

Costa Rica Monteverde & More | Species List

March 19 – 29, 2024 w/ extension March 29 – April 1



With Local Guide Armando Orbano, Naturalist Journeys Guide Steve Shunk, Naturalist Journeys Host Kristine Faber, and clients Boudewijn, Carolyn, Charles, Deborah, Holly, Thomas, Julie, and Robin

Compiled by: Steve Shunk

Summary:

From the Pacific Coast to the Caribbean slope, we transected the diverse country of Costa Rica on a wildlife odyssey. Temperatures were unseasonably warm for much of the trip, and we had no rain in this tropical dry season. We got some respite from the heat in the middle of the trip when we climbed up to the Monteverde cloud forest, but the bird diversity remained high at all our destinations.

Our main tour started with an estuarine boat trip on the Tarcoles River, followed by a day in the lowland Carara National Park. We then ascended to Monteverde for a few days, where we explored both sides of the continental divide, bringing together birds of both mountain slopes. A slight drop in elevation took us north to the montane Rio Celeste and Tenorio Volcano National Park, on the upper Caribbean slope. Next, we continued north and dropped down into the Caribbean lowlands—though quite a ways from the sea itself—where we explored the wetlands and surrounding flats of the Cano Negro region, adding another great boat ride.

Our three-day extension took us south to the Sarapiquí River, where we visited private reserves at Pierella Gardens and La Selva Biological Station. We enjoyed our third and final boat trip—on the Sarapiquí itself—during a very busy Easter weekend; despite what seemed like the entire community swimming in the river, we still had several wildlife highlights. The extension finished with visits to the Socorro River and the La Paz waterfall region before dropping us back into the central valley outside of San Jose.

Below are compilations of the birds and other wildlife we encountered throughout the trip. Click the links to online eBird lists and to Steve's iNaturalist page for the non-bird highlights. Then, join us next year when we return for "Monteverde and More" in the Central American gem that is Costa Rica!

THE BIRDS

The iconic Resplendent Quetzal may be the most sought-after of Costa Rica's birds. Nowhere else in the range of the



Lesson's Motmot

species is this trogon cousin so predictable. Well, we saw our quetzals, but we saw so much more, including five different trogons. We watched the White-tipped Sicklebill feeding at Heliconia flowers in Celeste—just one of our 27 different hummingbird species. We found an Ornate Hawk-Eagle at Monteverde—one of 19 diurnal raptor species. We stumbled upon all six Western Hemisphere kingfishers. Among 32 different flycatchers, we found this guide's first Panama and White-ringed Flycatchers. We saw the massive Jabiru stork and the diminutive Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant. We worked hard for the Three-wattled Bellbird and got the bonus of several Long-tailed Manakins. Truly, too many highlights to list them all here!

The three links below will get you to three different eBird trip reports. Once you have pulled up a report, you will first see the list of species we encountered, in taxonomic order. Clicking on any species will take you to the eBird reference page for that bird. Clicking the green icons to the right will show you the different checklists from the sites where each species was encountered, and these listings link to the checklists themselves. Back on the main page, you can access the complete set of checklists from the tour by clicking the blue box at the top. Enjoy exploring our master list of 340 bird species. We certainly enjoyed finding them!

[eBird Trip Report for the Main Tour](#)

[eBird Trip Report for the Extension only](#)

[Combined eBird Trip Report for both parts of the tour](#)

MAMMALS

Hoffmann's Toe-toed Sloth *Choloepus hoffmanni*—Three sloths seen at La Selva Bio Station.

Proboscis Bat *Rhynchonycteris naso*—At Cano Negro, La Selva Bio Station, and on the Sarapiquí.

Honduran White Bat *Ectophylla alba*—Under a heliconia leaf at Pierella Gardens.

Greater Sac-winged Bat *Saccopteryx bilineata*—Pierella Gardens.

Central American Agouti *Dasyprocta punctata*—Seen on two days in Monteverde.

Variiegated Squirrel *Sciurus variegatoides*—Several locations.

Central American Dwarf Squirrel *Microsciurus alfarri*—Celeste Lodge trail and one other location.

Central American Spider Monkey *Ateles geoffroyi*—Carara Nat. Pk. and one other spot.

White-throated Capuchin *Cebus capucinus*—Monteverde Reserve

Mantled Howler Monkey *Alouatta palliata*—Seen and heard on many locations.

White-nosed Coati *Nasua narica*—Monteverde Reserve

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

Spectacled Caiman *Caiman crocodilus*—several at Cano Negro, one eating an Anhinga that it tore in half.

American Crocodile *Crocodylus acutus*—Tarcoles River Bridge.

Emerald Swift *Sceloporus malachiticus*—Small chunky juvenile at Monteverde Reserve; others elsewhere.

Black Spiny-tailed Iguana *Ctenosaura similis*—Many locations.

Green Iguana *Iguana iguana*—Many locations, mostly later in the trip.

Helmeted Iguana *Corytophanes cristatus*—Seen once in Celeste.



Scarlet Macaw

Common Basilisk *Basiliscus basiliscus*—Carara Nat. Pk.
Green Basilisk *Basiliscus plumifrons*—Several locations on the Caribbean side.
Middle American Ameiva *Holcosus festivus*—Seen twice in the middle of the trip.
Red-eyed Tree Frog *Agalychnis callidryas*—Selva Verde Lodge, Pierella Gardens.
Strawberry Poison Dart Frog *Oophaga pumilio*—Pierella Gardens.
Green-and-black Poison Dart Frog *Dendrobates auratus*—Many at Carara Nat. Pk.
Giant Toad *Rhinella horribilis*—Selva Verde Lodge.
Copper Anole *Anolis cupreus*—Carara Nat. Pk.
Border Anole *Anolis limifrons*—Tenorio Nat. Pk.
Smilisca tree frog *Smilisca sp.*—Celeste Lodge.

OTHER NOTABLE FAUNA

White-angled Sulphur butterfly *Anteos chlorinde*—
Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve
Mexican Silverspot butterfly *Dione moneta*—Monteverde
Reserve
Lemon-patched Satyr butterfly *Oxeoschistus cothone*—
Santa Elena at Monteverde
Blue Morpho butterfly *Morpho peleides*—Several
locations.
Monarch butterfly *Danaus plexippus*—Not sure exactly
where we saw this one.
Honey Wasp *Epipona sp.*—Large nest at Children’s Eternal
Forest
Long-waisted Honey Wasp *Polybia sp.*—Starting a nest at
Selva Verde Lodge; ‘subgenus’ *Myrapetra*.
Orchid Bee *Eulaema polychroma*—Monteverde Reserve
Green grasshopper *Munatia biolleyi*—Celeste Lodge
Brown grasshopper *Balboana tibialis*—Celeste Lodge
Tachinid fly *Macromyia sp.*—Monteverde
Banana fly *Glyphidops sp.*—Pierella Gardens
Ponerine trap-jaw ant *Odontomachus hastatus*
Bullet ant *Paraponera clavate*—A couple of locations.
Army ant Subfamily Ecitoninae (all New World army ants)— According to the [web site linked here](#), four genera of army ants
occur in Costa Rica: *Eciton*, *Labidus*, *Neivamyrmex*, and *Nomamyrmex*. Among these, *Neivamyrmex sumichrasti* is
considered a “moderately abundant diurnal forager” at higher elevations, so this may (or may not!) be the ones we
saw at Monteverde. Fascinating reading.
Leaf-cutter Ant Subfamily Myrmicinae, tribe Attini—All leafcutter ants belong to one of two genera, *Atta* and *Acromyrmex*,
both of which occur in Costa Rica.
Cotton Stainer bug *Dysdercus sp.*—Monteverde
Patent leather beetle *Passalus*—Celeste Lodge
Cockroach Family Blattidae—Inside the bus! And elsewhere?
Cicadas Family Cicadidae—Very loud at Celeste and elsewhere.
Costa Rican Red-leg Tarantula *Abdomegaphobema mesomelas*—Monteverde Reserve
Golden Silk Spider *Trichonephila clavipes*—Hotel Bougainvillea, plus one wrapping up its prey at La Selva Bio Station.
Western Spotted Orbweaver *Neoscona oaxacensis*—Celeste Lodge
Flat-backed Millipede Order Polydesmida —Santa Elena.
Painted (Ghost?) Crab *Ocypode gaudichaudii*—I think this was at the Tarcoles?

[Link to Steve’s iNaturalist Page for this tour.](#)



Green-and-Black Poison Dart Frog