WILDLIFE TRAVEL

all our profits are donated to nature conservation

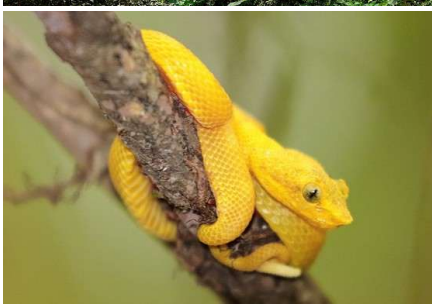












15th to 30th January 2028 (16 nights)

COSTA RICA

easy birding and natural history

From the western Pacific mangroves to the eastern Caribbean slope, this holiday is a perfect introduction to the Tropics, exploring Costa Rica's exciting landscapes and bird life.

Costa Rica is a natural history paradise, as discovered by those who travelled with us on our previous 13 visits to this biodiverse country, where a high percentage of the land is managed for conservation. The wildlife will captivate both the new and the more seasoned traveller as we explore coastal forests and mangroves, seasonal lakes and marshes, cloud forests, rainforests, and dramatic volcanic cones.

We start at Poás Volcano, where there are spectacular tropical rainforests and beautiful waterfalls, prior to striking west for the Tárcoles River and its abundant American Crocodiles. Moving to the dry forest of Carara National Park, we'll seek out gaudy Scarlet Macaws, before exploring the foothills of the Tenorio and Miravalles Volcanoes in search of Tody Motmot and Mountain Tapir. Heading north, we'll enjoy the seasonal wetlands and abundant wildlife of Caño Negro National Wildlife Refuge both on foot and by boat. We'll then traverse the diverse habitats of the Caribbean slope, before exploring the high cloud forest of the Talamanca Mountains, with a chance to see the Resplendent Quetzal!

Accommodation is mostly at attractive lodges, and our travel is at a comfortable pace. Walks on easy trails will give us many chances to see hummingbirds, motmots, colourful frogs, and abundant tropical plants.

PRICE £6,250
single room supplement £600

Full Board

TOUR LEADER Laurie Jackson

PAYMENT
deposit £2,500
instalment £1,500 due on confirmation of holiday
balance due 16th October 2027

Group size min 5, max 12

ITINERARY AT A GLANCE

Day 1 travel to Costa Rica
Day 2 Poas Volcano
Day 3 Tarcoles River
Day 4 Carara
Day 5 Heliconias Reserve, Tapir Valley
Days 6-7 Caño Negro
Day 8 Sarapiqui
Day 9 La Selva
Days 10-11 Rancho Naturalista
Day 12 Turrialba
Days 13-14 Talamanca Mountains
Day 15 San Jose
Day 16 return to UK

The Manor House, Broad Street, Great Cambourne, Cambridge CB23 6DH
01954 713575 - wildlifetravel@wildlifebcn.org - www.wildlife-travel.co.uk

Wildlife Travel Limited is registered in England & Wales, no. 2237697. c/o Azets, Westpoint, Lynch Wood, Peterborough PE2 6FZ

ITINERARY

Please note that the itinerary may be changed to suit the weather or other practicalities or at the discretion of the leaders.

Day 1 Saturday 15th January. Morning flight from UK to San José, arriving in the late afternoon and transferring to our hotel. o/n Hotel Bougainvillea.

Day 2 Sunday 16th January. From San José we will visit Poás Volcano, enjoying the wonderful view of one of the most accessible volcanoes in the country. Access to the crater is c.30 minute's slow walk from the main entrance, and we hope to find Volcano Hummingbird and Poás Squirrel on the way, whilst getting a good (sulphury) sense of nature's power from the rim of the caldera.

Heading for lower altitudes, we will travel to the picturesque San Fernando Waterfall, located in the cloud forest of the Caribbean slope, where we will see Northern Emerald Toucanet, Prong-billed Barbet, and many hummingbirds and tanagers coming to the feeders. o/n Hotel Bougainvillea.

Day 3 Monday 17th January. Our destination this morning is the Tárcoles River on the Pacific coast, where we will take a boat trip, exploring the muddy banks and mangrove swamps. More than ten species of heron can be seen here, including the shy Boat-billed Heron, frigatebirds and pelicans nest in riverside colonies, and huge American Crocodiles lounge on the riverbanks. We'll then head south to Macaw Lodge; an ecolodge nestled in the Cerros de Turrubares hills, where we will explore the tropical gardens and their abundant bird life. o/n Macaw Lodge.

Day 4 Tuesday 18th January. Today we will visit Carara National Park, which forms a transition between the dry forests of the northwest and the rainforests of the south Pacific slope. The area is described as a 'must see' for anyone interested in tropical biology, supporting a high species diversity alongside relatively easy access.

The forest here provides a wonderful contrast to the rain- and cloud forests we'll see elsewhere and provides habitat for a very different set of species, including the spectacular Scarlet Macaw. Following our visit, we'll head north to Celeste Mountain Lodge, which sits in the volcanic saddle near Tenorio Volcano National Park. o/n Celeste Mountain Lodge.

Day 5 Wednesday 19th January. Following some morning birding in the grounds of the lodge, we will visit the community owned Heliconias Reserve. The tropical rainforest here supports a high diversity of mid-elevation birds, including localised species such as the endearing Tody Motmot, and we'll spend some time exploring its trails and canopy bridges.

In the afternoon we will head to the nearby Tapir Valley Nature Reserve: a wonderful conservation project, which is trying to restore habitat for the impressive Mountain Tapir. We have an excellent chance of encountering this iconic species here, with the reserve also having an amazing diversity of forest birds, frogs, and snakes, including the endemic Celeste Frog and striking Eyelash Pit Viper. o/n Celeste Mountain Lodge.

Days 6-7 Thursday 20th to Friday 21st January. We head north, breaking our journey at a roadside hummingbird garden, before arriving at Caño Negro National Wildlife Refuge where we will spend the next two days. Here we'll explore the extensive riverine habitats and seasonal wetlands associated with annual flooding from the Rio Frío, both on foot and by boat, encountering Spectacled Caiman, Green Iguanas, and a diverse range of waders and waterfowl. We'll also keep an eye out for both Two-toed and Brown-throated Sloths in riverside trees and seek out the near endemic Nicaraguan Grackle. o/n Caño Negro Natural Lodge.



Day 8 Saturday 22nd January. Today we depart for Sarapiquí to explore the area's lowland rainforest, which supports a fantastic array of lowland forest birds. We'll spend the afternoon along the Tirimbina road, which provides views into the adjacent Tirimbina Reserve and is a great place to see both Yellow-breasted and Keel-billed Toucans, Great Green Macaws, Rufous Motmot, and a range of low elevation tanager species. o/n La Quinta de Sarapiquí Lodge.

Day 9 Sunday 23rd January. Following an early breakfast, we head to La Selva Biological Station, a reserve owned by the Organization of Tropical Studies and an amazing place for wildlife, with more than 470 species of bird recorded at the station. Here we will learn about the research being carried out in the rainforest and take a natural history tour with a local guide.

Following our tour, we will climb 900m into the middle elevations of the Caribbean slope to our destination close to Turrialba: the scenic lodge of Rancho Naturalista. Having settled into our rooms, we will have time to explore the grounds, renowned in particular for their hummingbirds, including the lovely Snowcap, the exquisite Green Thorntail, and the showy White-necked Jacobin - all regular visitors to the garden's flowers and feeders. o/n Rancho Naturalista.

Day 10 Monday 24th January. We will spend the day exploring the trails of the Rancho Naturalista Forest Reserve, a great place to become further acquainted with species of the Caribbean slope. As well as the feeding flocks of tanagers, euphonias, and other colourful birds, the feeders around the lodge are occasionally visited by White-nosed Coati and (if we are really lucky) Tayra, an enigmatic rainforest predator with a particular liking for well-ripened bananas! o/n Rancho Naturalista.

Day 11 Tuesday 25th January. A second day acquainting ourselves with the species of the Caribbean slope, with colourful highlights likely to include Lesson's Motmot, Keel-billed Toucan, and Gartered Trogon.

In the afternoon, we visit the nearby Angostura Reservoir, where the wetland habitats will introduce us to a different suite of birds: various herons and kingfishers, lily-trotting Northern Jacana, and the bizarre Limpkin can all be expected. o/n Rancho Naturalista.

Day 12 Wednesday 26th January. Following a final morning enjoying the garden birds of Rancho Naturalista, we head towards the Turrialba area (carefully checking roadside trees for sloths on the way) and enjoy a guided tour of the Guayabo National Monument. One of Costa Rica's largest and most important pre-Columbian archaeological sites, as well as an excellent location for birds, we will seek out a variety of antbirds, wrens, and tanagers amongst the ruins.

Later in the day we will continue our journey upwards into the central Talamanca Mountains and our ultimate destination of the Savegre Valley, located at 2,200m asl amongst extensive upland oak forest. We travel through deep cloud forest, stopping along the way to watch more hummingbirds, paying particular attention to two local specialities, the Talamanca Hummingbird and Fiery-throated Hummingbird. o/n Savegre Hotel.

Day 13 Thursday 27th January. An early start will find us heading out to look for one of the most beautiful birds of the Americas; the Resplendent Quetzal. The largest trogon, famous for its ridiculously long tail, it feeds on the wild avocados in the area, and we will listen out for calling birds and hope to find a fruiting tree before returning to the hotel for breakfast.

Following breakfast, the hotel jeeps will assist us in reaching the high forest trails, along which we will explore the wonderful highland ecosystem. We will encounter a range of attractive high-altitude species, including the characterful Collared Whitestart, Flame-throated Warbler, and Yellowish Flycatcher, and seek out localised rarities such as the Ochraceous Pewee. In the afternoon we will walk a lower trail alongside the Savegre River, searching for riparian species such as Torrent Tyrannulet. o/n Savegre Hotel.



Day 14 Friday 28th January. Depending upon our success yesterday, we may put some more time in this morning looking for the quetzals. We also expect to travel higher, to the páramo habitat of Cerro de la Muerte (c. 3,100m asl) home to a very different flora, as well as the near endemic Volcano Junco and Volcano Hummingbird. We will also visit the Sueños Natura Bird Sanctuary, where well-stocked feeders attract several enticing, high-altitude, specialities, including Peg-billed Finch and Slaty Finch, plus a range of attractive hummingbird species. We then head back to San José, and the welcoming hospitality and extensive gardens of Hotel Bougainvillea. o/n Hotel Bougainvillea.

Day 15 Saturday 29th January. Following breakfast, we will check out and then have one last excursion, as we explore the nearby San Miguel Reservoir for waders and wildfowl, before visiting Finca Robledal; an area of dry forest and grassland located close to the airport. We should encounter several new species here, including the likes of Pearl Kite, Plain-capped Starthroat, Nutting's Flycatcher, and Spot-bellied Bobwhite, prior to taking lunch.

And then, all too soon, it will be time to head to the airport ready for our afternoon flight home, arriving **Day 16 Sunday 30th January**.

TOUR LEADERS

Laurie Jackson is an excellent all-round naturalist and Director of Wildlife Travel. She will be familiar to our travellers as an experienced Wildlife Travel leader, having led more than 50 of our holidays since 2013.

We will be accompanied throughout by an expert Costa Rican guide.

ACCOMMODATION AND MEALS

All of the lodges and hotels are of a good standard, some with very attractive settings. All the rooms have private bathrooms with hot water and are either air-conditioned or have ceiling fans where needed. Some lodges may have a swimming pool available. Single rooms are available in all locations. The exact lodge or hotel used may be changed if local conditions change or if we felt a different choice would suit our needs better.

All meals are included - some lunches will be in local restaurants, and we will take a picnic on some days.

We will do our best to ensure that our travelling is as comfortable as possible. There will be days when we are transferring from one area to another where the journey may take much of the day, but we will take plenty of stops for comfort breaks and to enjoy interesting areas.

GROUP TRAVEL

The group flights will be with British Airways from London Gatwick to San José, (flight times for 2028 are yet to be released, but should be similar to 2027):

15th January depart London Heathrow 11.10, arrive San José 16.40
29th January depart San José 18.40, arrive London Heathrow 10.50 (30th)

It may also be possible to fly from either Birmingham, Edinburgh, Manchester, or Newcastle with Air Canada, Lufthansa, or Air France, with connecting flights via Toronto, Frankfurt, or Paris. Contact us to discuss options.

WEATHER

We will be travelling at the start of the dry season, making travelling easier and with less likelihood of rain in some areas, although the weather may still be unpredictable and wet at times.

In the rainforest of the Caribbean slope, a number of plant species are in flower at any one time, depending on local climate patterns, and this area, and the mountains, can be visited at any time of year to see a good variety of birds, other animals and plants.

In the lowlands, particularly on the coast, it can be humid and relatively hot, but we will adapt our plans to the temperatures. The cloud forest is, effectively, a higher altitude rainforest and we can expect generally cooler weather with, perhaps, some showers.

HEALTH AND FITNESS

You will need to have a reasonable level of general fitness to be able to participate in the holiday. The tour visits several locations and travelling in the tropics can be tiring if you are not used to it. However, the trip is designed to be relatively comfortable so please discuss any concerns with us. Although most of the walks are not long, although we will sometimes be walking on rough or wet ground. Walking boots (lightweight ok) are essential for most areas. There are a few occasions when we walk uphill, but this is not excessive.

As we are in the tropics, the sun is very strong, even when it appears overcast. Sun protection (hat, sunglasses, and suncream) is essential. Where possible, we will avoid walking in the hottest part of the day.

The highest altitudes visited during our itinerary will be c 3,100m asl at Cerro de la Muerte (the lodge is at a lower elevation) and 2,800m asl on Poas Volcano. There is some risk of altitude sickness, although rest and drinking plenty of water usually relieves any mild effects (headaches and tiredness). If you have suffered from altitude problems before, or are suffering from any medical condition, you should take your doctor's advice. We will be taking it easy at these higher altitudes and none of the walking will be strenuous.

Safety advice given by the leaders must be heeded at all times. We will receive a safety briefing upon boarding any boats, and safety rules (e.g. wearing life jackets whilst in small boats) are strictly adhered to. Safety guidelines must also be followed when using canopy walkways, or in relation to volcanic areas.

There is a very low risk of malaria in the parts of Costa Rica we visit, and prophylaxis isn't usually recommended. Vaccines against Hepatitis A and Tetanus are recommended for most travellers, and you might want to consider Typhoid and Rabies vaccinations.

PASSPORT AND ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

British nationals do not need a visa to enter Costa Rica. You may stay as a visitor for up to 180 days under a tourist visa waiver. If you are visiting Costa Rica, your passport should have at least one day's validity from the date you are leaving Costa Rica.

For up-to-date information, check **www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/costa-rica** where you can also sign up for email alerts for your destination.

Holders of non-UK passports should check with the relevant embassy.



PRICE

£6,250 per person, £600 single room supplement, full board.

INCLUDED: Return flights from London to San José, including airport taxes. Local transport as specified in itinerary. 14 nights' accommodation (1 night extra on overnight flight), full board basis (all meals from dinner day 1 to lunch day 15). Entry fees. Services of leader and local guides. Tips for local guide, driver, boatmen, and hotel staff.

NOT INCLUDED: Drinks with evening meals. Refreshments. Gratuities. Travel insurance. Laundry and any items of a personal nature.

PAYMENTS

Deposit amounts are shown on page 1 of the holiday information pack. **Payments should be made by bank transfer to Sunvil,** using the details given on the booking form, or by posting a cheque made payable to Sunvil Holidays, to the address given on the booking form. Please **DO NOT post any payments to our Cambourne address.**

BOOKING YOUR HOLIDAY

If you have any queries about your holiday or need to talk to someone about your booking, please contact us here at Wildlife Travel. We can make sure that you are given the correct the information and get your questions answered more quickly. We would ask that you **please DO NOT contact Sunvil direct**, to avoid confusion.

COMPLETING THE BOOKING FORM

We do sometimes have more than one set of dates for the same destination, so please make sure you fill in the 'destination' and 'dates' for the holiday you wish to book on.

Please also make sure you complete the section concerning health and fitness: write 'none' if this is the case, but please don't leave that section blank.

If possible, **please fill in the booking form electronically**, by typing directly into the pdf form, save your changes, and then **email the form back to us at wildlifetravel@wildlifebcn.org**. Alternatively, you can post a paper copy to Sunvil Holidays, using the address given on the booking form. Please **DO NOT post bookings to our Cambourne address.**

SUNVIL HOLIDAYS

This holiday is booked through our tour operator, Sunvil Holidays, CAA-ATOL Licence 808, a member of ABTA (V6218), IATA and AITO. All payments are made to them, and your money and booking are protected accordingly.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Please ensure you have read all the information given in the holiday leaflet and booking pack, paying particular attention to the entry requirements, health and fitness information, and details of what is and isn't included in the holiday price.

In order to ensure that this holiday suits you, it is imperative that you read the information on health and fitness in the holiday leaflet, and in the 'general information' section of the booking pack, and **let us know of any issues that may affect your participation in the holiday PRIOR TO BOOKING**.



TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel insurance is compulsory for our trips outside the UK. You should ensure that any pre-existing medical conditions are covered. We recommend having insurance in place as soon as your booking is confirmed, in the event of your cancellation.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Your booking should be acknowledged with a week, usually sooner. **If you have not heard back from us within a week of sending your booking form, please let us know**: emails and post both go astray, and we wouldn't want you to lose your place on a trip. You will receive a welcome letter from us, which will tell you if the holiday has already reached minimum numbers or not.

Please **DO NOT arrange any additional travel or accommodation that you may need** until the holiday has been confirmed as going ahead.

When the holiday reaches the minimum numbers to be confirmed, we will send you a confirmation letter, including a confirmation invoice from Sunvil, with details of payments due, flights or trains included in your booking, and an ATOL certificate where appropriate.

thank you for travelling with us

www.wildlife-travel.co.uk

01954 713575 wildlifetravel@wildlifebcn.org

/WildlifeTravel.UK @wildlifetraveller @wildlifetraveller

The Manor House, Broad Street, Great Cambourne, Cambridge CB23 6DH