SABREWING
NATURE TOURS



Costa Rica

Raptor Migration Spectacular

Tour Leader: Janice Travis

October 16-25, 2027

info@SabrewingNatureTours.com | www.SabrewingNatureTours.com | 317-324-8505

Itinerary Overview:

October 16: Arrival in San José, Costa Rica - Transfer to Hotel
October 17: Drive to the Caribbean Coast with Birding Stops - Transfer to Cariblue Beach Resort
October 18: Raptor Migration from Casa Calateas and Afternoon at Cahuita National Park
October 19: Raptor Migration from Talamanca Hawk Deck
October 20: Caribbean Coast and Angostura Reservoir - Transfer to Rancho Naturalista
October 21: Rancho Naturalista and Surrounding Areas
October 22: Rancho Naturalista, El Copal Reserve - Transfer to Hotel Quelitales
October 23: Hotel Quelitales, Casona del Cafetal, Finca Cristina
October 24: Irazú Volcano, Hotel Bougainvillea - Transfer to Hotel Bougainvillea
October 25: Departure from San José, Costa Rica

Detailed Itinerary:

October 16: 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 17: Drive to the Caribbean Coast with Birding Stops - Transfer to Cariblue 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: Cariblue Beach Resort

October 18: 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 Antvireo, Black-faced Antthrush, Ruddy-tailed Flycatcher, Brown-capped Tyrannulet, and Shining Honeycreeper.

-Overnight: Cariblue Beach and Jungle Resort

October 19: Raptor Migration from Talamanca Hawk Deck

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 the Talamanca Hawkwatch, a conservation and research project managed by local birders and researchers in the area. The reserve has an observation deck on a strategic point on top of the ridge with spectacular views where we can appreciate the migration. We may also take a walk along the nearby trails where we could see Snowy Cotinga, Red-capped Manakin, and Broad-billed and Rufous Motmots. On many days, hundreds of migrant passerines including Swainson's Thrushes, Scarlet Tanagers, and Bay-breasted Warblers, can also be seen.
-Overnight: Cariblue Beach and Jungle Resort

October 20: 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 21: 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 22: 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 23: 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 specialties 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 24: 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 25: 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: $5,799
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 18, 2027).

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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