



TOGETHER FOR NATURE

Birding Costa Rica

February 18-March 3, 2023

Tentative Trip Itinerary

Day 1, Saturday February 18: Arrival

Arrival to Juan Santamaría International Airport in Alajuela, Costa Rica. We will meet the recommended flight at the airport and transport you to the lovely Hotel Bougainvillea in Heredia for a good night's rest before the birding extravaganza begins.

Lodging: Hotel Bougainvillea, Heredia

Day 2, Sunday February 19: Drive to Dominical

We begin the day with an early bird walk in the beautiful gardens of Hotel Bougainvillea, hoping for good looks at Hoffman's Woodpecker, Rufous-naped Wren and the exciting Lesson's Motmot. After breakfast we head to the central Pacific Coast with a stop at the Tarcoles River to seek out various kingfishers and wading birds, plus giant American Crocodiles. As we drive along the Pacific coast we will keep watch for Double-toothed Kite, Scarlet Macaw, and Yellow-headed Caracara.

Lodging: Hacienda Barú

Day 3, Monday February 20: Dominical

Today, we hike in the morning and afternoon along the wonderful trails at Hacienda Barú. A great diversity of species is expected as we traverse open grasslands, rainforest and tropical garden habitats, including Charming Hummingbird, Black-hooded Antshrike, Chestnut-backed Antbird, possible Orange-collared Manakin and various tanagers and parakeets.

Lodging: Hacienda Barú

Day 4, Tuesday February 21: Dominical to Talamanca Mountains

After an early bird walk and breakfast, we'll travel upland onto the lovely Talamanca Cordillera. Possible stops today include Mirador Valle del General and Bosque del Tolomuco, both wonderful for a rich variety of tropical hummingbirds and warblers. Our journey will take us through both cloud and pre-montane forest as we drive the rim of the cordillera. We'll check into our lodge with time to explore the beautiful and expansive grounds as we seek out high-elevation specialties like Large-footed Finch, Long-tailed Silky-Flycatcher and Black-billed Nightingale-thrush.

Lodging: Paraíso Quetzal

Day 5, Wednesday February 22: Talamanca

This morning, we rise early to explore the surrounding farms, woodlands and rolling hills in search of the magnificent Resplendent Quetzal, considered by many to be the most beautiful bird in the world! We may also come across mixed-species flocks of highland birds, including Golden-browed Chlorophonia, Sooty-capped Chlorospingus, Black-faced Solitaire, Tufted Flycatcher and Spangle-cheeked Tanager. In the afternoon, we'll hike the surrounding forest roads and trails and spend time at the outstanding hummingbird garden at our lodge.

Lodging: Paraíso Quetzal

Day 6, Thursday February 23: Talamanca to Orosi

Today we will make a stop at Cerro de la Muerte (11,300'), the highest point on the Interamerican highway. Here, we will look for a few very special highland species in the northernmost extent of páramo, a unique habitat that consists of grasses and windswept shrubs and bamboo. Our main target here will be the Volcano Junco, and we may also encounter Timberline Wren, Slaty Flowerpiercer and Flame-throated Warbler. We then make our way to the Central Valley for lunch, and we'll check in to our hotel with time for a short evening bird walk before dinner.

Lodging: Paraíso Orocay Lodge

Day 7, Friday February 24: Orosi Valley

From the shores of Lake Cachí to the village of Ujarrás, we'll seek out Central Valley midslope specialties including Cabanis's Ground Sparrow, Green Ibis, Least Grebe, Scarlet-thighed Tanager and Golden-hooded Tanager. We'll visit the picturesque Ruinas de Ujarrás, where Crimson-fronted Parakeets nest in the church walls, and time permitting, we'll visit the bird-friendly coffee plantation at Cafe Cristina, where neo-tropical migrants and the occasional boa constrictor can be found!

Lodging: Paraíso Orocaiy Lodge

Day 8, Saturday February 25: Orosi to Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí

After breakfast, we head north through the cloud forest and mid-elevation slopes of Irazú and Braulio Carrillo, ending up in the wonderfully diverse Caribbean Lowlands. Stops along the way should give us some excellent sightings, possibly including Coppery-headed Emerald, Black-cheeked Woodpecker and Collared Aracari. We'll arrive at our next accommodation in time to bird the very birdy grounds of this colorful lodge.

Lodging: Gran Gavilán Lodge

Day 9, Sunday February 26: Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí

We will start early this morning to take advantage of much activity on the entrance road to the famous La Selva Biological Station. This forest edge is frequented by many species, and mixed-species flocks frequently pass through, including a variety of antbirds and antshrikes. At about 8:00 a.m., we'll enter the reserve and walk the rainforest trails with our local guides, delighting in the abundance of birds, mammals and reptiles in this incredible reserve. This afternoon we will visit the magnificent feeders at Mirador Cinchona, a favorite of Northern Emerald-toucanets and where both Red-headed and Prong-billed Barbets are a strong possibility.

Lodging: Gran Gavilán Lodge

Day 10, Monday February 27: Travel to Tortuguero

After a morning bird walk in search of Great Green Macaw, we check out and head east over the foothills, pastures and banana plantations of the coastal plain. At midday, we meet our water taxi at the La Pavona boat launch and ride the Rio Suerte to the peaceful environs of Tortuguero, a small village with no cars located on a spit of sand between the Caribbean and a large canal. It will take about 2 hours by boat, through the waterways of Tortuguero National Park, to get to the village, where we settle in to charming Casa Marbella for three nights.

Lodging: Casa Marbella

Day 11, Tuesday February 28: Tortuguero

Today, we will take morning and afternoon boat tours through Tortuguero National Park and the surrounding canals. From the boat we will look for herons, raptors, kingfishers, toucans, parrots, manakins, as well as caiman, freshwater turtles and up to 3 species of monkeys and 2 species of sloth. The luxury of birding while gently drifting along a variety of canals is a unique and peaceful experience.

Lodging: Casa Marbella

Day 12, Wednesday March 1: Tortuguero

This morning we will take another relaxing boat ride up the canals to search for new and exciting birds and wildlife, including Rufescent Tiger Heron and possible Great Potoo. The afternoon will have a relaxed pace as we explore the village.

Lodging: Casa Marbella

Day 13, Thursday March 2: Tortuguero to Alajuela

After an optional, early-morning bird walk and breakfast, we will begin our return to San Jose with another scenic water taxi ride up the river, where we'll reunite with our bus for the drive back. Lunch and birding in various habitats along the way, followed by our final group dinner after check-in at our lodging near the airport.

Lodging: Hampton Inn, Alajuela

Day 14, Friday March 3: Alajuela

Departure from the international airport in Alajuela to your respective destinations.

Trip Leaders

Candace Larson: clarson@audubonportland.org

Mary Coolidge: mcoolidge@audubonportland.org

and local guides