

# COSTA RICA BIRDING JOURNEYS



## Destinations:

**Carara National Park, Sarapiquí Area, Tapanti National Park.**

**Sarapiquí** is a real rainforest experience with vast areas to cover, primary rainforest, active and non active pasture fields, river edges, canopy bridges, thick understory, etc. Cotingas, macaws, oropendulas, guans, eagles, toucans are some of the many species to find. At Gavilan Lodge daily birds to spot are Green Ibis, Sunbittern, Jacamars, Tanagers, Orioles, Woodpeckers, Tityras, etc. Botanical gardens nearby offer great opportunities to spot a dozen or more species of hummingbirds and its adjacent forest always bring good surprises as Little Tinamou, Lattice tailed Trogon, Cinnamon Woodpecker, and much more. The Braulio Carrillo National Park is a real rainforest experience with the largest mixed flocks ever including favorites such as Sharpbills and Umbrellabirds. Our visit will extend to the lower base of the park on a private property which belongs to the Aerial Tram Rainforest, a concept originally design to understand rainforest canopy ecosystems that later on; was transform into a tourist activity. Our goal here is to target rare birds such as Sharpbill, Rufous ground vented Cuckoo, and the best know lek of Bare necked Umbrellabird, an endemic specie that most people only dream about it.

**Carara National Park** is by far one the best birding place all year round in Costa Rica. Within the national park protects the second largest population of Scarlet Macaws, easy access to all trails, mangrove swamps, pasture fields and forest edges. There are very few places in the country where more than hundred species can be found in one trail. Meandrica's trail it has become an icon for quality birding, tinamous, trogons, wrens, antpittas, manakins, cotingas, bellbirds, antshrikes are among the most common birds in the forest. The nearby forested edges give as a good number of open field birds, jays, blackbirds, greenlets, rails, ground doves, motmots, hawks, parakeets, owls are among many of the avifauna found in these habitats.

The mangroves at Rio Grande de Tarcoles are very rewarding on a good day along the river edges 5 species of kingfishers can be spotted, more than a couple dozens of shorebirds, herons, egrets are also easy to find but the most remarkable species are the ones with a restricted range or to the mangroves such as vireos, warblers, cuckoos, flycatchers, the elusive Rufous necked woodrail and the only true Costa Rican endemic Mangrove Hummingbird.

**Tapanti National Park** because of its geographical position this national park is effected by constant cloud formation the forest is lush rich in epiphytic plants, mosses, orchids and a dense understory. This environment encloses a incredible number of biodiversity and a fabulous number of over 320 species of birds. Antpittas, hummingbirds, finches, woodquails, tanagers, euphonias, eagles, trogons, owls are common families represented here. With a large main trail bordering both secondary & primary forest; Tapanti is a place for those birders whom are looking for a challenge and finding those elusive ones such as Sharpbills, Monklets, Antpittas, Woodquails, Quaildoves and a soaring eagles or two. One of the most amazing characteristics of Tapanti are its mixed flocks which will arrive at any give moment and a good couple of dozens of species will be sighted.

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## Destinations:

Pejibaye's Rainforest, Talamanca Mountains.

## Why these destinations?

**Pejibaye's mid elevation rainforest** is without doubts the best birding place in Costa Rica, it lies beneath the caribbean slope of Talamanca Mountains near Tapanti National Park, its unique geographical position benefits the area with an exuberant forest cover, intermountain valleys, river gorges and more importantly very little human presence. The lower forest near the lodge is a magnet for tanagers, orioles, shrike vireos, oropendulas, toucans, hummingbirds, etc. Its understory with an even vegetation is fantastic for manakins, spinetails, finches, wrens, sparrows and even tinamous. In a single mixed flock over 30 species are found songwrens, antthushes, antpittas are common on the understory darkness, meanwhile grosbeaks, 17 species of tanagers, woodcreepers, woodpeckers, flycatchers, also the not often found yellow ear toucanets glide from branch to branch in the forest canopy. Pejibaye's Rainforest is the best place to find Snowcaps anywhere!! The charm of the hotel staff and the unrivaled privacy of this lodge makes a supreme combination for birdwatching.

**Talamanca Mountains** there is not destination in Costa Rica more fulfilling for endemic birds, although the number of species in the highlands in the country are far less than rainforest lowlands, the exceptional number of endemics far exceeds those ones in areas as Corcovado National Park or La Selva. Hummingbirds, flycatchers, vireos, trogons, wrens, are some the families that had been isolated for millions of years; creating specialization of species therefore endemics. Among some of the most beautiful birds are found the Resplendent Quetzal and perhaps the only place in which can be found all year round. Gian oaks, misty mornings and crisp air are many of the wonderful things that makes this destination a favorite among us.... Birders!



**DAYS 1 - 6 Sarapiquí Area & Carara Nt Park, Jaco Beach Area, Tarcoles River.**

**Day 1. March 4.** Arrival to Costa Rica, Overnight at **Villas Zurqui**. No meals included. Pick up transfer and information meeting. Today, CRBJ staff will describe the day by day activities, the destinations, possible bird sightings, what to wear by destination and all other general information regarding the trip.

**Day 2. March 5.** Breakfast at the lodge and leisure departure to Sarapiquí Lowlands ( 3 hours ). **Gavilan Lodge.**

Traveling to the Braulio Carrillo is breath taken, its 95% of the forests has never been altered by human hands, dozens of small waterfalls, evergreen vegetation makes this little piece of jungle one of the best places in Costa Rica to visit. More than 350 species had even recorded within the park area & adjacent villages. Our first visit is a local's farm in search for Spectacle Owl, Long tailed Tyrant, Great Potoo, the least goes on!! Lunch on a nearby restaurant and visit the national park to try to find Sharpbill, aracaries, mix flocks of tanagers, orioles, woodpeckers, barbets, woodquails, rare wrens, etc. **All meals included.**

**Day 3. March 6.** All day at the morning at the lodge grounds. At **Gavilan Lodge**, the nearby riparian forests holds a good biodiversity of birds, such as Sunbittern, Green Ibis, Bright rumped Atila, Fasciated Antshrike, Rufous tailed Jacamar to mention few. We will also visit couple local spots for guans, toucans and more. **All meals included.**

**Day 4. March 7.** Early start to Tirimbina Rainforest Preserve. **Gavilan Lodge.**

A most to visit for birders of all levels. A complex net of canopy bridges, forested trails & nearby rivers are some of the great habitats to explore. Great place for Black crested Coquette, Yellow eard Toucanet, Great Tinamou, Keel billed Motmot among other good birds. Lunch at a local restaurant follow to some resting time to continue birding after on several open fields for Snowy Cotingas, Aracaries and more. **All meals included.**

**Day 5. March 8.** Travel to Central Pacific Area. **Arenal Pacifico Hotel.**

Upon arrival and check in travel a for half hour to birdwatch about 3 hour boat tour to Tarcoles River Mangroves in which a combination of deforested areas, river edges, mangrove forest and river mouths are impressive. Herons, egrets, vireos, hummingbirds, frigatebirds, shore birds, waders, cuckoos, macaws, parrots, hawks, also looking for White throated Magpie Jay, Ferruginous Pygmy Owl, Black headed Trogon and much more are among the common groups of birds sighted; although the boat tour main goal is to find the mangrove specialities such Mangrove Humminbird, Cuckoo, Vireo, Warbler, Rufous necked Woodrail, Panama & Scrub Flycatchers & American Pygmy Kingfisher. On the afternoon we will visit open farm lands, forest patches, river edges and more pasture fields; the goal here is to find seedaters, raptors, parakeets, flycatchers, lapwings, anis,ducks, species that are not longer found at the national park due their habitats disappearance. **All meals included.**

**Day 6. March 9.** Breakfast on the go! " **Arenal Pacifico Hotel.**

The early bird catches the worm", today we will visit one of the best birding sites in Central America, Carara nt. Park is a combination of ecosystems, that aloud an amazing number of endemics, birds with restricted ranges and many other beauties with more than 400 species recorded antbirds, macaws, hummingbirds, euphonias, tanagers, flycatchers, cotingas, wrens, manakins and dozen more families are daily sightings. All day at the park, lunch at a local restaurant & dinner at Jaco Beach Town. **All meals included.**



BLACK CRESTED COQUETTE

**DAYS 7 - 15 Tapanti National Park, Pejibaye's Rainforest & Cerro de la Muerte Highlands.**

**Day 7. March 10.** Breakfast on the go! **Arenal Pacifico Hotel.**

We are still going to visit the amazing Carara, but daily targets are going to be antpittas, tinamous, uncommon quaildoves, flycatchers, woodcreepers, becards and hopefully more than glimpse of Three Watted Bellbird and King Vultures. But the order to the trail visit will vary, we are going to visit first primary forest early in the morning and semi-open forests at Meandrical's trail on the afternoon. **All meals included.**

**Day 8. March 11.** Breakfast & early departure to Tapanti National Park. **Kiri Lodge.**

Travel to the Orosi's valley largely cover by coffee farms, active pasture fields, and rivers. Great habitats for hundreds of species such as orioles, spinetails, flycatchers, raptors, nightingales, wrens, etc. Birding along the road with several stops. Upon arrival to the lodge a well deserve lunch and some resting time. The rest of the day we will visit disturbed habitats.

**Day 9. March 12.** Birding before breakfast. **Kiri Lodge.**

Today, we will be birding before the sun shines, finding Antpittas it will require a little sacrifice. Birding inside the national park for antpittas, woodquails, woodcreepers, tinamous, and mixed flocks. All day birding at the park trails.

**Day 10. March 13.** All day at the park. **Kiri Lodge.**

**Day 11. March 14.** Leisurely take a breakfast pack and get ready to intense birding at Pejibaye's Rainforest. **Copal Lodge.** birding along roadside, farms, cattle fields, etc. Once at the lodge explore the surrounding forests, birdwatch on site. **All meals included.**

**Day 12. March 15.** Early rising, search for antbirds, leaflossers, woodcreepers return for breakfast and spend all day birding at the lodge grounds and nearby trails. All meals at the lodge. **All meals included.**

**Day 13. March 17.** Get up with the sounds of the forest, birdwatch from the lodge deck, breakfast & continue searching for birds inside the forest. All meals at the lodge. **All meals included.**

**Day 14. March 18.** Birding before breakfast and leisurely departure to the highlands of Talamanca. **Savegre Lodge.**

Cerro de la Muerte is the best destination for endemic birding, nearly 50 species can be found within this area hummingbirds, wrens, nightjars, jays, owls and more. The gardens and adjacent forest a fill with birdlife. All day birding at the lodge grounds. **All meals included.**

**Day 15. March 19.** In search of Quetzal. **Savegre Lodge.**

Talamanca Highlands is a world renown destination for the most beautiful bird in the Americas. Resplendent Quetzals inhabit this valleys all year round. A full day search for Quetzals and prime highland endemics, visit to the Paramo forest for Junco Volcano, Timberline Wren & Dusky Nightjar. **All meals included.**

**Day 16. March 20.** Relax breakfast and good bye paradise, transfer to the international airport!! **Breakfast Included**

## Price per participant

4 to 6 pax \$2600 ( double accommodation )

**\*\*Single supplement add \$200 u.s\*\***

### **Included**

- *All lodging*
- *All meals except arrival day.*
- *All ground transportation*
- *All park fees*
- *All activities*
- *Pro-birder guiding the entire trip*
- *Costa Rica Bird Check lists*

### **Non included**

- *Airfare*
- *Gratuities*
- *Travel Insurance*
- *Alcoholic drinks*

## What to bring on your trip to Costa Rica

### **Clothing**

Tennis shoes with good traction or Hiking boots with good ankle support (waterproof)  
Comfortable sandals or flip flops  
Swim wear  
Underclothes and socks  
Neutral colored clothing for rain forest hikes  
Several cool long sleeve shirts and short sleeve shirts  
Hat for sun protection (breathable)  
2-3 pairs of light weight long pants for rain forest hikes  
Lightweight rain jacket (**neutral color only**)  
Casual beach clothing(t-shirts, shorts, sun dresses)  
Long pants and a fast drying sweater for the city/mountains (temp. are cooler there)  
Lightweight gloves for cooler areas  
Rubber boots can be bought in Costa Rica for \$12 us.

### **Gear**

Small hiking backpack for day trips  
Small first aid kit  
Binoculars  
Camera (optional)  
Sunglasses  
Sun block and Bug Spray (Avon's Skin So Soft)  
Several pencils  
Daily journal  
A passport purse (to carry money, credit cards, etc... wear it close to your body)  
Any needed medications, anti-diarrhea, or any prescriptions  
Flashlight  
Alarm Clock  
Money,credit cards, identification  
About \$50-200 in cash (not tears in bills, small bills are better)  
Travelers checks (American Express or Visa)(can exchange some of them for Colones at the the local banks or hotel front desk)  
Visa credit card widely accepted in Costa Rica, except rural towns(keep phone number of credit card company separate.)  
Passports  
Photo copies of passports and driver's license(kept in a separate place) IUse a credit card to call US from your hotel room or local phone.  
For local calls in Costa Rica, purchase a phone card at pharmacies or supermarkets-use public phones (1000 colones)  
You can also purchase a phone card here for international calls (\$9 for 12 minutes to US)

## What people are saying!

*“ Your keen knowledge of the birds of Costa Rica was uncanny. I have never before seen a guide call in so many species without the use of tapes. How do you whistle some of those songs? It is truly an amazing gift you have and I am honored to have walked with you to experience a REAL birding guide”. Brian St. Clair.*

*“Ce fut un plaisir incontesté de partager ton expérience illimitée sur les oiseaux du Costa Rica pendant 12 jours consécutifs très intenses. Je recommande à tous les ornithologues amateurs et avancés de profiter de tes talents d'imitateurs de chants d'oiseaux et de tes nombreuses connaissances de la faune ailée, de ton dynamisme, de tes compétences et ta détermination à satisfaire tes clients devenus tes amis à la fin de tes excursions.*

*Merci mille fois Randall pour cette merveilleuse aventure et au plaisir de retourner te voir dans un avenir rapproché pour satisfaire une fois de plus ma passion des oiseaux”.*

*Nicole Felx*

*Vaudreuil-Dorion, Quebec, Canada*

*“De regreso a Francia sin problemas ,pero la vida sin avistar y fotografiar cincuenta pajaros o mas por dia es triste... Muchas gracias por haberte dedicado a nuestro grupo con tanta eficiencia. Espero volver algun dia”.*

*Stephane Lepoutre, France.*

*Michele at Carara National Park.*



**REGISTRATION FORM**

**Print a copy of this form, scanned & completed, and email to us**

(Please print)  
**Birding Tour**

**Dates:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Name(s): (Dr./Mr./Mrs./Ms.)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Street address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip-code:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone: (Home)** \_\_\_\_\_ **(Work)** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Level of birding interest:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Bird Wish List or Targets ( please add an additional page or email us yours )**

**Any other special interests:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Physical limitations** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Any health concerns about which we should be notified** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Diet preferences / Smoking or Non Smoking** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency contact information is required in case of accident; please write down name and phone numbers:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_