



# ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

## Costa Rica

### Rancho Naturalista & La Selva

25<sup>th</sup> November to 1<sup>st</sup> December 2023 (7 days)



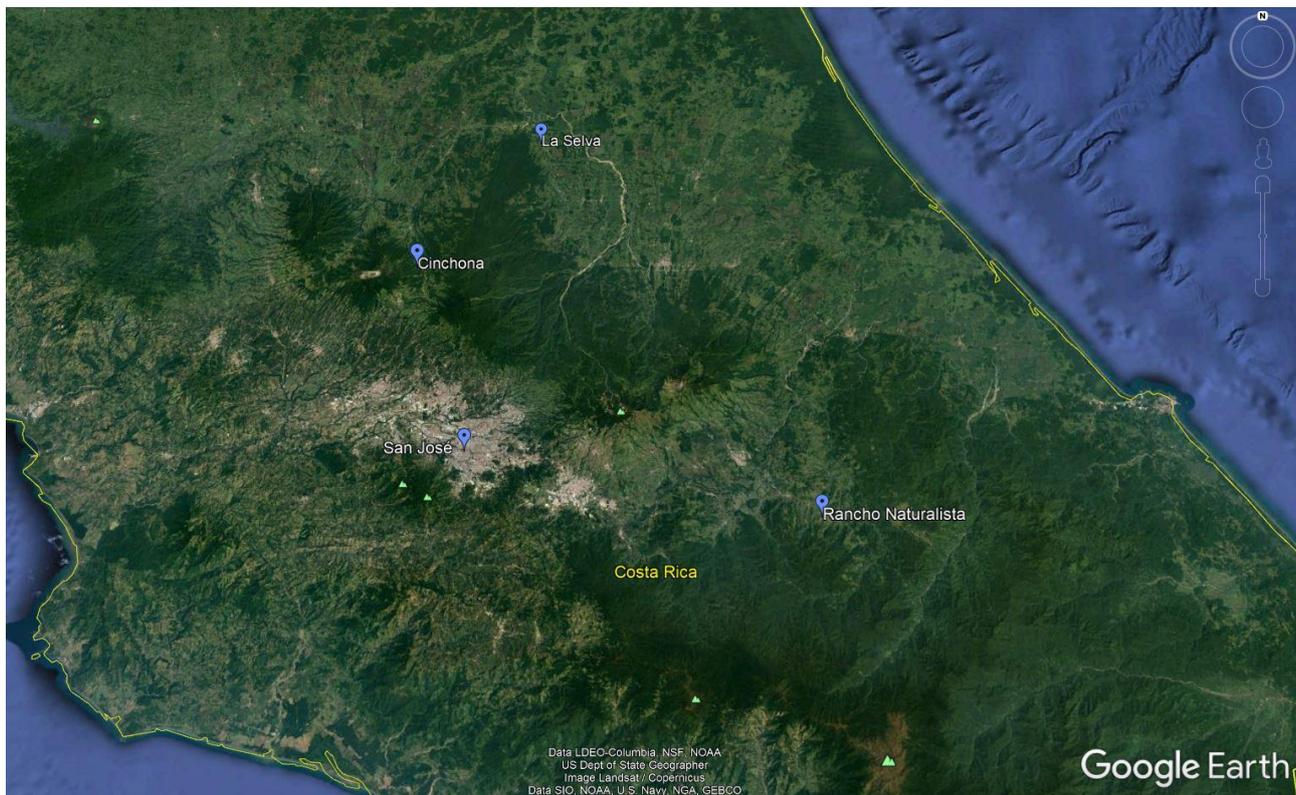
Snowcap by Adam Riley

*The small nation of Costa Rica has geared itself heavily towards avitourism and has developed a superb infrastructure to service the numerous visiting birders, and with over 850 species it is easy to understand why! The backbone of the country is formed by a scenic mountain range, and here the cloud forests are home to exotic species including Snowy Cotinga, Red-capped and White-crowned Manakins, Fiery-throated and Talamanca Hummingbird, Slaty-tailed and Black-throated Trogons, Long-tailed Silky-flycatcher, Black-and-yellow Phainoptila, Wrenthrush and Golden-browed Chlorophonia. We are primarily birding the Caribbean slope, but will also spend a day in the central highlands searching out many striking species of trogons, toucans, motmots and hummingbirds, among many other spectacular birds. Thrilling birding, quality lodges and a relaxed pace make this destination perfect for anyone who has yet to experience the exciting avifauna of Central America!*

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**THE TOUR AT A GLANCE...****ITINERARY**

<b>Day 1</b>	<b>Arrival in San José</b>
<b>Day 2</b>	<b>San José to Rancho Naturalista</b>
<b>Days 3 &amp; 4</b>	<b>Rancho Naturalista</b>
<b>Day 5</b>	<b>Rancho Naturalista to La Selva</b>
<b>Day 6</b>	<b>La Selva</b>
<b>Day 7</b>	<b>La Selva to San José via Cinchona</b>

**TOUR ROUTE MAP...**

**THE TOUR IN DETAIL...**

**Black-cheeked Woodpecker**  
by Adam Riley

**Day 1: Arrival in San José.** After arriving at Juan Santamaría International Airport in San José, you will be transferred to a hotel near the city for an overnight stay. Today is scheduled as an arrival day so you can arrive at any time you wish. This evening we will all meet at dinner to discuss our forthcoming adventures.

**Day 2: San José to Rancho Naturalista.** After breakfast we shall head to one of the premier birding lodges in Costa Rica. Rancho Naturalista is the perfect introduction to our tour of the country, relaxed, friendly and servicing delicious locally sourced gourmet food. Expect to be enchanted by the view from the balcony, the distant, smoking Turrialba Volcano on the horizon and numerous hummingbirds at arms-length. With over 450 species recorded in the general area, the next few days are sure to be packed with excitement.

Starting on the balcony, we shall work our way through a myriad of hummingbirds that may include Crowned Woodnymph, White-necked Jacobin, Green Hermit, Green Thorntail, Violet Sabrewing, Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer and Green-crowned Brilliant. Aside from the numerous hummingbirds, we can also expect to see the brightly coloured Scarlet-rumped and Blue-grey Tanagers, Black-cheeked Woodpecker, Montezuma Oropendola and bossy Collared Aracaris.

Moving off the deck, our focus will remain on hummers as we reach the *Verbena* hedges and search for one of the most targeted birds in Central America, the Snowcap. It is a frequent visitor along the flower laden hedges, where we may also find Black-crested Coquette, Violet-headed Hummingbird and possibly Garden Emerald.

We will also spend some time near the Hummingbird Pools, where any number of hummers and other birds arrive in the afternoon for a dip in the water or a drink. Aside from various hummingbirds, we may also see such skulking species as Tawny-throated Leaf-tosser, Dull-mantled Antbird or Great Tinamou venturing into the open, if only for a few seconds.

**Day 3: Rancho Naturalista.** We have a full day to fully explore the surrounding forests for as many of the speciality birds as we can find. Taking advantage of the early morning dapple light, we will search for some of the true skulkers. Walking quietly along the trails is our best chance to find Purplish-backed Quail-Dove, while often heard calling, they are sometimes seen walking in the open. We visit a known lek for the uncommon White-crowned Manakin, perhaps the most accessible site in Costa Rica for this pitch black manakin with a bright



**Violet Sabrewing** by Adam Riley





Snowy Cotinga by Adam Riley

white crown. Delving deeper into the forest, we hope to track down a singing Thicket Antpitta. A truly difficult species to see, we will need a good slice of luck to have views of this species. While targeting the specialities, we shall also keep a keen eye out for Bicolored Hawk, Rufous-winged Woodpecker, Zeledon's Antbird, both White-collared and White-ruffed Manakins, Slaty-capped Flycatcher, Brown-billed Scythebill and Scaly-breasted Wren. Having worked our way through the forests, we shall also spend some time in the nearby swampy pastures searching for the patchily distributed White-throated Flycatcher.

Moving into the secondary growth, we shall certainly hear Black-throated Wren before a little work should produce good sightings of these birds feeding in vine tangles. We will surely keep our eyes and ears out for Grey-headed Piprites, a poorly known and rarely seen species. Tawny-chested Flycatcher is another rare and localised species that we shall pay special attention to. Restricted to small patches of increasingly fragmented forest, our surroundings are perhaps the best place in the world to see this species. Medium sized, dull brown and taxonomically challenging, the Northern Schiffornis is another species located primarily by call. The more open secondary growth areas also provide us with good chances of finding Grey-headed Chachalaca, Brown-hooded Parrots and Finsch's Parakeets overhead, Scarlet-rumped Cacique, Chestnut-headed Oropendola, Black-headed Saltator and a host of tanagers including Black-and-yellow, Carmiol's, Speckled and Crimson-collared.

**Day 4: Rancho Naturalista to La Selva.** Today we will bird our way to the famed La Selva OTS station. Upon arriving at the La Selva Biological Station this afternoon, our avian 'welcoming committee' should include a profusion of parrots, trogons, toucans, flycatchers, honeycreepers, and tanagers that could well make it difficult to concentrate on the tasks of checking in and unloading! We have an afternoon to explore the trail systems at La Selva, allowing us to access a variety of habitats ranging from primary forest to river margins, although tearing ourselves away from the morning bird activity around the park's secondary forest edge can sometimes be a real challenge! The haunting calls of Great and Slaty-breasted Tinamou will likely be some of the first sounds of the morning, while as the dawn breaks there should be plenty to keep us busy with noisy Great Green Macaws and Olive-throated Parakeets cruising by overhead, Blue-chested Hummingbird, White-necked Puffbird, Chestnut-colored Woodpecker, Black-cowled and



Great Green Macaw by Adam Riley





**Red-capped Manakin by Doug Weschler**

flock-leading Red-throated Ant Tanager and family-oriented Blue-black Grosbeaks. Rufous-winged Woodpecker, Black-throated Wren, Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher, Long-billed Gnatwren, the impressive Rufous-tailed Jacamar and tiny Black-capped Pygmy Tyrant are all part of the diverse avifauna in the mosaic of secondary and primary woodlands here, where mammals are also abundant and fearless. Signs of digging along the trails are the tell-tale markers of Collared Peccary and Central American Agouti, while movements in the forest canopy above could well signal troops of Central American Spider Monkeys, or the massive Black Howler. Overhead we will also keep our eyes peeled for soaring raptors such as Short-tailed Hawk, Plumbeous Kite or even the scarce Semiplumbeous Hawk.

Some of the species that are often encountered in the more open, and secondary areas around La Selva and nearby birding sites include Green Ibis, Black-cheeked and Pale-billed Woodpeckers, Collared Aracari, Ringed and Green Kingfishers, Masked Tityra, White-collared and Lesser Swallow-tailed Swifts, widespread Roadside and Grey Hawks, Shining, Red-legged and Green Honeycreeper, Long-tailed Tyrant, Chestnut-headed and Montezuma Oropendolas, and Black-headed Saltator among many others.

**Day 6: La Selva to San José via Cinchona.** This morning we will bird the lodge grounds if we still need any species, before beginning our drive back to San José.

Much of our day will be spent birding slowly along the Cinchona Road, which should add some middle elevation and highland endemic species to the list.

Set against backdrop of stunning scenery, we shall search for Long-tailed

Baltimore Orioles, Olive-backed Euphonia and if we are lucky, the striking Snowy Cotinga. Tonight we can venture out for some night birding, with a few possibilities including Middle American (split from Vermiculated) Screech Owl, Mottled Owl, the outrageous-looking Spectacled Owl, and Short-tailed Nighthawk flying over the forest at dusk.

**Day 5: La Selva.** We have an entire day to explore the trail systems at La Selva, allowing us to access a variety of habitats ranging from primary forest to river margins, although tearing ourselves away from the morning bird activity around the park's secondary forest edge can sometimes be a real challenge!

The humid lowland rainforest habitat here allows us to search for Gartered, Slaty-tailed and Black-throated Trogons, White-collared and Red-capped Manakins near fruiting trees and bushes, while mixed flock activity can produce Fasciated and Black-crowned Antshrikes, the



**Yellow-thighed Brushfinch by Adam Riley**





**Fiery-throated Hummingbird** by Adam Riley

Silky-Flycatcher and Black-and-yellow Phainoptila, Sooty Thrush, Ruddy-capped and Black-billed Nightingale-Thrushes, Mountain Thrush, Ruddy Treerunner, Sooty-capped Bush Tanager, and Yellow-thighed Brushfinch

Wintering Wilson's and Black-throated Green Warblers may make an appearance alongside the resident Collared Whitestart, Black-cheeked and Flame-throated Warblers. We are likely to find Black-capped Flycatcher and Golden-browed Chlorophonia, and with luck, perhaps the uncommon Resplendent Quetzal, Buffy Tuftedcheek, Black Guan, Wrenthrush, and even Costa Rican Pygmy Owl. This area is very good for hummingbirds, with the most sought-after species being Fiery-throated, Talamanca, and Volcano Hummingbirds.

Roadside birding may turn up Collared Trogon, Zeledon's Antbird, Sooty-faced Finch, Red-headed Barbet and various tanagers. Any fruiting trees are worth scanning for Scarlet-thighed Dacnis and Bay-headed Tanager. We will keep an eye to sky during the day, as there are chances for White, Barred and Short-tailed Hawks, and possibly Ornate Hawk-Eagle.

**Day 7: Final departures.** The tour will conclude this morning after breakfast.

### **FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:**

**Tour dates, prices, single supplement rates, approximate flight costs and spaces available for this tour are displayed on our website. Please see under IMPORTANT NOTES below.**

#### **This includes:**

- All meals from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 7;
- All lodgings during the tour;
- All ground transportation;
- All national park and other reserve entrance fees; and
- All guiding services.

#### **This excludes:**

- **ANY** flights and airport/departure taxes;
- Tips for local guides and services;
- Visa fees;
- Any beverages;
- Special gratuities; and
- Telephone calls, laundry and other items of a personal nature.

**Single Supplement:** The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBL cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.



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**IMPORTANT NOTES:**

- a) Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is however fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing (usually 4 months before the tour.) The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates, which are also quoted in the respective fixed currency.
- b) Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration a small party supplement will have to be charged.
- c) Furthermore, these costs are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.
- d) Lastly, we may be forced to change or alter the itinerary and / or the designated Rockjumper leader/s at short or no notice due to unforeseen circumstances; please be aware that we will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.

**Tippling:** As noted above, gratuities are NOT included on this tour.

**Please Note:**

- It is important for the comfort of your fellow travellers that you do not over-pack. Kindly stick to 20kg (44lb) for check in luggage and 8kg (+-18lb) for hand luggage.
- It can be hot with harsh sun in some areas of Costa Rica, especially along the coast or in the lowlands, so please come prepared with hats and sun cream for protection. Humidity levels are also high throughout most of the country. Temperatures in the highlands can be quite cold, especially at night so please also pack some cold-weather gear.
- Mosquitoes and tiny bloodsucking flies can be numerous at times and it's advisable to pack a good supply of DEET or another effective insect repellent.
- Accommodation throughout the trip is quite comfortable and a variety of western and local cuisines are available throughout the tour.

**ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE DETAILS:**

This tour **does not** include **any** airfares. The tour begins with a welcome dinner in San José on day 1 and concludes in San José after breakfast on day 7.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your **Tour Confirmation** package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

**FLIGHTS:**

Juan Santamaría International Airport, San José (IATA: SJO) is the main port of entry for international flights into Costa Rica and is serviced by several international carriers. **Please DO NOT book any flights until you have consulted the Rockjumper office for confirmation on the status of the tour.**

