

The South Pacific Coast

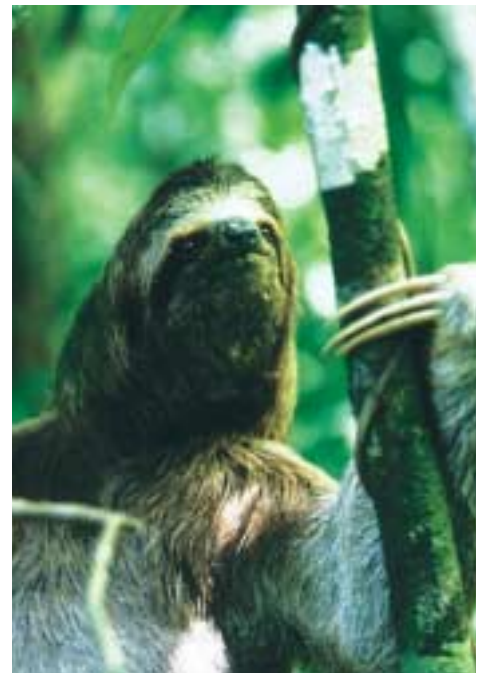
by Hernán Carazo



This coastal area of Costa Rica extends from Dominical in the north (30 miles south of Quepos) to the Osa Peninsula and the Golfito area in the south and includes fishing villages, world class surfing beaches, Corcovado National Park reported by National Geographic as "the most biologically intense place on earth", long stretches of deserted beaches and uninhabited forests, here you can find private reserves such as Hacienda Baru located one mile north of Dominical where you can follow trails through a cocoa plantation and pastures and into thick forest and mangroves backing to a gorgeous beach called Playa Baru where you can see many varieties of wildlife. Dominical is casual, cool and laid back and offers

attractions for all tastes. Dominical itself is a former fishing village now synonymous with surfing and an excellent point from which to go off hiking or horseback riding on the dirt roads that clamber up from the main coast highway to explore the surrounding Escaleras "staircase" mountains and the spectacular ocean views. Continuing south for nine miles from Dominical to Uvita, we reach the Brunca Coast named after a local Indian group. This area is still pretty much undeveloped and it offers a superb wildlife and marine refuge.

Further south we come to the Osa Peninsula, truly a nature lover's paradise were abundant wildlife and rain soaked



Continued on page 61

forests offer the opportunity for magnificent viewings and encounters. Here you will find sport fishing, diving and wilderness lodges all geared to providing you with a world class experience that will make you want to return year after year. In this area you will also find Corcovado National Park with over 103 acres, a place where you can get over 25 feet of annual rainfall (that's right feet not inches!) at the higher elevations. So much water means plenty of wildlife including over 1200 scarlet macaws, the largest population in Central America and over 400 bird species plus more than 115 reptile species. In fact, over 1/10th of all the mammal species living in the Americas can be found in the park! This

park also protects the largest extant stand of primeval rain forest along the Pacific Coast of Central America.

Heading inland from the Osa Peninsula toward the east we come to the Golfo Dulce (Sweet Gulf) and the

Golfito, a town that came to life in 1938 when the United Fruit Company established plantations and Golfito became the banana capital of the region and the main banana shipping port in Costa Rica. Today it's a favorite with yachters, sport fishermen, and nature travelers. It's also home to a duty-free zone created for Costa Ricans and established to help the local economy after the demise of the banana plantations.

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