

BEST OF COSTA RICA

March 21 – April 2, 2009



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Great Curassow

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Leaders: David and Mimi Wolf

Costa Rica is simply amazing! There are few other places in the world where such an amazing diversity of wildlife can be seen so readily and in such a small area. Our 2009 “Best of Costa Rica Tour” took full advantage of this wealth as we roamed from one side of the country to the other. Ecotourism has become one of Costa Rica’s biggest businesses, and throughout the country people have made it a friendlier place for wildlife. Where else do curassows parade through a parking area, or troops of coatis practically stroll along with the observers, or flocks of toucans pour into the trees right behind the lodge cabins? Where else does one see a Great Tinamou casually strolling a few feet from the group, or a stunning male quetzal feeding within sight of the cabins? Consider the pair of Black-and-white Owls in the town plaza that have become local mascots, or the huge American crocodiles that cause daily traffic jams along the coast highway, or the pairs of Scarlet Macaws right over a busy road. Such is birding in Costa Rica!

We began in the lush subtropical forests of the Bosque de Paz Reserve with a bonanza of hummingbirds, and tanagers and gorgeous Golden-browed Chlorophonias in the fruiting trees. Black Guans scrambling over the feeders were a ridiculous sight; at night those same feeders attracted a family of pacas, a rarely-seen large rodent that has been widely extirpated. A Black-banded Woodcreeper at a small swarm of army ants was a rare find, while shy forest-dwellers like the Streak-chested Treehunter and Spotted Barbtail eventually gave us great studies. A male Orange-bellied Trogon on our final morning here set us on track to see all of the trogons possible during the trip.

Moving to the dry Pacific lowlands, our first stop was for a concentration of Wood Storks and other waders feeding in a drying-up puddle, but it also yielded tantalizing looks at Scarlet Macaws, distant birds barely lit by the low afternoon sun. This is the signature species of this region, and the next morning we thrilled to their sheer brilliance and general rowdiness as we watched a pair exploring a nest site and others feeding overhead in the canopy. The partially-deciduous forests of Carara National Park are incredibly birdy, and here we found five species of gorgeous trogons, including the endemic Baird’s. At times it was hard to tear our eyes away from them to watch the plethora of flycatchers, antbirds, and other forest insectivores foraging in the forest around them. Here too we found concealed White-whiskered Puffbirds sitting motionless in the dark understory, watched in silent wonder as shy Red-capped and Blue-crowned manakins slipped down to bathe in a clear forest stream in the quiet of the late afternoon, and had never-to-be-forgotten scope views of a singing Streak-chested Antpitta. Overhead, a male spider monkey gave us a spectacular branch-shaking threat display, while the rest of his troop snuck away through the canopy.

A delightful afternoon boat trip on the Tarcoles River was a nice break from the intensity of the forest birding and produced close-ups of Boat-billed Herons, Bare-throated Tiger-Herons, Double-striped Thick-knees, Turquoise-browed Motmots, and more.

In the wet Caribbean lowlands, our first day at the world-famous La Selva Field Station was almost overwhelming, with birds popping out everywhere. Huge Crested Guans sat calmly in the trees in front of us, a pair of rare Great Green Macaws flew past in the morning mist, showy Cinnamon and Chestnut-colored woodpeckers landed low and close, and we watched a very stealthy Agami Heron slipping along a forest stream at close range. Perhaps the rarest sighting of the morning was the magnificent male Great Curassow in the path ahead of us—or so it seemed, until we returned in the afternoon and found a female and immature strolling around the parking area! We ended the day with long, close looks at a Great Tinamou casually feeding just off to the side of the trail. Not all of the birds seen here were large, and while in this area we also especially enjoyed the Rufous and Broad-billed motmots hooting and honking, the subtle beauty of forest-dwellers like the Rufous-winged Woodpecker and Black-striped Woodcreeper, an active lek of White-collared Manakins that allowed us to watch their antics at close range, and the spectacular songs of the elusive Stripe-breasted, Black-throated, and Bay wrens.

After the heat and humidity of the tropical lowlands, it was refreshing to end our tour in the delightful Savegre Valley, along a rushing mountain stream amidst the magnificent oak forest. Birds are not as abundant here as in the lowlands, but a very high percentage of them are endemic to these highlands and quite unique. We were lucky with most of the specialties—it took about 30 seconds to find the Volcano Junco—and had great looks at such scarce ones as Costa Rican Pygmy-Owl (with a large frog!), Silver-throated Jay, Timberline Wren, Spangle-cheeked Tanager, Large-footed Finch, and Black-thighed Grosbeak, while the endearing Collared Redstarts that landed all around us, and even on us, were clearly favorites. The outstanding bird of the area, however, is the Resplendent Quetzal. Some would argue that this is the most beautiful bird in the world, and, after watching a full-plumaged male foraging in an open orchard at close range for 20 minutes, we certainly wouldn't disagree!

All too soon it was time to return to San Jose, our grand tour of the highlights of Costa Rica complete.

ITINERARY:

March 21: group arrival in San Jose, Costa Rica.

March 22: AM: travel from the Meseta Central to the slopes above Bosque de Paz; PM: the Bosque de Paz gardens and nearby. This region is in the wet subtropical zone.

March 23: AM: Bosque de Paz; PM: exploring along the road below Bosque de Paz. March 24: AM: Bosque de Paz Reserve; PM: drive to Villa Lapas near Carara NP.

March 25: AM: forest trail at Carara NP; PM: boat trip on the Tarcoles River. This region is in the transition zone between the Pacific lowland dry and wet forests.

March 26: morning and afternoon excursions on forest trails at Carara NP.

March 27: AM: travel from Villa Lapas to the Aerial Tram (with a stop in Orotina en route); PM at the Tram and en route to Sueno Azul, with a stop in the marshy pastures.

March 28: morning and afternoon excursions to the La Selva Field Station of the OTS, in the wet Caribbean lowlands. This region is in the wet Caribbean lowlands.

March 29: AM: La Selva Field Station of the OTS; PM: around the grounds at Sueno Azul.

March 30: AM: Braulio Carillo National Park and nearby in the wet Caribbean foothills; PM: drive to Cerro de la Muerte and the valley of San Gerardo de Dota, in the upper subtropical and temperate zones. Unscheduled break-down stop near Cartago.

March 31: AM: in the temperate forests and gardens in the upper Savegre Valley near the lodge; PM: back up “the road” to the scrubrier forest at higher elevations.

April 1: AM: morning hike through the tall old-growth forest above Savegre Lodge; PM: back to San Jose after a final stop in the upper-zone subalpine scrub.

April 2: departure for home or on-going travels.

KEY:

MC = Meseta Central region, in transit plus our unexpected stop for the flat tire.

BP = Bosque de Paz Private Reserve and nearby, at subtropical elevations.

PL = Pacific lowlands in the Carara NP and Tarcoles River area and nearby, inc Villa Lapas.

CS = Caribbean slope, including the Aerial Tram, El Tapir garden and the Quebrada Gonzalez area of Braulio Carillo National Park. These sites are in the upper tropical (foothills) zones.

CL = Caribbean lowlands in the Sarapiquí region, especially at the La Selva Field Station of the OTS, around Sueno Azul Lodge, and along the roads in-between.

CM = Cerro de la Muerte, especially the temperate forests, orchards and gardens of the upper Savegre Valley at San Gerardo de Dota, but also to the high point on the Pan-American Highway.

hd = heard

BIRDLIST: a few of our highlights are bolded.

Great Tinamou (*Tinamus major*) - PL, CL (incredible looks at one that practically walked up to us at La Selva; in most places this species is shy and hard to observe).

Little Tinamou (*Crypturellus soui*) - CL (heard only)

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) - PL, CL

Muscovy Duck (*Cairina moschata*) - PL

Gray-headed Chachalaca (*Ortalis cinereiceps*) - CL

Crested Guan (*Penelope purpurascens*) - CL

Black Guan (*Chamaepetes unicolor*) - BP (scrambling all over the feeders at Bosque de Paz)

Great Curassow (*Crax rubra*) - CL (a magnificent male out in a muddy forest path and then later a female and full-sized immature at the forest edge by the footbridge; this species has been widely extirpated, but with protection they have come back here at La Selva).

Spotted Wood-Quail (*Odontophorus guttatus*) - CM (glimpsed when a pair jumped across the road; then heard a few times).

Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) - PL

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

Anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*) - PL, CL

Magnificent Frigatebird (*Fregata magnificens*) - PL

Pinnated Bittern (*Botaurus pinnatus*) - CL (stretching up out of the marshy pasture; the most unexpected bird seen on the trip and a great find anywhere).

Fasciated Tiger-Heron (*Tigrisoma fasciatum*) - CS (a well-camouflaged pair amidst the rocks of the clear river at the Aerial Tram).

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

Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) - PL

Great Egret (*Ardea alba*) - PL, CL

Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*) - PL

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

Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*) - PL

Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*) - BP, PL, CL, MC

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

Agami Heron (*Agamia agami*) - CL (an immature bird stealthily wading along a sun-dappled forest stream; a rare find here).

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

Boat-billed Heron (*Cochlearius cochlearius*) - PL (several nesting colonies of these strange birds were watched at close range).

White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*) - PL

Green Ibis (*Mesembrinibis cayennensis*) - CL

Roseate Spoonbill (*Ajaia ajaja*) - PL

Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*) - PL

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

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

King Vulture (*Sarcoramphus papa*) - CL (an adult over La Selva was a thrilling surprise).

Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) - PL, CL

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

Tiny Hawk (*Accipiter superciliosus*) - CL

Crane Hawk (*Geranospiza caerulescens*) - PL

White Hawk (*Leucopternis albicollis*) - CS

Mangrove Black-Hawk (*Buteogallus subtilis*) - PL (from the boat trip on the Tarcoles River; not always split from the Common Black-Hawk (*Buteogallus anthracinus*)).

Great Black-Hawk (*Buteogallus urubitinga*) - BP (perched on the forest edge).

Roadside Hawk (*Buteo magnirostris*) - CL

Broad-winged Hawk (*Buteo platypterus*) - BP, PL, CL

Gray Hawk (*Buteo nitidus*) - CL

Short-tailed Hawk (*Buteo brachyurus*) - BP

Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*) - CS

Zone-tailed Hawk (*Buteo albonotatus*) - PL (an especially good study of a bird low and close over the estuary at Puerto Caldera).

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

Barred Forest-Falcon (*Micrastur ruficollis*) - BP

Crested Caracara (*Caracara cheriway*) - PL

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

Laughing Falcon (*Herpetotheres cachinnans*) - CL

Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) - CL

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

Gray-necked Wood-Rail (*Aramides cajanea*) - CL (including two pairs engaged in some kind of scuffle right in the La Selva entry road).

Purple Gallinule (*Porphyrio martinica*) - PL, CL

Double-striped Thick-knee (*Burhinus bistriatus*) - PL (great looks at these odd shorebirds on the Tarcoles boat trip).

Southern Lapwing (*Vanellus chilensis*) - PL (unexpected; this species is rapidly expanding its range northward into Central America).

Collared Plover (*Charadrius collaris*) - PL

Semipalmated Plover (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) - PL

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

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

Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularia*) - PL, CL

Solitary Sandpiper (*Tringa solitaria*) - CL

Willet (*Tringa semipalmata*) - PL

Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*) - PL

Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*) - PL

Western Sandpiper (*Calidris mauri*) - PL

Least Sandpiper (*Calidris minutilla*) - PL

Laughing Gull (*Larus atricilla*) - PL

Royal Tern (*Sterna maxima*) - PL

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

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

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

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

Ruddy Pigeon (*Patagioenas subvinacea*) - CM

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

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

Inca Dove (*Columbina inca*) - PL, MC

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

Blue Ground-Dove (*Claravis pretiosa*) - CL

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

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

Ruddy Quail-Dove (*Geotrygon montana*) - PL

Sulphur-winged Parakeet (*Pyrrhura hoffmanni*) - CM (a very distinctive highland endemic).

Crimson-fronted Parakeet (*Aratinga finschi*) - PL, MC

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

Great Green Macaw (*Ara ambiguus*) - CL (a pair that flew past us in the morning mist was a rare surprise; this species is endangered over most of its range and they roam widely).

Scarlet Macaw (*Ara macao*) - PL (a thrilling sight each of the many times that we saw them).

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

Brown-hooded Parrot (*Pionopsitta haematotis*) - PL

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

Red-lore Parrot (*Amazona autumnalis*) - CL

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

Yellow-naped Parrot (*Amazona auropalliata*) - PL (a perched pair on the edge of the Carara forest).

Squirrel Cuckoo (*Piaya cayana*) - PL, CL

Striped Cuckoo (*Tapera naevia*) - PL (hd), CL (great looks at one foraging on the ground).
 Groove-billed Ani (*Crotophaga sulcirostris*) - PL, CL
 Vermiculated Screech-Owl (*Megascops guatemalae*) - CL
Spectacled Owl (*Pulsatrix perspicillata*) - CL (our pre-breakfast birds at Sueno Azul).
Costa Rican Pygmy-Owl (*Glaucidium costaricanum*) - CM (incredible scope studies of one inside the tall oak forest, with a prey item which proved to be a large frog).
Black-and-white Owl (*Ciccaba nigrolineata*) - PL (the town “mascots” at their day roost in the plaza in the middle of Orotina).
 Lesser Nighthawk (*Chordeiles acutipennis*) - PL (seen by a few).
 Common Pauraque (*Nyctidromus albicollis*) - CL (heard only)
 Dusky Nightjar (*Caprimulgus saturatus*) - CM (glimpsed from the bus by some; heard distantly a few times from the rooms).
 White-collared Swift (*Streptoprocne zonaris*) - MC, BP, CS, CM
 Vaux’s Swift (*Chaetura vauxi*) - BP
 Costa Rican Swift (*Chaetura fumosa*) - PL (seen by a few; a recent split from Band-rumped Swift (*Chaetura spinicauda*)).
 Gray-rumped Swift (*Chaetura cinereiventris*) - CL
 Lesser Swallow-tailed Swift (*Panyptila cayennensis*) - CL
 Green Hermit (*Phaethornis guy*) - BP
 Long-billed (Western Long-tailed) Hermit (*Phaethornis longirostris*) - PL, CL (formerly considered a race of Long-tailed Hermit).
 Stripe-throated Hermit (*Phaethornis striigularis*) - PL, CL (formerly considered a race of the Little Hermit).
 Scaly-breasted Hummingbird (*Phaeochroa cuvierii*) - PL
 Violet Sabrewing (*Campylopterus hemileucurus*) - BP
 White-necked Jacobin (*Florisuga mellivora*) - CS
 Green Violet-ear (*Colibri thalassinus*) - CM
 Green-breasted Mango (*Anthracothorax prevostii*) - PL, CL
 Violet-headed Hummingbird (*Klais guimeti*) - CS
Black-crested Coquette (*Lophornis helenae*) - CS (a male dancing around the purple verbena flowers in the foothills).
 Green Thorntail (*Discosura conversii*) - CS
 Violet-crowned Woodnymph (*Thalurania colombica*) - CS
 Fiery-throated Hummingbird (*Panterpe insignis*) - CM
 Blue-chested Hummingbird (*Amazilia (Polyerata) amabilis*) - CL
 Steely-vented Hummingbird (*Amazilia (Saucerottia) saucerrottei*) - PL
 Rufous-tailed Hummingbird (*Amazilia tzacatl*) - PL, CL, CS
 White-bellied Mountain-gem (*Lampornis hemileucus*) - BP
 Purple-throated Mountain-gem (*Lampornis calolaema*) - BP
 White-throated Mountain-gem (*Lampornis castaneiventris*) - CM
 Green-crowned Brilliant (*Heliodoxa jacula*) - BP
 Magnificent Hummingbird (*Eugenes fulgens*) - BP, CM
 Purple-crowned Fairy (*Heliothryx barroti*) - PL
 Plain-capped Starthroat (*Helimaster constantii*) - PL
 Magenta-throated Woodstar (*Calliphlox bryantae*) - BP, CM (females only).
 Volcano Hummingbird (*Selasphorus flammula*) - CM
 Scintillant Hummingbird (*Selasphorus scintilla*) - BP, CM

Black-headed Trogon (*Trogon melanocephalus*) - PL

Baird's Trogon (*Trogon bairdii*) - PL (great looks at this range-restricted endemic).

Violaceous Trogon (*Trogon violaceus*) - PL, CL

Collared Trogon (*Trogon collaris*) - CM

Orange-bellied Trogon (*Trogon aurantiiventris*) - BP

Black-throated Trogon (*Trogon rufus*) - PL, CL

Slaty-tailed Trogon (*Trogon massena*) - PL, CL

Lattice-tailed Trogon (*Trogon clathratus*) - CS (Caribbean foothill specialty).

Resplendent Quetzal (*Pharomachrus mocinno*) - CM (Costa Rica's "wow bird"; we watched a stunning full plumaged male feeding in the open orchard for 20 minutes).

Rufous Motmot (*Baryphthengus martii*) - CL

Broad-billed Motmot (*Electron platyrhynchum*) - CS, CL (couldn't ask for a closer view!).

Turquoise-browed Motmot (*Eumomota superciliosa*) - PL

Ringed Kingfisher (*Ceryle torquata*) - PL, CL

Amazon Kingfisher (*Chloroceryle amazona*) - PL, CL

Green Kingfisher (*Chloroceryle americana*) - PL, CS, CL

White-necked Puffbird (*Notharchus macrorhynchos*) - CL

White-whiskered Puffbird (*Malacoptila panamensis*) - PL, CL (motionless in the shady understory at close range, several times).

Rufous-tailed Jacamar (*Galbula ruficauda*) - CL

Prong-billed Barbet (*Semnornis frantzii*) - BP

Blue-throated Toucanet (*Aulacorhynchus caeruleogularis*) - BP, CM (not always split from the Emerald Toucanet (*Aulacorhynchus prasinus*)).

Collared Aracari (*Pteroglossus torquatus*) - CS, CL

Fiery-billed Aracari (*Pteroglossus frantzii*) - PL (a range-restricted endemic).

Keel-billed Toucan (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*) - BP, CS (hd), CL

Chestnut-mandibled Toucan (*Ramphastos swainsoni*) - PL, CL, CS (seen often and well; some of us saw one catch and eat a bat at Villa Lapas, a gory but amazing sight; sometimes lumped with the Black-billed Toucan (*Ramphastos ambiguus*) of the Andes).

Olivaceous Piculet (*Picumnus olivaceus*) - PL (seen by Paul; heard by the rest of us).

Acorn Woodpecker (*Melanerpes formicivorus*) - CM

Golden-naped Woodpecker (*Melanerpes chrysauchen*) - PL (great looks at this uncommon and range restricted species at its nesthole).

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

Hoffmann's Woodpecker (*Melanerpes hoffmannii*) - MC (hd), PL

Hairy Woodpecker (*Picoides villosus*) - BP, CM

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

Rufous-winged Woodpecker (*Piculus simplex*) - CL (beautifully camouflaged in forest colors; a generally uncommon regional specialty).

Cinnamon Woodpecker (*Celeus loricatus*) - CL

Chestnut-colored Woodpecker (*Celeus castaneus*) - CL (gorgeous at close range).

Lineated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus lineatus*) - CL

Pale-billed Woodpecker (*Campephilus guatemalensis*) - PL, CL

Red-faced Spinetail (*Cranioleuca erythroptis*) - BP

Spotted Barbtail (*Premnoplex brunnescens*) - BP

Ruddy Treerunner (*Magarornis rubiginosus*) - CM

Buffy Tuftedcheek (*Pseudocolaptes lawrencii*) - CM
 Lineated Foliage-gleaner (*Syndactyla subalaris*) - BP
Buff-throated Foliage-gleaner (*Automolus ochrolaemus*) - PL (nice study of a surprisingly bold bird in the shady understory at Carara).
Streak-breasted Treehunter (*Thripadectes rufobrunneus*) - BP (scope views of this normally shy forest dweller!).
 Plain Xenops (*Xenops minutus*) - PL
Long-tailed Woodcreeper (*Deconychura longicauda*) - PL (it is unusual to get such a good look at this uncommon and rarely-identified species).
 Wedge-billed Woodcreeper (*Glyphorhynchus spirurus*) - CL
 Northern Barred-Woodcreeper (*Dendrocolaptes sanctithomae*) - CL
Black-banded Woodcreeper (*Dendrocolaptes picumnus*) - BP (quietly perched motionless above the swarm of small army ants; a rare find in Costa Rica).
 Cocoa Woodcreeper (*Xiphorhynchus susurrans*) - PL, CL
Black-striped Woodcreeper (*Xiphorhynchus lachrymosus*) - CL (the most beautiful of its family in Central America, out in the open at the forest edge).
 Streak-headed Woodcreeper (*Lepidocolaptes souleyetii*) - PL, CL
 Spot-crowned Woodcreeper (*Lepidocolaptes affinis*) - BP, CM
 Fasciated Antshrike (*Cymbilaimus lineatus*) - CL
 Great Antshrike (*Taraba major*) - CL
 Barred Antshrike (*Thamnophilus doliatus*) - PL, CL (hd)
Black-hooded Antshrike (*Thamnophilus bridgesi*) - PL (repeated closeups at Carara).
 Western Slaty-Antshrike (*Thamnophilus atrinucha*) - CL
 Dot-winged Antwren (*Microrhophias quixensis*) - PL
 Dusky Antbird (*Cercomacra tyrannina*) - PL
 Chestnut-backed Antbird (*Myrmeciza exsul*) - PL, CL
 Spotted Antbird (*Hylophylax naevioides*) - CS (heard only)
Streak-chested (Spectacled) Antpitta (*Hylopezus perspicillatus*) - PL (the “egg with legs”, standing motionless on a rock on the shaded forest floor for a remarkable 15 minutes!).
 Silvery-fronted Tapaculo (*Scytalopus argentifrons*) - CM (heard only).
 Southern Beardless-Tyrannulet (*Camptostoma obsoletum*) - PL
 Yellow Tyrannulet (*Capsiempis flaveola*) - CL
 Greenish Elaenia (*Myiopagis viridicata*) - PL
 Yellow-bellied Elaenia (*Elaenia flavogaster*) - CL
 Mountain Elaenia (*Elaenia frantzii*) - BP, CM
 Torrent Tyrannulet (*Serpophaga cinerea*) - CM
 Ochre-bellied Flycatcher (*Mionectes oleagineus*) - PL
 Paltry Tyrannulet (*Zimmerius villissimus*) - BP, CL, CM
Black-capped Pygmy-Tyrant (*Myiornis atricapillus*) - CL (a pair of these adorable birds eventually came down from the canopy to their nest down low at the forest edge, sitting side-by-side).
 Northern Bentbill (*Oncostoma cinereigulare*) - PL
 Slate-headed Tody-Flycatcher (*Poecilatriccus sylvia*) - PL, CL (but only seen by a few).
 Common Tody-Flycatcher (*Todirostrum cinereum*) - PL, CL
 Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher (*Todirostrum nigriceps*) - CL
 Yellow-olive Flycatcher (*Tolmomyias sulphurescens*) - PL, CL
 Yellow-margined Flycatcher (*Tolmomyias assimilis*) - CL

Northern Royal Flycatcher (*Onychorhynchus mexicanus*) - CL (a good find here).
 Tufted Flycatcher (*Mitrephanes phaenocercus*) - BP, CM
 Olive-sided Flycatcher (*Contopus cooperi*) - PL, CS
 Tropical Pewee (*Contopus cinereus*) - CL
 Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (*Empidonax flaviventris*) - PL, CL
 Yellowish Flycatcher (*Empidonax flavescens*) - BP, CM
 Black-capped Flycatcher (*Empidonax atriceps*) - CM
 Black Phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*) - BP
Long-tailed Tyrant (*Colonia colonus*) - CL (a very attractive flycatcher).
 Bright-rumped Attila (*Attila spadiceus*) - BP (hd), PL (hd), CL (finally seen!).
 Rufous Mourner (*Rhytipterna holerythra*) - CL
 Dusky-capped Flycatcher (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*) - PL, CL
 Panama Flycatcher (*Myiarchus panamensis*) - PL
 Nutting's Flycatcher (*Myiarchus nuttingi*) - PL
 Great Crested Flycatcher (*Myiarchus crinitus*) - PL, CL
 Great Kiskadee (*Pitangus sulphuratus*) - BP, PL, CL, MC
 Boat-billed Flycatcher (*Megarynchus pitangua*) - BP, PL, CL
 Social Flycatcher (*Myiozetetes similis*) - PL, CL
 Gray-capped Flycatcher (*Myiozetetes granadensis*) - PL, CL
White-ringed Flycatcher (*Conopias albovittata*) - CL (the scarcest of the confusing look-alikes and confined to the treetops, but we had good looks).
 Golden-bellied Flycatcher (*Myiodynastes hemichrysus*) - BP
 Streaked Flycatcher (*Myiodynastes maculatus*) - PL
 Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher (*Myiodynastes luteiventris*) - BP, CL
 Piratic Flycatcher (*Legatus leucophaeus*) - PL, CL
 Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) - MC, BP, PL, CL, CM (seen daily).
Rufous Piha (*Lipaugis unirufus*) - PL (incredible vocal display from several responsive birds inside the tall forest at Carara).
 Cinnamon Becard (*Pachyramphus cinnamomeus*) - CL
 White-winged Becard (*Pachyramphus polychopterus*) - CL
 Rose-throated Becard (*Pachyramphus aglaiae*) - PL
 Masked Tityra (*Tityra semifasciata*) - PL, CL
 Black-crowned Tityra (*Tityra inquisitor*) - PL, CL
 Turquoise Cotinga (*Cotinga ridgwayi*) - PL (female seen by Keith in the high canopy).
White-collared Manakin (*Manacus candei*) - CL (males displaying at their lek, so close we could actually observe their postures and dance steps).
Orange-collared Manakin (*Manacus aurantiacus*) - PL (males at their lek inside the forest).
 Long-tailed Manakin (*Chiroxiphia linearis*) - PL (seen by Jackie only).
 Blue-crowned Manakin (*Lepidothrix coronata*) - PL (coming down to bathe).
Red-capped Manakin (*Pipra mentalis*) - PL (coming down to bathe in a clear stream right in front of us, in the quiet of the late afternoon inside the forest).
 Yellow-throated Vireo (*Vireo flavifrons*) - PL
 Yellow-winged Vireo (*Vireo carmioli*) - BP, CM
 Brown-capped Vireo (*Vireo leucophrys*) - BP, CM
 Philadelphia Vireo (*Vireo philadelphicus*) - PL, CM
 Yellow-green Vireo (*Vireo flavoviridis*) - PL

Lesser Greenlet (*Hylophilus decurtatus*) - PL, CL, CS
 Green Shrike-Vireo (*Vireolanius pulchellus*) - PL (hd), CS (hd) (heard only).
 Rufous-browed Peppershrike (*Cyclarhis gujanensis*) - BP, CM (hd)
 Brown Jay (*Cyanocorax morio*) - BP, PL
Silver-throated Jay (*Cyanolyca argentigula*) - CM (elusive in the canopy of the old-growth oak forest, but eventually seen really well; one of the hardest of the regional endemics to find).
 Gray-breasted Martin (*Progne chalybea*) - PL, CL
 Mangrove Swallow (*Tachycineta albilinea*) - PL, CL
 Blue-and-white Swallow (*Notiochelidon cyanoleuca*) - MC, BP, CM
 Northern Rough-winged Swallow (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*) - PL, CL
 Southern Rough-winged Swallow (*Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*) - CL
 Bank Swallow (*Riparia riparia*) - CL
 Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) - CL
 Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) - PL, CL
 Band-backed Wren (*Campylorhynchus zonatus*) - CL
 Rufous-naped Wren (*Campylorhynchus rufinucha*) - PL
Black-throated Wren (*Thryothorus atrogularis*) - CL (this specialty with the beautiful song came out beautifully for us; normally a real skulker).
 Bay Wren (*Thryothorus nigricapillus*) - CL
 Riverside Wren (*Thryothorus semibadius*) - PL
Stripe-breasted Wren (*Thryothorus thoracicus*) - CL, CS (hd) (an attractive bird with an incredible array of vocalizations; regional specialty).
 Rufous-breasted Wren (*Thryothorus rutilus*) - PL
 Rufous-and-white Wren (*Thryothorus rufalbus*) - PL
 Plain Wren (*Thryothorus modestus*) - CL (the “Canebrake” race, sometimes split).
 House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*) - BP, PL, CL, CS, CM
 Ochraceous Wren (*Troglodytes ochraceus*) - BP, CM
Timberline Wren (*Thryorchilus browni*) - CM (getting them to come into view in the dense subalpine bamboo thickets was a bit of a challenge).
 White-breasted Wood-Wren (*Henicorhina leucosticta*) - CS, CL
 Gray-breasted Wood-Wren (*Henicorhina leucophrys*) - BP, CM
 American Dipper (*Cinclus mexicanus*) - CM
 Long-billed Gnatwren (*Ramphocaenus melanurus*) - PL, CL
 Tropical Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila plumbea*) - PL, CL
Black-faced Solitaire (*Myadestes melanops*) - BP, CM (delightful songs in the cloud forest).
 Black-billed Nightingale-Thrush (*Catharus gracilirostris*) - CM
 Slaty-backed Nightingale-Thrush (*Catharus fuscater*) - BP (mostly heard; seen by some).
 Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrush (*Catharus frantzii*) - BP, CM
 Swainson’s Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*) - PL, CL, CM
 Wood Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*) - PL, CL, CM
 Sooty Robin (*Turdus nigrescens*) - CM
 Mountain Robin (*Turdus plebejus*) - BP, CM
Clay-colored Robin (*Turdus grayi*) - all regions and seen daily (the national bird of Costa Rica, seen and heard in large numbers, sometimes singing a bit too early in the morning).
Long-tailed Silky-Flycatcher (*Ptilogonys caudatus*) - BP, CM (elegant birds characteristic of the higher montane regions).

Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) - BP, CL, CM
Tennessee Warbler (*Vermivora peregrina*) - BP, PL, MC, CM
Flame-throated Warbler (*Parula gutturalis*) - BP, CM (down low and close several times).
Tropical Parula (*Parula pitiayumi*) - BP
Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica petechia*) - PL, CL (including a beautiful adult male of the “Mangrove” Warbler race along the Tarcoles River, sometimes considered a separate species).
Chestnut-sided Warbler (*Dendroica pensylvanica*) - PL, CS, CL
Black-throated Green Warbler (*Dendroica virens*) - BP, PL, CM
Black-and-white Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*) - BP, CS
Prothonotary Warbler (*Protonotaria citrea*) - BP, PL
Northern Waterthrush (*Seiurus noveboracensis*) - PL, CL
Kentucky Warbler (*Oporornis formosus*) - CM (Red’s bird)
Olive-crowned Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis semiflava*) - CL (a loud and rich song).
Gray-crowned Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis poliocephala*) - BP
Wilson’s Warbler (*Wilsonia pusilla*) - BP, CM
Slate-throated Redstart (*Myioborus miniatus*) - BP
Collared Redstart (*Myioborus torquatus*) - BP, CM (delightfully tame and confiding; one even landed on Lindsay!).
Golden-crowned Warbler (*Basileuterus culicivorus*) - BP (Paul’s bird).
Black-cheeked Warbler (*Basileuterus melanogenys*) - CM
Three-striped Warbler (*Basileuterus tristriatus*) - BP
Buff-rumped Warbler (*Basileuterus fulvicauda*) - PL, CS, CL (a surprising number of looks at this species on this trip).
Wrenthrush (*Zeledonia coronata*) - CM (heard so closely, but never seen).
Bananaquit (*Coerebe flaveola*) - CL
Common Bush-Tanager (*Chlorospingus ophthalmicus*) - BP, CM
Sooty-capped Bush-Tanager (*Chlorospingus pileatus*) - CM
Black-and-yellow Tanager (*Chrysothlypis chrysomelaena*) - CS (an active sprite of the canopy of the foothill forests).
Olive Tanager (*Chlorothraupis carmioli*) - CS
White-shouldered Tanager (*Tachyphonus luctuosus*) - PL
White-lined Tanager (*Tachyphonus rufus*) - CL (glimpsed).
Red-throated Ant-Tanager (*Habia fuscicauda*) - CL
Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*) - BP, PL, CL
Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga olivacea*) - CL (male glimpsed).
Flame-colored Tanager (*Piranga bidentata*) - CM
Crimson-collared Tanager (*Ramphocelus sanguinolentus*) - CL
Passerini’s Tanager (*Ramphocelus passerinii*) - CL, CS (spectacular and common).
Cherrie’s Tanager (*Ramphocelus costaricensis*) - PL (Scarlet-rumped Tanager was split into this and the preceding species; the females differ more than the males).
Blue-gray Tanager (*Thraupis episcopus*) - all regions and seen daily.
Palm Tanager (*Thraupis palmarum*) - BP, PL, CL
Plain-colored Tanager (*Tangara inornata*) - CL
Silver-throated Tanager (*Tangara icterocephala*) - BP, CS
Speckled Tanager (*Tangara guttata*) - CS
Bay-headed Tanager (*Tangara gyrola*) - BP, PL

Golden-hooded Tanager (*Tangara larvata*) - PL, CL

Spangle-cheeked Tanager (*Tangara dowii*) - BP, CM (beautiful endemic, seen down low and close in good sunlight several times).

Scarlet-thighed Dacnis (*Dacnis venusta*) - BP

Green Honeycreeper (*Chlorophanes spiza*) - PL, CS, CL

Shining Honeycreeper (*Cyanerpes lucidus*) - CL

Red-legged Honeycreeper (*Cyanerpes cyaneus*) - BP, PL, CL

Blue-black Grassquit (*Volatinia jacarina*) - PL (quick look from the bus).

Variable Seedeater (*Sporophila corvina*) - BP, CL

Nicaraguan Seed-Finch (*Oryzoborus nuttingi*) - CL (a very localized and obscure regional endemic, seen in the marshy pasture).

Thick-billed Seed-Finch (*Oryzoborus funereus*) - CL

Yellow-faced Grassquit (*Tiaris olivacea*) - BP, CM

Slaty Flowerpiercer (*Diglossa plumbea*) - BP, CM

Yellow-thighed Finch (*Psellophorus tibialis*) - BP, CM (unique highland endemic, seen often and well).

Large-footed Finch (*Pezopetes capitalis*) - CM (sneaky birds in the subalpine thickets).

White-naped Brush-Finch (*Atlapetes albinucha*) - BP

Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch (*Buarremon brunneinucha*) - BP, CM

Orange-billed Sparrow (*Arremon aurantirostris*) - PL, CL

Black-striped Sparrow (*Arremonops conirostris*) - CL

Rufous-collared Sparrow (*Zonotrichia capensis*) - BP, CM, MC

Volcano Junco (*Junco vulcani*) - CM (the highest-elevation endemic of these mountains).

Grayish Saltator (*Saltator coerulescens*) - CL

Buff-throated Saltator (*Saltator maximus*) - PL, CL

Black-headed Saltator (*Saltator atriceps*) - CL

Black-faced Grosbeak (*Caryothraustes poliogaster*) - CL, CS

Black-thighed Grosbeak (*Pheucticus tibialis*) - CM (great looks, especially at one down low beside the trail).

Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) - BP, PL, CL, CM

Blue-black Grosbeak (*Cyanocompsa cyanooides*) - PL, CL (hd)

Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*) - PL

Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) - PL, CL (at the southern limit of their range).

Eastern Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*) - BP, MC

Melodious Blackbird (*Dives dives*) - BP, PL

Great-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) - MC, BP, PL, CL

Bronzed Cowbird (*Molothrus aeneus*) - BP, CL, MC

Giant Cowbird (*Molothrus oryzivorus*) - CL

Black-cowled Oriole (*Icterus prothemelas*) - CL

Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*) - PL, CL, MC, CM

Yellow-billed Cacique (*Amblycercus holosericeus*) - CL

Scarlet-rumped Cacique (*Cacicus uropygialis*) - CL, CS

Chestnut-headed Oropendola (*Psarocolius wagleri*) - CL, CS

Montezuma Oropendola (*Psarocolius (Gymnostinops) montezuma*) - MC, PL, CL (a noisy and conspicuous favorite).

Scrub Euphonia (*Euphonia affinis*) - PL

Yellow-crowned Euphonia (*Euphonia luteicapilla*) - PL, CL

Thick-billed Euphonia (*Euphonia lanirostris*) - PL

Spot-crowned Euphonia (*Euphonia imitans*) - PL (it took a while to sort out all of the euphonias at Carara; this one is more restricted to forest and we saw a male well enough to see the obscure spots in the yellow forecrown).

Olive-backed Euphonia (*Euphonia gouldi*) - CL

Tawny-capped Euphonia (*Euphonia annae*) - CS

Golden-browed Chlorophonia (*Chlorophonia callophrys*) - BP, CM (exquisite).

House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) - MC, PL

MAMMALS: follows the nomenclature in “A Field Guide to the Mammals of Central America and Southeastern Mexico” by Fiona Reid.

Hoffmann’s Two-toed Sloth (*Choloepus hoffmanni*) - PL

insectivorous bats (several sizes)

White-throated Capuchin Monkey (*Cebus capucinus*) - PL

Mantled Howler Monkey (*Alouatta palliata*) - BP (hd), PL, CL

Central American Spider Monkey (*Ateles geoffroyi*) - PL (including a spectacular branch-shaking threat display from the adult male as the rest of the troop moved away from us); CL (hd)

Red-tailed Squirrel (*Sciurus granatensis*) - CL, CM

Variegated Squirrel (*Sciurus variegatoides*) - BP, PL, CL

Central American Agouti (*Dasyprocta punctata*) - BP, PL

Paca (*Agouti paca*) - BP (coming to the feeders shortly after darkness fell; this large nocturnal rodent has seriously declined from over-hunting and is not often seen).

Crab-eating Raccoon (*Procyon cancrivorus*) - PL (in the mangroves on the boat trip).

White-nosed Coati (*Nasua narica*) - BP, PL

Neotropical River Otter (*Lutra longicaudis*) - CL

Collared Peccary (*Tayassu tajacu*) - PL, CL

Red Brocket Deer (*Mazama americana*) - PL

AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES: follows “A Guide to Amphibians and Reptiles of Costa Rica” by Twan Leenders. This was a great group for spotting herps, but many remain unidentified to species.

Giant Toad (*Bufo marinus*) - PL

Strawberry Poison-Dart Frog (*Dendrobates pumilio*) - CL (“blue jeans frog”).

various small toads and frogs

American Crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*) - PL

Black Wood Turtle (*Rhinoclemys funerea*) - CL (sunning on logs in the rivers).

House Gecko (*Hemidactylus frenatus*) - PL (introduced)

Common Basilisk (*Basiliscus basiliscus*) - PL

Striped Basilisk (*Basiliscus vittatus*) - CL

Helmeted Iguana (*Coryphanes cristata*) - CL (this strange creature was found along a forest trail at La Selva and posed for closeup photos).

Black Spiny-tailed Iguana (*Ctenosaura similis*) - PL (“false iguana” or “ctenosaur”).

Green Iguana (*Iguana iguana*) - PL, CL

Pug-nosed Anole (*Norops capito?*) - CL (photographed on log in a light gap; well-camouflaged).

Stream Anole (*Norops oxylophus*) - CL (the one just above the stream as you walk into the La Selva Arboretum).

small anoles - CL (common in the leaf litter).

Bronze-backed Climbing-Skink (*Mabuya unimarginata*) - PL

Green Spiny Lizard (*Sceloporus malachiticus*) - CM

Central American Whip-tailed Lizard (*Ameiva festiva*) - PL, CL (fairly large brown lizard common in the leaf litter at Carara NP (pink-headed) and La Selva (blue-headed); variable in color with race and age).

Other Cool Stuff (a few):

tiger-faced crabs - in mangroves on the boat trip.

army ants

giant blue helicopter-damselfly (*Megaloptera*) - CL (the largest of its kind).

morpho butterfly (and almost 100 additional species of butterflies seen).