

**ORNITHOLIDAYS' TOUR TO COSTA RICA**  
*Classic Neotropical Birding*

**07 - 23 February 2010**



**Leader: Tony Pym**

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### A Personal Diary

#### Friday 5 February

We were booked on the first flight of the day, which required a very early start for everyone, with an agreed meeting time of 0420 in the morning! The check-in desks for our flight were soon open by which time the entire group had assembled. With check-in now available on-line it made for easier boarding card issue and baggage drop. The security checks came next, and there was time in reserve for any last minute shopping, or breakfast and refreshment, before our flight was called.

The flight left a little late, at 0645, though we had spare time in Madrid for the connecting long-haul flight to San José, Costa Rica. The first flight gave everyone the chance for a little snooze, after the early start. On arrival in Madrid we were taken by bus to the international terminal, quite some distance from the European arrivals.

The flight to San José took eleven hours and we touched down to find immigration facilities were slow with only a few desks open. Once all were through, and luggage collected, we went into the arrivals hall to be met by Simon, our ground agent, and Santiago, our driver. I knew both well, from previous visits, and it was good to see them once again. I knew from past experience that Santiago was a competent birder also, so we were in good hands.

The bus was soon loaded and we set off to our first hotel and, after checking-in, we met for dinner. Everyone was in high spirits for the 'real' start of the holiday, and tomorrow's plans were outlined. We retired for a good night's sleep in anticipation of seeing tomorrow one of the most beautiful birds in the world, the Resplendent Quetzal!

#### Saturday 6 February

We had an early start, to leave the city's traffic and to ensure two good sites could be visited today. Morning coffee was served at 0530 and Santiago joined us. Our drive took us out of the city to join the Pan-American Highway. The bus began climbing the hills into the Cerro de la Muerte. Our first stop was to be the Finca Paraiso del Quetzal, situated at an altitude of some 2,600 metres (8,600ft). This small private farm is renowned for this remarkable bird, the quetzal.

It was a pleasant day, cloudy but bright. Last time I was here I remembered the changeable weather of these highlands but we needn't have feared as the weather was to stay nice for our day's birding. We drove the track into the *finca* and walked to the small restaurant. The hummingbird feeders on the veranda were alive with these little gems, zooming in to sip the sugar-water. Dazzling Magnificent and Fiery-throated Hummingbirds squabbled for dominance, whilst Green Violet-ears and the occasional smaller Volcano Hummingbird sneaked in during the melee.

After a breakfast of hot homemade food served by the staff, we started our walk with Jorge, the local guide. We set off up the slope into the woodland where Sooty Robins flew from the path and Black-capped Flycatchers chased insects. A Volcano Hummingbird advertised his territory in display flights from the electricity wires. We were heading for an area of avocado trees, a favourite fruit for the quetzals. Both the silky-flycatchers, Long-tailed and Black-and-Yellow, were colourful highland specialities that mixed with small feeding flocks of tanagers. A bird particularly admired was the eye-catching Golden-browed Chlorophonia with its tropical plumage of blue, green and yellow.

Soon, we had found the star bird, the Resplendent Quetzal, and our first sighting was a full-tailed male with long streamers gently swaying in the breeze (though, in reality, it is not the tail, as the streamers are actually elongated uppertail coverts). After the obligatory photographs we moved on for more birds. In the distance the call of a Costa Rican Pygmy-Owl was heard and we tried playback, using the iPod. I saw the bird fly in,

but only to land, out of sight, in the top of a large tree. We all moved and tried playing the call once more. The bird flew to perch on the outer edge of the woodland for great views for everybody. As we moved back downhill for lunch Sooty-capped Bush-Tanagers called from the shrubbery whilst a Black-billed Nightingale-Thrush was studied as it hopped around in the leaf litter. Our quetzal count for the morning came to seven birds.

Lunch was a choice of main courses and was very good, after which we drove towards Savegre. Leaving the main road we drove five miles of made-up track before reaching a small hotel. The feeders here attracted many hummingbirds and we watched as White-throated Mountain-gems joined Scintillant Hummingbirds that came zinging past us within inches. These multi-coloured and iridescent flying jewels kept us spellbound. We took a short walk around the hotel grounds, which yielded Spotted Woodcreepers, Flame-coloured Tanagers and both Black-throated Green and Flame-throated Warblers, whilst large and dynamic White-collared Swifts flew overhead for all to see. A Collared Trogon was surprisingly low, at eye-level, and very close to the track; it was carrying a caterpillar in its bill to take to a nest close-by. At the coffee shop we took refreshment and watched the 'hummers' at the feeders. A flock of graceful Swallow-tailed Kites appeared over the distant hillside, whilst a Red-tailed Hawk did a flypast.

We returned to the hustle and bustle of the city. We had dinner together in the hotel restaurant and discussed our plans for tomorrow. It was to be another early start to get to the domestic airport and take the charter planes for Tiskita. Also we needed to pack, remembering the weight allowance of 12 kilograms for the flight, so retired to our rooms by 2100.

### **Sunday 7 February**

Early morning calls were arranged for 0445. We loaded the bags and left for the domestic airport. At the airport we were directed to the hangars where two small charter planes were waiting to take us to Tiskita.

The single-engined planes taxied out to fly over the mountains westwards towards the Pacific coast. At one point we could see the Atlantic to one side, in the far distance, and the Pacific to the other. The flight was very enjoyable, with little turbulence, and we were able to relax and enjoy the scenery as we headed down the coastline, over the Osa Peninsular, towards Tiskita.

The small runway, cut into the forest, looked tiny as we made our approach to the lodge. On landing we were met by Peter and Lisbeth, owners of Tiskita Lodge. Once both planes had landed, the luggage was offloaded and taken by vehicle to the lodge. We opted for the short walk up the track to the main building where breakfast awaited. On the way we could hear the characteristic calls from a Black-hooded Antshrike and the trees held Tennessee Warblers, Streaked Flycatcher and a Bright-rumped Attila. New birds were coming thick and fast and our binoculars were still in use during breakfast.

What else for breakfast in the tropics but plenty of fresh fruit and juices? Then, add homemade bread, local eggs and a hearty breakfast for all was the result. We were shown to our cabins and scheduled our first walk, Peter and Lisbeth leading us, into the forest following the course of a woodland stream. Stunning Red-capped and Blue-crowned Manakins bounced around the branches whilst playback brought in two Chestnut-backed Antbirds into the undergrowth. The loud calls from a Rufous Piha resonated through the forest but the bird remained typically well-hidden in the upper canopy. We added Black-headed Trogon on the way back, and our first toucans, Chestnut-mandibled. Our first walk here had been very successful.

We took lunch at the lodge. A Three-toed Sloth in a near tree, plus a King Vulture seen to descend into the closed forest, delayed us and meant we were little late, but this was a place to simply relax and enjoy. It was hot and we had a siesta after lunch. It was time to laze in a hammock or take a short nap. We agreed another walk would start at 1530.

Our afternoon walk took us to the airfield and from there to the beach. On the way, Green Honeyeaters fed on abundant berries whilst flycatchers sallied from trees for insect prey. A troop of Squirrel Monkeys crossed the path ahead of us, using the smallest of branches adeptly as aerial walkways. At the airstrip skulking Black-striped Sparrows called noisily from the undergrowth to finally show well. One lone bush held Yellow Warblers, Red-legged Honeycreepers and Variable Seedeaters whilst, higher in one of the trees, two Euphonia species could be compared alongside each other – these were Yellow-throated and Spot-

crowned Euphonias. We stood for a while at the beach, to take in the view of dark sand that continued for miles, the noise of crashing surf, and it was nice to feel the fresh sea breeze. A couple of Spotted Sandpipers flew along the tide line and Willets and Hudsonian Whimbrels gathered in a loose flock, further down the beach on the exposed rocks.

Arriving back at the lodge, we raided the tasty homemade lemonade available at the restaurant. It was very welcome in the heat. After freshening-up in our cabins, we met at the small bar, to one side of the restaurant, to enjoy a beer or glass or two of wine before dinner. After dinner we called our first bird log, adding those from yesterday as well; we could see the species list was mounting fast.

### **Monday 8 February**

The pre-breakfast bird walk never left the vicinity of the main lodge building as the birding was so good, with most birds coming to two fruiting trees. Toucans flew over, noisy Scarlet Macaws could be heard, and Philadelphia Vireo was amongst the feeding honeycreepers. White-necked Jacobin, Blue-throated Goldentail and Long-billed Hermit represented the hummers.

Our morning walk was intentionally into the forest once more. Riverside Wrens burst into song and we found another hummer, Band-tailed Barbthroat, holding territory. Black-throated Trogons were positively common, some seen well and even more heard. Ochre-bellied Flycatcher and a second Golden-crowned Spadebill were both good woodland species to add. Agoutis, large rodents related to guinea pigs, generally shy and afraid of humans, seemed to take little notice of us and simply walked away into cover. Just before lunch two good birds were found close to the parking area. The first a calling male Baird's Trogon, the most uncommon of Tiskita's trogons and usually found in the rainforest canopy at higher altitude, and secondly, a posing Laughing Falcon.

Once more, we had a siesta after lunch before meeting again when it was cool, at 1530, this time to take a walk to Peter's orchard. Peter explained his planting methods over the years and future plans for the farm. Few birds were seen here, though a large *Accipiter* that flew between the open areas went unidentified. Inside the forest a hyperactive Long-billed Gnatwren came to playback. Later, as dusk was approaching, a low and deep bubbling in the distance came from a waking Spectacled Owl, that was successfully brought in above our heads, with considerate use of the iPod once more (though the views were not the best). It was getting dark as we headed back and those in the lead disturbed a Common Pauraque from the path, that flew only short distance but to within deeper cover of the forest.

### **Tuesday 9 February**

Once more an early bird walk around the lodge was on offer. We had excellent views of Chestnut-mandibled Toucans as they flew to perch in a large *Cecropia*, then to call incessantly with shrill piercing yelps. Our first Buff-throated Saltator (we would find later this to be a common bird at La Selva) was spotted and a White Hawk put in an appearance over the forest.

Our walk was along a trail that followed the bends of a forest stream. 'Wing-snapping' from an Orange-collared Manakin, the volume comparable to the clapping of hands, led us towards a male, even if the views were brief. Again there was much activity from the Black-throated Trogons with a number of birds calling and seen flying. These would be males, out to attract females, as nesting begins this month. Black-bellied Wrens crept through the lower vegetation, giving themselves away by their loud songs. One pair was seen carrying nesting material. We came across a mixed feeding flock that contained Plain Xenops ('the upside-down bird') and a pair of Dot-winged Antwrens, the latter species being sexually dimorphic with the male generally black and the female red and grey.

We went back for lunch and were looking forward to Peter's freshly squeezed orange juice. Lunch, as usual here at Tiskita, was followed with a siesta. We would try birding along the beach later.

Mid-afternoon, we strolled down to the airfield. Raucous Mealy Parrots screeched overhead and a Mangrove Black Hawk, usually found here was, right on cue, sitting in a large tree some halfway down the runway. Disciplined squadrons of Brown Pelicans flew over, in neat formation, as if bombers going on a mission. A juvenile male Peregrine, identified on size and breast streaking (not barring), powered over to then circle upwards on a thermal.

The beach walk gave us the expected waders once more, with Willet, Whimbrel, Spotted Sandpiper and we added Semipalmated Plover today. At sea, outside the surf, a Royal Tern was fishing. Behind the beach numerous vultures, together with frigatebirds, soared over the woodland and the White Hawk reappeared amongst them.

We sauntered back to the lodge, and later enjoyed a drink at the bar. At the evening log call, I commented that seven tanager species had been seen today. Most were very colourful, but it was the Golden-hooded Tanager that seemed to win the accolade.

### **Wednesday 10 February**

We had a light breakfast at 0630 as the two aircraft were coming in to collect us at 0700. We heard them pass over, to buzz the lodge, giving the signal they were about to land. The luggage was taken down to 'Terminal 6', (actually a wooden hut in a field), and we walked to the airstrip. We said farewell to Peter and Lisbeth, then boarded for the one-hour flight.

We flew the same route back. In bright sunlight, we crossed the waters of Golfo Dulce, over the Osa Peninsular, to traverse the mountains before dropping down to San José. Volcan Irazu was on the horizon as we made our approach. We taxied to the hangars where Simon and Santiago were waiting. We were reunited with our main luggage that had been left in safe storage at Santiago's house.

Once we were all aboard the bus we set off, next stop Monteverde, a drive of five hours allowing for a couple of stops on the way. The first was at a freshwater reservoir where Least Grebes were swimming and Blue-winged Teal rested on the bank.

We took a short diversion from the main road to the small town of Orantina where we parked at the town square. We had a surprise in store for everybody, as this is a known 'stakeout' for an owl, an impressive large owl. With cameras to hand we walked into the square, looked upwards into the tree branches and there it was, a Black-and-White Owl, with half-open eyes it was staring right back at us with disdain! The square had a Two-toed Sloth in residence also, that has been here for many years and, at another corner, a Cinnamon Hummingbird was found sitting on a delicate nest of small fern scales and lichen held together by cobwebs.

Our next stop was at a café, along the coast road, favoured for its views over the tidal creek. The tide was on the way in but there were more than a 100 Laughing Gulls and many Royal Terns loafing on an exposed sandbar. An Osprey came upriver to drop and plunge into the water, in full view, but wasn't lucky for a catch this time. All this action was seen whilst we tucked into ice creams!

We took the turning to Monteverde, which was the start of the climb into the hills, and though the road has vastly improved over recent years it was still bumpy in many places. The scenery became better the higher we drove, with deep green valleys and distant mountains, even views across to the Pacific Ocean. We arrived at the lodge and after check-in formalities were completed the bus took us to our rooms, the best-sited in the hotel with distant views over the Monteverde forests.

After a late lunch Santiago drove us to the Hummingbird Gallery but just as we were leaving, at the garden edge, we saw an odd hummingbird, which I identified as Blue-tailed Hummingbird (on tail length and a most intense tail colour). This is a rare species known from a few sites only, but I knew the confusion species well, Steely-vented Hummingbird. I have since been told there is another feature for Blue-tailed; it has rufous secondaries, which I wasn't aware of, and now wish I had looked for at the time.

Both the gift shop and café at the gallery had many feeders outside. It was all happening so fast, as new hummer species for the group were coming and going, *very quickly*, but soon everyone had seen the species known to be here. Who could forget Violet Sabrewing, Purple-throated Mountain-gem or Coppery-headed Emerald? It was a magical show....

We returned to the hotel and met later to have dinner together. After this, we moved to the more comfy chairs in the foyer to go through the birds that were seen today and discuss the plans for tomorrow.

## **Thursday 11 February**

During breakfast Bernal, our local birding guide, arrived and was introduced to the group. He and I had agreed on the routes over the next couple of days and the important birds that we should be looking for. Today's plan was to visit the Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve and we set off through the village to the main entrance. It was not too busy today (sometimes the reserve can have busloads arrive, even from the cruise ships, as the reserve seems to be an iconic stop whilst in Costa Rica) and soon we had our tickets.

Our walk was to take us along the main trail. A number of active bird parties came through the trees over the next few hours. In them, were woodcreepers, foliage-gleaners and spinetails. A Black-and-White Warbler was seen climbing a branch, treecreeper-like. A pair of quetzals had decided on a nest site just off the main track and the male was splendid as he clung to the tree hole excavating and removing wood shavings.

Low-down, Grey-breasted Wood-Wrens burst into loud songs of melodious rich warbles and whistles, whilst at eye-level Golden-crowned Warblers passed through. Higher still, there was another trogon for us, Orange-bellied. A pair of tiny Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrants led us on a game of hide-and-seek as they raced through the deep and dark foliage, but eventually gave themselves up.

We walked to the Hummingbird Gallery where we ate our packed lunches watching as hummers came and went. The owner of the café told us that a pair of quetzals was coming to a nest on his property, just across the road. We walked over with him to find the male bird only six metres from us.

Our afternoon walk was to try and see another hummingbird, one that likes to be around fast flowing water. Bernal knew this bird was holding territory close to a waterfall. We set off, soon finding a Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch alongside the path and we scoped a White-throated Robin. A family group of Coatis were actively digging the leaf litter in search of invertebrates and fruit (but they will take lizards, rodents, even birds given the chance) and passed us by, taking little notice. We found our hummer too...it was a Green-fronted Lancebill...iridescent green with a long needle-like bill.

At closing time we left the reserve to return to the hotel where we had a couple of hours to relax before dinner.

## **Friday 12 February**

A pair of Blue-throated Toucanets (see Taxonomic Notes at the end of trip list) perched in trees outside the dining area before our breakfast was served. Bernal arrived during breakfast and we left the hotel at 0700 for Santa Elena Reserve, a privately owned forest with good trails. One feeding flock contained Red-faced Spinetail, Ruddy Treerunners, Spotted Barbtail and Buffy Tuftedcheek – all members of the *Furnariids* or Ovenbirds that build diverse covered nests, some are massive structures. Barred Becard was a nice one to get also.

A Slaty-backed Nightingale-Thrush bounced along the trail ahead of us whilst Slate-throated Redstarts hopped and flitted close, as if to inspect us. These birds always fan their tails, which have white-outers, which some say may flush insects. A dainty Tufted Flycatcher chased insects to return to its favourite perch. Further on a Grey-throated Leaf-tosser was calling. We used playback and successfully got it to come closer on the forest floor. Indeed, at one stage, the bird was less than three metres from our feet. An Immaculate Antbird, a regular army ant follower, also called but this one stayed in dense cover. We had a long walk at Santa Elena, some slopes were steep, but the birding here had been excellent.

Our afternoon excursion was to the Santuario Ecologico, this reserve having 'open forest' and areas of second growth. As we disembarked the bus at the car park a male Long-tailed Manakin called and a Steely-vented Hummingbird was seen feeding on blossoms close-by. A Wood Thrush, a winter migrant here, decided to be uncooperative, and moved quickly off the path and back into the forest. As we were about to leave a distant Keel-billed Toucan called and was put 'in the scope' for all to admire.

We called in to the local craft shop, ran by the women of Monteverde. It had some lovely items, and some of the group bought gifts to take home. Bernal said goodbye and we thanked him for escorting us and finding the birds.

## **Saturday 13 February**

At 0615 Santiago brought the bus close to our block of rooms so we could load the luggage before breakfast. We left Monteverde and headed southwards towards Carara and the Pacific coast. We stopped at the Carara Bridge, and walked across so as to see the huge American Crocodiles basking in the sun. Black-necked Stilts and noisy Southern Lapwings were on the riverbank.

We had a boat trip this morning and drove to a small jetty on the River Tarcoles where our boat was waiting. We had a brilliant couple of hours. Firstly, Luis the boatman took us towards the estuary mouth where Brown Pelicans, 100+ Magnificent Frigatebirds, White Ibis and numerous herons and egrets species had gathered. We turned the boat to travel upstream, passing a sentinel Osprey on a dead tree, and into the small backwaters where Bare-throated Tiger-Herons looked for fish. A furtive Rufous-necked Wood-Rail moved quietly through the mangrove roots but unfortunately was not seen by the entire group.

We moved on, to one side of the boat we see a Grey-headed Kite lift to the air, and a small bobbing bird at the mangrove edge simply had to be a Northern Waterthrush, on actions alone. Ringed, Green and American Pygmy Kingfishers were all seen and we shouldn't forget the Scarlet Macaws, wild indigenous stock here.

We cruised out onto the main river once more, moving further upstream. The boatman steered the boat under a large overhanging tree, to show us roosting Boat-billed Herons, and slowed down at another point to show a Double-striped Thick-knee, exposed on the baking earth. We saw a tiny plover chick running around but the parent, a Collared Plover, took longer to find.

A tidal lake was our last stop where Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks walked along the bank, ever-alert, and flocks of Western and Semipalmated Sandpipers ran around like clockwork toys.

We had enjoyed the boat trip and once back at the quayside we boarded the bus, as Santiago had a lunch stop in mind for us. It was on private property and was a long straight dirt track with forest to both sides. We added Rufous-and-white Wren and Black-headed Trogon to the growing bird list.

We drove a few hours to enter the Hacienda Solimar estate, in the Guanacaste lowlands. This is a working ranch, of some 5000 acres, and the produce here is quality beef coming from award-winning Brahmin cattle. Stripe-headed Sparrows and a Laughing Falcon were seen as we drove the entrance road. We were shown to our rooms in, and alongside, the main house and met Demetrio, who would be our guide for the next few days, and Anna and Juanita, our cooks.

Some of the party took a dip in the swimming pool whilst others watched from the balcony area as the sun set. We were the only guests, so dinner was a relaxed affair.

## **Sunday 14 February**

We left for our walk after breakfast. We drove to a remnant patch of secondary forest on the estate. Demetrio imitated the call of a Collared Forest-Falcon, which flew towards us to perch in the closest tree. Birding was slow inside the forest. We walked along a dried-out stream, which had occasional wet and flooded areas. We couldn't believe our eyes to see a Sunbittern slowly and stealthily walking into one of the remaining ponds. This was a very good record here and Demetrio told us he had seen only two in over a year. Also, a key bird for this particular birding tour, and I was glad to see this one, never knowing the conditions at the main stakeout at La Selva Verde. We stayed still, remained quiet, and watched the bird for some time as it searched for small fish, occasionally making a strike.

Demetrio imitated the call of Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl and a Yellow Warbler, Rose-throated Becard and Tropical Gnatcatcher came in to scold the 'owl'. Outside the forest, in the open grasslands, flocks of parakeets flew over and we found another hummer, perched at the very top of a solitary dead tree – Green-breasted Mango.

Lunch was at the farmhouse, and this was followed by a siesta. Some took advantage of the swimming pool, which looked very inviting, as the air temperature was about 33° C. There was time to relax, read, take a snooze or gen-up with the bird book.

Mid-afternoon, we gathered to visit another birding site, the salt lakes or Las Salinas. These extensive lagoons were a haven for birds. Each banked enclosure held numbers of waders and thousands of shorebirds were spread over the site. We started the identification, using the telescopes, so everyone could appreciate the differences between various species. Semipalmated Sandpipers could be directly compared against Western Sandpipers and the finer details of Stilt Sandpipers, Short-billed Dowitchers and Marbled Godwits were discussed. Amongst the Laughing Gull flock were Black Skimmers and Royal Terns. Soon Sandwich and Gull-billed Terns had joined them, in a mixture of summer and winter plumages.

We walked the perimeter checking the mangroves that abutted the salt works. The imitated call of Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl, and some dedicated 'pishing', resulted in Mangrove Warblers and a fine Prothonotary Warbler coming into view.

Our return drive was halted by an armadillo, which crossed the road in front of the vehicle. They are prolific diggers and it began digging furiously at the roadside bank. When hearing the noise, from us humans, it stood upright on back legs, with nose twitching and large ears pointing forward. In Spanish the name means 'little armoured one'.

### **Monday 15 February**

In the early morning we drove to another forest area within the farm, which had larger trees and more open vegetation than yesterday. At the parking area, close to some farm workers' accommodation, two Ferruginous Pygmy-Owls were found and a White-necked Puffbird; this family get their name for the large heads, short tails and 'loose' plumage giving them a stout, or 'puffy' appearance.

We walked two trails here; the first was a large wide trail up a slope, where Banded Wrens sang from the undergrowth. A male Ruby-throated Hummingbird, a migrant from the US that winters in Costa Rica, remained perched for everyone to have good views through the scope. A Summer Tanager posed for the photographers and we added Yellow-green Vireo and Boat-billed Flycatcher to our list.

We walked off the main trail, onto a secondary track. More effort was needed to find birds though two flycatchers were nice, Dusky-capped and Yellow-bellied. By now, it was late morning and the forest was becoming quiet. It was time to return to the hacienda for lunch. During siesta time an owl was found, close to the main house. To see it, we needed to be very quiet as it was roosting in a small tree, just above head height, and its plumage cryptic. We had cameras ready as we approached to peer up and see a well-camouflaged Pacific Screech-Owl.

We had a routine now, with the afternoon drive and walk designed for 1500, after the heat of the day. At lunchtime the temperature was 36°C with high humidity. We tried the estuary mouth, good for waterbirds, the herons and egrets but the mosquitoes though won the day here. It was disappointing to leave, as we could see Snail Kites as they glided past Black-crowned Night-Herons and Bare-throated Tiger-Herons. We agreed it would be better to drive to the flooded areas to see more of the same birds, but in more comfort inside the bus.

The farm tracks skirted large areas of seasonal swamp, the flooded meadows. Abundant egrets, in thousands, took to the wing. Little Blue, Green and Tricoloured Herons fished the pools and ditches. Two enormous Jabirus towered over all, and were unmissable, on size alone – six pairs of these impressive birds nested at Solimar last year.

We headed back, looking forward to a refreshing shower before dinner and to drinking a beer, or glass of wine, on the balcony.

### **Tuesday 16 February**

We thanked Demetrio, Anna and Juanita and left Solimar at 0730. It would take the day to reach La Selva Verde in the east. We stopped for coffee at a German bakery in Nuevo Arenal then continued, driving alongside Lake Arenal, before leaving the main highway onto 'Santiago's Road', a back route I had used before. This can be a great birding spot but we saw little today – Lesser Greenlets, Yellow Warbler and a Black-hooded Antshrike was calling - maybe because it was already too late in the morning.

Volcan Arenal looked dark and formidable, and even though the peak, and upper half, was shrouded in cloud we could see plumes of gas and steam coming from fumaroles on the lava slopes. This famous volcano is of 'classic' shape, though our views earlier from Santa Elena were better. The volcano is spectacular, always active, but can be seen only on three out of ten visits.

We had our lunch stop at the Iguana Café in the small village of Muelle, where we could select from the best selection of ice creams in Costa Rica! The owner had a rehabilitation unit for iguanas. These unfortunate lizards are often taken for the pet industry, many not being wanted once they start getting large....and some of these beauties here were two metres long!

We continued our drive, seeing a pair of Grey Hawks at a stop for diesel, and Tropical Pewee and Blue-black Grassquits alongside the road. We arrived at La Selva Verde Lodge late afternoon. During check-in a Buff-rumped Warbler could be seen at a small stream below the balcony. This was a 'catch-up' bird for many as the views at Tiskita had been brief.

We agreed there was time for some last-minute birding before dusk and we met at Reception to walk to the botanical garden across the main road to try for two good hummers....and we saw both! Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer regularly feeds on the flowers here, and we had been told that a Black-crested Coquette was at a nest. It took a little time finding but we succeeded, the tiny female sitting on a very exposed nest anchored by cobwebs to a tree branch.

We had requested rooms at the far end of the elevated walkways. It was quieter, and good forest was close, so better birding opportunities. With many walkways to learn it took everyone a little while to find the bar and restaurant. We met and relaxed at the bar from 1900 where various cocktails were being offered. I tried a Marguerita...excellent. We had a private table reserved for dinner, as it can get very busy in the restaurant here. Rodolfo arrived and was introduced. He would be our specialist guide from tomorrow, and works at La Selva Biological Station. I have known him for some years and knew we had the best birder in the area.

We had an enjoyable meal at the lodge restaurant, after which the bird log was called - an ideal venue was found where we could gather everyone, a large table close to the cocktail bar.

### **Wednesday 17 February**

The weather did not look promising. It had been raining through the night and at 0600 when we met it was raining heavily. We postponed the early bird walk. After breakfast, the rain was still too heavy for even walking the trails. We had no choice but to sit it out, so we occupied the seats overlooking the river, venturing outside occasionally to check for any improvement. Of course, a Fasciated Tiger-Heron wasn't concerned with rain, and a party of Grey-rumped Swifts came swooping lower than usual, beneath the main cloudbanks. Stripe-throated Hermit, Violet-headed Hummingbird, Blue-chested Hummingbird, and the common Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, all came to feed at the flowering bushes in front of the restaurant. Staff had put fresh fruit at the feeder, which attracted a pair of Black-cheeked Woodpeckers and a number of tanagers.

Lunchtime came and went, and I offered three choices: (a) to drive to an area of private land where the owner knew a large owl was roosting this morning, and where he had found also a nest of a Sunbittern (but, we would get wet!) (b) to walk the covered walkway that leads uphill from the botanical garden (c) just to relax at the lodge. The second option was the majority vote. Only a few came on the walk and the birding was virtually impossible in the weather, the results were few. We found a very wet female Black-throated Trogon, took another look at the sitting Black-crested Coquette from yesterday, and heard a Great Green Macaw. This bird was close, and I wish we had seen it, a very scarce species nowadays. We returned to the lodge late afternoon. It was still raining very hard, after 15 hours - a tropical downpour.

### **Thursday 18 February**

I awoke to find it still raining (now for more than 30 hours, non-stop). After so much time yesterday at the lodge I decided we should head out *somewhere*, so suggested La Selva, where we could find some different birds, even if viewed from the cover of the restaurant area.

We drove towards La Selva. The river level now was high, swollen from streams higher in the mountains. Some fields were flooded and cattle were being moved. At La Selva we had to retreat to the undercover restaurant area, but we did find some birds. Gaudy Black-faced Grosbeaks were seen feeding on berries and a Paltry Tyrannulet (surely, worthy of a better name?) chased the few insects that flew in the rain.

We decided to venture out, so with ponchos on or 'brollies up, we walked across the reserve's suspension bridge to join a hard trail, laid with shingle. Two Great Tinamous were calling and we watched as they approached us closer to then walk along the forest edge in open view. Rodolfo had a stakeout in mind but it would involve careful treading on very slippery grass and mud. We gave it a go, as the bird was another new owl for us - this one, a Vermiculated Screech-Owl, and it was not easy to see. It was roosting in the tangle of a large bush, and very dark inside. We found the best views meant getting inside the forest and viewing from a different angle.

After seeing Crested Guans we headed back to the bus. Santiago drove us for lunch at the lodge. Rodolfo and myself held an 'extraordinary meeting' to see where we should go, in the rain, and thought we should try a flooded area locally, where we could bird from the bus. This proved a good choice as a couple of Green Ibis were here and a solitary American Purple Gallinule strutted through the long grass.

We carried on, to La Selva once more, to find two Great Curassows parading around the back of the restaurant. These were joined later by a third. Here in the park, they were unconcerned at our presence, very different to those that are hunted. One of the problems of sustainability for this *Cracid* is that it lays only two eggs whereas the game birds have large clutches. I am still uncertain of the age/sexes of the three birds seen here but lean towards one being an immature male and the other two, females of indeterminate ages. It's not unusual for them to be in small groups, often gathering at fruiting trees, and this one being a specific favourite - they were munching guavas.

The restaurant roof gave us some protection from the rain and a flock of Olive-throated Parakeets, another of Chestnut-headed Oropendolas were our final birds of the day. We headed back to the lodge at 1730, and needless to say, it was still raining heavily.

### **Friday 19 February**

During early morning there was a brief respite from the rain. The river was now very high indeed and a Sunbittern was forced from the shady rocky shoreline to within five metres of the restaurant veranda. The flowing river had created new streams and the Sunbittern was now following one of these. It seemed to catch small yellowish crabs(?) in the mud which it would then wash in the water. We watched Red-capped Manakin and Yellow-crowned Euphonias in trees to one side of the restaurant.

After a quick breakfast we decided to head to Braulio Carillo National Park, about three-quarters of an hour away. It looked good...it wasn't raining. We pulled in at a neglected bungalow with many Vervain bushes. This site is the best in Costa Rica for Snowcap, an enigmatic hummingbird with a fragmented distribution. Violet-crowned was here, as was Black-crested Coquette and Rufous-tailed hummer, but sadly not the Snowcap.

We drove to the reserve entrance, parked and walked one of the forest trails but birding was slow. The trails here can be remarkably good for birds, conversely very little indeed. Known for its fast-moving flocks, we didn't connect with any this morning but consoled ourselves with another motmot species, the Broad-billed. The bad news was that it began raining again, so we returned to the bus and travelled back to La Selva Verde. We would have lunch and decide how best to spend the afternoon. I decided that we should do something, even if it was raining, so firstly we tried the flooded area that we had visited yesterday - it was a good choice as the rain eased, albeit temporarily. The Green Ibis now numbered three and two Solitary Sandpipers were new, Melodious Blackbirds could be viewed in the scope and a haughty Crested Caracara stalked prey in the longer grass.

Secondly, we drove on to La Selva but the rain was just too much for us. Even a boat had to be used to transfer the staff to the offices! Some 15 inches of rain had fallen in the last three days. Downhearted, we call it a day and return to the lodge. I felt despondent as there were birds to be seen in this area, that I wanted to show the group, yet the weather, over the last few days, had been exceptionally atrocious.

### **Saturday 20 February**

The 'early bird' optional walk at 0600, before breakfast, got off well when two Grey-necked Wood-Rails walked out from riverside vegetation into the open, in front of us, to then cross the lodge pathway. One of these birds later visited the bird table and was seen a few times walking the lodge's pathways towards Reception. A Fasciated Tiger-Heron was on the riverbank, viewed from the bar area.

With the rain coming on once more, we decided to take our time packing for the return journey to San José. We loaded the bus at 1045, paid our bills, and were underway at 1100, as planned. There was a spell of clear weather so decided a stop at the Braulio Carillo hummer site might be worth a last try. Still no luck with Snowcap, but we did have Violet-crowned Woodnymph and Violet-headed Hummingbird.

We drove on towards San José; the cloud was low and the rain heavy yet again. We reached the airport early. Simon was there to meet us and help with the check-in. It was time to say goodbye to Santiago, our driver/birder/friend. Already a queue had formed at the Iberia desks and it took a while before we had our boarding passes, ready to go through to the security checks. After thanking Simon, for the background organisation, we went into the Departure Lounge to await our flight being called. The flight to Madrid boarded late and we were an hour behind schedule when we left Costa Rica but this was made up during the journey to Spain.

### **Sunday 21 February**

In Madrid we had to transfer between terminal buildings - and it's not the easiest to understand, especially as a monorail is involved - but we arrived at the gate for the London flight, and left on time, finally touching down 1510 at Heathrow. At the baggage carousel we said our goodbyes to each other. There remained only the onward journey to our homes.

### **Acknowledgements**

Our gratitude to the expert guides that accompanied us – Jorge, Bernal, Demetrio and Rodolfo. Particular thanks go to Santiago, who was not only a first-rate driver but also a good birder. Also, thanks to Simon Ellis for the well-organized ground arrangements.

My personal thanks to all of you for coming on our tour to Costa Rica! A lovely country, that certainly offers *Classic Neotropical Birding*, as per the tour's title. I hope you have fond memories of the holiday, the country and its birds – maybe the toucans and hummingbirds (32 species, at the end), or the Resplendent Quetzals and the Sunbitterns, or the tanagers and euphonias...just so many. For me, it was nice to be back in Costa Rica again, after some years. I enjoyed your company and look forward to seeing you on another Ornitholidays' adventure in the near future.

Many thanks are due to Howard Gorringe for photographs that illustrate this report.

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March 2010

## Itinerary and Weather

5 February	Flew from London, Heathrow to Madrid, Spain to San José, Costa Rica
6 February	a.m. Paraiso del Quetzal p.m. Savegre Cloudy becoming bright and sunny 27°C
7 February	Flew from San José to Tiskita. Local walks around Tiskita Hot and humid with light showers 28.5°C
8 February	Various walks, trails of Tiskita Hot, humid 29°C
9 February	Various walks, trails of Tiskita Hot, humid 31°C
10 February	Flew from Tiskita to San José. Drove to Monteverde Sunny and hot 30+°C
11 February	Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve Cloudy, some light rain, windy at times 24°C
12 February	a.m St Elena Cloud Forest Reserve p.m Sanctuario Ecologico Cloudy, occasional sun 23°C
13 February	a.m drove from Monteverde to Rio Tarcoles for boat trip p.m Hacienda Solimar Hot, sunny, cloudy afternoon 32°C
14 February	Solimar: a.m. forest walk p.m Las Salinas Hazy cloud all day 33°C
15 February	Solimar: a.m forest walk p.m estuary and flooded meadows Very hot 36°C
16 February	Drove from Hacienda Solimar to La Selva Verde Heavy cloud, humid, light rain 28°C
17 February	La Selva Verde Heavy rain, all day 26°C
18 February	La Selva Biological Station Heavy rain, all day 23°C
19 February	a.m Braulio Carrillo p.m La Selva Biological Station Rain, heavy by midday 23°C
20 February	Drove from La Selva Verde to San José Airport. Flew from San José to Madrid, Spain Rain, brighter nearer San José 25°C
21 February	Arrival Madrid, Spain. Flew to London, Heathrow

**CHECKLIST OF BIRDS SEEN DURING TOUR**

<b>Number of days recorded</b>	<b>Major locations where species were seen</b>	<b>Abundance Scale (max on one day)</b>
1 2h means seen on 1 day and heard on 2 other days	Q = San José, Paraiso del Quetzal and Savegre T = Tiskita M = Monteverde and area S = Solimar, River Tarcoles (Carara), Las Salinas L = La Selva Verde, La Selva and Braulio Carillo J = Journeys to and from above	1 = 1 – 4 2 = 5 – 9 3 = 10 – 99 4 = 100 – 999 5 = 1,000-9,999 6 = 10,000+

<b>Species</b>	<b>No of days recorded</b>	<b>Locations</b>	<b>Abundance scale</b>	<b>Scientific Name</b>
Great Tinamou	1	L	1	<i>Tinamus major</i>
Highland Tinamou	- 1h	M	1	<i>Nothocercus bonapartei</i>
Thicket Tinamou	- 1h	S	1	<i>Crypturellus cinnamomeus</i>
Black-bellied Whistling Duck	3	S L	3	<i>Dendrocygna autumnalis</i>
Muscovy Duck	1	J	1	<i>Cairina moschata</i>
Blue-winged Teal	2	S J	1	<i>Anas discors</i>
Grey-headed Chachalaca	4	M L	2	<i>Ortalis cinereiceps</i>
Crested Guan	2	L	1	<i>Penelope purpurascens</i>
Black Guan	2	M	1	<i>Chamaepetes unicolor</i>
Great Curassow	1	L	1	<i>Crax rubra</i>
Crested Bobwhite	2	S	2	<i>Colinus cristatus</i>
Least Grebe	2	J	2	<i>Tachybaptus dominicus</i>
Brown Pelican	5	Q T S J	4	<i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>
Neotropic Cormorant <sup>1</sup>	2	S J	1	<i>Phalacrocorax brasilianus</i>
Anhinga	2	S	1	<i>Anhinga anhinga</i>
Magnificent Frigatebird	5	T S J	4	<i>Fregata magnificens</i>
Fasciated Tiger-Heron	2	L	1	<i>Tigrisoma fasciatum</i>
Bare-throated Tiger-Heron	3	S	3	<i>Tigrisoma mexicanum</i>
Great Blue Heron	4	T S	2	<i>Ardea herodias</i>
Great Egret	7	S L J	3	<i>Ardea alba</i>
Snowy Egret	7	S L J	3	<i>Egretta thula</i>
Little Blue Heron	8	S L J	3	<i>Egretta caerulea</i>
Tricolored Heron	3	S	3	<i>Egretta tricolor</i>
Western Cattle Egret	8	S L J	4	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>
Green Heron <sup>2</sup>	4	S L	2	<i>Butorides virescens</i>
Black-crowned Night-Heron	1	S	1	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	2	S	1	<i>Nyctanassa violacea</i>
Boat-billed Heron	1	S	3	<i>Cochlearius cochlearius</i>
White Ibis	3	S J	3	<i>Eudocimus albus</i>
Green Ibis	2	L	1	<i>Mesembrinibis cayennensis</i>
Roseate Spoonbill	1	S	1	<i>Ajaia ajaja</i>
Jabiru	1	S	1	<i>Jabiru mycteria</i>
Wood Stork	3	S	3	<i>Mycteria americana</i>
(American) Black Vulture	13	Q T M S L J	4	<i>Coragyps atratus</i>
Turkey Vulture	13	Q T M S L J	3	<i>Cathartes aura</i>
King Vulture	1	T	1	<i>Sarcoramphus papa</i>
Osprey	5	S J	1	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>
Grey-headed Kite	1	S	1	<i>Leptodon cayanensis</i>
American Swallow-tailed Kite	4	Q T J	3	<i>Elanoides forficatus</i>
White-tailed Kite <sup>3</sup>	3	S	1	<i>Elanus leucurus</i>
Snail Kite	1	S	2	<i>Rostrhamus sociabilis</i>
White Hawk	1	T	1	<i>Leucopternis albicollis</i>
Mangrove Black-Hawk <sup>4</sup>	2	T S	3	<i>Buteogallus subtilis</i>
Broad-winged Hawk	2	M J	1	<i>Buteo platypterus</i>
Grey Hawk	3	S J	1	<i>Asturina nitida</i>
Red-tailed Hawk	2	Q J	1	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>
Collared Forest-Falcon	1	S	1	<i>Micrastur semitorquatus</i>
Crested Caracara	5	T S L J	1	<i>Caracara cheriway</i>
Yellow-headed Caracara	7	T S L	2	<i>Milvago chimachima</i>

Laughing Falcon	3	1h	T	S			1	<i>Herpetotheres cachinnans</i>
Peregrine Falcon	1		T				1	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
Rufous-necked Wood-Rail	1			S			1	<i>Aramides axillaris</i>
Grey-necked Wood-Rail	2			S	L		1	<i>Aramides cajanea</i>
(American) Purple Gallinule	2				L		1	<i>Porphyrio martinica</i>
Sunbittern	3	1h		S	L		1	<i>Eurypyga helias</i>
Limpkin	1			S			3	<i>Aramus guarauna</i>
Double-striped Thick-knee	4			S			1	<i>Burhinus bistriatus</i>
Southern Lapwing	1			S			3	<i>Vanellus chilensis</i>
Black-bellied (Grey) Plover	2			S			3	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>
Semipalmated Plover	2		T	S			2	<i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i>
Wilson's Plover	1			S			1	<i>Charadrius collaris</i>
Collared Plover	1			S			1	<i>Charadrius collaris</i>
Black-necked Stilt	2			S			4	<i>Himantopus mexicanus</i>
Northern Jacana	3			S		J	4	<i>Jacana spinosa</i>
Spotted Sandpiper	7		T	S		J	3	<i>Actitis macularia</i>
Solitary Sandpiper	1				L		1	<i>Tringa solitaria</i>
Willet	4		T	S			3	<i>Catoptrophorus semipalmatus</i>
Lesser Yellowlegs	1			S			2	<i>Tringa flavipes</i>
Hudsonian Whimbrel	4		T	S			3	<i>Numenius hudsonicus</i>
Marbled Godwit	1			S			3	<i>Limosa fedoa</i>
Ruddy Turnstone	2			S			2	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>
Red Knot	1			S			3	<i>Calidris canutus</i>
Semipalmated Sandpiper	2			S			4	<i>Calidris pusilla</i>
Western Sandpiper	1			S			3	<i>Calidris mauri</i>
Least Sandpiper	1			S			1	<i>Calidris minutilla</i>
Stilt Sandpiper	1			S			2	<i>Calidris himantopus</i>
Short-billed Dowitcher	1			S			3	<i>Limnodromus griseus</i>
Laughing Gull	3			S		J	4	<i>Larus atricilla</i>
Royal Tern	3		T	S		J	4	<i>Thalasseus maxima</i>
Sandwich Tern	1			S			2	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>
Gull-billed Tern	1			S			3	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>
Black Skimmer	1			S			3	<i>Rynchops niger</i>
Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)	6		Q	S		J	3	<i>Columba livia</i>
Red-billed Pigeon	4			M	S	L	2	<i>Patagioenas flavirostris</i>
Band-tailed Pigeon	1		Q				2	<i>Patagioenas fasciata</i>
Short-billed Pigeon	2	1h	T			L	1	<i>Patagioenas nigrirostris</i>
White-winged Dove	6		Q		S	J	3	<i>Zenaida asiatica</i>
Inca Dove	2				S	J	3	<i>Columbina inca</i>
Common Ground Dove	3				S	L	3	<i>Columbina passerina</i>
Plain-breasted Ground Dove	1				S		1	<i>Columbina minuta</i>
Ruddy Ground Dove	4				S	L	2	<i>Columbina talpacoti</i>
White-tipped Dove	6		T		S	J	2	<i>Leptotila verreauxi</i>
Grey-chested Dove	1					L	1	<i>Leptotila cassinii</i>
Sulphur-winged Parakeet	1		Q				1	<i>Pyrrhura hoffmanni</i>
Crimson-fronted Parakeet	1		Q				3	<i>Aratinga finschi</i>
Olive-throated Parakeet	2	2h				L	3	<i>Aratinga nana</i>
Orange-fronted Parakeet	3				S		3	<i>Aratinga canicularis</i>
Great Green Macaw	-	1h				L	1	<i>Ara ambigua</i>
Scarlet Macaw <sup>5</sup>	4		T		S		3	<i>Ara macao</i>
Orange-chinned Parakeet	3				S	L	1	<i>Brotogeris jugularis</i>
White-crowned Parrot	2					L	1	<i>Pionus senilis</i>
White-fronted Parrot	2			M	S		1	<i>Amazona albifrons</i>
Red-lored Parrot	2					L	1	<i>Amazona autumnalis</i>
Mealy Parrot	4		T			L	2	<i>Amazona farinosa</i>
Yellow-naped Parrot	1				S		1	<i>Amazona auropalliata</i>
Squirrel Cuckoo	3				S		1	<i>Piaya cayana</i>
Groove-billed Ani	4				S	J	4	<i>Crotophaga sulcirostris</i>
Pacific Screech-Owl	1				S		1	<i>Megascops cooperi</i>
Vermiculated Screech-Owl	1					L	1	<i>Megascops guatemalae</i>
Spectacled Owl	1		T				1	<i>Pulsatrix perspicillata</i>
Costa Rican Pygmy-Owl <sup>6</sup>	1		Q				1	<i>Glaucidium costaricanum</i>
Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl	2				S		1	<i>Glaucidium brasilianum</i>

Black-and-White Owl	1				J	1	<i>Ciccaba nigrolineata</i>		
Common Pauraque	1		T			1	<i>Nyctidromus albicollis</i>		
White-collared Swift	4	Q		M	L	4	<i>Streptoprocne zonaris</i>		
Vaux's Swift	1	Q				3	<i>Chaetura vauxi</i>		
Grey-rumped Swift	2				L	3	<i>Chaetura cinereiventris</i>		
Costa Rican Swift <sup>7</sup>	1		T			1	<i>Chaetura fumosa</i>		
Band-tailed Barbthroat	2		T			1	<i>Threnetes ruckeri</i>		
Green Hermit	3			M		1	<i>Phaethornis guy</i>		
Long-billed Hermit <sup>8</sup>	3		T		L	1	<i>Phaethornis longirostris</i>		
Stripe-throated Hermit <sup>9</sup>	5		T		L	1	<i>Phaethornis striigularis</i>		
Green-fronted Lancebill	1			M		1	<i>Doryfera ludovicae</i>		
Violet Sabrewing	3			M		3	<i>Campylopterus hemileucurus</i>		
White-necked Jacobin	1		T			1	<i>Florisuga mellivora</i>		
Green Violet-ear	3	Q		M		3	<i>Colibri thalassinus</i>		
Green-breasted Mango	1				S	1	<i>Anthracothorax prevostii</i>		
Violet-headed Hummingbird	1				L	1	<i>Klais guimeti</i>		
Black-crested Coquette	3				L	1	<i>Lophornis helenae</i>		
(Violet-) Crowned Woodnymph <sup>10</sup>	3		T		L	1	<i>Thalurania colombica</i>		
Fiery-throated Hummingbird	1	Q				3	<i>Panterpe insignis</i>		
Blue-throated Goldentail	4		T			2	<i>Hylocharis eliciae</i>		
Blue-chested Hummingbird	3				L	1	<i>Amazilia amabilis</i>		
Charming (Beryl-crowned) Hummingbird <sup>11</sup>	2		T			1	<i>Amazilia decora</i>		
Steely-vented Hummingbird	3			M	S	1	<i>Amazilia saucerrottei</i>		
Rufous-tailed Hummingbird	9		T		L	2	<i>Amazilia tzacatl</i>		
Cinnamon Hummingbird	3				S	J	2	<i>Amazilia rutila</i>	
Blue-tailed Hummingbird <sup>12</sup>	1			M		1	<i>Amazilia cyanura</i>		
Stripe-tailed Hummingbird	2			M		1	<i>Eupherusa eximia</i>		
Coppery-headed Emerald	2			M		3	<i>Elvira cupreiceps</i>		
Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer <sup>13</sup>	2				L	1	<i>Chalybura urochrysis</i>		
Purple-throated Mountain-gem	3			M		3	<i>Lampornis calolaema</i>		
White-throated Mountain-gem	1	Q				3	<i>Lampornis castaneiventris</i>		
Green-crowned Brilliant	3			M		3	<i>Heliodoxa jacula</i>		
Magnificent Hummingbird	1	Q				3	<i>Eugenes fulgens</i>		
Purple-crowned Fairy	1				L	1	<i>Heliothryx barroti</i>		
Magenta-throated Woodstar	3	Q		M		2	<i>Calliphlox bryantae</i>		
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	2			M	S	2	<i>Archilochus colubris</i>		
Volcano Hummingbird	1	Q				2	<i>Selasphorus flammula</i>		
Scintillant Hummingbird	1	Q				1	<i>Selasphorus scintilla</i>		
Black-headed Trogon	3				S	L	2	<i>Trogon melanocephalus</i>	
Baird's Trogon	1		T			1	<i>Trogon bairdii</i>		
Violaceous Trogon	2		T		J	1	<i>Trogon violaceus</i>		
Collared Trogon	1	Q				1	<i>Trogon collaris</i>		
Orange-bellied Trogon	1			M		1	<i>Trogon aurantiiventris</i>		
Black-throated Trogon	5		T		S	L	2	<i>Trogon rufus</i>	
Slaty-tailed Trogon	1					L	1	<i>Trogon massena</i>	
Resplendent Quetzal	3	Q		M		2	<i>Pharomachrus mocinno</i>		
Broad-billed Motmot	1					L	1	<i>Electron platyrhynchum</i>	
Turquoise-browed Motmot	4				S	J	2	<i>Eumomota superciliosa</i>	
Ringed Kingfisher	3				S	L	1	<i>Ceryle torquata</i>	
Green Kingfisher	2				S	L	1	<i>Chloroceryle americana</i>	
American Pygmy Kingfisher	1				S		1	<i>Chloroceryle aenea</i>	
White-necked Puffbird	1					S	1	<i>Bucco macrorhynchos</i>	
White-whiskered Puffbird	1					L	1	<i>Malacoptila panamensis</i>	
Blue-throated Toucanet <sup>14</sup>	1			M			1	<i>Aulacorhynchus caeruleogularis</i>	
Collared Aracari	4					L	J	2	<i>Pteroglossus torquatus</i>
Keel-billed Toucan	4			M		L	1	<i>Ramphastos sulfuratus</i>	
Chestnut-mandibled Toucan	8		T			L	2	<i>Ramphastos swainsonii</i>	
Acorn Woodpecker	1	Q					1	<i>Melanerpes formicivorus</i>	
Golden-naped Woodpecker	2		T				1	<i>Melanerpes chrysauchen</i>	
Black-cheeked Woodpecker	5					L	J	1	<i>Melanerpes pucherani</i>
Red-crowned Woodpecker	1		T				1	<i>Melanerpes rubricapillus</i>	
Hoffmann's Woodpecker	5				S	J	1	<i>Melanerpes hoffmannii</i>	
Hairy Woodpecker	1	Q					1	<i>Picoides villosus</i>	

Rufous-winged Woodpecker	1		T				1	<i>Piculus simplex</i>
Pale-billed Woodpecker	2		T				1	<i>Campephilus guatemalensis</i>
Red-faced Spinetail	2			M			2	<i>Cranioleuca erythroptus</i>
Spotted Barbtail	2			M			1	<i>Premnoplex brunnescens</i>
Ruddy Treerunner	2		Q	M			2	<i>Margarornis rubiginosus</i>
Buffy Tuftedcheek	1			M			1	<i>Pseudocolaptes lawrencii</i>
Lineated Foliage-gleaner	1			M			1	<i>Syndactyla subalaris</i>
Streak-breasted Treehunter	1			M			1	<i>Thripadectes rufobrunneus</i>
Grey-throated Leaf-tosser	1			M			1	<i>Sclerurus albigularis</i>
Plain Xenops	1		T				1	<i>Xenops minutus</i>
Olivaceous Woodcreeper	1			M			1	<i>Sittasomus griseicapillus</i>
Wedge-billed Woodcreeper	4		T		L		1	<i>Glyphorhynchus spirurus</i>
Northern Barred Woodcreeper	2				L		1	<i>Dendrocolaptes certhia</i>
Cocoa Woodcreeper <sup>15</sup>	1		T				1	<i>Xiphorhynchus guttatus</i>
Spotted Woodcreeper	2		Q	M			1	<i>Xiphorhynchus erythropterus</i>
Streak-headed Woodcreeper	1				L		1	<i>Lepidocolaptes souleyetii</i>
Barred Antshrike	1	1h	T		S		1	<i>Thamnophilus doliatus</i>
Black-hooded Antshrike	3	1h	T		S	J	2	<i>Thamnophilus bridgesi</i>
Slaty Antwren	-	1h		M			1	<i>Myrmotherula schisticolor</i>
Dotted-winged Antwren	1		T				1	<i>Microrhopias quixensis</i>
Chestnut-backed Antbird	4		T			L	2	<i>Myrmeciza exsul</i>
Immaculate Antbird	-	1h		M			1	<i>Myrmeciza immaculata</i>
Silvery-fronted Tapaculo	-	1h		M			1	<i>Scytalopus argentifrons</i>
Yellow-bellied Elaenia	3			M		L	1	<i>Elaenia flavogaster</i>
Mountain Elaenia	2		Q	M			1	<i>Elaenia frantzii</i>
Ochre-bellied Flycatcher	2		T				1	<i>Mionectes oleagineus</i>
Paltry Tyrannulet <sup>16</sup>	2			M		L	1	<i>Zimmerius vilissimus</i>
Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant	1			M			1	<i>Lophotriccus pileatus</i>
Common Tody-Flycatcher	2					L	1	<i>Todirostrum cinereum</i>
White-throated Spadebill	-	1h		M			1	<i>Platyrinchus mystaceus</i>
Golden-crowned Spadebill	2		T				1	<i>Platyrinchus coronatus</i>
Tufted Flycatcher	1			M			2	<i>Mitrephanes phaeocercus</i>
Ochraceous Pewee	1		Q				1	<i>Contopus ochraceus</i>
Tropical Pewee	2					L J	1	<i>Contopus cinereus</i>
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	1				S		1	<i>Empidonax flaviventris</i>
Yellowish Flycatcher	1			M			1	<i>Empidonax flavescens</i>
Black-capped Flycatcher	1		Q				2	<i>Empidonax atriceps</i>
Black Phoebe	1					J	1	<i>Sayornis nigricans</i>
Bright-rumped Attila	3		T			L	1	<i>Attila spadiceus</i>
Dusky-capped Flycatcher	2				S		1	<i>Myiarchus tuberculifer</i>
Great Crested Flycatcher	2		T				1	<i>Myiarchus crinitus</i>
Brown-crested Flycatcher	1			M			1	<i>Myiarchus tyrannulus</i>
Great Kiskadee	14		T	M	S	L J	2	<i>Pitangus sulphuratus</i>
Boat-billed Flycatcher	2	1h			S	L	1	<i>Megarhynchus pitangua</i>
Social Flycatcher	6		T			L J	1	<i>Myiozetetes similis</i>
White-ringed Flycatcher	-	1h				L	1	<i>Conopias albobittatus</i>
Streaked Flycatcher	2	1h	T		S		1	<i>Myiodynastes maculatus</i>
Piratic Flycatcher	2					L J	1	<i>Legatus leucophaeus</i>
Tropical Kingbird	15		Q	T	M	S L J	2	<i>Tyrannus melancholicus</i>
Sulphur-rumped Flycatcher	1			T			1	<i>Myiobius sulphureipygius</i>
Rufous Piha	-	1h		T			1	<i>Lipaugus unirufus</i>
Barred Becard	1			M			1	<i>Pachyramphus versicolor</i>
Cinnamon Becard	1					L	1	<i>Pachyramphus cinnamomeus</i>
White-winged Becard	1		T				1	<i>Pachyramphus polychropterus</i>
Rose-throated Becard	3				S		1	<i>Pachyramphus aglaiae</i>
Masked Tityra	3					L	1	<i>Tityra semifasciata</i>
Three-wattled Bellbird	-	1h		M			1	<i>Procnias tricarunculata</i>
White-collared Manakin	1					L	1	<i>Manacus candei</i>
Orange-collared Manakin	1		T				1	<i>Manacus aurantiacus</i>
Long-tailed Manakin	1			M			1	<i>Chiroxiphia linearis</i>
Blue-crowned Manakin	3		T				1	<i>Pipra coronata</i>
Red-capped Manakin	6		T			L	1	<i>Pipra mentalis</i>
Yellow-throated Vireo	1				S		1	<i>Vireo flavifrons</i>

Philadelphia Vireo	2		T					1	<i>Vireo philadelphicus</i>	
Lesser Greenlet	3			M	S	L		1	<i>Hylophilus decurtatus</i>	
White-throated Magpie-Jay	3				S		J	2	<i>Calocitta formosa</i>	
Brown Jay	3			M			J	3	<i>Cyanocorax morio</i>	
Grey-breasted Martin	1		Q					3	<i>Progne chalybea</i>	
Mangrove Swallow	1				S			3	<i>Tachycineta albilinea</i>	
Tree Swallow	1						J	2	<i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>	
Blue-and-White Swallow	5		Q	M			J	3	<i>Notiochelidon cyanoleuca</i>	
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	3			M	S		J	3	<i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>	
Southern Rough-winged Swallow	3				S	L	J	1	<i>Stelgidopteryx ruficollis</i>	
Barn Swallow	3				S		J	5	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	
Rufous-naped Wren	4				S			2	<i>Campylorhynchus rufinucha</i>	
Band-backed Wren	1						L	1	<i>Campylorhynchus zonatus</i>	
Black-bellied Wren	1		T					1	<i>Thryothorus fasciatoventris</i>	
Riverside Wren	3		T					1	<i>Thryothorus semibadius</i>	
Rufous-and-white Wren	1				S			1	<i>Thryothorus rufalbus</i>	
Banded Wren	1				S			1	<i>Thryothorus pleurostictus</i>	
House Wren	5			T	M	S	L	1	<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>	
Grey-breasted Wood-Wren	2				M			2	<i>Henicorhina leucophrys</i>	
Long-billed Gnatwren	2		T					1	<i>Ramphocaenus melanurus</i>	
Tropical Gnatcatcher	2				S			1	<i>Polioptila plumbea</i>	
Black-faced Solitaire	2	1h	Q	M				2	<i>Myadestes melanops</i>	
Slaty-backed Nightingale-Thrush	2			M				1	<i>Catharus fuscater</i>	
Black-billed Nightingale-Thrush	1		Q					1	<i>Catharus gracilirostris</i>	
Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrush	1			M				1	<i>Catharus frantzii</i>	
Wood Thrush	1							1	<i>Hylocichla mustelina</i>	
Sooty Robin	1		Q					2	<i>Turdus nigrescens</i>	
Mountain Robin	2		Q	M				1	<i>Turdus plebejus</i>	
White-throated Robin	1			M				1	<i>Turdus assimilis</i>	
Clay-colored Robin	12		Q	T	M	S	L	J	2	<i>Turdus grayi</i>
Long-tailed Silky-flycatcher	1		Q					2	<i>Ptilononys caudatus</i>	
Black-and-yellow Silky-flycatcher	1		Q					2	<i>Phainoptila melanoxantha</i>	
Tennessee Warbler	8			T	M	S		2	<i>Vermivora peregrina</i>	
Golden-winged Warbler	1				M			1	<i>Vermivora chrysoptera</i>	
Flame-throated Warbler	1		Q					1	<i>Parula gutturalis</i>	
Yellow Warbler	6			T	M	S	L	J	1	<i>Dendroica petechia</i>
Mangrove Warbler <sup>17</sup>	2					S		1	<i>Dendroica p. erithachorides</i>	
Chestnut-sided Warbler	7			T			L	J	1	<i>Dendroica pensylvanica</i>
Black-throated Green Warbler	3		Q	M				1	<i>Dendroica virens</i>	
Black-and-White Warbler	3			M	S			1	<i>Mniotilta varia</i>	
Prothonotary Warbler	1				S			1	<i>Protonotaria citrea</i>	
Northern Waterthrush	1				S			1	<i>Seiurus noveboracensis</i>	
Grey-crowned Yellowthroat	1				S			1	<i>Geothlypis poliocephala</i>	
Wilson's Warbler	2		Q	M				1	<i>Wilsonia pusilla</i>	
Collared Redstart <sup>18</sup>	2		Q	M				3	<i>Myioborus torquatus</i>	
Slate-throated Redstart <sup>18</sup>	2			M				3	<i>Myioborus miniatus</i>	
Rufous-capped Warbler	2			M	S			1	<i>Basileuterus rufifrons</i>	
Three-striped Warbler	2			M				2	<i>Basileuterus tristriatus</i>	
Black-cheeked Warbler	1		Q					1	<i>Basileuterus melanogenys</i>	
Golden-crowned Warbler	2			M				2	<i>Basileuterus culicivorus</i>	
Buff-rumped Warbler	5			T			L	2	<i>Basileuterus fulvicauda</i>	
Bananaquit	7			T	M		L	1	<i>Coereba flaveola</i>	
Common Bush-Tanager	2				M			2	<i>Chlorospingus ophthalmicus</i>	
Sooty-capped Bush-Tanager	2		Q	M				1	<i>Chlorospingus pileatus</i>	
Grey-headed Tanager	1			T				1	<i>Eucometis penicillata</i>	
Red-throated Ant-Tanager	4						L	1	<i>Habia fuscicauda</i>	
Summer Tanager	9			T	M	S	L	1	<i>Piranga rubra</i>	
Flame-colored Tanager	1		Q					1	<i>Piranga bidentata</i>	
Passerini's Tanager <sup>19</sup>	4						L	J	2	<i>Ramphocelus passerinii</i>
Cherrie's Tanager <sup>19</sup>	3			T				2	<i>Ramphocelus costaricensis</i>	
Blue-grey Tanager	12			T	M	S	L	J	3	<i>Thraupis episcopus</i>
Palm Tanager	8			T	M		L	2	<i>Thraupis palmarum</i>	
Silver-throated Tanager	4				M		L	2	<i>Tangara icterocephala</i>	

Golden-hooded Tanager	7		T		L		1	<i>Tangara larvata</i>
Bay-headed Tanager	3		T				1	<i>Tangara gyrola</i>
Spangle-cheeked Tanager	2		Q		M		1	<i>Tangara dowii</i>
Blue Dacnis	2		T				1	<i>Dacnis cayana</i>
Scarlet-thighed Dacnis	1		T				1	<i>Dacnis venusta</i>
Green Honeycreeper	7		T			L	1	<i>Chlorophanes spiza</i>
Shining Honeycreeper	5		T			L	1	<i>Cyanerpes lucidus</i>
Red-legged Honeycreeper	5		T		S		2	<i>Cyanerpes cyaneus</i>
Black-and-yellow Tanager	1					L	2	<i>Chrysothlypis chrysomelas</i>
Blue-black Grassquit	2				S	J	1	<i>Volatinia jacarina</i>
Variable Seedeater	5		T			L J	1	<i>Sporophila aurita</i>
White-collared Seedeater	1				S		3	<i>Sporophila torqueola</i>
Yellow-faced Grassquit	3			M	S	J	3	<i>Tiaris olivacea</i>
Slaty Flowerpiercer	1		Q				1	<i>Diglossa plumbea</i>
Large-footed Finch	1		Q				1	<i>Pezopetes capitalis</i>
Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch	1			M			1	<i>Atlapetes brunneinucha</i>
Orange-billed Sparrow	5		T			L	1	<i>Arremon aurantiirostris</i>
Black-striped Sparrow	2		T				1	<i>Arremonops conirostris</i>
White-eared Ground-Sparrow	1			M			1	<i>Melozone leucotis</i>
Striped-headed Sparrow	3				S		3	<i>Aimophila ruficauda</i>
Rufous-collared Sparrow	5		Q		M S		3	<i>Zonotrichia capensis</i>
Greyish Saltator	1			M			1	<i>Saltator coerulescens</i>
Buff-throated Saltator	7		T		S L		1	<i>Saltator maximus</i>
Black-faced Grosbeak	2					L	3	<i>Caryothraustes poliogaster</i>
Red-winged Blackbird	3				S L		3	<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>
Eastern Meadowlark	5		Q		M S	J	3	<i>Sturnella magna</i>
Melodious Blackbird	1	1h		M		L	1	<i>Dives dives</i>
Great-tailed Grackle	13		Q	T	M S L	J	4	<i>Quiscalus mexicanus</i>
Bronzed Cowbird	3			M		L	3	<i>Molothrus aeneus</i>
Baltimore Oriole	6		Q		M S L		3	<i>Icterus galbula</i>
Spotted-breasted Oriole	2				S		1	<i>Icterus pectoralis</i>
Streak-backed Oriole	2				S		1	<i>Icterus pustulatus</i>
Scarlet-rumped Cacique	2		T				1	<i>Cacicus uropygialis</i>
Chestnut-headed Oropendola	2					L	3	<i>Psarocolius wagleri</i>
Montezuma Oropendola	5				S L	J	3	<i>Psarocolius montezuma</i>
Scrub Euphonia	1				S		1	<i>Euphonia affinis</i>
Yellow-crowned Euphonia	4					L	1	<i>Euphonia luteicapilla</i>
Thick-billed Euphonia	2		T				1	<i>Euphonia lanirostris</i>
Yellow-throated Euphonia	1				S		1	<i>Euphonia hirundinacea</i>
Elegant Euphonia	1			M			1	<i>Euphonia elegantissima</i>
Spotted-crowned Euphonia	3		T				1	<i>Euphonia imitans</i>
Olive-backed Euphonia	4					L	1	<i>Euphonia gouldi</i>
Tawny-capped Euphonia	1					L	1	<i>Euphonia annae</i>
Golden-browed Chlorophonia	3		Q		M		1	<i>Chlorophonia callophrys</i>
House Sparrow	2					J	1	<i>Passer domesticus</i>

This species checklist follows the sequence of *Birds of Costa Rica* by Garrigues and Dean

#### Notes to the above list:

- <sup>1</sup> Neotropic Cormorant is also called Olivaceous Cormorant
- <sup>2</sup> 'Green-backed' Herons have been split, and are now called Striated Heron and Green Heron respectively (the latter has a maroon neck)
- <sup>3</sup> White-tailed Kite is split from Black-shouldered Kite
- <sup>4</sup> Mangrove Black-Hawk, of the Pacific coast (with shorter wings) is split from Common Black-Hawk
- <sup>5</sup> The Scarlet Macaws of Tiskita are part of a reintroduction scheme
- <sup>6</sup> Costa Rican Pygmy-Owl is a split; formerly considered a subspecies of Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl, Mountain Pygmy-Owl and Andean Pygmy-Owl depending on authority
- <sup>7</sup> Costa Rican Swift is split from Band-rumped Swift
- <sup>8</sup> Long-tailed Hermit (e.g *A Guide to the Birds of Costa Rica* - Stiles and Skutch), later called Western Long-tailed Hermit, is now confusingly called Long-billed Hermit, following recommendation from Gary Stiles.
- <sup>9</sup> Little Hermit has been split; those in Central America now being called Stripe-throated Hermit
- <sup>10</sup> Confusingly called Crowned Woodnymph, and sometimes Purple-crowned Woodnymph or Violet-crowned Woodnymph. Not to be confused with other *Thalurania*, for example Green-crowned Woodnymph (Panama to

- Ecuador) and Violet-capped Woodnymph (Brazil to Argentina)
- <sup>11</sup> Called Charming Hummingbird, or alternatively Beryl-crowned Hummingbird, depending on authority
- <sup>12</sup> This is a very rare hummingbird, the identification was based on strong colour intensity of the blue tail and tail length cf. Steel-vented Hummingbird (see text)
- <sup>13</sup> The Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer is resident from eastern Honduras to northwestern Ecuador. It is known also in Costa Rica as the Red-footed Plumeleteer as the subspecies *C. u. melanorrhoea* (Nicaragua, Costa Rica) has a black, not bronze, tail
- <sup>14</sup> Called Emerald Toucanet in the field-guides, but now split into seven species; Blue-throated Toucanet, from the highlands of Costa Rica and Panama
- <sup>15</sup> Buff-throated Woodcreeper has been split; those from Central America (and across to Venezuela and Trinidad and Tobago) now called Cocoa Woodcreeper
- <sup>16</sup> Paltry Tyrannulet is called Mistletoe Tyrannulet also
- <sup>17</sup> Though sometimes considered a separate species, the Mangrove Warbler is most often regarded as a race of Yellow Warbler (though more study certainly required, on plumage differences and habitat preference)
- <sup>18</sup> Collared Redstarts and Slate-throated Redstarts; these two species are sometimes called Whitestarts, the name given to redstarts of Central and South America that have white, not red, in the tail. A vote by the South American Classification Committee of the American Ornithologists' Union rejected this proposed name change
- <sup>19</sup> Scarlet-rumped Tanager has been split – the vocalisations and female plumages differ between birds of the Pacific (Cherrie's Tanager) and Caribbean slopes (Passerini's Tanager)

#### MAMMALS

Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth	3		T				1	<i>Bradypus tridactylus</i>	
Hoffmann's Two-toed Sloth	3				L	J	1	<i>Choloepus hoffmanni</i>	
Nine-banded Armadillo	1				S		1	<i>Dasybus novemcinctus</i>	
White-lined Sac-winged bat	1					L	1	<i>Saccopteryx bilineata</i>	
Central American Squirrel Monkey	4		T				3	<i>Saimiri oerstedii</i>	
White-throated (-faced) Capuchin	3		T	M		L	3	<i>Cebus capuchinus</i>	
Mantled Howler Monkey	6	4h	T	M	S	L	J	2	<i>Alouatta palliata</i>
White-nosed Coati	5		T	M			J	2	<i>Nasua narica</i>
Collared Peccary	2					L		1	<i>Tayassu tajacu</i>
Red-tailed Squirrel	4		T	M	S	L		1	<i>Sciurus granatensis</i>
Central American Dwarf Squirrel	2			M			J	1	<i>Microsciurus alfari</i>
Variegated Squirrel	3					S		1	<i>Sciurus variegatoides</i>
Central American Agouti	6		T	M				1	<i>Dasyprocta punctata</i>
Mexican Hairy Porcupine	1			M				1	<i>Coendou mexicanus</i>

Order and taxonomy follows *Neotropical Rainforest Mammals* (Emmons)

The following amphibians and reptiles were recorded also:

American Crocodile, Common Central American Boa, Vine Snake sp., Black River Turtle (Black Terrapin), Green (Common) Iguana, Black (Spiny-tailed) Iguana, House Gecko, Emerald Basilisk and Brown Basilisk (Jesus Christ Lizard), Green and Black (Poison Dart) Frog *Dendrobates auratus*, Blue Jeans (Strawberry Poison Dart Frog) *Oophaga pumilio*, Green Jeans (Poison Dart) Frog *Dendrobates granuliferus*, Red-eyed Tree Frog *Agalychnis callidryas*.

These lists represent those birds and other animals seen by party members of this tour.



Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl



Male Barred Antshrike



Male Summer Tanager



Green Heron



Buff-throated Saltator



Female Purple-throated Mountain-gem

Cover photograph: Green Violet-ear  
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