

# Costa Rica Birding

July 2-12, 2016



*Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve, photo courtesy of David Schaffter*

**Leaders:** Andrew Spencer (Tropical Birding guide), Brian Rapoza (TAS Field Trip Coordinator)

**Participants:** Kathy Burkhart, Barbara and Ted Center, Nancy Freedman, Alice and Bob Pace, David Schaffter, Lorena Siqueira

**Trip report by:** Brian Rapoza

## Overview

- Two days in the Caribbean lowlands and foothills, where we explored Braulio Carrillo National Park and La Selva Biological Station. Lodging at Hacienda Sueno Azul.
- Two days in the Talamanca Mountains, where we birded cloud forest in and around the Savegre Valley as well as paramo habitat at Cerra de la Muerte. Lodging at Hotel Savegre.
- Two days on the Pacific coast, where we visited Carara National Park and enjoyed an afternoon boat ride on the Rio Tarcoles. Lodging at Hotel Villa Lapas.
- Two days in Monteverde, where we explored the town's renowned cloud forest reserve and other privately owned protected areas. Lodging at Cala Lodge.

## Day 1: Saturday, July 2

After arriving in San Jose, meeting Andrew Spencer, our Tropical Birding guide, and checking into Hotel Robledal, some of us birded around the hotel grounds. White-winged Dove, Cinnamon Hummingbird, Hoffmann's Woodpecker, Great Kiskadee, Tropical Kingbird, Clay-colored Thrush, Rufous-naped Wren and Great-tailed Grackles were among the species we found. Later in the afternoon, the group was taken to an undeveloped property owned by the hotel, which we dubbed "Finca Robledal." Several Crested Bobwhites were flushed from their grassy hiding places soon after we arrived; this was our only sighting of this species during the tour. Other birds encountered during our walk included Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Gray Hawk, Northern Jacana, Red-billed Pigeon, Inca Dove, Groove-billed Ani, White-fronted Parrot, Crimson-fronted Parakeet, Yellow-bellied Elaenia, Boat-billed Flycatcher, Lesser Greenlet, Blue-and-white and Southern Rough-winged Swallow, Gray-breasted Martin, Rufous-and-white Wren, Gray-crowned Yellowthroat, Blue-gray Tanager, Blue-black Grassquit, Stripe-headed Sparrow, Blue Grosbeak, Eastern Meadowlark and Bronzed Cowbird. After returning to the hotel just before sunset, we were introduced to one of the hotel's resident Ferruginous Pygmy-Owls.



*Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl, photo  
courtesy of Ted Center*

## Day 2: Sunday, July 3

We birded the hotel grounds before breakfast, then loaded our bus and began our 90-minute drive over the mountains (the Cordillera Central) that divide the Central Valley from Caribbean lowlands. Our bus driver, Luis, was a veteran driver of many Costa Rican birding tours. He knew the birds and provided a number of useful tips for where to stop to see some of our target species. Our first scheduled stop was at Braulio Carrillo National Park. We hiked a popular loop trail through Caribbean foothill habitat, searching for feeding flocks. Many birds were seen right around the parking lot, including Green Hermit,



*Olive-backed Euphonias, photo courtesy of David Schaffter*

Black-and-yellow Tanager and Red-legged and Green Honeycreeper. Three Great Green Macaws flew over the road just before we hit the trail. During the hike, we managed to locate at least one good flock that included Streak-crowned Antwren, Checker-throated Antwren, Spotted Woodcreeper, Striped Woodhaunter, White-throated Shrike-Tanager and Carmiol's Tanager. Other birds seen along the trail included Stripe-throated Hermit, White-whiskered Puffbird, White-breasted Wood-Wren, Black-headed Nightingale-Thrush, Pale-vented Thrush, Golden-hooded, Tawny-crested, Speckled, Bay-headed, Emerald and Silver-throated Tanager, Chestnut-headed Oropendola and Tawny-capped and Olive-backed Euphonia.

Our next stop was at El Tapir Gardens, only a few minutes away from the Braulio Carrillo trailhead. The beds of flowering porterweed attracted an impressive assemblage of hummingbirds, including White-necked Jacobin, Black-crested Coquette, Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer, Crowned Woodnymph, Snowcap (an immature bird in puzzling plumage), Violet-headed, Blue-chested and Rufous-tailed Hummingbird and Blue-throated Goldentail. Our first Passerini's Tanagers and Buff-throated Saltators were also found here. After lunch at a roadside cafeteria, we headed into the lowlands, pulling over along the way to view a perched Laughing Falcon; we also stopped at a bridge over the Rio San Jose where Luis had seen Fasciated Tiger-Heron in the past. No tiger-heron was present, but as consolation, we spotted, in addition to our first Black Phoebe, a Sunbittern and a flyover King Vulture!



*Crowned Woodnymph, photo courtesy of David Schaffter*



*Scaly-breasted Hummingbirds, photo courtesy of Ted Center*

Hacienda Sueno Azul was our base for our two days in the lowlands. A nice selection of birds were found during the afternoon around the lodge or along the entrance road, including Gray-headed Chachalaca, Boat-billed Heron, Green Ibis, Pale-vented, Scaled and Short-billed Pigeon, Ruddy Ground-Dove, White-tipped Dove, Squirrel Cuckoo, Scaly-breasted Hummingbird (a pair engaging in a decidedly peculiar mating display), Slaty-tailed and Gartered Trogon, Amazon and Green Kingfisher, Collared Aracari, Yellow-throated Toucan, Black-cheeked Woodpecker, Red-lore Parrot, Orange-chinned and Olive-throated Parakeet, Common Tody-Flycatcher, Tropical Pewee, Long-tailed Tyrant,

Social and White-ringed Flycatcher, White-collared Manakin, Masked Tityra, Bay Wren, Tawny-faced Gnatwren, Shining Honeycreeper and Variable Seedeater. A very wet Hoffmann's Two-toed Sloth was found hanging onto a fence along the entrance road and Neotropical River Otter were seen in a pond near the lodge. We also drove to El Tigre, a known location for Nicaraguan Seed-Finch, but were unable to locate any, certainly not for lack of effort on Andrew's part. We didn't go home empty-handed, though, adding Bare-throated Tiger-Heron, Purple Gallinule and Black-crowned Tityra to our trip list during this late afternoon drive. A Common Pauraque was flushed from the entrance road when we returned to the lodge that evening.



*Hoffmann's Two-toed Sloth, photo courtesy of David Schaffter*

## Day 3: Monday, July 4



*Crested Guans, photo courtesy of David Schaffter*

Our second day in the Caribbean lowlands began early on the entrance road to La Selva Biological Station. Woodpeckers were active in the trees above us as dawn approached, including four species new for the trip: Rufous-winged, Chestnut-colored, Lineated and Pale-billed. Other birds encountered as we walked toward the station entrance included Bat Falcon, White-crowned Parrot, Bright-rumped Atilla, Masked Tityra, Olive-crowned Yellowthroat and Buff-rumped Warbler. A Little Tinamou was calling from somewhere in the surrounding forest.

After breakfast at the station's cafeteria, we were joined by one of the station's local guides, who escorted us on a forest walk along one of the reserve's paved trails. Near the footbridge at the trailhead, we discovered a family of Crested Guans. Other birds seen around the footbridge included White-collared and Gray-rumped Swift, Rufous-tailed Jacamar and Gray-capped Flycatcher. Central American Spider Monkeys were also seen near here, as was a Collared Peccary. Shortly after we began the walk, it began to rain and bird activity dropped precipitously. While we all huddled under a trail shelter, hoping for the rain to stop, sharp-eyed Bob spotted a bright yellow snake clinging to a tree trunk behind the shelter. It was a venomous Eyelash Pitviper! The snake never budged as many in the group snapped photos. Once



*Eyelash Pitviper, photo courtesy of David Schaffter*



*Great Curassow, photo courtesy of Ted Center*

the rains ended, we continued a bit farther down the trail; some in the group were lucky enough to see a pair of Great Curassow cross our path. Other birds spotted along the trail included Russet-naped Wood-Rail (split from Gray-necked Wood-Rail), Rufous and Broad-billed Motmot, Mealy Parrot, Yellow Tyrannulet and Purple-throated Fruitcrow. Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher was a heard-only.

After lunch at the station's cafeteria, we explored another of the reserve's paved trails, again accompanied by the local guide. Soon after we began our walk, we chanced

upon a female Great Curassow prancing and preening beside the trail. The group enjoyed an extended performance, as the bird appeared unfazed by our presence. Among other species encountered on this very productive walk were Long-billed Hermit, Black-throated Trogon, Fasciated Antshrike, Dusky Antbird, Wedge-billed and Cocoa Woodcreeper, Plain Xenops, Ochre-bellied Flycatcher, Rufous Mourner, Cinnamon Becard, Black-throated and Stripe-breasted Wren,



*Fasciated Antshrike, photo courtesy of Ted Center*

Dusky-faced Tanager, Orange-billed Sparrow, Red-throated Ant-Tanager, Black-faced Grosbeak, Scarlet-rumped Cacique and Montezuma Oropendola. The local guide also took us slightly off-trail to view a group of tiny White Tent Bats snoozing under a leaf. We also saw White-throated Capuchin Monkeys along the trail.



*Boat-billed Heron, photo courtesy of Ted Center*

Back at the lodge as the sun began to set, many in the group spent some down time on our balconies, relaxing as Neotropic Cormorants, egrets and herons (including two Boat-billed Herons) assembled at their evening roost in a pond adjacent to our rooms.

## Day 4: Tuesday, July 5

Before returning to La Selva this morning, we birded around the bridge at the lodge entrance. A distant Fasciated Tiger-Heron was discovered among the boulders that made up the riverbed; a Purple-crowned Fairy was found much closer to the bridge. New birds spotted on the drive to the reserve included Ringed Kingfisher and Keel-billed Toucan. After breakfast at the station cafeteria, we returned to the trail where we enjoyed so much

success yesterday afternoon. Though it was sunny and hot this morning, noticeably decreasing bird activity, we still managed to find a few new birds along the trail, among them Black-striped and Streak-headed Woodcreeper, Yellow-margined Flycatcher, Tropical Gnatcatcher, Plain-colored Tanager, Blue Dacnis, Grayish Saltator, Giant Cowbird and Black-cowled Oriole. A Snowy Cotinga flew overhead but was only seen by Andrew; Great Tinamou was heard-only. By mid-morning, bird activity had dropped down to near zero, so we decided to head back to the station to relax until lunch. Minutes after we arrived, thunder rumbled and the skies opened; heavy rain continued intermittently for the rest of the morning. Some in the group who ventured out between rain showers found a female Passerini's Tanager on its nest in a bromeliad near the cafeteria.



*Passerini's Tanager, photo courtesy of David Schaffter*

After a final lunch at the cafeteria, we began the long journey from the Caribbean lowlands to the Savegre Valley, on the Pacific slope of the Talamanca Mountains in the southwestern part of the country. The drive took us back through San Jose and then up



*Long-tailed Silky-Flycatcher, photo courtesy of Ted Center*

into the mountains via the Pan-American Highway. A winding dirt road led down into the valley and the beautiful Hotel Savegre. We stopped on the way down at a spot where bird activity was conspicuous; highlights from this elevation included Band-tailed Pigeon, Volcano Hummingbird, Ruddy Treerunner, Black-capped Flycatcher, Black-billed Nightingale-Thrush, Sooty Thrush, Long-tailed Silky-Flycatcher, Flame-throated Warbler, Slaty Flowerpiercer, Sooty-capped Chlorospingus and Elegant Euphonia. Our first Rufous-collared Sparrow was also here; it would certainly not be the last.

Farther down the road, Luis spotted two Black Guans through a hole in the roadside vegetation; our sharp-eyed driver obligingly backed up the bus to allow everyone to obtain satisfactory views. Dusk was quickly approaching when we finally reached the hotel, but enough light was still available to identify hummingbirds visiting feeders outside the hotel's restaurant, including Lesser Violetear (formerly Green Violetear), Magnificent Hummingbird, White-throated Mountain-gem and Scintillant Hummingbird. Both Acorn Woodpecker and Flame-colored Tanager made appearances at



*Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrush, photo courtesy of Ted Center*

a tray feeder in the hotel's magnificent gardens and a Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrush was hopping about outside our rooms. Our day ended with the first of several delicious meals we would enjoy at the hotel.

## Day 5: Wednesday, July 6



*Resplendent Quetzal (male), photo courtesy of Ted Center*

The Savegre Valley's marquee species was at the top of this morning's agenda and we headed out before breakfast in hopes of finding it. Assembling at an up-valley roadside location where its favorite food (a fruit in the avocado family) is located, we didn't have to wait long before our target, a female Resplendent Quetzal, appeared and began feeding. A short while later, her mate joined her; both birds provided us with spectacular looks. An Emerald Toucanet feeding in the same tree added to the colorful show.

We returned to the hotel for breakfast; a Stripe-tailed Hummingbird was observed at the restaurant feeders. Afterwards, we reassembled for a walk along the Savegre River to search for other valley specialties. We checked every vantage point up and down the river, hoping for an American Dipper, but never found one. We saw plenty of other birds, though, including Barred and Sulphur-winged Parakeet, Spot-crowned Woodcreeper, Mountain Elaenia, Yellowish and Golden-bellied Flycatcher, Yellow-winged and Brown-capped Vireo, Gray-breasted Wood-Wren, Black-faced Solitaire, Mountain Thrush, Black-cheeked Warbler, Collared Redstart, Spangle-cheeked Tanager, Yellow-faced Grassquit, Common Chlorospingus, Chestnut-capped Brushfinch, Yellow-thighed Finch and Melodious Blackbird. A trogon found on the way back to the hotel was first thought to be an Orange-bellied, but it was later determined that the orange belly wasn't quite orange enough, so it had to be a more-expected-for-this-location Collared Trogon.



*Spangle-cheeked Tanager, photo courtesy of Ted Center*

After lunch, we drove back up to the Pan American Highway to try for higher elevation species. Our first stop was at Paraiso de Quetzales Lodge, whose feeders attract Fiery-throated Hummingbirds. Several individuals of this stunning hummingbird were present. A Black-and-yellow Silky-Flycatcher was also spotted, as were a couple of Large-footed Finch. We spent the rest of the afternoon birding along Providencia Road, a side road providing access to quality habitat away from the highway. Andrew heard the soft call of



*Fiery-throated Hummingbirds, photo courtesy of David Schaffter*

a Wrenthrush inside a stand of bamboo, so he had us all take up positions inside the stand to see if we could catch a glimpse of this highly secretive bird. It responded quite nicely to a recording of its call, affording extremely satisfying views for all of us huddled together in breathless anticipation. Other birds seen with various degrees of satisfaction during this walk included Ruddy Pigeon, Silvery-fronted Tapaculo, Buffy Tuftedcheek, Barred Becard and Ochraceous and Timberline Wren.

It was dark by the time we headed back down the road to the hotel. We stopped along the way at a location that in the past was good for both Bare-shanked Screech-Owl and Dusky Nightjar. Andrew played a recording of the nightjar, but it elicited no response. He then tried a recording of the owl; almost immediately, some in the group thought they heard a response from a nightjar. We shined our lights around and discovered that sitting on a fence post, just a few feet from the bus, was a Dusky Nightjar! At least one photo was obtained before the bird flew up to the top of a nearby electrical pole. Andrew, also hoping for a photo, climbed up on top of the bus in an attempt to coax the bird down from its lofty perch, but it wouldn't budge. He also couldn't get any response from an owl. Oh, well, one out of two night birds isn't so bad!

## Day 6: Thursday, July 7

This morning, we bid goodbye to the Savegre Valley and headed back up to the Pan American Highway. Our next destination: The Pacific lowlands. We made a brief stop at another lodge in the valley and scanned the river one last time for American Dipper, but instead found the tour's only Torrent Tyrannulet. Once on the highway, our journey took us above 11,000 feet elevation at Cerra de la Muerta, the legendary Mountain of Death and the literal high point of our tour. Early morning temperatures in this landscape of stunted trees are typically near freezing, with foggy conditions often reducing visibility to a few feet. In the early 1900s, unprepared travelers passing through this area sometimes became lost in the fog and succumbed to the frigid conditions. Fortunately for us, the weather during our short visit



*The group at Cerra de la Muerta, photo courtesy of Nancy Freedman*





*Volcano Junco, photo courtesy of Ted Center*

was comfortably cool with excellent visibility. A side road leading to a number of radio towers took us into good habitat away from the highway. Andrew called in a very cooperative Volcano Junco, but photographs taken suggest that it wasn't particularly happy to see us. Timberline Wrens were found nearby, providing significantly better views than yesterday.

Back on the highway, our next stop was La Georgina, a restaurant surrounded by excellent high elevation habitat. While some in the group stayed at the restaurant and watched Fiery-throated and Volcano Hummingbirds coming to their feeders, the rest of us explored a steep trail leading down slope at the back of the property. The very rare Silvery-throated Jay is sometimes seen here, but not today. We heard another Wrenthrush and Silvery-fronted Tapaculo, had much better looks at Buffy Tuftedcheek than yesterday and had our only Hairy Woodpecker and

Yellow-billed Cacique of the trip. It was nearly lunchtime by the time we trudged back to the restaurant, so we did the sensible thing and had lunch.

Leaving the mountains behind, we continued our journey towards the coast, stopping at a spot in the town of San Isidro where Luis had seen Turquoise Cotinga in the past. After waiting out a brief thunderstorm, we scanned the surrounding trees, eventually locating a beautiful male. Yellow-crowned and Thick-billed Euphonia were also present. Our first Costa Rican Swifts were spotted overhead and Variable Seedeaters of the Pacific race were perched on surrounding fences. It was here where we encountered our first Red-crowned x Hoffmann's Woodpecker hybrids, though one had only a hint of yellow on the nape, probably as close to pure Red-crowned Woodpecker as we would see on the tour. Luis then took us next to nearby pastureland where we quickly found his target bird for this spot, a Red-breasted Blackbird. Other good birds seen here included White-tailed, Swallow-tailed and Pearl Kite, Southern Lapwing, our only Smooth-billed Anis for the tour and as a bonus, another male Turquoise Cotinga. Outside of town, Luis hit the brakes when he spotted three Fiery-billed Aracaris on a roadside tree. We also drove by several Cherrie's Tanagers perched on wires along the road. We wouldn't see either of these species again; the San Isidro area was also the only location on the tour where we saw Tropical Mockingbird. Our only Yellow-headed Caracara of the tour flew over the road as we headed north up the coast to our next birding destination, Carara National Park and Hotel Villa Lapas, our lodging for the next two nights.

## Day 7: Friday, July 8

We birded a bit around the hotel grounds before breakfast, adding several new birds: Streaked Flycatcher, Scaly-breasted and Riverside Wren and Yellow-throated and Spot-crowned Euphonia. After breakfast, we drove to a roadside trail providing access into Carara National Park. The trail was quite muddy from overnight rains, but still passable.

Though Scarlet Macaws were briefly seen in flight yesterday when we arrived at the hotel, we were able to observe a pair today that was perched relatively close to the trail. Other birds encountered during our walk included Crane Hawk, Ruddy Quail-Dove, Gray-chested Dove, Turquoise-browed Motmot, Barred Antshrike, Slaty Antren, Chestnut-backed Antbird, Northern Bentbill, Slate-headed Tody-Flycatcher, Ruddy-tailed Flycatcher, White-winged Becard, Black-bellied and Rufous-breasted Wren, Gray-headed and White-lined Tanager and Blue-black Grosbeak. Golden-naped Woodpecker, Baird's Trogon and Orange-collared Manakin were heard-only. Near the end of the trail, we were forced to pause as a parade of Collared Peccaries darted across our path.



*Scarlet Macaws, photo courtesy of Ted Center*

After lunch, we headed to the beach, followed by a much-anticipated boat cruise on the Tarcoles River. The beach had Scarlet Macaws (!), along with more

expected species such as Magnificent Frigatebird, Brown Pelican, Neotropic Cormorant and Laughing Gull. Our boat cruise took us first to the mouth of the river, then up a mangrove channel and finally upriver towards the national park. We found most of the specialties of this estuarine habitat, including Double-striped Thick-knee, the endemic Mangrove Hummingbird (only seen by a few participants), Panama Flycatcher, Mangrove Vireo, Mangrove Swallow and the Mangrove race of Yellow Warbler. Other new additions included Plumbeous Kite, Common Black-Hawk, Blue Ground-Dove, Lesser Nighthawk, American Pygmy Kingfisher, Yellow-naped Parrot, Pale-breasted Spinetail, Rose-



*Bare-throated Tiger-Heron, photo courtesy of David Schaffter*

throated Becard, Rufous-browed Peppershrike and the always-impressive White-throated Magpie-Jay. There was also no shortage of American Crocodiles along the river.

We encountered an impressive assortment of water birds, including Black-belled Whistling-Duck, Wood Stork, Bare-throated Tiger-Heron (including two birds engaged in a major squabble), Great Blue, Little Blue, Tricolored, Green and Boat-billed Heron, Great, Snowy and Cattle Egret, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, White Ibis, Roseate Spoonbill, Purple Gallinule, American Oystercatcher, Black-bellied, Collared and Wilson's Plover, Spotted Sandpiper, Willet, Lesser Yellowlegs, Whimbrel, Ruddy Turnstone

and Royal, Sandwich and Elegant Tern. A pair of Turquoise-browed Motmots coming and going from their riverbank burrow provided great photo-ops, as did the flock after flock of Scarlet Macaws that streamed over the river as the sun set behind us. It was a memorable end to a fantastic day.

## Day 8: Saturday, July 9

Our first order of business this morning was to find a Mangrove Hummingbird that would be more cooperative than yesterday's, so we headed to a patch of mangroves accessible by road. Along the way, we spotted Orange-fronted Parakeets, more Scarlet Macaws, a Black-headed Trogon and a few Stripe-headed Sparrows. Once at the mangroves, Andrew played a recording and moments later, a Mangrove Hummingbird perched above us, staying just long enough for everyone to get on it. As a bonus, this location also provided our only Olivaceous Piculet of the tour. Common Black-Hawk and Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl provided photo-ops.

We spent the rest of the morning exploring the trail system at Carara National Park's headquarters. We passed quickly through the paved section at the entrance and made our way to an unpaved trail that brought us deeper into the interior forest. At one point, a singing Streak-chested Antpitta required us to go completely off-trail to track it down. While focused on trying to find the antpitta, no one but Andrew noticed that a Baird's



*Streak-chested Antpitta, photo  
courtesy of Ted Center*



*Turquoise-browed Motmot, photo  
courtesy of Ted Center*

Trogon was calling somewhere above us. By the time we got everyone on the antpitta and shifted our attention to the trogon, it apparently had moved on. Another was calling later in the morning, but also remained heard-only. We had no time, though, to dwell on misses, as new birds kept popping up along the trail, including Black-hooded Antshrike, Dot-winged Antwren, Black-faced Antthrush, Long-tailed and Tawny-winged Woodcreeper, Yellow-olive, Royal, Sulphur-rumped and Black-tailed Flycatcher, Blue-crowned Manakin, Tawny-crowned Greenlet, Green Shrike-Vireo and Long-billed Gnatwren.

After lunch, we loaded up the bus and headed north to the tour's final destination, Monteverde. We made a stop along the way in Punta Morales, in a coastal area that provided opportunities to see birds of the northwestern dry forest. This area had many shrimp farms that attracted our only Black-necked Stilts

seen on the tour. The mangrove race of Yellow Warbler provided photo-ops. Dry forest species seen here included Northern Beardless Tyrannulet, Northern Scrub and Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, Yellow-green Vireo, White-lored Gnatcatcher, Banded Wren, White-collared Seedeater, Streak-backed Oriole and Scrub Euphonia. After a well-earned ice cream break, we continued north, slowly climbing the winding, dusty, bumpy road up to Monteverde. We reached Cala Lodge, our base for the next two days, just before nightfall. We learned that our faithful driver, Luis, needed to return to San Jose, so we would have a new driver for the remainder of the tour.



*Yellow Warbler (mangrove race), photo courtesy of Ted Center*

## Day 9: Sunday, July 10

The wind was howling when we awoke this morning, apparently a common occurrence in these parts. A quick before-breakfast exploration of the hotel grounds added a couple of



*Slaty-backed Nightingale-Thrush, photo courtesy of Ted Center*

new birds to our ever-growing trip list: Lesson's Motmot (just split from Blue-crowned) and White-eared Ground Sparrow. A Black-thighed Grosbeak was heard-only. This morning's destination was the spectacular Monteverde Cloud Forest Biological Reserve. Slaty-backed Nightingale-Thrush and Slate-throated Redstart were hopping about right at the entrance station. Good birds kept coming, including Canivet's Emerald, Prong-billed Barbet, Smoky-brown Woodpecker, Plain Antvireo, Lineate Foliage-gleaner, Streak-breasted Treehunter, Spotted Barbtail, Red-faced Spinetail and Rufous-capped and Costa Rican Warbler (recently split from Three-striped Warbler). Tawny-throated Leaf-tosser, Eye-ringed Flatbill and Azure-hooded Jay were heard-only. Arguably the most memorable sighting of the morning was the Chiriqui Quail-Dove that stayed in view for several minutes as this normally challenging-to-see dove meandered across the path ahead of us.

Rather than retracing our route back to the reserve entrance, we returned via a steeper trail that led to a suspension footbridge/canopy walkway. Unfortunately, a large group waiting at the other end prevented us from spending much time on the walkway. Afterwards, we spent some time at the incredible Hummingbird Gallery, just down the road from the reserve entrance. Hundreds of hummingbirds were swirling around the

feeders arranged on all sides of this very popular tourist attraction. We were able to identify seven different species: Green Hermit, Lesser Violetear, Green-crowned Brilliant, Purple-throated Mountain-gem, Violet Sabrewing, Stripe-tailed Hummingbird and the endemic Coppery-headed Emerald. Several Bananaquit were also competing for space at the feeders. As an added bonus, an Orange-bellied Trogon (the expected species here) was spotted in a tree across the street from the gallery.



*Violet Sabrewing, photo courtesy of Ted Center*

After lunch at a restaurant in town, some in the group went souvenir shopping while the rest returned to the hotel for a short siesta. The group reassembled mid-afternoon for an excursion to Bajo del Tigre, a protected area within the Children's Eternal Rainforest, the largest private reserve in Costa Rica. The unmistakable calls of Three-wattled Bellbirds, one of our targets at this location, could be heard as soon as we stepped out of the bus. These birds are easy to hear but much more difficult to actually see, as they typically call



*Mottled Owl, photo courtesy of Ted Center*

from the top of the forest canopy and don't always remain in the same place. Andrew had to work hard to figure out exactly where a bird was calling from and identify a location where we would be able to see it; some of us had to scramble down a steep slope to position ourselves for a view. Eventually, everyone obtained decent looks. Such was not the case for our other target bird, Long-tailed Manakin. These birds form leks in dense forest where males perform courtship displays. We could all hear the bird's vocalizations easily enough, but you had to be in just the right spot to see one as it suddenly popped into view and just as quickly disappeared. Some of us could just never pick the right spot. We stumbled upon a few other new birds while searching for our targets, including Golden-olive Woodpecker, Olivaceous Woodcreeper and White-throated Thrush. It was dusk when we decided to finally call it a day.

## Day 10: Monday, July 11

Our last morning in Monteverde was spent exploring the extensive trail system at Curicancha, another private reserve near town. One highlight of this visit was finding, with the assistance of directions provided by other birders, a baby Mottled Owl and one of its parents. Other new birds encountered during our walk included Steely-vented Hummingbird, Paltry Tyrannulet, a very photogenic White-throated Spadebill, Golden-crowned Warbler and Hepatic Tanager. An Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush was heard; we also had much better looks at a Black-headed Nightingale-Thrush than the individual

encountered at Braulio Carrillo over a week ago. Before heading back into town, we made another visit to the Hummingbird Gallery; the seven hummingbird species tallied here yesterday were all present again today. After lunch at the same restaurant in town where we enjoyed lunch yesterday, we bid Monteverde goodbye and began the slow descent back down to the Central Valley. We stopped to bird a side road on our way down the mountain, adding our tour's final species to our trip list: Nutting's Flycatcher and a heard-only Thicket Tinamou. Back at Hotel Robledal, where this incredible tour began, we ate our tour's final dinner, completed our final checklist count-up and made sure everyone was set for our flights home tomorrow.

## Trip Totals

During our tour, we tallied an amazing 411 birds and 13 mammals; we also identified some, but certainly not all of the reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates we encountered along the way. Without Andrew Spencer, our incredible Tropical Birding guide, our success rate would have been infinitely lower. On behalf of everyone in the group, thanks, Andrew! I'd also like to thank our outstanding bus drivers as well as the staff at the five birder-friendly hotels and lodges we visited during our tour.

Following are the species we found and identified: (G = guide only; H = heard only)

### Birds

#### *Tinamidae - Tinamous*

Great Tinamou (H)

Little Tinamou (H)

Thicket Tinamou (H)

#### *Anatidae - Ducks, Geese and Waterfowl*

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck

#### *Cracidae - Guans, Chachalacas and Curassows*

Gray-headed Chachalaca

Crested Guan

Black Guan

Great Curassow

*Odontophoridae - New World Quail*

Crested Bobwhite

Spotted Wood-Quail (H)

*Ciconiidae - Storks*

Wood Stork

*Fregatidae - Frigatebirds*

Magnificent Frigatebird

*Phalacrocoracidae - Cormorants and Shags*

Neotropic Cormorant

*Pelecanidae - Pelicans*

Brown Pelican

*Ardeidae - Herons, Egrets and Bitterns*

Fasciated Tiger-Heron

Bare-throated Tiger-Heron

Great Blue Heron

Great Egret

Snowy Egret

Little Blue Heron

Tricolored Heron

Cattle Egret

Green Heron

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron

Boat-billed Heron

*Threskiornithidae - Ibises and Spoonbills*

White Ibis

Green Ibis

Roseate Spoonbill

*Cathartidae - New World Vultures*

Black Vulture

Turkey Vulture

King Vulture

*Pandionidae - Osprey*

Osprey

*Accipitridae - Hawks, Eagles and Kites*

White-tailed Kite

Swallow-tailed Kite

Pearl Kite

Plumbeous Kite

Crane Hawk (G)

Common Black-Hawk

Roadside Hawk

Semiplumbeous Hawk (G, H)

Gray Hawk

Red-tailed Hawk

*Eurypygidae - Sunbittern*

Sunbittern



*Rallidae - Rails, Gallinules and Coots*

White-throated Crake (H)

Russet-naped Wood-Rail

Purple Gallinule

*Burhinidae - Thick-Knees*

Double-striped Thick-knee

*Recurvirostridae - Stilts and Avocets*

Black-necked Stilt

*Haematopodidae - Oystercatchers*

American Oystercatcher

*Charadriidae - Plovers and Lapwings*

Black-bellied Plover

Southern Lapwing

Collared Plover

Wilson's Plover

*Jacanidae - Jacanas*

Northern Jacana

*Scolopacidae - Sandpipers and Allies*

Spotted Sandpiper

Willet

Lesser Yellowlegs

Whimbrel

Ruddy Turnstone

*Laridae - Gulls, Terns and Skimmers*

Laughing Gull

Royal Tern

Sandwich Tern

Elegant Tern

*Columbidae - Pigeons and Doves*

Rock Pigeon

Pale-vented Pigeon

Scaled Pigeon

Red-billed Pigeon

Band-tailed Pigeon

Ruddy Pigeon

Short-billed Pigeon

Inca Dove

Common Ground-Dove

Ruddy Ground-Dove

Blue Ground-Dove

Ruddy Quail-Dove

White-tipped Dove

Gray-chested Dove

Chiriqui Quail-Dove

White-winged Dove

Mourning Dove

*Cuculidae - Cuckoos*

Squirrel Cuckoo

Mangrove Cuckoo (H)

Lesser Ground-Cuckoo (H)

Smooth-billed Ani

Groove-billed Ani

*Strigidae - Owls*

Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl

Mottled Owl

*Caprimulgidae - Nightjars and Allies*

Lesser Nighthawk

Common Pauraque

Dusky Nightjar

*Apodidae - Swifts*

White-collared Swift

Costa Rican Swift

Gray-rumped Swift

*Trochilidae - Hummingbirds*

White-necked Jacobin

Band-tailed Barbthroat

Green Hermit

Long-billed Hermit

Stripe-throated Hermit

Lesser Violetear

Purple-crowned Fairy  
Black-crested Coquette  
Green-crowned Brilliant  
Magnificent Hummingbird  
Fiery-throated Hummingbird  
Purple-throated Mountain-gem  
White-throated Mountain-gem  
Volcano Hummingbird  
Scintillant Hummingbird  
Canivet's Emerald  
Violet-headed Hummingbird  
Scaly-breasted Hummingbird  
Violet Sabrewing  
Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer  
Crowned Woodnymph  
Stripe-tailed Hummingbird  
Coppery-headed Emerald  
Snowcap  
Blue-chested Hummingbird  
Charming Hummingbird (G)  
Mangrove Hummingbird  
Steely-vented Hummingbird  
Rufous-tailed Hummingbird  
Cinnamon Hummingbird  
Blue-throated Goldentail (G)

*Trogonidae - Trogons*

Resplendent Quetzal

Slaty-tailed Trogon

Black-headed Trogon

Baird's Trogon (H)

Gartered Trogon

Black-throated Trogon

Orange-bellied Trogon

Collared Trogon

*Momotidae - Motmots*

Lesson's Motmot

Rufous Motmot

Broad-billed Motmot

Turquoise-browed Motmot

*Alcedinidae - Kingfishers*

Ringed Kingfisher

Amazon Kingfisher

Green Kingfisher

American Pygmy Kingfisher

*Bucconidae - Puffbirds*

White-necked Puffbird (G)

White-whiskered Puffbird

*Galbulidae – Jacamars*

Rufous-tailed Jacamar

*Semnornithidae - Toucan-Barbets*

Prong-billed Barbet

*Ramphastidae - Toucans*

Emerald Toucanet

Collared Aracari

Fiery-billed Aracari

Yellow-throated Toucan

Keel-billed Toucan

*Picidae - Woodpeckers*

Olivaceous Piculet

Acorn Woodpecker

Golden-naped Woodpecker (H)

Black-cheeked Woodpecker

Red-crowned Woodpecker

Hoffmann's Woodpecker

Smoky-brown Woodpecker

Hairy Woodpecker

Rufous-winged Woodpecker

Golden-olive Woodpecker

Chestnut-colored Woodpecker

Lineated Woodpecker

Pale-billed Woodpecker

*Falconidae - Falcons and Caracaras*

Barred Forest-Falcon (G)

Crested Caracara

Yellow-headed Caracara

Laughing Falcon

Bat Falcon

*Psittacidae - New World and African Parrots*

Barred Parakeet

Orange-chinned Parakeet

White-crowned Parrot

Red-ored Parrot

Yellow-naped Parrot

White-fronted Parrot

Mealy Parrot

Sulphur-winged Parakeet

Olive-throated Parakeet

Orange-fronted Parakeet

Great Green Macaw

Scarlet Macaw

Crimson-fronted Parakeet

*Thamnophilidae - Typical Antbirds*

Fasciated Antshrike

Great Antshrike (G)

Barred Antshrike

Black-hooded Antshrike

Russet Antshrike (G)

Plain Antvireo (G)

Streak-crowned Antvireo

Checker-throated Antwren

Slaty Antwren (G)

Dot-winged Antwren

Dusky Antbird

Chestnut-backed Antbird

Grallariidae - Antpittas

Streak-chested Antpitta

*Rhinocryptidae - Tapaculos*

Silvery-fronted Tapaculo

*Formicariidae - Antthrushes*

Black-faced Antthrush

*Furnariidae - Ovenbirds and Woodcreepers*

Tawny-throated Leaf-tosser (G)

Olivaceous Woodcreeper

Long-tailed Woodcreeper

Tawny-winged Woodcreeper

Plain-brown Woodcreeper

Wedge-billed Woodcreeper

Northern Barred Woodcreeper

Cocoa Woodcreeper

Black-striped Woodcreeper

Spotted Woodcreeper

Streak-headed Woodcreeper

Spot-crowned Woodcreeper

Plain Xenops

Buffy Tuftedcheek



Lineated Foliage-gleaner  
Streak-breasted Treehunter  
Striped Woodhaunter  
Spotted Barbtail  
Ruddy Treerunner  
Red-faced Spinetail  
Pale-breasted Spinetail

*Tyrannidae - Tyrant Flycatchers*

Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet  
Yellow Tyrannulet  
Yellow-bellied Elaenia  
Mountain Elaenia  
Torrent Tyrannulet  
Ochre-bellied Flycatcher  
Rough-legged Tyrannulet  
Paltry Tyrannulet  
Northern Scrub-Flycatcher  
Black-capped Pygmy-Tyrant (H)  
Northern Bentbill  
Slate-headed Tody-Flycatcher  
Common Tody-Flycatcher  
Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher  
Eye-ringed Flatbill (H)  
Yellow-olive Flycatcher  
Yellow-margined Flycatcher  
White-throated Spadebill  
Royal Flycatcher

Ruddy-tailed Flycatcher  
Sulphur-rumped Flycatcher  
Black-tailed Flycatcher  
Tropical Pewee  
Yellowish Flycatcher  
Black-capped Flycatcher  
Black Phoebe  
Bright-rumped Attila  
Rufous Mourner  
Dusky-capped Flycatcher  
Panama Flycatcher  
Nutting's Flycatcher  
Great Kiskadee  
Boat-billed Flycatcher  
Social Flycatcher  
Gray-capped Flycatcher (G)  
White-ringed Flycatcher  
Golden-bellied Flycatcher  
Streaked Flycatcher  
Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher  
Piratic Flycatcher  
Tropical Kingbird

*Cotingidae - Cotingas*

Purple-throated Fruitcrow  
Turquoise Cotinga  
Three-wattled Bellbird  
Snowy Cotinga (G)

*Pipridae - Manakins*

Long-tailed Manakin

Blue-crowned Manakin (G)

White-collared Manakin

Orange-collared Manakin (H)

*Tityridae - Tityras and Allies*

Black-crowned Tityra

Masked Tityra

Barred Becard

Cinnamon Becard

White-winged Becard

Rose-throated Becard

*Verionidae - Vireos, Shrike-Babblers and Erpornis*

Mangrove Vireo

Yellow-winged Vireo

Brown-capped Vireo

Yellow-green Vireo

Scrub Greenlet

Tawny-crowned Greenlet

Lesser Greenlet

Green Shrike-Vireo

Rufous-browed Peppershrike

*Corvidae - Crows, Jays and Magpies*

Azure-hooded Jay (H)

White-throated Magpie-Jay

Brown Jay

*Hirundinidae - Swallows*

Blue-and-white Swallow

Northern Rough-winged Swallow

Southern Rough-winged Swallow

Gray-breasted Martin

Mangrove Swallow

*Troglodytidae - Wrens*

Scaly-breasted Wren

House Wren

Ochraceous Wren

Timberline Wren

Band-backed Wren (G)

Rufous-naped Wren

Black-bellied Wren

Rufous-breasted Wren

Black-throated Wren

Banded Wren

Rufous-and-white Wren

Stripe-breasted Wren

Cabanis's Wren

Riverside Wren

Bay Wren

White-breasted Wood-Wren

Gray-breasted Wood-Wren

*Poliophtilidae - Gnatcatchers*

Tawny-faced Gnatwren

Long-billed Gnatwren

White-lored Gnatcatcher

Tropical Gnatcatcher

*Turdidae - Thrushes and Allies*

Black-faced Solitaire

Black-billed Nightingale-Thrush

Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush (H)

Slaty-backed Nightingale-Thrush

Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrush

Black-headed Nightingale-Thrush

Sooty Thrush

Mountain Thrush

Pale-vented Thrush

Clay-colored Thrush

White-throated Thrush

*Mimidae - Mockingbirds and Thrashers*

Tropical Mockingbird

*Ptilogonatidae - Silky-Flycatchers*

Black-and-yellow Silky-flycatcher

Long-tailed Silky-flycatcher

*Parulidae - New World Warblers*

Flame-throated Warbler

Gray-crowned Yellowthroat  
Olive-crowned Yellowthroat  
Tropical Parula (G)  
Yellow (Mangrove) Warbler  
Rufous-capped Warbler  
Black-cheeked Warbler  
Golden-crowned Warbler  
Costa Rican Warbler  
Buff-rumped Warbler  
Slate-throated Redstart  
Collared Redstart  
Wrenthrush

*Thraupidae - Tanagers and Allies*

Gray-headed Tanager  
White-shouldered Tanager  
Tawny-crested Tanager  
White-lined Tanager  
White-throated Shrike-Tanager  
Passerini's Tanager  
Cherrie's Tanager  
Blue-and-gold Tanager  
Blue-gray Tanager  
Palm Tanager  
Golden-hooded Tanager  
Speckled Tanager  
Spangle-cheeked Tanager  
Plain-colored Tanager

Bay-headed Tanager  
Emerald Tanager  
Silver-throated Tanager  
Scarlet-thighed Dacnis  
Blue Dacnis  
Shining Honeycreeper  
Red-legged Honeycreeper  
Green Honeycreeper  
Black-and-yellow Tanager  
Slaty Flowerpiercer  
Blue-black Grassquit  
Variable Seedeater  
White-collared Seedeater  
Bananaquit  
Yellow-faced Grassquit  
Dusky-faced Tanager  
Buff-throated Saltator  
Grayish Saltator

*Emberizidae - Buntings and New World Sparrows*

Sooty-capped Chlorospingus  
Common Chlorospingus  
Stripe-headed Sparrow  
Orange-billed Sparrow  
Chestnut-capped Brushfinch  
Sooty-faced Finch (G)  
Volcano Junco  
Rufous-collared Sparrow

Large-footed Finch

White-eared Ground-Sparrow

Yellow-thighed Finch

*Cardinalidae - Cardinals and Allies*

Hepatic Tanager

Flame-colored Tanager

Red-throated Ant-Tanager

Carmioli's Tanager

Black-faced Grosbeak

Black-thighed Grosbeak (H)

Blue-black Grosbeak

Blue Grosbeak

*Icteridae - Troupials and Allies*

Red-winged Blackbird

Eastern Meadowlark

Red-breasted Blackbird

Melodious Blackbird

Great-tailed Grackle

Shiny Cowbird

Bronzed Cowbird

Giant Cowbird

Black-cowled Oriole

Streak-backed Oriole

Yellow-billed Caci que

Scarlet-rumped Caci que

Chestnut-headed Oropendola



Montezuma Oropendola

*Fringillidae - Finches, Euphonias and Allies*

Scrub Euphonia

Yellow-crowned Euphonia

Thick-billed Euphonia

Yellow-throated Euphonia

Elegant Euphonia

Spot-crowned Euphonia

Olive-backed Euphonia

Tawny-capped Euphonia

Golden-browed Chlorophonia

Yellow-bellied Siskin

*Passeridae - Old World Sparrows*

House Sparrow

**Mammals**

Hoffmann's Two-toed Sloth

Brazilian Long-nosed Bat

White Tent Bat

White-throated Capuchin Monkey

Mantled Howler Monkey

Central American Spider Monkey

Alfaro's Pygmy Squirrel

Red-tailed Squirrel

Variegated Squirrel

Central American Agouti

White-nosed Coati

Neotropical River Otter

Collared Peccary

White-tailed Deer

## Amphibians

Marine Toad

Green and Black Poison Frog

Strawberry Poison Frog

## Reptiles

Common Basilisk

Emerald Basilisk

Brown Basilisk

Spinytail Iguana

Green Iguana

Central American Ameiva

Eyesh Pitviper

Spectacled Caiman

American Crocodile