

Pair Bonding during Panama's Green Season

June 2021

Why we chose the Canopy Family's 20 Day Green Season Tour:

- The price for the twenty day Green Season tour is significantly less than the price for the same 20 day tour during the Dry Season.
- We had no need to see Neotropical migrants which are not present during the Green Season as we are all North American birders.
- Although June is in the Green or Rainy Season, it has less rain than some other Green Season months.
- Birding during the Green Season provided an unparalleled opportunity to observe many birds as pairs and some on the nest as well as animals with young.
- The Canopy Family's reputation for excellent guiding, lodging, and service.

Travel: Kathy, Chris, and Chantal flew from San Francisco to Tocumen International Airport Panama City via Miami on American Airlines. Scott flew from Austin to Tocumen International Airport Panama City via Houston on United Airlines. Both airlines required negative COVID-19 tests within 72 hours of departure to board the plane. In Panama City, we were able to receive this test for \$60.00 each at a clinic in the same plaza as the Crowne Plaza Hotel-Panama City before our return flights.

Entering Panama: As US citizens, a prearranged visa was not required to enter the country. Immigration and customs were efficient at Tocumen International Airport in Panama City.

Lodging in Panama City: Upon arrival on June 5th, Kathy, Chris, and Chantal stayed at the Crowne Plaza Hotel – Panama City, a short distance from the airport with shuttle service and a restaurant. Scott used Marriott points to stay at the Santa Maria Hotel and Golf Resort. Arriving on June 4th enabled Scott to bird June 5th around the hotel grounds and neighboring golf course, identifying 26 species including three species, Whimbrel, Saffron Finch, and Cattle Tyrant, not seen on the following tour.

Bird Resources: Angehr, George R. and Robert Dean. *The Birds of Panama: A Field Guide*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 2010. The Canopy Family has a Checklist for the Canopy Camp and a Checklist for the Canopy Tower/Lodge available on its website. It also provides a printed copy of the appropriate checklists upon your arrival.

Weather: Generally the weather was fine, hotter at the Canopy Camp in the Darien than at the Canopy Tower or Canopy Lodge, but the heat and humidity were never really oppressive at any of the three sites. Although it was the Green or Wet Season, only two afternoon excursions were cancelled due to heavy rain.

Food: Breakfast was a delicious combination of fresh fruit, eggs or pancakes, yogurt, toast, cereal, sometimes bacon/sausage and always coffee/tea. On, most days, after breakfast, we birded in the mornings, returned for a hot lunch and a siesta until about 3:00 pm, birded from 3:00 pm until 5:30 pm, completed the checklist with an appetizer, and then ate dinner. Cold drinks and snacks were available throughout the day, every day. On the several occasions when we were away from the Camp/Tower/Lodge for the full day, we had delicious cold lunches. At the Camp/Tower/Lodge lunches and dinners were varied and generally a tasty variety of vegetarian, beef, pork, fish, or chicken with a salad, starch, vegetables, fresh bread, and dessert. Memorable Panamanian dishes included Soncocho, Ropa Vieja, Patacones, and the most delicious Panamanian Pineapple Upside Down Cake. Overall, the

food was well-prepared, plentiful, and generally well-seasoned, but mild. For extra zest, an in-house hot sauce was available at all meals.

Communication: Wi-Fi was available at all three sites, although least reliable at the Canopy Camp. Chantal and Chris also purchased sim cards for their cell phones.

Bird Guides: The Canopy Family has a team of bird guides with a well-deserved reputation for excellence. While at the Canopy Camp, Carlos Bethancourt provided an outstanding experience. During this portion of the trip, we were also lucky to have a ‘bonus guide’ as Ito Santamaria from Tamandua Nature Tours, which offers tours in the Chiriquí region of Panama, joined our group. How lucky were we to have two expert and genial guides complete with two scopes etc. At the Canopy Tower, Carlos and Jorge Pineda took turns providing excellent guiding services at some of Panama’s most famous birding sites. While at the Canopy Lodge, Danilo Rodríguez, Jr. provided a wonderful experience throughout a wide range of habitats. Regardless of the guide, throughout the entire tour, the guides were extremely knowledgeable, friendly, enthusiastic, and patient.

Sunday, June 6th, Day 1: Birded around Avicar Restaurant in Torti, a site along the Rio Torti, and the Canopy Camp.

After Carlos and Ito collected us from our respective hotels, we began the four hour plus drive to the Darien. Surprisingly, the road to the Darien Province border was in worse shape than the road in the Darien Province. After entering the Darien, we stopped in Torti to eat at the Avicar Restaurant, well-known for its numerous hummingbird feeders which didn’t disappoint. What an easy way to study some of the numerous hummingbird gems we would spend the following days with including *White-necked Jacobin*, *Black-throated Mango*, *Scaly-breasted Hummingbird*, *Snowy-bellied Hummingbird*, *Long-billed Hermit*, and *Rufous-tailed Hummingbird* among others.



Barred Antshrike – Christine Miller

After finishing a delicious lunch of fried rice, we were introduced to our first bird pairs of this trip: *Barred Antshrikes* and *Yellow-crowned Tyrannulets*. Upon leaving the restaurant, we drove to a site along the Rio Torti which proved quite birdy as we had great looks at *Cinnamon Becard*, a pair of calling *Whooping Motmots*, a pair of *White-eared Conebills*, an *Orange-crowned Oriole*, and an unexpected *Pearly-breasted Cuckoo*. Quick glimpses were also had of *Panama Flycatcher* and *Yellow Tyrannulet*, but no worries as we would catch up to these species again near the Canopy Lodge. The day concluded with our arrival at the Canopy Camp and nice sightings of a *Long-billed Starthroat* and nesting *Thick-billed Euphonias*.

Monday, June 7th, Day 2: Birded Canopy Camp grounds and entrance road and two stops along the Pan American Highway en route to Yaviza

Although skeptical about spending a morning birding just around the Canopy Camp, concerns were soon put to rest as the Camp and its surroundings provided excellent views of numerous new and exciting species. At the actual Camp species included numerous hummingbirds at the feeders, flyover *Plumbeous Kites*, perched *Roadside Hawk*, a pair of *Pied Puffbirds*, multiple *Spot-crowned Barbets*,

White-vented Plumeteers at the feeders, **Blue-headed Parrots**, **Masked Tityra**, **Ochre-bellied Flycatcher**, **Brown-capped Tyrannulet**, and **Golden-headed** and **Plain-colored Tanagers** in addition to the first of multiple flocks and/or pairs of **Mealy Parrots**, **Red-lored Parrots**, **Chestnut-headed Oropendolas**, and **Orange-chinned Parakeets** seen on many days throughout the tour. A walk along the Canopy Camp entrance road and a trail to the vulture viewing area provided excellent views of an array of beautiful birds including **Slaty-tailed** and **Black-tailed Trogons**, **Cinnamon Woodpecker**, **Olivaceous Piculet**, a very confiding pair of **Black Antshrikes**, a pair of **Gray-cheeked Nunlets**, and a fleeting glimpse of a **White-shouldered Tanager**.



Chestnut-headed Oropendola and Cinnamon Woodpecker – Christine Miller



Gray-cheeked Nunlet – Chantal Fletcher



Howler Monkeys – Christine Miller

After lunch and time watching and photographing the hummingbirds, we spent the afternoon taking a walk along a dirt road through some wetlands on the Pan American Highway which yielded a pair of **Spot-breasted Woodpeckers**, **Common Black Hawk**, and our first **Greater Anis**, **Wattled Jacana**, and **Fork-tailed Flycatcher**. These sightings were followed by a stop closer to Yaviza for **Black Oropendola** and a final stop at the cemetery in Yaviza for a very active and vocal pair of **Bicolored Wrens**.

Tuesday, June 8th, Day 3: Birded El Salto Road and Canopy Camp in the morning. Rained all afternoon.

After another hearty breakfast, it was off to El Salto Road, not too far from the Canopy Camp. The early morning was spent playing hide-and-seek with some birds, but things improved nicely as we progressed further down the road: culminating with a wonderful site that was being cleared for planting. While walking along the road, we observed a pair of **Black-crowned Antshrikes**, a pair of **Crimson-crested Woodpeckers**, **Purple-throated Fruitcrows**, **Yellow-rumped Caciques**, three male **Blue Cotingas**, and a Double-banded Graytail nest. Alas, the nest was unoccupied and although Carlos heard this species a couple of days later on the Canopy Camp entrance road, we never did catch up with this species. In the

cleared area, we got excellent views of the stunning **Blue Ground-Doves**, a **Long-tailed Tyrant**, and our first **Tropical Gnatcatchers**, while on the walk back to the van we saw a **White-necked Puffbird**.

After lunch, we were able to quickly view a male **Fulvous-vented Euphonia** and **Golden-collared Manakins** at the lek on the Canopy Camp grounds before the skies opened and birding was finished for the day.

**Golden-collared Manakin –
Christine Miller**



Wednesday, June 9th, Day 4: Birded on the Chucunaque River in the morning and birded Quebrada Felix in the afternoon.

The morning boat trip on the Chucunaque River was unquestionably one of the absolute highlights of trip, combining natural beauty, a visit to an indigenous village, and 29 new species to the trip list, most seen extremely well. While heading up the river to the Dusky-backed Jacamar site, we had excellent views of **Green Ibis**, **Cocoi Heron**, **Gray-lined Hawk**, **Ringed, Amazon**, and **Green Kingfishers**, a pair of **White-headed Wrens**, **Pacific Antwren**, a pair of **Red-billed Scythebills**, **Gray-capped Flycatcher**, **Pied Water-Tyrant**, and a pair of **Yellow-billed Caciques** in the reeds. Once we arrived at the Dusky-backed Jacamar site, we were treated to crippling views of **Chestnut-front Macaws** at their nest hole, **Dusky-backed Jacamars** in the scope, a pair of **One-colored Becards**, **Muscovy Duck**, and, in the scope, **Barred Puffbird** and **Spectacled Parrotlet**. On the way back to the departure site, it started to gently rain, but we did make a brief stop at an Embera village and purchased some masks and woven reed goods.



Dusky-backed Jacamar - Chantal Fletcher

After lunch at the Camp, we returned to the field with a visit to Quebrada Felix. Over the course of the next several hours, we had great views of a pair of **Black-tailed Trogons**, sitting **Short-tailed Hawk**, and **Black-chested Jays**. As we began our way back to the camp, Carlos was able to coax a **Black-bellied Wren** into a brief, but satisfying views followed by long and enjoyable views of multiple calling **Striped Cuckoos** and a pretty, male **Ruddy-breasted Seedeater**.



**Ruddy-Breasted Seedeater -
Kathy Francone**

Striped Cuckoo - Kathy Francone



We finished the day with a night walk during which we heard a **Mottled Owl** calling, but it was not interested in coming in to play. All in all, it was an amazing day in the Darien!

Thursday, June 10th, Day 5: Birded Gonzales Family Farm in the morning and the Canopy Camp road and trails in the afternoon.

After breakfast at the Camp, we returned to the Chucunaque River for a trip to the Gonzales Family Farm, home to a Harpy Eagle nest and some additional sought after species. The hike to the nest area took about 75 minutes through muddy pasture and forest. While the family diligently, but ultimately unsuccessfully, searched for the Harpy Eagles which were unfortunately not near the nest today, Carlos did a masterful job finding some really interesting species including his first ever inflight view of a calling **Slender-billed Kite**, a gorgeous pair of **Golden-green Woodpeckers**, don't be fooled by the picture in the field guide, these birds are stunning, **Choco Sirystes**, raucous **Red-throated Caracaras**, soaring **Swallow-tailed Kite**, and sitting **Pearl Kite**. Chris and Chantal also saw their first **Chestnut-backed Antwren** darting across the path on their foray into the forest. The way out was hot and muggy leading to a debate as to whether the face of one group member looked more like a Lobster or a Dungeness crab: who's to say... Last, but not least, the family's daughter kindly pointed out three roosting **Tropical Screech-Owls** by the boat landing site before we departed on the river for Yaviza.

In the afternoon, a Canopy Camp employee alerted Carlos of a roosting **Great Potoo** along the Canopy Camp entrance road. After enjoying this bird preening and even yawning and a relatively low Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth, we moved back on to the trails and observed multiple **Golden-headed Manakins**. On the way back to the Camp, Chantal, now known as "snake eyes", spotted a Hog-nosed Pit Viper that Carlos had mercifully passed over without stepping on it. After enjoying views and taking pictures of this pretty viper, Carlos gently removed it from the trail and everyone went their respective ways. No harm, no foul and a new nickname was born!



Great Potoo – Chantal Fletcher

Friday, June 11th, Day 6: Birded Crested Eagle Site and Gonzales Family Farm on the Chucunaque River in the morning and a Pan American Highway wetland and some rice fields in the afternoon.

This morning, we returned to the Chucunaque River one last time to see if we the Crested Eagles had returned to the nest that they had abandoned about a week before our arrival. Although they had not returned, we had an enjoyable morning birding on the river, what a stunning pair of **Capped Herons**, and around the landing site: enjoying great looks at a nesting pair of **Black-crowned Tityras**, a **White-tailed Trogon**, a pair of **Rufous-tailed Jacamar**, and **Pale-bellied Hermit**. Upon leaving this site, we received word that the Harpy Eagle had been spotted by the father on the Gonzales Family Farm so the race was on. Down the river we went in the dugout canoes followed by a 35 minute sprint for Chantal, Chris, and Scott, down from 75 minutes the day before, and a horseback ride for Kathy to the Harpy Eagle site. Our haste paid off as we observed the female **Harpy Eagle** through the scope and in the air and then had

long-lasting scope views of the juvenile near the nest tearing into its mid-day meal. What an experience!



© Christine Miller

Juvenile Harpy Eagle – Christine Miller

In the afternoon, we visited a wetland site along the Pan American Highway which contained lovely pairs of **Yellow-hooded Blackbirds** and our first and only **Black-capped Donacobius** of the tour. We capped things off with a trip to some rice fields where we were treated to a very close, no binoculars necessary view of an **Aplomado Falcon**.



Black-capped Donacobius – Chantal Fletcher



Aplomado Falcon – Chantal Fletcher

Saturday, June 12th, Day 7: Birded the San Francisco Nature Reserve in the morning before driving to the Canopy Tower.

Our last morning in the Darien began with a bang as we spent our remaining time birding at the San Francisco Nature Reserve outside of Torti. After signing in and briefly meeting the priest who is responsible for preserving this land in its natural state, we enjoyed two different mixed flocks of birds along the road. In or around the first flock, we observed our first Greenlets of the trip, **Lesser** and **Golden-fronted Greenlets**, as well **Yellow-crowned Euphonia**, **Plain-breasted Ground-Dove**, **White-breasted Antbird** and **Dusky-capped Flycatcher**, two species we had frequently heard, but not yet seen, and a nesting **Rufous-breasted Hermit** seen by some. Further along the road, just past a creek, we observed another flurry of activity which included **Royal Flycatcher**, **Plain Xenops**, **Checker-throated Antwren**, **Southern Bentbill**, and a pair of **Bay Wrens**. On the way out, we recorded our first **Eastern Meadowlark** and our only **Brown-chested Martins** of the tour before starting our drive to the Canopy Tower.

Sunday, June 13th, Day 8: Birded Semaphore Road in the morning. Rained all afternoon.

After a little birding from the observation deck which netted eye-level views of **Green-shrike Vireo**, **Brown-capped Tyrannulet**, **Lesser Greenlets**, **Plain-brown Woodcreeper** and **Scarlet Caciques**, Jorge led us down Semaphore Road from the Canopy Tower. **Band-tailed Barbtail** on the nest was quite the treat as was our first **Scaled Pigeon**, **Black-breasted** and **White-whiskered Puffbirds**, **Dusky Antbird**, **Long-billed Gnatwren**, **Black-faced Anthrush** calling and stalking through the leaf litter, male **Blue Crowned Manakin**, **White-breasted Wood-Wren**, and a pair of **Rufous-breasted Wrens** working the tangles. After a morning of birding thrills, we were picked up and driven back up the hill for lunch: easy peasy!



Black-breasted Puffbird – Chantal Fletcher



Band-tailed Barbtail – Kathy Francone

After lunch, the birding for the day ended as a violent and long-lasting thunderstorm moved through the area: quite the experience in the tallest metal structure on the tallest hill around, making us quite thankful for Benjamin Franklin's invention of the lightening rod in 1752.

Monday, June 14th, Day 9: Birded the Canopy Tower Observation Deck, Summit Ponds and Old Gamboa Road and Semaphore Road in the morning and the Ammo Dump in the afternoon.

After eating breakfast and checking out the observation deck, Jorge drove us to the Summit Ponds where we had an enjoyable morning before we left due to a persistent drizzle. While walking out the road beyond the ponds, we encountered a pair of **Jet Antbirds** and **Buff-breasted Wrens** working the tangles, and heard, but couldn't see, a calling **Rosy Thrush-Tanager**. We continued down the road before turning around at a flooded creek which prevented us from checking the Spectacled Owl roosting site. On the way back, we spotted a pair of **Dot-winged Antwrens**, and a pair of **Fasciated Antshrikes** sharing nest duty. The ponds yielded up a **Boat-billed Heron** and our continued walk produced a **Gartered Trogon**, a pair of **Isthmian Wrens**, and a male **Red-capped Manakin** before we drove back to the Tower. As the rain was letting up, Scott walked up Semaphore Hill, but the walk was not very birdy with just a Central American Agouti and White-nosed Coati sighted. After the rain stopped, we drove down Semaphore Hill before lunch and our efforts were rewarded by a pair of perched **Semiplumbeous Hawks**, a **Crane Hawk** on the big side and a tiny **Black-crowned Pygmy-Tyrant** on the small side. We also saw our only Hoffmann's Two-toed Sloth of the tour before returning for lunch.

Carlos returned after lunch for a trip to the Ammo dump and surrounding wetlands. After scanning the ponds beyond the fence and finding our first **Scrub Greenlet** and **Gray-headed Chachalacas** of the tour in the neighboring trees, we also observed our only Lesser Cabybara and Spectacled Caiman of the tour. Carlos then began and eventually won an epic battle with a **White-breasted Crake**. Good looks were had by all, but it was not an easy task.



Spectacled Caiman – Kathy Francone

After that experience, we wrapped up the afternoon with three **Rufescent Tiger-Herons** and a **Yellow-tailed Oriole** and enjoyed watching a massive container ship move past in the Panama Canal.



Rufescent Tiger-Heron – Kathy Francone



Panama Canal – Christine Miller

Tuesday, June 15th, Day 10: Birded Cerro Azul in the morning and Camino de Cruces NP in the afternoon.

The trip to Cerro Azul was much anticipated as it took us to a higher elevation, but as it necessitated heading east of the canal again, it was an early breakfast. Little did we know we would look back on this breakfast time as quite reasonable two days later when we ate at 3:30 am before heading to Nusagandi. The first stop which was actually a pit stop remarkably resulted in a close observation of the endemic **Stripe-cheeked Woodpecker** as well **Hepatic Tanager** and **Rufous-Capped Warbler**. After that, we drove a little ways, parked, and walked up a dirt road. It was pretty quiet at the beginning, but eventually things picked up as we ran into a group of tanagers which included beautiful **Rufous-winged, Bay-headed, Emerald, and Black-and-Yellow Tanagers**.

After returning to vehicle and fueling up with a snack and drink, we proceeded to a birding paradise at a private residence. Between the hummingbird and seed feeders, we were bedazzled by **Purple-crowned Fairy, Bronze-tailed Plumeteer, Green Hermit, Crowned Woodnymph, Rufous Motmot, Tawny-capped Euphonia, and Shining Honeycreeper** with their bright yellow legs. Just to keep things interesting **Rufous-capped Warbler, Olivaceous Woodcreeper, and Carmiol's Tanager** also made appearances in the yard. On the drive down from Cerro Azul, Carlos spotted a confiding **Fasciated Tiger-Heron** which was an unexpected treat.



Shining Honeycreeper – Christine Miller

After a late lunch, a tired crew made a quick visit to Camino de Cruces NP in an attempt to see another Panamanian endemic, Yellow-green Tyrannulet, but this time luck was not with us and we settled for hearing another **Rosy Thrush-Tanager** and seeing our first **Greenish Elania**.

Wednesday, June 16th, Day 11: Birded the first part of Pipeline Road in the morning and birded the Gamboa Resort and Chagres River in the afternoon.

This morning we bid Ito farewell as he needed to return to his hometown about 600 kilometers away. Although Ito was not an 'official' guide on this tour, his presence definitely enhanced the experience and we were all with impressed with his birding skills and his good nature. The morning was spent birding with Jorge along the first part of the world-famous Pipeline Road. We began the morning with beautiful views of **Bicolored** and **Chestnut-backed Antwrens**. After a fairly quiet interlude things picked up again with a small group of birds including **Gray-chested Dove**, a pair of **Spot-crowned Antvireos**, a male **White-flanked Antwren, Northern Barred** and **Black-striped Woodcreepers**, and **Song Wren**. On the way back to the vehicle, excellent views were had of a **Bright-rumped Attila** and an unanticipated **Speckled Mourner** which Jorge expertly got in the scope so everyone could see the subtle differences between this bird and a Rufous Mourner.

After lunch, Carlos returned for an afternoon of birding the Gamboa Resort area and a marina on the Chagres River. Although the Resort property was pretty quiet in terms of new species, we had great looks at a **White-winged Becard** and experienced an incredible scene while 10-15 different species mobbed a tape recording of a pygmy owl that Carlos had hidden in bush in the parking lot. Tanagers, thrushes, doves, euphonias, honeycreepers, tyrannulets, flycatchers – what a spectacle. When things

calmed down, we headed to a marina along the Chagres River where we observed **Band-rumped Swifts**, **Mangrove Swallows**, at least 4 different **Snails Kites** in adult and juvenile plumage, and a large American Crocodile.

After dinner, Carlos led a night drive down Semaphore Hill which resulted in incredible views of a **Choco Screech-Owl** and a heard **Black-and-white Owl**.

Thursday, June 17th, Day 12: All day bird trip to Nusagandi.

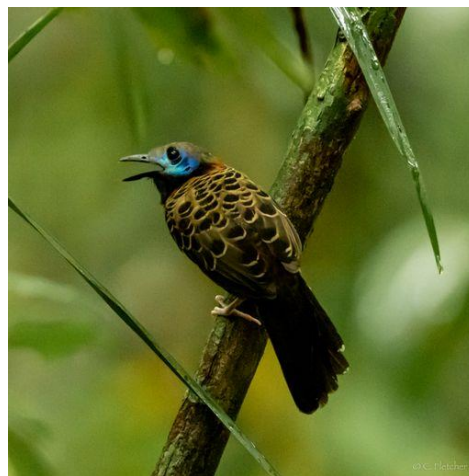
After the aforementioned 3:30 am breakfast, we drove across the Canal again and headed to Nusagandi in attempt to observe a Sapayoa among other specialties. Early birding was fairly slow with a male **Slate-breasted Grosbeak**, our first **Tawney Crested Tanagers**, a magnificent pair of **Crested Guans** perched and flying, and a **Short-billed Pigeon** among the morning highlights. A hike into prime Sapayoa habitat didn't pan out, but during the return, a steep up and down trail through the forest, Chantal, Scott, Carlos, and Jorge were treated to a great look at a **Stripe-throated Wren** as well as a nice mixed flock which included **Tawny-crested Tanagers**, **Rufous Mourner**, **Olive-striped Flycatcher**, and the sought after **Slate-throated Gnatcatcher**. Upon returning to the road and driving for a while, the group found another mixed flock which interestingly contained almost exactly the same species seen in the previous flock. One nice addition at this site was a flyover **King Vulture** while a **Least Grebe** was seen on a small pond on the way back to the Pan American Highway.

Friday, June 18th, Day 13: Birded more of the Pipeline Road in the morning and the Rainforest Discovery Center including its tower in the afternoon.

This morning we returned to the Pipeline Road. Highlights included **Gray-headed Tanagers**, **Spotted Antbird** and a **Double-toothed Kite** following White-faced Capuchin Monkeys, but the star of the morning was unquestionably a striking and very cooperative **Ocellated Antbird**. We had finished our walk and were heading back to the car in a light drizzle, when Carlos turned around, clearly excited by what had just flown across the path. Luckily, we were able to all get on the Ocellated Antbird and Carlos even got it in the telescope which was amazing. It was not at an ant swarm so we were incredibly lucky to see this spectacular bird which gave us multiple, stellar views over about five minutes.



Double-toothed Kite – Kathy Francone



Ocellated Antbird – Chantal Fletcher



Spotted Antbird – Chantal Fletcher

After lunch, we visited the Rainforest Discovery Center and its tower. En route to the tower, we heard a ***Streak-chested Antpitta***, but were unable to coax it in for a view. Once up the tower, birding was steady and we were able to see gorgeous ***Scaled Pigeons*** in the scope as well ***Gray-headed Kite***, ***Anhinga***, ***Blue Dacnis***, ***Brown-hooded Parrots*** and best of all a ***Collared Forest-Falcon***. On the way back to the vehicle, we encountered a nice little flock by the entrance building which contained a small and fast ***Mustached Antwren*** seen by most of us.

Saturday, June 19th, Day 14: Birded the Canopy Tower observation deck, transferred to the Canopy Lodge, birded the Canopy Lodge grounds.

After breakfast, one last trip to the Observation Deck produced nothing new, but allowed us to bid adieu to the regulars and snap a few more pictures before an uneventful drive to the Canopy Lodge.



Crimson-backed Tanager – Kathy Francone

After settling into our large en suite rooms and enjoying a nice welcome lunch, we met our guide for the next seven days Danilo Rodriquez, Jr. and proceeded to bird a little around the Canopy Lodge grounds. It was fun to see the ***Buff-breasted Warbler*** working the rocks in the stream as well as the ***Gray-cowled Woodrail*** crossing the stream. Other afternoon highlights were a roosting ***Common Potoo***, ***Gray-headed Chachalaca*** with young, ***Green Kingfisher***, ***Black-chested Jay***, ***Bay Wrens***, and ***Crimson-backed Tanager***. A lizard highlight of the tour was watching the basilisk lizards walk on water in the lodge's pond.

Sunday, June 20th, Day 15: Birded Canopy Adventure, La Mesa road, and Aqueducto El Guyavo trail in the morning. Birded Cara Iguana Road in the afternoon.

After viewing ***Dusky-faced Tanagers*** and ***Orange-billed Sparrow*** on the Canopy Lodge grounds, we made a quick stop at Canopy Adventure to try to see the Sunbittern and/or Rufous-vented Ground-Cuckoo. We were unsuccessful this morning in our quest as we were multiple future mornings. Undeterred, we birded along La Mesa Road in the drizzle seeing nothing of note before we birded along Aqueducto El Guyavo trail on which we saw ***Red-crowned Ant-Tanager*** and ***Tody Motmot***.

After lunch we drove to Cara Iguana Road and had an enjoyable afternoon birding along the road. Highlights included ***Lesson's Motmot***, ***Olive-striped Flycatcher***, numerous ***Panama Flycatchers***, multiple ***Yellow Tyrannulets***, male ***Lance-tailed Manakin***, multiple ***Rufous-and-white Wrens***, and ***Streaked Saltators***.

Monday, June 21, Day 16: Birded La Mesa Rd. in the morning and Watercress Trail in the afternoon.

To be honest, I have very little recollection of this morning. I believe we birded along La Mesa Road, heard a *Three-striped Sparrow* and saw *Ochre-bellied Flycatcher* and *Paltry Tyrannulet*.

The afternoon birding was not fast and furious, but we did end up seeing some beautiful birds including nine soaring *Swallow-tailed Kites* nicely framed by the background hills, numerous *White-collared Swifts*, *Flame-rumped Tanager*, and *Rosy Thrush-Tanager* and *White Hawk* in the scope. We heard *Orange-billed Nightingale Thrush*, but were unsuccessful in seeing this skulker. For Kathy and me, it was also the first time either of us had seen cultivated Watercress.

Tuesday, June 22nd, Day 17: Birded road to Juan Hombron in the morning and Juan Hombron area, including El Chiru, in the afternoon. All day trip.

The day started with a bang as we found and photographed a perched *Wedge-tailed Grass-Finch*. Once again, the picture in the book does not do this bird justice especially when it is perched and singing on top of a bush with beautiful Panamanian rolling hills behind it. The second stop was a known *Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl* roost which we heard calling almost the whole time we were there, but we never were able to locate it. No worries as a *Groove-billed Ani*, *Brown-throated Parakeets*, and *Crested Bobwhites* a little further down the road kept our interest. Our next stop was in an area with fields bordered with trees. After seeing another pair of *Crested Bobwhite*, we were able to scope several *Grassland Yellow-Finches* in the field. In the trees, a gorgeous *Rufous-browed Peppershrike* and a drabber *Yellow-green Vireo* put in an appearance. And the hits kept coming at the next stop where we watched a *Slate-headed Tody-Flycatcher* build its nest. After a bit of drive, we came to creek where in quick succession *Northern Scrub Flycatcher*, *Black-crowned Night-Heron*, and the honking *Straight-billed Woodcreeper* were observed. A little further down the road a perched *Savanna Hawk* and a perched female *Garden Emerald* were easily observed. Next it was on to the rice fields which yielded *Glossy* and *White Ibis* as well as *Black-necked Stilts* before we headed to the coast where we ate lunch at the beach while watching fishing *Brown Boobies* and *Brown Pelicans* and flyby *Laughing Gulls*, *Magnificent Frigatebirds*, and *Royal Terns*. Oddly enough on the way to the coast, we observed two *Eurasian Collared Doves* in the road which were a lifer for guide Danilo. On a dirt road right behind the beach, we observed *Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture* and *Crested Caracara* within 10 feet of the vehicle and a calling *Pale-breasted Spinetail*. Sadly, this wonderful day came to end, but not without leaving us with many fond memories.



Wedge-tailed Grass-Finch and Pale-breasted Spinetail – Kathy Francone

Wednesday, June 23rd, Day 18: Birded Canopy Adventure, Las Mesa Rd. and Las Minos Road in the morning and Cerre Valle Chiquito in the afternoon.

We had better luck on La Mesa Road this morning seeing our first **Silver-throated Tanagers**, **Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant**, and **Scarlet-thighed Dacnis** – a stunning bird. After continuing to walk up the road, we turned down Las Minas Road on which we ran into a nice little flock of birds which included **Checker-throated Antwrens**, a pair of **Slaty Antwrens** which played hide-and-seek with us for quite a while, and a **Russet Antshrike**. Before heading back to the Lodge for lunch, we observed two **White-tipped Sicklebills** in the scope feeding on a Heliconia flower.

Before heading beyond the Canopy Lodge grounds after lunch, Chantal and Scott walked upstream in an attempt to see the Sunbittern. Although this bird eluded us, we did have a cooperative, male **Blue-black Grosbeak**. After driving to Cerre Valle Chiquito, we had a fun afternoon of birding beginning with a heard-only **Great Antshrike** followed by sighted **Yellow-backed Oriole**, **Sulphur-rumped Flycatcher**, **Three-striped Sparrow**, **White-lined Tanager**, and a rufous phase **Tropical Screech-Owl** calling and being mobbed. It was a beautiful owl, but the passerines were definitely not pleased by its presence.

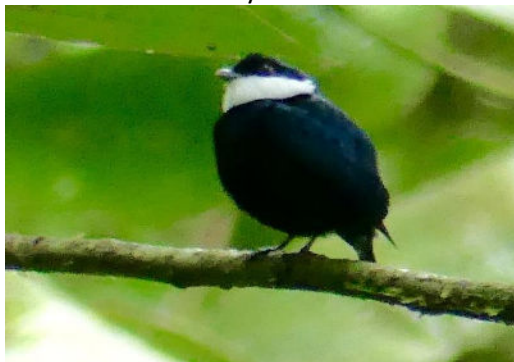
Thursday, June 24th, Day 19: Birded Altos del Maria all day.

After another delicious breakfast and a bit of a drive to the Altos del Maria area, we began birding on the road by a culvert in a patch of forest. A **Dull-mantled Antbird** gave us excellent views, while a **Scaly-breasted Wren** called and everyone but Scott was able to get on it. Overhead **Black-and-yellow Tanagers** made another appearance. Further up the road, we caught up with a low-level **Ochraceous Wren** along with two **Gray-breasted Wood-Wrens**.

A relatively long hike on nature trail started off with a bang as before we even entered the forest, we observed a **Pale-vented Thrush**, a **Spotted Barbtail**, and a **Spotted Woodcreeper**. Once in the forest, we were treated to excellent looks at **Orange-bellied Trogon**, male **White-ruffed Manakins**, and **Thrushlike Schiffonis**. Upon returning to the trailhead, we spent a while trying to see a pair of calling **Barred Forest-Falcons**, but unfortunately, in the end, this species remained heard-only. Continuing into the Altos del Maria development, we stopped for delicious lunch and then took a nice walk along the paved road sighting **Tufted Flycatcher**, known by some birders, “Cinnamon Titmouse”, a Brown-throated



Three-toed Sloth with baby, and a pair of **Rufous-browed Tyrannulets**. When we returned to the lunch site, Snowcap was seen by most and a **Scarlet-thighed Dacnis** was seen by all. On the way down, Scott saw a **Green Brilliant** identified by Danilo before it flew away.



2 of 12 Brown-throated Three-toed Sloths on the trip and White-ruffed Manakin – Kathy Francone

Friday, June 25th, Day 20: Birded Canopy Adventure, Candelario Trail in the morning and road to Altos del Maria in the afternoon.

No luck again at Canopy Adventure, but the hike on Candelario Trail produced some great views of some special birds including a ***Black-faced Antthrush***, heard by all and seen briefly by Scott, a pair of ***Plain Antvireos***, a ***Tawny-faced Gnatwren*** just a foot off the ground, a feeding ***Brown-billed Scythebill***, a pair of more cooperative ***Slaty Antwrens***, and upon exiting the trail a ***Wedge-billed Woodcreeper*** that Kathy had sought throughout this tour.

During the afternoon, we took the road towards Altos del Maria again hoping to see some Toucanets. Although this was not to be, a singing ***Orange-billed Nightingale Thrush*** was observed. While driving back to the Canopy Lodge, we stopped by a field and neighboring trees which were full of activity which including ***Black-headed Saltator***, ***Streaked Saltator***, perched ***Brown-hooded Parrots***, and ***Gray-capped Flycatcher***.

Saturday, June 26th, Day 21: Transfer from Canopy Lodge to Panama City Hotels. End of tour.

Summary: What an experience! With over 350 bird species seen and 10+ bird species heard as well as a nice assortment of animals observed, all within fairly close proximity to three welcoming and comfortable ecolodges operated by knowledgeable and friendly guides and staff, what's not to enjoy. Thank you to the entire Canopy Family for providing such an excellent Green Season adventure.

Scott Kampmeier