



*Field Guides Tour Report*

**Costa Rica: Birding the Edges Part I, the Deep South 2014**

Jan 11, 2014 to Jan 19, 2014  
Jay VanderGaast & Jim Zook

*For our tour description, itinerary, past triplists, dates, fees, and more, please [VISIT OUR TOUR PAGE](#).*

What a great way to start off the New Year: a brand new tour in a gorgeous tropical country with no threat of snow, frost, or all those other winter annoyances! This is a tour that I had long wanted to get going, so I was really pleased at the initial response to it, and even more pleased that it went so well. In my opinion, this was an excellent inaugural run of this trip, and it looks like a keeper that I'm excited about doing again in the coming years.

Beginning on our way south, we eased into the birding, with a stop for the locally restricted Sedge Wren, adding a bunch of other familiar North American species like Merlin, White-tailed Kite, Mourning Dove, and Eastern Meadowlark. With that brief warmup completed, we dove straight into the "real" Costa Rican birding with a couple of stunning Resplendent Quetzals stealing the show, and a bunch of other highland specialties to really whet our appetites. Volcano Hummingbird, Black-capped Flycatcher, Yellow-winged Vireo, Flame-throated Warbler, Collared Redstart, an unexpected pair of the highly irruptive Peg-billed Finches, and angry-eyed Volcano Juncos were just some of the specialties that crossed our paths that first day, not bad for what was essentially a travel day to get us to our main destinations!

Next morning, a pre-breakfast walk around the grounds of our well-placed local hotel gave us our first taste of some of the southern specialties we were here to find, including our first of many Olivaceous Piculets, and a pair of gaudy Fiery-billed Aracaris. And the feeders just outside of the restaurant were hopping with a constant stream of gorgeous birds, so that no one even noticed what we had for breakfast! We then moved on to the wonderful little reserve at Los Cusingos, where famed Costa Rican ornithologist and writer Alexander Skutch lived a simple life until his passing just before his 100th birthday. The feeders here were great, too, with local specials Golden-naped Woodpecker and Spot-crowned Euphonia dropping in among the hordes of other species. The forest trail was quiet by comparison, but it netted us super views of a roosting, though wide awake Common Potoo, plus Red-capped Manakin, Bicolored Antbird, Golden-crowned Spadebill, and many more.



*It's always wonderful to see a curassow, and this female was one of several Great Curassows we saw well during this tour. (Photo by guide Jay VanderGaast)*

Next up was the San Vito area and the lovely Wilson Botanical Gardens, just a stone's throw from the frontier with Panama. Our time here was split between the reserve itself and some local forest patches and marshes, which netted us such diverse birds as Black Hawk-Eagle, White-throated Crake, Southern Lapwing, Blue-headed Parrot, Snowy-bellied Hummingbird and White-tailed Emerald (both southern specials), Striped Woodhaunter, Pale-breasted Spinetail, Bran-colored Flycatcher, Masked Yellowthroat (the very disjunct Chiriqui subspecies, which is sometimes elevated to full species status), and Crested Oropendola, recently arrived in Costa Rica, and now breeding locally. Rumors of a male White-crested Coquette at the gardens sadly remained rumors, despite a lot of focused searching.

We finished up in the steamy Pacific lowlands, where bird life was plentiful at both our lodge and in the surrounding areas. Great Curassows strolled through the lodge's grounds, Violet-headed Hummingbird and Long-billed Hermit zipped from flower to flower around the restaurant, a pair of huge Spectacled Owls roosted along the creek nearby, and Black-striped Woodcreeper, Black-faced Antthrush, Baird's Trogon, and Riverside Wren were among the many other species just outside our cabin doors. And, of course, the big target for the region, the beautiful, endemic Black-cheeked Ant-Tanager serenaded us daily at dawn, and showed well along the aptly named "Bird Trail." The entrance road was good too, for a bunch of open-country species like Fork-tailed Flycatcher, Red-breasted Blackbird, various seedeaters, including good numbers of the local Slate-colored Seedeater, and, at night, a fierce looking Striped Owl.

Nearby areas we visited included a region south of Ciudad Niely that yielded Veraguan Mango, Sapphire-throated Hummingbird, and Brown-throated Parakeet in the flowering Erythrina trees, all recent additions to the Costa Rica list, the nicely wooded Golfito Road which produced White Hawk, White-necked Puffbird, and our most exciting mixed flock which included smashing views of Green Shrike-Vireo, Long-tailed Woodcreeper, and White-throated Shrike-Tanager, and the very productive Rincon Bridge, where Turquoise and Yellow-billed cotingas, two scarce and local specialties, highlighted an excellent morning of birding.

I know people are sometimes leery of signing on for the first run of a new tour, so I'd like to say thanks to all of you for joining me on this trip and doing your part to make it such a success! This was such a fun, enjoyable group to lead, and I had a super time with you. I look forward to seeing all of you again on another tour one day. And for those of you who only did Part 1, consider joining me for Part 2 next year. It went equally well, and was a great

complement to this first part. Watch for the triplist coming to the website soon! Oh, and before I forget, many thanks to my excellent co-leader, Jim, who was so invaluable on this trip. Also to Lenin, our able driver, who got us around safely and comfortably, and spotted a few great birds, too. It was great working with both of them.

--Jay

PQ = Paraiso Quetzal

TL = Talari Lodge

LC = Los Cusingos

WG = Wilson Botanical Gardens

EL = Esquinas Rainforest Lodge

SJ = San Joaquin marsh

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#### KEYS FOR THIS LIST

One of the following keys may be shown in brackets for individual species as appropriate: \* = heard only, I = introduced, E = endemic, N = nesting, a = austral migrant, b = boreal migrant

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## BIRDS

### Tinamidae (Tinamous)

**GREAT TINAMOU** (*Tinamus major*) – One flushed from along the trail at WG, and a few folks had good looks at a EL, including the ones that joined me for the "Insanity Hike" during the break one day.

**LITTLE TINAMOU** (*Crypturellus soui*) – Heard at EL. [\*]

### Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

**BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK** (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) – A flock of about 26 was lounging on the edge of a pond north of Dominical.

**BLUE-WINGED TEAL** (*Anas discors*) – The only migrant duck that regularly makes it this far south in numbers. We had a few at the marshes around San Vito. [b]

### Cracidae (Guans, Chachalacas, and Curassows)

**GRAY-HEADED CHACHALACA** (*Ortalis cinereiceps*) – Seen along the roads near San Vito on a couple of days.

**CRESTED GUAN** (*Penelope purpurascens*) – Seen by some at WG, but best at EL where we watched up to 5 at close range in the hotel grounds.

**GREAT CURASSOW** (*Crax rubra*) – A male and 2 females were regulars in the gardens at EL. Large, tasty birds like this disappear quickly where forest is disturbed and hunting pressure high, so their presence is always a good sign.

### Podicipedidae (Grebes)

**LEAST GREBE** (*Tachybaptus dominicus*) – One on the pond at Finca Cantaros.

### Ciconiidae (Storks)

**WOOD STORK** (*Mycteria americana*) – One along the EL entrance road, then a few more during the drive along the coast.

### Fregatidae (Frigatebirds)

**MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD** (*Fregata magnificens*) – A couple from the Rincon bridge, and a bunch along the coast during the drive back north.

### Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

**NEOTROPIC CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) – A couple of birds along the river at Rincon.

### Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

**BROWN PELICAN** (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) – A few birds flying over the bay near Rincon, and again along the coast drive.

### Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

**BARE-THROATED TIGER-HERON** (*Tigrisoma mexicanum*) – Two birds were perched side by side on a branch over the river at Rincon, with a third bird a few feet above them. One of the lower birds was calling loudly and displaying, so I'm assuming he was trying to warn the intruder above him to back off from his mate.

**GREAT BLUE HERON** (*Ardea herodias*) – Singles daily in the lowlands, and one at the Finca Cantaros pond.

**GREAT EGRET** (*Ardea alba*) – Daily around San Vito and in the lowlands.

**SNOWY EGRET** (*Egretta thula*) – Small numbers in the lowlands.

**LITTLE BLUE HERON** (*Egretta caerulea*) – A few daily in the lowlands.

**TRICOLORED HERON** (*Egretta tricolor*) – A single bird along the coast near the Rincon Bridge.

**CATTLE EGRET** (*Bubulcus ibis*) – Plenty daily.

**GREEN HERON** (*Butorides virescens*) – Small numbers in the swampy pastures near EL.

**BOAT-BILLED HERON** (*Cochlearius cochlearius*) – One was briefly spotlighted along a canal near EL but it took off before we all were on it.

### Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

**WHITE IBIS** (*Eudocimus albus*) – Good numbers in the lowlands.

*Cathartidae (New World Vultures)*

**BLACK VULTURE** (*Coragyps atratus*) – Lots daily.

**TURKEY VULTURE** (*Cathartes aura*) – Lots daily.

**LESSER YELLOW-HEADED VULTURE** (*Cathartes burrovianus*) – Great looks at one over the rice fields near Ciudad Niely. This bird is pretty local in the country, occurring only here and in the Cano Negro region in the far north.

**KING VULTURE** (*Sarcoramphus papa*) – Our first King Vulture turned into a Wood Stork when viewed through the scope, but a few minutes later, a second stork that Jim spotted turned into one of these vultures when he looked at it with the scope!

*Pandionidae (Osprey)*

**OSPREY** (*Pandion haliaetus*) – A couple of birds along the Rio Terraba on our way south to San Vito, then one carrying a large fish at the San Vito airport marsh, and another perched along the river by the Rincon bridge.

*Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)*

**PEARL KITE** (*Gamponyx swainsonii*) – We spotted a pair on roadside wires during our return drive to San Jose, but by the time we turned around, they were gone. Another was seen flying over the highway north of Dominical. This species first turned up in the country about 20 years ago, and is now a regular in the Pacific lowlands.

**WHITE-TAILED KITE** (*Elanus leucurus*) – Our first morning near Cartago, one kited over the pastures, then came in for a landing in a nearby dead tree, giving us super views. We saw a second, juvenile bird shortly after, then a couple more on our final day.

**GRAY-HEADED KITE** (*Leptodon cayanensis*) – A fairly distant bird flying over LC, and a much closer, better view of one, also soaring over, near EL.

**SWALLOW-TAILED KITE** (*Elanoides forficatus*) – Mainly a breeding migrant from South America here, and while they were common in the south, and seen almost daily, interestingly we saw none at all in the north.

**BLACK HAWK-EAGLE** (*Spizaetus tyrannus*) – A couple seen poorly at Finca Cantaros, and another the same day just before lunch over the rooms at WG, which was seen pretty well by those that were present.

**DOUBLE-TOOTHED KITE** (*Harpagus bidentatus*) – One flying over the Rincon bridge showed quite well.

**COMMON BLACK-HAWK (MANGROVE)** (*Buteogallus anthracinus subtilis*) – Singles were seen each day in the lowlands, the closest being the one that flew across the highway ahead of the bus during the drive back to San Jose.

**ROADSIDE HAWK** (*Rupornis magnirostris*) – The most numerous hawk in the south, with several seen pretty much every day.

**WHITE HAWK** (*Pseudastur albicollis*) – This gorgeous hawk was seen quite well during both visits to the Golfito Road, first when we flushed one from its bath along the river.

**BROAD-WINGED HAWK** (*Buteo platypterus*) – Small numbers in the San Vito area. [b]

**SHORT-TAILED HAWK** (*Buteo brachyurus*) – A light morph bird was seen at Finca Cantaros, and a dark morph during our cotinga vigil on the Rincon bridge.

**ZONE-TAILED HAWK** (*Buteo albonotatus*) – Seen nicely twice, once low over the rice fields south of Ciudad Niely, and again over the Rincon bridge.

**RED-TAILED HAWK (COSTA RICAN)** (*Buteo jamaicensis costaricensis*) – Seen by some during the steep trek to the quetzal site on our first day.

*Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)*

**WHITE-THROATED CRAKE** (*Laterallus albigularis*) – A common species, but can be tough to see. We had nice views of a couple at the SJ marsh thanks to some nice spotting by Lannois, then saw another pair below the Rincon bridge.

**GRAY-NECKED WOOD-RAIL** (*Aramides cajaneus*) – Seen almost daily, with highs of 4 birds in one area along the EL entrance road.

**PURPLE GALLINULE** (*Porphyrio martinicus*) – Small numbers in the marshes around San Vito.

**COMMON GALLINULE** (*Gallinula galeata*) – In the same marshes as the previous species.

*Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)*

**SOUTHERN LAPWING** (*Vanellus chilensis*) – A relatively recent arrival in Costa Rica, this handsome lapwing is now quite widespread. We found 4 at the San Vito airport marsh, then 2 south of Ciudad Niely and another pair during our drive back north along the coast.

*Jacanidae (Jacanas)*

**NORTHERN JACANA** (*Jacana spinosa*) – Common wherever there was appropriate habitat.

*Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)*

**SPOTTED SANDPIPER** (*Actitis macularia*) – One along the river at TL and a couple along the Rio Rincon. [b]

**GREATER YELLOWLEGS** (*Tringa melanoleuca*) – A lone bird along the Rio Rincon. [b]

**WILLET** (*Tringa semipalmata*) – A single along the Rio Rincon was seen by just a few folks. [b]

**LEAST SANDPIPER** (*Calidris minutilla*) – A group of 6 fed on the muddy banks of the Rio Rincon. [b]

**WILSON'S SNIPE** (*Gallinago delicata*) – Rather uncommon in the country; we saw one at the San Vito airport marsh. [b]

*Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)*

**LAUGHING GULL** (*Leucophaeus atricilla*) – A handful, all in nonbreeding plumage, along the coast near the Rincon bridge.

**ROYAL TERN** (*Thalasseus maximus*) – Three birds among the gulls.

*Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)*

**ROCK PIGEON** (*Columba livia*) – Aka Feral Pigeon. Only around some of the bigger towns. [I]

**PALE-VENTED PIGEON** (*Patagioenas cayennensis*) – The common large pigeon of the Pacific lowlands.

**SCALED PIGEON** (*Patagioenas speciosa*) – Surprisingly scarce, with one seen at TL, and a couple more around San Vito.

**RED-BILLED PIGEON** (*Patagioenas flavirostris*) – The common large pigeon away from the coastal lowlands, including around the Hotel Bougainvillea.

**BAND-TAILED PIGEON** (*Patagioenas fasciata*) – One large flock was seen as we descended from the mountains towards San Isidro.

**RUDDY PIGEON** (*Patagioenas subvinacea*) – At WG. [\*]

**SHORT-BILLED PIGEON** (*Patagioenas nigrirostris*) – Also heard at WG where it overlaps with Ruddy Pigeon. Seen well in the lowlands, where its voice was among the most commonly heard calls throughout the day.

**WHITE-WINGED DOVE** (*Zenaida asiatica*) – This species of the dry northwest has expanded eastward across the central valley, and is now quite common around the Bougainvillea, where it was absent a few years back.

**MOURNING DOVE** (*Zenaida macroura*) – Quite local in the country; we saw one near Cartago. The birds here are part of a resident breeding population, not migrants.

**INCA DOVE** (*Columbina inca*) – This small dove has mirrored the expansion of the White-winged Dove, and it is another fairly recent arrival to the Hotel Bougainvillea grounds.

**PLAIN-BREASTED GROUND-DOVE** (*Columbina minuta*) – A lone bird was perched on a roadside fence near Ciudad Niely.

**RUDDY GROUND-DOVE** (*Columbina talpacoti*) – Numerous in the lowlands.

**BLUE GROUND-DOVE** (*Claravis pretiosa*) – Southwest Costa Rica must be the hot spot for these gorgeous doves; we saw them daily in the lowlands, including one group made up of a minimum 10 males and 2 females, the largest group I have ever seen anywhere!

**WHITE-TIPPED DOVE** (*Leptotila verreauxi*) – A common bird, throughout, and seen nearly daily.

**GRAY-CHESTED DOVE** (*Leptotila cassini*) – Heard regularly around EL. [\*]

**RUDDY QUAIL-DOVE** (*Geotrygon montana*) – A couple along the Bird Trail at EL, but I think Suellen was the only one to see this species well.

#### Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

**SQUIRREL CUCKOO** (*Piaya cayana*) – Pretty common throughout.

**STRIPED CUCKOO** (*Tapera naevia*) – Heard a couple of times in the lowlands, but never close. [\*]

**SMOOTH-BILLED ANI** (*Crotophaga ani*) – The default ani of the south, where it is common.

**GROOVE-BILLED ANI** (*Crotophaga sulcirostris*) – Replaces the Smooth-billed in the northern half of the country; we saw them only at the Rio Tarcoles bridge.

#### Strigidae (Owls)

**TROPICAL SCREECH-OWL** (*Megascops choliba*) – A great, quick response from one in the hotel grounds our first night led to some excellent views.

**CRESTED OWL** (*Lophotrix cristata*) – Distantly at WG. [\*]

**SPECTACLED OWL** (*Pulsatrix perspicillata*) – Jim went out looking for these big owls during an afternoon break at EL, and found two roosting near the lodge. Only one was left when he led the rest of us back in, but that bird patiently allowed us some lengthy scope studies. David and Ann both picked this as their favorite trip bird.

**FERRUGINOUS PYGMY-OWL** (*Glaucidium brasilianum*) – A two owl night on our first night of the tour was kicked off with a cooperative one of these little guys in the hotel grounds at dusk.

**MOTTLED OWL** (*Ciccaba virgata*) – Heard at very close quarters at WG, but we couldn't locate it in the dense canopy. [\*]

**STRIPED OWL** (*Pseudoscops clamator*) – A long night drive near EL finally paid dividends when we spotted one of these strikingly beautiful owls perched in a roadside owl palm just before we got back to the lodge. This was the top bird of the trip for both Ron and Suellen.

#### Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

**SHORT-TAILED NIGHTHAWK** (*Lurocalis semitorquatus*) – Incredibly good response to my whistled imitations by a bird at WG, where it flew at my head a few times as we stood on the viewing deck at dawn one morning!

**COMMON PAURAUQUE** (*Nyctidromus albicollis*) – Seen regularly, with the best one being the bird we found on a nest during our night drive near EL. Two incredibly cute and well-camouflaged fuzzy chicks were in the nest, one under each wing of the adult.

#### Nyctibiidae (Potoos)

**COMMON POTOO** (*Nyctibius griseus*) – The local guide at LC led us straight to a day roost of this odd bird, where we had superb looks at it looking quite wide awake, and enjoying the early morning sun.

#### Apodidae (Swifts)

**WHITE-COLLARED SWIFT** (*Streptoprocne zonaris*) – The largest swift of the region, seen several times at scattered locations.

**VAUX'S SWIFT** (*Chaetura vauxi*) – A small group was seen over the gardens at the Hotel Bougainvillea.

**COSTA RICAN SWIFT** (*Chaetura fumosa*) – We saw this small swift well enough to make out the narrow white bands across their rumps, in the lowlands near EL.

#### Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

**WHITE-NECKED JACOBIN** (*Florisuga mellivora*) – One male at the Rincon bridge, another along the entrance road to EL.

**BAND-TAILED BARBTHROAT** (*Threnetes ruckeri*) – Some excellent looks at a couple on song perches in roadside forest near EL.

**GREEN HERMIT** (*Phaethornis guy*) – Great looks at a couple of singing males on a lek along the trails at WG.

**LONG-BILLED HERMIT** (*Phaethornis longirostris*) – Replaces Green Hermit as the common large hermit in the lowlands. Sandy and David saw this one first as they waited for the rest of us to show up for breakfast one morning at EL. We saw a few more around the lodge, including one that took an interest in us and hovered around checking us out.

**STRIPED-THROATED HERMIT** (*Phaethornis striigularis*) – A quick little bird that usually doesn't stay put for long, this hermit can be tricky to see, though I think most folks caught up with it during one of its many visits to the flowers around the EL restaurant.

**GREEN VIOLETEAR** (*Colibri thalassinus*) – A few birds at the feeders at PQ on our first day.

- PURPLE-CROWNED FAIRY** (*Heliodytes barroti*) – This dainty hummingbird was seen twice, once at LC and once at EL.
- VERAGUAN MANGO** (*Anthracothorax veraguensis*) – One of several species only recently found to occur on Costa Rica, this hummer seems to have spread quite rapidly. We saw three birds, one female, one adult male, and one male in transitional plumage, in some flowering *Erythrina* trees south of Ciudad Niely, then a couple more along the EL entrance road, in the same kind of flowering trees.
- MAGNIFICENT HUMMINGBIRD** (*Eugenes fulgens*) – The dominant large hummer at the PQ feeders.
- LONG-BILLED STARTHROAT** (*Heliomaster longirostris*) – Ann spotted a perched bird at the Finca Cantaros which stayed put for some nice scope views. Another was seen briefly the next day near EL.
- FIERY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Panterpe insignis*) – Seen only in the highlands on our first day. This stunning hummingbird is endemic to the Chiriqui highlands of CR and Panama; the colorful throat can be tough to see, but we were able to get some excellent views at the PQ feeders. This was Walt's favorite bird of the tour.
- WHITE-THROATED MOUNTAIN-GEM (GRAY-TAILED)** (*Lampornis castaneiventris cinereicauda*) – A female seen at the quetzal site on our first day was likely this species, but we didn't see it well enough to separate it from the very similar female Purple-throated Mountain-gem, which could also occur here.
- RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Archilochus colubris*) – In among all the beautiful tropical hummingbirds we found a couple of females of this familiar species, one in the flowering *Erythrina* trees south of Ciudad Niely, another during a gas station rest stop on our drive back to the north. [b]
- VOLCANO HUMMINGBIRD** (*Selasphorus flammula*) – These tiny hummers are restricted to high elevations, and we saw them only on Cerro de la Muerte, where a couple were visiting the feeders at PQ, looking like midgets among all the huge Magnificent Hummingbirds.
- GARDEN EMERALD** (*Chlorostilbon assimilis*) – Only one for the trip, a female which we spotted from the bus on the drive in to LC.
- VIOLET-HEADED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Klais guimeti*) – A single bird paid daily visits to the flowering hedges just outside the restaurant at EL.
- SCALY-BREASTED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Phaeochroa cuvierii*) – A large dull hummingbird which was quite common throughout the south. We even saw one bird on a nest at LC. [N]
- CROWNED WOODNYMPH** (*Thalurania colombica*) – After a separation that lasted several years, Violet-crowned and Green-crowned woodnymphs have gotten back together as Crowned Woodnymph. We saw just a couple, a male at LC, and a female along the Golfito Road.
- WHITE-TAILED EMERALD** (*Elvira chionura*) – One of several specialty hummingbirds restricted to southern CR and western Panama. This active little bird was a little tough to get the bins on, but we had a few opportunities at WG and Finca Cantaros.
- CHARMING HUMMINGBIRD** (*Amazilia decora*) – One bird briefly at LC, then several more in the lowlands. Another of the southern CR specialty hummers.
- SNOWY-BELLIED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Amazilia edward*) – The first couple at TL were pretty distant and only identifiable in the scope, but we had a couple of close ones in the flowering verbena at Finca Cantaros that allowed much better views.
- RUFIOUS-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Amazilia tzacatl*) – By far the most commonly encountered hummingbird of the tour.
- CINNAMON HUMMINGBIRD** (*Amazilia rutila*) – Seen by Jim and a couple of others in Orotina park, where we looked in vain for owls.
- SAPPHIRE-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Lepidopyga coeruleogularis*) – Another species that has recently invaded CR from Panama. We had at least one at the flowering *Erythrina* trees near Ciudad Niely, alongside the Veraguan Mangos, though I think only a few folks got a good look before it moved on.
- BLUE-THROATED GOLDENTAIL** (*Hylocharis eliciae*) – Pretty numerous in the lowlands, and we had several good scope views of these noisy hummers.

#### Trogonidae (Trogons)

- RESPLENDENT QUETZAL** (*Pharomachrus mocinno*) – It was an awfully steep hike to the only place that quetzals have been reliable in the Cerro de la Muerte area this season, but it sure was worth it, with smashing views of a half a dozen birds, including some shimmering males with full tail plumes.
- SLATY-TAILED TROGON** (*Trogon massena*) – Great close views of a pair perched right next to the Golfito Road. We thought they might have been nesting in a nearby arboreal termite mound, but they weren't there a couple of days later, so maybe it was just coincidence.
- BAIRD'S TROGON** (*Trogon bairdii*) – A couple in the grounds of EL gave so-so views, which were much improved upon on our last morning along Golfito Road when we found four birds together. This trogon is restricted to Costa Rica's and Panama's Pacific slope.
- GARTERED TROGON** (*Trogon caligatus*) – Our driver Lenin showed one to Catherine at LC, while the rest of us caught up with this species around the EL area. This one was formerly known as Violaceous Trogon, a name I've found hard to let go of so far!
- BLACK-THROATED TROGON** (*Trogon rufus*) – Nice looks at a male as we searched for the ant-tanager along the Bird Trail at EL one morning.

#### Momotidae (Motmots)

- BLUE-CROWNED MOTMOT (LESSON'S)** (*Momotus coeruliceps lessonii*) – Common throughout, and recorded every day of the trip. Probably the most interesting sighting was in the early morning at WG, where we saw a bird with quite a long caecilian (a legless, snake-like amphibian) that it proceeded to gulp down in very short order.

#### Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

- RINGED KINGFISHER** (*Megasceryle torquata*) – A couple of these monsters were seen along the entrance road to EL.
- AMAZON KINGFISHER** (*Chloroceryle amazona*) – Our first was perched on wires across the river near San Isidro, and we had a couple more in the lowlands.
- GREEN KINGFISHER** (*Chloroceryle americana*) – Just a single bird was seen at one of the stream crossings on our way in to EL.

#### Bucconidae (Puffbirds)

- WHITE-NECKED PUFFBIRD** (*Notharchus hyperhynchus*) – Nice studies of a bird perched in some bare branches along Golfito Road.

#### Galbulidae (Jacamars)

- RUFIOUS-TAILED JACAMAR** (*Galbula ruficauda*) – Jim tracked down a shimmering male that was calling in the gardens at EL.

Ramphastidae (Toucans)

**FIERY-BILLED ARACARI** (*Pteroglossus frantzii*) – The bird for which Alexander Skutch's Los Cusingos was named, and another of the specialties of southern CR and western Panama. We saw these beautiful toucans well at TL and a few times in the lowlands, but I don't recall seeing any at Los Cusingos.

**BLACK-MANDIBLED TOUCAN (CHESTNUT-MANDIBLED)** (*Ramphastos ambiguus swainsonii*) – Pretty common at WG and onward through the rest of the trip. The most interesting sighting was a bird on a night roost during our owling trip around EL; not the kind of bird we were expecting, or hoping, to find that night!

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

**OLIVACEOUS PICULET** (*Picumnus olivaceus*) – Encountered a number of times on the trip. Memorable were the bird in the nest hole at LC, and another along the EL entrance road that was working diligently on a nest hole in a roadside fencepost. This bird was pretty intent on its task and allowed us to approach quite closely for some good photographs. He so impressed Junie and Sandy that they picked it as their favorite bird of the trip! [N]

**ACORN WOODPECKER** (*Melanerpes formicivorus*) – Just a couple of birds along the Providencia Road on our first morning in the highlands.

**GOLDEN-NAPED WOODPECKER** (*Melanerpes chrysauchen*) – Another of the regional specialties this trip was designed to find, this one surprised us at LC when it visited the feeders there, not a usual behavior from what I understand. We saw these lovely woodpeckers again around EL and they also got a bird of the trip nomination as Marianne's top pick.

**RED-CROWNED WOODPECKER** (*Melanerpes rubricapillus*) – This close relative of Red-bellied Woodpecker was the most common woodpecker species we encountered on the tour.

**HOFFMANN'S WOODPECKER** (*Melanerpes hoffmannii*) – Replaces the preceding species in the northern half of the country, with a hybridization zone along the Pacific slope from about Dominical north to Jaco. We saw this one only on the grounds of the Bougainvillea.

**SMOKY-BROWN WOODPECKER** (*Picoides fumigatus*) – Heard a couple of times but never close enough to do anything with it. [\*]

**HAIRY WOODPECKER** (*Picoides villosus*) – The resident race is restricted to highland forests, and is smaller than our northern birds, with a brownish wash to the underparts. We had a pair of these "Dirty Hairies" along the Providencia Road.

**RED-RUMPED WOODPECKER** (*Veniliornis kirkii*) – This small woodpecker is at the northern limit of its range in southwestern Costa Rica, and the male we saw so well at the Rincon bridge was my first in the country.

**RUFIOUS-WINGED WOODPECKER** (*Piculus simplex*) – Mike spotted this one which was traveling with a mixed flock along the Golfito Road. We saw another in the same general area a couple of days later; perhaps the same bird even.

**GOLDEN-OLIVE WOODPECKER** (*Colaptes rubiginosus*) – A very cooperative male allowed us long scope studies at the Finca Cantaros.

**LINEATED WOODPECKER** (*Dryocopus lineatus*) – Pretty widespread, and we saw this species on several days, perhaps best in the gardens at EL.

**PALE-BILLED WOODPECKER** (*Campephilus guatemalensis*) – We heard the characteristic double-knock of this species in the mangroves along the coast, and I tried luring it in by reproducing the sound. The bird was only slightly interested, though, and I believe Lannois was the only one to see it when it approached a little closer, then quickly flew off again.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

**BARRED FOREST-FALCON** (*Micrastur ruficollis*) – Heard in the early morning at WG. [\*]

**CRESTED CARACARA** (*Caracara cheriway*) – A bit of a surprise at WG where a pair had recently taken up residence and apparently bred locally. Quite common in the lowlands.

**YELLOW-HEADED CARACARA** (*Milvago chimachima*) – Pretty common in the south, and expanding quite rapidly throughout the country. This species was seen several times dust-bathing in the middle of the road en route to EL.

**LAUGHING FALCON** (*Herpetotheres cachinnans*) – Dr. Skutch generally disliked birds of prey since they killed other birds, but he did tolerate this species due to its preference for snakes. We heard these birds regularly, and had scope views of one from the tower at WG.

**MERLIN** (*Falco columbarius*) – An uncommon winter visitor to CR. Jim spotted one perched in a distant tree at the Sedge Wren spot near Cartago. [b]

**BAT FALCON** (*Falco rufigularis*) – Ron, Lannois, and Jim saw one fly past the cafeteria at WG; the rest of us caught up with one soaring over the new toll highway during our drive back to San Jose.

**PEREGRINE FALCON** (*Falco peregrinus*) – Nice views of one flying over during our morning walk around the grounds at TL. Another uncommon winter visitor in the country. [a]

Psittacidae (Parrots)

**CRIMSON-FRONTED PARAKEET** (*Aratinga finschi*) – Common and noisy throughout.

**BROWN-THROATED PARAKEET** (*Aratinga pertinax*) – Another of the species that has recently invaded Costa Rica from south of the border. Still rather uncommon, and our only ones were a small flock of seven birds in the flowering *Erythrina* trees south of Ciudad Niely.

**SCARLET MACAW** (*Ara macao*) – A few birds seen rather distantly and poorly at the Rincon Bridge, then some excellent views of at least 20 in a staging area next to the highway near Jaco.

**BARRED PARAKEET** (*Bolborhynchus lineola*) – We heard a flock going overhead along the Providencia Road. [\*]

**ORANGE-CHINNED PARAKEET** (*Brotogeris jugularis*) – Fairly common and seen on several days of the tour.

**BROWN-HOODED PARROT** (*Pyrilia haematotis*) – As is often the case, these fast flying parrots were only seen in flight as they hurtled by overhead. The red wingpits are distinctive though, if you manage to get your bins on them before they're out of sight!

**BLUE-HEADED PARROT** (*Pionus menstruus*) – Quite common in the San Vito area. Our best views were from the tower at WG, where we had one perched atop a dead palm tree in beautiful light.

**WHITE-CROWNED PARROT** (*Pionus senilis*) – The most common small parrot throughout the country; seen on most days.

**RED-LORED PARROT** (*Amazona autumnalis*) – The more numerous of the two *Amazona* parrots in the south, though we saw both this and Mealy Parrots several times in the lowlands.

**YELLOW-NAPED PARROT** (*Amazona auropalliata*) – A single bird flew past the bus west of the airport as we headed back to San Jose.

**WHITE-FRONTED PARROT** (*Amazona albifrons*) – This is another species of the dry Pacific northwest that has spread eastward across the Central

Valley in recent years, and has recently turned up around the Bougainvillea, where we saw a pair fly past on our first afternoon of birding.  
**MEALY PARROT** (*Amazona farinosa*) – The largest of the Amazona parrots here, and seen regularly in the southern lowlands.

*Thamnophilidae (Typical Antbirds)*

**BLACK-HOODED ANTSHRIKE** (*Thamnophilus bridgesi*) – This is another endemic of southwestern CR and western Panama, and while it is still quite common in CR, forest destruction in western Panama has made this a pretty scarce bird now in that country. We had good views of this bird several times around EL.

**RUSSET ANTSHRIKE** (*Thamnistes anabatinus*) – One seen quite well in a mixed flock along the trails at WG.

**PLAIN ANTIVIREO** (*Dysithamnus mentalis*) – A couple of males in the same mixed flock as the preceding species were also seen well.

**SLATY ANTWREN** (*Myrmotherula schisticolor*) – An excited male along the Rio Java trail at WG never sat still long enough to be seen really well.

**DOT-WINGED ANTWREN** (*Microrhopias quixensis*) – Most of us never connected with this generally common species for some reason; only Ron saw one at LC.

**DUSKY ANTBIRD** (*Cercomacra tyrannina*) – A pair of these skulking antbirds showed pretty well in some dense scrub along the EL entrance road.

**CHESTNUT-BACKED ANTBIRD** (*Myrmeciza exsul*) – Super views of one with the big mixed flock we encountered in the forest at LC. Another was seen on the grounds at EL.

**BICOLORED ANTBIRD** (*Gymnophrys leucaspis bicolor*) – We never found an army ant swarm but we did get good looks at one of these ant swarm aficionados in the forest at LC.

*Rhinocryptidae (Tapaculos)*

**SILVERY-FRONTED TAPACULO** (*Scytalopus argentifrons*) – Not very vocal at this time of year; we heard just one of these skulkers along the Providencia Road. [\*]

*Formicariidae (Antthrushes)*

**BLACK-FACED ANTTHRUSH** (*Formicarius analis*) – Heard regularly, then finally seen beautifully at EL, where a confiding bird approached to within a few feet near the compost piles at EL.

*Furnariidae (Ovenbirds and Woodcreepers)*

**OLIVACEOUS WOODCREEPER** (*Sittasomus griseicapillus*) – A single bird was with a small flock just above the administration building at WG. Keep note of wherever you see this widespread species, as there's a good chance it will be split into several species sometime soon.

**LONG-TAILED WOODCREEPER** (*Deconychura longicauda*) – Generally a rare and poorly known species in the country. We had awesome views of one with that great mixed flock that delayed our departure from Golfito Road on our final morning!

**TAWNY-WINGED WOODCREEPER** (*Dendrocincla anabatina*) – Seen by some at LC, then again by a few of us as we searched for the ant-tanager at EL.

**WEDGE-BILLED WOODCREEPER** (*Glyphorhynchus spirurus*) – The smallest of the woodcreepers, this species was seen a few times, none better than the one that flew onto a tree trunk at eye level, just a few feet away from us at EL!

**NORTHERN BARRED-WOODCREEPER** (*Dendrocolaptes sanctithomae*) – Good looks at one of these large woodcreepers on our final morning at EL.

**COCOA WOODCREEPER** (*Xiphorhynchus susurrans*) – Pretty common by voice, but I think we only managed to see one of these birds around EL.

**BLACK-STRIPED WOODCREEPER** (*Xiphorhynchus lachrymosus*) – Easily the most striking of CR's woodcreepers. We saw this beautifully marked species in the grounds at EL, then again with a small mixed flock along the Golfito Road.

**SPOTTED WOODCREEPER** (*Xiphorhynchus erythropygius*) – A common woodcreeper of mid-elevation forests, though we saw just one with a mixed flock at WG.

**STREAK-HEADED WOODCREEPER** (*Lepidocolaptes souleyetii*) – The woodcreeper most likely to be seen in heavily disturbed areas, and easily the most numerous species on the tour. We recorded them almost daily.

**SPOT-CROWNED WOODCREEPER** (*Lepidocolaptes affinis*) – Replaces the preceding species at high elevations. We saw a couple as we searched for quetzals on our first morning.

**PLAIN XENOPS** (*Xenops minutus*) – We had nice views of a couple of these small Furnariids at Finca Cantaros and WG.

**STRIPED WOODHAUNTER** (*Hylocistetes subulatus*) – This skulking species loves dense vine tangles, where they can be very tough to see. We had reasonably good views of one along the Rio Java trail at WG. Note that the birds of the Amazon Basin in South America are sometimes treated as a separate species from the ones west of the Andes and into Central America.

**BUFF-THROATED FOLIAGE-GLEANER (EXSERTUS)** (*Automolus ochrolaemus exsertus*) – Best seen was the one with the great mixed flock along Golfito Road on our last morning. The birds here along the Pacific slope of CR and southward have very different vocalizations from the Caribbean slope birds, and some work may need to be done to determine if they are the same species or not.

**RUDDY TREERUNNER** (*Margarornis rubiginosus*) – Just one of these Chiriqui highland endemics was seen with a mixed flock near PQ.

**RED-FACED SPINETAIL** (*Cranioleuca erythrops*) – Great looks at a vocal pair near the administration building at WG.

**PALE-BREASTED SPINETAIL** (*Synallaxis albescens*) – One at the SJ marsh was pretty reluctant to show itself, though a few folks saw it well. Better was the singing bird we managed to scope near EL. That black spot we saw on the throat is usually concealed, and generally only exposed when the bird is singing or agitated.

*Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)*

**YELLOW-BELLIED TYRANULET** (*Ornithion semiflavum*) – This small canopy flycatcher can be a tough one to see well, but we managed to scope a calling bird for some excellent studies in the gardens at LC.

**SOUTHERN BEARDLESS-TYRANULET** (*Camptostoma obsoletum*) – Good views of one from the Rio Rincon bridge.

**GREENISH ELAENIA** (*Myiopagis viridicata*) – Fairly common and seen daily in the San Vito region.

**YELLOW-BELLIED ELAENIA** (*Elaenia flavogaster*) – These bushy-crested elaenias are pretty common and widespread, and we saw them most days of the trip.

**MOUNTAIN ELAENIA** (*Elaenia frantzii*) – We heard a lot of these up in the highlands on our first day, and eventually we also managed to see one or two.

**OCHRE-BELLIED FLYCATCHER** (*Mionectes oleagineus*) – Good views of one with a mixed flock along the river on the Golfito Road.

**SLATY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER** (*Leptopogon superciliosus*) – A couple of cooperative birds showed well with a mixed flock along the WG trails.

**PALTRY TYRANNULET** (*Zimmerius vilissimus*) – One of the most widespread species in the country, this little Tyrannid occurs from the lowlands on both slopes right on up to the highland forests. We heard and/or saw these mistletoe specialists nearly every day.

**SCALE-CRESTED PYGMY-TYRANT** (*Lophotriccus pileatus*) – A little bird with a big voice and a lot of attitude, not to mention a great name! We had some fine views along the trails at WG.

**SLATE-HEADED TODY-FLYCATCHER** (*Poecilatriccus sylvia*) – One was seen poorly in dense scrub along the entrance road at EL.

**COMMON TODY-FLYCATCHER** (*Todirostrum cinereum*) – A common and charismatic species, seen regularly throughout the tour.

**EYE-RINGED FLATBILL** (*Rhynchocyclus brevirostris*) – One bird on the grounds of EL, where we also saw the large hanging nest of this species.

**YELLOW-OLIVE FLYCATCHER** (*Tolmomyias sulphurescens*) – Heard regularly, but only seen a couple of times.

**YELLOW-MARGINED FLYCATCHER** (*Tolmomyias assimilis*) – This was a real surprise to me, as this species is not even shown to occur here in the newest field guide for the country. Jim told me that he'd first noted this species here a few years ago, and that it sounded different from the birds on the Caribbean slope. Then on our last morning along the Golfito Road, we saw a *Tolmomyias* flycatcher that was clearly dark-eyed and more brightly colored than Yellow-olive usually is, and in forested habitat, where that species is generally absent. Had Jim not mentioned seeing Yellow-margined here, I think I'd have been quite confused by this bird!

**GOLDEN-CROWNED SPADEBILL** (*Platyrinchus coronatus*) – Super looks at this tiny interior forest flycatcher along the trail at LC.

**SULPHUR-RUMPED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiobius sulphureipygius aureatus*) – Singles were seen with mixed flocks at WG and Finca Cantaros.

**BRAN-COLORED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiophobus fasciatus*) – A fairly local bird in CR, occurring only in the far south. We had great looks at a lone bird at the small airport marsh near San Vito.

**EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE** (*Contopus virens*) – Two wood-pewees near EL were likely this species, as it is generally the more commonly occurring one overwintering in the lowlands, but as they were silent, we couldn't rule out Western Wood-Pewee. [b]

**YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax flaviventris*) – The most common wintering Empid in the country. We saw a few birds at scattered sites. [b]

**BLACK-CAPPED FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax atriceps*) – For an Empid, this is a pretty distinctive and attractive little bird. Our only ones were in the highlands near PQ.

**BLACK PHOEBE** (*Sayornis nigricans*) – A couple of birds along the river at TL.

**BRIGHT-RUMPED ATILA** (*Attila spadiceus*) – We chased our first one at EL with limited success then later stumbled upon a couple more cooperative ones over the next couple of days.

**RUFIOUS MOURNER** (*Rhytipterna holerythra*) – Heard several times at EL, but they showed no interest in our imitations. [\*]

**DUSKY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*) – Seen daily around WG.

**GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus crinitus*) – One heard in the mangroves near Rincon bridge. [b]

**GREAT KISKADEE** (*Pitangus sulphuratus*) – Very common and seen daily.

**BOAT-BILLED FLYCATCHER** (*Megarynchus pitangua*) – Scarce this trip, with just one sighting of a bird at LC.

**RUSTY-MARGINED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiozetetes cayanensis*) – Another species only recently discovered in the country. We had one along the entrance road to EL, where it was hanging out with a couple of Socials for a good comparison.

**SOCIAL FLYCATCHER** (*Myiozetetes similis*) – Numerous throughout.

**GRAY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiozetetes granadensis*) – Less numerous than the Social, but we still saw several most days.

**GOLDEN-BELLIED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiodynastes hemichrysus*) – A distant one heard at PQ. [\*]

**STREAKED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiodynastes maculatus*) – Nice views of singles on a couple of days along the road to EL and Golfito Road.

**PIRATIC FLYCATCHER** (*Legatus leucophaeus*) – I was a bit surprised to find these birds here already, as they generally don't show up in the northern parts of the country until February. We heard one at TL, and saw one along the road to EL. [a]

**TROPICAL KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) – Abundant throughout.

**SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER** (*Tyrannus forficatus*) – A trio of birds at the duck pond near Dominical was a nice treat. Here they are near the southern end of their wintering range, wandering only irregularly south into western Panama. [b]

**FORK-TAILED FLYCATCHER** (*Tyrannus savana*) – After missing these en route to San Vito, we were lucky to find a gorgeous pair in a scrubby field along the road into EL.

#### Cotingidae (Cotingas)

**TURQUOISE COTINGA** (*Cotinga ridgwayi*) – We just missed one at LC, and it wasn't looking good when we headed to the lowlands without this specialty under our belts. Our last hope was Rincon Bridge, and it sure came through for us! We had good scope studies of a glowing, if a bit distant, male for a couple of minutes before he disappeared into the forest canopy. This much-wanted bird was Mike's pick for favorite of the trip.

**RUFIOUS PIHA** (*Lipaugus unirufus*) – Heard at LC and EL. [\*]

**YELLOW-BILLED COTINGA** (*Carpodectes antoniae*) – Rincon Bridge is the place for this rare and local southwest specialty. We had a minimum of half a dozen birds, including a couple of immaculate white males, at fairly close range.

#### Pipridae (Manakins)

**WHITE-RUFFED MANAKIN** (*Corapipo altera*) – A male was seen by some at LC, otherwise we only saw a couple of females at Finca Cantaros and along the Golfito Road.

**RED-CAPPED MANAKIN** (*Ceratopipra mentalis*) – Our lone bird was a stunning male scoped along the trails at LC.

**ORANGE-COLLARED MANAKIN** (*Manacus aurantiacus*) – We caught up with these snappy manakins a few times, most memorably in the gardens of LC where a small fruiting bush attracted in both sexes. We also saw a male briefly in a fruiting tree near the cabins at TL shortly after we arrived there.

Tityridae (Tityras and Allies)

**BLACK-CROWNED TITYRA** (*Tityra inquisitor*) – These sharp looking birds were encountered daily in the lowlands.

**MASKED TITYRA** (*Tityra semifasciata*) – These tityras always seem to be more numerous than the Black-crowns and we saw one or more on most days of the trip.

**BARRED BECARD** (*Pachyramphus versicolor*) – Heard along the Providencia Road. [\*]

**CINNAMON BECARD** (*Pachyramphus cinnamomeus*) – On the Pacific side of CR, these attractive becards are primarily restricted to mangroves, which is where we saw our only one near the Rincon bridge.

**ROSE-THROATED BECARD** (*Pachyramphus aglaiae*) – First seen by Ann and David from their veranda at WG. We also caught up with a couple of others in the lowlands. Unlike the becards that make it into the southern US, the ones down here lack the namesake rose throats.

Vireonidae (Vireos)

**YELLOW-THROATED VIREO** (*Vireo flavifrons*) – A pretty common wintering species seen in small numbers most days. [b]

**YELLOW-WINGED VIREO** (*Vireo carmioli*) – This Chiriqui highland specialty was seen nicely in the oak forest near PQ.

**PHILADELPHIA VIREO** (*Vireo philadelphicus*) – One on our pre-breakfast walk at TL, then a couple more in the lowlands. [b]

**TAWNY-CROWNED GREENLET** (*Hylophilus ochraceiceps*) – Heard in the forest at LC. [\*]

**LESSER GREENLET** (*Hylophilus decurtatus*) – Very common and widespread in all kinds of forest, but generally heard far more often than actually seen.

**GREEN SHRIKE-VIREO** (*Vireolanius pulchellus*) – This canopy loving species can be incredibly difficult to see, but that wasn't our experience on this trip, as we had astounding views of a pair almost at eye level with a great mixed flock on our last morning along the Golfito Road.

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

**BROWN JAY** (*Psilorhinus morio*) – Unlike in the northern half of the country, this jay is quite scarce in the south, and our only ones were a pair in the grounds at TL.

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

**BLUE-AND-WHITE SWALLOW** (*Pygochelidon cyanoleuca*) – The common swallow species everywhere but in the lowlands.

**SOUTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW** (*Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*) – Fairly common in the lowland areas.

**GRAY-BREASTED MARTIN** (*Progne chalybea*) – Mainly in the lowlands, but also seen around the town of San Vito.

**MANGROVE SWALLOW** (*Tachycineta albilinea*) – Though not restricted to mangroves or coastal areas, this pretty swallow is generally found in close proximity to water.

**BARN SWALLOW** (*Hirundo rustica*) – A pretty numerous wintering species in the lowlands. [b]

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

**HOUSE WREN** (*Troglodytes aedon*) – Pretty common throughout.

**OCHRACEOUS WREN** (*Troglodytes ochraceus*) – Heard in the highlands. [\*]

**TIMBERLINE WREN** (*Thryorchilus browni*) – A few were singing in the highlands, but they weren't as responsive as they can be, and we generally had fairly brief views of the ones we saw.

**SEDGE WREN** (*Cistothorus platensis*) – A very local bird in the country, and they played tough to get this trip, with most of us only getting fleeting glimpses as they zipped a short distance over the grass before plunging down out of sight once more.

**RUFOUS-NAPED WREN** (*Campylorhynchus rufinucha*) – A pair of these boisterous wrens has recently taken up residence in the grounds of the Bougainvillea, where they were enjoyed by all, particularly Dan, who named them as his favorite bird of the tour.

**BLACK-BELLIED WREN** (*Pheugopedius fasciatoventris*) – We heard this skulker once or twice at EL. [\*]

**RUFOUS-BREASTED WREN** (*Pheugopedius rutilus*) – Pretty noisy in the San Isidro area and at WG, and we eventually got some good looks at these attractive wrens too.

**PLAIN WREN** (*Cantorchilus modestus*) – Heard often, and finally seen at Rincon, with a pair showing well just below the bridge.

**RIVERSIDE WREN** (*Cantorchilus semibadius*) – These gorgeous wrens were recorded pretty much daily, but they weren't as cooperative as we would have liked, and it took some time before everyone got satisfactory looks at them. The gardens at EL was certainly the best place to see them.

**WHITE-BREASTED WOOD-WREN** (*Henicorhina leucosticta*) – One of these tiny wrens gave a pretty good showing in the forest near the potoo perch at LC.

**GRAY-BREASTED WOOD-WREN** (*Henicorhina leucophrys*) – Heard in the highlands. [\*]

Poliophtilidae (Gnatcatchers)

**LONG-BILLED GNATWREN** (*Ramphocaenus melanurus*) – Several pairs at LC, though they were a bit tough to see, given that they like dense vine tangles and they virtually never sit still! I think we all managed a look in the end, though.

**TROPICAL GNATCATCHER** (*Poliophtila plumbea*) – Quite common and seen regularly.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

**BLACK-BILLED NIGHTINGALE-THRUSH** (*Catharus gracilirostris*) – One of these high elevation birds perched on the railing below the hummingbird feeders at PQ.

**ORANGE-BILLED NIGHTINGALE-THRUSH** (*Catharus aurantiirostris*) – Pretty common in the hilly parts of the south. Seen well a couple of times at WG and Finca Cantaros.

**SWAINSON'S THRUSH** (*Catharus ustulatus*) – One of these migrants was in a fruiting tree in the gardens at LC. [b]

**WOOD THRUSH** (*Hylocichla mustelina*) – A lone bird on the Hotel Bougainvillea grounds on our first afternoon. [b]

**SOOTY THRUSH** (*Turdus nigrescens*) – Restricted to the higher mountains, where we saw one or two around the PQ.

**MOUNTAIN THRUSH** (*Turdus plebejus*) – Good numbers in the highlands, particularly around the quetzal site.

**CLAY-COLORED THRUSH** (*Turdus grayi*) – Ubiquitous and seen daily in good numbers.

**WHITE-THROATED THRUSH** (*Turdus assimilis*) – A couple of these furtive thrushes showed quite well in the big bamboo patch near the WG administration building.

*Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)*

**TROPICAL MOCKINGBIRD** (*Mimus gilvus*) – A fairly recent arrival to the country, though no one is quite sure just where they arrived from! We saw a pair hanging around the San Vito hospital.

*Bombycillidae (Waxwings)*

**CEDAR WAXWING** (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) – Ron saw one on the feeder at the Bougainvillea. A rather scarce wintering bird in CR most years, though somewhat irruptive here. [b]

*Ptilonotidae (Silky-flycatchers)*

**BLACK-AND-YELLOW SILKY-FLYCATCHER** (*Phainoptila melanoxantha*) – Good looks at a pair of these specialties in the highland forest along Providencia Road.

*Parulidae (New World Warblers)*

**NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH** (*Parkesia noveboracensis*) – A pretty numerous wintering warbler. We saw them most days of the trip. [b]

**GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER** (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) – Generally a common wintering species, though we saw just a lone female at Finca Cantaros. [b]

**BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER** (*Mniotilta varia*) – Quite a common migrant especially around WG where we saw them daily. [b]

**FLAME-THROATED WARBLER** (*Oreothlypis gutturalis*) – A stunning resident warbler, and a Chiriqui endemic to boot. We saw only one along the road in to PQ, but it gave us superb close views as it moved along with a small mixed flock.

**TENNESSEE WARBLER** (*Oreothlypis peregrina*) – Easily one of the most numerous wintering warblers in the country. [b]

**MASKED YELLOWTHROAT (CHIRIQUI)** (*Geothlypis aequinoctialis chiriquensis*) – It was approaching dusk before we finally heard one of these calling at the SJ marsh, but it did give us a great view once it did get fired up. This disjunct population of Masked Yellowthroat is sometimes treated as a separate species endemic to CR and Panama.

**MOURNING WARBLER** (*Geothlypis philadelphia*) – Jim pished in three birds near the small lake at Finca Cantaros. [b]

**KENTUCKY WARBLER** (*Geothlypis formosa*) – One heard at Finca Cantaros. [b\*]

**AMERICAN REDSTART** (*Setophaga ruticilla*) – An adult male hawking for insects around the parking area at TL, and a first year male at Finca Cantaros were the only ones we saw. [b]

**TROPICAL PARULA** (*Setophaga pitiaiyumi*) – A few sightings of this resident species at WG.

**BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER** (*Setophaga fusca*) – Just a few sightings around the WG and along Golfito Road, but at least one of them was a stellar male. [b]

**YELLOW WARBLER** (*Setophaga petechia*) – Migrants were pretty common, especially in the lowlands. [b]

**YELLOW WARBLER (MANGROVE)** (*Setophaga petechia erithachorides*) – This resident breeding form was heard only in the mangroves. [\*]

**CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER** (*Setophaga pensylvanica*) – I think by tour's end everyone had a handle on this extremely common wintering warbler which can be rather confusing in its nonbreeding plumage! [b]

**BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER** (*Setophaga virens*) – A couple of birds in the highland forests. [b]

**RUFIOUS-CAPPED WARBLER** (*Basileuterus rufifrons*) – Heard at SJ marsh. I also thought I heard one at WG, until I realized that a singing Scaly-breasted Hummingbird was doing a perfect imitation of the warbler's call note! [\*]

**BLACK-CHEEKED WARBLER** (*Basileuterus melanogenys*) – These birds are usually in small groups, so it was kind of surprising to see one all by itself along Providencia Road.

**BUFF-RUMPED WARBLER** (*Myiothlypis fulvicauda*) – Particularly common around EL where we saw them regularly right outside the cabins.

**WILSON'S WARBLER** (*Cardellina pusilla*) – Fair numbers of this migrant in the highlands. [b]

**SLATE-THROATED REDSTART** (*Myioborus miniatus*) – A few birds with mixed flocks at WG.

**COLLARED REDSTART** (*Myioborus torquatus*) – A handful of these charming birds, known locally as "amigo de hombre" were seen at close range in the highlands.

*Thraupidae (Tanagers and Allies)*

**GRAY-HEADED TANAGER** (*Eucometis penicillata*) – A regular follower of army ant swarms, this species proved quite common in the forests of the south, but I was still pretty surprised to see a trio of them visit the feeders at LC!

**WHITE-SHOULDERED TANAGER** (*Tachyphonus luctuosus*) – Just a couple of records of these birds with mixed flocks mainly.

**WHITE-LINED TANAGER** (*Tachyphonus rufus*) – This is a species of scrubby, second growth habitat, but it's fairly local in the south, having only recently spread north from Panama (much more widespread in the Caribbean lowlands). We saw just a couple of birds during the drive from WG to the lowlands.

**WHITE-THROATED SHRIKE-TANAGER** (*Lanio leucothorax*) – An incredible response from a male along the Golfito Road. After a single playback of a call, the bird flew in and flew circles around us for several laps before settling down in perfect view. A bonus was that he also drew in his mate and a great feeding flock with Green Shrike-Vireo and Long-tailed Woodcreeper among other species!

**CHERRIE'S TANAGER** (*Ramphocelus costaricensis*) – One of the most numerous birds throughout the south.

**BLUE-GRAY TANAGER** (*Thraupis episcopus*) – A very common and widespread tanager; seen in good numbers daily.

**PALM TANAGER** (*Thraupis palmarum*) – Just a little less numerous than the Blue-gray Tanagers.

**GOLDEN-HOODED TANAGER** (*Tangara larvata*) – The most common of the Tangara tanagers, seen in good numbers most days.

**SPECKLED TANAGER** (*Tangara guttata*) – These gorgeous little tanagers were quite common around the WG, where we had especially good views of them on the feeders. Catherine chose these as her favorites bird of the trip.

**BAY-HEADED TANAGER** (*Tangara gyrola*) – Another fairly common, absolutely stunning tanager. Ho hum.

**SILVER-THROATED TANAGER** (*Tangara icterocephala*) – Ditto the last comment. This species ranges higher in elevation than most other Tangara

tanagers in CR.

**SCARLET-THIGHED DACNIS** (*Dacnis venusta*) – A lone male along the EL entrance road was a bit hard to identify due to the poor lighting. He was also a bit of a surprise, as this species is pretty scarce in the lowlands.

**BLUE DACNIS** (*Dacnis cayana*) – A pair were seen nicely at the Rincon bridge.

**SHINING HONEYCREEPER** (*Cyanerpes lucidus*) – Also a couple at the Rincon bridge.

**RED-LEGGED HONEYCREEPER** (*Cyanerpes cyaneus*) – A pretty common bird through most of the tour,

**GREEN HONEYCREEPER** (*Chlorophanes spiza*) – A few seen most days, including some at the feeders at WG.

**SLATY FLOWERPIERCER** (*Diglossa plumbea*) – Another Chiriqui highland specialty. We saw a few in the forests around PQ and along the Providencia Road.

**PEG-BILLED FINCH** (*Acanthidops bairdi*) – Superficially similar to the much more common flowerpiercer, except this species is larger, has a faint wing bar, and has a very different shaped bill. This bird is also tied to seeding bamboo, and is often absent from the areas we visit, so it was a nice surprise to learn of a patch of bamboo that had gone to seed on Cerro de la Muerte. Despite the wind, we did manage superb close views of this distinctive bird, though sadly we couldn't find any other bamboo specialists.

**BLUE-BLACK GRASSQUIT** (*Volatinia jacarina*) – Pretty common in the scrubby pastures in the lowlands.

**SLATE-COLORED SEEDEATER** (*Sporophila schistacea*) – This irruptive species is often associated with seeding bamboo in the lowlands, though it seems that rice fields are also to its liking. We had superb views of a singing male we tracked down in some riparian growth next to one rice field, then saw another feeding with other seedeaters in another field. Plus we heard several more birds through our time in the lowlands. Not bad for a species I wasn't expecting to see at all!

**VARIABLE SEEDEATER** (*Sporophila corvina*) – The most widespread of the seedeaters, and the default species in most areas.

**WHITE-COLLARED SEEDEATER** (*Sporophila torqueola*) – About half a dozen in the wet meadows near Cartago, then another singing male at the Rincon Bridge.

**YELLOW-BELLIED SEEDEATER** (*Sporophila nigricollis*) – A handful among the other seedeaters in the rice fields near EL.

**THICK-BILLED SEED-FINCH** (*Oryzoborus funereus*) – Very similar to the Pacific slope form of Variable Seedeater, but larger with a much bigger bill. We saw several near EL.

**BANANAQUIT** (*Coereba flaveola*) – Pretty common throughout.

**YELLOW-FACED GRASSQUIT** (*Tiaris olivaceus*) – Heard only near the entrance to WG. [∗]

**STREAKED SALTATOR** (*Saltator striatipectus*) – I think the only ones we saw were on the feeders at WG and at Finca Cantaros, though we also heard them in the lowlands.

**GRAYISH SALTATOR** (*Saltator coerulescens*) – On this trip only in the Hotel Bougainvillea gardens.

**BUFF-THROATED SALTATOR** (*Saltator maximus*) – Pretty numerous throughout.

#### Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)

**LARGE-FOOTED FINCH** (*Pezopetes capitalis*) – Great looks at a pair scratching around on the forest floor at the seeding bamboo site in the highlands.

**ORANGE-BILLED SPARROW** (*Arremon aurantirostris*) – These little beauties were seen pretty much daily. Most memorable were the ones at EL that were attacking themselves in the side view mirrors on one of the vehicles parked there.

**COSTA RICAN BRUSH-FINCH** (*Arremon costaricensis*) – A pair with Orange-billed Sparrows at TL showed no interest in cooperating, but a couple of folks manage to see them anyway!

**BLACK-STRIPED SPARROW** (*Arremonops conirostris*) – Pretty common in secondary scrub, especially around EL.

**RUFOUS-COLLARED SPARROW** (*Zonotrichia capensis*) – These sparrows are a common sight in the highlands.

**VOLCANO JUNCO** (*Junco vulcani*) – Only occurs at very high elevations, and we saw our only pair at the highest point we reached on the tour. Lannois was especially impressed by these great birds, choosing them as her trip favorite.

**COMMON CHLOROSPINGUS** (*Chlorospingus flavopectus*) – Not at all common on this trip; we had just one small group at WG. All the birds in this genus were known, until recently, as bush-tanagers.

**SOOTY-CAPPED CHLOROSPINGUS** (*Chlorospingus pileatus*) – Numerous in the highland forests on Cerro de la Muerte.

#### Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

**SUMMER TANAGER** (*Piranga rubra*) – A common wintering species here. We saw one or more on all but a couple of days. [b]

**RED-CROWNED ANT-TANAGER** (*Habia rubica*) – A few of these noisy tanagers were seen at LC and WG, though they were pretty furtive overall.

**BLACK-CHEEKED ANT-TANAGER** (*Habia atrimaxillaris*) – One of the few true endemics of CR, this species surprisingly has never been recorded in Panama, though its normal range takes it very near the border. It took some work to get these birds for everyone, but we all managed some fine views of this gorgeous bird at EL. [E]

**ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAK** (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) – Generally a common migrant, though we saw only a couple this tour, in a flowering tree at TL. [b]

**BLUE-BLACK GROSBEAK** (*Cyanocompsa cyanoides*) – Pretty good views of a singing male near the cabins at WG.

#### Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

**RED-BREADED BLACKBIRD** (*Sturnella militaris*) – The southwest used to be the only place to see this species in the country, but they've spread across the lowlands of both slopes and are now quite widespread in appropriate habitats throughout the country. We saw fair numbers in the pastures along the EL entrance road.

**EASTERN MEADOWLARK** (*Sturnella magna*) – These familiar birds are resident here. Our only ones were in the wet pastures near Cartago.

**MELODIOUS BLACKBIRD** (*Dives dives*) – Since the first record in the country in the late 1980's, this species had exploded across the country, and now occurs pretty much everywhere. We saw them in the Bougainvillea grounds and around San Isidro.

**GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE** (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) – Numerous throughout.

**SHINY COWBIRD** (*Molothrus bonariensis*) – Another pretty recent arrival, first recorded in the country within the last decade. We saw a male and

two females along with both other cowbird species along the EL entrance road.

**BRONZED COWBIRD** (*Molothrus aeneus*) – Pretty common throughout.

**GIANT COWBIRD** (*Molothrus oryzivorus*) – These nest parasites target oropendolas, so oropendola colonies are often the best place to see them. We saw a couple near the Crested Oropendola colony at San Vito, then a single along the EL entrance road.

**ORCHARD ORIOLE** (*Icterus spurius*) – A handful of these migrants were in the flowering Erythrina trees south of Ciudad Niely. [b]

**BALTIMORE ORIOLE** (*Icterus galbula*) – A very common migrant, seen in good numbers almost daily. [b]

**YELLOW-BILLED CACIQUE** (*Amblycercus holosericeus*) – Ron and Mike saw one of these skulkers on Cerro de la Muerte; the rest of us only got quick views of a pair that flew across the Golfito Road.

**SCARLET-RUMPED CACIQUE (SCARLET-RUMPED)** (*Cacicus uropygialis microrhynchus*) – Seen several times in the lowlands, including a pair collecting nest material in the EL grounds.

**CRESTED OROPENDOLA** (*Psarocolius decumanus*) – First noted in CR in about 1999, these birds now nest at several sites in the south. We saw a couple near a nesting colony along the runway at the San Vito airport. [N]

**MONTEZUMA OROPENDOLA** (*Psarocolius montezuma*) – Lannois and I saw one in Orotina as we searched for the owls on our last afternoon.

#### Fringillidae (Siskins, Crossbills, and Allies)

**YELLOW-CROWNED EUPHONIA** (*Euphonia luteicapilla*) – A group of 5 birds at TL on our pre-breakfast walk there, then heard and seen regularly in the lowlands.

**THICK-BILLED EUPHONIA** (*Euphonia lanirostris*) – This yellow-throated euphonia is fairly common in the south, with a couple even visiting the feeders at WG.

**SPOT-CROWNED EUPHONIA** (*Euphonia imitans*) – Males of this southwestern specialty are very similar to male Yellow-crowned Euphonias, and they can be tricky to separate on plumage features (though they sound very different). Females on the other hand are very distinctive, and not likely to be confused with any other locally occurring species. We saw these birds pretty regularly.

**GOLDEN-BROWED CHLOROPHONIA** (*Chlorophonia callophrys*) – Heard flying over the quetzal site. [\*]

**LESSER GOLDFINCH** (*Spinus psaltria*) – Quite a local bird in the country. We saw just one, a male, above the feeders at WG.

#### Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

**HOUSE SPARROW** (*Passer domesticus*) – Common in some of the cities and towns, particularly around gas stations. [I]

## MAMMALS

**LONG-NOSED BAT** (*Rhynchonycteris naso*) – A group of 14 of these little bats had a roost above the verandah of David and Ann's cabin at EL.

**GREATER WHITE-LINED BAT** (*Saccopteryx bilineata*) – About 20 of these large dark bats were roosting behind the beer fridge at EL.

**MANTLED HOWLER MONKEY** (*Alouatta palliata*) – Heard only at the Rincon bridge. [\*]

**WHITE-THROATED CAPUCHIN** (*Cebus capucinus*) – Heard distantly at WG. [\*]

**HOFFMANN'S TWO-TOED SLOTH** (*Choloepus hoffmanni*) – The owls were missing from Orotina park, but at least there was one of these sloths there to make the stop worthwhile!

**BRAZILIAN RABBIT** (*Sylvilagus brasiliensis*) – A couple during our night drive at EL.

**VARIEGATED SQUIRREL** (*Sciurus variegatoides*) – Pretty common in the San Isidro area. This is the larger of the two squirrel species we saw.

**RED-TAILED SQUIRREL** (*Sciurus granatensis*) – Pretty common throughout, even visiting the feeders for some bananas at LC and WG.

**CENTRAL AMERICAN AGOUTI** (*Dasyprocta punctata*) – Quite tame where hunting pressure is low, and we saw them regularly around WG and EL.

**WHITE-NOSED COATI** (*Nasua narica*) – Singles on 5 consecutive days at WG and EL, but I don't remember a single one that was seen by everyone.

#### Herps

**SLENDER ANOLE** (*Anolis limifrons*) – Generally one of the most numerous of the anoles, though we probably saw a couple of other species as well.

**GREEN IGUANA** (*Iguana iguana*) – Small numbers of these big guys in the lowlands.

**COMMON BASILISK** (*Basiliscus basiliscus*) – Pretty numerous along the rivers and streams in the lowlands.

**TROPICAL HOUSE GECKO** (*Hemidactylus mabouia*) – Heard most nights, and a few folks saw this one as well. Often around lights on the ceilings of lodges in the country.

**CALICO SNAKE** (*Oxyrhopus petola*) – The beautiful red and black snake we were shown by the groundskeeper at Finca Cantaros was probably this species, which is also known as the False Coral Snake.

**AMERICAN CROCODILE** (*Crocodylus acutus*) – Some big ones along the Rio Tarcoles including one that was missing much of its upper jaw.

**SPECTACLED CAIMAN** (*Caiman crocodilus*) – A mother with a bunch of little ones in the Caiman Pond at EL.

**CANE TOAD** (*Bufo marinus*) – Lots of these at night at EL.

**RED-EYED LEAF FROG** (*Agalychnis callidryas*) – One of these beauties was found above one of the small ponds after dark at EL.

**TUNGARA FROG** (*Engystomops pustulosus*) – One of these very toad-like frogs was in one of the small ponds at EL.

**SOUTH AMERICAN SNAPPING TURTLE** (*Chelydra acutirostris*) – Seems to now be treated as a separate species from the Common Snapping Turtle of the USA and Canada. We saw a couple of big ones in the ponds at EL.

## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

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Totals for the tour: 356 bird taxa and 10 mammal taxa