

Maravillas Del Bosque Nuboso

Santa Elena Cloud Forest Reserve

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Article N° 2



Photo: Johnny Pérez.

Common Name: Quetzal

Scientific Name: *Pharomachrus mocinno*

The Quetzal, a bird of lush beauty that attracts many tourists each year to the Monteverde area and that is Endangered (CITES Appendix I) can be observed mainly during the months of December through June in the paths of the Santa Elena Cloud Forest Reserve.

In recent years there has been some work on this species, gathering on data Quetzales nests with GPS (Global Positioning System) on the trails where they have noticed the greater number of individuals of this species.

On May 22, 2011 one of the few active nests within the Reserve Quetzal, was plundered by a weasel (*Mustela frenata*). It was also observed that nesting began later than usual as well as the avocado fruit production (Family Lauraceae).

This species is found within the family Trogonidae and its distribution is from southern Mexico to Panama. It is one of the most striking species of birds in the Americas. It is a resident of tropical forests in the mountains and they are usually at a height above a thousand meters above sea level. (Libro Aves 4° edición 2007 Gary Stiles, Alexander F. Skutch).



Down Left: Female / *P. mocinno*

This bird makes an altitudinal migration in line with the fruiting Lauraceae species (aguacatillos).

Guatemalan Legend has it that the arrival of Spanish conquistadors to the city of Quetzaltenango in 1542 killed the chief "Tecun Uman" thrusting a spear into his chest. At the moment he fell mortally wounded, his spiritual protector, Quetzal, with brilliant green plumage fell on his wound, staining it red with their blood. The plumage of the bird's breast was emerald green.



The avocado fruit (above) is the main food of the quetzal and bellbird. It should be noted that in the Monteverde area there are over 70 species of this family (Lauraceae).

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Translated: Global Volunteers