

COSTA RICA

10.63° N - 10.36° N

Birding & Natural History

March 29 - April 8, 2026



Wild **LATITUDES**
WORLDWIDE NATURE TOURS

COSTA RICA

Birding and Natural History

Greetings, Fellow Explorer!

Costa Rica, widely regarded as one of the most biodiverse and tourist-friendly countries in Central America, is a naturalist's paradise, and a shining example of ecotourism at its best.

This amazing trip's highlights are the **Monteverde Cloud Forest** and the unique canals of **Tortuguero National Park**. You'll get rich experiences across a diverse array of habitats in Costa Rica, from coast to coast.

Our adventure begins in the Guanacaste Province, where Pacific breezes blow across the arid land of the northwest coast. The dry tropical forest is punctuated by the canopies of Elephant Ear Trees. This region is home to birds like **White-throated Magpie-Jay**, **Squirrel Cuckoo**, and **Turquoise-browed Motmot**.

After our first day on the Pacific Coast, we'll travel to the magical cloud forest of Monteverde. Epiphyte-laden trees are nestled in the rolling hills of the Tilaran Mountain Range where many spectacular birds occur. These include **Emerald Toucanet**, **Three-wattled Bellbird**, and the near mythical **Resplendent Quetzal**.

We'll then journey east into the lowlands along the Sarapiquí River, where La Selva Biological Research Station offers some of the highest biodiversity on the continent.

Next, we head to Tortuguero—accessible only by boat down the Rio Suerte. Along the way, we may see **Ringed, Amazon, and Green Kingfishers**, **Roadside & Common Black Hawk**, and **Basilisk Lizards**. As we near the coast, we pass through a pristine forest, with impressive Yolilla Raffia Palms lining the banks. We should find birds like the **Red-lored Parrot**, **Scarlet-rumped Tanager**, and **Northern Jacana**.

We'll spend several days exploring Tortuguero National Park, one of the world's largest intact tropical lowland ecosystems. We'll cruise the backwaters of this wilderness, surrounded by the sounds and beauty of the rainforest. The park is also a haven for **Harpy Eagles**, **Jaguars**, monkeys, sloths, caiman, and much more.

TRIP DETAILS

Start Date: Mar 29, 2026

Duration of Main Tour: 11 days

Number of participants: Max of 14

Price of Tour: \$4,995 per person

Deposit: \$2,500

Single Supplement: \$1,195

Trip Leaders: Chris & Rebecca Payne

Activity Level: Moderate

Included:

- Double-occupancy lodging
- Ground and water transportation
- Breakfasts and lunches
- Excursions and park fees
- Guiding services

Not Included:

- Flights
- Dinners
- Alcoholic beverages
- Personal items
- Optional gratuities for guides



Steve Robertson and Ivan Phillipsen
Co-owners and Lead Guides at Wild Latitudes
info@wildlatitudes.com 503-714-3504

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ITINERARY

Tentative and subject to change depending on weather, road, or other conditions.

Day 1 - Mar 29 - Arrival

Arrival to Liberia—welcome to Costa Rica! You'll be met by your guides **Chris** and **Rebecca Payne** at the airport. We'll drive to the north shore of the Gulf of Nicoya, where we will have our first dinner as a group together at the lodge.

Lodging: [Ensenada Lodge](#)

Day 2 - Mar 30 - Morning birding and travel to Monteverde

This morning we wake to the sounds of the Guanacaste region, where **Rufous-naped Wrens** and **Turquoise-browed Motmots** will greet us on our morning walk. We'll get acquainted with **Tropical Kingbird**, **Great Kiskadee**, and **Social Flycatcher**. With some luck, we should find the elegant **White-throated Magpie-Jay**, as they move through the clearings in marauding flocks. The environment is a mixture of coastline, upland pastures, and salt pans that concentrate large numbers of waders and shorebirds. We should also see many tropical species of **flycatchers**, **orioles**, **parakeets**, and more to

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get our list off to a great start. After an enjoyable morning and lunch, we'll ascend from sea level to the cloud forest of **Monteverde** at around 4,000'. We'll spend the next 3 nights here. There will be time to settle into our new lodging and possibly take a short walk on the property before dinner.

Lodging: [Hotel Montaña Monteverde](#)

Day 3 - Mar 31 - Monteverde Cloud Forest

The next two days will be spent exploring the bird-rich forests and gardens of Monteverde. We will visit some popular locations, such as Curi-Cancha Preserve and Santa Elena Cloud Forest Preserve, as well as a few lesser-known gems nearby. One of our primary birding targets here will be the **Resplendent Quetzal**, known for its spectacular golden-green plumage and tail that can be twice the length of its body! We'll also be on the lookout for the unique **Three-wattled Bellbird**, several species of toucans, including the **Northern Emerald-Toucanet**, and a wide variety of **hummingbirds**, **tanagers**, **antbirds**, and much more. While in Monteverde, we'll eat out at various local restaurants for a diverse dining experience.

Lodging: [Hotel Montaña Monteverde](#)



Red-headed Barbet

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Day 4 - Apr 1 - Monteverde Cloud Forest, continued

Further exploration of Monteverde.

Lodging: [Hotel Montaña Monteverde](#)

Day 5 - Apr 2 - Traveling to Sarapiquí



White-faced Capuchin Monkey

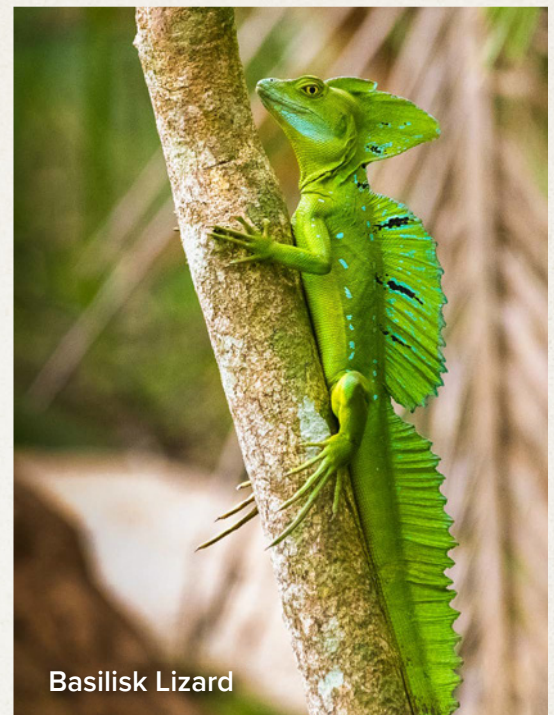
This will be primarily a travel day, as we move from the high elevation of Monteverde to the lowlands along the banks of the **Sarapiquí River**. Along the way we will take in the view from a scenic overlook above Lake Arenal and relax for a while at a café with a nice view from their open-air deck. We should get to our next lodge with plenty of time to settle in and check out the property, where we may see birds like the **Long-tailed Tyrant**, **Collared Aracari**, **White-collared Manakin**, and many

species of **woodpeckers** and **woodcreepers**. We'll have a tasty traditional Costa Rican dinner prepared by the staff of the local, family-owned lodge.

Lodging: [Gran Gavilán del Sarapiquí Lodge](#)

Day 6 - Apr 3 - La Selva Biological Station

Today we will have an early breakfast so that we can fit in an entire morning of birding at **La Selva Biological Station**, one of the most biodiverse locations in all of Costa Rica. Here we may see birds such as **Great Curassow**, **Purple-crowned Fairy**, **Snowy Cotinga**, **Golden-hooded Tanager**, **Shining Honeycreeper** and many more, as more than 500 species of birds have been recorded at the station! La Selva is also a great place to see a variety of other wildlife, such as snakes, lizards, poison dart frogs, and both **Brown-throated** and **Hoffmann's Two-toed Sloths**. After what is sure to be a very exciting morning, we'll drive to Laguna Hule where we will have an excellent lunch from a balcony with a stunning view of a crater lake and two volcanoes.



Basilisk Lizard

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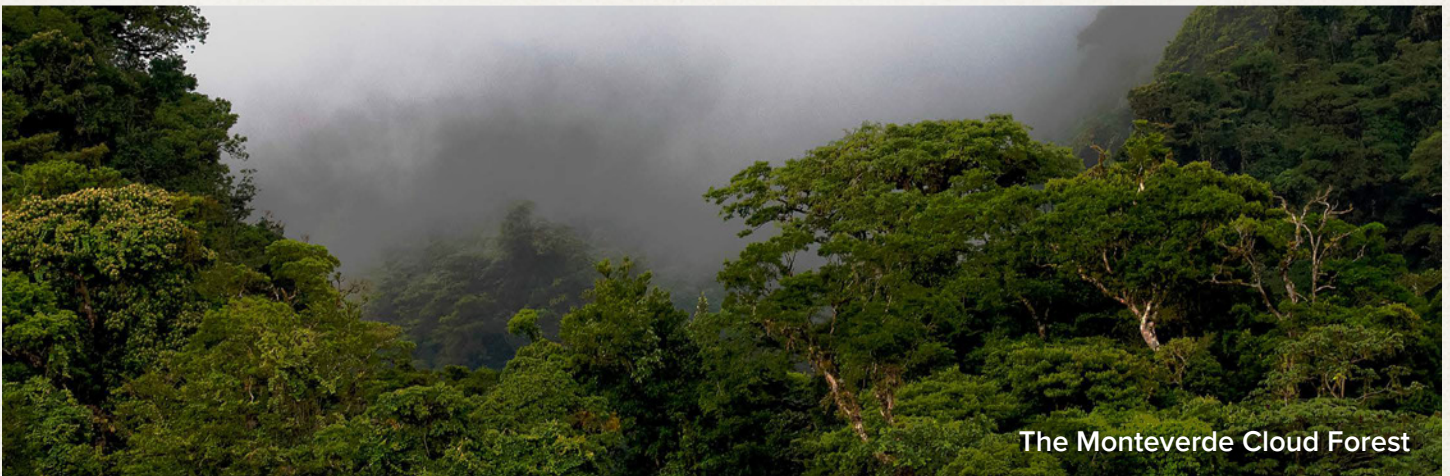
Hoffman's Two-toed Sloth



Red-eyed Treefrog



Chestnut-colored Woodpecker



The Monteverde Cloud Forest

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Before returning to the lodge, we'll make one more stop at La Cinchona, a café with bird feeding stations that will give us unforgettable, close-up views of hummingbirds, tanagers, and more.

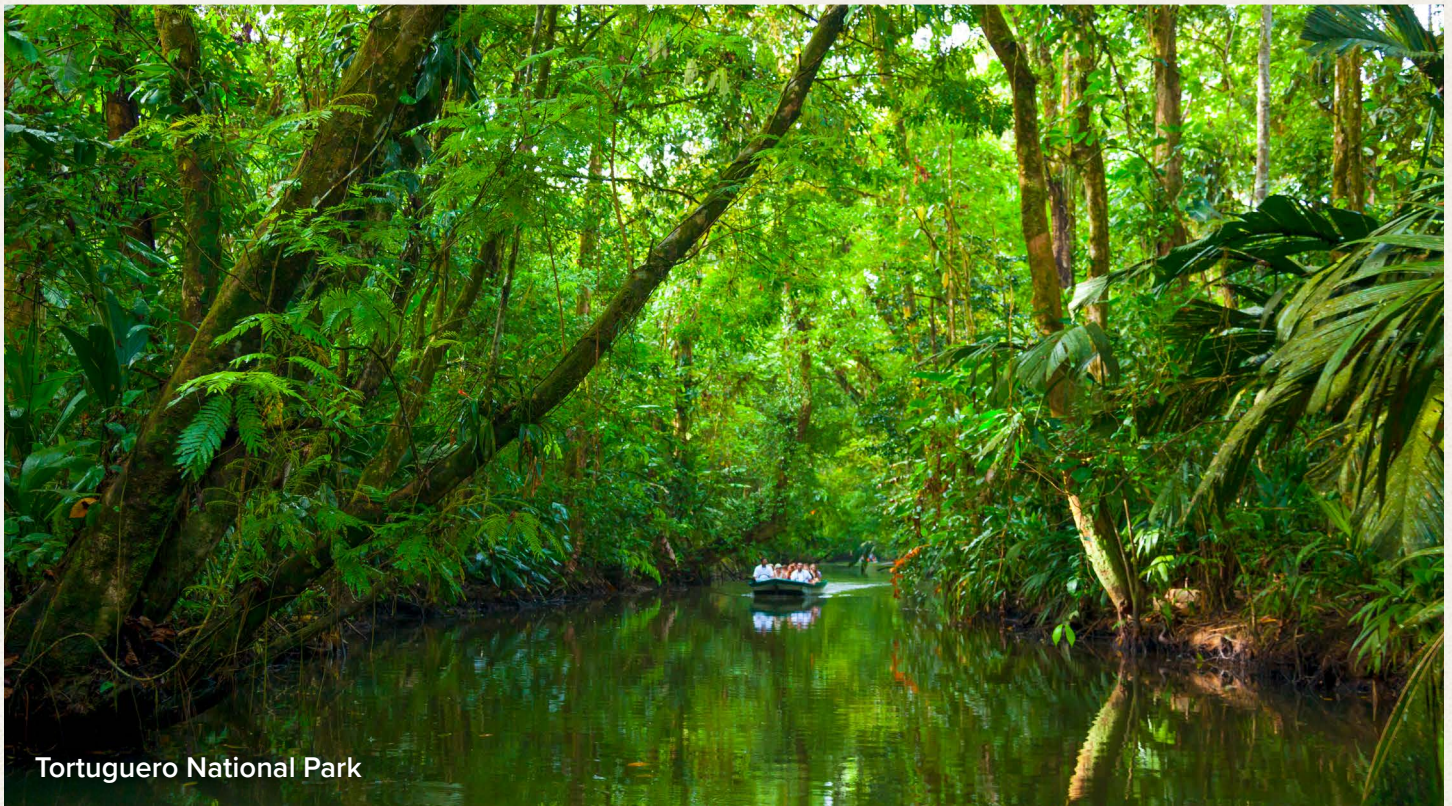
Lodging: [Gran Gavilán del Sarapiquí Lodge](#)

Day 7 - Apr 4 - Travel to Tortuguero

After birding around the lodge in the morning, we will begin making our way to **Tortuguero**. On the way, we will stop at a privately-owned establishment called the Nectar & Pollen Reserve. The owner of the property has planted an abundance of native flowering plants here to attract pollinators and other birds. Here we may get to see **Chestnut-headed Oropendola**, **Rufous Motmot**, and maybe even the rare **Snowcap hummingbird**! From there, it will

Our Commitment to Conservation

On every Wild Latitudes tour, we aim to make a positive conservation impact wherever we travel. We utilize the services of local guides and, when possible, stay in environmentally-sensitive, locally-owned lodges. Through our partnership with the Rainforest Trust, a portion of all international tour fees goes to purchasing rainforest acreage, for its protection in perpetuity. On every trip, we also make a contribution to a local conservation effort that works to protect a native species or ecosystem.



Tortuguero National Park

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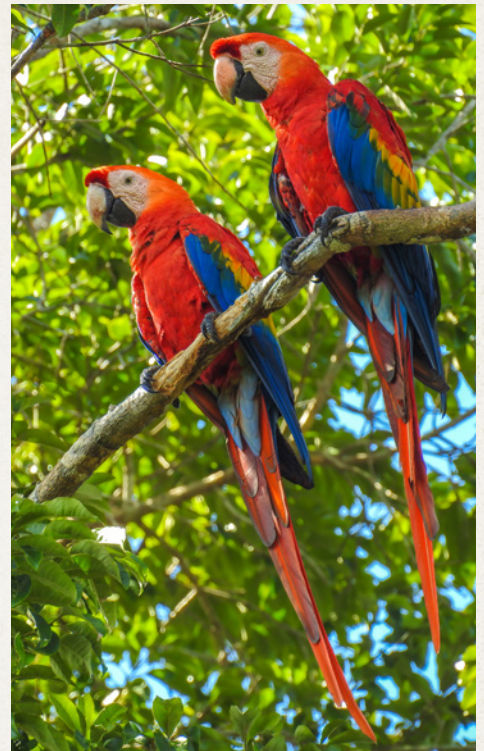
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be on to La Pavona along the banks of the Río Suerte, where we will trade in our bus for a water taxi to get to the village of Tortuguero, accessible only by boat. Once we reach the village and get settled in to our new accommodations, there will be time to check out the town at your own pace, with many local vendors, the beach, and some nature trails within a short walk of the hotel.

Lodging: [Casa Marbella](#)

Day 8 - Apr 5 - Tortuguero National Park

We will have two full days to explore the wilderness of **Tortuguero National Park**. Like the village, much of the park is best accessed from the water, so most of our time will be spent investigating the quiet channels from an electric boat. This is the best way to see elusive birds such as the **Sungrebe**, **Agami Heron**, and six species of **kingfishers**, including the miniature **American Pygmy-Kingfisher**. There is also a hiking trail through



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the upland part of the park that we will visit one afternoon where we will have a good chance of seeing **Great Green Macaws** and perhaps even a secretive and elusive **Jaguar**! While in Tortuguero, we will dine at a variety of the town's restaurants for both lunches and dinners. We will also visit a locally-owned chocolate maker to see a hands-on demonstration of the process from start to finish, with delicious samples at the end!

Lodging: [Casa Marbella](#)

Day 9 - Apr 6 - Tortuguero National Park, continued

Further exploration of Tortuguero.

Lodging: [Casa Marbella](#)

Day 10 - Apr 7 - Return Upriver and Journey to Airport

We'll have one final breakfast in Tortuguero, then take the water taxi back to the mainland, where our bus and driver will be waiting for us. We'll head southwest towards the capital city of San José, stopping at a lodge along the way where we will enjoy lunch and a nice bird feeding station. When we reach the hotel, there will be time to relax and get organized for travel before we enjoy our final dinner together as a group.

Lodging: [Airport Hampton Inn](#)

Day 11 - Apr 8 - Departures

Goodbyes all around and flights home or onward to other respective destinations.

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YOUR GUIDES

CHRIS PAYNE

Chris has been immersed in the natural world his entire life. Growing up in rural Pennsylvania with two naturalists for parents, his first interest in wildlife was anything he could catch: frogs, salamanders, snakes, and the like. Once Chris discovered the world of birds, he was hooked. He soon began making lists of all the birds he could identify, both at home and when his family traveled. Each new bird that Chris encountered left him wanting to learn more about them.

It was during Chris's sophomore year at West Virginia University that he decided that spending time in nature had to be more than just a hobby. After graduating with a degree in biology, he pieced together bird-related field work for several years, conducting surveys for Cerulean and Golden-winged Warblers, nest searching, hawkwatching, and assisting in geolocator research. After meeting his wife, Rebecca, Chris decided to return to school for an M.S. in biology, and graduated with an MS in Biology from Shippensburg University.

Leading nature tours is the best of both worlds for Chris: getting to work in nature surrounded by birds, but more importantly, getting to share that passion with others.



REBECCA PAYNE

From an early age, Rebecca has been avidly curious about the natural world. What started out as exploring the backyard of her childhood home led to an interest in exotic animals. While completing her B.A. in Zoo and Wildlife Biology, she was surrounded by teachers and mentors who nurtured her love for all things birds and birding. Through their encouragement, she focused her studies on the care of avian species. For several years, Rebecca worked in zoos across the country as an aviculturist, participating in breeding programs for endangered species, bird shows, and public outreach. Through these experiences, she discovered that her true passion lies in teaching others and fostering meaningful connections between people and wildlife.

This spring-boarded Rebecca into the world of environmental education. Combining this field with her love of exploring new places, she has enjoyed many fulfilling teaching roles, from New Jersey Audubon's Cape May Bird Observatory, to the Vermont Institute of Natural Science, to Pennsylvania State Parks. All the while, she has had her binoculars in hand, using birds and avian ecology to bring people closer to nature.

Rebecca is excited to bring her experience to the nature-tour industry and share her love of birds and the environment with others.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

THE PACE AND STYLE OF OUR TOURS

The primary goal of our trips is to experience and learn about the natural world, especially the region's birds and other wildlife, and of course, to have fun! As birding is often a primary focus of our tours, and birds are active in the morning, we will sometimes have early morning outings before breakfast. That said, our style of birding may not be ideal for hard-core "listers." We prefer to spend time observing the species we encounter, and learn a bit about their natural history, rather than rushing through the field to add the maximum number of species to our bird list. We also make diversions for interesting, non-avian wildlife, plants, geological wonders, and cultural activities. The pace of most of our trips is moderate, and we encourage anyone in good health to attend and enjoy the experience. Please contact us about if you need specific information on the types of physical activities on a tour and their physical requirements.

We strive to immerse participants in the local culture and to that end, wherever possible, we stay in locally owned and operated hotels that are designed and run in an environmentally sustainable way. Though some accommodations may be more basic than others, all are safe, clean and comfortable. We also utilize the services of local guides, visit local markets, and other culturally significant sites.

TOUR DATE AND TRIP LEADER CHANGES

Leaders and schedules are determined up to a year in advance of our tours. In the event that we have a change in a tour's dates or leaders, we reserve the right to do so, and will strive to inform participants as early in the process as possible. Additional leaders may be added to tours according to the group size, and will be specified in the tour itinerary. We also reserve the right to cancel any trip for which there are insufficient reservations.

HOW TO REGISTER FOR THE TOUR

When you're ready to sign up for the tour, please let us know by doing one of the following:

- Send us an email at info@wildlatitudes.com
- Call us at 503-714-3504

Then we'll send you the link to our online registration form. You can choose to pay your deposit by credit card or check. See 'Deposit Policy' below.

DEPOSIT POLICY

A deposit is due at the time of registration. ***A deposit is the only thing that guarantees your place on the trip.*** Registration can be made over the phone with a credit card: 503-714-3504. *Note:* there is an additional 3.0% fee for credit card payments. This is only what we are charged by the credit card company.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Checks are happily accepted and should be made out to *Wild Latitudes LLC*. Include the tour name on the memo line of the check and send to:

Wild Latitudes, PO Box 25115, Portland, OR 97298.

PAYMENT POLICY

Full payment is required **90 days** prior to the tour departure date for international tours or any tour involving flights; and **30 days** prior to the tour departure date for local (i.e. in the Portland, Oregon area), van-based tours.

CANCELLATION POLICY

In the event a participant needs to cancel a reservation for any tour, the following policies will apply:

- **90 days** or more prior to tour departure date, the deposit will be refunded, minus an administrative fee of \$100.
- **Less than 90 days but more than 60 days** prior to tour departure date, all payments refunded, minus 50% of deposit.
- **Less than 60 days** prior to tour departure date, no refunds will be given.

We *strongly* recommend that you purchase trip cancellation insurance to protect yourself from unforeseen circumstances.

If for any reason Wild Latitudes cancels a tour prior to the start of the tour, full refunds—minus the cost of any internal/in-country airline tickets purchased and/or any non-refundable deposits or expenses already made by Wild Latitudes—will be given to all participants. In the event that the tour is canceled while underway due to unforeseeable events such as but not limited to natural disaster, military activities, social uprising, or other extremely dangerous conditions not within the control of Wild Latitudes, no refund will be issued.
