



Costa Rica is recognized as one of Central America's premier birding destinations, with an extraordinary range of ecosystems concentrated within a small country. From humid lowland rainforests and tropical dry forests to cool cloud forests and coastal mangroves, the variety of habitats is striking. Within this compact geography, visitors encounter active volcanoes, rugged mountains, and a vast network of protected reserves. With more than 930 bird species recorded, Costa Rica provides exceptional opportunities for discovery. Its strong conservation ethic and welcoming communities add depth and meaning to the journey.

DC BIRD ALLIANCE in partnership with **FLYWAY BIRDING TOURS** welcomes you to Costa Rica for a birding program that combines field observation, tropical ecology, and conservation. Traveling across a range of habitats and elevations, participants will explore some of the country's most important ecosystems while gaining insight into the diversity, behavior, and conservation of Neotropical birds..



FIERY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD



RED-LEGGED HONEYCREEPER



LESSON'S MOTMOT

DCBA COSTA RICA BIRDING TOUR 2027

Day 1 – Tuesday, February 9, 2027 – Central Valley – Heredia

Arrival at Juan Santamaría International Airport and short transfer to our hotel in the Central Valley, located at approximately 4,000 ft. Depending on arrival times, the hotel grounds offer an immediate introduction to Costa Rica's birdlife, with landscaped gardens, open lawns, and mature trees supporting a mix of common Central Valley species. Here we often encounter Lesson's Motmot, Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, Blue-gray Tanager, Great Kiskadee, and White-eared Ground-Sparrow moving along hedgerows and shaded areas. The mild climate at this elevation provides a comfortable start to the trip, with cooler evening temperatures compared to the lowlands. We use the afternoon to settle in and adjust after travel, followed by a short orientation meeting in the evening to review logistics, pacing, terrain conditions, and general birding approach for the tour.

Overnight at Hotel Bougainvillea. D

Day 2 – Wednesday, February 10, 2027 Central Valley to Arenal Foothills

We begin the day with early morning birding in the hotel gardens, taking advantage of active feeding periods when species such as Hoffmann's Woodpecker, Crimson-fronted Parakeet, and various euphonias are most detectable. After breakfast, we attend a presentation by Cerulea Project, a local conservation initiative focused on protecting species like the endemic Cabanis's Ground Sparrow, which is closely tied to fragmented urban and semi-rural environments. This visit provides useful context on conservation challenges in human-modified landscapes. Late morning, we depart toward the Arenal region (approx. 3–3.5 hours), moving from the Central Valley into wetter Caribbean-influenced foothill forest. Along the route, we stop at San Luis feeders to enjoy close up views of colorful tanagers and hummingbirds. Arrival at our lodge in the early afternoon, located on a private reserve at the base of Arenal Volcano. The property includes open viewpoints, forest trails, and active feeding areas where we may find species such as Great Curassow, Collared Aracari, Emerald Tanager, and Green Honeycreeper. Late afternoon birding around the lodge focuses on edge habitat and forest margins, often productive for toucans, oropendolas, and mixed flocks

Overnight at Arenal Observatory Lodge – BLD

Cabanis's Ground-Sparrow is one of Costa Rica's most localized and range-restricted endemic birds, found mainly in the Central Valley and nearby foothills. This secretive species depends on brushy fields, coffee-growing landscapes, hedgerows, and patches of secondary growth—habitats that have declined rapidly with urban expansion. Observing this bird offers a clear example of how working landscapes, small habitat corridors, and local conservation efforts can play an important role in protecting Costa Rica's endemic birdlife.



ORANGE-CHINNED PARAKEET



CABANIS'S GROUND-SPARROW

DCBA COSTA RICA BIRDING TOUR 2027

EMERALD TANAGER



Day 3 – Thursday, February 11, 2027 – Arenal

Early birding around the lodge grounds before breakfast, when activity is typically highest. We then spend the morning working the trail system, which provides access to both secondary and older forest. Army ant swarms are occasionally encountered here, and when present, can attract species such as Bicolored Antbird, Ocellated Antbird, and Plain-brown Woodcreeper, along with other opportunistic

followers. The terrain is moderate, with well-maintained trails and gradual elevation changes. In the afternoon, we visit a nearby suspension bridge system that places us at mid-canopy level, allowing better views of species that are otherwise difficult to observe from the forest floor. From these vantage points, we may encounter Emerald Tanager, White-ruffed Manakin, and various canopy tanagers moving through fruiting trees. Mammal sightings such as Mantled Howler Monkey and Hoffmann's Two-toed Sloth are also possible. We return to the lodge in the late afternoon for a more relaxed session overlooking the volcano, and after dinner, there is an option for a short night walk to search for species such as Black-and-white Owl and other wildlife.

Overnight at Arenal Observatory Lodge – BLD

Day 4 – Friday, February 12, 2027 – Arenal to Sarapiquí Lowlands

After breakfast, we depart for the Caribbean lowlands (approx. 2–2.5 hours), descending from the volcanic foothills of Arenal into the warmer and more humid forests of the Sarapiquí region. Along the route, changes in elevation and rainfall patterns become evident through shifts in vegetation and bird communities, transitioning into classic Caribbean lowland rainforest habitat. Before leaving the Arenal area, we make a stop at Eco Centro Danaus, a small private reserve and environmental education project near La Fortuna that protects wetland and secondary forest habitats within an increasingly developed landscape. The reserve's accessible trail system provides good opportunities for observing species associated with edge habitat, wetlands, and second-growth forest, while also highlighting local efforts in environmental education, habitat restoration, and sustainable land management. Upon arrival at our lodge in the Sarapiquí region, we begin birding along trails that pass through secondary forest, river edge, and mature growth within a larger forest corridor connected to protected areas nearby. The lodge grounds and surrounding habitats can produce species such as Keel-billed Toucan, Fasciated Antshrike, White-collared Manakin, and Cinnamon Becard. Open areas and fruiting trees near the dining area often attract tanagers, honeycreepers, and flycatchers. The afternoon is spent on the trails and observing activity around feeders and forest edges. Dinner will be at the lodge

Overnight at Selva Verde Lodge – BLD

WHITE-COLLARED MANAKIN



DCBA COSTA RICA BIRDING TOUR 2027

Day 5 – Saturday, February 13, 2027 – La Selva Biological Station

We depart early for La Selva Biological Station, one of the most important lowland research sites in the Neotropics. The trail system here is extensive and mostly flat, allowing us to cover a range of habitats including mature rainforest, river margins, and secondary growth. This area supports a high diversity of species, and we focus on both vocal detection and movement patterns in dense forest conditions.

During the morning, we may encounter Great Tinamou calling from the understory,

Rufous Motmot along shaded trails, and species such as Pied Puffbird and Rufous-tailed Jacamar in more open areas. Mixed flocks can include antwrens, woodcreepers, and small insectivores moving through mid-level vegetation. After lunch, we return to the La Selva area and continue birding along the river corridor and open grounds. This region is also an important stronghold for Great Green Macaw, which depends on large almendro trees for nesting, and we remain attentive for distant calls or flyovers.

Overnight at Selva Verde Lodge – BLD

Day 6 – Sunday, February 14, 2027 – Sarapiquí Region

This morning we visit the Eco Vida Project, where local conservation work focuses on reforestation, sustainable agriculture, and watershed protection. The visit provides a practical look at how conservation is implemented at a community level in working landscapes. We then continue to Cope Arte, a well-known site for locating roosting and cryptic species, where careful observation can reveal birds such as potoos, owls, and well-camouflaged forest species.

Along the way, we stop at feeder sites that offer close-range views of species such as Crimson-collared Tanager, Shining Honeycreeper, and Collared Aracari. The combination of structured stops and more exploratory birding allows for both targeted observation and broader habitat coverage. We return to the lodge in the late afternoon, with time to review species and observations from the day.

Overnight at Selva Verde Lodge – BLD



La Selva Biological Station is one of Costa Rica's most important tropical research sites, located in the Caribbean lowlands near Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí. Managed by the Organization for Tropical Studies, the station protects lowland rainforest connected to a broader biological corridor and has been central to decades of research on tropical ecology, conservation, and biodiversity. For birders, La Selva offers access to excellent forest trails, edge habitats, and open areas where lowland species can be observed in a setting strongly tied to science and conservation.

DCBA COSTA RICA BIRDING TOUR 2027

Day 7 – Monday, February 15, 2027 – Sarapiquí to Savegre Valley

We begin a longer transfer day (approx. 4.5 hours with stops), traveling from lowland rainforest into the Talamanca highlands. The route provides a clear transition through multiple habitat zones, including foothill forest, montane cloud forest, and eventually high-elevation oak forest above 7,000 ft. Temperatures drop noticeably as we gain elevation

Arrival in the Savegre Valley in the afternoon, where our lodge is situated along the river within largely intact highland forest. The surrounding habitat supports a distinct set of species adapted to cooler conditions. Late afternoon birding around the lodge focuses on gardens, feeders, and nearby forest edges, where we may encounter Talamanca Hummingbird, Slaty Flowerpiercer, and other highland specialists. This area is also one of the most reliable regions in the country for Resplendent Quetzal.

Overnight at Savegre Hotel Natural Reserve & Spa. BLD

Day 8 – Tuesday, February 16, 2027 – Savegre Valley and Highlands

Early start to work areas known for Resplendent Quetzal, particularly around fruiting wild avocado trees. Activity is often concentrated in the first hours of the morning. We then continue exploring a combination of forest trails and roadside habitats, targeting species associated with high-elevation oak forest and nearby open areas. As we move through

different elevations, we may encounter Long-tailed Silky-Flycatcher, Flame-throated Warbler, Sooty-capped Chlorospingus, and Dark Pewee, along with a variety of hummingbirds at feeders including Fiery-throated Hummingbird and White-throated Mountain-gem. A short visit to higher elevation habitat introduces páramo-like conditions where species such as Volcano Junco may be found. Terrain varies from easy to moderate, with cooler temperatures throughout the day.

Overnight at Savegre Hotel Natural Reserve & Spa. BLD

Day 9 – Wednesday, February 17, 2027 – Savegre Valley and Los Quetzales National Park

Early morning birding around the lodge and nearby forest edges in the Savegre Valley, where highland species are often most active during the first hours of the day. After breakfast, we depart for the páramo section of Los Quetzales National Park, reaching elevations of approximately 11,400 ft in the upper Talamanca range. This open high-elevation habitat provides opportunities to search for species adapted to colder conditions, including Volcano Junco and other regional specialties. Following our morning in the highlands, we stop for lunch at the well-known Miriam's Quetzal Café before continuing to Feathers Garden for a relaxed afternoon session around the feeders and gardens, often productive for hummingbirds and close-range observation opportunities. Before returning to the lodge, we spend additional time birding along sections of the Savegre River and nearby forest edge habitat.

Overnight at Savegre Hotel Natural Reserve & Spa. BLD



DCBA COSTA RICA BIRDING TOUR 2027

Day 10 – Thursday, February 18, 2027 – Savegre to Central Valley

Morning departure with a stop at Paraíso Quetzal, a high-elevation reserve offering access to montane forest and roadside birding in cool, often misty conditions. This site is productive for species such as Black-billed Nightingale-Thrush, Large-footed Finch, and other highland specialists that favor dense understory and forest edge.

After time in the field and lunch, we begin our descent back to the Central Valley (approx. 3 hours), passing through a mix of forested and agricultural landscapes. Arrival at our hotel in the late afternoon, followed by a final dinner where we review the trip, consolidate species lists, and close out logistics

Overnight at Hotel Bougainvillea. BLD

Day 11 – Friday, February 19, 2027 – Departures

Timed transfers to the international airport. A closing briefing highlights how the itinerary connected diverse ecosystems—from Central Valley farmlands to volcanic foothills, tropical rainforest, and highland cloud reserves—and how each stop reinforced the role of local families, community projects, and national parks in protecting Costa Rica's biodiversity. **B**

The Central Valley of Costa Rica is a vibrant region that is home to a rich variety of bird species. This area's diverse habitats, ranging from urban gardens and agricultural lands to montane forests, attract a plethora of birdlife. Notable species include the Lesson's Motmot, Clay-colored Thrush (Costa Rica's national bird), Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, and more. Birders can also spot several species of tanagers, warblers, and orioles, making the Central Valley a prime spot for both resident and migratory birds.



CLAY-COLORED THRUSH

Tour Difficulty and Conditions

This program is designed for participants with a general interest in birding and nature, including beginner and intermediate birders, and is best described as easy to moderate in difficulty. Most birding takes place on established trails, lodge grounds, forest roads, feeder areas, gardens, and accessible reserve paths, though participants should be comfortable walking on uneven terrain while carrying optic gear.

Most days begin early around sunrise, when bird activity is highest. Walking distances are generally moderate, often between 1–3 miles spread throughout the day rather than continuous hiking. Trails may include gravel, mud, roots, short inclines, suspension bridges, and occasionally slippery conditions, particularly in rainforest regions such as Sarapiquí and Arenal. The itinerary also moves through a broad elevational range, from warm Caribbean lowlands near sea level to cloud forest and one visit to páramo habitat above 11,000 ft in the Talamanca Mountains, where temperatures can be cooler.

Several transfer days involve drives of approximately 2–5 hours, usually broken up with birding stops and rest breaks. While this tour does not require technical hiking experience or exceptional physical fitness, participants should be comfortable with repeated early starts, changing weather conditions, moderate walking, and consecutive days of outdoor activity in tropical environments.

DCBA COSTA RICA BIRDING TOUR 2027

Included in the program:

- Professional Naturalist & Birding Guide services .
- Coach transportation throughout the program
- All meals indicated with B (Breakfast), L (lunch) and D (Dinner)
- All lodging in standard double occupancy (single supplement available at extra cost).
- All entrance fees and excursions.
- Updated Costa Rica bird check-list.
- Purified Water.
- Donations to DCBA and local conservation group.
- Gratuities.

Not included in the program:

- Airline ticket - Travel insurance - Alcoholic beverages - Personal expenses

DC BIRD ALLIANCE



PRICE PER PERSON
DOUBLE \$4600
SINGLE \$5600

DATES:
FEBRUARY 9 - 19
2027

GROUP SIZE:
10 BIRDERS



DCBA COSTA RICA BIRDING TOUR

- Bougainvillea Hotel
- Arenal Observatory Lodge
- Selva Verde Lodge
- Savegre Hotel Natural Reserve & Spa

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