



A [Tropical Birding](#) SET DEPARTURE tour

Costa Rica: The Introtour

9 – 19 February 2018

TOUR LEADER: Fito Downs

Report and photos by Fito Downs



Black-throated Tropic bird is regularly seen at the forest trails of La Selva

Our Costa Rica Introtour took place during early February 2018. This time of the year is quite busy for travelers from all over the world visiting this always wonderful and amazingly diverse Central America country, but it is also one of the best times of the year to see some of the local rarities and specialties.

With more than 40% of the country officially protected under different categories like Biological Reserves, Wildlife Refuges and National Parks Costa Rica host some of the finest birding areas of all Latin America. As you move through the country you can see and feel a respect for nature, and notice how locals care about their environment. This world-wide reputation makes the travelers to come over and over again.

This country has so much to offer, from lowland rainforest in the Northeast, to the high elevation mountains at ten thousand feet above sea level, to the magical transition areas of the central pacific slope. Not to

mention the very pleasant weather at the cloudforest of Monteverde and spectacular sunsets over the Gulf of Nicoya.

We were especially lucky with a huge number of 23 hummingbird species (including gems like **Snowcap**, **Black-crested Coquette** and **Magenta-throated Woodstar**), just in 9 days! In addition to the hummingbirds we found 2 species of the always hard-to-see quail-doves and 2 species of wood-quails. And, we will never forget the **Double-toothed Kite** following the troop of **Capuchin Monkeys** at La Selva Biological Station.

We visited fantastic birding spots during our tour such as the renowned La Selva Biological Station where we enjoyed displaying males of the lovely **White-collared Manakins** right at the main building area. We also saw another local star here; **Snowy Cotinga** (male) seen many times perched right up in the bare trees of the main entrance road.

As our tour continued we went to the Talamanca Mountain Range also known as Cerro de la Muerte (mountain of death) due the very cold weather that early settlers unexpectedly encountered as they travelled through the region. We visited the charming town of San Gerardo, located right along the Savegre River, consider one of the cleanest rivers in the country. Here we got the glamorous **Resplendent Quetzal**.

During our time in the central Pacific slope of the country, we were delighted with large flocks of **Scarlet Macaws** going to their roosting sites at the mangrove forest near Tarcoles River. The trails of Carara National Park provided a good quantity of regional endemics like **Black-hooded Antshrike** and we also enjoyed a very tame **Great Tinamou** (our second one of the trip) along the main trail of the park. The boat tour was always wonderful with birds everywhere. Tons of herons were spotted there, including **Boat-billed Heron**.

The area of Monteverde was unusually very sunny and “hot” compared to what I am used to. But, we managed to see most of our target species there. Curi-cancha Reserve was great, with some local rarities such as **Magenta-throated Woodstar** at the verbena flower in the forest clearings. We also got our second **Resplendent Quetzal** in the wild avocado trees. The Monteverde Reserve was really nice and peaceful in the afternoon (since most tourists go there in the morning) and we encountered some mixed species flocks and a very cooperative **Black Guan** eating some fruits near the main trail.



Slaty-tailed Trogon was one of our targets in La Selva Station

10 February – La Selva Station via Braulio Carrillo National Park

After arriving the day before, our birding started with a short walk around the grounds around the hotel. Some of the first birds we saw there were **Blue-and-white Swallows**, **Blue-gray Tanagers**, **Clay-colored Thrush**, and the common and noisy **Great-tailed Grackle**. We then continued with a delicious breakfast and then headed up to our next destination, Braulio Carrillo National Park.

As we drove through the busy city of Heredia we spotted something white flying near the road and we immediately managed to pull off the road; that bird turned out to be the always elegant White-tailed Kite. We stayed long enough for everyone to see it.

Shortly after, and still in the city we saw a pair of **Brown Jays** foraging very low in a bushy tree in a open lot by the side of the road. Always active and noisy, this was our first time to see it, but later on the tour it was a regular visitor at the feeders in Monteverde.

After one hour of driving we hit the Braulio Carrillo highway. From this point everyone was already excited and ready to be inside the park. We crossed the continental divide and started descending towards the ranger station where the loop trail Las Palmas was our next birding spot for about 2 hours. It was raining but not too hard, we decided to try, and once in the trail our hope was to find either an army ant swarm or a mixed-species flock. The forest was quiet, and it was hard to see well because the dripping in the trees. After few minutes we got our flock with the **Carmiol's Tanager** as the first bird, followed by the uncommon **Tawny-crested Tanager** and a **Wedge-billed Woodcreeper**. Later on we found a very attractive **Tawny-capped**

Euphonia male which was the only one of the entire trip. The rain continued so we just walked along the end of the trail and headed up to the next location.

February is usually one of the driest months of the year in the Caribbean lowlands, but the rainforest is famous for being able to have rain at any time. A few minutes later we stopped at El Tapir, a popular spot for hummingbirds. There we got some really cool-looking hummingbirds such as **Violet-headed Hummingbird**, **Green Hermit**, **Rufous-tailed Hummingbird**, and the two local stars: **Black-crested Coquette** with its incredible bee-like flight, and **Snowcap**. There are just no other places where you can actually have a chance to see both species at the same location like this. In the same area we also found both **Keel-billed** and **Yellow-throated Toucans**.

Having found our main targets at El Tapir we went for a local restaurant for lunch. Included were rice and beans, a very typical dish in Costa Rica locally called *casado*. We then continued on towards La Selva Station, planning to arrive there in the middle afternoon. Upon arrival a colorful male **White-collared Manakin** was actively displaying near the reception area, where we enjoyed really cool views of this special performance.



Collared Peccaries can be ridiculously tame at La Selva Station (Fito Downs)

Some other species seen in the afternoon at La Selva included the common **Passerini's Tanager**, **Tropical Kingbird**, **Social Flycatcher**, **Masked Tityra**, and **Golden-hooded Tanager**. At night we got **Common Pauraque** sitting along the main road of the station.

11 February – Full day at La Selva Biological Station

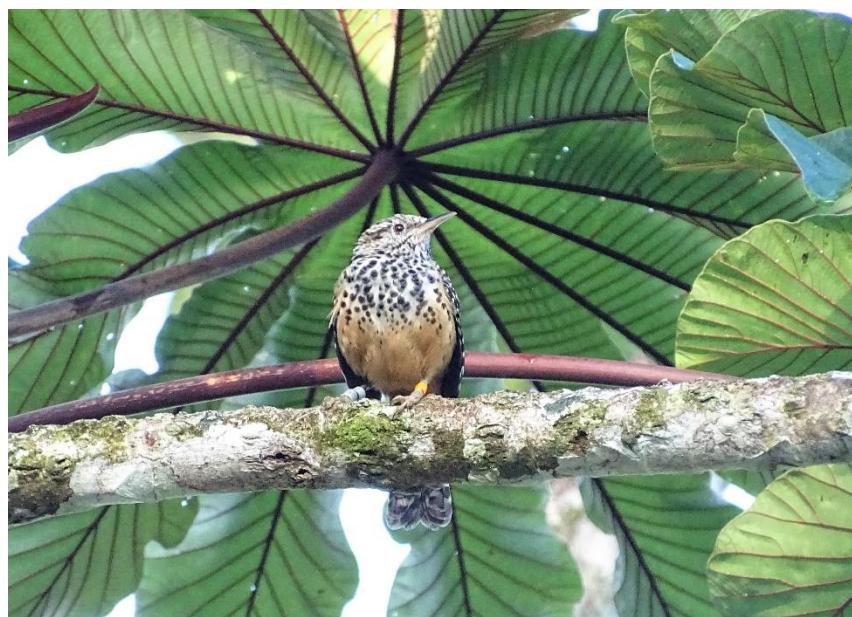
Howler Monkeys are a distinctive sound of the rainforest throughout their range, but sometimes it is hard to appreciate them when they start howling right next to your cabins at 5:15 AM! Just before the dawn chorus

started we had a troop of these monkeys calling loudly near the lodge. Undoubtedly, one of the most memorable moments during this tour.

The parking lot lights attracted a huge number of birds early in the morning. As soon as we met outside our rooms, we knew that something was going on near the light behind our bus. There we found several species “having breakfast” by hunting moths and other insects. **Cinnamon Becard** was very actively gleaning all the dry leaves near the light, and **Cocoa Woodcreeper**, **Chestnut-sided Warbler**, **Yellow-olive Flycatcher**, **Passerini’s Tanager** and even a **Streak-headed Woodcreeper** were all in attendance.

After our breakfast, we spent some time right outside the HQ area, hoping for more manakins to show up but instead of that we had great looks at a female **Slaty-tailed Trogon** in a fig tree, **Black-cheeked Woodpecker**, **Orange-chinned Parakeets**, and more **Golden-hooded Tanagers** feeding in the same tree. Suddenly, as we looked up in the blue sky we were able to admire a male **Snowy Cotinga** flying overhead in perfect light conditions, definitely this one is in the top 5 birds of the trip for me.

We saw more **Snowy Cotingas** later on this morning, due to the abundance of fruiting trees during this season, however it is not an easy bird to find elsewhere. We kept birding the main garden and clearings of the station and got some North American migrants such as **Northern Waterthrush**, **Chestnut-sided Warbler**, **Golden-winged Warbler**, and **Baltimore Oriole**.



Band-backed Wren was “banded” for a research project at La Selva Station.

The *Heliconia* flowers provided great views of **Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer** and **Long-billed Hermit**. We quickly racked up a few woodpeckers like **Black-cheeked Woodpecker**, **Cinnamon Woodpecker**, and **Lineated Woodpecker**. **Plain-colored Tanager**, **Pied Puffbird**, **Semiplumbeous Hawk**, **Slaty-tailed Trogon**, **Gray-capped Flycatcher**, **Crested Guan** and the interesting **Rufous Mourner** were spotted along the trail near the river.

We went to a spot for a roosting pair of **Vermiculated Screech-Owls**, where we definitely had to make an epic effort to find them, but we did! Our views of a lovely pair were really outstanding, and La Selva is one of the best places for it. Our morning was finish with an excellent lunch and we went to our rooms for a break before to continue the rest of the day.

Our plan was to visit two different areas in the afternoon. First of all, we went back to the road searching for semi-open and open country species where we found **Black-cowled Oriole**, **Green Honeycreeper**, **Fasciated Antshrike**, **Social Flycatcher**, **Shiny Cowbird**, **Melodious Blackbird**, and the uncommon **Chestnut-colored Woodpecker** near a *Heliconia* patch.



Cerro de la Muerte is home to the always active **Slaty Flowerpiercer**

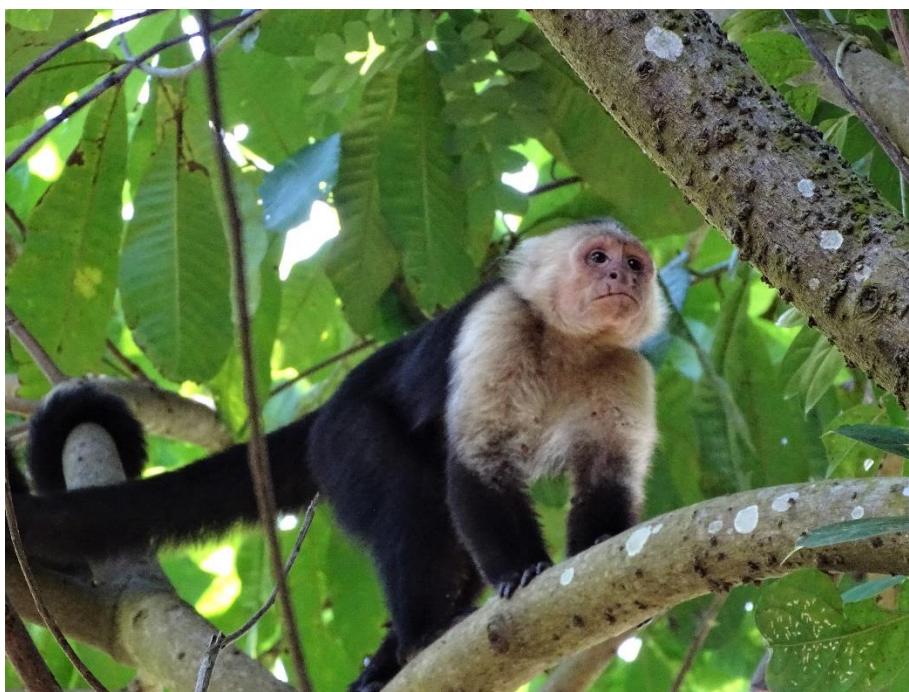
The second spot was going to give us a big chance to see the rare and highly endangered Great Green Macaw. As we waited for the macaws to arrive we spent some time enjoying the **Red-lored Parrots** in the giant wild almond trees, along with **Crimson-fronted Parakeets**. Another nice surprise for the day was a **Laughing Falcon** perched right up near the top of a tree in the heart of palm plantation next to the road. It's definitely an elegant raptor to see and admire. Not too long after that, we had another raptor sitting atop of a tree, this one was the always popular **Bat Falcon** (yes, they eat bats among other things).

The day was not over until we heard a loud “squak” call in the distance, which belongs to the endangered **Great Green Macaw**; one came in and gave us a nice “fly by” above our heads and headed to a hole in a tree, and we wondered if it had an active nest. What a way to end our birding for the day, with such a great look at this bird!

12 February – La Selva Station to Cerro de la Muerte

With another morning left in the rainforest, we planned to spend more time on forest trails. The fig tree outside the restaurant was very busy as usual, this time the male **Slaty-tailed Trogan** came into view, we also saw a flock of **Dusky-faced Tanagers**, and a pair of **Red-throated Ant-Tanagers** was foraging with them. Suddenly we realized there was a male **Great Curassow** under the same tree eating the fallen fruits! What a fantastic bird.

Once on the forest trail, we heard a troop of **White-faced Capuchin Monkeys** calling loudly, we immediately searched for them and saw a juvenile and some adults in the trees. A **Double-toothed Kite** was following the monkeys. It is not rare to find this type of raptor taking advantage of the monkeys to find food. As the monkeys travel through the trees, they shake and break many branches, disturbing insects and other animals, and the kite snatches them up. A very interesting behavior to watch!



Mammals are often encountered on this tour like this **Capuchin Monkey** (Fito Downs)

We continued along the trail and found a lovely **Rufous Motmot**, this one stayed long enough for everyone to see it nice and clear. We also had a **Broad-billed Motmot** in the same area, and it was kind of cool to have two species of motmots so close to each other. A **Collared Peccary** was seen eating the wild almond fruit on the ground, at the same time we heard a **Great Tinamou** singing in the distance. We hoped to get closer to one since La Selva along with Carara are the best places in the country to find it.

As we made our way deeper into the forest, we saw a cooperative **Pale-billed Woodpecker**, which was no more than 15 feet off the ground (quite low for this woodpecker) A very nice-looking woodpecker with a wide distribution in the country. In the same area we also found an **Eyelash Pit-Viper**. This tiny snake is venomous, but not aggressive; it was a yellow morph (this species is highly variable in colors).

After another sighting of a Howler Monkey eating some *Cecropia* leaves, we got another really difficult species, the elusive **Olive-backed Quail-Dove**. This bird is always a treat to see, and La Selva is one of the best places to find it. Finally, almost at the end of the trail, we saw our first **Great Tinamou** of the tour. Nice looking bird (when you can see it...); it is not as hard to see compared to the other Costa Rica tinamous, and for many birders it is the first member of the family that they actually see.

Back at the bridge, there was a male **Black-throated Tropicbird** posing near the path. This tropicbird was just unbelievably tame and cooperative, perching in a low branch maybe 12 feet off the ground and gave us the best views anyone can imagine! After this special moment, we departed La Selva, and spent most of the afternoon driving back through San José and then up into the mountains. We arrived at our lodge in the Savegre Valley in late afternoon.

13 February – Cerro de la Muerte / San Gerardo de Dota /Savegre River

Many of the group were looking forward to this moment, because the first mission today was to search for the majestic **Resplendent Quetzal**. We met at 5:25AM for a quick cup of coffee before heading out to a stakeout where the bird was previously seen. It was just a matter of patience and luck. There were other people from nearby lodges waiting there too.

After a few minutes of waiting, one of the local guides spotted it. We all moved to get the best possible spot and enjoyed every minute with one of the most beautiful birds in the continent! There was a pair, we saw them inspecting a tree cavity – maybe they would decide to nest there. It seemed a little early in the season for them to start nesting yet. After enjoying the quetzals, we returned for breakfast with huge smiles on our faces. Oh, I almost forgot - while waiting for the quetzals we saw 5 Black Guans on the ground, where they were probably feeding on falling fruits; it's a very nice regional endemic species.

We birded the near our lodge for the rest of the morning, where we got great looks at **Lesser Violet-ear** and **White-throated Mountain-Gem**, along with the tiny **Volcano Hummingbird** working hard in the fuchsia flowers in the garden. In the back of the garden and just inside the forest, we encountered a **Spotted Wood-Quail**, a rare high elevation species; the Savegre River valley may be the best place to find it.



Volcano Junco is only found in the páramo at Cerro de la Muerte (Fito Downs)

Later in the morning, we eventually found another scarce montane bird, the Red-headed Barbet. The unmistakable shape and colors of this nice looking bird made it one of the favorites of the trip.

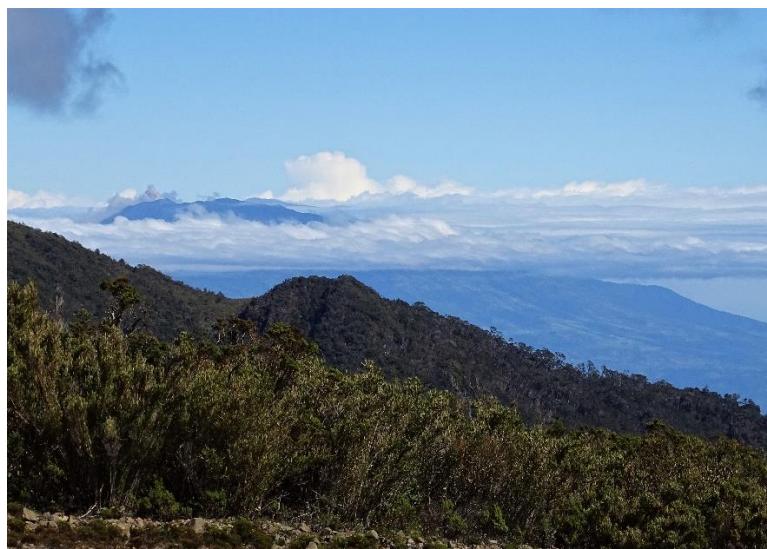
After lunch and a short break, we walked along the charming Savegre River which is considered to be one of the most pristine and cleanest rivers of Costa Rica.

One of our goals here was to find some water-associated birds like **Torrent Tyrannulet** and **Black Phoebe**, and we were successful with that. Watching the blue sky we found a **Red-tailed Hawk** and the always elegant and graceful **Swallow-tailed Kite**. Before the end of the day we saw **Long-tailed Silky-Flycatcher**, **Acorn Woodpecker**, **Sulphur-winged Parakeet**, **Band-tailed Pigeon**, and **Blue-and-white Swallow**.

14 February – Talamanca Mountains to Carara National Park

Before breakfast, we saw another male **Long-tailed Silky-Flycatcher**, and a fruiting tree in the lodge garden attracted **Mountain Elaenia**, **Sooty-capped Chlorospingus**, **Yellow-bellied Siskin**, and the striking regional endemic **Spangle-cheeked Tanager**. We also got more great views of the male **Red-headed Barbet**, and we did not mind seeing this phenomenal bird once again.

We departed the lodge after breakfast, and with packed lunches, we started traveling towards our next destination, Carara National Park. Our plan was to take the longer way along the coast, avoiding the need to go back through San José, and birding the higher mountains along the way, which reach over 10000 feet.



On clear days you can see the active **Turrialba Volcano** from Cerro de la Muerte

Our main target there was to see another regional endemic, the interesting **Volcano Junco**, which lives in the páramo above the tree line. We found one foraging low near the ground almost at the end of the road to the top of the mountain. We also were lucky enough to have nice weather, so we could see both Irazu and Turrialba Volcanoes from there!

Something that nobody was expecting was to see the Pacific Ocean from the top of that mountain; it was really a bonus to have such a clear day to enjoy the beauty of this part of the country. After a few minutes at this location we went back to the main road, and stopped briefly at Restaurante El Mirador for some birding. Here we found **Buff-throated Saltator**, **Green-crowned Brilliant**, **Cherrie's Tanager**, **Silver-throated Tanager**, and a neat **Violet Sabrewing** who was regularly visiting a *Heliconia* flower near the restaurant. After a good cup of coffee and fantastic view from there we continued our journey to the central Pacific lowlands.

We stopped near the town of Quepos to check out a roadside pond for **Anhinga**, **Neotropic Cormorant**, **Amazon Kingfisher**, and **Ringed Kingfisher**, but the real surprise was a soaring **Zone-tailed Hawk**. You never know when you will see this bird, which can be found in a huge diversity of habitats and elevations throughout the country. Definitely this was a great stop and after that we kept driving towards Carara National Park.



The grounds of Savegre Lodge are the best place to get **Yellow-bellied Siskin**

Our last stop before getting to our lodge was simply spectacular. A nice selection of beach almond trees were planted along the road to provide food for **Scarlet Macaws**, and we hoped for them to fly over us up by the ridge. What we saw before the macaws arrived was a **Peregrine Falcon** who came right after a black hawk (which was probably a Common), and literally attacked it in front of our eyes! I thought this was really amazing, and shortly after that we saw the first pair of **Scarlet Macaws** come in. What an amazing way to finish a long drive!

15 February – Carara National Park / Tarcoles River

The very important Carara National Park was established in 1978 as a biological reserve, but its growing popularity after 1990 forced the authorities to upgrade its category to national park in 1998. The park is located south of the Tárcoles River between 2 ecosystems: the rainforest in the south and the dry forest in the north. This situation makes this national park of high importance transition zone where you can see animals and plants of both regions interacting together within the forest. For example, we saw the common **Rufous-naped Wren** right next to the endemic **Black-hooded Antshrike**; the wren is a dry forest species and the antshrike a rainforest dweller.

Upon arrival to the main entrance of the park, we had a lovely **Steely-vented Hummingbird** in the verbena flowers by the ranger station. There was an Acacia tree being used by several species as a nesting site, some of the birds there were **Boat-billed Flycatcher**, **Social Flycatcher**, and **Yellow-olive Flycatcher**, and a **Piratic Flycatcher** that was attempting to usurp one of the nests.

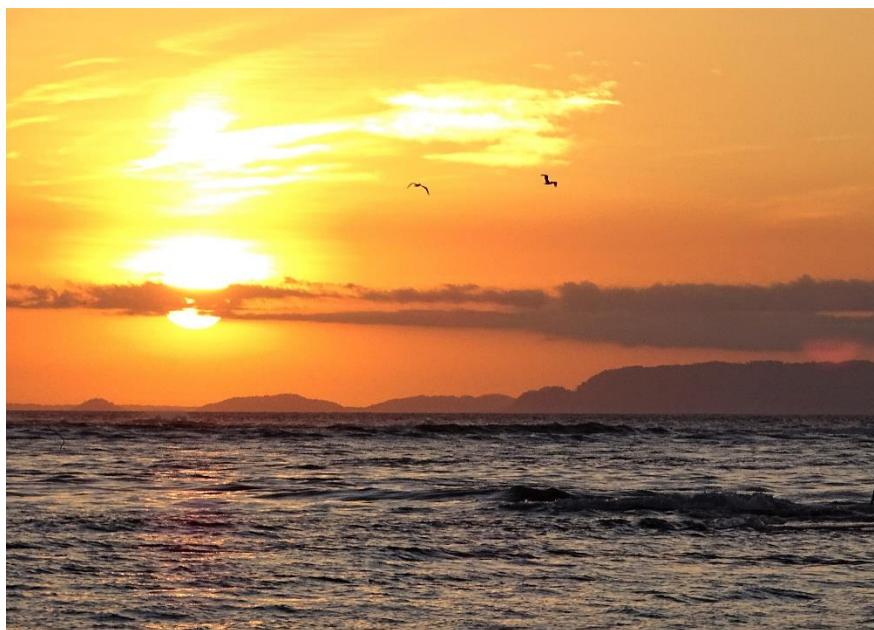


Bare-throated Tiger-Herons often feature on the Tárcoles River boat tour

On the HQ grounds, we saw a nice pair of Black Iguanas (also called Ctenosaurs) that were foraging by the grassy field near the station. Once on the trail, we saw the first **Lesser Greenlets** of the tour, and later saw **White-tipped Dove**, **Tennessee Warbler**, **Yellow Warbler**, **Red-legged Honeycreeper**, and had great views of the regional endemic **Fiery-billed Aracari**.

A stop by the river provided views of **White Ibis**, **Buff-rumped Warbler** and lots of **Basilisk Lizards** (known locally as “Jesus Christ” lizards). Near the giant wild cashew tree we found two more **Great Tinamous** just by the side of trail! Carara National Park is an amazing place to see this bird too. We spent a lot of time with them until the birds walked away from us. Soon, we crossed the small bridge over the creek named Quebrada Bonita, where there was an active nest of the impressive **Scarlet Macaw**. A lovely pair of macaws emerged from inside a huge cavity high up in the tree and we managed to get great and prolonged views of this spectacular bird.

On our way back to the entrance we found some **Sac-winged Bats** sleeping by the buttresses of a huge fig tree and as if that was not enough, there was a Northern Ghost Bat roosting in a long palm frond by the trail. A number of bat species roost like, while others roost inside cavities in the trees, or build “tents” from leaves. We headed up back to the lodge for lunch and a rest before the Tárcoles River trip in the afternoon.



Spectacular sunset from the mouth of Tárcoles River (Fito Downs)

At 2:30pm, we headed to the river for a boat ride. Conditions were perfect, and we saw almost all the heron and egret species starting with **Green, Tricolored, and Great Blue Herons** and **Cattle, Great, and Snowy Egrets**. It took a while, but we finally saw a **Bare-throated Tiger-Heron**, and **Yellow-crowned Night-Herons** were seemingly everywhere. Almost at the end of the tour we nailed the most-wanted **Boat-billed Heron** near the mangrove forest.

Some other birds on the trip were **Osprey, Crested Caracara, Yellow-headed Caracara, Common Black-Hawk, Prothonotary Warbler, Neotropic Cormorant, Brown Pelican, Whimbrel, Black-necked Stilt, White-collared Seedeater, and Yellow-naped Parrot**. Some **Scarlet Macaws** started making their way towards roosting areas mangrove forest, and we enjoyed a nice and impressive sunset near the mouth of the Tárcoles River.

During our way back to the dock, we saw lots of Lesser Nighthawks making crepuscular flights, which was an excellent way to finish our birding day.

16 February – Carara NP to Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve

As we convened at 6:00 am for some pre-breakfast coffee and birding, we were amazed by the courtship display of a pair of **Bare-throated Tiger-Herons**. Back at the coffee table, we found a lonely but very cooperative **Orange-billed Sparrow** scrutinizing every corner of the restaurant in search for food. This bird can be really hard to see sometimes, so we really enjoyed it. After the sparrow, there was a **Yellow-throated Toucan** singing from the top of the trees above us. We watched it until it left, then headed to the lodge gardens where there was a nice fruiting fig tree full of birds including a pair of **Slaty-tailed Trogons** and the common national bird of Costa Rica, the **Clay-colored Thrush**.



Roseated Spoonbills roost in the mangrove forest near Tarcoles River

Not bad for one hour of birding... After breakfast, he headed to the popular “crocodile bridge” to see some of the biggest **American Crocodiles** around. They congregate here to feed, though this morning they were just loafing near the bottom of the bridge. We also spotted some birds like **Snowy Egret**, **Mangrove Swallow**, and **Black-bellied Whistling-Duck**.

We then headed to another forest trail, where we started out by seeing the scarce **Blue-throated Goldentail** actively flying near start of the trail. Another good bird of the morning was a pair of **Dot-winged Antwrens**, which are declining in most of their range in Costa Rica (we do not know why), so those birds were definitely the bird of the day for me.



Double-striped Thick-Knee rest along the river bank near Carara National Park

Continuing down the trail, we found more activity with **Red-legged Honeycreeper**, **Lesser Greenlet**, **Scarlet Macaw**, and **Common Tody Flycatcher**, and then a **White-whiskered Puffbird** was found quietly perched in the understory. Not far from there, we encountered a distant **Turquoise-browed Motmot** which perched for a long time allowing great scope views of this nice looking dry forest species.

Heading back to the parking area, we were surrounded by an entire troop of **White-faced Capuchin Monkeys** that were very busy searching for food. We spent some time watching them as they swung back and forth in the trees. It sure was a very nice way to finish the morning before packing up and driving to Monteverde in the afternoon.

Monteverde is famous for the beauty of the cloudforest and its birds, but for many years it was also infamous for the terrible road you had to go on to get there. However it is much better now, and takes a lot less time than it used to. Sometimes you see great birds, like the pair of almost tame Keel-billed Toucans that we had on the way up. Upon arrival in Cala Lodge, coffee and cookies were ready for our group and we relaxed and enjoyed the nice view from the balcony.

17 February – Curi-cancha Reserve and Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve

Our plan was to visit a private cloudforest reserve named Curi-canca in the morning, but before heading out we spent some time watching the feeders at the lodge for the nice looking **Lesson's Motmot**, which was squabbling over the fruit with the **Brown Jays** and **squirrels**. **Common Chlorospingus** was also attending the feeder and we had a **Wilson's Warbler** in the forest just near the restaurant.



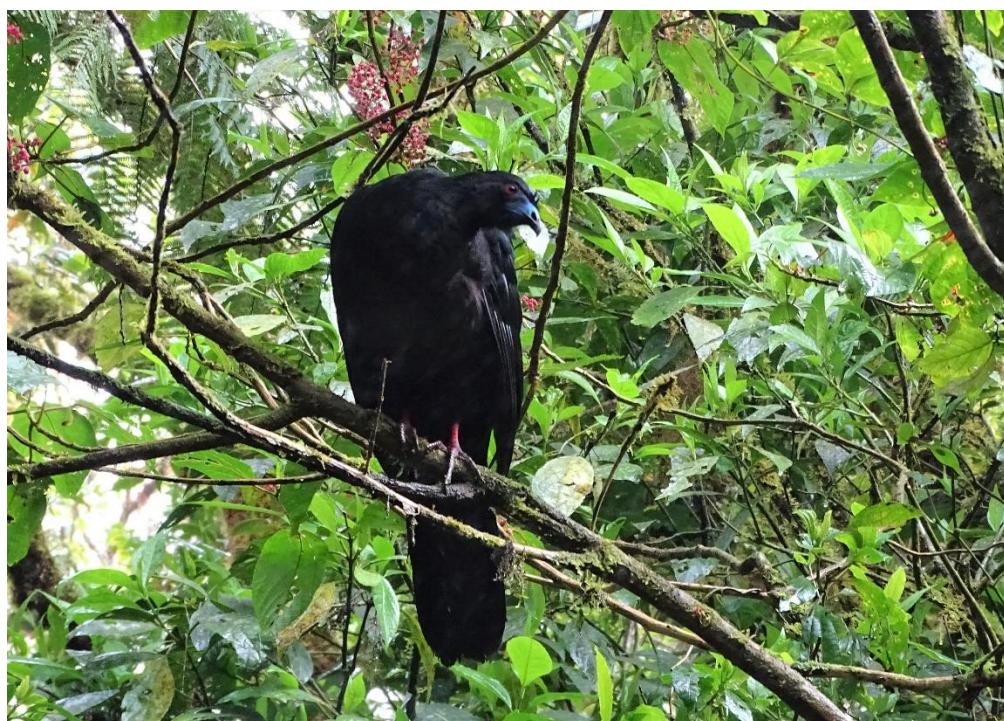
Green-crowned Brilliant rules the feeders at Monteverde Reserve

We arrive in the reserve and started walking the forest trails. The common **Yellowish Flycatcher** was seen many times today, and several warblers were also present along with **White-breasted Wood-Wren**. We spent

some time watching a male and female **Resplendent Quetzals** feeding on a wild avocado tree near a pasture at the edge of the forest. We definitely enjoyed them just as much as the first time in Savegre.

A trail in the secondary forest was full of **Mountain Thrushes**, and we probably saw at least a dozen attending a fruiting tree. A **Black-throated Green Warbler** was foraging in the middle level of the forest edge.

Eventually, we made it to the hummingbird “feeding station” (with natural plants not artificial feeders). There we saw **Stripe-tailed Hummingbird**, **Lesser Violet-ear**, the country endemic **Coppery-headed Emerald** and one of the local stars, the male **Magenta-throated Woodstar**. **Gray-crowned Yellowthroat** was singing in the open areas near the *verbena* plants and luckily we managed to get good views of this resident warbler.



Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve is a great place to find **Black Guan**

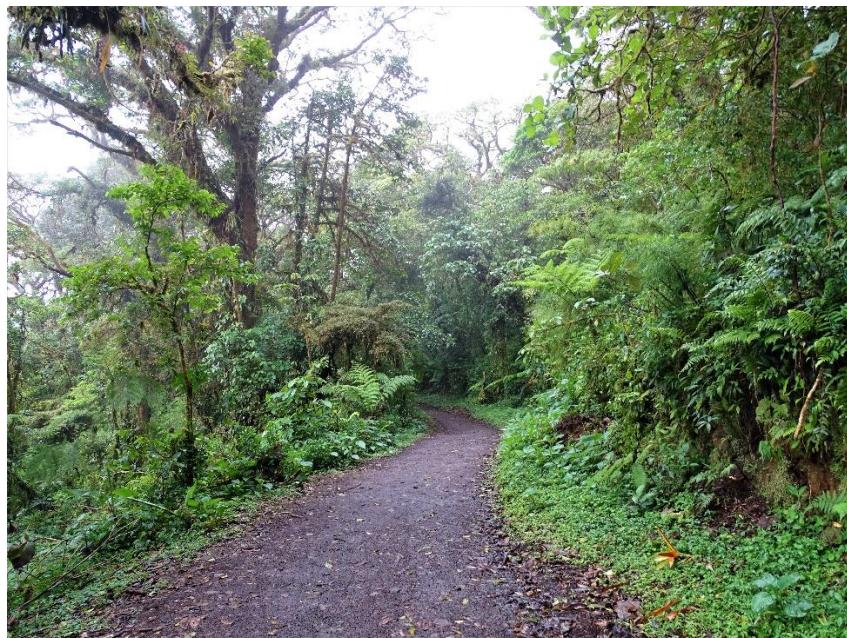
After lunch in a restaurant in town, we went to the famous Monteverde Reserve. Its fame also means it can be very crowded, but our plan today worked out great – by the time we arrived, most of the visitors had already left the reserve, so we could enjoy the forest in relative peace. We did a nice loop through the cloudforest, hoping to find some mixed species flocks. It was quiet as we started, but deeper in the forest we found **Mountain Thrush**, **Slaty Antwren**, **Emerald Toucanet**, **Purple-throated Mountain-gem**, **Spotted Barbtail**, and the acrobatic **Red-faced Spinetail**.

We also got wonderful views of a **Black Guan** that was eating some berries; this one was almost tame and we were able to have long views of it. At the end of the day, we visited the Monteverde Hummingbird Galley to find **Coppery-headed Emerald**, **Green-crowned Brilliant**, **Violet Sabrewing**, **Stripe-tailed Hummingbird**, and **Purple-throated Mountain-gem**.

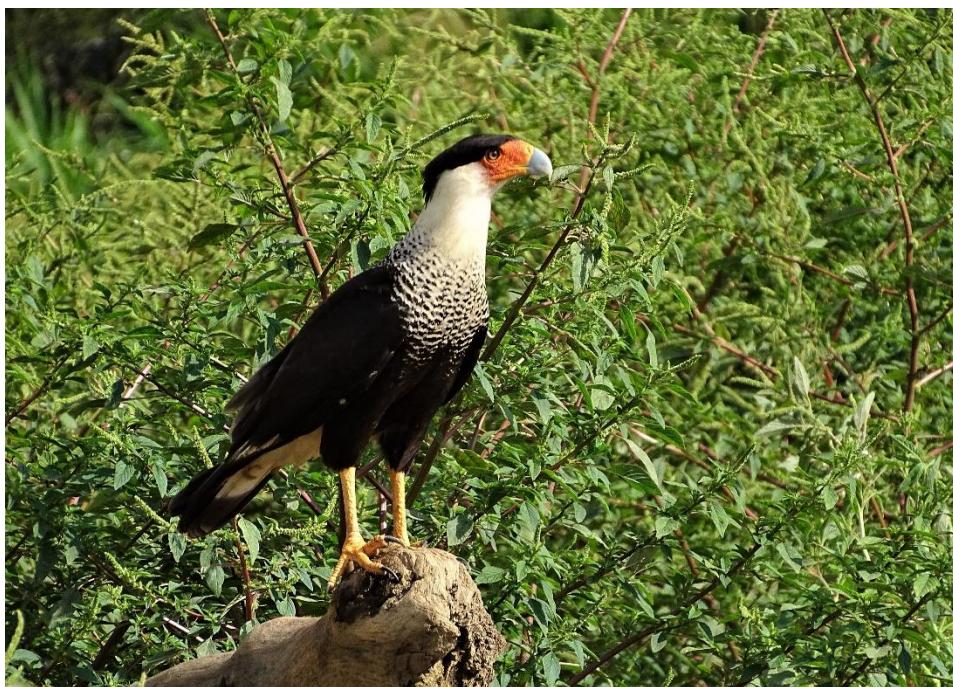
18 February – Ecological Sanctuary of Monteverde to San José

Sadly, this was our last morning in this special place. Our day started at the feeders of the lodge with the always beautiful **Lesson's Motmot** waiting at the porch of the restaurant for the fruits. There was a very impatient **Red-tailed Squirrel** moving around the bushes near the balcony and **Clay-colored Thrushes** were plentiful.

The interesting Canivet's Emerald was very active in the *verbena* flowers in the garden as well. After breakfast we went to a private reserve called Ecological Sanctuary. The birding was really good, and we were lucky to find the localized **Chiriquí Quail-Dove** along the first trail we walked. This quail-dove can be really hard to find and Monteverde area is one of the best places for it. We saw it very well. Along the same trail we found another local specialty, the skulking **White-eared Ground-Sparrow**. We did work hard to get great views of this sometimes shy bird, but in the end we all got nice looks. As we made our way through the reserve we saw **Golden-crowned Warbler**, **Wilson's Warbler**, and one of the best birds of the trip, a **Tawny-winged Woodcreeper** which was attending a small army ant swarm. We waited there a bit hoping to find more "ant followers" but none showed up and we were out of time. We departed Monteverde and drove back to San José, everyone sharing stories and memories of this fantastic birding trip in Costa Rica. PURA VIDA!



Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve as seen from one of the main trails



This elegant Crested Caracara was posing for a picture in Carara NP

TRIP LIST

The taxonomy of the bird list follows eBird/Clements (available here:
<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/clementschecklist/download/>)

(H) indicates a species that was heard only.

(E) indicates a regional endemic.

TINAMOUS: TINAMIDAE

Great Tinamou	<i>Tinamus major</i>
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DUCKS, GEESE, AND WATERFOWL: ANATIDAE

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck	<i>Dendrocygna autumnalis</i>
Muscovy Duck	<i>Cairina moschata</i>

GUANS, CHACHALACAS, AND CURASSOWS: CRACIDAE

Crested Guan	<i>Penelope purpurascens</i>
Black Guan (E)	<i>Chamaepetes unicolor</i>

Great Curassow	<i>Crax rubra</i>
NEW WORLD QUAIL: ODONTOPHORIDAE	
Black-breasted Wood-Quail (E)	<i>Odontophorus leucolaemus</i>
Spotted Wood-Quail	<i>Odontophorus guttatus</i>
GREBES: PODICIPEDIDAE	
Least Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus dominicus</i>
STORKS: CICONIIDAE	
Wood Stork	<i>Mycteria americana</i>
FRIGATEBIRDS: FREGATIDAE	
Magnificent Frigatebird	<i>Fregata magnificens</i>
CORMORANTS AND SHAGS: PHALACROCORACIDAE	
Neotropic Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax brasiliensis</i>
ANHINGAS: ANHINGIDAE	
Anhinga	<i>Anhinga anhinga</i>
PELICANS: PELECANIDAE	
Brown Pelican	<i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>
HERONS, EGRETS, AND BITTERNS: ARDEIDAE	
Fasciated Tiger-Heron	<i>Tigrisoma fasciatum</i>
Bare-throated Tiger-Heron	<i>Tigrisoma mexicanum</i>
Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
Snowy Egret	<i>Egretta thula</i>
Little Blue Heron	<i>Egretta caerulea</i>
Tricolored Heron	<i>Egretta tricolor</i>
Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	<i>Nyctanassa violacea</i>
Boat-billed Heron	<i>Cochlearius cochlearius</i>

IBISES AND SPOONBILLS: THRESKIORNITHIDAE

White Ibis	<i>Eudocimus albus</i>
Roseate Spoonbill	<i>Platalea ajaja</i>

NEW WORLD VULTURES: CATHARTIDAE

Black Vulture	<i>Coragyps atratus</i>
Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>

OSPREY: PANDIONIDAE

Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>
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HAWKS, EAGLES, AND KITES: ACCIPITRIDAE

White-tailed Kite	<i>Elanus leucurus</i>
Swallow-tailed Kite	<i>Elanoides forficatus</i>
Double-toothed Kite	<i>Harpagus bidentatus</i>
Common Black-Hawk	<i>Buteogallus anthracinus</i>
Semiplumbeous Hawk	<i>Leucopternis semiplumbeus</i>
Broad-winged Hawk	<i>Buteo platypterus</i>
Zone-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo albonotatus</i>
Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>

THICK-KNEES: BURHINIDAE

Double-striped Thick-knee	<i>Burhinus bistriatus</i>
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STILTS AND AVOCETS: RECURVIROSTRIDAE

Black-necked Stilt	<i>Himantopus mexicanus</i>
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OYSTERCATCHERS: HAEMATOPODIDAE

American Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus palliatus</i>
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PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS: CHARADRIIDAE

Collared Plover	<i>Charadrius collaris</i>
Semipalmated Plover	<i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i>

JACANAS: JACANIDAE

Northern Jacana	<i>Jacana spinosa</i>
SANDPIPER AND ALLIES: SCOLOPACIDAE	
Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularius</i>
Willet	<i>Tringa semipalmata</i>
Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>
Least Sandpiper	<i>Calidris minutilla</i>
GULLS, TERNS, AND SKIMMERS: LARIDAE	
Royal Tern	<i>Thalasseus maximus</i>
PIGEONS AND DOVES: COLUMBIDAE	
Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>
Red-billed Pigeon	<i>Patagioenas flavirostris</i>
Band-tailed Pigeon	<i>Patagioenas fasciata</i>
Short-billed Pigeon	<i>Patagioenas nigrirostris</i>
Inca Dove	<i>Columbina inca</i>
Ruddy Ground-Dove	<i>Columbina talpacoti</i>
Blue Ground-Dove	<i>Claravis pretiosa</i>
Ruddy Quail-Dove	<i>Geotrygon montana</i>
Olive-backed Quail-Dove	<i>Geotrygon veraguensis</i>
White-tipped Dove	<i>Leptotila verreauxi</i>
Chiriqui Quail-Dove (E)	<i>Zentrygon chiriquensis</i>
White-winged Dove	<i>Zenaida asiatica</i>
CUCKOOS: CUCULIDAE	
Squirrel Cuckoo	<i>Piaya cayana</i>
Groove-billed Ani	<i>Crotophaga sulcirostris</i>
OWLS: STRIGIDAE	
Pacific Screech-Owl	<i>Megascops cooperi</i>
Vermiculated Screech-Owl	<i>Megascops guatemalae</i>

NIGHTJARS AND ALLIES: CAPRIMULGIDAE

Common Pauraque	<i>Nyctidromus albicollis</i>
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SWIFTS: APODIDAE

White-collared Swift	<i>Streptoprocne zonaris</i>
Costa Rican Swift (E)	<i>Chaetura fumosa</i>
Gray-rumped Swift	<i>Chaetura cinereiventris</i>

HUMMINGBIRDS: TROCHILIDAE

Green Hermit	<i>Phaethornis guy</i>
Long-billed Hermit	<i>Phaethornis longirostris</i>
Stripe-throated Hermit	<i>Phaethornis striigularis</i>
Lesser Violetear	<i>Colibri cyanotus</i>
Black-crested Coquette	<i>Lophornis heleneae</i>
Green-crowned Brilliant	<i>Heliodoxa jacula</i>
Magnificent Hummingbird	<i>Eugenes fulgens</i>
Fiery-throated Hummingbird (E)	<i>Panterpe insignis</i>
Purple-throated Mountain-gem (E)	<i>Lampornis calolaemus</i>
White-throated Mountain-gem	<i>Lampornis castaneoventris</i>
Magenta-throated Woodstar (E)	<i>Calliphlox bryantae</i>
Volcano Hummingbird (E)	<i>Selasphorus flammula</i>
Scintillant Hummingbird (E)	<i>Selasphorus scintilla</i>
Canivet's Emerald	<i>Chlorostilbon canivetii</i>
Violet-headed Hummingbird	<i>Klais guimeti</i>
Scaly-breasted Hummingbird	<i>Phaeochroa cuvierii</i>
Violet Sabrewing	<i>Campylopterus hemileucurus</i>
Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer	<i>Chalybura urochrysia</i>
Stripe-tailed Hummingbird	<i>Eupherusa eximia</i>
White-tailed Emerald (E)	<i>Elvira chionura</i>

Coppery-headed Emerald (E)	<i>Elvira cupreiceps</i>
Snowcap (E)	<i>Microchera albocoronata</i>
Steely-vented Hummingbird	<i>Amazilia saucerrottei</i>
Rufous-tailed Hummingbird	<i>Amazilia tzacatl</i>

TROGONS: TROGONIDAE

Resplendent Quetzal	<i>Pharomachrus mocinno</i>
Slaty-tailed Trogon	<i>Trogon massena</i>
Gartered Trogon	<i>Trogon caligatus</i>
Black-throated Trogon	<i>Trogon rufus</i>

MOTMOTS: MOMOTIDAE

Lesson's Motmot	<i>Momotus lessonii</i>
Rufous Motmot	<i>Baryphthengus martii</i>
Broad-billed Motmot	<i>Electron platyrhynchum</i>
Turquoise-browed Motmot	<i>Eumomota superciliosa</i>

KINGFISHERS: ALCEDINIDAE

Ringed Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle torquata</i>
Belted Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle alcyon</i>
Amazon Kingfisher	<i>Chloroceryle amazona</i>
Green Kingfisher	<i>Chloroceryle americana</i>

PUFFBIRDS: BUCCONIDAE

White-necked Puffbird	<i>Notharchus hyperrhynchus</i>
Pied Puffbird	<i>Notharchus tectus</i>
White-whiskered Puffbird	<i>Malacoptila panamensis</i>

NEW WORLD BARBETS: CAPITONIDAE

Red-headed Barbet	<i>Eubucco bourcierii</i>
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TOUCANS: RAMPHASTIDAE

Emerald Toucanet	<i>Aulacorhynchus prasinus</i>
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Collared Aracari	<i>Pteroglossus torquatus</i>
Fiery-billed Aracari (E)	<i>Pteroglossus frantzii</i>
Yellow-throated (Chestnut-mandibled) Toucan	<i>Ramphastos ambiguus</i>
Keel-billed Toucan	<i>Ramphastos sulfuratus</i>

WOODPECKERS: PICIDAE

Acorn Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes formicivorus</i>
Black-cheeked Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes pucherani</i>
Red-crowned Woodpecker (H)	<i>Melanerpes rubricapillus</i>
Hoffmann's Woodpecker (E)	<i>Melanerpes hoffmannii</i>
Chestnut-colored Woodpecker	<i>Celeus castaneus</i>
Lineated Woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus lineatus</i>
Pale-billed Woodpecker	<i>Campephilus guatemalensis</i>

FALCONS AND CARACARAS: FALCONIDAE

Crested Caracara	<i>Caracara cheriway</i>
Yellow-headed Caracara	<i>Milvago chimachima</i>
Laughing Falcon	<i>Herpetotheres cachinnans</i>
Bat Falcon	<i>Falco rufigularis</i>
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>

NEW WORLD & AFRICAN PARROTS: PSITTACIDAE

Orange-chinned Parakeet	<i>Brotogeris jugularis</i>
White-crowned Parrot	<i>Pionus senilis</i>
Red-lored Parrot	<i>Amazona autumnalis</i>
Yellow-naped Parrot	<i>Amazona auropalliata</i>
Mealy Parrot	<i>Amazona farinosa</i>
Sulphur-winged Parakeet (E)	<i>Pyrrhura hoffmanni</i>
Great Green Macaw	<i>Ara ambiguus</i>
Scarlet Macaw	<i>Ara macao</i>

Crimson-fronted Parakeet (E)	<i>Psittacara finschi</i>
TYPICAL ANTBIRDS: THAMNOPHILIDAE	
Fasciated Antshrike	<i>Cymbilaimus lineatus</i>
Slaty Antwren	<i>Myrmotherula schisticolor</i>
Dot-winged Antwren	<i>Microrhopias quixensis</i>
OVENBIRDS AND WOODCREEPERS: FURNARIIDAE	
Wedge-billed Woodcreeper	<i>Glyphorynchus spirurus</i>
Northern Barred-Woodcreeper	<i>Dendrocolaptes sanctithomae</i>
Cocoa Woodcreeper	<i>Xiphorhynchus susurrans</i>
Buff-throated Foliage-gleaner	<i>Automolus ochrolaemus</i>
Spotted Barbtail	<i>Premnoplex brunnescens</i>
Red-faced Spinetail	<i>Cranioleuca erythrops</i>
TYRANT FLYCATCHERS: TYRANNIDAE	
Southern Beardless-Tyrannulet	<i>Camptostoma obsoletum</i>
Greenish Elaenia	<i>Myiopagis viridicata</i>
Mountain Elaenia	<i>Elaenia frantzii</i>
Torrent Tyrannulet	<i>Serpophaga cinerea</i>
Common Tody-Flycatcher	<i>Todirostrum cinereum</i>
Yellow-olive Flycatcher	<i>Tolmomyias sulphurescens</i>
Tufted Flycatcher	<i>Mitrephanes phaeocercus</i>
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (H)	<i>Empidonax flaviventris</i>
Yellowish Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax flavescens</i>
Black Phoebe	<i>Sayornis nigricans</i>
Long-tailed Tyrant	<i>Colonia colonus</i>
Bright-rumped Attila (H)	<i>Attila spadiceus</i>
Rufous Mourner (H)	<i>Rhytipterna holerythra</i>
Dusky-capped Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus tuberculifer</i>

Great Crested Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus crinitus</i>
Brown-crested Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus tyrannulus</i>
Great Kiskadee	<i>Pitangus sulphuratus</i>
Social Flycatcher	<i>Myiozetetes similis</i>
Gray-capped Flycatcher	<i>Myiozetetes granadensis</i>
Streaked Flycatcher	<i>Myiodynastes maculatus</i>
Piratic Flycatcher	<i>Legatus leucophaius</i>
Tropical Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus melancholicus</i>
COTINGAS: COTINGIDAE	
Snowy Cotinga (E)	<i>Carpodectes nitidus</i>
MANAKINS: PIPRIDAE	
White-collared Manakin	<i>Manacus candei</i>
TITYRAS AND ALLIES: TITYRIDAE	
Masked Tityra	<i>Tityra semifasciata</i>
Cinnamon Becard	<i>Pachyramphus cinnamomeus</i>
White-winged Becard	<i>Pachyramphus polychopterus</i>
VIREOS, SHRIKE-BABBLERS & ERPORNS: VIREONIDAE	
Lesser Greenlet	<i>Hylophilus decurtatus</i>
Green Shrike-Vireo	<i>Vireolanius pulchellus</i>
CROWS, JAYS, AND MAGPIES: CORVIDAE	
Brown Jay	<i>Psilorhinus morio</i>
SWALLOWS: HIRUNDINIDAE	
Blue-and-white Swallow	<i>Pygochelidon cyanoleuca</i>
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	<i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>
Southern Rough-winged Swallow	<i>Stelgidopteryx ruficollis</i>
Gray-breasted Martin	<i>Progne chalybea</i>
Mangrove Swallow	<i>Tachycineta albilinea</i>

Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
WRENS: TROGLODYTIDAE	
House Wren	<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>
Ochraceous Wren (E)	<i>Troglodytes ochraceus</i>
Band-backed Wren	<i>Campylorhynchus zonatus</i>
Rufous-naped Wren	<i>Campylorhynchus rufinucha</i>
Black-throated Wren (E) (H)	<i>Pheugopedius atrogularis</i>
Stripe-breasted Wren (E)	<i>Cantorchilus thoracicus</i>
Gray-breasted Wood-Wren	<i>Henicorhina leucophrys</i>
GNATCATCHERS: POLIOPTILIDAE	
Long-billed Gnatwren	<i>Ramphocaenus melanurus</i>
Tropical Gnatcatcher	<i>Polioptila plumbea</i>
THRUSHES AND ALLIES: TURDIDAE	
Black-faced Solitaire (E)	<i>Myadestes melanops</i>
Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush	<i>Catharus aurantiirostris</i>
Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrush	<i>Catharus frantzii</i>
Swainson's Thrush	<i>Catharus ustulatus</i>
Wood Thrush	<i>Hylocichla mustelina</i>
Sooty Thrush (Robin) E	<i>Turdus nigrescens</i>
Mountain Thrush (Robin)	<i>Turdus plebejus</i>
Clay-colored Thrush (Robin)	<i>Turdus grayi</i>
MOCKINGBIRDS AND THRASHERS: MIMIDAE	
Tropical Mockingbird	
SILKY-FLYCATCHERS: PTILOGONATIDAE	
Long-tailed Silky-flycatcher (E)	<i>Ptilogonys caudatus</i>
NEW WORLD WARBLERS: PARULIDAE	
Ovenbird	<i>Seiurus aurocapilla</i>

Northern Waterthrush	<i>Parkesia noveboracensis</i>
Golden-winged Warbler	<i>Vermivora chrysoptera</i>
Black-and-white Warbler	<i>Mniotilla varia</i>
Prothonotary Warbler	<i>Protonotaria citrea</i>
Tennessee Warbler	<i>Oreothlypis peregrina</i>
Gray-crowned Yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis poliocephala</i>
Yellow Warbler	<i>Setophaga petechia</i>
Yellow (Mangrove) Warbler	<i>Setophaga petechia bryanti</i>
Chestnut-sided Warbler	<i>Setophaga pensylvanica</i>
Black-throated Green Warbler	<i>Setophaga virens</i>
Golden-crowned Warbler	<i>Basileuterus culicivorus</i>
Costa Rican Warbler (E)	<i>Basileuterus melanotis</i>
Wilson's Warbler	<i>Cardellina pusilla</i>
Slate-throated Redstart (Whitestart)	<i>Myioborus miniatus</i>
Collared Redstart (Whitestart) E	<i>Myioborus torquatus</i>

TANAGERS AND ALLIES: THRAUPIDAE

White-shouldered Tanager	<i>Tachyphonus luctuosus</i>
Tawny-crested Tanager	<i>Tachyphonus delatrii</i>
White-throated Shrike-Tanager (E)	<i>Lanius leucothorax</i>
Passerini's Tanager	<i>Ramphocelus passerinii</i>
Cherrie's Tanager (E)	<i>Ramphocelus costaricensis</i>
Blue-gray Tanager	<i>Thraupis episcopus</i>
Palm Tanager	<i>Thraupis palmarum</i>
Golden-hooded Tanager	<i>Tangara larvata</i>
Spangle-cheeked Tanager (E)	<i>Tangara dowii</i>
Plain-colored Tanager	<i>Tangara inornata</i>
Bay-headed Tanager	<i>Tangara gyrola</i>

Silver-throated Tanager	<i>Tangara icterocephala</i>
Red-legged Honeycreeper	<i>Cyanerpes cyaneus</i>
Green Honeycreeper	<i>Chlorophanes spiza</i>
Blue-black Grassquit	<i>Volatinia jacarina</i>
Variable Seedeater (Caribbean)	<i>Sporophila corvina corvina</i>
Variable Seedeater (Pacific)	<i>Sporophila corvina hoffmanni</i>
White-collared Seedeater	<i>Sporophila torqueola</i>
Bananaquit	<i>Coereba flaveola</i>
Yellow-faced Grassquit	<i>Tiaris olivaceus</i>
Dusky-faced Tanager	<i>Mitrospingus cassinii</i>
Buff-throated Saltator	<i>Saltator maximus</i>

BUNTINGS AND NEW WORLD SPARROWS: EMBERIZIDAE

Sooty-capped Chlorospingus (E)	<i>Chlorospingus pileatus</i>
Common Chrlorospingus	<i>Chlorospingus flavopectus</i>
Orange-billed Sparrow	<i>Arremon aurantiirostris</i>
Volcano Junco (E)	<i>Junco vulcani</i>
Rufous-collared Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia capensis</i>
White-eared Ground-Sparrow	<i>Melozone leucotis</i>
Yellow-thighed Finch (E)	<i>Pselliophorus tibialis</i>

CARDINALS AND ALLIES: CARDINALIDAE

Summer Tanager	<i>Piranga rubra</i>
Flame-colored Tanager	<i>Piranga bidentata</i>
Red-throated Ant-Tanager	<i>Habia fuscicauda</i>
Carmiol's (Olive) Tanager	<i>Chlorothraupis carmioli</i>
Black-faced Grosbeak	<i>Caryothraustes poliogaster</i>

TROUPIALS AND ALLIES: ICTERIDAE

Melodious Blackbird	<i>Dives dives</i>
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Great-tailed Grackle	<i>Quiscalus mexicanus</i>
Shiny Cowbird	<i>Molothrus bonariensis</i>
Black-cowled Oriole	<i>Icterus prosthemelas</i>
Orchard Oriole	<i>Icterus spurius</i>
Baltimore Oriole	<i>Icterus galbula</i>
Chestnut-headed Oropendola	<i>Psarocolius wagleri</i>
Montezuma Oropendola	<i>Psarocolius montezuma</i>

FINCHES, EUPHONIAS & ALLIES: FRINGILLIDAE

Olive-backed Euphonia	<i>Euphonia gouldi</i>
Tawny-capped Euphonia (E)	<i>Euphonia anneae</i>
Yellow-bellied Siskin	<i>Spinus xanthogastrus</i>

OLD WORLD SPARROWS: PASSERIDAE

House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>

MAMMALS

Hoffmann's Two-toed Sloth	<i>Choloepus hoffmanni</i>
Greater White-lined Bat	<i>Saccopteryx bilineata</i>
Northern Ghost Bat	<i>Diclidurus albus</i>
White-throated Capuchin Monkey	<i>Cebus capucinus</i>
Mantled Howler Monkey	<i>Alouatta palliata</i>
Alfaro's Pygmy (Cent. American Dwarf) Squirrel	<i>Microsciurus alfari</i>
Red-tailed Squirrel	<i>Sciurus granatensis</i>
Variegated Squirrel	<i>Sciurus variegatoides</i>
Central American Agouti	<i>Dasyprocta punctata</i>
White-nosed Coati	<i>Nasua narica</i>
Olingo	<i>Bassaricyon gabbii</i>

Collared Peccary	<i>Tayassu tajacu</i>
White-tailed Deer	<i>Odocoileus virginianus</i>

OTHER WILDLIFE (A SELECTION)**AMPHIBIANS**

Strawberry Poison Frog	<i>Oophaga (Dendrobates) pumilio</i>
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REPTILES

Black River Turtle	<i>Rhinoclemmys funerea</i>
Common Basilisk	<i>Basiliscus basiliscus</i>
Spinytail Iguana (Ctenosaur)	<i>Ctenosaura similis</i>
Green Iguana	<i>Iguana iguana</i>
Common House Gecko	<i>Hemidactylus frenatus</i>
Eyelash Pitviper	<i>Bothriechis schlegelii</i>
American Crocodile	<i>Crocodylus acutus</i>

INSECTS

Leafcutter Ant	<i>Atta cephalotes</i>
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