



SOUTHERN COSTA RICA BIRDING TOUR

"ENDEMIC SPECIES PARADISE"

Although Costa Rica is a relatively small country, it lies within a bird-rich neotropical region, boasting an extraordinary number of bird species for its size. To date, 942 bird species have been recorded in Costa Rica, including 7 endemic species and 20 globally threatened species. With an area of only 51,100 km²—smaller than the state of West Virginia—Costa Rica holds the highest density of bird species of any continental American country, making it a true paradise for bird enthusiasts and nature lovers alike. This remarkable biodiversity is a testament to the country's diverse ecosystems, ranging from cloud forests and rainforests to coastal wetlands and high-altitude paramo regions.



WHITE-CRESTED COQUETTE

Los Angeles Birders

invites you to explore southern Costa Rica's bird-rich regions. Observe a wide range of species across contrasting habitats, gain a clear understanding of local ecosystems and cultural context, and directly support local conservation organizations through your participation. Join us to learn, document, and contribute while experiencing the landscapes and communities that define southern Costa Rica.

TOUR CONTEXT

This tour links two of Costa Rica's most important regions for avian endemism: the Osa Peninsula and the Talamanca Mountain Range. Both areas support distinct bird communities shaped by isolation, elevation, and long-term habitat stability.

The Osa Peninsula's lowland rainforests and coastal systems hold species with restricted southern Pacific distributions. Several of these birds are closely tied to mangroves, foothill forests, and intact lowland rainforest. Birding here highlights the conservation value of protected areas and private reserves in the Golfo Dulce region.

As the route moves north and upward, the Talamanca Range introduces a completely different ecological setting. These high mountains support some of Costa Rica's most localized and specialized endemic species. Elevation-driven habitat change plays a central role in species turnover along the route. Sites are selected to illustrate connectivity between lowlands, foothills, and high-elevation forest.

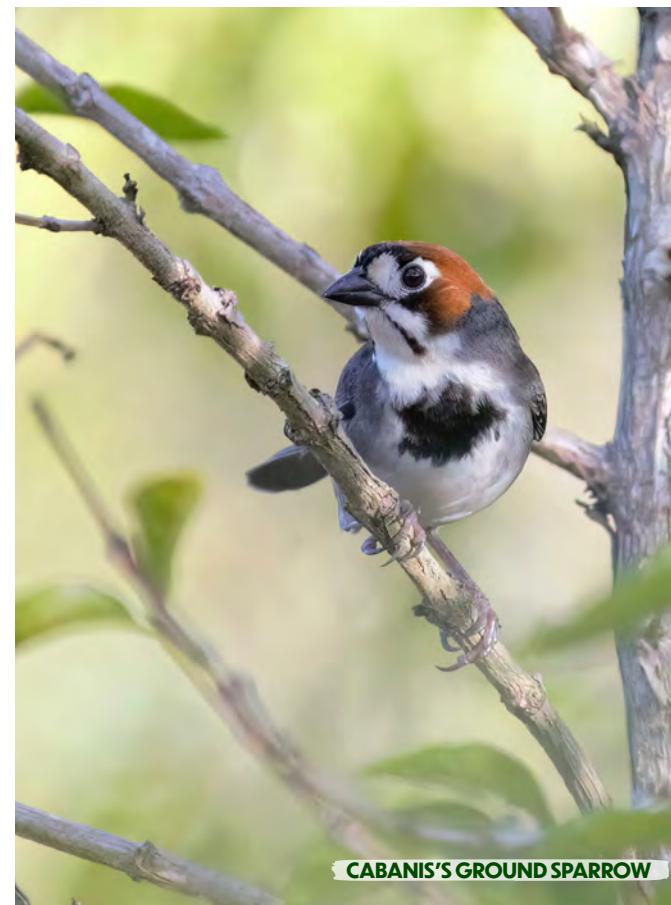
The itinerary integrates national parks, biological stations, and family-run lodges. Ecotourism throughout the tour directly supports conservation, research, and local livelihoods. This program is designed for birders seeking depth, context, and regional understanding.

SOUTHERN COSTA RICA BIRDING TOUR

Day 1 – Sunday, March 22, 2026 – Central Valley – Santo Domingo, Heredia

Upon arrival at Juan Santamaría International Airport (SJO), participants are met by our driver for a short, approximately 30-minute transfer to Hotel Bougainvillea, located in the Central Valley at roughly 1,100 meters elevation. Despite its proximity to the airport, the hotel is set within extensive botanical gardens that function as a productive urban refuge for birds and other wildlife. Afternoon birding around the grounds provides a relaxed introduction to the trip and allows time to adjust after travel. These gardens regularly support species such as Lesson's Motmot and White-eared Ground-Sparrow, along with Blue-and-white Swallow, Rufous-backed Wren, Chestnut-capped Warbler, and Common Squirrel Cuckoo. The setting offers a practical first look at Central Valley bird communities before moving into more remote habitats. In the evening, we gather for a brief orientation and welcome dinner to review logistics, field routines, and the plan for the days ahead.

Overnight: Hotel Bougainvillea / D



CABANIS'S GROUND SPARROW

Day 2 – Monday, March 23, 2026 – Central Valley to El General Valley – Pérez Zeledón

We begin the day with an early field visit to nearby coffee farms and agricultural edges in the Central Valley, focusing on one of Costa Rica's true endemics, the Cabanis's Ground Sparrow, a species largely restricted to this region with only a small, isolated population in the northern mountains. These working landscapes provide an important context for understanding how traditional agriculture and bird conservation intersect. After breakfast, we attend a presentation by Asociación Cerúlea, a local conservation organization actively involved in research and protection projects across several regions of the country. Late morning, we depart south toward the El General Valley, descending gradually into a warmer and more humid landscape, with the drive taking approximately four to five hours including birding stops. Along the way, we pause at selected sites to sample roadside habitats and foothill forest patches. By late afternoon, we arrive at our lodge near San Isidro de El General, where we spend time birding the grounds and surrounding gardens. This area can produce species such as White-crested Coquette and Garden Emerald, along with other regional specialties characteristic of southern Costa Rica.

Overnight: El Pelicano Mountain Lodge / BLD

The Central Valley of Costa Rica is a vibrant region that is home to a rich variety of bird species. This area's diverse habitats, ranging from urban gardens and agricultural lands to montane forests, attract a plethora of birdlife. Notable species include the Lesson's Motmot, Clay-colored Thrush (Costa Rica's national bird), Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, and more. Birders can also spot several species of tanagers, warblers, and orioles, making the Central Valley a prime spot for both resident and migratory birds.



CLAY-COLORED THRUSH

SOUTHERN COSTA RICA BIRDING TOUR

Day 3 – Tuesday, March 24, 2026 – El General Valley to San Vito – Coto Brus

The morning begins with birding around the lodge grounds, taking advantage of early activity before breakfast in this productive foothill setting. Afterward, we visit Los Cusingos Bird Sanctuary, the former home and long-term research site of Alexander Skutch, one of the most influential ornithologists and natural historians of the Neotropics. Skutch lived and worked here for decades, documenting bird behavior in extraordinary detail and setting a foundation for modern tropical ornithology. The reserve protects mature and secondary forest, gardens, and open areas which provide possibilities for Turquoise Cotinga and other unique species. Birding trails around the property provide insight into both the region's avifauna and the history of field-based ornithological research in Costa Rica. By late morning, we continue south toward the San Vito area, crossing into the southern Pacific foothills and gradually approaching the Panama border region. The drive includes selected birding stops along the way to sample changing habitats and elevations. We arrive in the San Vito area by late afternoon and settle in at Las Cruces Biological Station, a research and conservation center by the Organization for Tropical Studies.

Overnight: Las Cruces Biological Station / BLD

Day 4– Wednesday, March 25, 2026 – Coto Brus

We spend the full day birding in and around Las Cruces Biological Station, focusing on a mosaic of habitats that includes mature forest, regenerating woodland, research plots, and well-established garden edges. Situated at mid-elevation in southern Costa Rica, the station protects an important block of forest within a highly fragmented agricultural landscape. Morning and late-afternoon sessions take advantage of peak bird activity along trails, forest margins, and shaded clearings, where mixed-species flocks are often encountered.

The diversity here reflects both Pacific and Caribbean influences, making the area particularly productive for range-restricted and regional species. San Vito's Italian settler history and long-standing agricultural development provide useful context for understanding how conservation has evolved alongside working landscapes. The station plays a key role in protecting forest fragments and maintaining biological corridors that support bird movement across the region. Field time is paced to allow careful observation, photography, and sound recording, with breaks aligned around weather and activity patterns.

Overnight: Las Cruces Biological Station / BLD

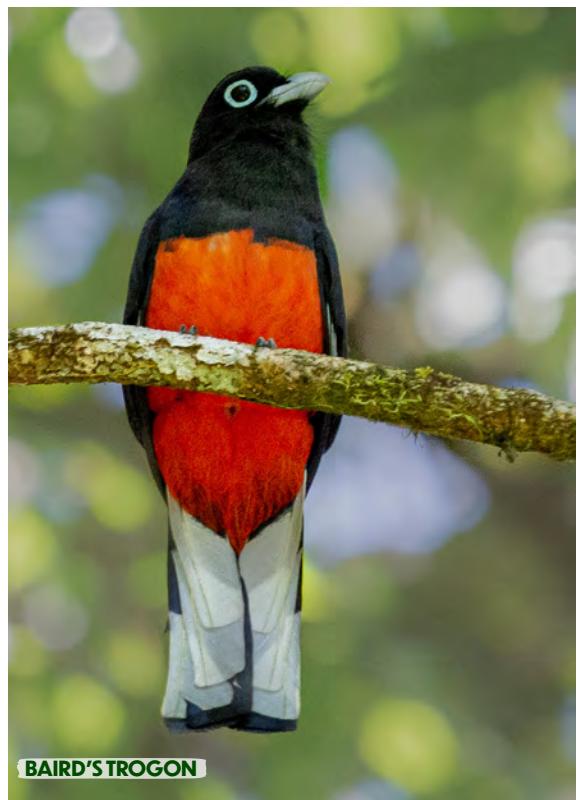


TALAMANCA MOUNTAIN RANGE



The Talamanca Mountain Range, located in southern Costa Rica and extending into western Panama, is one of Central America's most ecologically significant regions. It features rugged terrain, diverse ecosystems from tropical rainforests to cloud forests, and the highest peak, Mount Chirripó, at 12,530 feet (3,820 meters). This range is a sanctuary for many endemic species and offers breathtaking views of both the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean on clear days.

SOUTHERN COSTA RICA BIRDING TOUR



BAIRD'S TROGON

Day 5–Thursday, March 26, 2026 – Southern Pacific Lowlands – Golfito

After breakfast, we depart the San Vito area and begin descending toward the hot, humid lowlands of Costa Rica's southern Pacific region, with the first birding stop reached after approximately one hour of driving. Birding around Ciudad Neily and the Las Pangas area introduces a new suite of lowland habitats, including open savanna, riparian corridors, and agricultural edges. These sites are well suited for species such as Savanna Hawk, Brown-throated Parakeet, and Scrub Greenlet, while flowering trees and forest margins may produce Veraguan Mango and Sapphire-throated Hummingbird. The contrast with the cooler mid-elevation sites visited earlier in the tour is immediate and instructive. By mid-afternoon, we arrive at Esquinas Rainforest Lodge, a small, family-run lodge situated at the edge of lowland rainforest near the Golfo Dulce basin.

The lodge works closely with the nearby La Gamba Research Station, an important hub for tropical research and conservation supporting long-term ecological studies in the region. Late afternoon birding around the lodge gardens and forest edge allows time to settle in and continue exploring this species-rich lowland environment.

Overnight: Esquinas Rainforest Lodge / BLD

Day 6 – Friday, March 27, 2026 – Southern Pacific Lowlands – La Gamba

We spend a full day birding around Esquinas Rainforest Lodge, working a network of forest trails, garden edges, and nearby secondary growth that together offer excellent coverage of lowland rainforest habitats. Morning birding focuses on shaded forest interiors and transition zones where mixed flocks are active, with strong chances for the endemic Black-cheeked Ant-Tanager, a key target of the southern Pacific region. Additional forest specialties may include Baird's Tropic, Riverside Wren, Spot-crowned Euphonia, and Black-hooded Antshrike, all characteristic of these humid lowlands. Midday and afternoon sessions expand into open fields and agricultural edges around La Gamba, adding habitat diversity and increasing overall species variety.

We also bird areas adjacent to Piedras Blancas National Park, an important protected area that safeguards extensive tracts of lowland rainforest connected to the Golfo Dulce ecosystem. The combination of protected forest, buffer zones, and working landscapes provides a useful perspective on regional conservation and habitat connectivity.

Birding is paced throughout the day to match weather and activity levels.

Overnight: Esquinas Rainforest Lodge / BLD



BLACK-CHEEKED ANT-TANAGER

SOUTHERN COSTA RICA BIRDING TOUR



Day 7– Saturday, March 28, 2026 – Southern Pacific Lowlands – Golfito

After breakfast, we depart the La Gamba region and travel toward the Osa Peninsula, one of Costa Rica's most biologically rich landscapes, with the drive taking several hours including planned stops. Upon reaching the coastal lowlands near Puerto Jiménez, we focus on mangroves, estuaries, and adjacent coastal habitats that support a distinct bird community. A primary target here is the endemic Mangrove Hummingbird, a species closely tied to intact mangrove systems in the southern Pacific.

These coastal areas also provide opportunities to encounter migratory shorebirds depending on conditions, along with iconic regional species such as Scarlet Macaw and Yellow-throated Toucan and King Vulture. The mix of marine influence, lowland forest, and open shoreline offers a sharp contrast to previous inland sites. By mid-afternoon, we arrive at Danta Corcovado Lodge, a small lodge set within forested surroundings near the peninsula's interior. After settling in, we spend the late afternoon birding around the lodge grounds, where forest edges and fruiting trees often remain active into the evening.

Overnight: Danta Corcovado Lodge / BLD

Day 8 – Sunday, March 29, 2026 – Osa Peninsula – Puerto Jiménez

We begin with an early morning field excursion to the Rincón River Bridge, a well-known vantage point overlooking riparian forest and coastal lowlands. This area provides one of the best chances to search for the scarce Yellow-billed Cotinga, a flagship species of the southern Pacific lowlands, along with other regional specialties such as Fiery-billed Aracari, Red-lored Amazon, Mealy Amazon, and Blue-headed Parrot. After the morning session, we return to Danta Corcovado Lodge for breakfast and a short break. The remainder of the day is dedicated to birding the lodge's trail system, gardens, and observation tower, which offer access to mature forest, edge habitats, and canopy-level views. These varied microhabitats often support a wide range of forest and edge species throughout the day. In the afternoon, we also visit nearby areas bordering Corcovado National Park, sampling additional forest and buffer-zone habitats that complement the lodge grounds. Birding is paced carefully to match heat and activity levels, with flexibility to revisit productive areas.

Overnight: Danta Corcovado Lodge / BLD

The Osa Peninsula, located in southwestern Costa Rica, is renowned for its rich biodiversity and pristine rainforests. Home to Corcovado National Park, the area is often called the "most biologically intense place on Earth" due to its incredible variety of wildlife and plant species. This remote and lush region offers unparalleled opportunities for nature enthusiasts to experience one of the last great wilderness areas of Central America.



SOUTHERN COSTA RICA BIRDING TOUR

Day 9 – Monday, March 30, 2026 – Osa Peninsula to Talamanca Range –Dota

We begin with an early morning walk to the observation tower to take advantage of peak dawn activity around the lodge, focusing on regional specialties such as Golden-naped Woodpecker, Chiriquí Foliage-gleaner, and Orange-collared Manakin. After breakfast, we depart the Osa Peninsula and begin a long but scenic drive north and upslope into the Talamanca Mountain Range, transitioning from lowland rainforest to high-elevation habitats over the course of the day. Weather permitting, we make a stop in the sub-alpine páramo to explore one of Costa Rica's most distinctive ecosystems, where open shrublands and grasslands support highly specialized species. Target birds here include Volcano Junco and Timberline Wren, both closely tied to these high, exposed environments. By late afternoon, we arrive in the San Gerardo de Dota area and settle in at Sueños del Bosque.

If conditions allow, we spend time birding around the lodge grounds before evening, taking advantage of cooler temperatures and renewed activity at elevation.

Overnight: Sueños del Bosque Lodge/ BLD

Day 10 –Tuesday, March 31, 2026 – Talamanca Range – San Gerardo de Dota

We begin with an early morning outing focused on locating Resplendent Quetzal in the high-elevation oak forests surrounding the lodge, taking advantage of cool temperatures and peak activity. The remainder of the day is spent birding along trails and gardens around the lodge and exploring additional sites throughout the Savegre River Valley, where intact montane forest and riparian corridors support a rich highland bird community. These habitats regularly produce regional specialties such as Slaty Flowerpiercer, White-throated Mountain-gem, Scintillant Hummingbird, Dark Pewee, Sulphur-winged Parakeet, Ochraceous Wren, and Yellow-winged Vireo. Midday, we stop for lunch at Miriam's Quetzal Café, a well-known local establishment closely tied to birding tourism in the valley.

Afternoon birding continues along forest edges and riverine habitats, with flexibility to revisit productive areas. Much of today's activity takes place within and adjacent to Los Quetzales National Park, where ecotourism has played a key role in protecting high-elevation forest and supporting local conservation-based livelihoods. Cooler evening conditions often bring renewed bird activity around the lodge grounds.

Overnight: Sueños del Bosque Lodge/ BLD

Birding tourism plays a meaningful role in Costa Rica's conservation model by supporting protected areas, private reserves, and community-based initiatives. Visits to lodges, research stations, and local businesses generate steady income that helps maintain forest cover and habitat connectivity. In many regions, birding provides a long-term economic alternative to land-use practices that fragment or degrade ecosystems. Costa Rica is a leader in conservation-driven tourism, where biodiversity protection and local livelihoods are closely linked.



RESPLENDENT QUETZAL



SOUTHERN COSTA RICA BIRDING TOUR

Day 11- Wednesday, April 1, 2026—Talamanca Range to Central Valley – Heredia

After breakfast, we continue birding in the upper Los Quetzales National Park region, focusing on high-elevation forest and edge habitats before beginning our return to the Central Valley. A stop at Paraíso Quetzal Lodge provides additional access to montane gardens and forest edges that are especially productive for hummingbirds and canopy species. Targets today include Fiery-throated, Talamanca, and Volcano Hummingbirds, along with Wrenthrush, Long-tailed and Black-and-yellow Silky-flycatchers, and Ochraceous Pewee, all characteristic of Costa Rica's highlands. By late morning, we begin the descent toward the Central Valley, transitioning from cool, cloud-influenced forest to warmer mid-elevation conditions. By mid afternoon, we arrive back at Hotel Bougainvillea, where there is time to settle in and enjoy relaxed birding around the hotel's extensive gardens. In the evening, we gather for a farewell dinner at the hotel, providing an opportunity to review highlights and close the tour together.

Overnight Hotel Bougainvillea - BLD -

Day 12- Thursday, April 2, 2026

Following breakfast, participants transfer from Hotel Bougainvillea to Juan Santamaría International Airport for outbound flights. Transfers are scheduled according to individual flight times, allowing for a smooth and timely departure from the Central Valley. For those with later flights, there may be limited time for final birding around the hotel gardens or to organize luggage and equipment before departure.

This tour is rated Easy to Moderate in difficulty.

Most birding is done on established trails, lodge grounds, roadsides, and accessible observation points.

Daily walking distances are generally short to moderate, with a relaxed pace and frequent stops. The primary physical considerations are environmental rather than technical.

In the Osa Peninsula and southern Pacific lowlands, conditions are hot and humid, particularly during midday hours.

In contrast, the Talamanca Mountains reach elevations of up to 11,400 feet (3,475 m), where temperatures are cooler and thinner air may affect some participants. Elevation changes occur gradually by vehicle, with no sustained hiking at high altitude.

Early mornings are common to maximize bird activity, followed by flexible scheduling later in the day.

Participants should be comfortable with variable weather, including rain and humidity. This tour is well suited for birders seeking to expand their knowledge about Neotropical birds.

No technical skills are required beyond basic mobility and endurance. Proper preparation and pacing ensure the tour remains accessible while covering a wide ecological range.

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Included in the program:

- Professional Naturalist & Birding Guide services throughout the program.
- Coach transportation throughout the program
- All meals indicated with B (Breakfast), L (lunch) and D (Dinner)
- All lodging in standard double occupancy (single supplement at extra cost).
- All entrance fees and excursions.
- Updated Costa Rica's Bird & Wildlife Check-list.
- Purified Water.
- Donations to Los Angeles Birders and Asociación Cerulea
- Gratuities.

Not included in the program:

- Airline ticket - Travel insurance - Alcoholic beverages - Personal expenses

PRICE PER PERSON

10 BIRDERS \$3800

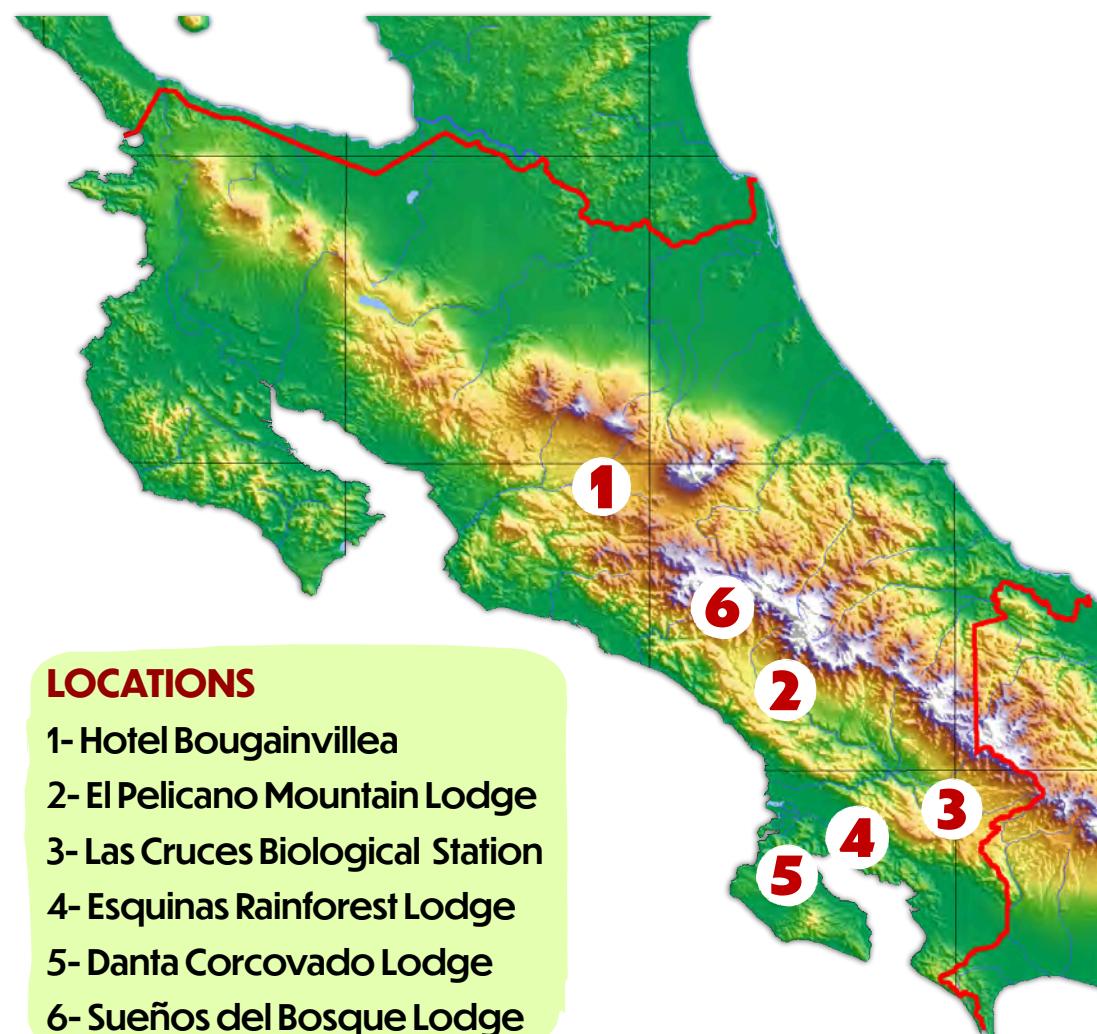
8 BIRDERS \$4100

SINGLE EXTRA \$600

**GROUP SIZE:
10 BIRDERS (MAX)**

**DATES:
MARCH 22 - APRIL 02
2026**

FOR REGISTRATION & INFO: info@flywaybt.com



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:

