



2027

EcoTravel

Overnight Natural History Tours and Day Trips

Casual Costa Rica

March 5 – 13, 2027



Overview

While Costa Rica is approximately the same size as West Virginia, its proximity to the Equator, along with vast towering mountains, results in 5% percent of the world's total biodiversity. A majority of the different organisms that inhabit Costa Rica can be found within national parks and other protected areas. Amazingly, 25 percent of Costa Rica's land is protected, by far the largest percentage of protected land throughout the world! Costa Rica once had one of the highest deforestation rates in the world, but attention to environment has brought its rate to a nearly complete stop.

A common destination for birdwatchers from all around, Costa Rica continues to draw visitors with a multitude of locations that never cease to amaze. On our journey we'll visit mountain retreats, home to some of Costa Rica's most sought-after species. From a wide variety of colorful hummingbirds to iconic toucans and more, this trip is sure to excite birders and nature lovers of all levels.

Whether you are a first-time traveler to Costa Rica, or a well-traveled return visitor, the chance to visit a peaceful, nature-loving country should never be turned down. Join us as we explore from high to low, from forests to mountaintops and everywhere in between. Witness the breathtaking beauty and jaw-dropping species, and take home countless memories as we explore wild Costa Rica.

Climate

Temperature and Season

Tempartures in the mountains range from the upper 40s to low 80s on average. While March is the dry season, this trip is centered around the cloud forest and rain can occur at any time. Travelers should expect to pack layers for cool mornings with warm afternoons.

Elevation

3,800 – 8,000 feet above sea level

Accommodation

Our hotels are comfortable with modern amenities. In the mountains, hotels normally don't have air conditioning because of cool evenings, unlike hotels in the Central Valley around the airport. Travelers can expect en suite bathrooms. Cellular service is spotty, and hotels in the mountains primarily have WiFi around common areas such as lobbies.

Pace and Physical Difficulty

This trip is at a casual pace, with some walking. Mountain roads take time to navigate by car, with driving usually taking longer than expected when using GPS apps. Bird feeders in Costa Rica are plentiful, with dozens of species regularly visiting.

Birding is at a relaxed pace, with options for longer walks at certain locations. Photography opportunities, especially around feeders where natural perches are common, are plentiful.



Itinerary

Day 1

After leaving our home airports in the early morning, we'll arrive in Costa Rica and clear customs. Once outside, we'll drive across San Jose, the capital, to our hotel, where we'll relax and enjoy the first night in this tropical paradise.

Night: Hotel Bougainvillea

Meals: D

Day 2

With optional pre-breakfast birding, we'll search the hotel gardens for our first species, including the resident **Mottled Owl**. **Rufous-tailed Hummingbirds** should be common, while warblers, motmots, and chachalacas might be around. **White-eared Ground-Sparrows**, a beautifully colored bird, can also be found hopping around the garden.

After breakfast, we'll head through the mountains to Nectar & Pollen Reserve, a privately owned reserve, which is a great place to search for hummingbirds. Some of the possible species include **White-necked Jacobin**, **Green** and **Long-billed hermits**, **Green Thorntail**, **Crowned Woodnymph**, and **Black-crested Coquette**. We'll scan the skies for **King Vulture** and **White Hawk**, while **Rufous Motmot**, **Collared Aracari**, **Crimson-collared Tanager**, and many more species visit the feeders.

In the afternoon, we'll visit Guarumo Lodge, where we'll eat lunch and enjoy the fruit feeders. **Red-legged**, **Green**, and **Shining honeycreepers** are all common, while **Russet-naped Wood-Rails** pick up scraps. After we've enjoyed the feeders to our hearts' content, we'll head into the mountains towards El Copal and our lodging for the next couple of nights.

Night: El Copal Reserve

Meals: BLD

Day 3

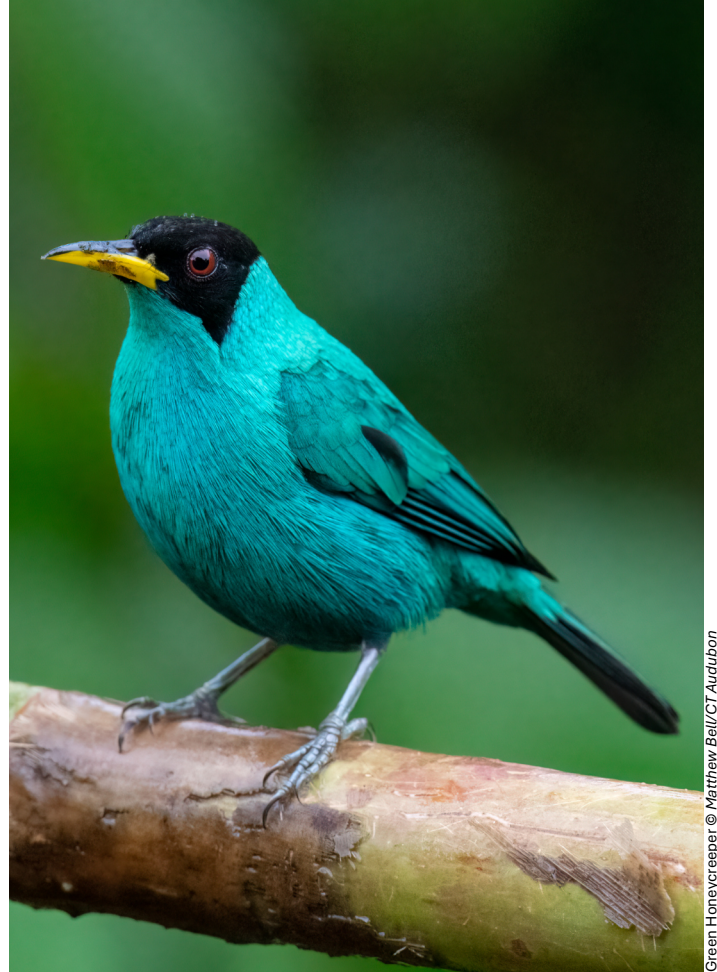
A community-run nature reserve located on the edge of the Talamanca Range, El Copal is often overlooked by visiting birders. Yet the property and its trails are arguably the best place in the country to see otherwise difficult species. One of the main highlights is the property's population of **Snowcaps**, a tiny, bright purple hummingbird with a large white forehead. The whole day will be dedicated to slowly exploring the property. Some of the main species we'll target, in addition to the hummingbirds, are **Yellow-eared Toucanet**, **Barred Hawk**, **Ashy-throated Chlorospingus**, **Rufous-browed Tyrannulet**, and **White-crowned Manakin**, along with the many species of tanagers, trogons, and flycatchers that call the reserve home.

Night: El Copal Reserve

Meals: BLD



Rufous-tailed Hummingbird © Matthew Bell/CT Audubon



Green Honeycreeper © Matthew Bell/CT Audubon



Collared Aracari © Matthew Bell/CT Audubon

Day 4

Today we'll make a day trip to the famous Rancho Naturalista. With its feeders and trails, it's been historically one of the best places to find **Lovely Cotinga**, although in recent years the species seems to have left the property. Nonetheless, the feeders and pools attract a myriad of species, including **Crested Guan**, **Garden Emerald**, **Lesson's Motmot**, **Orange-billed Sparrow**, **Montezuma Oropendola**, **Golden-hooded Tanager**, and many more.

After lunch, we'll head into one of the surrounding valleys, where we'll check some of the bodies of water for a variety of waterfowl, both wintering and resident. Among the **Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks** and **Muscovy Ducks**, we'll keep our eyes peeled for **Blue-winged Teal** and **Lesser Scaup**. Herons and egrets will also be around, while **Purple Gallinules** move nimbly through the floating vegetation. **Snail Kites** hunt overhead while a variety of kingfishers dive off their perches. We're sure to add several species to the trip list today!

Night: El Copal Reserve
Meals: BLD

Day 5

After packing our bags and saying goodbye to El Copal, we'll head to another local reserve. Here, we'll target any local species we've missed, and even have an outside chance at one of the rarest birds in Costa Rica: **Lancolated Monklet**. Finding mixed flocks will be our goal, and with luck, we'll run into multiple antbirds, flycatchers, euphonias, wrens, and warblers.

In the afternoon, we'll continue our drive around the mountains towards our next hotel.

Night: Hotel Quelitales
Meals: BLD

Day 6

Now at a higher elevation, we'll spend the day exploring Tapanti National Park and the surrounding roads. **Black Guans** will have replaced their lower elevation cousins, while **Purple-throated Mountain-gems** will hopefully be spotted visiting flowering plants. Both **Red-headed** and **Prong-billed barbets** can be found with mixed flocks, while **Silvery-fronted Tapaculos** can be heard calling from the dense brush. Mixed warbler flocks may hold residents such as **Tropical Parula** and **Slate-throated Redstart**, joined by wintering migrants including **Chestnut-sided** and **Golden-winged warblers**.

In the afternoon, we'll return to our hotel and check the gardens for some specialties of the property, including **Green-fronted Lancebill**, **White-bellied Mountain-gem**, and **White-naped Brushfinch**. With luck, as dusk approaches, we may get eyes on the secretive **Scaled Antpitta**, which sometimes comes in to worms placed on a rock.

Night: Hotel Quelitales
Meals: BLD



Crested Guan © Matthew Bell/CT Audubon



Yellowish Flycatcher © Matthew Bell/CT Audubon



Prong-billed Barbet © Matthew Bell/CT Audubon

Day 7

The exact location of where we explore today will depend not only on the weather but also on what birds we're still searching for. We'll venture high above the clouds, with one of our main targets being the iconic **Resplendent Quetzal**. We'll also be in range of species including **Fiery-throated Hummingbird** and **Long-tailed** and **Black-and-yellow silky-flycatchers**, which may lead us to a hunting **Costa Rican Pygmy-Owl**. With luck, we may stumble upon something rare and unusual.

Night: Hotel Quelitales

Meals: BLD

Day 8

On our final full day, we'll spend the morning exploring the grounds of the hotel, enjoying the dawn chorus, and the variety of species coming in to the multiple feeders. **Keel-billed Toucans** can be heard calling from the hillsides, while **Violet Sabrewings** aggressively defend the feeders. There's also a wide variety of butterflies around!

When bird activity has slowed down, we'll begin to make our way back towards San Jose and our final hotel, with ample time to relax and pack bags to ensure easy travel the next day. And don't forget about any souvenirs you may have purchased!

Night: Hotel Bougainvillea

Meals: BLD

Day 9

We'll depart after breakfast for the airport and our flights home, full of memories and with plenty of photos to sort through!

Meals: B



Fiery-throated Hummingbird © Matthew Bell/CT Audubon



Spotted Antbird © Matthew Bell/CT Audubon

General Information

Tour Cost: \$5,998.

Members: \$5,498.

The above cost is based upon a minimum number of six paying participants traveling together. If there are fewer participants, there will be a small group supplement. Per person Tour Cost is based on two people sharing a room.

Single Room Supplement: \$380.

All rates are calculated at the time of publication and are subject to change due to conditions out of our control (i.e. hotel rates). All passengers will be notified if changes in pricing occur.

Tour Includes:

Accommodations are based on double occupancy, one or two beds. Meals are included as outlined in the itinerary section (B=Breakfast/L=Lunch/D=Dinner). Additional charges for meals may apply if needs are out of the standard offerings. Entrance fees to national parks and sightseeing as specified in the itinerary.

Not Included:

Taxes; costs of obtaining passports and visas; airfare; baggage fees; personal expenses such as room service, beverages, laundry, gratuities for the local guide, and housekeeping; personal communications; airport taxes; tax increases or new taxes charged for services that were not taxed at the time the booking was made; excess mileage carried out at the request of the passenger; sightseeing or meals not specified in the itinerary; personal insurance coverage (strongly recommended); and transfers to and from your home airport.

Leader

Matt Bell is a graduate of The Ohio State University with BS degrees in both earth sciences and evolution/ecology. He started birding in May 2013 and became more seriously involved after a trip to Costa Rica. Since then he helped revive The Ornithology Club at Ohio State and assisted as a volunteer guide for The Biggest Week in American Birding and the Yellow Rails and Rice Festival. He absolutely loves participating in citizen science, tour guiding, chasing rare birds in his free time, and meeting fellow birders from around the globe. Most of all, Matt enjoys sharing his passion for birds and conservation with others and never shies away at taking the time to help beginners start their explorations of the avian world. Matt is the Assistant Director of EcoTravel and leads day trips and overnight tours.



Mountain Thrush © Matthew Bell/CT Audubon



Rufous-collared Sparrow © Matthew Bell/CT Audubon



Sooty-capped Chlorospingus © Matthew Bell/CT Audubon

General Terms & Conditions

Reservations

Early reservations with deposit are essential to guarantee your booking. A **\$1,500 deposit, per person**, applicable to final payment, is required to reserve space on this trip. Reservations made within 120 days of departure require full payment along with the formal Registration Forms. Final payment for programs is due 120 days prior to departure. Payments can be made by personal check, money order, certified check, or a cashier's check.

Rates and Fares

Prices are accurate as available at the time of publication. Prices do not include airfare unless otherwise stated. The Connecticut Audubon Society (CAS) reserves the right to alter quoted prices to reflect changes in airline fares, land service, or currency exchange rates. In the event that the number of participants is below the minimum required for the quoted price, a small group surcharge may be added.

Cancellation and Insurance

At the time the EcoTravel Office receives written notice that you must cancel your trip, the following cancellation fees will apply: Prior to 120 days from departure, your payments will be refunded minus **\$300 per person**. At 120 days and less, no refund is granted. NOTE: In addition to cancellation fees, airline tickets and deposits required to guarantee hotel rooms may be nonrefundable. The purchase of a general travel insurance plan covering baggage, accident/life, and trip cancellation is highly recommended. Give us a call and we can put you in touch with those providers. CAS reserve the right, if registration is insufficient or other reasons out of our control, to cancel, postpone, or offer the trip with a small group supplement. In the event that CAS cancels or postpones, those with reservations will be notified as soon as possible and a credit of payments will be held on file. The Connecticut Audubon Society is not responsible for the refund or credit of additional expenses incurred in preparation for a trip. Any "delay" or "postponing" of departure by tour participants is considered a cancellation and cancellation parameters will be apply relative to the 120-day window. There are no exceptions.

Responsibility

Payment of deposit represents and acceptance of the following terms and conditions by the purchaser: The Connecticut Audubon Society, its affiliates, and all cooperating airlines and agencies act only in the capacity of agents in all matters of transportation and tour operations, and their liability is limited to the terms of the airline tickets and land accommodation contracts. They are not responsible for any delays, inconveniences, accidents, expense, or mishap of any kind whatsoever resulting entirely or in part from the negligence of others or from causes beyond their control. They can accept no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, riot, war, pandemic, quarantine, or other causes. All such losses or expenses must be borne by the passengers, as the tour rate provides for arrangements only as describe in the tour brochure. The right is reserved to change tour leaders, substitute hotels, of similar category, and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by unforeseen circumstances. Baggage is at the owner's risk entirely. No refund can be made for unused hotel rooms, meals, and sightseeing tours unless arrangements are made at time of booking. The right is reserved to decline any person as a tour member for any reason which affects the operation of the tour or the rights, welfare, or enjoyment of the other tour members. Any refund of the recoverable land tour services in the limit of The Connecticut Audubon Society and its affiliates' liability.

To make a Reservation:

Send the above stated deposit to hold your reservation. Nonmembers, please add \$28 (65+), \$45 (single), or \$58 (family) for your annual membership and to take advantage of the member discount.

Send your name(s), address, phone number, email address, name of the trip, your deposit, and membership fee (if applicable) to:

The Connecticut Audubon Society EcoTravel

PO Box 903

Essex, CT 06426

(860) 767-0660

ecotravel@ctaudubon.org

www.ctaudubon.org/ecotravel