

# CHIRRIPO NATIONAL PARK

“Chirripó” derives from an indigenous word meaning “land of eternal waters.” Chirripó National Park lies towards the northern end of one of the most important biological zones of all Central America. It adjoins La Amistad International Park, which covers almost all of the Talamancas mountain range and, together with adjacent reserves, includes over a million hectares and spans major sections of northern Costa Rica and southern Panama. The grouping has been designated one of the “biological hot spots” of the Meso-American Biological Corridor. The Cloudbridge reserve adds a small piece to this complex.

The Chirripó National Park spans the most biologically diverse area in Costa Rica and, together with its neighbor La Amistad NP, comprises the largest unspoiled forest in the country. An astonishing number of habitats — produced by the differences in altitude, soil, climate and topography — can be found, including paramos, marshlands, oak forests, madrono forests, fern groves and mixed forests. Chirripó peak is the highest mountain in the country, reaching a height of 3,821 meters. The paramos of this elevation contain many varieties of stunted Andean-type woodland, consisting of shrubs, grasslands and perennial herbaceous plants. The fauna is astonishingly varied too, with 263 species of amphibians and reptiles and about 400 types of birds observed to date. The largest concentration of tapirs in the country can be found here, plus the puma, jaguar, ocelot, jaguarundi, white-lipped peccary and cacomistle (no, we didn’t know what this was either — it’s actually a small nocturnal raccoon-like creature). Birds include the resplendent quetzal (beautiful, but endangered), mot-mot, crested eagle, red-tailed hawk, volcano hummingbird, black guan, crowned wren-thrush, elegant trogon, and acorn woodpecker.

