

**COSTA RICAN HIGHLANDS
TALAMANCA & ARENAL
Dec 5-12, 2020**

Itinerary in Brief

(a more detailed itinerary will be sent to registrants)

Day 1, Dec 5 – Arrival

Today we all arrive on early flights (or the night before) to San Jose. Once we are through customs/immigration we make the 2.5 hr drive to our lodge in the Talamanca Mountain Range. The lodge has trails through primary forest and we will explore these today if we have time. **Night at Savegre Lodge.**

Day 2, Dec 6 – Talamanca Mountains

We spend all day today in the highlands, birding the trails around Savegre and other nearby hotspots, looking especially for the **Replendent Quetzal** and a number of Talamanca specialties including **Long-tailed Silky Flycatcher, Sulphur-winged Parakeet, Flame-throated Warbler, Yellow-winged Vireo**, and more. This evening will find us in the upper valley where we hope to find **Unspotted Saw-whet Owl, Bare-shanked Screech-Owl**, and **Dusky Nightjar**. **Night at Savegre Lodge.**

Day 3, Dec 7 – Providencia Rd to Paraiso de Quetzales

After some early morning birding at Savegre, we head up the valley to Providencia Road. Some of our target species for today are: **Golden-browed Chlorophonia, Black-and-Yellow Silky-Flycatcher, White-throated Mountain-Gem, Volcano Hummingbird, Scintillant Hummingbird, Fiery-throated Hummingbird, Spangle-cheeked Tanager**. **Night at Savegre Lodge.**

Day 4, Dec 8 - Paramo birding & Arenal

Today we once again start with some birding on the grounds of the lodge. After breakfast, we will check out and drive up to 11,000 ft and the Paramo, a montane grassland above the treeline, where we hope to find such specialties as **Volcano Junco, Timberline Wren, Peg-billed Finch, Sooty Robin, Black-billed Nightingale Thrush, and Zeledonia (Wrenthrush)**. We then head back to San Jose and continue north towards Arenal, making some stops on the way. **Silver-throated, Bay-headed, and Scarlet-rumped Tanagers, Green-crowned Brilliant and Green Thorntail** are a few other possibilities this afternoon. **Night at Arenal Observatory Lodge.**

Day 5, Dec 9 –Arenal Observatory Lodge and surroundings

Over 500 species have been recorded at Arenal Observatory Lodge and we will spend all day birding the excellent grounds and making use of its trails. We meet early this morning on the deck to watch the feeders which often host **Black-crested Coquette and Scaly-breasted Hummingbird** among others. On the trails and grounds we'll also be on the lookout for **Emerald Tanager, Great Curassow, Montezuma Oropendola, White-throated Shrike-Tanager, Keel-billed and Yellow-throated Toucans, White-crowned Parrot, Song Wren, and Band-backed Wren**. After dinner, we have the option for some owling and we hope to find both **Black-and-White and Spectacled Owls**. **Night at Arenal Observatory Lodge**

Day 6, Dec 10 – Medio Queso & Caño Negro Wetlands

We will leave the lodge early today with a boxed breakfast for a day trip to the northern part of Costa Rica, nearly to the Nicaraguan border. Our first destination is the wetland of Medio Queso where a boat ride up the river will give us a good chance of seeing such birds as **Pinnated & Least Bitterns, Jabiru, Nicaraguan Seed-Finch, and Nicaraguan Grackle**, among many others. We then continue our exploration of the wetlands with a visit to Caño Negro Wildlife Refuge. After enjoying lunch at a local restaurant, we will have another boat ride through the riparian forest and wetlands of the refuge. In addition to further chances for Bitterns and Jabiru, we also hope to find **White-throated and Yellow-breasted Crakes, Roseate Spoonbill, Green Ibis, Canebrake Wren, Black-collared & Crane Hawks, and Snowy Cotinga.** *Night at Arenal Observatory Lodge.*

Day 7, Dec 11 – Sky Adventures Hanging Bridges & Bogarin Trail

After some more early birding on the grounds, we'll have breakfast and head out to the nearby Hanging Bridges at Sky Adventures Park. The trail will take us inside a mature tropical rainforest that is fantastic for many specialties of the area, and we'll get a closer view of the canopy and its avian residents from the suspension bridges. We will be hoping for a swarm of army ants today to get us views of **Ocellated, Bicolored, Spotted, Dull-mantled, and Zeledon's Antbirds**, plus an assortment of woodcreepers. After lunch we will drive to La Fortuna and visit a local artist's home, whose main subject is birds. We will have a little free time in town to walk the shops and have a coffee or snack before spending the rest of the afternoon exploring the Bogarin Nature Trail. The feeders here are visited by a nice variety of birds and we will also take advantage of some of the easy trails. Some of our other target species for today are: **Golden-crowned Warbler, Yellow-eared Toucanet, Ornate Hawk-Eagle, Uniform Crake, Tropical Mockingbird, Yellow-crowned and Yellow-throated Euphonias, Great Antshrike** and more. *Night at Arenal Observatory Lodge.*

Day 8, Dec 12 –Peninsula Road to San Jose

Today we check out and make our way to the international airport, birding en route. Peninsula Road of Arenal Volcano National Park will provide us with numerous possibilities to boost our trip list in just a few hours. We'll look for **Keel-billed and Broad-billed Motmots, White-collared Manakin, White-fronted Nunbird, Red-throated Ant-Tanager, Bare-crowned Antbird, Thicket Antpitta, Violet-headed Hummingbird, Crested Guan**, and anything else we haven't seen. It's a 3 hr drive back to San Jose, so it will be necessary to book your return flights for later this evening or the following morning.

Please let us know if you require assistance booking accommodations for extra nights not included in the itinerary. There also may be the chance for a post-trip extension if you'd like a longer vacation!