

OSA CONSERVATION

Osa Conservation (OC) is a nonprofit organization founded in 2003 to protect the Osa Peninsula's globally significant biodiversity. OC actively conserves 5,800 acres of Costa Rican rainforest and operates the Greg Gund Conservation Center and Piro Biological Research Station to host researchers, student groups, volunteers, conservation professionals and other visitors to the Osa Peninsula, Costa Rica. Our team consists of dedicated Costa Rican and international biologists, environmental educators and land conservation professionals. Our diverse conservation efforts focus on the direct protection of critical habitat, scientific research, forest restoration, education, and community outreach.



THE OSA PENINSULA

The Osa Peninsula is a region with a lot of biological superlatives squeezed into a very modest area. Home to the largest remaining tract of tropical lowland rainforest and intact mangrove ecosystem on the Pacific Coast of Central America, one of only four tropical fjords on earth, and an expansive untouched coastline, the Osa Peninsula is the wildest and most spectacular region of Costa Rica. The Osa harbors over 460 species of birds, including the healthiest population of Scarlet Macaws in Central America, Red-capped Manakins, Yellow-billed and Turquoise Cotingas, and even the Harpy Eagle. Despite this extreme biological diversity, the Peninsula's remoteness has left it the most underbirded corner of the country.

OC's birding trips are designed to make this unique geography accessible and offer an unparalleled birding experience. You will have a chance to see many endemic species, which are limited in range to the Osa and western Panama, such as the Mangrove Hummingbird, White-crested Coquette, Baird's Trogon, Fiery-billed Aracari, Golden-naped Woodpecker, Black-cheeked Ant-Tanager... the list goes on. On top of the incredible birding, visitors to the Osa have the opportunity to observe all four of the country's monkey species, sloths, anteaters, pumas, jaguars, tapir, and amphibians, not to mention some amazing tropical flora.

All OC conservation birding trips are lead by Karen Leavelle, our resident ornithologist, as well as trained naturalist guides who are intimately familiar with the bird species and tropical ecosystems of Osa. These trips include lots of birding, forest hikes, and nightly talks and presentations by our staff of biologists and conservation professionals. Topics may include natural history, sea turtle conservation, wildcat conservation, avian research and conservation, reforestation, climate change and community engagement. Your participation directly supports OC's avian conservation and education programs. We thank you for participating in our mission to conserve the peninsula's globally significant biodiversity and we're looking forward to having you on this fantastic trip!

OC'S AVIAN CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Osa Conservation collaborates with a network of partners to protect birds in the region through research, monitoring, habitat protection and restoration, and educational outreach. Costa Rica's south pacific coast is home to over 460 species of birds. About a dozen of these are endemic and restricted to this region and adjacent Panama, including five species of conservation concern that inhabit the lush tropical forests and coastal mangroves of the Osa Peninsula. Our conservation work also focuses on many species of neotropical migrants that winter in the Osa.

Because the primary threat to wildlife in the Osa Peninsula is the loss and fragmentation of habitat, OC is helping to protect and restore habitats in the region through land acquisition, direct restoration projects, local education programs, and conservation birding trips.



OSA ENDEMIC OF CONSERVATION CONCERN:



YELLOW-BILLED COTINGA (*Carpodectes antoniae*)

This unique regional endemic is estimated to have a mere 250 – 999 individuals remaining. Historically distributed from central Costa Rica into Panama along the Pacific coastal slope, the Yellow-billed Cotinga is now believed to be further restricted mainly to the mangroves and adjacent rainforests of the Osa Peninsula and Golfo Dulce due to habitat loss. It is listed as endangered by BirdLife International but the limited information on its current distribution and abundance likely warrants this species to be up listed to critical.



BAIRD'S TROGON (*Trogon bairdii*) & TURQUOISE COTINGA (*Cotinga ridgwayi*)

Few birds are as brilliantly colored as an adult male Turquoise Cotinga or as regal as the Baird's Trogon. Both species are resident endemics to Costa Rica's south Pacific slope and western Panama. Most of their habitat in Panama has already been destroyed leaving southern Costa Rica and the Osa Peninsula as the species' final refuge. Cotingas in particular may make seasonal movements in search of fruit, but little is known about their behavior and conservation status despite important implications for the protection of rainforest throughout potential migratory routes.



MANGROVE HUMMINGBIRD (*Amazilia boucardi*)

An endangered species endemic to Costa Rica's Pacific coast, the Mangrove Hummingbird, as its name suggests, occurs mainly in mangroves. Although protected by law in Costa Rica, mangroves harboring this species continue to be cleared for shrimp farms and coastal development.



BLACK-CHEEKED ANT-TANAGER (*Habia atrimaxillaris*)

The Black-cheeked Ant-Tanager is an endangered species, restricted to the forests of the Osa Peninsula and Golfo Dulce in Costa Rica. It also qualifies as an Alliance for Zero Extinction trigger species. Much of its habitat outside of the Osa Peninsula in the Golfo Dulce region has been destroyed, but OC, along with other key partners, is harboring a vibrant population of these birds on our conservation lands.



In addition to these endemics, the Osa Peninsula supports one of the healthiest populations of Scarlet Macaws in Central America. Migrant shorebirds and songbirds from North America use the Osa Peninsula during northern winters. Neotropical migrants include the U.S. WatchListed Olive-sided Flycatcher, Wood Thrush, Golden-winged Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, and Canada Warbler. WatchListed shorebirds occurring here include the Snowy Plover, Wilson's Plover, American Golden-Plover, Marbled Godwit, Wandering Tattler, Surfbird, Red Knot, Sanderling, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Western Sandpiper, White-rumped Sandpiper, and Stilt Sandpiper.

CONSERVATION BIRDING

Conservation birding provides an opportunity for bird lovers of all abilities to have an incredible international birding experience while giving back to an important cause. In addition to some great birding, this trip is an opportunity to learn about the habitat requirements of your favorite birds as well as the conservation challenges facing this unique region. Your conservation donation enables us to protect and restore critical breeding and wintering habitat for both endemic species and neotropical migrants and conduct scientific monitoring and avian research. Take advantage of your time with our staff of biologists and local conservationists, who make conservation birding a truly unique and educational experience.



OSA BIRDING ITINERARY

Please note that this is a preliminary itinerary and some details may change

DAY 1 - Arrive at Puerto Jimenez on an afternoon flight from San José. Drive to Greg Gund Conservation Center for orientation and dinner while enjoying sunset over the Pacific. After sunset, and with a bit of luck, we'll watch the resident Common Potoo (like a Nighthawk on steroids) as it "sal-lies" for large, night flying moths. Overnight at the Greg Gund Conservation Center

DAY 2 - Morning birding around GGCC. Expect to see the Chestnut-mandible Toucan along with a variety of parrots, flycatchers and woodcreepers. Afternoon hike through secondary forest to the bamboo platform. We're likely to have close encounters with troops of four species of monkeys found in the area (be prepared to hide your bananas). Evening introduction to ebird and overnight at Greg Gund Conservation Center.

DAY 3 - Early morning birding around the center. Before warming temperatures create thermals that raptors love, is a particularly good time to search for hawks perched on exposed trees. We'll also continue to hone our flycatcher ID skills (no one said it was going to be easy!), frequently pausing to admire resident woodpeckers and forest edge associates like Dot-winged Antwren. Afternoon forest hike to a spectacular, undeveloped beach that provides critical nesting habitat for four species of sea turtles. Overnight at Piro Research Station.

DAY 4 - Morning hike through old growth forest near the station. We will experience the grandeur of an ancient rainforest (complete with 1,000+ year old trees) and may see rare mammals such as Tamandua, a beautiful arboreal anteater, and Tayra, a large, tropical weasel. This forest provides safe harbor for numerous secretive birds such as Great Curassow, Ornate Hawk Eagle, Rufous Mourner, Thrushlike Manakin, the endemic Black-cheeked Ant Tanager and dare I say.....Harpy Eagle? Afternoon birding near Carbonera and Matapalo. Evening beach barbecue and overnight at the Piro Research Station.

DAY 5 - Drive to Carate to search for the stunningly beautiful Turquoise Cotinga, an increasingly rare fruit-eating bird restricted to the endangered Isthmian-Pacific moist forests of southwestern Costa Rica and adjacent Panama. While near Carate, we'll spend time exploring the Osa's unique lagoon system. Crocodiles, limpkins, crakes and a variety of herons are all possibilities. We'll also keep a watchful eye for flocks of brilliant Scarlet Macaw.

We'll also spend the afternoon exploring the Rio Piro, a beautiful clearwater stream that meanders through tall secondary forest, keeping an eye peeled for riparian specialists like the secretive Agami Heron, North America's smallest kingfisher, the diminutive Pygmy, and Basilisk Lizard (the only reptile that can literally run across the surface of the water, hence its nickname as "Jesus Christ Lizard"). We'll take a moment in the evening to upload our birding information to ebird and overnight at the Piro Research Station.



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ITINERARY CONTINUED

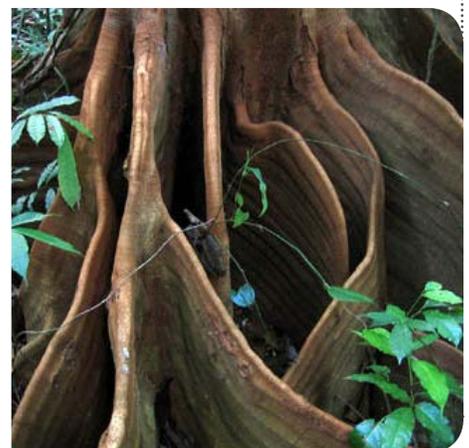
DAY 6 – This morning we will leave early to head over to the Golfo Dulce side of the peninsula to explore the mangrove forests near Rincon. These forests are part of the largest remaining mangrove complex on the Pacific coast of Central American and are critically important from a conservation perspective. They provide important habitat for myriad species including Boat-billed Heron, wintering Prothonotary Warbler, the endangered Mangrove Hummingbird and the endangered Yellow-billed Cotinga, a secretive, endemic species whose last remaining stronghold may be the Osa's mangroves and associated upland forest. After thoroughly exploring the area, we'll head over to Bosque del Rio Tigre Lodge (BRT), our destination for the next two days. The afternoon will be spent birding the area with owner/expert guide Abraham Gallo. Overnight at BRT.

DAY 7 – We'll spend the entire day exploring the amazingly birdy forests surrounding BRT. Possibilities include – Little Tinamou, Uniform Crake, White-tipped Sickle Bill (very cool hummer), Striped Woodhaunter (a vexing tropical ovenbird), Scaly-throated Leaf-tosser (another one), trogons galore, Red-throated Caracara, 40+ species of those pesky flycatchers, Marbled Wood Quail, Collared and Barred Forest Falcons (both seen from the lodge) and fingers crossed for the diminutive White-crested Coquette, a hummer with a hairdo that puts Lyle Lovett to shame.....you get the picture! Overnight at BRT.

DAY 8 – Early morning ride back to Puerto Jimenez where you can either catch a morning flight back to San José or browse the shops and restaurants in town.

Throughout the week we will have evening presentations from local biologists. Possibilities include: Yellow-billed Cotinga research, amphibian monitoring, sea turtle protection and management and wild cat conservation (the Osa is home to 5 species of cats - Jaguar, Mountain Lion, Ocelot, Margay and Jaguarundi!)

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO INQUIRE ABOUT FUTURE BIRDING TRIPS SEND AN EMAIL TO INFO@OSACONSERVATION.ORG!



WHAT TO EXPECT

Facilities

The Piro Research Center and Greg Gund Conservation Center offer very nice, modest accommodations in a remote rainforest setting. The Casa "Hola Chao" at the Greg Gund Center consists of two dorm-style rooms with shared bathrooms. The cabins at Piro station have private or shared rooms with a shared bathroom.

Food

Our staff and visitors enjoy a diet that blends local Costa Rican cuisine with a wide variety of international dishes. Our meals are cooked daily by Emilia and Annia, our resident Costa Rican chefs. Please indicate in the attached form any dietary restrictions you have so that we can plan accordingly.

Weather

Average temperature: 79° F

Annual precipitation: 5000-6000mm

Humidity: 90%+

January to March tend to be the driest and sunniest months of the year in Osa, although the possibility of rain can never be ruled out.

Bank and Grocery Store

Osa Conservation is located about 45 minutes outside of town (not including impromptu birding stops). If you need to get money from the ATM or grab any last minute items, this should be done in Puerto Jiménez when you arrive. You will pass both the bank and the grocery store (called the BM) on your way out of town.

Health & Safety

The health and safety of our visitors is our primary concern. In general, Costa Rica is an extremely safe country – the violent crime and unrest that exists in much of Central America is almost unknown here. The government is stable, with a well-established democratic tradition. That said, we strongly encourage all visitors and staff to be vigilant and aware of the potential hazards associated with traveling outside of their resident country. In addition, there are certain hazards associated with life in a remote field station. The majority of these pertain to the natural environment.

The most common discomforts are mosquitoes, sand flies, and other biting insects; sunburn; and dehydration. Sunblock and consumption of an adequate amount of water are absolutely essential.

Insects - While you will encounter mosquitoes, sand flies, and other biting insects on the Osa, their presence is not excessive, and is usually significantly lighter than you would find in many areas of Europe and North America. A good insect repellent will protect you well.

Snakes - Like other tropical regions, Osa has its fair share of snakes, some of which are poisonous. We strongly suggest the use of rubber boots on forest trails and it is absolutely necessary to use a head lamp or torch at night and always pay attention to your surroundings.

Hazardous Swimming Conditions - The Pacific Ocean off Río Piro beach has strong currents and riptides, powerful waves, and the occasional shark. We consider it too dangerous for swimming and do not allow visitors to do so. There are safe swimming beaches nearby; please ask somebody before going swimming.

Medical Emergencies - We have a complete first aid kit and can handle most medical concerns on-site. In case of an emergency, the nearest town on the peninsula, Puerto Jiménez, is 45 minutes by vehicle and has a commercial airstrip serviced by a charter company that provides 24-hour emergency service. Puerto Jiménez has a medical clinic that can help with anything from a twisted ankle to a snakebite. Please make sure you have travel/medical insurance that will cover you in Costa Rica.

Getting Around - Osa is remote. While this can be inconvenient, it is also what makes this place so incredible. Please be aware that most roads in Osa are not paved. Please be prepared for bumpy, dusty roads and rivers that may necessitate crossing by foot.

Internet Access & Cell Phones - During your stay at the OC, you will have limited access to the internet. We discourage visitors from bringing laptops or other valuable electronics as these are a burden to store, and susceptible to damage caused by high humidity and curious insects. Tri-band cell phones that have been activated for service in Costa Rica will work in Puerto Jiménez and from a high point at Cerro Osa, but service tends to be unreliable.

Storage & Security - We discourage visitors from bringing valuables or items of high personal value with them to the station. Although we consider the facilities to be safe, we cannot guarantee the safety of valuables and have no facility for storing them. Osa Conservation is not responsible for guaranteeing the security of such items.

Emergency Contact Information - If someone needs to contact you urgently, there is phone access at our office in Puerto Jiménez.

Puerto Jiménez Office +011 (506) 2735-5756
Washington, DC Office 202 234 2356

We have radio communication between our stations and our Puerto Jiménez office. In case of an emergency in the Osa, our staff will inform your designated contact immediately.



piro research station

WHAT TO BRING

- Photocopy of passport
- Flashlight – this is absolutely necessary for walking in the evening/night (headlamp is best to free up hands)
- Rubber Boots are highly recommended (we have some at the station to borrow). You can also purchase them at the BM grocery store in Puerto Jimenez.
- Water Shoes – Closed-toed water friendly shoes like Crocs are excellent for walking around in the Osa on the beach, road or for around the station.
- Toiletries (including shampoo, conditioner and soap - please bring biodegradable as our system interacts directly with the environment!)
- Clothing – Pack for hot weather and dirty conditions. Lightweight, fast-drying clothes are best. Denim is not good in the tropics as it is heavy and never dries in the humidity.
- Lightweight rain jacket (Many prefer to wear fast-drying clothes in the rain because they are breathable but a lightweight rain jacket may come in handy)
- Sunscreen
- Bug repellent - Please consider a natural one without chemicals like deet
- Ziplock bags are good for keeping humidity out of electronics such as cell phones and cameras

WHAT NOT TO BRING

Personal items that require an AC power supply such as hair dryers and electric razors, as the draw is too much for our renewable energy systems (rechargeable items like camera batteries are fine).

TRANSPORTATION

The trip begins from Puerto Jimenez, the nearest town to Osa Conservation's facilities.

How to Get to Puerto Jimenez from San Jose:

International flights land at Juan Santamaria International Airport (SJO). There are two airlines that fly to Puerto Jimenez, Sansa and Nature Air. Sansa is located right next to the Juan Santamaria Airport and Nature Air is located about 10 miles away in Pavas. Ground shuttle transportation can be booked online along with your flight.

Sansa: To connect to your Sansa flight, walk outside of the international terminal and proceed left along the sidewalk. You will see the parking lot for the Sansa terminal on your left-hand side about a block down - approximately 5 minutes. Flights are not always on time and often leave earlier or later than scheduled.

<http://www.flysansa.com/>

NatureAir: Nature Air is located at Tobias Bolaños airport in Pavas. To get there, you will need to take a taxi or shuttle from the international airport. Be sure to arrange a taxi at the official curbside taxi stand outside of baggage claim. The trip to Pavas can take up to thirty minutes or more with traffic.

<http://www.natureair.com/>

Schedules and prices vary according to the season. One-way costs approximately \$150 including taxes. All bookings can be made online. There are strict weight limits for baggage on domestic flights.