

# **BEST OF COSTA RICA**

## **MARCH 20–APRIL 1, 2012**



Orange-collared Manakin © David Wolf

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**TOUR REPORT  
BEST OF COSTA RICA  
March 20–April 1, 2012**

**By David Wolf**

Costa Rica is simply amazing! There are few other places in the world where such a great diversity of birds and other wildlife can be seen so readily, in such a small area, and our 2012 “Best of Costa Rica” tour took full advantage of this wealth as we roamed from one side of the country to the other. Costa Rica has done much to promote conservation and be more “eco-friendly,” and this really paid off for us with an astounding number of birds seen on the trip. More important, most of them were seen well, including many large and spectacular species that have declined over much of their range. Song and nesting activity were high, yielding many photo opportunities. We visited a wide variety of habitats and all the while we learned more about these wonderful tropical birds and their environments. Such is the joy of birding in Costa Rica.

This tour covered four very different regions, each producing its own specialties and surprises. After spotting our first birds in the hotel garden in San Jose, we traveled to the wet subtropical zone on the flanks of Volcan Poas, where at our first stop an Emerald Toucanet quietly climbed into view, and a responsive pair of Prong-billed Barbets appeared right in front of us for close studies. The lush gardens and forests of Bosque de Paz provided a nice selection of subtropical birds. We ended the day with a Black Guan displaying from tree to tree right above our rooms, while after dark a family of pacas, a large and rarely seen nocturnal rodent, came to the lodge feeders. The following day we visited the nearby Catarata de Toro and found the hummingbird feeders swarming with an incredible number of birds. There were so many individuals present it was hard to know where to look, but we soon found multiples of such little-known gems as Black-bellied Hummingbird, Coppery-headed Emerald, Green Thorntail, and White-bellied Mountain-gem amidst the more common species.

From the wet subtropics we moved to the drier Pacific lowlands. Our first day here began with a pair of Spectacled Owls as we walked to breakfast, a nice surprise to start the day. Then, shortly after leaving the hotel, we found our first Scarlet Macaws, teed-up on an exposed snag right by the highway. This is the signature species of the region and we thrilled to their sheer brilliance and general rowdiness this and every other time that we saw them. We soon reached our birding trail for the morning, but had walked barely 50 yards before we discovered army ants leaving their bivouac—and attendant Bicolored Antbirds and Gray-headed Tanagers waiting to follow them. It was a rare opportunity to study one of the most fascinating sights of the Neotropics close at hand. As always, the partially-deciduous forests of Carara National Park were incredibly birdy. Here we found gems like the stunning male Orange-collared Manakins snapping and buzzing at a lek beside the trail, and a sparkling pair of Rufous-tailed Jacamars. An afternoon boat trip on the Tarcoles River gave us a break from the forest birding, and great looks at Boat-billed Herons and Double-striped Thick-knees, among many other birds.

Our second day at Carara began with Turquoise-browed and Blue-crowned motmots at the edge, but then we entered the heavier forest, going for quality rather than quantity. We waited silently as we called-in a Black-faced Antthrush that eventually paraded right past us, and then soon thereafter lured a

Streak-chested Antpitta into full view for all. A pair of Baird's Trogons in the midstory gave us long looks, as did a very inconspicuous White-whiskered Puffbird sitting amidst a gang of actively foraging Riverside Wrens. A final late afternoon walk inside the quiet forest produced stunning male Red-capped and Blue-crowned manakins splashing in a "secret" bathing pool in a clear stream.

From here we traveled to the wet Caribbean lowlands, where both a Fasciated Tiger-Heron and a Sunbittern greeted us just as we arrived at our lodge. Our first day at the world-renowned La Selva Research Station produced its usual feast of birds along the entry road, including a memorable Chestnut-colored Woodpecker feeding on a *Heliconia* flower just a few feet from the group. That afternoon, as we watched a fruiting tree loaded with six Crested Guans, a male Great Curassow, and several toucans feeding in it, a small raptor came blasting into the tree, wreaking havoc with the birds as they noisily dove for the understory. The hawk proved to be an immature Bicolored, a species rarely seen well, and we were quite amused that it could cause such panic in the much larger birds. Our second morning at La Selva was drizzly, but we persisted and were rewarded with a beautiful Sungrebe as we crossed the footbridge, and then an immaculate male Snowy Cotinga displaying high up in a bare tree. That afternoon, after much searching, we finally connected with a Great Tinamou slowly and silently moving through the forest. This is one of the great birds of La Selva and I know of no other place where they are so tame and observable.

A travel day to our final destination gave us a chance to bird the rugged Caribbean foothills a little, where we had point-blank views of Black-crested Coquettes and a male Snowcap dancing around the verbena flowers, a pair of Dull-mantled Antbirds literally at our feet, and, best of all, a magnificent adult Ornate Hawk-Eagle perched above us in a huge emergent tree. After the heat and humidity of the tropical lowlands, it was refreshing to end the tour in the delightful Savegre Valley, along a rushing mountain stream amidst the highland forest. Birds are not as abundant here as in the lowlands, but a high percentage of those seen are endemic to these highlands. A stroll through the lodge gardens and nearby woodlots introduced us to this avifauna—favorites were the Ruddy Treerunner, Flame-throated Warbler, and Spangle-cheeked Tanager—until we reached our goal, a Resplendent Quetzal nest known to be active. Indeed it was active, and for the next two hours we watched enthralled as both male and female quetzals repeatedly delivered food to the nest and then rested nearby. Some would argue that this is the most beautiful bird in the world, and after watching them at close range we certainly wouldn't disagree! Even a flock of the scarce Sulphur-winged Parakeets foraging nearby distracted us only momentarily.

That afternoon found us searching for the high-elevation specialties in the thickets near tree line, discovering that the range-restricted Volcano Junco is a cheeky and entertaining little bird when foraging for crumbs at our feet! Our final excursion took us on a hike through the spectacular old-growth oak forest on the slopes high above the lodge. Just being amidst such a beautiful and peaceful setting was reward enough, but the Costa Rican Pygmy-Owl at the nest hole and Buffy Tuftedcheek rummaging through the epiphytes were added bonuses. All too soon it was time to head back to San Jose, our grand tour of some of the best birding areas in Costa Rica complete.

### **Itinerary:**

**March 20:** arrival in San Jose, Costa Rica.

**March 21:** morning travel from San Jose and the Meseta Central (after birding the garden at the Cariari) to Bosque de Paz and then afternoon birding around Bosque de Paz Private Reserve (cloudy and drizzly).

**March 22:** morning birding around Bosque de Paz and afternoon excursion to the Catarata del Toro waterfall and hummingbird garden.

**March 23:** morning birding at Bosque de Paz and then afternoon travel to the Pacific lowlands in the Carara NP region.

**March 24:** morning birding in Carara National Park and then an afternoon boat trip on the nearby Tarcoles River.

**March 25:** morning and afternoon hikes inside the forest in Carara NP, especially in the Quebrada Bonita area.

**March 26:** birding around the grounds at Villa Lapas before travel to the Caribbean slope at La Paz Waterfall Garden and a late afternoon arrival in the Caribbean lowlands at Sueno Azul.

**March 27:** morning and afternoon excursions to the La Selva Field Station of the Organization of Tropical Studies (OTS), with midday break at Sueno Azul.

**March 28:** a rainy morning excursion to La Selva and then afternoon birding in the open country around the grounds at Sueno Azul.

**March 29:** morning birding in the Quebrada Gonzalez area of Braulio Carillo NP and nearby, and then afternoon travel to the Savegre Valley on Cerro de la Muerte.

**March 30:** morning birding the beautiful Savegre Valley and then an afternoon excursion to the high country on Cerro de la Muerte.

**March 31:** morning hike in the old-growth oak forest above Savegre lodge and then an afternoon drive back to San Jose

**April 1:** departure for flights home.

**Key:**

MC = Meseta Central

BP = Bosque de Paz Private Reserve and nearby, in the wet subtropical rainforest at mid-elevations on the Caribbean slope.

PL = the Pacific lowlands in the Carara National Park region, including the Tarcoles River and the grounds at Villa Lapas.

CS = the wet Caribbean foothills at the La Paz Waterfall Garden and then again in the Quebrada Gonzalez area of Braulio Carillo NP a few days later.

CL = the Caribbean lowlands from Sueno Azul to the La Selva Field Station and nearby.

CM = Cerro de la Muerte area, especially the Savegre Valley and nearby, but also the high country near “the towers”.

**E** = endemic to Costa Rica only

**eh** = endemic to the highlands of Costa Rica and western Panama

**ec** = endemic to the Caribbean lowlands and foothills centered on Costa Rica but in some cases extending as far as se. Honduras and central Panama.

**ep** = endemic to the moist Pacific lowlands of southern Costa Rica and far western Panama.

**el** = endemic to both the Caribbean and Pacific lowlands and foothills of Costa Rica and Panama.

hd = heard

**Bird List:** Follows *The A.O.U. Check-list of North American Birds, Seventh Edition* and supplements. A few of our many highlights are **bolded**.

**Great Tinamou** (*Tinamus major*) – CL (after considerable searching we finally had a great look at the “tiramisu”; I know of no other place where they are as visible as here).

Little Tinamou (*Crypturellus soui*) – CL (heard only).

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) – CL

Muscovy Duck (*Cairina moschata*) – PL, CL

**Crested Guan** (*Penelope purpurascens*) – PL, CL (crazy conspicuous birds seen often and well, but the best was the pair with the three tiny chicks).

**eh** **Black Guan** (*Chamaepetes unicolor*) – BP, CM (a specialty of the subtropical forest).

**Great Curassow** (*Crax rubra*) – CL (we watched a male clumsily feeding in a fruiting tree, while the female stode around down below; this spectacular bird has been hunted to extirpation in most of its range).

Spotted Wood-Quail (*Odontophorus guttatus*) – CM (heard only).

Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*) – PL

Magnificent Frigatebird (*Fregata magnificens*) - PL

Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) – PL, CL

Anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*) – PL, CL

Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) – PL

**Fasciated Tiger-Heron** (*Tigrisoma fasciatum*) – CL (nice study of one on the bank of the clear rocky river as we arrived at Sueno Azul).

Bare-throated Tiger-Heron (*Tigrisoma mexicanum*) – PL, CL

Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) – PL, CL

Great Egret (*Ardea alba*) – PL, CL

Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*) – PL, CL

Little Blue Heron (*Egretta caerulea*) – PL, CL

Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*) - PL

Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*) – PL, CS, CL, MC

Green Heron (*Butorides virescens*) – PL, CL

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (*Nyctanassa violacea*) – PL

**Boat-billed Heron** (*Cochlearius cochlearius*) – PL (comical and unique).

White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*) – PL

Green Ibis (*Mesembrinibis cayennensis*) – CL

Roseate Spoonbill (*Platalea ajaja*) – PL

Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) – all regions (seen daily).

Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*) – all regions (seen daily).

**King Vulture** (*Sarcoramphus papa*) – PL, CS (good looks at soaring adults).

Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) – PL, CM

Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*) – BP, PL, CS, CM

White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus*) – MC, PL

Double-toothed Kite (*Harpagus bidentatus*) – PL

Plumbeous Kite (*Ictinia plumbea*) – PL

**Bicolored Hawk** (*Accipiter bicolor*) – CL (this rather small raptor caused widespread

panic when it landed in the fruiting tree full of guans and toucans; a rare opportunity to study the immature plumage of a secretive raptor not often seen well).

Crane Hawk (*Geranospiza caerulescens*) - PL

**Semiplumbeous Hawk** (*Leucopternis semiplumbeus*) – CL (a great look at this small forest raptor sitting up in nice early morning light).

Mangrove Black-Hawk (*Buteogallus subtilis*) – PL (not always split from Common Black-Hawk (*Buteogallus anthracinus*)).

Broad-winged Hawk (*Buteo platypterus*) – BP, CS

Gray Hawk (*Buteo nitidus*) – PL, CL

Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*) – BP

Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) – BP, CS, CM

**Ornate Hawk-Eagle** (*Spizaetus ornatus*) – CS (scope views of a close adult perched above us on a huge emergent tree in the foothill forest; a spectacular bird).

Barred Forest-Falcon (*Micrastur ruficollis*) – BP (heard only).

Crested Caracara (*Caracara cheriway*) – PL

Yellow-headed Caracara (*Milvago chimachima*) – PL

Laughing Falcon (*Herpetotheres cachinnans*) – CL

**Sunbittern** (*Eurypyga helias*) – CL (slowly sneaking along the riverbank as we arrived at Sueno Azul; good spotting Bill!).

White-throated Crake (*Laterallus albigularis*) - CL (heard only).

Gray-necked Wood-Rail (*Aramides cajanea*) – CL

Purple Gallinule (*Porphyrio martinica*) – CL

**Sungrebe** (*Heliornis fulica*) – CL (great looks as it slowly drifted up the big river at La Selva, searching the branches and logs in the water).

**Double-striped Thick-knee** (*Burhinus bistriatus*) – PL (several pairs of these strange semi-nocturnal birds seen along the Tarcoles River).

Southern Lapwing (*Vanellus chilensis*) - PL

Black-bellied Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) – PL

Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*) - PL

Northern Jacana (*Jacana spinosa*) – PL, CL

Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularius*) – PL, CL

Willet (*Tringa semipalmata*) - PL

Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*) – PL

Least Sandpiper (*Calidris minutilla*) - PL

Laughing Gull (*Leucophaeus atricilla*) - PL

Rock Pigeon (*Columba livia*) - feral birds in cities and towns.

Pale-vented Pigeon (*Patagioenas cayennensis*) - CL

Red-billed Pigeon (*Patagioenas flavirostris*) - MC, PL, CL

Band-tailed Pigeon (*Patagioenas fasciata*) - CM

Ruddy Pigeon (*Patagioenas subvinacea*) – BP, CM

Short-billed Pigeon (*Patagioenas nigrirostris*) – PL (hd), CL (seen), CS (hd)

White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*) – MC, PL

Inca Dove (*Columbina inca*) – PL

Ruddy Ground Dove (*Columbina talpacoti*) – PL, CL

White-tipped Dove (*Leptotila verreauxi*) – BP, PL, CL

Gray-chested Dove (*Leptotila cassini*) - PL

**eh** **Sulphur-winged Parakeet** (*Pyrrhura hoffmanni*) – CM (this erratic wanderer was present in the Savegre Valley in numbers and we had great studies of feeding birds).

Olive-throated Parakeet (*Aratinga nana*) – CL

Orange-fronted Parakeet (*Aratinga canicularis*) – PL

**Scarlet Macaw** (*Ara macao*) – PL (spectacular and seen repeatedly).

Orange-chinned Parakeet (*Brotogeris jugularis*) – MC, PL, CL

Brown-hooded Parrot (*Pyrilia haematotis*) – CL

White-crowned Parrot (*Pionus senilis*) – BP, CL

Red-lored Parrot (*Amazona autumnalis*) – BP, CL

Mealy Parrot (*Amazona farinosa*) – PL, CL

**Yellow-naped Parrot** (*Amazona auropalliata*) – PL (a well-camouflaged pair in a tree along the Tarcoles River).

Squirrel Cuckoo (*Piaya cayana*) – PL, CL, CS (hd)

Groove-billed Ani (*Crotophaga sulcirostris*) – PL, CL

**Spectacled Owl** (*Pulsatrix perspicillata*) – PL (called up on our way to breakfast).

**eh** **Costa Rican Pygmy-Owl** (*Glaucidium costaricanum*) – CM (in the nest hole and then perched nearby).

Black-and-white Owl (*Ciccaba nigrolineata*) – PL (heard only).

Lesser Nighthawk (*Chordeiles acutipennis*) - PL

Common Pauraque (*Nyctidromus albicollis*) – CL

White-collared Swift (*Streptoprocne zonaris*) – BP, CS, CL, CM

**E** Costa Rican Swift (*Chaetura fumosa*) – PL (now split from the Band-rumped).

Gray-rumped Swift (*Chaetura cinereiventris*) – CL

Band-tailed Barbthroat (*Threnetes ruckeri*) – PL (seen by a few).

Green Hermit (*Phaethornis guy*) – BP, CS

Long-billed Hermit (*Phaethornis longirostris*) – PL (formerly considered a race of Long-tailed Hermit).

Stripe-throated Hermit (*Phaethornis striigularis*) - PL (formerly lumped with Little Hermit).

Scaly-breasted Hummingbird (*Phaeochroa cuvierii*) – PL

Violet Sabrewing (*Campylopterus hemileucurus*) – BP, PL, CS, CM

White-necked Jacobin (*Florisuga mellivora*) – CL

Brown Violet-ear (*Colibri delphinae*) - CS

Green Violet-ear (*Colibri thalassinus*) – CS, CM

Violet-headed Hummingbird (*Klais guimeti*) - CS

**Black-crested Coquette** (*Lophornis helenae*) – CS (repeated close looks at both male and female of this tiny bird).

Green Thorntail (*Discosura conversii*) – BP, CS

Violet-crowned Woodnymph (*Thalurania colombica*) - CS

**eh** **Fiery-throated Hummingbird** (*Panterpe insignis*) - CM (stunning endemic of the highest elevations, but it takes a while to see all of the colors light up).

Blue-chested Hummingbird (*Amazilia amabilis*) – CL

Steely-vented Hummingbird (*Amazilia saucerrottei*) - PL

- Rufous-tailed Hummingbird (*Amazilia tzacatl*) – BP, PL, CS, CL  
 Stripe-tailed Hummingbird (*Eupherusa eximia*) – CM
- eh** **Black-bellied Hummingbird** (*Eupherusa nigriventris*) – BP, CS (this normally uncommon specialty of the wet mid-elevations of the Caribbean slope was common at the feeders this year, many of them allowing us to approach within a few feet).
- E** **Coppery-headed Emerald** (*Elvira cupreiceps*) – BP, CS (a true Costa Rican endemic, known from no other country).
- ec** **Snowcap** (*Microchera albocoronata*) – CS (including a stunning male at the verbenas).  
 Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer (*Chalybura urochrysia*) – CL
- eh** White-bellied Mountain-gem (*Lampornis hemileucus*) – BP
- eh** Purple-throated Mountain-gem (*Lampornis calolaemus*) – BP, CS
- eh** White-throated (Gray-tailed) Mountain-gem (*Lampornis castaneiventris*) – CM  
 Green-crowned Brilliant (*Heliodoxa jacula*) – BP, CS  
 Magnificent Hummingbird (*Eugenes fulgens*) – BP, CM  
 Purple-crowned Fairy (*Heliostyris barroti*) – PL (on a nest), CL  
 Long-billed Starthroat (*Heliomaster longirostris*) - PL
- eh** Magenta-throated Woodstar (*Calliphlox bryantae*) – BP, CS
- eh** Volcano Hummingbird (*Selasphorus flammula*) - CM
- eh** Scintillant Hummingbird (*Selasphorus scintilla*) – BP, CM
- ep** **Baird's Trogon** (*Trogon bairdii*) – PL (it's hard to pick a favorite trogon, but this is the scarcest and most range-restricted that we saw).  
 Gartered Trogon (*Trogon caligatus*) – PL, CL (now split from the Violaceous Trogon (*Trogon violaceus*) of Amazonia).  
 Collared Trogon (*Trogon collaris*) – BP
- eh** Orange-bellied Trogon (*Trogon aurantiiventris*) - BP  
 Black-throated Trogon (*Trogon rufus*) – PL, CL  
 Slaty-tailed Trogon (*Trogon massena*) – PL, CL
- Resplendent Quetzal** (*Pharomachrus mocinno*) – CM (who could even get enough of this spectacular bird? We observed a pair feeding young in the nest hole for several hours, as they came and went with food, often perching nearby for extended periods of time).  
 Blue-crowned Motmot (*Momotus momota*) - PL
- Rufous Motmot** (*Baryphthengus martii*) – CL (big and spectacular, but surprisingly hard to spot in the thick rainforest understory).  
 Broad-billed Motmot (*Electron platyrhynchum*) – CL  
 Turquoise-browed Motmot (*Eumomota superciliosa*) – PL  
 Ringed Kingfisher (*Megaceryle torquatus*) – PL, CL  
 Amazon Kingfisher (*Chloroceryle amazona*) – PL, CL  
 Green Kingfisher (*Chloroceryle americana*) – PL, CL  
 White-necked Puffbird (*Notharchus hyperrhynchus*) - CL
- White-whiskered Puffbird** (*Malacoptila panamensis*) – PL (sitting quietly just above the ground, watching for prey flushed by actively foraging wrens; good spotting Gary!).  
**Rufous-tailed Jacamar** (*Galbula ruficauda*) – PL, CL (a sparkling gem).
- eh** **Prong-billed Barbet** (*Semnornis frantzii*) – BP (strange and unique birds called up to within a few feet of the group for incredible looks).



Emerald Toucanet (*Aulacorhynchus prasinus*) – BP, CM (the endemic Blue-throated race, sometimes split as a separate species (*Aulacorhynchus caeruleogularis*)).

Collared Aracari (*Pteroglossus torquatus*) - CL

**ep** Fiery-billed Aracari (*Pteroglossus frantzii*) - PL

Keel-billed Toucan (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*) - CL

**Chestnut-mandibled Toucan** (*Ramphastos swainsoni*) – PL, CL (colorful, noisy, common and conspicuous; sometimes lumped with Black-billed Toucan (*Ramphastos ambiguus*) of the Andes).

Acorn Woodpecker (*Melanerpes formicivorus*) – CM

Black-cheeked Woodpecker (*Melanerpes pucherani*) - CL

**eh** Hoffmann's Woodpecker (*Melanerpes hoffmannii*) – MC, PL

Hairy Woodpecker (*Picoides villosus*) – CM

Smoky-brown Woodpecker (*Veniliornis fumigatus*) - CL

**el** Rufous-winged Woodpecker (*Piculus simplex*) – CL

Cinnamon Woodpecker (*Ceelus loricatus*) - CL

**Chestnut-colored Woodpecker** (*Ceelus castaneus*) – CL (they came out right in front of us several times).

Lineated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus lineatus*) – PL (heard only).

Pale-billed Woodpecker (*Campephilus guatemalensis*) – PL (heard only).

Slaty Spinetail (*Synallaxis brachyuran*) - CL

**Red-faced Spinetail** (*Cranioleuca erythrops*) – BP (especially fun to watch the pair actively working on the bulky suspended nest hanging right over the road).

Spotted Barbtail (*Premnoplex brunnescens*) - BP

**eh** Ruddy Treerunner (*Magarornis rubiginosus*) - CM

Buffy Tuftedcheek (*Pseudocolaptes lawrencii*) – CM

Lineated Foliage-gleaner (*Syndactyla subalaris*) – BP

Buff-throated Foliage-gleaner (*Automolus ochrolaemus*) – PL (hd), CS (seen by a few).

**eh** Streak-breasted Treehunter (*Thripadectes rufobrunneus*) - BP

Plain Xenops (*Xenops minutus*) – PL

Wedge-billed Woodcreeper (*Glyphorhynchus spirurus*) - CS

Northern Barred-Woodcreeper (*Dendrocolaptes sanctithomae*) - CL

Cocoa Woodcreeper (*Xiphorhynchus susurrans*) – PL, CL

Spotted Woodcreeper (*Xiphorhynchus erythropygius*) – BP, CS

Streak-headed Woodcreeper (*Lepidocolaptes souleyetii*) – PL, CL

Spot-crowned Woodcreeper (*Lepidocolaptes affinis*) – BP, CM

**Fasciated Antshrike** (*Cymbilaimus lineatus*) – CL (several males engaged in a subtle song battle for territory).

Great Antshrike (*Taraba major*) – CL (thanks to Mimi's persistence!).

Barred Antshrike (*Thamnophilus doliatus*) – PL

**ep** Black-hooded Antshrike (*Thamnophilus bridgesi*) – PL

Western Slaty-Antshrike (*Thamnophilus atrinucha*) - CL

Russet Antshrike (*Thamnistes anabatinus*) – CS (by a few).

Dot-winged Antwren (*Microrhopias quixensis*) – PL

Dusky Antbird (*Cercomacra tyrannina*) – PL

Chestnut-backed Antbird (*Myrmeciza exsul*) – PL

**Dull-mantled Antbird** (*Myrmeciza laemosticta*) – CS (incredible studies of this uncommon antbird of the lush foothill forest, literally right at our feet).

Bicolored Antbird (*Gymnopithys leucaspis*) – PL (at the ant swarm of course).

**Black-faced Antthrush** (*Formicivorus analis*) – PL (slowly parading around us on the forest floor like a miniature hen).

**Streak-chested Antpitta** (*Hylopezus perspicillatus*) – PL, CS (hd) (scope views of this “egg with legs”, a magical experience).

**eh** Silvery-fronted Tapaculo (*Scytalopus argentifrons*) – CM (this notorious skulker was actually seen).

Southern Beardless-Tyrannulet (*Camptostoma obsoletum*) – PL

Yellow Tyrannulet (*Capsiempis flaveola*) – CL

Greenish Elaenia (*Myiopagis viridicata*) - PL

Yellow-bellied Elaenia (*Elaenia flavogaster*) – MC, CS, CL

Mountain Elaenia (*Elaenia frantzii*) – BP, CM

Torrent Tyrannulet (*Serpophaga cinerea*) – BP, CS, CM

Olive-striped Flycatcher (*Mionectes olivaceus*) - BP

Ochre-bellied Flycatcher (*Mionectes oleagineus*) – PL, CL

Paltry (Mistletoe) Tyrannulet (*Zimmerius villissimus*) – BP, CL, CM (hd)

Northern Bentbill (*Oncostoma cinereigulare*) – PL

**Slate-headed Tody-Flycatcher** (*Poecilatriccus sylvia*) – PL (an uncommon and skulking small flycatcher of the vine tangles and thickets that we saw remarkably well).

Common Tody-Flycatcher (*Todirostrum cinereum*) – PL, CL

Black-headed Tody Flycatcher (*Todirostrum nigriceps*) - CL

Yellow-olive Flycatcher (*Tolmomyias sulphurescens*) – PL, CL

**Stub-tailed Spadebill** (*Platyrrinchus cancrominus*) – PL (very responsive bird in the dark, but open, understory of the heavy forest, so tiny it was hard to spot just a few feet away).

Golden-crowned Spadebill (*Platyrrinchus coronatus*) - PL

**Royal Flycatcher** (*Onychorhynchus coronatus*) – PL (nest-building right over the trail).

Sulphur-rumped Flycatcher (*Myiobius sulphureipygius*) – PL

Tufted Flycatcher (*Mitrephanes phaenocercus*) – BP, CM

**eh** Dark Pewee (*Contopus lugubris*) – CM

Western Wood-Pewee (*Contopus sordidulus*) - PL

Tropical Pewee (*Contopus cinereus*) – CL

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (*Empidonax flaviventris*) - PL

Yellowish Flycatcher (*Empidonax flavescens*) – BP, CS, CM

**eh** Black-capped Flycatcher (*Empidonax atriceps*) - CM

Black Phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*) – BP

**Long-tailed Tyrant** (*Colonia colonus*) – CL (a favorite and a very distinctive flycatcher).

Bright-rumped Attila (*Attila spadiceus*) – PL, CL, CS (hd)

Rufous Mourner (*Rhytipterna holerythra*) - CL

Dusky-capped Flycatcher (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*) – PL, CL

Brown-crested Flycatcher (*Myiarchus tyrannulus*) – PL

Great Kiskadee (*Pitangus sulphuratus*) – MC, PL, CS, CL

- Boat-billed Flycatcher (*Megarynchus pitangua*) – PL, CL, CM  
 Social Flycatcher (*Myiozetetes similis*) – PL, CL  
 Gray-capped Flycatcher (*Myiozetetes granadensis*) – PL, CL  
 White-ringed Flycatcher (*Conopias albivittatus*) – CL (the scarcest of the “look-alikes”).
- eh** **Golden-bellied Flycatcher** (*Myiodynastes hemichrysus*) – CM (bold and colorful).  
 Streaked Flycatcher (*Myiodynastes maculates*) – PL  
 Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher (*Myiodynastes luteiventris*) – BP, CS  
 Piratic Flycatcher (*Legatus leucophaeus*) – PL, CL  
 Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) – all regions (seen daily).  
 Eastern Kingbird (*Tyrannus tyrannus*) - CL  
 Thrush-like Schiffornis (*Schiffornis turdina*) - PL  
 Cinnamon Becard (*Pachyramphus cinnamomeus*) – CL  
 Rose-throated Becard (*Pachyramphus aglaiae*) - PL  
 Masked Tityra (*Tityra semifasciata*) – PL, CL  
 Black-crowned Tityra (*Tityra inquisitor*) – PL, CL
- ec** **Snowy Cotinga** (*Carpodectes nitidus*) – CL (long studies of a displaying male high up in a bare emergent tree).  
 White-collared Manakin (*Manacus candei*) – CL
- ep** **Orange-collared Manakin** (*Manacus aurantiacus*) – PL (active males jumping, snapping and buzzing at their lek in the forest understory).  
 Long-tailed Manakin (*Chiroxiphia linearis*) – PL (elusive).  
 Blue-crowned Manakin (*Pipra coronata*) – PL  
**Red-capped Manakin** (*Pipra mentalis*) – PL (gorgeous males splashing in their “secret” bathing pool inside the forest in the late afternoon).  
 Yellow-throated Vireo (*Vireo flavifrons*) - PL
- eh** Yellow-winged Vireo (*Vireo carmioli*) – BP, CM  
 Brown-capped Vireo (*Vireo leucophrys*) – CM (seen by a few).  
 Philadelphia Vireo (*Vireo philadelphicus*) – PL, CM  
 Yellow-green Vireo (*Vireo flavoviridis*) – PL  
 Tawny-crowned Greenlet (*Hylophilus ochraceiceps*) - PL  
 Lesser Greenlet (*Hylophilus decurtatus*) - PL, CL, CS (hd)  
 Green Shrike-Vireo (*Vireolanius pulchellus*) – PL (heard only).  
 Rufous-browed Peppershrike (*Cyclarhis gujanensis*) – BP (heard only).  
 Azure-hooded Jay (*Cyanolyca cucullata*) – BP (heard only).  
 Brown Jay (*Cyanocorax morio*) – BP, PL  
 Gray-breasted Martin (*Progne chalybea*) – PL, CL  
 Mangrove Swallow (*Tachycineta albilinea*) – PL, CL  
 Blue-and-white Swallow (*Pygochelidon cyanoleuca*) – MC, BP, CS, CM  
 Northern Rough-winged Swallow (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*) – CL  
 Southern Rough-winged Swallow (*Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*) – CL  
 Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) – PL, CL, CM (migrating with the Barns).  
 Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) – PL, CL, CM  
 Band-backed Wren (*Campylorhynchus zonatus*) - CL  
 Rufous-naped Wren (*Campylorhynchus rufinucha*) – MC, PL

- ec** Black-throated Wren (*Thryothorus (Pheugopedius) atrogularis*) – CL  
**Black-bellied Wren** (*Thryothorus (Pheugopedius) fasciatoventris*) – PL (we watched a pair of these especially secretive wrens being attacked by a pair of Rufous-breasted Wrens).  
Rufous-breasted Wren (*Thryothorus (Pheugopedius) rutilus*) – PL  
Bay Wren (*Thryothorus (Cantorchilus) nigricapillus*) – CL, CS (hd)
- ep** Riverside Wren (*Thryothorus (Cantorchilus) semibadius*) – PL
- ec** Stripe-breasted Wren (*Thryothorus (Cantorchilus) thoracicus*) – CS (heard only).  
Plain Wren (*Thryothorus (Cantorchilus) modestus*) - CL  
Rufous-and-white Wren (*Thryothorus (Thryophilus) rufalbus*) - PL  
House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*) – BP (hd), PL, CL, CS
- eh** Ochraceous Wren (*Troglodytes ochraceus*) – BP (seen), CM (hd)
- eh** **Timberline Wren** (*Thryorchilus browni*) – CM (a high-country specialty eventually coaxed out of the bamboo for great looks).  
White-breasted Wood-Wren (*Henicorhina leucosticta*) – CS (heard only).  
Gray-breasted Wood-Wren (*Henicorhina leucophrys*) – BP, CS (hd), CM  
Long-billed Gnatwren (*Ramphocaenus melanurus*) – PL (hd), CL (hd) (heard only).  
Tropical Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila plumbea*) – PL  
American Dipper (*Cinclus mexicanus*) – BP
- eh** **Black-faced Solitaire** (*Myadestes melanops*) – BP (hd), CM (the music of the mountain forests).
- eh** Black-billed Nightingale-Thrush (*Catharus gracilirostris*) – CM  
Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrush (*Catharus frantzii*) – BP, CM  
Black-headed Nightingale-Thrush (*Catharus mexicanus*) – CS (heard only).  
Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*) – BP, PL, CL, CM (widespread migrants).  
Wood Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*) - PL
- eh** Sooty Thrush (*Turdus nigrescens*) – CM (fierce-eyed endemic of the high country).  
Mountain Thrush (*Turdus plebejus*) – BP, CM  
**Clay-colored Thrush** (*Turdus grayi*) – all regions (the national bird of Costa Rica, seen and heard daily, sometimes singing a bit too early in the morning).  
Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*) – CL
- eh** **Long-tailed Silky-Flycatcher** (*Ptilogonys caudatus*) - CM (sleek, elegant birds reminiscent of waxwings; we watched an active nest in a tree right over the dining hall).  
Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) - BP  
Tennessee Warbler (*Oreothlypis (Vermivora) peregrina*) - MC, BP, CM
- eh** **Flame-throated Warbler** (*Oreothlypis (Parula) gutturalis*) – BP, CM (oh what a beauty!).  
Tropical Parula (*Parula pitayumi*) – BP, PL (hd), CS  
Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica petechia*) - MC, PL  
Chestnut-sided Warbler (*Dendroica pensylvanica*) – PL, CS, CL, CM  
Black-throated Green Warbler (*Dendroica virens*) - BP, CM  
Townsend's Warbler (*Dendroica townsendi*) – CM (gorgeous adult male, up high).  
Blackburnian Warbler (*Dendroica fusca*) – BP  
Black-and-white Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*) – BP, PL  
Prothonotary Warbler (*Protonotaria citrea*) – PL (in the mangroves).

- Northern Waterthrush (*Parkesia (Seiurus) noveboracensis*) – PL  
 Olive-crowned Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis semiflava*) – CL  
 Gray-crowned Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis poliocephala*) – CL  
 Wilson=s Warbler (*Wilsonia pusilla*) – BP, CS, CM  
 Slate-throated Redstart (*Myioborus miniatus*) - BP
- eh** **Collared Redstart** (*Myioborus torquatus*) – CM (the incredibly tame and confiding Aamigo de hombre@, very typical of the high-elevation oak forests and edge).
- eh** Black-cheeked Warbler (*Basileuterus melanogenys*) – CM  
 Three-striped Warbler (*Basileuterus tristriatus*) – BP, CS  
**Buff-rumped Warbler** (*Basileuterus fulvicauda*) – PL, CL (especially the noisy one that regularly visited our porches at Sueno Azul).  
 Bananaquit (*Coereba flaveola*) – BP, CS, CL  
 Common Bush-Tanager (*Chlorospingus ophthalmicus*) – BP, CS, CM
- eh** Sooty-capped Bush-Tanager (*Chlorospingus pileatus*) – CM  
**Gray-headed Tanager** (*Eucometis penicillata*) – PL (especially the birds at the army ant swarm that approached us very closely).
- el** White-throated Shrike-Tanager (*Lanio leucothorax*) – CS (seen by Jan; heard only for the rest of us).  
 White-shouldered Tanager (*Tachyphonus luctuosus*) – PL  
 Tawny-crested Tanager (*Tachyphonus delatrii*) - CS  
 Crimson-collared Tanager (*Ramphocelus sanguinolentus*) – CS (seen by a few).  
**Passerini=s Tanager** (*Ramphocelus passerinii*) – CS, CL (everything a tropical bird should be – colorful, common and conspicuous).
- ep** Cherrie’s Tanager (*Ramphocelus costaricensis*) - PL  
 Blue-gray Tanager (*Thraupis episcopus*) – all regions (seen daily).  
 Palm Tanager (*Thraupis palmarum*) – MC, PL, CL  
 Plain-colored Tanager (*Tangara inornata*) - CL  
 Emerald Tanager (*Tangara florida*) - CS  
 Silver-throated Tanager (*Tangara icterocephala*) – BP, CS, CM  
 Bay-headed Tanager (*Tangara gyrola*) - BP  
 Golden-hooded Tanager (*Tangara larvata*) – CL
- eh** **Spangle-cheeked Tanager** (*Tangara dowii*) – BP, CM (beautiful highland endemic seen more often than usual).  
 Scarlet-thighed Dacnis (*Dacnis venusta*) - BP  
 Blue Dacnis (*Dacnis cayana*) – PL, CL  
 Green Honeycreeper (*Chlorophanes spiza*) – PL, CL, CS  
 Shining Honeycreeper (*Cyanerpes lucidus*) – CL  
 Red-legged Honeycreeper (*Cyanerpes cyaneus*) – PL  
 Grayish Saltator (*Saltator coerulescens*) - MC  
 Buff-throated Saltator (*Saltator maximus*) – PL, CL  
 Black-headed Saltator (*Saltator atriceps*) – CL  
 Slate-colored Grosbeak (*Saltator grossus*) - CS  
 Blue-black Grassquit (*Volatinia jacarina*) – PL (by a few).  
 Variable Seedeater (*Sporophila corvina*) – PL, CL

- Thick-billed Seed-Finch (*Oryzoborus funereus*) - CL  
 Yellow-faced Grassquit (*Tiaris olivacea*) – BP, CL, CM
- eh** Slaty Flowerpiercer (*Diglossa plumbea*) – BP, CM
- eh** **Yellow-thighed Finch** (*Psellophorus tibialis*) – BP, CM (comical and common).
- eh** **Large-footed Finch** (*Pezopetes capitalis*) - CM (lurking in the bamboo thickets at high elevations).  
 Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch (*Arremon brunneinucha*) – BP, CS, CM  
 Orange-billed Sparrow (*Arremon aurantirostris*) – PL, CL  
 Black-striped Sparrow (*Arremonops conirostris*) - CL  
 Rufous-collared Sparrow (*Zonotrichia capensis*) - MC, BP, CS, CM
- eh** **Volcano Junco** (*Junco vulcani*) – CM (fierce-eyed specialty of the paramo thickets at the highest elevations, begging crumbs practically at our feet).  
 Hepatic Tanager (*Piranga flava*) - CS  
 Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*) – PL, CL  
 Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga olivacea*) – CL  
 Flame-colored Tanager (*Piranga bidentata*) – CM  
 Red-throated Ant\_Tanager (*Habia fuscicauda*) – CL  
 Carmiol=s Tanager (*Chlorothraupis carmioli*) – CS  
 Black-faced Grosbeak (*Caryothraustes poliogaster*) - CL, CS
- eh** **Black-thighed Grosbeak** (*Pheucticus tibialis*) – CM (a scarce highland endemic).  
 Blue-black Grosbeak (*Cyanocompsa cyanoides*) – PL  
 Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*) – PL (seen by a few).  
 Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) – PL  
 Melodious Blackbird (*Dives dives*) – PL (hd), CS (hd), CL (seen)  
 Great-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) – MC, BP, PL, CS, CL  
 Bronzed Cowbird (*Molothrus aeneus*) – MC, CL  
 Shiny Cowbird (*Molothrus bonariensis*) – CL (female seen well at La Selva; a recent invader to Costa Rica).  
 Black-cowled Oriole (*Icterus prosthemelas*) - CL  
 Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*) – MC, PL, CL  
 Scarlet-rumped Cacique (*Cacicus uropygialis*) – CL, CS  
 Chestnut-headed Oropendola (*Psarocolius wagleri*) - CL  
**Montezuma Oropendola** (*Psarocolius montezuma*) – PL, CS, CL (always entertaining, this species takes the prize for the most-interesting sound effects).  
 Scrub Euphonia (*Euphonia affinis*) - PL
- el** Yellow-crowned Euphonia (*Euphonia luteicapilla*) – PL  
 Thick-billed Euphonia (*Euphonia lanirostris*) - PL  
 Yellow-throated Euphonia (*Euphonia hirundinacea*) – PL  
 Olive-backed Euphonia (*Euphonia gouldi*) - CL  
 Tawny-capped Euphonia (*Euphonia anae*) – CS
- eh** **Golden-browed Chlorophonia** (*Chlorophonia callophrys*) – BP (including a pair working on a nest in the epiphyte gardens of a forest tree).  
 Yellow-bellied Siskin (*Carduelis xanthogastra*) - CM

**Mammal List:** follows the nomenclature in *AA Field Guide to the Mammals of Central America and Southeastern Mexico* by Fiona Reid.

Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth (*Bradypus variegatus*) – CL, CS  
Hoffmann’s Two-toed Sloth (*Choloepus hoffmanni*) – CL  
Nine-banded Armadillo (*Dasypus novemcinctus*) – CL (Steve’s friend).  
Long-nosed Bat (*Rhynchonycteris naso*) – CL (roosting on tree trunk by the bridge).  
insectivorous bats (several sizes) – PL, CL  
White-throated Capuchin Monkey (*Cebus capucinus*) – BP, PL  
Mantled Howler Monkey (*Alouatta palliata*) – BP (hd), PL (hd), CL (hd) (heard only).  
Red-tailed Squirrel (*Sciurus granatensis*) – BP, PL, CS, CM (widespread inside moister forests, including at higher elevations).  
Variegated Squirrel (*Sciurus variegatoides*) – PL, CL  
“black mouse” – BP (by a few).  
Central American Agouti (*Dasyprocta punctata*) – BP, PL  
**Paca** (*Agouti paca*) – BP (a rare animal due to hunting and habitat loss, but protected here, where they come to the feeders after dark).  
Coyote (*Canis latrans*) – CM (heard only, by a few).  
White-nosed Coati (*Nasua narica*) – BP, PL  
Collared Peccary (*Tayassu tajacu*) - CL

**Amphibians & Reptiles:**

Cane (Giant) Toad (*Bufo marinus*) - CL  
Strawberry Poison-dart (Ablue jeans) Frog (*Dendrobates pumilio*) – CL  
American Crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*) - PL  
Black Wood-Turtle (*Rhinoclemmys funerea*) - CL  
House Gecko (*Hemidactylus frenatus*) – CL  
Common Basilisk (*Basiliscus basiliscus*) - PL  
Black Spiny-tailed Iguana (“ctenosaur” or “false iguana”) (*Ctenosaura similis*) - PL  
Green (Common) Iguana (*Iguana iguana*) – PL, CL  
Central American Whip-tailed Lizard (*Ameiva festiva*) – CL  
Green Spiny Lizard (*Sceloporus malachiticus*) - CM  
parrot-snake sp? (*Leptophis sp?*) - CL

**And many other fascinating butterflies, small creatures and plants, including:**

Red-kneed Tarantula  
Morpho butterflies  
spectacular moths at the Bosque de Paz lights  
Helicopter damselfly  
Eciton army ants  
Leaf-cutter ants  
Leaf-mimic katydid  
“big bridge beetle”