

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

NOVEMBER 15-20, 2006

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TOUR REPORT
EL VALLE'S CANOPY LODGE
EXTENSION TO FALL IN CENTRAL PANAMA
November 15-20, 2006

By Barry Lyon

Following our Fall in Central Panama tour, this extension to El Valle's Canopy Lodge proved an enchanting ending to our time in Panama. Few other places in Central America have the ability to provide such a perfect combination of outstanding birding, beautiful natural surroundings, and terrific accommodations. Though our time here was short, we visited nearly all of the major birding areas of El Valle, including ample time in the lovely gardens of the Canopy Lodge.

The remarkable feeding stations adorning the front "yard" are surely the most instantly recognizable feature of the Canopy Lodge. Each morning we looked on in complete wonder as hundreds of beautiful tropical birds descended on fruit-laden feeding trays. While birds seemed to be everywhere, it was the tanagers that were so riveting. Velvety Crimson-backed and Flame-rumped tanagers appeared only feet away, like oil paintings come to life. Immaculate White-lined and Blue-gray tanagers were seen with ease, and even the raucous, peculiarly colored olive and black Dusky-faced Tanager was seen daily.

Beside tanagers, the procession of birds was literally a sensual onslaught. Thick-billed Euphonias and Red-legged Honeycreepers pranced about the feeding platforms like little living jewels, Streaked and Buff-throated saltators put in regular appearances, and Black-chested Jays looked on from the treetops surrounding the grounds.

Surely one of the most beautiful birds in Central America is the Rufous Motmot. With its burnt-orange chest and varying combinations of blue and green wings and tail, this exquisite bird represents the allure of tropical birding. It too visited the feeders each morning, much to our delight.

While repeatedly working through the lush grounds of the lodge and surrounding property, we encountered a mesmerizing suite of hummingbirds. We would ultimately record 15 species, among them some of the most beautiful and sought-after hummers in Central America. All around us danced a profusion of hummingbirds, sporting such names as Green Thorntail, White-vented Plumeleteer, Violet-headed Hummingbird, Snowy-bellied Hummingbird, Violet-crowned Woodnymph, Garden Emerald, and Green-crowned Brilliant. For good measure, we recorded the White-tailed Emerald, a highland hummingbird only rarely found this low. Despite all these wonderful birds, the prized sighting was the Rufous-crested Coquette, a dazzling little sprite found—among all VENT tours—exclusively at El Valle.

Part of our group was lucky enough to spot a Black-billed Cuckoo, an uncommon migrant in Panama and a first for the Canopy Lodge!

Another great aspect of El Valle is that birds are generally easy to see here. Side trips to Cerro Gaital Natural Monument and a forest patch known as Cara Iguana produced waves of new species. Noteworthy were the tremendous numbers of Silver-throated Tanagers, in addition to such target species as Lineated Woodpecker, Spotted Woodcreeper, White-bellied Antbird, Yellow Tyrannulet, and Yellow-crowned Euphonia. From both of these locations came some of the most special sightings of the trip. Below Cerro Gaital, Patricia Davidson came through in a big way, spotting a roosting Common Potoo by day, while at Cara Iguana Tino put us onto a roosting Tropical Screech-Owl, also by day and certainly a new bird for everyone on the tour. And at least as exciting were our scope views of the always-desired Tody Motmot, perched quietly back in the forest.

An all-day trip to Altos de Maria in 4 x 4 vehicles provided more memorable experiences. Perhaps it was the effort required to get there, but we had an especially satisfying day of birding across the mountains. Our first stop netted us several area specialties, including a glowing male Orange-bellied Trogon, Brown-billed Scythebill, and Dull-mantled Antbird. From there the birding proved steady, with each ensuing stop resulting in more special sightings. Over the course of the day we would go on to record such interesting species as the nearly endemic Rufous-browed Tyrannulet, Olive-striped and Bran-colored flycatchers, Tawny-capped Euphonia, two spectacular soaring White Hawks, and dynamite studies of Spotted Woodcreeper. Just before lunch Martin raised the excitement level with his keen-eyed observation of a White-throated Crake foraging in the open only 30 feet away! This was the most exciting moment of the trip for many.

Perhaps most remarkable of all, however, was the discovery of a single Panamanian golden frog in a roadside stream. Undeniably beautiful, this incredible little amphibian is perched on the brink of extinction due to habitat loss, the spread of a lethal fungus infection, and over-collecting.

Before returning to the lodge, a stop at a roadside pasture produced a final flurry of activity, with many more species new for the trip, including a calling Crested Bobwhite, Fork-tailed Flycatchers by the bushel, Rufous-browed Peppershrike, and Red-breasted Blackbird.

Aside from the birding, the butterflying was spectacular. Without trying we came across multitudes of morphos, sulfurs, skippers, longwings, and many others at flowering trees and bushes throughout.

Our final morning was equally memorable, as an exploration of the lodge grounds produced a fine variety of new birds, with Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush, Black-Striped Sparrow, and Scrub Greenlet among the more memorable sightings. Before returning to the lodge for lunch, Tino led us to a site where we enjoyed scope views of a Mottled Owl, spending his day in a dark, forested recess.

On our final evening in Panama City we ate on the Balboa Peninsula, enjoying the pleasures of delicious local cuisine on a warm Panamanian evening.

ITINERARY

November 15, 2006 – Group transfer from Gamboa to the Canopy Lodge at El Valle; remainder of the day spent birding the grounds of the lodge and the road outside the lodge leading up to the Canopy Adventure.

November 16 – We spent the early morning hours after breakfast birding the lodge grounds, searching in particular for the Rufous-crested Coquette. We then spent the remainder of the morning above the lodge in a region known as La Mesa (The Table), where we birded along several stretches of the main road. In the afternoon we made a short trip to the hills on the west side of El Valle, to a place called Cara Iguana (Iguana Face). Supposedly named for the shape of the mountain above town, Cara Iguana is essentially a birding trip along an old road that skirts forest and field. We spent the rest of the afternoon here.

November 17 – Today we loaded up in 4-wheel drive vehicles for an all-day trip to the higher forest at Altos de Maria, outside El Valle. We birded from one end of the road to the other, making numerous stops at forest patches, trails, and along the road. Due to the heavy rain that developed in the afternoon, we descended the western flank of the mountain, returning to El Valle on the Pan-American Highway. En route we made one last birding stop in the drier lowlands.

November 18 – We returned to La Mesa this morning, this time birding further up the road in the vicinity of Cerro Gaital Natural Monument. Before returning for lunch, we birded the lower section of the trail leading up to the monument. After lunch about half the group participated in the optional trip into El Valle to visit the local artisan market. In the mid-afternoon our planned visit to a forest trail, called La Samia, on the north side of El Valle, was foiled by a huge afternoon storm. We returned to El Valle to wait out the storm. In the late afternoon, several of the group members birded the entrance to El Valle and up the paved road to the Canopy Adventure.

November 19 – We began our final morning at the Canopy Lodge by watching the feeders and strolling through the lodge grounds. From mid-morning to lunch we birded around the lodge entrance and up the road toward the Canopy Adventure, including the upper portion of the river trail above the lodge. Following lunch we loaded up and spent the remainder of the afternoon in transit to Panama City. The Country Inn & Suites hotel is situated on the edge of a large bay, and some of the group participants spent some the final hour of daylight birding along the edge of the bay.

November 20 – Early transfers to the airport for departing flights home.

BIRDLIST

The A.O.U. Checklist of North American Birds is the official source on the taxonomy of birds found in North and Middle America. This birdlist is taxonomically organized in accordance with the Seventh Edition of the A.O.U. checklist through the 46th supplement.

Guans & Chachalacas - Cracidae

Gray-headed Chachalaca (*Ortalis cinereiceps*) – Common around the lodge.

Pelicans – Pelecanidae

Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) – Common in the nearshore waters around Panama City.

Cormorants - Phalacrocoracidae

Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*)

Hérons & Egrets - Ardeidae

Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*)

Great Egret (*Ardea alba*)

Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*)

Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*)

Little Blue Heron (*Egretta caerulea*)

Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*)

Green Heron (*Butorides virescens*)

Black-crowned Night-Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)

New World Vultures - Cathartidae

Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*)

Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*)

Hawks, Eagles, & Kites - Accipitridae

Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)

White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus*)

White Hawk (*Leucopternis albicollis*) – Dazzling looks at pairs around El Valle and at Altos de Maria.

Barred Hawk (*Leucopternis princeps*) – One flying over the lunch site on the day we went to Altos de Maria was not seen very well.

Roadside Hawk (*Buteo magnirostris*)

Broad-winged Hawk (*Buteo platypterus*)

Short-tailed Hawk (*Buteo brachyurus*)

Caracaras & Falcons - Falconidae

Yellow-headed Caracara (*Milvago chimachima*)

Bat Falcon (*Falco ruficularis*)

American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*)

Rails - Rallidae

White-throated Crake (*Laterallus albigularis*) – While inspecting a stream for golden frogs, Martin spotted a crake foraging in the open at the edge of the marsh!

This normally furtive species miraculously wandered in and out of the reeds repeatedly, and at a distance of only 10 yards. Great looks for all.

Gray-necked Wood-Rail (*Aramides cajanea*) – Mostly heard only, but a few people briefly saw a pair around the lodge.

Plovers & Lapwings - Charadriidae

Southern Lapwing (*Vanellus chilensis*) – Scope views of one on La Mesa.

Pigeons & Doves - Columbidae

Ruddy Ground-Dove (*Columbina talpacoti*)

White-tipped Dove (*Leptotilla verreauxi*)

Parrots - Psittacidae

Orange-chinned Parakeet (*Brotogeris jugularis*) – Many flyovers, but none seen particularly well.

Blue-headed Parrot (*Pionus menstruus*) – Distant looks at a couple of high-flying birds.

Cuckoos - Cuculidae

Squirrel Cuckoo (*Piaya cayana*)

Black-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*) – An immature in the yard at El Valle was a first for the property; this species is a regular, but very uncommon migrant in Panama.

Smooth-billed Ani (*Crotophaga ani*)

Typical Owl - Strigidae

Tropical Screech-Owl (*Megascops choliba*) – A roosting individual at Cara Iguana provided outstanding scope views of a bird that is almost never seen by day.

Mottled Owl (*Ciccaba virgata*) – Another owl seen, remarkably enough, by day. Scope views were the reward for the intrepid few who walked up the road the final morning.

Nightjars - Caprimulgidae

Chuck-will's-widow (*Caprimulgus carolinensis*) – One flushed by Martin at El Valle was a particularly interesting find. Though this species is regular in Panama in winter, it is not an easily found one.

Potoos - Nyctibiidae

Common Potoo (*Nyctibius griseus*) – Yet another nightbird not normally encountered by day, we enjoyed amazing scope views of a roosting individual along the road at La Mesa. Thanks to Patricia for this great find!

Swifts - Apodidae

White-collared Swift (*Streptoprocne zonaris*)

Hummingbirds – Trochilidae – Though the rich diversity of birds found at the Canopy Lodge always provides an unforgettable birding experience, it is perhaps the hummingbirds that are the most enchanting. Without trying very hard, we recorded 15 species, a number of which are not easily found elsewhere.

Green Hermit (*Phaethornis guy*)

Stripe-throated Hermit (*Phaethornis striigularis*)

Violet-headed Hummingbird (*Klais guimeti*) – Seen daily, with repeated studies of males.

Rufous-crested Coquette (*Lophornis delattrei*) – Probably the most cherished of El Valle's Hummingbirds, we had several encounters with a lovely rufous-crested male.

Green Thorntail (*Discosura conversii*) – Diminutive like the coquette, but equally beautiful; we watched a pair feed in tranquility just yards away.

Garden Emerald (*Chlorostilbon assimilis*) – A true emerald indeed!; fine views of glittery males and more subtle females.

White-tailed Emerald (*Elvira chionura*) – Normally a highland species, the initial appearance of this bird in El Valle generated great excitement; even more exciting was that we had dynamite looks at a lovely male as it visited a feeder.

Violet-crowned Woodnymph (*Thalurania colombica*) – Another lovely tropical hummer.

Rufous-tailed Hummingbird (*Amazilia tzacatl*) – The common garden hummer.

Snowy-bellied Hummingbird (*Saucerottia edward*) – A stunning male was seen daily in the garden.

Snowcap (*Microcechera albocoronata*) – A female for a few only at Altos de Maria.

White-vented Plumeleteer (*Chalybura buffonii*) – Big and bold, this was the dominant hummer at the feeders.

Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer (*Chalybura urochrysia*) – A female at a flowering tree on La Mesa.

Green-crowned Brilliant (*Heliodoxa jacula*) – A sparkling male at a feeder along the river above El Valle.

Purple-crowned Fairy (*Heliathyx barroti*)

Trogons - Trogonidae

Orange-bellied Trogon (*Trogon aurantiiventris*) – A shy female at La Mesa and a gorgeous male at Altos de Maria.

Motmots - Momotidae

Tody Motmot (*Hylomanes momotula*) – One at Cara Iguana was clearly a trip highlight; scope views for everybody of a bird perched deep in the forest.

Rufous Motmot (*Baryphthengus ruficapillus*) – Seen daily in the yard at El Valle; a candidate for the most beautiful bird in Panama, we enjoyed many lovely looks whenever one visited the feeding stations.

Broad-billed Motmot (*Electron platrhyncum*) – Certainly heard, unfortunately never seen.

Kingfishers - Alcedinidae

Amazon Kingfisher (*Chloroceryle amazona*)

Green Kingfisher (*Chloroceryle americana*)

Toucans - Ramphastidae

Collared Aracari (*Pteroglossus torquatus*)

Keel-billed Toucan (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*)

Woodpeckers - Picidae

Red-crowned Woodpecker (*Melanerpes rubricapillus*)

Lineated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus lineatus*)

Ovenbirds - Furnariidae

Plain Xenops (*Xenops minutus*)

Woodcreepers - Dendrocolaptidae

Wedge-billed Woodcreeper (*Glyphorhynchus spirurus*)

Cocoa Woodcreeper (*Xiphorhynchus susurrans*)

Spotted Woodcreeper (*Xiphorhynchus erythropygius*) – Excellent looks for everybody at La Mesa and Altos de Maria.

Brown-billed Scythebill (*Campylorhamphus pusillus*) – So-so looks at an evasive individual while at our first stop at Altos de Maria; perhaps the most enticing quality of this species is its wondrous bill.

Typical Antbirds - Thamnophilidae

Great Antshrike (*Taraba major*) – Heard only.

Barred Antshrike (*Thamnophilus doliatus*)

Plain Antvireo (*Dysithamnus mentalis*) – Good studies of a foraging pair at Cerro Gaital.

White-bellied Antbird (*Myrmeciza longipes*) – A stealthy individual at Cara Iguana was eventually seen well by most.

Dull-mantled Antbird (*Myrmeciza laemosticta*) – This species is not commonly encountered, so the foraging individual at Altos de Maria was certainly cause for excitement.

Tyrant Flycatchers - Tyrannidae

Southern Beardless-Tyrannulet (*Camptostoma obsoletum*)

Yellow Tyrannulet (*Capsiempis flaveola*) – Brief looks at a flighty individual at Altos de Maria.

Yellow-bellied Elaenia (*Elaenia flavogaster*)

Ochre-bellied Flycatcher (*Mionectes oleaginous*)

Olive-striped Flycatcher (*Mionectes olivaceus*) – Excellent studies; Altos de Maria.

Rufous-browed Tyrannulet (*Phylloscartes superciliaris*) – An endemic species of the Caribbean slope of Costa Rica and Panama; we had quick looks at an individual at Altos de Maria.

Paltry Tyrannulet (*Zimmerius vilissimus*) – Fairly common throughout.

Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant (*Lophotriccus pileatus*) – Same.

Common Tody-Flycatcher (*Todirostrum cinereum*)
Bran-colored Flycatcher (*Myiophobus fasciatus*) – We saw two, the first at Altos de Maria while watching the crane, and a second on our second visit to La Mesa.
Tufted Flycatcher (*Mitrephanes phaeocercus*) – Seen well at Altos de Maria.
Eastern Wood-Pewee (*Contopus virens*) - A very common migrant.
Acadian Flycatcher (*Empidonax virescens*) – One at La Mesa.
Long-tailed Tyrant (*Colonia colonus*) – An immature in the yard at El Valle was a first for the property!; scope views for all.
Dusky-capped Flycatcher (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*)
Panama Flycatcher (*Myiarchus panamensis*) – Scope views of one in a dry pasture while en route to El Valle from Altos de Maria.
Boat-billed Flycatcher (*Megarynchus pitangua*)
Social Flycatcher (*Myiozetetes similis*)
Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*)
Fork-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus savanna*) – When we stopped at the dry field below altos de Maria, we discovered many of these beauties fluttering like butterflies amid the tall grass and brush.

Manakins - Pipridae

Golden-collared Manakin – Several females seen throughout, and quick looks at a bright male at Cerro Gaital.
White-ruffed Manakin (*Corapipo altera*) – Heard only.
Lance-tailed Manakin (*Chiroxiphia lanceolata*) – Brief looks at a female at Cara Iguana.
Blue-crowned Manakin (*Lepidothrix coronata*) – Nice looks at a female near the Canopy Adventure.
Thrushlike Schiffornis (*Schiffornis turdinus*) – Heard only.

Vireos & Allies - Vireonidae

Yellow-throated Vireo (*Vireo flavifrons*)
Philadelphia Vireo (*Vireo philadelphicus*)
Red-eyed Vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*)
Scrub Greenlet (*Hylophilus flavipes*) – A singing male in the yard at El Valle.
Lesser Greenlet (*Hylophilus decurtatus*)
Rufous-browed Peppershrike (*Cyclarhis gujanensis*) – An active pair scoped at distance in the dry field below Altos de Maria.

Jays - Corvidae

Black-chested Jay (*Cyanocorax affinis*) – We had no problems locating roving flocks of these flashy tropical birds.

Swallows – Hirundinidae

Gray-breasted Martin (*Progne chalybea*)
White-thighed Swallow (*Neochelidon tibialis*) – Though not exactly rare, this species is highly localized in Panama; fortunately El Valle is a great place to see them; this species is among the “cutest” of the swallows.

Southern Rough-winged Swallow (*Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*)

Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)

Wrens – Troglodytidae – In the tropics, the wren family is typically represented by boldly marked, handsome species who occupy nearly every ecological zone. This group of birds is famous for its beautiful songsters, whose loud, liquid voices brighten every tropical day.

Rufous-breasted Wren (*Thryothorus rutilus*) – A pair on the property of the Canopy Lodge was elusive, but seen well.

Bay Wren (*Thryothorus nigricapillus*) – While we heard this bird at seemingly every stop, seeing it proved another matter; eventually seen well by most, but never easily.

Rufous-and-white Wren (*Thryothorus rufalbus*) – Another skulker, but seen well by most at Altos de Maria.

Plain Wren (*Thryothorus modestus*)

House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*)

Ochraceous Wren (*Troglodytes ochraceus*) – Like a little mouse, this higher elevation wren was seen skittering along moss covered branches at Altos de Maria.

White-breasted Wood-Wren (*Henicorhina leucosticta*) – La Mesa; only by a few.

Gray-breasted Wood-Wren (*Henicorhina leucophrys*)

Scaly-breasted Wren (*Microcerculus marginatus*) – Heard only.

Gnatcatchers - Polioptilidae

Long-billed Gnatwren (*Ramphocaenus melanurus*)

Thrushes & Allies - Turdidae

Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush (*Catharus aurantiirostris*) – Lovely scope views on the final morning at the Canopy Lodge.

Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*)

Clay-colored Robin (*Turdus grayi*)

White-throated Thrush (*Turdus assimilis*)

Mockingbirds - Mimidae

Tropical Mockingbird (*Mimus gilvus*)

New World Warblers - Parulidae

Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) – Two gorgeous males at La Mesa.

Tennessee Warbler (*Vermivora peregrina*) – The most common warbler.

Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica petechia*)

Chestnut-sided Warbler (*Dendroica pensylvanica*)

Black-throated Green-Warbler (*Dendroica virens*)

Blackburnian Warbler (*Dendroica fusca*) – At least a half dozen seen, maybe more.

Bay-breasted Warbler (*Dendroica castanea*) – Here and there throughout.

Black-and-white Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*)

Northern Waterthrush (*Seiurus noveboracensis*)

Louisiana Waterthrush (*Seiurus motacilla*)

Mourning Warbler (*Oporornis philadelphia*) – Fairly common in edge-type habitats throughout.

Canada Warbler (*Wilsonia Canadensis*)

Rufous-capped Warbler (*Basileuterus rufifrons*) – Abundant and seen daily.

Bananaquit - Coerebidae

Bananaquit (*Coereba flaveola*)

Tanagers & Allies – Thruapidae

Common Bush-Tanager (*Chlorospingus ophthalmicus*) – Several seen at Altos de Maria; the local *punctulatus* race.

Rosy Thrush-Tanager (*Rhodinocichla rosea*) – Heard only.

Dusky-faced Tanager (*Mitrospingus cassinii*) – Conspicuous around the lodge in small, noisy flocks.

White-shouldered Tanager (*Tachyphonus luctuosus*) – A small flock along the road outside the lodge.

Tawny-crested Tanager (*Tachyphonus delatrii*)

White-lined Tanager (*Tachyphonus rufus*) – A very attractive tanager; seen daily.

Red-crowned Ant-Tanager (*Habia rubica*)

Hepatic Tanager (*Piranga flava*)

Crimson-backed Tanager (*Ramphocelus dimidiatus*) – A common visitor to the lodge feeders; several velvety males were captivating.

Flame-rumped Tanager (*Ramphocelus flammigerus*) – Common and seen daily, especially around the lodge feeders.*

* The taxonomy of the Flame-rumped Tanager is a complicated issue, and one that has caused headaches for ornithologists for at least the last two decades. The range of this species extends from Panama into western Columbia, then south along the western slope of the Andes into northwestern Ecuador. Throughout most of the bird's range, males are characterized by a velvety black plumage contrasting with a bright yellow rectangular patch on the lower back and rump. The original name of the species was Yellow-rumped Tanager (*Ramphocelus icteronotus*). Problems began when it was discovered that a closely related species, Flame-rumped Tanager (*Ramphocelus flammigerus*), was proven to be widely interbreeding with *icteronotus* in southwestern Columbia's Cauca Valley. The lower back and rump of *flammigerus* is a bright scarlet red and the hybrid offspring of yellow-rumped and scarlet-rumped birds showed varying degrees of orange. Because hybridization between the two forms was so widespread, ornithologists felt compelled to lump the two species, with the entire group receiving the name Flame-rumped Tanager in the 1983 AOU checklist. Though the reasons for this were stated, ornithologists knew that Flame-rumped was a poor name for the yellow-rumped birds, which are overwhelmingly more numerous, but nobody has offered a better solution. Some ornithologists maintain that the two forms represent separate species, and that they came into contact in the first place through deforestation. With the publication of the Birds of Ecuador (2001), by Robert Ridgely and Paul Greenfield, a new name, Lemon-rumped Tanager, appeared with the original scientific name *R. icteronotus*. The authors evidently felt that more than one species is involved and that a split of the two is warranted, which

they did, even though the split has not yet been recognized by the AOU. So as of now the superspecies exists as Flame-rumped Tanager (*R. flammigerus*), however, if the birds are eventually split, then the name Lemon-rumped Tanager (*R. icteronotus*) will probably be used for all yellow-rumped birds, including those in Panama.

Blue-gray Tanager (*Thraupis episcopus*)

Palm Tanager (*Thraupis palmarum*)

Plain-colored Tanager (*Tangara inornata*)

Silvery-throated Tanager (*Tangara icterocephala*) – The most commonly encountered tanager away from the lodge.

Bay-headed Tanager (*Tangara gyrola*) – Despite its beautiful colors, this tanager is not always easy to get a good look at; it was fairly common, however.

Golden-hooded Tanager (*Tangara larvata*)

Green Honeycreeper (*Chlorophanes spiza*)

Red-legged Honeycreeper (*Cyanerpes cyaneus*)

Shining Honeycreeper (*Cyanerpes lucidus*) – A higher elevation species, we were pleased to find a single female at the lodge feeders.

Sparrows, Seed eaters, & Allies - Emberizidae

Variable Seed eater (*Sporophila corvina*)

Thick-billed Seed-Finch (*Oryzoborus funereus*)

Yellow-faced Grassquit (*Tiaris olivacea*)

Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch (*Buarremon brunneinucha*)

Orange-billed Sparrow (*Arremon aurantirostris*)

Black-striped Sparrow (*Arremonops conirostris*)

Saltators, Grosbeaks, & Allies - Cardinalidae

Streaked Saltator (*Saltator striatipectus*) – A few around the lodge feeders.

Buff-throated Saltator (*Saltator maximus*)

Slate-colored Grosbeak (*Saltator grossus*) – Scope views of a gorgeous singing male on La Mesa.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*)

Blackbirds, Orioles, & Allies - Icteridae

Red-breasted Blackbird (*Sturnella militaris*) – Great looks at a small flock in the dry field below Altos de Maria.

Eastern Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*)

Great-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus mexicanus*)

Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*)

Chestnut-headed Oropendola (*Psarocolius wagleri*)

Siskins & Allies - Fringillidae

Yellow-crowned Euphonia (*Euphonia luteicapilla*) – Several nice views of singing males.

Thick-billed Euphonia (*Euphonia lanirostris*) – The most common euphonia, with several around the lodge.

Tawny-capped Euphonia (*Euphonia annae*)
Lesser Goldfinch (*Carduelis psaltria*)

Total: 176

MAMMAL LIST

Variiegated Squirrel
Red-tailed Squirrel
Three-toed (Brown-faced) Sloth

REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS

Central American Whiptail
Striped Basilisk
Iguana Sp.

Panamanian Golden Frog (*Atelopus zeteki*) – The Panamanian Golden Frog, native to the mountain rainforests of central Panama, is one of the world's rarest amphibians. It is also one of its most beautiful. It is a fairly large species, entirely brilliant gold in color. Many individuals sport black markings on the back. Unfortunately, this frog has become critically endangered, with its decline attributable to a variety of factors, but none more lethal than a skin fungus (Chytrid) that has also ravaged other amphibian species. Current projections suggest the frog may slide into extinction in the wild before the end of 2007.

We came across a single individual in a roadside stream just before lunch on the day we went to Altos de Maria. Our complete lack of familiarity with this species led to some confusion over whether we were seeing the Golden Toad, a-thought-to-be extinct species from the cloud forests of Costa Rica. A little research revealed that the two animals are very different from one another. The Golden Toad (*Bufo periglenes*), was a small, shiny bright orange toad native to the Monteverde cloud forest of central Costa Rica that was last seen in 1989. To compare the two species, more information about the Golden Toad can be found on the wikipedia website. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_Toad.

More information about the Panamanian Golden Frog can be found at http://www.rockymountainnews.com/drmn/local/article/0,1299,DRMN_15_5172424,00.html.