

## TRAVEL STORIES FROM COSTA RICA



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*Cloud forests of Costa Rica*



*By Alankar Chandra (PGP 2009), the founder of Wild Voyager ([www.wildvoyager.com](http://www.wildvoyager.com)) which specializes in nature travel around the world. He also runs Olgatuni Camp ([www.olgatuni.com](http://www.olgatuni.com)) which is a boutique property inside Masai Mara national reserve of Kenya.*

*“I have been doing birds and wildlife photography around the world for over 14 years now. So, if I have to pick my favorite birding destination, it has to be Costa Rica.”*

Costa Rica is known for its rich culture, stunning natural beauty, and strong commitment to environmental conservation. The country has a strong tourism industry, attracting visitors for its pristine beaches, lush rainforests, and abundant wildlife. It is also a popular destination for eco-tourism and sustainable tourism. **Costa Rica is considered a birding paradise for several reasons:**

**Biodiversity:** With over 900 species of birds, Costa Rica is home to a rich variety of avian life.

**Climate:** The country's tropical climate provides ideal conditions for bird habitats, such as rainforests, cloud forests, and wetlands.

**Geography:** Costa Rica is located at a convergence point between North and South America, making it a stopover for many migratory species.

**Conservation efforts:** The country has a strong commitment to environmental conservation, including the protection of bird habitats.

**Accessibility:** There are many bird-watching tours and reserves available, making it easy for tourists to see and appreciate the country's avian life.

These factors combined make Costa Rica a popular destination for birding enthusiasts and a true birding paradise.

**SOME OF THE MOST ICONIC BIRDS OF COSTA RICA, AND MY PERSONAL FAVORITES ARE,**



**THE RESPLENDENT**

**QUETZAL** Can be found in the high-altitude cloud forests of the Central and South Pacific regions. These areas provide the bird with its preferred habitat, including tall trees for roosting and dense undergrowth for foraging. The Resplendent Quetzal is a threatened species, with its population declining due to habitat loss and hunting.



**TOCO TOUCAN** A large, colorful bird native to South America, including parts of Costa Rica. It is best known for its distinctive, oversized bill, which is bright yellow and black. The Toco Toucan is one of the most recognizable birds in the world and is often featured in advertisements, television shows, and movies.

In Costa Rica, the Toco Toucan can be found in the lowland forests of the northern region, where it feeds on a variety of fruits, insects, and small animals. It is a highly social bird, often found in flocks, and is known for its loud calls.

**HUMMINGBIRDS** Costa Rica is home to over 50 species of hummingbirds, making it an excellent destination for birding enthusiasts. Some of the most seen hummingbirds in the country include:

- Violet Sabrewing
- Snowy-bellied Hummingbird
- Green Thorntail
- Fiery-throated Hummingbird
- Magenta-throated Woodstar
- Long-tailed Sylph
- Green Hermit
- Green-crowned Brilliant
- Scintillant Hummingbird
- Crowned Woodnymph

Hummingbirds are attracted to the country's abundant nectar-producing flowers and feeders, making it easy to observe and appreciate these tiny birds.



*Green Breasted Mango*





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*Fiery Throated Hummingbird (L) and Lesser Violetear (R)*

**OTHER BIRDS AND REPTILES** There are other bird families found like tanagers, trogons, vultures, macaws, and a host of reptile species.

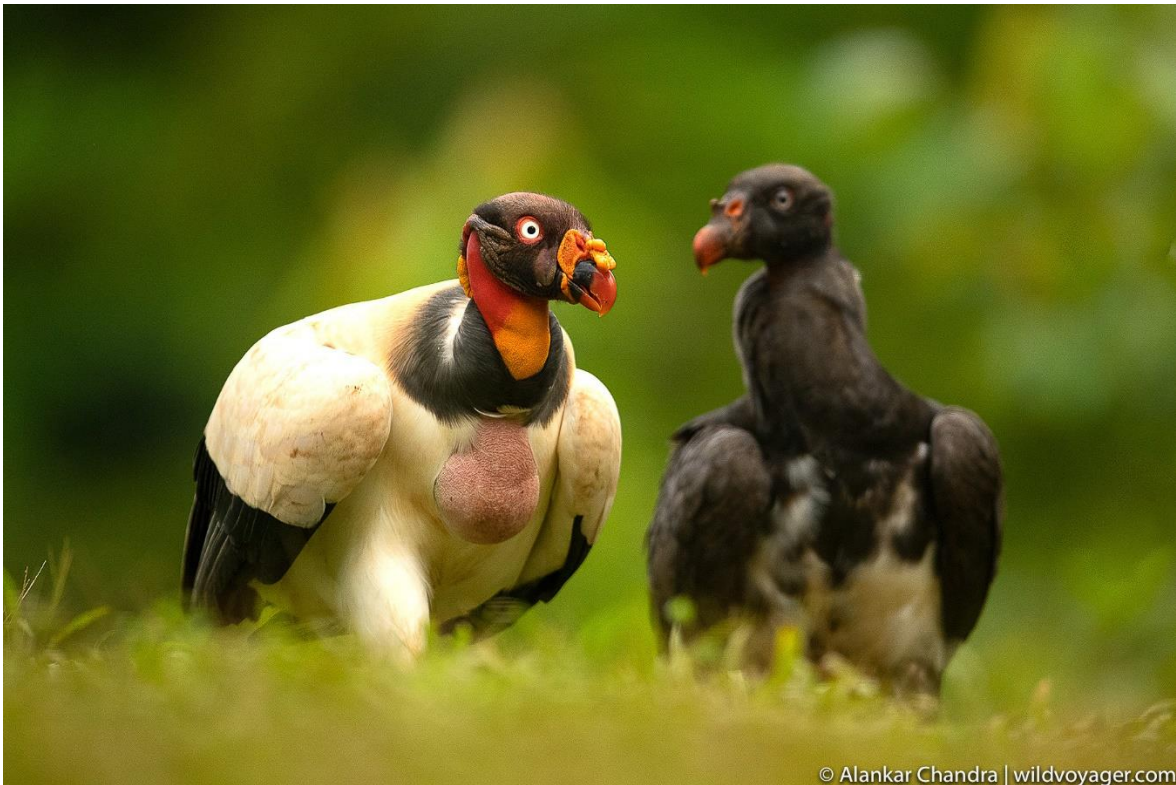


© Alankar Chandra | wildvoyager.com  
*Golden Browed Chlorophonia*



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*Scarlet Macaw*



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*King Vulture and Turkey Vulture*





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*Summer Tanager*



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*Red eyed frog*

I have been lucky enough to document around 450 of the 900+ bird species in Costa Rica. Hope to go back soon this year to this place that I call the mecca of bird watching.