



THE BEST OF PANAMA: CANOPY TOWER AND THE DARIÉN

08 - 19 JULY 2026

13 - 24 JULY 2027



Birding Ecotours
Dylan Vasapolli

The rare Rufous-vented Ground Cuckoo will hopefully be encountered on this trip.

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Welcome to our Best of Panama birding tour! Panama is perhaps one of the best and most accessible birding countries in the neotropics. With easy access, an excellent infrastructure, and a huge bird list of 1,012 species, it is an obligatory birding destination. Panama is perfect for any newcomers to the neotropics, who will certainly fall in love with the natural history and the overwhelming number of birds, including colorful tanagers, sparkling hummingbirds, noisy parrots, and gorgeous motmots and trogons. For those who already have neotropical birding experience, Panama offers an exquisite set of seldom-seen and highly sought-after species, such as **Bare-crowned** and **Ocellated Antbirds**, **Black-crowned Antpitta**, and if we are lucky, the elusive **Rufous-vented Ground Cuckoo**.

During this 12-day birding tour you will start the adventure visiting Canopy Camp in the Darién Province, a beautiful and safe area to visit, far from the Colombian border. During the next four days we will look for a whole set of range-restricted species shared only with Colombia, some of them quite tough to find in other neotropical countries. The amenities at Canopy Camp are very comfortable; each camping unit provides a safari-style tent with wooden floors, beds, electricity, fans (however, no air-conditioners), a second room for luggage, and a private bathroom outside the tent. Some of the birds that we'll be on the lookout for in the Darién include **White-eared Conebill**, **Double-banded Greytail**, **Dusky-backed Jacamar**, **Black Oropendola**, **Spectacled Parrotlet**, **Black-crowned Antpitta**, **Bare-crowned Antbird**, **Black Antshrike**, **Grey-cheeked Nunlet**, **Spot-crowned Barbet**, and **Orange-crowned Oriole**. We will also try for **Blue Cotinga**, **Green Shrike-Vireo**, **Stripe-cheeked Woodpecker** and perhaps even the rare **Harpy Eagle**.



*We hope to encounter the mighty **Harpy Eagle** in the Darién (photo Dr Uwe Speck).*

Next, we will explore the Gamboa area near the Panama Canal, where we will be based at the world-famous Canopy Tower Lodge. This tower, a former US military center, built to house

powerful radars used in the defense of the canal, is today one of the most magnificent birding lodges in Latin America. The tower allows guests a magnificent 360° view of the surrounding forests of the Soberanía National Park. Here, we will stay a total of four nights, exploring the great surroundings, including places like the Pipeline Road, Summit Ponds, Semaphore Hill Road, and the Gamboa Marina Resort. At these sites we will look for species such as **Brown-hooded Parrot**, **Northern Mealy** and **Red-lored Amazons**, **Keel-billed** and **Yellow-throated Toucans**, **Rufous** and **Broad-billed Motmots**, **American Pygmy Kingfisher**, **Boat-billed Heron**, **Crimson-backed** and **Golden-hooded Tanagers**, **Purple-throated Fruitcrow**, **Spotted Antbird**, **Dot-winged Antwren**, **Long-billed Gnatwren**, **Song Wren**, **Slaty-tailed**, **Gartered**, and **White-tailed Trogons**, and if we are lucky, **Rufous-vented Ground Cuckoo** and **Ocellated Antbird**. The lodge's surroundings are also good for other wildlife, including **Brown-throated Sloth**, **Nine-banded Armadillo**, **Central American Agouti**, and **Lesser Capybara**.



*The brightly colored **Yellow-throated Toucan** will hopefully be seen on this tour.*

Finally, we will visit Canopy Lodge in the Valle del Antón (Anton Valley), surrounded by lush, forested hills and ridges and home to several special species, such as **Yellow-eared Toucanet**, **Snowcap**, **Ochraceous Wren**, **White-tipped Sicklebill**, **Black-and-yellow Tanager**, **Tiny Hawk**, **Tody Motmot**, **Rosy Thrush-Tanager**, **Grey-headed Chachalaca**, and **Collared Trogon**. Here, we'll also have another chance for **Rufous-vented Ground Cuckoo**. Canopy Lodge is a very comfortable and beautiful lodge, situated in a peaceful location, surrounded by gardens where we will try for **Tropical Screech Owl** and with luck, **Uniform Crake** as well as several tanagers such as **Bay-headed** and **Dusky-faced Tanagers**.

Itinerary (12 days/11 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Panama City and transfer to the hotel

Arrival in Panama City and transfer to our nearby airport hotel.

Overnight: Hotel Riande, Panama Airport

Days 2-5. Transfer to and birding the Darién and Canopy Camp area

We will transfer to Canopy Camp in the Darién Province in Panama where we will spend the next three days exploring different locations looking for some Darién and regional endemics such as **Dusky-backed Jacamar, Black Antshrike, Grey-cheeked Nunlet, Black Oropendola, Double-banded Greytail, White-eared Conebill, Spot-crowned Barbet, Choco Sirystes** and **Speckled Mourner**. Other species which we will be on the lookout for include **Great Green Macaw, Rufous Piha, Rufous-winged Tyrannulet, Sooty-headed Tyrannulet, Bare-crowned Antbird, Black-crowned Antpitta, Northern Barred Woodcreeper, Yellow-throated Toucan, Pied Puffbird, White Hawk, Cinnamon Woodpecker, Gartered Trogon, Cocoa Woodcreeper, Golden-headed Manakin, Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher, Collared Aracari, Keel-billed Toucan, Chestnut-headed Oropendola, Golden-hooded Tanager, Mottled Owl, Ochre-lored Flatbill, Barred Puffbird, and Tropical Royal Flycatcher.**



Keel-billed Toucan is one of several toucan species we hope to encounter in Panama.

The Darién Province is a good area for the elusive and most-wanted **Harpy Eagle** which is often reported from active nests here. We hope to be lucky with an active nest in the area during our visit.

Overnight: Canopy Camp

Day 6 Transfer to Canopy Tower

We will return to Panama City and transfer to the famous Canopy Tower Lodge, near the Panama Canal area, where we will stay for the next three nights. We will enjoy birding the lodge surroundings and use it as our base to explore some nearby birding locations including the famous Pipeline Road. If time and our schedule permits, we may explore an area along the way to look for **Great Jacamar**, **Panamanian Tyrannulet** and **Stripe-cheeked Woodpecker**.

Overnight Canopy Tower

Day 7. Canopy Tower

We will meet at the observation deck before dawn to enjoy the forest's chorus from the canopy with the early calls of **Barred** and **Slaty-backed Forest Falcons**. While enjoying some coffee we will try to detect the secretive **Green Shrike-Vireo** and the beautiful **Blue Cotinga**. Other birds likely here include **Northern Mealy** and **Red-lored Amazons**, **Brown-capped Tyrannulet**, **Collared Aracari**, and the striking **Keel-billed Toucan**.



*We will look for **Green Shrike-Vireo** around Canopy Tower (photo Dr Uwe Speck).*

After breakfast we will bird the famous Semaphore Hill, looking for **Rufous** and **Broad-billed Motmots**, **Slaty-tailed Trogon**, **Semiplumbeous Hawk**, **Plain-colored** and **White-shouldered Tanagers**, **Fulvous-vented Euphonia**, and **Green Honeycreeper**. Before lunch we will check the hummingbird feeders around the lodge entrance, likely enjoying views of **Blue-chested**, **Violet-bellied**, and **Snowy-bellied Hummingbird** as well as **White-necked Jacobin**.

In the afternoon we will explore the Summit Ponds area, where we will try for the elusive **White-throated Crake**, **Boat-billed Heron**, **Wattled Jacana**, **Rufescent Tiger Heron**, and **Purple Gallinule**. Other birds include **Lemon-rumped Tanager**, **Palm Tanager**, **Crimson-backed Tanager**, **Black-striped Sparrow**, **Isthmian Wren**, and many others. We might also have our first mammal encounters here with **Lesser Capybara** and **Brown-throated Sloth**.

Overnight: Canopy Tower

Day 8. Birding the Pipeline Road

We will have a full day along the famous Pipeline Road, trying to see as many birds as possible and soaking them all in. The possible list includes species like **Black-breasted Puffbird**, **White-tailed**, **Gartered**, and **Black-throated Trogons**, **Song Wren**, **Golden-collared Manakin**, **Purple-throated Fruitcrow**, **Great Jacamar**, and **Fasciated** and **Black-crowned Antshrikes**. If we are lucky to find any army ant swarms, we might see the striking **Ocellated Antbird**, along with **Spotted** and **Bicolored Antbirds**, and **Northern Barred** and **Plain-brown Woodcreepers**. We will visit some hummingbird feeders with species such as **Long-billed** and **Stripe-throated Hermits**, **Crowned Woodnymph**, and if we are lucky, **Rufous-crested Coquette**.

Overnight: Canopy Tower



Ocellated Antbird will be searched for near army ant swarms (photo Dr Uwe Speck).

Day 9. Transfer to and birding around Canopy Lodge

Today we will transfer to El Valle de Antón, with time to explore the surroundings. En route we'll pay a visit to the Canopy Adventure Center, where we have seen the mythical **Rufous-vented Ground Cuckoo** in the past.

After lunch we will explore the lodge surroundings, enjoying **Grey-headed Chachalaca**, **White-tipped Dove**, **Red-crowned Woodpecker**, **Black-chested Jay**, **Black-striped Sparrow**, **Buff-throated Saltator**, and **Chestnut-headed Oropendola**.

Overnight: Canopy Lodge

Day 10. Birding the La Mesa and Cerro Valle Chiquito areas

Today we will explore the La Mesa and Cerro Valle Chiquito areas, looking for species such as **White-tipped Sicklebill**, **Dusky-faced Tanager**, **Red-crowned Ant Tanager**, **Thick-billed Euphonia**, **Silver-throated Tanager**, **Bay-headed Tanager**, **Red-legged Honeycreeper**, **Black-faced Antthrush**, and if we are lucky, **White Hawk**. We will also try for **Tody Motmot** and **Rosy Thrush-Tanager**. Other birds include **Grey-necked Wood Rail** and perhaps even **Uniform Crake**. At night we will search for **Tropical Screech Owl**.

Overnight: Canopy Lodge



*The cute **Tody Motmot** (photo Dr Uwe Speck).*

Day 11. Birding the Altos del Maria Road

We will have a full day at the Altos del Maria Road, focusing on special targets such as **Yellow-eared Toucanet**, **Collared Trogon**, **Snowcap**, **Rufous-browed Tyrannulet**, **Ochraceous** and **Rufous-and-white Wrens**, **Barred Hawk**, and with luck, the secretive **Black-crowned Antpitta**.

Overnight: Canopy Lodge



*We will search for the striking **Golden-collared Manakin** near Canopy Tower (photo Dr Uwe Speck).*

Day 12. Canopy Lodge and transfer to Panama City

Today we will transfer back to Panama City airport to connect with our international flights back home after a wonderful 12 days of birding in Panama.

Please note that the itinerary 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. In addition, we sometimes have to use a different guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling or other factors.

Duration: 12 days
Limit (Group Size): 4 - 8
Dates: 08–19 July 2026
13–24 July 2027
Start: Panama City
End: Panama City
Prices: US\$6,822 per person sharing, assuming 4 - 8 participants (2026)
US\$6,971 per person sharing, assuming 4 - 8 participants (2027)
Single Supplements: US\$825 (2026)
US\$853 (2027)

Price includes:

Airport transfers on the first and final day
Accommodation
All meals (except as indicated)
Bottled water and complementary soft drinks
All transportation
English-speaking tour leader
Admission fees

Price excludes:

All flights
Hotel in Panama (before or after the tour if needed)
Alcoholic drinks
Personal expenses such as laundry, internet access, phone calls, etc.
Gratuities (please see our [tipping guidelines blog](#))
Dinner in Panama on the last day
Any activity and meals in Panama City on the first day if arrival is early in the morning

Tour information

We consider this an easy trip. Most of the birding is along roads and near the vehicle. However, we will walk up to two miles (three kilometers) per day at a slow birding pace.

Canopy Camp is a comfortable African-safari-style setting with private bathrooms including sinks, showers, flush toilets, and electricity. We will bird around forest clearings, explore forest trails, and walk along roads.

Canopy Tower lodge does not have elevators, and the rooms are located on the second and third floors, the dining room on the fourth. Around Canopy Tower we will spend most of the time birding along paved roads and at the lodge observation deck. During our visit to Canopy Lodge almost all birding is along roads, except for the visit to the Canopy Adventure Center, where there is some steep terrain. Fourth floor, and the observation deck at the top. Tour participants should be able to walk up and down every day.

Accommodation Notes:

Accommodation in Canopy Camp is in comfortable safari-style tents (roughly eight feet high), with 173 square feet of wooden floor and proper beds, along with a private bathroom (outside the tent), complete with electricity. Canopy Tower is a unique but rather small lodge with different levels for dining, observation decks, and lodging. Due to its small size, Canopy Tower does not have an elevator, and sounds may occasionally be heard from other guests climbing the stairs in the evening. Additionally, we unfortunately cannot always guarantee participants a single room. For those who do require a single room, we encourage an early booking which will certainly help your chances. We will do our best to accommodate your requests, however, we are subject to the capacity limits of Canopy Tower.