

## **FALL AT PANAMA'S CANOPY TOWER OCTOBER 21-28, 2006**

### **PANAMA: FALL AT EL VALLE'S CANOPY LODGE EXTENSION OCTOBER 28-NOVEMBER 2, 2006**

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*Panama is without doubt one of the premier birding destinations in the Neotropics. It is famed for its rare combination of easy access to extensive, high-quality habitat, good food and water, comfortable accommodations, and high diversity of birds—all within a compact geographic area. While ideal for those new to the Neotropics, VENT's Panama tours also offer plenty of challenges and local specialties for those who have birded elsewhere in the region. Our focus will be on finding, identifying, and observing a wealth of wonderful tropical birds, including trogons, toucans, motmots, puffbirds, manakins, antbirds, and tanagers. We'll take time to sort out the look-a-likes, learn a bit about the plant associations and habitats, and call up many of the more skulking species.*

*Among the pleasures of a visit here is the opportunity to stay at the Canopy Tower Ecolodge & Nature Observatory, a lodge located amidst spectacular birding in Soberania National Park. Offering the chance to hear the dawn chorus, to gaze upon seldom-seen denizens of the upper reaches of the forest, and to remain in such beautiful surroundings without sacrificing amenities, this innovative venture has taken its place as one of Central America's very finest ecotourist hotels.*

*This special departure occurs during an excellent time for observing hawk migration through Panama. Virtually the entire U.S. population of Broad-winged and Swainson's hawks, plus tens of thousands of Turkey Vultures, migrate to South America through Panama. With the right weather conditions, spectacular flights can be observed. The Canopy Tower provides an ideal site from which to observe this phenomenon. Imagine sitting in a comfortable chair on the roof of the lodge while you view exciting tropical species and observe one of the world's greatest hawk spectacles.*

*Approximately 60 miles west of Panama City lies picturesque El Valle de Antón, known as El Valle for short, a pleasant and quiet community of country homes. Nestled in the crater of an extinct volcano and surrounded by jagged ridges and hills, El Valle is considered a "secret getaway" for many Panamanians. The three forested peaks of Cerro Gaítal Natural Monument loom over the valley and impart a deep sense of tranquility.*

*This part of Panama is visually and sensually different than the area around the Canal Zone. The verdant forests and gardens support a broad diversity of birds that one simply cannot find around the Canopy Tower. Foothill species such as Blue-throated Toucanet, Orange-billed Trogon, Spotted*

*Woodcreeper, Dull-mantled Antbird, Black-crowned Antpitta, Tody Motmot, and Silver-throated, Tawny-crested and Dusky-faced tanagers are among the many possibilities.*

*Realizing the natural beauty and great birding potential of the surroundings, the creator of the Canopy Tower, Raúl Arias de Para, put to work his intimate knowledge of this land and the people who live there. The result is a brand-new facility called the Canopy Lodge. The Canopy Lodge is a sister to the Canopy Tower, and serves as a lovely contrast to it.*

*In similar fashion to the 1999 opening of the Canopy Tower, VENT is proud to be the first bird tour company to utilize the new lodge. An optional extension will spend four nights in this idyllic setting. Featuring excellent cuisine, immaculate accommodations, and quiet nights, the pleasures of a stay at the Canopy Lodge are sure to reveal themselves immediately upon arrival.*

*Our specific day-to-day itinerary of both the main tour and extension will be kept flexible, allowing us to take advantage of local weather and birding conditions. Having such comfortable bases in the midst of so much fine birding gives us leeway in planning our activities.*

## **FALL AT PANAMA'S CANOPY TOWER**

**OCTOBER 21-28, 2006**

**October 21, Day 1: Arrival in Panama City and Transfer to the Canopy Tower.** Participants are encouraged to fly to Panama City on either American Airlines Flight 959 from Miami or Continental Airlines Flight 888 from Houston, which are both scheduled to arrive in the evening. Passengers on either flight will be met at the airport and transferred to the Canopy Tower, which is about 45 minutes away. For those not on either of these flights, private transfers can be arranged for an additional fee.

NIGHT: Canopy Tower Ecolodge & Nature Observatory, Gamboa

**October 22, Day 2: Canopy Tower and Entrance Road.** An early start this morning will find us on top of the Tower enjoying a cup of coffee or tea while watching the sun rise over the forested hillsides. The predawn chorus often includes the strange barks and moans of forest-falcons, the haunting calls of a tinamou, or the last hoots of an owl. As the light hits the treetops, the forest really begins to come alive. Birds begin singing and actively foraging, many of them close and often below us. Species regularly seen from here include incredible Keel-billed and Chestnut-mandibled toucans, Slaty-tailed Trogon, Masked Tityra, wintering Bay-breasted Warblers and Yellow-throated Vireos, and the stunning Slate-colored Grosbeak. Fruiting cecropias often harbor a nice variety of tanagers, including Plain-colored, White-shouldered, and Palm; Fulvous-vented Euphonia; and gorgeous Green Honeycreepers. We'll also keep a sharp eye out for two of the true prizes of the tree tops: the spectacular Blue Cotinga and the brilliant Green Shrike-Vireo. We've had excellent luck seeing cotingas here, often at close range, and the shrike-vireo, whose monotonous titmouse-like song can be heard in many areas of the tropics, can perhaps be viewed best here at the Tower. It can be hard to tear oneself away from the show to go inside for breakfast. Fortunately, the dining room has panoramic windows that will allow us to keep an eye out even while eating!

After breakfast we'll likely head back out to the top of the Tower for a raptor watch. A variety of forest species are possible from here, including such gems as White, Semiplumbeous, and Short-tailed hawks. In fall, the Tower serves as an excellent spot to observe migrating raptors, as well. We will spend some time here hoping to observe flights of migrating Broad-winged and Swainson's hawks and Turkey Vultures. Our Fall 2001 tour witnessed an incredible sight of roughly 100,000 raptors pouring over the Tower in a one-hour period!

By mid-morning we'll tear ourselves away from the Tower and begin working our way down the one-mile entrance road. As we descend Semaphore Hill, a host of new birds will greet us. Broad-billed and Rufous motmots, the localized Great Jacamar, various trogons, Chestnut-backed Antbird, and Blue-crowned and Red-capped manakins are among the many possibilities. Ant swarms are sometimes encountered along this road, as well, with a variety of attendant antbirds and woodcreepers possible.

After lunch and an afternoon siesta we will likely spend some time watching the hummingbird feeders around the base of the tower. While there is much seasonal variation, up to eight species are possible here. Among the more regular visitors are the stunning White-necked Jacobin, Western Long-tailed Hermit, the incomparable Violet-bellied Hummingbird, Blue-chested Hummingbird, Snowy-bellied Hummingbird, and White-vented Plumeleteer.

NIGHT: Canopy Tower Ecolodge & Nature Observatory, Gamboa

**October 23, Day 3: Cerro Azul and Tocumen Marsh.** An early start (about 4:30 a.m.) will take us to the foothills of Cerro Azul. We'll head directly for the gardens surrounding a private residence in this area. The view of Chagres National Park alone is worth the visit, but the birds can be equally compelling. Violet-capped and Violet-headed hummingbirds, Green Hermit, and Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer patrol the flower gardens. Even the rare White-tipped Sicklebill is possible. Red-lore and Mealy parrots can often be seen cruising by at eye level in the morning light. Fruiting trees in the yard typically attract some of the most colorful foothill birds, including Speckled, Bay-headed, and Emerald tanagers and Scarlet-thighed and Blue dacnis. The very local and striking Rufous-winged Tanager, difficult to see anywhere else in its range, is regularly spotted here, as well. Other birds we may encounter include Yellow-eared Toucanet, Stripe-cheeked Woodpecker, Paltry Tyrannulet, Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant, Spotted and Black-striped woodcreepers, Rufous-capped Warbler, and Yellow-faced Grassquit. It should be noted that many of these foothills birds can be hard to locate in a short visit, especially with unpredictable foothills weather, but the possibilities here are certainly enticing.

The afternoon will be devoted to open country birding in the vicinity of the Tocumen Marsh and rice fields. Some of the species possible here include Pearl and White-tailed kites, Great Black Hawk, Crested Caracara, Southern Lapwing, Wattled Jacana, Little (scarce) and Striped cuckoos, Greater Ani, Sapphire-throated Hummingbird, American Pygmy-Kingfisher, Pale-breasted Spinetail, Barred Antshrike, Streak-headed and Straight-billed woodcreepers, Yellow-bellied Elaenia, Common Tody-Flycatcher, Lesser Kiskadee, Panama Flycatcher, Gray Kingbird, White-winged Becard, Olivaceous Piculet (scarce), Buff-breasted Wren, Prothonotary Warbler, Variable and Ruddy-breasted seedeaters, and Streaked Saltator.

NIGHT: Canopy Tower Ecolodge & Nature Observatory, Gamboa

**October 24, Day 4: Pipeline Road.** Beginning just beyond the old Canal Zone town of Gamboa, Pipeline Road winds for miles through the forests and foothills of Soberania National Park. The combination of rich primary and secondary forests; clear, beautiful streams; lack of traffic (the road dead-ends); and abundant birdlife make this arguably the most famous birding road in the world. One never knows quite what to expect here, but there will certainly be much to see. Perhaps we'll find a fruiting matchwood tree with three species of toucans and several trogons feeding in it. Maybe it will be a Black-breasted Puffbird or Broad-billed Motmot perched motionless at eye level, or a noisy troop of Purple-throated Fruitcrows working the forest edge. We may locate a lek of spectacular Golden-collared Manakins displaying on sunlit patches of the forest floor. The wild frenzy of wing-snapping and jumping is truly an amazing sight. Fruiting cecropias lure honeycreepers, tanagers, and dacnis to their fruiting spikes. We'll always be on the alert for a foraging ant swarm with its attendant antbirds (the Spotted, Bicolored, and perhaps the stunning Ocellated) and woodcreepers (Northern Barred and Plain-brown among the possibilities). Other than the Darien, the very remote frontier zone between Panama and Colombia, Pipeline road is the best area we've found in the Neotropics for locating ant swarms. Surely the whirl of activity around a swarm is one of the most exciting phenomena of the bird world. As the voracious ants march along the forest floor seeking smaller terrestrial prey, the birds pursue larger, more mobile insects and other arthropods. Because the birds are so intent on feeding, it is often possible to get very close views of them.

## ***Fall at Panama's Canopy Tower & El Valle's Canopy Lodge, Page 4***

Some of the other birds we may encounter in the Pipeline Road area are Black Hawk-Eagle, Blue-headed and Mealy parrots, Slaty-tailed and Black-throated trogons, Rufous Motmot, Great Jacamar, Cinnamon Woodpecker, Scaly-throated Leaf-tosser, Fasciated and Western-Slaty antshrikes, Spot-crowned Antvireo, Streak-chested Antpitta (secretive), Brownish Flycatcher (Twistwing), and Chestnut-headed Oropendola. We'll have a full day to enjoy the riches of this area.

NIGHT: Canopy Tower Ecolodge & Nature Observatory, Gamboa

**October 25, Day 5: Achote Road and Fort San Lorenzo.** Another early morning departure (about 4:30 a.m.) will find us heading towards Colon on Panama's Atlantic coast and crossing the locks to the west side of the Canal. Our destination will be Achote Road, one of Central Panama's most famous birding spots. The early morning activity along this road is marvelous. Semiplumbeous Hawk; Double-toothed Kite; Violaceous, Slaty-tailed, and White-tailed trogons; Blue-headed Parrot; Black-breasted and Pied puffbirds; Cinnamon Woodpecker; Purple-throated Fruitcrow; Golden-collared Manakin; Black-chested Jay; Yellow-backed and Yellow-tailed orioles; and Scarlet-rumped and Yellow-rumped caciques can all be seen here. Though harder to find, Achote specialties such as Spot-crowned Barbet, Bare-crowned Antbird, and White-headed Wren will be targeted as well.

Edge habitats near the town itself could yield Greater Ani, Long-tailed Tyrant, and Thick-billed Seed-Finch. A quick stop on our return at Gatun Locks might reveal Savanna Hawk and Red-breasted Blackbird.

We'll end the day by boarding a train in Colon for the 50-mile journey from sea to sea. This was the first trans-continental railroad in the world and has recently been privatized and completely rebuilt. Crossing the isthmus at sunset should provide a perfect ending to the day. En route we'll keep a watch out for Snail Kites and other birds in Gatun Lake. Upon arrival at the station near Panama City, we'll be met and transferred back to the Canopy Tower.

NIGHT: Canopy Tower Ecolodge & Nature Observatory, Gamboa

**October 26, Day 6: Gamboa and Summit Gardens.** Near Gamboa there are some nice wetlands where we'll seek out a whole new group of birds. Tiny White-throated Crakes dart about the marsh. Wattled Jacanas and Purple Gallinules walk on the floating vegetation. Greater Anis are often seen atop the brushy tangles, while Lesser Kiskadees prefer perches closer to the water. Sometimes a Cagybara strolls by, and Rufescent Tiger-Herons are regular. A careful check of the shoreline might reveal a skulking Gray-necked Wood-Rail or a gorgeous American Pygmy-Kingfisher hiding in the shadows. The open field and edge habitats surrounding the marsh can be good for Squirrel Cuckoo, Barred Antshrike, Black-striped Sparrow, and Yellow-billed Cacique, in addition to a variety of raptors, hummingbirds, parrots, and flycatchers.

The Summit Gardens area hosts a good variety of edge species as well. Ponding areas near the police academy often yield a variety of herons (occasionally including the rare Capped), as well as kingfishers. Orange-chinned Parakeet, Red-crowned Woodpecker, Southern Beardless-Tyrannulet, Thick-billed Seed-Finch, and Streaked Saltators are among the open country birds to be seen here. We'll also make time today to watch a ship transit through one of the famous canal locks.

NIGHT: Canopy Tower Ecolodge & Nature Observatory, Gamboa

**October 27, Day 7: Metropolitan Natural Park.** The entire morning will be devoted to the drier forests of the Metropolitan Natural Park area. The avifauna here is quite different from that around the Canopy Tower. Among the many possibilities are Gray-headed Chachalaca, Pheasant Cuckoo (scarce and seasonal), Blue-crowned Motmot, White-necked Puffbird, Lineated Woodpecker, Fasciated Antshrike, White-bellied and Dusky antbirds, Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet, Lance-tailed Manakin, Golden-fronted Greenlet, Rufous-breasted and Rufous-and-white wrens, Long-billed Gnatwren, and Crimson-backed Tanager. In addition, we'll spend some time searching for two of the real specialty birds of this area: the endemic Yellow-green Tyrannulet and the magnificent Rosy Thrush-Tanager, both of which can be found in this park. Afternoon plans will be flexible, but may include a trip to some nearby edge habitats or a walk through the lush forest of Plantation Road.

NIGHT: Canopy Tower Ec lodge & Nature Observatory, Gamboa

**October 28, Day 8: Departure for Home or Begin Extension.** Participants not continuing on our Panama: Fall at El Valle's Canopy Lodge Extension will be provided with group transfers from the Canopy Tower to the airport in time for various morning flights home.

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

**OCTOBER 28-NOVEMBER 2, 2006**

**October 28, Day 1: Canopy Tower to El Valle.** After breakfast we will depart the Canopy Tower and arrive in El Valle in time for lunch. En route, stops will be made in the dry Pacific lowlands. Though this region is heavily settled, birds are abundant around the farms, woodlots, and hedgerows.

After turning off the Pan-American Highway, a narrow road winds up through dry hills for 20 kilometers, slowly increasing in elevation until we round a bend and El Valle de Antón comes into view. At nearly 2000 feet in elevation, the views of the charming valley before us are memorable indeed. The climate here is refreshing, cooler than in the lowlands but still dominated by the dry Pacific weather. Everywhere around the town are lovely landscaped gardens, colorful with flowers and shaded by open groves of trees, while nearby hillsides are covered in secondary forest. Birds are abundant in this patchwork of habitats. We will make our way through the bustling little town en route to the Canopy Lodge, our home for the next four nights.

The Canopy Lodge's spacious guestrooms offer comfortable beds, complete with mosquito netting, and private baths, as well as hammocks and tasteful interior decoration. The grounds, meanwhile, are a birder's paradise. The gardens and walkways are often loaded with birds. In fact, it is not uncommon to record 60 species from the property alone in a single visit. Further enhancing the delightful setting are feeding trays, which draw birds all day long. This is indeed a most relaxing way to bird.

After a tasty lunch, we will pay close attention to the feeders and explore the expansive grounds. Among the many species that visit the garden and feeders are Flame-rumped and White-lined tanagers (both of which are hard to find elsewhere), Rufous Motmot, Red-crowned Woodpecker, Bananaquit, Black-striped Sparrow, Buff-throated Saltator, and Chestnut-headed Oropendola (a colony of which nests on the hillside above).

We will begin exploring the many side roads and trails nearby. There are a number of species especially sought in this area, including Blue-crowned Motmot, Lance-tailed Manakin, numerous flycatchers of all sizes and stripes, Rufous-and-white and Rufous-breasted wrens, Rufous-capped Warbler, Rosy Thrush-Tanager, and Red-crowned Ant-Tanager. This will be our first chance for the Tody Motmot, found locally in these forests but often elusive.

NIGHT: Canopy Lodge, El Valle de Antón

**October 29-November 1, Days 2-5: El Valle Area, The Canopy Adventure, Altos de Maria and Cerro Gaital Natural Monument.** From El Valle, a country road leads a short distance up through scattered farms and forest to the back side of three tall peaks, a flat area known locally as "La Mesa," which we will bird on Day 3. This area is on the crest of the ridge along the Continental Divide. For much of the year, it is brushed by clouds passing over from the Caribbean slope. The frequent misting creates a super-moist environment, where the remaining forests are fantastically sculpted and laden with epiphytes and shade the dense understory.

## ***Fall at Panama's Canopy Tower & El Valle's Canopy Lodge, Page 6***

This area is home to some fantastic foothill birds not found in the forests below or the Canal area. Among these, tanagers are the dominant group, with potential for gems like Emerald, Bay-headed, Speckled, Golden-hooded, Flame-rumped, and Tawny-crested tanagers, Tawny-capped Euphonia, and Scarlet-thighed Dacnis.

Hummingbirds are also diverse here, and possibilities include some real foothill specialties like White-tipped Sicklebill, Green Hermit, Green-crowned Brilliant, Rufous-crested Coquette (scarce), Violet-headed Hummingbird, Violet-crowned Woodnymph, and Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer. A short hike up to a lookout over El Valle below takes us into an isolated area of stunted elfin forest, home to birds like Barred Hawk, Orange-bellied Trogon, Blue-throated Toucanet, Spotted Woodcreeper, Plain Antvireo, Black-headed Antthrush (secretive), and a distinctive local race of Common Bush-Tanager.

Just above El Valle lies "The Canopy Adventure," a private reserve that protects tall tropical moist forest along a clear foothill stream dominated by a 200-foot-high waterfall. The goal of the refuge is to provide much-needed employment for the local population, who would otherwise be cutting the forests for fuel and agriculture. The refuge currently employs ten young men to safeguard its treasures. Highly sought-after birds that we will search for here include White Hawk, Sunbittern, Brown-hooded Parrot, Tody and Rufous motmots, Crimson-crested Woodpecker, Dull-mantled Antbird, Black-chested Jay, Bay Wren, and Dusky-faced Tanager, amongst the more widespread forest birds.

Back on the grounds of the Canopy Lodge, another afternoon vigil may produce new birds for our ever-growing list, like Rufous-tailed and Violet-capped hummingbirds, Social Flycatcher, Barred Antshrike, Blue-gray and Plain-colored tanagers, Yellow-faced Grassquit, and Orange-billed Sparrow. Even the rarely seen Sunbittern is occasionally spotted in the tumbling stream that passes by the front of the lodge.

One morning will be spent at Altos de Maria, a remnant cloud-forest type habitat that is about 3000 feet above sea level. Here we may find several species not readily available elsewhere on the tour. Orange-bellied Trogon, Spotted Woodcreeper, Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant, Ochraceous Wren, Silver-throated Tanager, and Common Bush-Tanager (subspecies *punctulatus*) are among the expected fare. The greatest potential prize of this location is the stunning Black-crowned Antpitta. Though this antpitta is secretive and sometimes difficult to see, we have a decent chance of finding one of these spectacular ground dwellers. Our visit to Altos de Maria will certainly prove memorable.

After a final morning enjoying El Valle on Day 5 and lunch, we will transfer to our hotel in Panama City where we will have a farewell dinner and spend the night.

NIGHTS: Canopy Lodge, El Valle de Antón (October 28-31)  
Country Inn and Suites Canal, Panama City (November 1)

**November 2, Day 6: Departure for Home.** Participants will be provided with transfers to the airport in time for morning or early afternoon flights home.

**TOUR SIZE:** Each section will be limited to 14 participants.

**TOUR LEADERS:** Fall at Panama's Canopy Tower will be led by Barry Zimmer with the assistance of local guides. Panama: Fall at El Valle's Canopy Lodge Extension will be led by local guides.

**Barry Zimmer** has been birding since the age of eight. His main area of expertise lies in the southwestern United States, but his travels have taken him to all 50 states, seven Canadian provinces, much of western Mexico, parts of Central and South America, New Zealand, Madagascar, South Africa, and Antarctica. Barry is a member of both the Texas and New Mexico Bird Records Committees. He has recently co-authored three books: *Birds of the Trans-Pecos*, *A Birder's Guide to the Rio Grande Valley*, and *Birds and Birdfinding in the El Paso Area*. Barry has a keen interest in nature photography, having captured more than 900 species of birds on

film. He received his degree in psychology at the University of Texas at El Paso. Barry resides in El Paso with his wife, Yvonne, and their daughter, Alexandra.

**FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:** The fee for Fall at Panama's Canopy Tower is **\$2695** per person in double occupancy from Panama City, Panama for occupying a standard guestroom (Canopy Room) at the Canopy Tower. This includes all meals, seven nights shared accommodations in one of the five Canopy Rooms (see ACCOMMODATIONS section below), ground transportation during the tour, tipping, park entrance fees, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare from your home to Panama City and return, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may have to be charged.

The fee for Fall at Panama's Canopy Tower is **\$2895** per person in double occupancy from Panama City, Panama for occupying a premium room at the Canopy Tower. This includes all meals, shared accommodations for seven nights in either the Blue Cotinga Suite or Harpy Eagle Suite (see CANOPY TOWER ACCOMMODATIONS section below), ground transportation during the tour, tipping, park entrance fees, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare from your home to Panama City and return, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may have to be charged.

The fee for Fall at Panama's Canopy Tower is **\$2295** per person in single occupancy from Panama City, Panama for occupying a single room at the Canopy Tower. This includes all meals, single accommodations for seven nights in a single room with a shared bath (see CANOPY TOWER ACCOMMODATIONS section below), ground transportation during the tour, tipping, park entrance fees, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare from your home to Panama City and return, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may have to be charged.

The fee for Panama: Fall at El Valle's Canopy Lodge Extension is **\$1395** per person in double occupancy from Panama City, Panama. This includes all meals, all lodging as described in the tour itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, tipping, park entrance fees, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare from your home to Panama City and return, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may have to be charged.

The single supplement for the Panama: Fall at El Valle's Canopy Lodge Extension is **\$320** for occupying a standard double room with a private bath for four nights at the Canopy Lodge (see CANOPY LODGE ACCOMMODATIONS section below) and a single room for one night at the Country Inn and Suites Canal. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations, or if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may have to be charged.

The fee for Panama: Fall at El Valle's Canopy Lodge Extension is **\$1245** per person in single occupancy from Panama City, Panama for occupying a single room with a shared bath for four nights at the Canopy Lodge. This includes all meals, single accommodations for three nights in a single room with a shared bath at the Canopy Lodge (see CANOPY LODGE ACCOMMODATIONS section below), a single room with a private bath for one night at the Country Inn and Suites, ground transportation during the tour, tipping, park entrance fees, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare from your home to Panama City and return, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may have to be charged.

**CANOPY TOWER ACCOMMODATIONS:** The Canopy Tower has a total of 2 suites (Blue Cotinga and Harpy Eagle), five standard double guestrooms (Canopy Rooms), and 5 single rooms with a shared bath. Both suites and all Canopy Rooms have private bathrooms. All rooms will be pre-reserved on a first-come, first-served basis. You will be advised of your specific room assignment at the time of your registration.

**Please also note that since there is no elevator, all guests will climb 3 to 4 flights of stairs to reach their rooms, the dining area and observation deck.**

**CANOPY LODGE ACCOMMODATIONS:** The Canopy Lodge has a total of 8 standard double guestrooms and 4 single rooms with a shared bath. Based on room availability, singles have a choice of paying a supplement to occupy a standard double guest room with a private bath or a paying a discounted tour fee to occupy a single room with a shared bath. All rooms will be pre-reserved on a first-come, first-served basis. You will be advised of room availability and your specific room assignment at the time of your registration.

**TOUR REGISTRATION:** To register for this tour, complete the VENT registration form and return it with a deposit of **\$500** per person per tour or extension (check or money order in U.S. dollars). If registering by phone, the deposit must be received within 10 days or the space will be released. Full payment of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to the tour departure date.

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** Refunds are made according to the following schedule: If cancellation is made 120 days or more before departure date, the deposit less \$75 per person is refundable. If cancellation is made fewer than 120 days before departure date, no refund is available. This policy and fee schedule also applies to pre-trip and post-trip extensions, as well as any transfers from one tour to another. ***We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance to protect yourself.***

<u>If you cancel:</u>	<u>Your refund will be:</u>
120 days or more before departure date	Your deposit minus \$75.
Fewer than 120 days before departure date	No refund available.

**TRIP CANCELLATION INSURANCE:** Application forms for optional coverage for baggage, illness, and trip cancellation can be obtained through the VENT office. We **strongly recommend** that you purchase trip cancellation insurance to protect yourself against losses due to accidents or illness. Check with your insurance agent regarding coverage you may presently have via other insurance policies that may cover illness during your trip. **Waiver for pre-existing conditions is available, as are other coverages such as terrorism protection; however, stipulations apply, usually requiring the purchase of the insurance soon after registering. Contact the VENT office prior to registration for details.**

**Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of \$50,000. CST #2014998-50.**

**AIR INFORMATION:** Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements.

**BAGGAGE:** In case your checked luggage is delayed, it's recommended that you pack all documents, medications, a change of clothes, your binoculars, and toiletry items in a carry-on bag.

**CLOTHING:** As is the case for all our tropical tours, lightweight field clothing is the norm for Panama. This includes several pair of lightweight field pants, along with cool and comfortable long-sleeved shirts. A hat and sunscreen are recommended for protection from the sun.



Dark-colored or neutral clothing is suggested, as white or bright colors may frighten secretive birds. Lightweight and comfortable walking shoes are recommended, since some days we will spend a good bit of time on foot. Waterproof boots are essential, as the trails can be muddy. A small umbrella and/or rain gear are essential as well.

**LAUNDRY SERVICE:** Laundry service is available at the Canopy Tower. Because the clothes are sent out to Panama City to be cleaned, it may take 48 hours before they are returned to the Tower.

**CURRENCY:** The U.S. Dollar is the official currency of Panama. VISA and American Express are most commonly used, but MasterCard and Diners Club are also accepted.

**DOCUMENTS:** A passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure from Panama is required. Visas are not required for entry by U.S. citizens. A tourist entry card must be purchased from the airline on which you travel into Panama (approximately \$5.00 U.S.). Non-U.S. citizens should check with their local Panamanian consulate/embassy for instructions.

**EQUIPMENT:** You should pack a pair of binoculars that are in good repair, along with a belt pack or day pack (good for carrying books, sunscreen, extra film, etc.). As a precaution, it's a good idea to pack your binoculars, a change of clothing, toiletry items, medications, and travel documents in your airline carry-on bag. Your leaders will have a spotting scope; but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so.

**HEALTH:** In general, we recommend that you consult your doctor before taking any immunizations. Health requirements change frequently and often vary from district to district within a country. No vaccinations are required to enter Panama. However, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta advise that there is some risk of malaria in parts of the country. The areas visited on this tour are not at risk. The CDC is recommending precautions for travelers going out of these main areas. You may check with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta at 877-FYI-TRIP or [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel) for further health information. Your tetanus, Polio, and yellow fever vaccinations should be current. The water is drinkable in Panama, and the food is safe. Please do check with your doctor for your own personal needs and prescription drugs (which may or may not be available on tour).

**INSECT PROTECTION:** Chiggers can be a problem in some areas. We recommend the use of Cutter's lotion (or a similar **lotion**) and a pump-style container of OFF or a similar repellent. Topsy gel is useful in reducing irritation from chigger bites or nettle stings (cortisone creams are now available without a prescription). Some people recommend sprinkling sulphur, which is available at the Canopy Tower, on your socks as a chigger deterrent.

**MISC:**

- Departure Tax – U.S. \$20 (subject to change without notice)
- Electricity – 120 volts; plugs are the flat 2-pin American type.
- Language – The official language is Spanish, but English is spoken.
- Time – Eastern Standard Time

**SUGGESTED READING:** Our website at [www.ventbird.com](http://www.ventbird.com) offers an affiliated online store that carries a wide variety of items for birding and nature lovers, including over 6,000 books. A portion of the sales from the store benefits the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. You might also want to visit such other online stores as [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), and for those out-of-print and hard-to-find titles, [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com), or [www.buteobooks.com](http://www.buteobooks.com), which specializes in ornithology books.

***Field Guides:***

Ridgely, Robert S. and John Gwynne. *A Guide to the Birds of Panama*. (Second edition). Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992. This excellent field guide is highly recommended as your primary reference book on the birds. No other field guides are really necessary.

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Emmons, Louise H. *Neotropical Rainforest Mammals: A Field Guide*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997.

***Background Reading:***

Chapman, Frank. *My Tropical Air Castle*. New York: Appleton and Company, 1929. Fun reading by an early ornithologist in Panama. Out of print; try [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com).

Chapman, Frank. *Life in an Air Castle*. New York: Appleton-Century Co, 1938. Out of print; try [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com).

Forsyth, Adrian and Ken Miyata. *Tropical Nature*. New York: Charles Scribner, 1987. Excellent introduction to many fascinating aspects of the tropical rainforest.

Hilty, Steven. 1994. *Birds of Tropical America*. Shelbourne, VT: Chapters Publishing, 1994. Subtitle: "A watcher's introduction to behavior, breeding and diversity."

Kricher, John C. *A Neotropical Companion*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999. An excellent introduction to the rainforest.

McCullough, David. *A Path Between the Seas: The Creation of the Panama Canal*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1999. An excellent history of the construction of the Panama Canal.

Richards, Paul W. *The Tropical Rain Forest: An Ecological Study*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. (Second edition.) A more scientific review of the botanical structure of rainforests.

Gradwohl, Judy and Russell Greenberg. "The Formation of Antwren Flocks on Barro Colorado Island, Panama." *Auk* 97 (April 1980).

Munn, Charles A. and John W. Terborgh. "Multi-species Territoriality in Neotropical Foraging Flocks." *Condor* 81 (1979): 338-347.

***Reference:***

Croat, Thomas B. *Flora of Barro Colorado Island*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1978. A massive technical manual, but the best plant book available for the region.

Hilty, Steven L. and William L. Brown. *A Guide to the Birds of Colombia*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986. An excellent field guide that has most of the birds of Panama in it; perhaps useful as an additional reference book.

Ridgely, Robert S., and Guy Tudor. *Birds of South America Volume I, The Oscine Passerines: Jays, Swallows, Wrens, Thrushes and Allies, Vireos, Wood-warblers, Tanagers, Icterids and Finches*. Austin: The University of Texas, 1989. Very useful reference, with range maps and illustrations of many species not previously illustrated.

Ridgely, Robert S., and Guy Tudor. *Birds of South America Volume II, The Suboscine Passerines: Ovenbirds and Woodcreepers, Antbirds, Gnateaters, and Tapaculos, Tyrant Flycatchers, Manakins and Cotingas*. Austin: The University of Texas, 1994. Very useful reference, with range maps and illustrations of many species not previously illustrated.

**TIPPING:** As noted in our itineraries, tipping (restaurants, porters, drivers, local guides) is included on VENT tours. However, if you feel one or both of your VENT leaders or any local guides have given you exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are not expected and are entirely optional.

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