



Tropical Audubon Society

Eastern Panama: The Canal Zone and the Darien October 31 - November 9, 2019

Brian Rapoza and a Canopy Family guide lead this ten-day, nine-night birding tour in Panama, home to over 950 bird species, the highest in Central America! This tour, for up to eight participants, involves ten full days of birding and is designed for intermediate to advanced birders. We'll spend our first three nights at world-famous **Canopy Tower**, in Soberania National Park along the Panama Canal. Among the many possible birding destinations during our three days here will be Semaphore Hill Road, Summit Gardens, Ammo Dump Pond and the legendary Pipeline Road!



Adult female Harpy Eagle by Jenn Sinasac

We'll spend the next six nights in luxury safari-style tents at **Canopy Camp**, in the heart of the Darien, Panama's easternmost province. Our itinerary may include an all-day excursion to search for Panama's national bird, the majestic **Harpy Eagle**! Other locations we may visit while in the Darien include Bayano Lake, Rio Torti, El Salto Road, Las Lagunas Road, Quebrada Felix, Lajas Blancas, Nuevo Vigia, Aligandi, San Francisco Reserve and Yaviza, at the very end of the Pan-American Highway.

COSTS: \$2,695.00 per person double occupancy, \$300.00 single supplement. Cost includes transportation, meals, lodging and guides. Not included is round-trip airfare to Panama City, tips, laundry costs and other incidental expenses. All trip participants are responsible for their own personal travel insurance to cover accidents, medical expenses or loss of personal belongings. Trip cancellation/interruption insurance is strongly recommended; see <http://www.tripinsurancestore.com/> for additional information. All participants must indicate upon booking any medical conditions that could limit participation in the tour.

RESERVATION REQUIREMENTS: To reserve your space, a deposit of \$600.00, along with a completed trip application and agreement must be submitted within 30 days of booking. Email Brian Rapoza, TAS Field Trip Coordinator at fieldtrips@tropicalaudubon.org

to request an application. Make out a check to Tropical Audubon Society and mail to: **Brian Rapoza, TAS Field Trip Coordinator, 14525 SW 88 Street, J-207, Miami, FL 33186**

Balance of payment must be received by July 31, 2019 to ensure your reservation. No refunds for cancellations after 7/31/19. Again, trip cancellation/interruption insurance is strongly recommended.

TOUR ITINERARY (subject to change):

Day 1 (Thursday, October 31): Arrival and Orientation at Canopy Tower



Observation deck by Alex Alba

Upon arrival at the Panama City airport, we'll be met by a Canopy Family driver who will transfer us to the **Canopy Tower**, located at the top of Semaphore Hill in the rainforest of Soberanía National Park. A member of the Canopy Family staff will greet us as we arrive at the Tower, and we'll be provided with an orientation on the use of the facilities. At this

time, staff will answer any questions we may have. As our luggage is being ferried to our rooms, we may visit the dining/bar area and enjoy a refreshing drink. We'll spend some time on the roof-top observation deck; the view from the platform provides some incredible birding opportunities! Here, we get a unique eye-level perspective of the rainforest canopy. Many birds, including toucans, parrots, tanagers of various species and dozens of others, as well as two species of sloths, monkeys and other mammals are commonly seen. We'll also scan overhead for raptors, as this time of year is the peak of fall hawk migration in Panama. From this vantage point we can also see ships transiting the Panama Canal, the majestic Centennial Bridge and miles of rainforest! We may also want to watch the hummingbird feeders at the base of the Tower for Long-billed Hermit, White-necked Jacobin, Violet-bellied and Blue-chested hummingbirds and White-vented Plumeleteer. Occasionally, a Snowy-bellied Hummingbird is spotted! After sunset, dinner will be served in the dining area.

Days 2 - 3 (Friday, November 1 – Saturday, November 2): Canopy Tower and Beyond

Our Canopy Family guide will be waiting for us at the observation deck for early morning birding. While we look for birds we can also enjoy hot coffee, tea and orange



*Rufous Motmot
by Arthur Morris*

juice. Some of the bird species that we are likely to see from the observation deck are Green and Red-legged honeycreepers, Green Shrike-Vireo, Blue Cotinga, Scaled Pigeon, Mealy and Red-ored Parrots, Keel-billed Toucan, Collared Araçari, flycatchers of various kinds and raptors, including King Vulture and Ornate Hawk-Eagle! After breakfast, at mid-morning, we'll begin our exploration of Soberanía National Park by taking a pleasant walk down Semaphore Hill Road. This winding, shady paved road, festooned on the shoulders by wildflowers of many types, is a little more than a mile long and crosses a large creek about half-way down. There are some incredible birding opportunities here, including birds from the forest interior as well as edge-dwellers. Olivaceous Flatbill, Plain Xenops, Lesser Greenlet, Black-breasted and White-whiskered Puffbirds, Fasciated and Black-crowned (formerly Western Slaty) Antshrikes, Slate-colored Grosbeak, Bay-headed and White-shouldered Tanagers, Black-throated Trogon, Broad-billed and Rufous Motmots and Great Jacamar may be found. Great Tinamou is often heard, but harder to find. This road is also great for raptors—White, Tiny and Great Black-Hawks have been seen, and during fall migration it's easy to see more than ten species of warblers and other songbirds in one morning. Our morning bird list will be impressive, as we catch a ride back just in time to enjoy a delicious lunch at Canopy Tower.



The Rainfomobile going down Semaphore Hill Rd

This afternoon and tomorrow, we'll have an opportunity to visit several locations close to Canopy Tower, traveling by Canopy Family's Birdmobile or Rainfomobile, both open-air vehicles, returning in most cases to Canopy Tower for meals. We won't have time to visit them all, so which locations we visit will depend on our target species and current conditions. Possibilities include:

Plantation Trail (5 minutes from Canopy Tower): Located at the bottom of Semaphore Hill, this easy trail passes through mature rainforest and follows a small creek (Rio Chico Masambi) and is a reliable place to find Golden-crowned Spadebills. Oftentimes at the parking area near the entrance, we find Black-chested Jays. Other birds to look for along the trail include Ocellated, Bicolored, Chestnut-backed, White-

bellied and Spotted Antbirds; Broad-billed and Whooping Motmots, trogons, White-whiskered Puffbird, hummers (Blue-chested, White-necked Jacobin and others); Plain Brown, Northern Barred and Cocoa Woodcreepers; Cinnamon, Crimson-crested and Black-cheeked Woodpeckers; White-breasted Wood-Wren, Song Wren, Dot-winged, Checker-throated and White-flanked Antwrens; Purple-throated Fruitcrow, Bright-rumped Attila, Gray-headed Tanager, Long-billed Gnatwren, Black-crowned and Fasciated Antshrikes, Red-capped and Blue-crowned Manakins, Great Tinamou, Ruddy-tailed, Royal and Yellow-margined Flycatchers, Yellow-rumped Cacique, Scaly-throated Leaf-tosser and occasionally, a Great Jacamar or the endemic Yellow-green Tyrannulet!

Summit Ponds and Old Gamboa Road (10 minutes from Canopy Tower): Old Gamboa Road and the associated ponds at Summit are great places to find Canal Zone birds of many types. At Summit Ponds we'll scan for Green, Striated, Capped and Boat-billed Herons as well as Green, Ringed, Amazon, Green-and-rufous (rare) and American Pygmy Kingfishers, which are all resident here! Also, we'll search for Rusty-margined and Streaked Flycatchers,

Mangrove Swallow, Bat Falcon, Cocoa Woodcreeper and Lineated and Crimson-crested Woodpeckers. Going straight past the two ponds, we'll be on Old Gamboa Road, one of the birdiest spots in the area. This road passes through a variety of habitats and has plenty of specialties, including Blue Ground-Dove, Great Antshrike, Jet Antbird, Black-tailed & Royal Flycatchers, Lance-tailed & Golden-collared Manakins and the delightful Rosy Thrush-Tanager! We also may find species like White-bellied Antbird, Yellow-bellied Elaenia, Yellow-backed Oriole, Boat-billed Flycatcher, Yellow-headed Caracara and more. Also resident are Gray-headed Chachalaca, with Spectacled Owl a real possibility, too, as our local guide knows where they often roost.



Shining Honeycreeper by Rafael Lau

Summit Gardens (10 minutes from Canopy Tower): A center for recreation, education and conservation and dedicated to reflect and enhance Panama's tropical and cultural diversity. The botanical gardens are great for migratory warblers and other forest-edge species, including a colony of Chestnut-headed Oropendolas, Yellow-margined Flycatcher, Laughing Falcon, Gray-lined, Crane and Great Black-Hawks, Collared Forest-Falcon, Tropical Pewee, Masked Tityra, Golden-fronted and Scrub Greenlets, Yellow-crowned

Tyrannulet, Yellow-rumped Cacique, Giant, Shiny and Bronzed Cowbirds and Blue Cotinga. This park is the best place to find Streak-headed Woodcreeper, a difficult species to get elsewhere. The Harpy Eagle is Panama's national bird, and this park has an exhibit, including a life-size nest and interpretive panels, tracing the importance of the Harpy in Panamanian history and culture dating back to Pre-Columbian times.

Gamboa Feeders and the Chagres River (15 minutes from Canopy Tower): First, we'll stop at the Canopy Bed & Breakfast in the picturesque village of Gamboa, to check the bird feeders! With a beautiful backdrop of Cerro Pelado, the backyard at the Canopy B&B is teeming with bird life. At the fruit feeders, we are likely to see Red-legged, Shining & Green Honeycreepers, Lemon-rumped, Crimson-backed and Blue-gray Tanagers, Thick-billed Euphonia, Yellow-bellied and Variable Seedeaters, Whooping Motmot and Gray-headed Chachalaca, with Central American Agoutis lurking about under the feeders. Next, we're off to Chagres River, the main tributary for the Panama Canal. The birding along the river banks and the forest edges of Gamboa Resort can be spectacular! Here, we'll search for Amazon, Green and American Pygmy Kingfishers, as well as Whooping Motmot and Cinnamon Woodpecker. We could also see Gray-Necked Wood-Rail, Cooi, Green and Striated Herons, Wattled Jacana, Pied-billed Grebe, Anhinga, Royal and Sandwich Terns, Brown Pelican, Neotropic Cormorant, Tricolored and Little Blue Herons, Rufescent Tiger-Heron, Mangrove Swallow, Black-chested Jay, Lesser Kiskadee, Rusty-margined Flycatcher, Yellow-billed Cacique, Black-bellied and Buff-breasted Wrens, Fasciated and Barred Antshrikes, Cinnamon Becard, Slaty-tailed Trogon, White-bellied Antbird, and even Slaty-backed Forest-Falcon and Blue Cotinga at times!

Ammo Dump Ponds (15 minutes from Canopy Tower): Located just past Gamboa on the way to Pipeline Road, it is the best place to see the elusive White-throated Crake, as well as a host of other water birds. Least Grebes and Purple Gallinules are common and Rufescent Tiger-Heron and American Pygmy-Kingfisher are also resident. Here, we often find Greater Ani, Red-legged Honeycreeper, Whooping Motmot, Yellow-tailed Oriole, Southern Lapwing, Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet, Tropical Kingbird, Scrub Greenlet, Lesser Kiskadee, Black-bellied Whistling-Duck and Panama, Social & Rusty-margined flycatchers and even an Olivaceous Piculet!

Pipeline Road (20 minutes from Canopy Tower): The best place in Central Panama to find forest birds, and one of the premier birding spots in the world! If here only for the morning, we'll concentrate our efforts at the beginning of Pipeline, where we'll look for Greater Ani, Gray-necked Wood-Rail, Yellow-tailed Oriole, Masked Tityra, Rosy Thrush-Tanager, Plain Wren, Streaked Flycatcher, Red-throated Ant-Tanager, Squirrel Cuckoo, Gray-headed Chachalaca, Southern Bentbill, Forest Elaenia, Panama Flycatcher, Blue Ground-Dove and Little Tinamou. Other birds recorded here are Black-bellied and Buff-breasted wrens, Golden-collared Manakin, White-necked Puffbird, Gartered, Slaty-tailed, Black-throated, White-tailed and Black-tailed Trogons, Purple-crowned Fairy, Yellow Tyrannulet, White-bellied and Dusky Antbirds, and Fasciated and Black-crowned Antshrikes. During migration this entrance road is excellent for migrant warblers, flycatchers, grosbeaks and tanagers.

Should a decision be made to spend the entire day at Pipeline, we would have more time to search for the area's super-rare specialties, the Rufous-vented Ground-Cuckoo and Harpy Eagle, both recorded here. Eight species of wrens, five trogons, four puffbirds, three motmots, many tanagers and flycatchers, including the unusual Brownish Twistwing, Great Jacamar and Common Potoo, among others, are often found in areas not reached on a half-day visit. Also, the calls of Streak-chested Antpitta and Black-faced Antthrush will lure us in! Army ant swarms are found occasionally, attended by a host of birds including, Bicolored, Ocellated and Spotted Antbirds. Plus, we will hunt for Golden-collared, Red-capped and Blue-crowned Manakins, always high on a birder's list of favorites! Raptors include three forest-falcons, Tiny and Semiplumbeous Hawks, Ornate & Black Hawk-Eagles (soaring overhead), as well as Carmiol's and Sulphur-rumped Tanagers, Purple-throated Fruitcrow, Black-crowned and Masked Tityras, Cinnamon and Crimson-crested Woodpeckers, Scarlet-rumped Cacique, Red-lore and Brown-hooded Parrots, Collard Araçari, Pheasant Cuckoo, Speckled Mourner, Buff-throated Foliage-Gleaner, Black-mandibled and Keel-billed Toucans, and Black-striped, Northern Barred and Plain Brown woodcreepers! As we cross several rivers, we'll search for Sunbittern and Green-and-rufous Kingfisher. To maximize our time in



Black-chested Jay by Kathie Kinney

the field, we'll enjoy a nice picnic lunch along Pipeline Road—but with scope and binoculars at the ready! After lunch, we'll search for more species, including the elusive Wing-banded Antbird and Spot-crowned Antwren, Moustached Antwren, Ruddy Quail-Dove and Marbled Wood-Quail!

Rainforest Discovery Center (20 minutes from Canopy Tower): An ecotourism and environmental education facility created and administered by Fundacion Avifauna Eugene Eisenmann. It is located off Pipeline Road adjacent to Soberanía National Park. The center contains several attractions, the best of which is a 100-foot-tall observation tower, with four rest platforms—each stopping at a different layer of the rainforest. The view from the top is incredible! Here, we scan for hawks like Double-toothed Kite and Semiplumbeous Hawk. Also, we explore the 1.1-kilometer circuit of well-maintained forest trails, one ending at a pond, which is excellent for birds! Snail Kite, Wattled Jacana, Little Blue Heron and Sungrebe are often resident at the pond, and along the trails we'll look for White-necked Puffbird, motmots, trogons, manakins, antbirds, wrens, tanagers, flycatchers and many others. The covered Visitor Center has several hummingbird feeders (attracting species that may be photographed easily), bathrooms, lunch tables and a small gift shop with drinks and snacks.

Day 4 (Sunday, November 3): Transfer to Canopy Camp Darien

After a final breakfast at Canopy Tower, we'll pack up for the drive to Canopy Camp Darien. As we drive along the Pan-American Highway, we'll scan for roadside birds and open-field raptors including Savanna Hawk and Crested Caracara. At the bridge at Bayano Lake, a great opportunity awaits to see what we can find along the lakeside. This reservoir supports large numbers of water birds, including a large colony of Neotropic Cormorants, as well as Anhinga, Cocoi Heron and the rare Bare-throated Tiger-Heron. We'll scan the water's edge for Purple Gallinule, Pied Water-Tyrant, Smooth-billed Ani and Ruddy-breasted Seedeater. A short trail leading from the water's edge is a great place to search for Black Antshrike, Bare-crowned Antbird, Rufous-winged Antwren and Golden-collared Manakin. Just 10 minutes down the road at Río Mono Bridge, the surrounding forest is home to One-colored Becard, Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher, Blue Cotinga, Pied Puffbird, Orange-crowned Oriole, Blue Ground-Dove and more. We'll also scan the river below for Green-and-rufous Kingfisher and the elusive Fasciated Tiger-Heron. The forest edge and scrubby roadsides around Rio Torti offer good opportunities to see Pacific Antwren, Double-banded Graytail and Little Cuckoo. At a lovely Panamanian restaurant in Torti, the hummingbirds at the feeders will no doubt capture our attention, as Long-billed Starthroat, Sapphire-throated Hummingbird, Scaly-breasted Hummingbird, Black-throated Mango and more take their lunch as well, providing great photo opportunities!



*Standard suite tent with two single beds,
photo by Alex Alba*

In the late afternoon, we'll arrive at **Canopy Camp Darien**, where we'll enjoy comfortable, large, safari-style tent accommodations, each with full-size beds, private bathroom facilities

with refreshing showers, flush toilets, electricity from solar panels, and fans. The protected forests of the Filo del Tallo Hydrological Reserve surround the camp. In the vicinity of the camp itself we'll enjoy such regional specialties as Gray-cheeked Nunlet, White-headed Wren, Rufous-tailed Jacamar and Pale-bellied Hermit right in the gardens! Dinner at Canopy Camp.

Days 5 to 9 (Monday, November 3 – Saturday, November 8): Canopy Camp and Beyond



Golden-headed Manakin, photo by Lee Dalton

After breakfast, we'll search for birds around the camp. Yellow-throated and Keel-billed toucans call from the towering Cuipo trees; Red-lored and Mealy Parrots fly overhead; White-bellied Antbird, Bright-rumped Attila, White-headed Wren and Golden-headed Manakin sing from the surrounding forests; while Pale-bellied Hermit and Sapphire-throated Hummingbird visit the flowers around camp. Rufous-tailed Jacamar and Barred Puffbird are also seen frequently around the grounds. We'll work our way into the forest on "Nando's Trail," in hopes of finding Tiny Hawk, Black Antshrike, Great Antshrike, Olive-backed Quail-Dove,

Cinnamon Becard, Black-tailed Trogon, Double-banded Graytail, Gray-cheeked Nunlet, Yellow-breasted Flycatcher, Royal Flycatcher and Russet-winged Schiffornis. We'll also be looking for groups of Red-throated Caracara, King Vulture and Short-tailed Hawk overhead in the clearings. Ornate Hawk-Eagle, Plumbeous and Zone-tailed hawks are also possible.

In the open areas, the verbenas are full of hummingbird and butterfly activity, where we hope to see Violet-bellied Hummingbird, Pale-bellied Hermit, Long-billed Starthroat, Blue-throated Goldentail and if lucky, a stunning Ruby-Topaz Hummingbird feeding here. Spot-crowned Barbet, Olivaceous Piculet, White-headed Wren, Red-rumped Woodpecker and Streak-headed Woodcreeper are birds we may encounter. If desired, we can hike up the slope to stand in the shadows of two giant Cuipo trees, standing like gates to rich mature forest.

This afternoon and for the rest of the week, we'll have an opportunity to visit a number of birding locations elsewhere in the Darien. Our Canopy Family guide knows this region very well, where to find the regional specialties that live here and how to dodge the ever-changing conditions of the region from season to season. Our itinerary, therefore, will once again be very flexible to our desires and targets as well as current conditions. Possible birding locations include:

El Salto Road: This road extends 6 kilometers north from the Pan-American Highway and ends at the mighty Río Chucunaque. This open road and surrounding dry forest is a great place to search for regional specialties including Golden-green Woodpecker, Double-banded Graytail, Blue-and-gold and Chestnut-fronted Macaws, Black and Crested Oropendolas, Blue Cotinga, White-eared Conebill, Black-breasted Puffbird, Orange-crowned Oriole and the majestic King Vulture. A trail at the end of the road will take us into low-canopy forest, where we hope to find Bare-crowned Antbird, Pale-bellied Hermit, Olivaceous Piculet, Streak-headed Woodcreeper and Forest Elaenia.

Adjacent to EL Salto Road is the property of the Tierra Nueva Foundation. Fundación Tierra Nueva is a non-profit organization whose main mission is “working towards the sustainable development of people of the Darién Rainforest.” The property is the home of a technical school focusing on applications in agriculture. We will explore the trails of this large, forested property, in hopes of finding Streak-headed Woodcreeper, Yellow-breasted and Black-billed Flycatchers, Red-rumped Woodpecker, Slaty-backed Forest-Falcon, Cinnamon, Cinereous and One-colored Becards, White-eared Conebill, White-headed Wren and the magnificent Great Curassow. We will also search for the eastern race of the Chestnut-backed Antbird, which shows white spots on the wings.

Las Lagunas Road and Aruza Lagoons: This road extends 12 km south off the Pan-American Highway through open farmland, dry scrub and roadside habitat. The road eventually crosses a small stream and ends at small ponds. Along the roadsides, we hope to find Red-breasted Blackbird, Spot-breasted Woodpecker, Yellow-breasted Flycatcher, White-headed Wren, Smooth-billed and Greater Ani, Muscovy Duck, Rufescent Tiger-Heron, Southern Lapwing, Blue-headed Parrot, Striped Cuckoo, Scaly-breasted Hummingbird, Ringed and Amazon Kingfishers, Fork-tailed Flycatcher, Buff-breasted Wren, Bananaquit, Giant and Shiny Cowbirds, Crested Oropendola, Laughing Falcon and Aplomado Falcon. If we're lucky, we may get a glimpse of a Chestnut-fronted Macaw or a shy Little Cuckoo; both have been seen along this road. At the lagoons, we hope to find Pied Water-Tyrant, Capped Heron, the beautiful Yellow-hooded Blackbird and the extraordinary Black-capped Donacobius, a great habitat for all these wonderful species.



White-fronted Nunbird by Rafael Lau

Quebrada Felix: This newly discovered site awaits us to be explored! Quebrada Felix is nestled in the base of the Filo del Tallo Hydrological Reserve and is just a short drive from the Canopy Camp. Surrounded by tall trees and mature lowland forest, we will walk the rocky stream in search of some of Panama's most wanted species, such as Black-crowned Antpitta, Scaly-throated Leaf-tosser, Speckled Mourner, Ocellated Antbird, Rufous-winged and Moustached Antwrens, White-fronted Nunbird, Wedge-billed Woodcreeper, Royal Flycatcher and our endemic, the Stripe-cheeked Woodpecker. It is also a great spot to find Fasciated Tiger-Heron, Green-and-rufous Kingfisher, Bicolored Antbird, Golden-crowned Spadebill, Double-banded Graytail and much more. Crested and Solitary Eagles have even been spotted here, a great testament to the mature forest of the area. Quebrada Felix is becoming a favorite spot among our guides and recent visitors!

Lajas Blancas: The closest Embera Indigenous community to the Canopy Camp (just 15 minutes away), Lajas Blancas is a large community with a population of over 1000 residents. The open areas and mixed forests around the community boasts great birding and the opportunity to find many Darien specialties! After turning off the Pan-American Highway, we drive through pasture and open farmland—a great place to see One-colored Becard, Great Potoo, Spot-breasted Woodpecker, Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet, Yellow-breasted Flycatcher, Black Antshrike and Black Oropendola. During the dry season, a bridge across the

Chucunaque River provides us easy access to some mature secondary forest where Double-banded Graytail, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, White-winged and Cinnamon Becards, Cinnamon and Golden-green Woodpeckers, manakins and others can be found. Beyond the community, the road continues and there is much more forest, including primary forest at its far reaches, waiting to be explored.



Nuevo Vigia Embera, Darién

Nuevo Vigia: Another Embera indigenous community nestled north of the Pan-American Highway, surrounded by great secondary growth dry forest and two small lakes, all of which attract an enticing variety of birds. The community is accessible by "piragua", locally-made dugout canoes. As we coast along the Chucunaque and Tuquesa Rivers, we will keep our eyes and ears open for Chestnut-backed, Crested and Black Oropendolas, Spot-breasted Woodpecker, Common

Black Hawk, Yellow-tailed Oriole, Red-billed Scythebill, Capped and Cocoli herons, White Ibis, Greater Ani, Solitary Sandpiper and other water birds. We will spend the majority of the morning birding a trail toward a small lagoon, a great place to see Black-collared Hawk, Bare-crowned and White-bellied Antbirds, Green Ibis, Gray-cheeked Nunlet, Spectacled Parrotlet, Black-tailed Trogon, Striped Cuckoo, Black-bellied Wren, Little Tinamou, Golden-green Woodpecker and Green-and-rufous Kingfisher! In the town of Nuevo Vigia, local artisans weave colorful decorative masks and plates out of palm fronds and carve cocobolo wood and tagua nuts into animals and plants, and we will have the opportunity to meet some of the community members and admire and purchase some of the beautiful products they make by hand. We will enjoy a satisfying picnic lunch in the village, followed by more great birding around the riversides and scrubby habitat surrounding Nuevo Vigia before heading back to the Canopy Camp.

Aligandi: A huge area with unique scrub forest and much to be explored. We head out from the Camp toward the end of the Pan-American Highway, taking a turn prior to reaching Yaviza. Along the roadsides here, we'll scan for Red-breasted Blackbird, Striped Cuckoo, Ruddy-breasted Seedeater, Thick-billed Seed-Finch, American Kestrel and other open area birds. A Great Green Macaw nest is tucked up in the canopy of a huge Cuipo tree, visible from the road, and if lucky, an adult or a chick may be seen poking its head out of the cavity. At Finca Doncella, we continue on foot along the road through the scrub forest, seeking out Spot-breasted Woodpecker, Bat Falcon, Giant Cowbird, Orange-crowned Oriole, Red-billed Scythebill, White-eared Conebill and mixed feeding flocks. It is often possible to see macaws fly over as we explore this area.

Yaviza: We'll head southeast and bird the forests and swampy meadows along the Pan-American Highway toward Yaviza, at the very end of the highway. Beyond this point is Darien National Park, in the virtually roadless Darien Gap; beyond that, South America! Black-billed Flycatcher, Sooty-headed Tyrannulet, Jet Antbird, Black Oropendola, Pied Water-Tyrant, Bicolored Hawk, Black-collared Hawk, Pearl Kite, White-tailed Kite, Limpkin, Spot-breasted

Woodpecker, Ruddy-breasted Seedeater, Yellow-hooded Blackbird, Black-capped Donacobius and Red-breasted Blackbird can all be found as we head further into Darién.

If our tour coincides with recent Harpy Eagle sightings in a remote area, for example near the village of El Real, adjacent to Darien National Park, we may devote a day to try to find this magnificent raptor. We'll start very early, long before sunrise, and drive all the way to Yaviza. Arriving at dawn, we'll board a "piragua" and traverse the still waters of the Chucunaque and Taira rivers. The river edges offer shrub and grass habitat, as well as mudflats and beaches depending on the water level.



Black-capped Donacobius
by Carlos Bethancourt

There are plenty of birds to see along the riverside: Neotropic Cormorant, Anhinga, Great Blue, Cocoli, Little Blue, Tricolored, Striated and Capped Herons, Snowy Egret, White Ibis, Green Ibis, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Pied Water-Tyrant, Bronzed Cowbird, Yellow-hooded Blackbird and both Crested and Black Oropendolas. White-tailed Kite, Black-collared Hawk, Common Black-Hawk as well as macaws and other parrots may be spotted cruising overhead.

Upon arrival in El Real, we can scan the open areas for Spot-breasted Woodpecker and Great Potoo. We'll meet a local truck and head south out of town past the airstrip, to the trailhead toward the border with the national park. This trail is wide, traversing through lowland rainforest and alongside a river. If very lucky, we may see a Harpy Eagle in this area. If successful, we can rest and have a picnic lunch in the field and continue to bird along the trail. Other large forest eagles, including Ornate Hawk-Eagle and Crested Eagle, can also be found in the area, as well as Gray-cheeked Nunlet, White-fronted Nunbird, Green-and-rufous Kingfisher, Agami Heron, Red-throated Caracara, Chestnut-backed Antbird (the eastern Panama race shows white dots on the wings), Chestnut-fronted and Great Green Macaws, Scarlet-browed Tanager and more. After lunch and a break, we will retrace our steps and start our way back to El Real, then head back to Yaviza by river. Along the Pan-American Highway, we can scan for bird activity as the sun sets in the horizon.

There will also be an opportunity during the week to explore the grounds of the Canopy Camp at night in search of nocturnal birds and mammals, including Black-and-white and Mottled Owls, Great and Common Potoos, Kinkajous, Central American Woolly Opossum and more!

Day 10 (Sunday, November 9): Return to Panama City

After our final breakfast at Canopy Camp, we'll pack up and begin our drive back to Panama City. Along the way, we'll spend some time at **San Francisco Nature Reserve**, a private forest reserve owned and managed by the St. Francis Foundation, covering 1,300 acres in eastern Panama Province. The San Francisco Reserve was established in 2001 by Father Pablo Kasuboski, an American priest from Wisconsin who came to Panama in 1988. The reserve serves as a wildlife refuge and protects the headwaters of the main rivers of the area. The foundation created by Padre Pablo, as Father Kasuboski is called, also works on infrastructure development in the area by building and maintaining aqueducts, roads, schools and churches. In fact, the St. Francis Foundation built and maintains the largest private rural

aqueduct in all of Panama and Central America. The reserve has a variety of habitats including primary, secondary and riparian forests, forest edge, fields, farmland, ponds and wetlands. During our morning here, we'll explore some of the different habitats along the short road that enters the reserve. We'll hope to find Great Jacamar, Broad-billed Motmot, Collared Aracari, Sulphur-rumped Tanager, Russet-winged Schiffornis, Royal Flycatcher, White-fronted Nunbird, Brownish Twistwing, Yellow-green Tyrannulet, Central American Pygmy-Owl, Blue and Plain-breasted Ground-Doves, and if we're very lucky, a Black-and-white Hawk-Eagle soaring overhead or a Wing-banded Antbird along the trails!

Upon our arrival in Panama City, participants with return flights this evening will be dropped off at the international airport, while participants with next day flights will be dropped off at a hotel near the airport.

LUGGAGE AND CLOTHING RECOMMENDATIONS

Please only bring one carry-on and one reasonable-size checked bag per person. The carry-on should include essential items such as medications, all your money, passport and tickets, binoculars and camera, bathroom kit, and one change of clothes. By taking these precautions, it won't be such a major difficulty if your bag is delayed. All luggage, including carry-on, should have identification, on both the outside and the inside.

Dress casually and pack lightly. In general, light weight, fast-drying clothing is preferable. Some rain is possible, so rain gear should be carried during most outings. At the minimum this should be a raincoat or poncho, but a mini-umbrella is also a good idea.

Recommended Clothing List

- Several long-sleeved light-weight "travel-style" shirts.
- T-shirts.
- Lightweight "travel-style" trousers for most situations.
- Lightweight rain gear.
- Sun hat or baseball cap.
- Sturdy hiking boots. Rubber boots are not needed.
- A pair of sandals or light shoes to change into in the evenings.
- Plenty of long socks, and of course, undergarments.
- A jacket or sweater.

OTHER ESSENTIAL ITEMS

- Binoculars
- Insect Repellent
- Sunscreen (SPF 30 is recommended) and lip balm with sunscreen.
- Field guide (Recommended: *The Birds of Panama*, by George R. Angehr and Robert Dean)

- Small knapsack or waist pack.
- Small flashlight with spare batteries.
- Alarm clock – Neither the tower nor the camp offer a wake-up service.
- Personal first aid kit with band aids, aspirin, motion sickness pills, blister pads, anti-itch cream, etc.
- Over-the counter remedies and prescription medications in their original containers packed in your carry-on bag. Take along a copy of the prescription as well.
- An extra pair of glasses or contact lenses if you are dependent on them.
- Reading and writing materials.
- A photocopy of your passport.

Optional

- Camera.
- Spotting scope. The local guide will have a good scope, but you are welcome to bring your own.
- Spare pair of binoculars. If your binoculars break, there is no way to replace them on this tour.
- Hiking pole – this may be useful on a couple of trails.