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.

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,
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 Antvireo, 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!

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, Whitetipped 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-lobed Parrot, Orange-chinned and Olive-throated Parakeet, Common Tody-Flycatcher, Tropical Pewee, Long-tailed Tyrant,
Social and White-ringied 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.

Day 3: Monday, July 4

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
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, 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.

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 bromiliad near the cafeteria.

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 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
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

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.

Resplendent Quetzal (male), photo courtesy of Ted Center

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
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
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.

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-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-bellied 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 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.

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 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 Leaffosser, 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.

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 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 Curi-Cancha, 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 Barthroat
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-lored 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 Leaftosser (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
Polioptilidae - Gnatcatchers
Tawny-faced Gnatwren
Long-billed Gnatwren
White-lobed 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 Honeyscreeper
Red-legged Honeyscreeper
Green Honeyscreeper
Black-and-yellow Tanager
Slaty Flowerpiercer
Blue-black Grassquit
Variable Seedeater
White-collared Seedeater
Bananquit
Yellow-faced Grassquit
Dusky-faced Tanager
Buff-throated Saltator
Grayish Saltator

**Emberizidae - Buntins 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
Carmiol’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 Cacique
Scarlet-rumped Cacique
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
Eylash Pitviper
Spectacled Caiman
American Crocodile