

## Costa Rica 16 Days / 13 Nights Bird watching Program

*Birding in Costa Rica is an extraordinary experience, with 812 species recorded with voucher to date (Ornithological Association of Costa Rica)*



### Day by Day Itinerary

#### **Day 01-February 9<sup>th</sup>: Welcome to Costa Rica. Transfer to your hotel. Overnight at the Presidente Hotel**

Meet & greet at airport, transfer to the Hotel Presidente. After passing through Immigration you will meet one of our representatives at the airport. He will take you to your hotel and give you our welcome kit.

[www.hotel-presidente.com](http://www.hotel-presidente.com)



#### **Day 02-February 10<sup>th</sup>: Private ground transfer to San Gerardo de Dota. (B/L/D). Overnight at Mirador de Quetzales.**

The Mountain Hotel Mirador de Quetzales is located in the Cerro de la Muerte 2 hours from San José. It was founded by Leonor Serrano and Eddy Obando and is characterized by the easy observation of the beautiful Quetzal and more than 150 species of birds (hummingbirds, nuthatches, tanagers, black kettles and more).

<http://www.elmiradordequetzales.com/>



#### **Day 03-February 11<sup>th</sup>: Transportation to Rancho Naturalista. Overnight at Rancho Naturalista (B/L/D).**

The lodge is situated in 50 hectares (125 acres) of protected primary pre-montane Caribbean slope rainforest. Here, the habitats within the grounds include semi-wooded pastures and seasonal mountain streams. The extensive network of good trails provides access to diverse sections of the forest, these trails range from easy to more strenuous although the birding

rewards make the tougher hikes worthwhile. Two very popular areas within the forest are the [Hummingbird Feeders and Hummingbird Pools](#) which give people stunning close-up views of the signature bird of Rancho Naturalista, the Snowcap, and a plethora of other species. (Night tours available, mercury lamp's is allowed).



**Day 04-February 12<sup>th</sup>: Rancho Naturalista in the Caribbean (B/L/D).**

Today (you can organize early morning bird watching tour with your guide) explore various trails looking for the over 450 species of birds have been recorded in the area. These birds may be sampled from this comfortable lodge famous for its excellent food, welcoming hospitality and stunning volcano views.



**Day 05-February 13<sup>th</sup>: Transfer to Tarcoles, Overnight at Cerro Lodge. (B,L,D)**

Cerro Lodge is located "in the middle" of the Carara National Park and the Tárcoles mangroves (where the scarlet macaws live and nest), so usually these birds fly through this section of the valley and it's easy to see them.

Cerro Lodge is an environmental friendly project located in a farm in Tarcoles (Central Pacific). This area is one of the most important refuges of the scarlet macaw in Costa Rica.



**Day 06-February 14<sup>th</sup>: Boat tour at the Tarcoles River, Overnight at Cerro Lodge. (B,L,D)**



Located on the Central Pacific Coast of Costa Rica, the Estuary of Guacalillo and the Tarcoles River offer the opportunity to observe one of the largest populations of American crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*) in America, also discover the mangrove area with a high percentage biodiversity among which there is a large number of waterfowl and one of the most important conservation area of the Scarlet Macaw in the country.

Boats with up to 25 people will take you for a ride extensive mangrove ecosystem composed impressive four mangrove species, all of them represent an important nesting ground for birds that inhabit it, so that in turn represent their shelter and nutrients area for many fish and invertebrates also mangrove swamps are extremely important for marine productivity.

As the boat approaches the sand banks around the river, passengers will have the opportunity to see up close crocodiles up to five meters long in its wild habitat. The crocodiles were common in mangroves and coastal shores, but in recent decades trappers severely decimated its population, today, thanks to conservation programs, the last inventory along the Tarcoles River in the area of Carara Biological Reserve resulted in 50 to 150 individuals per kilometer.

Furthermore, in the area of mangroves and the river can be found a population of over 250 different birds such as kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), roseate spoonbills (*platelea ajaja*) Basiliscus (*basiliscus* sp) heron (*Ardea sinerea*), aningas (*anhinga anhinga*), Blue Heron (*Egretta caerulea*) nocturnal birds and more. The Tarcoles River is one of the most important feeding sites for resident and migratory birds, and an important meeting place for mating and shelter for mammals and reptiles.



**Day 07-February 15<sup>th</sup>: Transfer to Monteverde, Overnight at Los Cipreses Hotel. (B/L/D)**

Cool, misty cloudforest and deep green foliage is what has made Monteverde an absolute hot spot for eco tourism in the Central Highlands of Costa Rica. This zone is home to a string of volcanoes, both active and dormant, beautiful national parks and diverse weather. A long winding dirt road off of the Pan American Highway leads to the lush mountaintop paradise of Monteverde, which is nestled between two primary cloud forest reserves. The town was founded in the 1950's by a few Quaker families that were looking to leave the U.S. and its war behind. The absence of a military made Costa Rica the perfect fit. They settled in the area now called Monteverde and established dairy farms which would eventually supply the Monteverde Cheese Factory. Shortly after their arrival they established the wildlife sanctuary of Monteverde.

The spectacular Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve attracts scientists, bird watchers, and wildlife lovers from all parts of the world. Inside the reserve you can explore the virgin forests and multi-century old strangler fig trees on your way to a viewpoint which sits on the

continental divide. On a clear day you can see both the Caribbean and the Pacific coasts. The reserve is also one of the few remaining homes of the endangered resplendent Quetzal; the opportunity to see this exotic bird is worth the trip alone.

On the other side of town you'll find the slightly smaller, and higher, Santa Elena Cloud Forest Reserve which has views of the Arenal Volcano. Other popular activities in the area include the canopy tours, visits to the butterfly garden, the suspension bridges tour, horseback riding, a visit to the cheese factory and the hummingbird galleries found at the entrances to both reserves.



**Day 08-February 16<sup>th</sup>: Early Bird watching tour, Overnight at Los Cipreses Hotel. (B/L/D)**

Anyone who has birded Costa Rica has heard of Monteverde, the famous cloud forest. One of the legendary and classic bird watching spots where 350+bird species have been identified. Located at an altitude ranging from 1400 to1700 meters above sea level, this cool retreat is home to hundreds of tropical birds, Apart from the popular quetzals and toucans, other species commonly see include wood creepers, flycatchers and migratory species like orioles and grosbeaks; although not often se but frequently herd, the three-wattle bellbird also resides here.



**Day 09-February 17<sup>th</sup>: Transfer to Bosque de Paz. Overnight at Bosque de Paz lodge. (B/L/D)**



Bosque de Paz Private Ecological Reserve and Lodge is an Orchid and Bird Paradise in the mountains, unparalleled just about anywhere in the world - a haven for photographers - bird, orchid, nature and animal photography. You will be staying at the edge of the impressive cloud forest of Juan Castro Blanco National Park. This hotel is unique in its isolated setting, undisturbed quietness and spectacular fauna and flora. Several hummingbird species, the Black Guan and Chestnut-capped Brush-finch can be enjoyed from nearby at the hotel feeders.

**Day 10-February 18<sup>th</sup>: Exploration day at Bosque de Paz lodge. (B/L/D)**

You will admire wonders of nature, outstanding birds, and wildlife at Bosque de Paz, using signed trails through the forest. There are different trails ranging from 1 kilometer to 7.5 kilometers, adding up to 22 kilometers through old growth and second growth forest. You will be looking for typical cloud forest birds like Golden-browed Chlorophonia, Azure-hooded Jay and Black-faced Solitaire among others. At night during dinner you can watch the rare and shy Paca's coming to the corn feeders.

**Day 11-February 19<sup>th</sup>: Transfer to Sarapiquí. OV: La Selva Biological Station (B/L/D)**



La Selva Biological Station (Estacion Biologica La Selva) was originally founded in 1954 for purely scientific purposes. Since then, it has become a leading research center for Costa Rican ecology and has been opened to the public. Providing some of the most immaculate primary tropical rainforest available, the well-kept trail system extends over 31 miles (50 km) and allows visitors the opportunity for exploring La Selva with a knowledgeable guide. Visit the station, which is now managed by the Organization for Tropical Studies, to experience, first hand, the vast contributions the park has made to the scientific and biological community.

There are around 1,000 tree species found throughout the 3,700 acre (1,500 ha) park as well as 420 bird species that reside within the station borders. The reserve is also home to about half of the mammal species found in Costa Rica and the majority of the butterfly varieties. Also, watch out for the 55 species of snakes that slither through the premontane rain forest. Together with Braulio Carrillo National Park, this joint effort in conservation provides an educational opportunity to witness Costa Rica's ecology up close and personal.

La Selva is located just 2 miles (3 km) south of Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí. From San José, it can be accessed from the Guápiles Highway (Hwy 32). Head east from the capital, then take the Hwy 4 exit passing north through the town of Las Horquetas until you reach the park entrance on the left hand side.



**Day 12-February 20<sup>th</sup>: Early birding tour/  
OV: La Selva Biological Station (B/L/D)**

La Selva Biological Station is one of the finest places for bird watching in Costa Rica. Our excellent trail system and our knowledgeable naturalist guides would lead birdwatchers through a variety of habitats, from dense primary rain forest to open pasturelands. Walks are offered at 5:45am previous reservation. Each walk is approximately 2 hours.

**In the afternoon Boat tour at Sarapiquí River**

It is a very tranquil and safe area, great for observing nature, birds, the rain forest, and animals such as iguanas, monkeys and crocodiles. You can sit back and use your telescope, binoculars, or your bird-watching book to enjoy the trip.

**Day 13-February 21<sup>st</sup>: Return to San Jose. (B) Overnight at the Presidente Hotel**

**Day 14-February 22<sup>nd</sup>: Departure transfer from hotel to the Juan Santamaria International Airport. (B)**

*Hasta pronto!*