

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc.

BEST OF COSTA RICA

March 5-17, 2006

Leader: Andrew Whittaker

My return visit to Costa Rica (after a three-year gap) was truly a memorable one. Birding this remarkably diverse country is always a treat; from the lush Caribbean slopes and lowlands to the Pacific dry forests and the temperate forests at high elevations, each region and its distinct habitats results in highlights galore.

What a dream start: a fruiting avocado tree, containing not one, but seven Resplendent Quetzals, including three dazzling males! Witnessing the antics of the males as they chased the females was almost overwhelming! Those that claim the Resplendent Quetzal is the most beautiful bird in the world would get little argument from anyone in our group! The parade of quetzals was followed by a stunning pair of Golden-browed Chlorophonias. The chlorophonias fed at point-blank range, at eye level, allowing us to delight in their multiple brilliant colors, from emerald-green to violet-blue, to turquoise and yellow! We were also treated to stunning, close-up studies of Crimson-collared, Golden-hooded, and Silver-throated tanagers, closely followed by the most cooperative pair of Prong-billed Barbets one could ever hope for. It was an amazing first few hours, and a portent of things to come.

Our relaxed stay at the secluded Bosque de Paz reserve rewarded us with a fantastic feeder show that included hummers galore (including multiple spectacular Violet Sabrewings), and as many as 20 Black Guans mobbing the seed trays, not to mention a rarely seen paca coming in by night. Forest birds included the immaculate Long-tailed Silky-flycatcher and Black-and-yellow Silky-flycatcher, Red-faced Spinetail, and the diminutive Barred Becard.

En route to the drier Pacific lowlands we stopped for scope-filling views of a pair of roosting Black-and-white Owls, and an odd, shaggy looking two-toed sloth. A stop on a bridge high above the Rio Tarcoles treated us to several huge (15 to 20 feet in length) American crocodiles basking in the sun on the riverbanks below us! A distant white spot in a treetop turned out to be a snazzy looking male Yellow-billed Cotinga. After sitting still for scope views, this rare bird obligingly flew right at us, passing closely at eye level!

Carara National Park was as birdy as ever. Scarlet Macaws, feeding in perfect morning light, presented lovely studies, and were followed by a noisy group of Fiery-billed Aracaris, their vividly colored bills catching the first rays of the sun to penetrate the canopy. A wide forest trail provided great studies of a stellar lineup of gorgeous trogons, with Baird's, Slaty-tailed, Black-throated, and Black-headed all in attendance. Woodpeckers were also much in evidence, and we were lucky to see both the range-restricted Golden-naped Woodpecker, and the massive Pale-billed Woodpecker as it hammered on a huge trunk.

Best of Costa Rica

By walking quietly along forested trails, we were rewarded with stunning Orange-collared Manakins displaying at their lek, and a pair of Long-tailed Manakins. A Streak-chested Antpitta responded well to tape playback, giving excellent studies, and we observed not one, but two different Great Tinamous at point-blank range. Then there was a confiding male Ruddy Quail-Dove feeding right in the open in front of us! Both Riverside Wren and Stub-tailed Spadebill gave exceptional looks too, and we were both surprised and delighted to find the extremely rare Slate-colored Seedeater. An afternoon visit to nearby drier habitats provided studies of the odd-looking White-throated Magpie-Jay, a Turquoise-browed Motmot, perched White-fronted Parrots, Olive and Stripe-headed sparrows, Banded Wren, Nutting's Flycatcher, and our mascot, the Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl that followed us everywhere! Excellent studies of Double-striped Thick-knees were a bonus.

Lush, forested Caribbean slopes produced some nonstop hummingbird action, including the endemic Coppery-headed Emerald and striking male Green Thorntail. Here, our walk produced a huge mixed-species flock that rewarded us with stunning prolonged views of a pair of colorful Red-headed Barbets at eye level. At the valley bottom we were even able to observe the underwater antics of an American Dipper in the magnificent crystal-clear river.

La Selva Field Station was, as expected, extremely birdy and, at times, almost overwhelming. Highlights of our first day in these rich lowlands were: Pied Puffbird; Black-capped Pygmy-Tyrant (at its nest at eye level); an army ant swarm, attended by the stunning Ocellated Antbird; and a magnificent pair of Great Curassows crossing the trail. The afternoon produced a Spotted Antbird visiting the previously mentioned ant swarm (somewhat of a surprise here, where the species has become very uncommon), and Dusky-faced Tanagers. Further exploration the next day produced Crested Guans, a stunning close view of a male Snowy Cotinga, Chestnut-colored Woodpecker, Red-lored and Brown-hooded parrots, and the odd Bare-crowned Antbird. Detailed scope views of Keel-billed Toucans left us spellbound as we observed the multitude of bright colors on their huge beaks, and around the clearings we sorted through a host of flycatchers, wrens, and tanagers.

The cooler climate of Braulio Carillo National Park found us thrilling to the antics of a family group of Central American spider monkeys. Here the birding was a little slower than normal due to the inclement weather. However, Braulio always provides some memorable highlights, such as the Yellow-eared Toucanet doing its see-saw display, a confiding Dull-mantled Antbird, White-throated Shrike-Tanager, and Emerald and Black-and-yellow tanagers.

Our final days afield were spent in the very different, temperate forests of Cerro de la Muerte, where we tracked down all the unique highland endemics, including Large-footed Finch, Volcano Junco, and Timberline Wren. A very successful night excursion rewarded us with superb studies of Dusky Nightjar and Bare-shanked Screech-Owl. Even our last morning produced yet another trip highlight, as we witnessed a tremendous raptor migration of more than 20,000 Broad-winged and Swainson's hawks passing low against a cloudless blue sky. And who among us will forget the amazingly obliging pair of Wrenthrushes that paraded around in the open, right in front of us? It just doesn't get better than this!

TOP FIVE BIRDS (as voted by the group)

- 1- Resplendent Quetzal
- 2- Turquoise-browed Motmot
- 3- Ocellated Antbird
- 4- Keel-billed Toucan
- 5- Wrenthrush (Zeledonia)

ITINERARY:

- March 5: group arrival in San Jose, Costa Rica.
- March 6: Today we visited the spectacular La Paz Waterfall Garden and its hummingbird and fruit feeders, continuing onto Bosque de Paz.
- March 7: Bosque de Paz and nearby areas, in this lush wet subtropical zone.
- March 8: Drive over to the drier Pacific lowland forest and lovely Villa Lapas.
- March 9: Carara reserve; PM: road to the estuary of the Tarcoles River.
- March 10: Carara reserve; P.M. birding the dry Guanacaste habitat nearby.
- March 11: Drive up into the lush Caribbean slope, birding both hummingbird feeders and at Virgen del Socorro; afternoon drive down to the lowlands and Selva Verde.
- March 12: La Selva Field Station of the OTS all day, in this famous Caribbean lowland forest reserve.
- March 13: La Selva Field Station all day.
- March 14: Drive up to Braulio Carillo National Park, where we birded trails in the rich wet Caribbean foothills; P.M.: traveling up to the Meseta Central and then on to Cerro de la Muerte and the valley of San Gerardo de Dota, and onto Savegre Lodge.
- March 15: All day in the temperate zone forests around the lodge and in the valley San Gerardo de Dota area including a night excursion up on the ridge.
- March 16: A.M. excursion for the highland specialties at the top of “the Road”; P.M. drive back to San Jose area with farewell meal.
- March 17: departure for home.

Key:

- MC = Meseta Central region
- BP = Bosque de Paz and nearby (at subtropical elevations)
- CS = Caribbean slope (at foothill and lower subtropical elevations, including Virgen del Socorro side road, La Paz Waterfall Garden, the feeding station at Cinchona, and the Quebrada Gonzalez area of Braulio Carillo National Park).
- CL = Caribbean lowlands (the Sarapiquí region, especially at the La Selva Field Station of the OTS, around Selva Verde, and along the roads in-between).
- PL = Pacific lowlands in the Carara National Park region (tropical moist forest) and drier Guanacaste region nearby.
- CM = Cerro de la Muerte, especially the temperate forests, orchards and gardens of the valley of San Gerardo de Dota.
- hd = heard

Best of Costa Rica

Bird List: Revised to follow the names and taxonomic order presented in “Birds of the World: A Check-list (Fifth Ed)”, and subsequent revisions, by Jim Clements. Some of our favorite sightings are underscored and commented upon.

- Great Tinamou (*Tinamus major*) - PL (magical looks at one drinking, and later, another foraging in dry leaf litter at point blank range).
- Little Tinamou (*Crypturellus soui*) - PL, CL (heard only)
- Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) - PL
- Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) - PL
- Anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*) - PL
- Magnificent Frigatebird (*Fregata magnificens*) - PL
- Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) - CL, PL
- Great Egret (*Ardea alba*) - CL, PL
- Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*) - PL
- Little Blue Heron (*Egretta caerulea*) - CL, PL
- Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*) - CL, PL
- Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*) - BP, CS, CL, PL
- Green Heron (*Butorides virescens*) - CL, PL
- Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (*Nyctanassa violacea*) - PL
- Boat-billed Heron (*Cochlearius cochlearius*) - PL (great looks at one on a nest)
- Bare-throated Tiger-Heron (*Tigrisoma mexicanum*) - PL
- Fasciated Tiger-Heron (*Tigrisoma fasciatum*) - CL
- Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*) - PL
- Green Ibis (*Mesembrinibis cayennensis*) - CL,
- White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*) - PL
- Roseate Spoonbill (*Ajaia ajaja*) - CS, PL
- Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) - PL
- Muscovy Duck (*Cairina moschata*) - PL
- Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) - all regions and seen every day.
- Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*) - MC, CS, CL, PL, CM (Almost daily, included an impressive 3000 passing over on migration at La Selva, a sight never to be forgotten. We saw both the local resident race with the creamy nape patch, and the red headed migrant race from North America.)
- King Vulture (*Sarcoramphus papa*) - PL (seen by some)
- Gray-headed Kite (*Leptodon cayanensis*) - CL
- Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*) - CS, CM
- White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus*) - CS
- Double-toothed Kite (*Harpagus bidentatus*) - CL
- Tiny Hawk (*Accipiter superciliosus*) - PL
- Gray Hawk (*Asturina nitida*) - CL, PL, CS
- Roadside Hawk (*Buteo magnirostris*) - CS (from the bus).
- Broad winged Hawk (*Buteo platypterus*) - BP, CI, CS, CM (Who could ever forget that last morning, when we witnessed a remarkable migration of more than 20,000 raptors, 60% of which were Broad-wings, pouring over in just 40 minutes? A truly breathtaking display of migration and a trip highlight for me and many of you.)
- Short tailed Hawk (*Buteo brachyurus*) - PL, CS
- Swainson’s Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*) - CS, CL, CM (Spectacular migration of 8000 + flying north on that last morning; also a few migrating with Turkey Vultures at La Selva).
- Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) - CM (After the tour, I checked the literature and decided that lone odd *Buteo* that we saw that last morning was a subadult Red-tail.)
- Ornate Hawk-Eagle (*Spizaetus tyrannus*) - CS (heard by all)
- Northern Crested Caracara (*Caracara cheriway*) - PL, CM
- Yellow-headed Caracara (*Milvago chimachima*) - BP, PL, CS,
- Laughing Falcon (*Herpetotheres cachinnans*) - CL, PL (hd)

- Barred Forest Falcon (*Micrastur ruficolis*) - BP (hd)
Merlin (*Falco columbarius*) - CM, (A rarely seen raptor in Costa Rica, especially in spring.)
Crested Guan (*Penelope purpurascens*) - CL, PL (Calmly feeding right overhead in a giant rainforest tree).
Black Guan (*Chamaepetes unicolor*) - BP, CM (What an incredible “feeder bird”, with up to 25 counted late one evening!).
Great Curassow (*Crax rubra*) - CL (Crippling look at a pair of these magnificent birds at La Selva; especially the female, which was calmly foraging in the open. Spectacular!).
Black-breasted Wood-Quail (*Odontophorus leucolaemus*) - BP (hd),
White-throated Crake (*Laterallus albigularis*) - CL
Gray-necked Wood-Rail (*Aramides cajanea*) - PL
Uniform Crake (*Amaurolimnas concolor*) - CL (hd only)
Purple Gallinule (*Porphyrio martinica*) - PL
Sunbittern (*Heliornis fulica*) - CL (Spectacular looks under the bridge at our hotel on several afternoons.)
Northern Jacana (*Jacana spinosa*) - CL, PL, CS
Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*) - PL
Double-striped Thick-knee (*Burhinus bistriatus*) - PL (Excellent studies of multiple birds; one bird crouched and well-hidden and probably on eggs).
Black-bellied Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) - PL
Semipalmated Plover (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) - PL
Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*) - PL
Greater Yellowlegs (*Tringa melanoleuca*) - PL
Solitary Sandpiper (*Tringa solitaria*) - PL
Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularia*) - CL, PL
Sanderling (*Calidris alba*) - 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).
Band-tailed Pigeon (*Patagioenas fasciata*) - BP, CM
Pale vented Pigeon (*Patagioenas cayennensis*) - CL
Red-billed Pigeon (*Patagioenas flavirostris*) - MC, BP, CS, CL
Short-billed Pigeon (*Patagioenas nigrirostris*) - CL, PL (hd)
Ruddy Pigeon (*Patagioenas subvinacea*) - CM
White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*) - BP, PL
Ruddy Ground Dove (*Columbina talpacoti*) - CL, PL
Inca Dove (*Columbina inca*) - MC, PL
Blue Ground-Dove (*Claravis pretiosa*) - PL, CL (hd)
White tipped Dove (*Leptotila verreauxi*) - BP, PL
Gray-chested Dove (*Leptotila cassini*) - CL, PL
Ruddy Quail-Dove (*Geotrygon montana*) - PL (We had excellent looks at a fine male).
Scarlet Macaw (*Ara macao*) - PL (Especially the pair we observed quietly feeding at point blank range, through the scope.)
Crimson-fronted Parakeet (*Aratinga finschi*) - PL,
Olive-throated Parakeet (*Aratinga nana*) - CL
Orange-fronted Parakeet (*Aratinga canicularis*) - PL,
Sulphur-winged Parakeet (*Pyrrhura hoffmanni*) - CM (great studies)
Orange chinned Parakeet (*Brotogeris jugularis*) - CL, PL
White-crowned Parrot (*Pionus senilis*) - CS, CL
Brown-hooded Parrot (*Pionopsitta haematotis*) - CL (superb looks)
White-fronted Parrot (*Amazona albifrons*) - PL
Red lored Parrot (*Amazona autumnalis*) - CL (Wonderful scope studies)
Yellow-naped Parrot (*Amazona auropalliata*) - PL
Mealy Parrot (*Amazona farinosa*) - CL, PL

Best of Costa Rica

- Squirrel Cuckoo (*Piaya cayana*) - CL, PL
Groove billed Ani (*Crotophaga sulcirostris*) - CS, CL, PL
Lesser Ground – Cuckoo (*Morococcyx erythropygus*) - CL
Black-and-white Owl (*Ciccaba nigrolineata*) - PL (Excellent studies of the town “mascots” at their day roost in the plaza).
Bare-shanked Screech Owl (*Megascops clarkii*) - CM (Superb scope studies of this hard to see nocturnal beauty.)
Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl (*Glaucidium brasilianum*) - PL
Short-tailed Nighthawk (*Lurocalis semitorquatus*) - PL
Lesser Nighthawk (*Chordeiles acutipennis*) - PL
Pauraque (*Nyctidromus albicollis*) - PL (hd only)
Dusky Nightjar (*Caprimulgus saturatus*) - CM (Fantastic studies; this bird flew in an amazing distance to tape-playback to give stunning views.)
White-collared Swift (*Streptoprocne zonaris*) - MC, CS, CL, PL, CM
Costa Rican Swift (*Chaetura fumosa*) - PL (a recent split from Band-rumped Swift (*Chaetura spinicauda*)).
Gray-rumped Swift (*Chaetura cinereiventris*) - CS, CL
Chimney Swift (*Chaetura pelagica*) - PL, CL, CM
Band-tailed Barbthroat (*Threnetes ruckeri*) - CL
Long-billed (Western Long-tailed) Hermit (*Phaethornis longirostris*) - CL, PL (formerly considered a race of Long-tailed Hermit).
Green Hermit (*Phaethornis guy*) - BP (Coming into the feeders.)
Stripe-throated Hermit (*Phaethornis striigularis*) - CL, PL
Scaly-breasted Hummingbird (*Phaeochroa cuvierii*) - PL
Violet Sabrewing (*Campylopterus hemileucurus*) - BP, CS, PL, (huge and colorful males dominated the feeders at several sites).
White necked Jacobin (*Florisuga mellivora*) - CL
Brown Violet-ear (*Colibri delphinae*) - CS
Green Violet-ear (*Colibri thalassinus*) - CS, CM
Violet-headed Hummingbird (*Klais guimeti*) - CL, CS
Green Thorntail (*Discosura conversii*) - CS (Adult males at feeders and in the wild).
Fiery-throated Hummingbird (*Panterpe insignis*) - CM (Inches from us as they mobbed the feeders at the restaurant on the crest of Cerro de la Muerte).
Coppery-headed Emerald (*Elvira cupreiceps*) - CS (a true Costa Rican endemic).
Stripe-tailed Hummingbird (*Eupherusa eximina*) - CS
Violet-crowned Woodnymph (*Thalurania colombica*) - CS
Cinnamon Hummingbird (*Amazilia rutila*) - PL
Blue-chested Hummingbird (*Polyerata amabilis*) - CS
Rufous tailed Hummingbird (*Amazilia tzacatl*) - CS, CL, PL
Snowcap (*Microchera albocoronata*) - CS (Alas, only the female was seen.).
Bronz-tailed Plumeleeter (*Chalybura urochrysia*) - CL
Purple-throated Mountain-gem (*Lampornis calolaema*) - BP, CS
Gray-tailed (White-throated) Mountain-gem (*Lampornis castaneiventris*) - CM
Green-crowned Brilliant (*Heliodoxa jacula*) - BP, CS, CM
Magnificent Hummingbird (*Eugenes fulgens*) - CM
Purple-crowned Fairy (*Heliophryx barroti*) - PL
Magenta-throated Woodstar (*Calliphlox bryantae*) - BP,
Scintillant Hummingbird (*Selasphorus scintilla*) - BP, CM
Volcano Hummingbird (*Selasphorus flammula*) - CM
Black-headed Trogon (*Trogon melanocephalus*) - PL
Baird’s Trogon (*Trogon bairdii*) - PL (After a lot of work, great looks at this range-restricted endemic.)
Violaceous Trogon (*Trogon violaceus*) - CL, PL (hd)
Collared Trogon (*Trogon collaris*) - BP
Black throated Trogon (*Trogon melanurus*) - PL

- Slaty tailed Trogon (*Trogon massena*) - CL, PL
Lattice-tailed Trogon (*Trogon clathratus*) - CS (hd)
Resplendent Quetzal (*Pharomachrus mocinno*) - BP, (A wonderful, breathtaking display of 3 males displaying to 4 or 5 females around a wild avocado tree. The best quetzal show I have ever seen! How could we ever forget the stunning male in full sunlight, that flew past us at eye-level, not 20 feet away?).
Ringed Kingfisher (*Ceryle torquata*) - CL, PL,
Amazon Kingfisher (*Chloroceryle amazona*) - CL, (seen by some)
Green Kingfisher (*Chloroceryle americana*) - CL, PL
Blue crowned Motmot (*Momotus momota*) - BP, PL, CL
Rufous Motmot (*Baryphthengus martii*) - CL
Broad billed Motmot (*Electron platyrhynchum*) - CL
Turquoise-browed Motmot (*Eumomota superciliosa*) - PL
Rufous-tailed Jacamar (*Galbula ruficauda*) - PL, CL
White-necked Puffbird (*Northarchus macrorhynchos*) - PL (heard only)
Pied Puffbird (*Northarchus tectus*) - CL
Red-headed Barbet (*Eubucco bourcierii*) - CS (What a smart looking bird! Stunning views of both members of the pair).
Prong-billed Barbet (*Semnornis frantzii*) - BP, CS (Including stunning views from only a few feet away.)
Blue-throated Toucanet (*Aulacorhynchus caeruleogularis*) - BP, CM (split from Emerald Toucanet).
Collared Aracari (*Pteroglossus torquatus*) - CS
Fiery-billed Aracari (*Pteroglossus frantzii*) - PL (vying with the Scarlet Macaws to be seen).
Keel billed Toucan (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*) - CS, CL
Chestnut-mandibled Toucan (*Ramphastos swainsoni*) - CL, PL (Sometimes lumped with the Black-billed Toucan (*Ramphastos ambiguus*)).
Acorn Woodpecker (*Melanerpes formicivorus*) - CM
Golden-naped Woodpecker (*Melanerpes chrysauchen*) - PL (An especially good look at this colorful and scarce woodpecker.)
Black cheeked Woodpecker (*Melanerpes pucherani*) - CL
Hoffmann's Woodpecker (*Melanerpes hoffmannii*) - MC, PL
Hairy Woodpecker (*Picoides villosus*) - BP, CM
Smoky-brown Woodpecker (*Veniliornis fumigatus*) - CL
Rufous-winged Woodpecker (*Piculus simplex*) - CL (heard only).
Golden-olive Woodpecker (*Piculus rubiginosus*) - CS, CM
Chestnut-colored Woodpecker (*Celeus castaneus*) - CL
Lineated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus lineatus*) - CL, PL
Pale-billed Woodpecker (*Campephilus guatemalensis*) - PL, CL
Slaty Spinetail (*Synallaxis brachyura*) - CL
Red-faced Spinetail (*Cranioleuca erythrops*) - BP, CS
Spotted Barbtail (*Premnoplex brunnescens*) - BP, CM
Ruddy Treerunner (*Magarornis rubiginosus*) - CM (epeated great studies)
Plain Xenops (*Xenops minutus*) - PL
Buffy Tuftedcheek (*Pseudocolaptes lawrencii*) - CM
Steak-breasted Treehunter (*Thripadectes rufobrunneus*) - BP, (seen by few).
Lineated Foliage-gleaner (*Syndactyla subalaris*) - CM
Gray-throated Leaf-tosser (*Sclerurus albigularis*) - CS
Olivaceous Woodcreeper (*Sittasomus griseicapillus*) - BP
Wedge-billed Woodcreeper (*Glyphorhynchus spirurus*) - CL, CS
Northern Barred-Woodcreeper (*Dendrocolaptes sanctithomae*) - CL, CS (great looks at La Selva).
Cocoa Woodcreeper (*Xiphorhynchus susurrans*) - CL, PL (recent split from the Buff-throated Woodcreeper).
Spotted Woodcreeper (*Xiphorhynchus erythropygius*) - CS
Streak-headed Woodcreeper (*Lepidocolaptes souleyetii*) - CL, PL
Spot-crowned Woodcreeper (*Lepidocolaptes affinis*) - BP, CM, CS
Fasciated Antshrike (*Cymbilaimus lineatus*) - CL (hd)

Best of Costa Rica

- Barred Antshrike (*Thamnophilus doliatus*) - CL, PL (hd)
Black-hooded Antshrike (*Thamnophilus bridgesi*) - PL
Western Slaty-Antshrike (*Thamnophilus atrinucha*) - CL
Russet Antshrike (*Thamnistes anabatinus*) - CS
Streak-crowned Antwren (*Dysithamnus striticeps*) - CS (hd)
Dot-winged Antwren (*Microrhopias quixensis*) - PL
Dusky Antbird (*Cercomacra tyrannina*) - PL
Bare-crowned Antbird (*Gymnocichla nudiceps*) - CL
Chestnut backed Antbird (*Myrmeciza exsul*) - PL
Dull –mantled Antbird (*Myrmeciza laemosticta*) - CS
Immaculate Antbird (*Myrmeciza immaculata*) - CS
Bicolored Antbird (*Gymnopithys leucaspis*) - CS (hd)
Spotted Antbird (*Hylophylax naevioides*) - CL
Ocellated Antbird (*Phaenostictus mcleannani*) - CL (One of the most spectacular antbirds; great studies of this beauty!)
- Black-headed Antthrush (*Formicarius nigricapillus*) - CS (hd)
Back faced Antthrush (*Formicarius analis*) - CL (hd), PL
Black-crowned Antpitta (*Pittasoma michleri*) - CS (hd)
Streak-chested (Spectacled) Antpitta (*Hylopezus perspicillatus*) - PL (Incredible looks of a singing bird; the endearing “egg with legs”.)
- Silvery-fronted Tapaculo (*Scytalopus argentifrons*) - BP, CS, CM (heard only)
Yellow-billed Cotinga (*Carpodectes antoniae*) - PL (Wonderful studies of an adult male of this endangered Cotinga; first in the scope, then as he obligingly flew right past us at eye-level.)
Snowy Cotinga (*Carpodectes nitidus*) - CL (Ethereal specialty of the Caribbean lowlands; last-minute close study of a spectacular adult male perched low.)
- White collared Manakin (*Manacus candei*) - CL (What a show at that lek! Like firecrackers in the forest!)
Orange-collared Manakin (*Manacus aurantiacus*) - PL (it was a treat to observe the active lek of displaying males; yet another great looking manakin seen very well.)
- White-ruffed Manakin (*Corapipo altera*) - CS (hd)
Long-tailed Manakin (*Chiroxiphia linearis*) - PL
Blue-crowned Manakin (*Lepidothrix coronata*) - PL
Yellow-bellied Tyrannulet (*Ornithion semiflavum*) - PL (hd)
Yellow Tyrannulet (*Capsiempis flaveola*) - CL
Yellow bellied Elaenia (*Elaenia flavogaster*) - BP, MC, CL
Mountain Elaenia (*Elaenia frantzii*) - BP, CM
Torrent Tyrannulet (*Serpophaga cinerea*) - CS
Ochre-bellied Flycatcher (*Mionectes oleagineus*) - PL, CL
Slaty-capped Flycatcher (*Leptopogon superciliaris*) - CS
Paltry Tyrannulet (*Zimmerius villissimus*) - CS, CM
Black-capped Pygmy-Tyrant (*Myiornis atricapillus*) - CL (What a stroke of luck to see one at a nest! This miniscule tyrant normally spends most of its time high up in the canopy.)
- Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant (*Lophotriccus pileatus*) - CS (hd)
Northern Bentbill (*Oncostoma cinereigulare*) - PL
Slate-headed Tody-Flycatcher (*Poecilotriccus sylvia*) - PL (hd).
Black headed Tody Flycatcher (*Todirostrum nigriceps*) - CS (hd)
Common Tody Flycatcher (*Todirostrum cinereum*) - CL, PL
Yellow-olive Flycatcher (*Tolmomyias sulphurescens*) - CS, CL, PL (Remember this subspecies was *cinereiceps*; there are to be lots of future splits within this “species”.)
- Stub-tailed Spadebill (*Platyrinchus cancrominus*) - PL (Superb studies from a responsive bird in the open understory of the mature forest.)
Golden-crowned Spadebill (*Platyrinchus coronatus*) - PL (hd)
Northern Royal Flycatcher (*Onychorhynchus mexicanus*) - PL, CL (hd).
Ruddy-tailed Flycatcher (*Terenotriccus erythrurus*) - PL

- Black-tailed Flycatcher (*Myiobius atricaudus*) - PL, CS
Tufted Flycatcher (*Mitrephanes phaenocercus*) - BP, CS, CM
Olive-sided Flycatcher (*Contopus cooperi*) - CM
Dark Pewee (*Contopus lugubris*) - BP (leader only, heard by all)
Tropical Pewee (*Contopus cinereus*) - CL (hd)
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (*Empidonax flaviventris*) - PL
Yellowish Flycatcher (*Empidonax flavescens*) - BP
Black-capped Flycatcher (*Empidonax atriceps*) - CM
Black Phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*) - BP, CM,
Long-tailed Tyrant (*Colonia colonus*) - CL
Bright rumped Attila (*Attila spadiceus*) - BP (hd), CL, PL (hd)
Rufous Mourner (*Rhytipterna holerythra*) - CL (hd), PL
Dusky capped Flycatcher (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*) - CL, PL
Nutting's Flycatcher (*Myiarchus nuttingi*) - PL
Great Crested Flycatcher (*Myiarchus crinitus*) - CL
Brown-crested Flycatcher (*Myiarchus tyrannulus*) - PL
Great Kiskadee (*Pitangus sulphuratus*) - MC, CL, CS, PL
Boat-billed Flycatcher (*Megarynchus pitangua*) - BP, CL, PL
Social Flycatcher (*Myiozetetes similis*) - BP, CS, CL, PL
Gray-capped Flycatcher (*Myiozetetes granadensis*) - CL,
White-ringed Flycatcher (*Conopias albobittata*) - CL
Golden-bellied Flycatcher (*Myiodynastes hemichrysus*) - BP
Streaked Flycatcher (*Myiodynastes maculatus*) - PL, CL
Piratic Flycatcher (*Legatus leucophaeus*) - BP, CS, CL, PL
Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) - MC, CS, CL, PL, CM (almost daily).
Western Kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*) - PL
Barred Becard (*Pachyramphus versicolor*) - BP
Cinnamon Becard (*Pachyramphus cinnamomeus*) - BP (hd), CL (Nesting at La Selva, where we saw it building its nest.)
White-winged Becard (*Pachyramphus polychopterus*) - PL, CL (hd)
Rose-throated Becard (*Pachyramphus aglaiae*) - PL
Masked Tityra (*Tityra semifasciata*) - BP, CL
Black-crowned Tityra (*Tityra inquisitor*) - PL, CL
Gray breasted Martin (*Progne chalybea*) - CL, PL
Mangrove Swallow (*Tachycineta albilinea*) - PL
Blue-and-white Swallow (*Notiochelidon cyanoleuca*) - BP, CS
Northern Rough-winged Swallow (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*) - BP, PL
Southern Rough winged Swallow (*Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*) - CL, CS
Bank Swallow (*Riparia riparia*) - BP
Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) - BP, PL
Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) - PL
Black-and-yellow Silky-Flycatcher (*Phainoptila melanothorax*) - BP
Long-tailed Silky-Flycatcher (*Ptilogonys caudatus*) - BP, CM (Sleek and elegant birds characteristic of the higher montane regions.)
American Dipper (*Cinclus mexicanus*) - CS (We were lucky to see it walking under the water.)
Band-backed Wren (*Campylorhynchus zonatus*) - CL
Rufous-naped Wren (*Campylorhynchus rufinucha*) - PL
Black-throated Wren (*Thryothorus atrogularis*) - CL
Black-bellied Wren (*Thryothorus fasciatoventris*) - PL
Rufous-breasted Wren (*Thryothorus rutilus*) - PL
Riverside Wren (*Thryothorus semibadius*) - PL (Especially good looks at this beautiful specialty of the southwestern forests.)
Bay Wren (*Thryothorus nigricapillus*) - CS, CL

Best of Costa Rica

- Stripe-breasted Wren (*Thryothorus thoracicus*) - CL, CS (hd)
Banded Wren (*Thryothorus pleurostictus*) - PL
Rufous-and-white Wren (*Thryothorus rufalbus*) - PL
Plain Wren (*Thryothorus modestus*) - CL (Caribbean birds are split from Plain Wren by some authorities, and then called “Canebrake Wren”.)
House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*) - BP, CL, PL
Ochraceous Wren (*Troglodytes ochraceus*) - BP
Timberline Wren (*Thryorchilus browni*) - CM (Restricted to dense bamboo and scrub at the highest elevations.)
White breasted Wood Wren (*Henicorhina leucosticta*) - CL
Gray-breasted Wood-Wren (*Henicorhina leucophrys*) - BP(hd), CM
Nightingale Wren (*Microcerculus philomela*) - CS (hd)
Black-faced Solitaire (*Myadestes melanops*) - BP, CM
Slaty-backed Nightingale-Thrush (*Catharus fuscater*) - CS (hd)
Black-billed Nightingale-Thrush (*Catharus gracilirostris*) - CS, CM
Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrush (*Catharus frantzii*) - BP, CM (delightful song).
Black-headed Nightingale-Thrush (*Catharus mexicanus*) - CS
Swainson’s Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*) - CL
Wood Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*) - PL, CL, CM
Sooty Robin (*Turdus nigrescens*) - CM
Mountain Robin (*Turdus plebejus*) - BP, CM, CS
Pale-vented Thrush (*Turdus obsoletus*) - CL, CS
Clay colored Robin (*Turdus grayi*) - all areas and seen every day (The national bird of Costa Rica; seen and heard daily in large numbers.)
Long billed Gnatwren (*Ramphocaenus melanurus*) - PL, CL (hd)
Tropical Gnatcatcher (*Poliophtila plumbea*) - CL (hd)
White-throated Magpie-Jay (*Calocitta formosa*) - PL
Brown Jay (*Cyanocorax morio*) - BP, PL
House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) - PL
Yellow-winged Vireo (*Vireo carmioli*) - BP, CM
Brown-capped Vireo (*Vireo leucophrys*) - BP
Philadelphia Vireo (*Vireo philadelphicus*) - PL (leader only)
Red-eyed Vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*) - CL
Yellow-green Vireo (*Vireo flavoviridis*) - PL
Lesser Greenlet (*Hylophilus decurtatus*) - CL, PL
Green Shrike-Vireo (*Vireolanius pulchellus*) - PL, CS (hd)
Rufous-browed Peppershrike (*Cyclarhis gujanensis*) - BP (hd)
Yellow-bellied Siskin (*Carduelis xanthogastra*) - CM (hd)
Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) - BP, CS, CL (several beautiful males).
Tennessee Warbler (*Vermivora peregrina*) - MC, CS, PL, CM
Flame-throated Warbler (*Parula gutturalis*) - BP, CM (stunning looks at this great warbler).
Tropical Parula (*Parula pitiayumi*) - BP (hd), CS
Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica petechia*) - CL, PL (Including a “Mangrove” Warbler at the Tarcoles River bridge; sometimes considered a separate species.)
Chestnut sided Warbler (*Dendroica pensylvanica*) - CS, CL, PL
Magnolia Warbler (*Dendroica magnolia*) - PL (One female observed along the big road down to the marsh; very rare in Costa Rica.)
Black-throated Green Warbler (*Dendroica virens*) - CM
Blackburnian Warbler (*Dendroica fusca*) - CS
Black-and-white Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*) - BP, CS (great little acrobat).
Northern Waterthrush (*Seiurus noveboracensis*) - PL
Wilson’s Warbler (*Wilsonia pusilla*) - BP, CS, CM
Slate-throated Redstart (*Myioborus miniatus*) - BP, CS

- Collared Redstart (*Myioborus torquatus*) - BP, CM
Black-cheeked Warbler (*Basileuterus melanogenys*) - BP, CM
Three-striped Warbler (*Basileuterus tristriatus*) - BP
Buff-rumped Warbler (*Basileuterus fulvicauda*) - CS, CL
Wrenthrush (*Zeledonia coronata*) - CM (This odd bird was seen well at two different sites, but best was the show by the pair on the last morning, which was the best I have ever seen them!).
Bananaquit (*Coerebe flaveola*) - BP, CS, CL, PL
Common Bush-Tanager (*Chlorospingus ophthalmicus*) - BP, CS, CM
Sooty-capped Bush-Tanager (*Chlorospingus pileatus*) - CM
Ash-throated Bush-Tanager (*Chlorospingus canigularis*) - CS (often hard to find)
Black-and-yellow Tanager (*Chrysothlypis chrysomelaena*) - CS (stunning!)
Dusky-faced Tanager (*Mitrospingus cassinii*) - CS (Wonderful looks at this odd tanager.)
Olive Tanager (*Chlorothraupis carmioli*) - CS
Gray-headed Tanager (*Eucometis penicillata*) - PL
White-throated Shrike-Tanager (*Lanio leucothorax*) - CS
White-shouldered Tanager (*Tachyphonus luctuosus*) - CL, PL
Tawny-crested Tanager (*Tachyphonus delatrii*) - CS
Red throated Ant Tanager (*Habia fuscicauda*) - CL (hd)
Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*) - MC, BP, CL, CS, PL
Flame-colored Tanager (*Piranga bidentata*) - BP (hd), CS, CM
Crimson-collared Tanager (*Ramphocelus sanguinolentus*) - CS, CL
Passerini's Tanager (*Ramphocelus passerinii*) - CS, CL
Cherrie's Tanager (*Ramphocelus costaricensis*) - PL ("Scarlet-rumped Tanager" was split into this and the preceding species).
Blue gray Tanager (*Thraupis episcopus*) - all areas and seen almost daily.
Palm Tanager (*Thraupis palmarum*) - BP, CL, PL
Scrub Euphonia (*Euphonia affinis*) - PL
Thick-billed Euphonia (*Euphonia laniirostris*) - PL
Yellow-throated Euphonia (*Euphonia hirundinacea*) - CL
Olive-backed Euphonia (*Euphonia gouldi*) - CL
Tawny-capped Euphonia (*Euphonia anneae*) - CS
Golden-browed Chlorophonia (*Chlorophonia callophrys*) - CS (exquisite little fig-feeders!)
Emerald Tanager (*Tangara florida*) - CS
Silver-throated Tanager (*Tangara icterocephala*) - BP, CS, CM
Bay-headed Tanager (*Tangara gyrola*) - CS, PL
Golden hooded Tanager (*Tangara larvata*) - CS, CL
Spangle-cheeked Tanager (*Tangara dowii*) - BP, CM
Scarlet-thighed Dacnis (*Dacnis venusta*) - CL, CS
Blue Dacnis (*Dacnis cayana*) - CL
Green Honeycreeper (*Chlorophanes spiza*) - CS, CL
Shining Honeycreeper (*Cyanerpes lucidus*) - CL
Red legged Honeycreeper (*Cyanerpes cyaneus*) - CL, CS
Blue-black Grassquit (*Volatinia jacarina*) - PL
Slate-colored Seedeater (*Sporophila schistacea*) - PL (This singing immature male was a great find; the species is quite rare in Costa Rica!)
Variable Seedeater (*Sporophila corvina*) - CL, PL
Thick-billed Seed-Finch (*Oryzoborus funereus*) - CL
Blue Seedeater (*Amaurospiza concolor*) - BP (hd)
Yellow-faced Grassquit (*Tiaris olivacea*) - BP, CM
Slaty Flowerpiercer (*Diglossa plumbea*) - BP, CS, CM
Yellow-thighed Finch (*Psellophorus tibialis*) - BP, CM
Large-footed Finch (*Pezopetes capitalis*) - CM

Best of Costa Rica

- Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch (*Buarremon brunneinucha*) - BP (An attractive visitor to the feeders; normally difficult to see inside the forest.)
- Orange-billed Sparrow (*Arremon aurantirostris*) - CL, CS, PL (A good candidate for splitting, based on vocal differences between birds of the Caribbean and Pacific Slopes.)
- Olive Sparrow (*Arremonops rufivirgatus*) - PL
- Black striped Sparrow (*Arremonops conirostris*) - CL (hd)
- Rufous-collared Sparrow (*Zonotrichia capensis*) - MC, BP, CS, CM
- Stripe-headed Sparrow (*Aimophila ruficauda*) - PL
- Volcano Junco (*Junco vulcani*) - CM (the highest-elevation endemic of these mountains).
- Buff throated Saltator (*Saltator maximus*) - CS, CL, PL
- Black-headed Saltator (*Saltator atriceps*) - CS, CL
- Black-faced Grosbeak (*Caryothraustes poliogaster*) - CL, CS
- Black-thighed Grosbeak (*Pheucticus tibialis*) - CM (a tough-to-find highland endemic).
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) - BP, CS
- Blue black Grosbeak (*Cyanocompsa cyanooides*) - PL
- Blue Grosbeak (*Passerina caerulea*) - PL
- Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) - CS, CL
- Eastern Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*) - PL
- Melodious Blackbird (*Dives dives*) - BP, CS (spreading)
- Great tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) - MC, CS, CL, PL
- Bronzed Cowbird (*Molothrus aeneus*) - BP, CS, CL
- Giant Cowbird (*Molothrus oryzivorus*) - CL
- Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*) - CS, CL, PL, CM
- Black-cowled Oriole (*Icterus prothemelas*) - CL
- Scarlet rumped Cacique (*Cacicus uropygialis*) - CS
- Chestnut-headed Oropendola (*Psarocolius wagleri*) - CS
- Montezuma Oropendola (*Gymnostinops montezuma*) - CS, CL

Mammal List: 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
Tent making bat (*Saccopteryx* sp?) - PL
Mexican Free-tailed Bat - PL
Mantled Howler (*Alouatta palliata*) - CL
Central American Spider Monkey (*Ateles geoffroyi panamensis*) - CS
Variegated Squirrel (*Sciurus variegatoides*) - CL, PL (more open and secondary woodland).
Red-tailed Squirrel (*Sciurus granatensis*) - BP, CS, CM (inside moister forests).
Central American Agouti (*Dasyprocta punctata*) - BP, PL
Paca (*Agouti paca*) - BP (rarely seen nocturnal rodent)
White-nosed Coati (*Nasua narica*) - BP, PL
Collared Peccary (*Tayassu tajacu*) - CL
Red Brocket Deer (*Mazama americana*) - PL (nice looks at a doe with a fawn)

Amphibians & Reptiles: follows “A Guide to Amphibians and Reptiles of Costa Rica” by Twan Leenders.

Giant Toad (*Bufo marinus*) - CL, PL
Strawberry Poison-Dart Frog (*Dendrobates pumilio*) - CL (“blue jeans frog”).
Spectacled Caiman (*Caiman crocodilus*) - PL
American Crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*) - PL
House Gecko (*Hemidactylus frenatus*) - CL (introduced)
Common Basilisk (*Basiliscus basiliscus*) - PL
Striped Basilisk (*Basiliscus vittatus*) - CL
Black Spiny-tailed Iguana (*Ctenosaura similis*) - PL (“false iguana”).
Green Iguana (*Iguana iguana*) - CL, PL
Central American Whip-tailed Lizard (*Ameiva festiva*) - CL