



Field Guides Tour Report

COSTA RICA 2017

Mar 19, 2017 to Apr 3, 2017
Jay VanderGaast & Cory Gregory

For our tour description, itinerary, past triplists, dates, fees, and more, please [VISIT OUR TOUR PAGE](#).



It's hard to beat birding with oceanside scenery like this! Photo by guide Cory Gregory.

I was excited to join Jay for this classic tour of Costa Rica this year. For being such a small country, Costa Rica is a rich and tropical paradise full of colorful critters and an amazing avifauna. Joining Jay on his former “home turf” was both rewarding and insightful, especially because we got to share all the fun and excitement with you all. It was a great group of people and both Jay and I enjoyed your company.

No matter where you are, the weather so often plays a major part in birding. In the tropics of Costa Rica, one often has to expect rain and yes, we had rain. It was a rather rainy start as we birded the Caribbean lowlands due to a system that had planted itself right over us. Still, we succeeded in seeing many of the specialties there. Thank you for being resilient! The rain diminished as we ventured uphill to Rancho Naturalista and things were even clearer as we found ourselves in the highlands of Cerro de la Muerte. We enjoyed the cool and crisp mornings in the higher elevations of the Savegre Valley before dropping down to the Pacific lowlands. Here it was warm and humid, typical for the Carara area. We ended though in the beautiful Monteverde area where temps were cooler and birds were plentiful! As we wrapped up the tour and headed back to San Jose, we encountered a true deluge of rain but, thankfully, it didn't hamper any of our birding.

The birding on tour was superb and we very nearly topped the 500 mark. We started at spots like Virgen del Socorro and La Paz Waterfall Gardens where we were immersed in a flurry of activity of Black-bellied Hummingbirds, the endemic Copper-headed Emerald, the gaudy Violet Sabrewings, a regal White Hawk, and even Sooty-faced Finches during lunch. With those amazing appetizers, it was a great start to the tour!

We spent the next several days in the Caribbean lowlands where we focused our attention around La Selva where we easily tallied 200+ species. New birds came fast and furious. Whether it was the Snowy Cotinga that finally materialized, the impressive Great Curassows roaming the grounds, the Short-tailed Nighthawk that zoomed overhead at dusk, or the numerous Eyelash Vipers, there was something for everyone. Nearby sites provided even more variety including Spot-fronted Swifts, a roadside pair of White-throated Crakes, and even both Barred and Great antshrikes in plain view. Our visit to the lowlands was capped off by a beautiful Great Green Macaw at a potential nest hole, their Scarlet Macaw cousins nearby, and even a King Vulture overhead. Despite the rain, it was productive birding!

Our good luck continued at places like the Rio San Jose where we found a Fasciated Tiger-Heron, a roadside stop for scope views of a Great Potoo, and Reserva El Tapir where we connected with the fantastic Snowcap. We ventured to Braulio Carrillo where, despite the rain, our targets materialized; we found Black-headed Nightingale-Thrush on the trails, a sharp-looking White-throated Shrike-Tanager, and to top it all off, a cracking experience of watching two Yellow-eared Toucanets interacting high overhead! Our time at Rancho Naturalista continued to be top-notch; we enjoyed the many species of hummingbirds from the patio and the moth sheet each morning was alive with a variety of woodcreepers and flycatchers.

We made our way to the Tapanti area where a Black Hawk-Eagle rose overhead, the Zeledon's Antbirds came in to inspect us, and we even watched as an adult Green-fronted Lancebill fed youngsters. At night, we found the mysterious Bare-shanked Screech-Owl high in the forest through the mist. The Savegre Valley high in the cloudforests is a special destination with new birds almost dripping off the mossy branches. In fact, the birding was downright fantastic: Long-tailed Silky-Flycatchers swooped around the lodge, Slaty Flowerpiercers worked the flowers, an Ochraceous Pewee materialized on a roadside, the Collared Redstarts remained friendly, Spotted Wood-Quail lurked in the shadows, and the truly magical Resplendent Quetzals put on a show for all of us. Higher yet, the range-restricted Volcano Junco hopped around roadsides, a Peg-billed Finch briefly teased us, and Black-billed Nightingale-Thrushes sang from the stunted vegetation.

The warm lowlands around Carara National Park hosted a wide range of different species and we spent several days exploring the avifauna. We watched as a Black-faced Anthrush did a lap around us, Spectacled Owls kept a watch over the dining hall, and a variety of manakins came into bathe. The dry forests along the Guacalillo Road were surprisingly birdy with Stripe-headed Sparrows, a whopping 25 Turquoise-browed Motmots, and even a Lesser Ground-Cuckoo in plain view. To top everything off, we enjoyed a leisurely boat trip through the mangroves of the Rio Tarcoles where we enjoyed Boat-billed Herons, a Mangrove Vireo, the colorful Roseate Spoonbills, and lots of Common Black Hawks.

Our final destination was the famous Monteverde area where temps were cooler and even more target species awaited. The grounds hosted White-naped Brushfinches, White-eared Ground-Sparrow, a friendly pair of Orange-bellied Trogons, and even a couple of shy Black-breasted Wood-Quail. Of course one of the main draws of the area is the emblematic Three-wattled Bellbird which we found and got to watch through the scope. What a song, too!

A major thanks goes out to Vernon for his superb driving but also his thorough knowledge of Costa Rica, keen ears and eyes, and willingness to help me out guiding. We'd also like to thank Kevin for stepping in on short notice and his willingness to share up-to-date knowledge on targets. The success of this trip also points to an expert behind the scenes and we'd like to thank Caroline for her hard work ensuring this tour was a success. I certainly had a lot of fun sharing this Costa Rican experience with you and we sincerely hope you enjoyed yourself as well. We both hope to see you in the future on another trip.

On behalf of Jay and the rest of us at Field Guides, thank you!

-- Cory

KEYS FOR THIS LIST

One of the following keys may be shown in brackets for individual species as appropriate: * = heard only, I = introduced, E = endemic, N = nesting, a = austral migrant, b = boreal migrant

BIRDS

Tinamidae (Tinamous)

HIGHLAND TINAMOU (*Nothocercus bonapartei*) – We managed to hear one of these skulkers in the Monteverde Cloud Forest but it remained hidden. [*]

GREAT TINAMOU (*Tinamus major*) – Although we were lucky to hear this terrestrial species fairly often, we even got to see one that came down to the bathing pools at Carara.

LITTLE TINAMOU (*Crypturellus soui*) – La Selva was the only location that we heard this species. [*]

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

MUSCOVY DUCK (*Cairina moschata*) – A huge male was seen flying over near Puerto Viejo one morning.

BLUE-WINGED TEAL (*Anas discors*) – A flock of about 40 were loafing on the edge of the pond at Las Concavas. This is generally the most common and widespread of the migrant ducks in the country. [b]

LESSER SCAUP (*Aythya affinis*) – Cory counted 48 of these migrants on the Angostura Reservoir, a rather high count for the region. [b]

Cracidae (Guans, Chachalacas, and Curassows)

GRAY-HEADED CHACHALACA (*Oreortyx cinereiceps*) – We all enjoyed great views of this cracid at the Rancho Naturalista feeders.

CRESTED GUAN (*Penelope purpurascens*) – These ungainly birds were ridiculously tame at La Selva, where a bunch of them were congregating in a fruiting fig tree.

BLACK GUAN (*Chamaepetes unicolor*) – Excellent views of several of these Chiriqui highland specialties along the road at Rio Macho.

GREAT CURASSOW (*Crax rubra*) – We were having trouble tracking down a calling male at La Selva, until local guide Joel finally found it sitting high overhead. Later we saw a bunch more strolling around the grounds of the station like domestic turkeys.

Odontophoridae (New World Quail)

CRESTED BOBWHITE (SPOT-BELLIED) (*Colinus cristatus dickeyi*) – Three of these were seen scurrying about in the dry forest along the Guacalillo Road.

BLACK-BREASTED WOOD-QUAIL (*Odontophorus leucolaemus*) – Kevin put us at the right place at the right time on the Hotel Fonda Villa grounds; a few crossed the road right in front of us!

SPOTTED WOOD-QUAIL (*Odontophorus guttatus*) – Thanks to Ben for spotting a couple; we all eventually saw a few of these working in the leaf litter near our lodge in the Savegre Valley.

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

LEAST GREBE (*Tachybaptus dominicus*) – We spied a couple on the shrinking pond at Las Concavas.

Ciconiidae (Storks)

WOOD STORK (*Mycteria americana*) – A flyover flock of 8 were spotted as we were hiking in Carara National Park.

Fregatidae (Frigatebirds)

MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD (*Fregata magnificens*) – It's always a pleasure seeing these "friggin birds". We saw some overhead along the Guacalillo Road and on the boat trip through the mangroves.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

NEOTROPIC CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) – Two of these were seen on the boat trip through the mangroves along the Rio Tarcoles.

Anhingidae (Anhingas)

ANHINGA (*Anhinga anhinga*) – Phyllis spotted our first one along the Rio Puerto Viejo as we crossed the suspension bridge at La Selva.

Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

BROWN PELICAN (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) – These large, soaring birds were seen offshore from the Guacalillo Bird Observatory.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

FASCIATED TIGER-HERON (*Tigrisoma fasciatum*) – Great looks at an adult along the Rio San Jose on our way to Braulio Carrillo and a tiger-striped immature bird at the Sunbittern nesting site near Rancho Naturalista.

BARE-THROATED TIGER-HERON (*Tigrisoma mexicanum*) – Our first was seen perched in a roadside tree on our way to La Selva early one morning, though this is a much more commonly seen species along the Pacific coast.

GREAT BLUE HERON (*Ardea herodias*) – We saw this familiar heron just once! Our sighting came from the Rio Tarcoles mangrove boat trip.

GREAT EGRET (*Ardea alba*) – Fairly common throughout the trip in marshy habitats.

SNOWY EGRET (*Egretta thula*) – Although never as numerous as the previous species, they were spotted on at least 5 different days.

LITTLE BLUE HERON (*Egretta caerulea*) – We saw a few of these smallish herons at the lagoon near the Guacalillo Bird Observatory. We had good looks at the white youngsters as well.

TRICOLORED HERON (*Egretta tricolor*) – This slender species was seen at a couple of different spots including the lagoon near the Guacalillo Bird Observatory and on the boat ride on the Rio Tarcoles.

CATTLE EGRET (*Bubulcus ibis*) – Widespread throughout the tour in grassy fields, often alongside livestock.

GREEN HERON (*Butorides virescens*) – We tallied half a dozen of these tiny herons as we walked alongside the lake near Casa Turire.

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) – An immature bird near the Sunbittern nest offered a good opportunity to brush up on the identification of juvenile night-herons!

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nyctanassa violacea*) – First seen on the Caribbean slope where we had a couple of birds, including a lovely adult, at the Angostura Reservoir.

BOAT-BILLED HERON (*Cochlearius cochlearius*) – What a bird! We had crushing views of this retiring species on our mangrove boat trip on the Rio Tarcoles.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

WHITE IBIS (*Eudocimus albus*) – These became fairly common once we dropped into the lowlands around Carara. We had an especially nice fly-by on our boat trip.

GREEN IBIS (*Mesembrinibis cayennensis*) – Excellent views of a pair roosting below the suspension bridge at La Selva. One of the rare occasions on which these birds actually did look green! We would go on to see another in the mangroves along the Rio Tarcoles (quite rare from the west coast of the country).

ROSEATE SPOONBILL (*Platalea ajaja*) – A few of these striking birds were seen on the Rio Tarcoles boat trip.

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

BLACK VULTURE (*Coragyps atratus*) – Daily in large numbers.

TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*) – It's easy to tire of vultures on this tour, but it is still an impressive sight to see huge numbers of them streaming by overhead as they begin their northward migration.

KING VULTURE (*Sarcoramphus papa*) – Most of us were already back on the bus after our Great Green Macaw experience when Cory spotted a handsome adult soaring over among a bunch of migrant Turkey Vultures. Cory was especially pumped, as this has been a nemesis of his up until this point.

Pandionidae (Osprey)

OSPREY (*Pandion haliaetus*) – We don't usually see Ospreys on the Caribbean side, but one bird had a regular roost on a tall dead tree near the macaw nest hole near La Selva and we saw it on a couple of days there. [b]

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

WHITE-TAILED KITE (*Elanus leucurus*) – Seen nicely right out front of the Hotel Bougainvillea on our first morning.

HOOK-BILLED KITE (*Chondrohierax uncinatus*) – Thanks to Cory's photograph, we were able to positively ID the distant, dark raptor we saw flying by as we enjoyed the potoo near Grapples. Another gray morph bird was seen flying over the coffee plantations near Orosi. An easy bird to miss, so having 2 separate sightings was unexpected.

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE (*Elanoides forficatus*) – A few of these graceful raptors were seen overhead at places like the Rio Macho Road, the trails above Savegre Mountain Lodge, and Bosque Del Tolomuco.

BLACK HAWK-EAGLE (*Spizaetus tyrannus*) – We had superb views of a bird at Rio Macho, spotting it as it was just starting to fly, low against the hills, then enjoying it as it climbed steadily overhead.

SNAIL KITE (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*) – An adult bird flew past a couple of times at the Angostura Reservoir, where a small population has become established in recent years.

PLUMBEOUS KITE (*Ictinia plumbea*) – Our only sighting of these fantastic birds-of-prey was on our boat trip along the Rio Tarcoles. We even saw a pair interacting in midair.

COOPER'S HAWK (*Accipiter cooperii*) – A rather scarce bird in the country, but one was seemingly holding a winter territory near the Hotel Bougainvillea, as we saw it on both our first afternoon and the following morning (and I had seen it the previous afternoon as well). [b]

BICOLORED HAWK (*Accipiter bicolor*) – The resident birds at Rancho Naturalista were heard only this visit. [*]

CRANE HAWK (*Geranospiza caerulescens*) – It was an exciting moment when one of these scarce hawks flew over us on the Guacalillo Road! We even saw the white crescents in the wings quite well.

COMMON BLACK HAWK (MANGROVE) (*Buteogallus anthracinus subtilis*) – Although once split out as a different species, this subspecies has been relumped with Common Black Hawk. We saw quite a few of these in the mangroves during our boat trip.

ROADSIDE HAWK (*Rupornis magnirostris*) – There was usually one perched next to the pastures just below Rancho Naturalista.

WHITE HAWK (*Pseudastur albicollis*) – One flashed by as we descended into the valley at Virgen del Socorro but was missed by most of the group, so we made a stop later in the day at a viewpoint over the valley, and after scanning for several minutes, Lois managed to find one perched, half-obscured by vegetation. By moving up the road a bit, we were able to get fine scope views of this gorgeous hawk.

GRAY HAWK (*Buteo plagiatus*) – We had two the day we birded out along the Guacalillo Road: one along the road and another closer to the Bird Observatory.

BROAD-WINGED HAWK (*Buteo platypterus*) – A common migrant and winter resident. As usual at this time of year, there were loads of them migrating through and we saw some pretty impressive flocks of these and Swainson's Hawks passing by, particularly in the Caribbean lowlands.

Surprisingly, we saw at least 2 dark morph birds, a form that is rare overall and one that I've only seen a couple of times previously in the country. [b]

SHORT-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo brachyurus*) – One light morph bird flew over at Virgen del Socorro.

SWAINSON'S HAWK (*Buteo swainsoni*) – A passage migrant only in the country, as these birds mainly winter in southern south America. We saw some large migrant flocks going by overhead in the La Selva area. [b]

ZONE-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo albonotatus*) – One of these vulture look-alikes cruised overhead during our mangrove boat trip.

RED-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo jamaicensis*) – A couple of birds flying over the Savegre Valley were of the race *costaricensis*, which is endemic to the highlands of CR and Panama.

Eurypygidae (Sunbittern)

SUNBITTERN (*Eurypyga helias*) – A much-wanted bird for several folks in the group, so our experience with this stunning bird was especially thrilling. A known nest near Rancho Naturalista made it easy, and we quickly enjoyed views of an adult flying up to the nest (containing two youngsters) from the river bed. A second adult was spotted moving along the river towards our position, and eventually, it also offered wonderful views of the intricately patterned wings as it flew under the bridge we were standing on! Hard to beat those views! [N]

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

WHITE-THROATED CRAKE (*Laterallus albigularis*) – It took some time and patience, but we were eventually rewarded with some great looks at a pair of these skulking birds along a country road in the Caribbean lowlands. After we'd worked so hard and then moved on from them, Ed spotted the birds walking in the open in a small rivulet along the edge of the road!

GRAY-COWLED WOOD-RAIL (*Aramides cajaneus*) – We were lucky to snag this species close to the end of our trip up at Monteverde. We saw two strolling on the grounds of the Hotel Fonda Vela. Although the range of this species is a source of some confusion since the recent split of Gray-necked Wood-Rail into two species (Gray-cowled and Russet-naped), photos of our birds confirmed them as Gray-cowled.

PURPLE GALLINULE (*Porphyrio martinicus*) – No fewer than 10 of these were spotted on our hike near Casa Turire.

COMMON GALLINULE (*Gallinula galeata*) – We found one of these in a small pond as we cut behind the city of Cartago (alongside Least Grebes, some teal, etc).

AMERICAN COOT (*Fulica americana*) – Not a common bird on the tour route, and we rarely see it on this tour, but there was one at the pond at Las Concavas. [b]

Aramidae (Limpkin)

LIMPKIN (*Aramus guarauna*) – Like the Snail Kite, this species has established a small population at the Angostura Reservoir since the lake's creation in 1999. We heard and saw a single bird there.

Burhinidae (Thick-knees)

DOUBLE-STRIPED THICK-KNEE (*Burhinus bistriatus*) – Four of these sturdy shorebirds were seeking shade along the Guacalillo Road. This species, along with other thick-knees, are often nocturnal.

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

BLACK-NECKED STILT (*Himantopus mexicanus*) – We saw a few of these briefly on our drive near Carara. Turns out, that would be our only sighting of the trip.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER (*Pluvialis dominica*) – A real oddity and rare sighting, one of these migrants was refueling at the Guacalillo Bird Observatory lagoon. [b]

SOUTHERN LAPWING (*Vanellus chilensis*) – Our first and best view of this striking shorebird came in the pastures along the entrance to Casa Turire.

SEMPALMATED PLOVER (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) – There were 4 of these little plovers at the lagoon near the Guacalillo Bird Observatory. Smaller than Killdeer, this species only has one breast band. [b]

KILLDEER (*Charadrius vociferus*) – One was seen with all the teals at the pond at Las Concavas. [a]

Jacanidae (Jacanas)

NORTHERN JACANA (*Jacana spinosa*) – Fairly common in wetlands and moist habitats throughout our trip.

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

WHIMBREL (*Numenius phaeopus*) – We had great looks at this curlew as we motored by some roosting birds on the Rio Tarcoles boat trip. [b]

RUDDY TURNSTONE (*Arenaria interpres*) – This arctic breeder was feeding in the lagoon near Guacalillo Bird Observatory. [b]

SANDERLING (*Calidris alba*) – Same as the previous species, our only sighting came from the Guacalillo Bird Observatory lagoon. [b]

LEAST SANDPIPER (*Calidris minutilla*) – This peep, the smallest shorebird in the world, was seen in the Guacalillo Bird Observatory lagoon. [b]

PECTORAL SANDPIPER (*Calidris melanotos*) – At least 5 of these uncommon shorebirds were seen feeding in the Guacalillo Lagoon. [b]

SEMPALMATED SANDPIPER (*Calidris pusilla*) – This is another "peep" species that we saw in the Guacalillo Lagoon where more than 30 were tallied. [b]

WESTERN SANDPIPER (*Calidris mauri*) – This peep has a longer bill than the previous species. We found 10 of these at the shorebird lagoon near Guacalillo Bird Observatory. [b]

- SPOTTED SANDPIPER** (*Actitis macularius*) – We found the mother lode when nearly 40 of these were tallied on the Rio Tarcoles boat trip!
- GREATER YELLOWLEGS** (*Tringa melanoleuca*) – At least 3 of these tall tringas were spied out in the shorebird lagoon near the Guacalillo Bird Observatory. [b]
- WILLET** (*Tringa semipalmata*) – We found a couple of these sturdy tringas when we were sorting through gulls and terns at the Estero Mata de Limón lagoon. [b]
- LESSER YELLOWLEGS** (*Tringa flavipes*) – A duo were found at the shorebird lagoon near Guacalillo Bird Observatory. [b]

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

- LAUGHING GULL** (*Leucophaeus atricilla*) – An adult loafing on a log in the middle of the Angostura Reservoir was a surprise there, and the first for Jay at this site. [b]
- ROYAL TERN** (*Thalasseus maximus*) – We found a whole swarm roosting at the Estero Mata de Limón lagoon.
- SANDWICH TERN** (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*) – One of these was found roosting with the Royal Tern flock at Estero Mata de Limón lagoon. It was smaller than the Royals with a black bill with a yellow tip.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

- ROCK PIGEON** (*Columba livia*) – Commonly seen around towns and cities. [H]
- PALE-VENTED PIGEON** (*Patagioenas cayennensis*) – Fewer than expected in the Caribbean lowlands. I wonder if the apparent increase in Red-billed Pigeons in the lowlands has had an impact on this species.
- RED-BILLED PIGEON** (*Patagioenas flavirostris*) – The common large pigeon at low to mid-elevations on the Caribbean slope.
- BAND-TAILED PIGEON** (*Patagioenas fasciata*) – Several fairly large flocks were seen in the Savegre Valley.
- RUDDY PIGEON** (*Patagioenas subvinacea*) – Nice views of a couple of birds in a fruiting tree above the entrance to La Paz Waterfall Gardens were our first. A species pair with Short-billed Pigeon, and generally occurs at higher elevations than that species, though they do overlap at some mid-mountains sites so it's always good to hear them call as they are tough to tell apart on plumage alone.
- SHORT-BILLED PIGEON** (*Patagioenas nigrirostris*) – Heard and seen well around the administration buildings at La Selva. This is the lowland counterpart to the previous species.
- INCA DOVE** (*Columbina inca*) – This small and scaly-looking dove was fairly common in the dry forests along the Guacalillo Road where we tallied about 10.
- COMMON GROUND-DOVE** (*Columbina passerina*) – Like the previous species, we saw this small dove along the Guacalillo Road.
- RUDDY GROUND-DOVE** (*Columbina talpacoti*) – A common and widespread species throughout our trip, often seen around habitations.
- BLUE GROUND-DOVE** (*Claravis pretiosa*) – Two of these shot by during our boat trip on the Rio Tarcoles. However, they sadly didn't stick around for everyone to see.
- WHITE-TIPPED DOVE** (*Leptotila verreauxi*) – A chunky dove, often seen on the ground, that was seen on about half our tour days.
- GRAY-CHESTED DOVE** (*Leptotila cassinii*) – Nice looks at several of these plump, dark, terrestrial doves at La Selva.
- BUFF-FRONTED QUAIL-DOVE** (*Zentrygon costaricensis*) – A few of us were lucky to spy this sneaky and retiring species speed-walking away from us near our lodge in the Savegre Valley.
- WHITE-WINGED DOVE** (*Zenaida asiatica*) – Common and widespread through much of our trip including the Hotel Bougainvillea grounds.

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

- SMOOTH-BILLED ANI** (*Crotophaga ani*) – Vernon's sharp eyes picked these out on a roadside on our drive to Carara from Savegre. Thankfully we backed up and all saw them well.
- GROOVE-BILLED ANI** (*Crotophaga sulcirostris*) – We had wonderful views of these starting right away in the Hotel Bougainvillea area. They would remain common on the trip in grassy edges and fields.
- LESSER GROUND-CUCKOO** (*Morococcyx erythropygus*) – We were very lucky indeed to watch this sneaky species strolling around on the ground along the Guacalillo Road! Cory picked this as one of his favorite moments of tour.
- SQUIRREL CUCKOO** (*Piaya cayana*) – This large and long-tailed cuckoo was seen many times on tour but they were always fun to look at.

Tytonidae (Barn-Owls)

- BARN OWL** (*Tyto alba*) – A couple of birds were at their regular day roost in Cartago. How they can get any sleep with those noisy Crimson-fronted Parakeets as neighbors is beyond me.

Strigidae (Owls)

- TROPICAL SCREECH-OWL** (*Megascops choliba*) – A nice ice-breaker for the tour, as we had a great encounter with one on the hotel grounds on our very first evening.
- VERMICULATED SCREECH-OWL (VERMICULATED)** (*Megascops guatemalae vermiculatus*) – This can be a tricky species to track down at night, as their soft calls or somewhat ventriloquial, but we managed to do just that despite the rainy weather on our night walk at La Selva. The next morning's view of a bird on a day roost was just icing.
- BARE-SHANKED SCREECH-OWL** (*Megascops clarkii*) – It took a while to get this one going on a drizzly night near Orosi, but one finally did respond, then showed up beautifully in the spotlight, making up for the lack of Mottled Owls that evening!
- SPECTACLED OWL** (*Pulsatrix perspicillata*) – A calling bird in the early hours of our final morning at La Quinta showed well for the few of us who didn't get caught up in the confusion of the other birding group that were departing and claiming the bird was gone. Luckily, another one was seen above the restaurant at Villa Lapas, so it wasn't so painful a miss for those that deserted their hot breakfasts to try and see that first one!
- COSTA RICAN PYGMY-OWL** (*Glaucidium costaricanum*) – A calling bird in the tall oak forests above Savegre Lodge was incredibly difficult to track down. But knowing this was likely our only chance, Jay didn't want to walk away from such a vocal bird. Persistence eventually paid off, and we had pretty good views of this bird before it moved off out of sight.
- FERRUGINOUS PYGMY-OWL** (*Glaucidium brasilianum*) – Found easily a couple of times near the Hotel Bougainvillea on our first birding outings. We would go on to find about 5 (!) along the Guacalillo Road.
- MOTTLED OWL** (*Ciccaba virgata*) – Those electing to join us on a post-dinner owling excursion at Monteverde spotted one of these owls at close range right beside our hotel building!

STRIPED OWL (*Pseudoscops clamator*) – Kevin knew right where to look for this gorgeous owl species one night after dinner. Those that joined us had wonderful scope views.

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

LESSER NIGHTHAWK (*Chordeiles acutipennis*) – These nightjars were seen flying overhead one evening when we exited the forest at Carara National Park.

SHORT-TAILED NIGHTHAWK (*Lurocalis semitorquatus*) – The weather was a bit dodgy as we waited for dusk at La Selva, but the rain held off long enough for us to see one of these make a single pass overhead before winging off over the canopy.

COMMON PAURAUQUE (*Nyctidromus albicollis*) – The most commonly seen nightjar. La Selva guide Joel found a nest with two eggs when we flushed one bird from the edge of the trail behind the soccer field. [N]

DUSKY NIGHTJAR (*Anrostomus saturatus*) – Vernon knew the exact stump that this species preferred to land on and, with some patience, we all got to see this Costa Rica/Panama specialty quite well high in the Savegre Valley.

Nyctibiidae (Potoos)

GREAT POTOO (*Nyctibius grandis*) – Excellent looks at a roosting bird along the very busy highway on our way from Braulio to Rancho.

COMMON POTOO (*Nyctibius griseus*) – We heard the distinctive calls of this species one evening/morning at Rancho Naturalista. [*]

Apodidae (Swifts)

SPOT-FRONTED SWIFT (*Cypseloides cherriei*) – Swifts are such a difficult group of birds to identify, but every once in a while you get a flock in good light, and that's what happened one afternoon in the Caribbean lowlands. A mixed flock of swifts flying ahead of a storm system held about 10 of these uncommon birds, giving pretty decent views of their salient field marks.

CHESTNUT-COLLARED SWIFT (*Streptoprocne rutila*) – A similar number of these swifts were with the Spot-fronted Swifts, and the chestnut collar was pretty distinct when you caught them in the right light.

WHITE-COLLARED SWIFT (*Streptoprocne zonaris*) – This huge swift is easily identified and often seen. We had them daily in the Caribbean lowlands, including about 20 with the above two species.

VAUX'S SWIFT (*Chaetura vauxi*) – We tallied quite a few of these overhead at La Paz Waterfall Gardens on our first birding day. This is the most-expected *Chaetura* species at that elevation.

COSTA RICAN SWIFT (*Chaetura fumosa*) – The swifts zooming about as we birded Villa Lapas one morning were this species. If seen from above, the pale rump is a great fieldmark.

GRAY-RUMPED SWIFT (*Chaetura cinereiventris*) – Rather scarce this trip, and we saw just a couple with the three larger swifts in the Caribbean lowlands.

LESSER SWALLOW-TAILED SWIFT (*Panyptila cayennensis*) – Nice looks at a pair of these Barn Swallow-like swifts flying over the entrance to La Selva.

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

WHITE-NECKED JACOBIN (*Florisuga mellivora*) – Especially common at the porch feeders at Rancho.

GREEN HERMIT (*Phaethornis guy*) – Quite common at middle elevations and a regular visitor to the feeders at La Paz and Rancho. Another one hovered in front of us in the forest at Braulio Carrillo, probably interested in a red article of clothing someone was sporting.

LONG-BILLED HERMIT (*Phaethornis longirostris*) – A perched bird low in the undergrowth along a trail at La Selva was an excellent find by Susan.

STRIPE-THROATED HERMIT (*Phaethornis striigularis*) – We had a few sightings of this small hermit at Rancho Naturalista.

GREEN-FRONTED LANCEBILL (*Doryfera ludovicae*) – It was pretty amazing watching one of these long-billed hummers feeding a couple of tiny babies in a nest at the entrance to Tapanti National Park. [N]

LESSER VIOLETEAR (*Colibri cyanotus*) – Our first were at the La Georgia rest stop at Cerro de la Muerte but we would see more at the Monteverde Hummingbird Gallery feeders. This species used to be known as Green Violetear before being split into two species: Lesser and Mexican.

PURPLE-CROWNED FAIRY (*Heliodytes barroti*) – We didn't see many on this tour but we did chance into a couple including one on Cerro El Silencio near Rancho Naturalista.

GREEN-BREASTED MANGO (*Anthracothorax prevostii*) – A very common species at Rancho's porch feeders.

GREEN THORNTAIL (*Discosura conversii*) – This tiny species showed up at feeders at both La Paz and Cinchona, and at flowering Inga trees at Rancho and near the Cachi Reservoir, briefly raising hopes that we'd spotted an elusive coquette.

GREEN-CROWNED BRILLIANT (*Heliodoxa jacula*) – A pretty common feeder hummingbird at several locations.

MAGNIFICENT HUMMINGBIRD (*Eugenes fulgens*) – The largest hummingbird in the highlands, and one of the more numerous species at the Savegre Lodge feeders.

LONG-BILLED STARTRHOAT (*Heliomaster longirostris*) – This species was scoped high in some treetops when we arrived at the main entrance to Carara National Park.

PLAIN-CAPPED STARTRHOAT (*Heliomaster constantii*) – We were lucky to find this species at a stake-out location on our way up to Monteverde (near Guacimal). We eventually found it in a flowering tree that was hosting half a dozen other hummingbird species!

FIERY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD (*Panterpe insignis*) – This high-elevation species was on everyone's mind for a while and we finally connected with a whole swarm at the La Georgia rest stop near Cerro de la Muerte.

WHITE-BELLIED MOUNTAIN-GEM (*Lampornis hemileucus*) – A fairly scarce species on this tour route, and one that could easily be missed, but we did well this year, as we had a couple of birds at La Paz and a single at Cinchona, and we also saw one at a flowering epiphyte at Tapanti NP.

PURPLE-THROATED MOUNTAIN-GEM (*Lampornis calolaemus*) – Both males and females were seen nicely at the La Paz feeders, and we also had a couple of female plumaged birds at Tapanti, where they are seasonal. Also common at feeders in the Monteverde region.

WHITE-THROATED MOUNTAIN-GEM (GRAY-TAILED) (*Lampornis castaneiventris cinereicauda*) – This mountain-gem occurs at higher elevations than the other species, and as usual, was only encountered in the Savegre valley.

MAGENTA-THROATED WOODSTAR (*Calliphlox bryantae*) – We connected with this tiny gem in the Monteverde area where we saw them above our hotel and again at the Monteverde Hummingbird Gallery.

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD (*Archilochus colubris*) – This migrant was spotted high in the "magic hummingbird tree" en route to Monteverde. It was one of 7 or 8 species of hummingbirds in the same tree! [b]

- VOLCANO HUMMINGBIRD** (*Selasphorus flammula*) – Not uncommon in the Savegre Valley, though, as usual, most were either females or young birds. Generally occurs at higher elevations than the similar Scintillant Hummingbird, though they do overlap at some sites, making for an interesting identification challenge.
- SCINTILLANT HUMMINGBIRD** (*Selasphorus scintilla*) – A quick view at Bosque del Tolomuco was all this species provided for us. This tiny hummer is found only in Costa Rica and Panama.
- VIOLET-HEADED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Klais guimeti*) – The small hummer with the large white spot behind its eye. Best seen at the flowering verbena hedges at El Tapir.
- SCALY-BREASTED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Phaeochroa cuvierii*) – A rather plain-colored hummer, this species was seen along the Guacalillo Road (you might remember we noted the pale corners to the tail).
- VIOLET SABREWING** (*Campylopterus hemileucurus*) – Easily recognizable by it being huge and purple! A regular feeder bird at several sites.
- BRONZE-TAILED PLUMELETEER** (*Chalybura urochrysis*) – I still prefer the former name, Red-footed Plumeteer, as no other hummingbird has feet this color, and they are surprisingly noticeable as we saw on that first bird at La Selva. The feet were a bit tougher to make out on the pair of birds at El Tapir, but they were still obviously red.
- CROWNED WOODNYMPH** (*Thalurania colombica*) – For several years this was known as Violet-crowned Woodnymph, but it was recently re-lumped with several other species and is back to just being "Crowned". Whatever you call it though, it is a stunning bird. Most of the ones we saw were at Rancho.
- STRIPE-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Eupherusa eximia*) – Our best looks came from the Monteverde Hummingbird Gallery where a few were reliable.
- BLACK-BELLIED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Eupherusa nigriventris*) – At least 4 of these striking little Chiriqui endemics were at the La Paz feeders, the only place we were to see this species.
- COPPERY-HEADED EMERALD** (*Elvira cupreiceps*) – One of the few species endemic to Costa Rica. This one was numerous at the feeders at La Paz Waterfall Gardens. [E]
- SNOWCAP** (*Microchera albocoronata*) – A Rancho specialty, though we never actually saw one at Rancho this year, likely as the abundance of flowering Inga trees kept them from feeding on the back yard verbena hedges during our visit. No matter, as we had a couple of males and a female at El Tapir, then another male (at a verbena hedge) along the Silent Mountain Road.
- BLUE-CHESTED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Amazilia amabilis*) – Restricted to the Caribbean lowlands, and seen only at La Selva, as usual. The overcast conditions made them appear even duller than they normally do.
- MANGROVE HUMMINGBIRD** (*Amazilia boucardi*) – This Costa Rican specialty is found in no other country! We had great looks at one coming to feeders at the Guacalillo Bird Observatory. [E]
- STEELY-VENTED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Amazilia saucerotiei*) – One was seen at the flowering Eucalyptus trees near Orosi where we waited in vain for a coquette to show up.
- SNOWY-BELLIED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Amazilia edward*) – We found this handsome hummer feeding on the hedge at Bosque Del Tolomuco. This would turn out to be our only sighting on tour.
- RUFOUS-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Amazilia tzacatl*) – The most common and numerous lower elevation hummer by a long shot. In fact, we had these every day on the Caribbean slope.
- CINNAMON HUMMINGBIRD** (*Amazilia rutila*) – This buffy-fronted hummer is a specialty of the dry forests in the western and northwestern portions of the country. We saw them several times along the Guacalillo Road and again in Guacimal on our way to Monteverde.
- BLUE-THROATED GOLDENTAIL** (*Hylocharis eliciae*) – This species was spotted at the productive tree for hummers in Guacimal on our way up to Monteverde.

Trogonidae (Trogons)

- RESPLENDENT QUETZAL** (*Pharomachrus mocinno*) – I quite enjoyed watching the hordes of other tourists dashing frantically up the road when someone spotted a quetzal a couple of hundred yards away, then having that stellar male fly in and land right out in the open directly in front of where we stood waiting patiently! An amazing bird and at least a couple of folks (Susan, Ben) mentioned it being a major target after missing it on earlier visits to the country. In fact, this species tied the bellbird as the "bird of the trip".
- SLATY-TAILED TROGON** (*Trogon massena*) – Common in the lowlands on both sides of the country and we saw quite a few around La Selva.
- BLACK-HEADED TROGON** (*Trogon melanocephalus*) – First heard while we were hiking in Carara, this trogon was eventually seen quite well later in the trip as we birded the Guacalillo Road.
- BAIRD'S TROGON** (*Trogon bairdii*) – The grounds at Villa Lapas yielded our only sighting of this red-bellied trogon for the trip.
- GARTERED TROGON** (*Trogon caligatus*) – Formerly known as Violaceous Trogon, this is the one with the yellow eye ring and yellow belly. Quite common, widespread, and not exclusively tied to good forest. We saw quite a few on the Caribbean slope.
- BLACK-THROATED TROGON** (*Trogon rufus*) – A smallish trogon of the forest interior, where it generally perches quite low. We had fine views of a male along the paved trail at La Selva.
- ORANGE-BELLIED TROGON** (*Trogon aurantiiventris*) – We all had superb views of a pair at the back of the Villa Lapas grounds one morning. There is ongoing debate on whether this is a "good" species or whether it should be lumped with the following species.
- COLLARED TROGON** (*Trogon collaris*) – Occurs at higher elevations than any other Costa Rican trogon, except for the quetzal and the similar Orange-bellied Trogon, which I am not convinced is a good species anyway. The group that did the steeper hike at Rancho had a pair of these near the end of our walk, and we also saw a male in the gorgeous oak forest in the Savegre Valley.

Momotidae (Motmots)

- LESSON'S MOTMOT** (*Momotus lessonii lessonii*) – A few years ago, Blue-crowned Motmot was split into 5 species, with the northernmost species retaining the name. Then last year, this form was again split into two species, neither of which is called Blue-crowned, so that name has disappeared altogether as a species name. The species found in Costa Rica now goes by this name. Some of the group saw one during our first afternoon's walk around the Hotel Bougainvillea, and everyone later caught up with it at Monteverde.
- RUFOUS MOTMOT** (*Baryphthengus martii*) – The largest of the motmots, this one was encountered regularly at both La Selva and Rancho.
- BROAD-BILLED MOTMOT** (*Electron platyrhynchum*) – Similar to the Rufous Motmot, but much smaller and not as brightly-colored, and with a very different call. We saw several of these at La Selva.

TURQUOISE-BROWED MOTMOT (*Eumomota superciliosa*) – We tallied no fewer than a whopping 25 on our birding trip down the Guacalillo Road! A beautiful bird, it's hard to truly have your fill of them.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

RINGED KINGFISHER (*Megaceryle torquata*) – Seen several times along various rivers and large bodies of water throughout the tour.

BELTED KINGFISHER (*Megaceryle alcyon*) – It was getting a tad late in the year to be seeing this wintering species but we managed to snag one flying over the Guacalillo Bird Observatory lagoon. [b]

AMAZON KINGFISHER (*Chloroceryle amazona*) – Larger than the Green Kingfisher, this green kingfisher was spied a few times on tour including at Casa Turire and Cerro El Silencio near the Sunbittern spot.

GREEN KINGFISHER (*Chloroceryle americana*) – This tiny fish-eater was seen on our walk near Casa Turire and again during our boat trip through the mangroves.

Bucconidae (Puffbirds)

WHITE-NECKED PUFFBIRD (*Notharchus hyperrhynchus*) – Kevin's intel was spot on; we had great looks at one near a possible nest on our way towards Monteverde.

WHITE-WHISKERED PUFFBIRD (*Malacoptila panamensis*) – A male at La Selva was a nice find, as Jay rarely sees this species there. We would go on to see several more in the Carara region including a pair along the trail behind our lodge.

Galbulidae (Jacamars)

RUFOUS-TAILED JACAMAR (*Galbula ruficauda*) – A couple of birds perched low on vines along the soccer field trail at La Selva. One bird was trying to subdue a large cicada it had just caught.

Capitonidae (New World Barbets)

RED-HEADED BARBET (*Eubucco bourcierii*) – A male played a bit hard to get in the forest at Rio Macho, but I think everyone caught up with it in the end.

Semnornithidae (Toucan-Barbets)

PRONG-BILLED BARBET (*Semnornis frantzii*) – One of only two species in its family (the other being the Toucan Barbet of Colombia and Ecuador), this chunky bird is one of the many Chiriqui endemics. We had excellent looks at a pair at the fruit feeders at Cinchona.

Ramphastidae (Toucans)

EMERALD TOUCANET (BLUE-THROATED) (*Aulacorhynchus prasinus caeruleogularis*) – A couple of birds showed nicely in the late afternoon at Rio Macho. Emerald Toucanet was once split into several species, then re-lumped again several years ago. A 2016 proposal to once again split it into several species was rejected, but who knows where this will go in the future. Best to keep track of where you've seen them in case of further changes.

COLLARED ARACARI (*Pteroglossus torquatus*) – Lots of these small toucans were seen at La Selva, with about 15 of them one morning feeding in fruiting trees near the suspension bridge.

FIERY-BILLED ARACARI (*Pteroglossus frantzii*) – This emblematic species was seen quite well near the Villa Lapas lodge one morning. In fact, they kind of found us instead of the other way around!

YELLOW-EARED TOUCANET (*Selenidera spectabilis*) – A scarce species that we rarely see on this tour, and Jay personally hadn't seen one in a long, long time. So it was a great thrill to first hear one calling in the canopy above us at Braulio Carrillo, then to see the pair perched high overhead. Not a bad find for a rainy day in the park!

YELLOW-THROATED TOUCAN (CHESTNUT-MANDIBLED) (*Ramphastos ambiguus swainsonii*) – The more numerous of the two large toucans in the Caribbean lowlands. Toucans in this genus are split into two groups, the larger, smooth-billed "yelpers", such as this species, and the smaller, keel-billed "croakers", like the next.

KEEL-BILLED TOUCAN (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*) – Less numerous around La Selva than the previous species, but this bird ranges a little farther up the mountains than does Yellow-throated, so at places like Rancho, this is the only large toucan species.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

ACORN WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes formicivorus*) – Quite common in the highlands, wherever there are oak trees. There are lots of these trees in the Savegre Valley, and thus, plenty of these woodpeckers, too.

GOLDEN-NAPED WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes chrysauchen*) – This scarce species was spotted just once when we were birding the grounds at Villa Lapas near Carara. Unfortunately it didn't stick around for long.

BLACK-CHEEKED WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes pucherani*) – The most often seen woodpecker on the Caribbean slope.

HOFFMANN'S WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes hoffmannii*) – Numerous in the central valley, and along the Pacific coast, and everyone's first woodpecker, seen on the grounds of the Hotel Bougainvillea.

SMOKY-BROWN WOODPECKER (*Picoides fumigatus*) – Heard by the group that hiked up the trails at Rancho, but we couldn't track it down. [*]

HAIRY WOODPECKER (*Picoides villosus*) – Our only encounter was on the day we hiked above Savegre Mountain Lodge.

GOLDEN-OLIVE WOODPECKER (*Colaptes rubiginosus*) – Several of us saw our first at Bosque Del Tolomuco but we later caught everyone up with it at Hotel Fonda Vela at Monteverde.

CINNAMON WOODPECKER (*Ceelus loricatus*) – Heard distantly a couple of times at La Selva. [*]

CHESTNUT-COLORED WOODPECKER (*Ceelus castaneus*) – Lois spotted this floppy-crested woodpecker feeding low along the entrance road at La Selva.

LINEATED WOODPECKER (*Dryocopus lineatus*) – A close relative of Pileated Woodpecker, this species is quite widespread, and we kicked off our sightings with nice views of one near the Hotel Bougainvillea on our first afternoon.

PALE-BILLED WOODPECKER (*Campephilus guatemalensis*) – A trio of these large woodpeckers, close relatives of the extinct Ivory-billed Woodpecker, at the suspension bridge at La Selva.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

BARRED FOREST-FALCON (*Micrastur ruficollis*) – Keen eyes by Jan (or Ed?) spotted this secretive raptor on the grounds at Hotel Fonda Vela. It didn't stick for long, however; most of us only saw a streak as it flew off.

COLLARED FOREST-FALCON (*Micrastur semitorquatus*) – We heard the distant calls of this falcon at Hotel Fonda Vela but it stayed out of view.

[*]

CRESTED CARACARA (*Caracara cheriway*) – Until fairly recently, this was a scarce species on the Caribbean slope, but they've increased a lot lately, and now are not uncommon, though we saw just one on this slope near La Selva. Generally much more numerous along the Pacific coast.

YELLOW-HEADED CARACARA (*Milvago chimachima*) – Our best views of this raptor came from the Guacalillo Bird Observatory where one flew over.

LAUGHING FALCON (*Herpetotheres cachinnans*) – Heard in the lowlands near La Quinta one afternoon. We would go on to spot another at Bosque Del Tolomuco thanks to Vernon's sharp eyes.

Psittacidae (New World and African Parrots)

RED-FRONTED PARROTLET (*Touit costaricensis*) – I think it was Connie who saw one of these rare parrots along with Vernon at the ranger station at Braulio Carrillo.

BARRED PARAKEET (*Bolborhynchus lineola*) – Several good-sized flocks (totaling an estimated 250-300 birds) flew over as we birded the highlands on our way down to Savegre Lodge. As usual, they were seen only in flight, though several flocks flew by close enough that some could make out their color.

ORANGE-CHINNED PARAKEET (*Brotogeris jugularis*) – A common small parakeet in the lowlands of both slopes.

BROWN-HOODED PARROT (*Pyrilia haematotis*) – Excellent looks at a trio of these along the paved trail at La Selva, then seen again at Rancho.

WHITE-CROWNED PARROT (*Pionus senilis*) – Generally the most common of the smaller parrots (remember, short-squared tail = parrot, longer, pointy tail = parakeet). We saw them in pretty good numbers almost daily on the Caribbean slope.

RED-LORED PARROT (*Amazona autumnalis*) – The more numerous of the two large Amazona parrots at La Selva.

YELLOW-NAPED PARROT (*Amazona auropalliata*) – We spotted 4 of these flying over on our mangrove boat trip on the Rio Tarcoles.

WHITE-FRONTED PARROT (*Amazona albifrons*) – The smallest of the Amazona parrots, and the only one to show strong sexual dimorphism. We saw a trio flying over a couple of times at the Hotel Bougainvillea, where this Pacific coast species has been increasing in recent years.

MEALY PARROT (*Amazona farinosa*) – The largest of the Amazona parrots here. We had several of these around La Selva.

SULPHUR-WINGED PARAKEET (*Pyrhura hoffmanni*) – A few small groups were seen flying overhead along the Silent Mountain road, then Cory and a few others saw a trio investigating a potential nesting cavity in the oak forest above Savegre.

OLIVE-THROATED PARAKEET (AZTEC) (*Eupsittula nana astec*) – Only in the Caribbean lowlands, where we had good scope views of a few in a treetop among the lab buildings.

ORANGE-FRONTED PARAKEET (*Eupsittula canicularis*) – A specialty of the northwest portions of the country, this parakeet was seen well along the Guacalillo Road and again flying over on our boat trip.

GREAT GREEN MACAW (*Ara ambiguus*) – This used to be tough to find in the La Selva region, but encouragingly, their numbers have grown and now we'd be unlucky to miss them. We had great views of a pair at a probable nesting cavity along the Police Academy Road.

SCARLET MACAW (*Ara macao*) – We usually only see this one in the Carara region, but a small population has recently re-established itself in the Caribbean lowlands, where they'd been absent for many years. The first macaws we heard along the Police Academy Road turned out to be this species, rather than the more expected Great Green Macaw. We would go on to have lovely views of Scarlet Macaws in evening light from the Rio Tarcoles boat trip. Gail and Nancy picked this species as one of their top 3!

CRIMSON-FRONTED PARAKEET (*Psittacara finschi*) – A large, noisy parakeet that is super abundant in many parts of the country, including in the central valley.

Thamnophilidae (Typical Antbirds)

GREAT ANTSHRIKE (*Taraba major*) – Great views of a responsive male that came in close and moved around in the open in some roadside scrub in the Caribbean lowlands.

BARRED ANTSHRIKE (*Thamnophilus doliatus*) – We also had awesome views of a pair of these neat birds at the same place as our lone Great Antshrike.

BLACK-HOODED ANTSHRIKE (*Thamnophilus bridgesi*) – This antshrike ended up being fairly common during our time in the Carara area; we had good looks at some right near the Villa Lapas one morning.

RUSSET ANTSHRIKE (*Thamnistes anabatinus*) – This bird differs greatly from the other Costa Rican antshrikes, not least of all by its choice of habitat, as it occupies the canopy of middle elevation montane forests. The group that did the steeper hike at Rancho had a pair of these with a mixed flock.

PLAIN ANTVIREO (*Dysithamnus mentalis*) – A pair gave great views as they came in to feed around the moth cloth at Rancho early one morning.

CHECKER-THROATED ANTWREN (*Epinecrophylla fulviventris*) – Heard at both Braulio Carrillo and Rancho Naturalista. [*]

SLATY ANTWREN (*Myrmotherula schisticolor*) – Occurs higher in elevation than any other Costa Rican antwren. We had a pair at Rancho, then a fairly cooperative female at Rio Macho.

DOT-WINGED ANTWREN (*Microrhopias quixensis*) – Our only sighting came from Carara National Park where we spotted just one.

DUSKY ANTBIRD (*Cercomacroides tyrannina*) – Although we heard this species far more often than we saw it, we caught glimpses of a pair at Carara at one point.

CHESTNUT-BACKED ANTBIRD (*Poliocrania exsul*) – This antbird was fairly common around Carara and we saw pairs at both the national park and along the trail behind Villa Lapas.

ZELEDON'S ANTBIRD (*Hafferia zeledoni*) – An excited pair at Rio Macho gave excellent views as they hopped through the roadside vegetation calling loudly and pumping their tails. Until recently this species was called Immaculate Antbird.

BICOLORED ANTBIRD (*Gymnopithys bicolor bicolor*) – Our only sighting of this species came on the hike in Carara National Park where we saw one visiting the bathing pools.

Grallariidae (Antpittas)

STREAK-CHESTED ANTPITTA (*Hylopezus perspicillatus*) – Although everyone heard this skulker, only a few lucky folks got to catch a glimpse of this species near the bathing pools in Carara National Park.

Rhinocryptidae (Tapaculos)

SILVERY-FRONTED TAPACULO (*Scytalopus argentifrons*) – The epitome of a skulking bird, this mouse-like critter came creeping in once or twice along the Rio Macho Road. However, we all heard the distinctive song in the forest above Savegre Mountain Lodge and Monteverde Cloud Forest.

Formicariidae (Anthrushes)

BLACK-FACED ANTHRUSH (*Formicarius analis*) – We all stayed very still as one of these did an entire loop around us on the trail at Villa Lapas in the Carara region. What a view!

Furnariidae (Ovenbirds and Woodcreepers)

OLIVACEOUS WOODCREEPER (*Sittasomus griseicapillus*) – Cory and a couple of other folks saw one at La Paz Waterfall Gardens, while the rest of us caught up with a nice pair at Rio Macho. The form found here is very gray-headed, and not really olivaceous at all, like some populations in South America. Almost certainly will be split up into several species sometime soon, and Handbook of the Birds of the World has already done this, calling this form Western Olivaceous Woodcreeper.

PLAIN-BROWN WOODCREEPER (*Dendrocincla fuliginosa*) – The name pretty much sums up this one; there's not many distinctive features, but given that most other similar-sized woodcreepers in its range have obvious streaking or barring, that in itself is a distinctive feature. We saw this one best at the moth cloth at Rancho.

WEDGE-BILLED WOODCREEPER (*Glyphorhynchus spirurus*) – The smallest of the woodcreepers, and a common and widespread one, too. We had singles on several days on the Caribbean slope.

NORTHERN BARRED-WOODCREEPER (*Dendrocolaptes sanctithomae*) – The barring on this large woodcreeper is pretty fine and can be tough to see in the low light conditions of the forest, but it was clearly visible on the ones that visited the moth cloth at Rancho each morning.

COCOA WOODCREEPER (*Xiphorhynchus susurrans*) – A common lowland species on both slopes, and we saw them well at La Selva and again at Carara.

SPOTTED WOODCREEPER (*Xiphorhynchus erythropygius*) – Usually the most numerous and conspicuous large woodcreeper in middle elevation forests, though the spotting is not all that obvious given that most of it is on the underside, which is pretty much always against a tree trunk. Still, the buffy spectacles make it an easy ID. We had this one at Rancho and Rio Macho, among other sites.

STREAK-HEADED WOODCREEPER (*Lepidocolaptes souleyetii*) – More tolerant of disturbed forest habitats than many other species, and consequently one of the more often encountered woodcreepers. We certainly saw this one most days on the Caribbean slope.

SPOT-CROWNED WOODCREEPER (*Lepidocolaptes affinis*) – Replaces the previous species at higher elevations. Similar to Streak-headed, it's a fairly easy-to-see species in places like the Savegre Valley, where we saw several.

PLAIN XENOPS (*Xenops minutus*) – This bird is often seen creeping along vines and small branches, hammering away at them to get at the tasty treats inside, very much like a small woodpecker. We had nice views of one at La Selva and another at Braulio Carrillo.

STREAKED XENOPS (*Xenops rutilans*) – A fairly limited elevational range keeps this one from being encountered as frequently as its plain cousin. It occurs in upper middle elevational forests, generally above the range of Plain Xenops, so there is very little if any overlap between the two. The one we saw so nicely was at Rio Macho.

BUFFY TUFTEDCHEEK (*Pseudocolaptes lawrencii*) – A pair with a mixed flock along the creek trail above Savegre Lodge were a bit sneaky, and views varied quite a bit from one person to the next, but at least some of us had pretty nice looks at these cool Furnariids, which specialize in digging around in large bromeliads, which is why they are often so hard to see well.

LINEATED FOLIAGE-GLEANER (*Syndactyla subalaris*) – Incredible views were had of this skulking and difficult to see species along the road at Rio Macho.

BUFF-THROATED FOLIAGE-GLEANER (HYPOPHAEUS) (*Automolus ochrolaemus hypophaeus*) – Another sneaky and elusive bird, made somewhat easier by them being attracted to the bug buffet at Rancho's moth cloth. This Caribbean slope subspecies has a very different song than the Pacific slope form, and a split may be imminent.

BUFF-THROATED FOLIAGE-GLEANER (EXSERTUS) (*Automolus ochrolaemus exsertus*) – We found this Pacific slope subspecies in the forest while hiking in Carara National Park. Keep your eyes peeled, they may be split off one day.

SPOTTED BARBTAIL (*Premnoplex brunescens*) – A pair at Rio Macho were a bit tough to see well as the late afternoon light was a bit too low for a lot of detail to be seen.

RUDDY TREERUNNER (*Margarornis rubiginosus*) – Nice views of this high-elevation species with a mixed flock in the oak forest above Savegre Lodge.

RED-FACED SPINETAIL (*Cranioleuca erythroptus*) – A pretty common arboreal spinetail of middle elevations, though we only saw one bird on our morning at Rio Macho.

SLATY SPINETAIL (*Synallaxis brachyura*) – Spinetails in this genus are generally found in low, thick, secondary scrub, as was the case with our bird in the Caribbean lowlands. Luckily it did come out and perch in the open offering up some amazing looks.

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

NORTHERN BEARDLESS-TYRANULET (*Camptostoma imberbe*) – We entered the range of this species, the northern counterpart to the following species, in the dry forests along the Guacalillo Road. Luckily, one responsive bird came in straight away.

SOUTHERN BEARDLESS-TYRANULET (*Camptostoma obsoletum*) – Our only day with this flycatcher was at Carara where we heard, and then saw, this somewhat-drab species.

YELLOW TYRANULET (*Capsiempis flaveola*) – A pair in the roadside scrub at Virgen del Socorro was a bit surprising, and a possible first record for the site. Prior to the big earthquake and subsequent landslides here in 2009, there really wasn't any suitable habitat for this species here.

GREENISH ELAENIA (*Myiopagis viridicata*) – This uncommon flycatcher was spotted on back-to-back days in the Carara region. Along with other elaenias, these are fairly drab flycatchers.

YELLOW-BELLIED ELAENIA (*Elaenia flavogaster*) – This large, bushy-crested elaenia is the most often encountered elaenia on this tour route. We saw them a few times in the Rancho Naturalista region, particularly along the Silent Mountain Road.

MOUNTAIN ELAENIA (*Elaenia frantzii*) – We chanced into a couple of these at high elevations; our first was at Rio Macho and then again a couple of times in the Savegre Valley including at Miriam's Cafe.

TORRENT TYRANULET (*Serpophaga cinerea*) – Nice looks at a lone bird along the rushing river below the hummingbird feeders at La Paz.

OLIVE-STRIPED FLYCATCHER (*Mionectes olivaceus*) – We found singles a couple of times including at Cerro El Silencio, above Savegre, and at Monteverde. This species has a noticeable, white post-ocular spot.

OCHRE-BELLIED FLYCATCHER (*Mionectes oleagineus*) – One of these came in briefly to the bathing pools in Carara National Park.

SLATY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER (*Leptopogon superciliosus*) – Our best views were at Rancho Naturalista where one came in to the moth cloth in the morning.

PALTRY TYRANULET (*Zimmerius vilissimus*) – When you become familiar with the calls of this rather nondescript flycatcher, you realize how common and widespread it really is. Sightings were pretty much a daily event on the Caribbean slope.

BLACK-CAPPED PYGMY-TYRANT (*Myiornis atricapillus*) – Barring the hummingbirds, this is the smallest Costa Rican bird. In fact, it is one of the smallest Passerines in the world. We had nice looks at a pair of these canopy-dwelling flycatchers along the paved trail at La Selva.

SCALE-CRESTED PYGMY-TYRANT (*Lophotriccus pileatus*) – An awesome flycatcher with attitude, these little guys are pretty common in middle elevation forests, and we saw them both at Rancho and Rio Macho.

NORTHERN BENTBILL (*Oncostoma cinereigulare*) – Sneaky little thing, this flycatcher was only heard at Villa Lapas and despite much trying, we couldn't lure it into view. [*]

SLATE-HEADED TODY-FLYCATCHER (*Poecilatriccus sylvia*) – The trail at Carara National Park yielded our only sighting of this tiny flycatcher.

COMMON TODY-FLYCATCHER (*Todirostrum cinereum*) – The fact that this is a fairly bold species and one that tends to stay pretty low makes it a rather easy bird to see. We had them almost daily on the Caribbean slope.

BLACK-HEADED TODY-FLYCATCHER (*Todirostrum nigriceps*) – Unlike the previous species, this beautiful little bird tends to favor the canopy, though they sometimes will come quite low, too, as did the one along the Silent Mountain Road.

EYE-RINGED FLATBILL (*Rhynchocyclus brevirostris*) – We heard (and some saw) this flycatcher at the Refugio de Vida Silvestre Monteverde spot (where the bellbird was).

YELLOW-OLIVE FLYCATCHER (*Tolmomyias sulphurescens*) – A rather widespread species, singles were seen at La Selva, Rancho Naturalista, and near Monteverde. However, it was heard more often than seen.

STUB-TAILED SPADEBILL (*Platyrinchus cancrominus*) – This plump but tiny flycatcher was only heard during our hike from the Carara main headquarters. [*]

WHITE-THROATED SPADEBILL (*Platyrinchus mystaceus*) – We were very fortunate indeed to stumble onto two of these calling flycatchers in the cloudforest at Monteverde. They even posed for photos for a bit!

GOLDEN-CROWNED SPADEBILL (*Platyrinchus coronatus*) – This tiny dude was seen briefly along the trails in Carara National Park. Although it came in for a few seconds, it didn't stay in view long.

ROYAL FLYCATCHER (NORTHERN) (*Onychorhynchus coronatus mexicanus*) – Wow, what a sighting! Kevin knew where there was an (active?) nest in Carara National Park and we all filed in, eventually got a look at the bird, and filed out.

RUDDY-TAILED FLYCATCHER (*Terenotriccus erythrurus*) – This was another flycatcher that we found on one of our hikes along the trails at Carara. Although it didn't stick around for many, I know a few people saw it.

SULPHUR-RUMPED FLYCATCHER (*Myiobius sulphureipygius aureatus*) – This distinctive flycatcher (yes, distinctive flycatchers do occur!) was seen coming in to the bathing pools at Carara. The pale rump was thankfully obvious!

TAWNY-CHESTED FLYCATCHER (*Aphanotriccus capitalis*) – A very local and restricted range species, and Rancho Naturalista is probably the best place anywhere to see it. We had a nice look at one that visited the moth cloth early one morning.

TUFTED FLYCATCHER (*Mitrephanes phaeocercus*) – A charming, endearing and easy to see flycatcher of upper elevations. We had one at Virgen del Socorro, then several more in the Savegre Valley.

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER (*Contopus cooperi*) – An uncommon passage migrant in the country. We had scope views of one hawking insects from an exposed snag along the Silent Mountain Road. [b]

DARK PEWEE (*Contopus lugubris*) – After listening to one calling for quite some time at Rio Macho, we finally tracked it down for some fine scope views.

OCHRACEOUS PEWEE (*Contopus ochraceus*) – Like the preceding species, this one is a Chiriqui highland endemic, but this is a much scarcer species and one we often miss, so the amazing scope views we had in the Savegre Valley were much appreciated by all.

TROPICAL PEWEE (*Contopus cinereus*) – Our first sighting was at the Great Green Macaw spot where one was perched in a small tree out in the field. They were never abundant though; we saw them on only 3 tour days.

YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax flaviventris*) – Usually the most commonly seen migrant Empid. Best views were of the bold bird at the moth cloth each morning. [b]

YELLOWISH FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax flavescens*) – Our first of these bright empids was found on the trails above Savegre Mountain Lodge although we would see more at Monteverde.

BLACK-CAPPED FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax atriceps*) – This very distinctive Empid, which is a Chiriqui endemic, gave us nice views as we walked down from the forest above Savegre Lodge.

BLACK PHOEBE (*Sayornis nigricans*) – Not uncommon along suitable watercourses at a great range of elevations. The birds here are resident, and differ from the birds found in the US in showing much less white below.

LONG-TAILED TYRANT (*Colonia colonus*) – Cory spotted one of these handsome small flycatchers near the suspension bridge at La Selva.

BRIGHT-RUMPED ATTLA (*Attila spadiceus*) – The loud, distinctive song of this species is often heard, but getting a good look at these wary birds is a bit more problematic. Fortunately they're pretty common in a number of places, so there are plenty of chances to see them. We had a couple of decent sightings at La Selva and Rancho.

RUFOUS MOURNER (*Rhytipterna holerythra*) – Seen nicely at both La Selva and Rancho.

DUSKY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*) – The most widespread Myiarchus in the country, and the dark cap makes it pretty easy to identify where it does occur with other species. We had especially good views at the moth cloth.

PANAMA FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus panamensis*) – Kevin spotted this bird during our mangrove boat trip on the Rio Tarcoles. In Costa Rica, this species is only found on the western coast.

NUTTING'S FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus nuttingi*) – The dry country in the northwestern part of the Costa Rica is home to this myiarchus flycatcher and we had looks at one along the Guacalillo Road.

GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus crinitus*) – A not uncommon wintering species. We saw several at La Selva. [b]

BROWN-CRESTED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus tyrannulus*) – This is another myiarchus flycatcher that we saw along the Guacalillo Road. Vocalizations are key when trying to identify species in this genus.

- GREAT KISKADEE** (*Pitangus sulphuratus*) – Abundant and easy to see. It's good to learn this species well as a starting point to sorting out all the similar species.
- BOAT-BILLED FLYCATCHER** (*Megarynchus pitangua*) – Larger-billed than the kiskadee, and with a broken white ring around the crown. This species is also common, but a little less conspicuous than the kiskadee. We saw a bunch on the Caribbean side, including a sleeping bird we spotted on our La Selva night walk.
- SOCIAL FLYCATCHER** (*Myiozetetes similis*) – Much smaller, and smaller-billed, with a gray, not black face. Another very common and conspicuous flycatcher. Seeing some in the rain at La Selva was neat, as the rain dampened their crowns making their usually concealed vermilion crown patches visible.
- GRAY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiozetetes granadensis*) – Similar in size and color to the more common Social Flycatcher, but lacks the white ring on the crown. Still fairly easy to find at a number of places. One bird at La Selva was being attacked by Common Tody-Flycatchers for some reason.
- WHITE-RINGED FLYCATCHER** (*Conopias albobittatus*) – The size of a Social Flycatcher, but patterned more like a kiskadee, with a strongly contrasting black and white head pattern. This species is restricted to the Caribbean lowlands, where we had several good sightings at La Selva.
- GOLDEN-BELLIED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiodynastes hemichrysus*) – Patterned like a kiskadee, and only a bit smaller, but more closely related to the next two species. The dark malar streak and pale-edged tertials help sort this one out. It is also restricted to forested highland regions. We had a nice look at a pair at Rio Macho.
- STREAKED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiodynastes maculatus*) – This flycatcher also shares the same genus as the following species but can be differentiated by it from the heavier bill and paler yellow underparts. We saw 3 of these at Villas Lapas in the Carara region.
- SULPHUR-BELLIED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiodynastes luteiventris*) – Breeds in Costa Rica but winters in South America. This squeaky-voiced bird is very similar to the Streaked Flycatcher, but the broad dark malar streaks join under the bill as a chinstrap. We met up with these at several sites. [a]
- PIRATIC FLYCATCHER** (*Legatus leucophaeus*) – We saw this species several times on tour including at Rancho Naturalista, Rio Macho Road, and Guacimal. They are so named because of their proclivity for taking over the nests of others. [a]
- TROPICAL KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) – A ubiquitous bird, seen regularly perched on power lines throughout the country.
- SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER** (*Tyrannus forficatus*) – These beautiful and graceful flycatchers breed farther north in North America but will winter south to Costa Rica. We saw a few along the Guacalillo Road and another on the Rio Tarcoles boat trip. [b]

Cotingidae (Cotingas)

- RUFOUS PIHA** (*Lipaugus unirufus*) – Heard only for the first several encounters but we eventually saw one (or bits of one) perched high in the canopy at Carara National Park.
- THREE-WATTLED BELLBIRD** (*Procnias tricarunculatus*) – I'm so happy that everyone in our group managed the hike in to see this amazing and emblematic species near Monteverde. This cotinga spends the winter in the lowlands and then migrates upslope during the breeding season. Every spring is different and this spring had us concerned because there hadn't been many reports yet. However, intel from Kevin took us to Refugio de Vida Silvestre Monteverde where we got to watch this bird singing. This species, said to be the loudest bird on earth, was picked by half of the group as one of their highlights.
- SNOWY COTINGA** (*Carpodectes nitidus*) – The rainy weather wasn't in our favor when trying to find this scarce bird, but we got lucky on our second morning at La Selva, spotting an immaculate male perched high in the bare limbs of a tall tree near the cafeteria. Luckily it stuck around for everyone to finish their bathroom breaks!

Pipridae (Manakins)

- LONG-TAILED MANAKIN** (*Chiroxiphia linearis*) – Fairly common in Refugio de Vida Silvestre Monteverde but our first looks were along the Guacalillo Road. The odd song of this species really stood out to several of us!
- BLUE-CROWNED MANAKIN** (*Lepidothrix coronata*) – All black with a blue cap, this handsome manakin arrived at the bathing pools in Carara and performed quite well for everyone.
- WHITE-COLLARED MANAKIN** (*Manacus candei*) – That first male in the shrubs right next to the cafeteria at La Selva sure put on a fantastic show!
- ORANGE-COLLARED MANAKIN** (*Manacus aurtiarius*) – This was one of three species of manakins we saw in Carara National Park on Day 11. We found a lek of this species and we took turns creeping in and watching the males making their popcorn-sounding displays.
- WHITE-CROWNED MANAKIN** (*Dixiphia pipra*) – Those that made the steep hike up to the upper trails at Rancho were rewarded with super views of a male calling loudly from a series of song perches at the long-used lek there.
- RED-CAPPED MANAKIN** (*Ceratopipra mentalis*) – We all had crippling views of this species as it bathed in the pools just feet from us at Carara National Park. What a bird!

Tityridae (Tityras and Allies)

- BLACK-CROWNED TITYRA** (*Tityra inquisitor*) – A pair was seen from the Rio Tarcoles mangrove boat trip but that was our only sighting of the trip.
- MASKED TITYRA** (*Tityra semifasciata*) – Pairs of these great birds were seen fairly regularly at a number of sites.
- NORTHERN SCHIFFORNIS** (*Schiffornis veraepacis*) – Heard early one morning at Rancho and then again at the bathing pools in Carara. [*]
- BARRED BECARD** (*Pachyrhamphus versicolor*) – We played tag with one of these along the road in the Savegre Valley multiple times! Although everyone could hear it, it only snuck in within view once or twice.
- CINNAMON BECARD** (*Pachyrhamphus cinnamomeus*) – A pair of these lovely birds were working on a large messy nest below the suspension bridge at La Selva. [N]
- WHITE-WINGED BECARD** (*Pachyrhamphus polychopterus*) – At Rancho Naturalista, those staying downhill with Cory and Vernon heard this species but it never came within view. [*]
- ROSE-THROATED BECARD** (*Pachyrhamphus aglaiae*) – We saw this "Roseless-throated" species several times at Villa Lapas and again on the mangrove boat trip. Most of the males in Costa Rica actually lack the reddish color on the throat.

Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)

- RUFOUS-BROWED PEPPERSHRIKE** (*Cyclarhis gujanensis*) – One was calling persistently from the canopy at Rio Macho, and eventually we all saw it reasonably well. Later on in the Savegre Valley, we had splendid looks at one lower down.

GREEN SHRIKE-VIREO (*Vireolanius pulchellus*) – Heard in the canopy at Braulio Carrillo. Unfortunately this leaf-sized, leaf-shaped, and leaf-colored bird remained hidden. [✱]

TAWNY-CROWNED GREENLET (*Tunchiornis ochraceiceps*) – This small and plain species was called in several times in the Carara area. Although they never stayed put for very long, we had views along the trail at Villa Lapas and again at Carara NP.

LESSER GREENLET (*Pachysylvia decurtata*) – Although they often weren't front-and-center, we heard this species quite frequently on tour. We saw them too at places like La Selva and the Rancho Naturalista area.

MANGROVE VIREO (*Vireo pallens*) – This mangrove specialist was only seen on our mangrove boat trip along the Rio Tarcoles. How fitting!

YELLOW-THROATED VIREO (*Vireo flavifrons*) – This migrant was spotted a couple of times in the Carara region including along the Guacalillo Road. [b]

YELLOW-WINGED VIREO (*Vireo carmioli*) – We had great looks at a pair of this highland specialty on the trails above Savegre Mountain Lodge.

PHILADELPHIA VIREO (*Vireo philadelphicus*) – A couple of different individuals were seen at Rancho, including one seen from the balcony during our morning coffee break. [b]

BROWN-CAPPED VIREO (*Vireo leucophrys*) – Great looks at a couple of close birds behind the ranger station at Tapanti.

RED-EYED VIREO (*Vireo olivaceus*) – A migrant here, just passing through on their way north from their South American wintering grounds. Cory's group saw this species at Rancho. [b]

YELLOW-GREEN VIREO (*Vireo flavoviridis*) – Differs from the similar Red-eyed Vireo in showing bright yellow on the flanks and lacking the dark eye line of that species. We saw a few of these starting with one in the riverside vegetation near the Sunbittern nest. [a]

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

AZURE-HOODED JAY (*Cyanolyca cucullata*) – Always skulking and hard to see, and we struggled for decent views of a scolding pair at Rio Macho. But then Monteverde happened where many of us found ourselves face-to-face with this gorgeous corvid out in the open! Beautiful looks!

WHITE-THROATED MAGPIE-JAY (*Calocitta formosa*) – These jays have little tufts on their heads; who knew! Large and flashy, these corvids were seen well along the Guacalillo Road. Susan picked this as one of her top moments.

BROWN JAY (*Psilorhinus morio*) – Gregarious and garrulous, and a common bird at a number of locations.

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

BLUE-AND-WHITE SWALLOW (*Pygochelidon cyanoleuca*) – The typical highland swallow, common and widespread.

NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*) – The two species of rough-winged swallows seem equally common in the country, and either species could be recorded just about anywhere so learning the differences is key in reporting the birds correctly. This species shows no contrast between the back and the rump, and shows a dingy, grayish throat. We saw both species at several sites, including at La Selva where we saw both in the same area.

SOUTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW (*Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*) – The contrasting white rump and peach-colored throat distinguish this one.

GRAY-BREASTED MARTIN (*Progne chalybea*) – Often sitting on power lines, this large but subtly-colored swallow was spied on at least 4-5 days.

MANGROVE SWALLOW (*Tachycineta albilinea*) – Our best looks came on our boat trip on the Rio Tarcoles where we saw about 10. This swallow has a bright white rump which really helps it stand out.

BANK SWALLOW (*Riparia riparia*) – At least one was seen on our day spent birding the Guacalillo Bird Observatory and the Rio Tarcoles boat trip. [b]

BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*) – We found this familiar species at scattered locations throughout the tour such as Casa Turire, Rancho Naturalista, and Guacalillo Bird Observatory. [b]

CLIFF SWALLOW (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) – This is a migrant species that doesn't actually breed in Costa Rica. We spied one of these along the Guacalillo Road. [b]

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

SCALY-BREASTED WREN (WHISTLING) (*Microcerculus marginatus luscini*) – This secretive wren species was heard but not seen at Rancho Naturalista. [✱]

HOUSE WREN (*Troglodytes aedon*) – Occurs pretty nearly everywhere, and far more often to be seen in disturbed areas than many other species.

OCHRACEOUS WREN (*Troglodytes ochraceus*) – Great looks at a couple of these at La Paz, where they were creeping up branches among vine tangles in their typical fashion.

TIMBERLINE WREN (*Thryorchilus browni*) – Sometimes it can be tough to find a cooperative pair, though there are plenty of these in the highlands. This trip it was dead easy, as Vernon brought us to where he'd had a responsive pair a few days earlier. Within a couple of minutes we had these high elevation specialists in our bins for some great views.

BAND-BACKED WREN (*Campylorhynchus zonatus*) – This large relative of the Cactus Wren showed well a couple of times near the cafeteria at La Selva.

RUFOUS-NAPED WREN (*Campylorhynchus rufinucha*) – Although often around the Hotel Bougainvillea, we didn't find ours until the dry country along the Guacalillo Road where they were fairly common.

BLACK-BELLIED WREN (*Pheugopedius fasciatoventris*) – A mega-skulker, it took us a while but I think eventually everyone managed a peek of this interesting wren at Carara National Park.

RUFOUS-BREASTED WREN (*Pheugopedius rutilus*) – Not uncommon in the Carara area; we saw one at Villa Lapas and again in the National Park.

BLACK-THROATED WREN (*Pheugopedius atrogularis*) – Quite a skulking species, and it's always nice when you get a good look at one in the dense scrub it favors. Our luck was great this year, as we had super looks at a pair in a vine tangle at La Selva.

BANDED WREN (*Thryophilus pleurostictus*) – This species is fond of dry woodlands in the northwest part of the country. We eventually found one on an impromptu walk at a rest stop en route to Monteverde.

RUFOUS-AND-WHITE WREN (*Thryophilus rufalbus*) – A beautiful songster, we even saw this species well along the trail behind the hotel at Villa Lapas.

STRIPE-BREASTED WREN (*Cantorchilus thoracicus*) – A pair of these gorgeous wrens showed wonderfully over the trail behind the soccer field at La Selva.

CABANIS'S WREN (*Cantorchilus modestus*) – Last year, Plain Wren was split into three species, all three of which occur in Costa Rica. This is the most widespread of the three. After listening to their songs at several sites, we finally caught up with some good views of a pair along the Silent

Mountain Road.

CANEBRAKE WREN (*Cantorchilus zeledoni*) – Another split from the former Plain Wren, this larger, grayer species is restricted to the Caribbean lowlands, where we had a great view of them along the Police Academy Road.

RIVERSIDE WREN (*Cantorchilus semibadius*) – Detected on only a couple of days, we chanced into this species in the Carara region a couple of times.

BAY WREN (*Cantorchilus nigricapillus*) – We heard far fewer this year than usual, and they were even more skulking than normal. End result, we only heard this species. [∗]

WHITE-BREASTED WOOD-WREN (*Henicorhina leucosticta*) – Though common and widespread, this species can be a pain to see, which is why I'm so thankful for Rancho's moth cloth, as it regularly draws a couple of these sneaky little devils out into the open where everyone can get fantastic looks.

GRAY-BREASTED WOOD-WREN (*Henicorhina leucophrys*) – Wood-wrens can be tricky to see despite being very loud and vocal. After hearing quite a few, many folks got looks at one near our lodge in the Savegre Valley. We would go on to see more in the Monteverde region as well.

SONG WREN (*Cyphorhinus phaeocephalus*) – A trio of these unusual wrens were in the forest interior at Braulio Carrillo, where they called a lot, and bounced around quickly through the undergrowth, usually only showing themselves well to the folks at either end of our line.

Poliophtilidae (Gnatcatchers)

TAWNY-FACED GNATWREN (*Microbates cinereiventris*) – A couple of pairs were encountered at Braulio, but typically they only showed as small, flitting shapes in the undergrowth. [∗]

LONG-BILLED GNATWREN (*Ramphocaenus melanurus*) – It's surprising sometimes how slinky this species can be when you want to get a look. It was seen by a few folks early in the trip but it was only heard on our hike in Carara National Park.

WHITE-LORED GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila albiloris*) – Our best views of this dry-country species was along the Guacalillo Road.

TROPICAL GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila plumbea*) – Not rare on this tour but only seen on about 4 of the days. One of these was spotted on our mangrove boat trip in the Carara region.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

BLACK-FACED SOLITAIRE (*Myadestes melanops*) – We heard the beautiful, ethereal song at several highland sites, and eventually scoped a singing bird in the oak forest at Savegre.

BLACK-BILLED NIGHTINGALE-THRUSH (*Catharus gracilirostris*) – This one occurs at higher elevations than any other nightingale-thrush, and is quite a common and easy-to-see species from about 8000' on to above the tree-line.

ORANGE-BILLED NIGHTINGALE-THRUSH (*Catharus aurantirostris*) – I find this the toughest of the nightingale-thrushes to see well, usually, and the first one we encountered in the Orosi valley played the part as expected, showing well for some folks, but leaving others wanting more.

SLATY-BACKED NIGHTINGALE-THRUSH (*Catharus fuscater*) – One of Cory's favorite Costa Rican birds, this all dark species sports a bright orange eyering, bill, and legs. We had a great look at one on the trail at Monteverde to close things out.

RUDDY-CAPPED NIGHTINGALE-THRUSH (*Catharus frantzii*) – Pretty easy to see on the grounds of our Savegre Valley lodge. Similar to Black-billed, but the pale base to the lower mandible, rufous cap, and lack of a brown breast band readily distinguish it.

BLACK-HEADED NIGHTINGALE-THRUSH (*Catharus mexicanus*) – Since this species disappeared from Rancho a few years back, Braulio Carrillo has become the only place to get it on our tour route. So that's what we did, scoring fine views of this lovely species despite the rain.

SWAINSON'S THRUSH (*Catharus ustulatus*) – We had a half dozen of these familiar thrushes when we birded the Hotel Fonda Vela grounds at Monteverde. [b]

WOOD THRUSH (*Hylocichla mustelina*) – A migrant, like the previous species, this richly-colored thrush was seen well below the balcony at Rancho Naturalista. Our first sighting, however, was in a vine tangle at La Selva. [b]

SOOTY THRUSH (*Turdus nigrescens*) – Numerous and conspicuous from about 8000' and upwards in the Savegre valley.

MOUNTAIN THRUSH (*Turdus plebejus*) – Still fairly common in the Savegre Valley despite the steady increase of Clay-colored Thrushes in the region in recent years.

CLAY-COLORED THRUSH (*Turdus grayi*) – We should send out the checklists with this one pre-checked for every day of the tour, as it would be pretty difficult to miss it on any given day. There's a reason it's the national bird.

WHITE-THROATED THRUSH (*Turdus assimilis*) – One feeding in a fruiting wild avocado tree among a bunch of Clay-colored Thrushes on the Silent Mountain Road was a good find as it is a locally uncommon species.

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

GRAY CATBIRD (*Dumetella carolinensis*) – One responded to our recordings and popped out in the open at the Caribbean lowland site that also gave us our White-throated Crake and Great Antshrike. I forget what recording it responded to, but I think it was Rufous-winged Woodpecker. [b]

TROPICAL MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus gilvus*) – Still quite local in the country, but increasing and spreading since its first appearance in the country about 20 years ago. We saw a couple along the highway on our way to Rancho.

Ptiliognatidae (Silky-flycatchers)

BLACK-AND-YELLOW SILKY-FLYCATCHER (*Phainoptila melanoxantha*) – An inconspicuous and easily overlooked species, especially compared to the other three members of its family. We came across a male rather easily this year, getting super looks at it a short time after our Timberline Wren experience. Thanks to Vernon for suggesting a quick stop there for those two species -- it really paid off in record time!

LONG-TAILED SILKY-FLYCATCHER (*Ptiliognys caudatus*) – This is always a favorite species of mine in the Savegre Valley, where they are generally fairly conspicuous and easy to see. This year was no exception, as we had a phenomenal close encounter with a pair just outside Savegre Mountain Lodge as we waited for our ride up the hill.

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

OVENBIRD (*Seiurus aurocapilla*) – Cory spotted one foraging below the back yard feeders at Rancho, where Jay believes it was a new balcony bird for him (the balcony list there is up around 250 species!) [b]

LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH (*Parkesia motacilla*) – Our best luck for this migrant warbler came on Cerro El Silencio near Rancho Naturalista. [b]

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH (*Parkesia noveboracensis*) – This streaked, ground-loving species was seen hopping around the stream at Villa Lapas more than once. [b]

- GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER** (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) – Seen regularly in small numbers. One gorgeous male showed well as it fed in a small Cecropia just off the balcony at Rancho Naturalista, gleaning Mullerian bodies (the little white droplets produced by Cecropia trees at the base of the leaf stalk. They are rich in glycogen and also consumed by the Azteca ants that live in the tree). [b]
- BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER** (*Mniotilta varia*) – This is another migrant species that breeds farther north but spends the winter in the tropics. We saw a few of these limb-creeping warblers in the Rancho Naturalista area. [b]
- FLAME-THROATED WARBLER** (*Oreothlypis gutturalis*) – We didn't see all that many, but there were several mixed in with various feeding flocks in the Savegre Valley. The brilliant orange throat is almost shocking, it's so bright!
- TENNESSEE WARBLER** (*Oreothlypis peregrina*) – A few folks watched one of these bathing right next to a Golden-winged Warbler at Rancho Naturalista. This species departs Costa Rica during the spring and migrates to the US and Canada where they breed. [b]
- GRAY-CROWNED YELLOWTHROAT** (*Geothlypis poliocephala*) – We turned up a pair of these birds in a dry, grassy field during our afternoon visit to Casa Turire.
- MOURNING WARBLER** (*Geothlypis philadelphia*) – Not always the easiest warbler to see, we managed to catch a glimpse of one on the day we drove from the Savegre Valley to the Carara region (at Bosque del Tolomuco, I believe). [b]
- KENTUCKY WARBLER** (*Geothlypis formosa*) – Though not an uncommon wintering bird, this one can be a bit tough to see, so it was nice to have that one foraging in the open below the moth cloth one morning. [b]
- OLIVE-CROWNED YELLOWTHROAT** (*Geothlypis semiflava*) – This yellowthroat seems to prefer wetter areas than does the Gray-crowned, though they do occur close together, as we saw at Casa Turire as we found one immediately after finding a pair of Gray-crowned Yellowthroats.
- HOODED WARBLER** (*Setophaga citrina*) – A regular but scarce migrant in the country, so an elusive male at La Selva was a good find, and I think most everyone eventually had some kind of look at it. [b]
- AMERICAN REDSTART** (*Setophaga ruticilla*) – Only some of the group saw this familiar migrant warbler at Rancho Naturalista. This would end up being our only sighting. [b]
- TROPICAL PARULA** (*Setophaga pitiayumi*) – Seen beautifully at Rancho, where a singing bird kept returning to the same small Cecropia tree at about eye level, feeding on the Mullerian bodies alongside the Golden-winged Warbler mentioned above.
- BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER** (*Setophaga fusca*) – The Rio Macho Road provided our only sighting of this beautiful warbler familiar to many of the US/Canada birders. [b]
- YELLOW WARBLER** (*Setophaga petechia*) – Most of the Yellow Warblers seen on tour were of the migrant subspecies (not the Mangrove ones). Turns out, these migrants were fairly common and we saw them a number of places ranging from the Hotel Bougainvillea to Casa Turire and even on to Guacimal. [b]
- YELLOW WARBLER (MANGROVE)** (*Setophaga petechia erithachorides*) – This very distinctive and non-migratory subspecies (yes, only a subspecies) sports a rusty-colored head! We saw a few on the boat trip through the mangroves.
- CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER** (*Setophaga pensylvanica*) – Among the most numerous wintering warblers in the country. A few of the birds we saw, primarily in the Caribbean lowlands, were nearly in full breeding plumage. [b]
- BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER** (*Setophaga virens*) – We found this migrant species at mid-upper elevations including locations like Rio Macho, Miriam's Cafe, and at the Sueños del Bosque Lodge. [b]
- RUFOUS-CAPPED WARBLER** (*Basileuterus rufifrons*) – We had a few of these slinking around the house feeders below Rancho Naturalista (for those that explored downhill with Cory & Vernon).
- BLACK-CHEEKED WARBLER** (*Basileuterus melanogenys*) – A highland specialty, and fairly common in the understory of upland forests as in the Savegre region. These birds showed well a couple of times during our stay there, at least once in the company of Yellow-thighed Finches, with which they often travel together.
- GOLDEN-CROWNED WARBLER** (*Basileuterus culicivorus*) – Another of the many species seen well at the moth cloth at Rancho.
- COSTA RICAN WARBLER** (*Basileuterus melanotis*) – Recently split from Three-striped Warbler, this "new" species is restricted to the highlands of Costa Rica and Panama. We first ran into a cooperative pair along the road at Rio Macho.
- BUFF-RUMPED WARBLER** (*Myiothlypis fulvicauda*) – Always found around water, and we saw them regularly along the rivers in the Caribbean lowlands.
- WILSON'S WARBLER** (*Cardellina pusilla*) – A fairly common and widespread migrant warbler that tends to stick to higher elevations. We saw quite a few in the Savegre Valley including some above the Savegre Mountain Lodge as we hiked the trails. [b]
- SLATE-THROATED REDSTART** (*Myioborus miniatus*) – A widespread and common warbler. The redstarts found in Costa Rica are yellowish below whereas the ones found farther north in Mexico are reddish below.
- COLLARED REDSTART** (*Myioborus torquatus*) – Delightful, as always, in the highland forests of the Savegre Valley.
- WRENTHRUSH** (*Zeledonia coronata*) – What a skulker! I think we all saw bits and pieces of this denizen of thick undergrowth on our hike above Savegre Mountain Lodge. Formerly known as *Zeledonia* which is its genus name.

Thraupidae (Tanagers and Allies)

- GRAY-HEADED TANAGER** (*Eucometis penicillata*) – Rather uncommon, our only sighting of this somewhat-plain tanager came from the bathing pools in Carara National Park.
- WHITE-SHOULDERED TANAGER** (*Tachyphonus luctuosus*) – Only a few birders saw our first at Braulio Carrillo but more would go on to see the ones at Villa Lapas a week later.
- TAWNY-CRESTED TANAGER** (*Tachyphonus delatrii*) – Though we could hear several of these with a group of Carmiol's Tanagers at Braulio, they mostly stayed out of sight, and only a couple of folks got a look at one.
- WHITE-LINED TANAGER** (*Tachyphonus rufus*) – Similar to the White-shouldered, this species shows less white in the folded wing. We watched this tanager from the Rancho Naturalista balcony where one came in and fed out in the open on the ground.
- WHITE-THROATED SHRIKE-TANAGER** (*Lanio leucothorax*) – A rainy morning at Braulio Carrillo made birding a bit tough, but we still pulled out a handful of the main targets, including a striking male of this species, which sat out nicely for all to see.
- CRIMSON-COLLARED TANAGER** (*Ramphocelus sanguinolentus*) – This species wasn't very numerous on this tour. We had good but quick looks at one that came in to Cope's feeders and then another on Cerro El Silencio.
- PASSERINI'S TANAGER** (*Ramphocelus passerinii*) – Super common on the Caribbean slope, where we saw these beauties daily.

- CHERRIE'S TANAGER** (*Ramphocelus costaricensis*) – We saw this black-and-red species after we crossed over towards the Pacific slope. The best views were at Bosque Del Tolomuco where 5 were coming in to the feeders.
- BLUE-GRAY TANAGER** (*Thraupis episcopus*) – By far the most numerous species of tanager we had on tour. This species is widespread, abundant, and seen in a variety of different habitats.
- PALM TANAGER** (*Thraupis palmarum*) – Never as abundant as the previous tanager, this duller *Thraupis* species was still spotted numerous times throughout the tour.
- GOLDEN-HOODED TANAGER** (*Tangara larvata*) – A common species but believe me, we were ok with that! We saw these attractive tanagers at La Selva, Rancho Naturalista, and Bosque Del Tolomuco.
- SPECKLED TANAGER** (*Tangara guttata*) – Talk about 11th hour! We finally found a couple of these gorgeous tanagers at the Bosque Del Tolomuco feeders.
- SPANGLE-CHEEKED TANAGER** (*Tangara dowii*) – Although at first they seemed hard to find, who can forget the sighting of one clinging to the bus and pecking at its reflection in the window! Silly bird. Cory eventually sent it on its way before it injured itself.
- BAY-HEADED TANAGER** (*Tangara gyrola*) – Not as numerous as we were expecting on tour. We had our best luck at mid-elevation sites like Braulio Carrillo and Rancho Naturalista.
- EMERALD TANAGER** (*Tangara florida*) – This highly sought-after species finally materialized for us at the Reserva El Tapir gardens and again high up at Braulio Carrillo.
- SILVER-THROATED TANAGER** (*Tangara icterocephala*) – This was another very common and widespread (but sharp looking!) tanager. We saw double-digit numbers at places such as La Paz Waterfall Gardens, the Cinchona feeders, Cerro El Silencio, and Bosque Del Tolomuco.
- SCARLET-THIGHED DACNIS** (*Dacnis venusta*) – Excellent looks at a couple of brilliant males at La Paz Waterfall Gardens, though, as usual, the scarlet thighs remained hidden from view.
- BLUE DACNIS** (*Dacnis cayana*) – We found this attractive turquoise and black species, which is in the tanager family, at low-elevation sites like La Selva and Villa Lapas.
- SHINING HONEYCREEPER** (*Cyanerpes lucidus*) – A striped female along the stream behind the soccer field at La Selva was all we managed this trip.
- RED-LEGGED HONEYCREEPER** (*Cyanerpes cyaneus*) – Honeycreepers, which are in the tanager family, are sure signs that you're in the tropics. This species was encountered on both ends of the tour; it was first seen at the fruit feeders at La Quinta de Sarapiquí Lodge near La Selva and then again in the Carara area in the Pacific lowlands.
- GREEN HONEYCREEPER** (*Chlorophanes spiza*) – Although the males and females look quite different from each other (sexual dimorphism), I think we all got pretty good at picking this species out. We had beautiful looks at a male at Cope's feeders at one point.
- BLACK-AND-YELLOW TANAGER** (*Chrysothlypis chrysomelas*) – One of the main targets going into the Silent Mountain area, and though it took a while, we were finally rewarded with decent views of these brilliant birds.
- SLATY FLOWERPIERCER** (*Diglossa plumbea*) – A member of a fascinating group of birds; this species punctures tubes of flowers to get at the nectar via a shortcut! This all-gray flowerpiercer was fairly common in the Savegre Valley and some were often right outside the dining hall of our lodge.
- PEG-BILLED FINCH** (*Acanthidops bairdi*) – A tough bird to find, this species (actually in the tanager family) was found by Vernon high up at Cerro de la Muerte.
- BLUE-BLACK GRASSQUIT** (*Volatinia jacarina*) – Only spotted a few times on this tour, this small seed specialist was seen at the Police Academy Road near La Selva and then again at Casa Turire.
- THICK-BILLED SEED-FINCH** (*Sporophila funerea*) – Margareta keenly spotted a group of these birds feeding in some roadside grasses while the rest of us were distracted by all the swifts flying in the other direction.
- VARIABLE SEEDEATER** (*Sporophila corvina*) – A widespread denizen of grassy areas, this species was encountered mostly in low-mid elevation sites like La Selva, Rancho Naturalista, and Carara National Park.
- WHITE-COLLARED SEEDEATER** (*Sporophila torqueola*) – Seemingly always outnumbered by the previous species, this attractive seedeater was seen well at Casa Turire and a few other random spots. This is the same species that reaches the southern tip of Texas.
- BANANAQUIT** (*Coereba flaveola*) – A very widespread and common species that's fond of flowers. And for good reason, its diet consists of nectar and fruit.
- YELLOW-FACED GRASSQUIT** (*Tiaris olivaceus*) – Most of our sightings of this common, pasture-loving species came from the front end of our tour; places that hosted them included Cinchona, Rancho Naturalista, and the Rio Macho Road.
- BUFF-THROATED SALTATOR** (*Saltator maximus*) – Seen on at least 9 of our tour days, this species was fairly common and widespread. The entire La Selva area proved to be especially dense with them.
- BLACK-HEADED SALTATOR** (*Saltator atriceps*) – It seems we have to actually target this species more than we did in the past, so it was great that we stumbled upon a group of 5 or 6 in some fruiting trees along the Silent Mountain Road.
- GRAYISH SALTATOR** (*Saltator coerulescens*) – This attractive saltator is often easily seen around the Hotel Bougainvillea and that's where our first sighting came from as well.

Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)

- SOOTY-CAPPED CHLOROSPINGUS** (*Chlorospingus pileatus*) – A very common specialty of the higher elevation forests, usually above the elevational range of the next species, though there is a little overlap at some sites.
- COMMON CHLOROSPINGUS** (*Chlorospingus flavopectus*) – This and the previous species used to be called "bush-tanagers". We found this particular species at elevations lower than the Sooty-capped. La Paz Waterfall Garden was a good spot.
- STRIPE-HEADED SPARROW** (*Peucaea ruficauda*) – This handsome species is found in northwest Costa Rica where it favors the more dry habitats. We got great looks at some as we started down the Guacalillo Road.
- OLIVE SPARROW** (*Arremonops rufivirgatus*) – Like the previous species, this is another sparrow that we snagged on the Guacalillo Road. More specifically, at the same spot as the ground-cuckoo and Painted Buntings.
- BLACK-STRIPED SPARROW** (*Arremonops conirostris*) – This sparrow is in the same genus as the previous species and both are quite similar looking. We had looks at the Police Academy Road near La Selva, Rancho Naturalista, and Casa Turire.

- ORANGE-BILLED SPARROW** (*Arremon aurantirostris*) – A fairly widespread and boldly-marked species that is usually seen on the ground, sometimes near feeders. Rancho Naturalista was a great spot to watch them from above.
- CHESTNUT-CAPPED BRUSHFINCH** (*Arremon brunneinucha*) – These attractive birds, although staying mostly to the shadows, popped out into view at a couple of locations including La Paz Waterfall Gardens, Rio Macho Road, and Monteverde. The puffy white throat was especially visible!
- SOOTY-FACED FINCH** (*Arremon crassirostris*) – This bird was a lot harder to find before several of them got addicted to french fries and pasta and whatever other buffet scraps have fallen to the floor at La Paz. Now the trouble is trying not to step on them when they're scrounging around underfoot!
- VOLCANO JUNCO** (*Junco vulcani*) – Vernon, the junco whisperer, found us a couple of these highland specialists on top of Cerro de la Muerte. Once we found them, they weren't hard to see either!
- RUFOUS-COLLARED SPARROW** (*Zonotrichia capensis*) – The ubiquitous sparrow through much of our tour. Still, it's a handsome bird that shares its genus with our White-crowned, White-throated, and Harris's sparrows, etc.
- LARGE-FOOTED FINCH** (*Pezopetes capitalis*) – What is usually a tough-to-see and skulky species, this bird was center stage at the feeders at Miriam's Cafe in the Savegre Valley. Wow!
- WHITE-EARED GROUND-SPARROW** (*Melospiza leucotis*) – This ground-sparrow was seen a time or two near Monteverde on the grounds of the Hotel Fonda Vela. Although never seen at close range, it was clear that it was a handsome bird!
- PREVOST'S GROUND-SPARROW (CABANIS'S)** (*Melospiza biarcuata cabanisi*) – Always tough, but a few folks got to see one briefly on our walk the first morning. This bird is a good candidate for future splitting, in which case this form would be a Costa Rican endemic species.
- YELLOW-THIGHED FINCH** (*Pselliophorus tibialis*) – The yellow pantaloons really stood out on this all-black species! We first saw them on the trail down to the river at La Paz Waterfall Gardens but we later caught up to more in the Savegre Valley.
- WHITE-NAPED BRUSHFINCH (YELLOW-THROATED)** (*Atlapetes albinucha gutturalis*) – Our only sighting of this excellent species came from the grounds at Hotel Fonda Vela near Monteverde. Although seen by everyone, they were shy and stayed somewhat distant downhill. This species ranges from Mexico south to Colombia.

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

- SUMMER TANAGER** (*Piranga rubra*) – A common wintering species in Costa Rica. I think we all remember Splotchy, the young male at the Rancho Naturalista feeders. [b]
- SCARLET TANAGER** (*Piranga olivacea*) – Not a common bird in Costa Rica, this migrant species was spied high in some trees by Cory and Vernon at Rancho Naturalista. [b]
- FLAME-COLORED TANAGER** (*Piranga bidentata*) – This may be a hotline bird in Arizona, where they occasionally turn up, but they are common and easy to see here in the heart of their range in the highlands. The views at Miriam's Cafe were especially superb.
- RED-CROWNED ANT-TANAGER** (*Habia rubica*) – Villa Lapas in the Carara lowlands provided us our only sighting of this Pacific counterpart to the next species.
- RED-THROATED ANT-TANAGER** (*Habia fuscicauda*) – Bold and cheeky at the moth cloth at Rancho.
- CARMIOLE'S TANAGER** (*Chlorothraupis carmioli*) – A couple of decent-sized flocks at Braulio didn't really have many other species with them, sadly.
- BLACK-FACED GROSBEAK** (*Caryothraustes poliogaster*) – A few were regulars in the shrubbery around the cafeteria at La Selva, and a couple of big flocks noisily moved through the canopy at Braulio.
- ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK** (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) – A familiar species for some of us back home in the US, this migrant was spotted just a few times on tour. [b]
- BLUE-BLACK GROSBEAK** (*Cyanocompsa cyanoides*) – Wonderful close views of a singing male on the roadside one afternoon in the Caribbean lowlands.
- BLUE GROSBEAK** (*Passerina caerulea*) – It's hard to pay attention to a female Blue Grosbeak when it's perched next to Painted Buntings (but we managed)! This was along the Guacalillo Road in the dry country out west.
- INDIGO BUNTING** (*Passerina cyanea*) – Like the previous species, we spotted this migrant along the Guacalillo Road. This is a familiar summer bird for many of us from eastern North America. [b]
- PAINTED BUNTING** (*Passerina ciris*) – Both males and females were seen along a very birdy stretch of the Guacalillo Road. It was hard to concentrate with a ground-cuckoo, grosbeaks, and buntings galore! This was our only sighting of this species on tour. [b]

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

- RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD** (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) – A few of these familiar blackbirds were seen from our Rio Tarcoles boat trip. Typically, however, they aren't common on this tour itinerary.
- EASTERN MEADOWLARK** (*Sturnella magna*) – Not uncommon in the Cartago region, where we saw a few, and there were also some among the Red-breasted Meadowlarks at the Casa Turire. Note this is a resident form here, not a migrant.
- RED-BREASTED MEADOWLARK** (*Sturnella militaris*) – The name change from blackbird to meadowlark reflects this species close alliance with meadowlarks (same *Sturnella* genus). We had some nice views of these flashy birds on the grounds of the Casa Turire.
- MELODIOUS BLACKBIRD** (*Dives dives*) – A species that has really taken Costa Rica by storm in the last 3 decades (it first arrived from Nicaragua in the 1980s). We heard and saw this species many times including at the Hotel Bougainvillea and at Cope's feeder setup.
- GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE** (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) – A common and widespread species in Costa Rica. It was seen on all but two days of tour.
- SHINY COWBIRD** (*Molothrus bonariensis*) – One of the most recent arrivals to the country, this cowbird is quite widespread and continuing to increase in number. We saw a couple of birds in the La Selva region.
- BRONZED COWBIRD** (*Molothrus aeneus*) – Our first sighting was at the Hotel Bougainvillea but we would go on to see another (complete with thick neck and red eye) at the White Hawk overlook.
- GIANT COWBIRD** (*Molothrus oryzivorus*) – The half dozen we saw lingering around a Montezuma Oropendola colony in some palms by the Casa Turire tripped the filter on eBird. Generally this species is only seen in ones and twos in the country. Those that stayed with Cory at Rancho Naturalista saw one at close range.
- BLACK-COWLED ORIOLE** (*Icterus prosthemelas*) – Only present on the Caribbean slope, this attractive oriole was spotted a couple of times around La Selva and the nearby Pueblo Nuevo Lagoon Road.

- STREAK-BACKED ORIOLE** (*Icterus pustulatus*) – We were able to position ourselves right under a couple of these gorgeous orioles along the Guacalillo Road. This was the only area on tour that we ran into this species though; Costa Rica is at the far southern edge of their range.
- BALTIMORE ORIOLE** (*Icterus galbula*) – A very common wintering bird in the country. [b]
- YELLOW-BILLED CACIQUE** (*Amblycercus holosericeus*) – A shy, retiring species that loves dense stands of heliconia and ginger. We got lucky with a very responsive and cooperative bird at our very productive roadside stop one afternoon in the Caribbean lowlands.
- SCARLET-RUMPED CACIQUE (SCARLET-RUMPED)** (*Cacicus uropygialis microrhynchus*) – Much more of a canopy species than the previous species. We saw these both at La Selva and Braulio.
- CHESTNUT-HEADED OROPENDOLA** (*Psarocolius wagleri*) – Smaller and always outnumbered by the following species, this oropendola was spotted at locations like Police Academy Road, Braulio Carrillo, and Rancho Naturalista.
- MONTEZUMA OROPENDOLA** (*Psarocolius montezuma*) – A large, bold, and nearly unmistakable bird, this was our most common oropendola on tour. Cory likened the song to something choking on marbles.

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)

- SCRUB EUPHONIA** (*Euphonia affinis*) – Vernon picked these out high in a tree right as we began to bird the Guacalillo Road. This species ranges north well into Mexico.
- YELLOW-CROWNED EUPHONIA** (*Euphonia luteicapilla*) – We had this species several times around La Selva and our nearby La Quinta de Sarapiquí Lodge. Unlike the following species, the Yellow-crowned has a dark throat which makes for easy separation.
- YELLOW-THROATED EUPHONIA** (*Euphonia hirundinacea*) – We had this euphonia first at Cerro El Silencio near Rancho Naturalista and then a couple of times at our hotel in the Carara lowlands.
- ELEGANT EUPHONIA** (*Euphonia elegantissima*) – This species was once called "Blue-hooded Euphonia" and for good reason. Unlike the other euphonias, the blue on the head is very distinctive! We managed scope views of this beauty at Bosque Del Tolomuco.
- SPOT-CROWNED EUPHONIA** (*Euphonia imitans*) – We heard this species in Carara National Park but it never came within view. [*]
- OLIVE-BACKED EUPHONIA** (*Euphonia gouldi*) – Both of the sexes are quite unique looking among euphonias which makes for an easy ID process. This is a Caribbean slope species and we encountered it at La Selva and again at Rancho Naturalista.
- TAWNY-CAPPED EUPHONIA** (*Euphonia anaeae*) – This is another distinctive euphonia; the bright rufous cap really stands out! Found at mid-elevation sites along the Caribbean slope, we found it at Cerro El Silencio near Rancho Naturalista.
- GOLDEN-BROWED CHLOROPHONIA** (*Chlorophonia callophrys*) – We spotted this electric-green species on at least 6 different days. The views from Bosque Del Tolomuco were especially nice!

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

- HOUSE SPARROW** (*Passer domesticus*) – A widespread species around cities and towns. [I]

MAMMALS

- NORTHERN GHOST BAT** (*Diclidurus albus*) – A bizarre little white bat! We saw one of these as it hung from under a palm branch in Carara National Park where they are considered relatively rare.
- COMMON TENT-MAKING BAT** (*Uroderma bilobatum*) – We encountered this species in the lowlands around La Selva early on our tour.
- HONDURAN WHITE BAT** (*Ectophylla alba*) – These were the 5 tiny white bats huddled closely together below a modified leaf that Joel showed us at La Selva. The white bats we saw flitting around a fruiting fig tree on our night walk there were also certainly this species.
- MANTLED HOWLER MONKEY** (*Alouatta palliata*) – Although often heard-only, we eventually caught sight of these in the La Selva area. They are named "mantled" for the long guard hairs on their sides.
- WHITE-THROATED CAPUCHIN** (*Cebus capucinus*) – Our only sighting of this small monkey was in the Monteverde area towards the end of our trip. And no, it wasn't on the shoulder of pirate captain Barbossa.
- CENTRAL AMERICAN SPIDER MONKEY** (*Ateles geoffroyi*) – We lucked into a couple of groups of these lanky mammals in Carara National Park, especially near the bridge.
- HOFFMANN'S TWO-TOED SLOTH** (*Choloepus hoffmanni*) – They weren't going anywhere quickly... but that was fine! We had great looks at La Selva at both nighttime and during the day.
- BROWN-THROATED THREE-TOED SLOTH** (*Bradypus variegatus*) – One young one was feeding in a short tree right beside Cope's house.
- NORTHERN TAMANDUA** (*Tamandua mexicana*) – The tamandua is a type of anteater and some of us were lucky to spot one on the Guacalillo Road/Rio Tarcoles day.
- BRAZILIAN RABBIT** (*Sylvilagus brasiliensis*) – This rabbit, our only of the tour, was spotted in the La Selva region early in our trip.
- VARIEGATED SQUIRREL** (*Sciurus variegatoides*) – Rather common, this species was seen on more than half of our days. Interestingly, this squirrel rarely descends to the ground.
- RED-TAILED SQUIRREL** (*Sciurus granatensis*) – This is another tree squirrel species that we regularly encountered but did so less often than the previous species.
- DUSKY RICE RAT** (*Melanomys caliginosus*) – This little guy was spotted at the feeders at Rancho Naturalista eating... well... rice.
- CENTRAL AMERICAN AGOUTI** (*Dasyprocta punctata*) – Although our first sighting came from the Carara region, we spotted more of these up at Monteverde. These feed mostly on fruits and seeds and are considered important seed dispersers.
- NORTHERN RACCOON** (*Procyon lotor*) – One of these familiar dudes was spotted in the Rancho Naturalista area on our 7th tour day. This is the same species we have back north.
- CRAB-EATING RACCOON** (*Procyon cancrivorus*) – Our boat trip through the mangroves spotted this fascinating relative of the previous species. The diet, although very heavy on crab and lobster, also consists of turtle eggs, fruits, and small amphibians. Interestingly, and unlike the Northern Raccoon, the hair on the nape points towards the head instead of the other way around.
- WHITE-NOSED COATI** (*Nasua narica*) – The coati is in the same family as the previous two species but looks quite different. We spotted some at Tapanti as well as the Monteverde area.
- COLLARED PECCARY** (*Tayassu tajacu*) – Only spotted on our third day of tour, these were roaming the grounds at La Selva.

Herps

- GREEN IGUANA** (*Iguana iguana*) – The banks of the river at La Selva provided us with great looks at these herbivores. This species can grow as long as 5-6 feet!
- BLACK SPINY-TAILED IGUANA** (*Ctenosaura similis*) – This species, said to be the fastest running lizard in the world, prefers rocky habitat and we saw several on the ground in the Carara lowlands and Guacalillo Road area.
- COMMON BASILISK** (*Basiliscus basiliscus*) – Like the previous species, we saw these regularly in the Carara region including at Villa Lapas. Sometimes called the "Jesus Christ Lizard", this species is known for its ability to run on water; the lighter-weight young can run considerably farther on water than the heavy adults.
- STRIPED BASILISK** (*Basiliscus vittatus*) – This basilisk was spotted only once on tour and that was at La Selva. It is smaller than the previous species.
- HELMETED BASILISK** (*Corytophanes cristatus*) – This cool lizard was sitting motionless on a slim trunk below eye level beside Cope's house. As Cory noted, it wasn't even using its hind legs to hold on, as they were obviously trailed out behind it not grasping anything!
- TROPICAL HOUSE GECKO** (*Hemidactylus mabouia*) – Our most-frequently detected herp on tour! This species is actually native to sub-Saharan Africa. [I]
- CENTRAL AMERICAN WHIPTAIL** (*Ameiva festiva*) – This lizard was spotted only once, on our travel day from Carara to Monteverde.
- GREEN SPINY LIZARD** (*Sceloporus malachiticus*) – This species can be found at higher elevations than others and we encountered one all the way up at 11,000' by the radio towers at Cerro de la Muerte.
- EYELASH VIPER** (*Bothriechis schlegelii*) – We sometimes have to search pretty hard to see one of these, and often fail to find any at all, so the 4 we saw on our first morning at La Selva, all of the brilliant golden variety, was unprecedented! And then we went on to see another, this one of an olive color variant, right next to the picnic tables at Braulio!
- AMERICAN CROCODILE** (*Crocodylus acutus*) – We made a quick stop at the Rio Tarcoles bridge where the ominous hoard of crocs lay in wait below us. It was a very impressive sight!
- SPECTACLED CAIMAN** (*Caiman crocodilus*) – We spotted this little guy from the bridge on our night hike through the jungles of La Selva. I'd take my chances with this species over the previous one.
- SMOKY JUNGLE FROG** (*Leptodactylus pentadactylus*) – This attractive frog was spotted at La Selva on our third day of tour.
- FORRER'S LEOPARD FROG** (*Lithobates forreri*) – If you remember all the way back to our first evening of owling behind the Hotel Bougainvillea, you might remember this species from the pond out back.
- STRAWBERRY POISON DART FROG** (*Dendrobates pumilio*) – We ended up seeing quite a few of these along the trails at La Selva in the Caribbean lowlands. The toxicity in the skin of this species is due to their diet of certain mites and ants.
- GREEN-AND-BLACK POISON DART FROG** (*Dendrobates auratus*) – A couple of these were spotted on one of our Carara days; our first was found along the trail behind Villa Lapas and then another was found in the National Park.
- COMMON TINK FROG** (*Eleutherodactylus diastema*) – This amphibian remained heard-only despite us looking for them at La Selva. [*]
- SMOOTH-SKINNED TOAD** (*Bufo haematus*) – This was another herp we snagged at the species-rich La Selva in the Caribbean lowlands.
- CANE TOAD** (*Rhinella marina*) – These common, large toads were seen on about half of our tour days. This species is poisonous though (not venomous) and human deaths have occurred after ingesting Cane Toads.
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ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 495 bird taxa and 18 mammal taxa