

# Costa Rica's Caribbean Side

## With Naturalist Journeys & Caligo Ventures

**October 6 – 15, 2021**

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Naturalist Journeys, LLC







Few places rival Costa Rica's ecological diversity. Over a quarter of the country is a national park, wildlife refuge, biological reserve, or protected area. And for good reason: Costa Rica boasts 850 bird species, 208 mammal species, 50,000 insect species, and 2,000 orchids.

October is a key migration time in Costa Rica. Scores of Broad-winged Hawk might pass over, while many North American songbirds are on the wing to South America, or settling into winter homes in Costa Rica's mix of tropical to montane habitats. It is a great month for birding! And while raining to the west, it's the best time to visit Costa Rica's Caribbean side!

We spend several of our days on both the Caribbean and Pacific sides of the continental divide, with excellent field time in the Veragua Rainforest, and at Tenorio Volcano. Our route takes us close to the Nicaraguan border; lodges include Tapirus Lodge at the Rainforest Tram, Maquenque of the Caribbean lowlands, Celeste Mountain near Bijagua, and Bosque de Paz in the highlands. Several of these lodges are new to past Naturalist Journeys Costa Rica travelers, we invite you to return! We have fun, tasting local foods and perhaps visiting a market; we also enjoy sharing in Costa Rican customs while we experience our hosts' exceptional hospitality.

### Tour Highlights

- Enjoy beautiful, birdy gardens right at our hotel in San José
- Scan the skies at Veragua Rainforest for migrating raptors—the sheer quantity of birds here is incredible
- Spend two nights at Maquenque Eco-lodge, where we enjoy a boat safari, walk on the local trails, and immerse ourselves in tropical nature—birds abound!
- Visit Braulio Carrillo National Park; Ride a tram through lush rainforest; be amazed by hummingbirds
- Relax at the Celeste Mountain Lodge near Tenorio National Park, where the river literally turns blue!
- Bird among the cloud forest at Bosque de Paz Lodge in search of local bird specialties

### Tour Summary

10-Day / 9-Night Costa Rica Fall Birding Tour  
w/Micheal Marsden  
\$3190 DBL from San José, Costa Rica  
Airport is Juan Santamaria Airport (SJO)

## Itinerary



### Wed., Oct. 6 Arrival in San José

Welcome to Costa Rica! Arrive today in San José where you are met at the airport by a representative from Horizontes, our Costa Rican host company, for private transfer to the Hotel Bougainvillea. We select this boutique hotel for its spacious rooms, friendly service, and spectacular birdy gardens, just outside the door. This is an environmentally-friendly hotel with a commitment to our planet *and* hospitality.

Those arriving in time can enjoy a welcome dinner with fellow travelling companions and your Naturalist Journeys guide. Those that arrive later than dinner have a snack tray on arrival.

*Accommodations at Hotel Bougainvillea (D)*

### Thurs., Oct. 7 San José | Veragua Rainforest Mountain Reserve

We depart early this morning for Veragua Rainforest Mountain Reserve. En route, we travel through Braulio Carrillo National Park, where views of the rain forest are incredible. Although there are few trails in this massive park, the Quebrada Gonzalez Trail is a decidedly rich and productive one. Fast-moving feeding flocks, often led by Black-faced Grosbeak, can contain a host of striking and local species such as Streak-crowned Antvireo, Black-and-yellow Tanager, and Blue-and-gold Tanager. Away from such flocks, we also keep a sharp eye out for the animated White-ruffed Manakin and majestic Ornate Hawk-Eagle. Crowned Woodnymph, Silver-throated Tanager, and Golden-hooded Tanager may also make an appearance. Down the road, the old El Tapir Garden offers opportunities to see two dainty, near-endemic hummingbirds: Black-crested Coquette and Snowcap.

Once we arrive at Veragua Rainforest, we enjoy spectacular views of the magical raptor migration. The height, speed, and quantity of birds here is incredible. And lucky for us, our lodge is located here, and as the day visitors go we have it all to ourselves! The open-air dining room is a delight.

*Accommodations at Tapirus Lodge at the Rainforest Tram (B,L,D)*





### **Fri., Oct. 8 Rainforest Aerial Tram | Hummingbird Gardens**

We are right here at the Rainforest Tram, so we get into the rainforest canopy as soon as they open – wow! To greet the day with a feel of floating through the forest is wonderful.

We spend the day today exploring around Tapirus Lodge and adjacent Braulio Carrillo National Park, enjoy a chance to find mid-montane birding specialties. Our guide knows some great spots for finding Chestnut-colored and Cinnamon Woodpeckers, Slaty-tailed Trogon, Olive-backed Euphonia, Long-tailed Tyrant, and Crimson-collared Tanager. The area has a mix of pristine forest and open farmland which adds to the diversity of birding here.

Return to check out the action at the amazing hummingbird garden at the Tram site. With luck a territorial Snowcap will be chasing off a Violet-headed Hummingbird or a Crowned Woodnymph — wow!

*Accommodations at Tapirus Lodge (B,L,D)*

### **Sat., Oct. 9 & Sun., Oct. 10 Maquenque Lodge**

On morning walks we may be greeted by calling Keel-billed Toucan or even Broad-billed Motmot. After our walk and breakfast, we ready ourselves for our next destination, Boca Tapada, located in San Carlos. This little town is almost on the border with Nicaragua.

Once we arrive at Boca Tapada, we take the rest of the day to get familiar with the Maquenque Lodge and surrounding area. The grounds here host a variety of wildlife, including Mantled Howler Monkey, Green Iguana, and Spectacled Caiman.

Over the next two days, from the lodge, we scan the skies for raptors on the wing, including Broad-winged, Swainson's, and Short-tailed Hawks, and bird the grounds and surrounding forest. With the company of our local guide, we enjoy a boat safari on the San Carlos River.

In the afternoons, we walk on the lodge trails, where we might find Great Curassow, Great Green Macaw, Green Ibis, and Golden-hooded Tanager. It's wonderful to have these full days to immerse ourselves in migration, the resident birds, and the tropical nature of Maquenque! Here we enjoy creature comforts and some fabulous birding and wildlife.

*Accommodations at Maquenque Lodge (B,L,D)*



## Mon., Oct. 11 Tenorio National Park

After breakfast, we check out and get ready for our next birding area near the Tenorio Volcano. Due to the area's differing altitudes, the variety of birds here is extensive. We watch for feeding flocks containing such avian jewels as Scarlet-thighed Dacnis, Rufous-winged Tanager, and Shining Honeycreeper, joined by the more subdued supporting cast of woodcreepers and tyrannulets so typical of the Neotropics. We also stay alert for antbirds, Orange-bellied Trogon, and perhaps Nightingale Wren.

In the air we watch for kettles of migrating Broad-winged Hawk, above their resident cousins, Roadside Hawk, a common raptor. If we don't find raptors, there are still so many species to see!

After we check in at our lodge and settle in, we enjoy some free time to relax and get familiar with the grounds.  
*Accommodations at Celeste Mountain Lodge (B,L,D)*

## Tues., Oct. 12 Tenorio National Park

Have you ever heard of the place where the river's water turns sky blue? Well here at Tenorio National Park, you get to experience this incredible sight first-hand. And it is magical.

Today we explore the park trails looking for specialties like the toy-like Tody Motmot, Hermit Hummingbird, and Long-winged Butterfly. While we bird this prime tract of forest, the calls of antbirds in the understory may alert us to an army ant swarm, giving us our best chance to see some truly special obligate ant-followers such as Ocellated and Bicolored Antbird.

In the afternoon, we stroll the lodge grounds enjoying a spectacular mix of views and birds.  
*Accommodations at Celeste Mountain Lodge (B,L,D)*

## Wed., Oct. 13 Tenorio National Park | Cloud Forest Private Reserve

This morning we check out and embark on our drive to Bosque de Paz, a lodge with a lovely trail system and a relaxed environment, perfect for birding. Here we hope to see an assortment of higher elevation avian specialties more typical of cloud forest: Green-crowned Brilliant, Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant, Black Guan, Spotted Barbtail, Collared Redstart, Golden-browed Chlorophonia, and more. We also have a chance to see Resplendent Quetzal.





The ethereal tunes of Black-faced Solitaire are a constant companion for the length of our stay in this magical forest. Located within Bajos del Toro Amarillo town surroundings, this is a lovely location to round out our trip. *Accommodations at Bosque de Paz Lodge (B,L,D)*

### **Thurs., Oct. 14   Bosque de Paz Lodge**

Today we enjoy a full day at the lodge; the trails here offer great birding. With the assistance of an expert local guide, we search for cloud forest birds such as Foliage-gleaner, Orange-chinned Parakeet, Bay-headed and Silver-throated Tanager, Silvery-fronted Tapaculo, Red-faced Spinetail, and Green Hermit.

Feeders on the lodge grounds likely host a completely new set of hummingbirds for the trip, including Violet Sabrewing, Coppery-headed Emerald, Green-crowned Brilliant, and Purple-throated Mountain-gem. Flowers like Heleconias draw them in.

This evening we enjoy our farewell dinner, capping off a spectacular trip!  
*Accommodations at Bosque de Paz Lodge (B,L,D)*

### **Fri., Oct. 15   Departures**

After breakfast, we offer a group transfer to San José's Juan Santamaria International Airport to catch your flights back home. Keep in mind that driving time from the lodge to the airport is nearly two hours, and you should be at the airport almost three hours ahead of your flight, so watch those early-morning departures! If you must leave early we can arrange a private transfer for you (small additional cost), shared with others if they are also leaving early. Otherwise, we suggest you plan on flights out after 12:00 PM. *(B)*



## Cost of the Journey

### Plan Ahead!

Protect yourself with Allianz Travel Insurance. Please note, starting in January 2017, Naturalist Journeys pays 100% of your flight carbon offset.

### Travel Information

Plan to arrive in San José on Wednesday, October 6, ideally between 2:00 and 5:00 PM if you wish to join the welcome dinner. If you arrive later, we can arrange the airport pickup and a snack for you at the hotel, or you may eat on the plane. You may want to arrive a day or two early (at your own cost) to take in the sights of the city. We suggest you plan departures 12:00 PM onward on Friday, October 15, though earlier or later flights can be accommodated.

### Cost of the Journey

Cost of the journey is \$3190 DBL / \$3690 SGL, from San José, Costa Rica. This cost includes all accommodations, meals as specified in the itinerary, professional guide services, other park and program entrance fees and miscellaneous program expenses. With fewer than six participants, a small group surcharge (typically \$100 – \$300 per participant) may apply.

Tour cost does not include: round-trip transportation from your home city to San José, optional activities, or items of a personal nature such as laundry, telephone charges, maid gratuities, or beverages from the bar.

### Photo Credits

Golden-hooded Tanager, Peg Abbott (PA); Broad-winged Hawk, PA; Slaty-tailed Trogon, PA; Chestnut-colored Woodpecker, Sandy Sorkin (SS); Violet Sabrewing, SS; Broad-billed Motmot, Carla Bregman; Black Howler Monkey, PA; Eyelash Pit Viper, SS; Orchid at Hotel Bougainvillea, Greg Smith (GS); Snowcap, SS; Black-faced Grosbeak, SS; Silver-throated Tanager, GS; Golden-hooded Tanager, PA; Green Iguana, SS; Keel-billed Toucan, PA; Orange-billed Sparrow, GS; Orange-bellied Trogon, Howard Topoff; Resplendent Quetzal, GS; Bay-headed Tanager, PA; Purple-throated Mountain-gem, GS; Maquenque Lodge, courtesy of the lodge; Great Curassow Pair, SS.

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