



## Audubon Naturalist Society Costa Rica Trip: Feb. 7-Feb. 18, 2020 **Optional Extension to Feb. 21, 2020** Important Information

Costa Rica Expeditions: Our trip is coordinated by Costa Rica Expeditions, considered a leader and a pioneer in the ecotourism industry. We have worked with them to take ANS travelers to Costa Rica for more than 30 years. They provide friendly, exceptional service, and design trips to meet the interests of our participants. If you would like to find out more about them, visit their website: [www.costaricaexpeditions.com](http://www.costaricaexpeditions.com).

Field Equipment: The in-country guides will each have a spotting scope available for the group to use, but you may bring one yourself if you wish. Your own pair of binoculars will be essential for viewing wildlife.

Accommodation/Meals: Our lodges will be clean and comfortable. All have private baths and hot showers. They range from modest eco-lodges to the western-styled Hotel Bougainvillea. Two of our lodges in the hot lowlands (La Quinta and Cerro Lodge) offer the option of air conditioning and/or ceiling fans. Our other lowland to mid-elevation lodges (Talari, Las Cruces, and La Cusinga) do not offer air conditioning, but they have screened windows and fans for ventilation. No air conditioning provided (or needed) where we will stay in the mountains -- Hotel Bougainvillea and Trapp Family Lodge, our "landing and departure" hotels in the Central Valley, and Toucanet Lodge (of the extension)—as it cools down pleasantly at night. Food on our trip will be plentiful, prepared from fresh ingredients, and most often served family-style or from a buffet. All but two meals (dinner on Feb.7 and lunch on Feb.8) are included in the price of the trip. Vegetarians will dine happily here, and it has not been difficult to accommodate dietary restrictions in the past.

Physical Difficulty/Pace of Trip: We have planned an active trip with full field days. Most field walks will be fairly short--averaging no more than a mile or two at an easy pace--although longer hikes are possible and we will usually be on our feet for 2-3 (*or sometimes more*) hours at a time. Costa Rica is a mountainous country, so expect frequent hilly and uneven ground, with uphill and downhill walking. Some of our destinations and lodges require walking up and down steps. In the country's warm lowlands, temperatures are typically in the upper 70s through the upper 80s, but hotter temperatures are possible and they may be coupled with high humidity. Expect cooler (even chilly) temperatures at our lodge in the higher mountains of the optional extension.

Many days we will begin before dawn, when wildlife activity is greatest and when temperatures are cooler. Daylight is roughly 6 am to 6 pm. We recommend the “early to bed, early to rise” philosophy on a trip of this nature. There will be times when you are free to opt out of a group activity and relax or explore on your own, and we strongly encourage you to do so.

For the basic itinerary, our destinations will range from the hot and humid lowlands at or near sea-level to the mid-elevation habitats in the Central Valley and at Las Cruces near the Panamanian border, where there is some cooling at night. For the optional extension, we will be staying at around 6,400 feet and exploring in the nearby forests up to perhaps 9,000 feet. We also will likely take a drive to visit the nearby tropical alpine habitat called *paramo* at just over 11,000 feet, *if time and weather permit*. **If you have an existing heart or respiratory condition, you should check with your doctor about the advisability of traveling to the higher elevations of our optional extension.**

Medical Info: While there are no medications required for entry into Costa Rica, we urge you to check with your physician for his/her recommendation. Zika has been detected in the country, but there is no prophylaxis for this virus or two other mosquito-borne illnesses which are in the country (Dengue and Chickamauga). *A couple of years ago, the CDC dropped its recommendation for anti-malarial prophylaxis for travelers.* Check out the CDC’s website: [www.cdc.gov/travel.html](http://www.cdc.gov/travel.html) for more information. Sanitary conditions are generally excellent in Costa Rica, and tap water is safe to drink almost everywhere in the country. Our in-country guides will let us know if we visit any region where water safety may be suspect. For those who may still have concerns, bottled water is usually available. *(See above about high elevation on optional extension.)*

**Currency:** The currency in Costa Rica is the colon. Dollars can be exchanged to *colones* at our first hotel, although at many of the places we will travel using American dollars will be fine. For more expensive items, plastic is readily accepted, although there may be a minimum charge amount. More details on later trip materials.

Passport: A valid passport is necessary for travel to Costa Rica. Additionally, Costa Rica requires that anyone entering the country have a passport that is valid for at least six months beyond the traveler’s date of entry into the country.

Travel to and from Costa Rica: Anyone traveling to San José, Costa Rica on Feb.7, the day our trip begins, will be met at the airport by a representative from Costa Rica Expeditions who will take you to the Hotel Bougainvillea, our lodging for the first two nights. You are welcome to arrive earlier than the 7th if you choose, and we can help you with overnight reservations, airport transfers, excursions, etc.

Anyone traveling back to the States on February 18 or 21 will be taken to the San Jose airport by a representative from Costa Rica Expeditions.

**Please do no purchase airline tickets until we have sent you a note confirming that the trip is on. We will make suggestions for flight scheduling at that time.**