

PANAMA'S CANOPY TOWER

JANUARY 30 – FEBRUARY 6, 2010

LEADERS: KEVIN ZIMMER & JOSÉ SOTO

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No two birding trips to a tropical country are ever the same. The combination of a highly diverse avifauna and the subtly intertwined complexities of ever-changing weather patterns (wet versus dry seasons and their duration and onset) and how that influences fruiting cycles, flowering cycles, and insect abundance all makes for a lot of intangibles and unpredictability. However, regardless of the specifics, you know that you'll be treated to a lot of great birds and natural history. Our tour typified both the unpredictable and the predictable aspects of birding in the Neotropics. Our trip list was not as speciose as many of my previous weeklong tours to the Canal Zone, but this was a direct result of recent changes in access to two sites that used to be standards on all Canal Zone tours: Tocumen Marsh (private land no longer accessible to birders); and Old Gamboa Road and the Police Academy Ponds (as part of the ongoing expansion of the Canal, the Canal Authority pulled access privileges shortly before our trip). Not surprisingly, our species list took a hit from previous highs, but we still managed to experience a wonderful cross section of tropical birds and mammals in just one week's time. And, by virtue of an itinerary tweak that took us to the Bayano Valley, we actually had a number of eastern Panamanian birds that are not typically recorded on tours to the Canal Zone.

Our first dawn vigil atop the Tower produced the requisite great views of Green Shrike-Vireo, that persistent (some would say annoying) voice from the canopy. It also netted us fine views of a tree full of outrageous Keel-billed Toucans, a close Black-breasted Puffbird, and a close pass by a Gray-headed Kite that responded to my tape. After breakfast we headed down Semaphore Hill, where we spent the rest of the morning enjoying a nice selection of typical Canal Zone birds, among them, close Broad-billed and Rufous motmots, Cinnamon Woodpecker, Slaty-tailed and White-tailed trogons, White-whiskered Puffbird, Dot-winged and Checker-throated Antwrens, and a nesting pair of Fasciated Antshrikes. Our afternoon excursion started with crippling views of a perched Bat Falcon, followed by a visit to some feeders in Gamboa, where colorful tanagers and honeycreepers went bananas for bananas, and where we also enjoyed some nice looks at Gray-headed Chachalacas (imagine having those as a "feeder bird" back home!). The nearby Ammo Dump Ponds produced nicely, including Rufescent Tiger-Heron, up-close studies of a diminutive American Pygmy Kingfisher, the clown-like antics of a pair of Barred Antshrikes, Panama Flycatcher, and a nice variety of other open-country and marsh inhabiting species.

The next day started well before dawn because we had a lot of ground to cover. For the first time, we were substituting a day-trip to the Bayano Valley in eastern Panama Province into the slot where we would normally visit Cerro Azul. My recent experience

on January-February trips to Cerro Azul had been disappointing, with few trees in fruit at that elevation, and little or no flock activity. Accordingly, I had made the decision prior to our tour to spend the day exploring the Bayano Reservoir area. I had done some limited scouting and group birding there in the past, and I knew that there were a number of species that we might pick up whose ranges did not extend to the Canal Zone. We had barely made it out of the bus at our first stop when we noticed a distant flowering tree that was attracting a lot of birds. Scopes were a necessity, and we soon began to pick out a number of White-eared Conebills amongst the Plain-colored Tanagers. José spotted a female One-colored Becard, which he soon had in the scope. Our attention soon shifted to a family group of Orange-crowned Orioles that eventually worked their way right up to the road. The conebills eventually drifted our way as well, and before long we had conebills right next to the road, where everyone enjoyed outstanding studies. I taped in a Bright-rumped Attila, which posed for great views despite being harassed by multiple hummingbirds. I had just started to work on a Black Antshrike, when I heard the call of a ridiculously distant Barred Puffbird. I alerted José to the voice and played tape several times, but to no avail. So, I went back to working on the Black Antshrike and a Rufous-winged Antwren, both of which were playing somewhat hard to get. Then I heard the puffbird call again, this time somewhat closer, but still distant. I knew he had to be in one of two emergent cuipo trees, and after a bit of scanning, I thought I had him. José soon confirmed it with the scope—Barred Puffbird, a tour first! We all enjoyed multiple looks and then I tried the tape again. The puffbird came for us like a heat-seeking missile. In no time, the bird was right next to the road, and like the Attila before him, this bird was the immediate target of several upset hummingbirds, which buzzed him repeatedly. Unfazed, the puffbird posed and sang for us for an extended period, providing the best highlight of the day. Not long after, we all secured good views of both the male and female Black Antshrike, a bird with a microscopic global range (limited to eastern Panama and western Colombia). Icing on the cake came in the form of a very responsive Slaty-backed Forest-Falcon, which gave several close fly-bys, but which perched only long enough for a few people at a time to lay glasses or scopes on. All in all, it was a most productive “experimental” trip to the Bayano Valley, and one that I look forward to repeating next year.

Our third day was spent on famed Pipeline Road, one of the premier birding tracks in the Neotropics. Sadly, dawn arrived not with the usual bang, but with more of a whimper as regards bird vocalization. Despite this, we scored early on with Purple-throated Fruitcrows, Rufous Mourner, a couple of female Blue Cotingas, and others. Given the general lack of vocalization, we opted to try for a “project bird” early on. We bushwhacked a bit off the main track for a Streak-chested Antpitta, eventually scoring superb views of this endearing little “egg with legs.” We also enjoyed nice views of the world’s smallest passerine, the diminutive Black-capped Pygmy-Tyrant, which looked more like a large beetle or bee floating from perch to perch in the midstory. We spent a fair amount of time watching a small army ant swarm, and in the process, enjoyed repeated views of some typical ant swarm attendants, including Bicolored and Spotted antbirds, Northern Barred and Plain-brown woodcreepers, and Gray-headed Tanager. Less expected was a Ruddy Woodcreeper, which is a typical army ant-following species in northern Central America, but which is decidedly uncommon to rare in the Canal

Zone. Yet another project bird was the Song Wren, a pair of which eventually showed nicely for everyone. A Thrush-like Schiffornis responded well to tape, and Mary Lou made a great spot on a perched Gray-chested Dove that we all got to enjoy.

Achiote Road was typically birdy. From the moment that we stepped off the bus, birds were coming fast and furiously. One minute we were ogling Collared Aracaris, Black-cheeked Woodpeckers, and a dazzling male Blue Cotinga, and the next we were swinging our scopes from Flame-rumped Tanagers to Black-headed Saltators. After a bit of work, we taped a White-headed Wren into a spot where it could be studied in the scopes. This canopy-dwelling relative of our Cactus Wren is easily missed in a short trip, and our views were unusually good. Not to be outdone, three Spot-crowned Barbets (two males vying for the attention of a single female) settled into the same *Cecropia*, and proceeded to entertain us for several minutes. After lunch, we split up and hiked a loop trail, which produced Spot-crowned Antwren and Olivaceous Flatbill for some, and some colorful, green-and-black *Dendrobates* frogs for all. For most participants, the best was saved for last, when we visited a lek of Golden-collared Manakins (runner-up for Favorite Bird of the Trip). Upon stepping off the bus, I was a bit concerned at not hearing the usual snapping and popping that signals male manakins on the lek. However, within short order, we found multiple male manakins in full display mode, with their golden beards flared out, and wings snapping like dozens of firecrackers going off at once. Just as exciting, and completely unexpected, was a kinkajou that was sprawled across some low branches in plain view! This common forest mammal is normally active only at night, and it is a rare sight to ever see one in daylight, let alone as close and unobstructed as this animal was. It was hard to know where to look, at the kinkajou or the displaying manakins, so we did both. When we tired of rubbernecking between the two, we headed to the train station in Colón for a relaxing ride back through the Canal Zone, highlighted by good numbers of Snail Kites seen en route.

The following day we returned to Pipeline Road, but this time we focused our attention on the recently opened Panama Rainforest Discovery Center. We arrived early for a vigil atop their canopy tower. Besides providing an awe-inspiring birds-eye view of the rainforest canopy, the tower gave us close, eye level views of a number of canopy dwellers (including stunning studies of Brown-capped Tyrannulet), a singing male Slate-colored Seedeater, soaring Gray-headed Kites, a family group of White-necked Puffbirds, and more Blue Cotingas. A walk along the trails produced additional Slate-colored Seedeaters and too-close-to-focus-on Violaceous Trogons and Squirrel Cuckoos. But it was on the return hike that we really hit the jackpot. Carlos was leading the way out when he rounded a bend and saw a gorgeous Ocellated Antbird sitting in plain view within 10 feet of the trail. No sooner did he call it out than the bird dropped to the ground and pounced on a small lizard (*Anolis* sp.). As the antbird was busy subduing the lizard, we all scrambled for position. Unfortunately the bird flew off before everyone could get on it, and a second bird followed behind the first. There was no sign of an ant swarm in the vicinity, and army ants are usually a prerequisite for seeing Ocellated Antbirds. These obligate army ant followers are not territorial in the classical sense, so the songs on my iPod were no cinch to bring the birds back. But, they appeared to be our only hope, so I gave it a whirl. Within seconds we had a response, and soon thereafter, three Ocellated

Antbirds flew towards me and landed in a thicket just below us. At this point, they bunched together and appeared to go into a group trance. We, of course, bunched together and went into our own group trance, spellbound by the spectacular colors of what is arguably one of the most attractive of all antbirds. After a few minutes, two of the antbirds flew off, but the third stayed on, seemingly glued to its perch. This was an incredible stroke of good fortune for us. Normally, you would need ants to have any kind of chance at seeing Ocellated Antbird, and even when preoccupied with foraging at a swarm, Ocellateds tend to be somewhat jumpy and prone to fading off into the forest at the slightest disturbance. To have not one, but three of these handsome birds sitting still for a prolonged period was the highlight of the tour for most people. After this, the hummingbird feeders at the Visitor Center seemed anticlimactic, but they did attract a nice variety of hummingbirds, including gorgeous male Violet-bellieds.

Our afternoon excursion found us once more in the Gamboa area, this time along the Chagres River. Here, we were treated to more Rufous Tiger-Herons, a singing male White-bellied Antbird at point-blank range, Jet Antbird, and a Golden-fronted Greenlet that was close enough to touch.

Our final day found us exploring semi-deciduous forest at Metropolitan Park, which featured a number of dry-forest species, among them, Rufous-and-white Wren, Lance-tailed Manakin, and Red-crowned Ant-Tanager. The spritely Yellow-green Tyrannulet didn't elicit nearly as many gasps of delight from our group, but it was, after all, a Panamanian endemic, and one that is often missed. I would be remiss not to mention the additional Slate-colored Seedeaters that seemed to be singing all around us. This poorly-known species is highly nomadic, and its presence in any given area seems to be tightly tied to ephemeral mass-seeding events of various species of bamboo. Most of these bamboos may take 8–15 years before seeding, and when that happens, the seedeaters move in, breed explosively, and then, once the bamboo has died, disappear just as quickly as they appeared. They may not return to a given area for another decade or more. In all of my trips to Panama, I had never encountered Slate-colored Seedeaters in the Canal Zone before, and prior to November (when this latest invasion first started), most of the local Panamanian bird guides had only seen the species once or twice before. So, we were incredibly lucky that the timing of our tour coincided with an event that likely won't be repeated for another 10 years or more. We capped our day with an afternoon visit to Miraflores Locks, where, in addition to the fine Canal Museum, we were able to enjoy the spectacle of some behemoth container ships passing through the locks.

All in all, a great group of birders enjoyed a wonderful introduction to the natural riches of the Canal Zone, and had a lot of fun doing it. Thank you all for your good humor and good companionship, and I hope to cross paths with each and every one of you on another trip to some birdy corner of the world!

Itinerary:

January 30 – arrival in Panama City; transfer to Canopy Tower

January 31 – 0630–0730 tower watch from atop the Canopy Tower; 0830–1200 birding along Semaphore Hill; 1500–1800 hours at Gamboa feeders and Ammo Dump Ponds.

February 1 – 0400 breakfast with 0430 departure for Bayano Reservoir, arriving at bridge at 0730. Birded road and trails within a few kms of the bridge until 1430 hours (with picnic lunch); back to Canopy Tower by 1700 hours.

February 2 – 0530 breakfast and 0615 departure for Pipeline Road, where we spent the entire day, with lunch in the field. Return to Canopy Tower at 1700 hours.

February 3 – 0430 departure for Colon, Gatún Locks, and Achiote Road, where we birded until ca. 1530 hours; 1700 ride across the Isthmus on the PanAm Train.

February 4 – 0530 breakfast, with 0615 departure for Panama Rainforest Discovery Center (on Pipeline Road), where we birded until 1230. Returned to Canopy Tower for lunch and break, then birded Gamboa Resort area (Chagres River) from 1500–1830 hours. Post-dinner night drive along Semaphore Hill.

February 5 – 0530 departure for Metropolitan Park, where we birded until about 1100 hours; then to Costa del Este to check shorebirds before return to Canopy Tower for lunch; 1430 hours departure for Miraflores Locks & Canal Museum until 1700 hours.

February 6 – departure for home for many; or continue on to El Valle and the Canopy Lodge for others.

Key:

A = Achiote Road and vicinity, including Gatún Locks & Spillway area

BV = Bayano River Valley: all birding within 5 km of the big bridge at Bayano Reservoir.

CE = Costa del Este

G = Gamboa area, including Canopy Tower, Semaphore Hill, Gamboa Rainforest Resort (Chagres River area), Gamboa feeders, and Ammo Dump Ponds

ML = Miraflores Locks

MP = Metropolitan Park

PR = Pipeline Road & Panama Rainforest Discovery Center

* = heard only

NOTE: The following list follows (for the most part) the taxonomy and nomenclature employed by Ridgely & Gwynne 1989 (*A guide to the birds of Panama*), as modified by the American Ornithologists Union Checklist Committee (7th edition and subsequent supplements). Any exceptions are clarified in the list.

5 Favorite Birds of the Trip (as voted on by the group):

- 1. Ocellated Antbird**
- 2. Golden-collared Manakin**

3. **Barred Puffbird & White-bellied Antbird (tied)**
4. **Blue Cotinga, Spot-crowned Barbet, Slaty-backed Forest-Falcon & Rufescent Tiger-Heron (tied)**

Birds:

TINAMIDAE:

Great Tinamou (*Tinamus major*) - G (Seen only by Mary Lou & Nora; heard almost daily by everyone.)

Little Tinamou (*Crypturellus soui*) - BV*

ANATIDAE:

Muscovy Duck (*Cairina moschata*) - G

Blue-winged Teal (*Anas discors*) - B

CRACIDAE:

Gray-headed Chachalaca (*Ortalis cinereiceps*) - G

PODICIPEDIDAE:

Least Grebe (*Tachybaptus dominicus*) - BV

Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*) - G

SULIDAE:

Blue-footed Booby (*Sula nebouxii*) - CE (Plunge-diving offshore.)

PELICANIDAE:

Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) - CE

PHALACROCORACIDAE:

Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) - BV, A, G, CE

ANHINGIDAE:

Anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*) - BV, G

FREGATIDAE:

Magnificent Frigatebird (*Fregata magnificens*) - BV, A, G, CE, ML

ARDEIDAE:

Rufescent Tiger-Heron (*Tigrisoma lineatum*) - G, A

Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) - BV, CE

Cocoi Heron (*Ardea cocoi*) - G (Also known as “White-necked Heron”)

Great Egret (*Ardea alba*) - daily

Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*) - BV, A, G, CE

Little Blue Heron (*Egretta caerulea*) - BV, G, CE

Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*) - G, CE

Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*) - BV, A, G, Panama City

Green Heron (*Butorides virescens*) - G, BV, A

Black-crowned Night-Heron - CE

THRESKIORNITHIDAE:

White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*) - CE

CICONIIDAE:

Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*) - BV

CATHARTIDAE:

Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) - everywhere

Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*) - everywhere

ACCIPITRIDAE:

Pandioninae

Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) - A, G, MP, CE

Accipitrinae

Gray-headed Kite (*Leptodon cayanensis*) - G (Taped in nicely to the Tower’s observation deck.), PR (Soaring over the canopy tower at the Rainforest Discovery Center.)

Snail Kite (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*) - A (15+ seen from the train ride back through the Canal Zone.), PR, G

Double-toothed Kite (*Harpagus bidentatus*)* - PR*

Crane Hawk (*Geranospiza caerulescens*) - BV, A, PR
Savanna Hawk (*Buteogallus meridionalis*) - A
Short-tailed Hawk (*Buteo brachyurus*) - A

FALCONIDAE:

Micrasturinae

Slaty-backed Forest-Falcon (*Micrastur mirandollei*) - BV (Several brief, but good looks at a tape-responsive bird.), PR (Seen by some along the trail at the Rainforest Discovery Center.)

Caracarinae

Crested Caracara (*Caracara cheriway*) - BV, A
Yellow-headed Caracara (*Milvago chimachima*) - BV, A, CE

Falconinae

Laughing Falcon (*Herpetotheres cachinnans*) - BV
American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*) - A
Merlin (*Falco columbarius*) - G (1 at the Ammo Dump Ponds)
Bat Falcon (*Falco ruficularis*) - G, BV, MP (Nice views, particularly at Gamboa.)

RALLIDAE:

White-throated Crake (*Laterallus albigularis*)* - G* (They just didn't want to come out!)
Purple Gallinule (*Porphyrio martinica*) - BV
Common Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*) - G, PR (This one is about to revert to being called "Common Gallinule", a change already made by the AOU's South American Checklist Committee, and, I suspect, soon to be followed by the North American Committee, given that a recently published paper presents molecular evidence showing that Old World *G. chloropus* [= Common Moorhen] is not the same species as the New World *G. galeata* [= Common Gallinule].)
American Coot (*Fulica americana*) - G

CHARADRIIDAE:

Vanellinae

Southern Lapwing (*Vanellus chilensis*) - BV, A, CE

Charadriinae

Black-bellied Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) - CE

Wilson's Plover (*Charadrius wilsonia*) - CE

RECURVIROSTRIDAE:

Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*) - CE

JACANIDAE:

Wattled Jacana (*Jacana jacana*) - G, PR

SCOLOPACIDAE:

Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularius*) - CE

Greater Yellowlegs (*Tringa melanoleuca*) - CE

Willet (*Tringa semipalmatus*) - CE

Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*) - CE

Marbled Godwit (*Limosa fedoa*) - CE (10+)

Western Sandpiper (*Calidris mauri*) - CE

LARIDAE:

Larinae

Laughing Gull (*Larus atricilla*) - CE, ML

Sterninae

Sandwich Tern (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*) - CE

Rynchopinae

Black Skimmer (*Rynchops niger*) - CE (4 birds)

COLUMBIDAE:

Rock Pigeon (*Columba livia*) - widespread in towns

Pale-vented Pigeon (*Patagioenas cayennensis*) - G

Scaled Pigeon (*Patagioenas speciosa*) - G, PR (Particularly nice scope views from the tower at the Rainforest Discovery Center.)

Short-billed Pigeon (*Patagioenas nigrirostris*)* - PR*, A* (Curiously missing in action.)

Ruddy Ground-Dove (*Columbina talpacoti*) - daily

White-tipped Dove (*Leptotila verreauxi*) - daily

Gray-chested Dove (*Leptotila cassini*) - PR (Thanks to a great spot by Mary Lou!), MP, and heard almost everywhere else.

PTITTACIDAE:

Orange-chinned Parakeet (*Brotogeris jugularis*) - daily

Brown-hooded Parrot (*Pyrilia haematotis*) - G (Scope views from the tower of 4 perched birds were our only ones this trip.)

Blue-headed Parrot (*Pionus menstruus*) - BV, A, PR

Red-lored Parrot (*Amazona autumnalis*) - daily

Mealy Parrot (*Amazona farinosa*) - G, PR

CUCULIDAE:

Cuculinae

Squirrel Cuckoo (*Piaya cayana*) - PR, A, G, MP*

Crotopaginae

Greater Ani (*Crotophaga major*) - G, PR

Smooth-billed Ani (*Crotophaga ani*) - BV, A, G

STRIGIDAE:

Vermiculated (“Choco”) Screech-Owl (*Megascops guatemalae*)* - G* (It wasn’t for lack of trying! I walked circles around the tree/vine tangle he was in, but he wasn’t budging. Still not recognized by the AOU as a distinct species [for lack of published analysis], but these vocally distinct birds will eventually be treated as a species separate from other “Vermiculated Screech-Owls”.)

NYCTIBIIDAE:

Great Potoo (*Nyctibius grandis*) - G

APODIDAE:

Chaeturinae

Vaux's Swift (*Chaetura vauxi*) - G (Seen nicely from the observation deck at the Tower, where not really expected. These were the smallest of the three *Chaetura* present that afternoon, and the ones with the quickest wingbeats. They lack the distinct whitish rump band of the Band-rumped Swifts, and have a totally different shape from the Short-tailed Swifts, both of which were present for ready comparison.)

Short-tailed Swift (*Chaetura brachyura*) - G, PR, MP

Band-rumped Swift (*Chaetura spinicauda*) - G, A, PR

Apodinae

Lesser Swallow-tailed Swift (*Panyptila cayennensis*) - G, PR (Seen nicely from both towers.)

TROCHILIDAE:

Phaethornithinae

Rufous-breasted Hermit (*Glaucis hirsutus*) - BV

Long-billed Hermit (*Phaethornis longirostris*) - G, PR (Also known as “Western Long-tailed Hermit”.)

Stripe-throated Hermit (*Phaethornis strigularis*) - BV, PR (Split from “Little Hermit”)

Trochilinae

White-necked Jacobin (*Florisuga mellivora*) - daily

Black-throated Mango (*Anthracothorax nigricollis*) - G, BV, PR

Violet-crowned Woodnymph (*Thalurania colombica*) - PR

Violet-bellied Hummingbird (*Damophila julie*) - G, BV, PR (This one's a stunner!)

Blue-chested Hummingbird (*Amazilia amabilis*) - daily (And the incessantly singing ones near the tower parking area were hard to miss!)

Snowy-bellied Hummingbird (*Amazilia edward*) - BV, G, MP (Nearly a Panama endemic.)

Rufous-tailed Hummingbird (*Amazilia tzacatl*) - G, A, PR, MP

White-vented Plumeleteer (*Chalybura buffonii*) - PR, MP

Purple-crowned Fairy (*Heliodytes barroti*) - G

TROGONIDAE:

White-tailed Trogon (*Trogon viridis*) - G, A, PR*

Violaceous Trogon (*Trogon violaceus*) - PR

Black-throated Trogon (*Trogon rufus*) - PR, A*

Black-tailed Trogon (*Trogon melanurus*) - G, BV, PR (Easier than usual.)

Slaty-tailed Trogon (*Trogon Massena*) - G, PR, A, MP

MOMOTIDAE:

- Blue-crowned Motmot** (*Momotus momota*) - PR, MP
Rufous Motmot (*Baryphthengus martii*) - G, BV*, PR
Broad-billed Motmot (*Electron platyrhynchum*) - G, PR

ALCEDINIDAE:

- Ringed Kingfisher** (*Ceryle torquatus*) - BV, A
Belted Kingfisher (*Megaceryle alcyon*) - PR
American Pygmy Kingfisher (*Chloroceryle aenea*) - G (A particularly cooperative individual at the ammo dump ponds.)

BUCCONIDAE:

- White-necked Puffbird** (*Notharchus macrorhynchos*) - BV*, PR
Black-breasted Puffbird (*Notharchus pectoralis*) - G, PR
Pied Puffbird (*Notharchus tectus*) - A (We sweated this one, but literally pulled it out at the 11th hour!)
- Barred Puffbird** (*Nystalus radiatus*) - BV (A nice find! It was really cool to watch the various hummers harassing the puffbird as it sat stoically looking at us. This was a tour first for this species, which is more regular farther east in Panama [mainly in Darien].)
- White-whiskered Puffbird** (*Malacoptila panamensis*) - G, PR*

RAMPHASTIDAE:

Capitonidae

- Spot-crowned Barbet** (*Capito maculicoronatus*) - A (Repeated great studies of two males and a female.)

Ramphastinae

- Collared Aracari** (*Pteroglossis torquatus*) - BV, PR, A
Keel-billed Toucan (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*) - daily, including some stunning eye-level studies from the tower.
Chestnut-mandibled Toucan (*Ramphastos swainsoni*) - G*, PR, A, MP*

PICIDAE:

- Black-cheeked Woodpecker** (*Melanerpes pucherani*) - BV, A, PR
Red-crowned Woodpecker (*Melanerpes rubricapillus*) - G, A, PR, MP
Cinnamon Woodpecker (*Celeus loricatus*) - G, PR, A*

Lineated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus lineatus*) - G, PR
Crimson-crested Woodpecker (*Campephilus melanoleucos*) - PR, MP

FURNARIIDAE:

Furnariinae

Plain Xenops (*Xenops minutus*) - daily

Dendrocolaptinae

Plain-brown Woodcreeper (*Dendrocincla fuliginosa*) - BV, PR

Ruddy Woodcreeper (*Dendrocincla homochroa*) - PR (1 seen nicely and tape-recorded at an antswarm was a treat. This is a very uncommon bird in the Canal Zone.)

Northern Barred-Woodcreeper (*Dendrocolaptes sanctithomae*) - PR {Split from “Barred Woodcreeper” *D. certhia*.}

Cocoa Woodcreeper (*Xiphorhynchus susurrans*) - PR, A, G*, MP (Split from “Buff-throated Woodcreeper”, although you should expect more changes in the species-limits in this group.)

Black-striped Woodcreeper (*Xiphorhynchus lachrymosus*) - G*, PR (Spectacular views of this very attractive woodcreeper.), A*

Streak-headed Woodcreeper (*Lepidocolaptes souleyetii*) - BV

THAMNOPHILIDAE:

Fasciated Antshrike (*Cymbilaimus lineatus*) - G, PR, MP (Particularly nice studies of the pair feeding a youngster in the nest on Semaphore Hill.)

Great Antshrike (*Taraba major*) - G

Barred Antshrike (*Thamnophilus doliatus*) - G (These clowns are always crowd-pleasers!)

Western Slaty-Antshrike (*Thamnophilus atrinucha*) - daily (including an active nest on PR)

Black Antshrike (*Thamnophilus nigriceps*) - BV (This seldom-seen species has a tiny range – localized in e Panama and w Colombia – and hence, is not often found by birders. We saw it at the extreme western/northern end of its range.)

Spot-crowned Antwren (*Dysithamnus puncticeps*) - A (Half of the group saw a female nicely on the Trogon Trail.)

Checker-throated Antwren (*Epinecrophylla fulviventris*) - G, PR (Including an active nest on PR.)

Pacific Antwren (*Myrmotherula pacifica*) - A (Nice looks at a male and female.)

White-flanked Antwren (*Myrmotherula axillaries*) - G, PR, A

Rufous-winged Antwren (*Herpsilochmus rufimarginatus*) - BV (This is yet another species at the western edge of its range, that does not quite make it to the Canal Zone.)

Dot-winged Antwren (*Microrhopias quixensis*) - G, PR, A, MP

Dusky Antbird (*Cercomacra tyrannina*) - G, BV*, PR, MP

Jet Antbird (*Cercomacra nigricans*) - G

White-bellied Antbird (*Myrmeciza longipes*) - G (Spectacular looks!), MP*

Chestnut-backed Antbird (*Myrmeciza exsul*) - A (Much less conspicuous and vocal than normal.)

Spotted Antbird (*Hylophylax naevioides*) - G, PR, A* (Seen briefly several times at the ant swarm on PR, and by some folks along Semaphore Hill, but not as satisfying as usual.)

Bicolored Antbird (*Gymnopithys leucaspis*) - PR (Seen nicely at the army ant swarm.)

Ocellated Antbird (*Phaenostictus mcleannani*) - G (4 birds that blasted across the road on Semaphore Hill), PR (3 birds that taped in and then posed at the Rainforest Discovery Center. Voted “Favorite Bird of the Trip” on the basis of this latter sighting. Clearly, one of the most spectacular of all antbirds.)

FORMICARIIDAE:

Black-faced Antthrush (*Formicarius analis*) - G* (Oddly non-vocal this trip.)

GRALLARIDAE:

Streak-chested Antpitta (*Hylopezus perspicillatus*) - PR (This one took some work, but we were rewarded with terrific views. Antpittas rock!) {Also known as “Spectacled Antpitta”.}

TYRANNIDAE:

Elaeniinae

Brown-capped Tyrannulet (*Ornithion brunneicapillus*) - G, BV*, PR, A, MP (This little canopy-dweller was seen nicely from the tower at the Rainforest Discovery Center.)

Southern Beardless-Tyrannulet (*Camptostoma obsoletum*) - BV*, MP

Yellow Tyrannulet (*Capsiempis flaveola*)* - MP*

Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet (*Tyrannulus elatus*) - G, BV*, PR, A*, MP

Forest Elaenia (*Myiopagis gaimardii*) - BV, PR*, A*, MP*

Gray Elaenia (*Myiopagis caniceps*) - PR

Greenish Elaenia (*Myiopagis viridicata*)* - MP*

Yellow-bellied Elaenia (*Elaenia flavogaster*) - G, A

Ochre-bellied Flycatcher (*Mionectes oleaginus*) - G, PR, MP

Yellow-green Tyrannulet (*Phylloscartes flavovirens*) - MP (A Panamanian endemic!)

Paltry Tyrannulet (*Zimmerius vilissimus*) - G*, PR, A, MP*

Platyrynchinae

Black-capped Pygmy-Tyrant (*Myiornis atricapillus*) - PR (Nice studies of this little sprite!)

Southern Bentbill (*Oncostoma olivaceum*) - heard daily, but seen only at PR

Common Tody-Flycatcher (*Todirostrum cinereum*) - G, BV, A, MP
Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher (*Todirostrum nigriceps*) - BV (Nice studies.), A*
Brownish Twistwing (*Cnipodectes subbrunneus*) - PR (Formerly known as “Brownish Flycatcher”.)
Olivaceous Flatbill (*Rhynchocyclus olivaceus*) - PR*, A (Seen nicely by half the group along the Trogon Trail.)
Yellow-olive Flycatcher (*Tolmomyias sulphurescens*) - MP
Yellow-margined Flycatcher (*Tolmomyias assimilis*) - G, PR (Seen nicely along Semaphore Hill and from the tower at the Rainforest Discovery Center.)

Fluvicolinae

Ruddy-tailed Flycatcher (*Terenotriccus erythrurus*) - PR
Black-tailed Flycatcher (*Myiobius atricaudus*) - MP
Acadian Flycatcher (*Empidonax virescens*) - PR*, A
Pied Water-Tyrant (*Fluvicola pica*) - BV
Long-tailed Tyrant (*Colonia colonus*) - A

Tyranninae

Bright-rumped Attila (*Attila spadiceus*) - heard daily, but seen only at BV (Where it was being attacked by hummingbirds!)
Rufous Mourner (*Rhytipterna holerythra*) - PR, A*
Dusky-capped Flycatcher (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*)* - A*, PR*, MP*
Panama Flycatcher (*Myiarchus panamensis*) - G
Great Crested Flycatcher (*Myiarchus crinitus*) - BV, PR*, A*, MP*
Lesser Kiskadee (*Pitangus lictor*) - A, PR, G
Great Kiskadee (*Pitangus sulphuratus*) - daily
Boat-billed Flycatcher (*Megarynchus pitangua*) - A, G
Rusty-margined Flycatcher (*Myiozetetes cayanensis*) - G, BV, MP
Social Flycatcher (*Myiozetetes similis*) - G, A, MP
Gray-capped Flycatcher (*Myiozetetes granadensis*) - A
Streaked Flycatcher (*Myiodynastes maculatus*) - G, A
Piratic Flycatcher (*Legatus leucophaeus*) - G
Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) - everywhere
Fork-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus savanna*) - G, A, PR

Genera *Incertae sedis* (Tyrannidae/Tityridae)

Thrush-like Schiffornis (*Schiffornis turdinus*) - PR (Look for this widely distributed “species” to be split multiple ways before long. We saw the subspecies *S. t. panamensis*.)
Cinnamon Becard (*Pachyramphus cinnamomeus*) - A, MP*
White-winged Becard (*Pachyramphus polychopterus*) - A, PR

One-colored Becard (*Pachyramphus homochrous*) - BV (Another “Bayano specialty”. The range of this species extends down to nw Peru, but we were at the extreme western edge of its range. This was a first for this tour.)

Masked Tityra (*Tityra semifasciata*) - PR

Black-crowned Tityra (*Tityra inquisitor*) - A, MP

COTINGIDAE:

Blue Cotinga (*Cotinga nattererii*) - PR, A (The male is a stunner!)

Purple-throated Fruitcrow (*Querula purpurata*) - PR, A*, MP*

PIPRIDAE:

Golden-collared Manakin (*Manacus vitellinus*) - BV, PR*, A (Our visit to a lek of these stunning little birds was one of the trip highlights! Runner-up for Bird of the Trip honors.)

Lance-tailed Manakin (*Chiroxiphia lanceolata*) - MP

Blue-crowned Manakin (*Pipra coronata*) - G, PR

Red-capped Manakin (*Pipra mentalis*) - G, PR*

VIREONIDAE:

Yellow-green Vireo (*Vireo flavoviridis*)* - BV*

Scrub Greenlet (*Hylophilus flavipes*) - G, BV*, PR*, MP (Nice studies.)

Golden-fronted Greenlet (*Hylophilus aurantiiifrons*) - G, MP (Extraordinary views.)

Lesser Greenlet (*Hylophilus decurtatus*) - G, PR*, A*, MP

Green Shrike-Vireo (*Vireolanus pulchellus*) - G, BV*, PR, A*, MP* (Heard daily, but seen exceptionally well from the tower.)

HIRUNDINIDAE:

Gray-breasted Martin (*Progne chalybea*) - daily

Mangrove Swallow (*Tachycineta albilinea*) - G, PR, A

Southern Rough-winged Swallow (*Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*) - G, A, PR (I think we just didn't look hard enough for Northerns, which are also usually around at this time.)

TROGLODYTIDAE:

White-headed Wren (*Campylorhynchus albobrunneus*) - A (Nice views of this often difficult bird.)

Black-bellied Wren (*Thryothorus fasciatoventris*) - G, BV, PR, A

Bay Wren (*Thryothorus nigricapillus*) - PR

Rufous-breasted Wren (*Thryothorus rutilus*) - MP

Rufous-and-white Wren (*Thryothorus rufalbus*) - MP

Buff-breasted Wren (*Thryothorus leucotis*) - G, BV*

Plain Wren (*Thryothorus modestus*) - A, PR*, MP*
House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*) - G, A, MP
White-breasted Wood-Wren (*Henicorhina leucosticta*) - G
Song Wren (*Cyphorhinus phaeocephalus*) - PR

SYLVIIDAE:

Polioptilinae

Long-billed Gnatwren (*Ramphocaenus melanurus*) - G*, BV, PR*, MP
Tropical Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila plumbea*) - G*, BV, PR, MP

TURDIDAE:

Wood Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*) - A
Clay-colored Thrush (*Turdus grayi*) - everywhere (Formerly known as “Clay-colored Robin”.)

MIMIDAE:

Tropical Mockingbird (*Mimus gilvus*) - G, A

PARULIDAE:

Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) - PR (A female at the Rainforest Discovery Center was a good bird in the Canal Zone. More expected in the mountains of western Panama.)
Tennessee Warbler (*Vermivora peregrina*) - MP
Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica petechia*) - G, BV (These are migrants that breed in the U.S. and Canada.)
Chestnut-sided Warbler (*Dendroica pensylvanica*) - A, PR
Bay-breasted Warbler (*Dendroica castanea*) - BV, MP
Black-and-white Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*) - BV, MP
Prothonotary Warbler (*Protonotaria citrea*) - G (1 at the Ammo Dump Ponds and 1 at the Chagres River site)
Worm-eating Warbler (*Helmitheros vermivorum*) - MP
Northern Waterthrush (*Seiurus noveboracensis*) - A, G

Genus *Incertae sedis*

Bananaquit (*Coereba flaveola*) - BV, A

THRAUPIDAE:

White-eared Conebill (*Conirostrum leucogenys*) - BV (Another “Bayano Specialty”. The range of this bird extends east into the Llanos of n Venezuela, but we saw it at the western limit of its range. Another first for this particular tour.)

Rosy Thrush-Tanager (*Rhodinocichla rosea*)* - MP*

Gray-headed Tanager (*Eucometis penicillata*) - PR, G

White-shouldered Tanager (*Tachyphonus luctuosus*) - daily

Crimson-backed Tanager (*Ramphocelus dimidiatus*) - G, BV, A, PR, MP

Flame-rumped Tanager (*Ramphocelus flammigerus*) - A, G (Subspecies *icteronotus*, the form found from Panama to southwest Ecuador, is often treated as a distinct species, “Lemon-rumped Tanager”. There is apparently some intergradation between it and nominate *flammigerus* where the ranges of the two forms meet in Colombia. The AOU still treats them as conspecific on this basis, but this one seems ripe for a potential split.)

Blue-gray Tanager (*Thraupis episcopus*) - seen at all sites

Palm Tanager (*Thraupis palmarum*) - daily

Plain-colored Tanager (*Tangara inornata*) - G, BV, PR, A, MP

Golden-hooded Tanager (*Tangara larvata*) - G, BV, A, MP*

Blue Dacnis (*Dacnis cayana*) - G, PR

Green Honeycreeper (*Chlorophanes spiza*) - G, PR

Red-legged Honeycreeper (*Cyanerpes cyaneus*) - G, PR, MP

Genus *Incertae sedis*:

Buff-throated Saltator (*Saltator maximus*) - BV

Black-headed Saltator (*Saltator atriceps*) - A

Slate-colored Grosbeak (*Saltator grossus*) - G, PR

EMBERIZIDAE:

Slate-colored Seedeater (*Sporophila schistacea*) - PR, MP (As we discussed on the tour, this is a nomadic species whose presence seems to be closely tied to wide scale bamboo-seeding events, which, in any given region, may occur only once per decade. When this happens, these seedeaters move in and breed explosively, and then move on to somewhere else when the bamboo has finished seeding. We were lucky to hit a time when there were a number of these enigmatic birds present and singing. This was the first time I have seen them in the Canal Zone.)

Variable Seedeater (*Sporophila americana*) - G, BV, A, MP

Ruddy-breasted Seedeater (*Sporophila minuta*) - BV

Thick-billed Seed-Finch (*Oryzoborus funereus*) - G, A

Black-striped Sparrow (*Arremonops conirostris*) - PR*, MP

CARDINALIDAE:

Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*) - PR, MP

Red-crowned Ant-Tanager (*Habia rubica*) - MP (Exceptional views, and a nice comparison with the next species! This is one of the few places where you can see both species in the same spot.)

Red-throated Ant-Tanager (*Habia fuscicauda*) - PR, MP

Blue-black Grosbeak (*Cyanocompsa cyanooides*) - A, PR*, MP

ICTERIDAE:

Red-breasted Blackbird (*Sturnella militaris*) - A

Great-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) - everywhere

Yellow-backed Oriole (*Icterus chrysater*) - PR, MP

Orange-crowned Oriole (*Icterus auricapillus*) - BV (Another “Bayano specialty”, and another tour first!)

Yellow-tailed Oriole (*Icterus mesomelas*) - G

Yellow-billed Cacique (*Amblycercus holosericeus*) - G

Yellow-rumped Cacique (*Cacicus cela*) - G, BV, A, MP

Scarlet-rumped Cacique (*Cacicus uropygialis*) - G, PR, A

Crested Oropendola (*Psarocolius decumanus*) - A

Montezuma Oropendola (*Psarocolius montezuma*) - A (Nice scope views.)

Chestnut-headed Oropendola (*Psarocolius wagleri*) - PR, G

FRINGILLIDAE:

Euphoniinae

Yellow-crowned Euphonia (*Euphonia luteicapilla*) - BV, A, MP

Thick-billed Euphonia (*Euphonia laniirostris*) - BV, A, MP

Fulvous-vented Euphonia (*Euphonia fulvicrissa*) - G, PR, A

Mammals:

Common Opossum (*Didelphus marsupialis*) - G

Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth (*Bradypus variegatus*) - MP

Hoffmann’s Two-toed Sloth (*Cholepus hoffmanni*) - G

Nine-banded Armadillo (*Dasypus novemcinctus*) - G

Geoffroy’s (Red-naped) Tamarin (*Saguinus geoffroyi*) - G

White-throated Capuchin (*Cebus capucinus*) - G, PR

Mantled Howler Monkey (*Alouatta pallidata*) - G, PR, A

Variiegated Squirrel (*Sciurus variegatoides*) - G, PR

Red-tailed Squirrel (*Sciurus granatensis*) - G

Central American Agouti (*Dasyprocta punctata*) - G, PR, A

White-nosed Coatimundi (*Nasua narica*) - PR

Kinkajou (*Potos flavus*) - A (Really amazing to see this nocturnal animal so well in the daytime.)

Significant Others:

Slender Anole

Iguana

Poison dart frog (*Dendrobates* sp. - one of the green-and-black types)

And various butterflies, including several morpho species