

Costa Rica Trip Report: Apr/May 2019

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Itinerary

1st Route

- La Selva Biological Station
- Tirimbina Lodge
- Bosque de Paz Lodge
- Paraiso Quetzal Lodge

2nd Route

- Danta Corcovado Lodge
- La Leona Eco Lodge
- Saladero Eco Lodge
- Hacienda Baru/Damas Island/Damas Caves



Some notes

- Lodges were booked online beforehand, either directly on the lodge website or through Booking.com. These were all booked separately except for Danta/La Leona/Saladero which was a three lodge package for which we were collected at Puerto Jimenez and returned there afterward.
- We hired a car from Alamo for the first route ending at Puerto Jimenez, and then again a week later after returning from Danta/La Leona/Saladero for the second route. Alamo is the only big name car rental company in Puerto Jimenez as far as I know.
- We (my wife and I) landed at the San Jose airport around lunch time. After drawing colones from one of the ATMs which would be useful for certain purchases, we then bought a SIM card with the intention of using the Waze navigation app. Unfortunately the network was down so the card would only be activated the next day. We therefore took the GPS option on the hire car, but this worked well enough.
- A shuttle was available to take us from the Alamo booth at the San Jose airport to their offices a few kilometres away. This was a pleasant surprise because we did not know about this service and had planned to do so by taxi. Our experience with Alamo was quite satisfactory overall although both the cars we used were far from new (not serious) and it now appears to me that we may have been charged a collection fee that was never discussed with us (serious). I would therefore check your bill carefully when making a final payment and query any odd charge with them or any other rental companies who are notoriously dodgy in this country.
- After getting our car from the Alamo office we drove straight to La Selva. This seemed ambitious in our pre-trip planning phase but it worked out fine, probably because we left before there was any real traffic.
- Judging by various reports on the net, drivers in Costa Rica have a bad reputation. However we found that in general their driving was not nearly as reckless as expected. I guess this reveals that Costa Rica drivers are about on par with those in our own country (South Africa) and that the standard in either case is not high...
- Costa Rica is painfully expensive, especially for South Africans due to our weak currency. Although there are now chasms in our bank accounts, this was one of our best holidays ever.
- In the account below I am not sure of the identifications of some of the animals and one or two may not be correct. Where I was hesitant to even try I left it at the genus level.

La Selva Research Station

18-20 Apr

We were booked into the Arriera cabins which are about a kilometre from the main complex of reception, dining hall and research buildings. This was no problem and for us simply an excuse to walk through the forest, especially at night. If raining, we could also just drive around.

The first beasts were found quickly after arrival: all the cabins are built on a slope and each has a semi-enclosed storage room of sorts underneath in which there were groups of what appeared to be **short-tailed fruit bats** (*Carollia* sp.).

Variegated squirrels were commonly seen during the day.

At night a **Forest rabbit** was sometimes seen on the trails, and once a **Nine-banded armadillo**.

On a guided morning walk we saw an **Agouti** and a **Howler monkey**, and then a colony of **Proboscis bats** on one of the cabins in the research area, where a group of **Collared peccaries** were semi-tame and often found in the gardens.

An ill planned after dinner walk in the primary forest of the River Station area became an extensive journey as we became lost on the trails. During our wanderings a group of **peccaries** (presumably Collared) crossed the path silently ahead of us.

At some point we found a dilapidated old building and nearby a bat house mounted on poles on the lawn. With a torch I could make out two bats inside, one with a free-tail indicating that it was a **mastiff bat**.

After realising that we were heading deeper and deeper into the forest away from civilization (normally a good thing) we eventually managed to backtrack and find our way to the lodge.

When we returned to the area the next morning we had great sightings of foraging **Howler monkeys** and on the overhanging roof of the River Station there was a colony of **Proboscis bats**.



The tenants downstairs (*Carollia*, methinks)

Pierella Ecological Gardens (20 Apr)

There were no signs of Honduran white bats at La Selva (I checked numerous *Heliconia* plants) and so we decided to visit the Pierella Gardens nearby. On our first attempt we got lost and pulled to the side of the road to review our navigation. It was then we saw our first **sloth** with a baby slowly making her way along the telephone lines in the light rain. I cannot recall which species it was unfortunately.

In the end we phoned the gardens and made a booking for the next morning which they actually prefer.

It was well worth the \$50/person charge. Not only were we able to see two beautiful roosting **Honduran white bats**, but also a group of **Lesser white-lined bats** (*Saccopteryx leptura*) on a building and the unexpected bonus of a family with young of **Pygmy round-eared bats** (*Lophostoma brasiliense*) in an arboreal termite nest. Just outside the gardens the lady pointed out a **Two-toed sloth**. Bird life was great and we were able to witness the display of the male White-collared manakin as well as a nestling being attended to nearby. Also seen were all three of the iconic Costa Rican frogs: the Strawberry poison dart frog, the Green and Black poison dart frog and the Red-eyed tree frog.



Back at La Selva we found an arboreal termite nest near the main entrance in which there was a single **Pygmy Round-eared bat**.

Pygmy round-eared bat in termites nest

Additional interesting creatures

The guide pointed out Strawberry poison dart frogs and also a small but stunning yellow Eyelash pitviper. While examining it we noticed that there was another one about two metres away. During this time a boy in our group idly poked around the leaf litter nearby and unearthed a cat-eyed snake. After these first snake sightings it became apparent over the following days that La Selva was a herpetological haven:

During our late night meandering while lost near the River Station my wife who was walking behind me, stopped and pointed out a small snake near my feet which I think was a Two-coloured snail-eater. The next day in the same area we saw a Mexican parrot snake.

On a pre-dawn walk we found a Common snail-eater. And on a sunset walk to dinner my wife once again stopped me and pointed out a snake about half a meter long that I had nearly stepped on. I casually took some photographs as I did with all the other snakes without knowing that I was looking at a Fer-de-Lance. Of course there was also a wide variety of birds including some less common species such Great green macaws and Crested guanans.



Cat-eyed snake



Eyelash pit viper



Common snail-eater



Mexican parrot snake



Two-coloured snail-eater



Fer-de-Lance

Snakes of La Selva

Tirimbina Lodge

21-22 Apr

After the freedom of La Selva, Tirimbina at first seemed quite unappealing due to its restrictions; the forest can only be accessed by a suspension bridge across the river, between certain times (something along the lines of 6 am to 6 pm if I can remember correctly), and enforced with a locked gate.

Also the accommodation is not too far from the main road, and although in nice enough gardens and perfectly comfortable, it is just not the same as being next to a forest.

However these turned out to be not much of a problem. Since we were only there for two nights, the first on the bat tour and the second on a guided night walk, we would be spending both nights in the forest anyway.

For the bat tour Emmanuel Rojas and assistants set up mistnets in the relatively open area below the lodge. On the way down, he stopped to show us a group of **Pygmy round-eared bats** in an arboreal termite nest. That evening, roughly a dozen bats were mistnetted of three species: the two **short-tailed fruit bats** *Carollia perspicillata* and *Carollia castanea*, and the **Great fruit-eating bat** *Artibeus lituratus*.

The next morning Emmanuel gave us an enormous treat when he offered to take us to the forest and show us various bat roosts. As we started our walk on the suspension bridge he spotted a **Jaguarundi** on the river bank on the opposite side. We managed only a glimpse of it before it disappeared.

The personalised diurnal bat tour was unexpected and very special for us as serious bat enthusiasts. I doubt we would have seen any of these bats without him.

From my notes jotted down afterward, recalling what Emmanuel told us:

- A **Greater white-lined bat** (*Saccopteryx bilineata*) on a tree trunk.
- A family of **Chestnut sac-winged bats** (*Cormura brevirostris*) under a fallen tree.
- Another **emballonurid** under a fallen tree elsewhere.
- A single **Honduran white bat** in a *Heliconia* leaf.
- A **Shaggy bat** (*Centronycteris maximiliani*) roosting openly on a leaf high up on a tree (but invisible to our untrained eyes).
- We checked all the *Heliconia* plants in an area where there was a large grove but could find no disk-winged bats.
- We returned from the forest and on the thatched beam of the entrance to the neighbouring lodge were a group of **Proboscis bats**. In a storeroom nearby three or four **Greater white-lined bats**.

Great fruit-eating bat



Greater white-lined bat roosting high up on a tree trunk



Greater white-lined bat in storeroom

Other mammals seen at Tirimbina were both **three-toed** and **two-toed sloths**, very easily viewed next to the restaurant and in the gardens. Also a **Howler monkey** quite close to us on the suspension bridge and a family in the forest. We saw an **Agouti** while on the chocolate tour and on the guided night walk we saw **Kinkajou** three times (at least two different individuals).



Two-toed sloth next to restaurant



View from suspension bridge

Additional interesting creatures

A good variety of frogs almost all of which I have not yet identified. On the night walk a tarantula, a Common blunt-headed snake and another Fer-de-Lance. Birds included a Broad-billed motmot in its nest burrow, Black-throated trogons and a Snowy cotinga.

Common blunt-headed snake



Bosque de Paz Lodge

23-24 Apr

It was good to wander about freely again after Tirimbina, this time in cool mountain forest.

On the trails at night a **Nine-banded armadillo** scratched around a few metres away from me and the next night one passed by in the garden right in front of the dining room. During the day seed is thrown on the lawn which attracts **Agoutis, Red-tailed squirrels** (I think) and once there was a **White-nosed coati**.

At night the same lawn attracts a skittish **Paca** which unfortunately quickly takes cover in torchlight.

Twice I saw a small mammal in the treetops while spotlighting, perhaps some sort of opossum, but could not get a clear view before it disappeared. I also noticed the small bats which often flew past me on the trails. Based on the size, the more temperate climate and the easily recorded foraging call at around 60 kHz, I guessed that these were some sort of vesper, and perhaps there was more than one species. We put up a mistnet long enough to catch one of these bats and indeed it was a small (forearm roughly 30 mm) chestnut coloured **Myotis** of unknown species.

Howler monkeys were heard in the distance every day but never seen.

We very much enjoyed Bosque de Paz but I must say that we found it rather pricey, particularly the food.



Red-tailed squirrel



Unidentified *Myotis*

Additional interesting creatures

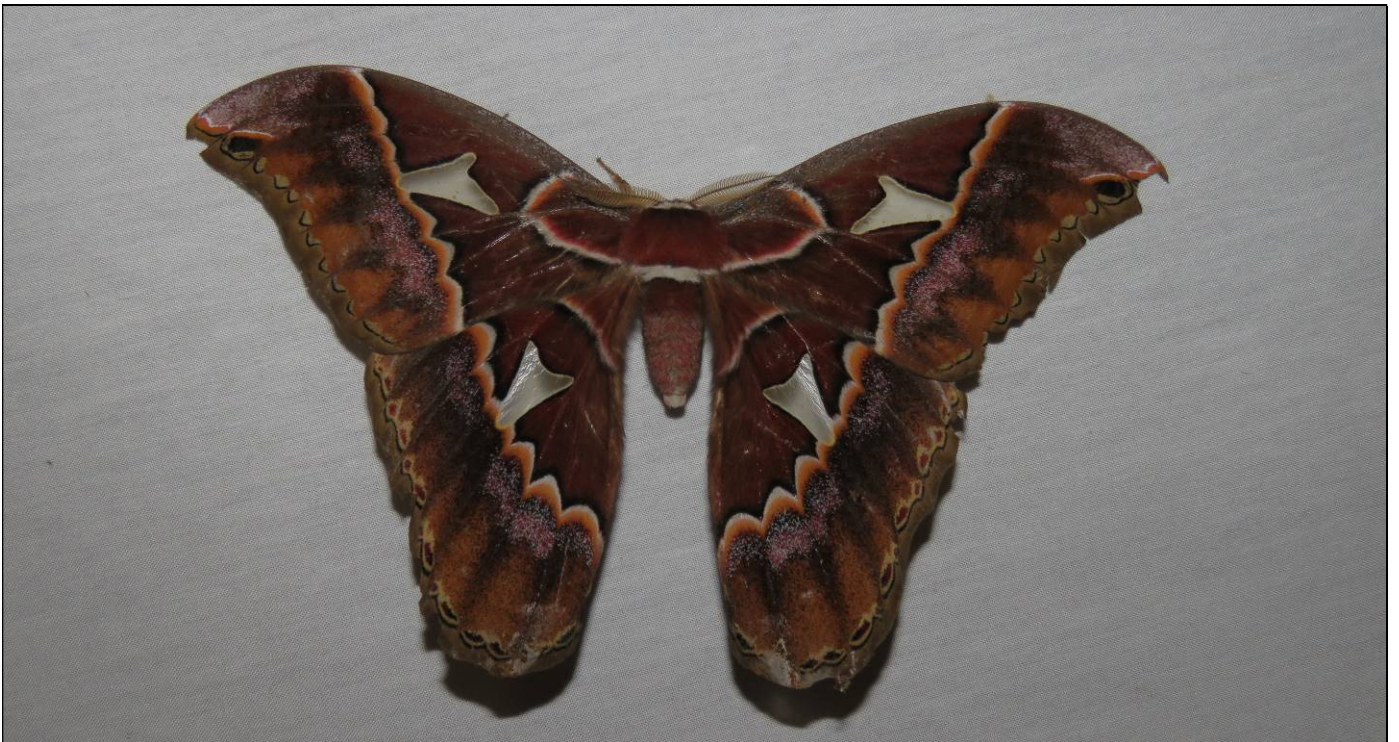
Bosque de Paz is more of a birding site and hummingbirds in particular visit feeders constantly. In the forest some less conspicuous ones were spotted such as Prong-billed barbet and the curious antpitta (Scaled methinks). An Ornate Hawk-eagle also flew over.

Probably the most spectacular sightings for me were the great variety of moths attracted to the UV light trap that was turned on every night. There were many variations, some exquisitely patterned and two impressively large, the Quatro Ventanas (four windows) and the White Witch which is one of the largest in the world.

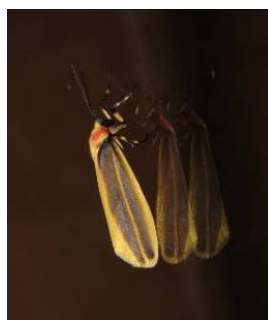
However, much as I loved the show of moths it seems a bit callous to lure them into a trap every night for tourist's benefit when they should be flying the forest seeking mates, pollinating flowers and feeding predators. But I have similar mixed feelings about the hummingbird feeders...



White witch



Quatro Ventanas



Moths of Bosque de Paz



Paraiso Quetzal Lodge

25 Apr

This lodge served two purposes: to break up the long drive down to the Osa Peninsula, and to see the Resplendant Quetzal.

We arrived in the afternoon and after checking in we hiked down the hill into the forest below. Surprisingly it was not too hard to locate some Quetzals and we got reasonable views.

The next morning we went with a guide to visit a site on a smallholding a few kilometres away. As I understood it, this is part of a programme where local farmers allow nest logs to be erected on their property and guided tourists can visit, the farmer getting a portion of the fees. Normally the farmers would chop down dead trees for firewood, leading to a shortage of nesting sites for woodpeckers and therefore for Quetzals, and so they are also encouraged to leave these be.

At this site a large nesting log had been erected and we could watch from about thirty metres away as the male and female would relieve each other in shifts. The Quetzal is indeed ridiculously resplendent and I am glad we made the effort to see it.

Also at the lodge was a host of hummingbirds at feeders (such as the Fiery-throated hummingbird) and some other higher altitude birds.

Danta Corcovado Lodge

26-27 Apr

We arrived in Puerto Jimenez and dropped off our rental car at the Alamo office where we were collected and taken to the lodge. Danta means Tapir but these are seldom seen in the area apparently. However the lodge does provide access to the Los Patos ranger station of Corcovado National Park which is a few kilometres away. Situated in a decent forest patch, accommodation was in luxury tents and very comfortable. The food was also pretty good.

Our first mammal was a family of **Squirrel monkeys** at sunset, frolicking on a palm tree in the camp. And during the day they played above our tent.

The next night while I was watching a pair of **Kinkajous** in a tree next to our tent, I heard a sound behind me. I turned around and saw that that the leaf tube of a *Heliconia* plant was moving. I pulled it down and something flew out, presumably a **Disk-winged bat**. Shortly afterward there was a large brown rodent with white underside moving through the leaf litter, which I think was a **Tomes's spiny rat**.

On the second day we did a guided hike into Corcovado National park from near the Los Patos Ranger Station, getting there from the lodge by a tractor and trailer.

Corcovado National Park (Los Patos Ranger Station) (27 Apr)

On the hike in the park we saw **Agoutis** twice, and **Spider monkeys** a few times. **Howler monkeys** could be heard but we saw none. There were also a few unidentified **squirrels**.

We arrived at a lovely small waterfall and pool where we could swim. Just nearby in some sort rocky hollow in the bank, I found two **short-tailed fruit bats** (methinks).



Carollia (?) at the waterfall

Additional interesting creatures

On a guided night walk there were a few frogs, a tarantula and a scorpion. Before this we were returning from dinner when we heard a movement in front of us next to the path. When I shone my torch there we saw a nearly one metre long Fer-de-Lance slowly slithering away.

Walking around on my own at night I saw my first Boat-billed heron at a stream, and the eyes of several caimans which somehow disappeared during the day.

On the Corcovado walk we had some good bird sightings such as the fabulous display of the male Red-capped manakin, a Blue-crowned manakin, a Double-toothed kite and a nesting Chestnut-mandibled toucan.

While we relaxed at the waterfall it rained briefly. A short while after it stopped, our guide heard a curious squealing sound. When he walked over towards the source he found a frog in the jaws of a small Fer-de-Lance. It appears that the frog had become active in the rain and was unlucky enough to wander into the range of the waiting snake. We watched as it was slowly swallowed its prey and then moved off to another spot about two metres away, settling into its curled strike pose, ready for the next ambush.



Close encounter with a Fer-de-Lance at the lodge (above) and then another one (right) found the next day at Corcovado (Los Patos), here settled into ambush position after we observed it eating a frog.



La Leona Eco Lodge

28-29 Apr

Road from Puerto Jimenez to Carate (28 Apr)

Our driver who collected us in Puerto Jimenez was a super guide. On the way he stopped and showed us a family of small screech-owls in a tree next to the road. Later a group of **Squirrel monkeys**. After that, Yellow-headed caracaras plucking ticks off cattle.

The highlight for me was when he showed us a Common potoo in a tree a short distance from the road. I had been wanting to see this special bird for a long time.

Route between Carate and La Leona Eco Lodge (28 Apr & 30 Apr)

From the small settlement of Carate, there is a walk of about two or three kilometres to the lodge through patches of forest and plantation parallel to the beach. Your luggage is transported for you by donkey cart on the beach itself.

On this route we encountered a solitary **White-nosed coati** who seemed oblivious to our presence turning over rocks and scratching around looking for food. Later we walked past another two.

Two days later, when we were on our way back to Carate we came across a guide who was standing with his group, looking at a **Tayra** resting in a tree above them.

The lodge itself faces the ocean with a forested hill behind it. A little less fancy than Danta, and with less impressive food, it has more of a resort feel to it. Our mildly negative impression may also have been influenced by my wife finding her bed covered in ants the first evening. Fortunately we could easily move to another tent. More dramatic, on the last night there was a scorpion on her pillow, which she luckily spotted before retiring and I let it go outside.

Despite slight drawbacks, it is still beautiful there and the lodge is fairly remote. It is also situated well, being within walking distance of the La Leona Ranger Station of the Corcovado National Park.

From our tent we could watch **Spider monkeys** in the forest behind us and then later we could get closer to them on the trail to the top of the hill.

On the first night I wandered along the route back to Carate and less than a kilometre from the lodge I saw a **Red-brocket deer**.

On the second day we did a guided hike into Corcovado National park.



A stream flowing from the forest out to sea at Corcovado (La Leona)

Corcovado National Park (La Leona Ranger Station) (29 Apr)

Our first sighting on the hike was one of our best of our trip. We spotted a **Tayra** close by which seemed unfazed by its human observers. It trotted around ahead of us, climbing a tree and generally moving purposefully through the forest. At one stage it found a banana from somewhere which it then stashed in hole in a tree.

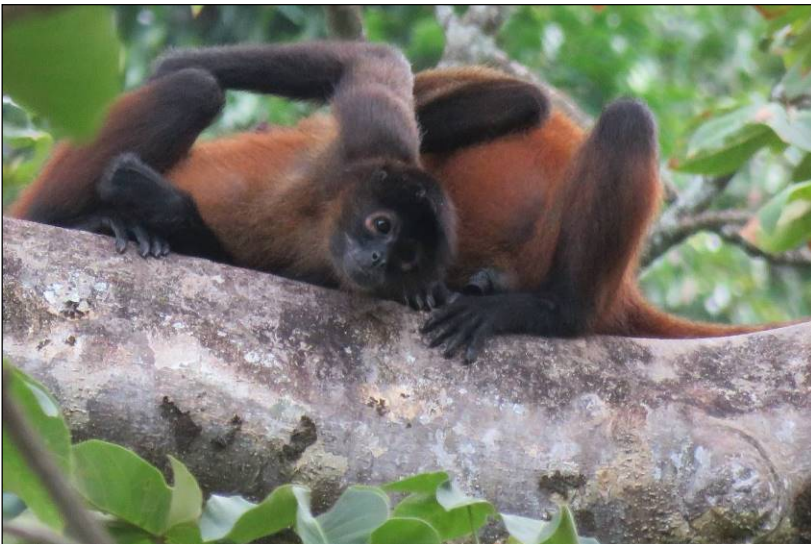
Another special sighting was when we came upon a large family of **White-nosed coatis** with young that moved slowly within metres of us while foraging, and we were literally surrounded at one point. Later we would encounter solitary coatis here and there.

Our first **White-faced capuchin monkeys** were seen on this walk. **Howler monkeys** were heard and we found **Spider monkeys** more than once.

Near the beach where a stream flows into the ocean, we found fresh looking Tapir tracks but unfortunately not their owner. Although they are occasionally seen in this area, the consensus seems to be that if one wants to see this beast, the Sirena Station is the best place for this.

A final treat was when the guide showed us a **tent-making bat** (*Uroderma sp.*) in a small palm.

Pair of Spider monkeys at Corcovado (La Leona)



Tent-making bat at Corcovado (La Leona)



Young White-nosed coati at Corcovado (La Leona)



Energetic Tayra at Corcovado (La Leona)



Beautiful Flat-footed bug at La Leona Eco Lodge

On our walk in Corcovado our guide had noted our pleasure at seeing the tent-making bat and mentioned that fishing bats could be seen foraging on the creek between the lodge and the park.

So naturally we staked out this site that night.

We chose a likely spot with calm water and for some time sat with a bat detector in the dark, shining our torches whenever a bat flew past over the water wondering if that was indeed a fishing sort.

Because we were mostly quiet we surprised an unwitting **Striped hog-nosed skunk** heading our way which then made a u-turn and disappeared back into the forest.

With no success we moved to another spot closer to the beach where the water was a little less calm and in our minds not as ideal. But our efforts were rewarded when soon after that we saw the unmistakable large brown form of a **Greater fishing bat** fly past, close to the water. There were at least two foraging over the small pool and we watched them fly by at regular intervals for a long time and merely a few metres away.

Additional interesting creatures

On our Corcovado walk we startled a snake that quickly slithered away. Our guide said it was a Salmon-bellied racer. It was the only one of the fourteen snakes we saw in Costa Rica that I did not get a photograph of.

We saw a number of Green and Black poison dart frogs and competition in the colour stakes was provided by brilliant Scarlet macaws easily seen at the lodge.

Saladero Eco Lodge

30 Apr-2 May

A small speed boat collected us at Puerto Jimenez and it took about twenty minutes to cross the bay. Just as we left a pair of **Bottlenosed dolphins** swam quite close to us.

The lodge is situated next to the water which allows very convenient kayaking and snorkelling. While the variety of fish that can be seen cannot compare with say the waters of Belize, the ease with which one can simply wade into the sea when you feel like it is something to be appreciated. I still managed to see about ten different species as well as a moray eel and a few sting rays. Another guest saw a turtle more than once. Dolphins swam past the lodge a few times and were also quite close when we returning by boat from a mangrove kayaking tour.

Upon arrival, while the camp manager was showing us around the large garden, we saw a **White-nosed coati**. She mentioned that camera traps in the forest had recorded ocelot as well as puma.



Bottlenose dolphins swim past Saladero

On a morning walk in the forest which is part of Piedras Blancas National Park we had good sightings of **Howler monkeys**, which also appear regularly near the Tree House, as well as White-faced capuchins, although we did not manage to see those.

The camp manager showed us a **Three-toed sloth** in a *Cecropia* tree in the garden and there were squirrels around but I'm not sure which species.

In our room, above the dining area, we sometimes heard the audible squeaks of **mastiff bats** living in the roof. One evening a bat was trapped in our room which we allowed to escape through an open window, but this one looked like a vesper to me and so I think both types were roosting above.

On a morning forest walk I noticed that a leaf of a *Philodendron* type plant was suspiciously bent. As I approached to investigate, something flew out, presumably a **tent-making bat**.

Bat activity was quite good on the trails at night and there was a colony inhabiting one unusually large and hollow tree. I am guessing these were phyllostomids since I could register no calls on my bat detector held right at the entrance.

In the hollow underneath a fallen tree near the mangroves I saw a large rodent that I think was another **Tomes' spiny rat**.

Sitting at dinner one evening in the open plan kitchen and dining area, what looked like a **four-eyed opossum** appeared briefly, clambering around the pots before disappearing quickly. Later that night I saw it again in a tree outside but again did not manage to get a good enough look for identification. Walking a bit further into the forest there was an unidentified rodent in the tree above.

Saladero was quite pleasant. We had great conversations with the camp manager and the food was healthy, tasty and simple. The combination of sea and forest was great.

The only downside for me was that the trail network was a bit limited.



Tomes' spiny rat?



Unidentified rodent

Additional interesting creatures

Just before we saw the opossum at dinner my wife got up and walked to kitchen. She suddenly felt something on her hand and found a puzzling gooey mess. Looking up she saw Bird-eating snake about a metre long amongst the pots and pans above that had just defecated on her hand. Fortunately it is reportedly a harmless species and we were able to encourage it to go outside.

Birdlife included the Great currasow, Collared forest-falcon, and a Boat-billed heron on a mangrove kayaking tour. It is apparently a good place to see Baird's trogon.



Bird-eating snake in the kitchen



Displaying Golfo Dulce anole

On returning by boat to Puerto Jimenez we collected our next car from Alamo and drove to Hacienda Baru.

Hacienda Baru Lodge

3-5 May

The lodge is located between the highway and the sea and is conveniently close to the tourist town of Dominical. It has a decent trail network through various grades of forest as well as down to the beach, although we never found time to investigate the latter.

This was also our base for a night time kayaking tour of the mangrove area around Damas Island, as well as a visit to Damas Cave, both about forty five minutes drive away and run by Ave-Natura.

Access to the forest is controlled by a usually locked gate (it is actually easy to walk around it) next to a hut where guides congregate, presumably ready to offer their services, but we never made use of them. There are always security guards on the premises and I am not sure it is possible to walk the trails at night: I never had the time to do so and so did not find out if this was allowed.

From our cabin I watched a group of **White-faced capuchin monkeys** in the trees nearby. There were **Agoutis** in the garden and were common on the trails. **Variiegated squirrels** were often seen in the Wild Almond trees in the gardens.



Variiegated squirrel eating wild almond

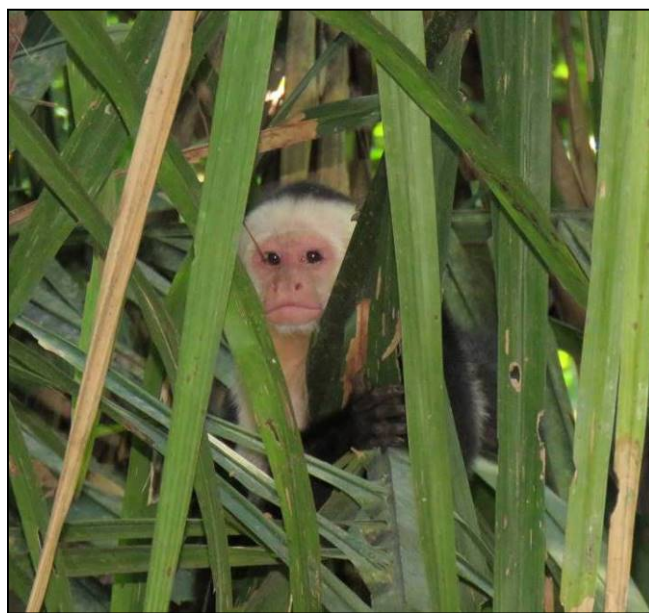
An afternoon walk on the Lookout Trail was productive. The first find was a sad example of ignorance where someone had crucified a bat on the barbed wire fence of the research station. It looked like an *Uroderma* and I'm guessing the culprit had come across the unlucky animal by chance and decided it was the evil Chupacabra, the mythical creature of Latin America that has become associated with bats.

However, a few meters away there was colony of living **Pygmy round-eared bats** (*Lophostoma brasiliense*) in an arboreal termite nest. Another nest nearby was too high to inspect.

On the other side of the highway in the older forest a group of **Chestnut sac-winged bats** (*Cormura brevirostris*) huddled in the hollow of a fallen tree. Then just before I crossed the highway heading back to the lodge I saw a **Three-toed sloth** resting in a tree. Further on a family of **White-nosed coatis**, and then a troop of **White-faced capuchin monkeys**.



Chestnut sac-winged bats under fallen tree



Suspicious White-faced capuchin monkey

Night kayak mangrove tour in Damas Island area (4 May)

From previous reports I got the impression that sightings of Silky anteater were likelier on day time tours but I was keen to see fishing bats and so I booked a night tour, not knowing that we would have excellent sightings of these at La Leona. I also prefer night tours because in general you see the more secretive and often scarcer nocturnal animals.

Conditions for us were far from ideal however. The tide was inconveniently low in the evening and it was only at about 21h30 that the water would be deep enough so that we could start kayaking. And it rained most of the time, although not too heavily but this made sightings difficult.

We did manage to see a group of **Proboscis bats** on a leaning tree and sometimes, usually when the rain stopped for a short while, foraging **Greater fishing bats**.

After some time in the near constant rain and not seeing much, it was becoming a little miserable. I suspect that our guide Maurillo was feeling unhappy that the somewhat expensive tour was not going as well as expected and to his credit he extended the time on the water, hoping we could at least see something more. Finally when we returned to the area nearer the launch site where there was forest and no longer mangroves we saw a group of sheepish looking **Crab-eating raccoons** that quietly skulked away.

There were a few bird sightings on the tour as well such as Boat-billed herons and Green herons.

Damas Caves (5 May)

The caves are next to a river in a scenic forested area beyond a palm plantation next to the highway. As we entered the area we saw **Squirrel monkeys** which seem to be resident around the caves. There were a number of bat species present, starting with **white-lined bats** (either *Saccopteryx bilineata* or *S. leptura*) and apparently **Lesser dog-like bats** (*Peropteryx macrotis*) at the cave entrance and exit sections. Deeper inside there were groups of those most fascinating of beasts, **Common vampire bats**, and of **short-tailed fruit bats**, probably *Carollia perspicillata*. A larger phyllostomid occurred in smaller numbers, apparently the **spear-nosed bat** (*Phyllostomus hastatus*). Lastly a small colony of **Orange nectar-bats** (*Lonchophylla robusta*). On the way out we had a good sighting of a Spectacled owl as we drove through the forest.



Saccopteryx bat



Lesser dog-like bat



Short-tailed fruit bats



Spear nosed bats



Orange nectar-bats

Additional interesting creatures

The lodge seemed to have good bird activity with sightings of Black-hooded antshrikes, Great currawong, Rufous-naped wren, Roadside hawk and my first and only Puffbird.

On the last night while wandering the gardens I came across a cat-eyed snake amongst leaf litter.



Cat-eyed snake

On our return journey to San Jose we stopped at the Tarcoles bridge to look at the American crocodiles below.