

BEST OF COSTA RICA

MARCH 17 - 29, 2007



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Resplendent Quetzal

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Leaders: David and Mimi Wolf

Simply put, there is nowhere like Costa Rica for easily viewing an incredible array of Neotropical wildlife. Ecotourism has become one of their biggest businesses and throughout the country people have made it a more-friendly place for wildlife. Where else do troops of javelinas practically stroll along with the observers, or flocks of toucans troop into isolated trees just overhead, or curassows parade through a parking area? Where else does one see a tinamou slowly strolling a few feet from the group, or hummingbirds vying with tanagers at incredibly active feeding stations, or quetzals carrying on right beside the cabins? Consider the pair of Black-and-white Owls in the town plaza that have become local mascots, or the huge American crocodiles that cause daily traffic jams along the coast highway, or the pair of Scarlet Macaws tussling and preening in a nesting tree beside a highway. We experienced all of this and much, much more on our 2007 Best of Costa Rica tour, as we roamed from the lush Caribbean slope and lowlands to the Pacific dry forests and the temperate forests at high elevations. Each different region and habitat brought its highlights.

At our first stop, Monteverde, it initially seemed that the wind might blow us off the mountain, but we found the cloud forests of the reserve to be sheltered, and the misty conditions were great for bird activity. Huge Black Guans silently sat beside the trail, mixed-flock after flock of small understory birds came out into view for us, a pair of Prong-billed Barbets appeared like magic in a hummingbird-filled garden (we had heard their ringing “war whoops” all morning), and we ended the day with long studies of Resplendent Quetzals that sat and posed for 15 minutes. No other bird is more symbolic of these cloud forests than this gorgeous creature.

Carara National Park, in the moist Pacific lowlands, was as birdy as ever, and here the action was almost nonstop. This group liked trogons—really liked trogons—and here we had multiple looks at four species, including the gorgeous endemic Baird’s. Sometimes it was hard to tear our eyes away from them to enjoy the plethora of flycatchers, antbirds, and other forest insectivores foraging around them. An afternoon hike into the shady forest produced a fabulous Great Tinamou wading in a small stream, while zippy Blue-crowned and Red-capped manakins came to bathe in the nearby pools, and a fabulous Streak-chested Antpitta hopped down the trail in front of us.

The next morning we saw 50 species before leaving the parking lot, with Turquoise-browed Motmots and Chestnut-mandibled Toucans the highlights. As we entered the forest we found a pair of Scarlet Macaws quietly working on their nest hole in a huge emergent tree, our viewing interrupted when a pair of stunning Fiery-billed Aracaris called high overhead and finally sat in the open for great scope views. Other highlights here included Boat-billed Herons at remarkably close range, a pair of Spectacled Owls, a surprise pair of Common Potoos at dusk, displaying male Orange-collared Manakins, a Northern Royal-Flycatcher that half-raised its remarkable crest, and the delightful Buff-rumped Warbler foraging on a fungi-covered log.

In the lush forests of the Caribbean foothills we found our first stunning Golden-hooded and Crimson-collared tanagers, while secretive Sooty-faced Finches and a Slaty-backed Nightingale-Thrush skulked nearby. Eleven species of hummingbirds in one day were topped by the endemic Black-bellied Hummingbird and numerous Brown Violet-ears, a species not often seen.

The La Selva Field Station in the wet Caribbean lowlands was even more active than usual, and at times the birds came so fast and furious it was almost overwhelming. The misty mornings seemed to bring out the puffbirds; we found a pair of Pies right over the patio our first day, and the second day a White-necked was sitting out in the drizzle. There were toucans galore, showy Chestnut-colored and Pale-billed woodpeckers, male Snowy Cotingas sitting up boldly (but hard to see against the cloudy sky), Rufous and Broad-billed motmots hooting and honking inside the tall forest, sneaky specialty wrens like the Black-throated and Stripe-breasted, and a Fasciated Antshrike foraging at close range. I still can't get over the magnificent male Great Curassow that boldly paraded across the parking area and past the dormitories while we snapped pictures! As we left this region, a final stop in the foothills produced "best-ever" looks at the fabulous male Snowcap and a male Black-crested Coquette almost close enough to touch, while a male Lattice-tailed Trogon sneaked into a nearby fruiting tree.

Our final days afield were spent in the cool and very different temperate oak forests of Cerro de la Muerte. Birds are not as abundant here, but a very high percentage of them are endemic to these highlands and quite unique. Here the odd Large-footed and Yellow-thighed finches could hardly be missed as they hopped around in the open, stunning Spangle-cheeked Tanagers came down to feed on berries at close range, and we watched an elegant pair of Long-tailed Silky-flycatchers at their nest. We were lucky with the high-elevation specialties and it took little effort to see the unique Timberline Wren and Volcano Junco, while Sulphur-winged Parakeets feeding in the croton trees were a real bonus. Resplendent Quetzals were present in the area, sneaking into fruiting "aguacatillo" trees to feed and quietly incubating with only the long plumes visible in the nest hole.

All too soon it was time to return to San Jose, our grand tour of the highlights of Costa Rica complete.

Itinerary:

March 17: group arrival in San Jose, Costa Rica.

March 18: Morning travel from the Meseta Central to Monteverde.

March 19: Monteverde Reserve and nearby areas, in the wet subtropical zone.

March 20: AM: hotel forest trail in lower Monteverde community; PM: drive to Jaco Beach.

March 21: morning and afternoon excursions to Carara National Park.

March 22: AM: forest trail at Carara Reserve; PM: to the mouth of the Tarcoles River.

March 23: stops at the Tarcoles River bridge and Orotina before travelling up to the Meseta Central and then on to the La Paz Waterfall Garden on the Caribbean slope; in the afternoon we stopped at the "hummingbird house" before driving on to Sueno Azul.

March 24: La Selva Field Station of the OTS, in the wet Caribbean lowlands.

March 25: La Selva Field Station of the OTS; PM Sueno Azul (and La Selva for some).

March 26: AM: Braulio Carillo National Park and nearby in the wet Caribbean foothills; PM: drive to Cerro de la Muerte and the valley of San Gerardo de Dota, after a bit of birding in the highest zone of the mountains.

March 27: AM: in the temperate forests and gardens in the upper Savegre Valley near the lodge; PM: up back up "the Road" and along the Pan American highway to Villa Mills, for the special birds of the subalpine thickets.

March 28: AM: birding the Savegre Valley along the Waterfall Trail; PM: back to San Jose after a final stop in the upper-zone forests.

March 29: departure for home or on-going travel.

Key:

MC = Meseta Central region

PL = Pacific lowlands en route to Monteverde, and then en route to Jaco Beach.

M = Monteverde Reserve, Sky Walk and community, mostly at subtropical elevations.

C = Carara National Park and nearby, including to the mouth of the Tarcoles River

CS = Caribbean slope, including La Paz Waterfall Garden, the hummingbird house at Cinchona, and the Quebrada Gonzalez area of Braulio Carillo National Park. The sites are in the lower subtropical and upper tropical (foothills) zones.

CL = Caribbean lowlands in the Sarapiquí region, especially at the La Selva Field Station of the OTS, around Sueno Azul Lodge, and along the roads in-between).

CM = Cerro de la Muerte, especially the temperate forests, orchards and gardens of the upper Savegre alley at San Gerardo de Dota, but also to the high point on the Pan-American Highway.

hd = heard

Bird List: a few of our highlights are bolded.

Great Tinamou (*Tinamus major*) - C, CL (hd) (incredible long looks at one wading in a shady forest stream inside Carara NP).

Highland Tinamou (*Nothocercus bonapartei*) - M (heard only, but close at hand).

Little Tinamou (*Crypturellus soui*) - CL (heard only)

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) - CL (seen by a few)

Muscovy Duck (*Cairina moschata*) - C

Gray-headed Chachalaca (*Ortalis cinereiceps*) - M, C

Crested Guan (*Penelope purpurascens*) - CL (calmly feeding in the trees right around the main station at La Selva).

Black Guan (*Chamaepetes unicolor*) - M (multiple great sightings inside the cloud forest).

Great Curassow (*Crax rubra*) - CL (incredible sighting of both a male and a female calmly foraging in the open at La Selva).

Black-breasted Wood-Quail (*Odontophorus leucolaemus*) - M (heard only).

Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) - C

Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) - CL

Anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*) - C

Magnificent Frigatebird (*Fregata magnificens*) - C

Fasciated Tiger-Heron (*Tigrisoma fasciatum*) - CL (great looks at two different adults fishing the clear riffles of the rivers and streams at the base of the foothills).

Bare-throated Tiger-Heron (*Tigrisoma mexicanum*) - CL

Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) - C, CL

Great Egret (*Ardea alba*) - PL, C, CL

Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*) - C, CL

Little Blue Heron (*Egretta caerulea*) - C

Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*) - C

Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*) - MC, PL, C, CS, CL

Green Heron (*Butorides virescens*) - C, CL

Black-crowned Night-Heron - (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) - C

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (*Nyctanassa violacea*) - C

Boat-billed Heron (*Cochlearius cochlearius*) - C (weird birds!).

White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*) - C

Roseate Spoonbill (*Ajaia ajaja*) - C (seen by a few)
 Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*) - C
 Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) - all regions and seen daily.
 Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*) - all regions and seen daily.
 King Vulture (*Sarcoramphus papa*) - C
 Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) - C, CS, CL, CM
 Gray-headed Kite (*Leptodon cayanensis*) - C, CL
 Hook-billed Kite (*Chondrohierax uncinatus*) - CL
 Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*) - M, CM
 White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus*) - MC (from the bus).
 Double-toothed Kite (*Harpagus bidentatus*) - C, CL, CS
 Plumbeous Kite (*Ictinia plumbea*) - C
 Barred Hawk (*Leucopternis princeps*) - CS
 Semiplumbeous Hawk (*Leucopternis semiplumbeus*) - CL (glimpsed low overhead).
 White Hawk (*Leucopternis albicollis*) - CS
 Mangrove Black-Hawk (*Buteogallus subtilis*) - C (distant view at mouth of Tarcoles River; not always split from the Common Black-Hawk (*Buteogallus anthracinus*)).
Broad-winged Hawk (*Buteo platypterus*) - CS, CL, CM (several impressive flights of thousands of migrants over the ridges at Savegre).
 Gray Hawk (*Buteo nitidus*) - CL
 Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*) - CL, CM (a few migrating with the Broad-wings).
 Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) - CM
 Barred Forest-Falcon (*Micrastur ruficollis*) - CL
 Crested Caracara (*Caracara cheriway*) - PL, C
 Yellow-headed Caracara (*Milvago chimachima*) - C
 Laughing Falcon (*Herpetotheres cachinnans*) - CL
 American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*) - PL (from the bus).
 Merlin (*Falco columbarius*) - CM
 Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) - C
 White-throated Crane (*Laterallus albigularis*) - CL
Gray-necked Wood-Rail (*Aramides cajanea*) - M, CL (out in the open!).
 Purple Gallinule (*Porphyrio martinica*) - CL
Sunbittern (*Eurypyga helias*) - CL (there to greet us at the Sueno Azul bridge).
 Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*) - C
 Northern Jacana (*Jacana spinosa*) - C, CL
 Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularia*) - C, CL
 Laughing Gull (*Larus atricilla*) - C
 Royal Tern (*Sterna maxima*) - C (from the bus).
 Rock Pigeon (*Columba livia*) - cities and town (feral birds).
 Pale-vented Pigeon (*Patagioenas cayennensis*) - CL
 Red-billed Pigeon (*Patagioenas flavirostris*) - MC, M, C
 Scaled Pigeon (*Patagioenas speciosa*) - CL
 Band-tailed Pigeon (*Patagioenas fasciata*) - M, CM
 Ruddy Pigeon (*Patagioenas subvinacea*) - CM
 Short-billed Pigeon (*Patagioenas nigrirostris*) - C, CL, CS (hd)

White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*) - PL, C
 Inca Dove (*Columbina inca*) - PL, C
 Common Ground-Dove (*Columbina passerina*) - PL
 Ruddy Ground-Dove (*Columbina talpacoti*) - PL, C, CL
Blue Ground-Dove (*Claravis pretiosa*) - C (hd), CL (perched calmly for along study).
 White-tipped Dove (*Leptotila verreauxi*) - PL, C, CL, CM
Gray-chested Dove (*Leptotila cassini*) - C, CL (great looks at two rather different races).
 Buff-fronted Quail-Dove (*Geotrygon costaricensis*) - CM (heard only)
Sulphur-winged Parakeet (*Pyrrhura hoffmanni*) - CM (feeding quietly inside the forest).
 Crimson-fronted Parakeet (*Aratinga finschi*) - C, MC
 Olive-throated Parakeet (*Aratinga nana*) - CL
 Orange-fronted Parakeet (*Aratinga canicularis*) - PL, C
Scarlet Macaw (*Ara macao*) - C (especially the pair at their nest cavity in a huge forest tree).
 Orange-chinned Parakeet (*Brotogeris jugularis*) - PL, C, CL
 Brown-hooded Parrot (*Pionopsitta haematotis*) - C, CL
 White-crowned Parrot (*Pionus senilis*) - C, CS, CL
 Red-lore Parrot (*Amazona autumnalis*) - CL
 Mealy Parrot (*Amazona farinosa*) - C, CL
 Yellow-naped Parrot (*Amazona auropalliata*) -
 Squirrel Cuckoo (*Piaya cayana*) - C, CL
 Striped Cuckoo (*Tapera naevia*) - C (heard only)
 Groove-billed Ani (*Crotophaga sulcirostris*) - PL, M, C, CL
Spectacled Owl (*Pulsatrix perspicillata*) - C (shy pair at their day roost in a shady grove).
 Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl (*Glaucidium brasilianum*) - PL, C (hd)
Black-and-white Owl (*Ciccaba nigrolineata*) - PL (the town “mascots” at their day roost in the plaza in the middle of Orotina village).
 Common Pauraque (*Nyctidromus albicollis*) - C (heard by a few), CL
Common Potoo (*Nyctibius griseus*) - C (a poolside surprise at dusk).
 Chestnut-collared Swift (*Streptoprocne rutila*) - CL, CM
 White-collared Swift (*Streptoprocne zonaris*) - CS, CL, CM
 Vaux’s Swift (*Chaetura vauxi*) - PL
 Costa Rican Swift (*Chaetura fumosa*) - C (a recent split from Band-rumped Swift (*Chaetura spinicauda*)).
 Gray-rumped Swift (*Chaetura cinereiventris*) - CL
 Lesser Swallow-tailed Swift (*Panyptila cayennensis*) - CL
 Green Hermit (*Phaethornis guy*) - M, CS
 Long-billed (Western Long-tailed) Hermit (*Phaethornis longirostris*) - C, CL (formerly considered a race of Long-tailed Hermit).
 Stripe-throated Hermit (*Phaethornis striigularis*) - CL (formerly considered a race of the Little Hermit).
 Violet Sabrewing (*Campylopterus hemileucurus*) - M, CS
 White-necked Jacobin (*Florisuga mellivora*) - C, CL
Brown Violet-ear (*Colibri delphinae*) - CS (an uncommonly seen species).
 Green Violet-ear (*Colibri thalassinus*) - M, CS, CM
Green-breasted Mango (*Anthracothorax prevostii*) - PL (both males and females).

Violet-headed Hummingbird (*Klais guimeti*) - CL, CS
Black-crested Coquette (*Lophornis helenae*) - CS (a fabulous little male almost close enough to touch).
Green Thorntail (*Discosura conversii*) - CS
Violet-crowned Woodnymph (*Thalurania colombica*) - C, CL, CS
Fiery-throated Hummingbird (*Panterpe insignis*) - CM (inches from us as they mobbed the feeders at the restaurant on the crest of Cerro de la Muerte).
Steely-vented Hummingbird (*Saucerottia saucerrottei*) - PL, C
Rufous-tailed Hummingbird (*Amazilia tzacatl*) - PL, C, CS, CL
Cinnamon Hummingbird (*Amazilia rutila*) - C
Stripe-tailed Hummingbird (*Eupherusa eximia*) - M
Black-bellied Hummingbird (*Eupherusa nigriventris*) - CS
Coppery-headed Emerald (*Elvira cupreiceps*) - M, CS (a true Costa Rican endemic).
Snowcap (*Microchera albocoronata*) - CS (the best looks ever at this incredible hummer).
Bronze-tailed Plumeleater (*Chalybura urochrysis*) - CL
Purple-throated Mountain-gem (*Lampornis calolaema*) - M, CS
White-throated Mountain-gem (*Lampornis castaneiventris*) - CM
Green-crowned Brilliant (*Heliodoxa jacula*) - M, CS
Magnificent Hummingbird (*Eugenes fulgens*) - CM
Purple-crowned Fairy (*Heliothryx barroti*) - CL (glimpsed)
Magenta-throated Woodstar (*Calliphlox bryantae*) - M, CS (bee-like!).
Volcano Hummingbird (*Selasphorus flammula*) - CM
Scintillant Hummingbird (*Selasphorus scintilla*) - CM
Black-headed Trogon (*Trogon melanocephalus*) - PL, C
Baird's Trogon (*Trogon bairdii*) - C (great looks at this range-restricted endemic).
Violaceous Trogon (*Trogon violaceus*) - PL, C, CL, CS
Orange-bellied Trogon (*Trogon aurantiiventris*) - M
Slaty-tailed Trogon (*Trogon massena*) - C, CL, CS
Lattice-tailed Trogon (*Trogon clathratus*) - CS (Caribbean foothill specialty).
Resplendent Quetzal (*Pharomachrus mocinno*) - M, CM (Costa Rica's "wow bird").
Blue-crowned Motmot (*Momotus momota*) - M, C
Rufous Motmot (*Baryphthengus martii*) - CL
Broad-billed Motmot (*Electron platyrhynchum*) - CL
Turquoise-browed Motmot (*Eumomota superciliosa*) - PL,C (elegant; a group favorite).
Ringed Kingfisher (*Ceryle torquata*) - C, CL
Amazon Kingfisher (*Chloroceryle amazona*) - C, CL
Green Kingfisher (*Chloroceryle americana*) - C, CL
White-necked Puffbird (*Notharchus macrorhynchos*) - CL
Pied Puffbird (*Notharchus tectus*) - CL (boldly perched in open cecropias above the patio).
White-whiskered Puffbird (*Malacoptila panamensis*) - C
Rufous-tailed Jacamar (*Galbula ruficauda*) - CL
Red-headed Barbet (*Eubucco bourcierii*) - M
Prong-billed Barbet (*Semnormis frantzii*) - M, CS (from only a few feet away).
Blue-throated Toucanet (*Aulacorhynchus caeruleogularis*) - M, CM (split from Emerald Toucanet).
Collared Aracari (*Pteroglossus torquatus*) - CL

Fiery-billed Aracari (*Pteroglossus frantzii*) - C (high overhead in the emergent trees).
 Keel-billed Toucan (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*) - M, CL
 Chestnut-mandibled Toucan (*Ramphastos swainsoni*) - C, CL (sometimes lumped with the Black-billed Toucan (*Ramphastos ambiguus*)).
 Acorn Woodpecker (*Melanerpes formicivorus*) - CM
 Black-cheeked Woodpecker (*Melanerpes pucherani*) - CL, CS (hd)
 Hoffmann's Woodpecker (*Melanerpes hoffmannii*) - PL, M, C,
 Hairy Woodpecker (*Picoides villosus*) - CM
 Smoky-brown Woodpecker (*Veniliornis fumigatus*) - M
Rufous-winged Woodpecker (*Piculus simplex*) - CL (an uncommon specialty).
 Golden-olive Woodpecker (*Piculus rubiginosus*) - M (glimpsed), CM (great looks).
 Cinnamon Woodpecker (*Celeus loricatus*) - C (heard; glimpsed shooting overhead).
Chestnut-colored Woodpecker (*Celeus castaneus*) - CL (gorgeous)
 Lineated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus lineatus*) - PL, CL
Pale-billed Woodpecker (*Campephilus guatemalensis*) - C, CL (a big and bold favorite).
 Slaty Spinetail (*Synallaxis brachyura*) - CL (by a few at Sueno Azul)
 Red-faced Spinetail (*Cranioleuca erythrops*) - M
 Spotted Barbtail (*Premnoplex brunnescens*) - M
 Ruddy Treerunner (*Magarornis rubiginosus*) - M, CM
 Lineated Foliage-gleaner (*Syndactyla subalaris*) - M
 Plain Xenops (*Xenops minutus*) - C
 Tawny-winged Woodcreeper (*Dendrocincla anabatina*) - C
 Wedge-billed Woodcreeper (*Glyphorhynchus spirurus*) - C, CL, CS
 Northern Barred-Woodcreeper (*Dendrocolaptes sanctithomae*) - C
 Cocoa Woodcreeper (*Xiphorhynchus susurrans*) - C, CL (recent split from the Buff-throated Woodcreeper).
 Spotted Woodcreeper (*Xiphorhynchus erythropygius*) - M
 Streak-headed Woodcreeper (*Lepidocolaptes souleyetii*) - C, CL
 Spot-crowned Woodcreeper (*Lepidocolaptes affinis*) - CM
Fasciated Antshrike (*Cymbilaimus lineatus*) - CL (foraging out in the open at length).
 Great Antshrike (*Taraba major*) - CL (heard only)
 Barred Antshrike (*Thamnophilus doliatus*) - C, CL
 Black-hooded Antshrike (*Thamnophilus bridgesi*) - C
 Slaty Antwren (*Myrmotherula schisticolor*) - M
 Dot-winged Antwren (*Microrhophias quixensis*) - C
 Dusky Antbird (*Cercomacra tyrannina*) - C (mostly heard)
 Chestnut-backed Antbird (*Myrmeciza exsul*) - C, CS
 Black-faced Antthrush (*Formicarius analis*) - C (heard only)
Streak-chested (Spectacled) Antpitta (*Hylopezus perspicillatus*) - C (the "egg with legs" hopping down the trail in front of us).
 Silvery-fronted Tapaculo (*Scytalopus argentifrons*) - M (hd), CM (hd) (heard only).
 Yellow Tyrannulet (*Capsiempis flaveola*) - CL
 Greenish Elaenia (*Myiopagis viridicata*) - C
 Yellow-bellied Elaenia (*Elaenia flavogaster*) - M, CL
 Mountain Elaenia (*Elaenia frantzii*) - M, CM

Torrent Tyrannulet (*Serpophaga cinerea*) - CM
 Olive-striped Flycatcher (*Mionectes olivaceus*) - M, C
 Ochre-bellied Flycatcher (*Mionectes oleagineus*) - C, CL
 Paltry Tyrannulet (*Zimmerius villissimus*) - M (hd), CL, CM
 Northern Scrub-Flycatcher (*Sublegatus arenarum*) - PL
 Black-capped Pygmy-Tyrant (*Myiornis atricapillus*) - CL
 Northern Bentbill (*Oncostoma cinereigulare*) - C
 Common Tody-Flycatcher (*Todirostrum cinereum*) - C, CL
 Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher (*Todirostrum nigriceps*) - CL
 Yellow-olive Flycatcher (*Tolmomyias sulphurescens*) - C, CL
Northern Royal Flycatcher (*Onychorhynchus mexicanus*) - C (the bird half-raised its remarkable crest when it perched by its nest – this is very rarely seen in the field).
 Sulphur-rumped Flycatcher (*Myiobius sulphureipygius*) - C
 Tufted Flycatcher (*Mitrephanes phaenocercus*) - M, CM
 Olive-sided Flycatcher (*Contopus cooperi*) - M
 Dark Pewee (*Contopus lugubris*) - CM
 Eastern Wood-Pewee (*Contopus virens*) - PL
 Tropical Pewee (*Contopus cinereus*) - CL
 Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (*Empidonax flaviventris*) - C
 Yellowish Flycatcher (*Empidonax flavescens*) - M, CS, CM
 Black-capped Flycatcher (*Empidonax atriceps*) - CM
 Long-tailed Tyrant (*Colonia colonus*) - CL
 Bright-rumped Attila (*Attila spadiceus*) - C (hd), CL
 Rufous Mourner (*Rhytipterna holerythra*) - CL
 Dusky-capped Flycatcher (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*) - C, CL
 Great Crested Flycatcher (*Myiarchus crinitus*) - C
 Great Kiskadee (*Pitangus sulphuratus*) - PL, M, C, CS, CL
 Boat-billed Flycatcher (*Megarynchus pitangua*) - PL, C, CS, CL, CM
 Social Flycatcher (*Myiozetetes similis*) - PL, C, CL
 Gray-capped Flycatcher (*Myiozetetes granadensis*) - C, CL
White-ringed Flycatcher (*Conopias albobittata*) - CL (the scarcest of the confusing look-alikes and confined to the treetops, but we had good looks).
 Streaked Flycatcher (*Myiodynastes maculatus*) - PL, C
 Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher (*Myiodynastes luteiventris*) - C
 Piratic Flycatcher (*Legatus leucophaeus*) - PL, C, CS, CL
 Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) - all regions and seen daily.
 Thrush-like Schiffornis (*Schiffornis turdina*) - C (heard only)
 Rufous Piha (*Lipaugis unirufus*) - C (heard often; glimpsed shooting overhead).
 Cinnamon Becard (*Pachyramphus cinnamomeus*) - CL
Rose-throated Becard (*Pachyramphus aglaiae*) - PL, C (including pairs nest-building, by wrapping long strands of material around the down-hanging pouch while in flight).
 Masked Tityra (*Tityra semifasciata*) - M, C, CL
 Black-crowned Tityra (*Tityra inquisitor*) - CL
Snowy Cotinga (*Carpodectes nitidus*) - CL (ethereal specialty of the Caribbean lowlands).
 White-collared Manakin (*Manacus candei*) - CL

Orange-collared Manakin (*Manacus aurantiacus*) - C (active lek of displaying males).
 Blue-crowned Manakin (*Lepidothrix coronata*) - C
 Red-capped Manakin (*Pipra mentalis*) - C
 Yellow-throated Vireo (*Vireo flavifrons*) - C
 Yellow-winged Vireo (*Vireo carmioli*) - CM
 Brown-capped Vireo (*Vireo leucophrys*) - CM
 Philadelphia Vireo (*Vireo philadelphicus*) - CM
 Yellow-green Vireo (*Vireo flavoviridis*) - PL
 Lesser Greenlet (*Hylophilus decurtatus*) - C, CL
 Green Shrike-Vireo (*Vireolanius pulchellus*) - C, CS (hd)
 Rufous-browed Peppershrike (*Cyclarhis gujanensis*) - CM (hd) (heard only).
 White-throated Magpie-Jay (*Calocitta formosa*) - PL
 Brown Jay (*Cyanocorax morio*) - M, C
 Silvery-throated Jay (*Cyanolyca argentigula*) - CM (heard only).
 Gray-breasted Martin (*Progne chalybea*) - CL
 Mangrove Swallow (*Tachycineta albilinea*) - C, CL
 Blue-and-white Swallow (*Notiochelidon cyanoleuca*) - MC, M, CS, CM
 Northern Rough-winged Swallow (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*) - PL, C, CS, CL
 Southern Rough-winged Swallow (*Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*) - CL
 Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) - CM
 Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) - PL, C, CL
 Band-backed Wren (*Campylorhynchus zonatus*) - CL
 Rufous-naped Wren (*Campylorhynchus rufinucha*) - PL, C
Black-throated Wren (*Thryothorus atrogularis*) - CL (this specialty with the beautiful song took patience and persistence; a real skulker).
 Black-bellied Wren (*Thryothorus fasciatoventris*) - C (heard only).
 Bay Wren (*Thryothorus nigricapillus*) - CL
 Riverside Wren (*Thryothorus semibadius*) - C
 Stripe-breasted Wren (*Thryothorus thoracicus*) - CL
 Rufous-breasted Wren (*Thryothorus rutilus*) - C
 Rufous-and-white Wren (*Thryothorus rufalbus*) - C
 Plain Wren (*Thryothorus modestus*) - M, CL (hd)
 House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*) - M, C, CS, CL
 Ochraceous Wren (*Troglodytes ochraceus*) - M, CM
Timberline Wren (*Thryorchilus browni*) - CM (restricted to dense bamboo and scrub at the highest elevations).
 Gray-breasted Wood-Wren (*Henicorhina leucophrys*) - M, CS (hd), CM
 American Dipper (*Cinclus mexicanus*) - CM (seen by the hikers on the Waterfall Trail).
 Long-billed Gnatwren (*Ramphocaenus melanurus*) - C
 Tropical Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila plumbea*) - C, CL
Black-faced Solitaire (*Myadestes melanops*) - M, CM (delightful songs in the cloud forest).
 Black-billed Nightingale-Thrush (*Catharus gracilirostris*) - CM
 Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush (*Catharus aurantiirostris*) - M
 Slaty-backed Nightingale-Thrush (*Catharus fuscater*) - M, CS
 Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrush (*Catharus frantzii*) - CM (delightful song).

Black-headed Nightingale-Thrush (*Catharus mexicanus*) - CS (heard only).
 Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*) - CM
 Wood Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*) - C, CL, CM
 Sooty Robin (*Turdus nigrescens*) - CM
 Mountain Robin (*Turdus plebejus*) - M, CM
Clay-colored Robin (*Turdus grayi*) - all areas and seen every day (the national bird of Costa Rica, seen and heard in large numbers, sometimes singing a bit too early in the morning).
 White-throated Robin (*Turdus assimilis*) - M
 Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*) - CL
 Black-and-yellow Silky-Flycatcher (*Phainoptila melanothorax*) - CM
Long-tailed Silky-Flycatcher (*Ptilogonys caudatus*) - CM (elegant birds characteristic of the higher montane regions; we watched a pair at their nest).
 Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) - M, CL, CM
 Tennessee Warbler (*Vermivora peregrina*) - CS, CL, CM
 Flame-throated Warbler (*Parula gutturalis*) - CM
 Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica petechia*) - PL, C, CL (including an immature male "Mangrove" Warbler near the Tarcoles River, sometimes considered a separate species).
 Chestnut-sided Warbler (*Dendroica pensylvanica*) - C, CS, CL
 Magnolia Warbler (*Dendroica magnolia*) - C (seen by a few; uncommon).
 Black-throated Green Warbler (*Dendroica virens*) - M, CM
 Bay-breasted Warbler (*Dendroica castanea*) - CL
 Black-and-white Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*) - M, CM
 Ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapilla*) - C (leader only)
 Northern Waterthrush (*Seiurus noveboracensis*) - C, CL
 Louisiana Waterthrush (*Seiurus motacilla*) - C
 Wilson's Warbler (*Wilsonia pusilla*) - M, CM
 Slate-throated Redstart (*Myioborus miniatus*) - M
Collared Redstart (*Myioborus torquatus*) - M, CM (tame and confiding).
 Black-cheeked Warbler (*Basileuterus melanogenys*) - CM
 Three-striped Warbler (*Basileuterus tristriatus*) - M
Buff-rumped Warbler (*Basileuterus fulvicauda*) - C, CL (hopping along a fungi-covered log beside a forest stream).
 Wrenthrush (*Zeledonia coronata*) - CM (heard only).
 Bananaquit (*Coerebe flaveola*) - M, CS, CL
 Common Bush-Tanager (*Chlorospingus ophthalmicus*) - M, CS, CM
 Sooty-capped Bush-Tanager (*Chlorospingus pileatus*) - CM
Black-and-yellow Tanager (*Chrysothlypis chrysomelaena*) - CS (zippy little tanagers of the foothills at their nest, a ball of green moss).
 Olive Tanager (*Chlorothraupis carmioli*) - CS
 Gray-headed Tanager (*Eucometis penicillata*) - C
 White-shouldered Tanager (*Tachyphonus luctuosus*) - C
 Red-throated Ant-Tanager (*Habia fuscicauda*) - CL
 Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*) - M, PL, C, CS, CL
 Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga olivacea*) - C (by a few)
 Flame-colored Tanager (*Piranga bidentata*) - CM

Crimson-collared Tanager (*Ramphocelus sanguinolentus*) - CS (stunning in color).
 Passerini's Tanager (*Ramphocelus passerinii*) - CS, CL (not too shabby either).
 Cherrie's Tanager (*Ramphocelus costaricensis*) - C (Scarlet-rumped Tanager was split into this and the preceding species).
 Blue-gray Tanager (*Thraupis episcopus*) - all areas and seen daily.
 Palm Tanager (*Thraupis palmarum*) - PL, C, CS, CL
 Plain-colored Tanager (*Tangara inornata*) - CL
 Silver-throated Tanager (*Tangara icterocephala*) - M, CS, CM
 Speckled Tanager (*Tangara guttata*) - CS
 Bay-headed Tanager (*Tangara gyrola*) - C
 Golden-hooded Tanager (*Tangara larvata*) - C, CS, CL
Spangle-cheeked Tanager (*Tangara dowii*) - M, CM (beautiful endemic, down low and close in good sunlight several times).
 Scarlet-thighed Dacnis (*Dacnis venusta*) - CS
 Blue Dacnis (*Dacnis cayana*) - CL
 Green Honeycreeper (*Chlorophanes spiza*) - CL, CS
 Shining Honeycreeper (*Cyanerpes lucidus*) - C, CL
 Red-legged Honeycreeper (*Cyanerpes cyaneus*) - C
 Blue-black Grassquit (*Volatinia jacarina*) - C
 Variable Seedeater (*Sporophila corvina*) - C, CL
 Thick-billed Seed-Finch (*Oryzoborus funereus*) - CL
 Yellow-faced Grassquit (*Tiaris olivacea*) - M, CS, CM
 Slaty Flowerpiercer (*Diglossa plumbea*) - CS, CM
Sooty-faced Finch (*Lysurus crassirostris*) - CS (a skulker not often seen well).
 Yellow-thighed Finch (*Psellophorus tibialis*) - CS, CM
 Large-footed Finch (*Pezopetes capitalis*) - CM
 Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch (*Buarremon brunneinucha*) - M, CM
 Orange-billed Sparrow (*Arremon aurantiirostris*) - C
 Olive Sparrow (*Arremonops rufivirgatus*) - PL
 Black-striped Sparrow (*Arremonops conirostris*) - CL
White-eared Ground-Sparrow (*Melospiza leucotis*) - M (perched for a long time).
 Stripe-headed Sparrow (*Aimophila ruficauda*) - C
 Rufous-collared Sparrow (*Zonotrichia capensis*) - MC, M, CS, CM
Volcano Junco (*Junco vulcani*) - CM (the highest-elevation endemic of these mountains).
 Grayish Saltator (*Saltator coerulescens*) - M
 Buff-throated Saltator (*Saltator maximus*) - C, CL
 Black-headed Saltator (*Saltator atriceps*) - CL
 Black-faced Grosbeak (*Caryothraustes poliogaster*) - CL, CS
Black-thighed Grosbeak (*Pheucticus tibialis*) - CM (commoner at Savegre than anywhere else that I've been).
 Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) - CS, CM
 Blue-black Grosbeak (*Cyanocompsa cyanoides*) - C
 Blue Grosbeak (*Passerina caerulea*) - PL
 Indigo Bunting (*Passerina cyanea*) - C
 Melodious Blackbird (*Dives dives*) - C

Great-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) - MC, PL, M, C, CS, CL
 Bronzed Cowbird (*Molothrus aeneus*) - CL
 Black-cowled Oriole (*Icterus prothemelas*) - CL
 Yellow-tailed Oriole (*Icterus mesomelas*) - CL
 Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*) - M, PL, C, CS, CL, CM
 Scarlet-rumped Cacique (*Cacicus uropygialis*) - CL, CS
 Chestnut-headed Oropendola (*Psarocolius wagleri*) - M, CL
Montezuma Oropendola (*Psarocolius (Gymnostinops) montezuma*) - C, CS, CL (a noisy and
 conspicuous favorite).
 Scrub Euphonia (*Euphonia affinis*) - PL, C
 Yellow-crowned Euphonia (*Euphonia luteicapilla*) - C, CL
 Thick-billed Euphonia (*Euphonia laniirostris*) - C
 Yellow-throated Euphonia (*Euphonia hirundinacea*) - M
 Spot-crowned Euphonia (*Euphonia imitans*) - C (heard only).
 Olive-backed Euphonia (*Euphonia gouldi*) - CL
 Tawny-capped Euphonia (*Euphonia anneae*) - CS
Golden-browed Chlorophonia (*Chlorophonia callophrys*) - M, CS (exquisite little fig-feeders).
 Yellow-bellied Siskin (*Carduelis xanthogastra*) - CM
 House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) - CL (leader only, in Puerto Viejo).

Mammal List: follows the nomenclature in “A Field Guide to the Mammals of Central America and Southeastern Mexico” by Fiona Reid.

Hoffmann’s Two-toed Sloth (*Choloepus hoffmanni*) - PL
white-lined bat sp? (*Saccopteryx sp?*) - CL (roosting on tree along La Selva footbridge).
insectivorous bats (several sizes)
White-faced Capuchin (*Cebus capucinus*) - C
Mantled Howler (*Alouatta palliata*) - M (hd), C (hd), CL (hd) (heard only).
Variegated Squirrel (*Sciurus variegatoides*) - PL, M, C, CS, CL
Red-tailed Squirrel (*Sciurus granatensis*) - CS, CL, CM (inside moister forests).
Central American Agouti (*Dasyprocta punctata*) - C, CL
Forest Rabbit (*Sylvilagus brasiliensis*) - CL
Gray Fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*) - M
White-nosed Coati (*Nasua narica*) - C, PL
Collared Peccary (*Tayassu tajacu*) - CL

Amphibians & Reptiles: follows “A Guide to Amphibians and Reptiles of Costa Rica” by Twan Leenders. This was a great group for spotting herps, but many remain unidentified to species.

Giant Toad (*Bufo marinus*) - CL, C
Dry Forest Toad (*Bufo coccifer*) - C
Strawberry Poison-Dart Frog (*Dendrobates pumilio*) - CL (“blue jeans frog”).
Spectacled Caiman (*Caiman crocodilus*) - CL
American Crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*) - C
Black Wood Turtle (*Rhinoclemys funerea*) - CL
House Gecko (*Hemidactylus frenatus*) - introduced
Common Basilisk (*Basiliscus basiliscus*) - PL
Striped Basilisk (*Basiliscus vittatus*) - CL
Black Spiny-tailed Iguana (*Ctenosaura similis*) - C (“false iguana” or “ctenosaur”).
Green Iguana (*Iguana iguana*) - CL
Norops sp? - CL (tiny plain brown anole on the forest floor at La Selva)
Norops sp? - PL (medium anole at Carara with large yellow-orange dewlap with weak whitish border).
Green Spiny Lizard (*Sceloporus malachiticus*) - CM
Central American Whip-tailed Lizard (*Ameiva festiva*) - CL
whip-tailed lizard sp? (*Ameiva sp?*) - PL (fairly large brown lizard common in the leaf litter at Carara NP).
very small brown snake – CL