

PANAMA

CANOPY TOWER AND CANOPY LODGE

July 17 – 26, 2021

\$2695

DETAILED ITINERARY

The following itinerary is a proposal and will not necessarily be followed in the exact order given. We will visit most sites on the itinerary, but the guides will select the sites and the sequence to follow based on current conditions and bird sightings at the time of the tour. In addition, guides could replace scheduled sites with others if a better birding opportunity presents itself.

Day 1, July 17: Arrival

Arrive at Panama's Tocumen International Airport, where a representative from the Canopy Tower will meet you and provide transportation to the Tower.

Overnight: Canopy Tower (meals provided will depend on the time of your arrival)

Day 2, July 18: Canopy Tower

AM: Observation Deck and Semaphore Hill

PM: Ammo Dump Pond

You will awake this morning to the sounds of the rain forest that surrounds the Canopy Tower. The Canopy Tower provides a prime location from which to observe the birds and other wildlife of the forest canopy. From the tower, the wildlife is right at eye level, and it is normal to get fantastic views of birds you would hardly see otherwise. You don't have to leave the tower



Three-toed Sloth

to find birds; you don't even have to leave your bedroom! Tanagers, Toucans, and Tityras can be seen right from your window. The dining area and the roof of the tower are extraordinary for finding elusive canopy birds, as well as Howler Monkeys, Sloths, Tamarins, and other mammals. Before breakfast today, we will spend some time on the observation deck

searching for some of the myriad of species that inhabit the surrounding forest. Some of the bird species we are likely to see are Green and Red-legged Honeycreepers, Green Shrike-Vireo, Palm Tanager, Blue Dacnis, Keel-billed Toucans, Collared Aracari, and many others. The possibilities are limitless! After breakfast, we will start exploring the forests of Central Panama as we walk down Semaphore Hill Road. This paved road, which serves as the entrance road to the Canopy Tower, is a little more than a mile long and passes through Soberania National Park. Here you will get a chance to see birds and mammals, such as Antbirds and Agoutis, that spend their lives close to the forest floor. The bird list of Semaphore Hill Road is extensive and includes birds from the forest interior as well as edge dwellers. Olivaceous Flatbill and White-whiskered Puffbird are common; Slate-colored Grosbeak, Gray-headed Tanager, and Broad-billed Motmot are seen frequently. Great Tinamou and Marbled Wood-Quail are present, often heard but to see these secretive ground-dwellers takes some effort. The road is also great for raptors: Tiny, White, and Bicolored Hawks have been seen here. When we get to the bottom of Semaphore Hill Road, we will be driven back to the top in one of the



White-whiskered Puffbird

Canopy Tower's specialized vehicles. The Birdmobile and Rainfomobile were designed specifically for birding, with open air seating that allows for unobstructed views in every direction. We will enjoy lunch and a short rest before venturing out for our afternoon excursion to the Ammo Dump Pond. The Ammo Dump Pond is located just north of 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. Wattled Jacanas, Common Moorhens, and Purple Gallinules are common while Rufescent Tiger-Heron and American Pygmy Kingfishers are present but more difficult to find. Occasionally Limpkins are sighted, and maybe with some luck, Least Bitterns. Snail Kites have recently taken up residence at the Ammo Dump Ponds as well. We will return to the Canopy Tower in time for a warm shower before dinner.

Overnight: Canopy Tower (BLD)

Day 3, July 19: Canopy Tower

AM: Rainforest Discovery Center, Pipeline Road entrance

PM: Summit Park

This morning we will travel in the Rainfomobile to the entrance of Pipeline Road, where we will first visit the Rainforest Discovery Center. Our first stop at the Discovery Center will be the 40-meter tower that allows us to search for canopy species as they begin their morning activities. After spending a few hours here, we'll stop at their hummingbird feeders to see some of the many species that regularly feed there: Long-tailed Hermit, White-necked Jacobin, Violet-bellied, Rufous-tailed, Snowy-bellied, and Blue-chested Hummingbirds, White-vented Plumeleteer, and Crowned Woodnymph. If we are very lucky, we might even catch a glimpse of a Rufous-crested Coquette! We will bird along a short part of the famous Pipeline Road or a trail at the Discovery Center before we head back to the Canopy Tower for lunch.

Following our midday siesta, we will visit Summit Park, a combination botanical garden, animal rehab center, family park that is maintained and operated by Panama City. Here we will take in the Harpy Eagle exhibit and see the resident Harpy Eagle in her large aviary. Afterwards, we'll stroll the grounds in search of common species such as Lineated Woodpecker, Black-chested Jay, Giant Cowbird, Shiny Cowbird, Common Tody-Flycatcher, and Crimson-backed Tanager. Some not-so-common species usually show up, so we'll keep our eyes and ears open for any possibility. We'll return to the Canopy Tower in time for a quick shower and dinner before we venture out to experience the rain forest after dark. At night, the forest changes into a completely different world. More than eight species of owls and potoos have been seen on the roads around the Canopy Tower, and we might get to hear the mournful cry of the Common Potoo in addition to seeing the bird. Many interesting nocturnal mammals inhabit the forest, including Two-toed Sloth, Night Monkey, Kinkajou, Woolly Opossum, and Rothschild's Porcupine. If we are extremely lucky, we might see one of the wild cats that inhabit this forest, Jaguarundi and Ocelot. (Our night drive will be scheduled for another night if the weather prohibits it on the scheduled night.)

Overnight: Canopy Tower (BLD)



Crowned Woodnymph

Day 4, July 20: Canopy Tower

AM: Pipeline Road

PM: Chagres River

Today we will explore the world-famous Pipeline Road, one of the premier birding sites of the

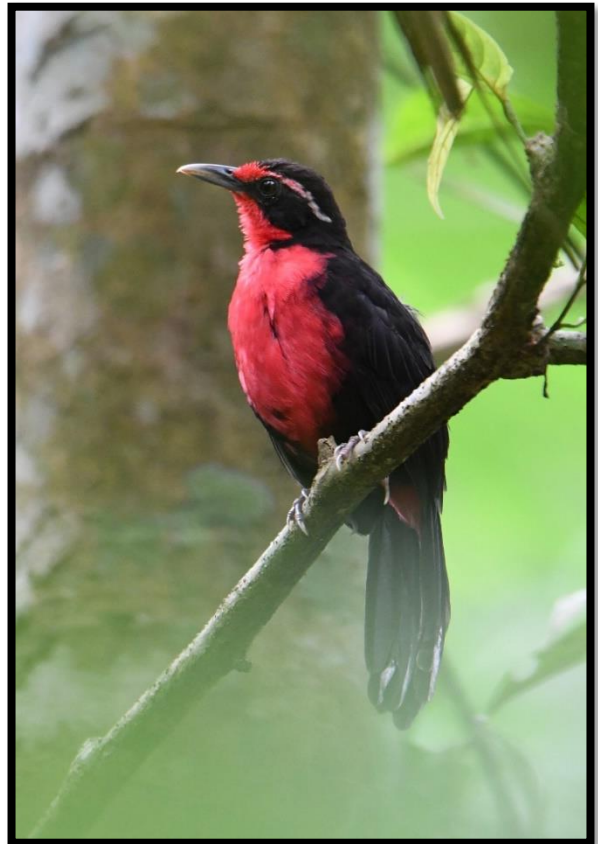
Americas. The Rainfomobile allows us to explore the second half of Pipeline Road, which offers the possibility of new species because of its overlap with the Atlantic area. We'll be on the lookout for ant swarms that attract nice mixed flocks as well as White-necked and Black-breasted Puffbirds, Antpittas, Great Jacamar, Black-tailed Trogon, Crane Hawk, Black Hawk-Eagle, Cinnamon Woodpecker, Black-striped Woodcreeper and many other species.



Tamandua

After lunch at the Tower and a midday siesta, we'll travel a short distance to the property of the Gamboa Rainforest Resort where we typically find a good variety of species: Yellow-tailed and Yellow-backed Orioles, Black-headed Saltator, White-bellied Antbird, Rosy Thrush-Tanager, Great Antshrike, Chestnut-backed Antbird, and Squirrel Cuckoo are but a few of the possibilities. Near the Chagres River, we'll walk along the banks to search for a variety of water birds such as Amazon Kingfisher, American Pygmy Kingfisher, Purple Gallinule, Anhinga, and multiple heron and egret species. Other species we might encounter include Blue-crowned Motmot, Cinnamon Woodpecker, Gray-necked Woodrail, and several species of flycatcher. Other wildlife of the area include alligators, turtles, and capybaras.

Overnight: Canopy Tower (BLD)



Rosy Thrush-Tanager

Day 5, July 21: Transfer to Canopy Lodge

AM: Chagres River

PM: Transfer to Canopy Lodge

Today, we'll spend some time on the observation deck before breakfast, enjoying one last morning overlooking the canopy. After breakfast we will descend Semaphore Hill Road to the entrance of Plantation Road. Here, we will walk for a few hours along the easy graded dirt

road that passes through a mature forest. The road follows a small creek, Rio Chico Masambi, where we have encountered nesting Sunbitterns, as well as Caimans. Golden-crowned Spadebills are regular around the creek, and White-breasted Wood-Wrens are very easy to find. In most places, the forest is clear of undergrowth, making it especially suited for observing shy, interior forest birds like Tinamous and Leaf-tossers. If we are lucky enough to come upon an Army Ant swarm, we should have good views of the birds that are attracted by the ants: Spotted, Bicolored and Ocellated Antbirds, Gray-headed Tanagers, Plain-brown, Northern Barred and Ruddy Woodcreepers, among others.

We will return to the Tower in time for a mid-morning departure for the Canopy Lodge, where we will spend the next four nights. If we have enough time, we will stop at the market on our way through El Valle de Anton, a lovely village nestled in the crater of an extinct volcano that exploded five million years ago. Located in El Valle de Anton, the lodge offers a bit of luxury amid the unique scenery of the dormant volcano - a steep valley surrounded by jagged peaks and filled with

flowers, streams, and verdant forests. The lodge was built next to a lovely mountain stream and is adjacent to the protected area of Cerro Gaital Natural Monument. We plan to arrive midday and will have lunch in the lodge's open-air dining room shortly after we arrive. Once we have settled into our rooms and have had time to observe some of the birds in the garden and at the feeders, we will walk with our guides along the entrance road to the lodge to see what we can find. Some of the species we might expect to see near the lodge include Crimson-backed,



Gray-cowled Wood-Rail

Blue-gray, Dusky-faced, and Plain-colored Tanagers, Social Flycatcher, Ruddy Ground-Dove, Barred Antshrike, Yellow-faced Grassquit, Rufous-tailed, Blue-chested, Snowy-bellied and Violet-capped Hummingbirds, Clay-colored Robin, Gray-cowled Wood-Rail, and Orange-billed Sparrow, among others. Verbena bushes near the lodge have hosted Rufous-crested Coquettes for the last few years, so we have a good chance of spotting this cute little hummingbird.

Overnight Canopy Lodge (BLD)

Day 6, July 22: Canopy Lodge

AM: Cerro Gaital Trail **PM: Birding in Lodge vicinity OR Canopy Adventure**

Today we will wake up early and go birding around the mountain trails surrounding the crater where it is possible to find Emerald Toucanets, Orange-bellied Trogon, Spotted Barbtail, Common Bush-Tanager, Black-faced Grosbeak, Rufous-capped Warbler, Gray-headed Kite, Tawny-capped Euphonia, White-tailed Emerald, and Violet-headed Hummingbird, to name a few. If we are lucky we might see a Scaled Antpitta or a Black-headed Antthrush.

After lunch, our birding guide will take us to yet another nearby area to find some new species.

Some very special birds have been sighted here, including the majestic White Hawk, the tiny Tody Motmot, the melodious Striped Cuckoo, and the elegant Sunbittern. Some colorful tanagers and honeycreepers are expected here as well, including Silver-throated, Golden-hooded and Bay-headed Tanagers along with Blue and Scarlet-thighed Dacnis. This trail will offer good possibilities of seeing Brown-hooded and Blue-headed Parrots, Squirrel Cuckoo, Wedge-billed Woodcreeper, Black-chested Jay and Crimson-crested Woodpecker.

Alternatively, those who wish to do so will have the opportunity to experience the Canopy Adventure (extra fee approximately \$65), a series of zip lines high in the canopy by which travelers can explore the rain forest using safe and modern climbing equipment.



Golden-hooded Tanager

The Canopy Adventure is located in a private refuge in the foothills above El Valle. The main attraction of this refuge is a beautiful 150 feet high waterfall called Chorro Macho. The birdlife and the flora are especially rich and diverse because the area has been a wildlife refuge for several years. The principle purpose of this refuge, apart from the obvious task of keeping the area free from poachers and loggers, has been to provide sustainable, nature-based employment to ten young men who would otherwise be cutting down the forest through slash and burn agricultural methods in order to survive and raise their families. The refuge is a way to keep the forest ecosystem whole while providing much needed employment.

After an invigorating short climb to the top of the ridge through bird-rich forest, you strap in and soar through the treetops, where you see a wealth of natural beauty and activity. As you walk through the forest to the first platform, you might spot a variety of bird species, including Broad-billed Motmot, White-tipped Sicklebill, Dull-mantled Antbird, Bananaquit,

Green and Stripe-throated Hermits, and Dusky-faced and Tawny-crested Tanagers Swooping from platform to platform among the sturdy cloud forest trees, you pass over the stream and waterfall not once, but twice.

Overnight Canopy Lodge (BLD)

Day 7, July 23: Canopy Lodge El Chiru and the Pacific Ocean

Today we will have an early breakfast and travel outside El Valle to visit a patch of dry forest just one hour away near the small village of El Chiru. The contrast with the lush and wet foothills of El Valle is dramatic. This habitat consists of relatively permanent growth of low and often straggly bushes and small trees with grass interspersed. It is a distinctive habitat of the Pacific lowlands and there is little of it left because so much of the population in Panama has settled in the Pacific Coast. We will search for Pale-eyed Pygmy-Tyrant, Crested Bobwhite, Rufous-browed Peppershrike, Brown-throated Parakeet, Blue Ground Dove, Fork-tailed Flycatcher and Pearl Kite, among other feathered residents of this scarce scrubby area. We hope to encounter the Veraguan Mango, a near-endemic species of Hummingbird (just one sighting in Costa Rica), and we'll check the vultures flying low to pick out a Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture among the more common Turkey and Black Vultures. Bird activity is high during the first few hours, and it usually gets hot early in the day. When we finish with our morning of birding, we'll head to the Pacific shore where we'll enjoy lunch at a private beach house. Our midday break will be here, and some participants may choose to bring swim suits to enjoy the warm waters of the Pacific during the time we spend at the beach. Magnificent Frigatebirds, Laughing Gulls, Brown Boobies, and some Tern species are possible as we relax, as well as some shorebird species. We'll return to the Lodge in time for a shower and a short break before dinner.

Overnight Canopy Lodge (BLD)

Day 8, July 24: Altos del Maria

Today we will take a tour to Altos del Maria, a gated mountain residential community that offers excellent accessible montane habitat at elevations of up to 3800 feet above sea level. As we enjoy a pleasant break from the heat and humidity of lower elevations, we will be on the lookout for species that prefer the cooler temperatures and the accompanying

vegetation of the highlands. Black-and-yellow Tanager, Slate-colored and Black-faced Grosbeaks, Scarlet-thighed Tanager, White-vented Euphonia, Gray-breasted Wood-Wren, Ochraceous Wren, Long-billed Gnatwren, White-ruffed Manakin, Rufous-browed Tyrannulet, Common Tufted Flycatcher, Slaty Antwren, Yellow-eared and Emerald Toucanets, Barred Forest-Falcon, Band-tailed



Barbthroat, and Snowcap are some of the species we hope to find here. This is a full-day outing with a lakeside picnic lunch at a lovely park within Altos del Maria. Again, we'll return to the Lodge in time for a shower and short break before dinner.

Overnight Canopy Lodge (BLD)

Day 9, July 25: Canopy Lodge - Panama City

After some morning birding and an early lunch at the Canopy Lodge, we will depart for Panama City. We will arrive at the Miraflores Locks of the Panama Canal in time to tour the museum and observe ships traveling through the locks. Afterwards, we will enjoy a farewell dinner at a traditional Panamanian restaurant before going to our hotel near the airport.

Overnight Hotel Riande Aeropuerto (or Crowne Plaza), Panama City (BD)

Day 10, July 26: Departure

This morning, participants will enjoy a buffet breakfast at the hotel before taking the hotel shuttle to the airport at a time that is convenient for their scheduled flights. **(B)**

Price Includes:

- ~ Lodging
- ~ All meals as indicated
- ~ All land transportation within Panama
- ~ Airport transfers
- ~ Entrance fees
- ~ Expert bilingual birding guide(s)
- ~ Two ***Cheepers!*** Tour Leaders (Jim & Cindy Beckman)
- ~ Pre-trip gift package, including customized checklist
- ~ Post-trip photo collection and electronic version of final checklist

Price does NOT Include:

- ~ International airfare to Panama City, Panama
- ~ Expenses of a personal nature such as laundry, phone calls, snacks, souvenirs, etc.
- ~ Tips

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

Deposit of \$500 with registration. Balance is due March 17, 2021.

Cancellation policy:

Cancellation should be made in writing (email or snail mail)

More than 6 months prior to departure – full refund of deposit

Between 4 and 6 months prior to departure – 50% refund of deposit

Less than 4 months prior to departure – No refund of deposit

Trip insurance is recommended.

You can compare prices offered by various trip insurance companies at these websites:

<http://www.quotewright.com/>

<https://www.insuremytrip.com/>

Cheepers! Birding on a Budget LLC reserves the right to make changes in the itinerary if the need should arise due to unforeseeable circumstances such as weather, landslides, and other natural phenomena, as well as suggestions by local guides in order to take advantage of an unusual birding opportunity.

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