

# BIRD TREKS

## NORTHERN COSTA RICA

### Cloud Forest, Volcanoes & Wetlands

Sunday, 8 August through Monday, 16 August 2010: 9 days & 8 nights

Tour Guide is [ERNESTO CARMAN](#)

This tour is designed not only for birders coming to Costa Rica for the first time, but also for birders who may have already been to Costa Rica and would like to visit new and exciting areas that this wonderful country has to offer.

This tour concentrates on the northern regions of Costa Rica, taking in a variety of habitats along our route. From highland cloud forest, Caribbean mid-elevations and foothills, to the Caribbean lowland forest patches and marshes, we will take in the amazing variety of birds that each area has to offer. The highlight of the tour may very well be our time spent near Arenal Volcano, with its natural fireworks show on clear nights.

Other activities include a Canopy Tour with swinging bridges at Arenal, along with a boat ride on Caño Negro. We will visit Poas Volcano and Caño Negro National Parks, and private reserves including La Paz Waterfall Gardens and Bosque de Paz.

With great birding accompanied by expert guide **Ernesto Carman**, very comfortable transport with a safe and dedicated driver, delicious food, and lovely accommodations, this Costa Rica tour is one you won't want to miss.

This tour can be an extension of our **Week at Rancho Tour**, 31 July through 8 August 2010. You will receive a \$200 discount if you participate in both tours.

**Blue-crowned Motmot** could easily be found on the grounds of the Orquideas Inn.

- - *Steven Easley*

*[Day-by-day itinerary begins on page 2]*



# NORTHERN COSTA RICA

8 - 16 August 2010

Fiery-throated  
Hummingbird

- - Steven Easley



## Day   Date   Agenda

1      8 Aug    Arrive in Costa Rica

Upon arrival at the San Jose Airport, you will be met by our driver for the short transfer to the comfortable Orquideas Inn for the night.

2      9 Aug    Orquideas Inn, Poas Volcano, La Paz Waterfall Gardens, to Bosque de Paz

The gardens of Orquideas Inn will produce a host of species to start our tour. Watch for **Steely-vented Hummingbird**, **Plain-capped Starthroat**, **Blue-crowned Motmot**, **Rufous-naped Wren**, **Grayish Saltator**, and **Rufous-capped Warbler** among the more common **Rufous-tailed Hummingbird**, **Red-billed Pigeon**, **Great Kiskadee**, **Boat-billed Flycatcher**, **Clay-colored Thrush**, and **Blue-gray Tanager**. After a nice breakfast we will depart for nearby Poas Volcano. Here in the highlands new species will come quickly. We will concentrate our efforts on finding what many birders consider the most beautiful bird in the New World, the amazing **Resplendent Quetzal**. Other highlights in this beautiful highland forest will include **Fiery-throated Hummingbird**, **Long-tailed** and **Black-and-yellow Silky-Flycatchers**, **Sooty Thrush**, **Black-billed Nightingale-Thrush**, **Yellow-winged Vireo**, **Black-cheeked Warbler**, **Sooty-headed Bush-Tanager**, **Yellow-thighed** and **Large-footed Finches**, and perhaps even a rarity such as **Buffy Tuftedcheek** or **Zeledonia**. The impressive crater lake of the volcano is a must see with its turquoise and green waters and sulphur fumaroles. We will take the trail to the overlook to see this spectacle. Our next stop is on the opposite side of the volcano, a private reserve called La Paz Waterfall Garden. We will arrive in time for a delicious lunch. Afterward we will concentrate on the many hummingbird species attending the feeders that may include **Green Hermit**, **Green Thorntail**, **Violet Sabrewing**, **Brown Violetear**, **Magenta-throated Woodstar**, **Purple-throated Mountain-Gem**, and **Black-bellied Hummingbird**. The banana feeders can attract **Emerald Toucanet**, **Prong-billed Barbet**, **Silver-throated**, **Common Bush-**, and **Crimson-collared Tanagers**, **Buff-throated Saltator**, and occasionally even **Golden-browed Chlorophonia**. Forest flocks may include **Red-faced Spinetail**, **Spotted Barbtail**, **Slaty-backed Nightingale-Thrush**, **Bay-headed** and **Spangled-cheeked Tanagers**, and the very rare **Ochre-breasted Antpitta**. By mid afternoon we will depart to our home for the next two nights, the cloud forest retreat of Bosque de Paz. Upon arrival you will see why it is called 'Forest of Peace'. A beautifully designed lodge with cloud forest on three sides, a stream running beside the lodge, excellent dining, and the wonderful hospitality of the owners Federico and Vanessa will all make for a most enjoyable stay. As night falls, the nocturnal **Paca**, a good-sized attractive member of the rodent family, comes to the corn meal to feed along with **Coati** and **Agouti**. The cool evening temperatures of the area will provide us a very good nights' sleep.

### 3 10 Aug All day in Bosque de Paz area, 2<sup>nd</sup> night at Bosque de Paz Lodge

We will have a full day at Bosque de Paz to take in the birds and wildlife of this beautiful area. A pre-breakfast walk around the gardens could yield **Collared Trogon**, **Emerald Toucanet**, **Golden-olive Woodpecker**, **Yellowish Flycatcher**, **Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrush**, and **Slate-throated Redstart**, to name just a few. Hummingbird feeders are abuzz with **Green Hermit**, **Violet Sabrewing**, **Green-crowned Brilliant**, **Purple-throated Mountain-Gem**, and **Magnificent** and **Scintillant Hummingbirds**. Corn meal and fruit feeders attract a different set of birds such as **Black Guan**, **White-tipped Dove**, **Common Bush-** and **Silver-throated Tanagers**, and the colorful **Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch** that forgets it is a skulker. A stream in front of the lodge should be watched for resident **Torrent Tyrannulet**, **Black Phoebe**, and **American Dipper**, while **Blue-and-white Swallows** constantly forage above and even nest in the eaves of the lodge. Mid-morning we will walk one of the forest trails looking for mixed flocks which may hold **Slaty Antwren**, **Olivaceous**, **Spotted**, and **Black-banded Woodcreepers**, **Red-faced Spinetail**, **Spotted Barbtail**, **Lineated Foliage-Gleaner**, **Barred Becard**, **Spangle-cheeked Tanager**, the exquisite **Golden-browed Chlorophonia**, and **Three-striped Warbler**. Some very elusive skulkers also occur here including **Highland Tinamou**, **Scaled Antpitta**, **Silvery-fronted Tapaculo**, and the bamboo specialist, **Blue Seedeater**. This area is also known for its occasional sightings of rare raptors such as **Great Black-** and **Bicolored Hawks**, and both **Black** and **Ornate Hawk-Eagles**. Bosque de Paz will give us our second opportunity of the trip to see the wonderful **Resplendent Quetzal**. We will continue our birding in the afternoon following a nice siesta. After dinner and weather permitting, we will do some owling nearby, where possibilities include **Mottled Owl** and **Dusky Nightjar**.



**Black Guan**

- - Kevin Easley

### 4 11 Aug Bosque de Paz, transfer to Arenal Volcano area & Arenal Observatory Lodge

This morning we will bird along the road above the lodge at a higher altitude, looking for highland specialties including the cerise-throated race of the **Volcano Hummingbird**, **Prong-billed Barbet**, **Long-tailed Silky-Flycatcher**, **Collared Redstart**, and many others. We will have the whole morning to explore this highland area before returning to the lodge. After lunch we will transfer to the Arenal Volcano area and the lovely Arenal Observatory Lodge. We will arrive to La Fortuna by mid afternoon and begin birding along the entrance road to the lodge. Soon, the pastures and farms will give way to a beautiful lush rainforest encircling the base of this impressive and very active volcano. We will make a semi-circle around looming Arenal Volcano, birding en route, eventually arriving to our home for the next two nights, the Arenal Observatory Lodge. This lodge is situated next to the volcano, close enough to hear its gaseous explosions followed by loud rumblings of large boulders of molten lava that careen down the slopes of the cinder cone, yet far enough to be safe. On a clear night, the lava explosions out of the top are simply breathtaking. We will have a delicious dinner at the lodge. The hot tub by the pool might be a relaxing finale to another great day of birding in Costa Rica.

*[Day 5 begins on page 4]*

**5 12 Aug All day in the Arenal Volcano area, 2<sup>nd</sup> night at Arenal Observatory Lodge**

We will begin with a pre-breakfast walk along the edge of the garden. Hummingbirds are abundant amongst the vervain flowers and may include **Stripe-throated Hermit, Violet-crowned Woodnymph, Brown Violetear, Red-footed Plumeleteer, Violet-headed Hummingbird**, and the amazing **Black-crested Coquette**. Along the edge of the garden we will watch for skulkers including **Nightingale Wren, Spotted Antbird, Thicket Antpitta, and Black-throated Wren**. We will want to be present when the fruit is put out for the birds, as it is one of the most impressive feeder displays anywhere. The blues of **Red-legged Honeycreepers** and **Golden-hooded Tanagers**, greens of **Green Honeycreepers**, yellow of **Yellow-throated Euphonia**, reds of **Hepatic and Crimson-collared Tanagers**, and chestnut of **Montezuma Oropendola** all come together producing a dazzling effect. Scraps dropped from the feeders attract **Coatis** along with **Black-striped Sparrows** and the occasional **White-throated Thrush**. We will have breakfast in sight of the feeders - Can you pass me the salt and the binoculars please? After breakfast, and if we can pull you away from the feeders, we will explore along the edge of picturesque Lake Arenal. Every stop will produce new and interesting species. This is a superb area for **Crested Guan** and **Gray-headed Chachalaca**, and **Great Curassow** also occurs. Toucans are well represented with **Keel-billed and Chestnut-mandibled Toucans, Collared Aracari**, and even the rare **Yellow-eared Toucanet**. Watch for three species of motmots including **Broad-billed**, the large **Rufous**, and the very rare **Keel-billed Motmot**. No less than four species of **Antshrike** occur here with **Russet, Great, Fasciated, and Barred**. Two more crowd pleasers, **Rufous-tailed Jacamar** and **Long-tailed Tyrant**, can be seen hunting for insects along the road. In the vine tangles we will search for **Long-billed Gnatwren, Bay and Stripe-breasted Wrens, and Yellow-billed Cacique**, while grassy patches hide **White-throated Crake, Slaty Spinetail**, both **Olive-crowned and Gray-crowned Yellowthroats**, and five species of **seedeater types**. Some very interesting raptors could be encountered and may include **White Hawk, Double-toothed and Gray-headed Kites**, and the impressive **Ornate Hawk-Eagle**. The afternoon will be more of the same. In all, it should prove to be a very special day full of dramatic scenery, good food, and plenty of great birds. Night again will be at Arenal Observatory Lodge.

**6 13 Aug Morning at the Arenal Hanging Bridges, transfer to Cano Negro Natural Lodge**

After some garden birding and breakfast, we will say farewell to the lodge, load up, and make the short transfer to the Arenal Hanging Bridges for a morning of walking through the treetops. A trail system through the primary rainforest traverses steep ravines over which are suspended hanging bridges. This gives us a unique opportunity to witness canopy species at eye level. Mixed flocks in this area can include an array of local species including **White-fronted Nunbird, Striped Woodhaunter, White-throated Shrike-Tanager, and Rufous-winged Tanager** amongst the more common **Smoky-brown Woodpecker, Spotted Woodcreeper, and White-shouldered, Bay-headed, and Speckled Tanagers**. **Yellow-eared Toucanet** is resident here and we hope to encounter this local species. While on the trails we will look for undergrowth skulkers such as **Thrush-like Schiffornis, Black-headed Nightingale-Thrush, Song and Nightingale Wrens**, and in the sub-canopy watch for **Purple-crowned Fairy, Rufous and Broad-billed Motmots, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Streak-crowned Antvireo, White-ruffed Manakin, and Tawny-crowned Greenlet**. Keep an eye on the sky for **White Hawk and Ornate Hawk-Eagle**. Vervain flowers near the entrance host feeding hummingbirds including **Scaly-breasted Hummingbird, Green-breasted Mango, Red-footed Plumeleteer**, and the ever-present **Rufous-tailed Hummingbird**. Just walking through the canopy on the

bridges is reason enough to visit this unique site, but the potential for seeing such seldom seen species will make this an exciting morning of birding. After lunch in La Fortuna we will bid farewell to the magical Arenal area and make our way north to the Caribbean lowland area of Caño Negro. En route watch for a variety of raptors including **Bat** and **Laughing Falcons**, **American Pygmy Kingfisher**, and **Nicaraguan (Pink-billed) Seed-Finch**. We will have two nights at the comfortable and air conditioned Caño Negro Natural Lodge.

**7 14 Aug All day at Caño Negro, a fine boat ride, 2<sup>nd</sup> night at Caño Negro Natural Lodge**

The highlight of this area for birders is the excellent boat trip on Lake Caño Negro. Birds are plentiful and this area holds a host of specialty birds. The Caño Negro area is the only regular site in Costa Rica for **Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture**, **Black-collared Hawk**, and **Spot-breasted Wren**. Other highlights may include **Sungrebe** swimming near the overhanging trees, **Gray-necked Wood-Rail** which is plentiful here, **Green Ibis**, **Jabiru**, **Bare-throated Tiger-Heron**, the unusual **Boat-billed Heron** hiding in trees on their day roosts, **Mangrove Cuckoo**, and up to five species of **kingfishers**. **Spectacled Caiman** are common, similar to a smaller version of the Alligator. After a late breakfast we will continue to explore the small forest patches near our lodge which can be very productive. Woodpeckers are well represented with **Lineated**, **Pale-billed**, **Black-cheeked**, **Cinnamon**, and **Chestnut-colored Woodpeckers**, along with their diminutive cousin, the **Olivaceous Piculet**. Other specialties in and around these forest patches include **White-throated Crake**, **Olive-throated** and **Crimson-fronted Parakeets**, the local **Gray-headed Dove**, **Pied Puffbird**, **Western Slaty-Antshrike**, and **White-collared Manakin**, along with a host of others. After a nice lunch and a siesta, perhaps by the pool, we will continue our birding in the late afternoon. Caño Negro is excellent for nocturnal birds. During our night drive we hope to find such highly prized species as **Pacific Screech**, **Mottled**, **Striped**, and **Black-and-white Owls**, both **Great** and **Common Potoos**, and the ubiquitous **Common Pauraque**.

**8 15 Aug Morning in Caño Negro area, transfer to Orquideas Inn for our final night**

The inviting cool dawn will find us once again out in the field marveling at the birds of this area. After lunch we will depart the Caño Negro area, traveling south to Orquideas Inn for our final night. Our last new species may very well be **Tropical Screech-Owl**, a resident in the garden of this lodge. We will have our final dinner and night at Orquideas Inn.

**9 16 Aug Homeward Bound!**

You will be picked up for the 15-minute transfer to San Jose Airport in time for your departure flight home.

**PLEASE NOTE** Combine this tour with the **Week at Rancho Naturalista** that immediately precedes it, and you will receive a **\$200 discount** on the combined tour fees, and have the opportunity to see a lot more of what **Costa Rica** has to offer!



Tropical Screech-Owl - - Steven Easley

Tropical Screech-Owl - © Steven Easley



**Your Leader** For the past three years, **Ernesto Carman** has been 1 of 4 principle bird guides at Costa Rica Gateway. Born and raised in Costa Rica to American parents, he has developed an intimate knowledge of not only the birds and wildlife of Costa Rica but its culture and people as well, which will add tremendously to your experience. Great leadership skills and personal attention to his participants while on tour are also attributes of Ernesto. You are in for a real treat!

**Price** \$1695 per person from San Jose, Costa Rica, based upon double occupancy. Single accommodations are available at an extra cost of \$275, if we are given ample notice.

**Includes** Expert guide service with Ernesto Carman; all ground transportation within Costa Rica, all boat rides and entrance fees within Costa Rica; **ALL meals** and lodging for the entire tour, except for dinner the first night. **ALL tips** are also included in the tour fee, except for anything extra that you may wish to give to your tour leaders, drivers, and boat captains.

Does not include the cost of alcoholic beverages, extra drinks during the day, items of a personal nature, and airfare to San Jose. Upon request we will help you obtain the best possible airfare and coordinate arrivals into San Jose. Also not included is the cost of your passport.

**Extra Services** We offer the services of our exclusive BIRD TREKS travel agent, **Lori Heathcote**, in arranging your air travel. Lori has 24 years of experience in the travel industry and is a veteran birder. Contact her directly at Bailey Travel, **1-800-224-5399**, or e-mail her at **lori@baileytravel.com**. By dealing with Lori you have the security of a 24-hour toll-free telephone number in case of any travel emergency. She can also assist you with all pre- and post-tour travel plans. There may be a fee for these services.

**Deposit** A \$400 deposit will assure your reservation on the tour. The balance is due on 6 May 2010. Send your deposit **SOON** so that we can secure the least expensive airfare to San Jose and guarantee your spot on the tour.

**Refund & Cancellation Policy** With written notice more than 90 days prior to the first day of the tour, 100% of your deposit will be refunded, minus a \$100 service fee. With 30-90 days notice, you will receive a 50% refund of the full cost of the tour. No refund can be made with less than 30 days notice. You will receive a full refund if you provide a replacement for your spot on the tour. No partial refund can be given once a tour begins. We **STRONGLY RECOMMEND** that you purchase trip cancellation insurance to protect your investment. Contact Access America at **1-800-284-8300** and mention **BIRD TREKS (ACCAM # F021096)**. You can apply by phone or via the Internet at **www.accessamerica.com**.