



COSTA RICA ESCAPE TOUR

3 - 11 JANUARY 2020



Resplendent Quetzal is one of our targets on this trip.

Join this short tour we have developed for you as the best excuse to leave home and the daily stress to do some great birding in one of the most fantastic birding destinations in the Neotropics.

Costa Rica offers probably the best birding in Central America not only in terms of birds (the country holds 903 species) but also in terms of accommodation and tourist infrastructure. We are staying at the nicest and most comfortable hotels available for birders and nature lovers.

If you don't have time to join our more comprehensive Costa Rica tour or just want to go back there to get few more species that you might have missed on previous tours, this could be perfect for you. The tour is suited for both beginning birders in the Neotropics and more experienced birders trying to get a high number of species in the shortest amount of time.

Itinerary (9 days/8 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in San José, transfer to Hotel Robledal

You will be met by your tour leader at your arrival and transferred to the Hotel Robledal. Dinner at the hotel.

Overnight Hotel Robledal, San José

Day 2. Freddo Fresas, La Paz Waterfall Gardens, Cinchona feeders, transfer to Sarapiquí, Caribbean slope

On our drive toward the Caribbean slope we will make a number of stops that will give us a great introduction to Costa Rica's famous suite of wonderful hummingbirds.

At the hummingbird feeders of the Freddo Fresas restaurant we might be watching **Volcano Hummingbird**, **Purple-throated Mountaingem**, **Scintillant Hummingbird**, **Green-crowned Brilliant**, **Admirable Hummingbird** (split from Rivoli's/Magnificent), **Magenta-throated Woodstar**, **Lesser Violetear** (split from Mexican/Green), and **Violet Sabrewing**. The surrounding area could also yield "non-hummers" like **Black-faced Solitaire**, **Golden-browed Chlorophonia**, **Prong-billed Barbet** (which, together with the Toucan Barbet of South America, are the only members of the family Semnornithidae), or **Long-tailed Silky-flycatcher**.

The La Paz Waterfall Gardens may provide us with more hummingbird pleasure -- 26 species have been recorded at these most species-diverse feeders in Costa Rica, including the endemic **Coppery-headed Emerald** and other species like **Black-bellied Hummingbird**, **White-bellied Mountaingem**, **Green Thorntail**, **Brown Violetear**, and **Green Hermit**. Other birds seen along the trails and open areas include **Sooty-faced Finch**, **Slaty Flowerpiercer**, **Chestnut-capped Brushfinch**, **Slaty-backed Nightingale-Thrush**, **Spotted Barbtail**, **Red-faced Spinetail**, **Black-eared Warbler**, **Slate-throated Whitestart**, **Black Guan**, **American Dipper**, **Torrent Tyrannulet**, **Dark Pewee**, **Silvery-fronted Tapaculo**, **Collared Trogon**, **Ochre-breasted Antpitta**, **Ochraceous Wren**, **Southern Nightingale Wren**, **Lineated Foliage-gleaner**, **Spot-crowned Woodcreeper**, **Prong-billed Barbet** foraging in small noisy flocks, **Green-fronted Lancebill** sometimes catching flies off boulders on the river or feeding from *Ericaceae*, and the large and secretive **Barred Hawk**.

More hummingbird feeders can be found at Cinchona, but of particular interest here are the fruit feeders, which are visited, among others, by **Blue-throated Toucanet**, **Prong-billed Barbet**,

Red-headed Barbet, Silver-throated Tanager, Passerini's Tanager, Blue-grey Tanager, and Palm Tanager. The looks down the canyon often produce **White Hawk** or **Barred Hawk**.

We will arrive at the comfortable La Quinta Sarapiquí Country Inn for a late lunch, where a nice selection of wildlife can be seen along the gallery forest next to the two adjoining rivers, including the impressive **Grey-necked Wood Rail**, several species of parrots and toucans, and the dancing **White-collared Manakin** on the lek. For many years a pair of **Spectacled Owls** has made this area their home.

Overnight: La Quinta Sarapiquí Country Inn, Sarapiquí

Day 3. La Selva Biological Station

Today we will have a full day birding at the famous La Selva Biological Station, where we will try to find species such as **Great Green Macaw, Great Curassow, Laughing Falcon, White-necked and Pied Puffbirds, Snowy Cotinga, White-ruffed and White-collared Manakins, Cinnamon Becard, Rufous-winged Woodpecker, Pale-billed Woodpecker, Red-throated Ant Tanager, Crested Guan, Black-cowled Oriole, Olive-backed and Yellow-throated Euphonias, Rufous and Broad-billed Motmots, Black-cheeked Woodpecker, Red-legged Honeycreeper**, and much more. At night we have chances for **Vermiculated Screech Owl** and possibly **Crested Owl**.

Overnight: La Quinta Sarapiquí Country Inn, Sarapiquí

Day 4. Cope Wildlife, El Tapir, Paraiso Quetzales, and transfer to Savegre

This morning, during our transfer to Savegre, we will visit Cope Wildlife near Guapiles, a private home and nature reserve. where **Collared Aracari** is just about guaranteed and we might see **Red-legged Honeycreeper, Palm Tanager, White-necked Jacobin, Long-billed Hermit, Crowned Woodnymph, Crested Oropendola, Shining Honeycreeper, Green Honeycreeper, and Rufous-naped Wood Rail**, among many others. We also hope to encounter **Spectacled and Crested Owl** on their day roost.

Then we will make a stop at the El Tapir hummingbird hotspot (a.k.a. the old butterfly garden), where we will search for **Snowcap** and other hummingbird species like **Green Thorntail, Violet-headed Hummingbird, and Black-crested Coquette**. On the trails here we will look out for **Barred Forest Falcon, Rufous Motmot, Western Woodhaunter, Song Wren, Northern Barred and Plain-brown Woodcreepers**. If we were to find an ant swarm, **Dull-mantled Antbird, Black-crowned Antpitta, Bicolored Antbird, Spotted Antbird, and Ocellated Antbird** could be possible.

Later we will drive to the Cordillera de Talamanca in the cloudforest mountains, birding en route, looking for **Large-footed Finch and Admirable Hummingbird**. A stop at the grounds of the Paraiso Quetzal Lodge will give us our first chance for the incomparable **Resplendent Quetzal**, one of the best-looking and most highly-sought birds on the planet.

After arrival at the Savegre Hotel, if time permits, we will be birding there for the rest of the day.

Overnight: Savegre Hotel Natural Reserve and Spa, San Gerardo de Dota

Day 5. Full day birding the Savegre area

Today we will again look for the magnificent and most-wanted **Resplendent Quetzal** as well as for **Spotted Wood Quail, Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrush, Mountain Thrush, and Dark Pewee**. Of particular interest here are the 36 Chiriquí Highland Endemics, (birds restricted to the Chiriquí Highlands of Costa Rica and Western Panama) that are found in the Savegre area. We

hope to see a number of them, including **Sulphur-winged Parakeet, Fiery-throated Hummingbird, Grey-tailed Mountaingem, Ruddy Treerunner, Silvery-fronted Tapaculo, Black-capped Flycatcher, Golden-bellied Flycatcher, Long-tailed Silky-flycatcher, Black-faced Solitaire, Black-billed Nightingale-Thrush, Sooty Thrush, Yellow-winged Vireo, Flame-throated Warbler, Black-cheeked Warbler, Collared Whitestart, Sooty-capped Bush Tanager, Golden-browed Chlorophonia, Spangle-cheeked Tanager, Slaty Flowerpiercer, Yellow-thighed and Large-footed Finches, Volcano Junco, and Black-thighed Grosbeak.**

We will look for night birds on both nights, maximizing the chances for **Dusky Nightjar**, another Chiriquí Highland Endemic.

Overnight: Savegre Hotel Natural Reserve and Spa, San Gerardo de Dota

Day 6. Transfer to Carara National Park, birding on the way

The higher elevations of the páramo in Los Quetzales National Park above the Savegre Hotel are home to the range-restricted **Timberline Wren** and **Volcano Junco**.

After getting these species we will drive to the verdant grounds of the Bosque del Tolomuco Nature Reserve and Lodge, where tanagers and parakeets are usually feeding in the gardens, the feeders are humming with hummingbirds, and **Clay-colored Thrush** (Costa Rica's national bird) has been found nesting outside the dining area. The adjacent forest trails may yield **Black Guan, Emerald Toucanet, Lesson's Motmot, Sulphur-winged Parakeet, Slate-throated Whitestart, Silver-throated Tanager**, and even the uncommon **Red-fronted Parrotlet**.

Via the wonderfully birdy San Isidro de El General area we will then transfer to the Pacific slope and Hotel Villa Lapas, where the humid habitats of southwestern Costa Rica and the dry habitats of the country's northwest make a transition. The hotel is surrounded by lush tropical gardens sitting in the midst of a private 500-acre jungle reserve, and we can explore the canopy via their walking tour of 1.5 miles (2.5 km) in length. We will be able to see the lush treetops of the rainforest from five suspended bridges at more than 180 feet (40 meters) above the ground! Each bridge is an astonishing walk, which crosses through the very heart of the beautiful rainforest.

Birding here is spectacular. Five different species of trogons and four species of manakins can be spotted in close proximity to each other, and we may also encounter **Scarlet Macaw, Yellow-throated Toucan, Yellow-billed Cotinga, Black-hooded Antshrike, Ruddy Quail-Dove, Northern Royal Flycatcher, Great Tinamou, Long-tailed Manakin, Streak-chested Antpitta**, and **Black-bellied Wren**, to name just a few.

Overnight: Villa Lapas Rain Forest Eco-Resort

Day 7. Full day at Carara National Park on the central Pacific Slope

We will have a pre-breakfast walk on the river trail at Villa Lapas, once more birding the fabulous grounds of our accommodation.

Then we'll spend the day at Carara National Park, one of Costa Rica's outstanding birding hotspots. We'll be looking for specialties such as **Fiery-billed Aracari, Scarlet Macaw, Black-hooded Antshrike, Streak-chested Antpitta, Golden-naped Woodpecker, Baird's Trogon, Riverside and Black-bellied Wrens, Orange-collared Manakin, Cherrie's Tanager, Great Tinamou, White-whiskered Puffbird, Bicolored and Chestnut-backed Antbirds, Spot-crowned Euphonia**, and if we are lucky the sought-after **Yellow-billed Cotinga**.

In the late afternoon we will visit Carara's "manakin pools", where watching male **Red-capped** and/or **Blue-crowned Manakins** lighting up the shadows is highly entertaining.

Overnight: Villa Lapas Rain Forest Eco-Resort

Day 8. Tárcoles River and transfer to San José

Today we will explore the Tárcoles River from a boat, looking for the endemic and local **Mangrove Hummingbird** and several water birds such as **Wattled Jacana**, **Anhinga**, **Bare-throated Tiger Heron**, **Boat-billed Heron**, **Common Black Hawk**, **Muscovy Duck**, **American Pygmy Kingfisher**, and “Mangrove” **Yellow Warbler** as the most representative species from the area. Other targets for a Tárcoles River boat tour typically include **Mangrove Vireo**, **Mangrove Cuckoo**, **Panamanian Flycatcher**, and **Northern Scrub Flycatcher** among many others.

During this boat ride we should manage to see several American crocodiles.

Overnight Hotel Robledal, San José

Day 9. Departure

After a nice, short, and exciting week we will return to the San José airport to connect with our international flights.

Please note that the itinerary above cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually slightly) due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides and other factors.

Duration: 9 days
Group size: 4 – 8
Date: 3 – 11 January 2020
Start: San José
End: San José

Price: US\$3731 per person sharing assuming 6-8 participants
 US\$4009 per person sharing assuming 4-5 participants
Single supplement: US\$636

Price includes:

All accommodation
 All meals
 Entrance fees
 Bottled water
 Private transportation
 Private tour leader

Price excludes:

Flights
 Personal expenses such as laundry, drinks and alcoholic drinks, personal items, phone calls, internet access, etc.
 Tips
 Medical and trip cancellation insurance
 The tour does not include any activity not described in the itinerary.