



A Guide to the Birds of Costa Rica (Civilization)

F. Gary Stiles, Gary Stiles, Alexander F. Gary Stiles

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Costa Rica, a country of no larger than West Virginia, hosts more than 830 species of birds, more than in all of North America north of Mexico. It may well be the only country in the world with as many bird species and habitats to be found in such a small area. Within two hours' drive from San Jose, one can see quetzals in highland forests, antbirds in lowland forests, or shorebirds and ibises in mangrove swamps.

This lavishly illustrated book is the most comprehensive treatment of a rich tropical avifauna ever presented in a single volume suitable for its use in the field. With its full coverage of waterbirds and migrants as well as resident tropical species, and its coverage of such topics as plumages, vocalizations, food habits, nesting, and distribution, it is truly a guide to the birds themselves, not merely a guide to their identification.

Gary Stiles and Alexander Skutch first set the stage for the birds by briefly describing the landforms, vegetation, and climates of Costa Rica. For those who want to take "that second long look" to interpret what they see, the authors discuss some aspects of evolution, ecology, and behavior of Costa Rican birds, and report on the costly and courageous conservation efforts the country is making in face of discouraging odds. The family and species accounts that follow, covering some 400 pages, make up the bulk of the book, with 52 magnificent color plates illustrating virtually every species of Costa Rican bird, migrants as well as residents. There are also practical tips for trips in the field and descriptions of good birding locations, with specific directions for travel by car, public transport, and on foot, as well as three maps.

A highly readable, portable encyclopedia to the fascinating, ever-surprising birds of Costa Rica, this book will be welcomed by birders and other naturalists, professional and amateur ornithologists, ecologists, travelers, and conservationists throughout the northern Neotropics.

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