



## PANAMA: CANOPY TOWER, DARIEN, CANOPY LODGE, AND TRANQUILO BAY TRIP REPORT

7 - 20 JANUARY 2016

By Eduardo Ormaeche



Rufous-vented Ground Cuckoo (photo Dylan Vasapolli)

## Overview

Birding Ecotours had the opportunity to return to Panama this year as part of a scouting trip to visit the Canopy Family lodges with the main idea to create a tour which can mix the three main accommodation facilities they have. The famous Canopy Tower was built in 1965 by the US Air Force to house powerful radar used in the defense of the Panama Canal. The tower played this role until 1995 and in 1999 was converted into a lodge for ecotourism and birdwatching. With its 360° view from the top of the tower the views of the Soberanía National Park are truly outstanding. Guests are able to visit the tower at dawn before breakfast and are enchanted by the calls of **Slaty-backed** and **Collared Forest Falcons** and views of **Brown-hooded Parrot**, **Red-lored Amazon**, **Blue-headed Parrot**, **Green Honeycreeper**, **Plain-colored Tanager**, **Red-legged Honeycreeper**, and with luck and persistence even the elusive **Green Shrike-Vireo**. We used the lodge as a base for a total of three nights, which allowed us to explore all its surroundings, including famous birding spots like the Pipeline Road and Summit Ponds.



Canopy Tower (photo courtesy Canopy Family)

The second place we visited was the new and recently inaugurated Canopy Camp in the Darien Province near the border with Colombia. The Darien conjures up the remoteness of Panama, visions of Harpy Eagles and near-endemic species found only in this part of the country and adjacent Colombia, but, with the latter country still having social and drug problems near the border, birders are not able to visit the Darien in Colombia. Fortunately, Colombia is changing every year and we don't have any doubt that the Darien will be open for tourist again in Colombia, where a few species still are waiting to be described, as ornithological expeditions have not been conducted there in at least two decades.

The Canopy Family have built a luxurious camp, African safari style, in the Panamanian Darien, which provides all mod cons for birders. You have your own tent or sharing twin bed tents with wooden floors, electricity, two-meter-high ceilings, fans, and private bathrooms with hot showers outside the tent. Like in all lodges they prepare all meals for you and organize drives and hikes around the area.

Canopy Camp is located in a small, private reserve, whose forests hold exquisite species like **Black-crowned Antpitta**, **White-eared Conebill**, **Double-banded Greytail**, and **Black Oropendola**, among others. Note that Canopy Camp is outside the Darien National Park near Cana. We know that birders had the chance to fly to Cana in the past and hike the famous Pirre Mountain in search of Panamanian endemics, but today the airstrip in Cana has been abandoned, and there are no logistics at all. We spent three nights and four days in the Darien, using the camp as our base to explore the surroundings. We were happy with Canopy Camp, and we think that many of our clients will love it.





Canopy Camp (photo courtesy Canopy Family)

The last lodge we visited was Canopy Lodge, located in Anton Valley. Unfortunately, we didn't have much time to explore this area, but the lodge has excellent access to some mid-elevation species like **Black-and-yellow Tanager** and **Blue-throated Toucanet**. The lodge is very comfortable with nice rooms and beautiful views of the woods. They provide all-inclusive service, and even though you have to drive out of the lodge to access most of the key birds, the grounds proper hold species such as **Rufous Motmot**, **Uniform Crake**, **Bay-headed Tanager**, **Rufous-capped Warbler**, **Buff-rumped Warbler**, and Sunbittern with some luck (which we had not). The Canopy Adventure (for those intrepid people who want to venture into the top of the trees) provides so far the best opportunity for **Rufous-vented Ground Cuckoo**.



Canopy Lodge (photo courtesy Canopy Family)

Our time in the Canopy Family lodges ended, and we took a flight to the Bocas del Toro Province in the northeast of the country. Our next task was to investigate a new place called

Tranquilo Bay Eco Adventure Lodge, which is supposed to hold a large list of birds and whose owner, Jim Kimball, had generously been inviting us for the last two years. We didn't have much information, only that the place was located on Bastimentos Island in the Bocas del Toro archipelago and could harbor birds of the Caribbean rainforest and mangrove specialists.



Tranquilo Bay (photo Jim Kimball)

I have to admit that the place and the attention from the host surpassed my expectations. Birding in Tranquilo Bay Eco Adventure Lodge was paradise. The place is located in the extreme eastern corner of Bastimentos Island with literally nobody around; it is far away from crowds and tourists. The shores of the Caribbean are surrounded by mangroves and Caribbean rainforest. The lodge possesses six comfortable, luxurious cabins with air-conditioning, fans, and spacious private bathrooms including hot showers. The cabins are found in the garden, surrounded by plenty of flowering bushes, which attract several hummingbird species. Some of the cabins face the ocean near the 30-meter-high tower, which allows fantastic view of the archipelago and of birds such as **Blue-headed Parrot**, **Red-lored Amazon**, and **Double-toothed Kite**. The service was first class, with excellent food, complementary drinks, and a lot of fun from our host Jay Viola – for sure some of the best attention we have received in Latin America. We stayed three nights at the lodge and used it as our base to explore the surroundings, which include the main canal in the archipelago, where good birds can be seen, such as **Nicaraguan Seed Finch** and **Three-wattled Bellbird**. Probably one of the highlights of the place is the chance to visit Bird Island (Swan's Cay), where **Red-billed Tropicbird** roosts throughout the year and flies at eye level, allowing fantastic views that are only comparable with the ones in the Galapagos Islands.

Tranquilo Bay Eco Adventure Lodge can be used as base to explore the low- and mid-elevation Bocas del Toro foothills, allowing birds such as **Prong-billed Barbet**, **Spangle-cheeked Tanager**, **Boat-billed Heron**, **Emerald** and **Speckled Tanagers**, and with luck Ornate Hawk-Eagle. The lodge grounds themselves hold bird species like **Chestnut-backed Antbird**, **White-flanked Antwren**, **Bronzy Hermit**, **Band-tailed Barbthroat**, **Montezuma**

**Oropendola**, and **White-collared** and **Golden-collared Manakins** and provide also the chance to see a few species of hummingbirds taking a bath in a forest stream.

After three nights at Tranquilo Bay Eco Adventure Lodge we had to say farewell to Panama, with the hope to come back with you, our clients and friends, in the near future.

### **Detailed Itinerary**

#### **Day 1, January 7**

Arrival in Panama City. Transfer to the Radisson Summit Hotel & Golf. Birding the hotel grounds and surroundings. Overnight Radisson Summit Hotel & Golf

#### **Day 2, January 8**

Transfer to the Canopy Tower. Birding the Canopy Tower and the Gamboa Rainforest Resort and its marina. Overnight Canopy Tower

#### **Day 3, January 9**

Birding the Pipeline Road and the Panama Rainforest Discovery Center tower in the morning and the Summit Ponds in the afternoon. Overnight Canopy Tower

#### **Day 4, January 10**

Birding Semaphore Hill and the Plantations Road in the morning and once more the Gamboa Rainforest Resort marina in the afternoon. Overnight Canopy Tower

#### **Day 5, January 11**

Transfer to the Canopy Camp in the Darien Province. Birding El Salto Road. Overnight Canopy Camp

#### **Day 6, January 12**

Birding Quebrada Felix in the morning and the Great Potoo site in the afternoon. Overnight Canopy Camp

#### **Day 7, January 13**

Birding the Darien and exploring the Yavitza area in the morning. Birding around Canopy Camp in the afternoon. Overnight Canopy Camp

#### **Day 8, January 14**

Birding San Francisco Reserve in the morning and transfer to Anton Valley. Overnight Canopy Lodge

#### **Day 9, January 15**

Birding Las Minas Road in the morning and the road to Altos del Maria in the afternoon. Overnight Canopy Lodge

#### **Day 10, January 16**

Last morning birding around Canopy Lodge. Transfer to Panama City. Overnight Radisson Summit Hotel & Golf

#### **Day 11, January 17**

Flight to Isla Colón in the Bocas del Toro Province. Transfer to Tranquilo Bay on Bastimentos Island. Overnight Tranquilo Bay Eco Adventure Lodge

#### **Day 12, January 18**

Birding the channels around the lodge and Bird Island. Overnight Tranquilo Bay Eco Adventure Lodge

#### **Day 13, January 19**

Birding at low and mid elevations on the continental road between Bocas del Toro and David. Overnight Tranquilo Bay Eco Adventure Lodge

#### **Day 14, January 20**

Last morning birding the lodge area. Transfer to Isla Colón and flight back to Panama to connect with the international flight



### Day 1

Dylan Vasapolli and I met at the Tocumen International Airport in Panama City and transferred to the Radisson Summit Hotel & Golf. This was the pre-day of the tour, so we decided to organize ourselves, have lunch, and share our enthusiasm for the upcoming days. The hotel was more than adequate and comfortable.

And, even better, the hotel owns a large extension of natural woodland that has access to good forest, and of course we could not wait and decided to explore it. We followed the main trail after the golf pitch, and it didn't take much time to find a nice **Rufous-breasted Wren**, followed by a small mixed flock with male and female **White-flanked Antwren**, **Dot-winged Antwren**, **Black-crowned Antshrike**, and a striking **Spotted Antbird**. Other common suspects included **Blue-grey Tanager**, **Squirrel Cuckoo**, **White-tipped Dove**, and **Whooping Motmot**. We also had nice views of nine-banded armadillo and white-nosed coati.

### Day 2

After a quick breakfast at the hotel we went back to the woods, finding **Long-billed Gnatwren**, **Orange-chinned Parakeet**, **Purple-throated Fruitcrow**, **White-bellied Antbird**, and **Red-crowned Woodpecker**.

Then we were collected by the Canopy Tower shuttle and transferred to the famous Canopy Tower in the heart of Soberanía National Park. After being welcomed by the host and check-in we spent the rest of the morning watching hummingbirds at the feeders, with species like **Blue-chested Hummingbird**, **White-necked Jacobin**, **Long-billed Hermit**, **Black-throated Mango**, **White-vented Plumeleteer**, and **Violet-bellied Hummingbird**.

Then we went to the top of the tower, where the view is amazing at any angle, but it was already warm and there was no activity except for the call of the elusive **Green Shrike-vireo**, "can't see me".

In the afternoon we visited the marina of the Gamboa Rainforest Resort area near the Chagres River, one of the most important tributaries of the Panama Canal. Here we got bird species such as **Great and Lesser Kiskadee**, **Rusty-margined Flycatcher**, **Golden-hooded Tanager**, **Blue-grey Tanager**, **Palm Tanager**, **Crimson-backed Tanager**, and **Plain-colored Tanager**. Several **Variable Seedeaters** were among the reeds, as well as **Southern Rough-winged Swallows**, **Mangrove Swallows**, and **Black Vultures**. We then returned to the lodge for our first checklist session and dinner.

### Day 3

We had high expectations for the famous Pipeline Road as probably one of the most productive bird spots in Latin America. But we first visited the new Discovery Center tower inside the Soberanía National Park. It was hot already early in the morning. We found **Pale-vented Pigeon**, **Blue-headed Parrot**, **Northern Mealy Amazon**, **Red-lored Amazon**, **Double-toothed Kite**, **Green Honeycreeper**, **Red-legged Honeycreeper**, **Keel-billed** and **Yellow-throated Toucans**, and the most-wanted **Blue Dacnis**, and even though the latter was far away, our spotting scopes did the trick.

We descend from the tower and started to bird the road in hope to find juicy army ant swarms. Sadly, we could not encounter any during the whole morning, so our dream of Ocellated Antbird was seriously denied us. Our consolation prize was a party of at least eight noisy **Song Wrens** at the side of the road. We were also lucky with the trogons, including species like **Gartered**, **Slaty-tailed**, and **White-tailed Trogons**. They were followed by crippling views of **Black-breasted Puffbird**, **Rufous-tailed Jacamar**, **Lineated Woodpecker**, **Cocoa Woodcreeper**, **Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet**, **Black-bellied Wren**, **Checker-throated Antwren**, **Southern Bentbill**, a juvenile **Rufescent Tiger Heron**

crossing the road in front of everybody, **Dusky Antbird** (which was heard only), and some others.

We returned to Canopy Tower for lunch and waited for our afternoon activity, which consisted in exploring the Summit Ponds, where the main target was a daytime roosting colony of **Boat-billed Heron**, and fortunately we got good views of those and also of **Lemon-rumped Tanager**, **Crimson-backed Tanager**, **Golden-fronted Greenlet**, **Tropical Gnatcatcher**, **Clay-colored Thrush**, **Tropical Mockingbird**, and nice views of **Prothonotary Warbler**. We heard **White-throated Crake** but didn't have any luck with visuals of this secretive species. We also enjoyed **Purple Gallinule**, **Wattled Jacana**, and **Southern Lapwing**, as well as a group of lesser capybara. Then we returned to the lodge for another overnight.

#### Day 4

A predawn start atop the Canopy Tower allowed us fantastic views of **Brown-hooded Parrot** and **Blue Cotinga**. We heard **Collared** and **Slaty-backed Forest Falcons**, but unfortunately no cigar on them.

After breakfast we focused on the Semaphore Hill road, which is the road leading to the lodge. We drove the road and made selected stops at several sites. Probably the best bird was a perched **Semiplumbeous Hawk**, which posed nicely for everybody. We also got several North American warblers, like **Bay-breasted Warbler**, **Chestnut-sided** and **Tennessee Warblers**, in addition to **Panamanian Flycatcher**, **Common Tody-Flycatcher**, and many others.

Then we investigated the Plantation Road, where we found **Rufous** and **Broad-billed Motmots** and a nice **Golden-crowned Spadebill** as well as our second **Spotted Antbird**. An **American Pygmy Kingfisher** was seen near a stream.

In the afternoon we were asked to make another visit to the Gamboa Rainforest Resort's marina to photograph the usual suspects there.

#### Day 5

Today we left the lodge by 5.30 a.m. toward Canopy Camp in the Darien Province. Unfortunately, we could not stop on the road and not visit the Nusagandi Reserve either, which seems to be one of the best places for the most-wanted Sapayoa. It took us over four hours to reach Canopy Camp.

As soon as we arrived we had splendid views of **White Hawks** soaring above the lodge clearing, and the fruiting trees were full of **Chestnut-headed Oropendolas**. However, the feeders were not active because of the heat, but even so we managed to find **Scaly-breasted Hummingbird** and **Sapphire-throated Hummingbird**.

After lunch and some rest we went for our official first Darien excursion. After a 25-minute drive we reached El Salto Road, where we saw **Little Tinamou** crossing the road, followed by **White-necked Puffbird**, **Buff-breasted Wren**, **Grey-headed Chachalaca**, **Mistletoe Tyrannulet**, **Western Sirystes**, **Cinnamon Becard**, **Plain-colored Tanager**, and **Blue Dacnis**. Before we returned to the camp we scored with the diminutive **Pied Puffbird**.

After dinner we spotted **Pauraque** around the campsite, but no other species of nightjars. We managed to hear **Mottled** and **Black-and-white Owls** calling very late at night not far from the camp.

#### Day 6

Today we drove to the entrance of Quebrada Felix. We reached a small parking lot surrounded with secondary growth. Here we got great views of **White-eared Conebill** and **Double-banded Greytail**, both targets in the Darien area. We started to walk through the

quebrada, passing through both secondary and primary forest. After crossing several streams we reached the habitat of **Black-crowned Antpitta**. It took us some time, but we were rewarded with magnificent views of this localized and highly-prized species. The antpitta was followed by the striking **Bare-crowned Antbird**, **Black-striped** and **Plain-brown Woodcreepers**, **Rufous Piha**, **Speckled Mourner**, **White-winged Becard**, **Golden-headed Manakin**, **Streaked Flycatcher**, **Grey Elaenia**, and **Olivaceous Flatbill**. We also flushed **Great Tinamou** and **Mottled Owl** along the forest trail. Happy we returned to the camp to celebrate.

In the afternoon we explored some open fields, where we found a day-roosting **Great Potoo** in the shade. Other species included **Red-breasted Blackbird**, **Streaked Flycatcher**, and **Blue Ground Dove**. At Canopy Camp we then enjoyed dinner and a few cold ones.

### Day 7

We decided to start at 4.45 a.m. to track down a pair of **Mottled Owls** and **Common Potoo** calling near the campsite. We had walked down the first 25 meters of Nando's trail when Dylan and I realized that there was a fer-de-lance just at few centimeters from my foot. I managed to move my whole body just in time, and the snake of course tried to run away from us, but we still managed good views of its intriguing pattern, including even the pit sensors below the nostrils.

After breakfast we continued exploring the Darien, finding **Bicolored Wren**, which is a new record for Panama; this species is commonly found during our Santa Marta tours in Colombia. We also had a brief view of **White-headed Wren**, **Pearl Kite**, and **Barred Puffbird**. Trying for the **Great Green Macaw**, it was heard but not seen. We drove all the way south of the Darien until we reached Yavitza, which is just a village at the end of the Pan-American Highway, and not far from there we found a nesting tree of the localized **Black Oropendola**.

We returned to Canopy Camp and decided to bird some fields near the campsite, where we won with **Grey-cheeked Nunlet** and **Black Antshrike**. Later around the lodge grounds we found **Spot-crowned Barbet**, **Olivaceous Piculet**, and **Blue-throated Sapphire**.

### Day 8

Our last morning in the Darien took us to explore the San Francisco Reserve, located about two hours from Canopy Camp. Here we had more views of **White-eared Conebill** and perhaps the best view of **Blue Cotinga**. We tried for Stripe-cheeked Woodpecker, but despite concerted efforts we could not find it. Other species we encountered were **Cinnamon Woodpecker**, **Pale-billed Woodpecker**, **Crimson-crested Woodpecker**, **Laughing Falcon**, **Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher**, and **Forest Elaenia**

At a restaurant in a village called Torti we had lunch while watching some hummingbird feeders with **Snowy-bellied Hummingbird** among others.

In the afternoon we transferred back to Panama City, where two members of the group had to leave, and then continued to the Canopy Lodge in Anton Valley.

### Day 9

After an early breakfast we were transferred to Las Minas, which is a mid-elevation place around the lodge. We stopped the car at one side of the main road and explored a trail, which proved very productive with several good species such as **Black-striped Sparrow**, **White-ruffed Manakin**, **Red-faced Spinetail**, **Bay-headed Tanager**, **Rufous-capped Warbler**, **Black-faced Antthrush**, and **White-tipped Sicklebill**, among many others.

Then we went to the Canopy Adventure, which is a place run by the Canopy Family to allow clients to visit the treetops, using safe, modern techniques. We had been told that the mythical



and legendary Rufous-vented Ground Cuckoo had been seen there daily during the last four days, so of course we had to try. When we reached the location where the cuckoo had been seen on the previous days, though, there was not a trace of any army ants, which the cuckoo searches out because it feeds on insects, scorpions, centipedes, etc., fleeing from the ants. So we decided to stop for a few minutes, which now as I write this seem to be ages, when suddenly the ants appeared – and just like a shadow behind them there it was, **Rufous-vented Ground Cuckoo!**

We managed to have excellent views of the cuckoo at ten meters from us on the trail and to watch its behavior: feeding, running into the bush, and coming back. Its movements can change from slow to incredible fast and seem to be choreographic. Suddenly the ants started to come towards us, crossing the trail, and even though the cuckoo knew we were there in the middle of the path, it came into the open and started to feed; in a way it seemed unaware of us. We had sunshine on the path and the cuckoo at four meters distance, enabling us to see its shiny colors on the flanks that, I believe, are rarely seen when you only have the bird on a dark forest trail for a quick view. The big surprise was when from behind a huge dead tree two other cuckoos joined the party; at that moment we were both thrilled and shocked, incapable to believe what our eyes were seeing. We could note that one of the individuals was a young one, because the feathers didn't look as fabulous as those of the other two. Our guess is that it was a family, a pair with a young one, and perhaps that might have been one of the reasons why they had remained in the same area during the last few days. I doubt I could have better views of this bird, ever!

Very excited we went back to the lodge to have lunch and get ready for the afternoon. The afternoon plan was exploring the road that goes to Altos del Maria, but we could not get into the place itself. We tried to find Snowcap, which had been recorded along this road before, but so far to no avail. The activity was slow, but we had great views of **Blue-throated Toucanet**, **Ochraceous Wren**, a brief view of **Tiny Hawk**, **Black-and-yellow Tanager**, and almost at the end of the day finally a female **Snowcap**. Then we returned to the lodge for dinner and overnight.

## Day 10

We were told that we would be transferred back to Panama City at 9.00 a.m., so after an early breakfast we explored the surroundings of the lodge for a last time. It was very windy, but we managed to find **Grey-headed Chachalaca** on the feeders, **Clay-colored Thrush**, and **Buff-rumped Warbler** along the stream. We looked for Sunbittern without luck, but we were absolutely thrilled by **Uniform Crane**, which came out into the open but only to quickly disappear again into the thick marsh vegetation near the pool. We also saw **Grey-necked Wood Rail** in the vicinity.

At 9.00 a.m. we said goodbye to the lodge and drove back to Panama City, where we stayed again at the Radisson Summit Hotel & Golf. We would have had time enough to go to the Metropolitan Park in the city, which is supposed to be the largest and most impressive park in Latin America and home to quite a few juicy birds, but we decided to rather discuss our impressions of the last ten days and ponder what kind of birding itinerary we could develop from the experience for the company. We packed to get everything ready for an international flight and tried to rest a bit and to get some meals and some cold ones as well. Dylan was flying to the United States the next morning to participate in the Space Coast Birding and Wildlife Festival, and I was flying to Bocas del Toro in the north of the country on the Caribbean coast to explore the new Tranquilo Bay Eco Adventure Lodge for three days.

## Day 11

We had to start around 3.30 a.m. in order to be on time at the airport for Dylan's international flight connection. My flight took less than one hour, after which I arrived on Isla Colón, the main island of the archipelago, at the international airport of Bocas del Toro. Here I was met by Jay Viola, one of the owners of the lodge, who was waiting for me and for another visitor who was scouting the lodge as well. Together with Jay were Ramón and Natalia, the resident naturalist guides of the lodge, both biologists with years of experience working with sea turtles. After a five-minute drive from the airport we were at the dock, from where we took the boat to Tranquilo Bay Eco Adventure Lodge. We left town and watched the different small islands of the archipelago pass by. We were heading to the most eastern part of Bastimentos Island, a 21<sup>st</sup>-century version of "Fantasy Island", where there is nothing but nature, beautiful sea, birds, wildlife, and peace and silence. On the way to the island we saw **Laughing Gull** and **Common Black Hawk**, and Ramón didn't need much time to prove himself a great spotter, finding **Snowy Cotinga** for us. There are a few different species of mangroves in the area.

We had a delicious breakfast with Jay, Ramón, and Natalia joining us, who told us the history of the lodge and the area. They then showed us around the lodge, and we were very impressed not only with its quality but particularly with the massive amount of work they had done to develop every single detail exactly as they wanted it. It was very hot, so after seeing the grounds we planned a hike for the afternoon. I watched the flowering bushes looking for hummingbirds, but I could not get much except a rather aggressive **Rufous-tailed Hummingbird**.

In the afternoon Ramón and Natalia took us along one of the trails, where we got **Stub-tailed Spadebill**. This bird just sneaks into Panama and is only found in his area at the most southern part of its distribution. We also found **Passerini's Tanager** and **Yellow-crowned Euphonia**, and a secretive **Mourning Warbler** was seen well, skulking in the vegetation. A flock with **White-collared** and **Variable Seedeaters** was studied well with the hope to find Thick-billed Seed-Finch. We heard **White-throated Crake**, but not cigar again. At a stream in the forest we watched a nice male **Red-capped Manakin** and **Crowned Woodnymph** taking a bath.

## Day 12

After an early breakfast we left the lodge to spend a full day exploring some channels among the mangroves and the coastline near the lodge. We entered the first channel, and sitting on the floating vegetation was our first target of the day, **Thick-billed Seed-Finch**, followed soon by **Baltimore** and **Orchard Orioles**, **American Yellow** and **Prothonotary Warblers**, **Belted Kingfisher**, **Green Heron**, **Western Osprey**, **Little Blue Heron**, **Squirrel Cuckoo**, and more **Passerini's Tanagers**.

More **Montezuma Oropendolas** were called, and then Ramón again found **Nicaraguan Seed Finch**, of which we had nice views of male and female in the same spot. We continued sailing along the channel when a very distinctive call made stop, and simultaneously we said "bellbird", with some excitement turning into desperation before we luckily found a place to park the boat well and actually found some open ground to walk on the island. A few minutes later we were below **Three-wattled Bellbird**, great! In both Panama and Costa Rica the bellbird and the umbrellabird make local altitudinal migrations, which renders them rather unpredictable.

Once out of the channel we saw a massive flock of ducks with at least 250 individuals, including species such as **Lesser Scaup**, **Blue-winged Teal**, **American Wigeon**, **Black-bellied Whistling Duck**, and two **Masked Ducks**. West Indian manatee and Neotropical otter can be seen in this area, but we had no luck. Another nice show was had when we

visited a lek of **White-collared Manakin**, where we saw a few males of the endemic subspecies *almirante*.

The time was then right to go to Bird Island, and, even though the sea was a bit rough while sailing to the island, we were full of excitement. Soon we were face to face with the gorgeous **Red-billed Tropicbird**, which actually nests and roosts year-round on this island. Simply beautiful! We saw several **Brown Boobies** as well.

Very satisfied we returned to the lodge for a celebration. At dusk we saw a crab-eating raccoon and a Central American woolly opossum near the lodge.

### Day 13

This was another early start to get back in the boat and sail to the mainland to explore the road that connects the Bocas del Toro and David Provinces. We focused on lowland and mid-elevations. Unfortunately, we were cursed with the weather with a whole day of rain. Our first stop was in the lowlands, where several African buffalo were enjoying the mud. Here we had **Red-breasted Blackbird**. Then we stopped by a marsh, where we found a few **Boat-billed Herons** roosting at daytime. **Keel-billed Toucan**, and **Collared Aracari**, and **Yellow-throated Toucans** were seen along the drive despite the rain.

We stopped at mid-elevation and were lucky to get a mixed flock with **Emerald Tanager**, **Speckled Tanager**, **Black-and-yellow Tanager**, **Green Honeycreeper**, **Summer Tanager**, **Silver-throated Tanager**, **Mistletoe Tyrannulet**, **Rufous-browed Tyrannulet**, **Olivaceous Woodcreeper**, and **Cinnamon Becard**. And just when we thought the rain would stop it got worse, of course. We kept driving to the highest point of the day and found two good species, **Spangle-cheeked Tanager** and **Prong-billed Barbet**, among the regular usual suspects. When we returned to the lowlands we found a perched **King Vulture** and **Striped Cuckoo** calling from a bush.

We returned to the boat and sailed back to the lodge; on the way we enjoy **Royal** and **Cabot's Terns** as well as a single **Parasitic Jaeger**.

### Day 14

After a nice morning around the gardens, adding **Band-tailed Barbthroat** and **Bronzy Hermit** to my personal list, sadly I had to leave this marvelous place on my way back to Isla Colón for the connection with my flight to Panama City. On the way to the island I could enjoy views of a spotted eagle ray. Once in Panama City, I was transferred to Tocumen International Airport for my flight back to Lima.

## PANAMA SCOUTING TOUR SYSTEMATIC LIST, JANUARY 2016

Taxonomy: IOC (International Ornithological Congress) 5.4

Abbreviation:  
(H) Heard only

### TINAMIFORMES

#### Tinamidae

**Great Tinamou** *Tinamus major* One bird was flushed along the Quebrada Felix trail in the Darien. Tinamous are secretive species as an effect of hundred years of being hunted by humans. The species is classified as near-threatened.

**Little Tinamou** *Crypturellus soui* One individual was seen briefly crossing the El Salto Road in the Darien. Here the subspecies *panamensis*

### ANSERIFORMES

#### Anatidae



**Black-bellied Whistling-Duck** *Dendrocygna autumnalis* Great views of a group near Bastimentos Island in Bocas del Toro

**American Wigeon** *Anas americana* Great views of a group near Bastimentos Island in Bocas del Toro

**Lesser Scaup** *Aythya affinis* 150+ were seen near Bastimentos Island in Bocas del Toro.

**Masked Duck** *Nomonyx dominicus* Two were seen near Bastimentos Island in Bocas del Toro.

**Green-winged Teal** *Anas carolinensis* One pair was seen well during a boat ride near Bastimentos Island in Bocas del Toro.

**Blue-winged Teal** *Anas discors* One pair was seen well during a boat ride near Bastimentos Island in Bocas del Toro.

## GALLIFORMES

### Cracidae

**Grey-headed Chachalaca** *Ortalis cinereiceps* Great views at the fruit feeders of Canopy Lodge

**Black Guan** *Chamaepetes unicolor* One bird was seen very well at mid-elevation along the continental road above Bocas del Toro. This is a near-endemic found in Costa Rica and Panama. The species is classified as near-threatened.

## PHAETHONTIFORMES

### Phaethontidae

**Red-billed Tropicbird** *Phaethon aethereus* One of the highlights of the trip. 30+ individuals were seen at eyelevel flying above the boat and even roosting on Bird Island in Bocas del Toro.



Red-billed Tropicbird (photo Natalia Decastro)

## PODICIPEDIFORMES

### Podicipedidae

**Pied-billed Grebe** *Podilymbus podiceps* One seen near Bastimentos Island in Bocas del Toro. Here the nominate subspecies

**CICONIIFORMES****Ciconiidae**

**Woodstork** *Mycteria americana* Two birds were flying above Tranquilo Bay.

**PELECANIFORMES****Threskiornithidae**

**Green Ibis** *Mesembrinibis cayennensis* One seen near Tranquilo Bay

**Ardeidae**

**Bare-throated Tiger Heron** *Tigrisoma mexicanum* Seen near Tranquilo Bay

**Rufescent Tiger Heron** *Tigrisoma lineatum* Close-up views of an individual crossing the Pipeline Road

**Yellow-throated Night Heron** *Nyctanassa violacea* One seen in the mangroves of Bastimentos Island in Bocas del Toro

**Green Heron** *Butorides virescens* Several sightings throughout the trip

**Western Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis* Quite a few sightings throughout the trip

**Great Egret** *Ardea alba* A couple of sightings at the marina at the Gamboa Rainforest Resort and at Tranquilo Bay

**Snowy Egret** *Egretta thula* A few sightings throughout the trip

**Tricolored Heron** *Egretta tricolor* Only one sighting in the mangroves of Tranquilo Bay

**Little Blue Heron** *Egretta caerulea* A few sightings at Tranquilo Bay

**Great Blue Heron** *Ardea herodias* Two sightings in the mangroves of Tranquilo Bay

**Boat-billed Heron** *Cochlearius cochlearius* A few individuals were seen roosting at daytime at the Summit Ponds, and later another group was seen closer along the main road in Bocas del Toro.



Boat-billed Heron (photo Dylan Vasapolli)

**Pelecanidae**

**Brown Pelican** *Pelecanus occidentalis* Common in the Panama Canal area and at Tranquilo Bay

**SULIFORMES****Fregatidae**

**Magnificent Frigatebird** *Fregata magnificens* Common in the Panama Canal area and at Tranquilo Bay

**Sulidae**

**Brown Booby** *Sula leucogaster* Great views of several individuals, even some with chicks, at Bird Island in Bocas del Toro

**Phalacrocoracidae**

**Neotropic Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax brasilianus* Seen near Tranquilo Bay

**ACCIPITRIFORMES****Cathartidae**

**Turkey Vulture** *Cathartes aura* Common throughout the trip

**Black Vulture** *Coragyps atratus* Common throughout the trip

**Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture** *Cathartes burrovianus* One seen soaring low over the fields in the Darien. Here the nominate subspecies

**King Vulture** *Sarcoramphus papa* One individual soaring high early in the trip and then a perched bird at Tranquilo Bay

**Pandionidae**

**Western Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus* Great views of one individual in the mangroves of Bastimentos Island in Bocas del Toro

**Accipitridae**

**White-tailed Kite** *Elanus leucurus* Good views in the Darien

**Pearl Kite** *Gampsonyx swainsonii* One individual was seen on its nest in the Darien. Here the subspecies *leoniae*

**Grey-headed Kite** *Leptodon cayanensis* Splendid views of two individuals flying low in the Darien. Here the nominate subspecies

**Swallow-tailed Kite** *Elanoides forficatus* Great views in the Darien

**Double-toothed Kite** *Harpagus bidentatus* Some individuals flying by were seen from the Canopy Tower and in the Darien area, and a perched bird was seen nicely at Tranquilo Bay. Here the subspecies *fasciatus*

**Tiny Hawk** *Accipiter superciliosus* A brown morph of this secretive species was seen briefly flying across the Altos del Maria road.

**Black-collared Hawk** *Busarellus nigricollis* Very scarce in the Bocas del Toro area. We got brief views of one individual in the mangroves.

**Snail Kite** *Rostrhamus sociabilis* Seen at the narina of the Gamboa Rainforest Resort not far from Canopy Tower

**Common Black Hawk** *Buteogallus anthracinus* Common in the mangroves of Bastimentos Island in Bocas del Toro. Here the subspecies *bangsi*

**Savanna Hawk** *Buteogallus meridionalis* A juvenile was seen in the Darien.

**Roadside Hawk** *Rupornis magnirostris* A few in the Darien

**Short-tailed Hawk** *Buteo brachyurus* Seen well in the Darien

**White Hawk** *Pseudastur albicollis* Brilliant views at Canopy Camp in the Darien

**Semiplumbeous Hawk** *Leucopternis semiplumbeus* Great views of a perched individual at Semaphore Hill

**Grey-lined Hawk** *Buteo nitidus* Seen in the Darien and near Canopy Tower. Here the subspecies *blakei*

**Broad-winged Hawk** *Buteo platypterus* Probably the most-frequently-encountered raptor of the tour with several sightings in the Canopy Tower and Darien areas

**Zone-tailed Hawk** *Buteo albonotatus* Only one encounter during the tour. Frequently soaring together with Turkey and Black Vultures

**GRUIFORMES****Rallidae**

**Uniform Crake** *Amaurolimnas concolor* An unexpected sighting with a bird running into the marshy vegetation in the Canopy Lodge grounds. Here the subspecies *guatemalensis*



**White-throated Crake (H) *Laterallus albigularis*** Heard in the Gamboa Rainforest Resort area and the Darien

**Grey-necked Wood Rail *Aramides cajaneus*** One bird seen walking along the compost trail at Canopy Lodge

**Purple Gallinule *Porphyrio martinicus*** Several good sightings throughout the trip, with the first bird at Summit Ponds

**Common Gallinule *Gallinula galeata*** Seen near Tranquilo Bay

**American Coot *Fulica americana*** Seen near Tranquilo Bay

## CHARADRIIFORMES

### Charadriidae

**Southern Lapwing *Vanellus chilensis*** Common at several locations

### Jacanidae

**Northern Jacana *Jacana spinosa*** Seen at flooded fields in Bocas del Toro

**Wattled Jacana *Jacana jacana*** Common at Summit Ponds. Here the subspecies *hypomelanea*

### Scolopacidae

**Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*** Seen in the Tranquilo Bay area

**Solitary Sandpiper *Tringa solitaria*** Seen in the Tranquilo Bay area

**Willet *Tringa semipalmata*** Seen along the shores of Bastimentos Island in Bocas del Toro

**Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius*** A few sightings throughout the trip

**Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla*** Seen in the Tranquilo Bay area

### Laridae

**Laughing Gull *Leucophaeus atricilla*** Common on Colón and Bastimentos Islands in Bocas del Toro

**Royal Tern *Thalasseus maximus*** Distant views over Summit Ponds and later close-up views in the Tranquilo Bay area

**Cabot's Tern *Thalasseus acuflavidus*** Close-up views near Tranquilo Bay

**Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*** Seen during a boat ride in Bocas del Toro. Here the subspecies *surinamensis*

### Stercorariidae

**Parasitic Jaeger *Stercorarius parasiticus*** One seen from the boat on the way to Tranquilo Bay

## COLUMBIFORMES

### Columbidae

**Rock Dove *Columba livia*** Common in towns

**Scaled Pigeon *Patagioenas speciosa*** Seen from the canopy tower at Tranquilo Bay

**Pale-vented Pigeon *Patagioenas cayennensis*** Seen in the Gamboa Rainforest Resort area and at Tranquilo Bay. Here the subspecies *pallidicrissa*

**Plain-breasted Ground Dove *Columbina minuta*** Scope views of one individual in the Darien

**Blue Ground Dove *Claravis pretiosa*** Good views of two pairs in the Darien

**Ruddy Ground Dove *Columbina talpacoti*** Common at several locations

**White-tipped Dove *Leptotila verreauxi*** Common at several locations in forest interiors and clearings

## CUCULIFORMES

### Cuculidae

**Groove-billed Ani *Crotophaga sulcirostris*** Common along the fields in the Darien

**Striped Cuckoo *Tapera naevia*** Seen well along the lower parts of the continental road in Bocas del Toro

**Rufous-vented Ground Cuckoo *Neomorphus geoffroyi*** An incredible and unreal encounter with two adults feeding on scorpions in an army ant-swarm in the Anton Valley. We were able to enjoy this legendary and secretive species for over 20 minutes and to watch its behavior. Only after a while we realized that there was a third young bird together with the adults. Amazing views, which we doubt we'll beat ever again, even with the help of feeding tricks. Panama is without doubt the best place in the world to see this species.

**Squirrel Cuckoo *Piaya cayana*** Several sightings throughout the trip

## STRIGIFORMES

### Strigidae

**Tropical Screech Owl (H) *Megascops choliba*** We heard this species before dawn calling from the Canopy Lodge garden.

**Mottled Owl *Strix virgata*** One individual was flushed at daytime along Quebrada Felix in the Darien and another was seen roosting at daytime in Anton Valley near Canopy Lodge. Here the nominate subspecies

**Black-and-white Owl (H) *Strix nigrolineata*** Heard before dawn around Canopy Camp in the Darien

## CAPRIMULGIFORMES

### Nyctibiidae

**Common Potoo (H) *Nyctibius griseus*** Heard before dawn around Canopy Camp in the Darien

**Great Potoo *Nyctibius grandis*** Seen at its usual roosting tree in the Darien

### Caprimulgidae

**Pauraque *Nyctidromus albicollis*** Seen on the Canopy Camp grounds

## APODIFORMES

### Apodidae

**White-collared Swift *Streptoprocne zonaris*** A few encounters throughout the trip

**Band-rumped Swift *Chaetura spinicaudus*** Seen from the Canopy Tower and the Discovery Center tower along the Pipeline Road

**Lesser Swallow-tailed Swift *Panyptila cayennensis*** Seen close, flying above the Radisson Summit Hotel & Golf grounds

### Trochilidae

**White-tipped Sicklebill *Eutoxeres aquila*** Seen feeding in a heliconia flower along the Las Minas Road near Canopy Lodge. Here the subspecies *salvini*

**Green Hermit *Phaethornis guy*** Seen along the Altos del Maria road in Anton Valley

**Pale-bellied Hermit *Phaethornis anthophilus*** A few sightings throughout the trip

**Long-billed Hermit *Phaethornis longirostris*** The most-commonly-encountered hermit on the trip, including a bird taking a bath in the Tranquilo Bay forest stream

**Bronzy Hermit *Glaucis aeneus*** Only one bird seen in the Tranquilo Bay gardens

**Stripe-throated Hermit *Phaethornis striigularis*** Seen at a few locations. Here the subspecies *saturatus*

**Band-tailed Barbthroat *Threnetes ruckeri*** Seen in the Tranquilo Bay gardens. Here the subspecies *ventosus*

**Rufous-breasted Hermit *Glaucis hirsutus*** Only one encounter during the trip

**Scaly-breasted Hummingbird *Phaeochroa cuvierii*** Seen in the Canopy Camp grounds in the Darien

**White-necked Jacobin *Florisuga mellivora*** One of the most-frequently-encountered hummingbirds on feeders, including at Canopy Tower

**Black-throated Mango *Anthracothorax nigricollis*** Seen at several locations, including the feeders at the Torti restaurant

**Green Thorntail *Discosura conversii*** Seen along the Altos del Maria road

**Crowned Woodnymph *Thalurania colombica*** Several sightings throughout the trip, including a bird taking a bath in the forest stream at Tranquilo Bay. Here the subspecies *venusta*

**Violet-bellied Hummingbird *Juliamyia julie*** Seen well at the Canopy Tower feeders

**Blue-throated Sapphire *Hylocharis eliciae*** Seen at Canopy Camp

**Sapphire-throated Hummingbird *Lepidopyga caeruleogularis*** Great views in the Darien. This is a near-endemic, found in Panama and Colombia.

**Snowy-bellied Hummingbird *Amazilia edward*** Great views on the feeders at the Torti restaurant. A near-endemic, found in Costa Rica and Panama

**Snowcap *Microchera albocoronata*** A female was seen on the road to Altos del Maria.

**Rufous-tailed Hummingbird *Amazilia tzacatl*** The most common hummer throughout Panama, including the Bocas del Toro archipelago. A real bully in the Tranquilo Bay garden

**Blue-chested Hummingbird *Amazilia amabilis*** Seen nicely at the Canopy Tower feeders and at Tranquilo Bay

**White-vented Plumeleater *Chalybura buffonii*** Seen on the Canopy Tower grounds

**Bronze-tailed Plumeleater *Chalybura urochrysia*** Seen at Anton Valley near Canopy Lodge

**Purple-crowned Fairy *Heliothryx barroti*** Seen in the Tranquilo Bay forest stream

**Long-billed Starthroat *Heliomaster longirostris*** A few sightings throughout the trip. Here the nominate subspecies

## TROGONIFORMES

### Trogonidae

**Slaty-tailed Trogon *Trogon massena*** Great views along the Plantation Road near Canopy Tower

**Black-throated Trogon *Trogon rufus*** Seen well along the Pipeline Road. Here the subspecies *tenellus*

**White-tailed Trogon *Trogon chionurus*** Seen along the Pipeline Road

**Gartered Trogon *Trogon caligatus*** Seen around Canopy Lodge and Canopy Tower

**Collared Trogon *Trogon collaris*** Great views of a pair along the Altos del Maria road. The subspecies *aurantiiventris*, which is found in Panama and Costa Rica, has been treated as a full species by some authorities, called Orange-bellied Trogon *Trogon aurantiiventris*.

**Black-tailed Trogon *Trogon melanurus*** Seen along the Plantation Road

### Alcedinidae

**Ringed Kingfisher *Megaceryle torquata*** Seen in the Gamboa Rainforest Resort area

**Belted Kingfisher *Megaceryle alcyon*** Seen near Bastimentos Island in Bocas del Toro

**Amazon Kingfisher *Chloroceryle amazona*** Seen at the marina area of the Gamboa Rainforest Resort

**Green Kingfisher *Chloroceryle americana*** Seen at Summit Ponds

**American Pygmy Kingfisher *Chloroceryle aenea*** Nice views along the Plantation Road and in the Tranquilo Bay area

### Momotidae

**Rufous Motmot *Baryphthengus martii*** Seen at the Plantation Road

**Broad-billed Motmot *Electron platyrhynchum*** Seen at the Plantation Road

**Whooping Motmot *Momotus subrufescens*** Seen at the Radisson Summit Hotel & Golf

## PICIFORMES

### Galbulidae

**Great Jacamar *Jacamerops aureus*** Seen in the San Francisco Reserve in the Darien

**Rufous-tailed Jacamar *Galbula ruficauda*** Seen along the Pipeline Road

### Bucconidae

**White-necked Puffbird *Notharchus hyperrhynchus*** Incredible views along the El Salto Road in the Darien



**Black-breasted Puffbird** *Notharchus pectoralis* One seen very well at the Pipeline Road  
**Pied Puffbird** *Notharchus tectus* Incredible views of a single bird in the Darien. Here the subspecies *subtectus*

**Barred Puffbird** *Nystalus radiatus* Great views in the clearing grounds around the Darien  
**Grey-cheeked Nunlet** *Nonnula frontalis* Excellent views along the El Salto Road in the Darien. A near-endemic, found in Panama and Colombia



Grey-cheeked Nunlet (photo Dylan Vasapolli)

### Capitonidae

**Spot-crowned Barbet** *Capito maculicoronatus* Great views of a pair in the Canopy Camp grounds clearings in the Darien. A near-endemic, found in Colombia and Panama

### Semnornithidae

**Prong-billed Barbet** *Semnornis frantzii* Excellent views of a pair in the Bocas del Toro foothills

### Ramphastidae

**Blue-throated Toucanet** *Aulacorhynchus caeruleogularis* Seen in the Anton Valley. A near-endemic, found in Costa Rica and Panama

**Collared Aracari** *Pteroglossus torquatus* Seen from the Canopy Tower and the Discovery Center tower in the Soberanía National Park

**Keel-billed Toucan** *Ramphastos sulfuratus* Common throughout the trip. This is the national bird of Belize.

**Yellow-throated Toucan** *Ramphastos ambiguus* Several sightings throughout the trip. Here the subspecies *swainsonii*. The species is classified as near-threatened.

### Picidae

**Olivaceous Piculet** *Picumnus olivaceus* Seen well in the Darien. Here the subspecies *flavotinctus*

**Black-cheeked Woodpecker** *Melanerpes pucherani* Common at several locations, including Bastimentos Island in Bocas del Toro

**Red-crowned Woodpecker** *Melanerpes rubricapillus* Seen around Summits Ponds

**Red-rumped Woodpecker** *Veniliornis kirkii* Seen in the Darien

**Cinnamon Woodpecker** *Celeus loricatus* Seen in the Darien

**Lineated Woodpecker** *Dryocopus lineatus* Seen around Canopy Tower and Tranquilo Bay

**Crimson-crested Woodpecker** *Campephilus melanoleucos* Seen well in the Darien

**Pale-billed Woodpecker** *Campephilus guatemalensis* Seen on the Pipeline Road

### Falconidae

**Red-throated Caracara** *Ibycter americanus* Only one sighting during the trip

**Yellow-headed Caracara** *Milvago chimachima* Several sightings throughout the trip

**Laughing Falcon** *Herpetotheres cachinnans* A handsome raptor seen nicely in the Darien

**Collared Forest Falcon (H)** *Micrastur semitorquatus* Heard before dawn at Canopy Tower

**Slaty-backed Forest Falcon (H)** *Micrastur mirandollei* Heard before dawn at Canopy Tower

**Bat Falcon** *Falco ruficularis* Seen nicely in the Darien

**Merlin** *Falco columbarius* Beautiful views of one bird on Bastimentos Island near Tranquilo Bay

**American Kestrel** *Falco sparverius* Seen below Semaphore Hill

### **PSITTACIFORMES**

#### Psittacidae

**Orange-chinned Parakeet** *Brotogeris jugularis* Common at Canopy Tower and in Soberanía National Park

**Brown-hooded Parrot** *Pyrilia haematotis* Scope views of one pair from the top of the Canopy Tower

**Blue-headed Parrot** *Pionus menstruus* Common at several locations. The best views were from the canopy tower at Tranquilo Bay.

**White-crowned Parrot** *Pionus senilis* Seen well in the Bocas del Toro foothills

**Red-lored Amazon** *Amazona autumnalis* Common in central Panama and at Tranquilo Bay

**Northern Mealy Amazon** *Amazona guatemalae* Seen well from the canopy tower at Tranquilo Bay. The species is classified as near-threatened. The Mealy Parrot has recently been split into Northern Mealy Parrot, which ranges from Mexico to Panama, and Southern Mealy Parrot from eastern Panama to Bolivia and the Guianas.

**Brown-throated Parakeet** *Eupsittula pertinax* Seen around Bastimentos Island in Bocas del Toro

**Great Green Macaw (H)** *Ara ambiguus* Unfortunately heard only along the jeep track in the Darien. The species is classified as endangered.

**Finsch's Parakeet** *Psittacara finschi* Seen in the Bocas del Toro lowlands. This species is near-endemic, found in Costa Rica and Panama. Named after Hermann Otto Finsch, a German ornithologist, collector and author (1839-1917)

#### Furnariidae

**Red-faced Spinetail** *Cranioleuca erythropus* Seen well along the Altos del Maria road. Here the subspecies *rufigenis*

**Double-banded Greytail** *Xenerpestes minlosi* Great views of this localized species along the El Salto Road in the Darien. A regional endemic from the Darien and the Chocó region of Eastern Panama to Northern Colombia and NW Ecuador

**Scaly-throated Leaf-tosser** *Sclerurus guatemalensis* Crippling views of this forest skulker at Quebrada Felix in the Darien

**Streaked Xenops** *Xenops rutilans* Seen in Anton Valley near Canopy Lodge

**Plain Xenops** *Xenops minutus* Seen well in the Darien

**Olivaceous Woodcreeper** *Sittasomus griseicapillus* Only one sightings during the tour. Here the subspecies *veraguensis*

**Plain-brown Woodcreeper** *Dendrocincla fuliginosa* Seen in the Darien. Here the subspecies *ridgwayi*

**Northern Barred Woodcreeper** *Dendrocolaptes sanctithomae* Great views at several locations. Here the nominate subspecies

**Cocoa Woodcreeper** *Xiphorhynchus susurrans* The most-frequently-encountered woodcreeper throughout the trip. We saw the subspecies *costaricensis* in the Bocas del Toro foothills and the subspecies *marginatus* in the Darien.

**Black-striped Woodcreeper** *Xiphorhynchus lachrymosus* Seen in the Darien

**Spotted Woodcreeper** *Xiphorhynchus erythropygius* Brief views in the Darien

**Wedge-billed Woodcreeper** *Glyphorhynchus spirurus* Seen in Bocas del Toro. Here the subspecies *pallidus*

**Streak-headed Woodcreeper** *Lepidocolaptes souleyetii* Seen along the Plantation Road

**Spot-crowned Woodcreeper** *Lepidocolaptes affinis* Only one sighting on the trip

### Thamnophilidae

**Fasciated Antshrike** *Cymbilaimus lineatus* Several sightings on the trip, including at the Plantation Road and in the Darien

**Great Antshrike (H)** *Taraba major* Heard only during a hike on Bastimentos Island

**Barred Antshrike (H)** *Thamnophilus doliatus* Heard in the Bocas del Toro foothills

**Black Antshrike** *Thamnophilus nigriceps* Great views of this forest dweller at Quebrada Felix in the Darien



Black Antshrike (photo Dylan Vasapoli)

**Black-crowned Antshrike** *Thamnophilus atrinucha* Seen at several locations

**Plain Antvireo** *Dysithamnus mentalis* Seen in Anton Valley

**Spot-crowned Antvireo (H)** *Dysithamnus puncticeps* Heard only in the Darien

**Checker-throated Antwren** *Epinecrophylla fulviventris* Seen in the Darien

**White-flanked Antwren** *Myrmotherula axillaris* Seen at several locations, including the Darien and Tranquilo Bay

**Rufous-winged Antwren (H)** *Herpsilochmus rufimarginatus* Heard only in the Darien

**Dot-winged Antwren** *Microrhoptias quixensis* Great views at several locations, including the Pipeline Road and the Radisson Summit Hotel & Golf grounds

**Dusky Antbird (H)** *Cercomacra tyrannina* Heard only along the Pipeline Road

**Bare-crowned Antbird** *Gymnocichla nudiceps* Incredible views of a pair of this most-wanted species on the forest trail at Quebrada Felix in the Darien. Here the nominate subspecies



**Chestnut-backed Antbird *Myrmeciza exsul*** Great views in the Tranquilo Bay grounds of the nominate subspecies and of the subspecies *cassini* in the Darien

**White-bellied Antbird *Myrmeciza longipes*** Great views of this forest ground skulker at a few locations during the trip. Here the subspecies *panamensis*

**Spotted Antbird *Hylophylax naevioides*** Great views along the Plantation Road and the Radisson Summit Hotel & Golf grounds. Here the nominate subspecies



Spotted Antbird (photo Dylan Vasapolli)

### Formicariidae

**Black-faced Antthrush *Formicarius analis*** Great views at Las Minas in the Anton Valley

### Conopophagidae

**Black-crowned Antpitta *Pittasoma michleri*** Together with the Rufous-vented Ground Cuckoo one of the big highlights of the trip. Spectacular views of this most-wanted species in the dense forest of Quebrada Felix in the Darien

### Tyrannidae

**Sooty-headed Tyrannulet (H) *Phyllomyias griseiceps*** Heard in the Darien

**Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet *Tyrannulus elatus*** Seen along the Pipeline Road and at Summit Ponds

**Forest Elaenia *Myiopagis gaimardii*** Seen in the Darien

**Grey Elaenia *Myiopagis caniceps*** Great views in the Darien. Here the subspecies *absita*

**Yellow-bellied Elaenia *Elaenia flavogaster*** Seen in the Darien

**Brown-capped Tyrannulet *Ornithion brunneicapillus*** Seen at Canopy Tower

**Southern Beardless Tyrannulet *Camptostoma obsoletum*** Seen in Anton Valley

**Rufous-browed Tyrannulet *Phylloscartes superciliaris*** Seen in the Bocas del Toro foothills

**Ochre-bellied Flycatcher *Mionectes oleagineus*** Seen in the Darien

**Olive-striped Flycatcher *Mionectes olivaceus*** Seen at several locations during the trip

**Black-capped Pygmy Tyrant *Myiornis atricapillus*** Seen in the Darien

**Southern Bentbill *Oncostoma olivaceum*** A few sightings of this near-endemic during the trip. Found in Panama and Colombia

**Scale-crested Pygmy Tyrant *Lophotriccus pileatus*** Seen in the Anton Valley

**Common Tody-Flycatcher *Todirostrum cinereum*** Seen in the Darien and at Canopy Tower

**Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher *Todirostrum nigriceps*** Seen in the Darien

**Olivaceous Flatbill** *Rhynchocyclus olivaceus* Seen in the Darien. Here the subspecies *bardus*

**Yellow-olive Flatbill** *Tolmomyias sulphurescens* Seen in the Darien

**Stub-tailed Spadebill** *Platyrinchus cancrominus* Seen at Tranquilo Bay. In Panama this species occurs only in the Bocas del Toro archipelago at its easternmost point of distribution

**Golden-crowned Spadebill** *Platyrinchus coronatus* Good views on the Plantation Road

**Black Phoebe** *Sayornis nigricans* Seen in the Canopy Lodge stream

**Acadian Flycatcher** *Empidonax virescens* Seen in the Darien

**Long-tailed Tyrant** *Colonia colonus* Seen in the Bocas del Toro foothills and the Darien

**Piratic Flycatcher** *Legatus leucophaeus* Seen in the Darien

**Social Flycatcher** *Myiozetetes similis* Common at several locations

**Rusty-margined Flycatcher** *Myiozetetes cayanensis* Seen at Summit Ponds

**Grey-capped Flycatcher** *Myiozetetes granadensis* Seen in the Darien

**Great Kiskadee** *Pitangus sulphuratus* Seen in the Gamboa Rainforest Resort marina area

**Lesser Kiskadee** *Philohydor lictor* Seen in the Gamboa Rainforest Resort marina area

**Boat-billed Flycatcher** *Megarynchus pitangua* Seen in the Darien

**Streaked Flycatcher** *Myiodynastes maculatus* Seen in the Darien. Here the subspecies *insolens*

**Tropical Kingbird** *Tyrannus melancholicus* Common

**Rufous Mourner** *Rhytipterna holerythra* Seen in the Darien

**Western Sirystes** *Sirystes albogriseus* Great views in the Darien

**Dusky-capped Flycatcher** *Myiarchus tuberculifer* Seen in the Bocas del Toro foothills

**Panamanian Flycatcher** *Myiarchus panamensis* Seen in the vicinity of Canopy Tower

**Great Crested Flycatcher** *Myiarchus crinitus* Great views in the Darien

**Bright-rumped Attila (H)** *Attila spadiceus* Heard at several locations, but we could not detect this canopy species.

### Cotingidae

**Blue Cotinga** *Cotinga nattererii* Great views of this species from the Canopy Tower, Discovery Center tower, and at the San Francisco Reserve in the Darien

**Three-wattled Bellbird** *Procnias tricarunculatus* Great views of this most-wanted Central American species along the Bastimentos Island channels in Bocas del Toro. The species is classified as vulnerable.

**Rufous Piha** *Lipaugus unirufus* Seen in the Darien. Here the nominate subspecies

**Snowy Cotinga** *Carpodectes nitidus* Seen on Bastimentos Island in Bocas del Toro

**Purple-throated Fruitcrow** *Querula purpurata* Seen around Canopy Tower, Tranquilo Bay, and the Radisson Summit Hotel & Golf grounds

### Pipridae

**White-ruffed Manakin** *Corapipo altera* Brief views of one male at Las Minas in the Anton Valley near Canopy Lodge

**White-collared Manakin** *Manacus candei* We got excellent views of the yellow-bellied subspecies known as “Almirante Manakin” on one of the islands in the Bocas del Toro archipelago.

**Golden-collared Manakin** *Manacus vitellinus* Excellent views in the Tranquilo Bay garden. Here the subspecies *cerritus*

**Golden-headed Manakin** *Dixiphia erythrocephala* Excellent views of a male in the Darien. Here the nominate subspecies

**Red-capped Manakin** *Dixiphia mentalis* Females were seen along the Pipeline Road and in the Darien, and the male was seen nicely at Tranquilo Bay

### Tityridae

**Northern Royal Flycatcher *Onychorhynchus mexicanus*** Great views in the Darien. Here the nominate subspecies. The Royal Flycatcher, together with the becards and the members of the *Myiobius* genus, has been removed from the flycatcher family and placed in the Tityridae family. Royal Flycatcher has been split into:

***Onychorhynchus mexicanus* Northern Royal Flycatcher** Found from Mexico to NE Colombia and NW Venezuela

***Onychorhynchus occidentalis* Pacific Royal Flycatcher** Found in W Ecuador and NW Peru

***Onychorhynchus coronatus* Amazonian Royal Flycatcher** Found in Amazonia

***Onychorhynchus swainsoni* Atlantic Royal Flycatcher** Found in SE Brazil

**Black-tailed Myiobius *Myiobius atricaudus*** Only one sighting in the Darien

**Ruddy-tailed Flycatcher *Terenotriccus erythrurus*** Seen in the Darien. Here the subspecies *fulvularis*

**Masked Tityra *Tityra semifasciata*** Quite of few sightings throughout the trip

**Black-crowned Tityra *Tityra inquisitor*** Seen in the Darien

**Russet-winged Schiffornis (H) *Schiffornis stenorhyncha*** Heard along the Pipeline Road

**Speckled Mourner *Laniocera rufescens*** Seen well in the Darien. Here the nominate subspecies

**Cinnamon Becard *Pachyramphus cinnamomeus*** The subspecies *fulvidior* was seen in Bocas del Toro and the nominate subspecies in the Darien.

**White-winged Becard *Pachyramphus polychopterus*** Good views of one individual in the Darien. Here the subspecies *similis*

**One-colored Becard *Pachyramphus homochrous*** A female was seen on the Plantation Road.

### Vireonidae

**Red-eyed Vireo *Vireo olivaceus*** A few on the trip

**Golden-fronted Greenlet *Hylophilus aurantiifrons*** One seen in the Gamboa Rainforest Resort marina area

**Lesser Greenlet *Hylophilus decurtatus*** Seen in the Bocas del Toro foothills

**Green Shrike-Vireo (H) *Vireolanius pulchellus*** Despite all our efforts it remained elusive all the time, as its nickname means “can’t see me”. We heard this species from the Canopy Tower and the Discovery Center tower.

### Corvidae

**Black-chested Jay *Cyanocorax affinis*** Seen in the Bocas del Toro lowlands

### Hirundinidae

**Grey-breasted Martin *Progne chalybea*** Seen in the Gamboa Rainforest Resort area

**Mangrove Swallow *Tachycineta albilinea*** Great views over the Panama Canal

**Southern Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*** Common throughout the trip

### Troglodytidae

**White-headed Wren *Campylorhynchus albobrunneus*** One bird was seen briefly in the Darien. A near-endemic, found in Panama and Colombia

**Bicolored Wren *Campylorhynchus griseus*** One seen well in the Darien. A recently-recorded species in the country, with its closest population in northern Colombia, where it is commonly seen on our Santa Marta tours

**Rufous-breasted Wren *Pheugopedius rutilus*** Great views in the Radisson Summit Hotel & Golf grounds

**Black-bellied Wren *Pheugopedius fasciatoventris*** Several sightings on the trip

**Buff-breasted Wren *Cantorchilus leucotis*** Seen along the Pipeline Road and in the Darien. Here the subspecies *galbraithii*

**Bay Wren *Cantorchilus nigricapillus*** Seen in the Bocas del Toro lowlands. Here the subspecies *costaricensis*



**House Wren** *Troglodytes aedon* Seen at several locations

**Ochraceous Wren** *Troglodytes ochraceus* Good views of one individual above Canopy Lodge. A near-endemic, found in Panama and Costa Rica

**White-breasted Wood Wren** *Henicorhina leucosticta* Seen in the Darien

**Southern Nightingale-Wren** *Microcerculus marginatus* Good views in the Darien. Here the dark-colored subspecies *luscini*

**Song Wren** *Cyphorhinus phaeocephalus* Nice views of a family party along the Pipeline Road. Here the subspecies *lawrencii*

#### Poliptilidae

**Long-billed Gnatwren** *Ramphocaenus melanurus* Great views in the Darien. Here the subspecies *panamensis*

**Tropical Gnatcatcher** *Poliptila plumbea* Seen in the Gamboa Rainforest Resort area

#### Mimidae

**Tropical Mockingbird** *Mimus gilvus* Seen in the Bocas del Toro lowlands

#### Turdidae

**Clay-colored Thrush** *Turdus grayi* Common throughout the trip. This is the national bird of Costa Rica.

#### Fringillidae

**Yellow-crowned Euphonia** *Euphonia luteicapilla* Seen in the Darien

**Thick-billed Euphonia** *Euphonia laniirostris* Seen in the Canopy Lodge area and in the Darien

**Fulvous-vented Euphonia** *Euphonia fulvicrissa* Several sightings during the trip

**Tawny-capped Euphonia** *Euphonia anneae* One seen in Anton Valley near Canopy Lodge

**Olive-backed Euphonia** *Euphonia gouldi* Seen in the Bocas del Toro foothills

#### Parulidae

**Northern Waterthrush** *Parkesia noveboracensis* Seen at the Canopy Lodge stream

**Louisiana Waterthrush** *Parkesia motacilla* Seen on Bastimentos Island

**Golden-winged Warbler** *Vermivora chrysoptera* Great looks of one bird along the Altos del Maria road. The species is classified as near-threatened.

**Prothonotary Warbler** *Protonotaria citrea* Great looks at several locations. We saw the first birds at Summit Ponds.

**Tennessee Warbler** *Leiothlypis peregrina* Seen in the Bocas del Toro foothills

**Olive-crowned Yellowthroat** *Geothlypis semiflava* One bird was seen briefly at Tranquilo Bay.

**Mourning Warbler** *Geothlypis philadelphia* A secretive bird was seen briefly at Tranquilo Bay.

**Bay-breasted Warbler** *Setophaga castanea* Quite a few during the trip

**Blackburnian Warbler** *Setophaga fusca* Only one encounter during the trip

**American Yellow Warbler** *Setophaga aestiva* Seen at Tranquilo Bay

**Chestnut-sided Warbler** *Setophaga pensylvanica* The most-commonly-encountered North American migrant warbler during the trip

**Buff-rumped Warbler** *Myiothlypis fulvicauda* Great views at the Canopy Lodge stream

**Rufous-capped Warbler** *Basileuterus rufifrons* Seen at Canopy Lodge

**Canada Warbler** *Cardellina canadensis* Only one encounter during the trip

#### Icteridae

**Red-breasted Blackbird** *Sturnella militaris* One seen in the Darien

**Chestnut-headed Oropendola** *Psarocolius wagleri* Nice views at the fruit feeders at Canopy Camp in the Darien

**Crested Oropendola** *Psarocolius decumanus* Good views at a few locations

**Montezuma Oropendola *Psarocolius montezuma*** Common around Tranquilo Bay. Named after Montezuma Xocoyotzin, 1480-1520, emperor of the Aztecs during the pre-hispanic Mexican civilization that was conquered by the Spaniard Hernán Cortés

**Black Oropendola *Psarocolius guatimozinus*** Brief views of this localized species in the Darien. A near-endemic, found in Colombia and Panama

**Yellow-rumped Cacique *Cacicus cela*** Common at a few locations

**Scarlet-rumped Cacique *Cacicus microrhynchus*** Seen along the Plantation Road. Here the nominate subspecies

**Yellow-backed Oriole *Icterus chrysater*** A few sightings during the trip

**Baltimore Oriole *Icterus galbula*** Regular sightings during the trip

**Orchard Oriole *Icterus spurius*** Only two sightings during the trip

**Giant Cowbird *Molothrus oryzivorus*** Seen in the Bocas del Toro lowlands

**Shiny Cowbird *Molothrus bonariensis*** Seen in the Bocas del Toro lowlands

**Great-tailed Grackle *Quiscalus mexicanus*** Common

#### Coerebidae

**Bananaquit *Coereba flaveola*** We saw both the subspecies *mexicana* in Bocas del Toro and *columbiana* in the Panama Canal area and the Darien.

#### Emberizidae

**Rufous-collared Sparrow *Zonotrichia capensis*** Seen around Canopy Lodge

**Black-striped Sparrow *Arremonops conirostris*** Seen well above Canopy Lodge. Here the subspecies *striaticeps*

**Orange-billed Sparrow *Arremon aurantiirostris*** Seen along the Plantation Road. Here the nominate subspecies

**Common Bush Tanager *Chlorospingus flavopectus*** Seen in the Bocas del Toro foothills

#### Thraupidae

**Nicaraguan Seed Finch *Oryzoborus nuttingi*** Awesome views of this regional endemic during the boat ride through the Tranquilo Bay canal. One of the targets in Bocas del Toro. Found from Nicaragua to W Panama



Nicaraguan Seed Finch (photo Ramón Fernández)

- Thick-billed Seed Finch** *Oryzoborus funereus* Seen in the Tranquilo Bay area
- Tawny-crested Tanager** *Tachyphonus delatrii* Seen along the Altos del Maria road
- White-shouldered Tanager** *Tachyphonus luctuosus* Seen in the Darien. Here the subspecies *panamensis*
- Crimson-collared Tanager** *Ramphocelus sanguinolentus* Numerous throughout the trip. There is an introduced population on the island of Tahiti.
- Crimson-backed Tanager** *Ramphocelus dimidiatus* Seen near the Gamboa Rainforest Resort marina area
- Passerini's Tanager** *Ramphocelus passerinii* Seen in the Bocas del Toro foothills and at Tranquilo Bay
- Lemon-rumped Tanager** *Ramphocelus icteronotus* Seen near the Gamboa Rainforest Resort marina area
- Blue-grey Tanager** *Thraupis episcopus* Common
- Palm Tanager** *Thraupis palmarum* Several sightings, especially in the Darien
- Plain-colored Tanager** *Tangara inornata* Good numbers were encountered in western, central, and eastern Panama.
- Emerald Tanager** *Tangara florida* Striking views in the Bocas del Toro foothills. Here the nominate subspecies
- Silver-throated Tanager** *Tangara icterocephala* The subspecies *frantzii* seen in the Bocas del Toro foothills and the subspecies *oresbia* in Anton Valley
- Speckled Tanager** *Tangara guttata* Wonderful views in the Bocas del Toro foothills. Here the subspecies *eusticta*
- Bay-headed Tanager** *Tangara gyrola* Seen in the Canopy Lodge garden
- Golden-hooded Tanager** *Tangara larvata* Seen around Summit Ponds and in the Bocas del Toro foothills
- Spangle-cheeked Tanager** *Tangara dowii* Great views along the continental road above the Bocas del Toro foothills. This is a near-endemic species, found in Costa Rica and Panama.
- Blue Dacnis** *Dacnis cayana* Nice views at Canopy Tower
- Red-legged Honeycreeper** *Cyanerpes cyaneus* Several views of this lovely bird
- Green Honeycreeper** *Chlorophanes spiza* Nice views from the Canopy Tower
- Black-and-yellow Tanager** *Chrysothlypis chrysomelas* A few were seen along the Altos del Maria road and in the Bocas del Toro foothills as well. Found from Costa Rica to Colombia
- White-eared Conebill** *Conirostrum leucogenys* Great views in the Darien
- Blue-black Grassquit** *Volatinia jacarina* Several sightings throughout the trip
- Variable Seedeater** *Sporophila corvina* Several seen throughout the tour
- Yellow-bellied Seedeater** *Sporophila torqueola* Seen in the marina area near Summit Ponds
- White-collared Seedeater** *Sporophila torqueola* Seen at Tranquilo Bay
- Yellow-faced Grassquit** *Tiaris olivaceus* A few seen during the tour
- Cardinalidae**
- Tooth-billed Tanager** *Piranga lutea* Seen above Canopy Lodge
- Summer Tanager** *Piranga rubra* Several sightings throughout the trip
- Red-crowned Ant Tanager** *Habia rubica* A couple of encounters with this shy species
- Black-faced Grosbeak** *Caryothraustes poliogaster* Nice views of one bird in the Bocas del Toro foothills
- Blue-black Grosbeak** *Cyanocompsa cyanoides* Seen in the Tranquilo Bay area
- Buff-throated Saltator** *Saltator maximus* Several sightings throughout the tour

## WILDLIFE

- Black-eared opossum** *Didelphis marsupialis* Seen in the Tranquilo Bay garden



**Central American woolly opossum *Caluromys derbianus*** This small and handsome marsupial was seen well in the Tranquilo Bay garden

**Central American agouti *Dasyprocta punctata*** Seen almost every day of the tour

**Lesser capybara *Hydrochoerus isthmius*** The Lesser Capybara is found in Panama, northern Colombia, and Western Venezuela. It was recognized as a distinct subspecies of capybara in 1912 and was elevated to species status in 1991. This species is reported to be common in Panama but rare in Venezuela. We had great views in the marina and Gamboa Rainforest Resort areas.

**Brown-throated sloth *Bradypus variegatus*** Panama must be the sloth capital of the Neotropics. We had almost daily sightings, especially in the Darien, at the Gamboa Rainforest Resort and its marina area, and at Tranquilo Bay, where a female with a baby was seen very nicely. This is the first time I personally heard its weird and loud vocalization.

**Nine-banded armadillo *Dasyus novemcinctus*** Two encounters on the trip. We had the first one in the Radisson Summit Hotel & Golf grounds at daytime, and the second one was seen after dinner around Canopy Tower

**Geoffroy's tamarin *Saguinus geoffroyi*** Nice views from the Canopy Tower and in the Darien

**Colombian white-faced capuchin *Cebus capucinus*** Nice views in the Canopy Camp in the Darien

**Mantled howler monkey *Alouatta palliata*** Seen in the Panama Canal area on the way back to Canopy Tower

**Crab-eating raccoon *Procyon cancrivorus*** Seen nicely in the Tranquilo Bay garden

**White-nosed coati *Nasua narica*** Seen almost every day in the area around Canopy Tower and in the Radisson Summit Hotel & Golf grounds

**Spectacled caiman *Caiman crocodilus*** Seen in the Chagres River and another in a forest stream in the Darien

**Yellow-bellied slider turtle *Trachemys scripta*** Seen at Summit Ponds

**Yellow-headed gecko *Gonatodes albogularis*** A nice male was seen at Tranquilo Bay

**Green basilisk *Basiliscus plumifrons*** Seen at Tranquilo Bay. This lizard is able to run short distances across water, using both its feet and tail for support, an ability shared with other basilisks and the Malaysian sail-finned lizard, *Hydrosaurus amboinensis*. In Costa Rica this has earned the green basilisk the nickname "Jesus Christ lizard". It is also an excellent swimmer and can stay under water for up to 30 minutes. The green basilisk's generic name *Basiliscus* is taken from the legendary reptilian creature of European mythology, which could turn a man to stone by its gaze, the basilisk.

**Brown basilisk *Basiliscus vittatus*** A young male was seen nicely at Tranquilo Bay.

**Green iguana *Iguana iguana*** Several sightings in the Darien and at Tranquilo Bay

**Green anole *Anolis carolinensis*** Seen at Tranquilo Bay

**Middle American Ameiva *Holcosus festivus*** Common around Canopy Camp

**Fer-de-lance *Bothrops asper*** I highly enjoy watching snakes, even the poisonous ones, from a certain distance, but definitely not the way I crossed this one along a trail at night in the Darien. I almost stepped on it.

**Green-and-black poison frog *Dendrobates auratus*** Seen at Tranquilo Bay

**Black scorpion *Centruroides limbatus*** This huge scorpion was seen in the Darien

**Southern stingray *Dasyatis americana*** We had beautiful views of this species through the clear waters of Tranquilo Bay.

**Spotted eagle ray *Aetobatus narinari*** We had beautiful views of this species through the clear waters of Tranquilo Bay