



RESPLENDENT QUETZAL (PHAROMACHRUS MOCINNO)

COSTA RICA

Birder's Paradise: Savegre, Sarapiquí, Arenal, and Carara

11 DAYS | Choose your dates | Best season to travel: **OCT - JUL**

Embark on a comprehensive excursion perfect for avid birders wishing to add to their life list: You'll be rewarded with ample opportunities to seek out some of the hundreds of avian species that call Costa Rica home. Visit hotspots encompassing a variety of habitats—such as Caribbean lowlands, premontane forest, tropical dry forest, mangroves, páramo, and more—during hikes, boat rides, and a hanging bridge canopy tour. Accompanied by one of our expert birding guides, you'll experience the breadth and depth of the country's diverse natural beauty while identifying resident and migrants alike, including rare, endangered, and endemic targets.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Bird the trails of the world-renowned La Selva Biological Station, where more than half of Costa Rica's species have been recorded.
- Enjoy excellent vantage points—including grassland, secondary forest, a river, and a natural spring—at a private ecological reserve near Arenal Volcano.
- Spend a full day in Carara National Park, an ecologically diverse hotspot due to its location at the convergence of northwestern tropical dry forest and humid southern Pacific rainforest.
- Seek out regional endemics like the Volcano Junco and White-throated Mountain-gem, plus the highly coveted Resplendent Quetzal, in the temperate forest and páramo habitats of Cerro de la Muerte.

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- Bilingual local birding expert
- Driver
- Accommodations
- Activities
- Private transportation
- Meals
- Beverages with meals
- Carbon offsetting



SUSPENSION BRIDGE BY GREG BASCO



BOAT RIDE ON THE SARAPIQUÍ

ITINERARY

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

DAY 1 - SAN JOSÉ

Arrive in San José and transfer to Villa San Ignacio, located just minutes from the airport in the charming town of Alajuela. Check in at the hotel and enjoy the stunning views of San José's Central Valley. Elevation is 3,100 feet. *Overnight at Villa San Ignacio.*

DAY 2 - SARAPIQUÍ

This morning, meet for breakfast and an orientation in the hotel restaurant, followed by an introductory presentation on tropical birding from a local expert. Check out of the hotel and start your journey to Selva Verde Lodge & Rainforest Reserve. En route, stop for birding at Cinchona and Virgen del Socorro, if road conditions permit. Selva Verde Lodge is situated in the Caribbean lowlands, at elevations ranging from 180 to 220 feet. Founded by the Holbrook family in 1985, the lodge is renowned for its commitment to ecological preservation and sustainability. The reserve is home to a large assortment of avian life, including several types of herons, egrets, hawks, falcons, macaws, hummingbirds, flycatchers, warblers, sparrows, and tanagers. Specific species often spotted at Selva Verde include the Keel-billed Toucan,



SUNBITTERN BY SANFORD M. SORKIN

Sunbittern, Crimson-collared Tanager, Wood Thrush, Crowned Woodnymph, and Russet-naped Wood-Rail. Selva Verde is also home to the endangered Great Green Macaw, which can occasionally be found feeding on the giant fruiting almond trees in the rainforest. Upon arrival, have lunch at the elevated on-site restaurant. After a brief orientation to the facilities, go birding on the lodge trails. This evening, after dinner, take a walk in search of nocturnal species. *Overnight at Selva Verde Lodge. (BLD)*

DAY 3 - SARAPIQUÍ

Depart at dawn for the world-famous Organization for Tropical Studies La Selva Biological Station for early morning birding in the tropical wet forests. La Selva consists of approximately 2,500 acres of land, over half of which is virgin forest. The area averages over 13 feet of rainfall each year, making it a prime spot to observe water birds. More than half of Costa Rica's recorded bird species have been spotted at La Selva, including the Bare-necked Umbrellabird, Red-capped Manakin, Great Antshrike, Chestnut-backed Antbird, Slaty-tailed Trogon, Striped Cuckoo, Slaty Spinetail, Yellow-tailed Oriole, and Rufous-tailed Jacamar. Return to the lodge for lunch and time at leisure. *Overnight at Selva Verde Lodge. (BLD)*

DAY 4 - SARAPIQUÍ

Begin the day with birding around the Selva Verde grounds and reserve. Later this afternoon, take a boat ride on the Sarapiquí River. While winding down the river bordered with forests and cultivated fields, look for aquatic animals, birds, and reptiles in their natural habitat. You may also see residents going about their daily lives and witness the impact local banana plantations have on this watershed. *Overnight at Selva Verde Lodge. (BLD)*

DAY 5 - ARENAL

This morning after breakfast, depart for Arenal Observatory Lodge, with a stop at La Fortuna's EcoCenter Danaus. This private ecological reserve also develops programs for conservation, training, environmental education, and sustainable production. There are a number of optimal birding locations to explore; the grassland areas, the bridge

over the Burío River, the secondary forest, and the natural spring are all excellent vantage points to seek out some of the 150 species recorded here. Have lunch in La Fortuna and continue to the hotel. Arenal Observatory is the only eco-lodge situated between Lake Arenal and the massive Arenal stratovolcano, and the only hotel within the boundaries of Arenal National Park. Set on a ridge amid towering pine trees on the south side of the volcano, the lodge boasts seven miles of well-maintained trails on over 800 acres. A birder's paradise, more than 400 species have been recorded here. Some of the more spectacular local residents include the Three-wattled Bellbird, Fasciated Tiger-Heron, Laughing Falcon, Red-lore Parrot, Great Curassow, Northern Jacana, Steely-vented Hummingbird, and Keel-billed Toucan. There is also plenty of other wildlife in the area, including three species of monkeys. Elevations range from 1,650 to 2,950 feet. *Overnight at Arenal Observatory Lodge. (BLD)*

DAY 6 - ARENAL

Early this morning, go birding on the lodge's trails. After breakfast, transfer to Arenal Hanging Bridges for birding along the 15 bridges, six of which are suspended in the upper canopy of this mature forest trail system (elevation is approximately 1,900 feet). The trail system straddles different types of ecosystems, forming a transitional vegetation-strip of high biodiversity where both highland and lowland species reside. There is an excellent chance to see motmots and jacamars. Return to the lodge for lunch, and this afternoon continue birding on the lodge's trails. *Overnight at Arenal Observatory Lodge. (BLD)*

DAY 7 - CARARA

Travel to Villa Lapas today, arriving in time for lunch at the lodge. Later this afternoon, when it cools off a bit, go for a boat ride along the Tárcoles River to watch for both water and shore birds, like Double-striped Thick-knee, Roseate Spoonbill, jacanas, and ducks. The Tárcoles River basin is one of the most important in the Pacific coastal region; it drains virtually the entire western side of the Central Valley. Tárcoles hosts an amazing diversity of wildlife along its banks. The river is a perfect place to catch a glimpse of mangrove specialties such as the rare Rufous-necked Wood-Rail, Mangrove Hummingbird, American Pygmy Kingfisher, Panama Flycatcher, Mangrove Vireo, Mangrove (Yellow) Warbler, and Scrub Greenlet. Perhaps the most famous of all its inhabitants are the enormous American crocodiles that live on its banks. Later, take a guided night walk to observe owls. *Overnight at Villa Lapas. (BLD)*

DAY 8 - CARARA

Take an early morning bird walk before breakfast. Then set out for a full day at Carara National Park, one of the birding hotspots of Costa Rica. The park is located in the Central

Pacific region, one of the most ecologically diverse areas of the country. The intersection of northwestern tropical dry forest with the humid rainforest of the South Pacific region, concentrated in a relatively small area, produces an interesting combination of species from both ecosystems. Keep your eyes open for Golden-naped Woodpecker, Baird's Trogon, Orange-collared Manakin, Riverside Wren, Black-hooded Antshrike, Dot-winged Antwren, Long-billed Gnatwren, and Chestnut-backed Antbird. Before dinner at the lodge, watch for macaws from a nearby bridge. *Overnight at Villa Lapas. (BLD)*

DAY 9 - SAN GERARDO DE DOTA

After breakfast, continue to Cerro de la Muerte, an area at the top of Cordillera de Talamanca that is famous for its diversity of endemic wildlife. Consisting of temperate forest and páramo habitats, the natural vegetation attracts species such

as the rare Red-fronted Parrotlet, Costa Rican Pygmy-Owl, Dusky Nightjar, Fiery-throated, Volcano, and Scintillant Hummingbirds, White-throated Mountain-gem, Ruddy Treerunner, Buffy Tuftedcheek, Silvery-fronted Tapaculo, Ochraceous Pewee, Silvery-throated Jay, Black-and-yellow Silky-flycatcher, Volcano Junco, Timberline Wren, Wrenthrush, and Resplendent Quetzal. Look for these species and others at Cerro de la Muerte and La Georgina en route to Savegre. Continue birding at the lodge before dinner. Take some time to visit the hummingbird feeders in front of reception and off the balcony at the lounge. The feeders are often active with resident Talamanca Hummingbird, Lesser Violetear,



ARENAL VOLCANO BY DEB SAVARESE

White-throated Mountain-gem, Volcano Hummingbird, and tiny Scintillant Hummingbird. *Overnight at Savegre Hotel Natural Reserve & Spa. (BLD)*

DAY 10 - SAN GERARDO DE DOTA

Savegre is located in a small community in the Talamanca Mountains and houses its own private biological reserve. This high-elevation habitat of mostly oak and highland cloud forest attracts a huge variety of avifauna. The large centennial oaks that cover the forest are laden with lichens and mosses that contrast with the colorful bromeliads. The forest is rich with insects, mammals, amphibians, and 170-plus bird species. Spend the morning birding looking for Spotted Wood-Quail, Costa Rican Pygmy-Owl, Collared Trogon, Buffy Tuftedcheek, Ruddy Treerunner, Ochraceous Pewee, Barred Becard, Wrenthrush, and Golden-browed Chlorophonia. Head to Los Lagos in the afternoon in search of the Resplendent Quetzal. Dinner is followed by a guided night walk. *Overnight at Savegre Hotel Natural Reserve & Spa. (BLD)*

DAY 11 - DEPARTURE

Depart early this morning for the airport in San José. Flights should be scheduled to depart after 1 pm. (B)

LAND PRICING

\$2,640 (12 participants + 1 leader)

\$2,810 (10 participants + 1 leader)

Price includes accommodations, meals, entrance fees, and activities as indicated in the itinerary, private transportation unless otherwise noted in itinerary, non-alcoholic beverages with meals, expert birding naturalist guide for duration of program, and carbon offset.

International airfare, gratuities, and items of a personal nature are not included.

Valid for travel in 2021.

THE FINE PRINT

A \$200 per person deposit and enrollment form is due to secure your reservation. This deposit is refundable until 95 days prior to departure excluding a \$100 cancellation fee. Non-refundable final payments are due no later than 95 days prior to departure.

TRAVEL PROTECTION

Holbrook Travel purchases Travel Protection on behalf of all participants. These plans help provide coverage once the trip has departed and offer benefits for Baggage/Personal Effects, Accident & Sickness Medical Expenses, Emergency Evacuation and more. Refer to the Plan Document for more details.

Optional additional coverage is available in the form of the Group Deluxe Plan, which offers benefits for Trip Cancellation/ Interruption, in addition to many other insurance benefits and non-insurance assistance services. If interested in this optional plan, we can provide you with rates and plan details.



This program includes optional carbon offsetting with ClimateSafe. Learn more at holbrooktravel.com/climatesafe



COLLARED REDSTART BY ANN AND ROB SIMPSON



WHITE-THROATED MOUNTAIN-GEM BY DON FAULKNER



ACTIVITY LEVEL

3

MODERATE

WHAT TO EXPECT

This journey exposes you to prime birdwatching habitats in Costa Rica's Caribbean lowlands, volcanic Arenal region, Pacific coast, and Talamanca Mountains. It also features Carara National Park, one of the country's most ecologically diverse birding hotspots. Daily guided birdwatching excursions are conducted at an easy pace, lasting up to 4 hours each; some days offer multiple excursions for up to 8 total hours of birding. You'll walk up and downhill along paved and unpaved trails within national parks and our hotels' forest preserves. Some trails have uneven or slippery surfaces, and there is one walk along suspended bridges in the rainforest canopy. Two 2-hour boat showcase aquatic birds. Elevation changes take you from 180 to 10,400 feet. Expect high humidity with temperatures ranging from 60° to 86° F. You'll travel between sites aboard private, air-conditioned motorcoaches along curvy mountain roads, with stops en route. The longest drive will be 4 hours.

