

Costa Rica: Birds & Nature

January 5 - 12, 2025 (Main Tour)

January 12 – 16, 2025 (Pacific Coast Extension)

Species List | with Naturalist Journeys



Compiled by guide Rick Weiman with local guide Johan Fernandez. Our 10 wonderful clients included Julia, Dana, Damon, Jennifer, Robert, Nancy, Kay R., Suratha, David, and Kay W.

Summary: As we learned on this tour, Costa Rica is a spectacular birding destination, as few places rival its ecological diversity. Over a quarter of the country is protected lands, boasting 850+ bird species and 200+ mammals. On this tour we crossed the Continental Divide over the Cerro de Muerte and Talamanca mountain range with our local guide Johan Fernandez. We traveled from the cloud forest home of the Resplendent Quetzal to the mid-montane rainforests of Rancho Naturalista and then visited the warmer Caribbean lowlands, including the La Selva Biological Station. We enjoyed a rewarding Sarapiquí River boat tour where we saw several kingfishers, caimans, many herons and egrets, and Mantled Howler Monkeys. Kay R., Nancy and Robert then enjoyed a private 4-day Pacific Coast extension of the tour with Rick and Johan and experienced mangrove boat tours complete with very large crocodiles and many new birds not seen on the main tour (82 of them!). Enjoy reviewing this species list to learn about the wonderful birds and wildlife species we encountered on this wildlife-filled tour.

BIRDS observed on the main tour: 235 species were recorded, of which 14 were heard only, 29 were regionally endemic, 1 was an endemic species (Coppery-headed Emerald) and 1 was an introduced species (Rock Pigeon). If you include the Pacific Coast extension and some pre-tour morning birding at the Hotel Bougainvillea for our early arrivers, the entire tour totaled 319 bird species. The Hotel Bougainvillea excursion list included 2 additional species not observed anywhere else on the tour, a male Rose-breasted Grosbeak and a Mottled Owl found day-roosting in a stand of bamboo in the hotel gardens.

The eBird report link below details the 235 species of birds our main tour group either observed or heard during the tour. If you're new to Ebird, be sure to click on "Show All Details" on the right side of the list as this will expand the report to show you where and when all of the birds were seen and how many.

[Costa Rica: Birds & Nature | January 5-12, 2025 | eBird Trip Report](#)

The eBird report link below details the 146 species of birds the private Pacific Coast extension part of the tour either observed or heard during the tour. There were 82 bird species added that were not observed on the main tour.

[Costa Rica: Birds & Nature | Extension January 12-16, 2025 | eBird Trip Report](#)

The following is a list of additional mammal, reptile, and amphibian species we were also lucky enough to find during the entire trip, including the Pacific Coast extension where noted.

MAMMALS (13):

Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth *Bradypus variegatus*—several were first spotted by our driver Mauricio along a highway in the Caribbean lowlands, including a mother with her baby. Observed at La Selva Biological Station also.

Hoffmann's Two-toed Sloth *Choloepus hoffmanni*—also spotted by our driver Mauricio along the same highway in the Caribbean lowlands. Observed at La Selva Biological Station as well near a Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth.

Honduran White Bat *Ectophylla alba*—a sleeping cluster of 10 bats were wrapped up under a large leaf at La Selva Biological station. Our La Selva guide Octavio knew where to find them.

Central American Agouti *Dasyprocta punctata*—observed under the feeders at Rancho Naturalista

Variiegated Squirrel *Sciurus variegatoides*—a very large and colorful squirrel observed multiple times on the tour

Red-tailed Squirrel *Sciurus granatensis*—a much smaller squirrel observed in several locations

Mantled Howler Monkey *Alouatta palliata*—we heard them calling often and then had several close looks at small troops of them including at the Pierella Gardens and La Selva Biological Station. Also heard on the extension.

White-throated Capuchin *Cebus capucinus*—observed on the Pacific coast extension on the grounds of the Tarcoles Birding Hotel and also at Carara National Park being followed by a foraging Gray-headed Tanager.

Common Raccoon (or Crab-eating Raccoon) *Procyon lotor*—one was spotted climbing down some tree roots on our Rio Sarapiquí boat tour.

White-nosed Coati *Nasua narica*—one was very fond of the banana feeding station at the Tarcoles Birding Hotel.

Hooded Skunk *Mephitis macroura*—this little guy was foraging around our dinner table, thankfully oblivious to us, at the Ensenada Lodge on the Pacific Coast extension. It was a very small skunk and an all-black race individual.

Tayra *Eira Barbara inserta*—Voted best mammal of the tour, at least by Rick, a jet-black Tayra showed up one morning at the banana feeding station at Rancho Naturalista. These large omnivores are from the mustelid family and it is the only species in the genus *Eira*. An interesting Tayra factoid: Caching has been observed among Tayras whereas they will pick unripe green plantains, which are inedible, and leave them to ripen in a cache, coming back a few days later to consume the softened pulp.

White-tailed Deer *Odocoileus virginianus*—One visited the feeding station at the Selva Verde Lodge and munched on some banana peels. A local guide got very excited as apparently they are seldom seen as they are secretive and smaller than those residing in the US.

REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS (14):

Spectacled Caiman *Caiman crocodilus*—One was spotted on the bank on our Rio Sarapiquí boat tour.

American Crocodile *Crocodylus acutus*—We had 2 small crocs on the Rio Sarapiquí boat tour and some much larger ones up to 10 feet long on our Rio Tarcoles mangrove tour.

Green Iguana *Iguana iguana*—spotted in trees throughout the tour at lower elevations

Black Spiny-tailed Iguana *Ctenosaura similis*—Observed several times on the Pacific Coast extension. Interesting factoids about this lizard: The Guinness Book of World Records lists this as the world's fastest lizard, with a maximum

sprint speed of 21.5 mph. These lizards, like their Green Iguana cousins, are primarily herbivorous but they will opportunistically also eat smaller animals like rodents, birds and their eggs, frogs, bats, etc.

Green Basilisk *Basiliscus plumifrons*—also named Emerald Basilisks, and we had a large male in the garden at Rancho Naturalista that certainly fit the bill as it was a brilliant emerald green color. A pair were also spotted on the Sarapiquí River tour.

Common (or Brown) Basilisk *Basiliscus basiliscus*—One was spotted lounging photogenically on a rock off the boardwalk at Selva Verde Lodge and also at Carara National Park.

Green Spiny Lizard *Sceloporus malachiticus*—One was spotted and photographed on the back stone wall in the Hotel Bougainvillea gardens on our January 5 morning walk with the early arriving group.

Common House Gecko *Hemidactylus fenatus*—an introduced species from Asia that is now common in most of Costa Rica. Most commonly seen in the lower elevation lodges including the extension.

Black River Turtle *Rhinoclemmys funerea*—spotted on logs on the boat tour along the Rio Sarapiquí

Meso-American Slider *Trachemys venusta venusta*—this very large lone turtle was spotted basking on the boat tour along the Rio Sarapiquí

Red-eyed Tree Frog *Agalychnis callidryas*—several were found on our night walk on the grounds of Selva Verde Lodge by Johan. Even Rick finally found one. They typically lay their egg mass under a large leaf over a small body of fresh water which will allow the tadpoles to safely hatch, wriggle free, and plop into the pond.

Slim-fingered Rain Frog *Craugastor crassidigitus*—We spotted one on a night walk at Rancho Naturalista and it was kind enough to pose for a few pictures.

Strawberry Poison Dart Frog *Oophaga pumilio*—Johan located a few of these very small frogs in the leaf litter off the boardwalk trail at Selva Verde Lodge; a very tiny frog with pink bodies with blue legs (one local name is blue-jean frog).

Giant Toad *Rhinella horribilis*—Also known as the Cane Toad. Spotted at Selva Verde Lodge and quite a few were found at night on the extension at the Tarcoles Birding Hotel. One fell in the pool there and was rescued.

One last species I'd be remiss to mention was the large **Orange-kneed Tarantula** (*Brachypelma smithi*) our guide Johan found and lured out of his burrow with a twig during a night walk at Rancho Naturalista. Their burrows keep them protected from predators and enable them to ambush passing prey, such as large insects, frogs and even mice.