

Panama: Canopy Camp

February 29 – March 7, 2024

Itinerary:

Day 1: Thu, Feb 29 – Arrival

Today we begin the long travel day to the Canopy Camp in Darien from the Canal Zone and Panama City. Those of us finishing up the Canopy Lodge & Tower tour will join up with the rest of the group and as we head east along the Pan-American Highway, we will scan for roadside birds and open-field raptors including Savanna Hawk and Crested Caracara. Our first stop will be in the Nusagandi Forest Preserve, off the highway into the foothills of the Caribbean Slope. This area is surrounded by pristine forest that is managed by the Kuna people. Here we will have a picnic lunch and explore the trails and open areas searching for Sapayoa, Speckled Antshrike, Slate-throated Gnatcatcher, Black-and-yellow Tanager, and many more. After lunch we will make stops at Lake Bayano, Panama's second largest lake for Cocoi Heron and Bare-throated Tiger-Heron. A short trail leading from the water's edge is a great place for Black Antshrike, Bare-crowned Antbird, Rufous-winged Antwren and Golden-collared Manakin. The Río Mono Bridge is home to One-colored Becard, Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher, Blue Cotinga, Pied Puffbird, Orange-crowned Oriole and more. We will carry on from here to the Canopy Camp and arrive in time to settle in our tents and get acquainted with the area. After a delicious dinner of typical American and Panamanian fare, we will gather to have a meeting about the days to come, and settle into our tents for the night. ***Night at Canopy Camp***

Day 2: Fri, Mar 1 - Canopy Camp Trails

We will meet before sunrise for a hot drink and to enjoy the predawn songs. Black-mandibled and Keel-billed Toucans call from the towering Cuipo trees, and Red-lored and Mealy Parrots fly overhead. The sounds of White-bellied Antbird, Bright-rumped Attila, White-headed Wren and Golden-collared Manakin ring from the surrounding forests, while Pale-bellied Hermit and Sapphire-throated Hummingbird visit the flowers around camp. After a hearty breakfast, we hike into the forest on "Nando's Trail" in hopes of finding Gray-cheeked Nunlet, Northern Royal Flycatcher, and Golden-headed Manakin. After lunch we can enjoy the hummingbirds and other species around the camp, or have a siesta. We'll meet again at 3:00 pm when we will continue birding around the camp property. The forests are full of great birds waiting to be found, including Tiny Hawk, Black and Great Antshrikes, Olive-backed Quail-Dove, Cinnamon Becard and Black-tailed Trogon. After dinner we will look for owls, including Striped, Crested, Barn, Black-and-white, and Mottled, as well as Common and Great Potoo. ***Night at Canopy Camp***

Day 3: Sat, Mar 2 - El Salto and Las Lagunas Roads

El Salto Road extends 6 km from the Pan-American Highway and ends at the mighty Chucunaque River. This open road and surrounding dry forest will be our destination this morning, and is a great place to search for regional specialties including Golden-green Woodpecker, Double-banded Graytail, Blue-and-gold and Chestnut-fronted Macaws, White-eared Conebill, Black-breasted Puffbird, and the majestic King Vulture. A trail at the end of the road will take us into a low-canopy forest, where we will hope to find Bare-crowned Antbird, Streak-headed Woodcreeper and Forest Elaenia. This afternoon we bird along the road to Las Lagunas. This road extends 12 km south off the Pan-Am Highway through open farmland, dry scrub and roadside habitat and eventually crosses a small stream and ends at some small ponds. In this area we hope to find Red-breasted Blackbird, Spot-breasted Woodpecker, Yellow-breasted Flycatcher, Smooth-billed & Greater Anis, Rufescent Tiger-Heron, Scaly-breasted Hummingbird, Fork-tailed Flycatcher, Buff-breasted Wren, and Aplomado Falcon. ***Night at Canopy Camp***

Day 4: Sun, Mar 3 - Fundacion Tierra Nueva and Yaviza

After another early breakfast we visit the property of the Tierra Nueva Foundation. This is a non-profit organization whose main mission is "working towards the sustainable development of people of the Darién Rainforest." We will explore the trails of this large property for Black-billed Flycatcher, Red-rumped Woodpecker,

and Slaty-backed Forest-Falcon. We will also search for the eastern race of the Chestnut-backed Antbird, which show white spots on the wings. After lunch we continue to the end of the Pan-American Highway at Yaviza, looking for Bicolored Hawk, Jet Antbird, Black Oropendola, Black-collared Hawk, and Black-capped Donacobius. Upon our arrival in Yaviza, we will get a feel for the day-to-day life of the Darién. This bustling town has a population of just over 1,000 people and is the main cultural center of the Darien as well as the gateway for many of the riverside communities of this province. The Río Chucunaque passes through the town and Yaviza is a major port access to this river. **Night at Canopy Camp**

Day 5: Mon, Mar 4 - El Real

Today, we will be traveling to El Real de Santa María, a community near the border of Darién National Park. It is accessible only by boat from Yaviza along the Río Chucunaque and Río Tuira, Panama's longest river. The Chucunaque and Tuira rivers are bordered by extensive lowland forest that holds high biological diversity. The river edges offer shrub and grass habitat, as well as mudflats and beaches depending on the water level. During the 45-minute boat journey to El Real we should see Capped Heron, Green Ibis, Pied Water-Tyrant, Bronzed Cowbird, and both Crested and Black Oropendolas. Black-collared Hawk and Common Black-Hawk can be found along the riversides here as well. El Real is surrounded by second-growth forest which attracts a wide variety of species that cannot be found in other areas of the Darién. During our time here we hope to find Spectacled Parrotlet, Rufous-tailed and Dusky-backed Jacamar, Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture, Long-tailed Tyrant, Fork-tailed Flycatcher, Green-crowned Woodnymph, Orange-bellied Euphonia, and perhaps even a tiny Gray-breasted Crake lurking around the riverbanks. There are also areas of mature forest here as well and if we are lucky, we may see Harpy, Crested, or Solitary Eagles (all 3 have been seen in this area). We will enjoy a picnic lunch in town and take cover during the heat of the day. After our birding day in El Real is complete, we will make our way back to camp, keeping our eyes on the riversides and roadsides for exciting sightings as sunset approaches. **Night at Canopy Camp**

Day 6: Tue, Mar 5 - Serranía Filo de Tallo Hydrological Reserve

After an early breakfast, we will head into the Serranía Filo de Tallo Reserve. This is a designated Hydrological Reserve that protects a small mountain range west of the Pan-American Highway. The Canopy Camp borders this reserve, which protects an area of 300 km² (74,000 acres). We will access the reserve through a trail located at the northern end of the range. The trail crosses a small creek and passes through part of the reserve, and climbs upward to a plateau where there is a teak plantation. Here we hope to have great looks at Olivaceous Piculet, Dull-mantled Antbird, Buff-rumped Warbler, and Great Curassow to name a few.

This afternoon you will be free to either relax and enjoy birding around the Canopy Camp grounds, or we may revisit a few sites in search of species we have yet to see. **Night at Canopy Camp**

Day 7: Wed, Mar 6 – Camp to Panama City

After some final birding around the lodge, we depart west towards Panama City, birding along the way as time permits. We may make additional stops at Nusagandi or Rio Mono if we did not have time for those places on arrival day. We arrive in Panama City in the afternoon, where the tour ends. **Night in Panama City**

Day 8: Thu, Mar 7 – Departure

You may book your departure flights any time today. Our hotel provides 24 hr shuttle service to the airport and your ride can be arranged for anytime. For those wanting a more leisurely departure, late morning or early afternoon flights would allow time for breakfast and some birding around the lodge before departure!

****Itinerary subject to change due to weather and the decisions of the guides***