledon's Antbird, Silvery-fronted Tapaculo, Brown-billed Scythebill, and Streak-breasted Treehunter. The cafe and hummingbird gallery on property is a great place to be surrounded by up to 10 hummingbird

species, including the Purple-throated Mountain-gem coming to their large array of feeders. This is a wonderful spot to photograph many of these hummingbirds.

Overnight: Hotel Valle Escondido or Similar



Collared Redstart

February 10: Santa Elena Reserve and Curi-Cancha Reserve

Our day will be spent at Curi-Cancha and Santa Elena Reserves looking for all the amazing highland species that Monteverde has to offer. Resplendent Quetzals feed on the avocado trees in the center of Curi-Cancha and the Costa Rican endemic Coppery-headed Emerald frequents the flowering plants all throughout the park. As we bird our way through the forest, we will be searching for many species including Highland Tinamou, Ochraceous Wren, Black-faced Solitaire, Golden-browed Chlorophonia, White-eared Ground-Sparrow, Collared Redstart, Costa Rican Warbler, and much more. If we are lucky, we hope to connect with one of the wandering groups of Azure-hooded Jays as well!

Overnight: Hotel Valle Escondido or Similar

February 11: Monteverde and Boat Ride at Caño Negro Wildlife Refuge - Transfer to Caño Negro

We will spend the early morning birding around the grounds of our hotel and focus on any species we may not have seen in the area. After breakfast, we'll start our long drive to the wetlands of Caño Negro. On the way, we will make a stop for lunch. By the mid-afternoon we'll arrive at our lodge to drop our bags and get ready for a boat ride through the wildlife refuge. The wetlands and wet forest habitats in this region are created by the Río Frío (Cold River) which drains Lake Nicaragua, the largest freshwater lake in Central America. The bird diversity in this region is outstanding and an afternoon boat ride through the marshy section of the refuge could result in 80-90 species or more! A few of our targets include Jabiru, Boat-billed Heron, Yellow-breasted Crake, Pinnated Bittern,

American Pygmy Kingfisher, Yellow-tailed Oriole, and Nicaraguan Grackle.

Overnight: Natural Lodge



Yellow-breasted Crake



Green-and-rufous Kingfisher

February 12: Boat Ride at Caño Negro Wildlife Refuge and Los Chiles - Transfer to La Fortuna

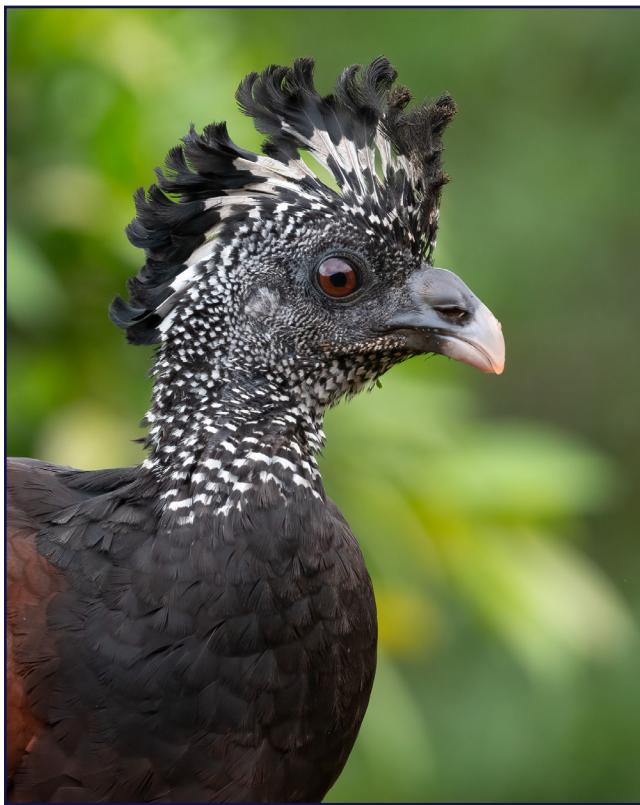
We will start this morning with another boat ride through the refuge, but we'll focus our birding on the gallery forests that border the river. Our bird list for the morning should be incredible! Some of the possible highlights are Bronzy Hermit, Sungrebe, Agami Heron, Bare-throated Tiger-Heron, Green-and-rufous Kingfisher, Olivaceous Piculet, Bare-crowned Antbird, Spot-breasted Wren, and so much more. In the late morning, we will bird along our drive to Los Chiles. This drive takes us

through open woodland, grassland, and wetland habitats. Some of the fields along the way are great for Nicaraguan Seed-Finch and Ruddy-breasted Seedeater. Once we're done birding this area, we will drive to the Arenal region where we will be staying for the next three nights.

Overnight: Arenal History Inn or Similar

February 13: Arenal Observatory Lodge and Peninsula Road

Our morning will start at the restaurant deck of Arenal Observatory Lodge where there will be plenty of action at the feeders for us to enjoy. Great Curassows and Crested Guans tend to make an appearance at the feeders each morning and sometimes throughout the day! We'll also explore the gardens and trails around the lodge. Some of the many highlights that we hope to see include Ornate Hawk-Eagle, Blue-throated Goldentail, Broad-billed Motmot, Dusky, Chestnut-backed, Dull-mantled, Zeledon's, Bicolored, Spotted, and Ocellated Antbirds, Thicket Antpitta, Buff-rumped Warbler, many species of tanagers including Emerald and Black-and-yellow, and White-throated Shrike-Tanager. A morning spent around the grounds of the lodge can easily yield over 100 species of birds plus several species of monkeys and other wildlife!



Great Curassow



Broad-billed Motmot

In the afternoon, not far from Arenal Observatory Lodge, we will stop at Peninsula Road. This road offers great birding in a mixture of habitats. Some of the species we hope to see include Keel-billed Motmot, White-fronted Nunbird, Great Antshrike, several species of antbirds including Bare-crowned, Tawny-chested Flycatcher, White-throated Magpie-Jay, White-throated Thrush, Yellow-billed Cacique, and many warblers and tanagers.

Overnight: Arenal History Inn or Similar

February 14: Sky Adventures Arenal and Papa's Place

After breakfast, we'll make the drive to Sky Adventure Park. The trails here have hanging bridges across a couple of valleys, putting us in a perfect place for spotting the mixed flocks of birds that move around the treetops. We also hope to find a swarm of army ants, which would result in antbirds and other species following the swarm to feed on the insects that the ants scare up. Highlights we hope to see include Purplish-backed Quail-Dove, Yellow-eared Toucanet, Rufous-winged Woodpecker, Barred Forest-Falcon, several species of antbirds, Black-faced and Black-headed Antthrush, Brown-billed Scythebill, Sharpbill (rare), Black-headed Nightingale-Thrush, Blue-and-gold, Rufous-winged, and Black-and-yellow Tanagers. It is sure to be a great morning of birding!

After lunch we will visit Papa's Place which is just outside of La Fortuna, where we will watch their feeders, have a homemade dinner, and take a night walk to see several species of frogs including the iconic, Red-eyed Tree Frog!

Overnight: Arenal History Inn or Similar



Red-eyed Tree Frog

February 15: Soda Cinchona and Slopes of the Poas Volcano - Transfer to Hotel Bougainvillea

Throughout this day we will be driving back to Hotel Bougainvillea, so we are able to catch our flights the following day. On the way, we will make several stops in the highland forests where there will be many new species for our trip. Our first stop will be at Soda Cinchona where we will have a chance to enjoy their feeders while having breakfast. Some of the highlights could include Northern Emerald-Toucanet, Coppery-headed Emerald, Black-bellied Hummingbird, and Prong-billed Barbet. Afterwards, we'll visit a nearby road that bisects some nice highland forest habitat. Some of the possibilities here include Resplendent Quetzal, Yellow-winged and Brown-capped Vireos, Slate-throated and Collared Redstarts, and Spangle-cheeked Tanager.

After lunch on the slopes of the Poás Volcano, we'll visit a nearby forest tract that has even higher elevation species than our morning stop. This high elevation forest has a number of specialty species we'll be looking for such as Black Guan, Scintillant and Volcano Hummingbirds, Black-and-yellow Silky-flycatcher, Golden-browed Chlorophonia, Yellow-thighed Brushfinch, and Flame-throated Warbler. By the mid-afternoon, we will continue on our way to Hotel Bougainvillea. We will end the day with a final dinner and recount all of our favorite moments of the trip!

Overnight: Hotel Bougainvillea

February 16: Departure from San José, Costa Rica



Scintillant Hummingbird

Trip Details:

Cost:

Price per person (double occupancy), from San José, Costa Rica: \$6,899

Single Supplement: \$1,200

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 (November 8, 2026).

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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