



Green Thorntail



Partnership for
International Birding



Resplendent Quetzal

Costa Rica Extensive Birding Trip Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival and Transfer to the Hotel near the Airport.

Trip participants can arrive at any time today. You will be transferred to the nearby airport hotel upon arrival, where you can relax or do a little birding on your own. The hotel has a very nice wooded garden that attracts a number of birds.

Some of the species around the garden are Rufous-naped Wren, Blue-gray Tanager, Blue-crowned Motmot, Crested Caracara, Crimson-fronted Parakeet, Orange-chinned Parakeet, Steely vented Hummingbird, Cinnamon Hummingbird, Hoffmann's Woodpecker Blue-crowned Motmot, and Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl at night.



Hoffmann's Woodpecker

Day 2: Departure to the Central Pacific Coast Area.

This morning you will have breakfast with your guide and leave for the Pacific coast of the country. Please be packed up and ready so the van can be loaded quickly.

Along the way you will stop to search for Northern Jacana, Gray Hawk, Yellow-headed Caracara, Wood Stork, Melodious Blackbird, Green-breasted Mango, Mangrove Swallow, Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Scarlet Macaw, Inca Dove and Green Kingfisher.

In the afternoon you will have a boat tour along the Tarcoles River to look for Southern Lapwing, Roseate Spoonbill, White Ibis, Bare-throated Tiger-Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Boat-billed Heron, Purple Gallinule, Brown Pelican, American Pygmy Kingfisher, Amazon Kingfisher, Neotropic Cormorant, Anhinga, Magnificent Frigatebird, Common Black Hawk, Panama Flycatcher, Streak-headed Woodcreeper, Rufous-browed Peppershrike, Cherrie's Tanager, Wood Stork, Yellow-naped Parrot (endangered), Mangrove Hummingbird (endemic), Orange-fronted Parakeet, and large numbers of shorebirds.

The Tarcoles River is well known as a place to see American Crocodiles, and you should see a number of them during the boat tour or from a nearby bridge.

After dinner the guide will review the daily bird checklist, go over birding plans for the next day, and confirm breakfast and departure times for the morning.



Orange-collared Manakin

Day 3 and 4: Full Days at Carara National Park.

You will have an early breakfast this morning, and possibly bird around the hotel grounds for a bit. Here you can see interesting species of birds such as Yellow-headed Caracara, Scarlet Macaw, Stripe-headed Sparrow, Inca Dove, Rose-throated Becard and White-fronted Parrot.

You will then head to Carara National Park, and try to arrive slightly before the park opens at 8:00 AM so you can be some of the first people on the trails. The park is one of the last primary rainforests in the Central Pacific region and harbors distinct flora and fauna. It offers a spectacular assortment of wildlife, including Capuchin Monkeys, Peccary, and Poison-arrow Frogs.

Once in the park you will go to the main trail of the reserve to look for Great Tinamou, Greenish Elaenia, Slaty-tailed Trogon, Plain Xenops, Sulphur-rumped Flycatcher, Rufous Piha, Pale-billed Woodpecker, Slaty Antwren, Riverside Wren, Tawny-crowned Greenlet, Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet, White-whiskered Puffbird, Black-throated Trogon, Baird's Trogon, Black-hooded Antshrike, Northern Barred-Woodcreeper, Chestnut-backed Antbird, Rufous-capped Warbler, Orange-billed Sparrow, Spot-crowned Euphonia, Golden-crowned Spadebill and more forest species.



Emerald Toucanet

You will return to the park after lunch, and some of the birds you may see are Red-capped Manakin, Cocoa Woodcreeper, Lesser Greenlet, Ruddy Quail-Dove, Black-faced Antthrush, Streak-chested Antpitta, and Gray-cowled Wood-Rail (recently split from Gray-necked Wood-Rail).

On the second day you will visit the Road Trail where Scaly-breasted Hummingbirds are quite common. Crested Guan, Fiery-billed Aracari, Northern Bentbill, Rufous-and-white Wren, Ruddy Quail-Dove, Stripe-throated Hermit, Long-billed Hermit, Yellow-throated Toucan, Lineated Woodpecker, Plain

Xenops, Slate-headed Tody-Flycatcher, Yellow-olive Flycatcher and Royal Flycatcher are usually found along the trail.

In the evening you will explore the second growth forest and open areas along the Tarcoles River for Laughing Falcon, Olivaceous Piculet, Gray-crowned Yellowthroat, Stripe-headed Sparrow, Plain-breasted Ground-Dove, Green-breasted Mango, Black-crowned Tityra, White-crowned Parrot, Crimson-fronted Parakeet and Scrub Euphonia.

Each day you will return to the lodge in the evening for dinner, and will review the checklist and verify plans for the next day. Be packed on the second night for an early morning departure.

Day 5: Departure to Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve.

After breakfast you depart towards the most famous cloud forest of the world! The Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve.



Violet Sabrewing

You will arrive around lunch time in the town of Monteverde where the lodge is located. After lunch you will go to the hummingbird feeders near the preserve to see Green Hermit, Violet Sabrewing, Green Violetear Stripe-tailed Hummingbird, Purple-throated Mountain-gem, Green-crowned Brilliant, the endemic Coppery-headed Emerald, and the spectacular Magenta-throated Woodstar. Prong-billed Barbet, Emerald Toucanet, Gray-breasted Wood-Wren, Slate-throated Redstart, and Brown Jay are other possibilities.

You will return to the lodge for dinner, update the checklist, and prepare for a great day of birding in the morning.

Day 6: Full Day at Monteverde Reserve.

After an early breakfast you will head just up the road to the Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve. The Reserve was established in 1972 by scientists George Powell and Wildford Guidon, and initially covered some 810 acres of forested land. Nowadays, its protective reach extends over 35,089 acres and encompasses eight life zones atop the Continental Divide. There are over 100 species of mammals, 400 species of birds, and 1,200 species of amphibians and reptiles living within its bounds. It's one of the few remaining habitats that support all six species of the cat family – jaguars, ocelots, pumas, oncillas, margays, and jaguarundis.

There are numerous trails in the park to search for the main target species. You will normally bird the Waterfall and Nuboso Trails to have more chances for mixed species flocks. If you are lucky, you can see Slate-throated Redstart, Ochraceous Wren, Golden-olive Woodpecker, Azure-hooded Jay, Lineated Foliage-gleaner, Common Chlorospingus, Flame-throated Warbler, Three-striped Warbler, Golden-crowned Warbler, Spotted Barbtail and other middle canopy species. Slaty-backed Nightingale-Thrush, Gray-breasted Wood-Wren, Gray-throated Leaf-tosser, Collared Redstart, Silvery-fronted Tapaculo and Black-breasted Wood-Quails are usually seen along the forest trails. Of course, do not forget the always majestic Resplendent Quetzal.

After a great day birding you will return to the lodge for dinner. Afterwards, the guide will go over the checklist and review all the species seen today. You will discuss morning departure plans, and the possibility of early birding before you leave.



Resplendent Quetzal

Day 07: Departure to Volcan Tenorio National Park.

After breakfast you will spend a few hours birdwatching around the lodge's grounds before departure to your next destination. The plan will be to have lunch en route and arrive at the lodge in the middle of the afternoon.

Some of the birds that you may find today are Brown Jay, Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush, Clay-colored Thrush, Zone-tailed Hawk, Cinnamon Hummingbird, Canivet's Emerald, Black-striped Sparrow, Double-striped Thick-knee, Roadside Hawk, Laughing Falcon, Mountain Thrush and others.

The lodge you will be staying at has some great birding habitat, so you will bird the trails around it until dinnertime. Some of the birds possible at the lodge include Great Curassow, White-necked Jacobin, Black-crested Coquette, Tody Motmot, Spotted Antbird, Ocellated Antbird, Streak-crowned Antvireo, Song Wren, Nightingale Wren, and Golden-hooded Tanager. Sometimes Mottled, Crested, and Black-and-white Owl roosts are staked out, and you will visit them if possible.

After dinner you will review the checklist and discuss plans for birding in the nearby park in the morning.



Black-and-white Owls

Day 8: Full Day Birdwatching the Trails of the Preserve.

This morning you will have an early breakfast and head into Tenorio Volcano National Park. The unique geography of this area makes it a well-used flyway for birds heading from the northerly marshes down to the Pacific coast. Expect to see numerous jungle dwelling species, but don't be surprised if you look up and see a flock of Roseate Spoonbills traveling along the flyway. Ocelots and Jaguars are illusive, but may be seen as you travel around the park. Along with the dormant volcano for which the park is named, the numerous blue waterfalls and thermal springs along the nearby river provide a beautiful backdrop for enjoying the birds you will find.

This forest is home to a number of fantastic birds such as Black-crested Coquette, Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, Lesser Greenlet, Spotted Antbird, Gray-chested Dove, Rufous Mourner, Wedge-billed Woodcreeper, Dull-mantled Antbird, Orange-bellied Trogon and the elusive Tody Motmot. Other species that you are looking for are Broad-billed Motmot, Keel-billed Motmot, Smoky-brown Woodpecker, Buff-rumped Warbler, Bay-headed Tanager, Passerini's Tanager, Chestnut-backed Antbird, Bicolored Antbird, Red-legged Honeycreeper, Ruddy Woodcreeper, Ruddy Quail-Dove and other deep forest species.

You will spend the whole day birding the trails around the park, with a break at midday for lunch. Dinner will be at the lodge, after which you will review your checklists with the guide and plan your departure in the morning.



Red-legged Honeycreeper

Day 9: Departure for Caño Negro Wildlife Refuge.

Today you will have the option to bird some of the garden and trails around the lodge before breakfast. You will try to get new species before departing towards your next location: Caño Negro Wildlife Refuge.

Part of the drive today will be through some open country, grasslands and semi-open areas which are excellent habitats for raptors such as Bat Falcon, Gray Hawk, White-tailed Kite and Snail kite. Some of the species found in the grasslands are Thick-billed Seed-Finch, White-collared Seedeater, Red-billed Pigeon, Pale-vented Pigeon, Blue-black Grassquit, Buff-throated Saltator, Grayish Saltator, Green Heron, Tropical Pewee, Bright-rumped Attila, Gray-crowned Yellowthroat, White-throated Crake and Nicaraguan Seed-Finch.

Once you arrive you will check in and have dinner at the lodge. The guide will review the checklist and plans for birding in the morning. The park is located very close to the Nicaraguan border, so be sure to have your passport with you to prevent unexpected delays.

Day 10: Full Day at Caño Negro Wildlife Refuge.

After breakfast you will head to the Caño Negro Wildlife Refuge. This 25,000+ acre refuge is home to numerous waterbirds, and access to many parts is restricted. There are no public facilities in the refuge, and it is only accessible by boat.

You will arrive at the Frio River and board your boat, which will take you on a floating safari through the rainforest, pastures, and wetlands inside the park. You will look for specialties including Green Ibis, Jabiru, Amazon Kingfisher, Ringed Kingfisher, Yellow-bellied Elaenia, Barred Antshrike, Bay Wren, Green Honeycreeper, Common Tody-Flycatcher, Black-faced Grosbeak, Yellow-crowned Euphonia, American Pygmy Kingfisher, Yellow-breasted Crake, Black-collared Hawk, Wood Stork and the local Nicaraguan Grackle. Other species found here are Gray-headed Dove, Spot-breasted Wren, Brown-capped Tyrannulet, Common Potoo, and Russet-naped Wood-Rail (recently split from Gray-necked Wood-Rail). Lunch will be provided on board the boat.

You will return to the lodge for dinner in the evening, fill out the checklist, and plan the next day's departure.



Common Tody-Flycatcher

Day 11: Departure to Arenal Volcano Area.

This morning you will look for birds that you may have missed the day before, and after breakfast you will depart toward the wonderful Arenal Volcano area.

You will be stopping along the way at several good birding locations for chances at Black-headed Saltator, Crimson-collared Tanager, Yellow-crowned Euphonia, Passerini's Tanager, Shining Honeycreeper, Broad-billed Motmot, Olive-crowned

Yellowthroat, Pale-vented Pigeon, Blue-throated Goldentail, Ringed Kingfisher, White-ringed Flycatcher, Stripe-breasted Wren, Buff-rumped Warbler, Red-throated Ant-Tanager, Gray-headed Chachalaca and more rainforest species.



Crimson-collared Tanager

Once checked in to the lodge you should have a chance to do some birding before dinner. The birding is superb here. The number of birds in just one day can be up to 100 species. Some of the best species are Broad-billed Motmot, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Yellow-throated Toucan, Keel-billed Toucan, Purple-crowned Fairy, Gray Hawk, Boat-billed Heron, Montezuma Oropendola, Gray-rumped Swift, Southern Rough-winged Swallow, Shining Honeycreeper, Gartered Trogon, Olive-throated Parakeet, Wedge-billed Woodcreeper, Song Wren, Plain-colored Tanager, Olive Tanager, Bay-headed Tanager, Black-throated Wren, Band-backed Wren, Great Curassow and many more.

After dinner you will fill out the daily checklist, and your guide will confirm birding plans for the morning.

Day 12: Full Day at Arenal Volcano National Park.

Arenal Volcano National Park is home to one of the most active volcanos in Costa Rica, and has been known to give spectacular views of eruptions to visitors (from a safe distance of course). The two volcanoes, numerous waterfalls, hot springs, 3000 species of plants, 450 species of birds, and beautiful scenery make this an exceptional location to explore. Other animal species living within the park include White-faced Capuchin monkeys, jaguar, deer, coati, and snakes like the Fer-de-lance and Parrot Snake.

You will spend the day on the extensive trail network around the volcano, with a break for lunch at noon. This wonderful area is home to many rainforest species with limited range like Keel-billed Motmot, Black-throated Wren and Crimson-collared Tanager. Some of the trails are good for species such as Black-headed Saltator, Crested Guan, White-vented Euphonia, White-lined Tanager, Blue Ground-Dove, Gray-crowned Yellowthroat, Fasciated Antshrike, Scaly-breasted Hummingbird, Keel-billed Toucan, White-collared Manakin, Gray-headed Chachalaca and Collared Aracari.

The guide will go over the checklist after dinner, and review morning departure plans.



Montezuma Oropendola

Day 13: Departure to Sarapiquí area.

After a final morning around Arenal you will move on towards an even deeper rainforest region. Sarapiquí located just 3 hours away from the Arenal Volcano area towards the Caribbean coast. With a worldwide reputation Sarapiquí holds some of the finest birding in the country. During the afternoon you have plenty of places to go or will just bird the grounds of the hotel. Some of the species found around the hotel's grounds are; Mangrove Swallow, Red-lored Parrot, White-crowned Parrot, Long-tailed Tyrant, Black-cowled Oriole, Fasciated Tiger-Heron and at dusk you may see Short-tailed Nighthawk.



Spectacled Owl

An option for evening birding can include a drive through the fields surrounding Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí to search for Great Green Macaw, Laughing Falcon, Blue-black Grassquit, Variable Seedeater, Keel-billed Toucan, Masked Tityra, and the secretive White-throated Crake. A location for Spectacled Owls may be visited if they have been seen in the area recently.

You will return to the lodge for dinner, after which the guide will review the checklist and go over plans for the next day.



Chestnut-headed Oropendola

Day 14: Entire Day at the La Selva Station.

Located just 3 kilometers from the town of Puerto Viejo is the La Selva Research Station. Not only is it a well-known location for wildlife research, but it is also one of the best birding places in Central America. After being at the Arenal Volcano area you can now focus more on species that you missed previously and some specialties like Olive-throated Parakeet, Great Green Macaw, Plain-colored Tanager, Great Antshrike, Band-backed Wren, Snowy Cotinga, Red-throated Ant-Tanager, Pale-billed Woodpecker, Nicaraguan Seed-Finch, Rufous-winged Woodpecker, Blue-chested Hummingbird, Crowned Woodnymph, Bat Falcon, Red-throated Ant-Tanager, Rufous Motmot, White-ringed Flycatcher, Semiplumbeous Hawk, Bay Wren, Great Curassow, Crested Guan, Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher and Short-tailed Pygmy-Tyrant, just to mention some of the targets.

After a great day of birding you will have dinner at the lodge. The guide will go over the final checklist of the main trip and review departure or extension plans for the next day. Be packed and ready to return to San Jose in the morning.



Sunbittern

Day 15: Transfer Back to San Jose for the Last Night of the Trip.

After breakfast you will load up for departure. Those not on the extension will return to San Jose, with exact plans to be determined by flight times. Some final birding prior to departure may be possible.

Those continuing on the extension will travel on towards Braulio Carrillo for 6 more days of birding.



Yellow-throated Toucan and Red-lored Parrot



Violet-headed Hummingbird

6 Day Extension.

Day 15: Morning at Braulio Carrillo National Park.

After breakfast you will bid farewell to any trip participants not going on the extension, and head to Braulio Carrillo National Park. This is another great birding spot, and is located just 45 minutes from the town of Puerto Viejo. Some of the birds here are unique and only found at this elevation in the Caribbean foothills, between five hundred and seven hundred meters above sea level. Some of the birds you should see are White Hawk, Striped Woodhaunter, Spotted Woodcreeper, Dusky-faced Tanager, Long-billed Gnatwren, Black-and-Yellow Tanager, Squirrel Cuckoo, Olive-backed Quail-Dove, Chestnut-headed Oropendola, King Vulture, Black Phoebe, Emerald Tanager, Blue-and-gold Tanager, Dull-mantled Antbird, Tawny-faced Gnatwren, Tawny-crested Tanager, Speckled Tanager, White-throated Shrike-Tanager, Lattice-tailed Trogon and amazing hummingbirds like Blue-chested Hummingbird, White-necked Jacobin, Bronzed-tailed Plumeleteer, Violet-headed Hummingbird and, if you are lucky, Black-crested Coquette and the spectacular Snowcap. You will spend the afternoon driving towards your next location.

When you reach the lodge in the evening you will have dinner and complete your checklist. The guide will review the plans for the next day of birding.

Day 16: Full Day Tapanti National Park.

After an early breakfast you will head out and bird Tapanti National Park. This 12,500 acre park is located on the edge of the Talamanca Mountain Range and is comprised of lower montane rainforest and pre-montane rainforest. Along with the 400+ species of birds found in the park, there are 45 mammal species, 28 reptile and amphibian species, and a large insect population that includes *Thysania agrippina*, the largest moth on the American continent, with a wingspan of 28 cm.

You will spend the whole day birding in this wonderful national park where you will start from the lodge grounds, coffee plantations and rivers to look for species such as White-lined Tanager, Eastern Meadowlark, Torrent Tyrannulet, White-eared Ground-Sparrow, Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush, Elegant Euphonia, Silver-throated Tanager, American Dipper, Black Phoebe, White-naped Brushfinch and Yellow-faced Grassquit.



Sooty-capped Chlorospingus

After lunch you will walk some of the trails to get species of hummingbirds like Black-bellied Mountain-gem, Green Hermit and the fantastic Green-fronted Lancebill. In addition to the hummingbirds you may see Prong-billed Barbet, Red-headed Barbet, Sooty-faced Finch, Golden-bellied Flycatcher, Zeledon's Antbird, Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant, Eye-ringed Flatbill, Collared Trogon, Red-faced Spinetail, Emerald Toucanet and others.

In the evening you will return to your lodge and have dinner, after which the guide will review the daily bird sightings and discuss morning departure plans.

Day 17: Departure to the Talamanca Mountains.

In the morning you will have breakfast and then depart towards your next destination high in the Talamanca Mountain Range. You will be staying near the highest point on the Costa Rican section of the Inter-American Highway: Cerro de la Muerte. The “Mountain of Death” was named such because in the past crossing the mountains meant a three- or four-day journey, on foot or on horseback, and many ill-prepared travelers succumbed to the cold and rain. The creation of the highway however has made the peak easily accessible, and literally paved the way for birders to see a number of Costa Rican endemics while enjoying the beautiful mountain scenery. Here you will be focusing on high elevation species. You will arrive in the mid-afternoon and will have some time to do some birdwatching in the evening.



Fiery-throated Hummingbird

The area around your lodge will be a good introduction to these highly localized species, and is one of the few places you have a chance to see the spectacular Fiery-throated Hummingbird. Other species you might find include Lesser Violetear, Scintillant Hummingbird, Dusky Nightjar, Barred Parakeet, Ruddy Treerunner, Black-faced Solitaire, Black-billed Nightingale-Thrush, Slaty Flowerpiercer, Large-footed Finch, Yellow-thighed Finch, and Golden-browed Chlorophonia.

Dinner will be held at the lodge, and the guide will go over the checklist and discuss plans for the next day.

Day 18: Full Day at Cerro de la Muerte.

Today you will have an early breakfast and try to beat the crowds that usually form around the Resplendent Quetzal locations.



Gray-tailed Mountain-gem

You will be birding in many habitats here (roads, gardens, forest) in order to find your targets. Some of the birds are Long-tailed Silky-Flycatcher, Dark Pewee, Yellow-thighed Finch, Flame-colored Tanager, Sooty-capped Chlorospingus, Black-cheeked Warbler, White-collared Swift, Red-tailed Hawk, Buffy-Tuftedcheek, Black Guan, Spangle-cheeked Tanager, Scintillant Hummingbird, Gray-tailed Mountain-gem, Ruddy Treerunner, Hairy Woodpecker, Spot-crowned Woodpecker, Black-and-yellow Silky-Flycatcher, Ruddy Pigeon, Volcano Hummingbird, Slaty Flowerpiercer, Mountain Elaenia, Acorn Woodpecker, Fiery-throated Hummingbird, Collared Redstart and the most spectacular of them all, the Resplendent Quetzal.

Lunch will be held around mid-day at a lodge in San Gerardo de Dota, where you can relax and watch the hummingbirds come to the nearby feeders and flowering plants.

Afterwards you will drive to the peak of Cerro de la Muerte, into the specialized high altitude habitat that is home to the Timberline Wren and Volcano Junco. Very few birds can survive in this habitat, but these two endemic species have adapted well and now can only be found in the specialized habitat on a handful of volcanic peaks in Central America.

In the evening you will have dinner at the lodge, review the checklist, and prepare for your final day of Costa Rican birding in the morning.



Volcano Junco

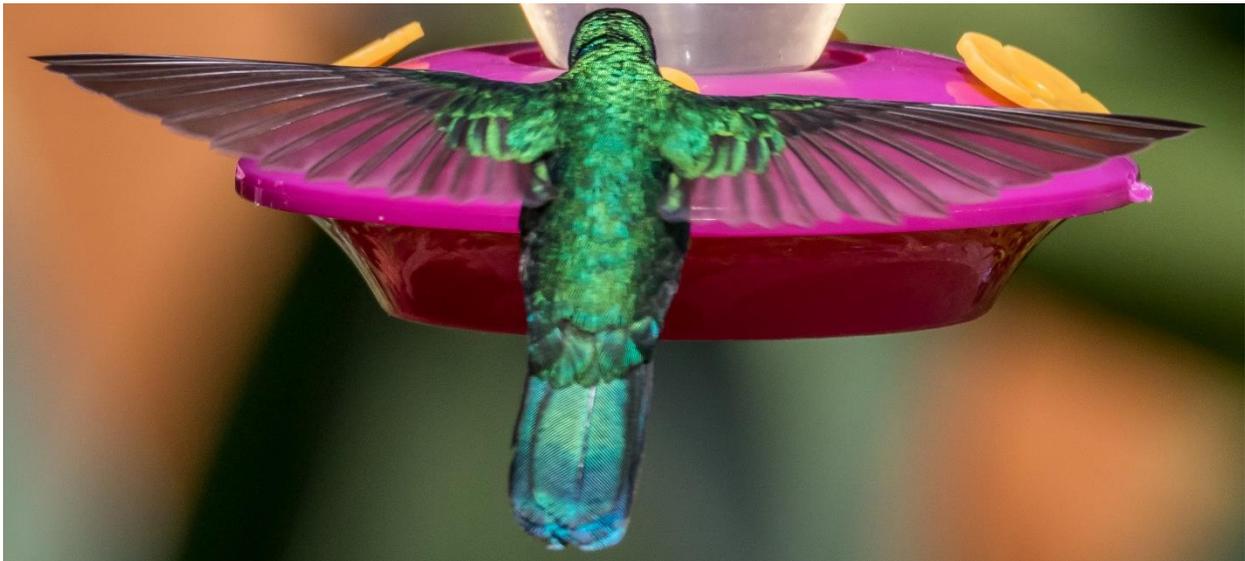
Day 19: AM Birding Cerro de la Muerte Area. PM Back to San Jose.

You will have an early breakfast and check out of the lodge. The morning will be spent searching the area for whatever birds you may have missed on the previous day. You will have lunch, and then depart down the mountain towards San Jose.

Tonight you will check in to the hotel in San Jose, and complete the final checklist of the trip with your guide. Airport departure plans will be discussed, and all necessary transfers will be arranged.

Day 20: Departure.

After breakfast you will be transferred to the airport for your flights home, or released into the wild to bird as you please. Any airport transfers will be arranged in advance depending on your flight times.



Lesser Violetear