Costa Rica

Talamanca and Osa Endemics

Tour Leaders: Rob Ripma and Diego Quesada

February 1-12, 2023
This itinerary combines two of the most bird-rich areas of Costa Rica into one trip. We’ll start high up in the Talamanca Mountain Range, picking up a variety of species that call these mountains home such as Resplendent Quetzal, Long-tailed Silky-Flycatcher, and Flame-throated Warbler. Next, we’ll begin moving down in elevation until we reach the Osa region. The Costa Rican endemic Black-cheeked Ant-Tanager can be found here. This is sure to be an exciting trip with a large list of species!

**Itinerary Overview:**

February 1: Arrival in San José, Costa Rica

February 2: **Birding on our way to the Talamanca Mountains**

February 3: Birding in the San Gerardo de Dota Valley

February 4: Birding the Paramo and drive to San Isidro Valley

February 5: Birding El Pelicano Lodge Grounds, Los Cusingos Bird Sanctuary, and drive to San Vito

February 6: Birding Las Cruces Biological Station and surrounding areas

February 7: Birding rice fields and Pacific lowland habitats

February 8: Birding Danta Corcovado Lodge and Rincon Bridge

February 9: Birding Danta Corcovado and drive to the Carara area

February 10: Boat ride on the Tarcoles River and Carara National Park

February 11: Birding Guacalillo Road and drive to San José

February 12 Departure from San José, Costa Rica

**Detailed Itinerary:**

**February 1: Arrival in San José, Costa Rica**

You will be met by your guides outside the customs area of Juan Santamaría International Airport in San José. From here, we’ll make the drive to our hotel outside San José for the night. We’ll do some birding around the property in the afternoon, if time permits. Some highlights might include White-eared Ground-Sparrow and Cabanis’s Wren among others. We’ll have a wonderful welcome dinner and plenty of time to relax before our adventures begin early the next morning.

-Overnight: Hotel Bougainvillea

**February 2: Birding on our way to the Talamanca Mountains**

After early birding and breakfast, we’ll make our way to the Talamanca Mountain Range with birding stops along some rural roads and other hotspots that will provide us with views of more of the common Central Valley species. Some highlights for this morning could include Grass Wren, Cabanis’s Ground-Sparrow, and Lesson’s Motmot.
In the afternoon, we’ll make our way to the next hotel in the Talamanca Mountains, a major center of endemism. Along the way, we’ll make a stop for some birding at Los Quetzales National Park where we hope to see a variety of high elevation species such as Fiery-throated Hummingbird.

We’ll arrive at Sueños del Bosque Lodge in time to settle in and check out their gardens before dinner.

-Overnight: Sueños del Bosque Lodge

**February 2: Birding in the San Gerardo de Dota Valley**

Sueños del Bosque Lodge is a beautiful property situated deep in the San Gerardo de Dota Valley high in the mountains. This region is home to numerous birds including the extraordinary Resplendent Quetzal. In fact, it’s one of the best places in the world to see this special species! We’ll spend the day exploring a variety of elevations in this area and enjoying all that beautiful Savegre, has to offer. Some possible highlight species include Black Guan, Dusky Nightjar, Barred Parakeet, Slaty Flowerpiercer, Long-tailed Silky-Flycatcher, and Flame-throated Warbler.

-Overnight: Sueños del Bosque Lodge

**February 4: Birding the Páramo and drive to San Isidro Valley**

After some early morning birding and breakfast, we’ll leave Savegre to make our way to the highest point in Costa Rica that is accessible by paved road. Here we’ll explore the páramo, a unique ecosystem found above timberline. Here we hope to find Volcano Junco, Timberline Wren, Peg-billed Finch, and other paramo specialties. Then we’ll drive down into the San Isidro Valley and spend the rest of the day birding around our lodge.

-Overnight: El Pelicano or similar

**February 5: El Pelicano Grounds, Los Cusingos Bird Sanctuary, and drive to San Vito**

Our day will start with early birding on the grounds of the lodge. After breakfast, we’ll make a short drive to Los Cusingos Bird Sanctuary, a hotspot for southern Pacific foothill species and the former home of the great 20th Century naturalist Alexander Skutch, the Pioneer of Ornithology in Costa Rica. Once we are finished exploring this exciting area, we’ll drive to San Vito and after check-in will spend the rest of the day birding on the grounds of the lodge. Just a few of the many possible highlight species today are Turquoise Cotinga, Speckled Tanager, and Orange-collared Manakin.

-Overnight: Las Cruces Biological Station or similar
February 6: Las Cruces Biological Station and surrounding areas

We will spend our day searching for middle elevation species, beginning with early morning birding on the grounds of the lodge and viewing their feeding station. After breakfast, we’ll explore the trails and watch towers at the biological station. In the afternoon, we’ll visit neighboring hotspots for some additional specialty species of the area. Some of the many possible highlights today include Crested Oropendola, Ruddy Foliage-Gleaner, and Costa Rican Swift.

- Overnight: Las Cruces Biological Station or similar

February 7: Birding rice fields and Pacific lowland habitats

After breakfast, we’ll drive to the lowlands and stop at Neily for birding in open areas and rice fields. Then, we’ll continue to La Palma and spend the rest of the day birding the trails and surroundings of our lodge. While birding today, we’ll hope to see Black-bellied Wren, Spot-crowned Euphonia, and Charming Hummingbird among many other highlights!

- Overnight: Danta Corcovado or similar

February 8: Birding at Danta Corcovado Lodge and Rincon Bridge

Today, we will leave the hotel before dawn and drive to the bridge over Rio Rincon to look for the elusive, near-endemic, Yellow-billed Cotinga. Then we’ll come back to the lodge for breakfast and will spend the rest of the day birding the trails and surrounding habitats for Osa Peninsula specialties. We should have an impressive list of species today with highlights such as Fiery-billed Aracari, Golden-naped Woodpecker, Black-hooded Antshrike, and the Costa Rican endemic Black-cheeked Ant-Tanager.

- Overnight: Danta Corcovado or similar

February 9: Birding Danta Corcovado and drive to the Carara area

Today will start with birding at the observation tower of the lodge where we will spend time enjoying the morning bird activity. Macaws, tanagers, titras, and more can be flying over, while wrens and tinamous call below. We’ll then walk the trails on our way back for breakfast. After that, we’ll make our way north along the coast stopping at El Rey wetlands. The remainder of the day will be spent birding the area surrounding our hotel.

- Overnight: Punta Leona or similar
February 10: Boat ride on the Tarcoles River and Carara National Park

Early this morning, we'll enjoy a boat ride on the Tarcoles River, looking for shorebirds, waders, and mangrove species, especially the Mangrove Hummingbird. Then we'll spend the rest of the day birding in Carara National Park, a unique place where the Pacific lowland rainforest meets the tropical dry forest. This meeting of habitats makes Carara an incredible birding destination with a huge variety of species. While here, we should expect to see a variety of trogons, motmots, antbirds, woodcreepers, flycatchers, and much more!
- Overnight: Punta Leona or similar

February 11: Birding Guacalillo Road and drive to San José

After some early morning birding at the lodge, we'll have breakfast before exploring the back roads in the Guacalillo area. This area is a dry forest, and we'll spend our time looking for the specialties that live in this specific habitat. Highlights for the morning could include Double-striped Thick-knee, Turquoise-browed Motmot, Hoffman's Woodpecker, and more. After lunch, we'll drive back to San José and enjoy a fantastic final dinner together. The hotel is near the airport making transfer for our flights the following day very easy.
- Overnight: Hotel Bougainvillea or similar

February 12: Departure from San José, Costa Rica
**Trip Details:**

**Cost:**
Price per person (double occupancy), from San José, Costa Rica: $5,399  
Single Supplement: $650  
Minimum Participants: 8  
Maximum Participants: 10

**Price Includes:**  
2 Expert Guides  
Ground Transportation in Costa Rica  
All Lodging  
All Meals  
Park Entrance Fees  
$250 Donation to Ohio Ornithological Society

**Price Does Not Include:**  
Airfare to and from San José, Costa Rica  
Passport and Visa Fees  
Alcoholic Beverages  
Personal Items  
Travel Insurance  
Tips

**Deposit:**
A deposit of $500 per person is required to hold your spot on this tour. The remaining balance is due no later than 3 months prior to the scheduled start date of the tour (November 1, 2022).

If you have any questions about this tour or would like to sign up for it, please contact us at info@sabrewingnaturetours.com, by phone at 317-324-8505, or register through our website at sabrewingnaturetours.com.

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