Birding North to South in Costa Rica

Blue-crowned Motmot by Terry Pomper

April 7 - 18, 2016 with Sue MacCallum

Costa Rica is one of the world’s premier birding destinations, but it has so many great birding locations that it can be daunting to decide on which areas to visit in a limited time! We have picked 4 sites that we feel offer the best combination of birds, habitats, and lodging for a productive stay in this beautiful little country. The diversity is simply amazing!

We start in the northern Caribbean lowlands and adjacent foothills, where the abundance of birds is stunning. Favorites such as toucans and trogons are easy to observe. We will explore nearby La Selva Biological Station, home to more than half of the 886 species of birds in Costa Rica.

Next we will explore the cool, mountain forests of Cerro de la Muerte, where we will look for the Resplendent Quetzal, considered by many to be the most beautiful bird in the world, and many other mountain specialties. The lodges here are surrounded by gorgeous forests, streams, and outstanding birding trails.

Costa Rica will continue to astound you as we travel south to the amazingly diverse Osa Peninsula and Corcovado National Park on the Pacific coast, completing our north to south journey through this lovely country.
Costa Rica: Day-To-Day Itinerary

Day 1: April 7 – Arrive in San José, Costa Rica
Our expedition begins at San José’s Juan Santamaria International Airport. You may arrive anytime late in the day. There will be one group transfer. After passing through immigration and customs, you will meet our in-country guide and transfer to the lovely Bougainvillea Hotel, surrounded by citrus orchards and lush gardens, and great for birding. Because people may be arriving later in the evening, there will be no dinner included. Lodging: Hotel Bougainvillea (www.hb.co.cr).

Day 2: April 8 – Travel to Sarapiquí River area
We will have an optional early-morning walk on the grounds of the hotel prior to our welcome breakfast. The hotel’s beautiful gardens are an excellent place to see Rufous-collared Sparrow, Clay-colored Robin, Blue-and-white Swallow, Tropical Kingbird, and many other exciting species.

After we check out of our hotel, we will drive towards Sarapiquí River area, stopping for lunch and some birding at the Waterfall Gardens. Our focus for the next 2 days is the area around the world-renowned La Selva Biological Station, classic lowland tropical rainforest in the Cordillera Volcánica Central Biosphere Reserve, near the Braulio Carrillo National Park. A focus for many of the tropical studies in the country today, the preserve and surrounding area at La Selva are home to more than the half of the 886 species of birds in Costa Rica, including the Red-capped Manakin, Great Antshrike, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Olive-backed Quail-Dove, Snowy Cotinga, Black-throated Wren, and Nicaraguan Seed-Finch.
We will stay at the Selva Verde Lodge at Selva Biological Station for 2 nights. Selva Verde's 500 acre Sarapiquí Rainforest Preservation Area provides habitat for a wide variety of birds, animals, reptiles, insects, and plants. Lodging: Selva Verde Lodge (http://www.selvaverde.com/lang/en) (B,L,D).

Day 3: April 9 – La Selva Biological Station and river trip
Today, we will spend a full morning visit to La Selva Biological Station, the longest running and certainly one of the most prestigious tropical rainforest research stations anywhere in the world. La Selva Biological Station was purchased in 1968 by the Organization for Tropical Studies (OTS) and declared a private biological reserve and station.

The reserve has amazing diversity! Located in a transition zone from the low, steep foothills of the Central Volcanic Cordillera to the vast Caribbean coastal plain in northeastern Costa Rica, La Selva contains over 3,790 acres of primary forest, swamp, and abandoned farmland. There are over 100 species of mammals, thousands of insects, and 2,000 species of plants, including 800 species of trees, all of which have been identified in this biologically rich area. Over 500 species of birds have been recorded here including an amazing variety of parrots, woodpeckers, wrens, and tanagers. Once we have had our fill of the birds (if that is even possible), we will have lunch at a local restaurant. And then enjoy an afternoon boat trip down the Sarapiquí River. Returning to our lodge, we should find Keel-billed Toucans, Great Green Macaws, Wood Thrushes, Grey-necked Wood Rails, Sunbitterns and Violet Crowned...

**Day 4: April 10 – Braulio Carrillo National Park and Rancho Naturalista**
We will leave the La Selva area and head south. Along the way, we will, if conditions allow, stop at a trail in the Braulio Carrillo National Park. These wet, Caribbean foothills can be very productive with Ornate Hawk Eagle, Lattice-tailed Trogon, Yellow-eared Toucanet, and more.

Our destination today is Rancho Naturalista. Set at an altitude of between 2,528 and 3,850 ft. on the Caribbean slope in the Cordillera Talamanca, this popular birding destination has had over 450 species of birds recorded in the area. Birding is excellent right on the grounds of the lodge and there are views of Costa Rica's two tallest volcanoes, Irazu and Turrialba. Lodging: Rancho Naturalista (B,L,D). (http://www.ranchonaturalista.net/)

**Day 5 - April 11, 2016 Full day birding at Rancho Naturalista**
Rancho Naturalista is a terrific birding lodge with plentiful hummingbirds on the large, open upstairs balcony where you can view the distant smoking volcano. The nearby trails are excellent and the location, within the Cordillera Talamanca, is a magnet to many resident and migratory birds. Nearby are several top birding sites, such as Rio Tuís, Cerro Silencio, La Mina, and CATIE are all certainly worth spending some time.

We will look for specialties such as Boat-billed Heron, Sharpbill, Lanceolated Monklet, Sunbittern, Resplendent Quetzal, Lovely Cotinga, Rufous-rumped Antwren and Zeledonia. Lodging: Rancho Naturalista (B,L,D).

**Day 6: April 12 – Cerro de la Muerte**
After some early morning birding on the grounds, we will continue south to the highland cloud forests of the Cerro de la Muerte. Our destination is Savegre Mountain Lodge, situated at approximately 7,000 feet above sea level. In this beautiful setting, we will experience the unique highland cloud forests of the Talamanca Mountains. Steep, forest-covered hills, lush green pastures dotted with tall trees and fruit orchards, and a beautiful mountain stream all provide habitats for a wide diversity of plants and animals. With almost 20 miles of trails, active hummingbird feeders near the dining area, and comfortable rooms, this is a popular stop for everyone. Lodging: Savegre Mountain Lodge (http://www.savegre.co.cr/) (B,L,D).

**Day 7: April 13 – Savegre Mountain Lodge**
We will spend the entire day exploring the area around the Savegre Mountain Lodge. Several trails pass through the lodge’s 800-acre private reserve, offering views of the area’s primary forest. Strangler figs, tree ferns, and epiphyte-laden emergent trees will provide a magnificent backdrop for the many species of birds here. For most, the target bird here is Resplendent Quetzal—without question, one of the most beautiful birds in the world! But we will not neglect the other highland bird specialties including Long-tailed Silky-flycatcher, Fiery-throated Hummingbird, Volcano Hummingbird, and Peg-billed Finch. The
Talamanca highlands are Costa Rica’s largest protected area, totaling over 234,000 acres. *Lodging: Savegre Mountain Lodge* (B,L,D).

**Day 8: April 14 – Travel to Osa Peninsula**

It will be hard to leave Savegre, but we will have to check out very early for our 3+ hour trip southward, towards Sierpe. We are headed towards the amazingly diverse Osa Peninsula and the 100,000 acre Corcovado National Park, considered the crown jewel of the Costa Rican national parks system.

To get there, we will board a boat for a 2 hour ride to our lodge. As we travel through the mangroves, we will look for caimans, monkeys, and various local tanagers, herons, trogons, and kingfishers. There is a wet landing at the Lodge, reminding us how very remote we are! We will arrive in time for lunch at the lodge.


**Days 9 & 10: April 15 & April 16 – Corcovado National Park**

We will have 2 full days to explore areas in and around Corcovado National Park – the last great original tract of moist tropical rainforest in Pacific Central America. It is tremendously diverse and researchers have identified 700+ species of trees, 42 species of frogs, 28 species of lizards, 123 species of butterflies, and over 365 species of birds (including 16 species of hummingbirds).

All six species of felines found in Costa Rica are known to exist in this wilderness area, as are the four native species of monkeys. Additionally, Corcovado supports the country's largest populations of the endangered White-lipped Peccary and Scarlet Macaw. *Lodging: Casa Corcovado Lodge* (B,L,D).

**Day 11: April 17 – Osa Peninsula to San Jose**

This morning’s departure from Casa Corcovado is right after breakfast. Again, we board the boats for our 2 hour ride back to Palmar Sur where we catch our late morning flight. We will arrive back in San Jose airport around mid-day where we will check into Bougainvillea for a restful afternoon and farewell dinner. *Lodging: Hotel Bougainvillea* (B, lunch on your own enroute, D).

**Day 11: Monday, April 18 – Departure for Home**

After breakfast, you will be escorted to the airport for your flight back home after a memorable adventure in this lovely country. (B).

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Luggage is limited to 25 pounds for the Corcovado portion (because of boat and plane restrictions). Guests are encouraged to re-pack in Savegre and any excess luggage will be driven back to the offices in San Jose on April 13th, and will be waiting for you at Hotel Bougainvillea on April 17th.
MASS AUDUBON BIRDING GUIDE: SUE MACCALLUM

Sue MacCallum is Director of Mass Audubon’s South Shore Sanctuaries in Marshfield. During her twenty-five years with Mass Audubon, she has coordinated and led many natural history and birding trips. Her international trips include many visits to Panama, Costa Rica, Ecuador, and the Galapagos Islands, as well as the Amazon Basin in Peru and Botswana. Her many tours to the neotropics have sparked her fascination with tropical ecology, which she enjoys sharing. She graduated from Western Illinois University with a bachelor’s degree in zoology and a minor in botany.

COSTA RICAN BIRDER / NATURALIST GUIDE: RUDY ZAMORA

Rudy is considered to be one of the finest naturalist birder guides in Costa Rica, winning the award for best guide in 1994 by ICT-CANATUR (Costa Rica Tourist Board-Costa Rican National Chamber of Commerce). A member of the American Birding Association, he has participated in ABA-sponsored conventions. Rudy was also a participant at the seminar on management of wildlife areas hosted at the Charles Darwin Institute in the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador. A true Renaissance man, Rudy is a farmer, has studied chemistry, has worked as a professional musician, and since 1987 has led numerous zoo, Audubon, and nature groups through his beloved homeland of Costa Rica. He has also traveled the world, visiting the USA (where he attended the University of Arizona), Mexico, Guatemala, Ecuador, and throughout Europe.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

PRICE: $4450 from San Jose per person/double occupancy; for 12 days
Single Supplement $600. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations, or if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you.
A $500.00 per person deposit is required.

GROUP SIZE: A minimum of 8 participants is required. The group size will be limited to 16 participants.

WHAT'S INCLUDED:

• Services of a qualified Massachusetts Audubon Society naturalist and local guide.
• All transfers and in-country transportation, including flight from Osa Peninsula to San Jose
• All accommodations and meals as indicated in the itinerary. Bottled water during drives.
• Taxes on lodging (16.39%) and meals (23%) included in this itinerary.
• River boat excursion
• Personalized service from local operator (24-hour pager system, radio communication in the bus, first-aid kit, etc).
• Guide services and ALL tips and gratuities all local drivers and guides
• Medical Evacuation insurance.

NOT INCLUDED:

• Round-trip travel to San Jose
• Items of a personal nature (phone calls, alcoholic beverages, laundry, etc.)
• Airport departure taxes ($29), passport fees, or other fees not listed in program.

Mass Audubon ▲ 208 South Great Road, Lincoln, Massachusetts 01773
800.289.9504 ▲ travel@massaudubon.org
TRAVEL DOCUMENTS: A U.S. Passport, valid for at least six months beyond the trip’s departure date. Those not citizens of the U.S. should contact the Costa Rican Embassy for visa requirements. No vaccines are required.

RESERVATIONS, APPLICATIONS, DEPOSITS: Early reservations are required to ensure your place on this trip. All reservations must be accompanied by a completed reservation form and a $500 deposit. In the case of questionable health, we reserve the right to require a physician’s certification to affirm you are capable of the activities. You will receive a final invoice prior to departure with final payment due by 90 days prior to departure - Jan 7, 2016.

RATES: All forms and fares are accurate at the time of publication, June 2014, but are subject to change at any time prior to departure. It is our policy to only pass on the actual amount of any increases in airfares or land costs such as those increases due to the devaluation of the dollar. A price increase may be called for if the group falls below the minimum of 8. The maximum number of participants is 16.

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: The quoted rate is valid for the first two single rooms booked and on a first-come, first-served basis. If more than two single rooms are needed, an additional supplement will apply. Single accommodations are not guaranteed, but will be provided at additional cost if available (see reservation form for cost.) The single room supplement pays for privacy for passengers who are traveling alone and wish to share a room with another tour member, we will do our best to provide a roommate. However, if this is not possible, you will be required to pay the single room supplement prior to your departure from the USA.

FLIGHTS: You, the traveler, are responsible for booking and paying for your own international flights. Once you reserve your space, we will provide you with suggested flights and tell you which flights our leaders will take. You may book flights directly with the airline, online, or with a travel agent. Please be aware that most tickets are non-refundable, therefore you should not book your flight arrangements until you have checked with us to be sure the tour has the minimum number of participants for the trip to go. We ask that you provide us with your flight details so we can be sure to meet you at the airport upon your arrival.

PHOTOS: Mass Audubon reserves the right to make use of any photograph taken on the tour. We guarantee that no photos of a compromising nature will be used. If you have questions or concerns, please contact us.

TRIP INSURANCE: If you cancel for any reason, the cancellation policy will apply. We strongly recommend purchasing Trip Cancellation insurance to protect your funds. A brochure for optional trip cancellation, illness and baggage insurance will be sent to you upon registrations. You can shop for Trip Insurance here: www.insuremytrip.com. We strongly recommend that you purchase trip cancellation insurance to protect yourself. Mass Audubon does provide Medical Evacuation Coverage as part of the tour price.

CANCELLATIONS AND REFUNDS: If you cancel for any reason, this cancellation policy will apply. All cancellations must be done in writing and are effective upon receipt in the Massachusetts Audubon Travel Office. Cancellations received up to 121 days prior to departure will be refunded deposits, minus a $250 per person service fee. For cancellations between 120 and 91 days prior to departure, all deposits will not be refunded. There are no refunds for cancellations 90 days or less from departure. We strongly urge all travelers to purchase trip cancellation insurance. You will be sent information from the Massachusetts Audubon Society upon receipt of your deposit.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND CONDITIONS: The Massachusetts Audubon Society (the “Society”) and/or its agents assume no responsibility or liability in connection with the service of any train, vessel, carriage, aircraft, motor, or other vehicle or conveyance that may be used wholly or in part, in the performance of their duty to the passengers; neither will they be responsible for any act, error, or omission, or for any injury (including death), loss, accident, delay or irregularity that may be occasioned by reason of any defect in any vehicle or conveyance, or through neglect or default of any company or persons engaged in conveying the passenger; or for any hotel proprietor, or for any other person, engaged in carrying out the purpose for which tickets or coupons are issued.

In the event that the tour operators deem it necessary or advisable for the comfort or well-being of the passengers, or for any other reason whatsoever, to alter the itinerary or arrangements, such alterations shall be made without penalty to the tour operators. Additional expenses, if any, shall be borne by the passengers. The Society reserves the right to withdraw any or all tours offered should conditions warrant. The Society also reserves the right to decline to accept or retain any passenger as a member of the tour. In such instances, the full, or an equitable, amount will be refunded to the passenger, but this amount shall not exceed the amount paid by the passenger. No refund shall be made for any passenger during operation of the tour.
The sole responsibility for any airline used in these tours is limited to that set out in the passenger contract evidenced by the ticket. Airlines and other carriers are not responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time passengers are not on board their planes or conveyances. This restriction shall also apply to all other types of carriers, including car rental companies. The services of any IATA and ATC carrier may be used in connection with these tours. The Society shall not be held responsible for any penalties or charges made on special purchase on discount tickets that, due to schedule changes or cancellations, must be changed by the participants.
Reservation form for Costa Rica: April 7-18, 2016

Mr./Mrs./Ms. 
Passenger Name (1) – as shown as passport

Preferred Name on name tag: ______________________________ Date of Birth: __________________________

Mr./Mrs./Ms. 
Passenger Name (2) – as shown as passport

Preferred Name on name tag: ______________________________ Date of Birth: __________________________

Address

City __________________ State __________ Zip __________

Phone: Day __________ Evening __________

Email address __________

Accommodations: I/We are non-smoker(s) ___ smoker(s) ___

___ I request single accommodations where available. Singles are not guaranteed.

___ I would like to be assigned a roommate. If one is not available, I understand that I must pay the single supplement.

Deposit: Please find my enclosed check ______________ or please charge __________ my credit card for the deposit:

VISA ___ MC ___ Card # __________________________ Exp. __________

I/we certify that I/we have not recently been treated for, nor am I aware of any physical or other condition or liability that would create a hazard to myself or the other members of this tour. I understand and agree to the terms of this tour as set forth in the itinerary.

________________________
Signatures