



Sunrise Birding, LLC
<http://www.sunrisebirding.com>

COSTA RICA

TRIP REPORT: January 5 – 17, 2008

LEADERS: Gina Nichol & Steve Bird
369 Bird Species Recorded; 363 Seen; 6 Heard only

Day 1 Saturday, January 05, 2008

Several of us met at Heathrow in the early morning hours and flew to Madrid where we met up with John and Christine. We continued on to San Jose meeting John and Milady at the airport and Wendy later at the lodge. Once settled into our rooms, we enjoyed our first dinner together in Costa Rica anticipating our days ahead.

Day 2 Sunday, January 06, 2008

With the excitement of the beginning of the tour, several of us were up and out early in the morning canvassing the grounds of the lodge for birds. The sky was clear blue with a few clouds and the temperature very pleasant for our first day. A Hoffman's Woodpecker was spotted in the upper branches of a large tree right outside the reception area and was seen well in the morning light. A Steely-vented Hummingbird worked the trees above the car park and it was soon apparent that the bird was tending a nest. After very satisfying views of the Hummingbird and the nest we walked a short way on a trail and found two Blue-crowned Motmots perched on the railing of some steps. Further down in a small open area we got quick looks at a Rufous-capped Warbler. Black Vultures were beginning to soar above, dwarfing the Blue-and-White Swallows that flew above the grounds. We continued walking to the lower part of an open field with some tall grasses and a few trees. A House Wren worked the edge of the field in some brush and a Rose-breasted Grosbeak was seen in the foliage of a tree just beyond the field. David pointed out a small swift flying high in the sky which turned out to be a Vaux's Swift. Our first of many Tropical Kingbirds hawked insects from an open branch and a Blue-Gray Tanager flew into a large sparsely leaved tree. On the other side of the field a few White-tipped Doves flew in and perched and a Red-billed Pigeon was less confiding. Rufous-naped Wrens were calling and soon a trio of them appeared on a small dead tree putting on a nice show for us. A Social Flycatcher appeared and showed well and in the tree where two Grayish Saltators were seen. We turned back to head up for breakfast when Steve heard a flock of parakeets approaching. Soon about 40 Crimson-fronted Parakeets flew in formation above us in nice light. As we left the field, a Boat-billed Flycatcher showed well and on the way up the hill toward the dining room a few of us saw a Great Kiskidee and were able to study the differences between it and the Boat-billed. Two Buff-throated Saltators fed in a Cecropia above the trail. We continued on to another open area where a few Groove-billed Anis flew by. As we stood under a massive tree in the middle of an open lawn, we saw a few Yellow Warblers and Chris spotted a Masked Tityra in the canopy. Back down in the car park, a few Brown Jays were spotted in some tall trees.

After breakfast, we loaded the bus and headed toward Savegre. A quick pit stop along the way produced a Wilson's Warbler and a Rufous-collared Sparrow. On the winding road down to Savegre we spotted several Sooty Robins, a Scintillant Hummingbird on top of a tree, Flame-

colored Tanager, Volcano Hummingbird, another Wilson's Warbler and a Yellow Warbler. As we descended into the valley, we gained a strong appreciation for Oscar's driving skills on the steep mountain road. We arrived at the lodge and headed in to lunch, many of us distracted by the activity at the hummingbird feeders on the way in. Buzzing around were Magnificent Hummingbird, several Green Violetears, White-throated Mountain-Gem, and Scintillant Hummingbird.

After lunch, we spent more time at the feeders and around the lodge where we picked up Acorn Woodpecker, a couple of Long-tailed Silky-Flycatchers, some White-collared Swifts, and several Turkey and Black Vultures soaring above the valley. From the veranda off the dining room, we had Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch, closer looks at the Long-tailed Silky-Flycatcher, and several Slaty Flowerpiercers.

In the afternoon, we took a walk from the lodge. As we entered the forest behind the cabins, we had good close looks at Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrush. The forest held a number of birds including Yellowish Flycatcher, Brown-capped Vireo, Mountain Elaenia, Mountain Robin, Paltry Tyrannulet, and White-throated Mountain-Gem. We walked over a bridge and up a forest road where we added Ruddy Treerunner, Sooty-capped Bush-Tanager, Collared Redstart, and Spot-crowned Woodcreeper to our list and had quick views of an Ochraceous Wren. We reached an open area where we had good looks at a Tufted Flycatcher in the trees near the river. An American Dipper was spotted in the middle of the river as were two Torrent Tyrannulets. We heard the call of a trogon and soon a beautiful male Resplendent Quetzal flew in and perched right out in the open in front of us its streamer tails picked up by the breeze. We were thrilled with our excellent views of this mythical bird and felt fortunate to have seen one so early in our tour. We headed back to the lodge as the sun went down, checked into our rooms, and reconvened for a lovely dinner.

Day 3 Monday, January 07, 2008

This morning we were up and out early to check an area where Resplendent Quetzals were known to be feeding. As we gathered by the lodge, a flock of Silver-throated Tanagers were feeding in a small tree with a Mountain Elaenia and as we were watching them a male Quetzal flew across in the background. We loaded into the van and went up the road to a private area. We walked up to an open flat area and immediately spotted two female Quetzals in a tree above an apple orchard. Soon a male flew into the same tree-its streamer tails fluttering gracefully in the breeze. We positioned ourselves for good looks at the male as a female flew out of the tree toward the forest. We enjoyed our great views until both remaining birds flew out toward the forest. Following the birds, we got to an area beside a small trout pond where Steve had spotted a male but it flew off before we got there. We scanned the trees until a male flew in right in front of us and a female appeared in the same tree. Soon another female came in and, amazingly, another male! Another male flew into the trees above but most of us were mesmerized by the sight of two male Quetzals and two females in one tree right in front of us! We watched them for several minutes until they began to fly off one by one. We followed them back to the original tree above the orchard and found two females and a male there. As we were watching the Quetzals, a Black Guan flew in and proceeded to feed on the Avocado fruits. We enjoyed our looks at the Guan as Mountain and Sooty Robins flew below. Satisfied with our morning, we headed down toward the bus and heard a call from behind it. In a few minutes, we located a Rufous-browed Peppershrike singing from an elevated perch.

After breakfast, we saw some Sulphur-winged Parakeets flying above the lodge. A look in the forest behind some of the cabins yielded good looks at a Spot-crowned Woodcreeper and

Brown-capped Vireo. The feeders held Green Violetear, Magnificent Hummingbird, Scintillant Hummingbird, and White-throated Mountain-Gem, and a Slaty Flowerpiercer fed in the flowers nearby.

We took the bus down the hill to our morning birding spot and as we got out of the van, David spotted a Black-faced Solitaire. Several Black Vultures were lined up on the branches above the trout pond creating a slightly foreboding picture. We searched the area for the Solitaire and found Mountain Elaenia, Dark Pewee, and a nice Black-capped Flycatcher. As we started down the trail we got better looks at the Black-faced Solitaire in front of a large tree trunk. We neared a makeshift bridge over the river where Gina spotted a Black-thighed Grosbeak in the trees above and called back the group to see two of them. Further along the trail we found a small flock that included Black-throated Green Warbler, Brown-capped Vireo, Ruddy Treerunner, and Sooty-capped Bush-Tanager.

We reached an open area with some large trees and several birds flitting back and forth. We tried our best to sort out the fast moving Tennessee Warblers, Yellow-winged Vireo, and Philadelphia Vireos. Near the river, there was a Tufted Flycatcher and a Dark Pewee was hawking insects from a perch. A Yellowish Flycatcher showed well and we had better looks at the Yellow-winged Vireo. There was a hub of activity around a bromeliad low in a tree which turned out to be four Ochraceous Wrens. They flew across to a tree that was closer to us allowing great views and photos.

We made our way back up toward the main road and added Ruddy-capped Nightingale Thrush, Collared Redstart, another Yellowish Flycatcher, and Black-throated Green Warbler. Those of us that walked back to the lodge got great looks at a Yellow-winged Vireo alongside the road. We walked across a bridge over the Savegre River and saw two Louisiana Waterthrushes flying back and forth across the river. In the top of a tree there was a Band-tailed Pigeon being mobbed by some Acorn Woodpeckers and in the gardens we had Common Bush-Tanager, Scintillant Hummingbird, and Brown-capped Vireo. We followed the trail heading back to the lodge for lunch and got excellent looks at a Blue-throated Toucanet perched in a tree.

After lunch, we relaxed at the hummingbird feeders and enjoyed the antics of the hummingbirds and some of us got excellent photos of a male Scintillant Hummingbird showing its brilliant orange gorget. We decided that this was a very civilized way to spend an hour or so in the afternoon.

Later in the afternoon, we headed up to the Paramo habitat. We arrived to a clear bright sky with intermittent clouds and mist and walked a semi-flooded trail. There were several Sooty Thrushes and a few Volcano Hummingbirds buzzing around. In a Bamboo area, we found Black-billed Nightingale-Thrush and coming out we strained to see an Elegant Euphonia at the top of a tree. In another area, we saw one or two Timberline Wrens in with a small flock that included Black-cheeked Warbler and a few Sooty-capped Bush-Tanagers. Further up the trail we got fleeting glimpses of a Timberline Wren in the bamboo.

We headed back to the main road and Oscar drove us further up toward the radio towers. By this time a mist was rolling in and we scanned the sides of the road for Volcano Junco. By the time we reached the top, it was quite misty and we spread out to find our quarry. It wasn't long before one was spotted near the road and this fearless bird walked right around our feet.

Gina was searching further up the road and called the group up for Large-footed Finches that were feeding under some shrubs. By the time the group arrived, the Finches were on the move across the road and up a hillside. We searched for a bit but the birds did not show. By now the mist and wind were brisk and we headed back down to the bus. A few of us had quick glimpses of a Zeledonia before heading back to the bus and on to the lodge.

Day 4 Tuesday, January 08, 2008

Some of us met early this morning to check out a new light post that attracts insects over night and then birds to feed on them in the morning. At 6 AM and two Flame-colored Tanagers were already there picking moths from the post but other than that it was rather quiet. A female Resplendent Quetzal flew in and perched on a tree branch behind us. Other birds visiting the light included Social Flycatcher, Tropical Kingbird, and Common Bush-Tanager. John spotted a Long-tailed Silky-Flycatcher in a large tree just down the hill and a Spot-crowned Woodcreeper flew in and worked a mossy branch. A Brown-capped Vireo foraged in a tree near the light.

We started back toward the lodge and as we crossed the bridge over the river, a Black-faced Solitaire flew in and showed well in a tree with a Mountain Elaenia. The Louisiana Waterthrush was in the same spot as yesterday and showed well on a rock in the river. A Gray-breasted Wood Wren showed well as it worked the trunk of a tree on the river edge. Behind us in a tall tree was a flock of Band-tailed Pigeons not far from the Acorn Woodpecker tree and we wondered what might transpire between them.

We made our way back for our last breakfast and Savegre and then loaded up the bus and started up the mountain out of the valley. Steve spotted a pair of Ruddy Pigeons on the side of the road which some of us were able to get on from the bus. We stopped on a corner and got out to check the area. Soon we found a flock of Yellow-thighed Finches which showed their yellow thighs quite well. A Black-cheeked Warbler and several Collared Redstarts flitted in the branches. A Large-footed Finch was spotted in a wispy tuft of Bamboo but dropped into the thicker foliage out of sight. In a few minutes, it crossed the road and we were all able to get good views of it as it foraged on the ground. Pleased with our finds, we continued up to the Pan-American Highway and headed toward our next birding area – a quiet road just a few miles away. We got out of the bus and began to walk the road in the mist. Sooty-capped Bush-Tanagers were flitting in the bushes and we saw our first of many Fiery-throated Hummingbirds feeding among the flowers along the road. We stopped at a bamboo area where a Zeledonia was calling and watched for several moments hoping the bird would show but it did not cooperate.

Further down, a male Quetzal flew across as we checked a large moss covered tree. Continuing on to a corner that had more activity, we got more Sooty-capped Bush-Tanagers and a couple of Ruddy Treerunners. A Black-capped Flycatcher was hawking insects up the hill. Further on, we saw our first of many Wilson's Warblers along the road, several of which were hawking insects like flycatchers do so we dubbed them "Wilson's Flycatcher-warblers". A few Black-throated Green Warblers were seen working the branches and a Green Violetear called incessantly from a perch. Two Slaty Flowerpiercers worked the vines along a tall tree and below them Gina and Doreen spotted a Black-and-Yellow Silky-Flycatcher. It dropped out of sight before anyone else could get on it so we checked the area from every angle to try to pick up the bird again. Finally a male and female showed in a small tree close to the road and we were all able to get good looks. Further on a Black-billed Nightingale-Thrush showed well as it walked across the track. We reached an open area with a flock that included our first Flame-throated Warbler. Despite our best efforts to locate Chris's mythical "window" that held the bird,

we soon realized that the flock had moved off and several of us had missed it. To our delight, we relocated the flock further down the road in a lone tree and two Flame-throated Warblers showed extremely well. The tree also held Yellow-winged Vireo, more Ruddy Treerunners, Sooty-capped Bush-Tanagers, and Collared Redstarts.

From here we continued to San Jose. On the journey back we picked up Black Phoebe and Roadside Hawk. Oscar spotted a strange bird on the side of the road which turned out to be a Budgerigar. Across the road there was quite a stir of activity with several Social Flycatchers, Clay-colored Thrush, a Rose-breasted Grosbeak female, Baltimore Oriole, and Yellow-bellied Elaenia. We continued on noting several Cattle Egrets in the fields. Steve spotted a White-tailed Kite flying above some farm fields and we passed several Great-tailed Grackles as we entered town. We stopped for lunch at a restaurant and enjoyed some typical Costa Rican fare. While we were eating a Brown-crested Flycatcher was spotted in the trees outside as was a Squirrel Cuckoo.

After lunch we headed for the park in Orotina where we found two Black-and-White Owls roosting in some palms. A Two-toed Sloth was spotted in a tree in the far corner of the park and there were lots of Clay-colored Thrushes, Great-tailed Grackles, and Kiskidees as well as a Baltimore Oriole was seen feeding high in a tree. As we left the park a Palm Tanager was spotted at the top of a large palm. Some Blue-Gray Tanagers were also seen on some lower trees. As we drove through town we picked up House Sparrow and several White-winged Doves.

We drove along the highway and made a quick roadside stop for a Turquoise-browed Motmot. Also in the area were Cinnamon Hummingbird, Stripe-headed Sparrow, Gray-breasted Martin, and Cliff Swallow and we noted a White-tailed Kite kiting in the distance.

As the sun set, we reached the Tarcole River Bridge. We walked across and picked up several species along the way including Tri-colored Heron, Amazon Kingfisher, Great Egrets, Black-necked Stilt, Spotted Sandpiper, a tree filled with White Ibis and Egrets, several Little Blue Herons, and all different sizes of Crocodiles. Some Red-ored Parrots flew over and landed in a distant tree. Steve spotted some Lesser Nighthawks in the distance and fortunately they came closer and we got good views of them flying over the river. As it was getting dark, we arrived at our hotel and checked into our rooms. Later, we met for dinner in the restaurant where a band was playing local music. We moved on to the bar to review our checklist for the day.

Day 5 Wednesday, January 09, 2008

Before breakfast, we were out on the grounds of the hotel checking out the bird life. Two Inca Doves worked their way around the roof tops and the trees. In the garden, a Scaly-breasted Hummingbird fed on some flowers and two Tent-making Bats were seen roosting on the underside of a palm frond. A Steely-vented Hummingbird was also seen feeding near where an Ochre-bellied Flycatcher was spotted. Great Kiskidees were vocal and seemingly omnipresent on the grounds.

We left the hotel to spend the morning at Carara National Park. The car park area was very active with a group of Dot-winged Antwrens, a Tennessee Warbler, Plain Xenops, and Red-legged Honeycreeper. Dickie Bird first spotted the Northern Bentbill which showed well for everyone. Other birds here included Chestnut-sided Warbler, Yellow-margined Flycatcher, and Dusky Antbird. A White-whiskered Puffbird was spotted a little way up the trail but remained

elusive for most of us as did the Orange-billed Sparrows and Ruddy Quail-Doves that were calling in the forest.

On the trail near some puddles, we spotted a Northern Waterthrush and we were pleased to see a nice Dusky Antbird come in close with nesting material in its bill. Two very vocal Gray-necked Wood Rails crossed the trail in front of us after a few minutes and a Pale-billed Woodpecker was spotted in the upper trunk of a tall tree. A brilliant Morpho Butterfly flew through our group getting oos and aahhs as it moved. A Boat-billed Flycatcher landed above our heads and a Slate-headed Tody-Flycatcher showed well. We crossed a small stream and spotted an American Pygmy-Kingfisher perched just above it. There was also Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Yellow-olive Flycatcher, and Lesser Greenlet above the trail. A few White-shouldered Tanagers showed in the branches above the trail. Just under the canopy we spotted a Violaceous Trogon and scoped it. A Ruddy Woodcreeper flew in close and worked up the trunk of a tree much more confiding than the Cocoa Woodcreeper which only allowed fleeting looks. An Agouti crossed the trail in front of us seemingly unfazed by our presence. The Cocoa Woodcreeper flew in allowing better looks and we checked some Yellow-crowned Euphonias in the canopy of a tree. A Chestnut-mandibled Toucan flew over garnering gasps of delight from the crowd. In the brushy area along the trail, we spotted a Blue-throated Goldentail which sat for a moment before disappearing. We looked up to the sky to see several Costa Rican Swiftlets flying. We worked on getting the Black-bellied Wren to show. It was skulking in a tangle and calling and showed for those of us who were in the right position. Above us, a Tropical Gnatcatcher flitted and across the muddy track a Black-hooded Antshrike was much more confiding. A Purple-crowned Fairy came in and perched overhead briefly and a Yellow-throated Vireo also worked the trees above.

On the way back out the trail, we reached an area that had an Orange-crowned Manakin which showed very briefly twice. While looking at the Manakin we noticed a Rufous-and-White Wren which appeared to be bathing in water in a hole in a tree and another sunning itself on a branch below. John reported a Barred Antshrike in the same area. As we neared the parking area, a Gray-chested Dove was seen by a few but could not be relocated.

Heading back on the bus, we could see a Magnificent Frigatebird or two in the distance and as we turned into the road toward the lodge, we caught a soaring Gray Hawk. Some of us continued up the hill above the lodge to an overlook area which held Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, Beryl-crowned Hummingbird, and some Social Flycatchers. We picked out two Zone-tailed Hawks from the many Black and Turkey Vultures soaring down the valley. Another Gray Hawk was seen and we spotted six Wood Storks flying over the ridge. As we boarded the van to return to the lodge, Steve spotted a King Vulture flying above the ridge and we were able to get good scope views of it. Heading back down toward the lodge we made a sudden stop for another adult King Vulture soaring and spotted a juvenile and another adult making an amazing total of four King Vultures! The views of these birds were the best you could hope for and we were thrilled with our morning of birding.

After lunch at the hotel, we had some time off and then went back to Carara later in the afternoon. We took a trail from the main headquarters and passed a very large Leaf-cutter Ant Colony. Above the colony we had good looks at Rufous-naped Wren and a nice Rufous-tailed Jacamar. In a small tree on the side of the trail we picked up a female Rose-throated Becard and an Ochre-bellied Flycatcher. Two Golden-hooded Tanagers were feeding in a tree above the trail as was a Rufous-capped Warbler and a couple of Lesser Greenlets giving much better views to appreciate their subtle markings. We reached an open area where we could see a

Scarlet Macaw nest hole with two red tail feathers sticking out. There was another adult Scarlet Macaw in a tree nearby and we marveled at the size and color of this brilliant bird. Ahead of us on the track was a Grey-chested Dove giving much better views than this morning.

In an open area by a river, we spotted a Tawny-winged Woodcreeper way up in a tree. A Riverside Wren was calling but did not show. Some Scarlet Macaws flew over as did several Costa Rican Swiftlets. As we searched for the Riverside Wren, a very cooperative Chestnut-backed Antbird appeared near the trail giving incredibly close views. Further on, we noticed an abnormal amount of leaves and debris falling to the forest floor and realized that it was from a group of White-throated Capuchin Monkeys feeding on flowers in the canopy. One Capuchin moved very low in a tree giving good close views. We took a short side trail and found a White-whiskered Puffbird calling under the canopy. The trail passed by a stream where a Blue-crowned Manakin was bathing. We continued up to an area where we spotted a Great Tinamou walking on the forest floor. We took another short side trail to the stream edge where a Gray-headed Tanager was flitting around. In a few minutes, David spotted it sat and preened over the stream.

On the corner of the trail, a Chestnut-backed Antbird appeared again and two Riverside Wrens showed very well in a tangle. An Agouti was spotted just off the trail and another Chestnut-backed Antbird showed nearby. A Black-faced Antthrush was spotted walking on the forest floor and crossed the track behind us allowing good views.

We reached the end of the trail and came out of the forest. On the way back to the lodge, we drove to a small pond where there were several birds including Green Heron, Northern Jacana, Mangrove Black-Hawk, and Bare-throated Tiger-heron. Some Scarlet Macaws flew over as the sun set and we made our way back to the lodge.

Day 6 Thursday, January 10, 2008

Many of us were up early to enjoy our last morning at Villa Lapas before our boat ride on the Tarcole River. Some Chestnut-mandibled Toucans were seen in the garden and a Green Kingfisher was spotted on a perch overlooking the river. During breakfast on the terrace, two Scarlet Macaws flew over and as we checked out there were two Bare-throated Tiger-herons in tree outside the reception area.

We traveled down to the coast passing several Turkey Vultures and Groove-billed Anis on the road. The Mangrove Black-Hawk was spotted in the field next to the pond we visited last evening as were a few Great Egrets, a Bare-throated Tiger-heron, and a Green Heron. We arrived at the dock noted four White Ibis and a Hudsonian Whimbrel as we made our way to our boat. There was also the first of many Spotted Sandpipers, and on the other side was a close Bare-throated Tiger-heron.

We left the dock and traveled down river first toward the sea. A Yellow-headed Caracara flew over and we saw the first of many Little Blue Herons along the shore. Mangrove Swallows seemed to be following us and did so throughout the trip sometimes landing on the boat. Luis, the driver of the boat, pointed out a Purple Gallinule behind a log and we saw it fly across and land out of site. Our first of many Great Blue Herons came into view and lifted its head as we quietly moved past. As we approached the mouth of the river, we could see waves crashing on the beach. The sandbar in front of us held a Neotropical Cormorant, several Royal Terns, Laughing Gulls, and many Brown Pelicans. On the other side of the river, an Osprey was perched on a stick.

We turned to head up river noting several Great Egrets, Least Sandpipers, and a few Black-necked Stilts on a sand bar near the shore. There were many Spotted Sandpipers some very vocal as we continued. We neared the mangroves on shore to view a bright Prothonotary Warbler flitting among the roots. There were several Crocodiles sunning out on a sand bar a reminder that this was not a place for swimming! Steve pointed out three Red-winged Blackbirds near the waters edge in the mangroves and Gina motioned toward a Belted Kingfisher on a dead tree along the edge. An Amazon Kingfisher showed well and we began to see more and more Tricolored Herons as we moved up river. A Roseate Spoonbill flew over and dwarfed the Rough-winged Swallows and Mangrove Swallows that were around. We reached an area where there was a Boat-billed Heron perched in the mangroves. As we positioned to get near it, a Yellow Warbler was noted and a Yellow-naped Parrot flew over. Luis stopped in an area where there were three more Prothonotary Warblers and our prize here was a nice Mangrove Warbler that gave great views.

We stopped at another area when we heard the call of Mangrove Hummingbird and got quick views as it flew back and forth across the river. At one point it perched in front of us and most of us got on it. A Rufous-browed Peppershrike called and showed well for us. Along the bank was a Northern Waterthrush which disappeared into the mangroves. We moved on slowly and found an American Pygmy-Kingfisher very close at the edge of the river. A Green Heron skulked across an open area and also disappeared into the mangrove roots. Above us the Turkey Vultures were starting to soar and we noted a Zone-tailed Hawk among them. Back down on the river we came to an area where two Mangrove Vireos were heard, one on either side of the river. Luis "docked" the boat in the mud and we searched the mangroves until we got satisfying views of it.

Taking another fork of the river yielded another Amazon Kingfisher and some distant Magnificent Frigatebirds. We reached an area that had several more Boat-billed Herons allowing close looks. Mesmerized by the herons, we nearly missed the Osprey fishing close by. There were a few Yellow-crowned Night-Herons perched above the herons and we noted some Green Iguanas sunning on the bank. As we moved on a Yellow-headed Caracara came in and perched on a stick in the river. All the while the Mangrove Swallows followed us closely.

We came to a bend in the river where there were several cows feeding with their attendant Cattle Egrets nearby. We slowly moved past a small group of very elegant looking Black-necked Stilts that barely acknowledged our presence. Here there were at least three Mangrove Black-Hawks flying above the river. We soon found the Reddish Egret that had been reported perched on a stick in the river. Beyond it, in an open area we spotted a Double-striped Thick-knee - only showing its head above the grass. Continuing further, we found a Roseate Spoonbill perched in a tree on the side of the river. This area also held three Boat-billed Herons and an unexpected Mangrove Cuckoo. Here, we noted our first Black-crowned Night-herons of the trip, an adult and a juvenile perched in the upper branches of the same tree.

We headed back down the river and as we were about to pull into port, four White-throated Magpie-jays were spotted in a tree. They flew over to the trees above our port and we got nice views of them. On shore, we got good views of a Hoffman's Woodpecker in a tree and another Ctenosaur perched up on a broken stump.

From here we headed to Guacimo Road which provided some dry, Guanacaste habitat and some new birds. David spotted four Spot-bellied Bobwhites from the bus. We positioned ourselves to see them under a tree not far off the road and soon Steve was out corralling them

in our direction. The sun was warm and bright as we did a roadside stop in an area which turned out to be quite birdy. A flowering tree held several hummingbirds including Plain-capped Starthroat, Green-breasted Mango, Cinnamon Hummingbird, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, and some nice Canivet's Emeralds. A Scrub Euphonia showed well in a tree right beside the road and some of us spotted a Stripe-headed Sparrow in the larger tree in front of the hummingbird tree. A few Orange-fronted Parakeets flew by and a few perched for quick looks. Across the road a Nutting's Flycatcher was spotted perched on a branch eating a berry. A Streak-headed Woodcreeper drew our attention back across the road and by this time it was time to move on.

Further on, we stopped beside a huge tree beside a small stream. A White-lored Gnatcatcher was heard and then seen close to the bus. We decided that this was a nice shady spot along a stream for our picnic lunch so we remained here for a bit.

After lunch, we spotted some birds in a large tree in a field nearby including Summer Tanager, Masked Tityra and Ruddy Ground-Dove. Across the bridge there was some activity in another large tree including Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Yellow-olive Flycatcher, Northern Beardless Tyrannulet, Streak-headed Woodcreeper, and Squirrel Cuckoo. Across the road, we found a female Long-tailed Manakin and a Hoffman's Woodpecker in the background.

Oscar turned the coach around and we got on board to head back out the road. At one point, Steve heard a call which sounded like a jay or parrots so we got out to see what it was. Soon David spotted one of several Orange-fronted Parakeets in a large tree on a farm on the side of the road. From here we continued on to our lodge near La Selva.

Day 7 Friday, January 11, 2008

During breakfast overlooking the Sarapiquí River, we enjoyed nice views of a Ringed Kingfisher perched on the nearby suspension bridge. At the feeders were Palm and Blue-Gray Tanagers, Shining Honeycreeper, and a female Green Honeycreeper. After breakfast we walked up to meet at the reception area and along the way got good views of Orange-billed Sparrow and a Wedge-billed Woodcreeper. We took the bus up to La Selva and on the way noted a few Gray-breasted Martins on a wire along the roadway. We got out at the entrance road to the reserve and birded our way to the gate. A Chestnut-mandibled Toucan showed well atop a low tree. A loud repetitive call of a Bright-rumped Attila turned our attention to the other side of the road to see this bird perched in the middle of a tree. Above the Cuckoo at the treetops were a couple of White-ringed Flycatchers. On the next corner, Wendy spotted a Crested Guan halfway up a tree on an open branch. Up the hill, we saw a bright Blue Dacnis on top of a tree and Liz spotted a Violaceous Trogon. A Keel-billed Toucan was spotted in a distant trees and scope views of it out in the open brought wows from several people. A Plain Wren skulked in the nearby vegetation and a Black-cheeked Woodpecker was spotted in some higher brush. On the other side of the road in a thick tangle, there was a female Fasciated Antshrike and a female Banded Antshrike as well as a Passerini's Tanager. As we got to the gate, there were two Green Ibis in an open field. We scoped some distant trees to find a few Black-thighed Grosbeaks and more Gray-capped Flycatchers. On up toward the car park, we saw Buff-throated Saltators on the ground along with more Passerini's Tanagers and a Ruddy Ground-Dove. Near the main building we scoped a large Green Iguana sunning at the top of a tree. In the garden near the building were Common Tody-Flycatcher and another Bright-rumped Attila. Two Banaquits fed on some purple flowers in the garden as did several Rufous-tailed Hummingbirds.

We met up with our guide Rudolpho and enjoyed good views of a Long-tailed Hermit feeding on some Heliconias. We began walking toward the suspension bridge and spotted more Chestnut-

mandibled Toucans feeding on some berries. A White-whiskered Puffbird was spotted briefly and then flew back into the forest. As we walked across the bridge a pair of Violaceous Trogons flew in and landed on the bridge. A Rufous Mourner showed well on the trunk of a tree at the end of the bridge. Just off the bridge, there was a bit of activity in the corner near the river. Some Black-cowled Orioles showed well as did a Northern Barred Woodcreeper. Passerini's Tanager showed its bright rump and distracted several of us from a Broad-billed Motmot that was perched just above the bridge. A Cinnamon Becard flew in and showed well for us as did a Streak-headed Woodcreeper. An Olive-backed Euphonia was a bit more difficult to see but we caught up with it a little later and had excellent looks as it fed on some berries in the middle of the garden. A Violet-crowned Woodnymph fed on some red flowers of a low tree and in the right light it showed its brilliant greens and purples. A group of Black-faced Grosbeaks arrived in a large tree and fed frenetically keeping us focus on the middle branches. A small flock of Silver-throated Tanagers appeared in a fruit tree while a White-collared Manakin female was seen at the forest edge. A Red-footed Plumeleteer posed for photos in a low branch.

We entered a forest trail where a group of Collared Peccaries were feeding just off the trail. Further on, some of us got looks at a very skulky Bay Wren but a White-ruffed Manakin male showed very well above the trail. After getting our fill of the Manakin, Gina notice a Great Tinamou very close to the trail and we were able to enjoy the bird from less than 3 meters away! A White-breasted Wood-Wren was seen well near the ground and a Western Slay-Antshrike female posed in the under story. We reached an area with some tall trees where several Woodcreepers were working the trunks including Northern Barred, Plain Brown, Streak-headed and Wedge-billed. Further along the trail, Rudolpho pointed out some Lesser Sac-winged Bats in a tree crevice and we got fairly good scope views of them. On the other side of the tree David spotted some Mealy Parrots eating some fruits and they were low enough to give very satisfying looks. We turned up another trail following the calls of a pair of Rufous Motmots which showed extremely well just above our heads. In the meantime, Steve had spotted a female Great Curassow that skulked on the forest floor almost always out of our view. While looking for the Curassow, we spotted a Ruddy Quail-Dove on the forest floor and a Strawberry Poison Dart Frog on the buttress roots of a large tree. As we worked our way back a very vocal Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was spotted above the trail. We left the forest and walked back through the gardens where a couple of Chestnut-mandibled Toucans were feeding on some low vines over the trail allowing great looks and photos. Two Short-billed Pigeons flew into a tree on the other side of the path. When we looked back at the Toucans they were flying off only to be replaced by two Collared Aracaris visiting the same fruits. Again, cameras clicked for this stunning bird.

We walked back over the suspension bridge and found the world's most active Hoffman's Two-toed Sloth feeding just above the bridge. A Dusky-faced Tanager was seen as well as a nice Band-backed Wren and a Scarlet-rumped Cacique foraging in the forest. Back at the headquarters, some of us found a very confiding Passerini's Tanager which posed for photos. We boarded the bus and headed back to the lodge for lunch. On the way back, we stopped for two Mantled Howler Monkeys on a Cecropia Tree. As we turned on to the main road, Steve spotted a Broad-winged Hawk flying.

After lunch and a short siesta, we reconvened at the lounge area. The feeders were active with Olive-backed Euphonia, Shining Honeycreeper, Palm and Blue-Gray Tanagers. Steve called us out to see a Green and Black Poison Dart Frog near a log in one of the gardens. We walked a trail along the edge of the river and soon came upon a Buff-rumped Warbler at the waters edge.

Further on, Doreen spotted a nice Sunbittern across the river on some rocks and we all got great looks at it. As we enjoyed the Sunbittern, two Great Green Macaws flew overhead. On the way back, John spotted a Broad-billed Motmot perched in the open on a branch. Back at the dining room, we saw some Red-ored Parrots feeding in a large tree above the roof. We continued on to another trail where we had a nice Bay Wren not far from the track. Wendy spotted another Buff-rumped Warbler by a small stream. We then followed a trail to the other side of the compound near John and Chris's room and saw the mythical Howler Monkey family that lived above their casita. Steve pointed out a Keel-billed Toucan above our heads and we looked across the river to see some Montezuma Oropendolas in a large tree feeding on its flowers. We walked out the road and found a group of Shining Honeycreepers feeding on a palm tree. Two White-crowned Parrots flew in and perched on a tree across the road offering good looks. We turned off the road into a natural area. Here Dickie spotted two Black-cheeked Woodpeckers perched on either side of a tall stump. We walked a bit into a forest trail which was quite dark by this time but we still managed to catch a few glimpses of Red-throated Ant-Tanagers here. We heard a Uniform Crake calling in the distance but it never came our way. On the way out, there was a Common Parakeet on the trail which allowed good looks. By the time we reached the open area, the sun had set and there were a few Lesser Nighthawks flying over. Before dinner, some of us watched and antics of a Central American Woolly Opossum feeding on the bird table.

Day 8 Saturday, January 12, 2008

This morning we took a boat trip on the Sarapiquí River. Despite thick morning fog, it cleared up beautifully by the time we got to the boat. As we left the dock a Roadside Hawk was spotted in a Cecropia. We headed up river and as we passed a large downed tree in the water we got great close views of Southern Rough-winged Swallows and Mangrove Swallows. We turned into a quiet area on the side of the river where a Green Ibis was feeding against a steep bank. There were several Spotted Sandpipers here and all along the river and Christine spotted three Collared Aracaris in a tree. As we turned to go back out the main channel, Steve spotted a Hoffman's Two-toed Sloth high in a tree. We rounded the corner and continued upriver noting a Red-ored Parrot showing well on some vines. Several Green Kingfishers were spotted as well as a nice Amazon Kingfisher perched on a log in the river. In the banks in the shady areas we saw several Buff-rumped Warblers usually in pairs and foraging very actively near the waters edge. There was one bright Prothonotary Warbler in some low vegetation allowing decent looks. Up in the trees we saw several huge Green Iguanas sunning themselves and wondered how some of the branches could hold them. An Anhinga flew up the river ahead of us and later we got nice views of two more perched and holding their wings out to dry.

We passed under a roadway bridge and could hear a Wood Thrush calling on one side. A few of us caught a glimpse of it in the shadows as we passed. Ahead of us some Orange-chinned Parakeets showed in good light. At one point Gina spotted a white bird perched on the upper branches of a tall tree so we asked the boat driver to reverse. As it came into view, it was clear that it was a Snowy Cotinga! In a moment, it dropped down to some thicker leaves and then flew off into deeper forest. Continuing on around the corner, we passed the first of many Great Blue Herons, this one standing at the waters edge offering very close views. A Pale-billed Woodpecker was seen sticking its head out of a hole in a dead palm tree. We took another fork out of the main channel to some quieter water. A beautiful Morpho butterfly flew lazily up along side us. Suddenly David shouted, "There's one!" and pointed to a close Sungrebe. We were all soon on it enjoying prolonged views of the bird as it swam up and down along the rivers edge. Great spot! When we'd had our fill we moved on and while we were recounting our views David erupted again as he saw a Neotropical Otter on a stump. By the time we turned to look for it, it

had disappeared into the water. Further up, Liz spotted another otter and a few of us were able to get very quick views before it too disappeared into the water. On the way back down river, we confirmed that there were indeed Crocodiles in the river as we saw one sunning on the bank. We wondered if the fishermen standing in the water up river had the same information.

Further on, we passed a Cattle Egret perched on a stick. We got to an area that had several large trees on the river banks. One tree with smooth bark had 10 or so Long-nosed Bats roosting on it and we got close views of these animals in good light reflecting off the river. We continued on passing two close Green Ibis feeding along the shore. On the other side we encountered a nice flock including Passerini's Tanager, Olive-backed Euphonia, and Clay-colored Thrush. We went back to the dock having thoroughly enjoyed our excursion. On the way back to the lodge, we stopped at a wet field which held White-throated Crake which a few of us saw.

We went back to the lodge for lunch and then checked out of our lodge. As we walked the path toward reception, we heard the snapping sound of a Manakin and found a male White-collared Manakin and two females. We loaded up the coach and headed toward Arenal. Along the way, we stopped to look at a Three-toed Sloth in a Cecropia on the side of the road. On the way up to the lodge we crossed a small stream where a Black Phoebe was seen on some rocks.

We arrived at the lodge and immediately went to the Terrace which had some feeders below which were buzzing with colorful birds. The most imposing were the Montezuma Oropendolas which were stunning close up. The Oropendolas ruled the feeders but when they moved off there was a stunning variety of colorful birds including Black-cheeked Woodpecker, Golden-hooded Tanager, Emerald Tanager, Olive-backed and Yellow-throated Euphonia, Palm, Blue-Gray and Hepatic Tanager, Crimson-collared Tanager, Banaquit, and Buff-throated Saltator. Two Coatis roamed the ground below the feeders picking up scraps. Also on the ground were House Wren, Gray-chested Dove, and Black-striped Sparrow. A few Violet-headed Hummingbirds buzzed around the purple flowers of Jamaican Vervain. A Wedge-billed Woodcreeper worked up a nearby tree trunk. All the while, the massive Arenal volcano loomed above occasionally spewing out fiery rock. We stayed at the feeders until dark and then met up later for a delicious dinner.

Day 9 Sunday, January 13, 2008

Overnight, many of us heard the explosive and rumbling sounds of the Arenal Volcano as lava rocks rolled down the sides of it. Just after dawn, most of us were out on the terrace for the morning show at the feeders. There were several Montezuma Oropendolas, Golden-hooded and Emerald Tanagers, Olive-backed and Yellow-throated Euphonia, Palm and Blue-Gray Tanager, Silver-throated and Crimson-collared Tanager, Banaquit, Brown Jay, and Buff-throated Saltator. A Coati was up on the terrace and two more foraged below. House Wren and Gray-chested Dove worked the ground under the feeder and a Stripe-headed Sparrow was spotted.

Before breakfast, we walked across the hanging bridge to an open area. A Stripe-throated Hermit fed on the purple Jamaican Vervain flowers and a Wedge-billed Woodcreeper worked the trunk of a pine tree. A Band-backed Wren was also spotted in the pines. A Black-crested Coquette appeared in the bare branches of a tree and then whizzed down to the purple flowers giving good views. A Dusky-capped Flycatcher showed well in a nearby bush. All the time the sounds of the rumbling volcano were in the background, sometimes louder than others. We continued on around the pool and found several Rufous-tailed Hummingbirds feeding on the

Vervain. Above the canopy, three Red-billed Pigeons sat in the bare branches of a Cecropia. A White-necked Jacobin appeared and fed on some red flowers making a nice color combination. Steve heard a Black-throated Wren in some nearby bushes and we were able to get quick glimpses of it as it skulked among the tangles and leaves. Two Stripe-breasted Wrens were much more obliging at the beginning of the forest trail. Thicket Antpittas were calling in the forest and we were able to lure one out for quick views. Back up into the garden, we spotted four White-throated Thrushes feeding on the ground – an unexpected species at this time of year. Another White-necked Jacobin perched atop a shrub in the sunlight and glistened for all to enjoy. A Yellow-bellied Elaenia showed as did a Black-striped Sparrow under a shrub.

After breakfast, we went back into the forest below the feeders. A Summer Tanager showed well and a Black-cheeked Woodpecker was seen on a distant tree trunk. The volcano continued to rumble but was covered with mist not permitting views of the top. A Common Tody-Flycatcher appeared in a thick bush and a Tropical Parula was spotted in the canopy.

We left the lodge and headed down the road toward the dam on Lake Arenal. We stopped to look at an immature Gray-headed Kite perched on a branch above the road. Liz had wandered a little further down the road and motioned to us to come and see the volcano now that the mist had lifted. Cameras clicked like mad as we could see the crater against the clear blue sky and felt fortunate to have such a view. We could see steam and gases coming from the caldera and the side vents of the volcano. Back on the bus, we continued down and stopped for a Broad-billed Motmot sat on a low branch right on the side of the road. We got off the bus and took photos at close range as the bird appeared not to be bothered by us in the least and posed for several minutes. We couldn't have gotten better views of this bird! We watched the sky for raptors and had a nice Short-tailed Hawk soaring near a wispy cloud. Steve heard a Bare-crowned Antbird and some of us were able to get on it before it vanished. Mantled Howler Monkeys were howling in the background and we got views on one in an open Cecropia tree. David spotted a red dot which turned out to be a Slaty-tailed Trogon perched in a tree for all to see. There were also two Coatis in a tree further down. Around the next corner we saw three Crested Guans in a big tree above the road. A Collared Aracari was spotted as well as were some Gray-headed Chachalacas in a vine covered tree. Below the Chachalacas were several birds including Russet Antshrike, a White-winged Becard, and a Great Antshrike, each presenting varying degrees of viewing difficulty. A Band-backed Wren showed reasonably well on another tree.

We continued down to the dam enjoying more clear views of the volcano. The lake was calm with few birds except a Spotted Sandpiper along the edge. A Gray Hawk flew across the volcano. On the other side a cracking White Hawk came over fairly close and giving excellent flight views. It was time to head back to the lodge so we boarded the bus and started up. John shouted "Stop" for a close Gray Hawk perched on a tree. As we passed the entrance to Arenal National Park, there were a couple of White-throated Magpie Jays in the trees and on the ground allowing good views for all.

We arrived at the lodge just in time for another delicious meal and then had some time off to enjoy the lodge on our own. In the afternoon, we met on the terrace and went back over the hanging bridge to the garden. A Green Hermit flitted among the flowers. On the forest trail we had cracking views of a Spotted Antbird that came right out on to the path. What a cooperative little beauty! A Wood Thrush was also seen here as well as a pair of Stripe-breasted Wrens. Further down the trail Chris spotted an Orange-bellied Trogon silhouetted against the sky. We heard a Nightingale Wren and it showed briefly twice in the same spot. We worked our way

back up the trail and tried again for the Thicket Antpitta which would not show. As we neared the end of the forest trail, a Black-headed Nightingale-Thrush showed for some of us. It was an afternoon of skulking forest birds which made us appreciate all the more the easy looks at the colorful birds at the feeders. All the while, Arenal volcano rumbled in the background. As the sun set, we headed back to the lodge and had magnificent clear views of the volcano painted orangey red by the setting sun. Back on the terrace we enjoyed the views of the lake and as darkness fell we could see fiery lava rock rolling down the volcano. On the way to dinner there was a spectacular lava light show of streaming rocks falling down the slope of the volcano. It was exciting to be in the presence of an erupting volcano for these two days and we all enjoyed our last views of this natural wonder.

Day 10 Monday, January 14, 2008

We met on the terrace before our early breakfast to get a last view of the activity at the feeders. The fruit had been depleted the previous day so we put out a banana and whatever biscuits we could find for the birds coming in for their morning feed. A Silver-throated Tanager was the first to take our offerings and was soon joined by Blue-Gray, Passerini's, and Palm Tanagers as well as Clay-colored Thrush. Emerald, Hepatic, and Summer Tanagers came in also. A Purple-crowned Fairy visited the trees above the feeder and we got our first good looks at this fluttering gem. On the ground were a Variable Seedeater, Gray-chested Dove, and a few Black-striped Sparrows. Above the feeders, there was a Black Guan earlier and now some Montezuma Oropendolas waiting for the fruit spikes to be refilled. The purple flowers attracted Violet-headed Hummingbird and Rufous-tailed Hummingbirds. We tore ourselves away for breakfast as the first of two Coatis arrived.

After breakfast, we loaded the bus and headed down the hill to the Arenal Hanging Bridges. On the way, we saw a Snowy Egret in a stream. We reached the hanging bridges and entered the trail and soon heard and saw a Spotted Antbird. Christine spotted a Rufous-tailed Jacamar on a hanging branch which we all got good views of before it was replaced by a Broad-billed Motmot. A Black-throated Trogon showed well above the Tarantula Bridge and further on a Chestnut-mandibled Toucan was spotted in a tree high above the Crested Guan Bridge. The volcano rumbled in the background sounding more like distant thunder than we had heard before. We heard, and then saw three Howler monkeys on a bare tree in the distance as we walked up the hill. There were several Chestnut-sided Warblers and we had quick looks at a number of Green Hermits. At one point, we saw two Lesser Greenlets working up a tangle along the trunk of a tree and got cracking views of a Golden-olive Woodpecker working on a tree close to the trail. On the corner of the trail, Liz spotted a Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant perched in the open. We continued up and over several bridges wondering how they were built in this steep thick forest. As we headed back a Black-billed Nightingale Thrush showed well down a hill off the trail. We also had good looks at a Buff-rumped Warbler in a fall area. At the end of the forest trail, we entered a garden which held Tennessee Warbler, a Wood Thrush offering great views, Passerini's Tanager, and Yellow-bellied Flycatcher.

From here we headed for lunch at a great restaurant outside of La Fortuna. A quick stop along the road for two White-fronted Nunbirds was exciting to say the least. After lunch, we moved on to our next lodge picking up Red-tailed Hawk and Bronzed Cowbird along the way. We arrived at Bosque de Paz and immediately went to the feeders which were very active with many Violet Sabrewings, Purple-throated Mountain-Gems, Green Hermits, Green-crowned Brilliants, Magnificent Hummingbirds, and Magenta-throated Woodstar. Amazingly, there were several Black Guans at the feeding table and in the trees and by the time darkness fell, the count was

21 Guans around the lodge! We settled into our rooms and reconvened for a delicious dinner which was interrupted to go out and see a large Paca feeding under the bird tables.

Day 11 Tuesday, January 15, 2008

This morning's Black Guan count was at least 28 by 6 AM! As we gathered outside the lodge for our early walk, the Violet Sabrewings were already buzzing the feeders. Some White-tipped Doves flew in and we noted an American Dipper in the river. We walked up the trail into the forest to a flurry of activity starting with a Tufted Flycatcher in the branches above the path. On the path, we got good looks at Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch, Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush, Three-striped Warbler, and Black-cheeked Warbler. A Tennessee Warbler worked some branches of a tall tree and a Black-and-White Warbler was spotted way up in the canopy. A Streak-breasted Treehunter worked some bromeliads on a trunk and Collared and Slate-throated Redstart flitted in the branches. A female Green-crowned Brilliant perched close to the trail. On the way back down, a Spotted Barbtail showed well and a female Orange-bellied Trogon was perched very low to the ground offering great views. Behind it, a Red-faced Spinetail worked up a trunk and further back a bright green Resplendent Quetzal was perched on a horizontal branch. Amazing! It was near time for breakfast and we had to drag ourselves away but not before a Spot-crowned Woodcreeper and Black-and-White Warbler were noted. At the feeders back at the lodge several Common Bush-Tanagers were feeding and in amongst them were two nice Chestnut-capped Brush-Finches. Silver-throated and Blue-Gray Tanagers arrived and we enjoyed the feeders as we had breakfast in the lovely dining room.

After breakfast, we met up around to go out for the morning. A Prong-billed Barbet showed well on the feeder. We walked a forest trail and on our way up the hill a Hook-billed Kite flew off from a low perch over the trail. A Red-faced Spinetail worked some branches over our heads and a Golden-winged Warbler flitted lower above the trail. A couple of Tufted Flycatchers showed very well for us. A Green-crowned Brilliant buzzed by us possibly attracted to some of the colors we were wearing.

We found an ant swarm on the trail and staked it out for awhile to see what would appear. There were several very active Slaty-backed Nightingale-Thrushes feeding as well as Gray-breasted Wood Wren, Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrush, Immaculate Antbird, Black-cheeked Warbler, Three-striped Warbler, Yellowish Flycatcher, Northern Barred Woodcreeper, and Spot-crowned Woodcreeper – Quite a show!

On the way back down, we had another Ruddy-capped Nightingale Thrush in an open area and a Brown-capped Vireo in some trees near the lodge. We enjoyed the feeders for a few minutes before sitting down to another delicious meal.

After lunch we explored the road above the lodge taking the bus up and walking down. As we got out there were two Ruddy-capped Nightingale Thrushes on the road easily seen. We spotted an Orange-bellied Trogon perched in a tree and got good scope views of it. Flocks in the canopy included Brown-capped Vireo, Yellow Warbler, Wilson's, Black-throated Green, Flame-throated Warbler, Black-and-White, and Townsend's Warbler. Continuing down the hill, we saw Collared and Slate-throated Redstarts, Common Bush-Tanager, and an Ochraceous Wren. A Golden-crowned Warbler flitted in the under story challenging us to get a good glimpse.

A Smoky-brown Woodpecker showed briefly and a Black-faced Solitaire was more cooperative as was a Gray-breasted Wood-Wren. A few Black Guans were seen as well as Spot-crowned

Woodcreeper, Mountain Robin, Mountain Elaenia, and Gray-capped Flycatcher. Near the last corner before a lodge a female Yellow-bellied Siskin was spotted in with a flock. As we entered the driveway of the lodge, a White-throated Spadebill was seen near a small stream. In the garden by reception, an Orange-bellied Trogon female sat low and offered good looks for a moment before it flew into the trees. The feeders were active with the usual suspects until it got dark. Later in the evening, as we were enjoying another delicious dinner, the Paca showed under the feeders.

Day 12 Wednesday, January 16, 2008

This morning we got up early as we had a full day before our trip back to San Jose. By first light the feeders were buzzing with hummingbirds and finches as well as the Guans. Four Brown Jays also visited. As we loaded the bus, the gardener motioned us to come down to the gate and look at the Hairy Woodpecker he had found – a first for the trip. We noted the different plumage of the bird and consulted the book as we drove out of Bosque de Paz. Along the way, we passed several Broad-winged Hawks along the road. At the main road, we had Montezuma's Oropendola, Tropical Kingbird which we had missed yesterday, and Great-tailed Grackle. We drove through some farm areas with open fields and scattered trees which held Brown-hooded Parrots, Keel-billed Toucans, Long-tailed Silky-flycatcher, and White-crowned Parrots. Blue-black and Yellow-faced Grassquits were in abundance and we stopped for get close looks at some perched on a wire. Further on through more agricultural land we had fantastic looks at Eastern Meadowlarks and Red-winged Blackbird. We also had several Ruddy Ground-Doves along the road.

A roadside stop overlooking a pond was quite productive with Great Egret, Cattle Egret, Green Heron, Green Kingfisher, and Anhinga. A White-throated Crake called and eventually came in close but never showed. While waiting for the Crake, however, we had good looks at Gray-crowned Yellowthroat, Common Tody-Flycatcher, Bananaquit, Variable Seedeater, and Rufous-tailed Hummingbird. Gina scanned the hill on the other side and found a White-throated Flycatcher perched on a wire.

We continued on to a dirt road and walked down the hill to a bridge. There were several White-collared Swifts around some flying very low and giving great looks. As we walked down, we looked through an opening in the trees to see two White-crowned Parrots sitting on top of a bare tree. On the other side, a Sooty-faced Finch came in very close giving excellent views. The area had its share of flycatchers including Yellowish, Yellow-olive, Tufted, and two very confiding Golden-bellied Flycatchers that allowed us to study the differences between it and all of the other Kiskidee-like Flycatchers. Further on, a Golden-winged Warbler showed well and a "real" Chestnut-sided Warbler showed in a low tangle with chestnut sides. A Violet-crowned Woodnymph came in to feed on some flowers on the side of the road. We spotted a raptor soaring above the valley which turned out to be a nice Barred Hawk which gave excellent views. At the bridge, we got great looks at a Torrent Tyrannulet and an American Dipper.

From here we went to the hummingbird café which overlooked a waterfall. As we arrived, there was a Blue-throated Toucanet at one of the feeders which remained amazingly close for photos. There turned out to be nearly a dozen Toucanets in the garden, many of them coming to the banana feeders. We also got amazingly close views at Red-headed Barbet both male and female which first showed under the hummingbird feeders and then on the bird tables out in the garden. Hummingbirds included Green Hermit, Coppery-headed Emerald, and Green-crowned Brilliant. There were many Silver-throated Tanagers on the fruit feeders and a Prong-billed Barbet showed well in the trees and on the feeders as well. Outside the back of the café were

more feeders which were visited by Brown Violetear, Green Violetear, Green Thorntail, Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, and White-bellied Mountain Gem. The café next door had feeders as well and we spotted the rare Black-bellied Hummingbird there giving reasonable looks. Some of us were brave enough to allow the café's pet Tarantula crawl on our hands.

Pleased with our hummingbird list, we moved on to La Paz Waterfall for lunch. There were Short-billed Pigeon sleeping in the trees above the main road allowing some of us to catch up with them. We had lunch and a few minutes exploring the garden before moving on to Poas Volcano. On the walk to the caldera, we had Black-billed Nightingale Thrush and Large-footed Finch. By the time we reached the crater, the mist cleared for a few minutes allowing spectacular views of the crater lagoon and the Sulphur pits. As we walked back, a very confiding Black-billed Nightingale-Thrush posed for photos not the least bit interested in our presence.

We moved on to a quiet road nearby which was rather quiet except for a few Sooty-faced Bush Tanagers, Black-faced Solitaire, Yellowish Flycatcher, and Magnificent Hummingbird. A Rufous-tailed Hummingbird buzzed Wendy's ear. Milady spotted a Black Guan in the top of a tree in the distance. We returned to the main road and found a Black-cheeked Warbler by a little stream. We walked up by a café that had a few Violet Sabrewings at the feeder but the highlight was a Two-toed Sloth hanging from a tree with a baby in tow on the hill above the café. As the sun set, we headed back to San Jose to settle into our hotel for the night.

Day 13 Thursday, January 17, 2008

This morning we met before breakfast to bird the lovely grounds of our hotel. The sky was crystal blue and the breeze was crisp. Early birders reported several Baltimore Orioles, a Summer Tanager, White-tipped Dove, Red-billed Pigeon, Inca Dove, and an Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush seen before the group assembled. We went immediately to a special area in the garden where we picked up White-eared Ground-Sparrow right away. A Blue-crowned Motmot showed very well and there were several Clay-colored Thrushes feeding on some compost. We searched for a better view of the Ground-Sparrow and a glimpse of the Prevost's Ground-Sparrow to no avail. A Wood Thrush was spotted in the area along with Rufous-capped Warbler, Plain Wren, and House Wren. We decided to check other parts of the garden and noted Swainson's Thrush and Rufous-tailed Hummingbird. Back in the special area, we finally found a Prevost's Ground-Sparrow which moved through a vine covered wall and then sat out in the open for good views and photographs.

After breakfast, we loaded the bus and set out for Braulio Carrillo National Park. We stopped at on old Butterfly Garden where we found a juvenile male Snowcap feeding among the purple flowers with Violet-headed Hummingbird, Violet-crowned Woodnymph, Purple-throated Mountain-Gem, and Rufous-tailed Hummingbird. To our delight and adult male Snowcap showed well and some of us even managed a few photos. Steve heard the sound of an owl and before long we were looking at a Central American Pygmy-Owl being mobbed by smaller birds including Blue-hooded Tanager. The owl flew above our heads between the trees and eventually sat out on an open branch allowing excellent scope views. We had expected the Snowcap but this was indeed a bonus and a first for Steve in Costa Rica. You know a bird is good when the guide does a dance!

We moved on to the Aerial Tram and took the transport up the hill to board the tram. As we waited to board a Rufous Motmot showed well on the other side of the loading platform. The ride through the lush forest and then above the canopy was peaceful and exciting at the same

time. One guide pointed out an old nest of a Violet-crowned Hummingbird and some of us saw the bird at eye level very close to the tram car. Others saw Ruddy-tailed Flycatcher, a Two-toed Sloth; Lesser Greenlet, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Olive-backed Euphonia and a few lucky people got a glimpse of a Bare-necked Umbrellabird. The scenery was spectacular and we all enjoyed this glimpse of the rainforest canopy.

From here we went to lunch at a nice café before starting the long journey home. We said goodbye to Doreen and Dickie who were heading off for a few days at Rancho Naturalista, dropped Milady at the hotel, and continued on to the airport. All agreed that we had a very successful birding tour with an exceptional group of people who got on very well.



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