

Costa Rica Long 2023 Trip Report

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Costa Rica Long 2023 Trip Report (Feb 9 - 25, 2023)

From the mangrove forests lining the estuaries along the Pacific coast to the high peaks of the Talamanca mountains this tour covered an incredible diversity of habitats and the wildlife that inhabits them. We saw over 400 species and had particularly memorable experiences with some of the showiest birds such as Scarlet Macaws in a nesting cavity, seven Resplendent Quetzals flying around us, Turquoise and Snowy Cotingas giving us the best views and a Pearl Kite feeding right in front of us! But it was not only birds, we also did very special coffee and chocolate tours and saw a variety of mammals, amphibians, reptiles, orchids and much more! All around it was a fantastic tour!

Day 1. Hotel Bougainvillea

We met in the late afternoon for our first birding of the trip in the astounding gardens of the hotel and started off with the resident pair of **Mottled Owls** roosting in a large clump of bamboo. We also saw the large Rufous-naped Wren, Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, Clay-colored Thrush, Red-billed Pigeon, Crested Caracara and Chestnut-capped Warbler. After dinner we went for a short night walk and saw the Pacific Leopard Frog and the endemic Golden-eyed Leaf-Frog.

Day 2. Hotel Bougainvillea, Tivives Mangroves, Hotel Villa Lapas

At 6:00 a.m. we gathered for our pre-breakfast birding in the cool, breezy morning. Right away we had a quick introduction to some of the look-alike flycatchers with Great Kiskadee, Boat-billed Flycatcher and Social Flycatcher all perching in the same leafless Guanacaste tree. Then all of the sudden another bird flew in and several others were chasing it and it turned out to be a **Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl!** Very quickly about a dozen other species of birds came in to mob the owl which worked perfectly for us to see them all! Baltimore Orioles, Yellow-throated Vireo, Yellow Warbler, Hoffman's Woodpecker, Rufous-naped Wren and even a Summer Tanager came in to bother the owl who eventually disappeared into a nesting cavity.



Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl © Ernesto Carman

After breakfast we met our driver, Jorge León, and began making our way west to the Pacific coast. Our first birding stop was in Tivives along a road that borders a mangrove forest. Despite the heat we found some fantastic birds such as Scarlet Macaws, White-throated Magpie-Jays, Prothonotary Warbler, Streak-backed Oriole, Magnificent Frigatebirds and the mangrove subspecies of the Yellow Warbler which has a completely brick-red head. After lunch we reached Hotel Villa Lapas where we would spend the following three nights. After checking in we did a little birding around the gardens and found a Bare-throated Tiger-Heron nest with two large chicks in a large Rain Tree over the rooms, Scarlet-rumped Tanager, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Gray-capped Flycatcher and great scope views of a Yellow-throated Toucan. After dinner we looked for some frogs around the pond and found Hourglass Tree-Frog, neonate Red-eyed Tree-Frog, Cane Toad, Common Rainfrog and a Yellow-spotted Glassfrog.



Frogging © Ernesto Carman



Yellow-spotted Glassfrog © Ernesto Carman

Day 3. Carara National Park and Tárcoles village

Before breakfast we birded around the hotel grounds and amongst the many flycatchers we found **Black-headed and Slaty-tailed Trogons** at a fruiting fig tree, Pale-billed Woodpecker and a Lesson's Motmot.



Black-headed Trogon © Ernesto Carman

After breakfast we visited Carara National Park and we had not even crossed the gate when we ran into a phenomenal mixed species flock and birds seemed to be everywhere. Along with more than a dozen Tennessee Warblers we saw Rose-throated Becard, Gartered Trogon, Lesser Greenlets, White-shouldered Tanager, Baltimore Orioles, Blue Dacnis, Red-legged Honeycreeper and a Purple-crowned Fairy feeding from the orange heliconia flowers around us. The flock eventually dwindled so we began our walk into the trail. After some patient searching we found two male Long-tailed Manakins singing from a low vine and we all had superb views.



Birding in Carara © Ernesto Carman



Long-tailed Manakin © Paz A Irola

Further along the trail we encountered another flock with Cocoa Woodcreeper, Dot-winged Antwrens, Plain Xenops, **Rufous-tailed Jacamar** and Gray-headed Tanagers, but we were also entertained by a troop of White-faced Capuchin Monkeys working in the trees just overhead. On our walk back out of the park we found another group of Gray-headed Tanagers, but this time they were accompanied by Tawny-winged Woodcreeper and **Northern Barred Woodcreeper**. After a fantastic morning we returned to the hotel for lunch and a short siesta before going back out for a little birding in the fishing village of Tárcoles and started with a troop of **Mantled Howler Monkeys** looking down at us from the trees, Streak-backed Oriole, Ruddy-ground Dove, Inca Dove, Groove-billed Anis, White Ibis, increasingly better views of Turquoise-browed Motmot and many Scarlet Macaws flying overhead.



Northern Barred Woodcreeper © Ernesto Carman

Day 4. Villa Lapas, Caldera and Tárcoles River Boat Tour

During our pre-breakfast birding we had better views of Slaty-tailed and Black-headed Trogons in the fruiting fig tree as well as a couple of immature Red-capped Manakins. After breakfast we visited the Caldera mangroves to look for one special target, the **Mangrove Hummingbird**. As we birded this side road that has mangroves on one side and dry forest on the other we spotted Short-tailed Hawk, **Turquoise-browed Motmot**, Brown-crested Flycatcher, Great-crested Flycatcher, Mangrove Yellow Warbler, Orchard Oriole, Prothonotary Warbler, Stripe-headed Sparrow, Cinnamon and Scaly-breasted Hummingbird and a recently fledged Black Vulture with a fluffy bandana of feathers. It was not until we reached a patch of flowering Chameleon Vine (*Combretum fruticosum*) that we found our main target and not only did we find it, we had excellent views of several individuals!



Mangrove Hummingbird © Paz A Irola



Turquoise-browed Motmot © Ernesto Carman

We returned to the hotel for lunch and in the afternoon we went for a boat tour on the Tárcoles River which is a fantastic way to watch and photograph birds and certainly a highlight of the trip. We were immediately seeing birds left and right, many species of **egrets and herons**, Anhinga, Neotropic Cormorant, wild Muscovy Ducks, Southern Lapwing, Boat-billed Heron, **Common Black Hawk** and Roseate Spoonbill, all feeding on the muddy banks alongside American Crocodiles. We

also saw several shorebirds including Spotted and Least Sandpiper, **Whimbrel**, **Willet**, **many Brown Pelicans**, **Magnificent Frigatebirds**, **Royal Terns** and **Osprey**. One of the exciting highlights of the boat tour was the fact we saw four different species of kingfisher and a family of **Double-striped Thick-knees**!



Roseate Spoonbill © Paz A Irola

Day 5. Villa Lapas, Quepos and San Isidro.

Today we did a longer pre-breakfast walk into the hotel's forest and had fantastic views of Black-hooded Antshrike, Chestnut-backed Antbird, Buff-rumped Warbler, Piratic Flycatcher and a pair of Golden-naped Woodpeckers in the morning sun. After breakfast we said goodbye to Villa Lapas and the resident Tiger-Heron chicks and began driving south along the coast. In Quepos we spotted a pair of **Scarlet Macaws** apparently nesting in a dead palm stump along the roadside, allowing for fantastic views and photos of this spectacular species.



Scarlet Macaws © Paz A Irola

We made one more stop along the roadside to see Red-breasted Meadowlarks before heading to San Isidro del General for lunch, arriving at our hotel soon after. After checking in to our rooms we agreed to reconvene at 3:30p.m. to go look for one of our main targets in this region, the Turquoise Cotinga. While in the parking lot waiting to get on the bus we were entertained by several species feeding from the fruit of a small Tourist Tree (*Bursera simarouba*) including several **Crimson-fronted Parakeets** and Streaked Flycatcher, then all of a sudden Paz yelled out "COTINGA!". Sure enough a male **Turquoise Cotinga** flew into the same tree and gave us the best ever views at close range. Cameras were clicking and jaws were dropping until it flew away and we all looked at each other in disbelief, the Cotinga came looking for us! With no need to leave we continued our afternoon birding around the hotel and actually found the Cotinga again, perching a little more distant but showing us its purple belly and throat. Other species we saw around the hotel were Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Red-crowned Woodpecker, Orange-chinned Parakeet, Variable Seedeaters, Gray-headed Chachalaca and Peregrine Falcon.



Turquoise Cotinga © Ernesto Carman

Day 6. San Isidro, Los Cusingos, Chirripó Oasis.

We gathered before breakfast at the Tourist Tree again and saw Orange-chinned Parakeet and Crimson-fronted Parakeets, Social and Streaked Flycatcher, Yellow-bellied Elaenia, Yellow-throated Vireo and Golden-hooded Tanager and after breakfast we drove to Los Cusingos, a private reserve run by the Tropical Science Center which was formerly the property of Alexander Skutch, one of the fathers of Costa Rican ornithology. When we arrived we were basically greeted by Costa Rica's smallest woodpecker, the **Olivaceous Piculet** which had a nest just outside the parking lot and was feeding the young. We also had a small mixed flock at the entrance with Dot-winged Antwrens, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Rufous-breasted Wren and Sulphur-rumped Flycatcher. As the day warmed up so did the cicadas, making it very difficult to hear and it also keeps birds a little less active due to auditive competition. We still found Buff-throated Saltator, Red-capped and Orange-collared Manakins, Spot-crowned Euphonia and Black-throated Trogon and enjoyed a nice walk through the reserve as well as Skutch's house which is now kept as a museum. From here we drove to San Gerardo de Rivas which is literally at the base of Costa Rica's highest mountains to visit a small, family run business called Chirripó Oasis. To reach the site we were driven four at a time in an old four wheel drive vehicle up the hillside where, apart from an amazing view, there were many birds visiting the gardens and feeders! It wasn't long until we began spotting new birds including one of our main target species, the **White-crested Coquette**! A male kept returning to the vervaine hedge about every ten minutes, pleasing everyone.



White-crested Coquette © Paz A Irola

We also saw Garden Emerald, Long-billed Starthroat, Shiny Cowbird, **Speckled Tanager** and Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush. After a delicious lunch and some more views of the coquette, we returned to the hotel mid-afternoon to rest. Part of the group decided to spend some time in the lobby waiting to see if the Turquoise Cotinga would return, but instead they had a **Pearl Kite** land in the same tree while it devoured a Variable Seedeater!

Day 7. San Isidro, Cerro de la Muerte, Paraíso Quetzal and Savegre.

Before breakfast we visited a nearby site looking for better views of Fiery-billed Araçari and again saw, with no complaints, Turquoise Cotinga, White-crowned Parrot, Red-crowned Woodpecker and Green Honeycreeper. After breakfast we packed our bags and began ascending to the highest point on this tour, Cerro de la Muerte at 3400m. We made our first birding stop in Villa Mills and saw Sooty-capped Chlorospingus, Volcano Hummingbird, Long-tailed Silky-Flycatcher, Mountain Elaenia and an adult **Ornate Hawk-Eagle** soaring majestically overhead!



Birding at Cerro de la Muerte © Ernesto Carman



Volcano Hummingbird © Paz A Irola

We then went to the highest point which is dominated by shrubs and short bamboo to look for **Volcano Junco** and after a short walk we found an incredibly obliging pair.



Volcano Junco © Paz A Irola

After enjoying the juncos we drove to Paraíso Quetzal Lodge for lunch and birding and we saw Long-tailed Silky-Flycatcher, Black-and-yellow Silky-Flycatcher, Volcano Hummingbird, Lesser Violetear, Talamanca Hummingbird and the spectacular **Fiery-throated Hummingbirds**. After lunch we met Oscar Zuñiga, the local guide who was going to take us on a Resplendent Quetzal tour which is part of a project in which they take tourists to see this species on the land of local farmers and pay the landowners a per person fee which benefits both the bird and the farmers. This afternoon we went to visit William Solano who has a small farm, but the Quetzal tours are a substantial part of his income. In the center of William's farm is a wild avocado tree full of fruit which is the main food of the Quetzal and precisely why we were here. As we approached the tree Oscar immediately pointed out an immature male **Resplendent Quetzal** right in front of us! However, not only was there one individual, there were six other males and two females constantly engaging in aerial displays, calling and feeding!!! Even as Oscar told us about the ecology of the quetzal and the project, they continued showing off in the background. It could not have been any more magical. Thrilled with having seen one of the main Costa Rican targets we made our way to Savegre Mountain Lodge.



Resplendent Quetzal © Ernesto Carman

Day 8.

We gathered in the cool, crisp morning to bird around the hotel grounds and saw White-throated Mountain-Gem, Tropical Mockingbird, Acorn Woodpecker, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Flame-colored Tanager and Slaty Flowerpiercer. After breakfast we birded along the entrance road in the impressive highland oak forests and as we got off the bus we encountered a mixed species flock and began seeing birds left and right! **Tufted Flycatchers** were flycatching from the wires, **Ruddy Treerunners** were hanging upsidedown from the mossy branches, Black-cheeked Warbler, Flame-throated Warbler, Hairy Woodpecker, Barred Becard and Yellow-winged Vireos all gave us fantastic views.



Ruddy Treerunner © Paz A Irola

As this flock moved on we walked down the road a bit and suddenly a large bird flew right over our heads and perched eye level in front of us and it was a male **Resplendent Quetzal!!!** Once again we had extended views and watched it for at least fifteen minutes before he went deeper in the forest. We then went up a little higher in elevation to a small feeding station and had close-ups of Acorn Woodpecker, Sooty, Mountain and Clay-colored Thrush, Large-footed Finch and Flame-colored Tanager. After a delicious lunch at Alma de Árbol Restaurant and a siesta we went for a walk along the Savegre River and had great views of **Torrent Tyrannulet**, with it's tiny size contrasting against the rushing water. We also had amazing scope views of **Sulphur-winged Parakeets**, Scintillant Hummingbird, Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrush and Slate-throated Redstart.



Torrent Tyrannulet © Paz A Irola



Birding in Savegre © Ernesto Carman



Sulphur-winged Parakeet © Ernesto Carman

Day 9. Savegre Mountain Lodge, Cafe Cristina, Ujarrás, Verdesana Lodge.

After breakfast we packed the bus and started our drive out of the Talamanca Mountains and into the eastern Central Valley where we made a brief stop in the town square of Paraíso to see a pair of **Tropical Screech-Owls** and a **Barn Owl** that have been roosting here for many years.



Barn Owl © Ernesto Carman

Our next stop was at Finca Cristina, an organic, shade-grown coffee farm owned by Ernesto's family

where we learned the whole coffee process from farm to cup, what makes a good cup of coffee and, more importantly what makes coffee a good habitat for many species of birds if done correctly. Despite the time of day we saw Broad-winged Hawk, Short-tailed Hawk, Lesson's Motmot and Collared Araçari. After purchasing our stash of coffee we drove to the restaurant run by Paz's grandmother, aunt and mother and we sat down for a delicious family style lunch cooked on a wood burning stove. During lunch we saw Cabanis's Wren, Tropical Parula, White-browed Gnatcatcher, Black Phoebe and a Black-and-white Warbler. After lunch we birded in the Ujarrás Valley and had prolonged views of several **Hook-billed Kites** including the scarce dark morph! We also saw Green Ibis and glimpses of Cabanis's Ground-Sparrow, one of Costa Rica's seven endemic species. Later that afternoon we reached our hotel in the middle elevation cloud forests outside Cartago and settled in the beautiful and cozy wood cabins.



Hook-billed Kite © Paz A Irola

Day 10. Verdesana, Río San José, La Flaminia, La Quinta.

The nighttime rain made for a marvelously clear and cool morning and the birds were very active. Before breakfast we had **Brown-capped**, Philadelphia and Yellow-throated Vireos, Blackburnian, Black-and-white, Black-throated Green and Wilson's Warblers, Red-faced Spinetail, Bananaquit and a pair of White-naped Brushfinches at the feeder. After breakfast we walked the entrance road to the hotel which is lined with hedges of vervain watching the flowers for hummingbirds. It wasn't long before we had seen eight different species of hummingbirds including Green Thorntail, Stripe-tailed Hummingbird, Violet Sabrewing, Scintillant Hummingbird and the Costa Rican endemic Coppery-headed Emerald.



Green Thorntail © Paz A Irola

Mid morning we loaded the bus and began our drive to the Caribbean lowlands. Our first birding stop was at Río San José to look for **Fasciated Tiger-Heron** which we saw very well and at the same site we also had our first **Three-toed Sloth**! A little further on we stopped at a little wetland in the town of La Flaminia and had several seedeaters including Morelet's, Variable, Thick-billed Seedfinch, and Blue-black Grassquit, but the main reason we had stopped here was for the **Nicaraguan Seedfinch** which we saw very well. After several successful target stops we made it to Hotel La Quinta and settled in for the night.



Fasciated Tiger-Heron © Paz A Irola



Three-toed Sloth © Paz A Irola



Ernesto wearing sloth t-shirt

Day 11. La Selva Biological Station and Hotel La Quinta.

Today we had an early breakfast and headed straight to La Selva Biological Station which is one of

the prime birding sites in Costa Rica, and today it proved its reputation! We began birding the entrance road and right away we saw a pair of Chestnut-colored Woodpeckers. As we reached the gate and parking area things began to get really crazy and the next ninety minutes were going to be nonstop bird after bird! It all started with one of the big targets for La Selva, the **Snowy Cotinga**, but not only did we see one, we saw at least seven of all ages and both plumages perching in the large deciduous trees in front of us.



Snowy Cotinga © Paz A Irola

Then Keel-billed and Yellow-throated Toucans, Collared Araçaris, Black-cheeked, Rufous-winged and **Cinnamon Woodpeckers** Black-cowled Oriole, Yellow-crowned Euphonia, Blue Dacnis, Squirrel Cuckoo, Masked and Black-crowned Tityras and Black-faced Grosbeaks all came through showing themselves extremely well.



Cinnamon Woodpecker © Ernesto Carman

As the sky cleared and the sun came through a large mixed flock of swifts began feeding over our heads including White-collared, Chestnut-collared, Spot-fronted, Gray-rumped and Lesser Swallow-tailed Swift. On a communication tower we had the opportunity to watch a pair of Piratic Flycatchers taking over a Gray-capped Flycatcher nest with incessant mobbing and determination. We also found a Strawberry Poison Dart Frog eating ants at the base of a tree. We finally met our local guide, Joel Alvarado, and were about to start his explanation about La Selva when a flock of eight **Great Green Macaws**, which are critically endangered, flew overhead and perched in the trees nearby! As we walked to one of the trails we spotted two Double-toothed Kites soaring above us along with a couple King Vultures. At a fruiting fig tree we saw several tanagers and flycatchers, but it was the **Shining Honeycreepers** that grabbed our attention as two males were fighting over a female! From here we took a short walk off-trail to see a roosting **Middle American Screech-Owl** which is truly a treat as it is a very difficult species to find.



Middle-American Screech-Owl © Ernesto Carman

As we continued down the trail the wind picked up a bit, but we still found Black-throated Trogon, a very obliging pair of Black-crowned Antshrikes and a golden morph of **Eyelash Pit-viper**! We headed back out and just when we thought it could not get any better we spotted a Sungrebe in the river below us as we crossed the bridge. We returned to La Quinta for lunch and later that afternoon walked around the hotel grounds and saw many colorful birds visiting the feeders such as Scarlet-rumped Tanager, Green and Red-legged Honeycreeper, Baltimore Orioles and Red-throated Ant-tanager. On the trail alongside the river we saw both large toucans and Collared Araçaris, **Olive-backed Euphonia**, American Redstart and quick views of Fasciated Antshrike.



Olive-backed Euphonia © Ernesto Carman

Day 12. La Quinta, Best Chocolate Tour, Medio Queso and Caño Negro.

We started our morning at the bird feeders and studying the usual Scarlet-rumped Tanager and Green Honeycreepers, but we also had Crimson-collared Tanager, Cinnamon-bellied Saltator and Bright-rumped Attila. After breakfast we went to the town of Chilamate where we did a chocolate tour at Costa Rica Best Chocolate. We were met by our guide Heiner who walked us through the whole chocolate process, from tree to bar and we sampled so much chocolate we were all on a high! During the tour we saw a Black-throated Trogon on its nest and **Green-and-black Poison Dart Frogs** hopping on the ground around the cocoa trees.



Green-and-black poison dart frog © Ernesto Carman

After the amazing tour we began our drive north towards the town of Los Chiles which is very close to the Nicaraguan border and we visited the Medio Queso wetlands and we had fantastic views of Pinnated Bittern, Lesser yellow-headed Vulture and **American Pygmy-Kingfisher**.



American Pygmy Kingfisher © Ernesto Carman

After Medio Queso we began the drive west towards the town of Caño Negro, but we made a forceful stop in some flooded fields known as Llanos de San Emilio because there were many birds in the fields. Amongst the many egrets and herons were Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Pectoral Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpiper, Southern Lapwing, Black-necked Stilt and Roseate Spoonbill, but towering above them all was one of our main targets, the giant Jabiru stork!!! In the end we saw five different Jabirus before they flew away, but we had fantastic scope views, and the near endemic **Nicaraguan Grackles** were quite obliging as well. We kept making our way down the bumpy road, stopping every now and then for parrots and parakeets perched alongside the road and even a White-winged Becard! Finally at the hotel we settled in, had dinner and went to bed to get rested for another great day to come.



Nicaraguan Grackle © Ernesto Carman

Day 13. Caño Negro, Arenal Observatory Lodge.

Before breakfast we did a little birding around the village of Caño Negro and saw Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Yellow-throated Euphonia, Black-striped Sparrow, Collared Araçari and Gray-headed Dove. After breakfast we went for a boat tour within the Caño Negro Wildlife Refuge and had amazing sightings of Spot-breasted Wren, **Black-collared Hawk**, an immature **Common Potoo** perfectly camouflaged against the tree trunk, Golden-olive Woodpecker, a pair of secretive Yellow-breasted Crakes and hundreds of Turkey Vultures migrating north. After the boat tour we drove to La Fortuna for lunch and then made our way to Arenal Observatory Lodge. On the drive in we had a Rufous Motmot, and after dinner we got fantastic views of the resident Black-and-white Owl that comes in to the lamp in the parking lot waiting for insects and bats to catch.

Day 14. Arenal Observatory Lodge

We gathered on the deck before breakfast and the Montezuma Oropendolas were already gathered around the bird feeder although there were only empty watermelon rinds, but as soon as a new batch of fruit was put out the whole mob came in and it was crazy! Dozens of Oropendolas crowded the feeder first, but a Great Curassow still found a way to squeeze in. Little by little other birds made their way in such as Collared Araçaris, Green Honeycreepers, Emerald and Golden-hooded Tanagers and even Crested Guan's. In the trees around the deck we also had Broad-billed Motmot, Lineated Woodpecker, Black-and-yellow Tanager and Scarlet-thighed Dacnis. After having our own share of fruit we birded the gardens and forest trails at the lodge and had Scaly-breasted Hummingbird, Violet-headed Hummingbird, **Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer** and Black-crested Coquette on the vervaine flowers. In the forest we saw Stripe-breasted Wren, White-ruffed Manakin, **Slate-colored Grosbeak**, Collared Trogon, **Black-faced Solitaire** and at an army ant swarm we had Spotted Antbird, Bicolored Antbird, White-collared Manakin, Pale-vented Thrush and Wood Thrush. We also found several amazing flowering orchids towards the end of the trail. After lunch we birded the entrance road to the lodge and had killer views of a **White Hawk**, Carmiol's Tanager, Louisiana and Northern Waterthrush, Cinnamon Becard, Vaux's Swift and the tiny Smoky-brown

Woodpecker.



White Hawk © Ernesto Carman

Day 15. Arenal Observatory Lodge and Peninsula Road

Our pre-breakfast walk was rewarding with fantastic views of Olive-streaked Flycatcher, Carmiol's Tanager and a male Black-crested Coquette. After breakfast we drove a short distance to the Peninsula Road, a gravel road which cuts through the Arenal Volcano National Park. We started off with great shots of White-throated Magpie-Jays, then we found a hotspot where a mixed species flock was moving alongside the road and we saw Barred, Fasciated and Great Antshrike, Yellow Tyrannulet, Northern Bentbill, White-shouldered Tanager, Long-tailed Tyrant, Golden-wings Warbler, many Chestnut-sided Warblers and Rufous-tailed Jacamars. We also had walk-away views of a Laughing Falcon along the side of the road. After lunch we took a short walk, but the rain kicked in so we called it a day, however we did have very close views of **Yellow-throated Toucans** and **Keel-billed Toucans**, Lineated Woodpecker and the tiny Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant. After dinner we took a short walk to the frog pond and saw **Red-eyed Leaf-Frog**, a tarantula and a whip-scorpion.

Day 16. Arenal Observatory Lodge, Peninsula Road, Cinchona, Hotel El Mango

Our early morning birding gave us a good review of the usual suspects with Montezuma Oropendolas, Crested Guans and White-nosed Coatis waiting for the fruit to be put out. In the fruiting trees in the parking lot we had Olive-streaked Flycatcher and Carmiol's Tanager. After breakfast we packed our bags on the bus one last time and began heading to the Central Valley, but of course we were going to be birding along the way! We took the Peninsula Road hoping to find a couple more species and did see Keel-billed Motmot and Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher. We then worked our way up to the mountains and stopped at Mirador Cinchona, a small restaurant that feeds both people and birds and while we had lunch we saw Prong-billed Barbets, Crimson-collared Tanager, Common Chlorospingus, Violet Sabrewing, Green-crowned Brilliant, Chestnut-capped Brushfinch and the shy and colorful Buff-fronted Quail-Dove. From here we crossed over the

continental divide and down to Hotel El Mango near the airport for our last night.