



WILD WESTERN PANAMA: THE CARIBBEAN AND THE CLOUDFOREST SLOPE

9 – 17 MAY 2020

9 – 17 MAY 2021



We will visit a breeding colony of **Red-billed Tropicbird** (photo © Ramón Fernández) on this trip.

Panama offers one of the greatest birding experiences in the Neotropics, conjuring up visions of the Panama Canal, Harpy Eagles, army ants, and ground cuckoos. However, less frequently visited by birders is Western Panama, which offers a unique experience to visitors, providing two amazing natural habitats with their respective avifauna: the Caribbean and the cloudforest mountains.

Our nine-day tour will start in Panama City, offering you a nice introduction to the Panamanian birds near the city. The Metropolitan Natural Park, considered probably the nicest park in Latin America, would be our first port of call. We will look for a very interesting set of birds, including the endemic **Panamanian** (Yellow-green) **Tyrannulet**.

After a short flight we will reach Colón Island in the Province of Bocas del Toro on the western Caribbean slope to stay at the beautiful Tranquilo Bay Eco Adventure Lodge. Tranquilo Bay Eco Adventure Lodge is strategically located adjacent to Isla Bastimentos National Marine Park on Bastimentos Island. The well-appointed lodge and its amenities are located on 200 forested acres, covering three distinct ecosystems. The islands of the Bocas del Toro Archipelago are often called the “Galapagos of the Caribbean” due to endemism and species differentiation. During our stay we will look for **Stub-tailed Spadebill**, **White-collared** and **Red-capped Manakins**, **Band-tailed Barbthroat**, **Bronzy Hermit**, **Snowy Cotinga**, **Three-wattled Bellbird** (seasonal), **Montezuma Oropendola**, **Nicaraguan Seed Finch**, **Passerini’s Tanager**, **Golden-hooded Tanager**, **White-throated Crake**, **Keel-billed** and **Yellow-throated Toucans**, **Common Black Hawk**, **Lesser Scaup**, **Black-bellied Whistling Duck**, and **Masked Duck**. One of the main attractions of Tranquilo Bay Eco Adventure Lodge is a visit to Swan Island, where we will have the chance to have incredibly-close-up views of a colony of **Red-billed Tropicbirds** and also of **Brown Boobies**.

With very comfortable, well-equipped cabins, a 30-meter-high scaffolding tower, nice gardens, incredible views of Caribbean shores surrounded by mangroves, and nocturnal wildlife like **Crab-eating Raccoon**, **White-faced Capuchin**, **Central American Woolly Opossum**, and **Brown-throated Sloth**, Tranquilo Bay Eco Adventure Lodge is a hidden jewel that guarantees a wonderful and quiet stay.

The foothills above the Caribbean coast are good for **Boat-billed Heron**, **Red-breasted Blackbird**, **Striped Cuckoo**, **Black Guan**, **Blue-throated Toucanet**, **Black-and-yellow Tanager**, **Tawny-capped Euphonia**, **Emerald Tanager**, **Silver-throated Tanager**, **Rufous-browed Tyrannulet**, **Speckled Tanager**, **Black-faced Grosbeak**, **Prong-billed Barbet**, **American Dipper**, **Slate-colored Grosbeak**, and **Bat Falcon**, and even the elusive **Ornate Hawk-Eagle** has been recorded in this area.

After four days in the Bocas del Toro Province we will be transferred by land to Los Quetzales Lodge in the heart of the cloudforest mountains in the province of David. We will spend four nights here, exploring the surroundings and the edge of Volcán Barú National Park, looking for species such as **Black-cheeked Warbler**, **Volcano Hummingbird**, **Yellow-winged Vireo**, **Collared Whitestart**, **Flame-throated Warbler**, **Black-and-yellow Phainoptila**, **Long-tailed Silky-flycatcher**, **Golden-browed Chlorophonia**, the endemic **Yellow-green Finch**, **Silvery-fronted Tapaculo**, **Yellow-thighed Finch**, **Buffy Tuftedcheek**, the elusive **Wrenthrush**,

Large-footed Finch, and the most-wanted **Resplendent Quetzal**. The hummingbird feeders provide species such as **White-throated Mountaingem**, **Green Hermit**, **Magnificent** and **Stripe-tailed Hummingbirds**, **Green Violetear**, and with luck **Fiery-throated Hummingbird**.

After four nights and days birding Los Quetzales Lodge and Volcán Barú National Park we will be transferred to the David airport for a flight to Panama City, from where you will connect with your international flights.

This tour can be combined with our **Central and Eastern Panama and the Darién** tour.

Itinerary (9 days/8 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Panama City, birding Metropolitan Natural Park

We will meet you at the airport and transfer you immediately to the Metropolitan Natural Park, looking for the endemic **Panamanian** (Yellow-green) **Tyrannulet**, and also for **Lance-tailed Manakin** and the sought-after **Rosy Thrush-Tanager**. If time permits we will explore the nicely wooded grounds of our hotel in Panama, which hold several interesting species such as **Spotted Antbird**, **Black-crowned Antshrike**, **White-flanked Antwren**, **Dot-winged Antwren**, **Rufous-breasted Wren**, **Long-billed Gnatwren**, **Squirrel Cuckoo**, **Whooping Motmot**, **Purple-throated Fruitcrow**, **Red-billed Pigeon**, **Red-crowned Woodpecker**, and with some luck **White-bellied Antbird**.

Overnight: Radisson Summit Hotel & Golf, Panama City

Day 2. Flight to Bocas del Toro, transfer to Tranquilo Bay Eco Adventure Lodge

We will transfer to the airport to get an early flight to Isla Colón in the Bocas del Toro Province. Then we will take a boat to the Tranquilo Bay Eco Adventure Lodge. On the way we will look for the handsome **Snowy Cotinga**, **Keel-billed** and **Yellow-throated Toucans**, **Great Blue Heron**, **Bare-throated Tiger Heron**, **Magnificent Frigatebird**, **Common Black Hawk**, and **Yellow-headed Caracara**. The gardens of our beautiful lodge offer excellent chances for **Band-tailed Barbthroat**, **Bronzy Hermit**, **Rufous-tailed Hummingbird**, **Red-lored Amazon**, **Montezuma Oropendola**, and **Red-billed Pigeon**. We will have time to look and watch out for **Red-capped Manakin**.

Overnight: Tranquilo Bay Eco Adventure Lodge, Bastimentos Island

Day 3. Birding around the archipelago and visit to Swan Island

We will have a full day by boat, exploring the channels and mangroves and looking for **Nicaraguan Seed Finch**, **Thick-billed Seed Finch**, **American Pygmy Kingfisher**, **Bare-throated Tiger Heron**, **Black-bellied Whistling Duck**, **Lesser Scaup**, **Masked Duck**, and with luck **Three-wattled Bellbird**, among many others. In the afternoon we will visit Swan Island to watch the **Red-billed Tropicbird** and **Brown Booby** colonies. Before we return to the lodge we will look for the *almirante* subspecies of **White-collared Manakin**.

Overnight: Tranquilo Bay Eco Adventure Lodge, Bastimentos Island

Day 4. Birding along the Fortuna Road

We will start exploring the lowest parts of the Fortuna Road, looking for a **Boat-billed Heron** colony. Along the pastures we also hope to locate **Red-breasted Blackbird**, **Striped Cuckoo**, **King Vulture**, **Collared Aracari**, **Masked Tityra**, **Wattled Jacana**, and **Limpkin**. As we get higher on the Fortuna Road we will find nice flocks of tanagers, including **Emerald**, **Silver-throated**, **Golden-hooded**, **Speckled**, and **Black-and-yellow Tanagers**. If we are lucky we might also encounter **Ornate Hawk-Eagle**.

Overnight: Tranquilo Bay Eco Adventure Lodge, Bastimentos Island

Day 5. Birding along the Fortuna Road and transfer to Los Quetzales Lodge

Another morning along the Fortuna Road will allow us to find birds we might have missed the previous day. We will try for **American Dipper**, **Spangle-cheeked Tanager**, **Prong-billed Barbet**, **Gartered Trogon**, **Passerini's Tanager**, **Black-striped Sparrow**, **White-ruffed Manakin**, **Sulphur-winged Parakeet**, **Long-tailed Tyrant**, **Red-faced Spinetail**, **Bay-headed Tanager**, **Blackburnian Warbler**, **Red-legged Honeycreeper**, **Chestnut-capped Brushfinch**, and **Black Guan**.

Later we will transfer to Los Quetzales Lodge in the David Province.

Overnight: Los Quetzales Lodge, Guadalupe

Days 6 – 8. Birding around Los Quetzales Lodge and Volcán Barú National Park

We will spend three full days birding around the Los Quetzales area and Volcán Barú National Park, looking for the most-wanted **Resplendent Quetzal** and also for **Golden-browed Chlorophonia**, **Ruddy Treerunner**, **Golden-bellied Flycatcher**, **Mountain Thrush**, **Black-faced Solitaire**, **Black-and-yellow Phainoptila**, **Long-tailed Silky flycatcher**, **Large-footed Finch**, **Yellow-thighed Finch**, **Flame-colored Tanager**, **Slaty Flowerpiercer**, **Dark Pewee**, **Ochraceus Wren**, and others.

Overnight: Los Quetzales Lodge, Guadalupe

Day 9. Birding around Los Quetzales and transfer to David to fly to Panama City

After a final morning birding around Los Quetzales Lodge and Volcán Barú National Park looking for **Black-cheeked Warbler**, **Black-billed** and **Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrushes**, **Flame-throated Warbler**, **Silvery-fronted Tapaculo**, **Scintillant Hummingbird**, **Volcano Hummingbird**, **Violet Sabrewing**, and **Buff Tuftedcheek**, we will transfer to David to fly back to Panama City to connect there with our international flights.

Please note that the itinerary above cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually slightly) due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides and other factors.

Duration: 9 days

Limit (Group Size): 6

Dates: 9 – 17 May 2020
9 – 17 May 2021

Tour Start: Panama City

Tour End: Panama City

Price: US\$3879 per person sharing 2020
US\$4189 per person sharing 2021

Single Supplement: Not available for Tranquilo Bay and Los Quetzales Lodges; available only for the night in Panama City at US\$133 2020
Not available for Tranquilo Bay and Los Quetzales Lodges; available only for the night in Panama City at US\$144 2021

Price includes:

Airport – hotel – airport transfers

Accommodation

Meals

All land and boat transportation

Private tour leader

Entrance fees

Bottled water

Domestic flights Panama City – Bocas del Toro and David – Panama City

Price excludes:

International flights

Insurance

Personal expenses such as drinks, laundry, phone calls, internet access, etc.

Gratuities

Any activity not described in the itinerary