

FINCA TRES EQUIS

After we landed in San José we didn't have enough time to travel all the way to Selva Bananito and therefore decided to stay somewhere halfway.

We were lucky enough to stay the night at Alfonso's Finca Tres Equis (info@fincatresequis.com) and sadly only for one night, we would have loved to stay longer.

I hope I recollect everything correctly, but I think Alfonso's father bought over 250 hectares of forest and didn't do much with it. Now Alfonso started this lovely Finca and has many projects. He was very motivated to accompany us for *night* and *early morning drives* and already has trails ready for discoveries.

Panthera and others have done some research on his land boarding native land and then *Barbilla National Park* and have photographed the following species on camera trap: Margay, Puma, Jaguar (on passage to La Amistad), Ocelot, Coyote, Grey Fox, Red Brocket, Grison, Agouti, Tayra, Jaguarundi, Collared Peccary, Paca and Neotropical River Otter.

On the way to the Finca one **Coyote** crossed our road. Being overly tired from San José traffic and Jet lagged we only did one night and one morning drive to the river and back which produced: **White-nosed Coati**, **Lesser Fishing Bat**, either Alston's or Zeledon's Mouse Opossum and two **Nine-banded Armadillos**. While having breakfast we saw a **Variegated Squirrel**.

SELVA BANANITO

The next day we arrived at beautiful Selva Bananito boarding *La Amistad National Park*. Selva Bananito is a 1500 hectares land which inhabits 12 Jaguars including melanistic ones (at least in the past) and the highest density of Fer-de-Lance snakes in the country.

We were very excited to see what we were going to discover but sadly rules and regulations made mammal watching difficult one more time: It was forbidden to go into the forest on our own and night walks were not allowed. One **Kinkajou** came two times during supper and Sophie saw a **White-nosed Coati** running on the pastures.

The lodge owner, Jürgen, is a very dedicated man to conservation. We did a flight over the rainforest with his *gyrocopter* which was fantastic and a creative way to do conservation. Jürgen saw what we were hoping for and we could do a seldomly used

trail which didn't produce any mammals although we did hear White-faced Capuchins and smelled Collared Peccaries. The guide was talking quiet loudly and we were outside the forest at least 2 hours before dawn just to be sure. Next, we slept on a platform in the forest which was amazing: Lovely local guide, fantastic food, the waterfall as a shower (with biodegradable soap of course) and the best view from the toilet. During the day we spotted a King Vulture and again smelled Collared Peccaries but didn't see them. We did a small night walk with Louis which produced: I think Coral Snake, Fer de Lance, **Brown-Throated Three-toed Sloth**, **Coues' Rice Rat** and **Talamancan Rice Rat**. While sleeping Manuel and Louis heard the Bushmaster and Sophie possibly a Jaguar. We did find two Jaguar tracks of the trails.

BOSQUE DE PAZ

We stay in Bosque de Paz having heard that it might be a good place to see the Margay. And it did start promising: Right when we arrived the owner explained that Pacas and Agoutis were not coming as usual because "a cat is around". We were able to *walk around* as much as we wanted and were *free* to go at *night* as well.

Bosque de Paz is feeding the bird with seeds, feeders and fruits which also attracts **White-nosed Coati**, Paca, **Central American Agouti** and **Red-tailed Squirrel**. We saw all the mentioned besides the Paca. We saw three **Collared Peccaries** one early morning, one **Northern Raccoon** at night around the lodge and found a Puma track. The staff confirmed that one individual was seen several times not long ago. Both our camera traps didn't photograph anything in the two nights on animal trails.

CERRO DE LA MUERTE

We stay in the lovely village *San Gerardo de Dota* which was very quiet. We ate at Miriam's Restaurant which was simple but good and the staff was lovely. We really enjoyed this calm beautiful mountainous landscape until we realized that it was a magnet to birders wanting to find the *Quetzal*. Locals told us, and it was true, that the Quetzal shows up every day at the same spot at the same time: If you drive from San Gerardo towards Hotel Savegre you will cross the river. Right after this bridge you will find two avocado trees one nearby a big rock and one nearby a small house. The Quetzal is on either of these every day between 06h30-07h30 and 16h30-17h30.

One research identified that the Coyote, the Dice's Cottontail, the Paca, Puma and the Northern Raccoon were the 5 most frequent large mammals in Valley Savegre. Next Collared Peccaries, Baird's Tapir, White-nosed Coati, Red Brocket and Oncilla. Others were identified but were pretty rare.

We did two *night drive routes*: The one is the road that goes from the Interamerican Highway to Providencia and the other in direction to San Isidro de El General where there is one way to the right going to many satellites. The night drives produced three **Dice's Rabbit** for us. We also saw both **Red-tailed** and **Montane Squirrel**.

OSA PENINSULA

After Cerro de la Muerte we drove to the Osa Peninsula, to Drake Bay. We were pleasantly surprised in that this place was not so crowded and to get informed that they restricted the amount of people visiting Corcovado in a day to 100 people. Nobody cancelled the first day and therefore we couldn't go. So instead we heard of *Alfredo* who is supposed to be the only man who can live in the park. For clarification he owns land that borders Corcovado but leaves there for 35 years. We slept there hoping for a night walk. It seems that most mammals are staying around **Sirena** because it's a secondary forest where lots of fruit trees were planted initially. Anyway, staying at Alfredo's was an interesting and certainly unique experience. He seems to have stayed in the hippie movement.

We had a beautiful encounter with a **White-faced Capuchin** family eating around us. Later we observed the **Lesser White-lined Bats** resting under his house during the day. Alfredo told us that a Baird's Tapir came sometimes to eat from his fruit trees and that he regularly saw Northern Tamanduas as well. We were able to convince Alfredo to do a night walk where we spotted a **Central American Woolly Opossum**. The next morning we observed a group of **Central American Spider Monkeys**.

During the two nights sleeping in Drake Bay we did night drives from there to the *Ranger Station of Los Planes*. This is the only road we know of where you don't have to cross the river by car and where there is a bridge. During one of these drives a **Common Opossum** crossed the road.

On our last morning in Osa we were able to go to Sirena Station. It was well organised, and we were lucky enough to have a quiet and motivated group. We were the only ones with binoculars and it was definitely worth scanning around as well even though we did have a good guide. The animals were, so it seems, accustomed to humans.

We saw a **Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth** with baby, **Mantled Howlers**, **Central American Spider Monkeys**, a **Red-tailed Squirrel**, a **Central American Agouti**, a couple of **White-nosed Coatis**, a sleeping **Baird's Tapir** and a **Northern Tamandua**. The guides will know where to look for animals that stick around for a while (sloths, owls and boas) and check almost every mud hole there is for tapirs during the right hour so it seems.

ESQUINAS

We went to Esquinas wanting to support their concept of buying more land with every tourist visiting. They bought so much land that the state bought it back to create the Piedras Blancas National Park.

It started off well when we saw **Lesser White-lined Bats** behind the bar and a **Central American Agouti** running around but then again it was forbidden to go into the forest after 2pm. The morning hour was more open (after sunrise). The guide wasn't very positive about seeing mammals on the trails either.

We decided therefore to rest and drink beer but still try with *night drives* and *morning walks* at least. We did a couple of night drives between the lodge and Golfito which produced a **Kinkajou**, a **Northern Raccoon** and a police control. Fortunately for us,

this wasn't a problem even though they didn't know what a Kinkajou was (mono?). In the last morning we realized that there were **Greater White-lined Bats** under our villa.

DAMAS ISLAND

For our last day in Costa Rica we wanted to try to find a hairy tennisball (silky anteater) and therefore dared to face lots of tourists around Manuel Antonio.

We stayed at *Hacienda Baru Lodge* which was, at least then, a quiet reserve next to the sea where it's allowed to walk the trails whenever you want (even at night!). We only did one small walk right after midday before leaving for Damas Island and saw two **Variegated Squirrels**, a **Hofmann's Two-toed Sloth**, a **Central American Agouti** and some **White-faced Capuchins**.

In Damas Island we did, at first, a kayak tour with two other tourists and would definitely recommend a private tour: We had a restricted amount of time for this tour which often didn't allowed us to scan the area as carefully as we wanted to. We saw a group of **White-faced Capuchins**. Our kayak guide was friendly enough to organised us a night boat tour the very same evening to try again before flying back.

The night tour was private and great (*Aventuras Macha Tour*): We spotted a couple of **Gray Four-eyed Opossums**, a gang of five **Northern Raccoons**, a **Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth** with baby, a **Kinkajou** and both **Greater** and **Lesser Fishing Bat**.

Common Opossum	<i>Didelphis marsupialis</i>	One crossing the road on a night drive between Drake Bay and Los Planes.	
Gray Four-eyed Opossum	<i>Philander opossum</i>	A couple of sightings during a night boat drive through the Damas mangroves.	
Alton's or Zeledon's Mouse Opossum		One very short sighting of an arboreal brown opossum in Finca Tres Equis at night.	
Central American Woolly Opossum	<i>Caluromys derbianus</i>	One sighting during a night walk in the borders of Corcovado.	
Northern Tamandua	<i>Tamandua mexicana</i>	One sighting at Sirena Station (follow the smell!).	
Hofmann's Two-toed Sloth	<i>Choloepus hoffmanni</i>	One sighting of a sleeping individual in Hacienda Baru Lodge.	
Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth	<i>Bradypus variegatus</i>	One sighting during a night walk in Selva Bananito Forest, one with baby in Sirena Station and a final sighting of another mum and baby during a night boat drive through the Damas mangroves.	
Nine-banded Armadillo	<i>Dasyus novemcinctus</i>	Two sightings during a night drive in Finca Tres Equis.	

<p>Lesser White-lined Bat</p>	<p><i>Saccopteryx leptura</i></p>	<p>A couple around the house in the borders of Corcovado and a couple behind the bar at Esquinas Lodge.</p>	
<p>Greater White-lined Bat</p>	<p><i>Saccopteryx bilineata</i></p>	<p>Two individuals under our villa in Esquinas Lodge.</p>	
<p>Lesser Fishing Bat</p>	<p><i>Noctilio albiventris</i></p>	<p>One sighting at the river during a night drive in Finca Tres Equis and sightings of several during a night boat tour through the Damas mangroves.</p>	
<p>Greater Fishing Bat</p>	<p><i>Noctilio leorinus</i></p>	<p>Sighting of three individuals fishing while doing a night boat tour through the Damas mangroves.</p>	
<p>White-faced Capuchin</p>	<p><i>Cebus capucinus</i></p>	<p>A beautiful sighting near Corcovado and another at Hacienda Baru Lodge and finally doing a Damas mangrove tour.</p>	
<p>Mantled Howler</p>	<p><i>Alouatta palliate</i></p>	<p>One sighting of a couple at Sirena Station.</p>	

<p>Central American Spider Monkey</p>	<p><i>Ateles geoffroyi</i></p>	<p>One sighting at the borders of Corcovado and another at Sirena Station.</p>	
<p>Variegated Squirrel</p>	<p><i>Sciurus variegatoides</i></p>	<p><i>Sciurus variegatoides belti</i> or <i>thomasi</i> in Finca Tres Equis and <i>Sciurus variegatoides melania</i> in Hacienda Baru Lodge.</p>	
<p>Red-tailed Squirrel</p>	<p><i>Sciurus granatensis</i></p>	<p>Sightings in Bosque de Paz and Cerro de la Muerte where they would eat the bird bait. Another sighting at Sirena Station.</p>	
<p>Montane Squirrel</p>	<p><i>Syntheosciurus brochus</i></p>	<p>One sighting walking around in Cerro de la Muerte.</p>	
<p>Coues' Rice Rat</p>	<p><i>Oryzomys couesi</i></p>	<p>One sighting at night in Selva Bananito Forest.</p>	
<p>Talamancan Rice Rat</p>	<p><i>Transandinomys talamancae</i></p>	<p>One sighting at night in Selva Bananito Forest.</p>	
<p>Central American Agouti</p>	<p><i>Dasyprocta punctate</i></p>	<p>One sighting in Bosque de Paz where they would eat the bird's bait. They were around Esquinas Lodge as well and finally one sighting on the trail of Hacienda Baru Lodge.</p>	

Dice's Rabbit	<i>Sylvilagus dicei</i>	Sightings of three individuals during night drives between the Interamerican Highway and Providencia.	
Coyote	<i>Canis latrans</i>	One sighting while driving from San José to Finca Tres Equis at night.	
Northern Raccoon	<i>Procyon lotor</i>	One sighting of an individual around the lodge of Bosque de Paz at night. Another during a night drive around the Esquinas Lodge and finally a sighting of five individuals during the night boat tour in the Damas Mangroves.	
White-nosed Coati	<i>Nasua narica</i>	One sighting during a morning drive in Finca Tres Equis, one running across the pastures of Selva Bananito, one eating the bird's bait in Bosque de Paz, several in Sirena Station and one crossing the main road to Osa Peninsula.	
Kinkajou	<i>Potos flavus</i>	Two sightings during supper in Selva Bananito (heard him calling), one sighting during a night drive between Esquinas and Golfito and a final sighting during the night boat tour in the Damas mangroves.	
Baird's Tapir	<i>Tapirus bairdii</i>	One sighting of a sleeping individual in the mud at Sirena Station.	

Collared Peccaries	<i>Pecari tajacu</i>	One sighting of tree individuals during a morning walk on the trails of Bosque de Paz.	
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