

Butterflies & Wildlife at lowland Rainforests, Pacific Slopes & highland Cloudforests of Costa Rica, 12 days



Our tour takes you to some of the best wildlife areas of Costa Rica visiting various habitats. Breathtaking lush forests, wetlands, beaches and incredibly rich flora and fauna await you including a long list of butterflies and some amazing moth species. The country boasts of close to 1500 species of butterflies which is around 10 percent of the butterfly fauna of the Earth. What is more the country also has almost 10 times more, circa 12000 moth species.

So considering the above numbers it is needless to say that we have a really good chance to see a plethora of colourful lepidoptera even during a relatively shorter circle in the country visiting the Pacific region and the highlands of the Cordillera Talamanca.

If you like Moths you will feel in paradise, there are hundreds of species around every night from tiny one to huge ones, even without a proper moth trap the variety is amazing.



Fact File

- 12 days in Costa Rica visiting world-famous National Parks, reserves
- start and finish in San Jose
- using most of the accommodations for 2-3 nights (except upon arrival and departure, depending on your flight schedule), most of them offer great on site wildlife watching possibilities

Highlights

- visits to Pacific Coast sanctuaries, National Parks and reserves
- Wilson Botanical Garden
- Savegre Reserve, high mountain cloud forests, Paramo
- **optional mangrove** boat trip
- **at Tarcoles, Carara NP - optional Whale-watching boat trip** at Bahia Ballena NP
- beside butterflies & moth wide variety of birds, mammals, reptiles, frogs & wildflowers

Accommodation

- 2 nights at Carara NP, Northern Central Pacific
- 3 nights at a Lodge at Southern Central Pacific
- 3 nights at Wilson's Botanical Garden, South Pacific, close to Panama
- 3 nights at San Gerardo de Dota at Savegre Mountain, flight home (mightbe overnight if you return to Europe)



Our price includes

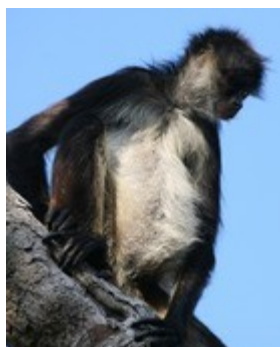
- all travel within the country as noted in the itinerary;
- all accommodation based on shared rooms, single rooms for extra charge;
- 3 meals per day, generally breakfast, box lunch, dinner
- services of the leader(s); - trip materials

Price does not include

- drinks, but you can fill your water bottle during the day; any personal expenses; tips
- entrance fees to places not included in the itinerary
- price of optional programmes such as Boat Tours: Mangrove; Whale/Dolphin; Turtle Tours

Activity level

Easy to moderate walks; some areas are hot and humid; up in the cloud forest can be cool, rain is possible however it is dry season



Itinerary with highlight species

Day 1 Arrival to **San Jose** and transfer to our hotel at the edge of the **Carara National Park**.
Night at Carara NP, Northern Central Pacific

Day 2 We spend the full day in the region of **Carara National Park**.



Possible species include **Blomfield's Beauty, Blue-eyed Sailor, Blue-studded Skipper, White-spotted Satyr** and of course **Tropical Checkered Skipper** plus many more.

Carara National Park boasts of pristine lowland tropical forests and some secondary forests, scrubby areas, wetlands, mudflats and mangrove thickets, each of which has its own range of species including **Angled Leafwing, Theona Checkerspot, Spot-celled Sister, Mangrove Buck-eye** and **Rusty Tipped Page** among many others.

Our optional boat Safari early morning on the **Tarcoles river** visits the estuary which is one of the best locations to see endangered birds such as the **Mangrove Cuckoo, Mangrove Hummingbird, Mangrove Vireo** and **Panama Flycatcher**, and more common ones such as **Pelicans, Boat-billed Heron, Roseate Spoonbill, Wood Stork, White Ibis, Bare-throated Tiger-heron, American Purple Gallinule, Black Skimmer, Magnificent Frigatebird, Mangrove Warbler, Mangrove Black-hawk** and **American Pygmy Kingfisher**.

Further bird species at and around our accommodation might include **Fiery-billed Araçari, White-necked Jacobin, Baird's Trogon, Blue-throated Goldentail, Blue-black Grosbeak, Great Curassow, Laughing Falcon, Yellow-headed Caracara, Collared Forest-falcon, Grey and Roadside Hawks, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher and Streak-backed Oriole.**

Night at Carara NP, Northern Central Pacific

Day 3 Carara and travel to Southern Central Pacific



After breakfast we have a walk and we may add some new species to our already long list.

At and around our accommodation we will look for **Red Cracker, Portillo Skipper, Plain Satyr, Pale-banded Crescent.** A lovely, attractive yellowish-greenish butterfly, **Malachite** is normally quite common. Harder to find **Little Banner** while at appropriate habitats **Giant White** is not so difficult. At sunny patches we will have a chance for the lovely **Giant Swallowtail** as well.

It is an excellent birding area as well, so those who listen and look for them can identify with our help **Grey-headed Dove, Crimson-fronted Parakeet, Scarlet Macaw, White-collared Swift, Long-billed Hermit, Scaly-breasted Hummingbird, Blue-crowned/Diademed Motmot, White-whiskered Puffbird, Hoffman's Woodpecker, Plain Xenops, Cocoa Woodcreeper, Chestnut-backed Antbird, Bright-rumped Attila, Northern Royal Flycatcher, Brown-crested Flycatcher,**

Streaked Flycatcher, Cinnamon & Rose-throated Becard, Blue-crowned Manakin, Yellow-green Vireo, Rufous-naped Wren, Riverside Wren, Buff-rumped Warbler, Grey-headed Tanager, Red-legged Honeycreeper, Orange-billed Sparrow, Sulphur-rumped Flycatcher.

From the Northern Central Pacific we travel SE partly nearby the coast to our next destination at Southern Central Pacific. During the way we pass Manuel Antonio National Park, Volcano Baru and Marina Ballena NP and we stop at suitable places for some more butterflies.



Night at Southern Central Pacific

Days 4-5 Searching butterflies at Southern Central Pacific



Various species can be found close to our base such as Fine-lined Stripe-streak, Sara Longwing, Common Banner, Cassius Blue, Ceraunus Blue and Brown Longtail, just to mention a few out of the long list of possibilities.

We will check the different Cracker species and will try to distinguish **Gray, Guatemalan, Red, Starry and Variable Crackers** from each other. At some species it is better to take a photo and analyze it in details later to separate them safely.

Further species during the days might include **Two-spotted Banded-Skipper, Square Bentwing, Marine Blue, Brilliant Blue Blue-skipper, Montezuma Cattleheart, Orion Cecropian.**



Some of the characteristic bird species which we will note **Crimson-fronted Parakeet, Rufous-tailed Hummingbird** and **Chestnut-mandibled Toucan**. Other new species can be here **Hoffmann's Woodpecker, Olivaceous Piculet** and **Wedge-billed Woodcreeper, Plain Xenops, Plain-Brown Woodcreeper** and **Ruddy-Woodcreeper**.

Bared-Antshrike and **Chestnut-backed Antbird** should be common as well. After lunch we discover a little bit the garden and later we go for a walk alongside a stream. We can find **Bare-throated Tiger Heron,**

Little Blue Heron.

At a river bank we can look for Tricolored Heron and American White Ibis, Willet, Greater Yellowleg and Spotted Sandpiper. Royal Turn, Common Black Hawk, Inca Dove and even **Scarlet Macaw** all possible here.

Garthered Trogon, Ringed and Green Kingfisher, Blue-and-White Swallow and **Mangrove Swallow** can color the day further here!



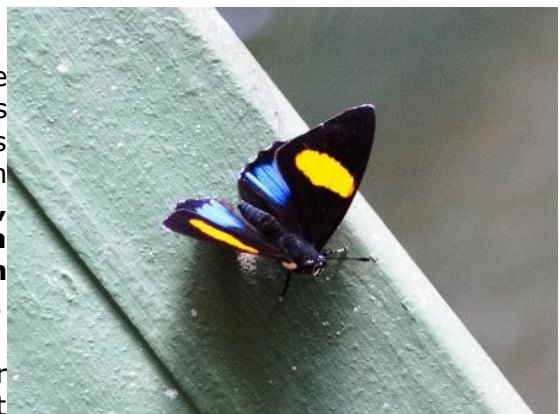
Nights at South-Central Pacific

Days 6-8 Wilson's Botanical Garden, South Pacific, close to Panama



After breakfast we have to say goodbye to this lovely place and all the birds. We pack again and continue our journey. From here we travel East partly nearby the coast to our next destination close to the Panamanian border. During the way we might brake our journey if we see something interesting before we arrive to San Vito area. Here we stay at the famous **Wilson Botanical Garden** which has great trails in primary and secondary forests, beside the amazing variety of trees and wildflowers in the garden itself. It is a perfect place to look for a wide variety of new butterfly species, such as **Scarce Bamboo Page, Tiger Clear-wing, White Angled Sulphur, Postman, different Owl Butterfly species** and the characteristically marked **Yellow-rimmed Eighty-eight**.

Needless to say that the botanical garden has always tremendous amount of wild flowers so the trails and the surrounding area can surprise us with such lovely species like **Ruby-spotted Swallowtail, Silverspot, Doris Longwing, Erato Heliconia, Julia Heliconia, Anna's Eighty-eight, Clown Daggerwing, Monarch** and the list can go on and on.



The Las Cruces Biological station also a paradise for birds, so the garden, the primary and secondary forest teeming with **Tanagers, Flycatchers, Tinamus, Parrots and Parakeets, Woodpeckeres and Woodcreepers,** plus several **Hummingbird species** and some endemics as well.

The fruit feeder and the surrounding flowering and fruiting trees are always busy with several species. We can observe **raptors** such as **Bicolored Hawk, Barred Hawk, White Hawk** & more, plus find some birds in the surrounding canopy of the forest from a lookout tower.

On one of the days we might make an excursion to the **Golfito area** to look for further butterfly species like **Heliconias, Eighty-eights, Swallowtails, Cattlehearts, Longtails** and many more.



This detour is also excellent for birding so we can add to the list **Brown-chested Martin, Baird's Trogon, Blue-crowned Manakin, Ruddy-breasted Seedeater, Scrub Greenlet and Thick-billed Euphonia. Fork-tailed Flycatcher** should be easy if it is around. We will have a chance for **Red-breasted Blackbird** and with some luck even the endemic **Black-cheeked Ant-Tanager**.

3 nights at Wilson's Botanical Garden, South Pacific, close to Panama



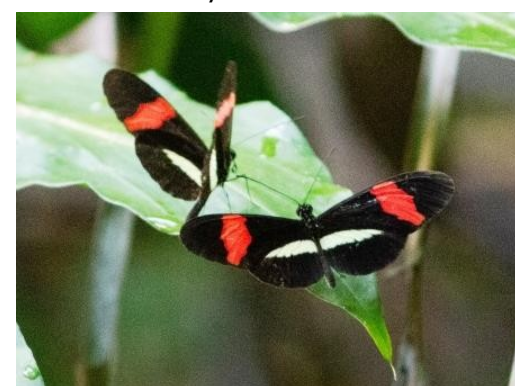
Days 9-11 Savegre Area, Cordillera Talamanca

After our last morning at Wilson Botanical Garden we travel South and drive up gradually into higher and higher elevation. We climb on the curvy but good quality road up the **Cerro de la Muerte and Cordillera de Talamanca**. On the way we will stop from time to time for checking different altitude levels and species and later we arrive to the **Savegre Area** crossing farmlands, tropical forests, cloud forests and paramo.

The paramo is not very rich in butterflies but the ones which are living at this elevation are really adapted well to the harsh climate. Some species were just discovered quite recently.

This area is a magnet for birders since a few interesting species can be found just here like **Timberline Wren, Volcano Junco or Red-tailed Hawk**.

There are some other species which can be found in the Talamanca Hills which are endemic to Costa Rican and Panamanian hills: **Coppery-headed Emerald, Volcano Hummingbird, Long-tailed Silky-Flycatcher** and **Peg-billed Finch**. As we descend into the valley we will brake the journey to find



Large-footed & Yellow-tighted Finch, Golden-browed Chlorophonia, White-throated & Grey-tailed Mountain Gem, Silvery-throated Jay, Black-billed Nightingale Thrush, Sooty-capped Bush Tanager, Flame-coloured Tanager, Slaty Flowerpiercer and some more.

Next day we will concentrate on different butterfly species from simply coloured species like **Pale Sicklewing**, through more colourful **Pure-banded Dartwhite, Banded Mapwing** till the breathtaking

Magnificent Swallowtail.

There are some amazing bird species around like the breathtaking Resplendent Quetzal, different other trogon species, Blue-throated Toucanet. There is a good chance that we find Black Guan, Spotted Wood Quail, Sulphur-winged Parakeet & Barred Parakeet as well. A wide variety of hummingbirds will be around our accommodation & restaurant such as Magnificent Hummingbird, Green Violetear, Snowy-bellied Hummingbird, Volcano & Scintillant Hummingbird. On our last tour beside all the previous ones we add some other local specialities as well such as Ruddy Treerunner, Spotted Barbtail, Spotted-crowned



Woodcreeper, Torrent Tyrannulet, Ruddy-capped Nightingale Thrush, Flame-throated Warbler, Collared Whitestart, Black-cheeked Warbler & Spangle-cheeked Tanager, not to mention the common species.

3 nights at San Gerardo de Dota at Savegre Mountain

Day 12

After a morning walk and breakfast finally we return to San Jose airport for our flight back home.





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