

Costa Rica: Northwest Loop

August 1-9, 2021

Tour leaders: Josh Engel with local guides Clink on links for: <u>Trip Page</u> | <u>Photo Gallery</u>

Costa Rica is truly one of the world's great ecotourism destinations. With brilliant infrastructure, extensive forest and other natural habitats, and a strong conservation ethic, birds and wildlife are everywhere. On this trip, we spent three nights each at three different world-class eco-lodges, each just a few hours apart along a loop west and north of San Jose, each with great birding on the grounds and more great birding in protected areas nearby. We had top-notch local guides in each location, ate a lot of fresh, delicious, local food, and saw a long list of great birds, mammals (even a tapir!), reptiles, and other critters.

Top 5 Birds as Voted by the Group

- 1. Black-and-white Owl
- 2. (tie) Three-wattled Bellbird, Barred Antshrike, Rufous-tailed Jacamar
- 5. (tie) lots!





Arenal Volcano from our lodge (left). Collared Aracari (right). Photos by Josh Engel.

We were a day delayed arriving to San Jose, thanks to a missed flight connection, but we hit the ground running. We stopped by the beach on our way to Monteverde, where we had a lunch of fresh seafood while frigatebirds and pelicans passed by, watched Scarlet Macaws feeding in a roadside tree, and took a walk on the beach.

Our first three nights were in Monteverde, one of Costa Rica's famous cloud forest regions. Right around the hotel, we saw birds like Coppery-headed Emerald, Violet Sabrewing, Lesson's Motmot, Golden-browed Chlorophonia, Collared Trogon, Black-breasted Wood-Quail, White-eared Ground-Sparrow, and Streak-headed Woodcreeper. We also visited Curi-Cancha and Santa Elena Reserves. In Curi-Cancha, we saw Three-wattled Bellbird--belling away--from the parking lot. Another guide pointed out a Side-striped Palm Pit-Viper coiled in a bush at the start of the trail. This was followed by birds like Barred Parakeet, Purple-throated Mountain-Gem, Long-tailed Mannakin, White-naped Brushfinch, Black-faced Solitaire, and Rufous-and-white Wren. In Santa Elena, we encountered a couple of nice mixed flock that included a Prong-billed Barbet, Red-faced Spinetail, Ruddy Treerunner, Costa Rican Warbler, and Spangle-cheeked Tanager.

From Monteverde, we continued northwest to the wonderful Celeste Mountain Lodge, situated on the edge of Volcán Tenorio National Park and with a private trail in the park's buffer zone. We spent a couple of mornings birding around the lodge and trails, where even after seeing quite a few tapir tracks, we were nonetheless shocked to see an actual tapir! The birding was excellent here, and we found Snowcap, White-tipped Sicklebill, Purple-crowned Fairy, Dullmantled Antbird, Carmiol's Tanager, Northern Schiffornis, Tody Motmot, Rufous-winged Woodpecker, and White-collared and White-ruffed Manakins. A Barred Antshrike visited us inside the hotel, and we saw Mantled Howler Monkeys and Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth nearby.

One afternoon we visited a seasonal forest not far away, where the rains of the rainy season had greened the forest. There were quite a few different birds here, including Black-throated and Elegant Trogons, Crested Bobwhite, Yellow-naped Parrot, Turquoise-browed Motmot, and Long-tailed Manakin, and Grasshopper Sparrow.

Another day we drove into the Caño Negro Wildlife Reserve and took a boat trip through its river system. Birds (and iguanas) were abundant. Of course waterbirds feature strongly here: Bare-throated Tiger-Heron, Northern Jacana, Muscovy Duck, Russet-naped Wood-Rail, Boat-billed Heron, Green Ibis, and three species of kingfishers were among the waterbirds we observed. But the waterways are lined with trees and forest, and featured another great suite of birds, like the rare Nicaraguan Grackle, Nicaraguan Seedeater, Pied Puffbird, Spot-breasted Wren, and a couple of people were lucky enough to see a Snowy Cotinga.

Our final three nights were spent in Arenal, where our private house had spectacular views of Arenal Volcano and easy access to excellent forest trails. As soon as we arrived we noticed with delight the tame Crested Guans and Great Curassows around the property, and upon nightfall

we were further delighted to hear, and then see, a Black-and-white Owl that lived next to our house.

We spent a couple of mornings birding around the lodge trails. Around the house, trails, and lodge grounds we found many other great birds, including Black-crested Coquette, Black-throated and Gartered Trogon, Barred Hawk, Dusky Antbird, Rufous Mourner, and the recently split Middle American Leaftosser. There were lots of toucans and parrots around, and we could often here them (and sometimes see them) right from our house.

We spent one of our Arenal days visiting a couple of local nature parks. In Místico Hanging Bridges we found a perched White Hawk and Double-toothed Kite; it's always a treat to see perched forest raptors. We found understory flocks there that included birds like Slaty Antwren, Russet Antshrike, and Spotted Antbird, as well as other mixed flocks with Rufous-winged Tanager, Tawny-crowned Greenlet, and Spotted Woodcreeper. We had great views of a Rufous Motmot with dirt on its bill, presumably from digging a nest burrow in a dirt bank. In the afternoon, we visited Sendero Bogarín, a small private reserve right on the edge of the town of La Fortuna. We waited out rainstorms in their convenient covered viewing area, where we watched Collared Aracaris and a variety of tanagers visiting fruit feeders and, amazingly, the secretive Uniform and White-throated Crakes visiting the pond. Walking the trails, we found roosting Black-and-white Owl and Pauraque, Smoky-brown Woodpecker, and Yellow-billed Cacique.

The trip was a great introduction to the wonders of Costa Rica. It was clear why it's such a popular birding destination. We only explored one small part of the country, so there's plenty of reason to return!



Spot-breasted Wren. Photo by Josh Engel.

BIRD LIST. 291 species, including 15 heard only and 4 leader only. Checklist follows Clements/eBird list, 2021 update. Names in parentheses correspond to eBird subspecies groups. H = Heard only; L = Tour leader only. Important subspecies groups in parentheses. Birdlife International threatened status: CR = Critically endangered; EN = Endangered; VU = Vulnerable; NT = Near-threatened.

Tinamous (Tinamidae)

Great Tinamou (H) Tinamus major

Thicket Tinamou (H) Crypturellus cinnamomeus

Swans, Geese, and Ducks (Anatidae)

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck Dendrocygna autumnalis

Muscovy Duck Cairina moschata

Guans, Chachalacas, and Curassows (Cracidae)

Gray-headed Chachalaca Ortalis cinereiceps
Crested Guan Penelope purpurascens

Great Curassow (VU) Crax rubra

New World Quail (Odontophoridae)

Crested Bobwhite Colinus cristatus

Black-breasted Wood-Quail Odontophorus leucolaemus

Grebes (Podicipedidae)

Least Grebe Tachybaptus dominicus

Pigeons and Doves (Columbidae)

Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)

Pale-vented Pigeon

Patagioenas cayennensis

Scaled Pigeon

Red-billed Pigeon

Patagioenas speciosa

Patagioenas flavirostris

Band-tailed Pigeon

Patagioenas fasciata

Short-billed Pigeon

Patagioenas nigrirostris

Inca Dove

Columbina inca

Common Ground Dove

Ruddy Ground Dove

Columbina passerina

Columbina talpacoti

Leptotila verreauxi

Leptotila cassinii

Purplish-backed Quail-Dove (H)

Zentrygon lawrencii

White-winged Dove

Zenaida asiatica

Cuckoos (Cuculidae)

Groove-billed Ani Crotophaga sulcirostris
Lesser Ground-Cuckoo (H) Morococcyx erythropygus

Squirrel Cuckoo Piaya cayana

Nightjars and Allies (Caprimulgidae)

Common Pauraque Nyctidromus albicollis

Swifts (Apodidae)

Chestnut-collared Swift Streptoprocne rutila
White-collared Swift Streptoprocne zonaris

Vaux's Swift Chaetura vauxi

Hummingbirds (Trochlidae)

White-necked Jacobin Florisuga mellivora
White-tipped Sicklebill Eutoxeres aquila
Green Hermit Phaethornis guy

Long-billed Hermit Phaethornis longirostris
Stripe-throated Hermit Phaethornis striigularis

Lesser Violetear

Purple-crowned Fairy

Green Thorntail

Black-crested Coquette

Green-crowned Brilliant

Colibri cyanotus

Heliothryx barroti

Discosura conversii

Lophornis helenae

Heliodoxa jacula

Long-billed StarthroatHeliomaster longirostrisPurple-throated Mountain-gemLampornis calolaemusScintillant HummingbirdSelasphorus scintillaCanivet's EmeraldCynanthus canivetii

Violet-headed Hummingbird Klais guimeti

Violet Sabrewing Campylopterus hemileucurus

Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer (L)

Crowned Woodnymph

Thalurania colombica

Snowcap

Coppery-headed Emerald

String toiled Hypersinghind

Fund ones a visition

Stripe-tailed Hummingbird

Scaly-breasted Hummingbird

Blue-vented Hummingbird

Eupherusa eximia

Phaeochroa cuvierii

Saucerottia hoffmanni

Cinnamon Hummingbird Amazilia rutila Rufous-tailed Hummingbird Amazilia tzacatl

Rails, Gallinules, and Coots (Rallidae)

Uniform Crake Amaurolimnas concolor
Russet-naped Wood-Rail Aramides albiventris
White-throated Crake Laterallus albiqularis

Plovers and Lapwings (Charadriidae)

Southern Lapwing (L) Vanellus chilensis

Jacanas (Jacanidae)

Northern Jacana Jacana spinosa

Sandpipers and Allies (Scolopacidae)

Spotted Sandpiper Actitis macularius

Storks (Ciconiidae)

Wood Stork *Mycteria americana*

Frigatebirds (Fregatidae)

Magnificent Frigatebird Fregata magnificens

Darters (Anhingidae)

Anhinga Anhinga anhinga

Cormorants (Phalacrocoracidae)

Neotropic Cormorant Nannopterum brasilianum

Pelicans (Pelecanidae)

Brown Pelican Pelecanus occidentalis

Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns (Ardeidae)

Bare-throated Tiger-Heron Tigrisoma mexicanum

Great Egret Ardea alba
Cattle Egret Bubulcus ibis

Green Heron

Butorides virescens

Cochlearius cochlearius

Ibises and Spoonbills (Threskiornithidae)

White Ibis Eudocimus albus

Green Ibis Mesembrinibis cayennensis

New World Vultures (Cathartidae)

Black Vulture Coragyps atratus
Turkey Vulture Cathartes aura

Hawks, Eagles, and Kites (Accipitridae)

White-tailed Kite

Swallow-tailed Kite

Black-collared Hawk

Snail Kite

Double-toothed Kite

Barred Hawk

Elanus leucurus

Elanus leucurus

Black-collared sorficatus

Busarellus nigricollis

Rostrhamus sociabilis

Harpagus bidentatus

Morphnarchus princeps

TRIP REPORT: Costa Rica

Roadside Hawk Rupornis magnirostris
White Hawk Pseudastur albicollis
Gray Hawk Buteo plagiatus
Short-tailed Hawk Buteo brachyurus

Typical Owls (Strigidae)

Crested Owl (H)

Mottled Owl

Black-and-white Owl

Lophostrix cristata

Ciccaba virgata

Ciccaba nigrolineata

Trogons (Trogonidae)

Slaty-tailed Trogon (H) Trogon massena
Black-headed Trogon Trogon melanocephalus
Gartered Trogon Trogon caligatus

Black-throated Trogon Trogon rufus

Elegant Trogon (Orange-bellied) Trogon collaris

Motmots (Momotidae)

Tody Motmot Hylomanes momotula
Lesson's Motmot Momotus lessonii
Rufous Motmot Baryphthengus martii
Broad-billed Motmot Electron platyrhynchum
Turquoise-browed Motmot Eumomota superciliosa

Kingfishers (Alcedinidae)

Ringed Kingfisher

Amazon Kingfisher

American Pygmy Kingfisher

Green Kingfisher

Megaceryle torquata

Chloroceryle amazona

Chloroceryle aenea

Chloroceryle americana

Puffbirds (Bucconidae)

Pied Puffbird Notharchus tectus

Jacamars (Galbulidae)

Rufous-tailed Jacamar Galbula ruficauda

Toucan-Barbets (Semnornithidae)

Prong-billed Barbet Semnornis frantzii

Toucans (Ramphastidae)

Northern Emerald-Toucanet

Collared Aracari

Yellow-throated Toucan

Aulacorhynchus prasinus

Pteroglossus torquatus

Ramphastos ambiguus

Keel-billed Toucan Ramphastos sulfuratus

Woodpeckers (Picidae)

Black-cheeked Woodpecker Melanerpes pucherani
Hoffmann's Woodpecker Melanerpes hoffmannii
Smoky-brown Woodpecker Dryobates fumigatus

Pale-billed Woodpecker Campephilus guatemalensis

Lineated Woodpecker Dryocopus lineatus
Rufous-winged Woodpecker Piculus simplex
Golden-olive Woodpecker Colaptes rubiginosus

Falcons and Caracaras (Falconidae)

Crested Caracara (Northern) Caracara plancus [cheriway Group]

Yellow-headed Caracara Milvago chimachima
Laughing Falcon Herpetotheres cachinnans

New World and African Parrots (Psittacidae)

Barred Parakeet Bolborhynchus lineola
Orange-chinned Parakeet Brotogeris jugularis
Brown-hooded Parrot Pyrilia haematotis
White-crowned Parrot Pionus senilis

Red-lored Parrot

Yellow-naped Parrot (EN)

White-fronted Parrot

Amazona autumnalis

Amazona auropalliata

Amazona albifrons

Olive-throated Parakeet Eupsittula nana
Orange-fronted Parakeet (VU) Eupsittula canicularis

Scarlet Macaw Ara macao

Crimson-fronted Parakeet Psittacara finschi

Typical Antbirds (Thamnophilidae)

Barred Antshrike Thamnophilus doliatus
Russet Antshrike Thamnistes anabatinus
Slaty Antwren Myrmotherula schisticolor
Dusky Antbird Cercomacroides tyrannina
Bare-crowned Antbird (H) Gymnocichla nudiceps

Chestnut-backed Antbird

Dull-mantled Antbird

Spotted Antbird

Ocellated Antbird

Symnocicnia nualceps

Poliocrania exsul

Sipia laemosticta

Hylophylax naevioides

Phaenostictus mcleannani

Antpittas (Grallariidae)

Thicket Antpitta (H) Myrmothera dives

Tapaculos (Rhinocryptidae)

Silvery-fronted Tapaculo (H)

Scytalopus argentifrons

Ovenbirds and Woodcreepers (Furnariidae)

Middle American (Tawny-throated) Leaftosser

Olivaceous Woodcreeper

Ruddy Woodcreeper

Wedge-billed Woodcreeper

Cocoa Woodcreeper

Sittasomus griseicapillus

Dendrocincla homochroa

Glyphorynchus spirurus

Xiphorhynchus susurrans

Xiphorhynchus erythropygius

Streak-headed Woodcreeper

Lepidocolaptes souleyetii

Plain Xenops Xenops minutus

Buff-throated Foliage-gleanerAutomolus ochrolaemusRuddy TreerunnerMargarornis rubiginosusRed-faced SpinetailCranioleuca erythropsSlaty SpinetailSynallaxis brachyura

Manakins (Pipridae)

Long-tailed ManakinChiroxiphia linearisWhite-ruffed ManakinCorapipo alteraWhite-collared ManakinManacus candei

Cotingas (Cotingidae)

Three-wattled Bellbird (VU) Procnias tricarunculatus
Snowy Cotinga Carpodectes nitidus

Tityras and Allies (Tityridae)

Black-crowned Tityra Tityra inquisitor

Masked Tityra Semifasciata

Northern Schiffornis Schiffornis veraepacis

Cinnamon Becard Pachyramphus cinnamomeus White-winged Becard Pachyramphus polychopterus

Sharpbill, Royal Flycatcher, and Allies (Oxyrunchidae)

Sulphur-rumped Flycatcher Myiobius sulphureipygius

Tyrant Flycatchers (Tyrannidae)

Olive-striped Flycatcher Mionectes olivaceus Ochre-bellied Flycatcher Mionectes oleagineus Slaty-capped Flycatcher (L) Leptopogon superciliaris Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant (H) Lophotriccus pileatus Northern Bentbill Oncostoma cinereigulare Common Tody-Flycatcher Todirostrum cinereum Yellow-olive Flycatcher Tolmomyias sulphurescens Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet (H) Camptostoma imberbe

Yellow Tyrannulet
Greenish Elaenia
Yellow-bellied Elaenia
Mountain Elaenia
Mistletoe Tyrannulet

Capsiempis flaveola
Myiopagis viridicata
Elaenia flavogaster
Elaenia frantzii
Zimmerius parvus

Tufted Flycatcher Mitrephanes phaeocercus

Tropical Pewee Contopus cinereus
Yellowish Flycatcher Empidonax flavescens
Long-tailed Tyrant Colonia colonus

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Bright-rumped Attila Attila spadiceus

Rufous Mourner Rhytipterna holerythra
Dusky-capped Flycatcher Myiarchus tuberculifer
Brown-crested Flycatcher Myiarchus tyrannulus
Great Kiskadee Pitangus sulphuratus

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Boat-billed Flycatcher Megarynchus pitangua
Social Flycatcher Myiozetetes similis

Gray-capped Flycatcher

White-ringed Flycatcher

Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher

Piratic Flycatcher (L)

Tropical Kingbird

Myiozetetes granadensis

Conopias albovittatus

Myiodynastes luteiventris

Legatus leucophaius

Tyrannus melancholicus

Vireos and Allies (Vireonidae)

Tawny-crowned Greenlet Tunchiornis ochraceiceps
Lesser Greenlet Pachysylvia decurtata

Crows, Jays, and Magpies (Corvidae)

White-throated Magpie-Jay Calocitta formosa
Brown Jay Psilorhinus morio

Swallows (Hirundinidae)

Mangrove Swallow

Blue-and-white Swallow Pygochelidon cyanoleuca
Southern Rough-winged Swallow Stelgidopteryx ruficollis
Gray-breasted Martin Progne chalybea

Gnatcatchers (Polioptilidae)

Long-billed Gnatwren Ramphocaenus melanurus
White-browed Gnatcatcher Polioptila bilineata

Wrens (Troglodytidae)

Nightingale WrenMicrocerculus philomelaHouse WrenTroglodytes aedonOchraceous WrenTroglodytes ochraceus

Tachycineta albilinea

Spot-breasted Wren Black-throated Wren

Banded Wren

Rufous-and-white Wren Stripe-breasted Wren Cabanis's Wren Canebreak Wren

Bay Wren

White-breasted Wood-Wren Gray-breasted Wood-Wren

Song Wren

Thryophilus pleurostictus
Thryophilus rufalbus
Cantorchilus thoracicus
Cantorchilus modestus
Cantorchilus zeledoni
Cantorchilus nigricapillus
Henicorhina leucosticta
Henicorhina leucophrys
Cyphorhinus phaeocephalus

Pheugopedius maculipectus

Pheugopedius atrogularis

Thrushes and Allies (Turdidae)

Black-faced Solitaire
Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush (H)
Slaty-backed Nightingale-Thrush (H)
Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrush
Black-headed Nightingale-Thrush
Mountain Thrush

White-throated Thrush
Clay-colored Thrush

Old World Sparrows (Passeridae)

House Sparrow

Finches, Euphonias, and Allies (Fringillidae)

Golden-browed Chlorophonia Yellow-crowned Euphonia Yellow-throated Euphonia Olive-backed Euphonia Tawny-capped Euphonia

New World Sparrows (Passerellidae)

Common Chlorospingus
Stripe-headed Sparrow
Grasshopper Sparrow
Black-striped Sparrow
Orange-billed Sparrow
Chestnut-capped Brushfinch
Rufous-collared Sparrow
White-eared Ground-Sparrow
White-naped Brushfinch

Troupials and Allies (Icteridae)

Myadestes melanops
Catharus aurantiirostris
Catharus fuscater
Catharus frantzii
Catharus mexicanus
Turdus plebejus
Turdus assimilis
Turdus grayi

Passer domesticus

Chlorophonia callophrys Euphonia luteicapilla Euphonia hirundinacea Euphonia gouldi Euphonia anneae

Chlorospingus flavopectus
Peucaea ruficauda
Ammodramus savannarum
Arremonops conirostris
Arremon aurantiirostris
Arremon brunneinucha
Zonotrichia capensis
Melozone leucotis
Atlapetes albinucha

Eastern Meadowlark (NT) Sturnella magna

Yellow-billed Cacique Amblycercus holosericeus

Chestnut-headed Oropendola Psarocolius wagleri Montezuma Oropendola Psarocolius montezuma Scarlet-rumped Cacique Cacicus uropyaialis Black-cowled Oriole Icterus prosthemelas Red-winged Blackbird Agelaius phoeniceus

Bronzed Cowbird Molothrus aeneus

Melodious Blackbird Dives dives

Great-tailed Grackle Quiscalus mexicanus Nicaraguan Grackle Quiscalus nicaraquensis

New World Warblers (Parulidae)

Black-and-white Warbler Mniotilta varia

Grav-crowned Yellowthroat Geothlypis poliocephala Olive-crowned Yellowthroat Geothlypis semiflava

Tropical Parula Setophaga pitiayumi

Golden-crowned Warbler Basileuterus culicivorus Costa Rican Warbler Basileuterus melanotis **Buff-rumped Warbler** Myiothlypis fulvicauda Slate-throated Redstart Myioborus miniatus

Collared Redstart Myioborus torquatus

Cardinals and Allies (Cardinalidae)

Hepatic Tanager Piranga flava

Habia fuscicauda Red-throated Ant-Tanager

Carmiol's Tanager Chlorothraupis carmioli Blue-black Grosbeak Cyanoloxia cyanoides Blue Grosbeak Passerina caerulea

Tanagers and Allies (Thraupidae)

Loriotus luctuosus White-shouldered Tanager White-throated Shrike-Tanager (H) Lanio leucothorax

Crimson-collared Tanager Ramphocelus sanguinolentus

Scarlet-rumped Tanager (Passerini's) Ramphocelus passerinii passerinii Blue-gray Tanager Thraupis episcopus

Palm Tanager Thraupis palmarum Stilpnia larvata Golden-hooded Tanager Tangara dowii Spangle-cheeked Tanager

Rufous-winged Tanager Tangara lavinia **Emerald Tanager** Tangara florida

Silver-throated Tanager Tangara icterocephala

Scarlet-thighed Dacnis Dacnis venusta Shining Honeycreeper Cyanerpes lucidus Red-legged Honeycreeper
Green Honeycreeper
Blue-black Grassquit
Ruddy-breasted Seedeater
Thick-billed Seed-Finch
Nicaraguan Seed-Finch
Variable Seedeater
Morelet's Seedeater
Bananaquit
Yellow-faced Grassquit

Yellow-faced Grassquit Buff-throated Saltator Black-headed Saltator Cinnamon-bellied Saltator Slate-colored Grosbeak (H) Cyanerpes cyaneus
Chlorophanes spiza
Volatinia jacarina
Sporophila minuta
Sporophila funerea
Sporophila nuttingi
Sporophila corvina
Sporophila morelleti
Coereba flaveola
Tiaris olivaceus
Saltator maximus
Saltator atriceps
Saltator grandis
Saltator grossus

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Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth Panamanian White-faced Capuchin

Mantled Howler Monkey

Geoffroy's Spider Monkey (EN)

Central American Agouti

Red-tailed Squirrel Variegated Squirrel

Tayra

Baird's Tapir (EN)
Collared Peccary

White-tailed Deer

Bradypus variegatus Cebus imitator Alouatta palliata Ateles geoffroyi Dasyprocta punctata Sciurus granatensis Sciurus variegatoides

Eira barbara Tapirus bairdii Dicotyles tajacu

Odocoileus virginianus



Mantled Howler Monkey. Photo by Josh Engel.