



Field Guides Tour Report

Panama's Canopy Tower III 2015

Feb 21, 2015 to Feb 27, 2015

Chris Benesh & Alexis Sanchez

For our tour description, itinerary, past triplists, dates, fees, and more, [please VISIT OUR TOUR PAGE.](#)



A Song Wren forages in the understory along Pipeline Road. (Photo by guide Chris Benesh)

Our third Panama's Canopy Tower tour of the season was a relaxing and enjoyable one, made so through great company, good food, and the amazing Alexis showing us some of the best that central Panama has to offer.

We started things off on the top deck of the Canopy Tower, a converted radar installation with a commanding view of the rainforest of Soberania National Park and bits of the Panama Canal itself. After breakfast, we headed for a slow walk down the hill, Semaphore Hill, where we saw a bunch of cool and interesting species staring right off the bat with a singing Pheasant Cuckoo. After a post-lunch siesta, we headed off to the Ammo Ponds, which provided our first real good look at the canal and more cool stuff.

Our second morning saw us off to the Panama Rainforest Discovery Center, where we spent some time in their tower as well as walking some of the trails. In the afternoon, we had a really enjoyable time at the Summit Ponds with their nesting Boat-billed Herons. We were thankful for the noisy Black-chested Jay which helped us track down a roosting Spectacled Owl.

The third day found us visiting the Metropolitan Park in downtown Panama City. Anything but an urban park, this place was loaded with birds, including lots of small forest flycatchers and colorful Lance-tailed Manakins. We spent a cultural afternoon at the Miraflores Locks watching the Panama Canal in action. There's nothing like seeing huge ships transiting down to the level of the Pacific Ocean! We finished the day with a terrific night-drive below the lodge, seeing some really interesting mammals.

Our fourth birding day was an all-day affair to Pipeline Road, perhaps the single most famous birding spot in Panama. We had a great time there, and Alex took us a ways out along the road. Plenty to see with good raptors, woodpeckers, trogons, jacamars, puffbirds, etc.

Our final morning of birding saw us return to Pipeline Road for some clean-up. We added a number of new species, and this left us the afternoon to explore the marshes near Gamboa and the grounds of the Gamboa Rainforest Resort. It was a great way to wrap up our birding.

Thanks again to each of you for making the trip possible. It was a real treat and I look forward to seeing you all again in the field!

--Chris

KEYS FOR THIS LIST

One of the following keys may be shown in brackets for individual species as appropriate: * = heard only, I = introduced, E = endemic, N = nesting, a = austral migrant, b = boreal migrant

BIRDS

Tinamidae (Tinamous)

GREAT TINAMOU (Tinamus major)

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK (Dendrocygna autumnalis)

BLUE-WINGED TEAL (Anas discors)

MASKED DUCK (Nomonyx dominicus) – It was a real treat to see this scarce nomadic species at the marina in Gamboa.

Cracidae (Guans, Chachalacas, and Curassows)

GRAY-HEADED CHACHALACA (Ortalis cinereiceps) [*]

Fregatidae (Frigatebirds)

MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD (Fregata magnificens)

Anhingidae (Anhingas)

ANHINGA (Anhinga anhinga)

Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

BROWN PELICAN (Pelecanus occidentalis)

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

RUFESCENT TIGER-HERON (Tigrisoma lineatum) – Super views of a nesting bird and presumably its mate at the Ammo Ponds.

GREAT BLUE HERON (Ardea herodias)

GREAT EGRET (Ardea alba)

SNOWY EGRET (Egretta thula)

LITTLE BLUE HERON (Egretta caerulea)

TRICOLORED HERON (Egretta tricolor)

CATTLE EGRET (Bubulcus ibis)

GREEN HERON (Butorides virescens)

STRIATED HERON (Butorides striata)

BOAT-BILLED HERON (SOUTHERN) (Cochlearius cochlearius panamensis) – Wonderful scope views of nesting birds at the Summit Ponds.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

WHITE IBIS (Eudocimus albus)

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

BLACK VULTURE (Coragyps atratus)

TURKEY VULTURE (Cathartes aura)

KING VULTURE (Sarcorampus papa) – Alex spotted one soaring over Pipeline Road.

Pandionidae (Osprey)

OSPREY (Pandion haliaetus)

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

SNAIL KITE (Rostrhamus sociabilis) – One seen along the canal.

PLUMBEOUS KITE (Ictinia plumbea)

WHITE HAWK (Pseudastur albicollis)

BROAD-WINGED HAWK (Buteo platypterus)

GRAY-LINED HAWK (Buteo nitidus)

SHORT-TAILED HAWK (Buteo brachyurus)

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

WHITE-THROATED CRAKE (Laterallus albigularis) [*]

GRAY-NECKED WOOD-RAIL (Aramides cajaneus)

PURPLE GALLINULE (Porphyrio martinicus) – Terrific looks at this colorful species in Gamboa.

COMMON GALLINULE (Gallinula galeata)

AMERICAN COOT (Fulica americana)

Jacaniidae (Jacanas)

WATTLED JACANA (Jacana jacana) – Nice views of a family group at the Discovery Center and then heaps of them in Gamboa.

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

SPOTTED SANDPIPER (Actitis macularius)

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

LAUGHING GULL (*Leucophaeus atricilla*)

ROYAL TERN (*Thalasseus maximus*)

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*)

PALE-VENTED PIGEON (*Patagioenas cayennensis*)

SCALED PIGEON (*Patagioenas speciosa*)

SHORT-BILLED PIGEON (*Patagioenas nigrirostris*)

RUDDY GROUND-DOVE (*Columbina talpacoti*)

WHITE-TIPPED DOVE (*Leptotila verreauxi*)

GRAY-CHESTED DOVE (*Leptotila cassinii*)

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

SQUIRREL CUCKOO (*Piaya cayana*)

PHEASANT CUCKOO (*Dromococcyx phasianellus*) – Super amazing encounter with one on our first morning at the Tower. Wow!

GREATER ANI (*Crotophaga major*)

SMOOTH-BILLED ANI (*Crotophaga ani*)

Strigidae (Owls)

SPECTACLED OWL (*Pulsatrix perspicillata*) – Thanks to some mobbing jays we were able to track down a roosting owl.

Nyctibiidae (Potoos)

GREAT POTOO (*Nyctibius grandis*) – Alex had a stakeout along Pipeline Road.

COMMON POTOO (*Nyctibius griseus*) – Scope views of a nesting bird on Semaphore Hill.

Apodidae (Swifts)

CHIMNEY SWIFT (*Chaetura pelagica*) – A tight flock of some thirty birds best fit this species and makes sense given the date.

SHORT-TAILED SWIFT (*Chaetura brachyura*)

BAND-RUMPED SWIFT (*Chaetura spinicaudus*)

LESSER SWALLOW-TAILED SWIFT (*Panyptila cayennensis*)

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

WHITE-NECKED JACOBIN (*Florisuga mellivora*)

LONG-BILLED HERMIT (*Phaethornis longirostris*)

STRIPE-THROATED HERMIT (*Phaethornis striigularis*)

PURPLE-CROWNED FAIRY (*Heliothryx barroti*) – A couple of nice studies of this locally scarce species.

BLACK-THROATED MANGO (*Anthracothorax nigricollis*)

RUFIOUS-CRESTED COQUETTE (*Lophornis delattrei*) – Alex spotted the male handing out at the Discovery Center.

WHITE-VENTED PLUMELETEER (*Chalybura buffonii*)

BLUE-CHESTED HUMMINGBIRD (*Amazilia amabilis*)

SNOWY-BELLIED HUMMINGBIRD (*Amazilia edward edward*)

RUFIOUS-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD (*Amazilia tzacatl*)

VIOLET-BELLIED HUMMINGBIRD (*Damophila julie*)

Trogonidae (Trogons)

SLATY-TAILED TROGON (*Trogon massena*) – We had a nice sweep of the trogons on this trip!

BLACK-TAILED TROGON (*Trogon melanurus*)

WHITE-TAILED TROGON (*Trogon chionurus*)

GARTERED TROGON (*Trogon caligatus*) – Formerly lumped with Violaceous Trogon.

BLACK-THROATED TROGON (*Trogon rufus*)

Momotidae (Motmots)

WHOOPIING MOTMOT (WHOOPIING) (*Momotus subrufescens conexus*) – Came about via a break-up of Blue-crowned Motmot into several species.

BROAD-BILLED MOTMOT (*Electron platyrhynchum*)

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

RINGED KINGFISHER (*Megaceryle torquata*)

AMAZON KINGFISHER (*Chloroceryle amazona*)

GREEN KINGFISHER (*Chloroceryle americana*)

Bucconidae (Puffbirds)

BLACK-BREASTED PUFFBIRD (*Notharchus pectoralis*)

PIED PUFFBIRD (*Notharchus tectus*)

WHITE-WHISKERED PUFFBIRD (*Malacoptila panamensis*) – We had great views of all of the puffbirds including several of these.

Galbulidae (Jacamars)

GREAT JACAMAR (*Jacameros aureus*) – A nice pickup on Pipeline Road.

Ramphastidae (Toucans)

COLLARED ARACARI (*Pteroglossus torquatus*)
BLACK-MANDIBLED TOUCAN (CHESTNUT-MANDIBLED) (*Ramphastos ambiguus swainsonii*)
KEEL-BILLED TOUCAN (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*)

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

BLACK-CHEEKED WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes pucherani*)
RED-CROWNED WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes rubricapillus*)
CINNAMON WOODPECKER (*Celeus loricatus*)
LINEATED WOODPECKER (*Dryocopus lineatus*)
CRIMSON-CRESTED WOODPECKER (*Campephilus melanoleucos*)

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

SLATY-BACKED FOREST-FALCON (*Micrastur mirandollei*) – The close encounter with a pair of these on Pipeline Road was surely a highlight for me.
COLLARED FOREST-FALCON (*Micrastur semitorquatus*) – We had one go flashing past us one morning heading down Semaphore Hill.
CRESTED CARACARA (*Caracara cheriway*)
YELLOW-HEADED CARACARA (*Milvago chimachima*)

Psittacidae (New World and African Parrots)

ORANGE-CHINNED PARAKEET (*Brotogeris jugularis*)
BLUE-HEADED PARROT (*Pionus menstruus*)
RED-LORED PARROT (*Amazona autumnalis*)
MEALY PARROT (*Amazona farinosa*)

Thamnophilidae (Typical Antbirds)

FASCIATED ANTSHRIKE (*Cymbilaimus lineatus*)
BLACK-CROWNED ANTSHRIKE (*Thamnophilus atrinucha*)
SPOT-CROWNED ANTIVIREO (*Dysithamnus puncticeps*)
CHECKER-THROATED ANTWREN (*Epinecrophylia fulviventris*)
WHITE-FLANKED ANTWREN (*Myrmotherula axillaris*)
DOT-WINGED ANTWREN (*Microrhopias quixensis*)
DUSKY ANTIBIRD (*Cercomacra tyrannina*)
JET ANTIBIRD (*Cercomacra nigricans*)
WHITE-BELLIED ANTIBIRD (*Myrmeciza longipes*)
CHESTNUT-BACKED ANTIBIRD (*Myrmeciza exsul*)
BICOLORED ANTIBIRD (*Gymnophrys bicolor bicolor*) [*]
SPOTTED ANTIBIRD (*Hylophylax naevioides*)

Formicariidae (Antthrushes)

BLACK-FACED ANTTHRUSH (*Formicarius analis*)

Furnariidae (Ovenbirds and Woodcreepers)

OLIVACEOUS WOODCREEPER (GRAYISH) (*Sittasomus griseicapillus sylvioides*)
PLAIN-BROWN WOODCREEPER (*Dendrocincla fuliginosa*)
COCOA WOODCREEPER (*Xiphorhynchus susurrans*)
BLACK-STRIPED WOODCREEPER (*Xiphorhynchus lachrymosus*)
PLAIN XENOPS (*Xenops minutus*)

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

BROWN-CAPPED TYRANNULET (*Ornithion brunneicapillus*)
SOUTHERN BEARDLESS-TYRANNULET (*Camptostoma obsoletum*)
YELLOW-CROWNED TYRANNULET (*Tyrannulus elatus*)
FOREST ELAENIA (*Myiopagis gaimardii*)
GREENISH ELAENIA (*Myiopagis viridicata*)
YELLOW-BELLIED ELAENIA (*Elaenia flavogaster*)
PALTRY TYRANNULET (*Zimmerius vilissimus*)
BLACK-CAPPED PYGMY-TYRANT (*Myiornis atricapillus*)
SOUTHERN BENTBILL (*Oncostoma olivaceum*)
COMMON TODY-FLYCATCHER (*Todirostrum cinereum*)
BLACK-HEADED TODY-FLYCATCHER (*Todirostrum nigriceps*)
OLIVACEOUS FLATBILL (*Rhynchocyclus olivaceus*)
YELLOW-OLIVE FLYCATCHER (YELLOW-OLIVE) (*Tolmomyias sulphurescens flavoolivaceus*)
YELLOW-MARGINED FLYCATCHER (YELLOW-MARGINED) (*Tolmomyias assimilis flavotectus*)
GOLDEN-CROWNED SPADEBILL (*Platyrinchus coronatus*)
RUDDY-TAILED FLYCATCHER (*Terenotriccus erythrurus*)
BLACK-TAILED FLYCATCHER (*Myiobius atricaudus*)
ACADIAN FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax virescens*) [*]

BRIGHT-RUMPED ATTLA (*Attila spadiceus*)
RUFIOUS MOURNER (*Rhytipterna holerythra*)
DUSKY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*)
PANAMA FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus panamensis*)
GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus crinitus*)
LESSER KISKADEE (*Pitangus lictor*)
GREAT KISKADEE (*Pitangus sulphuratus*)
BOAT-BILLED FLYCATCHER (*Megarynchus pitangua*)
RUSTY-MARGINED FLYCATCHER (*Myiozetetes cayanensis*)
SOCIAL FLYCATCHER (*Myiozetetes similis*)
STREAKED FLYCATCHER (*Myiodynastes maculatus*)
PIRATIC FLYCATCHER (*Legatus leucophaeus*)
TROPICAL KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus melancholicus*)
FORK-TAILED FLYCATCHER (*Tyrannus savana*)

Cotingidae (Cotingas)

PURPLE-THROATED FRUITCROW (*Querula purpurata*) – Some fabulous looks at this gregarious cotinga.
BLUE COTINGA (*Cotinga nattererii*) – The best look was through the scope at the Discovery Center.

Pipridae (Manakins)

LANCE-TAILED MANAKIN (*Chiroxiphia lanceolata*) – After a bit of searching we tracked it down at the Metro Park.
BLUE-CROWNED MANAKIN (*Lepidothrix coronata*)
GOLDEN-COLLARED MANAKIN (*Manacus vitellinus*)
RED-CAPPED MANAKIN (*Ceratopipra mentalis*)

Tityridae (Tityras and Allies)

MASKED TITYRA (*Tityra semifasciata*)
RUSSET-WINGED SCHIFFORNIS (*Schiffornis stenorhyncha panamensis*) – Formerly part of the Thrushlike Schiffornis complex, recently split into several species.
SPECKLED MOURNER (*Laniocera rufescens*) – Outstanding look at one that Alex spotted sitting quietly just a few feet off the group. One of the more highly sought after species in Central America.
CINNAMON BECARD (*Pachyramphus cinnamomeus*)

Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)

YELLOW-THROATED VIREO (*Vireo flavifrons*)
YELLOW-GREEN VIREO (*Vireo flavoviridis*)
GOLDEN-FRONTED GREENLET (*Hylophilus aurantiifrons*)
LESSER GREENLET (*Hylophilus decurtatus*)
GREEN SHRIKE-VIREO (*Vireolanius pulchellus*) – We ultimately had one right out in the open. This species can be notoriously difficult to spot.

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

BLACK-CHESTED JAY (*Cyanocorax affinis*)

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

SOUTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW (*Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*)
GRAY-BREASTED MARTIN (*Progne chalybea*)
MANGROVE SWALLOW (*Tachycineta albilinea*)
BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*)

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

HOUSE WREN (*Troglodytes aedon*)
BLACK-BELLIED WREN (*Pheugopedius fasciatoventris*) – Uncommonly great views of this species along Semaphore Hill.
RUFIOUS-BREASTED WREN (*Pheugopedius rutilus*)
RUFIOUS-AND-WHITE WREN (*Thryophilus rufalbus*)
PLAIN WREN (*Cantorchilus modestus*) [*]
WHITE-BREASTED WOOD-WREN (*Henicorhina leucosticta*)
SONG WREN (*Cyphorhinus phaeocephalus*) – This was another species that put on a particularly good show and entertained us with its quirky song.

Poliophtilidae (Gnatcatchers)

TAWNY-FACED GNATWREN (*Microbates cinereiventris*)
LONG-BILLED GNATWREN (*Ramphocaenus melanurus*)
TROPICAL GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila plumbea*)

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

CLAY-COLORED THRUSH (*Turdus grayi*)

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

TROPICAL MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus gilvus*)

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH (*Parkesia noveboracensis*)
BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER (*Mniotilta varia*)
TENNESSEE WARBLER (*Oreothlypis peregrina*)
MAGNOLIA WARBLER (*Setophaga magnolia*)
BAY-BREASTED WARBLER (*Setophaga castanea*)
YELLOW WARBLER (*Setophaga petechia*)
CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER (*Setophaga pensylvanica*)

Thraupidae (Tanagers and Allies)

GRAY-HEADED TANAGER (*Eucometis penicillata*)
WHITE-SHOULDERED TANAGER (*Tachyphonus luctuosus*)
TAWNY-CRESTED TANAGER (*Tachyphonus delatrii*) [*]
CRIMSON-BACKED TANAGER (*Ramphocelus dimidiatus*)
FLAME-RUMPED TANAGER (LEMON-RUMPED) (*Ramphocelus flammigerus icteronotus*) – We saw a male of the lemon-rumped variety.
BLUE-GRAY TANAGER (*Thraupis episcopus*)
PALM TANAGER (*Thraupis palmarum*)
GOLDEN-HOODED TANAGER (*Tangara larvata*)
PLAIN-COLORED TANAGER (*Tangara inornata*)
BAY-HEADED TANAGER (*Tangara gyrola*)
SCARLET-THIGHED DACNIS (*Dacnis venusta*)
BLUE DACNIS (*Dacnis cayana*)
SHINING HONEYCREEPER (*Cyanerpes lucidus*)
RED-LEGGED HONEYCREEPER (*Cyanerpes cyaneus*)
GREEN HONEYCREEPER (*Chlorophanes spiza*)
SULPHUR-RUMPED TANAGER (*Heterospingus rubrifrons*) – By poking our noses down Pipeline Road we encountered a couple of these at the far end.
RUDDY-BREASTED SEEDEATER (*Sporophila minuta*)
THICK-BILLED SEED-FINCH (*Sporophila funerea*)
VARIABLE SEEDEATER (VARIABLE) (*Sporophila corvina hoffmanni*)
YELLOW-BELLIED SEEDEATER (*Sporophila nigricollis*)
ROSY THRUSH-TANAGER (*Rhodinocichla rosea*) – Our first efforts were typical of this species in Panama. Body parts and color partially hidden by foliage. But the look we got at the Gamboa Rainforest Resort was just ridiculous!
BUFF-THROATED SALTATOR (*Saltator maximus*)
BLACK-HEADED SALTATOR (*Saltator atriceps*) [*]
SLATE-COLORED GROSBEAK (*Saltator grossus*) – A beautiful songster and its bill color isn't too bad either.

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

SUMMER TANAGER (*Piranga rubra*)
RED-CROWNED ANT-TANAGER (*Habia rubica*)
RED-THROATED ANT-TANAGER (*Habia fuscicauda*)
CARMIOL'S TANAGER (*Chlorothraupis carmioli*)
BLUE-BLACK GROSBEAK (*Cyanococcyz cyanoides*)

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus mexicanus*)
YELLOW-BACKED ORIOLE (*Icterus chrysater*)
YELLOW-TAILED ORIOLE (*Icterus mesomelas*)
BALTIMORE ORIOLE (*Icterus galbula*)
SCARLET-RUMPED CACIQUE (SCARLET-RUMPED) (*Cacicus uropygialis microrhynchus*)
YELLOW-RUMPED CACIQUE (*Cacicus cela*)
CHESTNUT-HEADED OROPENDOLA (*Psarocolius wagleri*)

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)

YELLOW-CROWNED EUPHONIA (*Euphonia luteicapilla*)
THICK-BILLED EUPHONIA (*Euphonia lanirostris*)
FULVOUS-VENTED EUPHONIA (*Euphonia fulvicrissa*)

MAMMALS

CENTRAL AMERICAN WOOLY OPOSSUM (*Caluromys derbianus*) – A couple well seen on the nightdrive.
GREATER WHITE-LINED BAT (*Saccopteryx bilineata*)
LARGE FRUIT-EATING BATS (*Artibeus* spp.)
RED-NAPED TAMARIN (*Saguinus geoffroyi*) – Better known as Geoffroy's Tamarin.
GRAY-BELLIED NIGHT MONKEY (*Aotus lemurinus*) – Thanks to Alex for tracking down this species for us at the Gamboa Rainforest Resort.
MANTLED HOWLER MONKEY (*Alouatta palliata*)
WHITE-THROATED CAPUCHIN (*Cebus capucinus*)

HOFFMANN'S TWO-TOED SLOTH (*Choloepus hoffmanni*)

BROWN-THROATED THREE-TOED SLOTH (*Bradypus variegatus*) – Some great encounters including the mother and kid.

VARIEGATED SQUIRREL (*Sciurus variegatoides*)

RED-TAILED SQUIRREL (*Sciurus granatensis*)

ROTHSCHILD'S PORCUPINE (*Coendou rothschildi*) – A nice find right at the end of our nightdrive and right by the tower.

CAPYBARA (*Hydrochaeris hydrochaeris*)

CENTRAL AMERICAN AGOUTI (*Dasyprocta punctata*)

WHITE-NOSED COATI (*Nasua narica*)

KINKAJOU (*Potos flavus*) – Alex went the extra mile to find us a Kinkajou, one of my favorite tropical mammals.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 225 bird taxa and 16 mammal taxa