JOIN CAROLINA BIRD CLUB AND LIFE BIRD TOURS FOR 10 DAYS OF BIRDING SOME OF COSTA RICA’S BEST HOT SPOTS INCLUDING LA SELVA, SAVEGRE VALLEY AND CARARA NATIONAL PARK. THIS WILL BE ANOTHER FANTASTIC COSTA RICA ADVENTURE WITH CBC MEMBER SHERRY LANE OF LIFE BIRD TOURS, LLC AND EXCELLENT LOCAL BIRD GUIDE STEVEN EASLEY WHO HAVE LED 5 PRIOR CBC BONUS TRIPS FOR THE CAROLINA BIRD CLUB TO COSTA RICA. WE EXPECT TO SEE APPROXIMATELY 300 SPECIES OF BIRDS INCLUDING MANY HUMMINGBIRDS, PARROTS, TROGONS, TOUCANS, MOTMOTS AND OF COURSE THE STUNNING RESPLENDENT QUETZAL!
Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl

Itinerary

DAY 1, APRIL 11 – ARRIVAL TO SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA – SHORT TRANSFER TO HOTEL ROBLEDAL

After arrival at the (SJO) San Jose International Airport, you will be met by a representative from the Hotel Robledal who will transfer you to the hotel which is approximately 15 minutes from the airport.

Please note: The Free Hotel Robledal Shuttle Service only functions between the hours of 5am-11pm. If you plan on arriving or departing Costa Rica outside of these hours please contact us for further assistance and information.

1 NT HOTEL ROBLEDAL

DAY 2, APRIL 12– HOTEL ROBLEDAL –
On our first exciting day of birding in beautiful Costa Rica, we will begin at sunrise with a short walk at the Hotel Robledal. Some of our first birds might include; Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl, White-winged & Inca Doves, Clay-colored Thrush, Tropical Kingbird, Great Kiskadee, Rufous-naped Wren, Yellow Warbler, Melodious Blackbird and the gorgeous Spot-breasted Oriole.

After a traditional breakfast of “Huevos revueltos, Gallo Pinto, Platáno Maduro y Café de Costa Rica” (Scrambled Eggs, Rice & Beans, Ripe Plantain & Costa Rican Coffee), we will load up our comfortable bus and make our way through into the Pacific lowlands, we will stop on several occasions looking for; Least Grebe, Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Southern Lapwing, Golden-naped & Red-crowned Woodpeckers, Costa Rican Swift and the recently split Isthmian Wren (formerly Plain). Another bird to watch for along this drive is the impressive King Vulture. This large white-colored vulture is usually not hard to pick out from the smaller Black & Turkey Vultures that dominate the skies of Costa Rica.

After a few more short stops to look for; Gray & Roadside Hawks, Pearl Kite, Smooth-billed Ani, Plain-breasted Ground-Dove, Pale-breasted Spinetail and Tropical Mockingbird, we will arrive at the welcoming Villa Lapas Hotel. Located in close proximity to the Rio Tarcoles and the famous Carara National Park, this lodge will act as the perfect base for the next couple days of exploration.
DAY 3, APRIL 13– CARARA NATIONAL PARK – RIO TARCOLES BOAT TOUR

After an early start and a quick cup of coffee or tea at the lodge, we will take a short walk around the impressive and expansive hotel grounds in search of; Scarlet Macaw, Lesson’s Motmot (formerly Blue-crowned), White-tipped & Gray-chested Doves, Plain Xenops, Black-hooded Antshrike, Chestnut-backed & Dusky Antbirds, Southern ardlesTyrannulet, Long-tailed Manakin, Brown Jay, Blue-black Grosbeak and Yellow-throated Euphonia.
Following breakfast, we will drive to the nearby Carara National Park and hike various trails that lead into one of the most biodiverse areas on Earth. The Lowland Pacific Rainforest is a habitat zone that has been reduced greatly in the last 100 years from human pressure, especially agriculture. This habitat, which is similar to areas of the Amazon Basin, is unique to Central America and is only found in Costa Rica and a small area in neighboring Panama. The birding possibilities are many and we hope to find; Great Tinamou, the near-endemic Baird’s Trogon, Pale-billed Woodpecker, Dot-winged Antwren, Streak-chested Antpitta, Black-faced Anthrush, Golden-crowned Spadebill, Ruddy-tailed, Ochre-bellied & Sulphur-rumped Flycatchers, Eye-ringed Flatbill, Rufous Piha, Red-capped & Blue-crowned Manakins, Long-billed Gnatwren and cheerful family groups of Riverside Wrens. If we are lucky enough to find an Army Ant swarm, that would dramatically increase our chances of seeing Tawny-winged Woodcreeper, Bicolored Antbird and Gray-headed Tanager.
After a great morning of interior forest birding, we will return to the hotel for a buffet style lunch and a nice siesta. The swimming pool and air conditioned rooms will be much appreciated retreats from the hot temperatures in the Pacific lowlands.

The afternoon activity is a lovely boat ride on the Rio Tarcoles. Following a short 15-minute drive to the boat dock, you can sit back and relax while your guide and boat captain point out all the excellent wetland species of the area. Birdlife is abundant and a few of the numerous possibilities include; Brown Pelican, Neotropic Cormorant, Magnificent Frigatebird, Wood Stork, Bare-throated Tiger-Heron, Great Blue, Tricolored, Green & Boat-billed Herons, Roseate Spoonbill, White Ibis, Osprey, Common Black-Hawk, Crested & Yellow-headed Caracaras, Purple Gallinule, Northern Jacana, the
localized Collared Plover, Black-necked Stilt, Yellow-naped Parrot, Ringed, Green & American Pygmy Kingfishers and the beautiful Mangrove Swallow.

Bare-throated Tiger-Heron juvenile

Boat-billed Heron
Also, some of the largest American Crocodiles on Earth can be seen along this stretch of river. Two of the largest, named Tornado and Osama by the locals, can sometimes be seen along the banks. Spiny-tailed Iguana and the “Jesus Christ Lizard” or Pacific Basilisk are also quite common on the boat tour. At dusk flocks of Lesser Nighthawks can be seen catching insects in flight above the river, which is always a nice way to end a great day of birding.

NT 2 of 3 VILLA LAPAS

American Crocodile

DAY 4, APRIL 14 – Carara National Park / Mangroves

After breakfast, we will once again visit Carara National Park and hike along a new trail, which could provide us views of; Slate-headed Tody-Flycatcher, Greenish Elaenia, White-winged Becard, Rufous-breasted Wren and the stunningly beautiful Orange-collared Manakin.

Central American Spider Monkey, White-throated Capuchin, Mantled Howler, Central American Agouti and the rare Northern Ghost-Bat are a few mammals possible while hiking the trail system in Carara National Park.
In the afternoon we visit the habitat zone known as Guanacaste. This dry scrub habitat stretches from Costa Rica all the way to southern Texas. New birds will be added with almost every roadside stop and could include; Short-tailed & Zone-tailed Hawks, Laughing Falcon, Double-striped Thick-knee, Common Ground-Dove, Orange-fronted Parakeet, the shy Lesser Ground-Cuckoo, Scaly-breasted, Steely-vented & Cinnamon Hummingbirds, Black-headed Trogon, Turquoise-browed Motmot, Lineated Woodpecker, Yellow-olive & Nutting’s Flycatchers, White-throated Magpie-Jay, White-lored & Tropical Gnatcatchers, Gray-crowned Yellowthroat, Stripe-headed Sparrow, Streak-backed Oriole and Scrub Euphonia.
We will visit an area where the Guanacaste scrub and the mangroves blend together. This transitional scrub habitat can be very productive, offering the best of both zones. A few highly sought-after targets will be; the endangered and endemic Mangrove Hummingbird, Panama Flycatcher, Northern Scrub-Flycatcher and the localized Mangrove Vireo. Other more commonly encountered species in this area are; Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet, Streaked & Brown-crested Flycatchers, Banded Wren, the distinctive mangrove subspecies of Yellow Warbler and the skulking Olive Sparrow. On rare occasions the retreating Rufous-necked Wood-Rail can also be seen walking deep inside the mangrove swamp, but sharp eyes and a bit of luck may be needed.
Our last morning in the Pacific lowlands will be spent tracking down birds still missing from our now impressive bird list. Pre-breakfast birding near the Tarcoles Village could yield; Gray-cowled Wood-Rail (formerly Gray-necked), the tiny Olivaceous Piculet and the declining (at least locally) Scrub Greenlet.

Orange-collared Manakin
DAY 6, APRIL 16 – HOTEL TALARI AND LOS CUSINGO RESERVE

Our morning birding will begin in the beautiful grounds of our lodge. We will be on the hunt for Long-billed Starfront, Lesson’s Motmot, Streaked Flycatcher and Olivaceous Piculet.

We will visit the Los Cusingos Reserve. This reserve was once the home of the famous naturalist Alexander Skutch and is now a forest reserve in honor of his dedication and study of Costa Rica’s wildlife, especially birds. Possible birds include Black-throated
Trogon, White-crowned Parrot, Fiery-billed Aracari, Blue-crowned, Orange-collared and Red-capped Manakins.

In the afternoon we will make our way into the Talamanca highlands. A worthwhile stop in route is small hotel called Bosque del Tolomuco. Over the years this site has proven to be a great place to add a few extremely localized species. Snowy-bellied Hummingbird, White-tailed Emerald, Brown-capped Vireo, Speckled Tanager, White-naped & Chestnut-capped Brushfinches and Elegant Euphonia are birds that will be targeted in the beautiful flower-filled garden of the lodge. White-crested Coquette is also an infrequent visitor to this area, but at times can be found feeding alongside other more common species.

We will arrive at the wonderful Savegre Mountain Lodge in the late afternoon. With comfortable rooms, professional service and excellent food, this hotel is really tough to beat.

NT 1 of 2 SAVEGRE MOUNTAIN LODGE

DAY 7, APRIL 17 – SAVEGRE VALLEY AND CERRO DE LA MUERTE

We will start with a quick cup of coffee or tea at dawn on the balcony behind reception. Just holding the warm cup in your hands will feel nice, because of the striking chill in the air. The lodge is set at around 7,200 feet and it can be quite cool before the sun rises over the nearby mountain ridgeline. Following coffee and a short drive in the bus, we will find ourselves searching for the most sought-after bird in all of Costa Rica, the gorgeous Resplendent Quetzal. Finding a fruiting “aguacatillo tree” or wild avocado tree is the best way to get great looks at this spectacular species. Once we have gotten satisfactory views, we will head back to the lodge and enjoy a wonderful breakfast.
The rest of the morning will be spent hiking on the mountain trails located high above
the lodge. Massive native oak trees dominate the landscape and the overall scenery is
pretty amazing. A few birds we may encounter on the Los Robles and Quebrada Trails
are; Spotted Wood-Quail, Band-tailed & Ruddy Pigeons, Black-faced Solitaire, Collared
Redstart, Ruddy Treerunner, Buffy Tuftedcheek, Spot-crowned Woodcreeper and
cheerful flocks of Black-cheeked Warblers. Occasionally the scarce Ochraceous Pewee
can be found or possibly a flyover of a formidable Ornate Hawk-Eagle.

After lunch and some time for a quick siesta, we will bird in the lower reaches of the
valley, which could produce; Black Guan, the resident subspecies of Red-tailed Hawk,

Later, we will visit a small feeder station along the main road near the top of the valley. This location is great for bird photography and; Acorn Woodpecker, Flame-colored Tanager, Sooty Thrush, Yellow-thighed Finch and Sooty-capped Chlorospingus always seem to be posing for the perfect shot.
A few targets for the latter part of the afternoon will be the difficult Wrenthush (formerly Zeledonia), the tiny and sneaky Timberline Wren and the very easy, yet localized Volcano Junco. Just after dark in the higher parts of the valley, we will try our luck with the near-endemic Dusky Nightjar.

NT 2 of 2 SAVEGRE MOUNTAIN LODGE

DAY 8, APRIL 18 — SAVEGRE - TRANSFER TO SARAPIQUI VIA PARAISO DEL QUETZAL

At least one main birding stop will be made on this journey at a place called Paraiso Quetzal. Here, we will witness a completely new set of hummingbirds while watching for other highland specialities from a large balcony overlooking the stunning valley below. Lesser Violetear (formerly Green), Volcano Hummingbird and the aptly-named Fiery-throated Hummingbird will be just feet away posing for top-notch photos. Hairy Woodpecker, Black-billed Nightingale-Thrush, Mountain Thrush, Black-capped Flycatcher, Mountain Elaenia, Long-tailed & Black-and-yellow Silky-Flycatchers, Yellow-thighed & Large-footed Finches and small flocks of Sooty-capped Chlorospingus are all to be expected.

Following lunch at a local restaurant, we will work our way towards La Quinta and visit an area called Pueblo Nuevo. Making our way through pineapple plantations and patches of scrub, we hope to find a wide range of secondary growth species. A few possibilities in this area are; Crimson-fronted & Olive-throated Parakeets, White-crowned & Brown-hooded Parrots, Groove-billed Ani, Great & Barred Antshrikes, Yellow Tyrannulet, Yellow-bellied Elaenia, Canebrake Wren (formerly Plain), Olive-crowned Yellowthroat, Thick-billed Seed-finch and the sexually dimorphic White-lined Tanager.
Also for those members of the group interested in amphibians, we can look for the stunning Red-eyed Leaf-frog at La Quinta Country Inn before dinner.

Barred Antshrike

Red-eyed Leaf-Frog
DAY 9, APRIL 19 – LA SELVA BIOLOGICAL STATION

A visit to the La Selva Biological Station in the Caribbean lowlands will certainly be one of the most productive of the trip. This area is filled with an abundance of tropical wildlife. After an early breakfast at the lodge, we will drive for about 20 minutes to the entrance of the research station. Birding from the parking lot is excellent and numerous birds can be spotted in the tops of nearby trees. A few possibilities while birding outside the station include; Semiplumbeous Hawk, Orange-chinned Parakeet, Red-lored

The La Selva Biological Station protects around 3,700 acres of pristine lowland rainforest and is home to a wealth of biodiversity. As we begin birding along several of the well maintained trails inside the reserve, we will be focusing on the following species; Great Curassow, Green Ibis, Crested Guan, Black-throated & Slaty-tailed Trogons, Broad-billed & Rufous Motmots, White-necked & Pied Puffbirds, Wedge-billed Woodcreeper, Black-crowned Antshrike (formerly Western Slaty), Black-capped Pygmy-Tyrant, White-ringed Flycatcher and the tiny Olive-backed Euphonia. The bird possibilities at La Selva are many and this list could go on for several more paragraphs.
Black-capped Pygmy-Tyrant

Mammals are also well represented here and the possibilities include both Hoffmann’s Two-toed & Brown-throated Three-toed Sloths, Central American Spider Monkey, White-throated Capuchin, Mantled Howler, Collared Peccary and Central American Agouti. Noteworthy reptiles and amphibians include the dragon-like Green Basilisk, the massive Green Iguana, the rapid and colorful Central American Whiptail and the diminutive Strawberry Poison Dart-Frog.

Green Basilisk

On this day both lunch and dinner will be at the La Quinta Country Inn. We will also have a small break after lunch to rest our legs before heading out again. Don’t forget to check out the bird feeders near reception after lunch. Birds such as; Gray-headed
Chachalaca, Collared Aracari, Crimson-collared & Golden-hooded Tanagers, Green & Red-legged Honeycreepers, Red-throated Ant-Tanager, Grayish & Black-headed Saltators and the charming Orange-billed Sparrow can all be seen and photographed from a close distance.

After our afternoon outing back at La Selva, we will try to find both Common Pauraque and Short-tailed Nighthawk at a site near the station.

**NT 2 of 2 LA QUINTA COUNTRY INN**

![Red-legged Honeycreeper](image)

**DAY 10, APRIL 20 – LA VIRGEN DEL SOCORRO VALLEY – CINCHONA AND LA PAZ WATERFALL GARDENS**

On our last day of birding we will head into the attractive La Virgen del Socorro Valley, we will watch for raptor species perched along the roadside. The elegant Bat Falcon can at times be spotted on dead snags in this area, yet the more common Broad-winged Hawk is more frequently seen. We will be spend time looking for mixed species flocks along a beautiful secluded stretch of road, deep in the forested valley. Here, we hope to find; Collared Trogon, Spotted Woodcreeper, Russet Antshrike, the uncommon Rufous-browed Tyrannulet, Slaty-capped Flycatcher, Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant, Tufted Flycatcher, Rufous Mourner, Slate-throated Redstart, Golden-crowned Warbler and Carmiol’s Tanager (formerly Olive). We will also scan the large rocky river at the base of the valley for Torrent Tyrannulet and American Dipper. On clear sunny days it is often the raptors that steal the show with possibilities of White, Barred & Short-tailed Hawks and the graceful Swallow-tailed Kite.
Our next stop will be at a bird feeder station in the small village of Cinchona, which is just a few miles further down the road. While watching a distant waterfall, we can expect great views of Red-headed & Prong-billed Barbets and the comical Northern Emerald-Toucanet. The shy Buff-fronted Quail-Dove can at times appear below the balcony and the brilliantly colored Silver-throated Tanagers are fun to photograph. Also watch for the localized White-bellied Mountain-Gem, which is often present attending the hummingbird feeders on the back porch.

Not far up the road towards the lush Caribbean side of Costa Rica, we will stop at the La Paz Waterfall Garden. More active hummingbird feeders await us and offer an opportunity to enjoy these flying jewels at close range. A few different hummingbird species that can be seen here are; Green Hermit, Green Thorntail, Black-bellied Hummingbird and the endemic Coppery-headed Emerald. Other birds we might see in the cloud-forest while hiking a few short trails near the restaurant include; Smoky-brown Woodpecker, Red-faced Spinetail, Spotted Barbtail, Dark Pewee, Ochraceous Wren, Gray-breasted Wood-Wren, Slaty-backed Nightingale-Thrush, Tropical Parula, Costa Rican (formerly Three-striped) & Blackburnian Warblers, Common Chlorospingus, Spangle-cheeked Tanager, Scarlet-thighed Dacnis and Yellow-thighed Finch.
Tropical Parula

Following an excellent buffet lunch, we will walk down a well maintained trail that allows fantastic point-blank views of several large waterfalls. Here, the gushing river perfectly dissect the lovely cloud-forest habitat. Our bus will meet us along the roadway below, which will save us from the long hike back up the mountain.

DAY 11, APRIL 21 – INTERNATIONAL DEPARTURES

Transportation will be provided from the Hotel Robledal to the (SJO) San Jose International Airport for your international flights. Your transport times will be arranged with the reception at the Hotel Robledal. Most flights to the United States leave in the morning and this means you should be able to make it home by evening. We hope to see you again on another awesome tour, safe travels!

End of services...

PRICE PER PERSON BASED ON DOUBLE OCCUPANCY: $3,065
(based on 8 participants)

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT FOR THE ABOVE ADD: $560 (Single supplement applies to anyone staying in a room by themselves, hotels charge more per person for single rooms)
About the Trip Leaders:

Sherry Lane: Tour Leader  She lives in Wilmington NC. She is the founder of LifeBird Tours, LLC and has led 5 successful Carolina Bird Club Bonus Trips to Costa Rica over the several years. LifeBird Tours, LLC provides International birding and nature tours. See LifeBirdtours.com for full details.

Steven Easley: Birding Guide  He lives in Costa Rica near Turrialba with his wife Magdalena. Steven is a very accomplished bird guide and nature photographer. His wealth of knowledge on all things natural will be evident from day one whether it is birds, butterflies, dragonflies, damselflies, leafhoppers, mammals, reptiles or amphibians. Steven has been guiding in Costa Rica for the past 15 years. Prior to Costa Rica he was a bird guide in Kenya for 6 years. He is a guide who is serious about birding but also wants everyone to have a good time in the process. He has developed a large following of loyal birders who not only appreciate his guiding skills and birding knowledge but also his sense of humor and his many stories of living in Kenya. These rare traits make for an unforgettable experience while on tour with him in Costa Rica.

General Trip Information

Birds  Expect to see approximately 300 species on this tour with a good representation of Costa Rica’s hummingbirds, toucans, woodpeckers, trogons, tanagers, oropendolas and much more. A checklist will be provided to each participant. Every evening, either before or after dinner, our guide will go over the daily checklist with us.

Mammals  This tour has possibilities of seeing Mantled Howler, Central American Spider-Monkey, White-faced Capuchin, White-nosed Coati, both Two-toed and Three-toed Sloths, American Agouti and Honduran White Bats. Other common species on the tour include Red-tailed Squirrel and Variegated Squirrel.

Photography opportunities are excellent at feeder sites and around the lodges. Depending on your equipment and skill you will have good chances on the wider trails in the forested areas we will visit.

Meals  All meals from breakfast – April 12 through breakfast – April 21 are included in the price. Dinner the night of arrival is not included in the price as it depends on our flight schedule. The hotel we will be staying at has a restaurant where you can order a-la-carte and pay for directly to the hotel for this meal.

Special Diets  Our agents in Costa Rica will pass on all such requests to the hotels and they will do their best to ensure (but of course cannot guarantee) that your needs will be met. Please be sure to tell us about any dietary restrictions in detail in order that they can make the necessary arrangements.

Water  will be provided on the bus throughout the tour in the form of refill jugs.
Transport  By comfortable Toyota Coaster which has seats for 16+ passengers. It is equipped with AC and is the perfect vehicle for our tour to Costa Rica. We will have a safe and dedicated driver with us throughout our tour.

Walking & Altitude  Costa Rica is a mountainous country so expect some trails to be steeper in parts - these will be taken slowly, with frequent stops to bird and rest. Rainforest trails can sometimes be muddy, best to have sturdy waterproof boots along for this trip. Sneakers or sandals are often ok for the lodge areas. The walking effort is mostly easy, but can be moderate at times due to the terrain and/or altitude at a few spots.

Insects  In higher elevations we should not expect a lot of annoying insects. Insect repellent is always good to have on hand in case we do run into mosquitoes or other annoying insects especially in lower elevations such as in the La Selva area.

Weather  In Costa Rica rainfall can occur anytime. The lowland areas are hot and humid in the middle of the day while the middle elevations are very pleasant. In the highlands it can get cold but never below freezing. You should definitely bring a fleece along for the evenings and early mornings while in the highlands.

A VALID PASSPORT IS REQUIRED TO ENTER COSTA RICA FROM THE USA and you must have at least 6 months left on your passport to enter so be sure your passport does not expire before October 10, 2020.

There are NO mandatory vaccinations to enter Costa Rica and there is NO risk of malaria either.

TRANSPORT INCLUDED IN THE PRICE:
Transport in a Toyota Coaster throughout the tour, 9 full days.
The Hotel Robledal’s Free Airport Shuttle runs from 5 AM to 11 PM for pick ups and drop offs.
The Shuttle driver will meet you in front of the Malinche Restaurant, which is located just outside of baggage claim to the right.

ENTRANCE FEES AND ACTIVITIES INCLUDED IN THE PRICE:
Boat ride on Tarcoles River
Visit to Los Cusingos Reserve
Entrance fee & lunch at La Paz Waterfall Gardens
Entrance fee to Cinchona Feeders
Full day at La Selva BS
Entrance fee to the Hummingbird Gardens @ Paraiso del Quetzal

Entrance fee to Bosque del Tolomuco

2 Entrance fees to Carara NP

**MEAL PLAN**

All meals included from breakfast April 12 through breakfast April 21

Note that on April 11 meals are not included because everyone has a different flight schedule. Hotel Robledal does have a restaurant to purchase meals.

*Water will be provided on the bus throughout the tour in the form of refill jugs.*

**ITEMS NOT INCLUDED IN THE PRICE:**

International airfare

Travel insurance

Pick ups or Drop offs from and to the Airport that are not between 5 AM and 11 PM

Tips to guide, driver, hotel staff, porters etc

Any items of personal nature such as phone calls, laundry, internet service etc.

Sodas or alcoholic beverages that are not provided as included in the meals

Any item not specifically mentioned as included above

**IF YOU WANT TO JOIN US ON THIS BONUS TRIP PLEASE CONTACT SHERRY LANE BY EMAIL.**

Slane360@yahoo.com

Sign up is on a first come first serve basis and you must be a member of Carolina Bird Club