

Costa Rican Bird Route

August 8—August 16, 2009



SERVICE
BIRDING

Birding tours that serve communities

August 8 San Jose

Arrive in San Jose, Costa Rica where you will be picked up and transferred to your hotel for a welcome and introduction to the trip. Overnight at Hotel Bougainvillea.

August 9 Albergue el Socorro (B,L, D)

Bird the gardens of Hotel Bougainvillea, then travel to one of the remote sites of the Bird Route, Albergue El Socorro. This site is nestled in the mountains, and boasts the highest elevation of any of the sites, offering a chance to view bird species not found at other sites. Meet the landowner, Jose Miranda and spend the morning birding the reserve. After a home-cooked lunch prepared by Jose's wife, travel to Tirimbina Rainforest Center for the evening.

August 10 Tirimbina (B, L, D)

Arise early to take advantage of the excellent birding found in this 850 acre reserve. After breakfast, take Tirimbina's famed Chocolate Tour, where a guide will reveal the secrets of transforming cacao fruit into one of the world's most tantalizing foods – chocolate! Spend the afternoon back on the trails and suspension bridges searching for the Sunbittern, White-fronted Nunbird, and the Royal Flycatcher – all emblematic species of the site. After dinner, let a guide teach you about creatures of the night with an **optional** (\$) night walk. Overnight at Tirimbina.

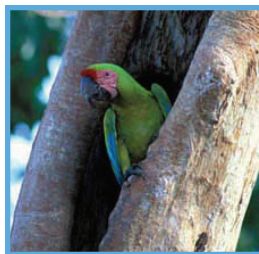
August 11 Mi Pedacito de Cielo (B)

Head north to the site of Mi Pedacito de Cielo, which translates to "My Little Piece of Heaven." This charming site overlooking the San Carlos River features hand-crafted bungalows with private porches, perfect for a relaxing swing after a day of birding. Spend the afternoon birding, then enjoy a sumptuous homemade feast prepared by the owner Marco Tulio and his family. Enjoy the night sounds while reviewing the bird list before heading to bed.



August 12 Laguna Lagarto (B, L)

Two of the emblematic species of Mi Pedacito are the Scarlet Macaw and the critically endangered Great Green Macaw. Spend the early morning exploring the site's large reserve in search of these majestic parrots. For lunch, travel a short three kilometers to the Laguna del Lagarto Lodge, home to one of the most important vestiges of Great



Green Macaw habitat. After the meal, bird on foot or take the opportunity to canoe the lagoons in hopes of sighting the Agami Heron, usually found hiding here. Return to Mi Pedacito for the evening.

August 13 Santa Elena (B, L)

Explore the reserve at Mi Pedacito one more time before heading to another remote site of the Bird Route, the Santa Elena Reserve. Santa Elena is a community-operated reserve overseen by three local organizations; a true oasis in the midst of many pineapple plantations. Eat a lunch made with fresh farm ingredients before heading out to bird. Guides for the 173 acre reserve are farmers from the community. Head to Selva Verde Lodge for dinner and a review of the bird list.

August 14 Selva Verde Lodge (B, L)

The lush rainforest of Selva Verde awaits you this morning. Bird the trails around the property before heading to a buffet style breakfast. After breakfast, go birding deeper into the reserve, and enjoy other sightings of wildlife found along the way. In the afternoon, enjoy a cultural exchange with the local community through the Sarapiquí Conservation Learning Center, a Costa Rica and U.S. non-profit. Visit a school and make a much-needed donation of books and other supplies and get a glimpse into the daily life of rural Costa Rica! Overnight at Selva Verde.

August 15 La Selva (B, L, D)

Eat an early breakfast and depart for the most famous Bird Route site, La Selva Biological Station. La Selva is operated by the Organization of Tropical Studies and is one of the most important sites in the world for tropical research.

Lunch at La Selva and then we head back to San Jose and Hotel Bougainvillea. Spend the afternoon birding, or relaxing in the gardens. Dinner and one last review of the bird list at Hotel Bougainvillea.

August 16 Departures

You will be shuttled to the airport for your flight home or depart on the optional extension trip.

OPTIONAL EXTENSION TRIP

August 16 Curú (L, D)

Depart early and head west to the Nicoya Peninsula to catch the ferry to Paquera. Cruise across the beautiful and scenic Nicoya Gulf, keep an eye out for wood storks diving for fish. From Paquera, journey to the quiet and secluded Curú Wildlife Refuge, a sanctuary on the beach. Curú connects to the Biological



Wildlife Corridor of the Nicoya Peninsula. Overnight at Curú.

August 17 Cabo Blanco (B, L)

Before breakfast search for some of the 232 bird species that have been counted at Curú. The rest of the day will be spent at Cabo Blanco, a breathtaking nature reserve on the coastline that is home to hundreds of plant and animal species. Overnight at Curú.

August 18 San Jose (B)

AM birding then catch the ferry back, and head toward San Jose for the night.

August 19 Departure (B)

Shuttle to airport for flight home.

Cost of Tour: \$1,230, based on 10 participants at double occupancy. Optional extension trip is \$306, based on 6 participants at double occupancy. If more than 6 register for the extension trip, price will be adjusted accordingly before final amount is due. Single room supplement is \$225. Meals that are *included* within the price are noted in the itinerary with a B, L, and D. Price of tour includes meals as indicated, lodging, ground transportation, guides, entrance fees, \$100 donation to Rainforest Biodiversity Group, and activities **not** noted as Optional (\$). Price of tour **does not** include airfare, airport tax (\$26), alcoholic beverages, snacks, bottled water, meals that **are not** indicated on this itinerary, or gratuities. **Register by:** June 12 (50% deposit due at time of registration); final amt. due June 29.

To register or for more information, contact Holly Robertson at
info@servicebirding.com.

(Photo credits: Bent Pederson, Bill Volkert, Holly Robertson)