

DAILY BIRDING OUTINGS – LOWLAND EXCURSION



Our Toucan Birding EcoLodge & Wildlife Reserve is quite centrally located in the Pacific Region partly because it is at lower mid elevation from where within less than half an hour you can be down at the seaside either at a lowland forest or at a mangrove. Below you can find a general description of a Lowland Birding Outing from our base.

Early morning we can start with a pre-breakfast birding in our garden and at the nearest trails. A general description of the Garden, The Vivero Trail and the Bamboo Stairs Trail can be found here:

<https://www.toucanbirdingecolodge-costarica.com/the-lodge/trails-and-feeders>

Later we have breakfast and prepare to leave for the full day. Within less than half an hour drive down towards the Pacific coast we can be at lowland areas.

There are different types of habitats we can visit during the day, the order of the areas will depend on the actual weather, actual birding info and birding activity, plus of course what is your main interest for the day, so we can spend more time at habitats which can provide better chance for your most preferred birds.

Here is a general description of the habitats where we can spend the day:

A. Mangrove

This is the home of some typical mangrove dwellers such as Mangrove Hummingbird, Mangrove Vireo, Mangrove Warbler, Yellow Warbler and Panama Flycatcher from the songbirds. With some luck among the dense bushes we might spot Boat-Billed Heron. Wood Stork and Bare-Throated Tiger-Heron is relatively common and can be spotted at the edge of the water quite easily. The most colourful species of the mangroves are American Purple Gallinule and Roseate Spoonbill.

White Ibises can be around in small numbers and when a Mangrove Black-Hawk flies too close they should be in the air flying around.

There are several Kingfisher species here such as Ringed, Amazon & Green, but surely the most sought-after one is the adorable American Pygmy Kingfisher.

Cuckoos are well represented here as well with Mangrove Cuckoo, Yellow-Billed Cuckoo and Squirrel Cuckoo.

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B. Seaside

The seaside areas usually popular beaches especially the sandy areas but we know some more hidden or rocky places where it is still easy to walk and look around a little bit for Magnificent Frigatebird, Black Skimmer, Brown Pelicans, Olivaceous Cormorants or Laughing Gulls. American Oystercatcher is a scattered breeder, but during migration we have better chance to see them. Depending on the season and water level there are always some plovers, sandpipers and other shorebirds.

But perhaps the most attractive bird for lot of birders are the Scarlet Macaws which follow the coastline and occur especially where they can find their favourite food-source, the almond trees. If they around you surely can't miss them, they are large, colourful and extremely noisy.

C. Rivers & estuaries

If we missed anything at the previous 2 habitats than rivers and estuaries can give a second chance for some of the species we mentioned before such as White Ibis or Kingfishers. Muscovy Duck loves not disturbed rivers as well. Both Crested Caracara and Yellow-headed Caracara can be around and Osprey can try to fish around here as well.

Alongside the bushy areas the most colourful Tanager will be Cherrie's, but Blue-Gray and Palm Tanagers should be around as well. The most common Hummingbird usually is Rufous-tailed.

Northern Waterthrush, Riverside Wren and Great-tailed Grackle is almost always around and Black-bellied Whistling Ducks are usually around as well.

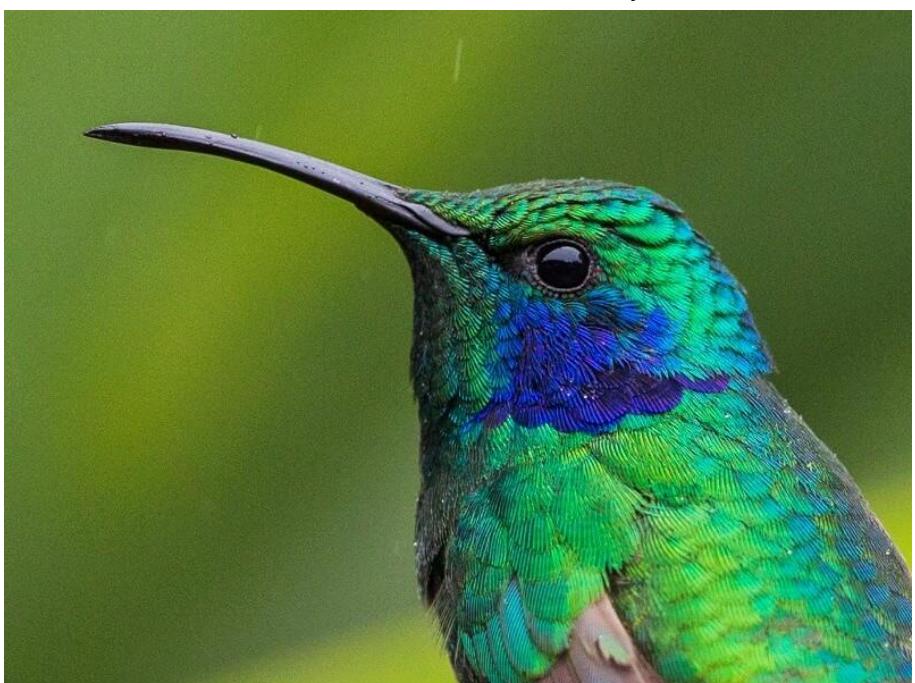
During hot days a riverside dirt road with an adjacent line of trees or especially a forest can be a good escape from the sun and also gives a chance for some of the forest species which will be mentioned at the next habitat.

D. Lowland Forests & edges

There are several excellent areas to visit for finding typical lowland Pacific

forest species. The following description is not complete but definitely will give you an idea for the possible species.

Everybody enjoys Trogon family and we surely should encounter one or the other, such as Slaty-tailed, Gartered (formerly known as Violaceous) or Black-throated Trogon. A bit further South we also can find the beautiful Baird's Trogon.



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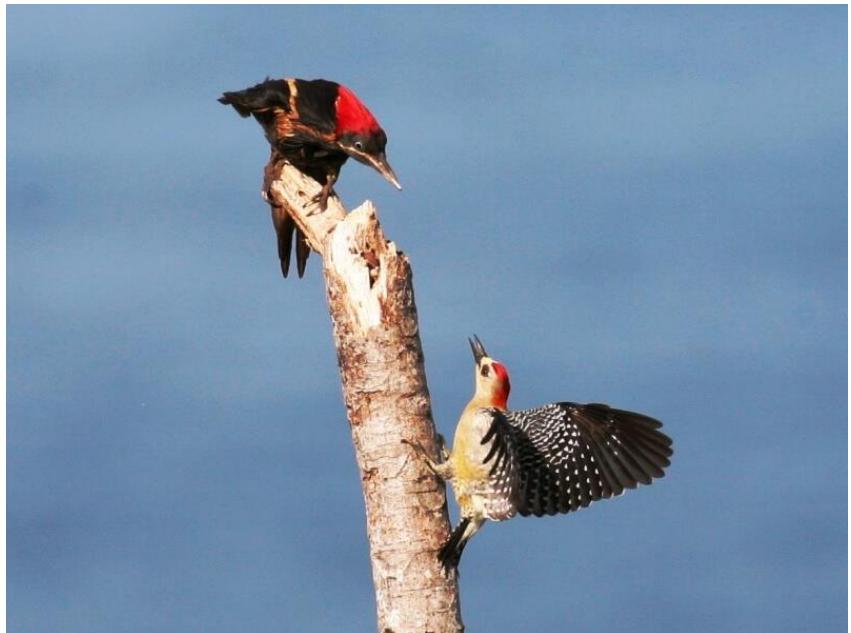
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Another spectacular bird we usually hear first and then we can see Lesson's or formerly called Blue-diademed Motmot. We also shouldn't miss small groups of Collared Aracaris and the noisy Yellow-throated Toucans. White-necked Puffbird is a bit harder since most of the time sits motionless and silent.



Woodpecker-wise the forests offer pretty good selection from the tiny Olivaceous Piculet through the local Golden-naped Woodpecker, then the common Red-crowned Woodpecker and Black-cheeked Woodpecker till the larger Lineated and Pale-billed Woodpeckers.

There are two raptors which usually easier to hear than see, hence the name of the Laughing Falcon and the other one is Collared Forest-falcon. Crested Caracara is quite common and during the last decades because of deforestation Yellow-headed

Caracara spreading as well. Rarely we see Bat Falcon and even Gray-headed Kite or Black-and-White Hawk Eagle is possible.

As we all know one of the hardest things is to find a roosting Owl during the day, but from time to time we manage to have either Spectacled or Black-and-white Owl or Mottled Owl.

Mornings and late afternoons different species of parrots fly high overhead, usually in pairs or small flocks. Species include White-crowned, White-fronted, Red-lored and Mealy Parrot, but Brown-hooded Parrot is possible as well. The most common parakeets are Orange-chinned and Crimson-fronted Parakeet.



One of the most exciting moments can be in a tropical forest when we bump into a larger mixed feeding flock which consists of antshrikes, antbirds, woodcreepers, spinetails, flycatchers, vireos, warblers and many more. Black-hooded Antshrike and Chestnut-backed Antbird is really common, but we will look for Great Antshrike, Barred Antshrike, Dusky Antbird and Zeledon's Antbird, (formerly Immaculate) as well.

We surely will add Tawny-winged, Wedge-billed and Streak-headed Woodcreeper to our list but will look for Ruddy, Black-striped and Cocoa

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becard. The latter one in this region usually does not have a rose-throat! Both Masked and Black-crowned Tityra are quite common.

Surely there is a long list of flycatcher species possible in this area from the tiny Ruddy-tailed Flycatcher, White-throated and Golden-crowned Spadebill, Slate-headed Tody-flycatcher through Tyrannulets, Kingbirds, Pewees till Kingbirds.

One of the biggest challenges is to distinguish some of the Myiarchus and Empidonax flycatcher species, especially if we can't hear them.

The following is a non-complete list of flycatchers we can find at different areas Ochre-bellied, Common tody, Bran-colored, Golden-bellied, Yellow-olive, Olive-sided, Sulphur-bellied, Yellow-bellied, Dusky-capped, Boat-billed, Social, Gray-capped, Piratic and Streaked Flycatcher.

If that was not enough you can add Yellow-bellied Elaenia, Eastern Wood Pewee, Lesser Elaenia Tropical Kingbird, Eye-ringed Flatbill and two pretty loud species, Bright-rumped Attila and Great Kiskadee. Tyrannulets are represented by Southern Beardless, Yellow, Mistletoe and Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet.



Woodcreeper as well. Plain Xenops is really common, but it is much rarer to see Brown-billed Scythebill. The call can help to locate Pale-breasted and Slaty Spinetail.

Everybody enjoys the little colourful feathery balls, the manakins which family represented quite well here with Red-capped, Blue-crowned, Orange-collared and seasonally White-ruffed Manakins.

Another incredibly coloured jewel is Turquoise Cotinga. Not so colourful but still exciting species in a good forest Rufous Piha, Northern Schiffornis and Rose-throated

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It can be tough to distinguish a Northern rough-winged Swallow from a Southern one, much easier Barn & Cliff Swallow or Bank and Blue-and-white Swallow. Gray-breasted and Purple Martin can be confused as well with certain distance and light conditions.

It is easy to identify White-collared Swift, sometimes we see Chestnut-collared as well coming down from higher elevations, but the real exciting challenge is to find Costa Rican Swift beside Vaux's Swift.



A good hearing is quite useful to distinguish the different wren species such as Long-billed Gnatwren, House wren, Black-bellied wren or Isthmian wren which was formerly known as Plain Wren, splitted into Isthmian and Cabani's Wren. Riverside Wren and Rufous-breasted Wren both are typical in the South Pacific region. White-breasted Wood-wren is widespread and Tropical Gnatcatcher is common as well.

Around 400 meters and above there is a chance for Orange-billed Nightingale-thrush. Swainson's Thrush is a common migrant especially during Spring while Clay-colored Thrush, which is actually the National Bird of Costa Rica is a common resident.



It is a great fun to distinguish the different lovely Euphonia species and their English name is very helpful like Yellow-crowned, Thick-billed, Spot-crowned and White-vented Euphonia.

There is no long list of Sparrow, but we should find either Black-striped or Orange-billed Sparrow.

One of the most entertaining thing is to witness the male Montezuma Oropendula trying to attract a female with incredible twists and turns on a branch, making some funny bubbling sounds in the meantime. At certain areas it is also possible to find Chestnut-headed or Wagler's Oropendola as well. Another 2 colourful species Scarlet-rumped Cacique and Streak-backed Oriole.

Finches and seedeaters will be represented by Blue-black and Yellow-faced Grassquit, Blue-black Grosbeak, Thick-billed Seed-finch and Variable Seedeater. The most common tanagers around should be Summer, Scarlet-rumped, Golden-hooded and Blue-gray, but we should find one or two Gray-headed and White-shouldered Tanagers as well.

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Wildflowers will attract Bananaquit, Red-legged Honeycreeper, Green Honeycreeper and Blue dacnis.

If we find a Saltator that will be more likely Buff-throated but we should try Streaked Saltator as well.

We should check the sky from time to time because beside Black and Turkey Vultures we always have a good chance to spot a King Vulture as well.

January and February is the best for American Swallow-tailed Kite and a bit later during Spring migration March , April is the best for Broad-winged Hawk, Short-Tailed Hawk and Swainson's Hawk.

Very rarely there is a chance to see Black-and-White Hawk-Eagle or even Ornate Hawk-Eagle. Much more regularly we suppose to see Gray Hawk, Roadside Hawk and with some luck White Hawk or Double-toothed Kite.



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