



Sunrise Birding, LLC
COSTA RICA
February 5 – 14, 2011
TRIP REPORT

Leaders: Steve Bird & Gina Nichol





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Lesser Ground Cuckoo

Day 1 - Arrival San Jose

By the end of the evening, all of us had arrived in tropical San Jose and settled into our lovely hillside hotel for the evening.

Day 2 Salt Pans and Solimar

In the morning, a few of us were out early to check the hotel gardens before breakfast. It was a great introduction to Costa Rica's varied avifauna with views of a number of the more common species including **Boat-billed Flycatcher, Yellow Warbler, Hoffmann's Woodpecker, Great Kiskadee, Blue-gray Tanager, Blue-and-White Swallow, Red-billed Pigeon, Summer Tanager, White-winged Dove, Yellow-bellied Elaenia, Baltimore Oriole, Great-tailed Grackle, Rufous-naped Wrens, and Blue-crowned Motmot.** A **Ferruginous Pygmy Owl** called down by the restaurant and soon we were all enjoying scope views of this feisty little bird. After breakfast, we loaded up our bags to set off and added a **Green-breasted Mango** which was flying around in the trees above the parking lot. We traveled out of San Jose southwest toward the small town of Orotina where we quickly found a **Black-and-White Owl** perched in one of



the trees in the town

square. Later on, Steve and Gina found out that the owl had not been seen in previous weeks so we were very lucky to find it.

We traveled to the Pacific Coast and soon the Gulf of Nicoya came into view. Our next stop was at some salt pans where we found **Black-necked Stilt, Whimbrel, Willet, Roseate Spoonbill, Little Blue Heron, Tricolored Heron, Great Blue Heron, Cattle Egret, Baird's Sandpiper, Lesser Yellowlegs, Spotted Sandpiper, White-rumped Sandpiper, Mangrove Black Hawk, Whimbrel, Stilt Sandpipers, and Short-billed Dowitchers.** At one point, the shorebirds took

flight and not long after we saw a **Peregrine Falcon** flying over, which was quite possibly the reason for the evacuation of the shorebirds. A **Green-breasted Mango** showed well perched in a flowering tree and we had **Brown-crested Flycatcher** on the way out. After lunch, we stopped by a pond on the side of the on the road which held several **Least** and **Pied-billed Grebes** and some **Northern Jacanas**.

Off the main road now, we traveled a dirt road that traversed sprawling open farm lands. Steve spotted a **Lesser Ground Cuckoo** on the side of the road so we quickly stopped but the bird got away before we could all get good views of it. While we were searching the cow field for the cuckoo, Gina spotted a **Northern Tamandua** in a tree which allowed excellent views. Trees above held several **Baltimore Orioles** and a little further on we stopped for a group of raucous **White-throated Magpie Jays**.



We arrived at Hacienda Solimar in the early afternoon and as we got out of the van, a **Black-headed Trogon** and a **Cinnamon Hummingbird** were there in the tree right above the parking area as if to greet us. We settled into our rooms and soon found ourselves enjoying the view from the veranda and noting several **Mantled Howler Monkeys** in the trees in front of the hacienda.



Our host Dimitrio accompanied us as we drove into the farm to do some late afternoon birding. The first pond held a **Roseate Spoonbill** and a **Green Heron**. **Double-striped Thick-knees** were amazingly plentiful and easy to see from the road as were **Bare-throated Tiger Herons**. We stopped to look at a **Laughing Falcon** perched on a tree in the middle of the field. There was a sprawling wetland on the other side of the road which held a small group of **Muscovy Ducks** and an **Anhinga**. Our first **Spot-breasted Oriole** was seen here as was a distant **Harris's Hawk** on top of another tree. There was a lone **Jabiru** that got a lot of attention from us while numerous **Barn**

Swallows whirled back and forth across the road and over the fields.

A little further on, we stopped at another marshy area where there were what seemed like thousands of **Black-bellied Whistling Ducks**! The sheer number was amazing and from time to time large groups would take flight and reposition themselves in the wetland creating a wonderful wildlife spectacle. We could also see smaller **Blue-winged Teal** in these flocks as well as several pairs scattered throughout the open water. We continued on to another area adding **Orange-chinned Parakeets**, **Ringed Kingfisher**, and amazingly easy to see **Plain-breasted Ground Doves**. Our last stop

of the evening yielded a juvenile **Black-crowned Night Heron** and a half dozen **Boat-billed Herons**. There were at least three **Lesser Nighthawks** perched on nearby trees allowing great views. We birded the area and got great views of **White-fronted Parrots**, **Belted Kingfisher**, **Northern Waterthrush**, **Cinnamon Hummingbird**, **Orange-fronted Parakeet**, and **Rose-throated Becards**. A **Yellow-naped Parrot** was scoped from below and another **Ferruginous Pygmy Owl** was seen as well as a **Streak-backed Oriole**. We had another look at the **Harris's Hawk** on the way out and stopped for photos of the gorgeous sunset.



Day 3 Solimar – Heliconias Lodge



We were out in the lodge grounds before breakfast as the **Mantled Howler Monkeys** were up and sounding off. Several birds were mobbing something near the parking lot and the highly frenetic flock offered amazing views of both **Spot-breasted** and **Streak-backed Oriole**, **Rufous-naped Wren**, **Rose-throated Becard**, and **White-throated Magpie Jay**! Something obviously had the birds agitated but try as we might we could not spot it. There was a **Pacific Screech Owl** in a nearby tree but it

seemed too distant to be the reason for the uproar. We guessed that it might be a snake on one of the branches.

After breakfast, we went back out with Dimitrio to the farm. As we gathered at the van, there was an amazingly large grasshopper which was later identified as a **Giant Grasshopper**, *Tropidacris cristata*, one of the largest grasshoppers in the new world. We set off into the farm starting the list with a group of **Muscovy Ducks** and a few **White Ibis** in the wetlands. A wild **White-nosed Coati** was seen running through an open field carrying prey. We had close views of **Amazon Kingfisher** and an **American Kestrel** which is not common in Costa Rica. A roadside stop yielded another good bird a **Grasshopper Sparrow** perched on a high stalk of grass. This area also held **Blue-black Grassquit**, **Plain-breasted Ground Dove**, and **White-collared Seedeater** and as we walked the road we added **Crested Bobwhite** and **Western Wood Pewee**. It was a good raptor day with **White-tailed Kite**, **Laughing Falcon**, and a perched **Crane Hawk**. An area with some large trees yielded **Olive Sparrow**,



Scrub Euphonia, Common Tody Flycatcher, and Black-headed Trogon.

Our driver Edwin spotted a pair of **Scissor-tailed Flycatchers** on a tree so we stopped for a better look. An **Osprey** flew by just before a familiar call caught Steve's attention. It was a **Lesser Ground Cuckoo** and this time we had stunning views of this bird for several minutes. Amazing! This was certainly the best that Gina had ever seen and an exciting tick for the entire group. We walked a shaded road and saw our first **Tennessee Warbler**. A

Ferruginous Pygmy Owl called from the canopy and brought our attention to the throng of birds that were mobbing the owl including **Steely-vented Hummingbird**, **Canivet's Emerald**, **Tropical Gnatcatcher**, and **Violet-crowned Woodnymph**. Continuing on, we added **Banded Wren**, **Masked Tityra**, another

Black-headed Trogon, and **Turquoise-browed Motmot**. The **Mantled Howler Monkeys** kept us entertained and distracted from the birds as we watched the antics of their babies. Other birds seen here were **Northern Beardless Tyrannulet**, **Dusky-capped Flycatcher**, a young **Gray Hawk**, and a well hidden **Spectacled Owl**. After persistent efforts, we had great views of a male **Long-tailed Manakin**. The forest also offered a female **American Redstart**, **Northern Barred Woodcreeper**, and **Streak-headed Woodcreeper**.



We drove to another spot stopping to look at a **Zone-tailed Hawk** on the nest. At the next stop we walked into the forest and found **Northern Beardless Tyrannulet**, **Dusky-capped Flycatcher**, **Steely-vented Hummingbird**, **Great Crested Flycatcher**, **White-winged Becard**, **Dusky Antbird**, **Slate-headed Tody Flycatcher**, **Yellow-olive Flycatcher**, and **Yellow-green Vireo**.

On the way back, Dimitrio showed us a **Jabiru** on a nest with a chick and we had good views of one in flight. This capped off an excellent morning of birding and some of us enjoyed a swim in the pool before lunch.



After lunch we loaded the van and set off for Heliconias Lodge set in the foothills of Tenorio Volcano, between Tenorio and Miravalles Volcanoes. We arrived, settled in, and set off for an afternoon walk in the forest. The birding was a bit more challenging than the morning had been and we added a few species to our day list including **Gray-breasted Wood Wren**, **Stripe-breasted Wren**, **Blue-black Grosbeak**, and for Paul and Steve, glimpses of a **Purplish-backed Quail-dove**. A **Scale-crested Pygmy Tyrant** called but remained elusive but a **Violet-crowned Woodnymph** showed well.

Back to the lodge, a **Paraque** was calling and two birds showed for us as the light of the day faded away.

Day 4 Heliconias Lodge

This morning we took an early walk in the forest where the misty conditions made it quite dark. Jorge, a local guide joined us and as daylight filtered into the forest we picked up a couple of **Crested Guans** perched in a tree, a lightning speed **Green Hermit**, **Spotted Antbird**, **Black-hooded Antshrike**, and **Blue-black Grosbeak**. On the way to breakfast near our rooms we added **Hepatic Tanager** and **Barred Antshrike**.



After breakfast, a **Chestnut-mandibled Toucan** presented itself in the largest tree in the garden and another **Hepatic Tanager** was seen. We walked the driveway and had good views of several **Black-crested Coquettes**, **Collared Aracari**, and **Baltimore Oriole**. It was becoming clear that **Clay-colored Thrush**, the national bird of Costa Rica was quite common. Other birds seen included **Common Tody Flycatcher**, **Plain Wren**, **Chestnut-sided Warbler**, our first **Montezuma Oropendolas**, and **Blue-throated Goldentail** but a singing **Violet-headed Hummingbird** eluded us. Suddenly, three large buses drove up the driveway unloading “tourists” and changing the feel of the area profoundly. We decided to escape the lodge and head to another area down the hill stopping for a tree full of **Chestnut-mandibled Toucans** and some **White-winged Doves**. We stopped by a river and found some **Crested Guans** feeding in a large tree just down stream. A **Masked Tityra** visited the tree and **Cinnamon Becard** was seen in the area as was a **Variable Seedeater**. We walked a track along the river and scoped a large fruiting tree



that was full of birds including **Green Honeycreeper**, **Rose-breasted Grosbeak**, **Golden-hooded Tanager**, **Red-legged Honeycreeper**, and at least three **Scarlet-thighed Dacnis**. It had started to rain but that didn't deter us or a **Blue-throated Goldentail** that was perched out in the open singing its heart out. A **Torrent Tyrannulet** was spotted in the river as the rain got heavier. We headed back to the van as the rain let up and scoped some **Red-lored Parrots** perched on a dead tree. On the opposite hill, a **Gray Hawk** was scoped and soon we were heading back up

the hill to the lodge. The crowds were still there having lunch so we waited until they departed to venture into the dining room.

We spent the afternoon on the Bridges Trail which produced a female **Long-tailed Manakin**, **Alfaro's Pygmy Squirrel**, **Tawny-crowned Greenlet**, a **Spotted Antbird**

that remained covert, **Golden-olive Woodpecker**, **Wedge-billed Woodcreeper**, **Bright-rumped Attila**, **Scale-crested Pygmy Tyrant**, and **Orange-bellied Trogon**. After dinner we ventured the short distance down the road where we struggled to get decent views of a **Mottled Owl** incessantly calling.

Day 5 Heliconias – Cano Negro

The skies cleared overnight and we were out before breakfast. Birding around the lodge produced **Golden-olive Woodpecker**, **Hepatic Tanager**, and a couple of **Yellow-faced Grassquits** on the lawn. A trail in the forest offered **Gray-chested Dove**, **Blue-throated Goldentail**, and a **Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth**. **Tody Motmot** was heard but remained elusive while a group of **Carmioli's Tanagers** kept up entertained. Other pre-breakfast birds were **Blue-black Grosbeak**, **Black-and-white Warbler**, **Scale-crested Pygmy Tyrant**, and a quickly disappearing **Golden-crowned Spadebill**.

As we arrived back at the lodge for breakfast, Jean and Joanna were watching some birds out in front of the restaurant. Here we added **Yellow-throated Vireo**, **Philadelphia Vireo**, **Golden-hooded Tanager**, **Tennessee Warbler**, and **Barred Antshrike** to our list for the day.

After breakfast, we went back out on the trails with Jorge and found **Golden-crowned Warbler**, **Tawny-crowned Greenlet**, **Tropical Gnatcatcher**, **Blue-black Grosbeak**, and **Rufous Piha**. A **Tawny-throated Leaf-tosser** was a nice find and the bird showed very well for us which was a triumph! We crossed one of the **hanging bridges** and Jean spotted a **Yellow-eared Toucanet** on the other side. Ahead was a **White-throated Robin** on the track and continuing on we encountered **Common Bush Tanager**, more **Carmioli's Tanagers**, and a few **Orange-chinned Parakeets**. The next hanging bridge had a tree in the middle and we spent some time here watching **Green** and **Red-legged Honeycreepers**, **Silver-throated Tanagers**, **Olive-backed Euphonias**, and an **Orange-bellied Trogon** that flew off into the canopy. Further along the trail we caught up with an exciting flock that included **Lesser Greenlet**, **Tawny-crowned Greenlet**, **Stripe-breasted Wren**, **Russet Antshrike**, and **Rufous Piha**. A **White-breasted Wood Wren** tried its best not to be seen on the way out.



After lunch, we headed over to Cano Negro in the northern zone of Costa Rica near Nicaraguan border. Along the way, we saw a **Long-tailed Tyrant** perched on a dead

tree and yet another **Laughing Falcon**. We settled into our rooms at the lodge and took a late afternoon walk around the grounds and surrounding area. **Montezuma Oropendolas** were around and a group of **Olive-throated Parakeets** flew over. A small pond held **Great Blue Heron, Bare-throated Tiger Heron, Great Egret**, and some **Mangrove Swallows** were swirling above the still water. This wetland area near the Rio Frio also offered **Red-winged Blackbirds, Spotted Sandpiper, Spectacled Caiman, Anhinga**, and adult and juvenile **Northern Jacanas**. The adjacent lawn had **Blue Ground Doves** and **Gray-headed Doves** and we got great views of these target birds with little effort. We walked the road at the edge of town and found several **Hoffmann's** and **Black-cheeked Woodpeckers** in the trees as well as a few **Palm Tanagers**. A **Tropical Pewee** hawked insects from a power line and a little further on we found some **Red-lored Parrots** feeding on a fruiting tree. There were fruits on the ground as well that were being devoured by **Yellow-throated Euphonias, Red-legged Honeycreepers**, and **Blue-gray Tanagers** offering a colorful scene. Paul spotted a small bird that turned out to be one of a pair of **Spot-breasted Wrens**, a specialty for the area. We had amazing views of these birds and were pleased that it was so easy to find them. The day ended with our first looks at **Yellow-headed Caracara** and some nice flyover views of **Roseate Spoonbill**. After dinner, Paul, Darryl, Gina and Steve did an evening drive which yielded several **Paraques** and a **Common Potoo**.



Day 6 Cano Negro



left side and on close inspection it was revealed to be a **Nicaraguan Grackle** (actually a

This morning we enjoyed a spectacular boat trip on the Rio Frio. It was a gorgeous morning, comfortable and dry and we arrived at the dock by 6 AM. A **Purple Gallinule** showed nicely as we walked up to the boat and soon we were on our way. The first **Green Iguanas** in the trees were a sight to behold their large bodies perfectly positioned on the branches for morning sun exposure. As we slowly cruised up the river, we saw several **Anhinga, Amazon Kingfisher, Prothonotary Warbler**, a female **Barred Antshrike, Bare-throated Tiger Heron, Roseate Spoonbill, Northern Waterthrush**, and **Green Kingfisher**. To our surprise, a **Northern Harrier** flew over, a rare sight and a new bird for Steve in Costa Rica. Continuing up river, we saw **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Black-crowned Night Heron, Orchard Oriole, Ringed Kingfisher**, and **Crested Caracara**. A dark bird caught our attention on the

pair), another target achieved! A small group of **Green Ibis** were seen in a wetland area adjacent to the river and further on Gina spotted a **Striped Cuckoo** that was calling from the top of a distant tree.

We enjoyed the antics of **Amazon Kingfishers** fishing from a power line and then continued on adding **Boat-billed Heron, White Ibis, and Black-necked Stilt**. Our boatman veered off to a smaller channel in the river and soon we were amazingly close to a perched **American Pygmy Kingfisher**! It seemed unconcerned with our presence and after a few minutes our attention was diverted to the call of a **White-throated Crake** in the grasses of the nearby shore. All at once the crake strutted out of the grass along an open area of shoreline not 10 feet away. The views were absolutely amazing given that most of the time we hear but don't see this bird and if we do see it the views of very poor. Incredible!



The excitement didn't stop with several **Passerini's Tanagers** around, plus **Clay-colored Thrush, Common Tody Flycatcher, Gray-headed Flycatcher**, and nice views of **Mangrove Cuckoo**. We proceeded into a lagoon where there were **Glossy Ibis** and lots of shorebirds including **Collared and Semipalmated Plovers** and **Least Sandpipers**. There were several **Blue-winged Teal** around and Steve spotted a **Black-collared Hawk** on the ground in the distance. We moved back out to the main channel adding **Grayish Saltator** and more **Mangrove Swallows**. Now the search was on for the **Sungrebe**, a small shy bird that skulks along the river edge in the shadows. We scanned the every nook and cranny of the shoreline and soon Steve found one lurking under some

branches in the water. The boatman repositioned us allowing great views of this unique little bird. After getting our fill and plenty of photos, we headed back down stream. Along the way we had good views of a perched **Wood Stork** and a **Pale-vented Pigeon**. We pulled up in the dock and it was time for breakfast, but we did note that before breakfast we had seen more species than most people see in a day!

After breakfast, we birded around town and found **Montezuma Oropendola, Southern House Wren**, several **Blue-gray Tanagers, Gray-headed Dove, Passerini's Tanager, Olivaceous Piculet**, and **Common Tody Flycatcher**. The day was heating up so back to our cool rooms and the pool for a few hours of relaxation. In the afternoon, we were

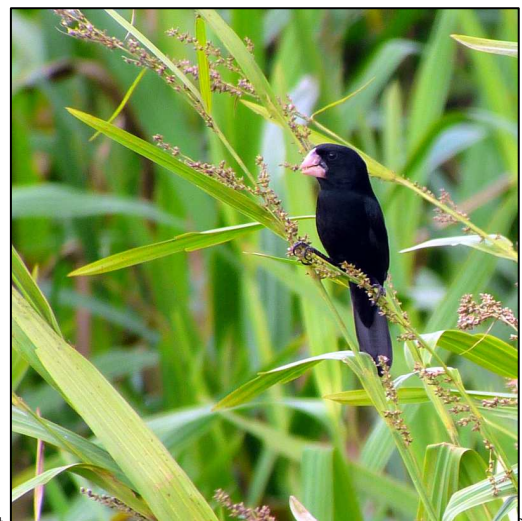
back out at 3:30 PM and found two more **Spot-breasted Wrens** near the boat dock.



The lagoon near the dock held **Limpkin, Purple Gallinule, Bare-throated Tiger Heron**, and there were **Yellow-throated Euphonias** in the trees above. We negotiated with a local to take a **boat across the Rio Frio** to check an area that was full of **Snowy** and **Great Egrets, Great Blue Heron, and Blue-winged Teal**. Here we added **Greater** and **Lesser Yellowlegs** to our day list while enjoying a lovely sunset with the melody of the banana boat song in our heads.

Day 7 Cano Negro to Arenal

Those of us out before breakfast had good views of **White-collared Manakin** in the grounds of the lodge. After breakfast, we loaded the vehicle and headed out toward Arenal. We stopped to take in the antics of a **Crested Caracara** taking a dust bath in the road. We stayed in the vehicle while the bird went on squatting down on the road, rolling on its back and shaking it's feet in the air. What a sight! A little further on a **Roadside Hawk** was seen as it descend into a field, caught prey, and then started devouring it on a branch alongside the road. The next stop was to check the vultures flying over and sure enough there were at least four **Lesser Yellow-headed Vultures** flying low over us offering good views of their yellow heads. Continuing on, we added another **Laughing Falcon** to our list and a few miles further we stopped by a small bridge over a wetland. We scanned the marsh grasses and eventually found an **Olive-crowned**



Yellowthroat and got great views of **Pink-billed** or **Nicaraguan Seed-Finch**.

We continued toward Arenal and soon the volcano came into view against a clear blue sky. We were very lucky as this was one of the rare times that it was fully visible in clear skies. We stopped and walked the road where we found **Rufous-tailed Jacamar**, **Rufous Mourner**, another **Laughing Falcon**, and the much hoped for **Fasciated Tiger Heron** at the “river of dreams”. When we arrived at the lodge, **the view of the volcano was completely clear, an**



amazing sight. We were immediately drawn to the feeders that hosted **Montezuma Oropendola**, **Blue-gray Tanager**, **Clay-colored Thrush**, and **Red-legged Honeycreeper**. Once settled into our rooms, we took an afternoon walk in the lodge gardens and picked up several species including **Yellow-bellied Elaenia**, **Bay-headed Tanager**, **Golden-hooded Tanager**, **Rufous-tailed Hummingbird**, **Bananaquit**, and **Wilson’s Warbler**. The Jamaican Vervain was in full flower offering good views of visiting **Violet-headed Hummingbirds**. A pair of **Crested Guans** looked to be settling in for the evening in a fruiting tree. We moved quietly toward them and got great views and photos. We walked a new forest trail which was quiet at first but then revealed **Bicolored Antbird**, **Slaty-backed Nightingale Thrush**, and **Spotted Antbird**. An **Ocellated Antbird** called nearby but remained elusive.

Day 8 Arenal

The birding was great around our rooms in the morning. **Purple-crowned Fairies** were seen jousting around a flowering tree and a group of 5 male and one female **Red-legged Honeycreepers** fed on flowers right off our verandas. Other birds around included **Cinnamon Becard**, **Summer Tanager**, **Buff-rumped Warbler**, and **White-necked Jacobin**. A **Thicket Antpitta** (or two) called from the forest but did not show. At the feeders, the **Montezuma Oropendolas** dominated and in between their visits to the banana table, there were **Red-legged**



Honeycreeper, **Green Honeycreeper**, Clay-colored Thrush, Blue-gray Tanager, Crimson-collared Tanager, and Baltimore Oriole. The nearby flowers hosted **Black-crested Coquette**, **Rufous-tailed Hummingbird**, and **Bananaquit** while the nearby trees offered **Chestnut-sided Warbler**, **Red-billed Pigeon**, **Brown Jay**, and **Tropical Parula**. A **Buff-rumped Warbler** swished on the ground while a **Great Currawong** and a **White-nosed Coati** prospected for scraps falling from the feeders.

In the gardens after breakfast, we found **Black-striped Sparrow**, **Black-cowled Oriole**, **Band-backed Wrens**, **Yellow-faced Grassquit**, more **Crested Guans**, **Green Thorntail**, **Orange-bellied Trogon**, **Smoky Brown Woodpecker**, and **White-crowned Parrot**. We walked along a road between a sprawling field and the forest and spotted a **Coyote** sitting quietly in the open. We entered the forest on the Waterfall Trail and soon encountered a frantic flock consisting of **Striped Treehaunter**, **Plain Xenops**,



Buff-throated Foliage Gleaner, **Slate-colored Grosbeak**, **Wedge-billed Woodcreeper**, **Chestnut-backed Antbird**, **Lineated Woodpecker**, **Russet Antshrike**, and **White-throated Shrike Tanager**! Pandemonium ensued as we tried to take in the frenetic birds all around us. In any direction, we could see **Sulphur-rumped Flycatcher**, **Black-and-white Warbler**, **Stripe-breasted Wren**, **Chestnut-sided Warbler**, or **Lesser Greenlet**. The **White-throated Shrike Tanager** was the biggest prize here and the whole experience filled us with frustration and elation at the same time!

Catching our breath, we wandered back through the garden and into the forest on the other side where **Steve modeled the latest in leaf wear**. The forest was quieting down but still offered **Tawny-capped Euphonia** and **White-breasted Wood Wren**. A **Speckled Racer** (snake) was being mobbed as it disappeared under a bush and some **Band-backed Wrens** were seen just before we headed in for lunch.

After lunch, we took the van to explore some areas along the road. Our roadside stops and walks along the road yielded **Yellow-throated Euphonias**, a **Short-tailed Hawk**, **Bare-crowned Antbird**, **Bay Wren**, **Black-cowled Orioles**, **Stripe-throated Hermit**, **Golden-winged Warbler**, **Mourning Warbler**, **Swainson's Thrush**, **Dusky Antbird**, **White-crowned Parrot**, **Great Antshrike**, and **Buff-throated Saltator**. The sunset was gorgeous over Arenal Lake and we



ended the day with fabulous photos of the pink and blue sky.

Day 9 Arenal

This morning greeted us with misty rain making us feel even more fortunate to have witnessed Arenal Volcano in the clear weather. Before breakfast, a group of **Gray-headed Chachalacas** was seen feeding in some trees behind the feeders. The birds were hanging around and finally the fruit man showed up and started restocking. Before he finished, at least thirty **Montezuma Oropendolas** descended on the fruit and soon there was **Passerini's Tanager**, **Red-legged Honeycreeper**, **Blue-gray Tanager**, **Crimson-colored Tanager**, **Black-cheeked Woodpecker**, **Black-cowled Oriole**, and **Golden-hooded Tanagers**. **Variable Seedeaters** and **Buff-rumped Warblers** were around as the **Great Currasow** appeared and jumped up toward the table feeder. It missed its landing and crashed back down to the ground and then made another unsuccessful attempt to get up to the banana on the table. The **Gray-headed Chachalacas** flew down the hill behind the feeders flying one at a time across an opening until all 8 had passed. After breakfast, the rain continued so we spent more time enjoying the show at the feeders.



When it looked brighter, we made our way down to the Arenal Hanging Bridges to do the two-mile birding hike over fifteen bridges. It was still raining but the birding was pretty good with nice views of a male **Spotted Antbird**, **Broad-billed Motmot**, **Spotted Woodcreeper**, and **Smoky-brown Woodpecker**. A **Buff-rumped Warbler** moved ahead of us up the track and soon we encountered a flock that held **Sulphur-rumped Flycatcher**, **Slaty Antwren**, **Buff-throated Foliage Gleaner**, **Long-billed Gnatwren**, another **Spotted Antbird**, and good views of **Streak-crowned Antvireo**! Moving on we added **Olivaceous Woodcreeper** and a short

diversion above the Pit Viper Tunnel produced **Buff-throated Foliage Gleaner** and another **White-throated Shrike Tanager**! Once again we found ourselves in the middle of a frantic flock and we laughed when we realized that we were all uttering lots of “ooh-oohs” and “ah-ahs” as we tried to get on the fast moving birds. We nailed a few down including **Russet Antshrike**, **Slaty-capped Flycatcher**, **Ruddy Treerunner**, and **Cocoa Woodcreeper**. From one of the bridges, we had **Lesser Greenlets**, **Purple-crowned Fairy**, **Ochre-bellied Flycatcher**, **Black-and-white Warbler**, and **Stripe-breasted Wren** and back in the forest we had **White-collared Manakin**, a pair of

Wedge-billed Woodcreepers close on a tree, **Silver-throated Tanager**, and **Tawny-capped Euphonia**. The trail exit opened into a lawn with scattered trees where we found one of the few **Rufous-collared Sparrows** of the trip. As we drove away, there were **Short-tailed Hawk** and **Gray Hawks** seen and **Yellow-faced** and **Blue-black Grassquits** seemed to pop out of the grasses along the road. We had lunch at a roadside restaurant and got better views of **Keel-billed Toucan**.

In the afternoon, we walked the road above the lake and found several **Purple-crowned Fairies** feeding on a flowering bush. **Black-throated Wren** was eventually seen and a troop of **Collared Aracaris** came in. The **Summer Tanagers** glowed brilliant red in the afternoon light and we had **Black-cowled Oriole** and several noisy **Great Kiskadees**. A **Swallow-tailed Kite** flew over quickly but still looked magnificent. We ended the day with **Green Honeycreeper**, **Cinnamon Becard**, **Yellow Tyrannulet**, a young male **Blue-black Grosbeak** in mottled plumage, **Great Antshrike**, and a **White-crowned Parrot** perched atop a tree. In the evening we reminisced about the trip over bottles of wine and a delicious dinner.

Day 10 Arenal to San Jose

On our last morning, some of us were out before breakfast to take in **Black-cheeked Woodpecker** and the flock of five males and one female **Red-legged Honeycreepers** in the Vervain in front of our rooms. Paul had **Black-crested Coquette** and **White-necked Jacobin** as well and the **Thicket Antpitta** was again calling. A **Black Phoebe** was hawking insects in the driveway and we saw **Band-backed Wren**, **Cinnamon Becard**, **Carmioli's Tanager**, and **Buff-rumped Warbler**. Steve coaxed in a **Song Wren** that showed amazingly well! The usuals were around as well - **Variable Seedeater**, **Social Flycatcher**, **Boat-billed Flycatcher**, and **Great Kiskadee** and a **Red-billed Pigeon** showed well perched on a power line. The feeders held the same cast of characters plus **Black-striped Sparrow**



and after breakfast we bid farewell to Arenal. We stopped for a group of **White-throated Magpie Jays** on the way out and also stopped for a **Harris's Hawk** perched on a dead tree close to the road.



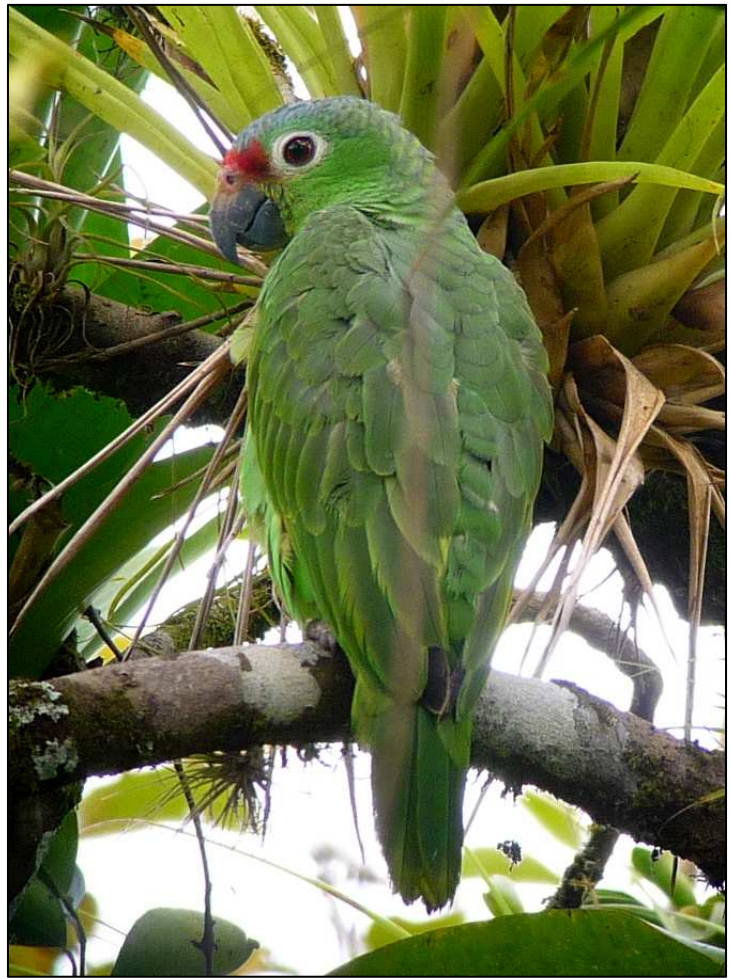
After a windy journey through the fog, we stopped at a butterfly garden with feeders that attracted **Violet Sabrewing**, **Green Hermit**, **Green-crowned Brilliant**, **Violet-crowned Woodnymph**, **Rufous-tailed hummingbird**, **Purple-throated Mountain Gem**, **White-bellied Mountain Gem**, and the endemic **Copper-headed Emerald**. We had a quick tour of the butterfly garden and then continued on our way back to San Jose for the night enjoying a nice dinner and sharing stories of our wonderful trip to Costa Rica!

This was a great group to travel with and this made it all the more fun to explore some of the lesser know areas of Costa Rica. Thanks to everyone for their lightheartedness, enthusiasm, and camaraderie. We look forward to traveling with you again!

Steve & Gina



Red-legged Honeycreeper



Red-lored Parrot



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