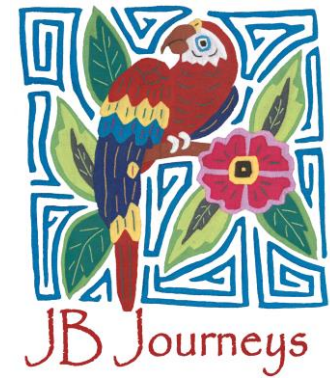


2022 Costa Rica Birding

with Eric Stager

December 3-10



Costa Rica is a leader in eco-tourism. In fact, tourism is among its top industries. It is one of the few countries with a government supported sustainable tourism program and has a goal for the first country to be carbon neutral. In 1949, the country declared its neutrality after a civil war, and has not had a standing army since. Instead, Costa Rica put its efforts into social services, and today is a democratic and peaceful country, politically and socially stable, with modern services and a literacy rate of 95%, the highest in Latin America.

*Although the country is small, about the size of West Virginia, it proudly shelters 5% of the existing biodiversity in the entire world, and more than 25% of the country is protected as natural areas and national parks. **Almost 850 species of birds** are seen in Costa Rica, more than in all of North America. We have chosen these December dates to take advantage of the transition of wet to dry season and of course migration.*

*And we'll make it easy on you by offering a single lodge for the tour, after a first night near San Jose airport. Located in the cloud forest of Costa Rica about 2-3 hours west of the capital, **Rancho Naturalista**, one of the best birding lodges in all of Central America, has over 400 bird species on their 120 acres with an extensive trail system. Rancho Naturalista is more than just a beautiful lodge set in the verdant Caribbean rainforest of Costa Rica. They are known for the many beautiful species of birds that live in the forest reserve. The Rancho consists of over 120 acres and connects with adjacent forested properties creating a large protected area of the Caribbean pre-montane rainforest. There is an extensive trail system of 4-5 miles, which ranges in elevation from 2800 to 4000 feet. These trails cross through a combination of advanced secondary and primary forest as well as an orchard containing many native fruiting trees highly attractive to birds and other wildlife.*



From the Rancho, we'll do day trips to other reserves and habitats, returning each night to the comfortable lodge.

***Eric Stager**, representing JB Journeys, will be accompanied by a local bilingual birding guide. This is an excellent for an intro to birds of the tropics as well as those who wish to study an area more. As we said, it's easy traveling, spending a full 6 nights at the same lodge, exploring from there and returning to the same place. Only a day or two will involve long drives.*

As of printing, Costa Rica has dropped the need to test for Covid beforehand, and they no longer require that you take out travel insurance, but we still recommend it. We do require all travelers to be fully vaccinated against Covid. This is for your own safety as well as that of your fellow travelers and the local population. Right now, the whole country is open, though masks are still required in some areas. We'll stay up to date on regulations and pass them along to you.

Day 1 - Dec 3, Saturday (D)

Arrive anytime. Our driver will pick you up at San Jose's International airport and drive you to our hotel for the night. Once all assemble, we'll have dinner together and go over the week's itinerary.

Overnight at Hotel Bougainvillea (D)

Day 2 – Dec 4, Sunday (B,L,D)

After breakfast and early morning birding the grounds, we'll board the coach and head to the Turrialba area, about 2.5- 3 hours with stops along the way for birding and comfort.

Once you arrive at the lodge, settle in for a full 6 nights. No more packing and unpacking! We'll meet up again for lunch then in the afternoon, hike the trails and get to know the Rancho.

Overnight at Rancho Naturalista (B,L,D)

Day 3-7 – Dec 5-9, Monday – Friday (B,L,D)

During these days, using Rancho Naturalista as our base, we'll visit areas near and further afield:

- **RANCHO NATURALISTA:** We'll spend a day, maybe more, on the grounds which is home to a wealth of bird species; from tanagers to toucans and manakins to antbirds and woodcreepers. The local list is over 400! The lodge garden has fruit feeders which attract a variety of bird species including Lesson's Motmot, Montezuma, and Chestnut-headed oropendolas, Grey-headed Chachalacas, Baltimore Orioles, several kinds of euphonias, and tanagers. The feeders also create great opportunities for bird photography. Besides birds, a number of mammals also visit the feeders and provide great close-up views. On the balcony, at Rancho Naturalista the hummingbird feeders are renowned for attracting many species of hummingbirds. Some of the species possible are Violet-crowned Woodnymph, White-necked Jacobin, Green Hermit, Green Thorntail, Violet Sabrewing, Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer, and Green-crowned Brilliant. On the Verbena hedges at the **Snowcap** is a frequent visitor along with the Black-crested Coquette, the Violet-headed Hummingbird, and the Garden Emerald. A unique feature offered at Rancho is the hummingbird pools where several hummingbird species (including Snowcap and Purple-crowned Fairy) come to bathe. Other species besides hummers visit this area including the Tawny-throated Leaf-tosser, Dull-mantled Antbird, and Great Tinamou. Elevation is from 2800 to 4000 feet.
- **TAPANTI NATIONAL PARK** – is a vast protected cloud forest and highland national park. The altitude varies from 4,000 to 8,400 feet, located close to Orosi, Cartago, offering many of the Talamanca highland endemic species and middle elevation specialty birds. An absolutely beautiful location with spectacular scenery and flora. Birdwatching from the main road can be productive for species such as Spangle-cheeked Tanager, Prong-billed Barbet, and Black-bellied Hummingbird and impressive mixed-species feeding flocks. This location is an excellent place to find the impressive Ornate Hawk-Eagle and offers chances for several of the rare birds of the middle elevations. About an hour drive from the Rancho.
- **CERRO DE LA MUERTE / LOS QUETZALES NATIONAL PARK** – This park is one of the newest in Costa Rica's national park system, established in 2006. It covers 12,350 acres (5000 hectares) and includes 3 forest zones and 14 eco-systems.



The Resplendent Quetzal can be spotted year-round, and the park also hosts a variety of trogons, hummingbirds, tanagers, and other highland species. Much of the park is covered in *aguacatillo* trees (relative of the avocado), the favorite food of the Quetzal. Expected birds include Highland Tinamou, Blue-and-white Swallow, Timberline Wren, Black-billed Nightingale-Thrush, and wintering warblers that we know and love from North America. This will be the longest day in the field, about 2-3 hours in each direction.

- **CERRO SILENCIO** - The beautiful hamlet of Los Morados can offer some fine roadside birding. A major draw is a potential for excellent mixed tanager flocks, which can include impressive numbers of Bay-headed, Crimson-collared, Speckled, Emerald, and Black-and-Yellow tanagers. The habitat combination of foothill and middle elevation makes for highly dynamic feeding flocks, which with a good fortune can produce such scarcities as Rufous-rumped Antwren and Rufous-browed Tyrannulet. The nature of the topography makes the valley a good site for soaring raptors such as Barred Hawk, Double-toothed Kite, and Black Hawk-eagles and interesting parrot species such as the regionally endemic Sulphur-winged Parakeet. The riverine environment offers chances for the enigmatic and other typical river-associated species. About 30 minutes drive.



Sunbittern

- **LA MINA VALLEY** - a thick forest with a lovely river. You'll access it via a dirt road and have a chance to get to the river's edge and see several great birds, in a beautiful natural setting. Be on the lookout for the **Sunbittern**, Buff-rumped Warbler, American Dipper, Torrent Tyrannulet, Green Kingfisher, and Amazon Kingfisher. About 15 minutes drive.

- **RIO TUIS VALLEY** - a cloud forest habitat connected to the vast Tapanti National Park. A pleasant riverside trail running through farmland, riparian, and montane forest offering opportunities for good tanager flocks including **Emerald**, Speckled and Black-and-yellow. The Tuis River itself offers chances for Sunbittern, Buff-rumped Warbler, and American Dipper, and there is constant potential for interesting raptors. About 30 minutes drive.



Emerald-Tanager-Andrew-Russell

- **COPAL RESERVE** an inspiring story of community-driven conservation



- a collective of 17 local rural farmers who, in 1986, took out a bank loan and bought nearly 500 acres of land which is managed for conservation, with over 75% of it is primary forest. Here you may see mixed tanager flocks containing Speckled and Emerald tanagers, as well as Fasciated Antshrike, Black-faced Solitaire, Yellow-eared Toucanet, and **Northern Emerald-Toucanet**. About an hours drive.

- **C.A.T.I.E.** - The Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Centre, located on the edge of the small town of Turrialba yield a number of species. The beautiful campus, complete with aquatic environments, open vistas, forest patches, and botanical gardens makes it an ideal locality for a number of specialty birds. The lake offers such interesting species as the Boat-billed Heron, Northern Jacana, and Green Ibis. A few species more typical to the Caribbean lowland also occur at this site as it sits just 2,270 meters

above sea level (some 900 feet lower than Rancho Naturalista) making for an interesting addition to the pre-montane birding experience at the lodge. About 30 minutes drive.

All Overnights at Rancho Naturalista (B,L,D)

Day 8 – Dec 10, Saturday (B)

After an early breakfast, we'll pack up and drive to the San Jose airport, about 2.5-3 hours, to check in 2 hours in advance of flight departure.

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*Note: The order and sites visited may vary due to weather, road conditions and other factors beyond our control.
Hotels listed are valid as of printing but may change.*

LODGING:



Hotel Bougainvillea is nestled within an award-winning tropical botanical garden that attracts many of Costa Rica's birds and butterflies, a great way to start a nature tour! Just 20 minutes from the airport, it is a world away, with comfortable rooms, a swimming pool, and a well-known restaurant. Free wifi is available in the public space. The guestrooms have private bath with hot water, balcony, and room safe.



Rancho Naturalista is more than just a beautiful lodge set in the verdant Caribbean rainforest of Costa Rica. All rooms have private bath with hot water shower, fan and hairdryer. Free wifi in the main lodge. Meals are served family style and foods are fresh and local. Laundry service at a fee.

Note: *While hotels in Costa Rica do have hot water in showers, they may not in the sink. Also, they may not have washcloths, so if you are used to using one, we suggest you bring your own along with a Ziplock bag to carry it.*

2022 Costa Rica Birding

COST:

- \$2995 per person in double occupancy with 10; with 8: \$3295; with 6: \$3595.
- \$1050 Single supplement. *We'll do our best to find you a roommate.*
- Limited to 10 people. Minimum 6 to run the tour.
- Led by a local bilingual bird guide and assisted by Eric Stager of JB Journeys
- To confirm your spot, please complete [the reservation form](#). We'll send a link for your \$500 deposit.
- Final payment will be due September 15, 2022
- Cancellation: After 30 days, deposit is non-refundable. Up to 60 days prior to departure, 50% refundable. Inside 60 days, non-refundable. Name change may be allowed.
- No refund for unused portions of trip

INCLUDED:

- Transportation as listed by van
- 7 nights lodging with taxes included
- Services of JB Journeys Eric Stager
- Led by a local bilingual bird guide
- Entry fees to parks, etc
- Meals as listed
- Gratuities to driver & group meals (see notes)

NOT INCLUDED:

- International airfare
- Meals not listed
- Drinks during meals
- Gratuities for guide (suggestions: -\$15-20/day)
- Personal Insurance

FLIGHTS: Arrive anytime on December 3. Departures on December 10 after 1:00 pm. (earlier departures will incur an additional transfer cost)

Let us know if we can assist with flight reservations and / or any pre or post travel that interests you.

ERIC STAGER will escort the group for JB Journeys, working with local guides.



Eric grew up on the Upper Texas Coast where he was bitten by the birding bug in 1981 at the age of 13. Although detrimental to his teenage social life, his obsession with birds was spurred on by kind mentors and nourished by the excitement of growing up in one of North America's top birding locations. While still in high school, Eric was leading field trips for the local bird club, compiling his local Christmas Bird Count, and operating the Texas Coast Rare Bird Alert (in the days of cassette tape answering machines). Eric left the coast to attend the University of Texas and has lived in Austin ever since. He has expanded his sights with birding trips in Central and South America, Africa, Asia and Australia.

In Austin, Eric leads field trips and teaches birding classes for Travis Audubon Society and serves as president of the board of directors. He works as a Senior Environmental Scientist for the City of Austin.

BRING: Binoculars, flashlight and/or headlamp, rain gear, warmer layers for the cloud forest, Ziplock bags to keep things dry, Water bottle, day pack or fanny pack. Your guides will have spotting scopes. More info once registered.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS:

- Proof of full vaccination
- A valid passport with at least one blank visa page, valid for at least 6 months from entry date.
- A roundtrip airline ticket to Costa Rica.
- Citizens of the US and Canada do not need visas, only passports. Citizens of other countries should check with the Costa Rican embassy or consulate nearest them. www.migracion.go.cr

LOCATION - Costa Rica, next to Belize and El Salvador, is one of the smallest republics of Central America. It borders on the north with Nicaragua, in the south with Panama, in the east with the Caribbean Sea and the west with the Pacific Ocean. The biodiversity allows the country to have a population of about 150 amphibians, 210 reptiles, approximately 850 species of birds (625 nest and 225 are migratory), more than 205 species of mammals, including bats and other non- flying mammals.

Costa Rica is divided into the following seven provinces (states): Alajuela, Cartago, Guanacaste, Heredia, Limón, Puntarenas, & San José (Capital City). Here, geography constricts a breathtaking amount of plant and animal life within a modest area of 19,563 square miles, an area comparable in size to Denmark or West Virginia. Within this diminutive nation is found an astonishing five percent of the world's biodiversity, including more than 800 species of ferns, 1,000 orchids, 2,000 trees, and 200 mammals. Both coastlines of Costa Rica have an abundance of beaches. Between the coasts, the interior of the country is shaped by four *cordilleras*, or mountain ranges, which run from north to south.



The capital, San Jose, rests roughly in the nation's center, settled within a highland valley. Cascading down to the Caribbean from the central mountains are Costa Rica's many great rivers, including the Reventazon. The Pacific side is marked by two broad peninsulas that hook out into the Pacific, the Nicoya and the Osa. It is a geographic curiosity that their shapes are almost identical, the Osa being a smaller rendition of the Nicoya.

LANGUAGE - The most widely spoken language in Costa Rica is Spanish (97% of the population); although there are other native languages used mostly within the indigenous reserves. Many businesses, in and around San Jose, and resorts throughout the country have employees who also speak English.

ELECTRICITY - 110 volts; plugs are two pronged without the grounding prong.

CREDIT CARDS- ATM's can be easily found in most populated areas of Costa Rica. Most international credit cards are accepted throughout the country: Visa, Master Card and American Express. We recommend you contact your credit card company prior to your trip to let them know you may be using the card abroad and beware of foreign transaction fees. Cards are accepted at both hotels.

CURRENCY & EXCHANGE RATE - The Colon (₡1.00) is the national currency of Costa Rica. The exchange rate against the US dollar can vary day by day. US dollars are accepted just about anywhere.

TIPPING – We have included tips for the local driver and staff at the Rancho. However, if you are happy with service, feel free to tip additional. Anyone working in tourism has had a rough couple of years during the pandemic and would appreciate it. We recommend you leave a tip in the room at Hotel Bougainvillea, \$2-3 per room Your guide should be tipped (if you are pleased!) and we recommend \$15-20 per person per day. Tipping can be done in US dollars.

CLIMATE - Costa Rica's climate is renowned as an atmospheric treat. Mild subtropical conditions prevail year-round, and discomforting temperature extremes and prolonged periods of gray are practically nonexistent. Temperature varies mainly according to elevation, the higher the cooler. The rainy season lasts from May through November, while a brief dry spell pays a visit from February to April. Costa Rica's rain falls mainly on the Caribbean coast, giving the Pacific a much more arid climate.

DEPARTURE TAX - There is a US \$29 departure tax for all visitors leaving by air. For years, you had to pay it in cash at the airport, causing delays. Since around 2015, the tax is included on your airline ticket, but we recommend you check that in advance.