

## Costa Rica: Volcanoes, Tanagers, and Hummingbirds

March 13-21, 2024

### Itinerary

#### **Day 1: Wed, Mar 13 - Arrival and night in Central Valley**

We'll meet our local guide outside of the customs area at the international airport and then drive to our hotel. After checking in, we will spend the rest of the day birding the gardens to start getting familiar with some of the common bird species of Costa Rica. Some of the expected species are Great Kiskadee, Social Flycatcher, Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, Lesson's Motmot, Cabanis's Wren, Crimson-fronted Parakeet, Chestnut-capped Warbler, Hoffman's Woodpecker, Yellow-headed Caracara, Melodious Blackbird, Inca Dove, and Blue-gray Tanager. The day will end with a welcome briefing and dinner. ***Night at Hotel Bougainvillea***

#### **Day 2: Thu, Mar 14 - Poas Volcano Slopes and Cinchona**

After breakfast we'll start our drive over the mountains towards Sarapiquí. Our first birding stops are going to be on the slopes of Poas Volcano between 7000 to 8000 feet. This is going to be the highest point on our trip and we will target a number of range-restricted species only found on the highlands of Costa Rica and Western Panama. Some of our target highland specialties here include Sooty Thrush, Black-billed Nightingale-Thrush, Yellow-thighed Brushfinch, Magenta-throated Woodstar, Volcano, Scintillant, Fairy-throated and Talamanca Hummingbirds, Long-tailed and Black-and-yellow Silky-Flycatchers, Black-capped Flycatcher, Golden-browed Chlorophonia, Flame-throated Warbler, Collared Redstart, Costa Rican Pygmy-Owl, Buffy Tuftedcheek and Black-thighed Grosbeak to mention a few.

For lunch we will stop at Mirador Cinchona, a small café at 4000 ft with great views of the San Fernando Waterfall plus fruit and nectar feeders that lure a fantastic combination of range-restricted and colorful species. We'll watch for Northern Emerald Toucanet, Coppery-headed Emerald, White-bellied Mountain-Gem, Violet Sabrewing, Black-bellied Hummingbird, Silver-throated, Crimson-collared and Scarlet-rumped Tanagers, Prong-billed and Red-headed Barbets and with some luck, Buff-fronted Quail-Dove. ***Night at Hotel Ara Ambigua, Sarapiquí***

#### **Day 3: Fri, Mar 15 - La Selva Biological Station**

After breakfast, we will take a short drive to La Selva Biological Station. This Lowland Rainforest site located at 2000 feet elevation is worldwide known for being one of the most important rainforest research centers in the Neotropics. The access road and clearings around the facilities provide edge habitat teeming with colorful species such as Red-legged, Shining and Green Honeycreepers; Golden-hooded, Scarlet-rumped, Blue-gray and Crimson-collared Tanagers; Chestnut-colored Woodpecker, Pied Puffbird and more. The trails in the old-growth forest host a number of specialties including Semiplumbeous Hawk, Purple-throated Fruit-Crow, Olive-back Quail-Dove, Rufous-winged Woodpecker, Black-capped Pygmy-Tyrant, White-whiskered Puffbird, Middle American Screech-Owl, Black-crowned Antshrike and Northern-barred Woodcreeper. ***Night at Hotel Ara Ambigua, Sarapiquí***

#### **Day 4: Sat, Mar 16 - Catarata del Toro**

Following breakfast at the hotel, we will load the van and start the drive to Arenal. On the way we will visit Catarata del Toro, a private cloudforest reserve at 4000 ft elevation with feeders, trails and lookouts with breathtaking views of a beautiful waterfall. Here we will look for Purple-throated Mountain-Gem, Coppery-Headed Emerald, Black-bellied Hummingbird, Green Hermit, Green Thorntail, Chestnut-capped Brushfinch, Slate-throated Redstart, Sooty-faced Finch, Slaty-backed Nightingale-Thrush, Black-faced Solitaire, Black-breasted Wood-Quail and Red-faced Spinetail. ***Night at Hotel Linda Vista, Arenal***

#### **Day 5: Sun, Mar 17 - Arenal Observatory Reserve**

We will spend the morning at Arenal Observatory Reserve, a private reserve at 2400 ft elevation with a great combination of Caribbean foothill habitats hosting a great diversity of species such as Emerald Tanager, Great Curassow, Crested Guan, Scarlet-thighed Dacnis, Yellow-throated Euphonia, Buff-rumped Warbler, Dull-mantled Antbird, Song Wren, Red-lored Parrot, Hepatic Tanager, Montezuma Oropendola, Black-crested Coquette and Violet-headed Hummingbird. In the afternoon we visit Peninsula Road, a gravel road passing through different stages of second-growth forest which is good for White-throated Magpie-Jay, Long-tailed Tyrant; Rufous, Broad-billed and Keel-billed Motmots;

Bare-crowned Antbird, Red-throated Ant-Tanager, Smoky-brown Woodpecker, White-collared Manakin, Thicket Antpitta, Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher and Bay Wren among many others. **Night at Hotel Linda Vista, Arenal**

**Day 6: Mon, Mar 18 - Sky Adventures Arenal**

Following breakfast, we will check out and take a short drive to Sky Adventures Arenal, where we will be birding the Sky Walk Trail. This trail passes through mature Caribbean foothill rainforest and has 2 suspension bridges and an observation platform that provide unique views of the forest canopy and host species such as Crowned Woodnymph, Purple-crowned Fairy, Shining Honeycreeper; Bay-headed, Blue-and-gold, Carmiol's and Black-and-yellow Tanagers; Brown-billed Scythebill; Spotted and Northern-barred Woodcreeper; Striped-breasted Wren, Black-headed Nightingale-Thrush, Ornate Hawk-Eagle; Spotted, Zeledon's, Bicolored and Ocellated Antbirds, Tawny-capped Euphonia, Tawny-faced Gnatwren and even the elusive Sharpbill. After a morning full of wonderful birds, we will continue the drive up and over the continental divide to our next hotel on the shores of the Gulf of Nicoya. **Night at Ensenada Lodge**

**Day 7: Tue, Mar 19 – Ensenada Lodge & Environs**

We will spend the day birding the grounds of the lodge. This deciduous dry forest location has a combination of habitats including pastures with scattered trees and second-growth forest that host Rose-throated Becard, Crested Bobwhite, Canivet's Emerald, Cinnamon Hummingbird, Long-billed Starthroat, Pacific Screech Owl, Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl, Streak-backed and Spot-breasted Oriole, Lesser Ground-Cuckoo, Turquoise-browed Motmot, Black-headed Trogon, Orange-fronted Parakeet, Yellow-naped Parrot, Rufous-naped and Banded Wrens, Scrub Euphonia, White-lored Gnatwren and more. **Night at Ensenada Lodge**

**Day 8: Wed, Mar 20 – Gulf of Nicoya Boat Trip; return to San Jose**

Before breakfast we will take a boat drive on the Gulf of Nicoya and Abangaritos Mangroves where we can find Whimbrel, Magnificent Frigatebird, Brown Pelican, Elegant, Sandwich and Caspian Terns, Surfbird, Ruddy Turnstone, Black-bellied Plover, and notable numbers of overwintering Ospreys. Our chief targets in the mangroves are the Yellow (Mangrove) Warbler, Mangrove Vireo, and the endemic Mangrove Hummingbird, whose distribution is limited to these mangroves on Costa Rica's Pacific Coast. After breakfast back at our lodge, we'll enjoy some more birding on the grounds of the hotel focusing on species we may have missed the day before. After lunch we will drive back to our hotel near the international airport in San Jose. **Night at Hotel Bougainvillea**

**Day 9: Thu, Mar 21 – Departure**

You may plan your return flight for any time today. The hotel is only 15 minutes away from the airport and transfers can be easily arranged. For those with later departures, you'll have opportunities for birding the grounds before your return flights.

***\*\*Itinerary is subject to change depending on weather conditions and the decisions of the guides. Some activities may be substituted or switched around on various days to give us the best chance at finding all our target species.***