

**PANAMA: FALL AT
EL VALLE'S CANOPY
LODGE EXTENSION**

OCTOBER 23 – 28, 2010

LEADERS: BARRY ZIMMER & MOYO RODRIGUEZ

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“Snowcap!” came the cry from someone in our group. This tiny (2 and 3/4 inches) wine-colored hummingbird with the bright white cap was one of our main targets for the day on Altos del Maria above El Valle. Now we had it perched and were able to enjoy scope views for several minutes. Quickly though, we were distracted by a male White-tailed Emerald. This species of hummingbird is rather rare in the region (I had never seen one here before) and now he was contesting the Snowcap for a patch of flowers. Our local guide, Moyo, then spotted a Brown Violetear—the rarest hummingbird of the three. With hummingbirds buzzing all about us, a small mixed flock came in. Stunning Black-and-yellow Tanagers (one of the prettiest of the whole family) actually posed briefly in the scope. A couple of flashy Green Honeycreepers joined them along with several Shining Honeycreepers and a Bay-headed Tanager. A noisy cluster of Common Bush-Tanagers poured through along with a Tufted Flycatcher. Overhead, a rarely seen Barred Hawk circled lazily about, as a Thrush-like Schiffornis sang from the thicket. Moments later the schiffornis was seen within ten feet! All this swirl of color and rarity within a ten-minute period!

The Canopy Lodge extension to our Fall at Panama's Canopy Tower tour is the perfect complement to a week in the Canal Zone. Here in the cooler foothills west of Panama City one can find an entirely different set of birds. Over the course of five days we tallied 194 species, an impressive 67 of which had not been seen on the Canopy Tower tour. This gave us a grand total of 341 species for the entire trip.

We began our birding right around the lodge where tray feeders just outside the dining area play host to an incredible variety of birds. Rufous Motmot, Chestnut-headed Oropendola, Buff-throated Saltator, Red-legged Honeycreeper, Clay-colored Thrush, Thick-billed and Tawny-capped euphonias, and nine species of tanagers (including the incomparable Crimson-backed and Flame-rumped) swarmed over the bananas and papaya. It was almost impossible to drag ourselves away from this spectacle. Eventually we took a short walk up the road and added Broad-billed Motmot, Stripe-throated Hermit, Violet-crowned Woodnymph, Bay Wren, and Tawny-crested Tanager, among others.

Our first full day was spent on La Mesa in the morning and at Cariguana in the afternoon. Forest along the Las Minas Road yielded Blue-throated Toucanet, Spotted Woodcreeper, Great Antshrike, Golden-collared Manakin, Black-headed Saltator, and Silver-throated Tanager. A short distance away we had a pair of Dull-mantled Antbirds within feet of the group. Bat Falcon, Tawny-faced Gnatwren, Plain Antvireo, a very rare Black-throated

Blue Warbler, and Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch were also seen. The lower elevation, drier forests of Cariguana produced the highly sought Tody Motmot, along with Blue-crowned Motmot, roosting Tropical Screech-Owls, Lineated Woodpecker, and Lance-tailed Manakins.

The next day we headed to the coastal Pacific lowlands for an entirely different group of birds. Savannah Hawk, Mangrove Black-Hawk, Brown-throated Parakeet (an allopreening pair from 20 feet!), Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl, Sapphire-throated Hummingbird, Straight-billed Woodcreeper, Fork-tailed Flycatcher, Rufous-browed Peppershrike, and Mouse-colored Tyrannulet were among the highlights.

Day three found us on Altos del Maria where we enjoyed the previously described ten-minute frenzy. The highlights on this particular day were almost too many to list. Black-crowned Antpitta from 30 feet, Brown-billed Scythebill (a lifer for me!), Orange-bellied Trogon, and a perched White Hawk stand out among the others.

On our last day we visited the Rio Indio area to the north of La Mesa. Here we tallied another tour first—the Barred Puffbird (!!!), Jet Antbird, Black-faced Grosbeak, and Buff-rumped Warbler. A last-minute check of the Canopy Adventure before heading back to Panama City produced a roosting Mottled Owl at eye level about 15 feet away! What a spectacular conclusion to an already fantastic trip!

Itinerary:

October 23 – arrival in El Valle around noon; birding on grounds of Canopy Lodge and up to trails of Canopy Adventure (51 species)

October 24 – lodge feeders, La Mesa (including Las Minas Road), Cariguana Trail in afternoon (91 species; 105 total)

October 25 – El Chiru, Santa Clara, Juan Hombron (81 species; 155 total)

October 26 – Los Altos del Maria all day (64 species; 184 total)

October 27 – Rio Indio, Canopy Adventure, drive to Panama City (68 species; 196 total)

October 28 – departures for home (197 total species)

Key:

Underlined species represent birds of very uncommon occurrence or species that occur regularly but in such low densities as to be easily missed

Bold-faced species indicate birds of rare, casual, or accidental occurrence

Birds:

Little Tinamou (*Crypturellus soui*) heard only
Gray-headed Chachalaca (*Ortalis cinereiceps*)
Crested Bobwhite (*Colinus cristatus*) heard only near El Chiru
Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*)
Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*)
Magnificent Frigatebird (*Fregata magnificens*)
Great Egret (*Ardea alba*)
Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*)
Little Blue Heron (*Egretta caerulea*) by the hundreds at Juan Hombron
Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*)
Green Heron (*Butorides virescens*)
White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*)
Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*)
Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) daily in numbers
Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*)
Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture (*Cathartes burrovianus*) Juan Hombron
Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)
White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus*)
Barred Hawk (*Leucopternis princeps*) one over Altos del Maria was a first for me in Panama!
White Hawk (*Leucopternis albicollis*) perched bird on Altos del Maria
Mangrove Black-Hawk (*Buteogallus subtilis*) great views
Savannah Hawk (*Buteogallus meridionalis*) superb studies at Juan Hombron of this handsome raptor
Roadside Hawk (*Buteo magnirostris*)
Broad-winged Hawk (*Buteo platypterus*) scattered migrants
Crested Caracara (*Caracara cheriway*) many in Juan Hombron rice fields
Yellow-headed Caracara (*Milvago chimachima*)
American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*)
Bat Falcon (*Falco ruficularis*)
Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*)
Gray-necked Wood-Rail (*Aramides cajanea*) by Moyo & Caryl
Southern Lapwing (*Vanellus chilensis*)
Wattled Jacana (*Jacana jacana*)
Wilson's Snipe (*Gallinago delicata*) two in Juan Hombron rice fields; uncommon
Royal Tern (*Thalasseus maxima*)
Rock Pigeon (*Columba livia*)
Scaled Pigeon (*Patagioenas speciosa*)
Ruddy Ground-Dove (*Columbina talpacoti*)
White-tipped Dove (*Leptotila verreauxi*)
Brown-throated Parakeet (*Aratinga pertinax*) scope studies of pair around El Chiru
Orange-chinned Parakeet (*Brotogeris jugularis*)
Brown-hooded Parrot (*Pionopsitta haematotis*)
Blue-headed Parrot (*Pionus menstruus*)

Squirrel Cuckoo (*Piaya cayana*)
Striped Cuckoo (*Tapera naevia*) very close near Rio Indio
Smooth-billed Ani (*Crotophaga ani*)
Groove-billed Ani (*Crotophaga sulcirostris*)
Tropical Screech-Owl (*Megascops choliba*) incredible daytime study of roosting pair at Cariguana
Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl (*Glaucidium brasilianum*) scope views at El Chiru
Mottled Owl (*Ciccaba virgata*) fantastic daytime study at eye level
Green Hermit (*Phaethornis guy*)
Stripe-throated Hermit (*Phaethornis striigularis*)
Brown Violet-ear (*Colibri delphinae*) a tour first; we had two on Los Altos!

Green Thorntail (*Discosura conversii*) lone females on Los Altos and near Rio Indio; very uncommon to rare
Garden Emerald (*Chlorostilbon assimilis*)
Violet-crowned Woodnymph (*Thalurania colombica*)
Sapphire-throated Hummingbird (*Lepidopyga coeruleogularis*)
Blue-chested Hummingbird (*Amazilia amabilis*)
Snowy-bellied Hummingbird (*Amazilia Edward*)
Rufous-tailed Hummingbird (*Amazilia tzacatl*) common
White-tailed Emerald (*Elvira chionura*) male on Los Altos del Maria was a surprise
Snowcap (*Microchera albocoronata*) stunning scope views of adult male perched; spotted by Donna; tied for third favorite bird of the tour!
Long-billed Starthroat (*Heliomaster longirostris*) gorgeous male near Las Nubes; very uncommon
Orange-bellied Trogon (*Trogon aurantiiventris*) scope views of male at Los Altos
Tody Motmot (*Hylomanes momotula*) nice looks at Cariguana; can be very hard to find
Blue-crowned Motmot (*Momotus momota*) five total
Rufous Motmot (*Baryphthengus martii*) a regular (and spectacular) visitor to the lodge feeders!
Broad-billed Motmot (*Electron platyrhynchum*) one near the Canopy Adventure
Green Kingfisher (*Chloroceryle americana*) one often visible from the dining area!
Barred Puffbird (*Nystalus radiatus*) a pair near Rio Indio was another tour first and a lifer for me!!!; voted the favorite bird of the tour
Emerald (Blue-throated) Toucanet (*Aulacorhynchus prasinus*) good views of three; a likely future split to be called Blue-throated Toucanet (would become *A. caeruleogularis*)
Collared Aracari (*Pteroglossus torquatus*)
Keel-billed Toucan (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*)
Black-cheeked Woodpecker (*Melanerpes pucherani*) near Rio Indio
Red-crowned Woodpecker (*Melanerpes rubricapillus*) seen daily; a regular feeder visitor at the lodge
Lineated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus lineatus*) superb, prolonged scope study at Cariguana
Plain Xenops (*Xenops minutus*)
Wedge-billed Woodcreeper (*Glyphorhynchus spirurus*) nice views on La Mesa

Straight-billed Woodcreeper (*Xiphorhynchus picus*) lengthy scope study at Juan Hombron
Cocoa Woodcreeper (*Xiphorhynchus susurrans*)
Spotted Woodcreeper (*Xiphorhynchus erythropygius*) four total
Brown-billed Scythebill (*Campylorhynchus pusillus*) yet another tour first and my second lifer of the trip!; tied for third favorite bird of the tour
Great Antshrike (*Taraba major*) this skulker proved difficult to see, but ultimately showed itself to Donna & I
Barred Antshrike (*Thamnophilus doliatus*)
Plain Antvireo (*Dysithamnus mentalis*) one on La Mesa; uncommon
Spot-crowned Antvireo (*Dysithamnus puncticeps*) heard only
Jet Antbird (*Cercomacra nigricans*) unexpected was a male near Rio Indio
White-bellied Antbird (*Myrmeciza longipes*)
Chestnut-backed Antbird (*Myrmeciza exsul*) heard only
Dull-mantled Antbird (*Myrmeciza laemosticta*) incredible close views of a pair on La Mesa; one of my personal favorites; very uncommon
Streak-chested Antpitta (*Hylopezus perspicillatus*) heard only at Los Altos
Black-crowned Antpitta (*Pittasoma michleri*) great views of this prized species on Los Altos de Maria
Mouse-colored Tyrannulet (*Phaeomyias murina*) El Chiru
Yellow-bellied Elaenia (*Elaenia flavogaster*)
Olive-striped Flycatcher (*Mionectes olivaceus*)
Ochre-bellied Flycatcher (*Mionectes oleaginous*)
Paltry Tyrannulet (*Zimmerius vilissimus*)
Pale-eyed Pygmy-Tyrant (*Lophotriccus pilaris*) heard only at El Chiru
Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant (*Lophotriccus pileatus*) heard only at Los Altos
Bran-colored Flycatcher (*Myiophobus fasciatus*) a very responsive pair on La Mesa
Tufted Flycatcher (*Mitrephanes phaeocercus*) good views on Los Altos
Olive-sided Flycatcher (*Contopus cooperi*) five or six scattered about
Eastern Wood-Pewee (*Contopus virens*) abundant
Acadian Flycatcher (*Empidonax virescens*)
Bright-rumped Attila (*Attila spadiceus*) heard only
Great Crested Flycatcher (*Myiarchus crinitus*)
Great Kiskadee (*Pitangus sulphuratus*)
Boat-billed Flycatcher (*Megarhynchus pitangua*)
Social Flycatcher (*Myiozetetes similis*) widespread & common
Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) abundant in open country
Gray Kingbird (*Tyrannus dominicensis*) Juan Hombron
Fork-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus savanna*) fantastic views of this stunner
Thrushlike Schiffornis (*Schiffornis turdina*) great studies from a few feet away!
Golden-collared Manakin (*Manacus vitellinus*) including one stunning male
White-ruffed Manakin (*Corapipo altera*) nice looks at males and females
Lance-tailed Manakin (*Chiroxiphia lanceolata*) six total
Yellow-throated Vireo (*Vireo flavifrons*)
Philadelphia Vireo (*Vireo philadelphicus*) one at El Chiru
Red-eyed Vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*)

Yellow-green Vireo (*Vireo flavoviridis*) one late bird at the Adventure
 Scrub Greenlet (*Hylophilus flavipes*) El Chiru
 Lesser Greenlet (*Hylophilus decurtatus*)
 Rufous-browed Peppershrike (*Cyclarhis gujanensis*) scope views at El Chiru
 Black-chested Jay (*Cyanocorax affinis*) almost daily
 Gray-breasted Martin (*Progne subis*)
 Bank Swallow (*Riparia riparia*)
 Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*)
 Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)
 Bay Wren (*Thryothorus nigricapillus*) good views
 Rufous-breasted Wren (*Thryothorus rutilus*)
 Rufous-and-white Wren (*Thryothorus rufalbus*) this super skulker was seen well near Rio Indio
 Plain Wren (*Thryothorus modestus*) heard only
 House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*) seen daily; this is the “Southern House Wren”, *T. musculus*, of some authors
Ochraceous Wren (*Troglodytes ochraceus*) heard only
 White-breasted Wood-Wren (*Henichorhina leucosticta*) heard only
 Gray-breasted Wood-Wren (*Henichorhina leucophrys*) pretty good views of this skulker
 Scaly-breasted Wren (*Microcerculus marginatus*) heard only
Tawny-faced Gnatwren (*Microbates cinereiventris*) great studies on La Mesa
 Swainson’s Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*) migrants every day
Pale-vented Thrush (*Turdus obsoletus*) very uncommon
 Clay-colored Thrush (*Turdus grayi*) abundant
Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*) one near the Canopy Adventure was unexpected; very uncommon
 Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) three or four
 Tennessee Warbler (*Vermivora peregrina*) seen daily
 Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica petechia*) El Chiru
 Chestnut-sided Warbler (*Dendroica pensylvanica*) seven total
 Blackburnian Warbler (*Dendroica fusca*) three total
 Bay-breasted Warbler (*Dendroica castanea*) seven total
Black-throated Blue Warbler (*Dendroica caerulescens*) a female on La Mesa was probably our rarest bird of the trip!
 Louisiana Waterthrush (*Seiurus motacilla*) one near the Canopy Adventure seen very well
 Mourning Warbler (*Oporornis philadelphia*)
 Rufous-capped Warbler (*Basileuterus rufifrons*) many good views
Buff-rumped Warbler (*Phaeothlypis fulvicauda*) two pairs near Rio Indio; uncommon
 Bananaquit (*Coereba flaveola*) common around feeders
 Common Bush-Tanager (*Chlorospingus ophthalmicus*) Los Altos de Maria; the distinctive subspecies *punctulatus*
Black-and-yellow Tanager (*Chryothlypis chrysomelas*) Los Altos de Maria; stunning
 Dusky-faced Tanager (*Mitrospingus cassinii*) this furtive forest species has adapted to coming in to the lodge feeders; repeated great views

White-shouldered Tanager (*Tachyphonus luctuosus*)
Tawny-crested Tanager (*Tachyphonus delatrii*) several groups seen, including above the lodge, on La Mesa, and on Los Altos
White-lined Tanager (*Tachyphonus rufus*) a male & female sporadically came in to lodge feeders
Crimson-backed Tanager (*Ramphocelus dimidiatus*) in numbers daily, especially at the feeders; spectacular!
Flame-rumped Tanager (*Ramphocelus flammigerus*) like the preceding species, common at the lodge feeders and truly stunning
Blue-gray Tanager (*Thraupis episcopus*) abundant (up to 25 at a time), especially at the feeders
Palm Tanager (*Thraupis palmarum*) regular at feeders
Plain-colored Tanager (*Tangara inornata*)
Silver-throated Tanager (*Tangara icterocephala*) in the upper elevations
Bay-headed Tanager (*Tangara gyrola*) another beauty; La Mesa, Los Altos
Golden-hooded Tanager (*Tangara larvata*) several superb views of these gems
Green Honeycreeper (*Chlorophanes spiza*)
Shining Honeycreeper (*Cyanerpes lucidus*)
Red-legged Honeycreeper (*Cyanerpes cyaneus*) fairly common at the lodge feeders (though no adult males)
Streaked Saltator (*Saltator striatipectus*) one at El Chiru
Buff-throated Saltator (*Saltator maximus*) common at lodge feeders
Black-headed Saltator (*Saltator atriceps*) excellent views on La Mesa
Blue-black Grassquit (*Volatinia jacarina*) El Chiru
Variable Seedeater (*Sporophila Americana*)
Yellow-faced Grassquit (*Tiaris olivaceus*)
Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch (*Arremon brunneinucha*) very skulky
Orange-billed Sparrow (*Arremon aurantillostris*) brief early morning appearances near the dining area; another stunner
Black-striped Sparrow (*Arremonops conirostris*)
Hepatic Tanager (*Piranga flava*) the Panamanian race *testacea* which is almost certainly a different species than the one found in the United States
Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*) daily
Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga olivacea*)
Red-crowned Ant-Tanager (*Habia rubica*) seen daily, often visiting the feeders
Black-faced Grosbeak (*Caryothraustes poliogaster*) on La Mesa; uncommon
Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) scattered migrants
Blue Grosbeak (*Passerina caerulea*) rare was a female at El Chiru
Red-breasted Blackbird (*Sturnella militaris*) El Chiru
Eastern Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*) El Chiru
Great-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) abundant in open country
Orchard Oriole (*Icterus spurius*)
Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*)
Yellow-billed Caticue (*Amblycercus holosericeus*)
Chestnut-headed Oropendola (*Psarocolius wagleri*) regular at the lodge feeders; voted the second favorite bird of the tour

Yellow-crowned Euphonia (Euphonia luteicapilla) El Chiru
Thick-billed Euphonia (Euphonia laniirostris) abundant at lodge feeders
Tawny-capped Euphonia (Euphonia anae) one male was surprisingly at the lodge
feeders; a few others in the foothills
House Sparrow (Passer domesticus)

Total species – **197** (including 67 species not seen on the main Canopy Tower tour;
grand total for both tours was 341 species!)

Leader only birds:

White-collared swift
Chaetura species
White-tipped Sicklebill---rare
Black-faced Anthrush---heard only
Yellow-margined Flycatcher
Canada Warbler
Dickcissel---heard only

Mammals:

Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth
Geoffroy's Tamarin---heard only
Red-tailed Squirrel---banana thief!
Variegated Squirrel
pygmy-squirrel species---apparently both Central American and Western both occur and
are nearly inseparable in the field; based on lack of ear spots in photos taken we believe
this was Western
Central American Agouti
Orange Nectar Bat---nightly visitors to the hummingbird feeders!

Total species – 7

Reptiles & Amphibians:

Central American Whip-tailed Lizard
Striped Basilisk
Mediterranean Gecko
Unidentified frog on truck

Total species – 4

Butterflies:

Thoas Swallowtail
Cattleheart species (Parides sp.)

Cloudless sulphur species---possibly Large Orange (Phoebis agarithe?)

Erato Heliconian (Heliconius erato)

Banded Peacock (Anartia fatima)

Monarch

Fritillary species

Malachite (Siproeta stelenes)

Common Morpho (Morpho helenor)

Yellow-bordered Owl-eye (Caligo uranus)

Total species – 10 (plus many, many others left completely unidentified; butterfly numbers very low on extension due to generally misty/ rainy weather in the afternoons)

Significant others:

Leafcutter ants

Giant or Helicopter Damselfly

Scorpion species---too close for comfort!