

**PANAMA:
CHRISTMAS AT EL VALLE'S
CANOPY LODGE PRE-TRIP**

DECEMBER 22 – 27, 2006

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HOLIDAY SEASON IN PANAMA

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Guides: Steve Hilty with Panamian guide Tino (Faustino)

Raul Arias's new lodge in the foothills west of the Canal Zone area has opened an exciting new birding destination that perfectly complements the lowlands of the Canal Zone. It short, it offers refreshing temperatures, great food and service, and easy access to an array of habitats that offer tremendous birding possibilities. Access from Panama City is quick and comfortable on good to excellent roads and, once at the lodge, birding or relaxing on the veranda begins immediately with a variety of species appraising the fruit offerings (mostly bananas) at several feeding trays conveniently numbered for ease in locating new and exciting arrivals. Hummingbirds of a half-dozen species forage in lush flowering gardens or visit feeders.

Several day-trips of varying lengths access an array of primary and secondary habitats by bus and four-wheel-drive. Our trip coincided with the beginning of an El Niño year and, this year, Panama was experiencing unusually heavy rainfall for December. During our visit the heavy rainfall continued, but little affected our activities. It rained hard late most afternoons and sporadically at night but, during our four days, we lost only an hour to rain one afternoon. This was more than offset by the benefit of delightfully cool temperatures and overcast conditions—both of which helped keep bird activity strong throughout the day.

This was my first visit to the El Valle area and I was surprised by the amount of good forest habitat that remains—far more than I expected—and the quality of birds that can be seen in this area. Tino, the resident guide at the Canopy Lodge, skillfully guided us to all the best birding spots, including a site known as Altos del María which taxed even the abilities of our intrepid, four-wheel-drive equipped chauffeurs as they negotiated slippery and exhilarating hills with daunting courage. It was worth it. We came away with three of the best prizes of the trip—a lovely little Snowcap, a Dull-mantled Antbird (which is a good deal brighter than its name would suggest), and a rare and seldom seen Black-crowned Antpitta which did its best to outwit and outmaneuver our tape playback tactics.

While the name, Canopy Lodge, doesn't convey much information about this lodge, or the charm of the place, or its lovely setting, this lodge is a gem. It fairly bursts with flowers and birds, the food and rooms are generous, even extravagant beyond all necessity (it was obviously good enough for movie stars Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie, who stayed a night just two days after our departure). It offers privacy, exotic surroundings, and a luxurious getaway surely fit to please even the most discriminating traveler. I liked this hotel and I predict that a lot of birders and naturalists are going to

make a pilgrimage to this lovely site in the future. I hope you liked it as much as my wife Bev and I did. She wanted to stay longer. So will you.

List of birds:

Brown Pelican	<i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>
Neotropic Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax brasilianus</i>
Magnificent Frigatebird	<i>Fregata magnificens</i>
Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>
Green Heron	<i>Butorides virescens</i>
Black Vulture	<i>Coragyps atratus</i>
Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>
White-tailed Kite	<i>Elanus leucurus</i>
Savanna Hawk	<i>Buteogallus meridionalis</i>
White Hawk	<i>Leucopternis albicollis</i>
Broad-winged Hawk	<i>Buteo platypterus</i>
Short-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo brachyurus</i>
*Black Hawk-Eagle	<i>Spizaetus tyrannus</i>
Yellow-headed Caracara	<i>Milvago chimachima</i>
Gray-headed Chachalaca	<i>Ortalis cinereiceps</i>
*White-throated Crake	<i>Laterallus albigularis</i>
Southern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus chilensis</i>
Laughing Gull	<i>Larus atricilla</i>
Royal Tern	<i>Thalasseus (Sterna) maxima</i>
Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon (sterna) nilotica</i>
Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>
Pale-vented Pigeon	<i>Patagioenas cayennensis</i>
Ruddy Ground-Dove	<i>Columbina talpacoti</i>
White-tipped Dove	<i>Leptotila verreauxi</i>
*Gray-chested Dove	<i>Leptotila cassini</i>
Orange-chinned Parakeet	<i>Brotogeris jugularis</i>
Brown-hooded Parrot	<i>Pionopsitta haematotis</i>
Blue-headed Parrot	<i>Pionus menstruus</i>
Squirrel Cuckoo	<i>Piaya cayana</i>
Groove-billed Ani	<i>Crotophaga sulcirostris</i>
Smooth-billed Ani	<i>Crotophaga ani</i>
*Tropical Screech-Owl	<i>Otus choliba</i>
White-collared Swift	<i>Streptoprocne zonaris</i>
Green Hermit	<i>Phaethornis guy</i>
Stripe-throated Hermit	<i>Phaethornis striigularis</i>
White-necked Jacobin	<i>Florisuga mellivora</i>
Violet-headed Hummingbird	<i>Klais guimeti</i>
Rufous-crested Coquette	<i>Lophornis delattrei</i>
Green Thorntail	<i>Discosura conversii</i>

Garden Emerald	<i>Chlorostilbon assimilis</i>
Violet-crowned Woodnymph	<i>Thalurania colombica</i>
<u>Blue-chested Hummingbird</u>	<i>Amazilia amabilis</i>
Rufous-tailed Hummingbird	<i>Amazilia tzacatl</i>
Snowy-bellied Hummingbird	<i>Amazilia (Saucerottia) Edward</i>
<u>Snowcap</u>	<i>Microcechera albocoronata</i>
White-vented Plumleteer	<i>Chalybura buffonii</i>
<u>Bronze-tailed Plumleteer</u>	<i>Chalybura urochrysis</i>
Purple-crowned Fairy	<i>Heliothryx barroti</i>
Black-throated Trogon	<i>Trogon rufus</i>
<u>Orange-bellied Trogon</u>	<i>Trogon aurantiiventris</i>
Ringed Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle torquata</i>
Green Kingfisher	<i>Chloroceryle americana</i>
<u>Rufous Motmot</u>	<i>Baryphthengus ruficapillus</i>
Broad-billed Motmot	<i>Electron platyrhynchum</i>
Blue-throated (split of Emerald) Toucanet	<i>Aulacorhynchus caeruleogularis</i>
Collared Aracari	<i>Pteroglossus torquatus</i>
*Keel-billed Toucan	<i>Ramphastos sulphuratus</i>
Red-crowned Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes rubricapillus</i>
Black-cheeked Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes pucherani</i>
<u>Spotted Barbtail</u>	<i>Premnoplex brunnescens</i>
Plain Xenops	<i>Xenops minutus</i>
Plain-brown Woodcreeper	<i>Dendrocincla fuliginosa</i>
<u>Northern Barred Woodcreeper</u>	<i>Dendrocolaptes sanctithomae</i>
Cocoa Woodcreeper	<i>Xiphorhynchus susurrans</i>
Spotted Woodcreeper	<i>Xiphorhynchus erythropygius</i>
Fasciated Antshrike	<i>Cymbilaimus lineatus</i>
Great Antshrike	<i>Taraba major</i>
Barred Antshrike	<i>Thamnophilus doliatus</i>
Western Slaty-Antshrike	<i>Thamnophilus atrinucha</i>
<u>Russet Antshrike</u>	<i>Thamnistes anabatinus</i>
Plain Antwreio	<i>Dysithamnus mentalis</i>
Slaty Antwren	<i>Myrmotherula schisticolor</i>
Dusky Antbird	<i>Cercomacra tyrannina</i>
White-bellied Antbird	<i>Myrmeciza longipes</i>
Chestnut-backed Antbird	<i>Myrmeciza exsul</i>
<u>Dull-mantled Antbird</u>	<i>Myrmeciza laemosticta</i>
<u>Bicolored Antbird</u>	<i>Gymnopithys bicolor</i>
Black-faced Antthrush	<i>Formicarius analis</i>
<u>Black-crowned Antpitta</u>	<i>Pittasoma michleri</i> AM (1 seen very well by everyone!; my pick as top bird of the trip)
<u>White-ruffed Manakin</u>	<i>Corapipo altera</i>
*Lance-tailed Manakin	<i>Chiroxiphia lanceolata</i>
Thrush-like Schiffornis	<i>Schiffornis turdinus</i>

Southern Beardless Tyrannulet	<i>Camptostoma obsoletum</i>
Yellow-bellied Elaenia	<i>Elaenia flavogaster</i>
Ochre-bellied Flycatcher	<i>Mionectes oleaginous</i>
Yellow Tyrannulet	<i>Capsiempis flaveola</i>
Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant	<i>Lophotriccus pileatus</i>
[Sepia-capped Flycatcher	<i>Leptopogon</i>
Common Tody-Flycatcher	<i>Todirostrum cinereum</i>
<u>Eye-ringed Flatbill</u>	<i>Rhynchocyclus brevirostris</i>
Bran-colored Flycatcher	<i>Myiophobus fasciatus</i>
<u>Tufted Flycatcher</u>	<i>Mitrephanes phaeocercus</i>
<i>Empidonax</i> sp. 1 at LM (no vocalization; not seen well enough for visual identification)	
Dusky-capped Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus tuberculifer</i>
Panama Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus panamensis</i>
Great Kiskadee	<i>Pitangus sulphuratus</i>
Boat-billed Flycatcher	<i>Megarynchus pitangua</i>
Social Flycatcher	<i>Myiozetetes similis</i>
Tropical Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus melancholicus</i>
Fork-tailed Flycatcher	<i>Tyrannus savanna</i>
White-winged Becard	<i>Pachyramphus polychopterus</i>
Gray-breasted Martin	<i>Progne chalybea</i>
Southern Rough-winged Swallow	<i>Stelgidopteryx ruficollis</i>
Rufous-breasted Wren	<i>Thryothorus ruficapillus</i>
Bay Wren	<i>Thryothorus nigricapillus</i>
*Rufous-and-white Wren	<i>Thryothorus rufalbus</i>
*Plain Wren	<i>Thryothorus modestus</i>
House Wren	<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>
<u>Ochraceous Wren</u>	<i>Troglodytes ochraceous</i>
*White-breasted Wood-Wren	<i>Henicorhina leucosticta</i>
Gray-breasted Wood-Wren	<i>Henicorhina leucophrys</i>
*Scaly-breasted Wren	<i>Microcerculus marginatus</i>
*Orange-bellied Nightingale-Thrush	<i>Catharus aurantiirostris</i>
<u>Pale-vented Thrush</u>	<i>Turdus obsoletus</i>
Clay-colored Robin	<i>Turdus grayi</i>
Long-billed Gnatwren	<i>Ramphocaenus melanurus</i>
<u>Black-chested Jay</u>	<i>Cyanocorax affinis</i>
<u>Scrub Greenlet</u>	<i>Hylophilus flavipes</i>
*Lesser Greenlet	<i>Hylophilus decurtatus</i>
Yellow-crowned Euphonia	<i>Euphonia luteicapilla</i>
Thick-billed Euphonia	<i>Euphonia lanirostris</i>
Tawny-capped Euphonia	<i>Euphonia annae</i>
Lesser Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis psaltria</i>
<u>Golden-winged Warbler</u>	<i>Vermivora chrysoptera</i>
Tennessee Warbler	<i>Vermivora peregrina</i>

Yellow Warbler	<i>Dendroica petechia</i>
Chestnut-sided Warbler	<i>Dendroica pennsylvanica</i>
Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler	<i>Dendroica coronata</i>
Cerulean Warbler	<i>Dendroica cerulea</i>
Black-and-white Warbler	<i>Mniotilta varia</i>
Northern Waterthrush	<i>Seiurus noveboracensis</i>
waterthrush sp.	<i>Seiurus sp.</i>
Mourning Warbler	<i>Oporornis formosus</i>
Canada Warbler	<i>Wilsonia canadensis</i>
[unidentified warbler possibly Canada Warbler x ? hybrid (unknown at this point in time)]	Like adult Canada Warbler but foreface and throat to upper breast black; bold broken white eyering; upperparts gray tinged olive; breast bright yellow belly and undertail coverts whitish
Rufous-capped Warbler	<i>Basileuterus rufifrons</i>
Bananaquit	<i>Coereba flaveola</i>
Common Bush-Tanager	<i>Chlorospingus ophthalmicus</i>
Rosy Thrush-Tanager	<i>Rhodinocichla rosea</i>
Dusky-faced Tanager	<i>Mitrospingus cassinii</i>
White-shouldered Tanager	<i>Tachyphonus luctuosus</i>
Tawny-crested Tanager	<i>Tachyphonus delatrii</i>
White-lined Tanager	<i>Tachyphonus rufus</i>
Red-crowned Ant-Tanager	<i>Habia fuscicauda</i>
Highland Hepatic-Tanager	<i>Piranga lutea (pending split from P. flava)</i>
Summer Tanager	<i>Piranga rubra</i>
Crimson-backed Tanager	<i>Ramphocelus dimidiatus</i>
Flame-rumped (Lemon-rumped) Tanager	<i>Ramphocelus flammigerus</i>
Blue-gray Tanager	<i>Thraupis episcopus</i>
Palm Tanager	<i>Thraupis palmarum</i>
Plain-colored Tanager	<i>Tangara inornata</i>
Silver-throated Tanager	<i>Tangara icterocephala</i>
Bay-headed Tanager	<i>Tangara gyrola</i>
Golden-hooded Tanager	<i>Tangara larvata</i>
Green Honeycreeper	<i>Chlorophanes spiza</i>
Red-legged Honeycreeper	<i>Cyanerpes cyaneus</i>
Blue-black Grassquit	<i>Volatinia jacarina</i>
Variable Seedeater	<i>Sporophila corvine</i>
Yellow-bellied Seedeater	<i>Sporophila nigricollis</i>
Yellow-faced Grassquit	<i>Tiaris olivacea</i>
Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch	<i>Atlapetes brunneinucha</i>
Orange-billed Sparrow	<i>Arremon aurantirostris</i>
Black-striped Sparrow	<i>Arremonops conirostris</i>
Streaked Saltator	<i>Saltator striatipectus</i>
Buff-throated Saltator	<i>Saltator maximus</i>
Black-headed Saltator	<i>Saltator atriceps</i>

Black-faced Grosbeak	<i>Caryothraustes poliogaster</i>
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	<i>Pheucticus ludovicianus</i>
*Blue-black Grosbeak	<i>Cyanocompsa cyanoides</i>
Great-tailed Grackle	<i>Quiscalus mexicanus</i>
Baltimore Oriole	<i>Icterus galbula</i>
Yellow-billed Cacique	<i>Amblycercus holosericeus</i>
Chestnut-headed Oropendola	<i>Psaracolius wagleri</i>

MAMMALS:

Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth
Variegated Squirrel
Red-tailed Squirrel
Pygmy Squirrel
Common Opossum
Bat sp.

HERPS:

Basilisk Lizard
Iguana
EV (1 atop a vine tangle)
<i>Ameiva</i> sp.
Water Anole (?)
Painted Keelback Snake (prob. this sp according to herpetologist Mario Urriola H.)
Golden Toad
tree frog sp.