



**- SPECIES LIST-**

**Christmas in Costa Rica**

**December 22-29, 2021**

*(Includes birding at Hotel Bougainvillea by early arrivals on Dec. 21-22)*

*-Compiled by Bob Meinke-*

**Naturalist Journeys Trip Leader:** Bob Meinke    **Resident Guide:** Johan Fernandez  
**Participants:** Kelly, Kathleen, John, Kathy, Karen, Nino, Sheila, Jeff, Dondi, Dana, and Cindy

**Summary:** With traveling still an uncertainty for many people, especially overseas travel, it was encouraging when this tour completely sold out (with a waiting list!). The vaccines required for Naturalist Journeys travel, the masking and Covid test requirements mandated by the airlines at the time, and the seriousness with which Costa Rica has addressed the pandemic made us feel comfortable and excited to be birding again, especially in such a beautiful destination.

We started our tour at the Hotel Bougainvillea, in a quiet suburb just outside San José. Several of the group arrived a day or two ahead to get settled and enjoy the lush landscaping that surrounds the lodge, which includes several acres of gardens and woodlands home to dozens of bird species, including mot-mots, wrens, warblers, parrots, flycatchers, owls, woodpeckers, hummingbirds, and many more. Arriving early at this upscale hotel is well worth considering, offering the opportunity to relax ahead of the tour, and sharpen your neotropical birding skills a bit before heading out on the road.

Even though this was a short tour (just six nights and seven days), we recorded a respectable 272 species of birds, 10 mammals, and 16 species of reptiles and amphibians. And we visited a wide array of habitats, including tropical lowlands, foothills and mid-montane valleys, and even subalpine zones just below timberline. The vistas were amazing, and the wildflowers really superb, especially in the mountains.

The birding was great, and we recorded 12 species of pigeons and doves, 12 parrots and parakeets, 6 trogon species (including the Resplendent Quetzal), 20 hummingbirds, 8 woodpeckers, 10 woodcreepers and related species, 6 antbirds, 10 wrens, 9 finches and euphonias, 24 tyrant flycatchers, 20 warblers, and 23 tanagers and their allies. On our list are many endemics, and a number of uncommon or difficult-to-see species, including Olive-backed Quail-Dove, Great Green Macaw, Bare-necked Umbrellabird, Sunbittern, White-tipped Sicklebill, Lattice-tailed Trogon, Buffy Tuftedcheek, Lineated Foliage-Gleaner, Timberline Wren, Nicaraguan Seed-Finch, Dark Pewee, Wrenthrush, Black-thighed Grosbeak, and Peg-billed Finch.

And birds weren't our only focus. Among the non-avian highlights were two species of sloth, Mantled Howler Monkeys, White-nosed Coati, the seldom-seen Cacomistle (a rare, range-restricted cousin of the Ring-tailed Cat), a bevy of brilliantly-colored frogs, the beautiful Emerald Basilisk, and a Talamancan Palm Viper, a rare, recently discovered, endemic snake (seen by just a couple of the group) that has only been known to science for six years! Pretty cool.

We had an excellent group on this trip, who were not only ready to venture out and actually travel again, but willing to do so during the holiday season. We shared some fantastic birding and comradery, made new

friends, experienced Christmas in Costa Rica, and enjoyed it all in a country that was clearly glad to have visitors again, ensuring we had a safe and memorable tour.

Finally, we owe much appreciation to our expert local birding guide Johan Fernandez, our amazing driver Drew (who never left us with white knuckles on those high mountain roads), and the hard-working local staff at our lodges, who had all labored through considerable adversity as the pandemic unfolded and tourism plummeted, and are now welcoming travelers again. Our trip was a success thanks to them!

**(HO)** = Heard only, and distinctly enough to be counted (but not seen)

**(GO)** = Seen or heard only by guide Johan Fernandez or Bob Meinke

**(I)** = Introduced species, not native to Costa Rica

**(RE)** = Regional endemic (not known outside Costa Rica and adjacent areas of bordering countries)

## **BIRDS (272 species recorded, of which 11 were *heard only*):**

### **TINAMOUS: Tinamidae (1)**

**Great Tinamou** *Tinamus major*—We had excellent views of a pair of birds (a species that's frequently heard, but seldom seen well!), just off the trail during our morning walk at the La Selva OTS Reserve.

### **DUCKS, GEESE AND SWANS: Anatidae (1)**

**Muscovy Duck** *Cairina moschata*—We had a single flyover of this species near the Frogs Heaven nature reserve in Heredia. Our only duck of the tour!

### **GUANS AND CURASSOWS: Cracidae (2)**

**Gray-headed Chachalaca** *Ortalis cinereiceps*—Seen several times, mainly at the Sarapiquí Lodge, but also in the little town of Los Gallitos (from the deck of the BBQ café where we had our impromptu lunch).

**Black Guan** *Chamaepetes unicolor* **(RE)**—A beautiful endemic, we had great views (our first day on the road) from the observation platform at the Paraiso Quetzal Lodge. We also saw the species the next day in the Savegre Valley at our hotel, as well as at the farm in San Gerardo de Dota where we watched the quetzals.



### **NEW WORLD QUAIL: Odontophoridae (1)**

**Spotted Wood-Quail** *Odontophorus guttatus* **(HO)**—A wary species, heard only by some of the group, on forest trails near the Savegre Hotel.

### **PIGEONS AND DOVES: Columbidae (12)**

**Rock Pigeon** *Columba livia* **(I)**—We had several sightings of this common, introduced species, in San José and in a couple of smaller towns.

**Pale-vented Pigeon** *Patagioenas cayennensis*—The species was heard briefly during the Rio Sarapiquí boat tour, and seen by some in a flyover at the Sarapiquí Lodge.

**Red-billed Pigeon** *Patagioenas flavirostris*—Fairly common during the tour, frequently seen flying overhead at the Hotel Bougainvillea, and also in the Savegre Valley.

**Band-tailed Pigeon** *Patagioenas fasciata*—A familiar species in parts of the U.S., some of us spotted this enormous pigeon silhouetted among the treetops at the Savegre Hotel.

**Ruddy Pigeon** *Patagioenas subvinacea*—Also spotted in the Savegre Valley, just once, as we walked the upper trails in the primary forest high above our lodgings.

**Short-billed Pigeon** *Patagioenas nigrirostris*—Our fifth species of large pigeon, we picked up a few birds in the trees at the La Selva OTS Reserve, as well as during our stop at Rainforest Adventures in Braulio Carrillo.

**Inca Dove** *Columbina inca*—A familiar species to those in the group who have birded in Arizona, we had several Inca Doves on the grounds of the Hotel Bougainvillea.

**Ruddy Ground Dove** *Columbina talpacoti*—Often a common species during Central American tours, we only saw Ruddy Ground Doves in the Sarapiqui area, near the lodge and along agricultural fields.

**Blue Ground Dove** *Claravis pretiosa* **(HO) (GO)**—The species steady coo was heard at a distance the last morning of the tour, near Rainforest Adventures.

**Olive-backed Quail-Dove** *Leptotrygon veraguensis*—An unexpected and welcome sighting by Kelly and Sheila, who were walking back at dusk for dinner at Rainforest Adventures, when one of the local guides graciously beckoned them into the forest to see this rarity at a roost. A great addition to the list!

**White-tipped Dove** *Leptotila verreauxi*—A common resident species at Hotel Bougainvillea, often scurrying on the ground under the landscaping or on the lawns.

**White-winged Dove** *Zenaida asiatica*—Also seen (and heard) only at Hotel Bougainvillea on the tour, it was common in the mid- to upper-canopy.

### **CUCKOOS AND ALLIES: Cuculidae (1)**

**Squirrel Cuckoo** *Piaya cayana*—Seen infrequently on our trip, though good views were had at Hotel Bougainvillea as well as the La Selva OTS Reserve.

### **NIGHTJARS: Caprimulgidae (2)**

**Common Pauraque** *Nyctidromus albicollis* **(GO)**—Heard just before dawn from the field behind the back wall at the Hotel Bougainvillea.

**Dusky Nightjar** *Antrostomus saturatus* **(RE) (HO)**—Johan had the group primed and ready on the upper slopes of the Savegre Valley on Christmas night, listening and spotlighting for nocturnal species. Calling Dusky Nightjars were definitely there, but none would show themselves!

### **SWIFTS: Apodidae (3)**

**White-collared Swift** *Streptoprocne zonaris*—This is a common swift, and a comparatively easy one to identify with its broad, white collar. We recorded the species several times, first at Hotel Bougainvillea, and later in the Savegre Valley and the Sarapiqui area.

**Vaux's Swift** *Chaetura vauxi*—A common species in the western U.S., we saw small flocks overhead at Hotel Bougainvillea as well as in the Sarapiqui area.

**Gray-rumped Swift** *Chaetura cinereiventris*—A bird nesting on the side of a tree was pointed out by Johan, during our walk along the trails at La Selva with the research station guides. Great views!

### **HUMMINGBIRDS: Trochilidae (20)**

**White-tipped Sicklebill** *Eutoxeres aquila*—Spotted by Bob and a couple others our last morning at the Rainforest Adventures site, visiting *Heliconia* flowers. The bizarre bill morphology of this uncommon species (and one close relative) is unique among hummingbirds.

**Bronzy Hermit** *Glaucis aeneus*—A mid-sized hummer, it was only seen by a few of the group during their last morning walk with Johan at Rainforest Adventures.

**Green Hermit** *Phaethornis guy*—This is a curious species, its mostly green plumage unlike most other hermits—we spotted it at the enormous feeder array at Galeria de Colibri in Mirador San Fernando, where we stopped for lunch (but then regrettably left before ordering, due to the large holiday crowd).

**Long-billed Hermit** *Phaethornis longirostris*—One of the largest hermits, with an impressive tail, we spotted this species at La Selva around the research station compound.

**Lesser Violetear** *Colibri cyanotus*—A striking and common hummingbird, this was one of the dominant species at the Paraiso Quetzal Lodge feeders, where we had lunch our first day. It was also widespread throughout the Savegre Valley, seen at our lodge there as well as the Batsu Gardens site.

**Green-breasted Mango** *Anthracothorax prevostii*—Spotted a few times at Hotel Bougainvillea during our pre-tour day, most birds were females, with their distinctive, jagged breast stripe.

**Green-crowned Brilliant** *Heliodoxa jacula*—Another of the hummers we only saw at Galeria de Colibri in Mirador San Fernando (the site of our aborted lunch stop on Day 5).

**Talamanca Hummingbird** *Eugenes spectabilis* **(RE)**—Nearly as common as Lesser Violetear, and seen mostly at the same locations. A beautiful, colorful endemic, and closely related to Rivoli's Hummingbird, which occurs in Arizona. It was very aggressive at the feeders.

**Fiery-throated Hummingbird** *Panterpe insignis* (RE)—Co-occurring with Lesser Violetear and Talamanca Hummingbirds, though not quite as common, this tiny species had astounding colors when seen in just the right light!

**White-throated Mountain-gem** *Lampornis castaneiventris* (RE)—This was the fourth common species seen at the Paraiso Quetzal Lodge feeders, although it was the least aggressive and easily spooked.

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird** *Archilochus colubris*—A winter migrant, and a well-known breeding species from North America. Seen only briefly, at Hotel Bougainvillea by those arriving early.

**Volcano Hummingbird** *Selasphorus flammula* (RE)—Initially found at the Paraiso Quetzal Lodge, but not as common as several other species there. It was easier to spot in the Savegre Valley.

**Scintillant Hummingbird** *Selasphorus scintilla* (RE)—Closely related to the preceding species, and seen at the same locations. Scintillant and Volcano Hummingbirds are in a species complex with Rufous and Allen's Hummingbirds of the U.S., and they share a similar plumage pattern.

**Violet-headed Hummingbird** *Klais guimeti*—A tiny species, seen visiting flowers on our only afternoon at Rainforest Adventures, not long after our arrival.

**Violet Sabrewing** *Campylopterus hemileucurus*—The largest hummer in Central America, and a stunning violet-purple—it was seen by the group at very close range at the Galeria de Colibri feeders.

**Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer** *Chalybura urochrysis*—Found along the trail by the early risers in our group, on our last morning (at Rainforest Adventures) before we headed to the airport for our flights home.

**Crowned Woodnymph** *Thalurania colombica*—Also seen at Rainforest Adventures visiting flowers, shortly after we arrived and before our canopy ride.

**Stripe-tailed Hummingbird** *Eupherusa eximia*—A distinctive, well-named hummingbird, seen during our stay in the Savegre Valley as we walked the lower road.

**Scaly-breasted Hummingbird** *Phaeochroa cuvierii*—We had great looks at this species on a nest at Frogs Heaven, perfectly tucked under a large, overhanging leaf. Very cool.

**Rufous-tailed Hummingbird** *Amazilia tzacatl*—A reasonably common species, it was seen several times during the tour, at Hotel Bougainvillea, in Mirador, and at Frogs Heaven. Overall, probably the most frequently recorded hummingbird species in Central America.



### **RAILS, COOTS AND ALLIES: Rallidae (2)**

**Russet-naped Wood-Rail** *Aramides albiventris*—Seen just once (a nice observation by Kelly!), from the covered deck at the BBQ café in the town of Los Gallitos, as we awaited our platters of smoked meat. The bird was walking around a wet, grassy pasture about 100 meters away.

**White-throated Crake** *Laterallus albigularis* (HO)—Abrupt churr notes (confirmed by Johan) were heard, coming from wet research station vegetation bordering the coffee plantation along the Comandancia de Sarapiquí Road.

### **LAPWINGS AND PLOVERS: Charadriidae (1)**

**Southern Lapwing** *Vanellus chilensis*—Spotted around wetlands in the Sarapiquí area, near a pond at the lodge, and also in a wet field (seen from the van) at El Tigre.

### **JACANAS: Jacanidae (1)**

**Northern Jacana** *Jacana spinosa*—Observed with the lapwing (above) in a marshy, open field, the same day we stopped in at Frogs Heaven—the eBird hotspot is “El Tigre (Sarapiquí).”

### **SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES: Scolopacidae (1)**

**Spotted Sandpiper** *Actitis macularius*—This familiar shorebird was common along the Rio Sarapiquí the day we birded there by boat. Seldom much of a flocking species in the U.S., it was interesting to see Spotted Sandpipers here in tight groups of a dozen or more, perched on woody debris in the river.

### **SUNBITTERN: Eurypygidae (1)**

**Sunbittern** *Eurypyga helias*—As we waited to check into our rooms at Rainforest Adventures, on our only afternoon there, Johan got word (*as local guides do*) that a Sunbittern had just been seen “somewhere” along a nearby creek that ran through the forest. Following his instincts, we quickly arrived at a likely spot, and soon after the bird crept out from behind some boulders. Definitely a highlight for the trip!



### **CORMORANTS: Phalacrocoracidae (1)**

#### **Neotropic Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax*

*brasilianus*—We had good looks at this species along the Rio Sarapiquí during our boat tour. Common and widespread in Costa Rica, but mostly nearer to the coast, this was our only sighting.

### **HERONS AND EGRETS: Ardeidae (6)**

**Bare-throated Tiger-Heron** *Tigrisoma mexicanum*—An unexpected find (at least in the location we were at), the species was seen right next to our van in a wet ditch by the highway, at the same spot (“El Tigre”) as the lapwing and jacana (above). Most of the group managed clear views of this impressive wader.

**Great Blue Heron** *Ardea herodias*—A single bird was seen on the grounds of our lodge in Sarapiquí.

**Great Egret** *Ardea alba* (GO)—The most widespread heron in the world, a bird was observed in flight from the van as we approached the airport on our last day of the tour.

**Little Blue Heron** *Egretta caerulea*—We had several close views of this species along the Rio Sarapiquí during our boat tour, where it was common.

**Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*—One of the first birds we saw at Hotel Bougainvillea after our early arrival, with flocks flying overhead around dawn. It was also spotted later in the Sarapiquí area.

**Green Heron** *Butorides virescens*—Reasonably abundant along the Rio Sarapiquí during our river tour, where several individual birds were spotted from our boat.

### **IBIS AND SPOONBILLS: Theskiornithidae (1)**

**Green Ibis** *Mesembrinibis cayennensis*—We spotted a Green Ibis during our stop at Frogs Heaven, perched high in the canopy and obscured by the leaves, possibly scoping out a nest site. A couple more were then seen in an adjacent farm field.

### **NEW WORLD VULTURES: Cathartidae (3)**

**King Vulture** *Sarcoramphus papa*—We had great views of King Vultures soaring overhead during our visit to the La Selva OTS Reserve, their white plumage standing out against the clear, blue sky.

**Black Vulture** *Coragyps atratus*—Super common in Costa Rica, we saw this species every day of the trip, starting with Hotel Bougainvillea.

**Turkey Vulture** *Cathartes aura*—Also very common, there were TKs at all of our destinations, from the Central Valley near San José to the slopes of the Talamanca Range.

### **OSPREY: Pandionidae (1)**

**Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*—We spotted this very familiar raptor at Los Gallitos (during our BBQ lunch stop), as well as in the Savegre Valley, where a bird was patrolling the swift-flowing river near our hotel.

### **HAWKS, KITES AND EAGLES: Accipitridae (8)**

**White-tailed Kite** *Elanus leucurus* (GO)—Seen by Bob over nearby open fields on our last day, when we stopped for a gas fill-up on our drive towards the airport.

**Hook-billed Kite** *Chondrohierax uncinatus*—Spotted by Johan and others our first morning of the tour, when we birded ahead of breakfast at Hotel Bougainvillea, before departing for the mountains.

**Black Hawk-Eagle** *Spizaetus tyrannus* (HO)—Heard by Johan on our morning at the La Selva OTS Reserve.  
**Roadside Hawk** *Rupornis magnirostris* (GO)—Briefly spotted along the highway as we headed out from our stay at Rainforest Adventures, on our way to the airport for our flights home.

**Gray Hawk** *Buteo plagiatus*—Spotted at least twice in the Sarapiquí area, this elegant species was seen well by the group along the Comandancia de Sarapiquí Road, near the coffee plantation.

**Broad-winged Hawk** *Buteo platypterus*—Observed soaring on several days, this was the most common of the Buteos in Costa Rica. And we had an up-close-and-personal encounter with a young Broad-winged Hawk, perched nonchalantly on a railing at the Savegre Hotel, on Christmas Day.

**Short-tailed Hawk** *Buteo brachyurus*—Also fairly common, we had views of this species overhead at Hotel Bougainvillea and in the Savegre Valley.

**Red-tailed Hawk** *Buteo jamaicensis*—Red-tails are not very common in Costa Rica, although the species is reliably seen in the Savegre area at higher elevations. We spotted a couple birds (presumably overwintering migrants) above our hotel during our stay.

### **OWLS: Strigidae (4)**

**Tropical Screech-Owl** *Megascops choliba*—The species was initially heard by Kelly and Bob, on their first pre-tour evening at Hotel Bougainvillea—the entire group later had great views of a pair of birds on the hotel grounds, snuggled on their roost within a bamboo thicket.

**Bare-shanked Screech-Owl** *Magascops clarkii* (RE) (GO)—Difficult to find, this was a target for us in the mountains. It's included here on the basis of a later chat with Johan, about the various calls we heard the evening we ascended the Savegre Valley in search of night birds. We were at a known site for the species.

**Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl** *Glaucidium brasilianum*—Picked up in the gardens at Hotel Bougainvillea by Bob and possibly a couple of the other early arrivals, a day ahead of the main tour.

**Unspotted Saw-whet Owl** *Aegolius ridgwayi* (RE) (HO)—Another target bird for the tour, and another tough one. We tried hard to locate this species on Christmas night along the road leading out of the Savegre Valley, and eventually heard a few calls. It was ultimately a satisfactory result, despite not seeing the bird, since few reports for this species involve actual sightings.

### **TROGONS: Trogonidae (6)**

**Resplendent Quetzal** *Pharomachrus mocinno*—We typically look for this species at Paraiso Quetzal Lodge, our first day out on tour, on our way to the Savegre Valley. We usually see it there, but not always. Johan got word of another possibility (at a San Gerardo de Dota farm site near the Savegre Hotel), and we opted for that. It was a great decision—we had outstanding views of several birds, early on the morning of Christmas Eve—wow!

**Lattice-tailed Trogon** *Trogon clathratus* (RE)—Probably the prize-winner from our aerial tram ride above (and through) the canopy at Rainforest Adventures, this is the least reported of the Central American trogon species. Johan was happy to see it, and we had nice views of a perched bird with its distinctive pale iris.

**Slaty-tailed Trogon** *Trogon massena*—This species was seen just once on the tour, but well, during our walk at the La Selva OTS Reserve, where a bird posed cooperatively for photos!

**Gartered Trogon** *Trogon caligatus*—Observed by most of the group, perched at mid-canopy, during our walk through the forest at the Frog's Heaven preserve.

**Black-throated Trogon** *Trogon rufus*—Also seen in the forest at the La Selva OTS Reserve, during our morning hike there with the local guides.

**Collared Trogon** *Trogon collaris* (HO)—A widespread species, heard by some of the group with Johan, the day we were watching the quetzals at the Savegre Valley farm site.



### **MOTMOTS: Momotidae (2)**

**Lesson's Motmot** *Momotus lessonii*—Only seen during our morning walks at Hotel Bougainvillea, where most of the group had amazing views and photo ops of several birds. A brilliantly colored, quintessential tropical species.

**Broad-billed Motmot** *Electron platyrhynchum*—This species was seen well during our walk at La Selva, and near the Rio Sarapiqui, and we spotted a vocalizing bird from the canopy tram at Rainforest Adventures.

### **KINGFISHERS: Alcedinidae (3)**

**Ringed Kingfisher** *Megaceryle torquata*—The largest of the New World kingfishers, seen several times during our float trip along the Rio Sarapiqui, as well as at the La Selva OTS Reserve.

**Amazon Kingfisher** *Chloroceryle amazona*—The largest of the mostly green-plumaged kingfishers, this species was also seen buzzing along the Rio Sarapiqui.

**Green Kingfisher** *Chloroceryle americana*—Seen with the two species above, at the same general location.

### **JACAMARS: Galbulidae (1)**

**Rufous-tailed Jacamar** *Galbula ruficauda*—We had a nice look at this sit-and-wait insectivore at La Selva, and then had even better views of the species in the forest understory at Frogs Heaven.

### **NEW WORLD BARBETS: Capitonidae (1)**

**Red-headed Barbet** *Eubucco bourcierii*—Seen by a couple of us at the Savegre Hotel, and then the whole group had close views of several birds visiting the feeders at Galeria de Colibri in Mirador San Fernando. A striking species!

### **TOUCAN-BARBETS: Semnornithidae (1)**

**Prong-billed Barbet** *Semnornis frantzii* (RE)—A fascinating endemic, in a small family that includes the colorful Toucan-barbets of South America, we saw this unique, brownish-yellow species only at the Galeria de Colibri feeders.



### **TOUCANS: Ramphastidae (4)**

**Northern Emerald-Toucanet** *Aulacorhynchus prasinus*—Seen on a couple of days, we had our best views by far at the Batsu Garden feeders (which are maintained by the Savegre Hotel), where it was almost impossible not to get some great photos!

**Collared Aracari** *Pteroglossus torquatus*—Seen several times during the latter half of the tour, we found this small toucan in the trees at the La Selva OTS Reserve, along the Rio Sarapiqui, at Frogs Heaven, and in the forest around our chalets at Rainforest Adventures.

**Yellow-throated Toucan** *Ramphastos ambiguus*—A large toucan, with a massive yellow and blackish-brown bill, we spotted this species at the same four locations listed above for Collared Aracari.

**Keel-billed Toucan** *Ramphastos sulfuratus*—Easily distinguished from the preceding species by its multi-colored bill (with patches of green, blue, and red), we spotted this toucan (*the National Bird of Belize*) in the canopy at La Selva and later at Rainforest Adventures.

### **WOODPECKERS: Picidae (8)**

**Acorn Woodpecker** *Melanerpes formicivorus*—A common resident in the mountains, Costa Rican populations are in the endemic subspecies *striatipectus*. We saw Acorn Woodpeckers every day while in the Talamanca Range and around the Savegre area.

**Black-cheeked Woodpecker** *Melanerpes pucherani*—Another common woodpecker for the tour, seen primarily during the latter half of the tour around the Sarapiqui Lodge (a regular at their feeders), at Frogs Heaven, and at Rainforest Adventures.

**Hoffmann's Woodpecker** *Melanerpes hoffmannii* (RE)—This was the common woodpecker in the trees at Hotel Bougainvillea, where we saw it several times. We also found the species at the Frogs Heaven nature reserve, where it is considered rare.

**Hairy Woodpecker** *Dryobates villosus*—A common North American species that barely trickles into Central America, we found birds at Miriam’s coffee house on the road into the Savegre Valley. These were the subspecies *extimus*, a montane endemic known only from Costa Rica and adjacent Panama.

**Pale-billed Woodpecker** *Campephilus guatemalensis*—Seen just once on the tour, this very impressive woodpecker was spotted during our walk at the La Selva OTS Reserve.

**Lineated Woodpecker** *Dryocopus lineatus*—Superficially similar to the preceding species (though not that closely related), this large, crested woodpecker, widespread in much of Latin America, was spotted during our stay at Hotel Bougainvillea.

**Cinnamon Woodpecker** *Celeus loricatus*—After adding this species to our checklist for La Selva, based only on its call, the group then was surprised with excellent views of a bird the next day at Frogs Heaven, as it excavated a nest cavity just a few feet above us. Another great phot op!

**Rufous-winged Woodpecker** *Picus simplex* (RE)—We found a single bird working a tree while visiting Frogs Heaven, spotted by Jeff and Dondi from the trail as we explored the preserve with the local site manager. An underreported endemic, it was a nice find!



#### **FALCONS AND CARACARAS: Falconidae (4)**

**Collared Forest-Falcon** *Micrastur semitorquatus*—Heard clearly at the Sarapiquí Lodge, and later scoped (at a fair distance) from the Comandancia de Sarapiquí Road on our morning walk.

**Crested Caracara** *Caracara cheriway*—Another of the birds only spotted during our BBQ lunch stop in Los Gallitos. It was seen from the back porch area that overlooked a large pasture and pond.

**Yellow-headed Caracara** *Milvago chimachima*—A common raptor in the Central Valley, we saw flocks several times at the Hotel Bougainvillea, both perched and in flight.

**Laughing Falcon** *Herpetotheres cachinnans*—We had a brief look at this species in the Sarapiquí area, then had great, early morning views of a preening bird perched high on an exposed snag at Rainforest Adventures, during our last morning of the tour. John was ecstatic.

#### **PARROTS: Psittacidae (12)**

**Barred Parakeet** *Bolborhynchus lineola*—A common montane parakeet in Costa Rica, we watched several noisy flyovers during our stay in the Savegre area, and also saw a few perched birds in the scope.

**Orange-chinned Parakeet** *Brotogeris jugularis*—A common species of the lowlands, we had good views of birds in flight at La Selva, when we searched for macaws along the Comandancia de Sarapiquí Road.

**Brown-hooded Parrot** *Pyrilia haematotis*—Spotted the last day of the tour, by the group that walked early with Johan before we loaded up for the drive to the airport.

**White-crowned Parrot** *Pionus senilis*—This species was briefly observed around the Rainforest Adventures area, during both days of our stay.

**Red-lored Parrot** *Amazona autumnalis*—A large, commonly seen parrot throughout much of Central America, the species was spotted several times in the Sarapiquí area and at Rainforest Adventures, where flocks were seen flying overhead early and late in the day.

**Yellow-naped Parrot** *Amazona auropalliata*—Kelly spotted this bird at Hotel Bougainvillea on our pre-tour day, and eBird promptly flagged it as rare. Double-checking with Johan, he confirmed that this species, more typically seen on the Pacific Slope in Costa Rica is, in fact, beginning to move into the Central Valley.

**White-fronted Parrot** *Amazona albifrons*—This species was also only spotted at Hotel Bougainvillea during the tour, the morning we birded with Johan for the first time.

**Mealy Parrot** *Amazona farinosa*—Six of this large, gregarious species were spotted the last morning of the tour at Rainforest Adventures, by the group that birded early with Johan.

**Sulphur-winged Parakeet** *Pyrrhura hoffmanni* (RE)—This is a regional endemic from Costa Rica’s highlands, with bright yellow underwing coverts that readily identify it in flight. We saw several groups pass overhead during our stay at the Savegre Hotel.

**Great Green Macaw** *Ara ambiguus*—We hoped to see this stunning, critically endangered species near the Rio Sarapiquí, and were caught off-guard when our first sighting was of a single bird flying low and noisily over us in the car park at La Selva! We did eventually see birds near the river, their loud, echoing calls announcing their presence. An amazing spectacle when they fly by!

**Scarlet Macaw** *Ara macao*—Not to be outdone by the preceding species, Scarlet Macaws were seen in the Sarapiquí area, as well. We had nice scope views of birds in mostly bare trees, about 100 meters west of Comandancia de Sarapiquí Road.

**Crimson-fronted Parakeet** *Psittacara finschi*—Also seen at Comandancia de Sarapiquí Road, this species was particularly common in the Central Valley, drawing our attention whenever squawking flocks flew over us at Hotel Bougainvillea.

### **ANTBIRDS: Thamnophilidae (6)**

**Great Antshrike** *Taraba major* (HO)—This species was initially heard by Johan, and then others, during our morning walk along the Comandancia de Sarapiquí Road.

**Black-crowned Antshrike** *Thamnophilus atrinucha*—Spotted in the shaded understory at the La Selva OTS Reserve during our morning hike, the species was seen again later at Rainforest Adventures.

**Dot-winged Antwren** *Microrhophias quixensis*—Yet another antbird species (both male and female were spotted) seen in the understory at Rainforest Adventures, right along the main trail.

**Chestnut-backed Antbird** *Poliocrania exsul*—One of the special antbirds with bare, blue skin around the eyes, we saw the species at La Selva as well as Rainforest Adventures.

**Bicolored Antbird** *Gymnophithys bicolor*—Another last-minute addition to our trip list, found in the understory at Rainforest Adventures, this species also features the curious blue skin around the eyes—another skulking ground-dweller.

**Spotted Antbird** *Hylophylax naevioides*—Spotted Antbird was seen initially at La Selva, and then again the morning we left Rainforest Adventures. Considering the number of antbirds and their relatives we saw at Rainforest Adventures, and in a very short time, our group lamented that we didn't have more days here to explore. Next time!

### **TAPACULOS: Rhinocryptidae (1)**

**Silvery-fronted Tapaculo** *Scytalopus argentifrons* (RE) (HO)—Difficult to spot, tapaculos often make up for it by being loud. We found this species high in the Talamanca Range, while searching for Timberline Wren. Despite its noisy disposition, our only visual encounter was a momentary rustling in the brush.

### **OVENBIRDS AND WOODCREEPERS: Furnariidae (10)**

**Wedge-billed Woodcreeper** *Glyphorhynchus spirurus*—A tiny woodcreeper with a Xenops-like bill, we spotted this species hitching up a tree at Rainforest Adventures on our last morning of the tour.

**Cocoa Woodcreeper** *Xiphorhynchus susurrans*—This medium-sized species was seen well in the forest at Frogs Heaven, ascending trees in the area near the “frog tires.”

**Spot-crowned Woodcreeper** *Lepidocolaptes affinis*—A mid-montane species, we had several views of birds in the Savegre area, i.e., around the lodge grounds, on the trails above the lodge (the day we rode the jeeps), and when we walked the waterfall trail.

**Buffy Tuftedcheek** *Pseudocolaptes lawrencii*—A few of the group with Bob were in the right place at the right time, when a mixed flock of understory species moved in along a trail we were walking above the Savegre Hotel complex. One of our highlights was this uncommon species, when it came in close to forage on mossy trunks, almost oblivious to our presence.

**Lineated Foliage-Gleaner** *Syndactyla subalaris* (HO)—This species was identified by Johan not long after we spotted the Tuftedcheek, though it was heard only. Mostly a South American species, it occurs here at the northern edge of its range.

**Streak-breasted Treehunter** *Thripadectes rufobrunneus* (RE)—Seen near the same group of birds that included the preceding two species, this scarce regional endemic was a special find.

**Buff-throated Foliage-gleaner** *Automolus ochrolaemus*—Located on the last day of the tour, before we departed for the airport, this was another interesting, hard-to-observe species found in the bird-rich understory at Rainforest Adventures.

**Ruddy Treerunner** *Margarornis rubiginosus* (RE)—Although related to the four preceding species, Ruddy Treerunner doesn't quite share the skulking habits of those species, and is generally easier to observe. We saw it from the viewing deck at Paraiso Quetzal Lodge, in upland forest habitat by the Savegre Hotel, and along the Savegre River.

**Red-faced Spinetail** *Cranioleuca erythropis*—Like many furnarids, spinetails are shy and generally hard to spot, and even more so in the case of arboreal species, like this one. So we were lucky to get good views (with Johan) of a couple different birds, along the waterfall trail near the Savegre River.

**Slaty Spinetail** *Synallaxis brachyura*—We had fleeting glances of this species when several birds sang continuously from the overgrown coffee plantation along the Comandancia de Sarapiquí Road.

### **MANAKINS: Pipridae (2)**

**White-ruffed Manakin** *Corapipo altera*—A single bird was seen in the understory during our hike with the staff at La Selva OTS Reserve.



**White-collared Manakin** *Manacus candei*—Seen on three days during the latter half of the tour, at La Selva, Frogs Heaven, and along the trail at Rainforest Adventures.

**Red-capped Manakin** *Ceratopipra mentalis*—One of the last birds seen on the trip, picked up during the pre-breakfast morning walk at Rainforest Adventures with Johan.

### **COTINGAS: Cotingidae (1)**

**Bare-necked Umbrellabird** *Cephalopterus glabricollis* (RE)—A major target species for any birding tour to Costa Rica, we thought we'd struck out on this one, until the last morning at Rainforest Adventures, when Kelly saw the species just steps from our chalets (with nice photo ops for Jeff). Regrettably, half the group missed out, choosing to pack up for the airport or get a bit of extra sleep. Definitely a reason to come back!



### **BECARDS AND TITYRAS: Tityridae (4)**

**Masked Tityra** *Tityra semifasciata*—This species was seen several times, first at our BBQ lunch stop, and then again at La Selva and Rainforest Adventures.

**Northern Schiffornis** *Schiffornis veraepacis*—A dark brown bird, that sits very still in the dim understory, this species gives itself away by its distinctive, high-pitched song. With that assist, we had a nice view of a perched bird at Rainforest Adventures.

**Barred Becard** *Pachyramphus versicolor*—This distinctive little bird was seen on the upper primary forest trail at Savegre, the day of the jeep shuttle. A tiny species that's primarily found in the Andes, its populations in Costa Rica's mountains are highly disjunct from the main range of the taxon in South America.

**Cinnamon Becard** *Pachyramphus cinnamomeus*—This was a last-minute species list addition for the tour, seen on the morning walk at Rainforest Adventures before we drove to the airport.

### **TYRANT FLYCATCHERS: Tyrannidae (24)**

**Olive-striped Flycatcher** *Mionectes olivaceus*—A montane species, Olive-striped Flycatcher was seen perched in the open, near forest gaps, during our stay in the Savegre area.

**Black-capped Pygmy-Tyrant** *Myiornis atricapillus* (HO) (GO)—A tiny species heard by Johan during our morning walk along the Comandancia de Sarapiquí Road, near the coffee plantation.

**Common Tody-Flycatcher** *Todirostrum cinereum*—This species was seen creeping around the brush below the observation deck at the BBQ café in Los Gallitos, and again during our forest walk at Frogs Heaven.

**Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher** *Todirostrum nigriceps* (HO)—Another unseen species that was heard reasonably well by a few of the group, after Johan brought it to our attention during our walk at La Selva.

**Yellow-margined Flycatcher** *Tolmomyias assimilis*—Only seen during at the La Selva OTS Reserve, this small flycatcher is in a taxonomically complex group of similar-appearing species.

**Yellow-bellied Elaenia** *Elaenia flavogaster*—This common species was first seen sitting near our parked van in Los Gallitos, then later in the brush along Comandancia de Sarapiquí Road, as well as at Frogs Heaven.

**Mountain Elaenia** *Elaenia frantzii*—Seen several times during the initial half of the tour, we had views of this species at Paraiso Quetzal Lodge our first day on the road, and later in areas around the Savegre Valley.

**Torrent Tyrannulet** *Serpophaga cinerea*—As the name implies, this small flycatcher is tied to swift-flowing streams, so it was interesting to see it hanging around a cement water tank (which was, to be fair, not too far from the Savegre River). We spotted a single bird at the farm where we watched the quetzals.

**Mistletoe Tyrannulet** *Zimmerius parvus*—Spotted high in the trees from the observation deck at Paraiso Quetzal Lodge before lunch, and again near our lodgings at Savegre—an inconspicuous, canopy species.

**Tufted Flycatcher** *Mitrephanes phaeocercus*—Another species of the highlands, Tufted Flycatchers were seen perched in the open at Paraiso Quetzal Lodge and in the primary forests above the Savegre Valley.

**Dark Pewee** *Contopus lugubris* (RE)—An excellent find, this endemic was seen by the group flycatching along the waterfall trail that followed the Savegre River, on Christmas morning.

**Ochraceous Pewee** *Contopus ochraceus* (RE)—Another interesting endemic, we found the species in the primary forest the day we took the jeeps up the slopes above the Savegre Hotel.



**Tropical Pewee** *Contopus cinereus*—A more widespread pewee than the preceding two, we had several views of birds in the fields and forest margins in the Sarapiquí area.

**Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** *Empidonax flaviventris*—A migrant that breeds in North America and then overwinters in Costa Rica, we spotted this species just once, on the grassy compound at the La Selva OTS Reserve.

**Yellowish Flycatcher** *Empidonax flavescens*—Limited to extreme southern Mexico and Central America, this near-endemic was only seen the day we hiked the forested slopes above the Savegre Valley.

**Black-capped Flycatcher** *Empidonax atriceps* (RE)—Birders from the U.S. know the difficulties of identifying *Empidonax* flycatchers, most of which are agonizingly similar in appearance. So it's refreshing to see an empid like this one (as well as the preceding species), which actually has some distinctive field marks! This endemic was seen twice, at Paraiso Quetzal Lodge, and in subalpine habitat at the Timberline Wren site.

**Black Phoebe** *Sayornis nigricans*—A common species in parts of the U.S, this little flycatcher is also resident in the Neotropics. We saw a single bird near Rainforest Adventures.

**Long-tailed Tyrant** *Colonia colonus*—An easily identified species, even at a distance, we spotted the unique profile of this species as several birds perched in trees along the Comandancia de Sarapiquí Road.

**Bright-rumped Attila** *Attila spadiceus*—A stout, distinctive flycatcher with a heavy beak, this patient understory predator focuses on large insects—we had nice views of a perched bird while at La Selva.

**Great Kiskadee** *Pitangus sulphuratus*—Distinctive, both in voice and appearance, we saw this species daily.

**Boat-billed Flycatcher** *Megarynchus pitangua*—Much like the preceding species in appearance, but not nearly as widespread, we found Boat-billed Flycatchers at Hotel Bougainvillea and in the Sarapiquí area.

**Social Flycatcher** *Myiozetetes similis*—Another ubiquitous flycatcher for us, it was seen and heard most everywhere on our trip except at the higher elevations.

**Gray-capped Flycatcher** *Myiozetetes granadensis*—Similar to the preceding species, but much less common, we found a single bird at the La Selva OTS Reserve.

**Tropical Kingbird** *Tyrannus melancholicus*—Very abundant, seen at most locations during the tour.

### **VIREOS: Vireonidae (6)**

**Rufous-browed Peppershrike** *Cyclarhis gujanensis*—Initially found during our pre-tour day at Hotel Bougainvillea, this bulky, distinctive vireo was also in the primary forest in the Savegre area.

**Lesser Greenlet** *Pachysylvia decurtata*—This easily missed, unobtrusive species (could be mistaken for Tennessee Warbler) was seen on the morning walk at Rainforest Adventures, before we left for the airport.

**Yellow-throated Vireo** *Vireo flavifrons*—An overwintering migrant, this small, colorful vireo was seen late in the day by a few of the group near the Rainforest Adventures compound.

**Yellow-winged Vireo** *Vireo carmioli* (RE)—Another of our montane endemics, this species was seen several times in the forests and along trails in the Savegre area. Sometimes called Carmiol's Vireo.

**Philadelphia Vireo** *Vireo philadelphicus*—Strictly an overwintering species in Costa Rica, this is a common breeder in Canada and a passage migrant in the U.S. It was very common around Hotel Bougainvillea.

**Brown-capped Vireo** *Vireo leucophrys*—Spotted once in the primary forest canopy, we saw this rather nondescript species along a trail above the lodge complex at Savegre.

### **CROWS AND JAYS: Corvidae (1)**

**Brown Jay** *Psilorhinus morio*—Common in the Central Valley and in Costa Rica's lowlands, we saw this boisterous species several times at Hotel Bougainvillea.

### **SWALLOWS AND MARTINS: Hirundinidae (4)**

**Blue-and-white Swallow** *Pygochelidon cyanoleuca*—This was the common swallow seen most days of the tour, found in a wide range of habitats (and not necessarily tied to water).

**Southern Rough-winged Swallow** *Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*—A flock of about 10 birds was spotted during our boat trip on the Rio Sarapiquí.

**Gray-breasted Martin** *Progne chalybea*—The largest of our swallows, reported on the day we arrived at Rainforest Adventures.

**Mangrove Swallow** *Tachycineta albilinea*—Very abundant along the Rio Sarapiquí, these curious birds followed our progress along the river, perching on floating branches, debris piles, and even our boat.

### **GNATCATCHERS: Polioptilidae (1)**

**Tawny-faced Gnatwren** *Microbates cinereiventris*—A furtive species and hard to spot, we saw it briefly in low vegetation at Rainforest Adventures on our last morning of the tour.

### **WRENS: Troglodytidae (10)**

**House Wren** *Troglodytes aedon*—A very widespread species in the Western Hemisphere, from Canada to Tierra del Fuego. North American subspecies are migratory, but the birds in Costa Rica are resident. We saw House Wrens at Hotel Bougainvillea, Los Gallitos, and in the Sarapiquí area, all near human habitation.

**Ochraceous Wren** *Troglodytes ochraceus* (RE)—Yet another montane endemic, we had very nice views of this species in forest openings during our hike in the dense primary forest at Savegre.

**Timberline Wren** *Thryorchilus browni* (RE)—A high-elevation endemic, occurring up to timberline, we had surprisingly easy views of the species in the Talamanca Mountains, when Johan took us to a site he was familiar with (a bit less than a km off Highway 2, along Camino Chevo Gomez). The birds were very vocal.

**Rufous-naped Wren** *Campylorhynchus rufinucha*—Seen each day at Hotel Bougainvillea, this is a large, gregarious wren that was easy to spot in the gardens and low trees.

**Rufous-breasted Wren** *Pheugopedius rutilus*—Seen once, when several birds were spotted more or less together, on our first morning of the tour when we birded around Hotel Bougainvillea with Johan.

**Stripe-breasted Wren** *Cantorchilus thoracicus*—We spotted this distinctive species in the understory at La Selva, and had even better views of a bird at Frogs Heaven.

**Cabanis's Wren** *Cantorchilus modestus*—The shyest of the wrens at Hotel Bougainvillea, the birds weren't uncommon here, but were mostly hidden among the landscaping. It took patience to spot them.

**Bay Wren** *Cantorchilus nigricapillus*—We had several views of this species during the last days of the tour, at La Selva, along the Rio Sarapiquí, and from the aerial tram at Rainforest Adventures.

**White-breasted Wood-Wren** *Henicorhina leucosticta*—A notoriously elusive wren of the lowlands and foothills, it's difficult to spot despite being frequently heard—we found this species in the forests around La Selva and at Rainforest Adventures.

**Gray-breasted Wood-Wren** *Henicorhina leucophrys*—Closely related to White-breasted Wood-Wren, and also very hard to see, this species prefers higher elevations. We heard several birds (and briefly spotted one once or twice) during our visits to the Talamanca Range and the Savegre Valley.

### **DIPPERS: Cinclidae (1)**

**American Dipper** *Cinclus mexicanus*—Familiar to many birders in western North America, it was a bit of a surprise to find an American Dipper hopping between rocks in the Savegre River, high in the Talamanca Mountains. The isolated populations here represent an endemic Central American subspecies (*ardesiacus*), are the most southerly outliers of the species.

### **MOCKINGBIRDS AND THRASHERS: Mimidae (2)**

**Tropical Mockingbird** *Mimus gilvus*—A few birds were seen on the grounds of the Savegre Hotel. Common in much of northern Central America and the Yucatan, the species is comparatively scarce in Costa Rica.

**Gray Catbird** *Dumetella carolinensis* (HO)(GO)—The characteristic mewing was heard by Bob from behind the back garden wall at Hotel Bougainvillea, on our pre-tour day.

### **THRUSHES: Turdidae (7)**

**Black-faced Solitaire** *Myadestes melanops* (RE)—A striking endemic species, it was relatively common on the grounds of the Savegre Hotel, and we saw birds perched just outside our rooms.

**Black-billed Nightingale-Thrush** *Catharus gracilirostris* (RE)—Another endemic, this species was often seen slinking around the fields, lawns, and shrubs at the Savegre Hotel complex.

**Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrush** *Catharus frantzii*—Nearly as common as the two preceding species, and found at the same locations in the Savegre area.

**Wood Thrush** *Hylocichla mustelina*—A common breeding species in the U.S., we saw a few overwintering birds in the forest understory and along trails around the Sarapiquí Lodge.

**Mountain Thrush** *Turdus plebejus*—A common species during the first half of the tour, we had good views on several days, with close looks at birds (peering out from shrubs by the hummingbird feeders) at Paraiso Quetzal Lodge.

**Clay-colored Thrush** *Turdus grayi*—The *National Bird of Costa Rica* (said to have been selected for its song), we saw this abundant species many times, at virtually every place we stayed.

**Sooty Thrush** *Turdus nigrescens* (RE)—A large, essentially all-black thrush, and easy to identify, this endemic species was common in the mountains and seen several times during the early part of the tour, especially in the Savegre Valley.

### **SILKY-FLYCATCHERS: Ptiliogonatidae (2)**

**Black-and-yellow Silky-Flycatcher** *Phainoptila melanoxantha* (RE)—A stunning, sexually dimorphic species, first spotted (where we had extended looks) from the viewing platform at Paraiso Quetzal Lodge, and then again later at the subalpine site where we stopped for Timberline Wren.

**Long-tailed Silky-Flycatcher** *Ptiliogonys caudatus* (RE)—Another regional endemic, initially seen well at Paraiso Quetzal Lodge, and then later on the grounds of the Savegre Hotel. Our best views of the species were at the Batsu Garden feeder array on the west slope above the hotel, where both male and female birds were very approachable, allowing for some nice photos.



## **OLD WORLD SPARROWS: Passeridae (1)**

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus* (I)—Seen near the San José Airport on the day of our departure.

## **FINCHES AND EUPHONIAS: Fringillidae (7)**

**Golden-browed Chlorophonia** *Chlorophonia callophrys* (RE)—A beautiful, multi-colored finch, this endemic was seen well from the Paraiso Quetzal Lodge hummingbird platform, at the San Gerardo de Dota quetzal site, and in the primary forest above the Savegre Hotel.

**Yellow-crowned Euphonia** *Euphonia luteicapilla*—Primarily a lowland species, it was observed in forest edge habitat at the La Selva OTS Reserve, Frogs Heaven, and at Rainforest Adventures.

**Yellow-throated Euphonia** *Euphonia hirundinacea*—This species was only seen once, when five birds were spotted in trees on the compound at the La Selva OTS Reserve.

**Olive-backed Euphonia** *Euphonia gouldi*—Also seen at La Selva, as well as briefly at Frogs Heaven, this species has unique plumage for a Euphonia.

**Tawny-capped Euphonia** *Euphonia anae* (RE)—Our fourth Euphonia of the tour, and an endemic, this interesting species was spotted on our last morning by Johan's group, as they birded the forest at Rainforest Adventures.

**Lesser Goldfinch** *Spinus psaltria*—A single bird (this was the South American subspecies *colombianus*) was spotted on Christmas Day, before breakfast, as we walked the road downstream from the Savegre Hotel.

**Yellow-bellied Siskin** *Spinus xanthogastrus*—A pair of birds was seen at Paraiso Quetzal Lodge, and then we had closer views when another pair flew in next to the lower seating area at Batsu Gardens.



## **NEW WORLD SPARROWS: Passerellidae (9)**

**Sooty-capped Chlorospingus** *Chlorospingus pileatus* (RE)—A common endemic species seen every day while we were in the mountains, we had great views at Paraiso Quetzal Lodge, Miriam's Restaurant, and along forest trails in and near the Savegre Hotel complex.

**Common Chlorospingus** *Chlorospingus flavopectus*—This species was seen well on at least two days, primarily on or near the grounds of the Savegre Hotel.



**Black-striped Sparrow** *Arremonops conirostris*—Seen once, along the forest margin, during our morning walk down the Comandancia de Sarapiquí Road before we drove on to Frogs Heaven and Rainforest Adventures.

**Orange-billed Sparrow** *Arremon aurantirostris*—A bird was discovered in the understory along the trail at Rainforest Adventures, on our last morning before heading to the airport.

**Chestnut-capped Brushfinch** *Arremon brunneinucha*—A large, striking sparrow, we watched this species on a rainy afternoon, as it foraged below the feeders up at Batsu Gardens.

**Rufous-collared Sparrow** *Zonotrichia capensis*—The default neotropical sparrow found in many human-impacted habitats, as well as in more native sites, we had numerous sightings at the Hotel Bougainvillea and around the Savegre Hotel.

**Large-footed Finch** *Pezopetes capitalis* (RE)—True to its name, this endemic "finch" (it's actually a sparrow relative) really has enormous feet. We had the chance to study it from the deck at Miriam's Restaurant (as we sipped hot chocolate), before heading down into the Savegre Valley where we saw the species again (in mixed flocks along primary forest trails).

**White-eared Ground-Sparrow** *Melospiza leucotis*—A beautifully patterned species, a few of the group spotted one or more birds foraging under plantings and around brush piles at the Hotel Bougainvillea.

**Yellow-thighed Brushfinch** *Pselliophorus tibialis* (RE)—Another appropriately named species (its otherwise drab gray plumage is set off by the brilliant yellow thigh tufts), this large ground-forager was also seen below the feeders at Miriam's Restaurant, and also in mixed flocks on forest hikes in the Savegre Valley.

### **WRENTHRUSH: Zeledoniidae (1)**

**Wrenthrush** *Zeledonia coronata* (RE)—A much sought-after montane endemic, Wrenthrush is a unique species placed by itself in its own family, and poorly known. With Johan's help, some of the group initially heard its high-pitched song in heavy forest above the Savegre Valley, before most of us (after a patient wait) eventually spotted one or more birds emerging briefly from a streamside thicket. Well worth the effort!



### **NEW WORLD BLACKBIRDS: Icteridae (5)**

**Montezuma Oropendola** *Psarocolius montezuma*—We had great views of birds in the trees at Hotel Bougainvillea, and later saw and heard the species several times in the lowlands (at La Selva, Frogs Heaven, along the Rio Sarapiquí, and at Rainforest Adventures). The vocalizations of this species are unique, to say the least.

**Scarlet-rumped Cacique** *Cacicus uropygialis*—Seen by those in Jeff and Dondi's tram car, as they sailed through the forest canopy at Rainforest Adventures.

**Baltimore Oriole** *Icterus galbula*—A North American breeder that overwinters in Costa Rica, this species was common at the Hotel Bougainvillea, and was also seen at Sarapiquí Lodge and in trees lining the Comandancia de Sarapiquí Road.

**Melodious Blackbird** *Dives dives*—A common and familiar species throughout the trip, it was seen and heard most days (except at the higher elevations).

**Great-tailed Grackle** *Quiscalus mexicanus*—Common in the southern U.S., this species is also resident in Central America. Our views on the tour were limited to a few unruly groups that frequented the Hotel Bougainvillea.

### **NEW WORLD WARBLERS: Parulidae (20)**

**Note:** *Olive-crowned Yellowthroat, Collared Redstart, and Flame-throated, Chestnut-capped, Black-cheeked, and Buff-rumped Warblers are year-round, resident species in Costa Rica. The remaining 14 species below are all North American breeders, and occur in Costa Rica only as overwintering visitors. These migrant birds were silent during the tour, and for the most part appeared in worn or basic (non-breeding) plumage.*

**Ovenbird** *Seiurus aurocapilla*—This species put in a very brief appearance along a trail during our morning walk at the La Selva OTS Reserve.

**Louisiana Waterthrush** *Parkesia motacilla*—Always up for a walk, this species was seen strolling the lawns at the Savegre Hotel, and was also spotted along the Rio Sarapiquí during our boat trip.

**Northern Waterthrush** *Parkesia noveboracensis*—Birds of this species (very similar to the preceding species, especially during winter) were also seen along the Rio Sarapiquí shoreline, their ID confirmed by Johan.

**Golden-winged Warbler** *Vermivora chrysoptera*—A seriously declining species that is considered "near threatened" throughout its range, it was spotted in the heavy forest during our hike above the Savegre Valley, the day we rode the jeeps.

**Black-and-white Warbler** *Mniotilta varia*—A distinctive warbler with a Chickadee-like appearance and foraging style, it was seen in the same general area as Golden-winged Warbler.

**Flame-throated Warbler** *Oreothlypis gutturalis* (RE)—A beautiful endemic species, seen on the same hike as the previous two species. It was also spotted the next day, when we walked the rocky path along the Savegre River on Christmas morning.

**Tennessee Warbler** *Oreothlypis peregrina*—A comparatively plain warbler, especially in non-breeding plumage, this species was very common at the Hotel Bougainvillea and often seen with Philadelphia Vireo. It was noticed again several times in the Savegre Valley.

**Olive-crowned Yellowthroat** *Geothlypis semiflava*—We (Johan actually gets full credit here) detected this beauty in the vegetation that lined the Comandancia de Sarapiquí Road. Persistence was definitely required, but most of us eventually got a look at this elusive species as it squirmed through the grassy thicket.

**Tropical Parula** *Setophaga pitiayumi*—A single bird was found by Bob and Kelly high in the trees at Hotel Bougainvillea, the morning of our pre-tour day.

**Hooded Warbler** *Setophaga citrina* (GO)—Spotted on the grounds of the Sarapiquí Lodge, this species was inadvertently left off the eBird checklist for the date.

**Bay-breasted Warbler** *Setophaga castanea*—This species was only seen by the group that birded early with John, on our last morning of the tour at Rainforest Adventures.

**Yellow Warbler** *Setophaga petechia*—A common species in the trees at Hotel Bougainvillea, it was briefly seen again near the Savegre Hotel.

**Chestnut-sided Warbler** *Setophaga pensylvanica*—Also spotted at Hotel Bougainvillea on our pre-tour days, this species was then seen again by the group at Los Gallitos (at the tasty BBQ stop), La Selva, Frogs Heaven, and Rainforest Adventures.

**Townsend's Warbler** *Setophaga townsendi*—Curiously, this was the only strictly western North American migrant warbler we saw on the tour. It was spotted in trees along the primary forest trail we hiked above the Savegre Valley.

**Black-throated Green Warbler** *Setophaga virens*—Seen on several days, this species was first observed at the Paraiso Quetzal Lodge, and then several times in the forests around the Savegre Hotel complex.

**Chestnut-capped Warbler** *Basileuterus delatirii*—Recently split from Rufous-capped Warbler, this species was fairly common (and easy to spot) in the gardens surrounding the Hotel Bougainvillea. Several birds were seen during our pre-tour days here.

**Black-cheeked Warbler** *Basileuterus melanogenys* (RE)—Another endemic located in the Savegre area, we spotted this species several times during our hike on Christmas Eve day, along the unpaved road and primary forest trails above the hotel.

**Buff-rumped Warbler** *Myiothlypis fulvicauda*—A small warbler with an affinity for streamside habitats, a few of the group spotted this tail-bobbing species moving through the forest near the Rainforest Adventures complex.

**Wilson's Warbler** *Cardellina pusilla*—Showing a seeming preference for higher elevations on its wintering grounds, we only saw this species in the mountains (during the first half of the tour). It's interesting that it often breeds down to sea level in North America.

**Collared Redstart** *Myioborus torquatus* (RE)—A common endemic warbler in the Savegre Valley, it was easy to locate around our hotel, where we saw the species frequently—we also spotted it deep in the forest on several hikes.

### **MITROSPINGID TANAGERS: Mitrospingidae (1)**

**Dusky-faced Tanager** *Mitrospingus cassinii*—A unique species in a tiny family (with only three other species), we found a pair of Dusky-faced Tanagers in the understory at the La Selva OTS Reserve, during our morning hike.

### **CARDINALS, GROSBEAKS AND ALLIES: Cardinalidae (8)**

**Summer Tanager** *Piranga rubra*—Common at Hotel Bougainvillea, this overwintering migrant species also appeared at other times during the tour, at La Selva, as well as at the feeders at both Frogs Heaven and the Sarapiquí Hotel.

**Flame-colored Tanager** *Piranga bidentata*—A very common resident species in Costa Rica's mountainous interior, sometimes seen mobbing feeders, such as at Miriam's Restaurant. Flame-colored Tanagers were also routinely seen in the Savegre Valley, around our hotel and on neighboring farms and homesteads.

**Red-throated Ant-Tanager** *Habia fuscicauda*—One of the large tanagers that routinely follows Army Ant swarms, we spotted this common and colorful species in the lowlands on at least two days, towards the end of the tour.

**Carmioli's Tanager** *Chlorothraupis carmioli*—A rather sturdy, non-descript tanager, lacking the sexual dimorphism often seen in other members of this family, we spotted the species on our last morning of the tour (at Rainforest Adventures).

**Black-faced Grosbeak** *Caryothraustes poliogaster*—We came across a group of five birds in the riverine forest along the Rio Sarapiquí, as we birded the river by boat.

**Black-thighed Grosbeak** *Pheucticus tibialis* (RE)—This beautiful endemic was seen on Christmas morning during our hike along the Savegre River on the waterfall trail. The birds were hidden high in the canopy and difficult to spot, but the scope helped.

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak** *Pheucticus ludovicianus*—At least one bird was seen at Hotel Bougainvillea along the back wall. A reliable migrant species at this property, it's been recorded here on previous tours.

**Blue-black Grosbeak** *Cyanoloxia cyanoides*—Typically a species of dense thickets, and heard more often than seen, we managed glimpses of at least one bird (while others called) during our last morning at Rainforest Adventures.

### **TANAGERS AND ALLIES: Thraupidae (23)**

**Crimson-collared Tanager** *Ramphocelus sanguinolentus*—Seen at the feeders at Galeria de Colibri in Mirador San Fernando, and also at our lodge in Sarapiquí. This is a striking crimson and black tanager, closely related to the following species.

**Scarlet-rumped Tanager** *Ramphocelus passerinii*—Very similar colors to Crimson-collared, but in a different pattern, we saw this species close-up at feeders (at Galeria de Colibri and Sarapiquí Lodge) as well as in lowland forest habitat (i.e., La Selva, Frogs Heaven, and Rainforest Adventures).



**Blue-gray Tanager** *Thraupis episcopus*—Widespread in the Neotropics and often seen at feeders, we initially saw this familiar species at Hotel Bougainvillea, and then several times later on in the Sarapiquí area (La Selva, Sarapiquí Lodge, Frogs Heaven, etc.).

**Palm Tanager** *Thraupis palmarum*—Related to the preceding species, and often occurring with it, we saw Palm Tanagers at several of the same locations.

**Golden-hooded Tanager** *Tangara lariat*—A stunning species with a beautiful combination of colors, we had best-ever views of this small tanager in the gardens and feeders at Sarapiquí Lodge.

**Spangle-cheeked Tanager** *Tangara dowii* (RE)—A colorful regional endemic, often found at higher elevations, we spotted birds in



the Talamanca Mountains the day we left Savegre (see location for Timberline Wren).

**Plain-colored Tanager** *Tangara inornata*—Aptly named, this unadorned species (as compared with other *Tangara* species) was spotted just once, during our morning walk at the La Selva OTS Reserve.

**Bay-headed Tanager** *Tangara gyrola*—Also seen at La Selva, we had nice views of this species in a bushy tree by one of the lab buildings, when we emerged from the forest after our hike.'

**Silver-throated Tanager** *Tangara icterocephala*—A common tanager in the foothills and montane valleys, and seen several times on the tour, this brightly-colored species was particularly abundant at the Batsu Gardens feeder array (across the road and up the hill from the Savegre Hotel).



**Scarlet-thighed Dacnis** *Dacnis venusta*—We saw a pair of this striking turquoise and black tanager (although its “scarlet thighs” were obscured) during our morning at the La Selva OTS Reserve in the Sarapiquí area.

**Shining Honeycreeper** *Cyanerpes lucidus*—One of three honeycreepers spotted on the tour (also see below), they were seen mostly at the feeders at Sarapiquí Lodge. In fact, soon after we arrived, all three species were sighted side-by-side on a fruit platform, just inches apart. Shining Honeycreeper has bright yellow legs, and was only found at Sarapiquí Lodge.

**Red-legged Honeycreeper** *Cyanerpes cyaneus*—Superficially similar to the preceding species, but readily identified by its distinctive red legs, views of this honeycreeper were also limited to Sarapiquí Lodge.

**Green Honeycreeper** *Chlorophanes spiza*—Larger than the previous two species, we saw both male and female Green Honeycreepers at Sarapiquí lodge, but also in trees on the grassy compound at the La Selva OTS Reserve.

**Slaty Flowerpiercer** *Diglossa plumbea* (RE)—Another of the locally common, regional endemics of the Savegre area, this little flowerpiercer (technically a tanager) was easily seen on the Savegre Hotel grounds, in the yards of nearby homes, and on the trails. It also occurred at the Paraiso Quetzal Lodge, Miriam’s Restaurant, and the Timberline Wren site.

**Peg-billed Finch** *Acanthidops bairdi* (RE)—With an even narrower distribution than the preceding species, Peg-billed Finch is essentially known only from the highlands of Costa Rica, extending just a few miles into Panama. Johan spotted it during a walk after lunch at Paraiso Quetzal Lodge. Bob had targeted this odd little species on previous trips to Costa Rica, with no luck, and he arrived on the scene just in time to see it by one of the lodge cabins with the group. *Whew!*



**Blue-black Grassquit** *Volatinia jacarina*—Noted for its jack-in-the-box song display of bolting straight up out of the weedy brush, then settling back down—repeated over and over—we spotted the species doing just this during our morning walk along the Comandancia de Sarapiquí Road.

**Nicaraguan Seed-Finch** *Sporophila nuttingi* (RE)—Another target finch for the group, we were in the right area for this endemic as we walked Comandancia de Sarapiquí Road. Giving little regard to yet another dull brown bird flying into a nearby tree, Johan patiently suggested we pay closer attention. Sure enough, it was the bird we were seeking, just not the jet-black male with the enormous pink bill we’d been watching for!

**Variable Seedeater** *Sporophila corvina*—The grassy fields along Comandancia de Sarapiquí Road turned out to be a haven for seed finches it seemed, and this little seedeater was common here. We also found the species later, in some open habitat near Rainforest Adventures.

**Morelet’s Seedeater** *Sporophila moreletii*—One of the most common seedeaters in Central America (though not so much on our tour), this species prefers brushy fields, pastures, and hedgerows like many of its relatives. We saw a couple of the black-and-white males as well as the brownish females during our morning hike along Comandancia de Sarapiquí Road.

**Bananaquit** *Coereba flaveola*—A tiny, active species, more like a warbler than a tanager, we saw several Bananaquits at the Sarapiquí Lodge feeders, and also near flowers and garden areas at Frogs Heaven and Rainforest Adventures.

**Buff-throated Saltator** *Saltator maximus*—Seen several times, but never common, we encountered the species first at Hotel Bougainvillea (on our first walk with Johan), and then later at La Selva and Frogs Heaven. Our best views were at the Sarapiqui Lodge feeders.

**Black-headed Saltator** *Saltator atriceps*—This species was the least common of our saltators, seen only once, during our walk through the forest at the Frogs Heaven nature preserve.

**Cinnamon-bellied Saltator** *Saltator grandis*—The more common of the two saltators at Hotel Bougainvillea, we saw this species there several times during our stay—it wasn't spotted elsewhere on the tour. This species used to be called Grayish Saltator.

#### MAMMALS (10 species recorded):

**Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth** *Bradypus variegatus*—Spotted in the Sarapiqui area, at La Selva.

**Hoffmann's Two-toed Sloth** *Choloepus hoffmanni*—Also in the Sarapiqui area, and at Frogs Heaven (staring down at us).

**Central American Agouti** *Dasyprocta punctata*—This was the large, spindly-legged rodent seen around the Sarapiqui Lodge and at Rainforest Adventures.

**Variagated Squirrel** *Sciurus variegatoides*—A bushy-tailed, oddly-colored squirrel, it was very common on the grounds of Hotel Bougainvillea.

**Red-tailed Squirrel** *Sciurus granatensis*—Fairly common in Savegre area forests.

**Proboscis Bat** *Rhynchonycteris naso*—A large group of these tiny bats was roosting in the open on a tree trunk, along the Rio Sarapiqui—very cute.

**Cacomistle** *Bassariscus sumichrasti*—A nocturnal, more diminutive relative of Ring-tailed Cats in the U.S, this rarely seen species is restricted to Central America and adjacent Mexico. We saw one on Christmas night, tight-rope along an old utility line in the Savegre Valley.

**White-nosed Coati** *Nasua narica*—One coati was hanging around the lab buildings at the La Selva OTS Reserve. It seemed a little too friendly.

**Coyote** *Canus latrans*—At least one was heard howling in the night near the Savegre Hotel.

**Mantled Howler Monkey** *Alouatta palliata*—The loud, booming noises associated with this primate were heard in the distance at La Selva and near Frogs Heaven.

#### REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS (16 species recorded):

**Strawberry Poison-dart Frog** *Oophaga pumilio*—This was one of the technicolor amphibians we saw at Frogs Heaven, a private reserve (with restored native forest) that's been set aside for this species and several others. The vibrant colors of this frog and the next two seemed unreal.

**Green-and-black Poison-dart Frog** *Dendrobates auratus*—This neon green and black species was also seen close-up at Frogs Heaven, and was simply stunning.

**Red-eyed Tree Frog** *Agalychnis callidryas*—Though not one of the poison-dart frogs, this species was every bit as colorful, and the eyes were mesmerizing. We had amazing views (together with the previous two species) at Frogs Heaven, with the help of the on-site manager.

**Veragua Cross-banded Tree Frog** *Smilisca sordida*—This small species was seen stuck to leaves in the evening around the Sarapiqui Lodge.

**Common Tink Frog** *Diaspora diastema*—Heard in the evening at Rainforest Adventures, the metallic vocals of this odd frog were confirmed by Johan.

**Leaf Litter Toad** *Rhaebo haematiticus*—What was presumably this species was seen one evening at Sarapiqui Lodge, hopping around near the pool area.



**Cane Toad** *Rhinella marina*—Many Cane Toads were squashed on the road near La Selva—the species was also heard bellowing at night around Sarapiquí Lodge.

**Spectacled Caiman** *Caiman crocodilus*—We had good views of this mid-sized crocodilian sneaking along the banks of the Rio Sarapiquí, during our boat excursion.



**Black River Turtle** *Rhinoclemmys funerea*—We saw several groups of this large turtle sunning on logs and other debris in the Rio Sarapiquí.

**Green Iguana** *Iguana iguana*—Spotted many times during the tour, the most impressive (i.e., most hefty) individuals were seen while we were boating, as they lounged in the trees and bushes that lined the Rio Sarapiquí.

**Emerald (or Green) Basilisk** *Basiliscus plumifrons*—Also spotted on the boat tour (see above), we saw one large adult perched along the shoreline. A really beautiful lizard.

**Common Basilisk** *Basiliscus basiliscus*—We ran across this well-known species a few times in the lowlands, mostly in the Sarapiquí area and usually near water.

**House Gecko** *Hemidactylus frenatus* (**I**)—A ubiquitous species in the tropics, it was chirping around on the walls at the Sarapiquí Lodge.

**Central American Ameiva** *Holcosus festivus*—A type of whiptail lizard, this species was seen running and sunning in open areas on the La Selva OTS Reserve compound.

**Eyelash Viper** *Bothriechis schlegelii*—A small viper, seen coiled in the crook of a downed log, about three meters off the trail, during our forest walk at La Selva—a curious, bright orange-yellow color, the snake really stood out in the gloomy understory.

**Talamancan Palm Viper** *Bothriechis nubestris* (**RE**)—Seen on a trail (by two of the group) near the Savegre Hotel, this was a very small viper, green with black speckles. A rare endemic species new to science, it was only recognized in 2016 (according to the literature), after molecular genetic studies confirmed its unique taxonomic status. Cool!

**Checklist photos, from the beginning:** Gray-headed Chachalaca (Bob Meinke, BM); Scaly-breasted Hummingbird, female (Dondi Black, DB); Sunbittern (Jeff Black, JB); Gartered Trogon, female (DB); Red-headed Barbet (JB); Rufous-winged Woodpecker, female (JB); Bare-necked Umbrellabird (JB); Masked Tityra (JB); Yellowish Flycatcher (JB); Black-and-yellow Silky-Flycatcher, female (JB); Sooty-capped Chlorospingus (JB); Large-footed Finch (JB); Montezuma Oropendola (JB); Crimson-collared Tanager (JB); Blue-gray Tanager (JB); Golden-hooded Tanager (JB); Silver-throated Tanager (DB); Slaty Flowerpiercer, female (JB); Green-and-black Poison-dart Frog (BM); Spectacled Caiman (BM).