

PANAMA: FALL AT EL VALLE'S CANOPY LODGE EXTENSION

OCTOBER 27 – NOVEMBER 1, 2007

LEADERS: BARRY ZIMMER & DANILO RODRIGUEZ

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Leaders: Barry Zimmer & Danilo Rodriguez

“What’s everyone looking at?” I asked, as I approached most of the group from behind on the Rana Trail at El Cope. I had hung back briefly to record a Stripe-breasted Wren that we had just seen a few meters back on the trail. The vast majority of the group, and our local leader Danilo, were ahead of me clustered together and looking down into the forest to the left of the trail. “Umbrellabird,” came the whispered answer. I was certain that I had misheard; to begin with, umbrellabirds are extremely rare in this area (only three known records in the past 11 years), and in addition, everyone seemed to be looking down below eye level and close (when they are seen, umbrellabirds are typically at canopy level). I quickly approached the end of the line and looked down, expecting to clear up the mystery of what I thought I had heard. There, not 20 feet away and slightly below the level of the trail as we looked downhill, was an adult male Bare-necked Umbrellabird sitting in a small sapling. I nearly fell off the trail and over the embankment! This crow-sized black bird sat for almost five minutes looking back at us with its bizarre umbrella-like tuft of head feathers and its bare red throat. We were collectively stunned. It was a life bird for everyone, including both Danilo (who has lived in this region of Panama his entire life) and myself. This species has a tiny world range (only in Costa Rica and Panama), and is thought to be declining rapidly due to deforestation. The last sighting at this locale was over eight years ago and it was of a female. This was certainly one of my greatest birding experiences ever!

While without doubt the umbrellabird was the most extraordinary sighting of our Canopy Lodge tour extension, there were countless other highlights as well. The foothill forests of the region around El Valle and the Canopy Lodge host a number of stunning and highly sought species. Tanagers, seemingly of every color of the rainbow, are numerous here. We tallied 23 species including such gems as Black-and-yellow, Emerald, Crimson-backed, Flame-rumped, Bay-headed, Golden-hooded, Silver-throated, and the incomparable Rosy Thrush-Tanager. We had superb views of three species of motmots, most notably the tiny and localized Tody Motmot (right outside our rooms). The stunning Rufous Motmot was a regular visitor to the feeders just off the dining area! Raptors put in a good showing with the likes of the tiny Pearl Kite, brilliant White Hawks (one perched just above the lodge), a Black Hawk-Eagle overhead at El Cope, and an Aplomado Falcon near El Chiru. A Striped Cuckoo in the open along the roadside was a highlight for many, as were the superb daytime views of a roosting Mottled Owl. Hummingbirds are always attention getters; Violet-crowned Woodnymphs and Bronze-tailed Plumeleeters were constant visitors to the lodge feeders, while Rufous-taileds, Snowy-

bellieds, Violet-headed, Garden Emeralds, and Stripe-throated Hermits patrolled the garden flowers. Foothill species such as Orange-bellied Trogon, Spotted Woodcreeper, Blue-throated Toucanet, Spotted Barbtail, White-ruffed Manakin, and Tawny-capped Euphonia were all seen well. Other noteworthy species included Crested Bobwhite in the scope at El Chiru, Gray-necked Wood-Rail below the lodge feeders, prolonged scope views of Brown-throated Parakeet and Brown-hooded Parrot, numerous Squirrel Cuckoos, incomparable Purple-crowned Fairies, a pair of Smoky-brown Woodpeckers (perhaps a first for the state of Cocle), great studies of Spot-crowned and Plain antvireos, a displaying pair of Dull-mantled Antbirds, and a family group of Yellow-throated Bush-Tanagers.

The Canopy Lodge offers fantastic accommodations in a glorious setting, and has arguably some of the best feeder-watching anywhere in the world. A dazzling variety of species regularly visit the tray feeders in the garden, with tanagers, honeycreepers, euphonias, motmots, woodpeckers, saltators, etc. all in the mix. This destination is simply a must for any birder interested in tropical birds.

Itinerary:

October 27– arrival in El Valle around 10:30 am; birding on grounds of Canopy Lodge and trails of Canopy Adventure (54 species)

October 28– La Mesa (morning & afternoon), Canopy Lodge (100 specie; 110 total)

October 29– El Cope all day (84 species; 142 total)

October 30– El Chiru, Las Nubes (torrential downpour) (84 species; 173 total)

October 31– Canopy Lodge feeders, Cariguana Trail (89 species; 192 total)

November 1– departures for home (196 total species)

Key:

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

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

Birds:

Gray-headed Chachalaca (*Ortalis cinereiceps*) small group on La Mesa

Crested Bobwhite (*Colinus cristatus*) nice study near El Chiru

Black-eared Wood-Quail (*Odontophorus melanotis*) heard only at El Cope

Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) around Panama City

Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*)

Magnificent Frigatebird (*Fregata magnificens*)
Cocoi Heron (*Ardea cocoi*) seen only by Sue en route to the airport
 Great Egret (*Ardea alba*)
 Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*)
 Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*)
 Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*)
 Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) daily in numbers
 Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*)
Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture (*Cathartes burrovianus*) one near El Chiru
Pearl Kite (*Gampsonyx swainsonii*) one at El Chiru and the other near El Valle; tied for third favorite bird of the tour
 White Hawk (*Leucopternis albicollis*) pair over the Canopy Lodge one day, another perched just above the lodge the next, and one at Cariguana
 Savannah Hawk (*Buteogallus meridionalis*) El Chiru
 Roadside Hawk (*Buteo magnirostris*) nice views at La Mesa & along Pan-American Highway
 Broad-winged Hawk (*Buteo platypterus*) migrants several days
Black Hawk-Eagle (*Spizaetus tyrannus*) good view over El Cope
 Crested Caracara (*Caracara cheriway*) El Chiru
 Yellow-headed Caracara (*Milvago chimachima*) mostly along Pan-American Hwy
Aplomado Falcon (*Falco femoralis*) El Chiru
 Bat Falcon (*Falco ruficularis*) distantly at El Cope
 Gray-necked Wood-Rail (*Aramides cajanea*) seen on La Mesa and below the lodge feeders (I think this was Clyde's 200th lifer for the trip!)
 Southern Lapwing (*Vanellus chilensis*) La Mesa
 Laughing Gull (*Larus atricilla*) Panama City en route to the airport
 Plain-breasted Ground-Dove (*Columbina minuta*) pair at El Chiru
 Ruddy Ground-Dove (*Columbina talpacoti*)
 White-tipped Dove (*Leptotila verreauxi*) daily
Purplish-backed Quail-Dove (*Geotrygon lawrencii*) heard by all, but perhaps seen by only one or two (Penny for sure)
 Brown-throated Parakeet (*Aratinga pertinax*) scope studies of three around El Chiru
 Orange-chinned Parakeet (*Brotogeris jugularis*)
 Brown-hooded Parrot (*Pionopsitta haematotis*) scope view of one at El Cope
 Red-lored Parrot (*Amazona autumnalis*) some flying by en route to airport
 Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*) nice study at El Chiru
 Squirrel Cuckoo (*Piaya cayana*) several good views
Striped Cuckoo (*Tapera naevia*) fabulous scope views near El Chiru; a skulking species that is seldom seen; tied for third favorite bird of the tour
 Smooth-billed Ani (*Crotophaga ani*)
 Groove-billed Ani (*Crotophaga sulcirostris*) El Chiru & La Mesa; scope views
 Mottled Owl (*Ciccaba virgata*) fantastic daytime study
 White-collared Swift (*Streptoprocne zonaris*) flocks over La Mesa & El Cope
 Green Hermit (*Phaethornis guy*)
 Stripe-throated Hermit (*Phaethornis striigularis*) scope views of perched bird near Canopy Adventure

Violet-headed Hummingbird (*Klais guimeti*) by some at the lodge
 Garden Emerald (*Chlorostilbon assimilis*) several; regular around the lodge
 Violet-crowned Woodnymph (*Thalurania colombica*) several nice views; common at lodge feeders
 Sapphire-throated Hummingbird (*Lepidopyga coeruleogularis*) male & female at El Chiru
 Snowy-bellied Hummingbird (*Amazilia Edward*) fairly common
 Rufous-tailed Hummingbird (*Amazilia tzacatl*) common & widespread
Snowcap (*Microchera albocoronata*) one female for some at El Cope
 White-vented Plumleteer (*Chalybura buffonii*) frequenting the lodge feeders
 Purple-crowned Fairy (*Heliostyris barroti*) La Mesa and in lodge garden
 Orange-bellied Trogon (*Trogon aurantiiventris*) scope views of two at La Mesa
Tody Motmot (*Hylomanes momotula*) great looks right behind our rooms; can be very hard to find
 Blue-crowned Motmot (*Momotus momota*) Cariguana
 Rufous Motmot (*Baryphthengus martii*) a regular (and spectacular) visitor to the lodge feeders!
 Ringed Kingfisher (*Ceryle torquatus*) along causeway in Panama City
 Green Kingfisher (*Chloroceryle Americana*) in small wetland area next to lodge
Blue-throated Toucanet (*Aulacorhynchus caeruleogularis*) good views of two on La Mesa; a recent split from Emerald Toucanet
 Collared Aracari (*Pteroglossus torquatus*) good views of one at Cariguana
 Keel-billed Toucan (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*) one seen very well at Cariguana
 Black-cheeked Woodpecker (*Melanerpes pucherani*) El Cope
 Red-crowned Woodpecker (*Melanerpes rubricapillus*) seen daily; a regular feeder visitor at the lodge
Smoky-brown Woodpecker (*Veniliornis fumigatus*) pair at El Cope; possibly a first ever for the state of Coclé!
 Lineated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus lineatus*) two at the lodge and three more on La Mesa
Spotted Barbtail (*Premnoplex brunnescens*) one at La Mesa and the other at El Cope; uncommon
 Plain Xenops (*Xenops minutus*)
 Plain-brown Woodcreeper (*Dendrocincla fuliginosa*) one at El Cope for some
 Wedge-billed Woodcreeper (*Glyphorhynchus spirurus*) exceptional views on a fencepost (!); found by Clyde on La Mesa
 Cocoa Woodcreeper (*Xiphorhynchus susurrans*)
 Spotted Woodcreeper (*Xiphorhynchus erythropygius*) four total
 Fasciated Antshrike (*Cymbilaimus lineatus*) heard only at Cariguana
 Great Antshrike (*Taraba major*) heard only
 Barred Antshrike (*Thamnophilus doliatus*) fantastic views at El Chiru
Plain Antvireo (*Dysithamnus mentalis*) three on La Mesa; uncommon
Spot-crowned Antvireo (*Dysithamnus puncticeps*) one at El Cope; uncommon
 White-bellied Antbird (*Myrmeciza longipes*) heard only at Cariguana
 Chestnut-backed Antbird (*Myrmeciza exsul*) great views on La Mesa & El Cope

Dull-mantled Antbird (*Myrmeciza laemosticta*) incredible close views of a pair displaying at El Cope; voted second favorite bird of the tour
 Bicolored Antbird (*Gymnopithys leucaspis*) a responsive pair at El Cope
 Black-faced Antthrush (*Formicarius analis*) the best views of my life of this skulking species right next to the lodge
Black-crowned Antpitta (*Pittasoma michleri*) four different ones heard at El Cope, two of these at least seen briefly by some
Streak-chested Antpitta (*Hylopezus perspicillatus*) heard distantly at El Cope
 Southern Beardless-Tyrannulet (*Camptostoma obsoletum*) close pair near El Chiru
 Mouse-colored Tyrannulet (*Phaeomyias murina*) heard only at El Chiru
 Yellow Tyrannulet (*Capsiempis flaveola*) heard only
 Yellow-bellied Elaenia (*Elaenia flavogaster*)
 Olive-striped Flycatcher (*Mionectes olivaceus*) good views of three
 Sepia-capped Flycatcher (*Leptopogon amaurocephalus*) Cariguana
 Paltry Tyrannulet (*Zimmerius vilissimus*) La Mesa
 Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant (*Lophotriccus pileatus*) good views at El Cope
 Common Tody-Flycatcher (*Todirostrum cinereum*)
 Ruddy-tailed Flycatcher (*Terenotriccus erythrurus*)
Bran-colored Flycatcher (*Myiophobus fasciatus*) excellent study on La Mesa
 Tufted Flycatcher (*Mitrephanes phaeocercus*) several good views on La Mesa
 Olive-sided Flycatcher (*Contopus cooperi*) four or five scattered about
 Eastern Wood-Pewee (*Contopus virens*) seen daily in numbers
 Tropical Pewee (*Contopus cinereus*) one close, calling bird on La Mesa
 Acadian Flycatcher (*Empidonax virescens*)
 Willow Flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii*) El Chiru
 Dusky-capped Flycatcher (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*)
 Panama Flycatcher (*Myiarchus panamensis*) El Chiru
 Great Crested Flycatcher (*Myiarchus crinitus*)
 Great Kiskadee (*Pitangus sulphuratus*)
 Boat-billed Flycatcher (*Megarhynchus pitangua*) El Chiru---the Pearl Kite chaser!
 Social Flycatcher (*Myiozetetes similes*) widespread & common
 Rusty-margined Flycatcher (*Myiozetetes cayanensis*)
 Streaked Flycatcher (*Myiodynastes maculatus*)
 Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) abundant in open country
 Fork-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus savanna*) nice views near El Chiru
 Thrushlike Schiffornis (*Schiffornis turdina*) heard only
Bare-necked Umbrellabird (*Cephalopterus glabricollis*) an adult male of this very rare species was seen from about 20 feet, below eye level, for about five minutes at El Cope; this was a lifer for everyone including both Danilo & myself and was a unanimous pick for favorite bird of the tour!!!!
 Golden-collared Manakin (*Manacus vitellinus*) male and female above the lodge
White-ruffed Manakin (*Corapipo altera*) excellent looks at males and females on La Mesa and at El Cope
 Lance-tailed Manakin (*Chiroxiphia lanceolata*) immature male at Cariguana
 Yellow-throated Vireo (*Vireo flavifrons*) a few
 Red-eyed Vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*) common

Scrub Greenlet (*Hylophilus flavipes*) family group at El Chiru
Lesser Greenlet (*Hylophilus decurtatus*)
Rufous-browed Peppershrike (*Cyclarhis gujanensis*) superb scope views at El Chiru
Black-chested Jay (*Cyanocorax affinis*) daily
Gray-breasted Martin (*Progne subis*)
Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)
Stripe-breasted Wren (*Thryothorus thoracicus*) excellent show at El Cope
Bay Wren (*Thryothorus nigricapillus*) good views
Rufous-breasted Wren (*Thryothorus rutilus*) seen best at Cariguana
Rufous-and-white Wren (*Thryothorus rufalbus*) finally, nice views of this skulker
Plain Wren (*Thryothorus modestus*) heard only
House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*) seen daily; this is the “Southern House Wren”, *T. musculus*, of some authors
White-breasted Wood-Wren (*Henicorhina leucosticta*)
Gray-breasted Wood-Wren (*Henicorhina leucophrys*) seen well by most on La Mesa
Scaly-breasted Wren (*Microcerculus marginatus*) pair near the canopy Adventure seen by some
Tawny-faced Gnatwren (*Microbates cinereiventris*) great studies on La Mesa and at El Cope
Long-billed Gnatwren (*Ramphocaenus melanurus*) after much effort seen quite well at El Cope
Swainson’s Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*) migrants most days
Clay-colored Robin (*Turdus grayi*) abundant
Tropical Mockingbird (*Mimus gilvus*) one in Panama City
Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*)
Tennessee Warbler (*Vermivora peregrina*) seen daily in numbers; common at feeders
Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica petechia*) El Chiru
Chestnut-sided Warbler (*Dendroica pensylvanica*)
Black-throated Green Warbler (*Dendroica virens*) a couple on La Mesa
Blackburnian Warbler (*Dendroica fusca*) La Mesa & El Cope
Bay-breasted warbler (*Dendroica castanea*)
Black-and-white Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*)
American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*) Cariguana
Northern Waterthrush (*Seiurus noveboracensis*)
Louisiana Waterthrush (*Seiurus motacilla*) one along Canopy Adventure trail
Mourning Warbler (*Oporornis philadelphia*) La Mesa, on lodge grounds
Canada Warbler (*Wilsonia Canadensis*)
Rufous-capped Warbler (*Basileuterus rufifrons*) quite common, but secretive
Bananaquit (*Coereba flaveola*) daily; common around feeders
Common Bush-Tanager (*Chlorospingus ophthalmicus*) numerous on La Mesa; the distinctive subspecies *punctulatus*
Yellow-throated Bush-Tanager (*Chlorospingus flavigularis*) family group at El Cope; very uncommon
Black-and-yellow Tanager (*Chryothlypis chrysomelas*) we were lucky to see a small group at El Cope; stunning

Rosy Thrush-Tanager (*Rhodinocichla rosea*) after considerable effort we finally had good views of a pair near Cariguana
 Dusky-faced Tanager (*Mitrospingus cassinii*) this often skulky forest species came once or twice to the lodge feeders and was seen once away from there as well
 White-shouldered Tanager (*Tachyphonus luctuosus*) pair just above the lodge
 Tawny-crested Tanager (*Tachyphonus delatrii*) two groups our first afternoon totaling about 20 birds---none after that
 White-lined Tanager (*Tachyphonus rufus*) a pair frequented the lodge of feeders
 Red-crowned Ant-Tanager (*Habia rubica*) seen daily, often visiting the feeders
 Red-throated Ant-Tanager (*Habia fuscicauda*) El Cope
 Hepatic Tanager (*Piranga flava*) the Panamanian race *testacea* which is almost certainly a different species than the one found in the United States; El Cope
 Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*) daily
 Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga olivacea*) a few migrants
 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, especially at the feeders
 Palm Tanager (*Thraupis palmarum*) regular at feeders
Emerald Tanager (*Tangara florida*) one at El Cope
 Silver-throated Tanager (*Tangara icterocephala*) in the upper elevations
 Bay-headed Tanager (*Tangara gyrola*) another beauty; La Mesa, El Cope
 Golden-hooded Tanager (*Tangara larvata*) one on La Mesa
 Green Honeycreeper (*Chlorophanes spiza*) two at El Cope lookout
 Red-legged Honeycreeper (*Cyanerpes cyaneus*) common at the lodge feeders (though few adult males)
 Blue-black Grassquit (*Volatinia jacarina*) El Chiru
 Variable Seedeater (*Sporophila Americana*) daily
Yellow-bellied Seedeater (*Sporophila nigricollis*) pair at El Chiru
 Yellow-faced Grassquit (*Tiaris olivaceus*)
 Orange-billed Sparrow (*Arremon aurantillostris*) another stunner that made daily (albeit often brief) appearances at the lodge feeders; is that bill for real?
 Black-striped Sparrow (*Arremonops conirostris*) at the lodge feeders
 Streaked Saltator (*Saltator striatipectus*)
 Buff-throated Saltator (*Saltator maximus*) common at lodge feeders
 Slate-colored Grosbeak (*Saltator grossus*) heard only on La Mesa
 Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) some migrants most days
 Indigo Bunting (*Passerina cyanea*) female at El Cope
 Red-breasted Blackbird (*Sturnella militaris*) El Chiru
 Eastern Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*) El Chiru
 Great-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) abundant in open country
 Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*)
 Scarlet-rumped Cacique (*Cacicus uropygialis*) El Cope
 Chestnut-headed Oropendola (*Psarocolius wagleri*)
 Thick-billed Euphonia (*Euphonia lanirostris*) abundant at lodge feeders

Tawny-capped Euphonia (*Euphonia annae*) several nice views on La Mesa & El Cope
Lesser Goldfinch (*Carduelis psaltria*)

Total species – 196

Leader only birds:

Short-billed Pigeon---heard
Yellow-olive Flycatcher
White-thighed Swallow
Orange-billed Nightingale Thrush---heard
Blue-black Grosbeak

Mammals:

Red-tailed Squirrel
Variegated Squirrel
Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth
Bat species---some fairly large species coming in to hummingbird feeders at night

Total species – 4

Reptiles & Amphibians:

Central American Whip-tailed Lizard
snake species
Smoky Jungle Frog (*Leptodactylus pentadactylus*)---huge frog seen on nightwalk

Total species – 3

Butterflies:

Malachite (*Siproeta stelenes*)
Morpho species
Caligo (Owl-eye)
Crimson-patched Longwing (*Heliconius erato*)
Julia
Sister type (*Adelpha* species)
Satyr species
Cloudless sulphur species
Banded Peacock (*Anartia Fatima*)

Total species – 9 (plus many others left completely unidentified)

Significant others:

Leafcutter ants

Walking stick