

BEST OF COSTA RICA

MARCH 21–APRIL 2, 2017



Resplendent Quetzal © David Wolf

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By David Wolf

Even after many trips over many years we continue to be amazed by Costa Rica, so small in size but huge in possibilities! There are few other places where such a diversity of birds can be seen so readily, in such a compact area, and our 2017 “Best of Costa Rica” tour took full advantage of this wealth as we roamed from one side of the country to the other. Costa Rica has done much to promote conservation, and this really paid off for us, with an astounding number of birds seen. Even more important, most of them were seen well, including many large and spectacular species that have declined over much of their ranges. Such is the joy of birding in Costa Rica!

This tour covered four very different regions, each producing its own specialties and surprises. We got off to a great start right in the garden at the Cariari Hotel in San Jose, with a nice selection of typical Costa Rican birds that included some not commonly seen on this trip, like the Green-breasted Mango, Steely-vented Hummingbird, and Grayish Saltator. From here we traveled west across the Meseta Central, eyeing the unusual and beautiful cloud formations hanging over the great volcanoes and ridges to the north. Unfortunately, we soon found ourselves driving right up into those clouds, into a fog that became even thicker as we reached our destination at Villa Blanca Lodge. The fog continued through the afternoon, making birds and their colors hard to see, but with persistence we found both Black and Crested guanans, Orange-bellied Trogon, and some of the smaller birds of these lush forests.



Spotted Woodcreeper © David Wolf

We awoke the next day to thick fog and wind again. This was a bit discouraging, but again we dug out some great birds, with especially good studies of forest specialties like the Spotted Barbtail, Scaly-throated Foliage-gleaner, Spotted Woodcreeper, Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant, Pale-vented Thrush, Slaty-backed Nightingale-Thrush, and Blue-and-gold Tanager. All of these are typical of the lower subtropical zone, but are rarely easy to see. The fog finally lifted in the afternoon, at last fully revealing the brilliant colors of the Bay-headed, Silver-throated, and Passerini’s tanagers that had previously been only silhouettes in the fog. Dawn the next morning brought fog again—this is called the “cloud forest” for a reason—but it wasn’t quite as dense, and we were able to study a parade of “mini-birds” coming to a fruiting tree, including Olive-

striped Flycatcher, a female White-ruffed Manakin, Scarlet-thighed Dacnis, Black-and-yellow Tanager, and Tawny-capped Euphonia. It was only after leaving the mountains that afternoon and descending to the steamy Pacific lowlands in the vicinity of Carara National Park that we learned that this unusual weather system had blanketed much of the country with rain and cooler-than-expected temperatures, caused by a late cold front in North America.

As always, the partially deciduous forests of the Carara area were incredibly birdy, and our first day in the lowlands proved almost overwhelming. It was still cloudy after yesterday's rain, the first in months, and many birds were sitting out at dawn, so that even before breakfast we had seen a wonderful pair of Lesson's Motmots, a male Gartered Trogon, and our first big Yellow-throated Toucan. Even more spectacular, however, was the Scarlet Macaw show. Numerous pairs of these raucous birds passed low over the lodge, some even landing in the trees above the restaurant, and then to our amazement we spotted one sitting in a low bush above the small river, preening after a morning bath and allowing us long scope views.

In all we tallied at least 20 individual macaws, a great showing from this signature species of the region. Then it was off to breakfast! Afterwards we headed to a forest trail in Carara, where our highlights included a pair of lethargic White-whiskered Puffbirds sitting quietly in the midstory and five species in the antbird family. That afternoon our boat trip on the Tarcoles River was simply amazing, producing great looks at 10 members of the heron family, including the strange Boat-billed; three American Pygmy Kingfishers; a brilliant Turquoise-browed Motmot at its nest hole in a riverbank; a flock of 14 Yellow-naped Parrots feeding in an isolated bush; and rarely-seen mangrove specialists like the Panama Flycatcher and Mangrove Vireo. It was a big surprise to watch a Common Black-Hawk catch a fish right in front of us and perch on a low snag to eat it, while a huge American Crocodile (nicknamed "Osama") was very impressive!



Turquoise-browed Motmot © David Wolf

On our second morning in the Pacific lowlands we entered the beautiful mature forest, initially finding it very quiet. Things livened up when a pair of Great Tinamous appeared in the trail ahead of us and allowed



Bare-throated Tiger-Herons © David Wolf

us to approach within a few feet. Then the shaking foliage of the understory alerted us to a ridiculously tame family group of Buff-throated Foliage-gleaners quietly foraging close at hand. Since it is rare to see any foliage-gleaner so well, we slowly followed the birds from a few feet away—and suddenly found ourselves amidst a mixed-flock of other forest birds that yielded great looks at Black-hooded Antshrikes and Dot-winged Antwrens, a gorgeous Black-striped Woodcreeper, and a very active but cooperative Sulphur-rumped Flycatcher. We rounded out the morning with an adorable “egg with legs,” the Streak-chested Antpitta, and a close pair of big Pale-billed Woodpeckers, while a late afternoon drive to more open country produced a pair of Streak-backed Orioles, a species rarely found on this route, and a persistently calling

Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl. Our midday siesta break was exciting for some when several Fiery-billed

Aracaris drifted through the trees above our rooms, but it wasn't until the next morning, before leaving, that we all got to observe the aracaris at length. Watching the crazy courtship antics and posturing of a pair of Bare-throated Tiger-Herons was fun too.

Then it was off to the Caribbean slope and the La Paz Waterfall Garden, where we studied 9 species of vibrant hummingbirds at point-blank range, found a mixed-flock that yielded an especially good study of a Streak-breasted Treehunter, and watched a pair of gorgeous Golden-browed Chlorophonias building a well-concealed nest in the moss. Finally, just as it was time to leave, we caught up with a weird and quite unique Prong-billed Barbet feeding in a fruiting tree.

The Caribbean lowlands harbor the richest avifauna in Costa Rica and never fail to produce top quality sightings. Here we began our birding along the entry road to the famed La Selva Biological Research Station, with great looks at a

Broad-billed Motmot and stunning male Black-throated Trogon. As the day progressed, we were treated to a spectacular male Great Curassow, ridiculously calm Crested Guans, and special sightings like a flight of 1,200 Swainson's Hawks; a brilliant Rufous-tailed Jacamar; Mantled Howler Monkeys and huge Green Iguanas; Rufous Motmots; displaying White-collared Manakins; and a tiny Black-capped Pygmy-Tyrant at its nest. Our second morning here was just as productive, with highlights like the male Snowy Cotinga that flew across a large open area; a pair of Green Ibis well-concealed along a tiny stream inside the forest; and great looks at skulkers like the Fasciated Antshrike and Black-throated and Stripe-breasted wrens. In between our excursions to La Selva we enjoyed the colorful tanagers and honeycreepers coming to the feeders at La Quinta, but the icing on the cake came late that afternoon, as we watched a grove of huge remnant trees amidst pastures and plantations. Numerous Red-ored Parrots squawked past us, and we watched a Bat Falcon having fun harassing the Black Vultures on a dead snag, but our hearts stopped when a pair of magnificent Great Green Macaws sailed in and landed in full view. We couldn't have asked for a better look at this bird, now endangered in most of its limited range and never to be taken for granted.



Great Green Macaw © David Wolf

The following morning it was time to leave the lowlands, but not before Mimi discovered a Fasciated Tiger-Heron fishing a riffle in the stream at La Quinta. Afterwards, we had hardly begun our travels before shouts from the bus brought us to a sudden halt along the roadside—for two adult King Vultures circling low overhead, for a long time! Stops at several sites in the lush foothills produced specialties like the Snowcap and Black-crested Coquette, and an Emerald Tanager nest with the adults repeatedly bringing food to the naked chicks, and then it was time to travel through the spectacular forested slopes and deep valleys of Braulio



Golden-browed Chlorophonia © David Wolf

Carillo National Park, to a completely different environment, the temperate highlands of Cerro de la Muerte.

The mountains of Costa Rica and far western Panama are the largest massif between Guatemala and the Colombian Andes, and this isolation has led to a remarkable degree of endemism. Here, amidst beautiful oak forest and flower-filled gardens, we tracked down a broad array of birds unique to this region. Favorites included the little Ruddy Treerunners scuttling around the branches as they searched the moss for insects; elegant Long-tailed Silky-Flycatchers and brilliant Flame-throated Warblers; friendly Collared Redstarts; and rather strange Yellow-thighed Finches. An excursion to the highest elevations produced specialties like the Fiery-throated Hummingbird, Black-and-yellow Silky-Flycatcher, and Large-footed Finch, each of these so unique they are the only member of their genus, while in the stunted paramo vegetation at the very highest elevations, the fierce-eyed Volcano Juncos practically hopped up to our feet. However, it is the Resplendent Quetzal that these cloud forests are best known for. Rightfully considered by many to be the most beautiful bird in the world, it is not rare in these forests, but it can be tricky to find, so at dawn our first morning here we joined the crowd watching a grove of fruiting trees that they were known to visit. It took patience, but sure enough, both a male and female quetzal eventually appeared for us to gawk at as we jostled for positions for scope views. Even more satisfying was the pair that we tracked down ourselves later that morning and then the surprise male that popped up in the midstory while we stalked a mixed-flock of smaller birds along a forested stream. With vivid memories of quetzals under our belts, we spent a final relaxed morning enjoying the smaller mountain birds one more time, and then all too soon it was time to return to San Jose and home, our circuit of some of Costa Rica's best birding areas complete. Special thanks go to our very able driver Fernando for taking such good care of us.



Large-footed Finch © David Wolf

ITINERARY:

March 21: Night at the Cariari Hotel by Doubletree in San Jose, Costa Rica.

March 22: Introductory birding in the garden at the Cariari before traveling from San Jose and the Meseta Central to Villa Blanca Lodge, in the hills above San Ramon. Afternoon birding around Villa Blanca and the Los Angeles Cloud Forest Reserve, in persistent thick fog, wind and mist.

March 23: Morning and afternoon birding around Villa Blanca Lodge and the Los Angeles Cloud Forest. The same weather pattern with fog and wind persisted through the morning, but broke up to higher clouds and some sun in the afternoon.

March 24: Morning birding at Villa Blanca and the Los Angeles Cloud Forest, again in the fog. Afternoon travel to the steamy Pacific lowlands near Carara National Park, with several birding stops en route. It was cloudy over the Meseta Central and the Pacific lowlands had received their first rain in months, all due to a strange weather system that affected the entire

country for three days.

March 25: Morning birding at Villa Lapas and in Carara National Park on the Laguna Meandrica Trail, and then a very productive afternoon boat trip on the nearby Tarcoles River.

March 26: Morning birding at Villa Lapas and inside the forest in Carara NP in the Quebrada Bonita area. Afternoon birding drive through the open country near the village of Tarcoles.

March 27: After pre-breakfast birding around the grounds at Villa Lapas we packed up and travelled to the La Paz Waterfall Garden at mid-elevation on the lush Caribbean slope, in the late afternoon descending to La Quinta de Sarapiquí in the Caribbean lowlands.

March 28: Morning and afternoon excursions to the La Selva Field Station of the Organization for Tropical Studies (OTS), with midday break at La Quinta.

March 29: Morning excursion to La Selva and then a very successful afternoon “parrot watch” in the more open country near the station, as well as birding the La Quinta grounds.

March 30: Leaving La Quinta we travelled to the El Tapir Garden and Quebrada Gonzales area of Braulio Carillo National Park for the morning. In the afternoon we drove to Cerro de la Muerte and then descended into the Savegre Valley.

March 31: A successful pre-breakfast search for quetzals and then the bulk of the morning birding the beautiful Savegre Valley. Afternoon excursion to the high country on Cerro de la Muerte. Clear in the morning and light cloud cover in the afternoon.

April 1: Morning birding in the Savegre Valley. In the afternoon we returned to San Jose, our circuit complete.

April 2: Departure for flights home.

KEY:

MC = Meseta Central

VB = Villa Blanca Lodge and Los Angeles Cloud Forest Reserve and nearby, in the wet subtropical rainforest at mid-elevations on the Caribbean slope.

PL = the Pacific lowlands in the Carara National Park region, including the Tarcoles River boat trip, the grounds at Villa Lapas and other stops within this general area.

CS = the wet Caribbean foothills at the La Paz Waterfall Garden and then again in the El Tapir Garden/Quebrada Gonzalez area of Braulio Carillo NP a few days later.

CL = the Caribbean lowlands from La Quinta to the La Selva Field Station and nearby.

CM = Cerro de la Muerte area, especially the Savegre Valley and nearby, but also the high country at the La Georgina Restaurant and “the towers”.

E = endemic to Costa Rica only

eh = endemic to the highlands of Costa Rica and western Panama

ec = endemic to the Caribbean lowlands and foothills centered on Costa Rica but in some cases extending as far as se. Honduras and/or central Panama.

ep = endemic to the moist Pacific lowlands of southern Costa Rica and far western Panama.

el = endemic to both the Caribbean and Pacific lowlands of Costa Rica and Panama.

hd = heard

BIRDS: Follows *The A.O.U. Check-list of North American Birds, Seventh Edition*@ and supplements. A few of our many highlights are **bolded**.

Great Tinamou (*Tinamus major*) – PL, CL (hd) (an especially close and confiding pair inside the forest in Carara; tinamous are rarely seen this well!).

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) – PL

Muscovy Duck (*Cairina moschata*) – PL

Blue-winged Teal (*Anas discors*) - VB

Gray-headed Chachalaca (*Ortalis cinereiceps*) – VB

Crested Guan (*Penelope purpurascens*) – VB, CL, CS (wonderfully bold at La Selva).

eh **Black Guan** (*Chamaepetes unicolor*) – VB, CS, CM (a specialty of the subtropical forest).

Great Curassow (*Crax rubra*) – CL (this spectacular bird has been hunted to extirpation in much of its range, but has increased here at La Selva, where males and a female on a nest were observed).

Spotted Wood-Quail (*Odontophorus guttatus*) – CM (heard only).

Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*) – PL

Magnificent Frigatebird (*Fregata magnificens*) - PL

Anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*) – PL, CL

Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) – PL

Fasciated Tiger-Heron (*Tigrisoma fasciatum*) – CL (motionless beside a clear rocky stream as it fished in the riffles).

Bare-throated Tiger-Heron (*Tigrisoma mexicanum*) – PL, CL (seen often and well in the Pacific lowlands, where we watched their unusual courtship displays at length).

Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) – PL

Great Egret (*Ardea alba*) – PL

Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*) – PL, CL

Little Blue Heron (*Egretta caerulea*) – VB, PL, CL

Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*) - PL

Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*) – VB, PL, CS, CL

Green Heron (*Butorides virescens*) – PL

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (*Nyctanassa violacea*) – PL

Boat-billed Heron (*Cochlearius cochlearius*) – PL (roosting birds just a few feet away from us on the boat trip).

White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*) – PL

Green Ibis (*Mesembrinibis cayennensis*) – CL (nice surprise on a tiny stream inside the La Selva forest).

Roseate Spoonbill (*Platalea ajaja*) – PL

Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) – all regions (seen daily).

Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*) – all regions (seen daily).

King Vulture (*Sarcorampus papa*) – CL (fabulous looks at two adults soaring low over the roadside, for a surprisingly long time).

Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) – PL, CM

Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*) – PL, CS, CM

White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus*) - MC

Double-toothed Kite (*Harpagus bidentatus*) – PL, CL
 Plumbeous Kite (*Ictinia plumbea*) – PL
 Crane Hawk (*Geranospiza caerulescens*) - PL
 Common Black-Hawk (*Buteogallus anthracinus*) – PL
 Roadside Hawk (*Rupornis magnirostris*) – CL
 Gray Hawk (*Buteo plagiatus*) – PL (now split from Gray-lined Hawk (*B. nitidus*), which is found from the Panama border southward).
 Broad-winged Hawk (*Buteo platypterus*) – MC, CL
 Short-tailed Hawk (*Buteo brachyurus*) - CL
Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*) – CS, CL (including a large flock of migrants).
 Gray-necked Wood-Rail (*Aramides cajanea*) – VB
 Purple Gallinule (*Porphyrio martinica*) – PL
 Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*) – PL
 Southern Lapwing (*Vanellus chilensis*) – VB, PL
 Northern Jacana (*Jacana spinosa*) – VB, PL
 Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularius*) – VB, PL
 Willet (*Tringa semipalmata*) - PL
 Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*) – PL
 Least Sandpiper (*Calidris minutilla*) – PL
 Laughing Gull (*Leucophaeus atricilla*) – PL
 Royal Tern (*Thalasseus maximus*) – PL
 Sandwich Tern (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*) - PL
 Rock Pigeon (*Columba livia*) – feral birds in cities and towns throughout
 Red-billed Pigeon (*Patagioenas flavirostris*) - MC, VB, PL, CS, CL
 Band-tailed Pigeon (*Patagioenas fasciata*) – CM
 Ruddy Pigeon (*Patagioenas subvinacea*) – CS
 Short-billed Pigeon (*Patagioenas nigrirostris*) – PL, CL, CS (hd)
 Inca Dove (*Columbina inca*) – PL, MC
 Ruddy Ground_Dove (*Columbina talpacoti*) – PL, CL
 Blue Ground-Dove (*Claravis pretiosa*) – CL (heard; glimpsed in flight).
 White-tipped Dove (*Leptotila verreauxi*) – VB, PL, CL
 Gray-chested Dove (*Leptotila cassini*) – CL
 White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*) – MC, PL
 Squirrel Cuckoo (*Piaya cayana*) – PL, CL
 Groove-billed Ani (*Crotophaga sulcirostris*) – VB, PL
 Spectacled Owl (*Pulsatrix perspicillata*) – PL, CL (hd)
Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl (*Glaucidium brasilianum*) – PL (finally seen, at length!).
 Lesser Nighthawk (*Chordeiles acutipennis*) – PL
 White-collared Swift (*Streptoprocne zonaris*) – VB, CS, CL, CM
E Costa Rican Swift (*Chaetura fumosa*) – PL (now split from the Band-rumped).
 Gray-rumped Swift (*Chaetura cinereiventris*) – CL
 Lesser Swallow-tailed Swift (*Panyptila cayennensis*) - CL
 Green Hermit (*Phaethornis guy*) – VB, CS
 Long-billed Hermit (*Phaethornis longirostris*) – PL (formerly considered a race of Long-tailed Hermit).

- Green-fronted Lancebill (*Doryfera ludovicae*) - CS
 Green Violet-ear (*Colibri thalassinus*) – CM
 Purple-crowned Fairy (*Heliothryx barroti*) – PL, CL
 Green-breasted Mango (*Anthracothorax prevostii*) – MC
 Green Thorntail (*Discosura conversii*) – CS
Black-crested Coquette (*Lophornis helenae*) – CS (highly decorated!).
 Green-crowned Brilliant (*Heliodoxa jacula*) – VB, CS
 Magnificent Hummingbird (*Eugenes fulgens*) – CM
eh **Fiery-throated Hummingbird** (*Panterpe insignis*) - CM (stunning endemic of the highest elevations, but it takes a while to see all of the colors light up).
eh White-bellied Mountain-gem (*Lampornis hemileucus*) – CS
eh Purple-throated Mountain-gem (*Lampornis calolaemus*) – CS
eh White-throated (Gray-tailed) Mountain-gem (*Lampornis castaneiventris*) – CM
eh Volcano Hummingbird (*Selasphorus flammula*) – CM
eh Scintillant Hummingbird (*Selasphorus scintilla*) – CM
 Violet-headed Hummingbird (*Klais guimeti*) – CS
 Scaly-breasted Hummingbird (*Phaeochroa cuvierii*) – PL
 Violet Sabrewing (*Campylopterus hemileucurus*) – VB, CS
 Stripe-tailed Hummingbird (*Eupherusa eximia*) – CM
eh **Black-bellied Hummingbird** (*Eupherusa nigriventris*) – CS (great looks at males of this uncommon specialty of the wet mid-elevations of the Caribbean slope).
E **Coppery-headed Emerald** (*Elvira cupreiceps*) – VB, CS (a true Costa Rican endemic, known from no other country).
ec **Snowcap** (*Microchera albocoronata*) – CS (including a stunning male; a spectacular hummingbird of restricted range and habitat that is rarely this easy to find and study).
 Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer (*Chalybura urochrysa*) – CS
 Crowned Woodnymph (*Thalurania colombica*) – VB, CS
 Blue-chested Hummingbird (*Amazilia amabilis*) – CL
ep Charming Hummingbird (*Amazilia decora*) – PL
E Mangrove Hummingbird (*Amazilia boucardi*) - PL
 Steely-vented Hummingbird (*Amazilia saucerrottei*) – MC, PL
 Rufous-tailed Hummingbird (*Amazilia tzacatl*) – MC, VB, PL, CS, CL
 Slaty-tailed Trogon (*Trogon massena*) – PL, CL
 Black-headed Trogon (*Trogon melanocephalus*) - PL
 Gartered Trogon (*Trogon caligatus*) – PL (now split from the Violaceous Trogon (*Trogon violaceus*) of Amazonia).
Black-throated Trogon (*Trogon rufus*) – CL (very close male gave us long studies).
eh **Orange-bellied Trogon** (*Trogon aurantiiventris*) – VB (surprisingly frequent in the cloud forest).
Resplendent Quetzal (*Pharomachrus mocinno*) – CM (who could ever get enough of this spectacular bird?).
 Blue-crowned Motmot (*Momotus momota (coeruliceps)*) – PL
Rufous Motmot (*Baryphthengus martii*) – CL (including long looks at a pair perched right beside the trail).

Broad-billed Motmot (*Electron platyrhynchum*) – CL
Turquoise-browed Motmot (*Eumomota superciliosa*) – PL (brilliant).
 Ringed Kingfisher (*Megaceryle torquatus*) – PL, CL
 Amazon Kingfisher (*Chloroceryle amazona*) – PL
 Green Kingfisher (*Chloroceryle americana*) – VB, PL, CL
American Pygmy Kingfisher (*Chloroceryle aenea*) – PL (yippee!).
White-whiskered Puffbird (*Malacoptila panamensis*) – PL (lethargic pair in the open midstory that sat for great views for a long time).
Rufous-tailed Jacamar (*Galbula ruficauda*) – CL (a sparkling gem).
eh **Prong-billed Barbet** (*Semnornis frantzii*) – CS (a strange specialty of the wettest subtropical forests).
 Emerald Toucanet (*Aulacorhynchus prasinus*) – VB, CM (the endemic ABlue-throated@ race, sometimes split as a separate species (*Aulacorhynchus* “*caeruleogularis*”).
 Collared Aracari (*Pteroglossus torquatus*) – CL, CS
ep **Fiery-billed Aracari** (*Pteroglossus frantzii*) – PL (a spectacular regional endemic).
 Keel-billed Toucan (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*) – CL
Yellow-throated (Black-mandibled) Toucan (*Ramphastos ambiguus*) – PL, CL (colorful, noisy and conspicuous; sometimes split as the “Chestnut-mandibled” Toucan (*Ramphastos* “*swainsoni*”).
 Acorn Woodpecker (*Melanerpes formicivorus*) – CM
 Golden-naped Woodpecker (*Melanerpes chrysauchen*) – PL (heard only)
 Black-cheeked Woodpecker (*Melanerpes pucherani*) – CL
eh Hoffmann’s Woodpecker (*Melanerpes hoffmannii*) – MC, PL
 Smoky-brown Woodpecker (*Picoides fumigatus*) - VB
 Hairy Woodpecker (*Picoides villosus*) – CM
 Chestnut-colored Woodpecker (*Celeus castaneus*) – CL
 Lineated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus lineatus*) - PL
Pale-billed Woodpecker (*Campephilus guatemalensis*) – PL (close and calm pair inside the heavy forest).
 Crested Caracara (*Caracara cheriway*) – MC, PL, CL
 Yellow-headed Caracara (*Milvago chimachima*) – PL
 Laughing Falcon (*Herpetotheres cachinnans*) – VB (hd), PL (hd), CL (seen by a few).
 Merlin (*Falco columbarius*) – VB (seen from the bus by some).
 Bat Falcon (*Falco ruficularis*) – CL
 Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) - PL
 Sulphur-winged Parakeet (*Pyrrhura hoffmanni*) – CM
 Olive-throated Parakeet (*Eupsittula nana*) – CL
 Orange-fronted Parakeet (*Eupsittula canicularis*) - PL
Great Green Macaw (*Ara ambiguus*) – CL (a rare sight).
Scarlet Macaw (*Ara macao*) – PL (the signature species of Carara NP and always thrilling to see).
 Crimson-fronted Parakeet (*Psittacara finschi*) – CL
 Orange-chinned Parakeet (*Brotogeris jugularis*) – MC, PL (hd), CL
 Brown-hooded Parrot (*Pyrilia haematotis*) – VB

White-crowned Parrot (*Pionus senilis*) – PL, CL
 White-fronted Parrot (*Amazona albifrons*) - PL
 Red-lored Parrot (*Amazona autumnalis*) – PL, CL
 Mealy Parrot (*Amazona farinosa*) – CL
Yellow-naped Parrot (*Amazona auropalliata*) – PL (close looks from the boat trip).
Fasciated Antshrike (*Cymbilaimus lineatus*) – CL (fierce looking).
 Barred Antshrike (*Thamnophilus doliatus*) – PL (a favorite!).
ep Black-hooded Antshrike (*Thamnophilus bridgesi*) – PL
 Black-crowned (Western Slaty) Antshrike (*Thamnophilus atrinucha*) - CL
 Dot-winged Antwren (*Microrhopias quixensis*) – PL
 Dusky Antbird (*Cercomacra tyrannina*) – PL
 Chestnut-backed Antbird (*Myrmeciza exsul*) – PL, CL (hd)
Streak-chested Antpitta (*Hylopezus perspicillatus*) – PL, CL (hd) (adorable “egg with legs” on the forest floor).
 Black-faced Antthrush (*Formicivorus analis*) – PL
 Olivaceous Woodcreeper (*Sittasomus griseicapillus*) – VB
Long-tailed Woodcreeper (*Deconychura longicauda*) – PL (rarely seen this well).
 Northern Barred-Woodcreeper (*Dendrocolaptes sanctithomae*) – CL
 Cocoa Woodcreeper (*Xiphorhynchus susurrans*) – PL, CL
Black-striped Woodcreeper (*Xiphorhynchus lacrymosus*) – PL (the most beautiful of the Costa Rican woodcreepers).
 Spotted Woodcreeper (*Xiphorhynchus erythropygius*) – VB, CS
 Streak-headed Woodcreeper (*Lepidocolaptes souleyetii*) – PL, CL
 Spot-crowned Woodcreeper (*Lepidocolaptes affinis*) – CM
 Plain Xenops (*Xenops minutus*) – PL
eh Streak-breasted Treehunter (*Thripadectes rufobrunneus*) – CS
Scaly-throated Foliage-gleaner (*Anabacerthia variegaticeps*) – VB (lengthy and repeated observations of a species never found on this tour before).
Buff-throated Foliage-gleaner (*Automolus ochrolaemus*) – PL (unusually calm and close family group just a few feet away from us, allowing great studies).
 Spotted Barbtail (*Premnoplex brunnescens*) – VB, CS, CM
eh **Ruddy Treerunner** (*Magarornis rubiginosus*) – CM (a favorite, scuttling around the mossy trunks and branches, sometimes even upside down).
 Red-faced Spinetail (*Cranioleuca erythrops*) – VB, CS
 Southern Beardless-Tyrannulet (*Camptostoma obsoletum*) – PL
 Yellow Tyrannulet (*Capsiempis flaveola*) - CL
 Greenish Elaenia (*Myiopagis viridicata*) - PL
 Yellow-bellied Elaenia (*Elaenia flavogaster*) – CS, CL
 Lesser Elaenia (*Elaenia chiriquensis*) - MC
 Mountain Elaenia (*Elaenia frantzii*) – CM
Torrent Tyrannulet (*Serpophaga cinerea*) – CS, CM (a distinctive little flycatcher that occupies a very distinctive niche along the streams).
 Olive-striped Flycatcher (*Mionectes olivaceus*) - VB
 Paltry (Mistletoe) Tyrannulet (*Zimmerius villissimus*) – VB, CS, CL, CM

Black-capped Pygmy-Tyrant (*Myornis atricapillus*) – CL (long looks at this tiny bird sitting next to a completed nest).

Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant (*Lophotriccus pileatus*) - VB

Common Tody-Flycatcher (*Todirostrum cinereum*) – PL, CL, CS

Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher (*Todirostrum nigriceps*) – CL

Eye-ringed Flatbill (*Rhynchocyclus brevirostris*) - CL

Yellow-olive Flycatcher (*Tolmomyias sulphureus*) – PL, CL (hd)

Sulphur-rumped Flycatcher (*Myiobius sulphureipygius*) – PL (surprisingly good looks).

Tufted Flycatcher (*Mitrephanes phaenocercus*) – CM

eh Dark Pewee (*Contopus lugubris*) – CM

Eastern Wood-Pewee (*Contopus virens*) – VB, PL

Tropical Pewee (*Contopus cinereus*) - CL

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (*Empidonax flaviventris*) – CL

Yellowish Flycatcher (*Empidonax flavescens*) – VB, CM

Black Phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*) – CS

Long-tailed Tyrant (*Colonia colonus*) – CL (a favorite and a very distinctive flycatcher).

Bright-rumped Attila (*Attila spadiceus*) – PL, CL

Rufous Mourner (*Rhytipterna holerythra*) - CL

Dusky-capped Flycatcher (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*) – VB, PL

Panama Flycatcher (*Myiarchus panamensis*) - PL

Great Crested Flycatcher (*Myiarchus crinitus*) – PL

Great Kiskadee (*Pitangus sulphuratus*) – MC, PL, CL, CM

Boat-billed Flycatcher (*Megarynchus pitangua*) – PL, CL, CM

Social Flycatcher (*Myiozetetes similis*) – MC, PL, CS, CL

Gray-capped Flycatcher (*Myiozetetes granadensis*) – PL, CL

White-ringed Flycatcher (*Conopias albobittatus*) – CL (the scarcest of the “look-alikes”).

eh Golden-bellied Flycatcher (*Myiodynastes hemichrysus*) - VB

Streaked Flycatcher (*Myiodynastes maculates*) – PL

Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher (*Myiodynastes luteiventris*) – VB (two pairs engaged in a vicious battle, presumably over territory).

Piratic Flycatcher (*Legatus leucophaeus*) – PL, CL

Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) – MC, VB, PL, CS, CL, CM

Western Kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*) – PL

Eastern Kingbird (*Tyrannus tyrannus*) - CL

Northern Schiffornis (*Schiffornis veraepacis*) – VB (formerly part of the Thrush-like Manakin, which has now been split into multiple species).

Cinnamon Becard (*Pachyramphus cinnamomeus*) – CL

White-winged Becard (*Pachyramphus polychopterus*) - PL

Rose-throated Becard (*Pachyramphus aglaiae*) - PL

Masked Tityra (*Tityra semifasciata*) – PL, CL

Black-crowned Tityra (*Tityra inquisitor*) – CL

Rufous Piha (*Lipaugus unirufus*) - PL

ec **Snowy Cotinga** (*Carpodectes nitidus*) – CL (we were very lucky to see a male of this

ethereal bird fly across a broad opening on the rainforest edge).

White-ruffed Manakin (*Corapipo altera*) – VB (great study – of a drab female).

White-collared Manakin (*Manacus candei*) – CL (displaying males).

ep **Orange-collared Manakin** (*Manacus aurantiacus*) – PL (beautiful endemic of limited range).

Red-capped Manakin (*Ceratopipra mentalis*) – CL

Mangrove Vireo (*Vireo pallens*) – PL

Yellow-throated Vireo (*Vireo flavifrons*) – MC, PL

eh Yellow-winged Vireo (*Vireo carmioli*) – CM

Brown-capped Vireo (*Vireo leucophrys*) – CS, CM

Philadelphia Vireo (*Vireo philadelphicus*) – PL, CM

Yellow-green Vireo (*Vireo flavoviridis*) – MC

Tawny-crowned Greenlet (*Hylophilus ochraceiceps*) – PL

Lesser Greenlet (*Hylophilus decurtatus*) – PL, CL

Rufous-browed Peppershrike (*Cyclarhis gujanensis*) – CM ((heard only).

Brown Jay (*Cyanocorax morio*) – VB, PL (hd)

Gray-breasted Martin (*Progne chalybea*) – PL, CL

Mangrove Swallow (*Tachycineta albilinea*) – PL, CL

Blue-and-white Swallow (*Pygochelidon cyanoleuca*) – VB, MC, CS, CM

Northern Rough-winged Swallow (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*) – PL, CL

Southern Rough-winged Swallow (*Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*) – CL

Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) – CL

Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) – PL, CL

House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*) – MC, VB, CL, CS, CM (hd)

eh Ochraceous Wren (*Troglodytes ochraceus*) – VB, CS, CM

Band-backed Wren (*Campylorhynchus zonatus*) – CL

Rufous-naped Wren (*Campylorhynchus rufinucha*) – MC, PL

ec **Black-throated Wren** (*Pheugopedius atrogularis*) – CL (a real skulker, seen well).

Rufous-breasted Wren (*Pheugopedius (Thryothorus) rutilus*) – PL

Rufous-and-white Wren (*Thryophilus (Thryothorus) rufalbus*) – PL

ec **Stripe-breasted Wren** (*Cantorchilus (Thryothorus) thoracicus*) – CL (after some persistence we had especially good looks at this wren; like most of them it is quite secretive).

Bay Wren (*Cantorchilus nigricapillus*) – CL

ep Riverside Wren (*Cantorchilus (Thryothorus) semibadius*) – PL

Gray-breasted Wood-Wren (*Henicorhina leucophrys*) – VB, CS (hd), CM (hd)

Long-billed Gnatwren (*Ramphocaenus melanurus*) – PL

Tropical Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila plumbea*) – PL

eh Black-faced Solitaire (*Myadestes melanops*) – VB, CM

eh Black-billed Nightingale-Thrush (*Catharus gracilirostris*) – CM

Slaty-backed Nightingale-Thrush (*Catharus fuscater*) – VB, CS(hopping around out in the open).

Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrush (*Catharus frantzii*) – CM

Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*) – CM

Wood Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*) – VB

- eh** **Sooty Thrush** (*Turdus nigrescens*) – CM (fierce-eyed endemic of the high country).
Mountain Thrush (*Turdus plebejus*) – CM
Pale-vented Thrush (*Turdus obsoletus*) – VB
Clay-colored Thrush (*Turdus grayi*) – all regions (the national bird of Costa Rica, seen and heard daily, sometimes singing a bit too early in the morning).
- eh** **Black-and-yellow Silky-Flycatcher** (*Phainoptila melanoxantha*) – CM (a surprise in the high-elevation forest).
- eh** **Long-tailed Silky-Flycatcher** (*Ptilogonys caudatus*) – BP, CM (sleek, elegant birds reminiscent of waxwings).
Northern Waterthrush (*Parkesia noveboracensis*) – PL
Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) – VB
Black-and-white Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*) – VB
Prothonotary Warbler (*Protonotaria citrea*) – PL
- eh** **Flame-throated Warbler** (*Oreothlypis gutturalis*) – CM (oh what a beauty!).
Tennessee Warbler (*Oreothlypis peregrina*) – MC, VB, PL, CS, CM
American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*) – PL, CL
Tropical Parula (*Setophaga pitiayumi*) – VB, CS
Blackburnian Warbler (*Setophaga fusca*) – CS
Yellow Warbler (*Setophaga petechia*) – MC, PL, CL
“Mangrove” Warbler (*Setophaga petechia erithachorides*) – PL (gorgeous male of this very different-looking resident race of Yellow Warbler. It is occasionally considered a separate species).
Chestnut-sided Warbler (*Setophaga pensylvanica*) – VB, PL, CL, CS
Black-throated Green Warbler (*Setophaga virens*) – CM
Buff-rumped Warbler (*Myiothlypis fulvicauda*) – PL
- eh** Black-cheeked Warbler (*Basileuterus melanogenys*) – CM
Wilson=s Warbler (*Cardellina pusilla*) – VB, CS, CM
Slate-throated Redstart (*Myioborus miniatus*) – VB, CS
- eh** **Collared Redstart** (*Myioborus torquatus*) – CM (the incredibly tame and confiding Aamigo de hombre@, very typical of the high-elevation oak forests and edge).
- eh** Wrenthrush (*Zeledonia coronata*) – CM (heard only)
- eh** **Blue-and-gold Tanager** (*Bangsia aracei*) – VB (special endemic of the lower subtropical zone; the northernmost of the Andean “mountain-tanagers”).
Blue-gray Tanager (*Thraupis episcopus*) – all regions (seen daily).
Palm Tanager (*Thraupis palmarum*) – MC, PL, CS, CL
Golden-hooded Tanager (*Tangara larvata*) – VB, PL, CL
Spangle-cheeked Tanager (*Tangara dowii*) – CS, CM
Bay-headed Tanager (*Tangara gyrola*) – VB, PL
Emerald Tanager (*Tangara florida*) – CS (beautiful adults bringing food to naked chicks in a very observable nest).
Silver-throated Tanager (*Tangara icterocephala*) – VB, CS, CM
- eh** Slaty Flowerpiercer (*Diglossa plumbea*) – CS, CM
Green Honeycreeper (*Chlorophanes spiza*) – VB, CL
Black-and-yellow Tanager (*Chrysothlypis chrysomelas*) – VB, CS

White-shouldered Tanager (*Tachyphonus luctuosus*) – PL
Tawny-crested Tanager (*Tachyphonus delatrii*) - CS
Passerini=s Tanager (*Ramphocelus passerinii*) – VB, CS, CL (everything a tropical bird should be – colorful, common and conspicuous!).
Cherrie’s Tanager (*Ramphocelus costaricensis*) – PL
Shining Honeycreeper (*Cyanerpes lucidus*) – CL
Red-legged Honeycreeper (*Cyanerpes cyaneus*) – PL, CL
Scarlet-thighed Dacnis (*Dacnis venusta*) – VB
Blue Dacnis (*Dacnis cayana*) – CL
Bananaquit (*Coereba flaveola*) – VB, CS, CL
Yellow-faced Grassquit (*Tiaris olivaceus*) – VB, CM
Thick-billed Seed-Finch (*Sporophila funereal*) – VB, CL
Variable Seedeater (*Sporophila corvina*) – VB, PL, CL
Black-headed Saltator (*Saltator atriceps*) – CL
Buff-throated Saltator (*Saltator maximus*) – VB, PL, CS, CL
Grayish Saltator (*Saltator coerulescens*) – MC, CL
Dusky-faced Tanager (*Mitrospingus cassinii*) – CL
eh **Yellow-thighed Finch** (*Psellophorus tibialis*) – CS, CM (comical and common).
eh **Large-footed Finch** (*Pezopetes capitalis*) - CM (lurking in the rose garden).
Orange-billed Sparrow (*Arremon aurantirostris*) – PL, CL
Sooty-faced Finch (*Arremon crassirostris*) – CS (hopped through the La Paz restaurant as we finished lunch!).
Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch (*Arremon brunneinucha*) – VB
White-naped Brush-Finch (*Atlapetes albinucha*) - CM
Rufous-collared Sparrow (*Zonotrichia capensis*) – MC, VB, CS, CM
eh **Volcano Junco** (*Junco vulcani*) – CM (specialty of the paramo thickets at the highest elevations, begging crumbs practically at our feet).
Common Chlorospingus (Bush-Tanager) (*Chlorospingus ophthalmicus*) – VB, CS, CM
eh Sooty-capped Chlorospingus (Bush-Tanager) (*Chlorospingus pileatus*) – CM
Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*) – VB, PL, CS, CL, CM
Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga olivacea*) – CL
Flame-colored Tanager (*Piranga bidentata*) – CM
Red-throated Ant_Tanager (*Habia fuscicauda*) – CL
Black-faced Grosbeak (*Caryothraustes poliogaster*) - CL, CS (hd)
Black-thighed Grosbeak (*Pheucticus tibialis*) – CM (good looks our final morning).
Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) - CM
Blue-black Grosbeak (*Cyanocompsa cyanoides*) – PL
Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*) – PL (gorgeous adult male on the lodge lawn).
Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) – VB
Eastern Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*) - VB
Melodious Blackbird (*Dives dives*) – VB, PL (hd), CS, CM
Great-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) – MC, VB, PL, CS, CL
Shiny Cowbird (*Molothrus bonariensis*) – CL
Bronzed Cowbird (*Molothrus aeneus*) – VB, CL, CM

Giant Cowbird (*Molothrus oryzivorus*) - CL
 Black-cowled Oriole (*Icterus prothemelas*) – CL
Streak-backed Oriole (*Icterus pustulatus*) – PL (a dry-country species rarely found on this tour).
 Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*) – MC, PL, CS, CL, CM
 Yellow-billed Cacique (*Amblycercus holosericeus*) - PL
 Scarlet-rumped Cacique (*Cacicus uropygialis*) - CL
 Chestnut-headed Oropendola (*Psarocolius wagleri*) – CL
 Montezuma Oropendola (*Psarocolius montezuma*) – VB, CS, CL
el Yellow-crowned Euphonia (*Euphonia luteicapilla*) – PL, CL
 Yellow-throated Euphonia (*Euphonia hirundinacea*) - PL
 Olive-backed Euphonia (*Euphonia gouldi*) – CL
 Tawny-capped Euphonia (*Euphonia anneae*) – VB, CS
eh **Golden-browed Chlorophonia** (*Chlorophonia callophrys*) – CS (a pair nest building in the epiphyte-laden trees in the La Paz garden).
 Yellow-bellied Siskin (*Spinus xanthogastrus*) - CM
 House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) – PL, CL

MAMMALS: follows the nomenclature in *The Mammals of Costa Rica*@ by Mark Wainwright.

Nine-banded Armadillo (*Dasypus novemcinctus*) – CL (dead one beside a trail at La Selva).
 Mantled Howler Monkey (*Alouatta palliata*) – CL
 Central American Spider Monkey (*Ateles geoffroyi*) - PL
 Central American (Alfaro's) Dwarf Squirrel (*Microsciurus alfari*) - CS
 Red-tailed Squirrel (*Sciurus granatensis*) – CM
 Variegated Squirrel (*Sciurus variegatoides*) –PL, CL (a large, highly-variable squirrel that looked quite different in each region in which we saw them).
 Central American Agouti (*Dasyprocta punctata*) – VB, PL
 insectivorous bats – PL, CL (several sizes, including some very small ones).
 White-nosed Coati (*Nasua narica*) – VB, CS
 Collared Peccary (*Tayassu tajacu*) - CL

AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES:

Giant (Cane or Marine) Toad (*Bufo marinus*) – PL
 Green-and-black Poison-dart Frog (*Dendrobates auratus*) - PL
 Strawberry Poison-dart (Ablue jeans@) Frog (*Dendrobates pumilio*) – CL
 American Crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*) – PL
 Black Wood-Turtle (*Rhinoclemmys funerea*) – CL
 House Gecko (*Hemidactylus frenatus*) – PL, CL
 Common Basilisk (*Basiliscus basiliscus*) – PL
 Green Basilisk (*Basiliscus plumifrons*) – CS
 Black Spiny-tailed Iguana (“ctenosaur” or “false iguana”) (*Ctenosaura similis*) - PL
 Green (Common) Iguana (*Iguana iguana*) – PL, CL
 Green Spiny Lizard (*Sceloporus malachiticus*) - CM

Central American Whip-tailed Lizard (*Ameiva festiva*) – CL

AND MANY OTHER FASCINATING BUTTERFLIES, SMALL CREATURES, AND PLANTS, INCLUDING:

“machaca” – fruit-eating fish seen from the La Selva bridge.

Morpho butterflies

spectacular moths at the Bosque de Paz lights

Eciton army ants

Leaf-cutter ants