

Northern Costa Rica

Wed 18th – Sun 29th April 2018



Trip photos (clockwise from top left): Long-tailed Silky-flycatcher • Prong-billed Barbet • Yellow-throated Toucan • White-throated Crake • Margay • Three-wattled Bellbird. © tour leader Mike Crewe/Limosa Holidays

Report compiled by tour leader: Mike Crewe

Daily Diary

Day 1 – Wednesday, April 18th, 2018

With a seemingly never-ending winter still gripping the UK, we were all pleased to be in warmer climes for a while. Having all met up by the time we were at the departure gate, we winged our way west and were soon meeting up with Herman and Luiz, before travelling the short distance to our hotel. The likes of Ruddy Ground-doves, Clay-coloured Sparrows and a noisy pair of Boat-billed Flycatchers, all got our Costa Rica lists started and we retired for the night with great hopes for the coming day.

Day 2 – Thursday, April 19th, 2018

We started our first full day with a look around the hotel garden at first light. Even before it was light it had become apparent that Clay-coloured Thrushes – Costa Rica's national bird – were abundant here. Rufous-backed Wrens, Hoffmann's Woodpecker, Blue-grey Tanagers and Grey Saltators were in the treetops. After a good breakfast, we were soon ready for the off and we took the main highway west to the Pacific coast. Passing through dry *guanacaste* habitat, we detoured from the main road to a dirt road where we could avoid the traffic and look for birds. There were some nice highlights here, including our first Ferruginous Pygmy Owl, Inca Dove, Turquoise-browed Motmots and Black-headed Trogon. White-lored Gnatcatchers showed well in the trees while Stripe-headed and Olive Sparrows scratched on the ground below.

We continued to the coast, soon adding Mangrove Swallows and menacing-looking Magnificent Frigatebirds, before trying out another area of dry scrub. Rose-breasted Becards were nesting here and Scrub Euphonias were a nice addition to the list. Eventually, we reached an area of saltpans, where waders were gathering to roost. Whimbrels, Willets, Marbled Godwits and Black-necked Stilts were plentiful, with a few Wilson's Plovers, Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers, Short-billed Dowitchers and both yellowlegs around too. Laughing Gulls and Black Skimmers were gathering, along with a Caspian and a few Cabot's Terns. A fly-over Zone-tailed Hawk was an unexpected bonus.

Time was pressing and, after lunch with the dinosaurs (!) we began the climb uphill to Monteverde. Our little spot that we had christened 'The Triangle' last year, proved productive again, with Piratic Flycatcher, Green-breasted Mango, Steely-vented Hummingbird and ice-creams all enjoyed! White-throated Magpie-jays and White-fronted Amazons entertained us on the roadside as we continued our journey.

Day 3 – Friday, April 20th, 2018

A pre-breakfast visit to the entrance of the Monteverde Rainforest Reserve, gave us our first upland species, with Slaty-backed Nightingale-thrush, Slate-throated Whitestart, Swainson's Thrush and Mountain Elaenias all showing well. The hummingbird feeders were busy with Green-crowned Brilliants and Violet Sabrewings.

Our morning was spent at the Curi Cancha Reserve. After Lesser Violetear, White-naped

Brushfinch and Dusky-capped Flycatcher around the car park, we took to the trails and were soon enjoying the remarkable blue morpho butterflies here. The denser areas of woodland were rather quiet, but we found a nice range of species in a more open area, that included Yellow-faced Grassquit, Rufous-collared Sparrow, Paltry Tyrannulet and Ruddy Pigeon. The verbenas held Coppery-headed Emerald, Blue-throated Sapphire and a Magenta-throated Woodstar, while a pair of Cabanis's Wrens showed well. But the real highlight at Curi Cancha came in the shape of an amazing Three-wattled Bellbird that sat and 'bonged' away to his heart's content, right in front of us! In the afternoon, we took a longer walk around Curi Cancha, then rounded off with a return to the Monteverde humming feeders, where we enjoyed more up-close views of the local hummingbirds.

Day 4 – Saturday, April 21st, 2018

We were up and out before breakfast on a quest this morning – a quetzal quest! We headed back to the Monteverde entrance and soon got lucky with a pair of Resplendent Quetzals, right on the roadside. Prong-billed Barbets also put in an appearance, and we had a rare sighting of a couple of Black-breasted Wood Quail. We spent the rest of the morning at the Reserva Ecologica – a private reserve, where we had great views of Long-tailed Manakins and found a very obliging Ovenbird. A Costa Rican Milk Snake was a nice find while we had refreshments, before we began the drive to Arenal, stopping for lunch in the town of Tilaran. The twisting, winding road took us around the manmade Arenal lake, and we made a prolonged stop near the dam, at a place that became known as 'Magic Corner'. Here, we were certainly in different habitats and new birds came thick

and fast. Passerini's Tanagers abounded, Barred Antshrike, Blue-black Grassquit, Variable Seedeater and Thick-billed Seed Finch were present and overhead, Herman spotted a King Vulture. Tropical Parulas were

singing, Long-tailed Tyrants were flycatching and we were reeling from all of the activity! One final stop came our way when we discovered a treeful of toucans – both Keel-billed and Yellow-throated Toucans were feeding through the area around the entrance lodge on the peninsula road and gave us wonderful views. Our lodge at Arenal eventually presented itself and we knew that we were going to enjoy our time here.

Day 5 – Sunday, April 22nd, 2018

The morning began damp, but it wasn't raining, so we were treated to Great Curassows and White-nosed Coatis at the feeders, along with occasional visits from Montezuma's Oropendolas, Green and Red-legged Honeycreepers, Golden-hooded Tanagers and Bananaquits. Then, one of the top tour highlights happened – we were alerted to a special visitation and hurried around behind the staff quarters, where we enjoyed a remarkable 15 minutes with a magnificent Margay; what an extraordinary privilege to be so intimate with this fabulous cat.

During breakfast, the rain set well and truly in, so we decided to head elsewhere for drier birding. We drove down to La Fortuna and spent the morning watching great birds at the

feeders on a private nature reserve. Here, the owner has been putting out food next to a small wetland area and the local crakes and rails come in for titbits! Rufous-naped Wood Rails and White-throated Crakes showed superbly well, the former with black, fluffy chicks in tow. Other birds seen easily here, included Tropical Mockingbird, Grey-headed Chachalaca, Orange-chinned Parakeets, Clay-coloured Thrush and Green Honeycreeper. While we were here, we took the opportunity for a short walk into the wooded area, where a Black-and-white Owl was at its daytime roost, a Golden-olive Woodpecker showed nicely, and we chanced across a fine, male Hooded Warbler.

Lunch was a nice, sit-down affair at a local restaurant, where Steve entertained us with his bartering skills and purchased a clay ocarina – we still await the results of the practice sessions! After a good feast, we explored the margins of some nearby ponds in the grounds of another hotel-restaurant complex. Our target bird here was Boat-billed Heron and we found two roosting birds almost immediately. But there was plenty to keep us here a lot longer and we found some wonderfully obliging Chestnut-sided Warblers, along with Melodious Blackbirds, White-tipped Dove, a very raucous Ringed Kingfisher and an all-too-close Spectacled Caiman!

Day 6 – Monday, April 23rd, 2018

The rain that had been plaguing us on and off until now, put on a more concerted effort this morning and we began our day undercover for a scan of the feeders and surrounding area. A brief Blackburnian Warbler was followed by a more obliging Cinnamon Becard and a Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher – but still the rain persisted. We decided we had to brave it, so we spent the morning walking around the lodge gardens and ducking into covered areas now and again. Despite the weather, there was much to see and we enjoyed a good array of hummingbirds, flycatchers, tanagers and more. Violet-headed Hummingbird, Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer and Stripe-throated Hermit were highlights in the hummingbird line, while Mistletoe Tyrannulet, Yellow-olive Flatbill, Scarlet Tanager and Collared Aracari were new for the trip. In nearby forest, we had wonderful views of a pair of very obliging Buff-rumped Warblers, and some got a look at a Black-headed Nightingale-thrush.

The rain rained like rain, so we headed out on the peninsula road for some respite after lunch. This did provide us with a few bits and pieces that were all much appreciated – especially the outrageously close views of Swallow-tailed Kite that we managed to arrange for Chris! An assortment of swifts overhead also provided us with a Lesser Swallow-tailed Swift, and we finished with a brave attempt at a Thicket Antpitta, which lived up to its name and stayed in the thicket.

Day 7 – Tuesday, April 24th, 2018

Uggh! It was a rainy start again today so, although Arenal had been kind of nice to us, the weather had not, and we shipped out sooner rather than later. As we descended to the entrance road, things improved a little, so we swung off along the road to the hanging bridges. Here, we had an enjoyable hour or so before the rain again closed in. First to

show well was a very obliging Song Wren, which sang heartily beside the trail and this was followed by a fabulous pair of Spotted Antbirds – one of the best-looking of its group. Another classic forest denizen here was an Ocellated Antbird, which seemed to be holding territory rather than following any ant swarms. We finished off with a White-breasted Wood Wren, then we made an unseemly dash for cover as the heavens opened once more. Perhaps predictably, the clouds rolled off Volcan Arenal as we headed around its far side, so we did at least stop for a photo shoot and noticed a sizeable patch of steaming ground on one side (but that's another story!).

Another stomach-stretching lunch followed, accompanied by the now expected yarns of lower division football, the madness of UK birding and assorted other dodgy subjects! With much mileage to do, we set off on the road again and headed north for the border. Despite an assortment of heavy lorries and slow tractors, lugging

pineapples and sugar cane, we made it to our destination in good time, and we were soon heading out on a raised bund across the marshes to reach the small jetty and board for our first boat trip. The birds came thick and fast and soon had us reeling! Nicaraguan Grackles showed themselves almost straight away and we were soon awash with Green Herons and Purple Gallinules. Red-winged Blackbirds sang from nearby bushes and a couple of Least Bitterns showed well. A couple of young Snail Kites were a nice bonus, as was a very approachable Black-collared Hawk. Wood Stork, Roseate Spoonbills, assorted egrets and a couple of close Pinnated Bitterns all added to the variety, as did the assorted kingfishers and good numbers of Black-bellied Whistling-ducks. It had been an excellent trip and was suitably rounded off right at the end by a couple of enormous, man-sized Jabirus...

Day 8 – Wednesday, April 25th, 2018

Another day, another lodge – and another suite of garden birds. Melodious Blackbirds were feeding on the lawn as we took a pre-breakfast walk along the road outside our lodge. Mantled Howler Monkeys were in good voice as parties of various parrots and parakeets were heading out to feed. A roadside White-rumped Seedeater put on a good show and a variety of tanagers, warblers and flycatchers were actively feeding. After breakfast, we took a short trip down to the town jetty and prepared for our trip on the Rio Frio to view the Cano Negro wetlands. In the morning, we took a trip downriver, and we were soon enjoying Nicaraguan Grackles in full display. Kingfishers were present in remarkable numbers, especially Green and Amazon Kingfishers, which seemed to be present around every corner. Little Blue Herons were seen in their patchy, immature -plumage and we found two, male, Sungrebes, both of which fed quietly along open stretches of river. A bonus bird for the morning was a pair of Northern Royal Flycatchers – never an easy bird to find – while full-on migration was appreciated when a river of Turkey Vultures and Swainson's Hawks passed overhead. Migration also showed in the shape of small parties of Mississippi Kites, feeding on the abundant dragonflies that were all around us.

In the afternoon, we headed out onto the river again, this time chugging upriver for some different birding experiences. Spectacled Caimans were abundant and soon put us off any ideas of going for a dip! As on the morning trip, herons, egrets, Neotropic Cormorants, Anhingas and various kingfishers abounded, the latter including a lucky find of a Green-and-rufous Kingfisher, which is always an elusive species. Bare-throated Tiger Herons showed particularly well this afternoon and a couple of fly-over White-tailed Kites were much appreciated, as was an unexpected Yellow-billed Cuckoo. We ended at a broad lagoon, where Northern Jacanas abounded and Black-winged Stilts fed with both Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs. Another Jabiru appeared and there were good numbers of White Ibis and Roseate Spoonbills. Cruising back, large numbers of egrets and ibises were gathering to roost in the riverine trees and made for a great finale.

Day 9 – Thursday, April 26th, 2018

We enjoyed a quick walk around the block in town today, which started with Mantled Howler Monkeys looking rather surreal as they sat eating the brilliant yellow flowers of a leafless Tabebuia tree. Our walk terminated in finding a leking band of White-collared Manakins and a Bare-headed Antbird called by decided not to show. With breakfast done, we were soon loaded up and heading back out across the llanos. Unexpected bonuses came in the shape of a pair of Double-striped Thick-knees and a close Slaty-tailed Trogon, while an extended stop along the way provided us with a male Nicaraguan Seed-finch among other, more common fare. One highlight among the good number of roadside birds was the discovery of a telephone pole that housed active nests of both Black-crowned Tityra and Black-cheeked Woodpecker! We had a lot of ground to cover today, but we managed to get our journey done in a timely fashion and we arrived at a La Paz Waterfall Gardens for a late lunch. This site is very popular with tourists, but it still has some great opportunities for birders – not least around the dining area, where Sooty-faced Finches, Rufous-collared Sparrows and Slaty-backed Nightingale Thrush were all hopping around under the tables! After we had finished eating, we checked out the hummingbird feeders. There was much activity here from Violet Sabrewings and Green-crowned Brilliants, but careful checking gradually revealed some nice Black-bellied Hummingbirds and a male Green Thorntail.

Most of the group headed out for the long and windy stairway down to the waterfall, but not before we found Slate-throated Whitestart and Bay-headed Tanager in nearby trees. Those of us who stayed at the top enjoyed Silver-throated Tanagers and a brief Golden-browed Chlorophonia, as well as some more familiar faces. Time for us to head to our plush lodge overlooking Poas volcano – a fitting end to a great tour!

Day 10 – Friday, April 27th, 2018

Before breakfast, we took a short drive out to a nice roadside spot near Poasito. Parties of Band-tailed Pigeons were passing overhead, Olive-sided Flycatcher and Red-eyed Vireo were noted and an immature male Flame-coloured Tanager confused us for a while. A

small group of Acorn Woodpeckers was much appreciated and Common Bush-tanagers fed in the roadside vegetation. After breakfast back at the lodge, we headed out towards Poas volcano, knowing that it was still closed to the public but hopeful of getting somewhere within

range of some good birding. In the event, we got an unofficial nod and a wink for a short visit 'off piste' by a kindly member of the park staff and we enjoyed an hour or so of good birding. We started with an up-close Collared Whitestart then found the first of what was to become several Black-and-yellow Phainoptilas for the day. Mountain Elaenias seemed to be all over the place and we picked out a brief Grey-cheeked Thrush and a nice Wilson's Warbler. Volcano and Flame-throated Hummingbirds fed at the Fuchsia flowers and we chanced across a nice pair of Large-footed Finches. More of the same showed up along the road a little further down, as well as a very obliging Sooty Thrush and some close encounters with Long-tailed Silky-flycatchers. Sooty-capped Bush-tanagers were noted here, too.

In the afternoon, we dropped back down the other side of the hill to the new bird feeding station at Cinchona. Although things were a little quiet here, we nevertheless had a great time with close encounters with hummingbirds, a fine Prong-billed Barbet on the banana feeder and a female Red-headed Barbet in the tree tops. A Blue-throated Toucanet showed briefly and a pair of White-naped Brushfinches rummaged in the undergrowth. Back at base, we thought all was done for day, until a Dusky Nightjar started calling and we all got nice flight views of a male as it swooped around the lodge.

Day 11 – Saturday, April 28th, 2018

The inevitable last day was finally upon us, but there was still time to enjoy one more pre-breakfast amble at the hotel, with Slaty Flowerpiercers and a very obliging Flame-throated Warbler being the highlights. We also shot out for an hour's birding near Virgen de Socorro, where a short walk gave us great views of American Dipper, two Orange-billed Sparrows, Sooty-faced Finch and a close-up Bay Wren. In contrast, a Bat Falcon couldn't have been further away, but scope views and good light helped bring it closer.

After we had demolished another great breakfast, then packed and loaded the bus, we headed up to the road, taking in a smart Eastern Meadowlark on the way. Running the gauntlet of Saturday traffic, we made our way to the airport in good time, saying our farewells to Herman and Wilson and getting checked in for the flight home.

This was a fabulous trip, that visited a remarkable range of habitats and produced some wonderful wildlife experiences. But it was made all the more special by the truly wonderful group of travel companions and I hope we get the chance to repeat the experience soon. Huge thanks also go out to Herman, Luiz and Wilson who looked after us so well, as well as all the lodge staff who catered wonderfully to our needs.

Annotated List of Birds Recorded

(Total species - 334)

Black-bellied Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna autumnalis*

Very common around Los Chiles and Caño Negro with perhaps 40 on 24th and over 100 on 25th.

Muscovy Duck *Cairina moschata*

Nice views of a pair in flight at Cano Negro on 25th.

Blue-winged Teal *Anas discors*

Three at Caño Negro on 25th.

Grey-headed Chachalaca *Ortalis cinereiceps*

Small numbers daily throughout the trip – including some funky chicklets at La Fortuna.

Crested Guan *Penelope purpurascens*

Widespread in small numbers and seen daily from 21st.

Black Guan *Chamaepetes unicolor*

Four logged at Monteverde on 21st and at least two at Poas on 27th.

Great Curassow *Crax rubra*

Up to four around Arenal Observatory Lodge, most often at the feeders there.

Black-breasted Wood Quail *Odontophorus leucolaemus*

After a little patience, we had brief but good views of a pair of these at Monteverde on 21st.

Wood Stork *Mycteria ibis*

Small numbers around Los Chiles and Caño Negro.

Jabiru *Jabiru mycteria*

Nice find of this scarce bird, with two at Los Chiles on 24th and one at Caño Negro the following day.

Green Ibis *Mesembrinibis cayennensis*

One seen along the Rio Frio on 25th then a flock of 10 on our boat trip the next day.

American White Ibis *Eudocimus albus*

Three at the coastal salt pans on 19th, then seen regularly around Los Chiles and Caño Negro.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*

Just a singleton seen at Caño Negro on 25th.

Roseate Spoonbill *Platalea ajaja*

Around a dozen at Los Chiles and 15 at Caño Negro.

Bare-throated Tiger Heron *Tigrisoma mexicanum*

One at Los Chiles on 24th, six on the Caño Negro boat trips and one as we left Caño Negro on 26th.

Boat-billed Heron *Cochlearius cochlearius*

Two seen well at La Fortuna on 22nd, then four on the Caño Negro boat trips on 25th.

Pinnated Bittern *Botaurus pinnatus*

Excellent, close views of two birds on our Los Chiles boat trip on 24th.

Least Bittern *Ixobrychus exilis*

Around five birds seen at Los Chiles on 24th.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

A couple of singles on our boat trips on 24th and 25th.

Yellow-crowned Night Heron *Nyctanassa violacea*

A nice bonus of one at Los Chiles on 24th.

Green Heron *Butorides virescens*

Amazingly common on our boat trips and giving excellent photo opportunities.

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Common in suitable areas throughout – abundant in the northern wetlands.

Great Blue Heron *Ardea herodias*

Two birds at Los Chiles on 24th and another two at Caño Negro on 25th.

Great Egret *Ardea alba*

One or two noted at coastal wetlands and at Lago Arenal, then common in the northern wetlands.

Tricoloured Heron *Egretta tricolor*

A couple of singletons on our Caño Negro boat trips on 25th.

Little Blue Heron *Egretta caerulea*

An adult at the coastal saltpans on 19th, then a small scattering of adults and moulting immatures in the northern wetlands on 24th and 25th.

Snowy Egret *Egretta thula*

Not common, but a small scattering around Los Chiles and Caño Negro.

Brown Pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis*

Six birds were seen floating above the mangroves at Morales on 19th.

Magnificent Frigatebird *Fregata magnificens*

Good numbers were seen soaring over during our time along the coast on 19th.

Neotropic Cormorant *Phalacrocorax brasilianus*

Common on the deeper channels around Los Chiles and Caño Negro.

Anhinga *Anhinga anhinga*

Common on the deeper channels around Los Chiles and Caño Negro.

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura*

Widespread, common and seen daily.

Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture *Cathartes burrovianus*

Some reasonable flight views of this tricky bird around the northern wetlands, but it would have been nice to have seen one perched somewhere!

Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus*

Widespread, common and seen daily.

King Vulture *Sarcoramphus papa*

One nicely picked out by Herman on 21st at our magic corner at Arenal on 21st.

White-tailed Kite *Elanus leucurus*

Two seen during our travels on 24th then singles around Caño Negro on 25th and 26th.

Swallow-tailed Kite *Elanoides forficatus*

Widespread in small numbers with one to four recorded on five dates.

Mississippi Kite *Ictinia mississippiensis*

Migration in action – small parties were hunting dragonflies over the Rio Frio on 25th, with perhaps 20 birds seen in total.

Black-collared Hawk *Busarellus nigricollis*

Nice views of singles at Los Chiles on 24th and at Caño Negro on 25th.

Snail Kite *Rostrhamus sociabilis*

Great close-up views of a couple of youngsters at Los Chiles during our boat trip on 24th.

Roadside Hawk *Rupornis magnirostris*

One in the Pacific dry habitats on 19th, then small numbers around the Caribbean lowlands on 24th-26th.

Grey Hawk *Buteo plagiatus*

One to two on six dates, with most birds seen from the bus on travel days.

Broad-winged Hawk *Buteo platypterus*

Singles at Monteverde on 21st and Arenal on 22nd, then a handful mixed in with the raptor migration over Caño Negro on 25th.

Short-tailed Hawk *Buteo brachyurus*

Two at Arenal on 21st and 23rd and one at Caño Negro on 25th.

Swainson's Hawk *Buteo swainsoni*

Four seen migrating with Turkey Vultures during our travel north on 24th, then at least 40 migrating over Caño Negro on 25th.

Zone-tailed Hawk *Buteo albonotatus*

One cruising over the saltpans near Morales on 19th was a nice bonus.

Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis*

Singletons seen in the Poas area on 27th and 28th.

Sungrebe *Heliornis fulica*

Brilliant views of two males feeding in the open on the Caño Negro boat trip on 25th.

White-throated Crake *Laterallus albigularis*

Five paraded before us at La Fortuna on 22nd. Heard near Caño Negro in roadside ditches on 26th.

Rufous-naped Wood Rail *Aramides albiventris*

A pair with two chicks at La Fortuna and two at Caño Negro on 25th. This is a recent split from Grey-necked Wood Rail but it is unfortunate that they chose to use an English name that invokes immediate confusion with Rufous-necked Wood Rail. Enough said!

Uniform Crake *Amaurolimnas concolor*

Although heard calling at the feeder pool at La Fortuna on 22nd, we didn't get a look at one.

Purple Gallinule *Porphyrio martinica*

Common around Los Chiles on 24th and one found by Wilson near Caño Negro on 26th.

Limpkin *Aramus guarauna*

At least three on the Caño Negro boat trip on 27th.

Double-striped Thick-knee *Burhinus bistriatus*

Great views of a roadside pair in a field near Caño Negro on 26th.

Black-necked Stilt *Himantopus mexicanus*

Small numbers at the coastal saltpans on 19th and in the Caño Negro area on 25th.

Southern Lapwing *Vanellus chilensis*

Two on the Pacific coast on 19th and small numbers around Los Chiles and Caño Negro.

Wilson's Plover *Charadrius wilsonia*

At least five at the coastal saltpans on 19th.

Northern Jacana *Jacana spinosa*

Remarkably common throughout the Los Chiles/Caño Negro area.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Around 50 or so at the coastal saltpans on 19th.

Marbled Godwit *Limosa fedoa*

Ten or so at the coastal saltpans on 19th.

Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla*

Two at the coastal saltpans on 19th and one in flight at Caño Negro on 25th.

Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla*

About 15 at the coastal saltpans on 19th.

Short-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus griseus*

A group of eight birds at the coastal saltplans on 19th.

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius*

One at Arenal on 22nd and two in the Caño Negro area on 25th.

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes*

One at the coastal saltpans on 19th and four at Caño Negro on 25th.

Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca*

Singles at the coastal saltpans on 19th and at Caño Negro on 25th.

(Western) Willet *Tringa semipalmata*

Ten or so at the coastal saltpans on 19th.

Black Skimmer *Rynchops niger*

At least 50 at the coastal saltpans on 19th.

Laughing Gull *Leucophaeus atricilla*

Increasing numbers were gathering at the coastal saltpans on 19th.

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*

One of these brutes was at the coastal saltpans on 19th.

Royal Tern *Thalasseus maximus*

Twelve or so at the coastal saltpans on 19th.

Cabot's Tern *Thalasseus acuflavidus*

Ten counted at the coastal saltpans on 19th. Recently split from Sandwich Tern.

Feral Rock Dove *Columba livia*

A few around towns during our travels.

Scaled Pigeon *Patagioenas speciosa*

One at Caño Negro on 25th, then great views of a pair at our lodge there on 26th.

Band-tailed Pigeon *Patagioenas fasciata*

Good numbers were moving in small parties over Poas on 27th and 28th.

Pale-vented Pigeon *Patagioenas cayennensis*

Small numbers around Los Chiles and Caño Negro on 24th to 26th.

Red-billed Pigeon *Patagioenas flavirostris*

A widespread species and noted on six dates throughout the tour.

Ruddy Pigeon *Patagioenas subvinacea*

One seen at close quarters at the feeders in the clearing at Monteverde on 20th.

Inca Dove *Columbina inca*

Locally common on the Pacific Slope on our first full day of the trip.

Common Ground Dove *Columbina passerina*

Six or more on the Pacific Slope on 19th.

Ruddy Ground Dove *Columbina talpacoti*

Widespread in the lowlands, with small numbers at La Fortuna and around Los Chiles/Caño Negro.

White-tipped Dove *Leptotila verreauxi*

Small numbers at low and middle elevations on six dates, scattered throughout the tour.

Grey-headed Dove *Leptotila plumbeiceps*

Great views of one at our lodge at Caño Negro on 25th.

White-winged Dove *Zenaida asiatica*

Common at lowland locations, most often around human habitation.

Groove-billed Ani *Crotophaga sulcirostris*

Widespread and usually seen in small parties around cattle.

Striped Cuckoo *Tapera naevia*

Three heard calling at Caño Negro on 25th with one eventually found, but against the light.

Lesser Ground Cuckoo *Morococcyx erythropygus*

Reverted to type this year – heard in dry Pacific scrub on 19th but sadly not seen.

Squirrel Cuckoo *Piaya cayana*

One at Monteverde on 20th and another heard calling at Caño Negro on 25th.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus americanus*

A surprise addition to the list with one along the Rio Frio during our boat trip on 25th.

Mangrove Cuckoo *Coccyzus minor*

A group of three birds tripped past us while we were birding in the Pacific lowlands on 19th.

Black-and-white Owl *Strix nigrolineata*

Great views of a bird at its daytime roost at La Fortuna on 22nd.

Ferruginous Pygmy Owl *Glaucidium brasilianum*

Two in the Pacific lowlands on 19th gave a nice contrast of a brown and a rufous morph.

Dusky Nightjar *Antrostomus saturatus*

One gave us a couple of nice fly-bys at our Poas lodge on 27th.

American Black Swift *Cypseloides niger*

A small party seen pre-breakfast from the deck at Arenal on 22nd.

Chestnut-collared Swift *Streptoprocne rutila*

Two picked out among swift parties at Arenal on 21st.

White-collared Swift *Streptoprocne zonaris*

Widespread and seen regularly at higher elevations. The largest and most dramatic swift of the region!

Vaux's Swift *Chaetura vauxi*

Around 15 seen moving over Arenal on 21st and two at Arenal on 23rd.

Lesser Swallow-tailed Swift *Chaetura vauxi*

Brief but nice views of two at Arenal on 23rd.

Green Hermit *Phaethornis guy*

One or two seen regularly at the Heliconia flowers at Arenal on 22nd-24th.

Stripe-throated Hermit *Phaethornis striigularis*

One at Arenal on 23rd and another at La Paz Waterfall Gardens on 26th.

Scaly-breasted Hummingbird *Phaeochroa cuvierii*

One at the Inga tree on our way to Monteverde on 19th and one on the vervain hedges at Arenal on 23rd.

Violet Sabrewing *Campylopterus hemileucurus*

A wonderful feature of feeders at Monteverde, Cinchona and La Paz Waterfall Gardens.

White-necked Jacobin *Florisuga mellivora*

A female seen at Arenal Observatory Lodge on 21st.

Brown Violetear *Colibri delphinae*

A nice scattering of sightings with one to two on six dates.

Lesser Violetear *Colibri cyanotus*

Noted at the feeders at both Monteverde and La Paz Waterfall Gardens. Recently split from Green Violetear.

Green-breasted Mango *Anthracothorax prevostii*

One on the Pacific Slope on 19th, then up to four daily, around Caño Negro on 24th-26th.

Violet-headed Hummingbird *Klais guimeti*

This little waif was seen on the vervain at Arenal Observatory Lodge on 23rd.

Black-crested Coquette *Lophornis helenae*

All too briefly, a female was at the magic corner at Arenal on 21st.

Green Thorntail *Discosura conversii*

Two males were seen at La Paz Waterfall Gardens on 26th.

Canivet's Emerald *Chlorostilbon canivetii*

One at Finca Ecologica, Monteverde on 21st.

Fiery-throated Hummingbird *Panterpe insignis*

Common on the lower slopes of Poas on 27th.

Coppery-headed Emerald *Elvira cupreiceps*

Two at Monteverde on 20th and at least two at La Paz Waterfall Gardens on 26th.

Stripe-tailed Hummingbird *Eupherusa eximia*

One at Monteverde on 20th.

Black-bellied Hummingbird *Eupherusa nigriventris*

Three at the feeders at La Paz Waterfall Gardens on 26th.

Crowned Woodnymph *Thalurania columbica*

Singles at Arenal on 24th and at Virgen de Socorro on 28th.

Blue-throated Sapphire *Hylocharis eliciae*

One at Monteverde on 20th then one at the Arenal verbena hedges on 21st and two on 23rd.

Cinnamon Hummingbird *Amazilia rutila*

Two noted in the Pacific Slope lowlands on 19th.

Rufous-tailed Hummingbird *Amazilia tzacatl*

Common and widespread in the low to mid-elevation regions.

Blue-vented Hummingbird *Amazilia hoffmanni*

Singles seen on four dates at our first hotel near the airport and around Monteverde.

Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer *Chalybura urochrysa*

One on the vervain at Arenal Observatory Lodge on 23rd.

Purple-throated Mountaingem *Lampornis calolaemus*

Two at Monteverde on 20th. Seen well at La Paz on 26th and on our walk below Poas on 27th.

Green-crowned Brilliant *Heliodoxa jacula*

Small numbers around Monteverde, at La Paz Waterfall Gardens and below Poas.

Talamanca (Admirable) Hummingbird *Eugenes spectabilis*

One seen at our Poas lodge on 27th and 28th. Recently spilt from Magnificent Hummingbird.

Purple-crowned Fairy *Heliotheryx barroti*

One seen briefly at Arenal Observatory Lodge on 23rd.

Magenta-throated Woodstar *Calliphlox bryantae*

Great views of one at the verbena hedges at Curi Cancha on 20th.

Volcano Hummingbird *Selasphorus flammula*

One in the garden of our Poas lodge and several along the road below Poas on 27th.

Resplendent Quetzal *Pharomachrus mocinno*

Two seen nicely at Monteverde before breakfast on 21st.

Slaty-tailed Trogon *Trogon massena*

One at our lodge at Caño Negro on 25th and another along the dirt road nearby on 26th.

Black-headed Trogon *Trogon melanocephalus*

In the lowlands, four on our travels on 19th and one near Caño Negro on 25th.

American Pygmy Kingfisher *Chloroceryle aenea*

One seen very well at Los Chiles on 24th and at least three at Caño Negro on 25th.

Green-and-rufous Kingfisher *Chloroceryle inda*

A bonus sighting of this elusive species at Caño Negro on 25th.

Green Kingfisher *Chloroceryle americana*

A good scattering in the Los Chiles/Caño Negro area.

Amazon Kingfisher *Chloroceryle amazona*

Singles at Arenal on 22nd to 24th, then remarkably common in the Los Chiles/Caño Negro area.

Ringed Kingfisher *Megaceryle torquata*

One at La Fortuna on 22nd, then good numbers in the Los Chiles/Caño Negro area.

Lesson's Motmot *Momotus lessonii*

One seen nicely at Curi Cancha on 20th and one at Caño Negro on 25th.

Rufous Motmot *Baryphthengus martii*

One in the car park at the Arenal bridges on 24th.

Turquoise-browed Motmot *Eumomota superciliosa*

Several noted on our travel day through the Pacific dry zone on 19th.

Rufous-tailed Jacamar *Galbula ruficauda*

Two in the forest at La Fortuna on 22nd.

Red-headed Barbet *Eubucco bourcierii*

A female was seen below the Cinchona feeding station on 27th.

Prong-billed Barbet *Semnornis frantzii*

Three high in the trees at Monteverde on 21st and two at the Cinchona feeders on 27th.

Blue-throated Toucanet *Aulacorhynchus caeruleogularis*

Singles at Monteverde on 20th, La Paz on 26th and at Cinchona on 27th.

Collared Aracari *Pteroglossus torquatus*

Up to eight around Arenal and a couple of singles around Caño Negro.

Keel-billed Toucan *Ramphastos sulfuratus*

One on our Pacific coast travel day, then pairs around Arenal on 21st and 23rd.

Yellow-throated Toucan *Ramphastos ambiguus*

Common in the Arenal area and noted there daily. Also, one at Virgen de Socorro on 28th. The local form is also known as Chestnut-mandibled Toucan.

Acorn Woodpecker *Melanerpes formicivorus*

A group of three or four birds in large trees below Poas on the morning of 27th.

Black-cheeked Woodpecker *Melanerpes pucherani*

Pairs noted regularly around Arenal and Caño Negro.

Hoffmann's Woodpecker *Melanerpes hoffmannii*

Regular in lowland areas and recorded on five dates in small numbers.

Hairy Woodpecker *Leuconotopicus villosus*

One of these interesting, smoky-looking birds along the road below Poas on 27th.

Golden-olive Woodpecker *Colaptes rubiginosus*

A couple of singles around La Fortuna on 22nd.

Lineated Woodpecker *Dryocopus lineatus*

Close views of a female on a roadside tree at our first birding stop in the Pacific lowlands on 19th.

Northern Crested Caracara *Caracara cheriway*

Two near La Fortuna on 22nd, then small numbers daily around the northern wetlands.

Laughing Falcon *Herpetotheres cachinnans*

Wonderful views of one perched beside the road at Arenal on 24th then one as we left Caño Negro on 26th.

Collared Forest Falcon *Micrastur semitorquatus*

One called at Curi Cancha on 20th but didn't put in an appearance.

American Kestrel *Falco sparverius*

One seen briefly at our Caño Negro lodge on 25th.

Bat Falcon *Falco ruficularis*

A very distant and yet clearly visible bird at Virgen de Socorro on 28th.

Orange-chinned Parakeet *Brotogeris jugularis*

Widespread and common in low to mid-elevations and noted regularly on seven dates.

Brown-hooded Parrot *Pyrilia haematotis*

Two flew past on our pre-breakfast walk at Caño Negro on 25th.

White-crowned Parrot *Pionus senilis*

Eight or so around Arenal on 23rd and two feeding in the lodge garden at Caño Negro on 26th.

White-fronted amazon *Amazona albifrons*

A group of 15 or so fed close to the road on our way up to Monteverde on 19th.

Red-lored Amazon *Amazona autumnalis*

Pairs seen flying over at Arenal and Caño Negro daily.

Northern Mealy Amazon *Amazona guatemalae*

Two of these big and chunky parrots flew over at Arenal on 21st.

Olive-throated Parakeet *Eupsittula nana*

Quite common around Caño Negro and seen daily there in good numbers.

Orange-fronted Parakeet *Eupsittula canicularis*

A Pacific slope species with two seen at our first birding stop on the dirt road on 19th.

Finsch's Parakeet *Psittacara finschi*

Two during lunch at La Fortuna on 22nd and noted below Poas on 27th. Also known as Crimson-fronted Parakeet.

Spotted Woodcreeper *Xiphorhynchus erythropygius*

Two noted at Monteverde on 20th.

Streak-headed Woodcreeper *Lepidocolaptes souleyetii*

A scattering of birds around Arenal and Caño Negro; the common woodcreeper of secondary growth.

Plain Antvireo *Dysithamnus mentalis*

One at Curi Cancha, Monteverde on 20th.

Barred Antshrike *Thamnophilus doliatus*

A cracking male at the magic corner near Arenal on 21st and a pair at La Fortuna on 22nd.

Ocellated Antbird *Phaenostictus mcleannani*

The ultimate antbird! One seen near the bridges at Arenal on 24th during a break in the rain.

Spotted Antbird *Hylophylax naevioides*

Wonderful prolonged views of a feeding pair near the bridges at Arenal on 24th.

Bare-crowned Antbird *Gymnocichla nudiceps*

One called close-by but didn't show at Caño Negro on 26th.

Thicket Antpitta *Hyllopezus dives*

A well-co-ordinated effort was made for this bird at Arenal on 23rd but, though we heard two calling, glimpses were none!

Yellow-bellied Elaenia *Elaenia flavogaster*

Small numbers daily in the Caño Negro and los Chiles areas.

Mountain Elaenia *Elaenia frantzii*

Noisy and obvious around Monteverde and common along the road below Poas.

Northern Beardless Tyrannulet *Camptostoma imberbe*

Nice views of one on a pre-breakfast walk at Caño Negro on 25th.

Yellow Tyrannulet *Capsiempis flaveola*

Nice views of a pair on a pre-breakfast walk at Caño Negro on 25th.

Mistletoe Tyrannulet *Zimmerius parvus*

Singles noted on four dates, scattered throughout the tour.

Olive-striped Flycatcher *Mionectes olivaceus*

One for Mike and Pam at La Paz Waterfall Gardens on 26th.

Common Tody-flycatcher *Todirostrum cinereum*

Widespread in small numbers in lowlands and foothills.

Yellow-olive Flatbill *Tolmomyias sulphureus*

Singles at Arenal on 23rd and on our pre-breakfast walk at Caño Negro on 25th.

Black Phoebe *Sayornis nigricans*

Scattered singles and pairs seen in wet areas and beside rivers on eight dates. A pair had recently fledged young at our Poas lodge.

Northern Tufted Flycatcher *Mitrephanes phaeocercus*

Two seen at Virgen de Socorro on 28th.

Olive-sided Flycatcher *Contopus cooperi*

One to two on three dates, around Monteverde, Arenal and Poas.

Dark Pewee *Contopus lugubris*

One seen by most of the group at La Paz Waterfall Gardens on 26th.

Eastern Wood Pewee *Contopus virens*

One to two on five dates, scattered throughout at mid-elevation sites.

Tropical Pewee *Contopus cinereus*

One to two on five dates, scattered throughout at mid-elevation sites.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher *Empidonax flaviventris*

Singles of this migratory species were at Arenal on 22nd and 23rd.

Yellowish Flycatcher *Empidonax flavescens*

Two seen at Monteverde on 22nd.

Black-capped Flycatcher *Empidonax atriceps*

Two seen at Monteverde on 20th and another two at La Paz on 26th.

Long-tailed Tyrant *Colonia colonus*

A pair of these smart flycatchers were hunting at the magic corner near Arenal on 21st.

Piratic Flycatcher *Legatus leucophaeus*

Widespread and noted on five dates, typically hanging out around other birds' nests!

Social Flycatcher *Myiozetetes similis*

Widespread and common pretty much throughout.

Great Kiskadee *Pitangus sulphuratus*

Widespread and common and noted daily throughout the tour.

Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher *Myiodynastes luteiventris*

Three singles seen around Monteverde and Arenal from 21st to 23rd and one on the afternoon of 26th.

Streaked Flycatcher *Myiodynastes maculatus*

Three seen in the Pacific dry zone during our travels on 19th.

Boat-billed Flycatcher *Megarhynchus pitangua*

A pair at our airport hotel at the start of the trip and another pair at Arenal on 23rd.

Tropical Kingbird *Tyrannus melancholicus*

Widespread and very common.

Eastern Kingbird *Tyrannus tyrannus*

Migrants were passing through the Arenal area in good numbers with flocks of up to 100 birds seen along the entrance road during our stay. Also, a handful around Caño Negro.

Dusky-capped Flycatcher *Myiarchus tuberculifer*

Widespread in lowlands to mid-elevations

Great Crested Flycatcher *Myiarchus crinitus*

Two on the Pacific Slope during our travels on 19th.

Brown-crested Flycatcher *Myiarchus tyrannulus*

A couple of pairs on the Pacific Slope on 19th.

Bright-rumped Attila *Attila spadiceus*

One calling – typically distantly - during our pre-breakfast walk at Caño Negro on 25th.

Three-wattled Bellbird *Procnias tricarunculatus*

Success this year! Fabulous views of a bonging male at Monteverde on 20th – what a bird!

Long-tailed Manakin *Chiroxiphia linearis*

At least four males seen at the private reserve at Monteverde on 21st.

White-collared Manakin *Manacus candei*

Heard wing-snapping at Arenal on 23rd and finally pinned down at Caño Negro on 26th.

Northern Royal Flycatcher *Onychorhynchus mexicanus*

A pair were attending a nest along the Rio Frio at Caño Negro on 25th.

Black-crowned Tityra *Tityra inquisitor*

Great views of a pair attending a nest in an old woodpecker hole in a telephone pole at Caño Negro on 26th.

Cinnamon Becard *Pachyramphus cinnamomeus*

Two at Arenal on 23rd.

Rose-throated Becard *Pachyramphus aglaiae*

A Pair was attending a nest near Puerto Caldera on 19th.

Warbling Vireo *Vireo gilvus*

One on our pre-breakfast walk at Caño Negro on 26th was a nice addition to the list.

Red-eyed Vireo *Vireo olivaceus*

Occasional migrants were seen scattered here and there with singles on six dates and two on 26th.

Yellow-green Vireo *Vireo flavoviridis*

A handful at various sites but seen best the first morning in the hotel garden before we headed for the coast.

Lesser Greenlet *Hylophilus decurtatus*

One at Finca Ecologica, Monteverde on 21st.

Brown Jay *Cyanocorax morio*

Pairs or small parties noted on four dates around Monteverde and Arenal.

White-throated Magpie-jay *Calocitta formosa*

At least six of these wonderful birds were seen in Pacific dry slope habitats as we travelled on 19th.

Black-and-yellow Phainoptila *Phainoptila melanoxantha*

Remarkably good views of at least five of this unusual species around Poas on 27th.

Long-tailed Silky-flycatcher *Ptilogonys caudatus*

After a few fly-overs early in the morning, we finally had great views of several of these birds along the road below Poas on 27th.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

A few near the Pacific coast on 19th then a good scattering in the Caño Negro wetlands.

Mangrove Swallow *Tachycineta albilinea*

Four near the Pacific coast on 19th then a good scattering in the Caño Negro wetlands.

Grey-breasted Martin *Progne chalybea*

Small numbers seen in towns, with a clear preference for petrol stations!

Blue-and-white Swallow *Pygochelidon cyanoleuca*

Small numbers noted mostly on travel days, but also seen well at our Poas lodge.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx serripennis*

Perhaps overlooked, but local birds were seen in the highlands around Monteverde and Arenal.

Southern Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*

Small numbers scattered through the trip but most frequent around Arenal.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Good movements of this species were taking place this year, with many migrants heading north throughout the trip.

American Cliff Swallow *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*

At least four with Barn Swallows on the coast on 19th then two on our boat trip near Los Chiles on 24th.

Rufous-backed Wren *Campylorhynchus capistratus*

Several at our first-night hotel and one or two along the Pacific slope on 19th and 20th.

Black-throated Wren *Pheugopedius atrogularis*

Nice views of one in the forest at La Fortuna on 22nd.

Spot-breasted Wren *Pheugopedius maculipectus*

A couple of pairs were seen very well around Caño Negro on 25th.

Cabanis's Wren *Cantorchilus modestus*

Two seen well towards the end of the day at Curi Cancha on 20th.

Canebrake Wren *Cantorchilus zeledoni*

One should nicely in riverside vegetation during our afternoon boat trip at Caño Negro on 25th.

Bay Wren *Cantorchilus nigricapillus*

A nice late addition of one at Virgen de Socorro on 28th.

Stripe-breasted Wren *Cantorchilus thoracicus*

Regular and noisy around the lodge at Arenal but we didn't manage to see one this year.

House Wren *Troglodytes aedon*

Common and noted around lodges and hotels throughout the trip.

Ochraceous Wren *Troglodytes ochraceus*

Two of these buffy chaps were seen nicely at Monteverde on 20th.

White-breasted Wood Wren *Henicorhina leucosticta*

One of these ace skulkers was seen remarkably well near the hanging bridges at Monteverde on 24th.

Grey-breasted Wood Wren *Henicorhina leucophrys*

Regularly heard singing around Monteverde and Poas, with one seen well as it searched for moths under the lights at Monteverde on 20th.

Northern Nightingale Wren *Microcerculus philomela*

An ace skulker, but the wonderful song was heard well at Arenal on 23rd.

Song Wren *Cyphorhinus phaeocephalus*

One seen well beside the narrow path near the hanging bridges at Arenal on 24th.

White-lored Gnatcatcher *Polioptila albiloris*

Lovely views of a pair at our first birding stop on the Pacific Slope during our travels on 19th.

Tropical Gnatcatcher *Polioptila plumbea*

At least two pairs in and around the lodge garden at Caño Negro on 25th and 26th.

Tropical Mockingbird *Mimus gilvus*

Two at the feeders at La Fortuna on 22nd and at least four at Caño Negro on 24th.

Black-billed Nightingale-thrush *Catharus gracilirostris*

A high-altitude species, with several seen really well below Poas on 27th.

Orange-billed Nightingale-thrush *Catharus aurantiirostris*

Plenty in song at Finca Ecologica, Monteverde on 21st and two were eventually seen well.

Slaty-backed Nightingale-thrush *Catharus fuscaster*

A common sound at Monteverde with one or two seen there. Also seen at La Paz Waterfall Gardens on 26th and at Virgen de Socorro on 28th.

Ruddy-capped Nightingale-thrush *Catharus frantzii*

Two or three were seen around our Poas lodge on 27th and again briefly the following morning.

Black-headed Nightingale-thrush *Catharus mexicanus*

One seen at Arenal Observatory Lodge on 23rd.

Grey-cheeked Thrush *Catharus minimus*

A nice bonus bird – one on the slopes below Poas on 27th.

Swainson's Thrush *Catharus ustulatus*

A common migrant in the forests around Monteverde and a handful also at Arenal and Caño Negro.

Sooty Thrush *Turdus nigrescens*

Several seen along the road below Poas, including a female attending a nest on 27th.

Mountain Thrush *Turdus plebejus*

A couple at Monteverde on 20th, then good numbers in the Poas area on 26-28th.

Clay-coloured Thrush *Turdus grayi*

The National bird of Costa Rica, widespread and common nearly throughout.

White-throated Thrush *Turdus assimilis*

Two seen at the entrance to the Monteverde reserve on 21st.

American Dipper *Cinclus mexicanus*

Great views of one at Virgen de Socorro on 28th. Bill also found one at La Paz Waterfall Gardens on 27th.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

A few seen in towns on five dates.

Scrub Euphonia *Euphonia affinis*

One seen rather distantly near Puerto Caldera on 19th.

Yellow-crowned Euphonia *Euphonia luteicapilla*

Two at Curi Cancha on 20th and one at Arenal on 23rd.

Yellow-throated Euphonia *Euphonia hirundinacea*

A small scattering of one to two birds throughout the trip with some good views at various places.

Tawny-capped Euphonia *Euphonia anaeae*

A couple of singletons noted at La Paz on 26th and Virgen de Socorro on 28th.

Golden-browed Chlorophonia *Chlorophonia callophrys*

Elusive this year, with birds heard well at Monteverde and below Poas but only a single seen, at La Paz Waterfall Gardens on 26th.

Rufous-collared Sparrow *Zonotrichia capensis*

Widespread and common in mid- elevations to highlands and noted around Monteverde, Arenal and Poas.

Stripe-headed Sparrow *Peucaea ruficauda*

A total of at least eight seen during our Pacific Slope travels on 19th.

White-eared Ground Sparrow *Melospiza leucotis*

A nice showy pair at Curi Cancha on 20th and two more at Monteverde on 21st.

Olive Sparrow *Arremonops rufivirgatus*

One showed nicely, scratching on the ground at our first, Pacific slope, birding stop on 19th.

Black-striped Sparrow *Arremonops conirostris*

Nice views of a few pairs around Arenal and the Caño Negro area.

Orange-billed Sparrow *Arremon aurantirostris*

Singles at La Fortuna on 22nd and Monteverde on 24th, then two at Virgen de Socorro on 28th.

Chestnut-capped Brushfinch *Arremon brunneinuchus*

Up to two at our Poas lodge on 27th and 28th, mostly at the breakfast feeder.

Sooty-faced Finch *Arremon crassirostris*

Two under the tables (!) at La Paz Waterfall Gardens on 26th and two at Virgen de Socorro on 28th.

Large-footed Finch *Pezopetes capitalis*

Wonderful views of two on our trail walk near Poas on 27th.

White-naped Brushfinch *Arremon brunneinuchus*

Three birds at Curi Cancha on 20th and a pair below the Cinchona feeders on 27th.

Yellow-thighed Finch *Pselliophorus tibialis*

Two seen nicely on our trail walk near Poas on 27th.

Common Bush Tanager *Chlorospingus ophthalmicus*

Singles at Monteverde on 21st and La Paz on 26th, then a few on the road below Poas on 27th.

Sooty-capped Bush Tanager *Chlorospingus pileatus*

At least six along the trail and road below Poas on 27th.

Eastern Meadowlark *Sturnella magna*

One on the way to Arenal on 21st, one near Caño Negro on 26th and a poser near our Poas lodge on 28th.

Red-breasted Blackbird *Sturnella militaris*

Singles in the Caño Negro area on 24th and 26th.

Montezuma Oropendola *Psarocolius montezuma*

Common at Arenal with good numbers nesting; elsewhere, a small handful of roadside birds noted.

Streak-backed Oriole *Icterus pustulatus*

Elusive this year, with just one at a nest near Puerto Caldera on 19th.

Baltimore Oriole *Icterus galbula*

A total of five birds in the first half of the week, including some glitzy males!

Black-cowled Oriole *Icterus prosthemelas*

A couple of pairs seen regularly around Arenal, including at the lodge feeders.

Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus*

Widespread and common in the Caño Negro area and also noted around La Fortuna.

Giant Cowbird *Molothrus oryzivorus*

Just fly-overs, with one at Arenal on 23rd, two during our drive on 24th and one at Caño Negro on 26th.

Shiny Cowbird *Molothrus bonariensis*

A male at our Poas lodge on 27th.

Bronzed Cowbird *Molothrus aeneus*

Small numbers noted on six dates, mostly around Monteverde, Arenal and Poas.

Melodious Blackbird *Dives dives*

Ones and twos of this recent invader seen on six dates, scattered throughout the trip.

Nicaraguan Grackle *Quiscalus nicaraguensis*

Great views of a pair at Los Chiles on 24th and some displaying pairs on the Caño Negro boat trips on 25th.

Great-tailed Grackle *Quiscalus mexicanus*

Widespread and very common in lowlands to mid-elevations.

Ovenbird *Seiurus aurocapilla*

A couple seen well around the Finca Ecologica at Monteverde on 21st.

Northern Waterthrush *Parkesia noveboracensis*

A couple seen on our boat trips along the Rio Frio on 25th.

Flame-throated Warbler *Oreothlypis gutturalis*

Scorching views of this wonderful bird at our Poas lodge on 28th.

Tennessee Warbler *Leiothlypis peregrina*

Small numbers seen around Arenal regularly, with six in the lodge gardens in a small flock on 23rd. Also noted at Caño Negro on 26th.

Grey-crowned Yellowthroat *Geothlypis poliocephala*

More often heard than seen over the first few days, but one showed well at our first pygmy owl spot on 19th.

Mourning Warbler *Geothlypis philadelphia*

Great views of one that came to the feeders at La Fortuna on 22nd.

Olive-crowned Yellowthroat *Geothlypis semiflava*

One sat up singing at Medio Queso after our boat trip on 24th and two at La Paz Waterfall Gardens on 26th.

Hooded Warbler *Setophaga citrina*

A very obliging male was enjoyed in the wet woods at La Fortuna on 22nd.

Tropical Parula *Setophaga pitiayumi*

First noted at our magic corner at Arenal on 21st, then singles at Arenal on 23rd and La Paz on 26th.

Blackburnian Warbler *Setophaga fusca*

Two near the feeders at Arenal on 22nd and a female there the next day.

American Yellow Warbler *Setophaga petechia*

Widespread with one to eight seen on six dates throughout the trip.

Chestnut-sided Warbler *Setophaga pensylvanica*

Some great views of some spectacular males around Arenal and La Fortuna, with one or two elsewhere, too.

Buff-rumped Warbler *Myiothlypis fulvicauda*

One to two daily around Arenal with some nice close encounters of this smart little bird.

Rufous-capped Warbler *Basileuterus rufifrons*

A nice pair flitted around us at Finca Ecologica, Monteverde on 21st.

Golden-crowned Warbler *Basileuterus culicivorus*

Normally a common and widespread bird, the weather no doubt played a part in keeping them quiet! Two at Curi Cancha on 20th and one at Caño Negro on 25th were our only sightings.

Black-eared Warbler *Basileuterus melanotis*

One seen by the group who took the waterfall trail at La Paz on 26th. Formerly lumped in Three-striped Warbler.

Canada Warbler *Cardellina canadensis*

One while trying for the antpitta at Arenal on 23rd and one at Caño Negro on 26th.

Wilson's Warbler *Cardellina pusilla*

A total of three birds at Monteverde on 20-21st and a singleton on the road below Poas on 27th.

Slate-throated Whitestart *Myioborus miniatus*

Several in forests around Monteverde and also seen at La Paz Waterfall Gardens and Virgen de Socorro.

Collared Whitestart *Myioborus torquatus*

One of these fabulous little birds was seen on the trail below Poas on 27th.

Flame-coloured Tanager *Piranga bidentata*

A singing male near Poasito on a pre-breakfast walk on 27th and another back at the lodge shortly after.

Tooth-billed Tanager *Piranga lutea*

A couple of nice pairs seen around Monteverde on 20th and 21st and one near Poas on 27th.

Scarlet Tanager *Piranga olivacea*

Single, stunning males were seen at Arenal on 21st and 23rd and Caño Negro on 26th.

Carmioli's Tanager *Chlorothraupis carmioli*

A party of six or so was seen in the forests at Arenal on 24th.

Crimson-collared Tanager *Ramphocelus sanguinolentus*

Brief but good views of one at a feeder at the hotel grounds we visited at La Fortuna on 22nd.

Passerini's Tanager *Ramphocelus passerinii*

Widespread and common in Caribbean lowlands and foothills and seen daily from 21st.

Blue-grey Tanager *Thraupis episcopus*

Widespread and common and seen throughout the trip.

Yellow-winged Tanager *Thraupis abbas*

One noted by Herman at Arenal Observatory Lodge on 23rd.

Palm Tanager *Thraupis palmarum*

Seen more or less throughout the trip, though not noted around Monteverde or the dry Pacific slope.

Emerald Tanager *Tangara florida*

Three around the Arenal Observatory Lodge grounds on 23rd.

Silver-throated Tanager *Tangara icterocephala*

A pair at La Paz Waterfall Gardens on 26th and another pair at Virgen de Socorro on 28th.

Bay-headed Tanager *Tangara gyrola*

Singles at Arenal on 21st and La Paz Waterfall Gardens on 26th and a pair at Virgen de Socorro on 28th.

Golden-hooded Tanager *Tangara larvata*

Small numbers daily around Arenal and singles at Caño Negro on 25th and 26th.

Scarlet-thighed Dacnis *Dacnis venusta*

Pairs at Monteverde on 20th and 22nd and prolonged looks at a fabulous male at Cinchona on 27th.

Shining Honeycreeper *Cyanerpes lucidus*

At least five seen at the magic corner near Monteverde on 21st and a further single on 22nd.

Red-legged Honeycreeper *Cyanerpes cyaneus*

Widespread and seen in small numbers on six dates – best views at the Arenal feeders!

Green Honeycreeper *Chlorophanes spiza*

Seen well around the Arenal area on 21st-24th and two at Virgen de Socorro on 28th.

Slaty Flowerpiercer *Diglossa plumbea*

Nice views of both males and females stealing nectar around the Poas area on 27th and 28th.

Black-headed Saltator *Saltator atriceps*

One showed nicely at the magic corner near Arenal on 21st and two were along the peninsula road on 23rd.

Buff-throated Saltator *Saltator maximus*

Two at the magic corner near Arenal on 21st and two at the Arenal feeders on 22nd.

Greyish Saltator *Saltator coerulescens*

One in fine song at our first hotel on the morning of 20th, then one or two seen daily in the Caño Negro area.

Blue-black Grassquit *Volatinia jacarina*

Just a single bird seen at the lake dam at Arenal on 21st and one at La Fortuna the next day.

Variable Seedeater *Sporophila corvina*

Common and widespread in the Arenal and Caño Negro areas.

White-collared Seedeater *Sporophila torqueola*

One on the Pacific Slope on 19th and small numbers around Arenal and Caño Negro.

Ruddy-breasted Seedeater *Sporophila minuta*

A smart pair with the male in full breeding plumage near Caño Negro on 26th.

Thick-billed Seed Finch *Oryzoborus funereus*

Two at the magic corner near Arenal on 21st.

Nicaraguan Seed Finch *Oryzoborus nuttingi*

A brief but close encounter with a singing male along the dirt road near Caño Negro on 26th.

Bananaquit *Coereba flaveola*

Widespread in small numbers and seen daily from 20th.

Yellow-faced Grassquit *Tiaris olivacea*

Common in cut-over, grassy places and seen regularly around Monteverde and Arenal.

MAMMALS**Mantled Howler Monkey *Alouatta palliata***

Heard or seen pretty much daily from 22nd with some nice studies of family life!

Variegated Squirrel *Sciurus variegatoides*

Widespread and seen in various colour forms throughout.

Red-tailed Squirrel *Sciurus granatensis*

Ones and twos seen in forested areas on four dates.

Poas Squirrel *Syntheosciurus brochus*

A close encounter with this petite species on the trail below Poas on 27th.

Central American Agouti *Dasyprocta punctata*

A total of three individuals in the Monteverde area on 20th and 21st.

Margay *Leopardus wiedii*

Bird of the trip! A wonderful, close encounter with this gorgeous cat at Arenal on 22nd.

White-nosed Coati *Nasua narica*

Small numbers on most days with close encounters around the feeders at Arenal.

White-tailed Deer *Odocoileus virginianus*

A female with a youngster was seen on one of our boat trips at Caño Negro on 25th.

REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS**Cane (Marine) Toad *Rhinella marina***

A few at Arenal and in the lowlands around Caño Negro.

Strawberry Poison-dart Frog *Oophaga pumilio*

Several of these little chappies were seen at La Fortuna on 22nd.

Common Rain Frog *Craugastor fitzingeri*

One on the wall at Arenal Observatory Lodge.

Brilliant Forest Frog *Lithobates warszewitschii*

One on our walk at Arenal Observatory Lodge.

Nicaraguan Slider *Trachemys emolli*

Common in the Los Chiles/Caño Negro area. The 'red-eared slider' complex has recently been chopped up into a number of species and this is the common form in northern Costa Rica.

Green Iguana *Iguana iguana*

Very common around Los Chiles/Caño Negro, especially on the boat trips.

Spiny-tailed (Black) Iguana *Ctenosaura similis*

One or two in the dry, Pacific Slope habitats on 19th.

Brown Basilisk *Basiliscus vittatus*

One at La Fortuna on 22nd.

Green Basilisk *Basiliscus plumifrons*

Several around Caño Negro on 25th.

Tropical House Gecko *Hemidactylus frenatus*

Common on the walls of our lodges at night.

Pug-nosed Anole *Norops capito*

One seen on the waterfall walk at La Paz on 26th.

Central American Whiptail Lizard *Ameiva festiva*

One on the deck at Arenal on 23rd.

Green Spiny Lizard *Sceloporus malachiticus*

One at Finca Ecologica, Monteverde on 21st.

Costa Rican Milk Snake *Lampropeltis triangulum*

One at Finca Ecologica, Monteverde on 21st was a startling find!

Spectacled Caiman *Caiman crocodilus*

Very common in wetlands around Los Chiles/Caño Negro and one at La Fortuna.

American Crocodile *Crocodylus acutus*

Two of these scarce animals were seen on the Rio Frio on 25th.