

Costa Rica

July 26th – August 10th 2004

Introduction

To visit Central America during the wet season, with no North American migrants to augment the bird list, is always going to be a bit of a risk. However, rain can be a problem at any time of the year and some birds can be easier to see during the wet season, when butterflies are generally more numerous. Except for a couple of days, we were treated pretty well by the elements, so to some extent it was a case of swings and roundabouts.

The greatest regret of all was that John van der Dol, who spent many long hours setting up our trip, was unable to travel with us for health reasons. Saying goodbye to us at Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory that July morning must have been very hard. However, it must be gratifying to John to know that the arrangements he made went splendidly. Our accommodation and food was good throughout, our driver was very helpful and the guides arranged for each site varied from very good to the very best that can reasonably be expected on an overseas birding trip. My thanks to Simon Ellis of Birdwatch Costa Rica for the work he put in to ensure that everything went well for us.

The itinerary worked pretty well and most of us appreciated the opportunity to spend as little time travelling between sites as possible, though Costa Rica is a small country that lends itself to such an approach more than some others.

I should like to thank everyone for your company and for making the task of ensuring that everything went smoothly pretty easy. In particular, thanks to Keith for an inordinate amount of work in putting together the trip list from which we worked each evening and which contained very few omissions or errors (many of which are matters of opinion, anyway). Thanks also to Brian for his contribution to the post-trip discussion on taxonomic matters and, by no means least, to Don for producing the cover for the report, which features his excellent photographs of (clockwise on the front, from top left) an *Ithomid* butterfly, Purple-throated Mountain-gem, Blue-crowned Motmot, Rufous-collared Sparrow and Blue Jeans Dart Frog and, on the back cover, Green-crowned Brilliant and Brown Violet-ear.

Here's to the next one!

Ian Hodgson

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John Beugg, Keith & Julie Ellis, Ian Hodgson, Paul Howe, Jim Law,
Sheila Seed, Brian & Linda Short, Valerie Thompson, John Weller, Don & Ann Wilks.

I can imagine, in some otherworld,
Primeval-dumb, far back
In that most awful stillness, that only gasped and hummed,
Humming-birds raced down the avenues.

D.H.Lawrence. Humming-bird.



Chestnut-mandibled Toucan by Brian Short

Tour Diary

July 26th We landed in Madrid 2 hours after leaving Heathrow, most of us well recovered from the shock of having our names inverted at check-in, to Wellerjohn, Thompsonval, etc. Another 8 hours later we landed in Miami, for the US Immigration Sketch, which involves standing in a queue that moves slower than a snail while uniformed officials ensure that the likes of Sheila and Ann are not, despite appearances, international terrorists. There is even a space on the immigration form for letting them know, just in case their deliberations are not totally effective, and in one brilliantly inexplicable manoeuvre, John and Sheila were shifted from the front of one row to five back in another, which, curiously, did not have the effect of speeding things along. That over, we flew for a further 2½ hours to San José, where we met Simon Ellis, the trip organiser, and Santiago, our driver, before transferring to our hotel in the city, where we met John B, who had travelled a day earlier. Beer, some light grub and much chatter later, we slept like logs.

July 27th Cloud hugged the rim of the Cordillera Central as we woke to our first Costa Rican morning and drove into the highlands south of San José, finding Crimson-fronted Parakeet and White-winged Dove by the hotel, quickly getting Rufous-collared Sparrow and Great-tailed Grackle out of our systems and passing a hovering White-tailed Kite as we entered the surrounding countryside. After a brief stop by the roadside at around 2,000m, where some of us were treated to our only Spangle-cheeked Tanagers of the trip and a female Grey-tailed Mountain-gem, we reached Finca Mirador de Quetzales, situated at 2,650m in the Cerro de la Muerte. After breakfast of rice and beans and scrambled eggs we headed out with Jorge, a local guide, finding Yellow-thighed and Large-footed Finches, Slaty Flowerpiercer, Black-capped Flycatcher, Sooty Robin, Sooty-capped Bush-Tanager, Black-billed Nightingale-Thrush and Fiery-throated Hummingbird in open areas close to the lodge, and Black and Yellow Silky-Flycatcher, Ochraceous and Timberline Wrens, Ruddy Treerunner, Golden-browed Chlorophonia and Black-cheeked Warbler as we delved deeper into the forest, where soft, bouncy trails below lichen-encrusted limbs and vines helped to disguise the effects of the altitude. Apart from Monteverde, where it is relatively difficult to see at this time of year, this is one of the few places in Costa Rica

where the beautiful Resplendent Quetzal is common and we were treated to three of these evocative creatures along one of the trails, followed not long after by a demonstrative Long-tailed Silky-Flycatcher as we headed into the open and on to a delicious lunch of local trout.

It remained pleasantly warm and dry, but mostly dull, as we headed for our next stop at Savegre Mountain Lodge, along a long, twisting road that drops into the floor of a lovely valley, with a river rushing enthusiastically below us; a country made for fishing, birdwatching and horse riding. Despite having been unable to find the local Volcano Junco, we decided against heading higher to the paramó and stayed around the lodge to maximise our chances of seeing birds in the limited time available to us. A party of Acorn Woodpeckers bounced on ahead of us and our first Torrent Tyrannulet was busy in the river as we neared the lodge, where the hummingbird feeders by the main building were occupied throughout. Volcano and Scintillant Hummingbirds favoured the front, while Magnificent Hummingbird, Green Violet-ear and Grey-tailed Mountain-gem were more frequent at the back, and Flame-coloured Tanager, Yellow-winged and Brown-capped Vireos and Yellow-bellied Siskin provided welcome distractions in the lodge grounds. Well satisfied at the end of a long but very enjoyable first day, we drove back into the capital with a storm flashing away to the north, reminding us that this was the Central American wet season.

Black and Turkey Vultures, White-tailed Kite, Red-tailed Hawk; Band-tailed and Red-billed Pigeons, White-winged Dove, Ruddy Ground-Dove, Crimson-fronted Parakeet, Squirrel Cuckoo, Violet Sabrewing, Green Violet-ear, Fiery-throated Hummingbird, Grey-tailed Mountain-gem; Magnificent, Scintillant and Volcano Hummingbirds, Resplendent Quetzal; Acorn and Hairy Woodpeckers, Ruddy Treerunner; Torrent and Paltry Tyrannulets, Tufted Flycatcher, Ochraceous Peewee, Black-capped Flycatcher, Black Phoebe, Great Kiskadee, Boat-billed Flycatcher, Tropical Kingbird; Blue and White and Northern Rough-winged Swallows; Black and Yellow and Long-tailed Silky-Flycatchers; Ochraceous and Timberline Wrens, Black-billed Nightingale-Thrush; Sooty, Mountain and Clay-coloured Robins; Yellow-winged and Brown-capped Vireos, Yellow-bellied Siskin, Collared Redstart, Black-cheeked Warbler, Sooty-caped Bush-Tanager; Flame-coloured and Blue-grey Tanagers, Golden-browed Chlorophonia, Spangle-cheeked Tanager, Yellow-faced Grassquit, Slaty Flowerpiercer; Yellow-thighed and Large-footed Finches, Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch, Rufous-collared Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, Great-tailed Grackle.

July 28th Arriving early at a local airport for our flight to Tiskita, we were apportioned to three five-seater aircraft, passengers and luggage having been weighed in the balance and found wanting. The twin-engine plane took its cargo to the Osa peninsula, while the rest of us flew direct in single-engine craft and waited for the remainder of the group and the luggage to follow. Rising to 7,000' we crossed the steep hillsides of the Cordillera Central, where the growth of ranching and homesteading has left indigenous forest on only the steepest ridges. Even these are being denuded to their summits, with roads and tracks etched into their gaunt faces. Sliding SW towards the Pacific, following the mountainous Cordillera de Talamanca, our course took us close to the highest point in Costa Rica, where the peak of Chirripó rises to over 3,800m and waterfalls cascade from forested cliffs to the flat coastal plain below. Our shadow followed us, dancing over slithering river channels that slid between patches of forest, and then over shrimp ponds, glistening flooded pastures, plantations and patches of cultivation teetering on the edge of existence. Rocky offshore islets and broad sandbars came ever closer and soon we swept out over the broad blue expanse of the Golfo Dulce, with the Osa peninsula to our right and forested fingers of land splaying down to the sea on our left, now low enough to pick out dolphins, a slow green turtle, frigatebirds and pelicans and a shoal of heavy fish, diving suddenly from the surface as we passed overhead. A final loop across the surf and past the quickening palm fringed, black-sanded beach and we were down on Tiskita's grass airstrip, where we met Luis, our guide, and Ashleigh and Grace who were there for our every need, or something like that.

Our first Squirrel Monkeys were seen from the airstrip shortly after we came to earth and birds came steadily as we waited for the rest of the group on the lawn outside the lodge restaurant, overlooking the rolling surf of the Pacific – Magnificent Frigatebird, Masked and Black-crowned Tityras, Chestnut-mandibled Toucan and some excellent raptors including King Vulture, Double-toothed Kite, Short-tailed Hawk and Mangrove Black-Hawk. A walk along the stream running through the forest behind the lodge produced two more hummers – Band-tailed Barbthroat and Crowned Woodnymph – and our first Golden-naped Woodpecker and some noisy Riverside Wrens. Luis also found a roost of nine tent-making bats underneath a huge banana leaf and our

first poison arrow frogs in moist leaf litter. Apparently, they obtain their noxious nature from a diet of ants, which is, in my view, totally understandable. Kept in captivity and fed cheese and pickle sandwiches and they lose their toxicity entirely. We were also introduced to our first two-toed sloth at some point, though the sense of amazement seemed rather one-sided. A post-lunch sortie added Black-hooded Antshrike, Chestnut-backed Antbird, Spotted-crowned Euphonia and Scarlet Macaw and as we returned to the lodge a flock of 11 Swallow-tailed Kites appeared, elegantly sweeping down to pick fruits from a tree close by.

The bright, hot and sultry morning changed gradually as cloud increased during our afternoon walk through secondary growth and around the edge of a mixed fruit orchard, where Plain Xenops, Thick-billed Seed-Finch, Shining Honeycreeper, Lesser Swallow-tailed and Band-rumped Swifts and Blue-throated Goldentail were all devoured with as much relish as the local starfruit. A White Hawk drifted along the face of the forest above as light rain began to fall and at 5.15 the heavens opened, bringing hurried fumbling for rain ponchos, for those who had brought those and their British faith in the weather with them. The rain poured down until after dark, and fireflies danced over the lawn by the restaurant as it moved away, the sound of the beating surf providing a wonderful backdrop to a lovely introduction to our time on Costa Rica's South Pacific.

Brown Pelican, Magnificent Frigatebird, White Ibis, King Vulture; Swallow-tailed and Double-toothed Kites; Barred and White Hawks, Mangrove Black-Hawk; Roadside and Short-tailed Hawks, Yellow-headed Caracara; Plain-breasted and Ruddy Ground-Doves, Scarlet Macaw, Orange-chinned Parakeet, Mealy Parrot; Chestnut-collared, White-collared and Band-rumped Swifts, Lesser Swallow-tailed Swift, Band-tailed Barbthroat, Crowned Woodnymph, Blue-throated Goldentail, Chestnut-mandibled Toucan, Golden-naped Woodpecker, Plain Xenops, Black-hooded Antshrike, Chestnut-backed Antbird, Bright-rumped Attila, Social Flycatcher; Masked and Black-crowned Tityras, Grey-breasted Martin; Riverside and House Wrens, Tropical Gnatcatcher, Buff-rumped Warbler, Bananaquit; Cherrie's and Palm Tanagers, Spot-crowned Euphonia, Shining Honeycreeper, Blue-black Grassquit, Variable Seedeater, Thick-billed Seed-Finch.



Yellow-headed Caracara by Brian Short

July 29th Luis said we wouldn't need to set alarms and he was right, as the first Howler Monkey went off just outside my room, bang on the dot of 5 am. Unable to locate its off button, it howled on enthusiastically until I just gave in and went to breakfast, to be confronted by the fact that the males possess white testicles, rather like biscuits that appear in tinned assortments in supermarkets around Christmas, though they tend to be less noisy.

Dull and humid to begin with, it began to rain steadily while we ate breakfast, but slackened at 7, allowing some birding from the lodge lawn, where highlights included Golden-naped Woodpecker, Purple-crowned Fairy, Thick-billed Euphonia and Golden-hooded, Cherrie's and Bay-headed Tanagers. We then headed into the primary forest behind the lodge, where it was initially quiet but suddenly vibrant as we found a party of Orange-billed Sparrows close to a clearing, just after the rain, which had been falling delicately for most of the morning, died away. The forest edge here produced a female Red-capped Manakin, Slaty and Dot-winged Antwrens, Black-throated Trogon, a Cocoa Woodcreeper and three Blue-crowned Manakins.

It remained dry after lunch, but rain was never far away as we walked towards the shore in the afternoon, adding Ruddy Ground-Dove, Orange-chinned Parakeet, Red-crowned Woodpecker,

Scrub Greenlet and Black-striped Sparrow near the airstrip. Hordes of hermit crabs scuttled along the beach, in shells of all shapes and sizes, under a wonderful energy-charged sky to the south, the atmosphere tautened by the constant roar of the surf on the black, driftwood-strewn sand.

Brown Booby, Bronzy and Long-tailed Hermits, Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, Purple-crowned Fairy, Black-throated Trogon, Red-crowned Woodpecker, Cocoa Woodcreeper, Slaty and Dot-winged Antwrens, Blue-crowned and Red-capped Manakins; Ochre-bellied, Panama and Streaked Flycatchers, Plain Wren, Scrub Greenlet, Thick-billed Euphonia; Bay-headed and Golden-hooded Tanagers, Blue Dacnis; Green and Red-legged Honeycreepers, Orange-billed and Black-striped Sparrows, Buff-throated Saltator.

July 30th It poured down again in the night, but most of us slept like logs and by the time we awoke it had relented. Although it rained throughout breakfast it cleared soon after 6 and our rapidly growing list of hummingbirds was augmented by Long-tailed and Little Hermits, White-necked Jacobin and a lovely, pristine Purple-crowned Fairy by the lodge. We were all brought scurrying to a quite stunning male Red-capped Manakin that posed for us in telescope view, but a rather too brief Pale-billed Woodpecker gave some of us several nervous nights prior to catching up with it again.

Our post-breakfast sortie took us up the hill behind the lodge into primary forest. Dull and relatively cool to begin with, it gradually became warmer and more humid with hazy sunshine. Soon after starting off we found Long-billed Gnatwren, Grey-headed Tanager, a lek of Red-capped Manakins and a 2-3 week old Fer-de-Lance (that still knew how to defend itself, judging from its posture). Birding continued steadily with Blue-crowned Manakin and Wedge-billed, Tawny-winged and Cocoa Woodcreepers, then Golden-crowned Spadebill, Rufous Piha and Baird's Trogon as we entered dense forest once again, appreciating the skills of Luis, our guide, who located some of these in apparently impossible situations.

We moved on expectantly through the forest, finding a couple of excellent feeding flocks, each of which seemed to have Black-hooded Antshrike as its main constituent. The first also included Plain Xenops, Long-billed Gnatwren and Slaty and Dot-winged Antwrens, while the second was made up of Plain Xenops, Plain Antvireo, Chestnut-backed Antbird, Cocoa Woodcreeper and a brief Tawny-capped Greenlet. Making sense of these flocks is one of the great challenges in birdwatching, wherever in the world you are, but at least these were at eye level, though they made no concession to our desire that they should stay close to the path, moving from leaf to leaf, vine to vine and across lichen-covered limbs in search of food as we frantically tried to keep them in view. As always, it is only the commoner ones that seem to return for a second look.

Lunch over, with a Bat Falcon for dessert, we ventured out again on a hot, sultry but dull afternoon, crossing the hill to the south, mostly along the edge of the primary forest, adding White-necked Puffbird, Black-tailed and Ochre-bellied Flycatchers, two more Golden-crowned Spadebills and Green Kingfisher. We emerged at the nearby village, where Tiskita United were playing football against the local plantation workers eleven, or fifteen or so, to be exact. Ice creams and a bit of shopping later, we sauntered back to the ranch, noticeably having forgotten any cares that had come with us in this utterly relaxing place. The same could not be said of the two LAPD Vice officers who had arrived earlier, feeling naked without their guns, apparently. It began to rain again at 5.30 but soon cleared to a beautiful evening lit by a full moon with fireflies dancing along the lawn and in the bushes and trees, a memorable last evening in this lovely place.

Bat Falcon, White-necked Jacobin, Baird's Trogon, Green Kingfisher, White-necked Puffbird, Pale-billed Woodpecker; Tawny-winged and Wedge-billed Woodcreepers, Plain Antvireo, Rufous Piha, Golden-crowned Spadebill; Black-tailed and Dusky-capped Flycatchers, Long-billed Gnatwren, Tawny-crowned Greenlet, Grey-headed Tanager.

July 31st It was a bright morning with shadows lengthening quickly as the sun rose over Tiskita's airstrip, as we prepared to resume our impersonation of the riddle in which a farmer has to take a chicken, a fox and a bag of grain one at a time across a river without anything getting eaten. After excellent views of a Barred Antshrike, the first group departed at 06.15, with the rest of us following between 07.15 and 07.35. Although Osa again featured in the equation, things

went much more smoothly than on our outward journey and we were away from the airport in San José at 08.40.

Our journey towards the Pacific coast was punctuated by Least Grebe and Muscovy Duck at a lake in the hills, then a stop at a park in the lowland town of Orotina, where we found a pair of roosting Black-and-White Owls, our first Rufous-naped Wrens, Greyish Saltator, Rose-throated Becard, Yellow-green Vireo and, just outside the town, a couple of Stripe-headed Sparrows that flew across the road. Some roadside pools near the Rio Tarcoles, just about the first bit of fresh water we had set eyes on since arriving in Costa Rica, produced Bare-throated Tiger-Heron, Northern Jacana, Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Purple Gallinule and Groove-billed Ani, plus a good selection of herons. A short drive onward and we stopped again, at the bridge over Rio Tarcoles, where Roseate Spoonbill, Mangrove Swallow and Ringed Kingfisher were all new for the trip, and some truly impressive crocodiles thrashed about in the river below. Very partial to a nice Danish pastry, is your American Crocodile.

We arrived at Villa Lapas at 13.30 and although Santiago found a couple of roosting Lesser Nighthawks in a huge tree outside the main building, rain set in soon after lunch and only a few of us ventured out again in the afternoon, ponchos on, whimpering a bit and not moving far from the bus as the rain fell steadily. However, we must have been pathetic enough for the rain gods to relent, because it ceased after about an hour, allowing some enjoyable roadside birding that produced Violaceous and Slaty-tailed Trogons, White-lined, White-shouldered and Grey-headed Tanagers, Lesser Greenlet, Rufous and White and Rufous-breasted Wrens, a superb Orange-collared Manakin, Rufous-capped Warbler and Dusky Antbird.

We returned to Villa Lapas to be greeted by confirmation that our accommodation was all-inclusive, including drinks. Including drinks? Right

Least Grebe, Neotropic Cormorant, Anhinga, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Tricoloured Heron, Little Blue Heron, Snowy Egret, Green Heron, Bare-throated Tiger-Heron, Roseate Spoonbill, Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Muscovy Duck, Crested Caracara, American Purple Gallinule, Northern Jacana, Short-billed Pigeon, Common Ground-Dove, White-tipped Dove, Brown-hooded Parrot, Groove-billed Ani, Black-and-White Owl, Lesser Nighthawk; Violaceous and Slaty-tailed Trogons, Ringed Kingfisher, Hoffmann's Woodpecker, Barred Antshrike, Dusky Antbird, Orange-collared Manakin, Rose-throated Becard, Mangrove Swallow; Rufous-naped, Rufous-breasted and Rufous and White Wrens, Brown Jay, Lesser Greenlet, Rufous-capped Warbler; White-shouldered and White-lined Tanagers, Stripe-headed Sparrow, Greyish Saltator, Red-winged Blackbird.

August 1st After White Ibis and Scaly-breasted Hummingbirds in the grounds of Villa Lapas, we made it to Carara NP at 07.30, where Santiago dropped us at the entrance to one of the subsidiary trails, initially under blue sky that gradually became cloudy as the humidity rose. The trails, apparently dry yesterday, were under ankle-deep puddles in places, necessitating a mix of nimble footwork and wet feet.

Although, curiously, we were left to our own devices by Santiago, we soon caught up with some good birds, including Orange-collared Manakin, Buff-throated Foliage-gleaner, Barred Woodcreeper, Baird's and Slaty-tailed Trogons, Dusky Antbird, Black-bellied Wren, Barred Antshrike and Yellow-throated Euphonia. We found two furtive Boat-billed Herons and a diminutive American Pygmy Kingfisher at a lake close to the trail and, shortly after, as we made our way back to the main road, a White-winged Becard and a lovely Turquoise-browed Motmot that we showed to some passing Americans. A what mot? Two Plumbeous Kites later and we drove back to the hotel for some lunch, during which light rain began to fall around 14.00.

In an effort to find Stripe-headed Sparrow for the group, we stopped at a field of rough grass and scattered scrub at the end of the track to the main road, which proved to be a fortuitous decision. The first highlight was a scruffy-headed Striped Cuckoo, calling repeatedly from a slight bush in the hot early afternoon, and after a few Yellow-bellied Elaenias someone discovered a family of Grey-crowned Yellowthroats, skulking about in low, dry grass and bushes. We even found some of the birds we had come to see: three Stripe-headed Sparrows on the roadside fence.

That over, we returned to Carara NP and walked one of the trails adjacent to the road, which produced Northern Bentbill, Yellow-olive Flycatcher, a secretive Blue-black Grosbeak and, as we walked back along the road toward the bus, four Fiery-billed Araçaris, a difficult-to-find species that soon melted away into the forest once again.

Boat-billed Heron, Plumbeous Kite, Striped Cuckoo, Vaux's Swift, Scaly-breasted Hummingbird, American Pygmy Kingfisher, Turquoise-browed Motmot, Fiery-billed Araçari, Buff-throated Foliage-gleaner; Barred and Streak-headed Woodcreepers, Yellow-bellied Elaenia, Northern Bentbill, Common Tody-flycatcher; Yellow-olive and Grey-capped Flycatchers, White-winged Becard, Black-bellied Wren, Grey-crowned Yellowthroat, Yellow-throated Euphonia, Blue-black Grosbeak.

August 2nd Dull and comfortably warm, we trundled off toward the Tarcoles Estuary, stopping at a grove of trees where Lineated Woodpecker, Black-headed Trogon, Melodious Blackbird and Ferruginous Pygmy Owl delayed us for half an hour or so. At the estuary, a midsummer selection of shorebirds included two or three Collared Plovers, zipping about madly on the sandbars, and at least one Wilson's Plover, though the nearest we got to any seabirds was a blizzard of Royal Terns that erupted from the beach as we watched. John Erb, owner of Tarcol Lodge, invited us on to his porch, where we supped a beer and mellowed even further, although the feeling was interrupted somewhat when a bright Yellow Warbler flashed across the estuary in front of us.

Leaving Villa Lapas in hazy sunshine at 09.45 we reached Puntarenas after an hour of bumping along potholed roads that recalled the drive up country to Tendaba in The Gambia. By now it was bright and sunny and the road instantly improved as we turned away from the coast, though the soporific effects of breakfast and John Erb's beer soon had most of us sleeping like the flopsy bunnies. Ten years ago, the last 40km to Monteverde was tortuous, the road set with boulders and deep ruts that slowed progress to a crawl and, in a car, more or less guaranteed a puncture. For some time it looked as if things had improved but fortunately the experience remains undiluted, the last 30km taking an hour and a half to shudder along. The road passes through stark open ranch country where remnant patches of forest linger only in gullies and stumps of once great trees protrude from the now-dry landscape. Reaching the settlement of Monteverde, established by the Quakers in 1951, was a relief in more ways than one. The last 10km produced a couple of Grey Hawks and an excellent Bat Falcon, perched at the end of a bare tree.

Writing my notes on my balcony, looking over the valley on to a forested hillside, dusting ants from my baggage and listening to the sounds of bellbirds and solitaires. This was our entrancing introduction to the continental divide, where Caribbean and Pacific slopes meet, although the only ocean that is visible from Monteverde is the Pacific, where the Golfo de Nicoya glistens in the evening sunlight. Not today, though, since it began to rain soon after we reached the hummingbird gallery, just outside the entrance to the cloud Forest Preserve. It didn't really dampen our spirits, or those of the hummers, and we spent a good couple of hours watching Green-crowned Brilliants, Purple-throated Mountain-gems, Violet Sabrewings, Coppery-headed Emeralds, Green Violet-ears, Stripe-tailed Hummingbirds and a solitary Fiery-throated Hummingbird, most of which were present in enough plumages to warrant another half a dozen species. We also saw Steely-vented Hummingbird at a nearby shop. Returning to the hotel, we met Melvin, our guide for the following two days. He seemed very personable, though some of us worried about calling him Marvin, the paranoid robot from Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy. The fact that he seemed capable of the occasional bout of self-hypnosis was also slightly worrying, though so long as he found us good birds he could more or less do what he liked, we reasoned.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Wood Stork, Osprey, Grey Hawk; Semipalmated, Wilson's and Collared Plovers, Short-billed Dowitcher, Greater Yellowlegs, Willet, Semipalmated and Western Sandpipers, Royal Tern, Ferruginous (Ridgeway's) Pygmy-owl, Stripe-throated Hermit, Coppery-headed Emerald, Stripe-tailed Hummingbird, Steely-vented Hummingbird, Purple-throated Mountain-gem, Black-headed Trogon, Lineated Woodpecker, Three-wattled Bellbird, Yellow Warbler, Melodious Blackbird.

August 3rd The continuous growl of thunder and a fresh breeze brought light rain down the valley just after first light, as Brown Jays flopped about in the trees below and the ringing calls of bellbirds gained in confidence, backed by the wistful fluting of solitaires. Melvin seemed on good form as we entered the Cloud Forest Preserve at 07.30 and walked on to the broad main trail, where we passed his initial test designed to see how good we were, correctly identifying an Olive-striped Flycatcher. We had not walked far when two things happened. It began to rain, though by no means heavily, and we encountered a mixed flock of birds by the trail

that gave us two hours of the best birding many of us have ever had, let alone on this trip. A Slate-throated Redstart got the action going, followed soon after by a Lineated Foliage-gleaner and a few noisy (and nosy) Grey-breasted Wood-Wrens that appeared at much the same time as a beautiful Spotted Barbtail, several Three-striped Warblers and at least one White-throated Spadebill, several of these very close to us. Some birds flicked among the leaves, which were also moving in response to pattering raindrops, while others picked around on vines encrusted with lichens and thick branches laden with bromeliads and epiphytic plants. Sometimes we might latch on to another Three-striped Warbler, or another Common Bush-Tanager, then the barbtail back again, then something else, but what? A Red-faced Spinetail, in the tree above, close to a barbet, a Prong-billed Barbet! Next, a flash of red/orange above us and a trogon appeared, its back to us, as usual, but looking very interesting. Very interesting indeed, an Orange-bellied Trogon, no less, yet another species new for us, but followed almost immediately by our first views of a Black-faced Solitaire, in truth the rather dowdy owner of a quite beautiful voice. A Spotted Woodcreeper, Ochraceous Wren and, as the rain began to intensify, our first Emerald Toucanet, picking tiny avocados from the dense foliage above, then more rain and, ponchos on, we straggled back to the HQ, to stay as dry as possible and to catch our breath.

Yellowish Flycatcher, Silver-throated Tanager, Paltry Tyrannulet, Eye-ringed Flatbill and a group of Black-breasted Wood-Quail competed for our attention around the HQ and one of the local guides very kindly came to tell us he had found a snake, which turned out to be a quite beautiful Side-striped Palm Pit-viper, bright green with smart yellow stripe along its side. An attempt to walk along one of the lower trails after a break for lunch was thwarted by another half an hour of heavy rain, though we still managed to see Olivaceous Woodcreeper and Slaty-backed Nightingale-Thrush after untickable views (for me, anyway) of Azure-hooded Jay, Golden-crowned Warbler and a male Resplendent Quetzal. A Black Guan was cavorting, as only guans can, in a tree by the car park, but with light rain falling again from 16.00 we returned to the hotel where it was dry, although rain was very close and the day ended as it had begun, with thunder and lightning and falling rain.

Back rather early, some of us decided to walk down to the small lake below the hotel grounds, the surrounds of which were almost certainly riddled with chiggers, judging by the state of my ankles the next day. Lightning flashed away enthusiastically over the Pacific below us throughout our evening meal, coinciding with Brian and Linda's 30th Wedding Anniversary. Mmmm, cake.

Black Guan, Black-breasted Wood-Quail, Orange-bellied Trogon, Prong-billed Barbet, Emerald Toucanet, Keel-billed Toucan, Red-faced Spinetail, Spotted Barbtail, Lineated Foliage-gleaner; Olivaceous and Spotted Woodcreepers, Olive-striped Flycatcher, Eye-ringed Flatbill, White-throated Spadebill, Yellowish Flycatcher, Grey-breasted Wood-Wren, Black-faced Solitaire, Slaty-backed Nightingale-Thrush, Azure-hooded Jay, Slate-throated Redstart; Golden-crowned and Three-striped Warblers, Common Bush-Tanager, Tawny-capped Euphonia, Silver-throated Tanager.

August 4th A flock of Montezuma Oropendolas in the forest opposite preceded breakfast and a drive up to Santa Elena Cloud Forest Reserve, where we decamped right away to the shelter of the shop/reception area as rain fell steadily. Although it ceased fairly quickly, as we watched Green Hermits visiting the feeders, it alternated between showers and sunshine all morning, and birding was very slow. We managed to see very little in a walk through the forest, until finding a Black Guan with two guanlets at the edge of the broad track back to the car park. We were enormously intrigued by the promise from Melvin of a Barbie Car, which sounded very pink, but never did get to see it, a disappointment compounded when we discovered that it was, in fact, Barred Becard. However, we did see Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrush by the reserve entrance and a few bits and pieces on a walk down the hill below, before reaching a scrubby field, at the edge of a partially cleared area of forest, which produced the best birding of the morning. A Piratic Flycatcher perched on a bare branch, with some tanagers buzzing about the main tree, and a flash of blue and black that turned out to be an Azure-hooded Jay, missed yesterday, that flew across the treetops toward us. The scrubby field turned up Yellow-throated Brush-Finch and Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush, but we were whipped back into the bus and back for lunch.

After a frustrating morning we were keen to get out again, so we embarked upon the evocatively named Pig Farm Trail, not far up the road from our hotel, soon after 14.00. We quickly caught up with a large flock of Keel-billed Toucans and several Emerald Toucanets, Yellow-throated Brush-

Finches for those who had been unlucky with them thus far, and a party of White-eared Ground-Sparrows. Val discovered a close Three-wattled Bellbird for us all to get tremendous views of in the 'scope, a couple of large flocks of Golden-browed Chlorophonias passed through the tree tops and an open area provided the opportunity to deliberate extensively on the subtleties of Western and Eastern Wood-Pewee (we eventually decided on the former), while the rest of us caught up at last with Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush, after a great deal of frustration for all of us except Paul in trying to see an elusive Long-tailed Manakin at the forest edge. Rain began to fall at 17.15 and we trundled back to the Hotel Montaña at the end of a rather difficult day, feeling a bit sorry for Melvin who did his best with birds simply being elusive.



Emerald Toucanet by Brian Short

Green Hermit, Long-tailed Manakin, Mountain Elaenia, Western Wood-Pewee, Piratic Flycatcher; Orange-billed and Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrushes, Yellow-throated Brush-Finch, White-eared Ground-Sparrow, Montezuma Oropendola.

August 5th It was cool and a fresh wind hurried frequent showers down the hillside towards the gulf below, hidden below a layer of cloud that hugged the coast. We set off at 07.30, following the Cordillera de Tilarán down from Monteverde then up again across a landscape of open hills and forested valleys that recalled the Welsh uplands, a comparison made more apt by the mist and rain that dogged us all the way. Santiago stopped a couple of times, for a flock of White-fronted Parrots at a fruiting tree and for two beautiful Blue-crowned Motmots close to the road. The rain cascaded through the streets of Tilarán and poured down as we gingerly skirted Laguna de Arenal, picking our way between impressive potholes that littered the road, passing figures standing disconsolately in doorways. Let's face it, nobody likes rain. It was not until midday that we reached the eastern end of Laguna de Arenal, having seen Amazon Kingfisher, a party of Grey-headed Chachalacas, Black-cowled Oriole and Southern Rough-winged Swallow by the lake. Santiago pulled off the main road and continued along a road that would take us to a view, weather permitting, of the active cone of Volcan Arenal. It still rained as we got out of the bus in a forested section of the road to stretch our legs and discovered some birds! Red-lored and White-crowned Parrots posed for us, a Crested Guan stood in a tree, our first Passerini's Tanagers whisked across the road and a small flock of Tropical Parulas fizzed about in a palm.

Moving on, we stopped at a junction in the road with the conical grey outline of Volcan Arenal protruding from the landscape above us, though its top half was shrouded in cloud and we were distracted by a large flock of White-throated Magpie-Jays in a copse near a grove of trees that held several Scarlet-thighed Dacnis, Pale-vented Pigeon and Red-legged Honeycreepers, while Grey-capped Flycatchers perched on roadside wires. A couple of Short-tailed Hawks drifted across the face of the volcano, which by now had only a veil of cloud across its summit, and the day brightened suddenly to reveal the sinister cone in all its glory – I spent three days here in 1995 and rarely saw it so clearly. The volcano is still a force to be reckoned with, having killed more than 80 people in a major eruption in July 1968 and it erupted twice while we took lunch, the distant rumble preceded about ten seconds earlier by a dense cloud of grey-black smoke that belched from the cone.

Skirting the imposing volcano, we headed eastward, through Aguas Zarcas and Venecia, with the flatter escarpment of Volcan Poás to our right for much of the last hour or so, then north through San Miguel and down on to the Caribbean lowlands and the Sarapiquí river, on which Selva

Verde stands. Our first taste of this rich region brought a few flocks of Red-winged Blackbirds and Bronzed Cowbirds and a superb adult Fasciated Tiger-Heron in the rocky Rio Guayabo, just beyond Venecia, plus Crested Caracara and Black-cheeked Woodpeckers by the roadside. We made our acquaintance with Erick, our new guide, with the river rushing by the lodge in full spate, and made arrangements for the first of what promised to be a memorable few days.

Fasciated Tiger-Heron, Grey-headed Chachalaca, Crested Guan, Pale-vented Pigeon; White-crowned, White-fronted and Red-lore Parrots, Amazon Kingfisher, Blue-crowned Motmot, Tropical Pewee; White-ringed and Sulphur-bellied Flycatchers, Southern Rough-winged Swallow, White-throated Magpie-Jay, Tropical Parula, Passerini's Tanager, Scarlet-thighed Dacnis, Bronzed Cowbird.

August 6th Erick arrived bright and early, though some of us managed only the early bit, while others had found Red-throated Ant-Tanagers in the grounds. We sauntered out of the lodge for some pre-breakfast birding, realising fairly quickly that this was going to be a good relationship. Erick found some good birds, notably a Black-capped Pygmy-Tyrant, but we joined in while he explained the differences between Montezuma and Chestnut-headed Oropendolas, enthused over several Collared Araçaris, found some Snowy Cotingas in a bare tree across the road from the lodge entrance and gasped in surprise as a party of four Great Green Macaws flew overhead on steady, deliberate wings.

After breakfast and Grey-rumped Swifts and Grey-chested Dove from the lodge, we spent some time at one of the lodge parking areas, a fairly open area that was very busy with birds. We found several Bright-rumped Attilas, Cinnamon Becard, Rufous Mourner, White-ringed and Dusky-capped Flycatchers, Black-crowned Tityra, Yellow-crowned and Olive-backed Euphonias, White-breasted Wood-Wren, White-collared Manakin (a female, unfortunately), Bay Wren, Pale-billed Woodpecker and a group of Scarlet-rumped Caciques, while another party of three Great Green Macaws flew over. We then walked across the road to a separate part of the lodge complex, where Violet-headed Hummingbird was seen briefly at some violet flowers and Bronze-tailed (Red-footed) Plumeleteer was seen at a favoured clearing, where great spiders hung on their webs in the still, humid air. At some point in the proceedings, Erick asked if anyone was interested in seeing an anteater – and there, just above our heads, was a beautiful Northern Tamandua, an orange and brown tree-dwelling anteater with prehensile tail, a little smaller than its South American counterpart, from all accounts. A Broad-billed Motmot and Blue-chested Hummingbird by some far-flung cabins and the morning had somehow evaporated in a flood of new birds, though it did not finish there, Jim appearing at some point around lunchtime to say that he had just been watching a Semiplumbeous Hawk devouring a lizard from his lodgings.

Down the road again after lunch, we turned off towards the river, past more Snowy Cotingas, a White-winged Becard and a Black-faced Grosbeak, then a group of Plain-coloured Tanagers, another Fasciated Tiger-Heron and a Sunbittern in the river. A Long-billed Starthroat atop a bush and we were out into the open, with diminutive Olive-throated Parakeets overhead and Band-backed Wren and Smoky-brown Woodpecker where a band of trees was bisected by the road. Thick-billed Seed-Finch, Yellow Tyrannulet, Black-cowled Oriole and Variable Seedeaters, very different from the Pacific version, were seen in the fields, bushes and trees of the rather park-like setting, and we trundled back to the lodge at the end of a long day, thoroughly tired but comfortable with the knowledge that this had been a really wonderful day, during which we had seen 105 species between us. As a bonus, although it had been very warm, still and sultry, it had remained dry all day, only deciding to rain after dark, which it did vigorously, ensuring some difficulty in sleeping, for me at least, even with substantial quantities of a liquid amber anaesthetic having been consumed with our evening meal.

Semiplumbeous Hawk, Sunbittern, Grey-chested Dove, Great Green Macaw, Olive-throated Parakeet, Grey-rumped Swift; Violet-headed and Blue-chested Hummingbirds, Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer, Long-billed Starthroat, Broad-billed Motmot, Collared Araçari, Smoky-brown Woodpecker, Snowy Cotinga, White-collared Manakin, Yellow Tyrannulet, Black-capped Pygmy-Tyrant, Rufous Mourner, Cinnamon Becard; Bay and Band-backed Wrens, White-breasted Wood-Wren, Red-throated Ant-Tanager; Yellow-crowned and Olive-backed Euphonias, Plain-coloured Tanager, Black-faced Grosbeak, Scarlet-rumped Cacique, Chestnut-headed Oropendola.

August 7th For the second successive day, overnight rain ceased before our breakfast stroll, which allowed most of us to catch up with Red-throated Ant-Tanager, singing in the gloom of the understorey of the lodge grounds, and a lovely male White-collared Manakin.

The rain began again with renewed enthusiasm as we drove to La Selva, but by the time we reached the Research Station it had ceased and the rest of the day was hot, still, sultry and dry. By this time we had more or less recovered from the details of John B's dream in which he was reminiscing about someone he once knew from SBBO, who had been killed and eaten by a sloth. John's reaction was simple. That's a shame. Let's just hope that random drug testing of bird tour participants is a long way off.

Beginning on the road leading to the Research Station, we soon found Crimson-collared Tanager, Chestnut-collared Woodpecker and had superb views, courtesy of Don in a rare non-photographic moment, of a Great Antshrike, often reticent but on this occasion right out in the open. A Rufous-tailed Jacamar was found as we searched for Blue-black Grosbeak in low roadside scrub and Blue-Ground-Dove and Green Ibis were added before we reached the main gates. The open area prior to the bridge across the Rio Puerto Viejo held Cinnamon Becard, Violet-headed Hummingbird, Yellow-margined Flycatcher and Rufous-winged Woodpecker, Violaceous Trogon was seen from the bridge itself and Slaty-tailed Trogon, Black-crested Coquette and Blue-chested Hummingbird just before we entered the forest. At this point, birding became very quiet, and we added only a superb male Western Slaty-Antshrike, Pale-billed Woodpecker and, for some, brief glimpses of Purple-throated Fruitcrow as a flock of fruitcrows and oropendolas moved through the forest ahead of us, remaining stubbornly elusive. However, as we neared habitation again we hit a purple patch that began with a fabulously showy female Great Curassow by the trail, continued with two or three Grey-necked Wood-Rails low down in the forest and ended with a lovely Olive-backed Quail-Dove on an open patch of the forest floor.

Back in the forest again after lunch after spending ages searching for a treetop-dwelling Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher, we found only a Nine-banded Armadillo, a perched Great Green Macaw and more Scarlet-rumped Caciques. Out in the open again, a Common or Lesser Nighthawk drifted over the bridge and dusk fell to end another long but highly productive day that again yielded 105 species between us.

Green Ibis, Great Curassow, Grey-necked Wood-Rail, Blue Ground-Dove, Olive-backed Quail-Dove, Black-crested Coquette, Rufous-tailed Jacamar; Rufous-winged and Chestnut-coloured Woodpeckers, Great Antshrike, Western Slaty-Antshrike, Purple-throated Fruitcrow, Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher, Yellow-margined Flycatcher, Crimson-collared Tanager.

August 8th Life's like that, isn't it? Having spent a back and neck-breaking age trying to see the elusive, altitudinal and unnecessarily wordy Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher yesterday, we saw one perfectly easily near the old butterfly house across the road at Selva Verde before breakfast.

After a welcome delay for a Laughing Falcon below the road, we reached Virgen del Socorro just after 08.30. A beautiful region of valleys through which the Rio Sarapiquí flows, crashing over forested cliffs in spectacular waterfalls, we descended into the first of these from just over 850m. Birding was initially quite slow, but a tree full of Scarlet-thighed Dacnis and beautiful Green Honeycreepers kept us amused for a while until a flock of tanagers by the roadside attracted our attention. The ubiquitous Common Bush-Tanager dominated, as usual, with Slate-throated Redstarts in attendance, but Silver-throated, Crimson-collared, Bay-headed, Speckled and Emerald Tanagers, a Red-headed Barbet and a female White-ruffed Manakin brought a flavour of the Andes, where mixed flocks like this are ever-present. As Barred and Short-tailed Hawks drifted about over the steep sides of the valley, with our first Double-toothed Kite since leaving Tiskita several moons ago, we found three Sooty-faced Finches coming to feed on rice scraps at a quarry-workers' shelter, American Dipper in the adjacent river and a hefty Blue-and-Gold Tanager amid a collection that included Tufted Flycatcher, Tawny-crowned Euphonia and Grey-breasted Wood-Wren. We said goodbye to a very friendly little dog that attached itself to us for our visit and drove on, up to Vera's Place, a café with hummingbird feeders overlooking the picturesque San Fernando waterfall. A series of new hummingbirds included Brown Violet-ear, White-bellied Mountain-gem, the fantastically lovely Green Thorntail and Black-bellied Hummingbird, with seven more familiar species making up the supporting cast. A couple of

Emerald Toucanets visited the feeders and as we were beginning to wonder about the scale of the view in front of us, a White Hawk drifted across the forest far below, tiny against the great green wall from which the waterfall plummeted relentlessly.

An encounter with a tarantula brought the revelation for most of us that they don't feel soft or furry, tiny points at the ends of their feet providing the surprising sensation that they wear stiletto heels. Moving on, we drove to La Paz waterfall, walking up the road with traffic passing us politely, just like drivers at home don't, finding Yellowish and Golden-bellied Flycatchers in roadside trees, Dark Pewee and, where the road bridge crosses the narrow, rocky river, a superb and aptly-named Green-fronted Lancebill, our 33rd hummingbird species of the trip, one more than on my trip to Peru in July 2002. Moving on again and back towards Selva Verde, we stopped at a lake near San Miguel, where a Southern River Otter was cavorting in the dark, still water and we found Collared Seedeater on the dry, grassy hillside above the road.

While some of us sipped beer at the lodge, Erick, Jim, John W and Keith, keen to the last, gained just reward for their perseverance with Great Tinamou, Great Potoo and Stripe-breasted Wren in the forest beyond the river bridge. It is, perhaps, appropriate to note at this point that prior to beginning our first full day with Erick in the Sarapiquí region, our trip list had not quite reached 300, but at the end of another really good day it was now beyond 360.

Great Tinamou, Laughing Falcon, Great Potoo, Green-fronted Lancebill, Brown Violet-ear, Green Thorntail, Black-bellied Hummingbird, White-bellied Mountain-gem, Red-headed Barbet, White-ruffed Manakin, Dark Pewee, Golden-bellied Flycatcher, American Dipper, Stripe-breasted Wren; Blue-and-Gold and Emerald Tanagers, White-collared Seedeater, Sooty-faced Finch.

August 9th The day that we all hate had come at last, though a late flight home meant that we had most of the morning to find more birds. Erick chose to drive past the entrance to La Selva, to some flooded rank grassland, then along a track past more of the same into some forest edge. Short-billed Pigeon and Semiplumbeous Hawk had earlier been seen near the lodge, and the rest of the morning produced Orchard Oriole, Nicaraguan (Pink-billed) Seed-Finch and a flock of about 110 Swallow-tailed Kites, moving steadily southward on their journey into South America after breeding here in Central America.

So that was it. Bidding a fond goodbye to Erick 'Half a Bee' Castro, probably the best guide it has been my pleasure to bird with, we drove back to the lodge for lunch, during which the sunny morning turned into a spectacularly torrential downpour that lasted for well over half an hour. According to Simon Ellis, one group experienced rain on 10 of 14 days in March, though how lucky we had been with the weather is difficult to say. At any rate, we were travelling all day on the wettest day and were rained upon heavily only at Tiskita and Monteverde, while the day at Santa Elena was troublesome, no worse. While rain fell on most days, it was otherwise mainly confined to the hours of darkness.

Olive-crowned Yellowthroat, Nicaraguan Seed-Finch, Orchard Oriole.

Ian Hodgson. August 2004



White-necked Puffbird by Brian Short

Systematic List of Species

This is where the fun begins. The phrase 'that's been split', or something similar, is invariably frequently used on a birding trip in Central and South America, where recent taxonomic study has resulted in a large number of new species being defined, sometimes as a result of DNA-analysis in the laboratory, sometimes from field study. However, the extent to which DNA can be used to define a species is still the subject of controversy, as is the whole fundamental concept of the approach to taxonomy, so there is much disagreement on speciation and any single authority will find plenty of opposition to his or her view. Keith did much work prior to the trip in producing the trip list, and this worked very well. He combined lists for each locality with world checklists by Sibley & Monroe, Clements and the summaries contained on the excellent Avibase website at www.bsc-eoc.org/avibase. This appears to be based mainly upon Sibley & Monroe while referring also to the taxonomic view of Clements and the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU), generally regarded as the last word on species definition for the region.

For better or for worse, the list that follows is based mostly on Clements' *Birds of the World: a Checklist*, published in 2000, with subsequent updates on the Ibis Publishing website at www.ibispub.com. However, Clements in some cases takes a position with which one might agree, while perhaps tending to lag behind in others. There is simply no last word on the subject and it's a case of making up your own mind. At any rate, I hope that the notes for each species where differences in opinion exist are helpful in this respect. Appropriate comments are also included where species are covered by the excellent *Handbook of the Birds of the World* (HBW), currently in the course of publication.

Great Tinamou *Tinamus major*

One was seen in the forest across the bridge over Rio Sarapiquí at Selva Verde.

Least Grebe *Tachybaptus dominicus*

One was seen at a lake in the hills somewhere between San José and the Pacific lowlands.

Brown Pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis*

Along the Pacific coast at Tiskita we saw up to 70 daily, with 40 on our journey north as we passed along the coast near Puntarenas.

Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster*

Two were seen associating with a fishing boat off Tiskita.

Neotropic Cormorant *Phalacrocorax brasilianus*

One was seen at a lake in the hills between San José and the Pacific lowlands, with up to three in the Rio Sarapiquí lowlands around Selva Verde.

Anhinga *Anhinga anhinga*

Up to five in the Rio Tarcoles area, from ponds upriver from the bridge to the estuary.

Magnificent Frigatebird *Fregata magnificens*

We saw up to 70-80 each day at Tiskita and up to six in the Rio Tarcoles area.

Great Blue Heron *Ardea herodias*

Two at ponds upriver from the bridge over Rio Tarcoles, one at the Tarcoles estuary and singles at Selva Verde and a pond between Virgen del Socorro and the Rio Sarapiquí lowlands.

Great Egret *Ardea alba*

(Frequently placed in the genus *Casmerodius*, but listed as *Egretta alba* in HBW, with the comment that recent DNA work suggests a closer relationship with *Ardea* than *Egretta*).

Up to ten daily in the Rio Tarcoles/Carara area and up to four in the lowlands around Selva Verde and La Selva.

Tricoloured Heron *Egretta tricolor*

We encountered two singles at the Rio Tarcoles.

Little Blue Heron *Egretta caerulea*

Up to four in the Rio Tarcoles/Carara area and two on two occasions while at Selva Verde.

Snowy Egret *Egretta thula*

Surprisingly scarce, we saw one or two only in the Rio Tarcoles area and at Selva Verde.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

The first group to sample the Osa peninsula returned with tales of up to 25 there, and although numbers at Tiskita were generally low, we did see similar numbers there one day. Elsewhere, there were up to ten in the Rio Tarcoles area and 30 while driving through the Caribbean lowlands to Selva Verde.

Green Heron *Butorides virescens*

(Regarded by Clements as distinct from Striated Heron *B.striatus* but as a race of Green-backed Heron *B.striatus* in HBW).

Up to three a day in the Rio Tarcoles area and two at Selva Verde, with five near La Selva on our last day.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron *Nyctanassa violacea*

There were at least eight at the Rio Tarcoles estuary.

Boat-billed Heron *Cochlearius cochlearius*

There were two at a lake in Carara NP.

Bare-throated Tiger-Heron *Tigrisoma mexicanum*

Four or five were seen at a pond upriver from the bridge over Rio Tarcoles, with two on each of the following two days in the Carara/Rio Tarcoles area.

Fasciated Tiger-Heron *Tigrisoma fasciatum*

An adult was seen in the rocky riverbed of Rio Guayabo, just beyond Venecia, as we drove into the Rio Sarapiquí lowlands, and a sub-adult was seen close to the lodge at Selva Verde on three days while we were there.

Wood Stork *Mycteria americana*

One at the Rio Tarcoles estuary.

Green Ibis *Mesembrinibis cayennensis*

One in a piece of swampy grassland by the entrance gate to La Selva.

White Ibis *Eudocimus albus*

12 on the Osa peninsula, up to nine at Tiskita and up to six in the Carara/Rio Tarcoles area.

Roseate Spoonbill *Ajaia ajaja*

There were up to four at various points along Rio Tarcoles.

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna autumnalis*

Up to 25 daily in the Rio Tarcoles/Carara area and one somewhere between Laguna de Arenal and Selva Verde.

Muscovy Duck *Cairina moschata*

One was seen at a lake in the hills between San José and the Pacific lowlands and three were seen flying over the Caribbean lowlands as we approached Selva Verde.

Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus*

Ubiquitous. Probably less abundant than Turkey Vulture on the Pacific side of the country, whereas on the Caribbean side Black tended to be more numerous.

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura*

See above remarks for Black Vulture. If you visit Costa Rica you will see both of these species.

King Vulture *Sarcoramphus papa*

Up to five were seen daily at Tiskita and two were seen near Selva Verde.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Despite the word *Tiskita* meaning Osprey in the language of the indigenous people of Costa Rica, we saw only one during the trip, on the estuary of the Rio Tarcoles.

Swallow-tailed Kite *Elanoides forficatus*

Voted the bird of the trip, we saw up to 12 daily at Tiskita, where a flock would invariably appear just after midday to gracefully pick fruits from a tree near the lodge, which they devoured in the air before returning for more. We also saw up to eight each day whilst at Monteverde and a flock of at least 110 was seen moving steadily southward near La Selva on their post-breeding journey into South America.

White-tailed Kite *Elanus leucurus*

We saw singles just outside San José, near Rio Tarcoles and somewhere between the Pacific coast and Monteverde.

Double-toothed Kite *Harpagus bidentatus*

Up to three were seen daily at Tiskita and we saw one over Virgen del Socorro.

Plumbeous Kite *Ictinia plumbea*

Two drifted over Carara NP.

Barred Hawk *Leucopternis princeps*

One was seen at Tiskita and at least three were seen over Virgen del Socorro.

Semiplumbeous Hawk *Leucopternis semiplumbea*

One was seen devouring a lizard near Selva Verde lodge and another was seen nearby along the river on our final day.

White Hawk *Leucopternis albicollis*

One or two were evident daily at Tiskita and one was seen at Virgen del Socorro.

Mangrove Black-Hawk *Buteogallus subtilis*

Until recently, considered a race of Common Black-hawk *B. anthracinus* but now elevated to specific status, although its taxonomic status remains uncertain in view of an unknown degree of hybridisation in Panama (HBW).

Up to three were seen at Tiskita and two were seen over the Rio Tarcoles estuary. They were described to us as Mangrove, rather than Common Black-Hawks, largely on the basis of habitat, but although Mangrove may be confined to mangroves for breeding, Common apparently also occurs in mangroves. It is doubtful that the views we had would allow separation on the basis of plumage details.

Grey Hawk *Asturina nitidus*

Included in the genus *Asturina* by Clements and on Avibase, but in *Buteo* by other sources, including HBW. Three on the journey from the Pacific coast to Monteverde and six between Monteverde and Selva Verde, then two singles at Selva Verde.

Roadside Hawk *Buteo magnirostris*

One at Tiskita, two between the lowlands and Virgen del Socorro and one near La Selva.

Short-tailed Hawk *Buteo brachyurus*

Sightings at Tiskita involved at least one pale and two dark individuals, two pale birds were seen at Volcan Arenal and four, all pale morph, were seen circling over Virgen del Socorro.

Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis*

One over Finca Mirador de Quetzales, situated at 2650m in Cerro de la Muerte.

Crested Caracara *Caracara cheriway*

Clements split Crested Caracara *C.plancus* in August 2000 into *C.plancus* of the Amazon basin and *C.cheriway*, extending from offshore Mexico into South America. However, HBW retains the original genus *Polyborus* and regards Crested Caracara *P.plancus* as monotypic.

One was seen on the Osa peninsula and another was seen in the Rio Sarapiquí lowlands as we drove towards Selva Verde.

Yellow-headed Caracara *Milvago chimachima*

Up to three daily at Tiskita and four in the Pacific lowlands as we drove north from Villa Lapas.

Laughing Falcon *Herpetotheres cachinnans*

This much sought-after raptor was splendidly spotted from the bus as we rove up to Virgen del Socorro and 'scoped for all to get very good views. Undoubtedly one of the birds of the trip.

Bat Falcon *Falco ruficularis*

One drifted across the forest below the lodge at Tiskita, another was seen as we drove towards Monteverde, another was seen from our hotel there and a fourth was seen on our last day, near La Selva.

Grey-headed Chachalaca *Ortalis cinereiceps*

There were at least ten around Laguna de Arenal and five at La Selva.

Crested Guan *Penelope purpurascens*

We saw one in the forest surrounding Laguna de Arenal and at least eight at La Selva.

Black Guan *Chamaepetes unicolor*

One was seen outside the Cloud Forest Preserve at Monteverde and an adult and two young were seen at Santa Elena Cloud Forest Reserve.

Great Curassow *Crax rubra*

A female put on a great performance for us at the edge of one of the forest trails at La Selva.

Black-breasted Wood-Quail *Odontophorus leucolaemus*

Between us, we saw a total of 11 in Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve.

Grey-necked Wood-Rail *Aramides cajanea*

Two or three were seen close to one of the trails in the forest at La Selva and John W saw what was almost certainly this species at a traditional lurking spot (for Wood-Rails) at Selva Verde.

American Purple Gallinule *Porphyrio martinica*

Rather parochially defined as Purple Gallinule in Clements, but as American Purple Gallinule by most other authorities.

Four at a series of pools upriver from the bridge over Rio Tarcoles, two at the Rio Tarcoles estuary and two near La Selva on our final day.

Sunbittern *Eurypyga helias*

We saw at least two on the river and adjacent forest, once close to the lodge, at Selva Verde, although there were reports from rafters that several more were present.

Northern Jacana *Jacana spinosa*

15-20 at pools upriver from the bridge over Rio Tarcoles as we drove towards Villa Lapas, then up to eight on each of the following two days, four plus juveniles in the Rio Sarapiquí lowlands as we drove towards Selva Verde and four, obviously nesting, near La Selva on our last day.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

One at the Rio Tarcoles estuary.

Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus*

About ten at the Rio Tarcoles estuary.

Wilson's Plover *Charadrius wilsonia*

Two at the Rio Tarcoles estuary.

Collared Plover *Charadrius collaris*

Two at the Rio Tarcoles estuary, which seems to be just about the most reliable site in Costa Rica for this scarce and local species.

Short-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus griseus*

Three at the Rio Tarcoles estuary.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Six at the Rio Tarcoles estuary.

Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca*

One at the Rio Tarcoles estuary.

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularia*

Two at pools upriver from the bridge over the Rio Tarcoles, one on the river at Villa Lapas and four or five at the Rio Tarcoles estuary.

Willet *Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*

Three at the Rio Tarcoles estuary.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Five at the Rio Tarcoles estuary.

Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla*

20-30 at the Rio Tarcoles estuary.

Western Sandpiper *Calidris mauri*

One at the Rio Tarcoles estuary.

Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla*

One at the Rio Tarcoles estuary.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Five were seen around a fishing boat off Tiskita.

Royal Tern *Sterna maxima*

A roost of at least 60 exploded from the beach at the Rio Tarcoles estuary.

Rock Dove/Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*

Seen around areas of habitation, so not often, fortunately.



Bare-throated Tiger Heron by Brian Short

Band-tailed Pigeon *Columba fasciata*

We saw at least 100 on our day at Cerro de la Muerte and up to 60 at Monteverde/Santa Elena.

Pale-vented Pigeon *Columba cayennensis*

Three on a couple of occasions at Selva Verde.

Red-billed Pigeon *Columba flavirostris*

We saw up to five in the San José area, eight at Monteverde and six while at Selva Verde.

Short-billed Pigeon *Columba nigrirostris*

One on the Osa peninsula, one at Carara NP and one on our final day at Selva Verde.

White-winged Dove *Zenaida asiatica*

Up to six in the San José area and four in the lowlands while driving towards Selva Verde.

Common Ground-Dove *Columbina passerina*

One above Villa Lapas and two in Carara NP.

Plain-breasted Ground-Dove *Columbina minuta*

One was seen on the Osa peninsula.

Ruddy Ground-Dove *Columbina talpacoti*

Small numbers (up to ten) were recorded from the Osa peninsula, Tiskita, the Pacific lowlands north of Villa Lapas and in the lowlands around Selva Verde/La Selva.

Inca Dove *Columbina inca*

One on the outskirts of San José and up to ten in the dry lowlands around Carara NP.

Blue Ground-Dove *Claravis pretiosa*

The only one of the trip was seen along the access road to La Selva.

White-tipped Dove *Leptotila verreauxi*

Singles were seen on the Osa peninsula and Villa Lapas and five were recorded in Carara NP.

Grey-chested Dove *Leptotila cassini*

Two were seen across the river from Selva Verde Lodge.

Olive-backed Quail-Dove *Geotrygon veraguensis*

One was seen on a bare patch of the forest floor at La Selva.

Great Green Macaw *Ara ambigua*

Against all expectations, we saw this spectacular species on three occasions at Selva Verde. Seven flew over on our first day, followed by six on our day at La Selva, one or two of which were watched feeding, and four on our final day, again at Selva Verde.

Scarlet Macaw *Ara macao*

Seen regularly at Tiskita, involving at least five and possibly as many as nine, with eight on the Osa peninsula and six in the Carara/Rio Tarcoles area.

Crimson-fronted Parakeet *Aratinga finschi*

Finsch's Conure/Parakeet according to some authorities but listed at Crimson-fronted Parakeet by Clements and HBW.

Widespread in small numbers (up to ten daily), with records from San José, Tiskita, between Monteverde and Santa Elena and in the Sarapiquí lowlands.

Olive-throated Parakeet *Aratinga nana*

Two flew over open grassland with scattered trees and scrub near Selva Verde.

Orange-chinned Parakeet *Brotogeris jugularis*

Up to ten were seen on the Osa peninsula, with up to four at Tiskita and up to eight during our stay in the Selva Verde area.

Brown-hooded Parrot *Pionopsitta haematotis*

We encountered small numbers (up to nine daily) on the Osa peninsula, at Monteverde and in the Rio Sarapiquí area.

White-crowned Parrot *Pionus senilis*

Our first encounter with this rather smart little parrot was a party of six in forest surrounding Laguna de Arenal, after which we saw up to six on most days in the Selva Verde region.

White-fronted Parrot *Amazona albifrons*

10-20 were feeding at a fruiting tree somewhere between Monteverde and Tilarán.

Red-lored Parrot *Amazona autumnalis*

Up to 11 daily in the Selva Verde/La Selva area.

Mealy Parrot *Amazona farinosa*

Up to 12 were seen daily at Tiskita and 10-15 were regular around Selva Verde.

Squirrel Cuckoo *Piaya cayana*

Small numbers were seen on the Osa peninsula, Carara/Villa Lapas (including five in Carara NP), Monteverde and in the Selva Verde area.

Groove-billed Ani *Crotophaga sulcirostris*

Common in the Pacific lowlands around Rio Tarcoles, where we recorded 20-30 one day, but less so in the Caribbean lowlands, where up to five were seen each day.

Striped Cuckoo *Tapera naevia*

One was seen and heard calling at an area of rough, dry grassland with scattered low bushes at the start of the approach road to Villa Lapas, near Carara NP.

Black-and-White Owl *Ciccaba nigrolineata*

Included in genus *Strix* by many authorities, including HBW.

Two were watched roosting in the town park in Orotina, north of Carara in the Pacific lowlands.

Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl *Glaucidium brasilianum*

According to Avibase, Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl has been split into four species: *G.brasilianum*, *G.ridgwayi*, *G.tacumanum* and *G.nanum*. The last two species are recognised by Clements and HBW as Tacuman Pygmy-Owl and Austral Pygmy-Owl, both of which occur only in South America, but *ridgwayi* (ranging from S.Texas to Panama) is still included by Clements under *G.brasilianum*, one of 12 races of a species that ranges from S.Arizona to S.Uruguay.

Two were seen at a grove of trees near the Rio Tarcoles estuary.

Great Potoo *Nyctibius grandis*

One was seen on top of a dead tree overhanging the Rio Sarapiquí at Selva Verde.

Lesser Nighthawk *Chordeiles acutipennis*

Two were found by Santiago, roosting in a tree at Villa Lapas, and a nighthawk, either this species or Common *C.minor* was seen from the bridge at La Selva at dusk.

Chestnut-collared Swift *Streptoprocne rutila*

Included in genus *Cypseloides* in HBW, which discusses reasons for placing in genus *Streptoprocne*, in accordance with Clements' view.

10-15 were identified with certainty only around Tiskita and Monteverde, though this species was probably present in a flock of swifts that passed our hotel in San José on our first morning.

White-collared Swift *Streptoprocne zonari*

This impressive swift was seen over Tiskita, Monteverde and the Rio Sarapiquí lowlands, where 50 were recorded one day.

Costa Rican Swift *Chaetura fumosa*

Regarded as specifically distinct by Clements (December 2002), having been split from Band-rumped Swift *C.spinicauda*. Also recognised as such by AOU (Avibase), although HBW regards it as a race of *spinicauda*.

Up to six were seen over Tiskita and two were seen in the Carara area.

Grey-rumped Swift *Chaetura cinereiventris*

Up to eight were seen well as they flew low over the Rio Sarapiquí at Selva Verde on two mornings during our stay.

Vaux's Swift *Chaetura vauxi*

Up to ten around Carara NP and 20 at Monteverde and at least 70 circling around Volcan Arenal.

Lesser Swallow-tailed Swift *Panyptila cayennensis*

This elegant swift was seen at Tiskita and Selva Verde, four being involved on both occasions.

Bronzy Hermit *Glaucis aenea*

One was seen on just one occasion at Tiskita.

Band-tailed Barbthroat *Threnetes ruckeri*

One-two were seen on two days while we were at Tiskita.

Green Hermit *Phaethornis guy*

Two were seen at the hummingbird feeders at Santa Elena Cloud Forest Reserve and one came to the feeders at Vera's place in Virgen del Socorro.

Western Long-tailed Hermit *Phaethornis longirostris*

Considered by Clements and HBW to be specifically distinct from Eastern Long-tailed Hermit *P.superciliosus* of Venezuela, the Guianas and N.Brazil. Called Long-billed Hermit by the AOU.

One or two were seen daily at Tiskita and singles were recorded at Selva Verde and La Selva.

Stripe-throated Hermit *Phaethornis striigularis*

This species appears in the field guide as Little Hermit *P.longuemareus*. However, Clements, HBW and AOU regard that species as ranging from NE Venezuela to French Guiana and Trinidad. The species occurring in Costa Rica is as included here.

One was seen at Villa Lapas and another was seen at Selva Verde.

Green-fronted Lancebill *Doryfera ludovicae*

One was seen at a narrow stream close to La Paz waterfalls in Virgen del Socorro.

Scaly-breasted Hummingbird *Phaeochroa cuvierii*

Singles were seen on a couple of occasions in the grounds of Villa Lapas.

Violet Sabrewing *Campylopterus hemileucurus*

One was seen at the hummingbird feeders at Savegre Mountain Lodge in Cerro de la Muerte, it was numerous (15-20 were estimated) at the feeders at Monteverde and two or three were seen at the feeders at Santa Elena Cloud Forest Reserve. About ten were also seen at Vera's place in Virgen del Socorro.

White-necked Jacobin *Florisuga mellivora*

We saw singles at Tiskita and in the open area near Selva Verde Lodge, but not particularly well on either occasion, which is a pity, since it is a very attractive hummer.

Brown Violet-ear *Colibri delphinae*

There were about ten at Vera's place in Virgen del Socorro.

Green Violet-ear *Colibri thalassinus*

20-30 were recorded during our day in Cerro de la Muerte and there were three or four at the hummingbird feeders at Monteverde, one or two over the next couple of days at Monteverde and Santa Elena and one at Vera's place in Virgen del Socorro.

Violet-headed Hummingbird *Klais guimeti*

Singles were seen at Selva Verde and La Selva.

Black-crested Coquette *Lophornis helenae*

Singles were seen at Selva Verde and La Selva.

Green Thorntail *Discosura conversii*

A quite beautiful male was seen repeatedly at the hummingbird feeders at Vera's place in Virgen del Socorro, though not so often that we became tired of looking at it.

Fiery-throated Hummingbird *Panterpe insignis*

There were 20-30 during our day in Cerro de la Muerte and a poorly-looking individual with a malformed or broken bill at the hummingbird feeders at Monteverde.

Coppery-headed Emerald *Elvira cupreiceps*

Two or three were present at the hummingbird feeders at Monteverde, with small numbers in the Monteverde area over the next two days, and about six were seen at the hummingbird feeders at Vera's place in Virgen del Socorro.

Stripe-tailed Hummingbird *Eupherusa eximia*

Five-six were seen at the hummingbird feeders at Monteverde, with smaller numbers in the Monteverde area over the next two days.

Black-bellied Hummingbird *Eupherusa nigriventris*

One of the birds of the trip, one was seen on a few occasions at the hummingbird feeders at Vera's place in Virgen del Socorro.

Violet-crowned Woodnymph *Thalurania colombica*

Included as Purple-crowned Woodnymph in HBW.

Up to four were regular around the lodge at Tiskita and up to three were recorded during our sojourn at Selva Verde and La Selva.

Blue-throated Goldentail *Hylocharis eliciae*

Up to two at Tiskita.

Rufous-tailed Hummingbird *Amazilia tzacati*

The most widespread and regularly recorded of the hummers, we recorded singles at Tiskita, up to three in the Carara/Rio Tarcoles area, two at Monteverde and ten while at Selva Verde, including sightings at Selva Verde, La Selva and the hummingbird feeders at Vera's place in Virgen del Socorro.

Blue-chested Hummingbird *Amazilia amabilis*

We saw singles at Selva Verde and La Selva.

Steely-vented Hummingbird *Saucerottia saucerrottei*

We encountered three individuals at Monteverde.

Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer *Chalybura urochrysis*

We saw two at Selva Verde.

White-bellied Mountain-gem *Lampornis hemileucus*

One, possibly two were seen at the hummingbird feeders at Vera's place in Virgen del Socorro.

Purple-throated Mountain-gem *Lampornis calolaema*

There were about ten at the hummingbird feeders at Monteverde and one at the feeders at Vera's place in Virgen del Socorro.

Grey-tailed Mountain-gem *Lampornis cinereicauda*

Clements regards this as distinct from White-throated Mountain-gem *Lcastaneovertris*, but HBW regards it as a race of Variable Mountain-gem *Lcastaneovertris*, a position taken by AOU.

We recorded eight in Cerro de la Muerte, mostly at Savegre Mountain Lodge.

Green-crowned Brilliant *Heliodoxa jacula*

This was the most numerous species at the Monteverde hummingbird feeders, where 20-25 were present. Four-five were also seen at Santa Elena and there were about eight at the hummingbird feeders at Vera's place in Virgen del Socorro.

Magnificent Hummingbird *Eugenes fulgens*

We recorded 15-20 during our day in Cerro de la Muerte.

Purple-crowned Fairy *Heliothryx barroti*

This elegant hummingbird was widespread but only in small numbers. We had two sightings of singles at the lodge at Tiskita, three in the grounds of Selva Verde Lodge and one at La Selva.

Long-billed Starthroat *Heliomaster longirostris*

The only individual seen on the trip was seen as we approached the open area across the river at Selva Verde.

Scintillant Hummingbird *Selasphorus scintilla*

Both this and the following species were seen at the hummingbird feeders at Savegre Mountain Lodge, but this species was a good deal less numerous, with no more than two being present.

Volcano Hummingbird *Selasphorus flammula*

10-15 were present at the hummingbird feeders at Savegre Mountain Lodge.

Black-headed Trogon *Trogon melanocephalus*

Two males were seen at a grove of trees near the Rio Tarcoles estuary.

Baird's Trogon *Trogon bairdii*

A female was seen in the forest at Tiskita and two males were located in Carara NP.

Violaceous Trogon *Trogon violaceus*

We found one in the hills above Villa Lapas, three at Carara NP and one at Selva.

Orange-bellied Trogon *Trogon aurantiiventris*

Two males were seen in Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve.

Black-throated Trogon *Trogon rufus*

Three individuals at Tiskita preceded a male at La Selva.

Slaty-tailed Trogon *Trogon massena*

Singles were seen in the hills above Villa Lapas and Carara NP and five or six were recorded at La Selva.

Resplendent Quetzal *Pharomachrus mocinno*

After three at Finca Mirador de Quetzales in Cerro de la Muerte we saw another at Monteverde.

Ringed Kingfisher *Megaceryle torquata*

We recorded singles at the bridge over Rio Tarcoles and at the estuary of the same river, then three around Laguna de Arenal and one or two daily whilst at Selva Verde.

Amazon Kingfisher *Chloroceryle amazona*

There were three around Laguna de Arenal and one or two daily at Selva Verde.

Green Kingfisher *Chloroceryle americana*

The most widespread and numerous kingfisher. We saw two near the village at Tiskita, two at the bridge over Rio Tarcoles, five in and around Carara NP, three while driving north along the Pacific coast from Villa Lapas, one between Laguna de Arenal and Selva Verde and one or two daily at Selva Verde and La Selva.

American Pygmy Kingfisher *Chloroceryle aenea*

Two were seen at a lake in Carara NP, one of which was very close to our viewing position.

Blue-crowned Motmot *Momotus momota*

Two were seen in the hills between Monteverde and Tilarán.

Broad-billed Motmot *Electron platyrhynchum*

We were treated to singles at the edge of the forest at Selva Verde and La Selva.

Turquoise-browed Motmot *Eumomota superciliosa*

We recorded three in Carara NP and one near the Rio Tarcoles estuary.

Rufous-tailed Jacamar *Galbula ruficauda*

One was seen along the access road to La Selva.

White-necked Puffbird *Notharchus macrorhynchos*

Two in the forest on our final day at Tiskita and one near La Selva on the last day of the trip.

Red-headed Barbet *Eubucco bourcierii*

We found two females in the forest at Virgen del Socorro.

Prong-billed Barbet *Semnornis frantzii*

Five in Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve.

Blue-throated Toucanet *Aulacorhynchus caeruleogularis*

Clements (July 2003) split Emerald Toucanet *A.prasinus* into seven species, the one occurring in the highlands of Costa Rica being Blue-throated Toucanet *A.caeruleogularis*. However, HBW does not follow this position, including all seven species within Emerald Toucanet *A.prasinus*.

We found two in Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve, four a little way above our accommodation at Monteverde and two at Virgen del Socorro.

Collared Araçari *Pteroglossus torquatus*

Common around Selva Verde and La Selva, where we recorded up to 15 daily.

Fiery-billed Araçari *Pteroglossus frantzii*

There were five at Carara NP.

Keel-billed Toucan *Ramphastos sulfuratus*

We first saw this species at Monteverde, where we saw up to ten each day, followed by up to four or five at Selva Verde and ten on our day at La Selva.

Black-mandibled Toucan *Ramphastos ambiguus*

Clements includes Chestnut-mandibled Toucan (formerly *R.swainsonii*) as a race of Black-mandibled Toucan *R.ambiguus*, following HBW, which rather more sensibly uses Yellow-throated Toucan as its English name.

We saw up to 12 at Tiskita, up to 14 between Villa Lapas and Rio Tarcoles and up to seven in the Selva Verde/La Selva area.

Acorn Woodpecker *Melanerpes formicivorus*

There were 20-25 of this smart woodpecker, which was seen in parties of up to six, around Savegre Mountain Lodge on our day in Cerro de la Muerte.

Golden-naped Woodpecker *Melanerpes chrysauchen*

One or two were seen daily at Tiskita.

Black-cheeked Woodpecker *Melanerpes pucherani*

Fairly common in the Rio Sarapiquí lowlands, where we saw up to ten daily.

Red-crowned Woodpecker *Melanerpes rubricapillus*

We recorded a probable total of nine individuals around Tiskita.

Hoffman's Woodpecker *Melanerpes hoffmannii*

We recorded up to three around Rio Tarcoles/Carara NP, four or five on the Pacific lowlands on our journey north from Villa Lapas and a couple of singles at Monteverde.

Hairy Woodpecker *Picoides villosus*

One was seen close to the entrance to Finca Mirador de Quetzales, at about 2500m.

Smoky-brown Woodpecker *Veniliornis fumigatus*

One was seen in an open area with lines of large trees near Selva Verde Lodge.

Rufous-winged Woodpecker *Piculus simplex*

One was seen close to the bridge across the Rio Puerto Viejo at La Selva.

Chestnut-coloured Woodpecker *Celeus castaneus*

Four were seen at La Selva, with one nearby on our final day.

Lineated Woodpecker *Dryocopos lineatus*

Three in a grove of trees near the Rio Tarcoles estuary.

Pale-billed Woodpecker *Campephilus guatamalensis*

One was seen briefly at Tiskita and singles were seen at Selva Verde and La Selva.

Red-faced Spinetail *Craniroleuca erythroptera*

We saw at least five or six in Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve.

Spotted Barbtail *Premnoplex brunnescens*

The *burnnoides* are not well represented in Costa Rica, many being at the northern edge of their ranges, but they provide a real flavour of the Andean forests. Most are furtive and many of them are at best cryptically coloured, but some are subtly beautiful, and this is as good an example as any that brown is not necessarily boring. We saw eight or nine in Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve and two in roadside forest at Virgen del Socorro.

Ruddy Treerunner *Margarornis rubiginosus*

A highland species that we saw at 2600m at Finca Mirador de Quetzales in Cerro de la Muerte and also at Santa Elena Cloud Forest Reserve, near Monteverde, probably at around 1500m.

Plain Xenops *Xenops minutes*

We saw up to four daily whilst at Tiskita and one or two on each day of our stay at Villa Lapas.

Lineated Foliage-gleaner *Syndactyla subularis*

There were seven or eight, mostly low down in forest understorey, at Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve.

Buff-throated Foliage-gleaner *Automolus ochrolaemus*

We found one in Carara NP.

Tawny-winged Woodcreeper *Dendrocincla anabatina*

We saw just one, in the forest at Tiskita.

Olivaceous Woodcreeper *Sittasomus griseicapillus*

Two were seen in Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve.

Wedge-billed Woodcreeper *Glyphorhynchus spirurus*

This diminutive woodcreeper was seen at Tiskita (up to four), Carara NP (a single) and at Selva Verde and La Selva (one or two at each site).

Northern Barred Woodcreeper *Dendrocolaptes sanctithomae*

Since *A Field Guide to the Birds of Costa Rica* was published, Barred Woodcreeper has been split into two species: Northern Barred Woodcreeper *D. sanctithomae*, which ranges from Mexico to South America, and Amazonian Barred Woodcreeper *D. certhia*, which occurs only in South America (Clements, HBW).

From one extreme to the other, two were seen in Carara NP, with up to four daily during our stay in the Selva Verde/La Selva area.

Cocoa Woodcreeper *Xiphorhynchus sussuratus*

Also split (in May 2000 by Clements) since *A Field Guide to the Birds of Costa Rica* was published, this species now comprises Cocoa Woodcreeper *X. sussuratus*, which is found from Guatemala to Venezuela, and Buff-throated Woodcreeper *X. guttatus*, which is found only in South America (Clements, HBW).

We saw six individuals at Tiskita, one in Carara NP and one or two at Selva Verde/La Selva.

Spotted Woodcreeper *Xiphorhynchus erythropygius*

There were two or three in Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve.

Streak-headed Woodcreeper *Lepidocolaptes souleyetii*

The most widespread of the woodcreepers, we recorded singles at Carara NP, Santa Elena Cloud Forest Reserve and Laguna de Arenal, five or six at Selva Verde and three at La Selva.

Great Antshrike *Taraba major*

Normally found only in deep cover amid dense forest or scrub, we had superb and prolonged views of a male on the approach road to La Selva.

Barred Antshrike *Thamnophilus doliatus*

After a male at the airstrip at Tiskita we saw a pair in Carara NP.

Black-hooded Antshrike *Thamnophilus bridgesi*

After one on our first day at Tiskita we saw ten on each of the following two days, mostly as the main species in feeding flocks in the forest. We also saw two above Villa Lapas and seven or eight in Carara NP.

Western Slaty Antshrike *Thamnophilus atrinucha*

Since *A Field Guide to the Birds of Costa Rica* was published, Slaty Antshrike has been split into Western Slaty Antshrike *T. atrinucha* of Central America and Guianan Slaty Antshrike *T. punctatus*, which ranges from the Guianas to Brazil.

We had great views of a male in the forest at La Selva.

Plain Antvireo *Dysithamnus mentalis*

We saw two in a mixed feeding flock at Tiskita that also included Black-hooded Antshrikes, Plain Xenops, Cocoa Woodcreeper, Chestnut-backed Antbird and a Tawny-capped Greenlet.

Slaty Antwren *Myrmotherula schisticolor*

We recorded three individuals in the forest at Tiskita and two in Carara NP.

Dot-winged Antwren *Microhopias quixensis*

We saw up to four on two of our forays into the forest at Tiskita.

Dusky Antbird *Cercomacra tyrannina*

We found a female in the forested hills above Villa Lapas and two in Carara NP.

Chestnut-backed Antbird *Myrmeciza exsul*

We managed to locate up to five in the forest around Tiskita, two in Carara NP, up to four at Selva Verde, two at La Selva and one in the forest at Virgen del Socorro.

Rufous Piha *Lipaugus unirufus*

Just about as decorous as its South American counterpart, but a good deal less vocal. We saw one in the forest at Tiskita, courtesy of some good work by Luis, our guide.

Snowy Cotinga *Carpodectes nitidus*

Against all expectations, we found several males and females in a flock that comprised at least seven individuals opposite the entrance to Selva Verde Lodge, with two more nearby later the same day, followed by a male at La Selva the next day.

Purple-throated Fruitcrow *Querula purpurata*

A flock of oropendolas and fruitcrows was heard moving through the forest at La Selva by Erick, our guide, and even though we got close enough to see several of the oropendolas, two or three or the fruitcrows showed themselves only briefly to a few of the group.

Three-wattled Bellbird *Procnias tricarunculata*

The sound of bellbirds and solitaires echoing from the forest at Monteverde was one of the most evocative memories of our few days on the Continental Divide, though both neither was easy to see well. We saw up to four bellbirds on treetops from our hotel each morning and had close 'scope views of one along the Pig Farm Trail one afternoon.

White-collared Manakin *Manacus candei*

We saw a probable six individuals around Selva Verde, although only one was a male.

Orange-collared Manakin *Manacus aurantiacus*

This beautiful Pacific counterpart of the preceding species was seen in the hills above Villa Lapas and in Carara NP, amounting to four individuals, of which three were males.

White-ruffed Manakin *Corapipo altera*

Two or three females were seen in roadside forest at Virgen del Socorro.

Long-tailed Manakin *Chiroxiphia linearis*

A male was heard calling repeatedly at forest edge along the Pig Farm Trail at Monteverde, but showed itself only briefly to one or two of the group.

Blue-crowned Manakin *Pipra coronata*

We saw 11 individuals at Tiskita, involving up to seven a day.

Red-capped Manakin *Pipra mentalis*

At Tiskita, we were fairly underwhelmed by our first, a female, but stunned by our second, a quite superb male in trees near the lodge. We found a lek of four in the forest later.

Yellow Tyrannulet *Capsiempis flaveola*

There were six in an open area resembling English parkland across the river from Selva Verde Lodge.

Yellow-bellied Elaenia *Elaenia flavogaster*

The most numerous and widespread Elaenia, we recorded three in dry scrubby grassland near Villa Lapas, up to three in the Monteverde area, up to three around Selva Verde and La Selva and six on our day at Virgen del Socorro.

Mountain Elaenia *Elaenia frantzii*

We found seven or eight on our day in the Santa Elena/Monteverde area.

Torrent Tyrannulet *Sepophaga cinerea*

We saw singles at Savegre Mountain Lodge in Cerro de la Muerte and the Rio Sarapiquí at Selva Verde Lodge and four in the streams and rivers of Virgen del Socorro.

Ochre-bellied Flycatcher *Mionectes oleaginous*

Up to three at Tiskita and two at Selva Verde, this species did not appear on any lists of favoured birds of the trip.

Olive-striped Flycatcher *Mionectes olivaceus*

We found two or three in Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve and one in Virgen del Socorro.

Paltry Tyrannulet *Zimmerius vilissimus*

One at Savegre Mountain Lodge in Cerro de la Muerte, two in the hills above Villa Lapas, three in Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve and one or two daily in the Rio Sarapiquí lowlands.

Black-capped Pygmy-tyrant *Myiornis atricapillus*

One was seen at Selva Verde Lodge.

Northern Bentbill *Oncostoma cinereigulare*

We found one in the forest parallel to the main road at Carara NP.

Black-headed Tody-flycatcher *Todirostrum nigriceps*

After taking an age to see our first, high up in a tree at La Selva, we found another the following morning at Selva Verde, not exactly low down, but a good deal easier to see.

Common Tody-flycatcher *Todirostrum cinereum*

Up to six at Carara NP and four at various points around Selva Verde.

Eye-ringed Flatbill *Rhynchocyclus brevirostris*

We saw one at Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve.

Yellow-olive Flycatcher *Tolmomyias sulphurescens*

We saw just one, in Carara NP.

Yellow-margined Flycatcher *Tolmomyias assimilis*

One was seen close to the river bridge at La Selva.

Golden-crowned Spadebill *Platyrinchus coronatus*

There were four in the forest at Tiskita on our third day there.

White-throated Spadebill *Platyrinchus mystaceus*

One was seen in a mixed feeding flock in Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve that comprised Common Bush-Tanagers, Three-striped Warblers, Slate-throated Redstarts, Spotted Barbtail and Lineated Foliage-gleaner.

Black-tailed Flycatcher *Myiobius atricaudus*

One was seen in the forest just south of Tiskita Lodge.

Tufted Flycatcher *Mitrephanes phaeocercus*

This attractive little flycatcher was seen in Cerro de la Muerte (three) and in Virgen del Socorro, where we saw at least six.

Dark Pewee *Contopus lugubris*

Two were seen in Virgen del Socorro.

Ochraceous Pewee *Contopus ochraceus*

We found two in Cerro de la Muerte.

Western Wood-Pewee *Contopus sordidulus*

According to *A Field Guide to the birds of Costa Rica* this species occurs earlier than the very similar Eastern Wood-Pewee (which appears from mid August) and possesses a blacker lower mandible. On this basis we identified a bird along the Pig Farm Trail at Monteverde as this species.

Tropical Pewee *Contopus cinereus*

We found five or six individuals in the Rio Sarapiquí lowlands, involving four one day around Selva Verde.

Yellowish Flycatcher *Empidonax flavescens*

We recorded two in Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve.

Black-capped Flycatcher *Empidonax atriceps*

Found only in the highlands around 2500m in Cerro de la Muerte, where we recorded 10-15.

Black Phoebe *Sayornis nigricans*

Two at Savegre Mountain Lodge, singles at Monteverde, Selva Verde and La Selva and three in Virgen del Socorro.

Bright-rumped Attila *Attila spadiceus*

One was seen briefly at Tiskita and we saw up to six or seven around Selva Verde and La Selva.

Rufous Mourner *Rhytipterna holerythra*
Singles were seen on three occasions at Selva Verde Lodge.

Dusky-capped Flycatcher *Myiarchus tuberculifer*
We found one at Tiskita and another at Selva Verde.

Panama Flycatcher *Myiarchus panamensis*
Two were seen at Tiskita.

Great Kiskadee *Pitangus sulphuratus*
Recorded on every day of the trip, probably most numerous in the Rio Tarcoles area, where we logged 15 one day.

Boat-billed Flycatcher *Megarhynchus pitangua*
Smaller numbers, up to three daily, were seen throughout the trip in similar situations to the previous species.

Social Flycatcher *Myiozetetes similis*
Between Great Kiskadee and Boat-billed Flycatcher in abundance, we also saw this species more or less throughout the trip, with up to six in the Carara NP area.

Grey-capped Flycatcher *Myiozetetes granadensis*
We recorded one at Carara NP and up to six daily in the Rio Sarapiquí lowlands.

White-ringed Flycatcher *Conopias albobittata*
There were up to seven daily in the Selva Verde/La Selva area.

Golden-bellied Flycatcher *Myiodynastes hemichrysus*
One was seen in roadside forest in Virgen del Socorro.

Streaked Flycatcher *Myiodynastes maculates*
Two at Tiskita were followed by seven or eight in Carara NP and two at Villa Lapas.

Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher *Myiodynastes luteiventris*
Replacing the previous species on the Caribbean side of the country, we saw one or two on three days in the Rio Sarapiquí lowlands.

Piratic Flycatcher *Legatus leucophaeus*
One was seen in the hills between Santa Elena and Monteverde.

Tropical Kingbird *Tyrannus melancholicus*
Seen throughout the trip, with up to eight a day, making it the second most numerous of the 'big yellow' flycatchers.

Cinnamon Becard *Pachyramphus cinnamomeus*
One was seen at Selva Verde Lodge and three or four were seen at La Selva.

White-winged Becard *Pachyramphus polychopterus*
We found a pair in Carara NP and a male near Selva Verde Lodge.

Rose-throated Becard *Pachyramphus aglaiae*
A female was seen in the town park at Orotina and there were six in Carara NP.

Masked Tityra *Tityra semifasciata*
This was the commonest and most widespread of the two tityras, with small numbers (up to four) at Tiskita, Carara/Rio Tarcoles, Monteverde/Santa Elena and the Rio Sarapiquí lowlands.

Black-crowned Tityra *Tityra inquisitor*

There were two at Tiskita Lodge and up to three around Selva Verde and La Selva.

Grey-breasted Martin *Progne chalybea*

Up to six or seven were recorded at Tiskita, Rio Tarcoles and the Rio Sarapiquí lowlands.

Mangrove Swallow *Tachycineta albilinea*

There were one-two on the Osa peninsula and Tiskita and six at the bridge over Rio Tarcoles.

Blue-and-White Swallow *Notiochelidon cyanoleuca*

Included in the genus *Pygochelidon* by Clements.

30-40 were recorded in the highlands of Cerro de la Muerte, with singles in San José and at Rio Tarcoles, up to 30 at Monteverde and up to 15 in the Rio Sarapiquí lowlands.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx serripennis*

Four were seen between San José and the highlands, with five at the bridge over Rio Tarcoles.

Southern Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*

Three or four were seen around Laguna de Arenal, with up to four around Selva Verde.

Bank Swallow (Sand Martin) *Riparia riparia*

One was seen at the bridge over Rio Tarcoles.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Small numbers were seen at Rio Tarcoles, Monteverde and the Rio Sarapiquí lowlands.

Black-and-Yellow Silky-flycatcher *Phainoptila melanoxantha*

We saw about ten around Finca Mirador de Quetzales, in the Cerro de la Muerte highlands at about 2600m.

Long-tailed Silky-flycatcher *Ptilogonys caudatus*

Eight around Finca Mirador de Quetzales, in the Cerro de la Muerte highlands.

American Dipper *Cinclus mexicanus*

One was seen in one of Virgen del Socorro's rushing, rocky rivers.

Band-backed Wren *Campylorhynchus zonatus*

We saw five or six individuals around Selva Verde.

Rufous-naped Wren *Campylorhynchus rufinucha*

Pretty common on the Pacific lowlands, we saw ten in the town park in Orotina and about 20 in Carara NP. We also saw one on our journey from Monteverde to Selva Verde.

Black-bellied Wren *Thryothorus fasciatoventris*

We found two in Carara NP: two males duetting at each other on either side of the trail.

Rufous-breasted Wren *Thryothorus rutilus*

One was seen at a scrubby gully in the hills above Villa Lapas.

Riverside Wren *Thryothorus semibadius*

The sound of this noisy wren became familiar at Tiskita, where we saw up to ten each day.

Bay Wren *Thryothorus nigricapillus*

Two were seen in the grounds of Selva Verde Lodge.

Stripe-breasted Wren *Thryothorus thoracicus*

One was seen in the forest beyond the bridge over the Rio Sarapiqui at Selva Verde.

Rufous-and-White Wren *Thryothorus rufalbus*

There were two in a scrubby gully in the hills above Villa Lapas and two in Carara NP.

Plain Wren *Thryothorus modestus*

Not particularly well named, since it is a good deal less plain than House Wren. We saw two at Tiskita, Monteverde and around Selva Verde and La Selva.

House Wren *Troglodytes aedon*

Although Clements and, apparently, the AOU treat House Wren as one species throughout its full range from SW Canada to Tierra del Fuego, other authorities split it into three species (in Avibase): - House Wren *T.aedon*, Brown-throated Wren *T.brunneicollis* and Antillean House Wren *T.martinicensis*.

Although we saw none on our day in the highlands, this species was seen everywhere else we went, though in fairly small numbers.

Ochraceous Wren *Troglodytes ochraceus*

We saw two at Finca Mirador de Quetzales, two in Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve and one in Virgen del Socorro.

Timberline Wren *Thryorchilus browni*

A high-altitude species, as its name suggests, we saw two or three at about 2600m at Finca Mirador de Quetzales.

White-breasted Wood-Wren *Henicorhina leucosticta*

We recorded four in the forest around Selva Verde and three at La Selva.

Grey-breasted Wood-Wren *Henicorhina leucophrys*

There were five or six in Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve, two or three between Santa Elena and Monteverde and two in Virgen del Socorro.

Black-faced Solitaire *Myadestes melanops*

One of the most evocative sounds of any of the world's forests is produced by this rather dowdy species that we saw on several occasions at Monteverde and at Santa Elena.

Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush *Catharus aurantiirostris*

Two were seen at the forest edge between Santa Elena and Monteverde.

Slaty-backed Nightingale-Thrush *Catharus fuscater*

There were two in Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve.

Black-billed Nightingale-Thrush *Catharus mexicanus*

The most numerous of the Nightingale-Thrushes, with 10-15 around Finca Mirador de Quetzales.

Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrush *Catharus frantzii*

There was just one, at the entrance to Santa Elena Cloud Forest Reserve.

Sooty Robin *Turdus nigrescens*

Abundant in the highlands, we saw 30-40 around Finca Mirador de Quetzales.

Mountain Robin *Turdus plebejus*

We recorded six in Cerro de la Muerte and two or three between Santa Elena and Monteverde.

Clay-coloured Robin *Turdus grayi*

Costa Rica's national bird, presumably because they got into a sulk because Guatemala had already laid claim to Resplendent Quetzal. Common just about everywhere.

Long-billed Gnatwren *Ramphocaenus melanurus*

'It's easier to see a gnat than a gnatwren', goes the famous saying. Well, not quite. We did see two in the forest at Tiskita.

Tropical Gnatcatcher *Polioptila plumbea*

Small numbers (up to three) were seen at Tiskita, Villa Lapas and the Rio Sarapiquí lowlands.

White-throated Magpie-Jay *Calocitta formosa*

10-15 were seen at a grove of trees below the glowering cone of Volcan Arenal.

Brown Jay *Cyanocorax morio*

We recorded three in the hills above Villa Lapas and up to 20 each day in the Monteverde area.

Azure-hooded Jay *Cyanolyca cucullata*

There were singles in Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve and at a grove of trees at the forest edge below Santa Elena.

Yellow-winged Vireo *Vireo carmioli*

Four were seen around Savegre Mountain Lodge in Cerro de la Muerte.

Brown-capped Vireo *Vireo leucophrys*

There were two at Savegre Mountain Lodge in Cerro de la Muerte.

Yellow-green Vireo *Vireo flavoviridis*

One was seen in the town park in Orotina.

Scrub Greenlet *Hylophilus flavipes*

There were two in scrub, no less, between Tiskita Lodge and the beach.

Tawny-crowned Greenlet *Hylophilus ochraceiceps*

One was seen briefly in a mixed feeding flock in the forest at Tiskita.

Lesser Greenlet *Hylophilus decurtatus*

Probably overlooked, this rather insignificant species was seen in small numbers in the Villa Lapas/Carara area, Monteverde and Selva Verde.

Yellow-bellied Siskin *Carduelis xanthogastra*

We saw at least 20 on our day in the highlands of Cerro de la Muerte.

Tropical Parula *Parula pitiayumi*

We found four in the forest around Laguna de Arenal.

Yellow Warbler *Dendroica petechia*

In Avibase, this species has been split into two species, Yellow Warbler *D.petechia* and Mangrove Warbler *D.erithachorides*, though it is still regarded as monotypic by Clements. One was seen at the Rio Tarcoles estuary.

Olive-crowned Yellowthroat *Geothlypis semiflava*

At least four were seen at a site near La Selva on our final day.

Grey-crowned Yellowthroat *Geothlypis poliocephala*

Up to three were seen near Villa Lapas, in the hills on the drive up to Monteverde, at Monteverde itself and in the Rio Sarapiquí lowlands en route to Selva Verde.

Slate-throated Redstart *Myioborus miniatus*

Four or five were seen in Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve and there were three between Santa Elena and Monteverde and two in Virgen del Socorro.

Collared Redstart *Myioborus torquatus*

Four were recorded on our day in the highlands of Cerro de la Muerte.

Golden-crowned Warbler *Basileuterus culicivorus*

Two were seen in Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve.

Rufous-capped Warbler *Basileuterus rufifrons*

We saw five or six in hills above Villa Lapas and one between Santa Elena and Monteverde.

Black-cheeked Warbler *Basileuterus melanogenys*

A highland species that was seen at Finca Mirador de Quetzales at 2600m in Cerro de la Muerte.

Three-striped Warbler *Basileuterus tristriatus*

There were at least eight in Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve and six between Santa Elena and Monteverde.

Buff-rumped Warbler *Basileuterus fulvicauda*

A creature of shaded stream gullies, we saw up to three in the forest at Tiskita and one or two on a couple of occasions at Selva Verde.

Bananaquit *Coereba flaveola*

Widespread in terms of geographical distribution and altitude, we saw this species at most sites we visited on the coast, including 10-15 at Tiskita, and as high as Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve.

Common Bush-Tanager *Chlorospingus ophthalmicus*

Ever-present in feeding flocks at middle elevation, we saw 10-15 at Monteverde and at least ten in the forest at Virgen del Socorro.

Sooty-capped Bush-Tanager *Chlorospingus pileatus*

Very common in the highlands of Cerro de la Muerte where we recorded 30-40 at around 2500m but also at lower elevation between Santa Elena and Monteverde, where we recorded three.

Grey-headed Tanager *Eucometis penicillata*

We recorded two at Tiskita, two or three in the hills above Villa Lapas and five or six at Carara.

White-shouldered Tanager *Tachyphonus luctuosus*

There were at least eight in the hills above Villa Lapas and two at Carara NP.

White-lined Tanager *Tachyphonus rufus*

We saw five, associating loosely with the previous species, in the hills above Villa Lapas. There was also one at La Selva.

Red-throated Ant-Tanager *Habia fuscicauda*

One or two were seen daily in the grounds of Selva Verde Lodge.

Flame-coloured Tanager *Piranga bidentata*

10-15 were present at Savegre Mountain Lodge in the Cerro de la Muerte highlands.

Crimson-collared Tanager *Ramphocelus sanguiolentus*

We saw two at La Selva and two at Virgen del Socorro.

Passerini's Tanager *Ramphocelus passerinii*

The Caribbean counterpart of the following species, we saw our first at Laguna de Arenal, then up to eight daily at Selva Verde, 10-15 at La Selva and ten in Virgen del Socorro.

Cherrie's Tanager *Ramphocelus costaricensis*

Common at Tiskita, where we recorded 15-20 daily, with smaller numbers in the Rio Tarcoles/Carara area.

Blue-grey Tanager *Thraupis episcopus*

Seen in all areas throughout the trip, though scarcest at highest elevations; the most we recorded were 10-15 at Tiskita, Selva Verde and Virgen del Socorro.

Palm Tanager *Thraupis palmarum*

Similar remarks apply to this species as to the last, though it was generally rather less numerous away from Selva Verde where we saw up to 20 daily.

Blue-and-Gold Tanager *Bangsia arcaei*

A superb male of this hulking tanager, which in bulk resembles the mountain-tanagers of the Andes, was seen at Virgen del Socorro.

Yellow-crowned Euphonia *Euphonia luteicapilla*

We found five around Selva Verde and one at La Selva.

Thick-billed Euphonia *Euphonia laniirostris*

We saw up to eight in the Tiskita area.

Yellow-throated Euphonia *Euphonia hirundinacea*

There were four in Carara NP and seven or eight between Santa Elena and Monteverde.

Spot-crowned Euphonia *Euphonia imitans*

Fairly common around Tiskita, where we saw up to 10-15 daily.

Olive-backed Euphonia *Euphonia gouldi*

Seen only in the Rio Sarapiquí lowlands, with up to six around Selva Verde and 10-15 at La Selva.

Tawny-capped Euphonia *Euphonia annae*

One was seen in Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve and two were found at Virgen del Socorro.

Golden-browed Chlorophonia *Chlorophonia callophrys*

There were five in the forest at Finca Mirador de Quetzales, five or six in Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve and at least 20-25 along the Pig Farm Trail above our accommodation there. We also saw one at Virgen del Socorro.

Plain-coloured Tanager *Tangara inornata*

There were at least 14 at Selva Verde, mostly in a parkland landscape beyond the Rio Sarapiquí.

Emerald Tanager *Tangara florida*

At least four or five were seen at Virgen del Socorro.

Silver-throated Tanager *Tangara icterocephala*

One or two were seen in Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve, with 15-20 at Virgen del Socorro.

Speckled Tanager *Tangara guttata*

At least two were seen in a mixed tanager flock in roadside forest at Virgen del Socorro.

Bay-headed Tanager *Tangara gyrola*

Small numbers (up to three) of this smart tanager were seen at Tiskita and in Carara NP and we also saw two in Virgen del Socorro.

Golden-hooded Tanager *Tangara larvata*

In the Pacific lowlands we saw up to 10-15 at Tiskita and up to five in the Rio Tarcoles/Carara area, then up to seven or eight in the Rio Sarapiquí lowlands on the Caribbean side, with two at Virgen del Socorro.

Spangle-cheeked Tanager *Tangara dowii*

There were three by the roadside when we stopped briefly in Cerro de la Muerte at around 2500m, on our way to Finca Mirador de Quetzales.

Scarlet-thighed Dacnis *Dacnis venusta*

Our first involved a party of six or seven below Volcan Arenal, after which we saw two daily at Selva Verde and La Selva and six in Virgen del Socorro.

Blue Dacnis *Dacnis cayana*

Up to four were seen at Tiskita, with two or three each day at Selva Verde and La Selva.

Green Honeycreeper *Chlorophanes spiza*

After four individuals at Tiskita we saw one at Villa Lapas and two at Virgen del Socorro.

Shining Honeycreeper *Cyanerpes lucidus*

There were up to six at Tiskita and one or two at Selva Verde and La Selva.

Red-legged Honeycreeper *Cyanerpes cyaneus*

We saw two singles at Tiskita and up to three in the Rio Sarapiquí lowlands.

Blue-black Grassquit *Volatinia jacarina*

Our records amounted to two on the Osa peninsula, two at Tiskita, up to 20-30 at Carara NP and adjacent areas, eight en route to Selva Verde from Laguna de Arenal and up to ten in open areas at Selva Verde.

Variable Seedeater *Sporophila corvina*

Formerly considered conspecific with Wing-barred Seedeater *S.americana* (*The Birds of South America Vol.1 by Ridgely & Tudor*) but treated as distinct by AOU and Clements, who include it as *S.corvina*, which accords with the treatment accorded in recent field guides for Ecuador and Peru.

One of the first species we saw after landing at Tiskita, we found the black and white form throughout our stay on the Pacific coast, up to 10-15 a day being usual in open areas. It was not until seeing the black Caribbean form at Selva Verde that the significance of its name became fully apparent, however.

White-collared Seedeater *Sporophila torqueola*

The only record we had was of a pair on a grassy bank by a lake between Virgen del Socorro and the lowlands.

Nicaraguan Seed-Finch *Oryzoborus nuttingi*

A female was found in palms close to a rough, swampy piece of grassland near La Selva.

Thick-billed Seed-Finch *Oryzoborus funereus*

Up to four in grassy areas at Tiskita and up to three in similar situations in the Caribbean lowland section of the trip.

Yellow-faced Grassquit *Tiaris olivacea*

We saw two at Savegre Mountain Lodge at about 2600m, up to 30-40 in the Monteverde/Santa Elena area at around 1500m and six at much lower altitude somewhere between Laguna de Arenal and Selva Verde.

Slaty Flowerpiercer *Diglossa plumbea*

There were at least ten on our day in Cerro de la Muerte, mostly at Finca Mirador de Quetzales.

Sooty-faced Finch *Lysurus crassirostris*

Three were seen coming to rice scraps at a workers' hut in Virgen del Socorro.

Yellow-thighed Finch *Pselliophorus tibialis*

We saw six at Finca Mirador de Quetzales and two in the forest at Santa Elena.

Large-footed Finch *Pezopetes capitalis*

There were six at Finca Mirador de Quetzales on our day in the highlands.

Yellow-throated Brush-Finch *Atlapetes gutturalis*

This species' treatment here differs from that in Clements, where it is considered a race of White-naped Brush-Finch *A. albinucha*. However, Avibase (reflecting Sibley & Monroe) and most recent sources treat White-naped Brush-Finch as restricted to Mexico, with Yellow-throated Brush-Finch ranging from the Mexican border with Guatemala through Central America into Colombia. Seven were recorded in the Monteverde area.

Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch *Atlapetes brunneinucha*

Included in the genus *Buarremon* by Clements.
One was seen in Cerro de la Muerte.

Orange-billed Sparrow *Arremon aurantiirostris*

Up to six in the forest at Tiskita, one in Carara NP and up to 20 around Selva Verde Lodge.

Black-striped Sparrow *Arremonops conirostris*

We saw up to five at Tiskita and three in the Selva Verde/La Selva area.

White-eared Ground-Sparrow *Melospiza leucotis*

There were six at the forest edge along the fairly open Pig Farm Trail at Monteverde.

Stripe-headed Sparrow *Aimophila ruficauda*

Two were seen flying across the road as we drove from Orotina into the Pacific lowlands and the rest of the group caught up with two or three at a rough, grassy field at the start of the track to Villa Lapas.

Rufous-collared Sparrow *Zonotrichia capensis*

This attractive sparrow soon became one of the also-rans after we saw our first in San José, with plenty of others in Cerro de la Muerte and around Monteverde.

Greyish Saltator *Saltator coerulescens*

There were four in the town park in Orotina.

Buff-throated Saltator *Saltator maximus*

We saw two at Tiskita, up to ten in the Rio Tarcoles/Carara area, up to four in the Monteverde area, up to four around Selva Verde and ten at La Selva.

Black-faced Grosbeak *Caryothraustes poliogaster*

Two were seen along the approach road to Selva Verde.

Blue-black Grosbeak *Cyanocompsa cyanoides*

We encountered one in Carara NP and four at La Selva.

Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus*

There were three in the lowlands between Orotina and Carara and up to 30-40 in the Caribbean lowlands between Laguna de Arenal and Selva Verde.

Eastern Meadowlark *Sturnella magna*

Up to three were seen on the outskirts of San José, with two at our hotel at Monteverde.

Melodious Blackbird *Dives dives*

When *A Field Guide to the Birds of Costa Rica* was published in 1989 this species was known from one individual photographed in the extreme NW of the country. The text noted that it was to be expected more frequently in future as it had been expanding its range along the Pacific coast of Nicaragua and the fact that we saw four near the Rio Tarcoles estuary suggests that this range expansion is well under way.

Great-tailed Grackle *Quiscalus mexicanus*

Abundant in open areas throughout the trip, with high counts of 40-50 between San José and Cerro de la Muerte and 50 at Monteverde. In truth, we could have counted a lot more.

Bronzed Cowbird *Molothrus aeneus*

One was seen at Monteverde, then about 30 between Laguna de Arenal and Selva Verde.

Orchard Oriole *Icterus spurius*

A pair was seen in a rough, swampy area of grass near La Selva.

Black-cowled Oriole *Icterus prosthelas*

Clements (August 2000) split Black-cowled Oriole *I.dominicensis* into Black-cowled Oriole *I.prosthelas* and Greater Antillean Oriole *I.dominicensis*.

A sub-adult male was seen at Laguna de Arenal and two were seen in an open parkland-like area across the Rio Sarapiquí from Selva Verde Lodge.

Scarlet-rumped Cacique *Cacicus uropygialis*

There were at least two in the grounds of Selva Verde Lodge and seven at La Selva.

Chestnut-headed Oropendola *Psarocolius wagleri*

Common around Selva Verde and La Selva, including a gang of 21 at the bird tables at Selva Verde Lodge.

Montezuma Oropendola *Gymnostinops Montezuma*

We saw up to six at Monteverde and 40-60 in and around Selva Verde Lodge.

Bird of the Trip

A wide range of species appeared in the nine lists supplied at the end of the trip – 63 in all – and only 21 of these appeared on more than one list. The range of species groups was interesting, with ten hummingbirds appearing alongside six tanagers.

In reverse order, tied for 9th place with 15 points, were Scarlet Macaw, Purple-crowned Fairy and Purple-throated Mountain-gem, while Great Tinamou and Keel-billed Toucan were in 8th and 7th with 16 and 17 points, respectively. Not far ahead were King Vulture on 18 points, Chestnut-coloured Woodpecker with 19 and Resplendent Quetzal with 20. Laughing Falcon was 3rd with 26 points but the top two were well ahead of the rest, with Three-wattled Bellbird in 2nd place with 34 points and the trip favourite, **Swallow-tailed Kite**, well clear on 43 points – it was in first or second place in three lists.

Mammals and Other Wildlife

BATS A roost of nine **Common Tent-making Bats** was found on the underside of a banana (?) leaf at Tiskita and a **Northern Ghost Bat** was seen around the huts at the edge of the forest near the lodge. Three **White Tent-making Bats** were seen at La Selva.

MONKEYS We saw up to about 40 **Central American Squirrel** Monkeys at Tiskita, where up to six **Mantled Howler Monkeys** were seen. Howlers were also recorded at Monteverde and La Selva. **White-faced Capuchins** were seen in Carara NP and at Monteverde.

Coyote One was seen crossing open ground below our hotel at Monteverde.

Northern Tamandua For many of us, this was the sighting of the trip. Erick pointed one out to us in trees just above our heads in the forest near Selva Verde Lodge.

Hoffmann's Two-toed Sloth We saw two singles at Tiskita, one in the town park in Orotina and one at Santa Elena.

Three-toed Sloth We saw a probable five individuals at Tiskita.

Nine-banded Armadillo There was one in the forest at La Selva.

Variegated Squirrel We recorded up to three in Carara NP, Santa Elena/Monteverde and Virgen del Socorro.

Deepe's Squirrel There were singles in the forest at Tiskita on two occasions.

Red-tailed Squirrel One was seen in the highlands of Cerro de la Muerte.

Southern River Otter One was seen at a pond between Virgen del Socorro and the lowlands.

Central American Agouti We saw up to 35 in the forest at Tiskita and small numbers at Carara NP and Monteverde.

Collared Peccary Up to 25 were seen in the forest at La Selva.

Red Brocket Deer There was one near Rio Tarcoles.

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS We saw **Fer-de-Lance** in the forest at Tiskita and Carara NP and a beautiful **Side-striped Palm Pit-viper** in Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve, while Don found **Brown Blunt-headed Vine Snake**, **Northern Cat-eyed Snake** and two species of Earth Snake. There were at least 31 **American Crocodiles** below the bridge over the Rio Tarcoles and red and black poison-arrow frogs were seen at Tiskita (**Granular Poison Arrow Frog**) and Carara NP (**Blue Jeans Poison Arrow Frog**) and **Black-and-Green Dart Frog** was seen at Tiskita. Every evening at Tiskita we were treated to **Cane Toads** that came out to cavort in the lodge restaurant and a large turtle, probably an **Olive Ridley Turtle**, was seen from a plane over Golfo Dulce. **Green Iguanas** and **Black-spined Iguanas** were seen at Tiskita and **Basilisk Lizards** were seen at several sites, the species involved being Common, Green and Striped Basilisk. Among species recorded by Don were **Common**, **Canopy** and **Stream Anoles**, **Four-lined** and **Central American Whip-tailed Lizards**. Adventures into the forest at night by Don, mainly at Selva Verde, produced **Common Tink Frog**, **Vaillant's Frog**, **Red-eyed Leaf Frog**, **Hourglass Tree Frog**, **Masked Tree Frog** and **Common** and **Noble's Rain Frogs**.

John van der Dol

john@sandwichbirdtours.co.uk