

Costa Rica: Monteverde & More | March 18 – 28, 2026 | Trip Report by David Jaffe



Naturalist Journeys guide David Jaffe, local guide Armando Sanchez with participants Chuck, Mona, Marcia, Ruth, Roger, Kate, Kay, Kitty, Carol and Susan.



Costa Rica is a place of extraordinary biological diversity in a remarkably small area. This West Virginia-sized country holds over 900 bird species and an equally impressive array of mammals, reptiles, and amphibians, distributed across a mosaic of habitats that range from Pacific mangrove estuaries to cloud-draped mountain rainforests to vast freshwater wetlands of the northern lowlands. Our itinerary covered several distinct habitats, each with its own character and its own set of wildlife highlights.

Wed., March 18 Arrivals in San José | Hotel Bougainvillea

Once the entire group arrived at Hotel Bougainvillea, we met for an introductory walk through the beautiful 10-acre garden which is literally out the back door of the hotel. In addition to getting to know each other with binoculars in hand, we strolled through a garden that was obviously very well cared for and had some amazing trees and flowers that attract all sorts of birds and butterflies. Among the special birds we observed included some wonderful views of the Lesson's Motmot, Red-billed pigeon and a Mottled Owl that was roosting in an



incredible thicket of bamboo. After about an hour of birding the garden, we returned to the hotel, had a short break and then reconvened for welcome drinks and formal introductions.

Armando and I shared information about our upcoming adventure including details about some of the wonderful sites that we planned to visit. We also discussed some safety pieces and general nuts-and-bolts about how we would like the trip to flow. I handed out the bird checklist before we sat down for our first group meal. And a lovely meal it was! We were off to a good start!!

Thurs., March 19 Central Pacific Coast

Based on the enthusiasm that Armando and I observed the previous night, it was not surprising that when we went outside for our “optional bird walk” that was to start at 6 AM Kat, Kitty, Mona and Chuck were already outside doing their own personal birding. Susan joined the group moments before 6 AM.

A little after 6 AM, the seven of us started our walk. Our walk began with some observations of birds from yesterday. But it was not long before we started seeing new species for our list, including the Cabani’s Wren and a Boat-billed Flycatcher that was perched right next to a Social Flycatcher. Their side-by-side perching provided us a really good opportunity for comparison. After a little bit of searching, Armando found our Mottled Owl again in a slightly different location — a little bit of a better view this morning than yesterday.

Our morning ended with some good looks of the White-eared Ground-Sparrow, a bird that is typically more difficult to see, but here in the gardens of Hotel Bougainvillea it showed itself quite nicely. This would have been a great bird to end our morning on, however, as Armando and I tried to pull guests back towards the restaurant for breakfast, our attention shifted to several more birds arriving on the scene. And THAT would have been a great way to end our optional morning birding session! But not yet... as we tried once again to make our way back for our morning meal, Chuck and Mona spotted a Summer Tanager in full view, lit up beautifully in the early morning sun. Then we had our first Northern Yellow Warbler of the trip. We couldn’t really get away from the garden! We then spotted a Philadelphia Vireo and more Whitetail Kites. Finally, after several attempts, we made it back to the hotel a little after seven having seen 20 species total, seven of which were new for the trip.

After breakfast we loaded up the bus and were ready to roll by a little after 8 AM. As we settled into our seats, but before we left the hotel parking lot, Armando gave us a very comprehensive description of all the typical Costa Rican snacks we had on board. Then as we traveled, Armando provided all of us with a map of Costa Rica



and shared some wonderful information about how the geography and geology gave rise to such incredible diversity in a country the size of West Virginia. As we traveled through the city, he then shared nuances of Costa Rican culture and the focus on conservation efforts that take place in the country.

Our first stop was a roadside-farm to look at a Harris's Hawk that we found at the apex of a tree. What we did not expect when we pulled over to scope the hawk were the great looks of the Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl that we observed immediately across the street from the hawk. But this owl made us work for it, flying often and making us look from tree to tree as it flew back-and-forth. However, eventually we all had some good looks at the owl before we got back in the bus. It wasn't more than 30 seconds before we stopped the bus again to look at a distance hawk that Armando spotted. Unfortunately, only Kat saw this Grey Hawk. But we did all get a good look at a Black Vulture, first one of the trip.

We got our first glimpse of the Pacific Ocean at 1:22 PM. Accompanying this view were four Scarlet Macaws and several Magnificent Frigatebirds, also first of the trip. While we were enjoying views of the Pacific Ocean, macaws, and frigatebirds, we also saw a Great Egret, a Great Blue Heron, and our first Snowy Egret of the trip. From here we made our way to the Jungle Crocodile Safari and boarded a small vessel for our afternoon excursion along the Tarcoles River.

Before we even embarked the boat, we all got good looks of a Common Black Hawk. Once on the boat and cruising the river, we saw numerous species of waterbirds including Bare-throated Tiger Herons, Green Herons, Little Blue Herons, and several Great, Snowy and Cattle Egrets. We also saw a few Striped-thick Knees, Black-necked Stilts and Northern Jacanas. Spotted Sandpipers and a Collared Plover also made the list along with several large American Crocodiles, two of which came right alongside our boat.

After about an hour and fifteen minutes of navigating the river and spotting incredible wildlife, we made our way towards the mouth of the river and the mighty Pacific Ocean. But this was not the end of our trip... We spent more time exploring the beautiful mangrove environment and seeing new species for the list, including the Mangrove Vireo, Roseate Spoonbill and many White Ibis. After an amazing journey on the river, we ended the boat trip the same way we started: with the Common Black Hawk.

From the safari, we were only about 15 minutes from our hotel, where we quickly checked in. We had a little time to relax before meeting for our first bird list of the trip and dinner to follow. Reviewing the day and filling in the bird list is always wonderful and a great way to fondly remember the experiences and locations of our shared bird and wildlife sightings.



Fri., March 20 Carara National Park | Monteverde

Pre-breakfast birdwatching ended with post-breakfast monkey watching! We had a White-throated Capuchin monkey within 10 feet of the lodge deck, investigating the feeders and being curious about the crowd that gathered to watch him. It would approach the feeders of sunflower seeds and banana slices, quickly scurry along the fence railing, grab a handful of some tasty morsels before quickly retreating to the safety of a large Spanish Cedar tree. Watching this incredible wildlife display pushed our departure time back a few minutes, but that is the beauty of having a flexible schedule.

Once on the road, we stopped briefly for a viewing of a roadside Crested Caracara. Although we saw one yesterday from the boat, today provided a closer and more intimate look.

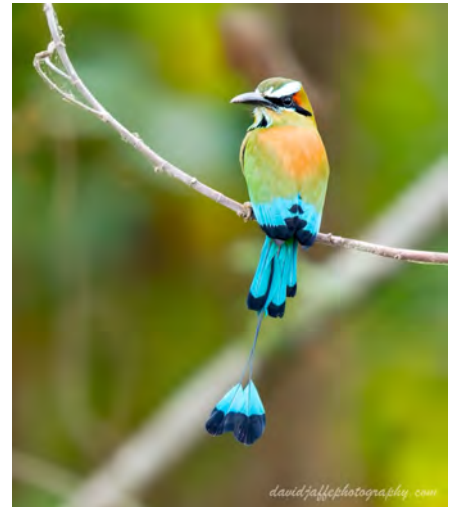
A short drive later found us at the entrance to Carara National Park where we would spend several hours. This national park is known to be one of the best intact examples of a transition forest — that which occurs between tropical dry and tropical humid forests. Therefore, we were privy to an entirely different suite of vegetation and species from what we saw in the mangroves the previous day.

A few specialties from the morning included the brilliant Orange-collared Manakin, three species of trogons (Baird's, Gartered and Northern Black-Throated) and the regionally endemic Black-hooded Antshrike.

Even though by 10:30 AM, the heat of the day started to slow the bird activity, we were still able to eke out a few species, including the Pale-billed Woodpecker, the White-browed Gnatcatcher, and a fleeting view of a Scarlet-rumped Tanager. We made our way back to the bus by about 11:30 AM. Of the 24 species we saw this morning, 16 of them were new for the trip. Not a bad way to start the day!

Before leaving the entrance area, we made a quick stop to look at a daytime roosting Lesser Nighthawk. On our way to our lunch spot, we made one more stop in search of the Black-throated Trogon and the American Pygmy Kingfisher. No luck. However, lunch was more of a sure thing! So, onward to lunch.

Back in the bus after lunch, we began our journey from the transitional forest of Carara National Park to the cloud forest of Monteverde. This was a climb of about 5500 feet from sea level. Again, we found ourselves in another completely different habitat which would provide the opportunity for us to see whole different suite of species than we had seen up to this point on the trip.



Sat., March 21 Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve | Curi-Cancha Reserve

After breakfast and in the bus by about 7:15 AM, we were on our way to the Monteverde Reserve. This reserve is renowned as a wildlife hotspot and a global conservation model because it integrates community-led action, scientific research, and sustainable ecotourism to protect high-biodiversity cloud forests. Founded in 1972, it pioneered private conservation, fostering a "green economy" where tourism funds environmental education and habitat protection.

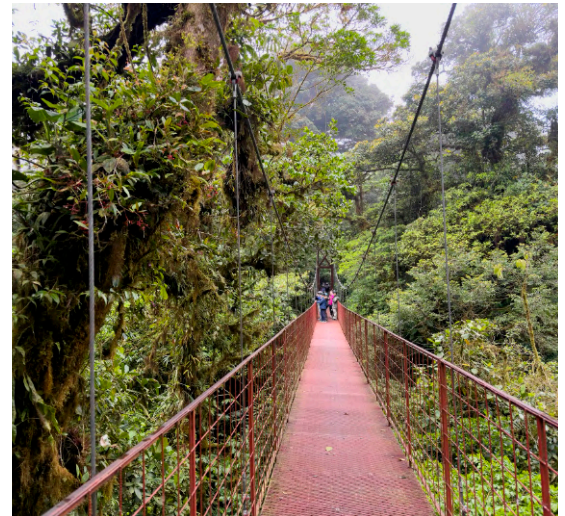
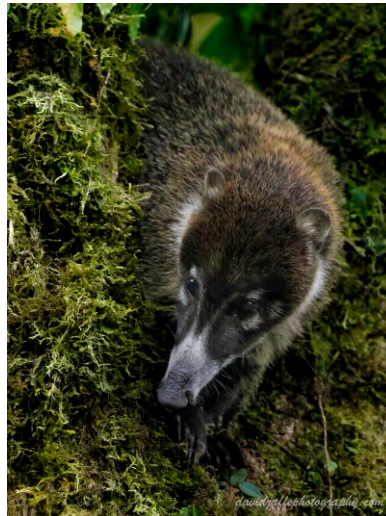
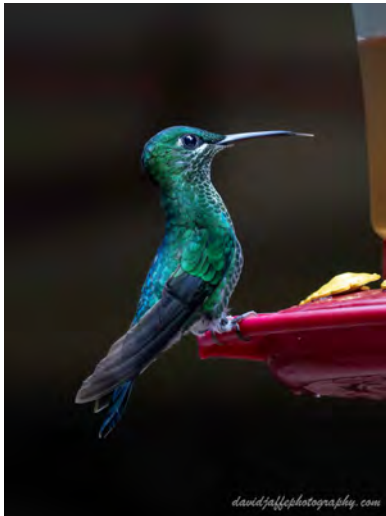
From our hotel, it was a very short drive up the hill into the cloud forest and the entrance to the reserve. The excitement to visit this place was palpable as many participants on the trip had heard about this location for decades, and this was their first time here!

Shortly after our arrival, we made our way to the hummingbird feeder stations and immediately observed four new species for the trip: Violet Sabrewing, Green-crowned Brilliant, Lesser Violetear and Purple-throated Mountain Gem. Following this initial look at these Monteverde treasures, we made our way into the forest and began searching for our target species of the day: the Resplendent Quetzal and the Three-wattled Bellbird. Of course, we would see numerous other species in the process.

After a little safety briefing from Armando, we began trekking along the Heart of the Forest Trail. Our first stop was about one minute up the trail to view our first bird of the day which was also our first test of birding this dense environment. Several folks were able to observe the Yellowish Flycatcher. Slowly, slowly, we moved through the forest, seeing different species throughout the course of the morning in search of our most sought after species. When we finally saw the quetzal, it was fleeing from treetop to treetop in the canopy so not everybody saw it perched although most of us saw it in flight.

After about 3 1/2 hours of exploration of this incredible mid-elevation cloud forest, we made our way back towards the start of the trail. We were wished farewell by a beautiful Side-striped Pit Viper and small troop of White-throated Capuchin monkeys.

Following this exquisite morning, we made our way to the restaurant at the entrance of the Monteverde Reserve. We made ourselves comfortable and settled in for a tasty lunch before moving on to our next adventure of the day.



After lunch, we returned to the hummingbird feeders to view these flying jewels and picked up one more species for the day: the Magenta-throated Woodstar. Then we were off. Our next stop would be Curi Cancha. Another private reserve just five minutes away from Monteverde.

After we checked in, it wasn't long before we were back into another cloud forest searching for wildlife. This forest 'felt' a little less dense than Monteverde and equally beautiful. Before we even made our way on the main trail, our first bird was a Coppery-headed Emerald feeding on nectar from various flowers and in the process, inadvertently, serving as a pollinator.

As we traveled the trails of the reserve, we came across a few new species for the trip including the Northern Banded Woodcreeper, the Mountain Elaenia and one of our target species for the day the Three-wattled Bellbird. Finding the Bellbird occurred towards the end of our walk, so shortly after viewing this incredible species, we made our way back to the bus. Following a break at the hotel, we reconvened for our evening bird list before heading 'out on the town' for a delicious meal: A wonderful way to end an engaging day exploring the diversity of Costa Rica.

Sun., March 22 Santa Elena Cloud Forest Reserve

After another nourishing breakfast at the Trapp Family Lodge, we made our way to Santa Elena Reserve, about a half hour drive away. We signed in at reception and were once again on our way through this amazing cloud forest that clings to the higher elevations of Costa Rica, where there is constant moisture and more opportunities to see some beautiful birds. We received some news about a nesting quetzal. So, we made a straight shot to the nest in hopes of seeing this bird, likely our last opportunity to see this key species.

About halfway through our 20-minute walk to the nest, we summited the high point on the trail of 5,629 feet before dropping down a couple hundred feet to the nest site. Once we arrived at the site of the nest, we staked out our spot and patiently waited as several groups came and went. In the meantime, we did see a few other species like the Lineated Foliage-gleaner, the Collared Redstart and some good looks of the Ochraceous Wren.

After a valiant effort, waiting for our target species of the day, we made the decision to move to one more location where we knew of a nesting quetzal. About 20 minutes later, we got to a point in the trail where Armando told us to wait so he could go down and scout for the quetzal. But he came back without the news for which we were hoping.



So, on we walked. We made our way back to the entrance and on to our lunch spot for some much-deserved nourishment. Lunch today would be at a family-owned restaurant that served typical Costa Rican food. In fact, it was 'so typical' that each dish was named for one of the provinces that occur in the country: San José, Alajuela, Cartago, Heredia, Guanacaste, Puntarenas, and Limón. The owners of the restaurant were very kind and the food was delicious.

Following this experience, we made our way to our final destination of the afternoon: The Children's Eternal Cloud Forest. The Children's Eternal Cloud Forest is special because it is Costa Rica's largest private reserve and was founded in the late 1980s through fundraising by school children in Sweden and 44 other countries. It protects unparalleled biodiversity, including 3% of the world's butterflies and 5% of its bird species.

Using a large map on the wall, Armando gave us a really good introduction to the protected areas around the continental divide. It was helpful to see how the different protected areas aligned and abutted. The first bird we all got a really good look at was the Northern Emerald Toucanet, a beautiful emerald green bird with a multi-colored bill. This was immediately followed by hearing a Long-tailed Manakin calling. We tried to call it in, without luck. We then searched for the Three-wattled Bellbird, which from the call we heard sounded like it was "right there" but, alas, we were not able to find that one either. We explored the forest for a little bit longer and then made our way back to the reception where we had some really great looks of a White-nosed Coatiundi.

Back to the hotel for a quick break before the bird list and then one more scrumptious dinner.

Mon., March 23 Celeste Mountain Lodge | Tenorio & Miravalles National Park

After we loaded the luggage in the bus, we all gathered by the side of the hotel for some impromptu birding. We got some really good looks of the White-naped Brushfinch and the White-eared Ground-Sparrow. Shortly after this short session, we began our journey to the north—Tenorio Volcano National Park!

As we climbed out of Monteverde, into a less developed area of the forest, we saw two Montezuma Oropendolas flying away from the bus. Their bright yellow tails were quite visible as they flew west, catching the early morning light shining upon them from the east.



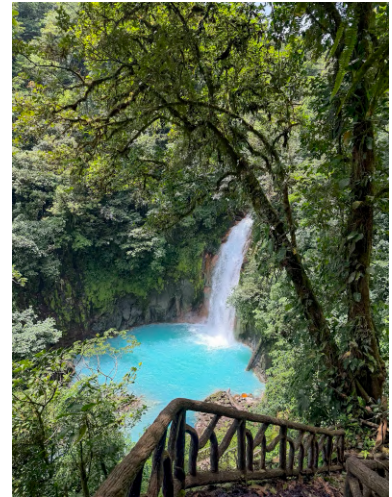
About 40 minutes into the trip, we turned down a narrow, winding dirt road leading us through a relatively undeveloped patch of forest. Our goal was one last attempt for the Resplendent Quetzal before we left its range. However, what got us out of the vehicle and walking the road was an exquisite view of Arenal Volcano and Lake Arenal. Seeing this mountain from base to summit is a very special experience being that often times it is obscured by thick cloud cover. And if that wasn't enough, we all had great looks at a Black Hawk-Eagle soaring over us, followed by a Swallow-tailed Kite. So just one minute off of the bus, this little excursion was already proving to be very productive!

This was nice, casual birding right along a quiet relatively untraveled road with edges and open space to look into the distance. It was so nice and so comfortable that we spent about two hours birdwatching on this section of undeveloped road. Although we only saw about 13 species, seven of them were new for the trip, including the Prong-billed Barbet, Red-legged Honeycreeper, Spotted Barbtail and, of course, our first bird of the excursion, and perhaps a highlight for all, was the Black Hawk-Eagle we saw as soon as we disembarked the bus.

While on our bus ride to the hotel, Armando gave us a chat about Costa Rican culture and taught us some of the friendly slang that we could use while we visit the country. Immediately upon arrival at our hotel, we unloaded the bus and went right in to the dining room. Not only were we in store for a really good lunch, but we had an amazing view over the beautiful gardens to a thick lush rainforest canopy. In addition, the feeder hosted a Scarlet-rumped Tanager and Yellow-throated Euphonia. Beautiful!!

After a little break, we all met back up in the dining room for a late afternoon walk. We explored the garden and the local grounds for about an hour and half. Among some of the new species we saw were the Golden-hooded Tanager, Black-cheeked Woodpecker, Yellow-throated Toucan and the Masked Tityra.

At 4:30 PM, some folks decided to stay and bird on the garden grounds while the rest of the group decided to go and stake out for the White-tipped Sicklebill by some brilliant Heliconia flowers. While we were waiting, we got a good look at the Cinnamon Becard, also new for the trip. After a few more minutes of looking for the hummingbird, we decided to call it a day. We reconvened at 6:30 PM to do our bird list before dinner after another wonderful day in Costa Rica!



Tues., March 24 Tenorio National Park | Celeste Mountain Lodge

The morning started before breakfast with some great birding right from the lodge. We got some really good looks of the Collared Aracari, Buff-throated Saltator, the Brown Violetear and the Green Honeycreeper. We birded right up until breakfast ... but since the tables were literally less than 10 feet from the wall-of-windows we birded through breakfast as well.

After a tasty breakfast, we made our way to Tenorio Volcano National Park, one of eight active volcanos in the country. The hike started a little slow so far as birds were concerned. However, Armando shared a lot of great information with us, including that the reason why termites nest above ground in Costa Rica and not underground like in other countries of the world. This is because of the constant temperature that occurs here throughout the year. Therefore, there is not much need to stay insulated from the heat or the cold when temperatures fluctuate at higher latitudes. We also stopped and talked about the structure of tree ferns. We spent quite a bit of time trying to figure out what insect we were looking at that we later discovered was called a Transvestite Rove Beetle. No one in the group has ever seen *anything* like this! WILD!!! The first bird of the walk we all got good looks at was the Swainson's Thrush, new for the day, new for the trip.

After about two hours of hiking through this beautiful tropical rainforest coating the slopes of an active volcano, we made it to our turnaround point of the Celeste Waterfall. This waterfall cascades over 100-foot cliff into a turquoise pool, so exquisite! On the rebound we all got some good looks at a non-venomous Green Vine Snake. As the name suggests, this snake attempts to camouflage as a vine to protect itself from predators such as birds, and therefore, it was difficult for some of us to get eyes on at first ... but persevere we did, and we all got to see this elegant creature. Just a few minutes down the trail we spotted a venomous snake: one of the five species of Costa Rican Coral Snakes. This snake was no thicker than a pencil, maybe a foot and a half long and full of beauty! This sighting was followed by a nice look at a White-throated Capuchin monkey searching for food just a few feet above us in the canopy.

In addition to all the incredible things we saw on the trail this morning, I think one of the highlights for all of us was seeing how Armando reacted when he encountered another guide on the trail. It turns out this was a friend of his that he has known since second grade, but hasn't seen him since high school! Very cool!!

After all of our encounters this morning, we made our way back to the lodge for another delicious lunch and short siesta before an afternoon excursion. First, some of us started in the garden and got some great looks at the Violet-headed Hummingbird and the Common Squirrel Cuckoo, a new one for the trip.



At about 3:30 PM, we gathered up the other half of the group to explore some more open areas the road would provide.

From the garden, we walked down to the main road in search of some Keel-billed Toucans that were calling. They were easily spotted and with their rainbow-colored bills and brilliant yellow chests, they gave us quite the show for several minutes. From here, we continued walking down the road before the bus picked us up and took us to our next stop. This next stop was exceptional! It started with another good look at the Purple-crowned Fairy. This was followed quickly with a sighting of the Broad-billed Motmot, two Slaty-tailed Trogons and a Black-throated Trogon. At one point, one of the Slaty-tailed Trogons flew out from its perch and gleaned one of the largest caterpillars many of us have ever seen. We felt bad for the insect, but such is the way in the natural world!!

After sufficient views of these amazing birds, we loaded the bus again and traveled towards the national park. We stopped at the Rio Celeste to view the beautiful slaty-blue water as it flowed down from the volcano, over the waterfall we visited earlier today and under the bridge upon which we were standing. This would be our furthest point for our afternoon excursion. As we made our way back towards the lodge, the afternoon light lit up the clouds, and we could tell that evening was approaching.

Before dinner, we had a wander around the garden in search of the Red-eyed Tree Frog ... you know the one ... that “famous green frog” with huge beautiful red eyes and large red toes!

While searching we encountered a couple of Masked Tree Frogs and a venomous Eyelash Viper, but then we saw several Red-eyed Tree Frogs. Amazing creatures. And just before we wrapped up for the evening and headed in for another wonderful meal, we spotted a roosting Wood Thrush.

Wed., March 25 Caño Negro National Wildlife Refuge | Optional Night Tour

It’s a good morning when you start with a White-tipped Sicklebill, a couple Yellow-throated Toucans and a Crimson-collared Tanager!! Add that to about 30 other tropical species of color and grandeur and you’ve got the makings for a wonderful day...and that was all before breakfast!!

After breakfast, we all had a little bit of free time to enjoy these incredible gardens, do some personal birdwatching, and just enjoy some time on our own. Shortly after 9 AM, we came together to load up and get back on the road. We stopped at a few places on our way to Caño Negro with our first stop turning up a couple King Vultures and some really good close looks of the Grey-breasted Martin and Blue-and-white Swallows. We



stopped at the Rio Celeste bridge again to search for the Torrent Flycatcher, without success. But we were all quite happy to look at the beautiful scene again.

A couple hours later, we found ourselves at a roadside spot where we were able to eat our delicious packed lunch from Celeste Mountain Lodge. The meal was packed in banana leaves and no plastic was used...quite refreshing! We pick up some beverages from the store as well as some ice cream to top off the meal!

On our way to Caño Negro, we stopped a few times to do some birdwatching along the road. We could definitely tell we were on the hotter, more humid side of the country – the Caribbean side. At one of these stops, we saw the Purple Gallinule right out in the open, the Green-breasted Mango, an Orchard Oriole, several Bronzed Cowbirds with their beautiful red eyes, and a distant Jabiru riding the thermals ... a couple of productive stops with our final stop being to view several Spider Monkeys, one with a very cute baby and a female White-collared Manakin as a bonus!!

Thurs., March 26 Caño Negro National Wildlife Refuge | Lago Caño Negro

Today started with coffee for some at 5:30 AM, and all of us on the bus before 6:00 AM for our boat excursion into Caño Negro wetlands. The early morning start is to get out and explore before the heat of the day slows down the animals that we are seeking. But before we even got on the bus we all watched dozens of Spider Monkeys jump and leap and clamber through the trees right on the property. A great foreshadowing for the day to come!

Immediately off the bus, we saw two Anhingas and one of our key species for the day: the American Pygmy Kingfisher! We saw 15 species before we even got on the boat for our exploration of the Rio Frio!

We explored the river for about three hours and saw over 60 species of birds, of which 21 were new for the trip. People got very excited about the Boat-billed heron, numerous Black-headed Trogons, three species of kingfisher, including the Amazon, American Pygmy, and Ringed. We also got a really good close look at the Jabiru as it flew right over our boat! We all oohed and aaaahed over that one!!



Our turnaround point was at a shallow destination where hundreds of water birds congregated: Great Egrets, Snowy Egrets, Bare-throated Tiger Herons, Green Herons, White Ibis, one Glossy Ibis, and a few Blue-winged Teals, to name just a few of those present. After this stop, we made our way back to the dock and were back on land by about 9 AM. As we climbed up the boat ramp to the trail back to the bus, we saw about 15 Long-nosed bats roosting on the underside of a large branch. Since they were only about 20 feet from us, we got some wonderful looks at them through our binoculars and with our long lenses on our cameras.

And this was all before breakfast! Following breakfast, we had a long siesta until lunch. We reconnected after lunch before our afternoon excursion for an appreciation circle that David facilitated. We all gathered in a circle. One individual would retrieve a small gift from the central table and offer it to another participant while sharing something nice about that person: something they learned, enjoyed or simply appreciated about being in the presence of that individual. Then the 'receiver' would continue the process by picking up a different small gift from the circle and offering it to another. This was a very sweet way to share ideas and feelings between members of the group and a wonderful way to transition from our siesta to the afternoon excursion, which would be another journey through the Caño Negro wetlands.

After the appreciation circle, we returned to the dock for our afternoon excursion: round two on the Rio Frio. At first, we made our way upstream, the opposite direction of the morning. In addition to several repeat species, we observed in the morning, as well as Spectacled Caimans, we got our first look at a group of Least Sandpipers.

Of the 36 species that we saw this afternoon, 14 were new from the morning excursion of which two were new for the trip: the Least Sandpipers and the Black-Crowned Tityra. We also got our eyes on one Howler Monkey. Up until this point, we've heard them more than we saw them, so it was nice to get eyes on this monkey again.

After dinner, Kitty, Kat and Susan joined Armando and I for a night walk in search of owls, potoos and any other creatures we might be lucky enough to see in the Caribbean lowlands.

We walked around the streets near the hotel for several minutes without any luck. Then as the entire group almost walked right past one of our key species, Kay said "Look!" and pointed to a Great Potoo. It was sitting on a post that was no more than 10 feet from us. What an amazing treat!

Before the night was over and we returned to the hotel, we heard the Common Pauraque, Common Potoo, observed a colony of leaf cutter ants crossing the road and a Giant Toad (aka Sugar Cane Toad) absorbing the heat that was radiating off the tar that it had absorbed through the hot part of the day.

Fri., March 27 Return from Caño Negro | Bougainvillea Hotel

Pre-breakfast birdwatching turned up a few new species for us this morning, including the Pied Puffbird, Gray-capped Flycatcher, and the Northern Beardless Tyrannulet. We heard the White-collared Manakin and the Northern Bentbill, among many other birds this morning, but didn't see them. However, we what did see were some Spider Monkeys, one of which was as close as the closest canopy, only about 40 feet away. From this close proximity, we observed this individual leap across the canopy in bounds of 10 feet or more, seemingly with no fear!



After this, in the nearby verbena flowers, we got some excellent views of the Rufous-tailed Hummingbird moving from flower to flower. Before we returned to the hotel, we put the scope on a Spider Monkey that was hanging in a very creative manner while eating the fruits of the Zapote Tree. Very fun!

Following a very satisfying breakfast, we loaded up the bus and began our journey back to San Jose a little after 8:00 AM. Of course, we wouldn't drive directly to the city. There would be multiple stops.

Our first stop was to view White-crowned Parrot. But in the process of viewing this parrot through the scope, we observed numerous other species, including a Laughing Falcon that Mona spotted way off in the distance. While we were looking at this falcon, a Bat Falcon flew across our view that we were able to get good looks at once it perched. Some of us also got good looks at the Gray-crowned Yellowthroat, a new warbler for the trip. A very productive stop!

About an hour later, we stopped for lunch at the same spot we stopped previously with views of numerous iguanas and the lovely forest immediately out the open-air windows, complete a lovely river to look at from the main building. We had a bit of lunch, followed by some tasty ice cream and then we were back on the road to San Jose by a little after 1 PM.

We made a stop to look at and photograph La Paz waterfall, a beautiful and powerful roadside waterfall. While many of us were exploring and photographing this incredible spectacle, Susan, Kay and Armando saw the Green-fronted Lancebill.

A few hours later, our arrival to Hotel Bougainvillea was welcoming and comforting. Shortly, after checking in, we all made our way to the restaurant for a final meal to rejoice about our trip, share stories, and talk about the next adventure to come!

Photos: Group shot in front of Volcán Arenal (David Jaffe - DJ), Painted wagon and wheels (DJ), Scarlet Macaw (DJ), American Crocodile (DJ), Northern Jacana (DJ), American Crocodile (DJ), Green Kingfisher (DJ), Turquoise Browed Motmot (DJ), Group (DJ), Green-crowned Brilliant (DJ), White-nosed Coatimundi (DJ), Suspension Bridge (DJ), Side-striped Palm Pit Viper (DJ), New

Friends (Kitty Peer - KP), Forest Canopy (DJ), Scarlet-rumped Tanager (Kay Palmer - KP), Stairs down to Celeste Waterfall (DJ), Collared Aracari (KP), Red-eyed Treefrog (KP), Black-headed Trogon (DJ), Boat-billed Heron (DJ), Great Potoo (DJ), Birding by Boat (KP), Wood Stork (DJ), Keel-billed Toucan (Susan Baskin)