

Curious Kids Press

# The Wildlife of COSTA RICA



## Red-eyed Tree Frog

**NEXT TO THE MONKEYS**, the red-eyed tree frog is probably one of the most popular animals in Costa Rica.

They live in the trees of Costa Rica's rainforests, rarely, if ever, coming down to the ground. Tiny suction cups on the bottom of their webbed feet hold them onto leaves of the forest. They have long sticky tongues to catch crickets and other insects.

What's with the eyes? Actually, they are a means of self-defense. They keep their eyes shut most of the time. But when they sense danger, they open their eyes suddenly, scaring any would-be predator to death.

Who wouldn't love these adorable amphibians?

# Scarlet Macaw



**THE SCARLET MACAW** is one of the most beautiful birds in the world with its brilliant red, yellow and blue feathers. It is also the largest member of the parrot family.

Not too long ago, Scarlet Macaws were almost **extinct** in Costa Rica. But then the country passed a law against keeping macaws and other rainforest birds as pets. As a result, their population has grown.

There are 17 species of macaws in Central and South America but only two live in Costa Rica – the Scarlet Macaw on the Pacific side and the Great Green Macaw on the Caribbean.

## **SCARLET MACAW**

### **At a Glance**

**Length:** 32 in (81 cm)

**Weight:** 2.2 lb (1 kg)

**Diet:** Fruit, nuts, seeds

**Lifespan:** 40-50 years in the wild

**Where to See Them:** Corcovado, Palo Verde and Carara National Park on the Pacific side rather than the Caribbean.

A three-toed sloth is shown clinging to a tree trunk. The sloth has long, shaggy, greyish-brown fur and is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. Its three yellowish claws are visible as it grips the tree. The background is a blurred forest scene.

# Three-toed Sloth

**COSTA RICA IS KNOWN** for its rich, lush, magnificent rainforests. There, you are sure to see iguanas, hundreds of different birds, and, of course, monkeys, including three of the four species of monkeys that live in Costa Rica.

You will also see (if you're lucky) of the cutest animals in the world—the sloth.

There are actually six different species (or kinds) of sloths in the world. Only two live in Costa Rica—the two-toed sloth and the three-toed sloth. The two-toed sloth is

## THREE-TOED SLOTH

### At a Glance

**Length:** 18 in (45 cm), plus a short tail of 2-3 in (6-7 cm).

**Weight:** 8-10 lb (3.5-4.5 kg).

**Diet:** Leaves, branches, buds, insects.

**Lifespan:** Up to 12 years in the wild.

**Interesting Fact:** It can take up to two weeks for a sloth to digest a meal.

slightly bigger. It usually hangs upside down in a tree. The three-toed sloth usually sits upright in the fork of a tree branch.

# The Squirrel Monkey

The **SHY** Central American squirrel monkey is the smallest of the Costa Rican monkeys.

Unfortunately, the population of this monkey is decreasing largely because of **deforestation**, hunting, and pet trade.

Squirrel monkeys make 25 to 30 different and distinct noises when searching for food and when they feel threatened.

## SQUIRREL MONKEY

### At a Glance

**Length (body):** Up to 13.8 inches (35 centimeters).

**Tail:** Up to 17 inches (42 centimeters) long.

**Weight:** 1.5 to 2 lbs (500 to 750 grams).

**Diet:** Omnivorous.

**Predators:** Eagles and snakes.



# Capuchin Monkey

## CAPUCHIN MONKEY

### At a Glance

**Length (body):** Up to 17.8 in (45.3 cm) long, excluding tail

**Tail (longer than the body):** Up to 21.7 in. (55.1 cm) long

**Weight:** Up to 8.2 lb (3.7 kg)

**Diet:** Omnivorous (fruits and insects)

**Lifespan:** Up to 44 years

The **FRANTIC capuchin monkey** is also known as the white-faced monkey (for obvious reasons).

Capuchin monkeys love ripe fruit. So, they smell it and squeeze it first before biting into it, just to make sure it's fresh. They also like shellfish and crack the shells of shellfish with stones. Like the spider monkey, they are very smart.

They have been known to beat snakes with sticks to defend themselves. They also have no fear of people. So watch out! They are likely to steal your backpack if you leave it by itself on the beach.



# Howler Monkey

## HOWLER MONKEY

### At a Glance

**Length (body):** Up to 36 in. (92 cm) excluding tail.

**Tail:** Often as long as its whole body.

**Weight:** Up to 20 lbs. (9 kg).

**Diet:** Primarily leaf eaters, but also fruits and flowers.

**Lifespan:** Up to 25 years.

The **NOISY mantled howler monkey** is famous for its howl. It can be heard nearly 1 mile (1.6 km) away through the dense jungle.

Mantled howler monkeys love to spend their day napping on tree branches. In fact, they hardly ever leave the treetops.

The tail of the howler monkey is like an extra arm. It can grip and hold on to tree branches.

A black spider monkey is hanging from a tree branch in a lush green forest. The monkey's long tail is wrapped around the branch, and its body is suspended. The background is filled with various green plants and trees.

# Spider Monkey

The **LARGE** spider monkey is the largest monkey in Costa Rica.

The **spider monkey** can weigh as much as 20 pounds (9 kg) with arms that are much longer than its legs. Its tail is also longer than the length of its body and head.

It's the only Costa Rican monkey not found in the Manuel Antonio rainforest.

## SPIDER MONKEY

### At a Glance

**Length (body):** 14 to 26 inches (35 to 66 cm).

**Tail:** Up to 35 in (89 cm) long.

**Weight:** 12-20 lbs (5.4-9 kg).

**Diet:** Omnivorous (nuts, seeds, fruits, insects).

**Lifespan:** About 20 years.

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