

Holiday Highlights

Cost Rica North

26 February – 13 March 2017

Guides: Roy Atkins and Paco Madrigal

Guests: Arlene Long, Neil Avis, Carolyn Owen, Connell, Caroline and Paul Hastilow, Lily and Paul Birkbeck, Jane and John Aggleton, Penny and Keith Chantler

Day 1: We gather at Heathrow for 5.40am and our flight leaves right on time - even arriving in Newark a little early. Passport control at Newark is remarkably quick and soon enough we are through security with time to relax and have a bite to eat before gathering at the gate for our second flight and even arrive in San Jose more than half an hour early. We are welcomed by Paco, our local guide, and Carlos, our driver, and are on our way to the hotel before we should have been landing. Half an hour later we are heading to bed - tired after a very long day.

Day 2: With our body clocks six hours ahead it does not prove too difficult to wake early and most of us gather at 5.45am for coffee in the foyer. We head into the gorgeous gardens with beautiful flowers including some stunning orchids. We start our bird list with Rufous-collared Sparrow then they come thick and fast - Blue-Gray Tanager, Hoffman's Woodpecker, Tropical Kingbirds, Social flycatcher, White-winged Dove, Clay-colored Thrush, Brown Jay and a pair of Red-billed Pigeon keep us entertained and the weather looks perfect. It is a lovely temperature with sunshine and a few clouds, so nice after the cold weather in the UK recently.

A small flock of birds working through the trees include both Yellow-throated and Philadelphia Vireos, Tennessee and Yellow Warbler and a small flock of Orange-chinned Parakeets flies over calling noisily. We find a pair of Blue-crowned Motmots, superb birds with iridescent blue crowns, then add Baltimore Oriole, House Wren, Summer Tanager, Blue-and-White Swallow and a Variegated Squirrel.

Walking further round we find our first hummingbird, a Rufous-tailed Hummingbird perched up in the trees and we even get to scope it. A pair of Melodious Blackbirds call loudly from the tree top then there are more warblers including a superb Rufous-capped Warbler, a good species to see. We find a smart male Summer Tanager as we head back for breakfast and discover an incredibly tame Inca Dove on the grass.

Breakfast is superb, a wonderful buffet with cooked options including plantain and the tradition Costa Rican 'rice and beans' or gallo-pinto, as well as cereal and a range of tropical fruits. After breakfast we gather at the bus then start our

journey through the town and out towards the high mountains in the middle of the country.

Driving through town we keep our eyes open for birds and spot Great-tailed Grackles everywhere. Turkey and Black Vultures are starting to circle now and we make a brief stop to see an Eastern Meadowlark. Once out of town the scenery becomes hillier with forested slopes and open areas of grazing fields and crops. The Pan American Highway then starts to gain height through forest that gradually becomes cloud forest, with tree ferns, bromeliads growing on the trees, huge Gunnera leaves and flowering plants that Paco names for us.

We eventually arrive at Paisso de Quetzales with its exciting hummingbird feeders. It is a delightful spot with a beautiful view out over the forest and the hummingbird feeders have three main species - Magnificent Hummingbird, Fiery-throated Hummingbird and Green Violetear. It is astonishing how the colours don't show at all until the bird is at the right angle then wow a dazzle of colour appears as if by magic. Other birds in the surrounding trees and bushes include Black-billed Nightingale Thrush, Slaty Flowerpiercer, Mountain Thrush, Mountain Elaenia, Sooty-capped Chlorospingus and Long-tailed Silky Flycatcher, an absolutely stunning bird. We also find a tiny Volcano Hummingbird feeding on flowers below the platform.

We take a short walk through the grounds and are astonished to find two Large-footed Finches right out in the open. There are Rufous-collared Sparrows everywhere and we get good views of a Wilson's Warbler and a beautiful Flame-coloured Tanager. Red-tailed Squirrels are on the feeders and at the far end of the walk Caroline spots a Flame-throated Warbler with brilliant orange throat. As we walk back a pair of Golden-browed Chlorophonias are feeding in the trees and we get good views of more Sooty-capped Chlorospingus.

The weather has really changed but some say they are actually quite pleased to see the cloud-forest now with cloud swirling through it. Back at the lodge we have lunch before putting in a last few minutes at the feeders, which proves fruitful in that Roy finds a pair of Black-and-Yellow Silky-Flycatchers, a bit of a speciality of this place.

We get on our way and are soon heading down the track towards our lodge. We make a stop to admire a superb Acorn Woodpecker and find another Flame-colored Tanager. We take a short walk down the road and almost immediately Roy spots a flock of seven Swallow-tailed Kites circling and chasing above the forest. They are such stunning birds and a species some had said they were particularly keen to see being one of the most elegant raptors in the world.

Shortly, Caroline spots a pair of Emerald Toucanets then we find Black Guan and both Black-billed and Ruddy-capped Nightingale Thrush hop out onto the track. We get very close views of Tufted Flycatcher and across the valley, Black-capped Flycatcher and Yellow-winged Vireo. Further on we find a mixed flock of birds

feeding around a superb moss covered tree with lots of bromeliads. There are several Wilson's and few Tennessee Warblers and we are pleased to find Black-throated Green Warbler too. There are more Sooty-capped Chlorospingus, Ruddy Tree-runner, Collared Redstart, a Spot-crowned Woodcreeper, Flame-throated Warblers showing very well and we get a great view of Barred Becard, an excellent find. We get brief views of Hairy Woodpecker and great views of Black-cheeked Warbler.

We decide to head down to the lodge, then after dropping the bags at the rooms, do some birding round the grounds. There are lots of Rufous-collared Sparrows, a few Flame-colored Tanagers and two new hummingbirds - White-throated Mountain Gem and Stripe-tailed Hummingbird. We get astonishing views of a Tennessee Warbler and Blue-gray Tanagers eating bananas and a very close Slaty Flowerpiercer actually piercing the flowers. A Scintillant Hummingbird shows well, allowing us to compare the orange tail with the green tail of Volcano Hummingbird. After a while the light starts to fade and we take a break before meeting up for our evening meal and run through the checklist, over a hundred species already.

Day 3: We meet up at the platform behind the main building at around 5.45am and find various species as we enjoy a coffee. It is surprisingly chilly, but there are few hummingbirds out already and we find Yellow-bellied Siskins in the tree above our heads. Melodious Blackbirds are singing nearby and we spot Blue-and-white Swallows, Acorn Woodpecker and a small flock of fly-by Sulphur-winged Parakeets.

We take a walk down through a small bit of woodland to a clearing. We find a Gray-breasted Wood Wren as we go through the trees, then in the clearing find Spot-crowned Woodcreeper, Collared Redstart, Mountain Elaenia, Yellow-thighed Finch and as we walk down to the bridge a Black-throated Green Warbler. A Scintillant Hummingbird is feeding on small purple flowers by the river and a Louisiana Waterthrush is on the stones. We see Mountain Thrush as we walk back up to the lodge and enjoy stunning views of Gray-breasted Wood Wren on the ground, usually a very skulking bird. Arriving back at the lodge we add Spangle-cheeked Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak and a tight flock of Barred Parakeets looking like a flock of starlings above the trees before we head in for breakfast.

After an excellent breakfast we set off again starting back along the same route down through the trees. It is much warmer now with clear skies and sunshine and the birds seem to be more active. We find Wilson's and Tennessee Warbler, Flame-colored Tanagers and other species we have already seen, then add Dark Pewee. There are more Spangle-cheeked Tanagers and Sulphur-winged Parakeets and we are surprised to find another Black Guan. There are lots of Black Vultures up now but apart from a very brief glimpse of a Sharp-shinned Hawk there seem to be surprisingly few raptors.

We decide to try one of the side trails, a lovely walk that goes into some beautiful rainforest. We have hardly started when Paco brilliantly spots a Scaled Antpitta. This is an astonishing find and we spend a while making sure everyone gets to see this very difficult species and eventually it stops completely still and we even get a telescope on it.

The forest is beautiful with plenty of beautiful trees, ferns and lianas etc and we find several Collared Redstarts, but it seems rather quiet for birds. A Black-faced Solitaire is singing up there in the foliage and after some searching we are very impressed when Paco finds it. As we walk back towards the entrance we find Tufted Flycatcher, a lovely Black-and-white Warbler plus Flame-throated Warbler, Yellow-winged and Brown-capped Vireos.

We walk down the river to a spot where we are hoping to find a Resplendent Quetzal but despite putting in plenty of time watching the fruiting avocado trees they fail to appear. We do find Common Chlorospingus, another Yellow-winged Vireo, Ruddy-capped Nightingale Thrush, Philadelphia Vireo and Wilson's Warbler, Red-tailed Squirrel, more Spangled-cheeked Tanagers and John sees a Paltry Tyrannulet. We get extremely close views of Yellowish Flycatcher just feet away and as we start back we get a brief Torrent Tyrannulet on the river before we get on the bus and drive back up to check the woodland for quetzals. Back at the clearing there are loads of White-collared Swifts heeling round overhead and, we are sure, some Chestnut-collared with them.

We arrive back, pack our bags before coming down for lunch. Near the dining room we find Baltimore Oriole, a Long-tailed Silky Flycatcher on a nest, plus all the usual hummingbirds and a couple of Silver-throated Tanagers. More Barred Parakeets are high over the forest and a few Sulphur-winged Parakeets are feeding in the apple trees near the car park. There a few Green Spiny Lizards around over lunch time too, sunbathing on the stones.

After lunch, we are soon on our way and drive slowly up the track checking the trees as we go - this is our last chance for Resplendent Quetzal and we are feeling very nervous that perhaps this could be the first ever trip in fifteen years in which we fail to see one. It seems everyone we have spoken to has been finding them difficult this year. Eventually we stop and walk slowly up the road in an area with several fruiting avocado trees. In honesty, it feels like we are just going through the motions, the weather is hot and this is not a good time of day to be looking but we can't give up and we look carefully into the trees and Paco walks a short way into the forest and disappears from view. We are astonished when he suddenly comes dashing back out calling for a telescope and telling us to come in, he has found one.. We follow him and soon get a scope set up and the first couple of people see it then it flies, damn. But we walk on a little way and are thrilled when we relocate it, an absolutely stunning male with incredibly long tail streamers. Everyone gets excellent scope views and we even find a female perched a little way above the male.

It flies again, this time disappearing from view so we go back up to the road and scan from there and amazingly locate it again and now the views are even better. To our astonishment, the male and female then fly towards us and at one moment the male flies up to take a fruit from the tree at the road's side and we get to see the brilliant red underside and everything as it twists and turns in flight, the tail streamers flowing behind it. It perches in a perfect spot at eye level and we enjoy more fantastic scope views enjoying every moment.

Time is passing rapidly and eventually we have to drag ourselves away leaving the birds still visible but we have a way to go and it would be nice to arrive in daylight. We pass Sooty Thrushes and shortly after joining the main road are glimpsed another Black Guan. We drop down into the lowlands and start seeing commoner birds on the wires. There are Great-tailed Grackles everywhere, Kiskadee, Social Flycatcher, Tropical Kingbirds and more. We get poor views of a couple of Crimson-fronted Parakeets flying by and a flock of Chimney Swifts then a lucky few spot a Bat Falcon flying across the road.

With a few delays around San Jose, we arrive at Villa Lapas in the dark at around 6.45pm and head to our rooms to settle in before meeting up for our evening meal at 7.30pm. But there is plenty of wildlife to see even in the dark. Neil's door has an enormous Red-winged Grasshopper, or locust may be a better word, a truly impressive beastie. There are several Cicadas attracted to the lights and we find a large Marine (Cane) Toad. There are House Geckos around the ceiling lights in the dining areas too. Best of all - a few lucky ones see a Pauraque on their way to the dining area feeding from the driveway and calling, very nice.

Day 4: Those who arrive for coffee a little early are lucky enough to get a brief view of a Spectacled Owl. It is nesting in one of the trees here and the rest of us vow to make it down earlier tomorrow. John also had a Chuck-wills Widow, an excellent find.

Sipping coffee, we scan the trees and river soon finding Kiskadee, Piratic Flycatcher, Northern Waterthrush, Spotted Sandpiper, Social Flycatcher and Paco points out a Bare-throated Tiger Heron on a nest high in the trees. Shortly a second appears on the river and catches a frog, it looks stunning through the scope. A Common Basilisk is sunbathing on a rock by the bridge. We enjoy lovely scope views of a superb male Slaty-tailed Trogon then add Palm Tanagers, Golden-hooded Tanager, Baltimore Oriole, Yellow-Olive Flycatcher, Streaked Flycatcher and we are thrilled when the first Scarlet Macaws fly over – brilliant red in the dawn sunshine. Shortly, another four fly right over our heads looking spectacular. A hummingbird high in the tree turns out to be a White-necked Jacobin and we add Great-crested Flycatcher, Gartered Trogon, Buff-throated Saltator and a Muscovy Duck flies through.

We decide to walk into the garden a little way as we have not even moved from the coffee spot yet. A tiny hummingbird is working the flowers, the white tail tip identifying it as a Stripe-throated Hermit then moments later we find the biggest

of the same group, a Long-billed Hermit. Roy is thrilled to find a White-whiskered Puffbird which is soon joined by another then more Scarlet Macaws fly over calling noisily. Our first toucan appears, a fabulous Black-mandibled Toucan feeding on the palm fruits. To listen to us all you would think it was bonfire night with all the oos and aaahs.

And the birds just keep coming. We find a gorgeous male Painted Bunting all red and blue and colourful then a beautiful Yellow-throated Euphonia. A Pale-billed Woodpecker is perched right out in the open the other side of the river and looks superb in the scope. We find Variable Seedeater, Yellow Warbler, Steely-vented Hummingbird, Short-billed Pigeon, Hoffmann's Woodpecker, Buff-throated Saltator, Ruddy Ground Dove, Gray-capped Flycatcher and of course the ubiquitous Clay-colored Thrush.

We have to put on blinkers to make it back for breakfast or we would never get there despite it just being yards away. But even breakfast is interrupted by the fabulous sight of five Scarlet Macaws flying in and landing in the big tree above the dining area and a pair of Black-mandibled Toucans in the tree the far side of the river. It is all exciting stuff.

After breakfast, we gather again to drive a short way to a trail through the forest on the edge of Carara National Park. On the drive we spot Inca Doves, Crested Caracara and Ruddy Ground Doves then when we make a stop to pick up entrance tickets we are delighted to get great views of White-fronted Parrot, a brief Squirrel Cuckoo, Boat-billed Flycatcher and Baltimore Oriole. Connell finds a lovely male Yellow-headed Gecko on one of the tree trunks.

We start down the trail and spot White-tipped Dove and Northern Waterthrush on the path ahead of us. A group of White-shouldered Tanagers are working through the trees and we get good scope views of Black-throated Trogon. There are Lesser Greenlets, Bay-headed Tanager, Streak-headed Woodcreeper, Dusky Antbird and we are astonished to find a Violet Sabrewing as this is almost sea level and this species is usually at higher altitude. Further on we find a Chestnut-backed Antbird checking out the spider's webs amongst the tree roots. Another mixed flock includes Black-hooded Antshrike, Dusky Antbird and a very smart male Barred Antshrike.

We walk on some way and Paco pauses and points when he hears a calling Royal Flycatcher. A short search and he soon locates it a little way into the trees and we get great scope views of a pair of them, though they refuse to raise their astonishing crests, you can see it poking out at the back of the head.

We find a small group of bats in one of the trees that look rather like Long-nosed Bats but we are not sure. A Black Spiny-tailed Iguana is high in one of the trees and we find Brown-crested Flycatcher and Yellow-throated Vireo. We were very pleased with our views of Scarlet Macaw earlier this morning but we get some fantastic views of a group of them feeding on palm fruits and flying in and out

of the trees, they are simply spectacular and it is such a treat to see these wonderful birds in the wild.

We can hear a hummingbird calling incessantly from the trees and Paco tells us it is a new one - Blue-throated Goldentail. It proves hard to find but eventually we discover it perched on a thin twig high in the trees and even get the scopes on it. We watch a Plain Xenops working the thin branches like a miniature woodpecker then add Blue Dacnis, Dusky-capped Flycatcher and a very brief Plumbeous Kite flies over before we turn round.

As we walk back we try again for the Goldentail but instead find a Scaly-throated Hummingbird. The noisy macaws are still in the trees but are astonished when a mantled Howler Monkey starts howling nearby. It is an incredible sound and it seems hard to believe we can't see it despite searching hard. Another replies some way off, an amazingly atmospheric sound of the forest. The other sound that is a constant background to everything is that of cicadas, which at first seems all invading then you stop noticing it until suddenly they stop for a little while.

We pause to admire a pair of Rufous-tailed Jacamars, find another male Black-hooded Antshrike and get even better views of Chestnut backed Antbird. A White-tipped Dove walks through and we find our first Chestnut-sided Warbler, a species we are likely to see many more of.

Back at the bus, Carlos has brought some lovely chilled slices of Mango and Pineapple. We are hot after our walk and thirsty too and this is surely the tastiest and most wonderful fruit we have ever eaten. We drive back and take a break over lunch but John is keen to get out and do some birding on his own and finds some additional species like Blue-black Grassquit and Common Tody Flycatcher.

We meet up again at 2.30pm and head for our boat ride on the Tarcoles River. It is a short drive but as we are heading down the track we pass some orange blossomed Poro trees and decide to make a short stop as there are a few birds in them. In the roadside bushes are a family of Rufous-naped Wrens and Magnificent Frigatebirds are cruising high overhead. In the trees are Baltimore Oriole, Blue-gray Tanager, Hoffman's Woodpecker and both Scaly-breasted and Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. We get excellent views of a Gray Hawk.

The boat is waiting for us at the jetty. It has loads of space and we soon get settled and as we set off we are already spotting Hudsonian Whimbrel, Spotted Sandpiper, Snowy Egret, Tricolored Heron and lots of Mangrove Swallows including some nesting on the boat. Barn Swallows skim the water as we head upstream and we are astonished to find a Boat-billed Heron on amongst the tall grasses at the edge of the river. They are normally very hidden in the dense bushes and this is a fabulous opportunity for photos. We spot Crested Caracara and an Osprey perched in the tree tops, Bare-throated Tiger Heron and Green Heron in the reeds and Orange-chinned and Orange-fronted Parakeets fly over. Gray-breasted Martins are amongst the many Barn Swallows and we are delighted

to spot a hovering White-tailed Kite, a stunning bird almost identical to Europe's Black-shouldered Kite. Along the bank we spot Northern Jacana, Yellow-headed Caracara, Hudsonian Whimbrel, Willet, Black-necked Stilts, Southern Lapwings, Little Blue Heron and an immature Yellow-crowned Night Heron. A Blue Ground Dove flies across the river and we Red-winged Blackbirds fly by. On the sandy shore, we spot both Black Spiny-tailed Iguanas and a few Green Iguanas and a couple of small American Crocodiles.

We start heading downstream and John spots our first Ringed Kingfisher. There are more Ospreys, our first Black Hawk and a brief Peregrine that flies straight over us and looks like a huge female. A couple of Scarlet Macaws fly by and we stop to look at a flock of White Ibis, also finding both Black and Yellow-crowned Night Herons and lots of Spotted Sandpipers here. A gorgeous Prothonotary Warbler is working the mangrove bushes here and a Common Tody Flycatcher too. We head round into one of the channels that goes into the mangroves and we're astonished as a huge flock of Brown Pelicans appears above the trees by the river mouth, an amazing sight. We pass Osprey, Neotropic Cormorants and Anhingas plus plenty more herons and egrets and a couple of perched Roseate Spoonbills as we head up the channel.

We focus on trying to find some of the mangrove specialities and are pleased to find Panama Flycatcher then Northern Scrub Flycatcher both of which can be tricky. We find another Prothonotary Warbler, even more stunning than the last, then American Redstart and after some searching a Rufous-browed Peppershrike. A Tropical Pewee is fly-catching here then Roy is astonished to find an Olivaceous Woodcreeper, not a species you would expect here at all.

Further up the channel a Blue Ground Dove flies across and perches nearby. We get superb views of a Black Hawk that just stays and watches us, a fabulous photo opportunity. In the tree tops we find Red-lored and Yellow-naped Parrots. Roy turns to Paco at this point and asks where all the Mangrove Yellow Warblers are? And a second later our driver points out a bird in the bushes to our right, a superb male Mangrove Yellow Warbler. We should try that more often perhaps.

We work our way back to the main channel passing a superb White Ibis roost and at least three more Ospreys. In the river mouth we watch pelicans and ospreys and egrets as the sun set out over the sea, a beautiful end to the day. We are astonished however to see a flock of Scarlet Macaws heading to roost - first seven, then more, then more and then a flock of fifteen flying over noisily overhead, one pair landing in the tree tops and playing around together.

Everyone has really enjoyed the trip and we are feeling very happy with what we have seen as we start heading back up river but there is one last finale as suddenly the sky is filled with Lesser Nighthawks. Perhaps thirty or more appear above the trees looking so beautiful with their languid buoyant flight, a really lovely way to finish the trip before we head back for our evening meal.

Day 5: Most of us gather by the Spectacled Owl tree at around 5.20am and wait to see if the bird comes in. For what seems a long time nothing happens then suddenly at about 5.45am it flies in and drops into the hole without even looking round. Great to see it but to be honest a rather disappointing view.

Armed with coffee we then spend the next hour watching the river and seeing what comes into the trees here. First up is a fabulous Black-mandibled Toucan, soon joined by a second bird. The Bare-throated Tiger Heron flies down to the stream and is soon joined by another and she seems rather interested, bowing, and stretching her neck and the two of them are just beginning to look very cosy when a third bird appears. He walks a little way towards them and they fly at him and chase him away down the river.

We see plenty of species we are familiar with from yesterday and it is nice to have the chance to consolidate identification with species like Social Flycatcher, Piratic Flycatcher, Summer Tanager, Baltimore Oriole, Gray-capped Flycatcher, Streaked Flycatcher, Steely-vented Hummingbird, Northern Waterthrush and many more. Carolyn spots a Stripe-breasted Hermit, we get great views of a perched Scarlet Macaws and are astonished to find a Royal Flycatcher briefly on the other side of the river. A Southern Beardless Tyrannulet appears high in the tree tops and a White-nosed Coati appears in the big tree.

We have an early breakfast and a few of spot some species as we head back to the rooms, including Yellow-crowned Euphonia, Northern Barred Woodcreeper, Cherries Tanager, Painted Buntings and Black-capped Tityra. We meet up again at 7.30am heading to a different trail in the primary forest.

In the car park, we find Ruddy Ground Dove, Baltimore Oriole and there is some hilarity as Roy spots a bird with a long tail flying towards us and calls a Squirrel Cuckoo but it is in fact a Scarlet Macaw. A real potential confusion pair these. We then find Squirrel Cuckoo moments later, so he now feels able to tell them apart again. We also find Yellow-throated Vireo, Lesser Greenlet and an Agouti in the undergrowth. Further up the track we find another Squirrel Cuckoo and are thrilled to discover Fiery-billed Araçari in the same tree. This is a superb bird and a great find here right at the north of their range.

Entering the primary forest birding seems rather quiet, it is however a wonderful habitat to see with huge trees, palms, ferns, lianas, strangler figs and a rather calm atmosphere. Some trees have enormous buttress roots, butterflies flit through the trees creating moving shadows that catch the eye and lines of Leaf-cutter Ants are crossing the path laden with their loads.

Gradually we start finding birds. Orange-billed Sparrow, Chestnut-backed Antbird, Dusky Antbird, Black-hooded Antshrike, Cocoa Woodcreeper, Riverside Wren and Sulphur-rumped Flycatcher are found then we realise some have been attracted by a large swarm of Army Ants. Many birds can be attracted to these

swarms as they disturb so many insects as they rampage through the leaves and leaf litter, they don't eat the ants themselves. We are especially delighted to find three Bicoloured Antbirds, not an easy species to find by any means. There are both Wedge-billed and Northern Barred Woodcreeper here and a couple of Grey-headed Tanagers. Eventually we move on finding Buff-throated Foliage-gleaner, White-whiskered Puffbird and Black-throated Trogon.

After some time, we arrive at a bridge over a stream. Here we can hear a bird calling that we think at first is Brown-capped Tyrannulet. Paco says this is very weird as it definitely should not be here, it is the wrong altitude and the wrong coast. We spot it and start discussing whether it might be Yellow-bellied Tyrannulet as this and Brown-capped look almost identical, perhaps they sound similar too. Another guide appears with a couple of clients and he has the recordings with him and he plays the songs of both and yes, they do sound almost identical, so this has to be Yellow-bellied as we are just inside the range of this species and in the right habitat too, it is a new bird even for Roy and Paco's first sighting here.

More birds appear. A Black-striped Woodcreeper appears above the stream, perhaps the smartest of this family, then we add White-necked Jacobin, Long-billed Starthroat, Rufous-breasted Wren, Gartered Trogon and high overhead we are delighted to discover a soaring King Vulture and a group of five or so Plumbeous Kites fly through too.

We move on, we still have quite a way to walk, and shortly find a Golden-crowned Spadebill – a tiny flycatcher. After some time, we bump into another mixed flock of birds including Golden-naped Woodpecker, Black-striped Woodcreeper, White-shouldered Tanager, Rufous-breasted Wren, Plain Xenops, Ruddy-tailed Flycatcher, Tropical Parula, White-winged Becard, Bay-headed Tanager, Green Honeycreeper, Black-and-white Warbler and a great find - a male Blue-capped Manakin, our first in many years. We finish with a lovely pair of White-crowned Parrots. Then suddenly we come out of the forest right by the bus and Carlos has again gone and bought delicious Mango and Pineapple for us to eat, perfectly ripe, slightly chilled and absolutely delicious.

Over lunchtime we are very pleased to find a bunch of Tent-making Bats under one of the plants in the garden. A few folk walk around in the grounds and find Painted Buntings, Variable Seedeater, White Ibis, Amazon Kingfisher, Grove-billed Ani, Streaked Flycatcher and more.

We meet up again at 3pm to head out for some birding along the local roads and tracks. We drive slowly along the Tarcoles road with Barn Swallows all over the place and pause to look at a family of Rufous-naped Wrens. We find Bare-throated Tiger Heron, Streaked-headed Woodcreeper, Hoffmann's Woodpeckers everywhere, then in a rather scruffy field find a mixed flock of White-collared and Variable Seedeaters, Blue-black Grassquits and both Ruddy Ground and Inca Doves. Magnificent Frigatebirds fly overhead as we drive and

groups of Orange-fronted Parakeets are flying over and landing in an orange flowered tree up ahead. We decide to stop and check them out and are soon enjoying great scope filling views of these lovely parakeets. There are Baltimore Orioles here too and a fabulous Green Iguana with an orange face eating the flowers. We move on and Connell spots a Black-headed Trogon on the wires - we are doing very well for trogons now.

We make a stop to walk down towards a possible Black-and-white Owl roost and spot more Orange-fronted Parakeets, plus various common species of tanagers etc. As we walk down we are pleased to find a pair of Tropical Gnatcatchers and we spot a White-winged Beard eating a katydid. We search the tree diligently but there don't appear to be any owls at home today, which is a shame.

We are just walking back when checking a bit of dense vegetation suddenly Paco exclaims that he has found a Two-toed Sloth. This is a big surprise just here, it doesn't seem the most likely spot for one at all but we are delighted and head over to get a better look. Rather typically it seems to be curled up asleep and you can't see much but a ball of fur with arms and rather long claws at the ends. The long pale fur tells us it is a Two-toed Sloth and at one point it starts moving an arm and you can see there are just two claws on the front feet.

Well pleased we have a scan around and start finding more birds. Dusky-capped Flycatcher, two Black Hawks, Yellow Warbler, Yellow-olive Flycatcher, Social Flycatcher, Common Tody Flycatcher, Turquoise-browed Motmot and a Spot-crowned Euphonia flies in. We get brief views of Yellow-naped Parrot and watch a lovely line of Roseate Spoonbills fly past looking very pretty in pink. Great Egrets fly by too and we add another hummingbird species with a female Green-breasted Mango with a black stripe down the front.

As we start walking back the Sloth finally raises its head. You can see the rather snub nose that looks pinkish and it seems to be star gazing, just looking straight up. It stays like that and does nothing more and eventually we leave it and walk back, dashing to escape the sudden rain which is coming down in very big drops. Fortunately, it doesn't completely soak us and we drive on a little and decide to head down to the beach.

The shore here is not as rubbish strewn as Paco suggests it might be and in fact has some good waders. Lots of Sanderlings are running around on the beach and we find Common Sandpiper, Grey Plover, Willet, Semipalmated Plover and are delighted to discover both Collared and Wilson's Plovers, both nice finds. More distantly we spot a Turnstone and there are a few Western Sandpipers too. Barn Swallows are everywhere and out at sea a few Brown Pelicans are passing by and an Osprey is circling. The sun is beginning to set and suddenly the sky is full of Lesser Nighthawks. There are lots of them and they make a wonderful finish to the day as they swoop down low over us and are all around and high up too, simply fabulous birds.

Day 6: We start the day again in the hotel gardens and those of us up early find Pauraque on the road and some are lucky enough to see Spectacled Owl too. Cherries Tanagers, Streaked Flycatcher, Eastern Wood Pewee, Common Tody Flycatcher, Yellow Warbler, Short-billed Pigeon, Scarlet Macaw, Rufous-naped Wren and more make for a very enjoyable session before we head to breakfast.

After breakfast, we meet up outside the rooms and head for a walk down the trail. As we reach the stream we find Green Kingfisher, Common Tody Flycatcher then a new bird - Thick-billed Seed Finch. Dusky Antbird, Black-hooded Antshrike, Pale-billed Woodpecker Ruddy-tailed Flycatcher, Squirrel Cuckoo and many others follow and amongst the Hoffmann's Woodpeckers John find a Red-crowned Woodpecker. We hear a calling Long-tailed Manakin and do our best to find it eventually getting a brief view of a smart male. Next comes a very tricky species - Red-crowned Ant Tanager – a species we have not seen on this trip in years, though frustratingly it is the female that most of us get to see while the colourful male only shows for a second or two.

We come out by the river again and get another brief view of a Long-tailed Manakin but are soon distracted when a White-faced Capuchin appears in the tree above our heads. We get great views as it works its way through the trees and seems to be doing well considering it only appears to have three working legs. Further on we find two Crested Guan clambering through the branches and several Costa Rican Swifts fly high overhead.

As we walk back we pause to look for manakins again but are treated instead to wonderful views of a Purple-crowned Fairy, an absolutely gorgeous hummingbird all white underneath with a long tail. We get another poor view of the manakin then as we walk back follow a Grey-chested Dove down the path. A stunning male Summer Tanager is in the bushes close to the hotel grounds and we find more Orange-billed Sparrows and finish with a Black-crowned Tityra.

We decide to have a look for raptors from the waterfall road and drive up until we gain plenty of height, pausing to admire the view of the river winding down below and the huge mangrove swamp and work out where we were on our boat trip yesterday. From our viewpoint, we find plenty of vultures in the sky and are very excited to find three King Vultures much closer than yesterdays. Scanning the forest down below Paco finds a White Hawk and we can see it fairly well through the scopes despite the distance. Two Gray Hawks circle up from the forest and we are very impressed when Carlos spots a Zone-tailed Hawk high up with the vultures. The only passerine we see is a Yellow-green Vireo. Then, as we head back down, John spots a Short-tailed Hawk hanging in the wind above the track.

After lunch, we have a bit of a drive to our next accommodation and we want to make a couple of stops on the way. Our first is at La Caldera, where we are hugely entertained by Arlene accidentally kicking the tap off a water pipe sending a spray of water up into the air. We do our best to look innocent as we scan the

birds in the bay finding loads of Laughing Gulls, Royal Tern, a few Hudsonian Whimbrel and a Willet then some guys arrive and we scarper before anyone asks us what happened.

Our next stop is along a dirt track when we spot a Greyish Saltator in the bushes. In the same bush is a female Rose-breasted Grosbeak and in the orange blossomed trees above are Green-breasted Mango and Ruby-throated Hummingbird. We are excited to discover there are also orioles including our first Streak-backed Oriole. There are also Baltimore Orioles and a very smart male Orchard Oriole. We find Stripe-headed Sparrow and John gets a brief view of a Banded Wren.

We move on to some salt pans and wow what a place. With high tide approaching we are faced with masses of birds including hundreds if not thousands of waders pushed off the estuary and a huge flock of terns. Starting with the waders we find large flocks of Marbled Godwits, Short-billed Dowitchers, Black-bellied Plovers and Willets. There are a surprising number of Wilson's Plovers - perhaps in the hundreds, with a smaller number of Semipalmated Plovers amongst them. At least a dozen Stilt Sandpipers are working the shallow water and we are surprised to find a lot more Semipalmated Sandpipers than Western Sandpipers but only a very few Least Sandpipers. There are lots of Whimbrel at the back and Paco brilliantly spots a Long-billed Curlew in amongst them.

Paco pulls out the stops with the terns too. There is an enormously impressive flock of Black Skimmers here and masses of Royal Terns and Cabot's Terns (recently split from Sandwich Tern) and lots of Laughing Gulls too. He manages to find a Gull-billed Tern, an impressive Caspian Tern and a Forster's Tern amongst them. We are most impressed. The spectacle is even more impressive when the whole lot take flight and wheel round for a while before landing again.

Extremely pleased with our sightings we have run out of time and head to our accommodation, arriving to find a Hooded Skunk wandering across the lawn. It is a superb animal with huge bushy tail with a white stripe down its side. We check in, then meet for the evening meal and a run through the checklist but we are astonished when we reach the section on amphibians and reptiles when Paco says, "...and a Milk Frog." None of us remember a Milk Frog then he says, "It is there on the table." Sure enough there is a huge pale tree frog just sat on the table and we wonder if it is hand-made or whether someone found it and put it there. How did we not spot it when we arrived?

Our final treat of the day is Tarantula Fishing with Roy, which involves finding a nice hole in the lawn and using a piece of grass to coax the tarantula to the opening of its hole. We succeed in finding a few occupied holes but only one really performs well, almost coming out before finally deciding better of it and letting go and vanishing down into the hole again. Great fun.

Day 7: We don't need an alarm clock today as we are awoken by the astonishing roar of Howler Monkeys close to the rooms and they are so loud! We gather at the usual 5.45am and enjoy coffee while we start birding, soon spotting a few bits and pieces like Rufous-naped Wren, Baltimore Oriole and a distant flock of Magnificent Frigatebirds behind a fishing boat out in the bay. We walk slowly down towards the sea, spotting Stripe-headed Sparrows and Inca Doves in the bushes with flocks of Barn Swallows and little groups of noisy Orange-chinned Parakeets going over. There are lots more Magnificent Frigatebirds and squadrons of Brown Pelicans passing just off shore.

Down at the coast we find Streak-backed Oriole and there are Ruddy Turnstones on the beach. Dozens of Royal and Cabot's Terns and Laughing Gulls are on the jetty plus a single Little Blue Heron. There are plenty of Hoffmann's Woodpeckers and we get great views of a smart male Black-headed Trogon and we keep hearing the song of Spot-breasted Oriole. At last John finds one and we enjoy great views of it in the orange-blossomed tree. There are Rose-throated Becards, a Turquoise-browed Motmot and then more and more orioles of all three types. Roy is pleased to spot a Cliff Swallow amongst the Barn Swallows and we are surprised to see Chestnut-collared Swifts - the chestnut even visible in the sunshine. There is a troop of Howler Monkeys in the trees and we watch them for a little while passing more on our way back for breakfast. John spots a Lesser Swallow-tailed Swift on the way back and we check the trees for a roosting Pacific Screech Owl that is sometimes here. It is astonishingly well spotted by Paco on the last branch of the last tree and what a fabulous little owl it is.

We stop to enjoy breakfast but have to keep guard as the White-throated Magpie-Jays are here and will sneak in and take food from your plate if you let them. We gather again after breakfast and drive out to Solimar where we are to pick up a local guide called Piño. We pause enroute for a beautiful, if brief Scissor-tailed Flycatcher and then a pair of Double-striped Thick-knees with chicks hiding in the shade of a tree in a large field.

We arrive at Hacienda Solimar and checking a small pond round the back find Least Grebe, Black-winged Stilts and lots and lots of Barn Swallows. We then head out into a huge area of cattle ranching, driving through large areas of grassland with occasional Eastern Meadowlark, Cattle Egrets and even more Barn Swallows. Surprisingly we spot an Osprey. Further on the area become wetter and we start passing the first small pools of water, one with Jacanas, Great Egret, Bare-throated Tiger Heron and a good-sized Crocodile on the shore.

Some of the ditches along the tracks are full of water and also have crocodiles in them plus Green Herons and occasional Bare-throated Tiger Herons and Anhingas. We stop to check out a group of doves and find a pair of Common Ground Doves as well as Incas and Ruddy Ground Doves.

We arrive at the wetter areas and find shallow water sitting in pools and flooding areas of grass and there are large patches of beautiful flowering Water Hyacinths. The most obvious birds are the big flocks of Black-bellied Whistling Ducks which are quite noisy making it obvious why they have the name. With them are a few Blue-winged Teal and there are lot of herons and egrets including Great Blue, Great Egret, Little Blue Heron Snowy Egret, load of Cattle Egrets and a couple of Tricolored Herons. There are several Limpkins, White Ibis and we enjoy fabulous views of Snail Kites as they hunt the large Apple Snails here.

We move on and stop at another very wet area, again with lots of Black-bellied Whistling Ducks and Blue-winged Teal. Many of the same species are here but also two Lesser Yellowlegs and a Solitary Sandpiper. Another Scissor-tailed Flycatcher flies over but lands too far away to see. We walk a little way down the road and are astonished by just how windy it is. It is hot already so it feels like standing in a hair drier. We set up the scope however to enjoy fabulous views of a Jabiru nest with three young and a single adult - and what an enormous bird it is.

Well pleased with our sightings here, we move on and drive round to an area of woodland where we take a short walk into the trees. It is very windy indeed and a little un-nerving but further in it is not so bad and we are pleased to get both Howler Monkey and then a small group of White-faced Capuchins. At first, we are concerned that the monkeys have frightened away the owls we are looking for, which we are told were here a few minutes ago. We continue searching however and eventually Paco finds them and we are thrilled with scope filling views of a pair of enormous and rather spectacular Spectacled Owls.

We start driving back to the lodge to drop off Piño and pause when Lily spots an Amazon Kingfisher close by and enjoy great views. Next, we find a White-nosed Coati but he runs off like the clappers when we stop to look. We head back to our accommodation to finish packing and have lunch then we set off for our next destination, the lodge at Arenal. The weather is very hot now as we leave with blue skies but very windy too. We can however see a large bank of cloud on the horizon and hope this does not bode too badly.

Despite checking every tree all the way to the main road we fail to spot any more Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, then we drive pretty much the whole way to Arenal with just one short stop to have a look at a perched Broad-winged Hawk by the roadside. The road takes us around Lake Arenal and while still very windy we are still mainly in sunshine for most of the way and the weather looks not too bad. Then as we get to see up the lake we are a bit disappointed to see the volcano seems to be completely hidden in cloud. It looks pretty grim but shortly the cloud lifts a little and at one point we can see perhaps two thirds of the volcano. We continue until we reach the start of the dirt track up to the lodge and here we make a stop to check a tree and, woohoo, the bird we are hoping for is in residence - a Great Potoo. Perched on its roosting spot, we enjoy scope filling views of this strange bird, rather like a cross between a nightjar and an owl.

We continue up the road and the rain starts. Light at first but with some heavy bursts and the track is very muddy, but we keep going only pausing when Jane spots a Great Curassow walking up into the forest. It is a brief view but great to see this bird and we are astonished when a second one, a female this time, is stood on the road a couple of miles further up the track. Further on, we pass a couple of Black-mandibled Toucans then as we cross the stream we are pleased to see a Fasciated Tiger Heron - a much scarcer species than the Bare-throated we have been seeing so far.

We arrive at the lodge and get brief views of a Passerini's Tanager as we unpack then, shortly after we are in our rooms, the rain really comes on heavy and we hope it will just get it all out of its system tonight so tomorrow might be better.

Day 8: The rain continues for most of the night but by first thing it is just about over and we gather at the platform by the dining room from where we can enjoy views of the birds coming to the feeders here. The fruit on the feeder is covered in Montezuma Oropendolas when we arrive but more and more other species soon start to arrive.

A pair of Great Curassows are on the lawn beneath, waiting for the banana man to come, while around the fruit on the high feeder and in the bushes a big list of birds appear. Passerini's, Golden-hooded, Silver-throated, Emerald, Blue-gray, Palm and Hepatic Tanagers, Yellow-throated Euphonia and a very brief White-vented Euphonia too - a much scarcer species. There are several Red-legged Honeycreepers and a couple of Green Honeycreepers plus Bananaquits and a smart White-throated Thrush. A pair of Mealy Parrots fly by, then later, a pair of Red-lored Parrots land in the tree allowing fabulous scope views. A House Wren is singing from the low bushes below us and we get occasional views of Black-striped Sparrow. We are also entertained by a group of White-nosed Coatis who are waiting for bananas to be knocked off the bird table by the rather clumsy curassows. White-collared Swifts fly over and a Lineated Woodpecker appears in the trees before flying right over our heads, landing in full view on a secropia nearby. Violet-headed Hummingbirds are around the vervain plants along with the usual Rufous-tailed and a brief Brown Violetear. We get brief views of a White-ruffed Manakin, a smart male too. Time flies and it is soon time for breakfast which is a fabulous buffet of fruit and cooked breakfast and cereals and great coffee.

It has been a tremendous start and we are pleased that though very cloudy and windy the rain seems to be holding off. After a short break, we meet up at 8am for a walk round one of the trails and gather at the rooms where we spot Black-striped Sparrows, Tropical Pewee, House Wren, Passerini's Tanager and more.

Our walk starts very quiet with just a Crested Guan and a Brilliant Forest Frog in the first hour. We find a lovely group of White-nosed Coatis, busy working their way through the forest floor digging here and there and looking very busy,

much nicer to see like that than around the bird table. We walk on and eventually find a bird - a Rufous Mourner.

As we walk through the quiet forest we have been saying that really, we need to bump into one of the mixed flocks that you get in the rainforest then suddenly here they are. The lead players are Olive Tanagers as they are often at the front of the flock - then it is chaos. Silver-throated and Emerald Tanagers vie for attention with Golden-hooded and Passerini's Tanagers. We get a good if brief view of White-ruffed Manakin and very good views of Spotted Woodcreeper. Our first Black-cheeked Woodpecker shows well then we add Black-and-yellow Tanager, Black-throated Green Warbler, Buff-throated Foliage-gleaner, Striped-breasted Wren Black-headed Nightingale Thrush, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and a Chestnut-sided Warbler with chestnut sides. Wow - a very busy few minutes indeed.

Shortly we come out into the gardens again and here there are lots of the purple flowers vervain bushes and hence plenty of hummingbirds. While the most common and most territorial, are the Rufous-tailed Hummingbirds we gradually amass a good list with Scaly-breasted, Violet-headed, Black-crested Coquette, Green Thorntail, Brown Violetear and Crowned Woodnymph. There is a Tropical Pewee fly-catching here and Variable Seedeaters feeding on the lawn. A superb Black-cowled Oriole is in the berry bushes along with one of the smartest Baltimore Orioles we have seen so far. We get great views of Band-backed Wren and then while we are looking at the oropendola nests a Giant Cowbird flies out being chased by an oropendola and then a second and we watch as it flies back to the colony and vanishes into one of the nests - presumably to lay an egg as they are egg parasites of oropendolas, their chick reared alongside the birds chicks.

We head now for lunch and the weather just gets better and better. As we eat we keep an eye on the volcano and the cloud lifts higher and higher. We can't stop checking the feeders either and we spot Shining Honeycreeper, which is new and a small group of Brown Jays come in. White-collared Swifts are flying through in good numbers and against the side of the volcano you can see the white collars very easily. Then suddenly the volcano is showing all the way to the top and we rush out to take pictures, a great sight even if not for long. And it really does look like a kid's drawing of a volcano, a large pointed peak with steam rising from the top.

After lunch, we gather at around 2pm to go out for a drive along the entrance road, making our first stop at the car park where apparently, while cleaning the van, Carlos noticed an Eyelash Viper. We jump out and go to check the hole, and yes, it is still there - a brilliant yellow snake inside a small hole in a fence post, its head poking out and body coiled up inside. Brilliant!

Next, we head down the road to a viewpoint in the hope of seeing some raptors and we are delighted to find there are about three or four Swallow-tailed Kites

wheeling round below us. They are there for the entire time we are here and it is lovely to be able to watch other birds then come back to them. There are White-collared Swifts in flocks rushing through too and we find Black-cowled Oriole, Southern Rough-winged Swallow, Variable Seedeater, Black-cheeked Woodpecker, Masked Tityra, Cinnamon Becard, Yellow-throated Euphonia and a brief Smoky-brown Woodpecker.

From here we drive down to the river where there are two Black Phoebe fly-catching from the stones. A Spotted Sandpiper is pottering around on the shore and in a tree on the far side Paco finds a nice male White-collared Manakin. We walk along the road and Caroline brilliantly spots a Wood Thrush in the undergrowth. Brown-hooded Parrots fly overhead and at the top of a rise we find a Long-tailed Tyrant, a lovely little flycatcher with elongated central tail feathers and a superb Rufous-tailed Jacamar.

We walk a little further and there are lots of birds moving around the trees and bushes. They are mainly species we are familiar with but a Black-and-white Warbler is nice to see again. Then Paco hears two rarer flycatchers calling and eventually we find them in the same bush - Slaty-capped and Olive-striped Flycatchers. While looking at these Roy finds a Crimson-collared Tanager and we also discover Boat-billed Flycatcher, White-necked Jacobin and another Black-and-white Warbler.

We drive a bit further up the road then try another spot and here we are surprised to find a second Smoky-brown Woodpecker and a very skulking Blue-black Grosbeak. We are astonished when a Pauraque suddenly flutters on the grass verge as if trying to get our attention. We wonder if there is a nest nearby but enjoy astonishing views of this bird normally seen by torchlight.

Day 9: We start a little earlier this morning, meeting at 5.30am, so that we can be down the road at some lights by 6am. These lights are on all night and often attract insects, then at first light birds come down to feed on the insects so it can be very good. The weather sounds atrocious at 5am with rain hammering on the roof but by 5.30am it has stopped raining - only to start again once we are all stood in place. The rain comes and goes and fortunately some birds do too with Buff-rumped and Golden-crowned Warbler, Olive and Hepatic Tanagers, House Wren, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, Silver-throated Tanagers, Chestnut-sided Warbler and in the tree nearby a rather wet looking Broad-winged Hawk. There are both Wood and White-throated Thrushes on the lawn and, as we walk round to the viewpoint, a Cinnamon Becard.

From the viewpoint, the weather is not helping either and there are few birds in the tree tops, but we do see Southern Rough-winged Swallows and a nice Tropical Parula plus a few other common species but the highlight is without doubt the group of four Keel-billed Toucans that come into one of the trees allowing frame filling views through the scope. Roy finds a flock of eight Swallow-tailed Kites perched up in the trees in the distance before we leave.

With the rain coming in heavy again we decide to head back for breakfast, where there are lots of the same birds on the feeders including a group of Brown Jays, lots of tanagers and euphonias and a nice Black-cheeked Woodpecker. And the rain does not let up. We wonder what to do and after some discussion, and with the rain still pouring down after breakfast, we decide to cut our losses and move on. We get packed and loaded up then head down the track towards the main road with the rain coming and going we make a few stops as we travel down the track.

A Green Kingfisher is at the little bridge over the river, then a bit further on we stop when Paco hears calling Black-headed Saltator from the window of the bus. We jump out and soon manage to pick up a group of three of them moving through the trees. There are a couple of Black-cowled Orioles too plus Passerini's Tanager.

We move on a little and stop when we spot a pair of Great Curassow further ahead on the track. We get out to scope them and find a Keel-billed Toucan perched right out in great light above the track, what a bird. Further down the road we get superb views of Long-tailed Tyrant and glimpse a Bay Wren, then hear a calling Scarlet-rumped Cacique which flies out and lands above our heads on the wires calling loudly and even displaying a little. Our next stop produces Gartered Trogon, Black-cheeked Woodpecker, Cinnamon Becard, Red-legged Honeycreeper and Caroline manages to see the singing Black-throated Wren that appears very briefly. Further on hear what we think might be a Keel-billed Motmot and we spend a while trying to find it and even try playing the call but when Paco finally finds it as we are about to leave it turns out be a Broad-billed Motmot - still a nice bird though. With the rain coming on again we decide to call it a day and head on to our next destination.

It is a good couple of hours drive to Selva Verde, so having got to the main road we drive straight there. We arrive and head straight to lunch then go to our rooms to sort ourselves out and get settled before meeting up again at 3pm. It is a short drive to our birding spot and we start with Grey-capped Flycatchers on the wires and a Cocoa Woodcreeper calling from in the trees. We can hear lots of Strawberry Poison-dart Frogs calling but for some time fail to find any - and we get distracted by Buff-throated Saltator, Squirrel Cuckoo, Variegated Squirrel of a very dark form and high in the trees a pair of Pied Puffbirds. They look like miniature black and white kingfishers. In the distance, we notice a large flock of migrating Turkey Vultures passing by but too far away to check through them.

We follow the track down to the river finding a Broad-billed Motmot down there with broken off tail rackets - and wow, it is certainly a very broad bill. Walking back up we spot Fasciated Antshrike, White-ringed Flycatcher and our first Collared Araçari, superb birds.

We take a track that goes to an area we like to call Parrot-land. It is where quite a few parrots come in to roost and usually a few macaws too. On the way, we pause to look at all the Variable Seedeaters but there seems to be nothing else with them other than Ruddy Ground Doves. We are astonished to see a huge flock of White-collared Swifts coming through, passing low overhead and looking fabulous being so fast and very big for swifts.

Further down we stop to check out the big trees where the parrots roost and we identify Red-lored Parrots and then Crimson-fronted Parakeets. We find a distant Osprey perched in one of the trees and Paco finds a White-crowned Parrot in the distance. We are thrilled to discover a King Vulture perched up in one of the distant dead trees, but close enough to see the face marking through the scope. It is quite a find as we rarely see these perched. Suddenly we are aware of a Great Green Macaw flying by - amazingly in silence. It lands in one of the big almond trees and we enjoy scope views too before it flies into the nesting hole at the back of the tree. A while later it appears again with its mate and they fly to another tree where again we can scope them - this time making plenty of noise. And what fabulous birds they are, all greens and blues with a red band above the bill - fantastic!

We are enjoying the parrots, parakeets and macaws when suddenly Paco shouts that he can hear a Bat Falcon. We soon locate it as it flies in and perches and we get excellent scope views. Shortly it flies to a tall dead tree where we discover there is a second one and we can't help wondering how long it has been there unnoticed. They look rather reminiscent of small Hobbies. Roy spots a White-lined Tanager in the top of one of the bushes and all the time more parrots and parakeets are flying in but now the light is beginning to go so we decide that perhaps we should call it a day and head back to the lodge. It has been a lovely finish to the day, but it turns out the day is not quite over yet.

We gather at the bar in the evening to run through the checklist and Roy decides to have a quick look for frogs before everyone has arrived and quite quickly finds a Red-eyed Tree Frog. This is the iconic image of the rainforest so often used in adverts and documentaries and hence a real thrill to see. It is just the most perfect animal and after our evening meal we come back and have another search finding about four of them and a sleeping Emerald Basilisk. A really excellent finish to the day.

Day 10: Once more we gather at 5.45am for coffee then after checking the feeding table, which just seems to have a female Red-throated Ant-Tanager, we take a walk in the grounds of the lodge. We start by the river where a few egrets are flying upstream then find a pair of Green Kingfishers on the far side. An Amazon Kingfisher flies through and there are Black Phoebes on the boulders. A Keel-billed Toucan and a Roadside Hawk are perched in a distant tree. Neil spots a Green-and-Black Poison-Dart Frog that looks like some kid's toy until it moves. There is a brief Fasciated Tiger Heron and as we walk back Paco tells us a little about what this place used to be like when he was younger - all pasture

land with cows etc. He even points out a few of the trees he planted himself perhaps twenty or more years ago and they are big full sized trees. John then spots a Bright-rumped Attila as we walk back, a slightly odd looking flycatcher that is very distinctive with its bright yellow rump.

After a lovely breakfast, we head out to La Selva. We park on the entrance road and Paco heads off into the trees for a few moments while we start birding - returning moments later grinning. He has been checking an owl roost and the bird is at home. We follow him and sure enough there, very well hidden in the bushes, is a Vermiculated Screech Owl. We enjoy astonishingly views through the scope as it is quite close and you can see the fine markings on its chest after which it is named. We are about to head back to the road when a raptor circles up from the forest, a Gray-headed Kite. There are two Rufous-tailed Jacamars here and a pair of White-breasted Wood Wren.

Once back on the road we check the swifts overhead, all Grey-rumped Swifts, and there are few commoner species in the bushes such as Passerini's Tanagers, a Bananaquit, Grey-capped Flycatcher etc. As we pass a small stream suddenly Paco beckons, he has spotted an Agami Heron! This is a fabulous find but sadly the heron has also spotted Paco and this shy species does not hang around and Penny is the only person to see it as it flies away.

Species start arriving a bit quicker now with Olive-backed Euphonia, Long-tailed Tyrant, Great Crested Flycatcher, Orange-chinned Parakeets, Purple-crowned Fairy, Black-cowled Oriole, Rufous Mourner and more. We are delighted to find a Two-toed Sloth and almost immediately a second one and this one has a small baby. She is quite active and climbs a bit higher in the tree with the baby perched on top as she climbs – a real aaaahhh moment.

As we approach the entrance and administration area we find Northern Rough-winged Swallows, Dusky Flycatcher and get good views of a Double-toothed Kite circling overhead. Then take a short break to do some paperwork to enter the reserve and also to check out the shop, which sells ice creams!

We are introduced to Joel who will come with us as you have to have a guide form the reserve here - and he seems very good soon finding us a Gartered Trogon nearby and a flock of Dusky-faced Tanagers. We add Northern Barred Woodcreeper and we hear the call of a Cinnamon Woodpecker. Paco whistles an imitation and it flies across and lands in one of the trees then, after a bit of chasing around, we get fantastic views of this usually elusive species. There is also a Pale-billed Woodpecker here with excellent views down at eye level. A Bay Wren is calling in the bushes and we eventually get great views of this too. Joel, finds another Two-toed Sloth and this is looking great laying in a bed of vines and looking very chilled out. We find Ground Anole and Central American Whip-tailed Lizards here and also Wedge-billed Woodcreeper. A flock of Turkey Vultures is migrating through - a long string of birds all following one another and we are pleased to spot a few Swainson's Hawks amongst them.

We walk along the track a little way finding a Pied Puffbird, Black-and-white Warbler, Blue-black Grosbeak and Black-faced Grosbeaks in a small flock eating berries that look almost too big for them to cope with. There is a pair of Slaty-tailed Trogons here and we also get good views of a Howler Monkey.

Time has run out so we head back to the centre and Carlos is waiting patiently to run us back for lunch. After lunch, we have a break then meet up again at 2.30pm to head back out for a walk into the primary rainforest. We are well on our way when suddenly Paco tells Carlos to pull in at the side and jumps out to check something, then he beckons and we are thrilled when it turns out he has found a Snowy Cotinga. Perched high in a leafless tree it is a lovely bird, completely white with a large dark eye and almost dove like in looks.

We continue on our way and as we drive up the entrance road we pause to check the little stream and Neil spots an American Pygmy Kingfisher. We jump out and soon have the scopes on this gorgeous little bird, the smallest of the American Kingfisher and much smaller than ours, a delightful little thing.

We arrive at the reserve where we disembark and then cross the bridge over the big river. We walk through the accommodation area for the researchers and at the far end find a Collared Peccary wandering through the grounds apparently completely unbothered by our close presence. It is one of the very few places where these animals don't run a mile at the sight of a human.

Next, we find a tree full of berries that has attracted a few birds including Passerini's Tanagers, Clay-colored Thrush and Olive-backed Euphonia but also an absolutely stunning Golden-winged Warbler. We find a female Shining Honeycreeper in there too and Golden-hooded Tanagers while nearby is a female Crowned Woodnymph and a baby Blue-throated Hummingbird which is fed briefly by an adult.

We walk into the forest and can hear a calling Great Tinamou. This is a bit of a must-see bird so we search for it carefully, scanning the forest floor methodically. More Peccaries wander through then suddenly the bird start to call again and we home in on the right area and suddenly Penny is pointing frantically. There is the Tinamou walking slowly across the forest floor and we are absolutely thrilled - watching in silence as the bird looks so wary. It slowly steps its way pausing now and then to call and gradually gets closer and closer. Then the local guide says it may cross the path and we wait and watch and sure enough we enjoy a wonderful view of it right out in the open as it does just that. What a wonderful moment.

We walk on and pause to shine a torch into a couple of holes in the embankment, where we quickly find a Tropical Night Lizard - a rather nice looking animal with pale yellow spots. We spot a second Great Tinamou and more peccaries then the local guide points out a bright yellow Eyelash Viper just like

yesterdays but out in the open. With the light fading fast we head back, finishing the day with more Red-eyed Tree Frogs and a Leopard Frog in the wet area by the dining room.

Day 11: We drink coffee early watching Summer and Red-throated Ant Tanagers (the latter actually in the dining room.) Black-cheeked Woodpecker, Orange-billed Sparrows, a brief Bright-rumped Attila and Stripe-throated Hermit, then take a walk adding Northern Barred Woodcreeper and a Boat billed Flycatcher.

We are astonished to find two Black-and-Green Poison-Dart Frogs having a fight. They rise up on their back legs with front legs interlocked and seem to be trying to turn each other over. It appears to be a real duel of strength and they keep going for quite a while before one finally gives up and hops away. Roy has found a Rufous-tailed Hummingbird nest which he shows everyone - with two tiny eggs inside. We find a spectacular Emerald Basilisk and a Black River Turtle in the stream near reception, then on the hillside opposite find Collared Araçari, Black-crowned Tityra, Olive-throated Parakeet and we have fly over White-crowned and Brown-hooded Parrots.

After breakfast, we head to La Selva, this time driving straight to reception where we find Paltry Tyrannulet by the building and a fine male White-collared Manakin. As we walk across the 'football pitch' a rather rufous coloured woodpecker flies across and we assume at first it is the Cinnamon Woodpecker we saw yesterday as we are in the same spot, then it calls and we realise it is a Chestnut-colored Woodpecker. It flies across to join another three or four of them amongst the trees, presumably a family and we get exceptional views of this superb looking woodpecker with its buffy crest. In the same area, Joel points out a nesting Eye-ringed Flatbill, perhaps the dullest bird of the trip so far but quite a rare species.

We start our walk and it seems rather quiet. There are a few Gray-rumped and White-collared Swifts overhead but the forest seems very quiet indeed. We find a pair of Black-throated Trogons but little else until we bump into a mixed flock with Golden-winged Warbler, Northern Barred Woodcreeper, Plain Xenops, Red-throated Ant Tanager, Pale-billed Woodpecker and Slaty-tailed Trogon. Joel disappears down a side track and comes back grinning, he leads us down to a large heliconia leaf and there, huddled together underneath, is a little group of Honduran Tent Making Bats - delightful little balls of cotton wool with pink ears. They bite through the heavy veins of the leaf causing the leaf to collapse either side of the midrib then roost underneath. It is absolutely delightful. A little less delightful, he also shows us a colony of enormous Bullet Ants, not something you want to mess with being almost an inch long with jaws to match. Eventually we come out of the forest close to 'Parrotland' and check the tall trees for macaws. While none are home we do find a Bat Falcon and by the road there are Cocoa Woodcreeper, Palm Tanager, Bananaquit, Buff-throated Saltator, Dusky-capped Flycatcher and a Plain-colored Tanager.

We head back for lunch and have a bit of a break, meeting up again for our afternoon outing at around 3pm. We decide to take a road that cuts down to the river but before we reach the river we start spotting birds so we get out and see what we can find. There are lots of Variable Seedeaters along the side of the road and then Orange-billed Parakeets fly in and land in the tree tops allowing us nice scope views. Olive-throated Parakeets are around too and we find Dusky-capped Flycatcher Scarlet-thighed Dacnis, Olive-backed Euphonia and plenty of common species like Passerini's, Blue-Gray and Palm Tanagers plus Plain-colored Tanagers too.

We suddenly become aware of a stream of migrating Broad-winged Hawks passing overhead. There must be hundreds of them, all gliding as they migrate north and in amongst them a few Swainson's Hawks too. It is a spectacular sight made even more special when a huge flock of White-collared Swifts flies through below them heading in another direction creating a two-layered effect, just wonderful.

We walk down to the river and above the river on the wires are both Ringed and Amazon Kingfishers with Green Kingfisher down below on the rocks. There are Black-faced Grosbeaks in the trees and more Plain-colored Tanagers, while beside the river are Spotted Sandpipers, Little Blue Heron, Snowy Egret and a Fasciated Tiger Heron. Paco hears a calling Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher so we try to find it and sure enough it is Paco who finds it first and we even manage to get a few people on it through the scope. We glimpse a White-ringed Flycatcher and get great views of Cinnamon Becard.

We cross over the bridge and scan a rather scrubby field, in which there are a few birds flitting around including more seedeaters but also Thick-billed Seed Finch and a Yellow-crowned Euphonia. In the background, there is a leafless tree full of Bronzed and Giant Cowbirds and the difference in size is quite amazing. Red-winged blackbirds fly in and join them too. Flocks of migrating Broad-winged Hawks are kettling up and flying over still, sometimes in their hundreds and there are lots more swifts, mainly Gray-rumped but plenty of White-collared too.

We start walking up the road and witness something very interesting. A pair of Social Flycatchers have built a nest and a pair of Piratic Flycatchers have decided they would rather like it themselves. This is something Paco told us about the other day when explaining the name but we never thought we would see it actually happening. The Piratic Flycatchers simply perch near the nest continually and every time they get chased off they just come back again. It seems remarkably unaggressive but Paco says the Piratics start entering the nest again and again and usually win in the end through sheer persistence.

Close by, a Golden-winged Warbler flits through the bushes and a male Great Antshrike too - a very smart black and white bird. A Black-mandibled Toucan appears in the tree above the road. And we enjoy great views of Olive-backed Euphonia, Yellow-Olive Flycatcher, Lesser Greenlet and Golden-hooded Tanagers.

We walk on stopping at a bend in the road where we find Yellow Warbler in a garden here and Caroline identifies a Gray Catbird. We find Black-crowned Tityra, Crimson-collared Tanager, more Thick-billed Seed-finches and a singing Melodious Blackbird then a pair of Lesser Swallow-tailed Swifts fly overhead amongst the Gray-rumped Swifts. There seem to be birds everywhere. Finally, we run out of time and as we walk back to the bus Cattle Egrets are flying down the river to roost and a Great Green Macaw flies overhead.

Day 12: We gather for breakfast at 7am with bags packed, so that after breakfast we can get going as soon as possible. It is a bit of a drive and we have to be at the jetty to board a boat for 11am to head down the channel to our lodge at Tortuguero.

We pass the odd bird on the wires but nothing different then once we reach the dirt track for the last part of the drive we are more able to stop if we spot things. There are thousands of Turkey Vultures migrating again and we make a brief stop to check them out and find Swainson's and a single Red-tailed Hawk in with them. The fields have lots of birds as we drive though, mainly species we have seen plenty of before like Groove-billed Ani, flycatchers, etc but we are very pleased to find a smart Red-breasted Blackbird.

Down at the port we hang around for ten minutes while the boat is loaded up and John brilliantly spots a Black-collared Hawk. This is an excellent find and rare sighting on this trip so we are very pleased. The boat ride is very pleasant and we spot Northern Jacanas, Least Sandpipers, lots of herons and egrets and a few Anhingas either perched or even soaring with the vultures. We find Black Hawk, Roy spots a couple of Bat Falcons and a Double-toothed Kite, we pass Laughing Gulls and Royal Terns and Paul B spots a Sungrebe, an excellent find and a real target species here.

We finally arrive at the lodge and go straight to lunch then have a little time to settle into our rooms before meeting up again for our first proper boat ride at 3.30pm. It is hot. We head across the canal and down the other side slowly checking trees as we go and shortly hear the raucous cries of Great Green Macaws. After a few moments, they appear above the trees and fly out over the channel then back away over the trees and Arlene is thrilled as these are her first. We then pause to enjoy good views of a Three-toed Sloth as it slowly climbs up into the leaves and looking through the binoculars we realise she has a little baby. This time it is Carolyn who is pleased as this is her first proper view of one.

We slowly work our way down the channel passing Mangrove Swallows and three kinds of kingfishers, Ringed, Amazon and Green, then head into a narrow channel in which there are sometimes Agami Herons. There seems to be no sign today though we get great views of a pair of Green Kingfishers here. As we come back out we are excited to spot five Great Green Macaws feeding in the bare branches of a tree nearby and we watch them for a while before they fly. Back in the main channel we have gone a little way when seven Great Green Macaws

fly out across the channel - three pairs and a billy-no-mates - and they just kook fabulous as they lazily flap across.

We watch a Great Egret deal with a fish and watch the fish slowly work its way down the egret's throat, before suddenly speeding across to the other side as Minor, our driver, has spotted monkeys. We arrive to see three Spider Monkeys feeding in the trees above the water and spend a while just enjoying watching them as they work the branches for fruit. A lot of the time they are simply hanging from their tails while all legs are holding nothing and they pick fruit and eat. One is a little baby and looks so cute.

We finally leave them be and have a look as at a huge Green Iguana as we go. We have not gone far before we find a troop of Howler Monkeys. A couple are quite actively feeding but the rest are just sleeping in various comfortable looking positions on the thicker branches, often with legs hanging down either side. There are lots of swifts overhead that we assume must be Gray-rumped though to some of us there look to be two sizes and we wonder if some may be Chimney Swifts. We get close views of Northern Jacana and also several Snowy Egrets, Little Blue Herons, Tricolored Heron and yet more kingfishers. We head now towards the river mouth and pass a roost of Spotted Sandpipers and are enjoying watching a big flock of vultures coming to roost when suddenly Connell calls that there are dolphins. They surface again and are surprisingly close in the channel with us not in the open sea - a mother and little one and we get to see them come up again and again. They are moving around quickly and are quite hard to follow but we get some lovely views of them and sometimes they lift their tails out of the water as they dive. It is a fabulous finish to the afternoon and we discuss the contrast between this afternoon's mammals - sloths, monkeys and dolphins - all mammals but what hugely different life styles.

We head back to the lodge assuming the day is done but Connell suddenly shout there is something on the bank. A quick look and we realise they are Gray-necked Wood Rails. We turn and go back to enjoy fabulous close views of these strange looking birds with their long pink legs and long yellow bills. And now, as the sun sets, we head for home.

Day 13: We are down at the boat by 5.30am, as we have to go and get tickets for entry to the Park before we can enter and we want to be at the front of the queue. We arrive and drop off Paco then potter around to see what we can find while we wait for him and to our surprise add two new birds to the still growing list. The first is a big surprise here, a Ring-billed Gull. It flies around the boat for a little while before moving off. A group of four Swallow-tailed Kites are wheeling round over the trees on the far side of the channel and we find two Keel-billed Toucans are in the branches above our heads. Then Carlos spots a group of four Green Ibis perched in the trees and we get excellent views of these almost vulture like birds, the other new one for the list. We find a young Yellow-crowned Night Heron then can see Paco is at the front of the queue now so we head back to pick him up.

We head back down the channel and shortly find a very nice Purple Gallinule right out in the open. There are Anhingas, three species of kingfishers then a very good view of Double-toothed Kite. We spot a group of Spider Monkeys and a sleepy Howler Monkey too then notice something swimming across the channel and are surprised realise it is a Sungrebe. They are normally close to the edge and we get slowly closer enjoying superb views before it takes flight.

We move on and find Paul H spots a Lineated Woodpecker high in one of the trees, where we also find Red-lore Parrots. We get ridiculously close views of a male Anhinga with punky hair and perhaps the most spotted Emerald Basilisk we have ever seen, a real beauty. A Pale-billed Woodpecker then appears in the tree tops and two more Swallow-tailed Kites then we get incredibly close views of Purple Gallinule. It is amazing how despite being in relatively short vegetation right beside the boat it can still disappear from view.

It is fast approaching 7.30am now so we decide to head back for breakfast, we have earned it we think. After breakfast, we head out again quite promptly as we have to go again to pick up tickets for the park and as we do so suddenly our driver, Minor, spots the Bottlenose Dolphins that we saw yesterday. We are very surprised how far up the canal they have come and head over to take a look. It is a bit uncomfortable however as everyone else has the same idea and it feels a bit like they are being harassed, so we decide to leave them be.

Once we have the tickets we set off towards the Park spotting Magnificent Frigatebirds and a Green Heron as we go. We find the Pale-billed Woodpecker again and also the two Purple-throated Fruitcrows. There are Mangrove Swallows, Gray-breasted Martins and Gray-rumped Swifts overhead and we get another excellent view of the Purple Gallinule.

In the trees we find a small group of Spider Monkeys and we watch them for a little while then a Double-toothed Kite flies in. An Olive-crowned Yellowthroat is singing in the long grasses at the edge of the water, so we try playing a little of the song to see if might show itself and almost immediately it pops up for a look and we get fabulous views. The occasional Blue Morpho Butterfly flies past in that strange rollercoaster flight they have and we see one with yellow underneath as well. Our driver seems particularly good at spotting Emerald Basilisks and we get very good views of a couple of them as well as several Green Iguanas, though most are not really green. Some are high up in the tree tops. Another two Double-toothed Kites are circling high over the channel and we are amazed to find two Anhingas soaring like raptors.

We pass a few Howler Monkeys sleeping in the tree tops then notice a group of White-faced Capuchins moving through the lower trees. They come to one quite tricky jump to get to the next tree and it is great fun watching them pluck up courage to make the leap. One seems very nervous and while others keep going past him making the jump he just can't seem to quite pluck up the nerve. He moves further down the tree as if trying to find an alternative route then

eventually comes back up and hesitates again. Finally, he goes for it and we make a big cheer as he scrambles away through the branches - we were all rooting for him.

We turn round and start back and shortly Carlos points high in one of the trees and he has found another new bird for the trip, a White-necked Puffbird. It is rather reminiscent of a pied Kookaburra. A raptor flies in and lands nearby and we are surprised to discover it is a Gray-headed Kite, a species you rarely see perched but now we get fantastic views of this very gentle looking raptor.

Over lunch a couple of go for a wander and check the sea, with nothing out there other than Royal Terns, Magnificent Frigatebirds and a single Brown Pelican but as we walk back we are very pleased to find an Eastern Kingbird. There is great excitement as this is the group's species number 400 and we gather to show everyone through the scope. Then Neil arrives for a look and shows us a bird he has photographed a little earlier in the grounds asking what it is. We are astonished to realise it is a Yellow-throated Warbler. This is a fabulous find and takes the place of eastern Kingbird as species 400. We head to the spot he saw it but despite a very thorough search by Roy and John we fail to relocate it but then it is the middle of the day when any sensible warbler will be having a siesta. We'll try again in the morning.

Our afternoon boat ride starts with picking up tickets at the office then we head off down the channel finding the usual herons and egrets etc. We spot a Squirrel Cuckoo but little else - but it is still very hot. With the blazing sun high overhead, we take the boat into one of the more tree covered canals and after a short distance the trees are now arching over the channel and meeting over the boat. It is wonderfully atmospheric and we just love the lighting and peaceful feel of the place. The boat engine is very quiet and at times he even cuts it off completely and we just drift gently along in silence enjoying the place and the moment. The sun shafts through the trees making spotlights on the water and plants and we find we don't really mind that there seems to be very little wildlife around.

There are a few monkeys here and there, Spider Monkeys and Howler Monkeys and one group of howlers has the tiniest baby we have seen, he looks almost too small to be climbing around on his own. We then spot a Black River Turtle and suddenly realise it has a young Emerald Basilisk on its back. This looks very funny but Paco explains that this is not entirely uncommon as the basilisks have learned that when the turtle sits with its head up, big horse flies often come and land on their heads. To our amazement, at that moment, a fly lands on the turtle's head and the basilisk gets all excited and makes a jump for it.

Right at the far end is a Green Heron beautifully backlit and we turn the boat round and start on our way back. Suddenly Paco says there is a snake up ahead. We are astonished when we realise how far ahead he has spotted it and that it is a very thin bright green snake that we have trouble spotting even when we get closer. Once we are there the snake can be seen slipping its way through

the branches of an overhanging bush - it is absolutely beautiful, very thin and a vivid green colour with yellowish underside and golden eyes - an Eastern Parrot Snake.

We get some lovely photos then continue on our way and something appears in the water on the right bank. It swims out into the channel but looks too big a head for an Otter but we are completely astounded when Paco shouts "Jaguar!!" Through the binoculars, you can easily make out the beautiful spots on its head and shoulders as it swims and across the channel ahead of us and then on reaching the left bank climbs up the steep banking and vanishes into the forest. It is a stunning moment and after a second or so of astonished silence suddenly we are punching the air and high fiving and simply babbling in excitement at what we have just seen. This is an unbelievable moment and Paco tells that that this is his first ever wild Jaguar despite 25 years of guiding and going hunting with his father as a child. It is a joyous moment to share with him. Carlos is close to tears and we are just beside ourselves with excitement.

How do you follow that?! We cruise slowly on down the channel still buzzing with adrenalin and arrive at the main channel again. Here we spot a Sungrebe under some very low bushes and get fabulous views of it as it peers up into the leaves for insects, a really delightful little bird. Then on the other bank a Gray-necked Wood Rail appears. The sun is getting lower now and we pick up speed and head for home before more hugs and handshakes and cheers for the jaguar as we arrive back at the lodge. What we missed in quantity this afternoon we sure made up for in quality.

Day 14: We are back into the routine again today of meeting for coffee at 5.45am then talking a walk before breakfast. We spot a Prothonotary Warbler before we have even gone a few yards then head round to where Neil had his Yellow-throated Warbler yesterday and within a minute or so we have found it. Close to where Neil saw it yesterday it is now fly-catching from the top of a small tree and what an absolutely beautiful bird it is.

We wander out towards the sea spotting more birds as we go - Common Tody Flycatcher, Pale-vented Pigeon, Social Flycatcher and Royal Tern and a mega distant Magnificent Frigatebird over the sea. Then we walk back adding female White-necked Jacobin, Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, Black-striped Sparrow, Slaty-tailed Trogon, Sumer Tanager, Yellow Warbler, Red-lored Parrots and yesterday's Eastern Kingbird. We finish with our best views yet of a Bright-rumped Attila that seems to be nest building.

At 8.45am we gather with all our bags at the boat and start our trip back up the channel. The journey back to Caño Blanco proves quite interesting with John and Roy seeming to take turns spotting Black Hawks and even a couple of Great Black Hawks. There are plenty of herons and egrets along the banks and Carolyn is delighted to spot her own Three-toed Sloth, quickly followed by Howler Monkeys. There are clouds of yellow butterflies here and there too and superb

views of a King Vulture. We spot Double-toothed Kites and a displaying Gray-headed Kite shimmering its wings above its back.

We arrive at Caño Blanco and while Paco and Carlos sort out the bus we go for an ice-cream and once we are ready we get on our way. We are a little behind schedule so there is no time to stop along the dirt road but we spot a few things like Roadside Hawk, Northern Jacanas, Ruddy-ground Doves and more.

We make a stop at one point on the main road when we realise there is a massive flock of migrating Turkey Vultures overhead. We get out to have a look and it is truly spectacular. It is by far the most massive movement of birds any of us have ever witnessed with thousands of Turkey Vultures and hundreds of Broad-winged and Swainson's Hawks. One 'kettle' of birds swirls higher and higher and you see a steady stream of birds peeling off from the top to glide slowly away into the distance and join the next 'kettle' and gain height again. They are streaming in from 'kettles' further back in the other direction and at one point we can see four or five spirals of birds wheeling in their hundreds with masses of birds gliding between them. We have never, even on any previous trip, seen so many birds on the move from one spot and while normally they are almost all Turkey Vultures, here there are hundreds of Swainson's Hawks with them and whole second layer of purely Broad-winged Hawks too - a truly awesome sight.

We stop for lunch at a restaurant with its own butterfly house (though rather damaged just now) with a few Blue Morphos and other nice species still in there and Connell spots a hawk overhead while in there that sounds like Roadside Hawk.

We drive on and take a short detour in search of a Crested Owl at a roost-site Paco knows. Sadly, we have no luck but we do find Red-throated Ant Tanager, Wedge-billed Woodcreeper and a few other bits and pieces. We continue on to our next stop, a friend of Paco's called Copé, who has a nice little set up in his garden for watching birds. We arrive to find a Red-eyed Tree Frog fast asleep under a leaf and a very strange looking lizard called a Helmeted Iguana. It is quieter than usual at the bird feeders but we see Green Honeycreeper, a few Passerini's Tanagers, Long-billed Hermit, White-necked Jacobin and get very good views of Gray-necked Wood Rail. The highlight however, in terms of scarce birds, is a White-tipped Sicklebill, an unusual hummingbird and a very good find.

We have one final stop, before we head to the hotel, at an old disused garden where there are lots of verbena bushes and hence lots of hummingbirds. And it does not disappoint. Within seconds of arriving we spot several species including Violet-headed Hummingbird, Crowned Woodnymph and the *crème de la crème* here - a male Snowcap. This stunning little hummingbird is a rich maroon colour with a brilliant white cap and over the next fifteen minutes we spot two adult males, a younger one and a female. We find a pair of Green Thorntails and a stunning male Black-crested Coquette too with spiky crest. There are Black-faced Grosbeaks here feeding in the trees and we get a very brief

Blackburnian Warbler as well as two species of toucans but suddenly a heavy downpour of rain sends us dashing back to the bus and we get back on our way. We make a brief stop at a supermarket for coffee as presents for people back home, then head to the hotel with plenty of time to sort ourselves out and pack and then meet up for our final run through the checklist and our traditional round up of the trip in which everyone gets to choose five favourite species, a favourite place and a 'magic moment'.

We go round the group finding out what species everyone has really enjoyed seeing and we are soon amassing quite a list. Unbelievably we end up with a list of 45 species that all get a mention by at least one person. This says it all really - what a trip - one in which 45 species can be considered good enough for a special mention at the end. They include everything from tiny hummingbirds to huge Jabiru Storks, Quiet Tinamous to noisy Howler Monkeys, colourful Scarlet Macaws to the plain brown Rufous Mourner and from little white Honduran Tent-making Bats to swinging Spider Monkeys. With so many species most only get one or two votes but there are a couple of species that do a lot better and there are no prizes for guessing they are Jaguar and Resplendent Quetzal, both very worthy of so many votes.

It is interesting that quite a few places also get a mention but again it is one destination that beats the rest easily - Tortuguero with its lovely gentle boat trips and beautiful waterways and so many species from monkeys to sloths to great birds, dolphins and of course that Jaguar. The Jaguar also came in on top for the magic moment, with 'Paco finding the Quetzal' coming in second followed by a list of other lovely moments including sunsets, migrating vultures, bats, basilisks, butterflies and lekking manakins. One thing on which we are all agreed is that it has been an incredible holiday with so many wonderful highlights and great thanks go to Paco for all his hard work making a truly fantastic trip.

Day 15: A few of us gather at 5.45am for coffee then a walk in the garden to try and see any final last new birds. A couple of species are possible, though difficult and we are aware that John has seen 399 species so far. He is very keen to reach 400 for two reasons - one, it is a nice target number but secondly, a friend of his (and Roy's) did this trip a couple of years ago and scored 400 species exactly and he is keen to at least match him. We find lots of birds - Rufous-naped Wrens, Blue-crowned Motmot, Rufous-collared Sparrow, Rufous-tailed and Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, White-winged Dove, Hoffmann's Woodpecker and more but we just can't find any of the possible new species.

We eventually arrive at breakfast time and head inside with John still on 399. After breakfast Roy checks something regarding the trip two years ago - and yes - suddenly we have a hilarious situation. Despite John seeing no new birds he has actually caught up with Phil as for a while Black Hawk was split into two species - Common and Mangrove Black Hawks and sure enough - on Phil's trip they were still split. So, if you use the same checklist for both years then John has an extra tick and they are on exactly the same number of species. Roy of course is very

relieved as it means he has not shown either of them more birds than the other which is very diplomatic and doesn't upset either of them - the perfect result - you really couldn't make it up!

We gather at the bus for our final journey to the airport and we give Carlos a big cheer as we arrive, he has been a great driver and a good spotter too. Then we say our fond farewells to Paco - said by Arlene to be not just the best guide she has ever met but also the best looking! It is hugs all round then we head into the airport for our flight home.

BIRDS

Great Tinamou	<i>Tinamus major</i>	Gray-necked Wood-Rail	<i>Aramides cajanea</i>
Least Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus dominicus</i>	American Purple Gallinule	<i>Porphyryula martinica</i>
Brown Pelican	<i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>	Sungrebe	<i>Heliornis fulica</i>
Neotropic Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax brasilianus</i>	Northern Jacana	<i>Jacana spinosa</i>
Anhinga	<i>Anhinga anhinga</i>	Black-necked Stilt	<i>Himantopus mexicanus</i>
Magnificent Frigatebird	<i>Fregata magnificens</i>	Double-striped Thick-knee	<i>Burhinus bistriatus</i>
Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>	Southern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus chilensis</i>
Great Egret	<i>Ardea albus</i>	Black-bellied Plover (Grey Plover)	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>
Tricolored Heron	<i>Egretta tricolor</i>	Semipalmated Plover	<i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i>
Little Blue Heron	<i>Egretta caerulea</i>	Wilson's Plover	<i>Charadrius wilsonia</i>
Snowy Egret	<i>Egretta thula</i>	Collared Plover	<i>Chadrius collaris</i>
Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	Short-billed Dowitcher	<i>Limnodromus griseus</i>
Green Heron	<i>Butorides virescens</i>	Long-billed Curlew	<i>Numenius americanus</i>
Agami Heron	<i>Agamia agami</i>	Hudsonian Whimbrel	<i>Numenius hudsonicus</i>
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	<i>Nyctanassa violacea</i>	Marbled Godwit	<i>Limosa fedoa</i>
Black-crowned Nigh-Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	Lesser Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa flavipes</i>
Boat-billed Heron	<i>Cochlearius cochlearius</i>	Solitary Sandpiper	<i>Tringa solitaria</i>
Bare-throated Tiger-Heron	<i>Tigrisoma mexicanum</i>	Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularia</i>
Fasciated Tiger-Heron	<i>Tigrisoma fasciatum</i>	Willet	<i>Catoptrophorus semipalmatus</i>
Jabiru	<i>Jabiru mycteria</i>	Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>
Wood Stork	<i>Mycteria americana</i>	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>
Green Ibis	<i>Mesembrinibis cayennensis</i>	Western Sandpiper	<i>Calidris mauri</i>
White Ibis	<i>Eudocimus albus</i>	Semipalmated Sandpiper	<i>Calidris pusilla</i>
Roseate Spoonbill	<i>Ajaia ajaja</i>	Least Sandpiper	<i>Calidris minutilla</i>
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck	<i>Dendrocygna autumnalis</i>	Stilt Sandpiper	<i>Calidris himantopus</i>
Muscovy Duck	<i>Cairina moschata</i>	Laughing Gull	<i>Larus atricilla</i>
Blue-winged Teal	<i>Anas discors</i>	Ring-billed Gull	<i>Larus delawarensis</i>
Black Vulture	<i>Coragyps atratus</i>	Cabot's Tern (was Sandwich)	<i>Sterna acufflavida</i>
Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>	Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>
King Vulture	<i>Sarcoramphus papa</i>	Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	Royal Tern	<i>Sterna maxima</i>
Gray-headed Kite	<i>Leptodon cayanensis</i>	Forster's Tern	<i>Sterna forsteri</i>
Swallow-tailed Kite	<i>Elanoides forficatus</i>	Black Skimmer	<i>Rynchops niger</i>
White-tailed Kite	<i>Elanus leucurus</i>	Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>
Snail Kite	<i>Rostrhamus sociabilis</i>	Band-tailed Pigeon	<i>Columba fasciata</i>
Plumbeous Kite	<i>Ictinia plumbea</i>	Pale-vented Pigeon	<i>Columba cayennensis</i>
Double-toothed Kite	<i>Harpagus bidentatus</i>	Red-billed Pigeon	<i>Columba flavirostris</i>
Sharp-shinned Hawk	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>	Short-billed Pigeon	<i>Columba nigrirostris</i>
Black-collared Hawk	<i>Busarellus nigricollis</i>	White-winged Dove	<i>Zenaida asiatica</i>
White Hawk	<i>Leucopternis albicollis</i>	Common Ground-Dove	<i>Columbina passerina</i>
Great Black Hawk	<i>Buteogallus urubitinga</i>	Ruddy Ground-Dove	<i>Columbina talpacoti</i>
Common Black Hawk	<i>Buteogallus anthracinus</i>	Inca Dove	<i>Columbina inca</i>
Gray Hawk	<i>Asturina nitidus</i>	Blue Ground-Dove	<i>Claravis pretiosa</i>
Roadside Hawk	<i>Buteo magnirostris</i>	White-tipped Dove	<i>Leptotila verreauxi</i>
Broad-winged Hawk	<i>Buteo platypterus</i>	Gray-chested Dove	<i>Leptotila cassinii</i>
Swainson's Hawk	<i>Buteo swainsonii</i>	Great Green Macaw	<i>Ara ambigua</i>
Short-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo brachyurus</i>	Scarlet Macaw	<i>Ara macao</i>
Zone-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo albonotatus</i>	Crimson-fronted Parakeet	<i>Aratinga finschi</i>
Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	Olive-throated Parakeet	<i>Aratinga nana</i>
Crested Caracara	<i>Polyborus plancus</i>	Orange-fronted Parakeet	<i>Aratinga canicularis</i>
Yellow-headed Caracara	<i>Milvago chimachima</i>	Sulphur-winged Parakeet	<i>Pyrrhura hoffmanni</i>
Laughing Falcon	<i>Herpetotheres cachinnans</i>	Orange-chinned Parakeet	<i>Brotogeris jugularis</i>
Bat Falcon	<i>Falco ruficularis</i>	Barred Parakeet	<i>Bolborhynchus lineola</i>
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	Brown-hooded Parrot	<i>Pionopsitta haematotis</i>
Crested Guan	<i>Penelope purpurascens</i>	White-crowned Parrot	<i>Pionus senilis</i>
Black Guan	<i>Chamaepetes unicolor</i>	White-fronted Parrot	<i>Amazona albifrons</i>
Great Curassow	<i>Crax rubra</i>	Red-lored Parrot	<i>Amazona autumnalis</i>
Limpkin	<i>Aramus gurauna</i>	Yellow-naped Parrot	<i>Amazona auropalliata</i>

Mealy Parrot	<i>Amazonia farinosa</i>	Pied Puffbird	<i>Bucco tectus</i>
Squirrel Cuckoo	<i>Piaya cayana</i>	White-whiskered Puffbird	<i>Malacoptila panamensis</i>
Groove-billed Ani	<i>Crotophaga sulcirostris</i>	Emerald Toucanet	<i>Aulacorhynchus prasinus</i>
Pacific Screech-Owl	<i>Otus cooperi</i>	Collared Araçari	<i>Pteroglossus torquatus</i>
Vermiculated Screech Owl	<i>Megascops guatemalae</i>	Fiery-billed Araçari	<i>Pteroglossus frantzii</i>
Spectacled Owl	<i>Pulsatrix perspicillata</i>	Keel-billed Toucan	<i>Ramphastos sulfuratus</i>
Great Potoo	<i>Nyctibius grandis</i>	Black-mandibled Toucan	<i>Ramphastos swainsonii</i>
Lesser Nighthawk	<i>Chordeiles acutipennis</i>	Acorn Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes formicivorus</i>
Pauraque	<i>Nyctidromus albicollis</i>	Golden-naped Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes chrysauchen</i>
Chuck-wills-widow	<i>Antrostomus carolinensis</i>	Black-cheeked Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes pucherani</i>
White-collared Swift	<i>Streptoprocne zonaris</i>	Hoffmann's Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes hoffmanni</i>
Chestnut-collared Swift	<i>Cypseloides rutilus</i>	Red-crowned Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes rubicapillus</i>
Chimney Swift	<i>Chaetura pelagica</i>	Hairy Woodpecker	<i>Picoides villosus</i>
Costa Rican Swift	<i>Chaetura spinicauda</i>	Cinnamon Woodpecker	<i>Celeus loricatus</i>
Gray-rumped Swift	<i>Chaetura cinereiventris</i>	Chestnut-colored Woodpecker	<i>Celeus loricatus</i>
Vaux's Swift	<i>Chaetura vauxi</i>	Lineated Woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus lineatus</i>
Lesser Swallow-tailed Swift	<i>Panyptila cayennensis</i>	Pale-billed Woodpecker	<i>Campephilus guatemalensis</i>
White-tipped Sicklebill	<i>Eutoxeres aquila</i>	Ruddy Treerunner	<i>Margaromis rubiginosus</i>
Stripe-throated Hermit	<i>Phaethornis striigularis</i>	Plain Xenops	<i>Xenops minutus</i>
Long-billed Hermit	<i>Phaethornis superciliosus</i>	Buff-throated Foliage-gleaner	<i>Automolus ochrolaemus</i>
Scaly-breasted Hummingbird	<i>Phaeochroa cuvierii</i>	Olivaceous Woodcreeper	<i>Sittasomus griseicapillus</i>
Violet Sabrewing	<i>Campylopterus hemileucurus</i>	Wedge-billed Woodcreeper	<i>Glyphorhynchus spirurus</i>
White-necked Jacobin	<i>Florisuga mellivora</i>	Northern Barred Woodcreeper	<i>Dendrocolaptes sanctithomae</i>
Brown Violet-ear	<i>Colibri delphinae</i>	Cocoa Woodcreeper	<i>Xiphorhynchus sussurans</i>
Green Violet-ear	<i>Colibri thalassinus</i>	Black-striped Woodcreeper	<i>Xiphorhynchus lachrymosus</i>
Green-breasted Mango	<i>Anthracothorax prevostii</i>	Spotted Woodcreeper	<i>Xiphorhynchus erythopygius</i>
Violet-headed Hummingbird	<i>Klais guimeti</i>	Streak-headed Woodcreeper	<i>Lepidocolaptes souleyetii</i>
Black-crested Coquette	<i>Lophomis helenae</i>	Spot-crowned Woodcreeper	<i>Lepidocolaptes affinis</i>
Green Thorntail	<i>Discosura conversii</i>	Smoky-brown Woodpecker	<i>Picoides fumigatus</i>
Fiery-throated Hummingbird	<i>Panterpe insignis</i>	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	<i>Sphyrapicus varius</i>
Striped-tailed Hummingbird	<i>Eupherusa eximia</i>	Fasciated Antshrike	<i>Cymbilaimus lineatus</i>
Crowned Woodnymph	<i>Thalurania colombica</i>	Great Antshrike	<i>Taraba major</i>
Blue-throated Goldentail	<i>Hylocharis eliciae</i>	Black-hooded Antshrike	<i>Thamnophilus bridgesi</i>
Rufous-tailed Hummingbird	<i>Amazilia tzacatl</i>	Barred Antshrike	<i>Thamnophilus doliatus</i>
Blue-chested Hummingbird	<i>Amazilia amabilis</i>	Slaty Antwren	<i>Microrhopias schisticolor</i>
Steely-vented Hummingbird	<i>Amazilia saucerrottei</i>	Dusky Antbird	<i>Cercomacra tyrannina</i>
Snowcap	<i>Microchera albocoronata</i>	Chestnut-backed Antbird	<i>Myrmeciza exsul</i>
White-throated Mountain-Gem	<i>Lampornis castaneiventris</i>	Bicolored Antbird	<i>Gymnopithys leucapspis</i>
Magnificent Hummingbird	<i>Eugenes fulgens</i>	Scaled Antpitta	<i>Grallaria guatemalensis</i>
Purple-crowned Fairy	<i>Heliothryx barroti</i>	Snowy Cotinga	<i>Carpodectes nitidus</i>
Long-billed Starthroat	<i>Heliothryx longirostris</i>	Purple-throated Fruitcrow	<i>Querula purpurata</i>
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	<i>Archilochus colubris</i>	Bare-necked Umbrellabird	<i>Cephalopterus glabricollis</i>
Scintillant Hummingbird	<i>Selasphorus scintilla</i>	White-collared Manakin	<i>Manacus candei</i>
Volcano Hummingbird	<i>Selasphorus flammula</i>	White-ruffed Manakin	<i>Corapipo leucorhoa</i>
Resplendent Quetzal	<i>Pharomachrus mocinno</i>	Blue-crowned Manakin	<i>Lepidothrix coronatus</i>
Black-headed Trogon	<i>Trogon melanocephalus</i>	Long-tailed Manakin	<i>Chiroxiphia linearis</i>
Baird's Trogon	<i>Trogon bairdii</i>	Southern Beardless Tyrannulet	<i>Camptostoma obsoletum</i>
Gartered Trogon	<i>Trogon caligatus</i>	Yellow-bellied Elaenia	<i>Elaenia flavogaster</i>
Black-throated Trogon	<i>Trogon rufus</i>	Mountain Elaenia	<i>Elaenia frantzii</i>
Slaty-tailed Trogon	<i>Trogon massena</i>	Torrent Tyrannulet	<i>Serpophaga cinerea</i>
Ringed Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle torquata</i>	Ochre-bellied Flycatcher	<i>Mionectes oleagineus</i>
Amazon Kingfisher	<i>Chloroceryle amazona</i>	Paltry Tyrannulet	<i>Zimmerius vilissimus</i>
Green Kingfisher	<i>Chloroceryle americana</i>	Northern Scrub Flycatcher	<i>Sublegatus modestus</i>
American Pygmy Kingfisher	<i>Chloroceryle aenea</i>	Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher	<i>Todirostrum nigriceps</i>
Blue-crowned Motmot	<i>Momotus momota</i>	Common Tody-Flycatcher	<i>Todirostrum cinereum</i>
Broad-billed Motmot	<i>Electron platyrhynchum</i>	Eye-ringed Flatbill	<i>Rhynchocyclus brevirostris</i>
Turquoise-browed Motmot	<i>Eumomota superciliosa</i>	Yellow-olive Flycatcher	<i>Tolmomyias sulphurescens</i>
Rufous-tailed Jacamar	<i>Galbula ruficauda</i>	Slaty-capped Flycatcher	<i>Leptopogon supercilialis</i>
White-necked Puffbird	<i>Bucco macrorhynchos</i>	Olive-striped Flycatcher	<i>Mionectes olivaceus</i>
		Yellow-bellied Tyrannulet	<i>Ornithion semiflavum</i>

Golden-crowned Spadebill	<i>Platyrinchos coronatus</i>	Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrush	<i>Catharus frantzii</i>
Royal Flycatcher	<i>Onychorhynchus coronatus</i>	Black-headed Nightingale-Thrush	<i>Catharus mexicanus</i>
Ruddy-tailed Flycatcher	<i>Terenotrichus erythrurus</i>	Wood Thrush	<i>Hylocichla mustelina</i>
Sulphur-rumped Flycatcher	<i>Myiobius sulphureipygius</i>	Sooty Thrush	<i>Turdus nigrescens</i>
Tufted Flycatcher	<i>Mitrephanes phaeocercus</i>	Mountain Thrush	<i>Turdus plebejus</i>
Dark Pewee	<i>Contopus lugubris</i>	Clay-colored Thrush	<i>Turdus grayi</i>
Tropical Pewee	<i>Contopus cinereus</i>	White-throated Thrush	<i>Turdus assimilis</i>
Eastern Wood Pewee	<i>Contopus virens</i>	Gray Catbird	<i>Dumetella carolinensis</i>
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax flaviventris</i>	Tropical Gnatcatcher	<i>Polioptila plumbea</i>
Yellowish Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax flavescens</i>	White-throated Magpie-Jay	<i>Calocitta formosa</i>
Black-capped Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax atriceps</i>	Brown Jay	<i>Cyanocorax morio</i>
Black Phoebe	<i>Sayornis nigricans</i>	Yellow-throated Vireo	<i>Vireo flavifrons</i>
Long-tailed Tyrant	<i>Colonia colonus</i>	Brown-capped Vireo	<i>Vireo leucophrys</i>
Bright-rumped Attila	<i>Attila spadiceus</i>	Yellow-winged Vireo	<i>Vireo carmioli</i>
Rufous Mourner	<i>Rhytipterna holerythra</i>	Philadelphia Vireo	<i>Vireo philadelphicus</i>
Dusky-capped Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus tuberculifer</i>	Yellow-green Vireo	<i>Vireo flavoviridis</i>
Panama Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus panamensis</i>	Lesser Greenlet	<i>Hylophilus decurtatus</i>
Great Crested Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus crinitus</i>	Rufous-browed Peppershrike	<i>Cyclarhis gujanensis</i>
Brown-crested Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus tyrannulus</i>	Golden-winged Warbler	<i>Vermivora chrysoptera</i>
Great Kiskadee	<i>Pitangus sulphuratus</i>	Tennessee Warbler	<i>Vermivora peregrina</i>
Boat-billed Flycatcher	<i>Megarhynchus pitangua</i>	Flame-throated Warbler	<i>Parula gutturalis</i>
Social Flycatcher	<i>Myiozetetes similis</i>	Tropical Parula	<i>Parula pitaiayumi</i>
Gray-capped Flycatcher	<i>Myiozetetes granadensis</i>	Yellow Warbler	<i>Setophaga petechia</i>
White-ringed Flycatcher	<i>Coryphotriccus albowittatus</i>	Mangrove Yellow Warbler	<i>Setophaga (p) erithachorides</i>
Streaked Flycatcher	<i>Myiodynastes maculatus</i>	Chestnut-sided Warbler	<i>Setophaga pensylvanica</i>
Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher	<i>Myiodynastes luteiventris</i>	Black-throated Green Warbler	<i>Setophaga virens</i>
Piratic Flycatcher	<i>Legatus leucophaeus</i>	Blackburnian Warbler	<i>Setophaga fusca</i>
Tropical Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus melancholicus</i>	Yellow-throated Warbler	<i>Setophaga dominica</i>
Eastern Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus tyrannus</i>	American Redstart	<i>Setophaga ruticilla</i>
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	<i>Tyrannus forficatus</i>	Black-and-white Warbler	<i>Mniotilta varia</i>
Cinnamon Becard	<i>Pachyramphus cinnamomeus</i>	Prothonotary Warbler	<i>Protonotaria citrea</i>
Rose-throated Becard	<i>Pachyramphus aglaiae</i>	Northern Waterthrush	<i>Seiurus noveboracensis</i>
White-winged Becard	<i>Pachyramphus</i>	Louisiana Waterthrush	<i>Seiurus motacilla</i>
<i>polychopterus</i> Barred Becard	<i>Pachyramphus versicolor</i>	Olive-crowned Yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis semiflava</i>
Masked Tityra	<i>Tityra semifasciata</i>	Wilson's Warbler	<i>Wilsonia pusilla</i>
Black-crowned Tityra	<i>Tityra inquisitor</i>	Collared Redstart	<i>Myioborus torquatus</i>
Gray-breasted Martin	<i>Progne chalybea</i>	Golden-crowned Warbler	<i>Basileuterus culivorus</i>
Mangrove Swallow	<i>Tachycineta albilinea</i>	Rufous-capped Warbler	<i>Basileuterus rufifrons</i>
Blue-and-white Swallow	<i>Notiochelidon cyanoleuca</i>	Black-cheeked Warbler	<i>Basileuterus melanogenys</i>
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	<i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>	Buff-rumped Warbler	<i>Phaeothlypis fulvicauda</i>
Southern Rough-winged Swallow	<i>Stelgidopteryx ruficollis</i>	Bananaquit	<i>Coereba flaveola</i>
Cliff Swallow	<i>Petrochelidon pyrrhonota</i>	Common Chlorospingus	<i>Chlorospingus ophthalmicus</i>
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Sooty-capped Chlorospingus	<i>Chlorospingus pileatus</i>
Long-tailed Silky-Flycatcher	<i>Ptilogonys caudatus</i>	Black-and-Yellow Tanager	<i>Chrysothlypis chrysomelas</i>
Black-and-yellow Silky-Flycatcher	<i>Phainoptila melanoxantha</i>	Dusky-faced Tanager	<i>Mitrospingus cassini</i>
Band-backed Wren	<i>Campylorhynchus zonatus</i>	Olive Tanager	<i>Chlorphtaupis carmioli</i>
Rufous-naped Wren	<i>Campylorhynchus rufinucha</i>	Gray-headed Tanager	<i>Eucometis penicillata</i>
Black-throated Wren	<i>Thryothorus atrogularis</i>	White-shouldered Tanager	<i>Tachyphonus luctuosus</i>
Rufous-breasted Wren	<i>Thryothorus rutilus</i>	White-lined Tanager	<i>Tachyphonus rufus</i>
Riverside Wren	<i>Thryothorus semibadius</i>	Red-crowned Ant-Tanager	<i>Habia rubica</i>
Bay Wren	<i>Thryothorus nigricapillus</i>	Red-throated Ant-Tanager	<i>Habia fuscicauda</i>
Stripe-breasted Wren	<i>Thryothorus thoracicus</i>	Summer Tanager	<i>Piranga rubra</i>
Banded Wren	<i>Thryothorus pleurostictus</i>	Hepatic Tanager	<i>Piranga flava</i>
Plain Wren	<i>Thryothorus modestus</i>	Flame-colored Tanager	<i>Piranga bidentata</i>
House Wren	<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>	Crimson-collared Tanager	<i>Phlogothraupis sanguinolenta</i>
White-breasted Wood-Wren	<i>Henicorhina leucosticta</i>	Cherrie's Tanager	<i>Ramphocelus costericensis</i>
Gray-breasted Wood-Wren	<i>Henicorhina leucophrys</i>	Blue-gray Tanager	<i>Thraupis episcopus</i>
Black-faced Solitaire	<i>Myadestes melanops</i>	Palm Tanager	<i>Thraupis palmarum</i>
Black-billed Nightingale-Thrush	<i>Catharus gracilrostris</i>	Yellow-crowned Euphonia	<i>Euphonia luteicapilla</i>

White-vented Euphonia *Euphonia minuta*
 Yellow-throated Euphonia *Euphonia hirundinacea*
 Spot-crowned Euphonia *Euphonia imitans*
 Olive-backed Euphonia *Euphonia gouldi*
 Golden-browed Chlorophonia *Chlorophonia callophrys*
 Plain-colored Tanager *Tangara inornata*
 Emerald Tanager *Tangara florida*
 Silver-throated Tanager *Tangara icterocephala*
 Bay-headed Tanager *Tangara gyrola*
 Golden-hooded Tanager *Tangara larvata*
 Spangle-cheeked Tanager *Tangara dowii*
 Scarlet-thighed Dacnis *Dacnis venusta*
 Blue Dacnis *Dacnis cayana*
 Green Honeycreeper *Chlorophanes spiza*
 Shining Honeycreeper *Cyanerpes lucidus*
 Red-legged Honeycreeper *Cyanerpes cyaneus*
 Blue-black Grassquit *Volatinia jacarina*
 Variable Seedeater *Sporophila aurita*
 White-collared Seedeater *Sporophila torqueola*
 Thick-billed Seed-Finch *Oryzoborus funereus*
 Yellow-faced Grassquit *Tiaris olivacea*
 Slaty Flowerpiercer *Diglossa plumbea*
 Yellow-thighed Finch *Pselliophorus tibialis*
 Large-footed Finch *Pezopetes capitalis*
 Orange-billed Sparrow *Arremon aurantirostris*
 Black-striped Sparrow *Arremonops conirostris*
 Stripe-headed Sparrow *Aimophila ruficauda*
 Rufous-collared Sparrow *Zonotrichia capensis*
 Grayish Saltator *Saltator coerulescens*
 Buff-throated Saltator *Saltator maximus*
 Black-headed Saltator *Saltator atriceps*
 Black-faced Grosbeak *Caryothraustes poliogaster*
 Rose-breasted Grosbeak *Pheucticus ludovicianus*
 Blue-black Grosbeak *Cyanocompsa cyanooides*
 Painted Bunting *Passerina ciris*
 Red-breasted Blackbird *Sturnella militaris*
 Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus*
 Eastern Meadowlark *Sturnella magna*
 Melodious Blackbird *Dives dives*
 Great-tailed Grackle *Quiscalus mexicanus*
 Bronzed Cowbird *Molothrus aeneus*
 Giant Cowbird *Scaphidura oryzivora*
 Spot-breasted Oriole *Icterus pectoralis*
 Streak-backed Oriole *Icterus pustulatus*
 Baltimore Oriole *Icterus galbula*
 Orchard Oriole *Icterus spurius*
 Black-cowled Oriole *Icterus dominicensis*
 Scarlet-rumped Cacique *Cacicus uropygialis*
 Chestnut-headed Oropendola *Psarocolius wagleri*
 Montezuma Oropendola *Psarocolius Montezuma*
 Yellow-bellied Siskin *Carduelis xanthogastra*
 House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Total: 406

MAMMALS

Jaguar *Panthera onca*
 Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth *Bradypus variegatus*
 Hoffman's Two-toed Sloth *Choloepus hoffmanni*
 Southern Tamandua *Tamandua tetradactyla*
 Mantled Howler Monkey *Alouatta palliata*
 White-faced Capuchin *Cebus capucinus*
 Central American Spider Monkey *Ateles geoffroyi*
 White-nosed Coati *Nasua narica*
 Collared Peccary *Tayassu tajacu*
 Red-tailed Squirrel *Sciurus granatensis*
 Variegated Squirrel *Sciurus variegatoides*
 Central American Agouti *Dasyprocta punctata*
 Eastern Cottontail *Sylvilagus floridanus*
 Hooded Skunk *Mephitis macroura*
 Brazilian Long-nosed Bat *Rhynchonycteris naso*
 White-lined Sac-winged Bat *Saccopteryx bilineata*
 Common Tent-making Bat *Uroderma bilobatum*
 Honduran Tent-making Bat *Ectophylla alba*
 Bottlenose Dolphin *Turiops truncatus*

REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS

American Crocodile	<i>Crocodylus acutus</i>
Black River Turtle	<i>Rhinoclemmys funereal</i>
Nicaraguan Slider	<i>Trachemys scripta</i>
House Gecko	<i>Hemidactylus frenatus</i>
Yellow-headed Gecko	<i>Gonatodes alboguralis</i>
Tropical Night Lizard	<i>Lepidophyma flavimaculatum</i>
Central Am Whip-tailed Lizard	<i>Ameiva festiva</i>
Ground Anole	<i>Anolis humilis</i>
Slender Anole	<i>Anolis limnifrons</i>
Green Spiny Lizard	<i>Sceloporus malachiticus</i>
Striped Basilisk	<i>Basiliscus vittatus</i>
Common Basilisk	<i>Basiliscus basiliscus</i>
Emerald Basilisk	<i>Basiliscus plumifrons</i>
Green Iguana	<i>Iguana iguana</i>
Black Spiny-tailed Iguana	<i>Ctenosaura similis</i>
Helmeted Iguana	<i>Corytophanes cristatus</i>
Eyelash Viper	<i>Bothriechis schlegelii</i>
Eastern Parrot Snake	<i>Leptophis depressirostris</i>
Green-and-Black Poison-Dart Frog	<i>Dendrobates auratus</i>
Strawberry Poison-Dart Frog	<i>Dendrobates pumilio</i>
Red-eyed Tree Frog	<i>Agalychnis callidryas</i>
Milky Frog	<i>Trachycephalus typhonius</i>
Common Rain Frog	<i>Eleutherodactylus fitzingeri</i>
Hourglass Frog	<i>Dendropsophus ebraccatus</i>
Ferrer's Leopard Frog	<i>Lithobates forreri</i>
Brilliant Forest Frog	<i>Lithobates warszewitschii</i>
Masked Frog	<i>Smilisca phaeota</i>
Cane Toad	<i>Bufo marinus</i>

ALSO

Blue Morphos
Owl Butterfly
Monarch
Many other beautiful butterflies
Green Page Moth (migrating moth)
Black Witch Moth
Golden Orb Spider
Praying Mantis
Cicadas
Katydid
Plated Millipede
Halloween Crab
Mangrove Crab
Ghost Crab
Leaf-cutter and Army Ants
Bullet Ant
Helicopter Damselfly
Ruby-spot Damselfly
Fiery-eyed Dancer
Stripe-kneed Tarantula
Red-winged Locust
...and lots, lots more.