

Cheepers! News

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June 30, 2012

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Welcome to Volume 3, Issue 2 of **Cheepers! News** issued by Jim Beckman with review, critique and photos provided by Cindy Beckman. If you are interested in reading previous newsletters, click [here](#).

As a reminder, the **Cheepers!** mission is to **bird the best birding locations using comfortable lodging and expert local bilingual birding guides while maintaining a lower per-day cost than comparable tours offered by the major birding tour companies.**

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We should call this the Canopy Tower /BWIAB special issue as many of the articles are about the Canopy Tower Family, Carlos Bethancourt and BWIAB.

Brazil here we come! We visit Cristalino Lodge in Amazonia, then the Pantanal and Cerrado biomes, and finish up in the Atlantic Forests. Four biomes in 20 days with an expectation of 600 birds species including nesting Harpy Eagle and Hyacinth Macaws. Throw in the possibility of Jaguar sightings and this becomes a truly spectacular trip. Look for our trip report in an upcoming newsletter.

New Tag Line

A good friend of ours, well-known in the birding community, recently suggested this tag line for **Cheepers!**: **"You don't travel through us, you travel with us"**.

From everything she has seen and heard about **Cheepers!**, she is impressed with the way we deliver quality trips at affordable prices along with providing outstanding personal attention to our customers during these trips.

What's New!

2013 PANAMA CANAL ZONE & CHIRIQUI HIGHLANDS

We just added our popular Panama Canal Zone & Chiriqui Highlands trip to the 2013 schedule. This is a 8 full days of birding and we have seen between 340 and 350 species on each of our last 4 trips following this itinerary including 139 in one day during our April 2012 trip. This price for this trip includes a round trip flight to the Chiriqui Highlands (David), a day trip to the Bayano lowland forests for some Darien specialties and dinner at the Panama Canal Miraflores Locks.

2013 HONDURAS

Our February 2 – 9, 2013, Honduras trip has sold out before we could even publicize the fact that Kenn and Kim Kaufman will be joining **Cheepers!** on this trip. If you would like to be wait-listed for this trip in case we get a cancellation, please call or drop us an email.

We have a second Honduras trip scheduled from March 9 – 16, and plenty of spots are available.

2013 PANAMA CANOPY TOWER

The Canopy Tower Family is adding a new location in 2013 when they open the Canopy Camp in the Darien Province. Lodging will be African-style tents on platforms with comfortable beds, fans, and private bathrooms with showers and flush toilets.

From a **Cheepers!** perspective, we have already filled our April 2013 Canopy Tower/Canopy Lodge trip but we are looking into adding a pre-trip extension to the camp. We also are working on adding a summer trip which will include all three locations. Please let us know if you are interested in being put on a wait-list for the April trip, interested in just the April pre-trip extension to the camp or interested in the summer trip to all three locations.

2013 SOUTH AFRICA

On May 30th, we confirmed dates, finalized pricing and notified our long list of friends and customers who had expressed strong interest in going with **Cheepers!** to South Africa in the fall of 2013. To accommodate our lengthy list of interested birders, we scheduled two 17-day Subtropical Trips with an 8-day Western Cape Trip in between.

Responses have been overwhelming. As of June 25:

- Subtropical Tour 1 (Oct 6 – 22, 2013) has two openings
- Western Cape Tour (Oct 22 – 29, 2013) has two openings
- Subtropical Tour 2 (Oct 29 – Nov 14, 2013) is filled

If you are interested in one or more of the open slots or if you would like to be wait-listed for Subtropical Tour # 2 in case we get a cancellation, please contact us as soon as possible.

Working on 2014 Calendar

We have confirmed dates for our April 2014 Canopy trips. We will again run simultaneous trips (as we did earlier this year) and will visit all three properties (Canopy Camp, Canopy Tower and Canopy Lodge).

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Cheepers! - Escorted Tour Schedule

Cheepers! is accepting registrations for the following escorted tours:

2012

Nov 27 – Dec 11 **ECUADOR**

Eastern Ecuador - \$3455 (**price reduced** – see pages 5 and 6 for more information on this trip)

Dec 11 – Dec 15 **ECUADOR**

Amazon Extension - \$1245

2013

Jan 12 – Jan 21 **PANAMA**

Canal Zone & Chiriqui Highlands - \$1988

Feb 2 – Feb 9 **HONDURAS (SOLD OUT)**

Quetzals & Pico Bonito Lodge - \$2250

Mar 9 – Mar 16 **HONDURAS**

Quetzals & Pico Bonito Lodge - \$2250

Apr 20 – May 1 **PANAMA (SOLD OUT)**

Canopy Tower & Canopy Lodge – \$2795

Oct 6 – Oct 22 **SOUTH AFRICA (2 spots available)**

Subtropical Tour #1 – 46,500 ZAR

Oct 22 – Oct 29 **SOUTH AFRICA (2 spots available)**

Western Cape – 21,000 ZAR

Oct 29 – Nov 14 **SOUTH AFRICA (SOLD OUT)**

Subtropical Tour #2 – 46,500 ZAR

Nov 30 – Dec 13 **COLOMBIA (2 spots available)**

Colombian Andes & Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta - Price TBA

We are continuing to work our 2013 schedule and hope to finalize the following before we leave for Brazil on July 7:

- Apr **Panama** – Canopy Camp Extension to existing Canopy Tower/Canopy Lodge trip
- Jun/Jul **Panama** - Canopy Camp/Canopy Tower/Canopy Lodge

We are also looking into a Southeast Arizona trip in late July.

2014

Apr 7 – Apr 23 **PANAMA**

Canopy 1 (Camp/Tower/Lodge) - \$3485

Apr 7 – Apr 23 **PANAMA**

Canopy 2 (Tower/Lodge) - \$2795

Canopy 2 Extension (Camp) - \$690

If you are interested in being wait-listed for one of our sold out trips in case we get a cancellation, please call or email us.

Visit the **Cheepers!** website www.cheepersbirding.com

for prices, detailed itineraries & registration forms.

If you have questions or need more information regarding our trips, please email us at

cheepers@sbcglobal.net or call us at 937-862-4505.

Cheepers! - Custom Tours

Cheepers! custom tours are normally led by Jim and/or Cindy, depending on the preferences of the group arranging the tour. When the tour is led by the Beckmans, all of the services provided in escorted tours are available to the group. If the group opts to schedule an unescorted tour, we do all we can to ensure that their needs will be met by carefully planning every facet of the tour and arranging for a highly qualified local guide. The trip coordinator would then assume the duties as tour leader, in which case **Cheepers!** would not be able to provide a final list of sightings, a DVD of photos, or a trip report at the end of the tour.

Our next scheduled custom tour is Colombia (Nov 30 – Dec 13, 2013) and we have 2 spots available.

If you have a group or organization interested in a birding destination, please allow us an opportunity to present a proposal. To develop a proposal, we need the following information:

- Where do you want to go (country or state)?
- Any specific sites?
- Any specific birds you want to see?
- When do you want to go?
- How many days should the trip be?
- What is your expected group size?
- If you are a non-profit organization, would you like this trip to be used as a fund-raiser?
- Do you want **Cheepers!** representatives to lead this trip?

Email or call for more information.

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Itineraries are available for the following destinations:

Alaska	Florida
Argentina	Guyana
Arizona (Southeast)	Honduras
Belize	Maine
Bolivia	Namibia
Brazil	Panama
California (CA Specialties)	Peru
Colombia	South Africa
Costa Rica	Texas (Gulf Coast)
Ecuador (Northern)	Texas (High Country)
Ecuador Photographer's Tour	Texas (Rio Grande Valley)
Ecuador (Southwest)	



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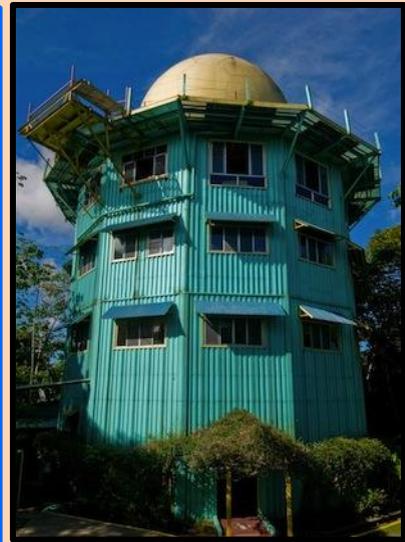
One of our Favorite Lodges – The Canopy Tower

Awaken to a tropical chorus of motmots, toucans, and fruitcrows.

Your bedroom is at treetop level, no more than 40 feet from the birds. In the cool Panamanian dawn you can feel Panamá's great rainforest awakening around you. Blue Cotingas and Green Shrike-Vireos, birds normally glimpsed high in the tops of trees, perch right outside your Canopy Tower room.

Up a flight of stairs in the dining room, a cup of coffee, fresh juice and rolls await you. Settle down at a table next to the window with your binoculars and field guide handy. Above the endless tropical forest of Soberanía National Park, a ship glides through the Panamá Canal. The howling of a distant troupe of monkeys punctuates the birdcalls. With unobstructed views, in complete comfort, you greet the morning sun. Through the unscreened open window, nature carries on its morning business.

Don't worry if you are new to birding, this is a great place to start. Dozens of species can be seen right from your window, most of them clearly illustrated in Panamá's excellent bird guides. The Canopy Tower is also a great place for those with a general interest in exploring the tropical forest. Giant, iridescent Morpho Butterflies flash their blue wings at you as you ride up the twisting road up to the Tower. Howler Monkeys startle you with a sudden roar overhead. Each shrub, tree and flower seems to be different from the last, reflecting Soberanía's extraordinary diversity.



Article and photo courtesy of the Canopy Tower Family Website

See page 9 for more information about the Canopy Tower.

Do you need a guest speaker for a local chapter/club meeting?

Depending on our schedules and the proximity of your group to one of the birding festivals we plan to attend or if you are in Ohio or in a state bordering Ohio, we are available as guest speakers for your local group.

We have the following presentations available:

- 2009 Harpy Eagle Trip to Panama
- Birding in Costa Rica (covers 3 trips)
- Birding in Ecuador (covers 5 trips)
- Birding in Peru (Macchu Pichu & Manu Road)
- Birding in South Africa

Birding Festival Schedule

Cheepers! is currently planning to participate in the following birding festivals:

- Nov 2012 – Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival
- Jan 2013 – Space Coast Birding Festival
- Mar 2013 – San Diego Birding Festival
- May 2013 – Biggest Week In American Birding

If you attend one of these festivals, please look for us at our vendor's booth or say hello to us on the boardwalk at Magee Marsh.

2012 BWIAB Book Winners

Congratulations to our field guide drawing winners at the Biggest Week in American Birding:

- Bill & Carla Hall** selected The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Western North America
- Julie & Rich Jerdonek** selected Hawks at a Distance: Identification of Migrant Raptors
- Anagene Loebick** selected Hawks from Every Angle: How to Identify Raptors In Flight
- Flo MacLeod** selected The Birds of Ecuador Field Guide

BOOKS WE'VE GIVEN AWAY

At each birding festival we go to, we invite attendees to complete a "Birder's Survey" which creates an entry into a bird book/field guide drawing. During the last 10 festivals **Cheepers!** attended, we have given away 31 birding books/field guides:

- Hawks from Every Angle: How to Identify Raptors in Flight – 7 copies
- Birds of Ecuador – 6 copies
- Birds of Belize – 3 copies
- Birds of Panama – 3 copies
- A Field Guide to the Birds of Brazil – 2 copies
- Birds of Africa South of the Sahara – 2 copies
- Newman's Birds of South Africa – 2 copies

- Birds of Peru - 1 copy
- Hawks at a Distance: Identification of Migrant Raptors – 1 copy
- Stokes Field Guide to Warblers - 1 copy
- The Birds of Costa Rica – 1 copy
- The Sibley Field Guide of Eastern North America – 1 copy
- The Sibley Field Guide of Western North America - copy



Highlights of the April 2012 Canopy Tower Trips

From the June 2012 Canopy Tower Family Newsletter

Dear Friends,

History was made when Cheepers! Birding on a Budget owners Cindy and Jim Beckman brought two groups simultaneously to the Canopy Tower and Canopy Lodge from April 22 – May 3. Tour 1, led by Jim, had 12 enthusiastic birders and visited the Tower first, before transferring to the Canopy Lodge. Tour 2, also with 12, was led by Cindy and began at the Canopy Lodge, then came to the Tower. On the last day, both groups rendezvoused at the Miraflores Locks Museum, where Zelesny, Denise and I joined them for a farewell dinner. Thanks, Cheepers!

Raúl Arias de Para
President/Founder
Canopy Tower Family

Jim, Denise and Raul at Miraflores Locks



Rufous Motmot

As Raul described above, **Cheepers!** took two groups to Panama in April 2012. Jim's group spent 5 nights at the Canopy Tower followed by 5 nights at the Canopy Lodge while Cindy's group spent 5 nights at the Canopy Lodge followed by 5 nights at the Canopy Tower. The final night for both groups was spent at a hotel near the airport after the groups met at Miraflores Lock for a scrumptious buffet dinner.

While staying at the Canopy Tower, each group birded Semaphore Hill Road, the Ammo Dump Ponds, Rainforest Discovery Center, Pipeline Road, Chagres River, Summit Ponds, Summit Gardens, Old Gamboa Road, and, of course, the Canopy Tower Observation Deck.

While staying at the Canopy Lodge, each group birded the lodge grounds, the road in front of the lodge, Cerro Gaital Trail, El Chiru, La Zamia Trail, Chorro Macho Trails, Altos del Maria, and the private gardens of a local birder.

Jim's group recorded 302 species seen, 28 heard, 1 guide only, and 1 fly-by. Of the 302 seen, 29 were new species not seen by **Cheepers!** on 2 previous Canopy trips. Cindy's group recorded 310 species seen, 15 heard, 4 guide only, and 4 fly-by. Of the 310 seen, 28 were new species not seen by **Cheepers!** on 2 previous Canopy trips.

Between the 2 groups, we saw 46 new species on these Canopy trips which brings our total species seen on 4 Canopy trips to 416. The new species seen were Great Tinamou, Black Guan, Fasciated Tiger-Heron, Capped Heron, Hook-billed Kite, Pearl Kite, Crane Hawk, Zone-tailed Hawk, Collared Forest-Falcon, American Kestrel, Merlin, Aplomado Falcon, American Coot, Black-necked Stilt, Greater Yellowlegs, Royal Tern, Ruddy Quail-Dove, Yellow-crowned Parrot, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Striped Cuckoo, Common Pauraque, Black Swift, Chimney Swift, Rufous-crested Coquette, White-tailed Emerald, Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer, Purple-throated Mountain-gem, American Pygmy Kingfisher, Pied Puffbird, Pale-breasted Spinetail, Red-faced Spinetail, Northern Barred-Woodcreeper, Brown-billed Scythebill, Russet Antshrike, Ocellated Antbird, Northern Scrub-Flycatcher, White-throated Spadebill, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Yellow-throated Vireo, Brown-chested Martin, Tawny-faced Gnatwren, Hermit Warbler, Shining Honeycreeper, Wedge-tailed Grass-Finch, Carmiol's Tanager, and Elegant Euphonia.



Crimson-backed Tanager



Spectacled Owl



Golden-headed Tanager



Tody Motmot



Common Potoo



Yellow-rumped Tanager



Red-legged Honeycreeper

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Spotlight Tour – NORTHERN ECUADOR

By Cindy Beckman

We are often asked what is our favorite trip. With so many remarkable destinations on our schedule, this is a very difficult question to answer, but I can say without hesitation that northern Ecuador is one of the top three (tied with Panama and South Africa). With over 1600 species in an area the size of Nevada, 131 species of Hummingbirds, and lodges that are ideally located as well as being comfortable and offering outstanding meals, there are few places that can compare to the birding experience that awaits you in Ecuador.

We begin our tour in Quito, spending the night there on arrival day. Sleeping at an altitude of 9000 feet helps acclimate us to the elevation we visit on the first full day of birding at Yanacocha. Reaching a bit over 11,000 feet above sea level, this reserve provides our first looks at highland specialties such as Mountain-Tanagers, Tawny and Rufous Antpittas, and a myriad of Hummingbirds, including Sword-billed. After a box lunch at the reserve, we head down the famous Nono-Mindo Road to the Tandayapa Valley for three full days of birding. Our favorite lodge on the eastern slope, Sachatamia Lodge overlooks the Mindo Valley and provides hummingbird and platform feeders that attract dozens of species. We start our first morning there in the parking lot, where lights have attracted insects that, in turn, attract birds at daybreak. On our last trip, we saw dozens of species without leaving the lodge property. Multiple Toucan Barbets and Pale-mandibled Aracaris moved in close for the fruit offered at the platform feeders. Beryl-spangled and Flame-faced Tanagers, Strong-billed Woodcreeper, Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager, Dusky Bush-Tanager, Speckled Chachalaca, and Sickle-winged Guan were but a few of the remarkable species seen from **one spot!** The hummingbird feeders attract Booted Racket-tail, Velvet-Purple Coronet, Violet-tailed Sylph, Empress Brilliant, and several other stunning hummingbirds all day long. From this charming lodge, we visit Paz de las Aves, the world-famous refuge where four species of Antpittas have been trained to come out from their hiding places in the dense forest for worms offered by the owner, Angel Paz. On our last trip, we were also able to see an Ocellated Tapaculo that Angel has recently trained, as well as Crimson-rumped Toucanet, Black-chinned Mountain-Tanagers, and Olivaceous Piha that come to feeders. After leaving the Paz refuge, we visit a farm where enigmatic Oilbirds can be seen, sometimes descending into the gorge where they roost by day. Climbing down bamboo ladders wearing a rock-climbing harness for safety, we are able to see these birds at eye-level. Near Sachatamia is Bellavista Research Road, where we often find Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan, the "cover bird" of the **Field Guide to the Birds of Ecuador**. After three days in the Tandayapa and Mindo Valleys, we move westward to lower elevation. From our base at Ayalir Lodge we visit Milpe Reserve, where Club-winged Manakins are the star performers and where we often see Guira and Rufous-necked Tanagers, among a multitude of other brightly-colored species. Silanche Reserve is another reserve we bird in this area, taking advantage of the canopy tower there during the early-morning hours.



Giant Antpitta



Violet-tailed Sylph



Pale-mandibled Aracari



Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan



Flame-faced Tanager

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Spotlight Tour – NORTHERN ECUADOR (Continued)



Toucan Barbet



Gould's Jewelfront

Next, as we move on to the eastern slope of the Andes, we stop at the Equator Museum for some insight into Ecuadorian culture and history. Before beginning our descent down the eastern slope, we climb to an altitude of over 13,000 feet to visit Antisana National Park, where we have seen Andean Condors on our last 4 trips, including a family of 5 on the ground and 2 groups of five in one binocular view. Visiting Antisana is like visiting another world, with paramo vegetation and birds that are adapted to living at this extreme altitude. Giant Hummingbird, Ecuadorian Hillstar, Bar-winged and Stout-billed Cinclodes, Silvery Grebes, and Carunculated Caracaras are just a few of the species we normally see. As we make our way down the eastern slope, we stay 2 nights at Guango Lodge and 2 nights at San Isidro Lodge, each with their attendant specialty birds such as Torrent Duck, Crested Quetzal, Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan, and several new hummingbird species. Inca Jays are so common at San Isidro, they are considered "junk birds", and the famous San Isidro "Mystery Owl" is normally easy to find. We finish our tour with 2 nights at Wild Sumaco Lodge, our favorite lodge on the eastern slope, with Gould's Jewelfront and Wire-crested Thorntails part of the welcoming committee on the lodge's deck. Paradise Tanagers, Gilded Barbets, and assorted raptors are but a few of the species usually seen from the spacious deck.

I don't have room to tell you about more of the species that will be seen on this tour, but, believe me, there are many! You'll just have to come with us to see them for yourself! AND - You can top this tour off with 5 days in the Amazon Basin at the Napo Wildlife Center, one of the most beautiful and comfortable lodges we've ever visited. Amazonian Umbrellabird, Hoatzin, Black-necked Red Cotinga, island endemics, parrot licks, so much more to see and experience – **the Amazon Basin is like nowhere else on earth.**



Masked Flowerpiercer)



Inca Jays (Immatures)



Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager

SPECIAL FOR NOVEMBER, 2012!

Our 15-day Northern Ecuador tour is priced at \$3455. Minimum 6 participants, Maximum 10.

If we register 8 - 9 participants, we will take \$100 off the price for each person.

If we register a full group of 10 participants, we will take \$200 off the price for each person in the group.

IN ADDITION, if you refer someone, we will take an additional \$100 off the cost of your tour for each person you refer (roommate excepted), up to 4 referrals.

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BIGGEST WEEK IN AMERICAN BIRDING HIGHLIGHTS

221 total species seen during the festival, and thousands of dollars raised for bird research, education, and conservation, place this year's festival firmly in the "epic event" category.

Quote courtesy of the BWIAB Website

CHEEPERS! BIGGEST WEEK IN AMERICAN BIRDING HIGHLIGHTS

While **Cheepers!** was in Panama in January 2012, Jim and Cindy convinced Carlos Bethancourt, Canopy Tower Family, that he should participate in the Biggest Week In American Birding in May 2012. Leading up to BWIAB, Jim, Cindy and Carlos arranged for Carlos and Jim to give presentations at BWIAB, Bruckner Nature Center, Troy, OH, and the Columbus Audubon Society Chapter.

Carlos led one of the two Cheepers! Canopy Tower/Canopy Lodge tours from April 23 thru May 4th and then flew to Ohio with Jim and Cindy. During the festival, **Cheepers!** and the Canopy Family shared a vendor table at festival headquarters. After the festival, Carlos and Jim gave their presentations to Bruckner on May 14 and Columbus Audubon on May 15. While Carlos was at BWIAB, he gained 5 lifer's (Black-throated Blue, Nashville and Cape May Warblers, the endangered Kirtland's Warbler and an American Woodcock performing its courtship display flight). Carlos returned home to Panama on May 16 after spending 25 days with **Cheepers!**.

In addition to being one of the official sponsors of the Biggest Week in American Birding, **Cheepers!** provided guiding services on the boardwalk plus had a vendor table at the festival headquarters (Maumee Bay Lodge) and at Black Swamp Bird Observatory. We also had our usual billboard on Route 2 near the turn off for Metsger Marsh, redeemed registration packet cards for **Cheepers!** microfiber lens cleaning cloths, and donated one spot each on 2 **Cheepers!** 2013 trips to the BWIAM Silent Auction.

Cheepers!, in partnership with the Canopy Family, Panama, donated one spot in the April 20 to May 1, 2013 **Cheepers!** Canopy Tower and Canopy Lodge trip. This comp covers all land package costs while in Panama (lodging, food, transportation, guide services, and entrance fees). Barb Hiebsch was the winning bidder for this trip.

Cheepers!, in partnership with the Lodge at Pico Bonito, Honduras, donated one spot in the February 2 – 9, 2013, **Cheepers!** "Honduras: Quetzals and Pico Bonito Lodge" trip. This comp covers all land package costs while in Honduras (lodging, food, transportation, guide services, and entrance fees). Andre Meyer was the winning bidder for this trip.

All proceeds from the BWIAB "Silent Auction" support Black Swamp Bird Observatory bird conservation efforts.

Biggest Week in American Birding

Carlos Bethancourt attended the Biggest Week in American Birding (BWIAB) on Lake Erie from May 5 through May 13, where he presented "Natural Splendor of Panama" at Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge. He also led birders at Magee Marsh. "I have never seen so many birders in one place before!" Carlos told us. He is looking forward to next year's event. After the festival Carlos visited the Bruckner Nature Center in Troy, OH, where he presented his popular program. The next day, Carlos repeated his presentation for the Columbus Audubon meeting.



Kenn and Kimberly Kaufman with Carlos at the **Cheepers!** / Canopy Tower Family booth at BWIAB

Article and photo courtesy of the June 2012 issue of the Canopy Tower Family Newsletter.

Cheepers! Billboard on Route 2

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HIGHLIGHTS OF FIRELANDS AUDUBON TEXAS TRIP

Seven chapter members and friends of Firelands Audubon visited the Texas Upper Coast and Texas Hill Country in April with the goal of seeing the Attwater's Greater Prairie-Chicken, Swainson's Warbler, Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Black-capped Vireo, Golden-winged Warbler, and other Texas specialties.

Sites visited included the Attwater Prairie Chicken NWR, Sam Houston National Forest, Jones State Forest, High Island, Smith Woods, Anahuac NWR, Bolivar Peninsula, Friedrich Wilderness Park, Kerr Wildlife Management Area, and South Llano River State Park. In addition to the target species, the group saw Clapper Rail, Vermillion, Ash-throated and Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Bewick's, Cactus and Canyon Wrens, Black-crested Titmouse, Sprague's Pipit, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Lesser Goldfinch, 12 species of Bitterns and Herons, 9 species of Hawks, 17 species of Sandpipers, Phalaropes and Allies, 9 species of Woodpeckers and Allies, 6 species of Vireos, 26 species of Wood Warblers, 13 species of New World Sparrows and Allies, 12 species of Blackbirds, Meadowlarks and Orioles, plus approximately 70 more species.



Attwater Prairie Chicken NWR – Saw the Attwater at the lek and near the road!



The Texas 7



Anahuac NWR - Saw many Clapper Rails



All smiles at Friedrich Wilderness Park – Just saw the Golden-cheeked Warbler



Agarita Blind at South Llano River State Park – Just saw another Black-capped Vireo plus much more



The Texas 7 with local birding guide Darrell Vollmer



One of Texas's "finest" meets the Texas 7



Wildflowers or "Wild Flowers"

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Short History of The Canopy Tower

The structure destined to become the Canopy Tower was built in 1965 by the United States Air Force to house a powerful radar used in the defense of the Panama Canal. By 1969, the site was jointly used by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to control air traffic in the area, and by the Panama Canal Commission (PCC) as a communications tower.

In September of 1988, the radar tower received an important new assignment when it was activated as Site One in the Caribbean Basin Radar Network (CBRN). This network of radars was used by the United States government to detect airplanes suspected of carrying drugs from South America. The tower played this role until June of 1995 when it was closed and left vacant waiting for better days.

In November of 1996, the radar tower and the Semaphore Hill site, consisting of approximately 35 acres of rain-forest within Soberanía National Park, was transferred to Panama in compliance with the Torrijos-Carter Treaties.

In August of 1997, the government of Panama signed a long-term contract with Raul Arias de Para to transform the site into a center for neotropical-rainforest observation and ecotourism.

In January of 1999, the Canopy Tower was inaugurated and the rest, as they say, is history.

*Article and photos courtesy of the
Canopy Tower Family Website*

Canopy Tower Guides



Carlos Bethancourt



Alex Sanchez



Domi Alveo

