



2027

EcoTravel

Overnight Natural History Tours and Day Trips

Panama's Famous Canopy Family

February 19 - March 1, 2027



Overview

Birdwatching in Panama is synonymous with the Canopy Family properties. On this exciting adventure, we'll visit the famous Canopy Tower, a converted US radar tower, and the luxurious Canopy Lodge, two of the three impressive properties that visiting birders cannot overlook.

Canopy Tower, first constructed in 1963 as a result of the Cuban Missile Crisis, was transferred from United States ownership to Panama in 1996 before being leased to Canopy Family in 1997. With an observation deck located 50 feet above the ground, visitors get a birds-eye view of the surrounding landscape, gazing out over the expansive Soberanía National Park. Along with specialized vehicles with outdoor seating, birding along the Panama Canal is a bucket list adventure for many birders.

The second half of the trip, to **Canopy Lodge**, will bring visitors into the mountain valleys, with cooler temperatures awaiting. With expansive windows to view the towering peaks, travelers will be surrounded by the breathtaking scenery. With a viewing platform, a natural swimming pool, and a stunning waterfall, all on site, it's a perfect escape from the hot lowland temperatures. Days will be spent exploring varying elevation, with new and diverse species awaiting.

Join us on this exciting adventure to one of Central America's dream birding destinations. Relax with beautiful views at either of the hotels, or adventure out in search of secretive and exotic species that call Panama home. This trip cannot be missed!

Climate

Temperature and Season

February and March are the heart of the dry season in Panama. This doesn't mean that there's no rain, just that it's unlikely. Temperatures can be expected to be hot and humid, especially in the lowlands around Canopy Tower. Temperatures range from upper 60s to mid 90s in the lowlands, with cooler weather expected in the mountain areas.

Elevation

0 – 4,000 feet above sea level

Accommodation

Both Canopy Tower and Canopy Lodge are impressive hotels, with en suite bathrooms and private rooms. Single rooms are available, yet highly limited.

Pace and Physical Difficulty

This trip is at a casual pace, with minimal walking. Travelers have the option to remain at the hotel on non-travel days, and may have the option to only take part in morning or afternoon excursions depending on the situation. Some roads, especially around Canopy Lodge, may be rough.

Birding is at a moderate pace, with the focus being on tropical specialties, especially those at the northernmost extent of their range. A wide variety of hummingbirds, toucans, and more can be expected at feeder setups.



Itinerary

Day 1

After departing from home airports in the early morning, we'll arrive in the mid-afternoon in Panama City. After clearing customs and retrieving luggage, we'll head out towards the famous Canopy Tower. Following an afternoon orientation, we'll have time to relax and enjoy the observation deck from the top of the tower.

Night: Canopy Tower

Meals: D

Day 2

In the early morning, we'll climb to the top of the tower and witness dawn from the observation deck. Birding from high in the canopy is both a relief on the neck and a spectacular way to see species such as **Green Shrike-Vireo**, **Blue Cotinga**, and more that are normally difficult to spot down low on the ground. After breakfast, we'll venture down the access road to the hotel, exploring the shaded habitat for birds found both in the forest interior and edge habitats. From **Black-breasted Puffbird** to **Black-throated Trogon** and many more, there's an impressive number of species to be found in the immediate area.

After returning to the tower for lunch, we'll head out in the afternoon to some local ponds and the surrounding habitats. We'll search for the elusive **White-throated Crake** while also keeping our eyes open for **Greater Ani**, **Lesser Kiskadee**, **American Pygmy-Kingfisher**, and more. We'll return to the tower before dinner to relax and review the species list for the day.

Night: Canopy Tower

Meals: BLD

Day 3

After breakfast, we'll head a short distance away to world-famous Pipeline Road. Built during World War II as a petroleum line in case the canal was compromised, the road became famous in 1977 when, during a Christmas Bird Count, 314 species were found in the area around it. Ever since then, birders have flocked to experience the diversity for themselves. **Great Jacamar**, **Pheasant Cuckoo**, and **Crimson-crested Woodpecker** are just some of the species we'll be searching for, while also keeping eyes peeled for any army ant swarms and all the birds that are attracted to the hunt. With bird activity sure to be high, we'll enjoy a picnic lunch in the forest.

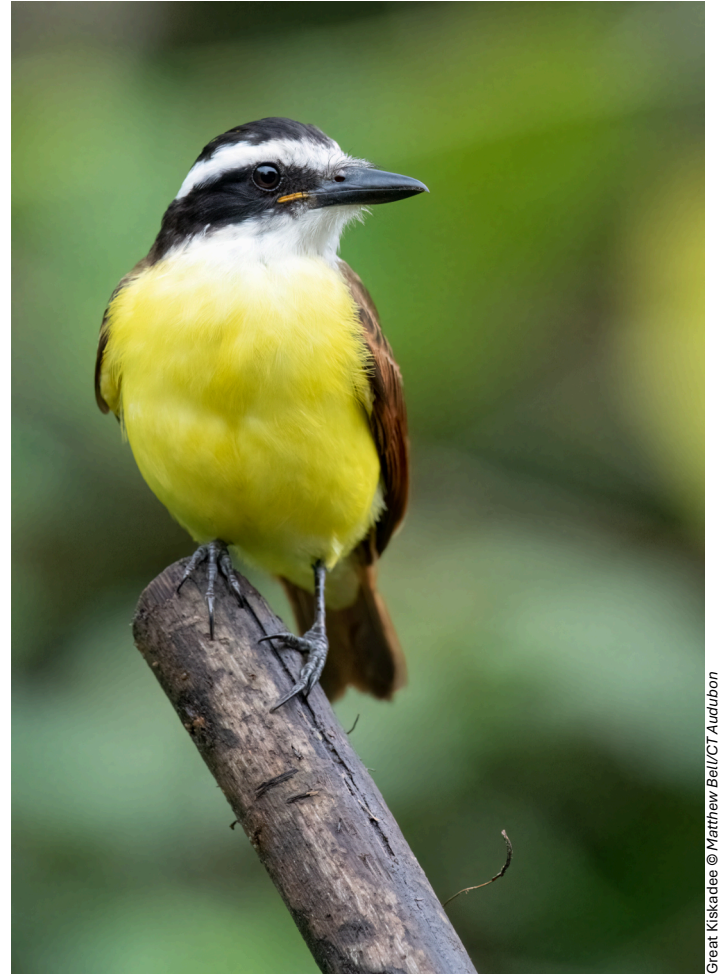
In the afternoon, we'll visit the area around the summit gardens. Here we'll hope to find species such as **Common Squirrel-Cuckoo**, **Keel-billed Toucan**, and others. The gardens and the flowering plants give us a chance at beautiful hummingbirds, including **Snowy-bellied Hummingbird**.

Night: Canopy Tower

Meals: BLD



American Pygmy Kingfisher © Matthew Bell/CT Audubon



Great Kiskadee © Matthew Bell/CT Audubon



Keel-billed Toucan © Matthew Bell/CT Audubon

Day 4

Today, we'll explore Plantation Trail, an area that is said to rival the impressive birding of Pipeline Road itself. This easy trail is a reliable spot to find the diminutive **Golden-crowned Spadebill**, and **Black-chested Jays** can normally be found in the parking lot. A wide variety of species can be found here, including woodcreepers, woodpeckers, antwrens, manakins, and more. Who knows what we might stumble upon!

After lunch, we'll head towards the village of Gamboa, where a stop at a local bed & breakfast's fruit feeders will give us up close views of colorful species, including **Flame-rumped** and **Crimson-backed tanagers**, **Yellow-bellied Seedeater**, and three species of honeycreepers. We'll then visit the Chagres River, the main tributary of the Panama Canal, where our eyes will be peeled for a variety of kingfishers and herons, along with other water-loving species such as **Mangrove Swallow**.

Night: Canopy Tower

Meals: BLD

Day 5

After again checking some local ponds for any species we may have missed, we'll head onto Old Gamboa Road. Passing through a wide variety of habitats, specialties here include **Blue Ground Dove**, **Jet Antbird**, and **Lance-tailed Manakin**. With luck, we may even come across the unique **Rosy Thrush-Tanager**. **Spectacled Owls** are around as well, and we'll check known roosting spots to see if any are in view.

The afternoon will include a visit to the Rainforest Discovery Center, where its 100-foot observation tower is a highlight. From the top of the tower, we'll scan for soaring species, including **Double-toothed Kite** and **Semiplumbeous Hawk**, while canopy-loving species, including **Scaled Pigeon**, might be perched in the open. Walking along one of the forest trails, we might stumble upon a secretive **Sungrebe** in a small pond, while trogons, motmots, and more call from the understory.

Night: Canopy Tower

Meals: BLD

Day 6

On our final morning birding from the observation deck of Canopy Tower, we'll enjoy a relaxed breakfast before embarking on a two-hour drive to El Valle de Antón, arriving at Canopy Lodge in time for lunch. Built next to a mountain stream and at a higher elevation than the Tower, we'll immediately notice the cooler temperatures. After an orientation about the property, there'll be time to relax and enjoy the incredible feeders. Species such as **Dusky-faced Tanager**, **Streaked Saltator**, and **Chestnut-headed Oropendola** are just some of the birds that can be expected.

Night: Canopy Lodge

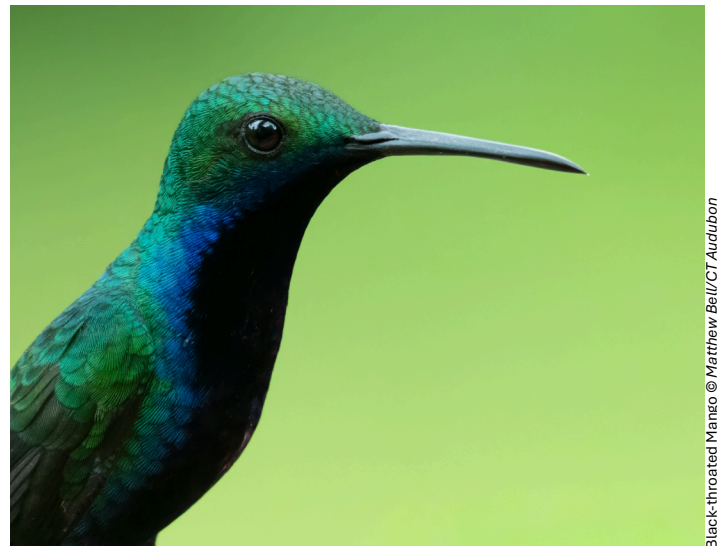
Meals: BLD



Tropical Kingbird © Matthew Bell/CT Audubon



Chestnut-headed Oropendola © Matthew Bell/CT Audubon



Black-throated Mango © Matthew Bell/CT Audubon

Day 7

In the early morning, we'll head up the mountain towards the ridgeline, offering views of the forested mountains and surrounding grasslands. If it's a clear day, you can see both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans! Unique species that we'll search for include **Wedge-tailed Grass-Finch**, **Emerald Tanager**, **Barred Hawk**, the endemic **Stripe-cheeked Woodpecker**, and **Black Guan**. Once we've exhausted our searching and built up an appetite, we'll descend back towards the lodge for lunch.

In the afternoon, we'll spend time on a trail that winds through some of the last remaining stands of Pacific dry forest. **Striped Cuckoo**, **Pale-eyed Pygmy-Tyrant**, and **Rufous-and-white Wren** will be targeted, while **Tody Motmot**, **Long-billed Gnatwren**, and much more will hopefully be around. We'll return to the lodge in time for some relaxation before dinner.

Night: Canopy Lodge

Meals: BLD

Day 8

After an early breakfast, 4x4s will take us high into the mountains. Climbing into the cloud forest, at 3,600 feet above sea level, highland forest birds will be our targets for today. **Yellow-eared Toucanet**, **Barred Forest-Falcon**, **Spotted Barbtail**, and **Tawny-crested Tanager** are just some of the many species we'll search for. We may even stumble upon the unique **Brown-billed Scythebill**, while **Snowcap**, **White-tipped Sicklebill**, and **Band-tailed Barbthroat** are just some of the local hummingbirds. A picnic lunch in the field will allow us to maximize our time in this incredible habitat, and in the mid-afternoon, we'll descend back to the lodge for some downtime before dinner.

Night: Canopy Lodge

Meals: BLD

Day 9

We'll start the day 15 minutes from the lodge, where the blend of habitats holds great birds including **Spot-crowned Barbet**, **Bay-headed Tanager**, and **Scarlet-thighed Dacnis**. **Rufous-crested Coquette** and **Crowned Woodnymph** can be found feeding on flowering bushes. Lunch will again be at the lodge. The afternoon will include a visit to more habitats, allowing us a chance to connect with species we may have missed, before again enjoying the feeders at the Lodge.

Night: Canopy Lodge

Meals: BLD

Day 10

In the morning, we'll ascend Cerro Gaital, the mist-shrouded mountain visible from the Lodge. **Northern Emerald-Toucanet**, **Collared Trogon**, **Rufous-capped Warbler**, and **White Hawk** can all be found at this elevation, while **Violet-headed Hummingbird**, **Black-headed Antthrush**, and **Blue Seedeater**, also inhabit the area.



Great Pototo © Matthew Bell/CT Audubon



Geoffroy's Tamarin © Matthew Bell/CT Audubon



Northern Emerald-Toucanet © Matthew Bell/CT Audubon

In the afternoon, we'll visit Valle Chiquito, recently accessible due to a newly paved road. A colony of **Chestnut-headed Oropendolas** can be found in one of the large trees, while **Sepia-capped Flycatcher** can be found along the rivers. **Black Hawk-Eagle**, along with **Zone-tailed** and **Gray-lined hawks**, may be heard calling while soaring, while **Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher**, **Little Tinamou**, and a variety of wrens move through the understory.

Night: Canopy Lodge
Meals: BLD

Day 11

With a final breakfast and some last-minute birding at the lodge feeders, we'll load our bags and begin the 3-hour journey back towards Panama City and the airport, ready to head home after an incredible experience with world-famous lodging.

Meals: B



Roadside Hawk © Matthew Bell/CT Audubon



Long-billed Starthroat © Matthew Bell/CT Audubon

General Information

Tour Cost: \$6,998.

Members: \$6,598.

The above cost is based upon a minimum number of six paying participants traveling together. If there are fewer participants, there will be a small group supplement. Per person Tour Cost is based on two people sharing a room.

Single Room Supplement: No charge; highly limited.

All rates are calculated at the time of publication and are subject to change due to conditions out of our control (i.e. hotel rates). All passengers will be notified if changes in pricing occur.

Tour Includes:

Accommodations are based on double occupancy, one or two beds. Meals are included as outlined in the itinerary section (B=Breakfast/L=Lunch/D=Dinner). Additional charges for meals may apply if needs are out of the standard offerings. Entrance fees to national parks and sightseeing as specified in the itinerary.

Not Included:

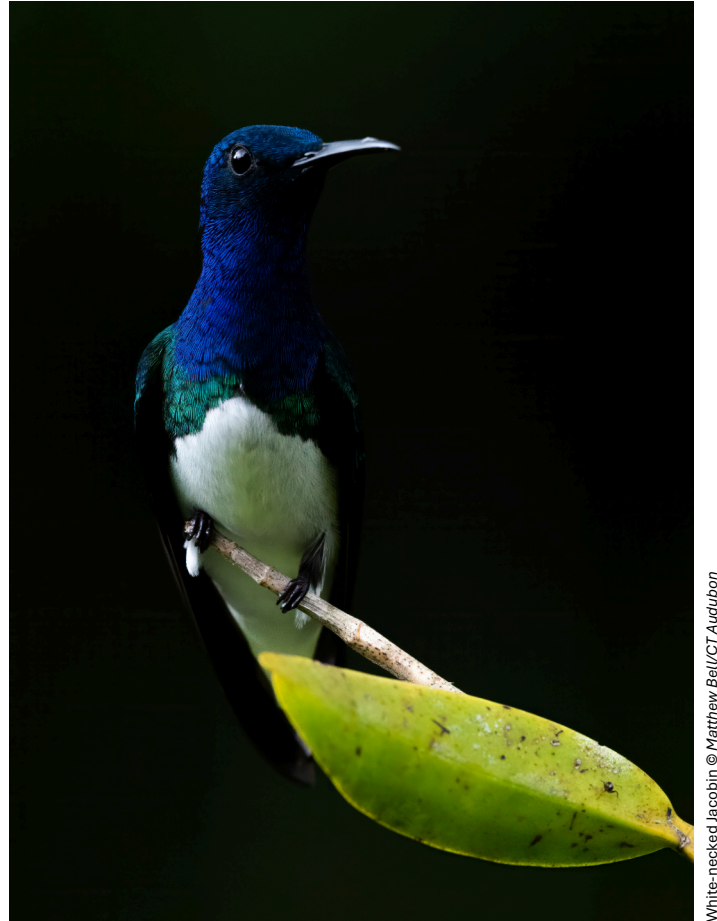
Taxes; costs of obtaining passports and visas; airfare; baggage fees; personal expenses such as room service, beverages, laundry, gratuities for the local guide and housekeeping; personal communications; airport taxes; tax increases or new taxes charged for services that were not taxed at the time the booking was made; excess mileage carried out at the request of the passenger; sightseeing or meals not specified in the itinerary; personal insurance coverage (strongly recommended); and transfers to and from your home airport.

Leader

Matt Bell is a graduate of The Ohio State University with BS degrees in both earth sciences and evolution/ecology. He started birding in May 2013 and became more seriously involved after a trip to Costa Rica. Since then he helped revive The Ornithology Club at Ohio State and assisted as a volunteer guide for The Biggest Week in American Birding and the Yellow Rails and Rice Festival. He absolutely loves participating in citizen science, tour guiding, chasing rare birds in his free time, and meeting fellow birders from around the globe. Most of all, Matt enjoys sharing his passion for birds and conservation with others and never shies away at taking the time to help beginners start their explorations of the avian world. Matt is the EcoTravel travel specialist and leads day trips and overnight tours.



Red-legged Honeycreeper © Matthew Bell/CT Audubon



White-necked Jacobin © Matthew Bell/CT Audubon



Red-tailed Squirrel © Matthew Bell/CT Audubon

General Terms & Conditions

Reservations

Early reservations with deposit are essential to guarantee your booking. A **\$1,500 deposit, per person**, applicable to final payment, is required to reserve space on this trip. Reservations made within 120 days of departure require full payment along with the formal Registration Forms. Final payment for programs is due 120 days prior to departure. Payments can be made by personal check, money order, certified check, or a cashier's check.

Rates and Fares

Prices are accurate as available at the time of publication. Prices do not include airfare unless otherwise stated. The Connecticut Audubon Society (CAS) reserves the right to alter quoted prices to reflect changes in airline fares, land service, or currency exchange rates. In the event that the number of participants is below the minimum required for the quoted price, a small group surcharge may be added.

Cancellation and Insurance

At the time the EcoTravel Office receives written notice that you must cancel your trip, the following cancellation fees will apply: Prior to 120 days from departure, your payments will be refunded minus **\$300 per person**. At 120 days and less, no refund is granted. NOTE: In addition to cancellation fees, airline tickets and deposits required to guarantee hotel rooms may be nonrefundable. The purchase of a general travel insurance plan covering baggage, accident/life, and trip cancellation is highly recommended. Give us a call and we can put you in touch with those providers. CAS reserve the right, if registration is insufficient or other reasons out of our control, to cancel, postpone, or offer the trip with a small group supplement. In the event that CAS cancels or postpones, those with reservations will be notified as soon as possible and a credit of payments will be held on file. The Connecticut Audubon Society is not responsible for the refund or credit of additional expenses incurred in preparation for a trip. Any "delay" or "postponing" of departure by tour participants is considered a cancellation and cancellation parameters will be apply relative to the 120-day window. There are no exceptions.

Responsibility

Payment of deposit represents and acceptance of the following terms and conditions by the purchaser: The Connecticut Audubon Society, its affiliates, and all cooperating airlines and agencies act only in the capacity of agents in all matters of transportation and tour operations, and their liability is limited to the terms of the airline tickets and land accommodation contracts. They are not responsible for any delays, inconveniences, accidents, expense, or mishap of any kind whatsoever resulting entirely or in part from the negligence of others or from causes beyond their control. They can accept no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, riot, war, pandemic, quarantine, or other causes. All such losses or expenses must be borne by the passengers, as the tour rate provides for arrangements only as describe in the tour brochure. The right is reserved to change tour leaders, substitute hotels, of similar category, and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by unforeseen circumstances. Baggage is at the owner's risk entirely. No refund can be made for unused hotel rooms, meals, and sightseeing tours unless arrangements are made at time of booking. The right is reserved to decline any person as a tour member for any reason which affects the operation of the tour or the rights, welfare, or enjoyment of the other tour members. Any refund of the recoverable land tour services in the limit of The Connecticut Audubon Society and its affiliates' liability.

To make a Reservation:

Send the above stated deposit to hold your reservation. Nonmembers, please add \$28 (65+), \$45 (single), or \$58 (family) for your annual membership and to take advantage of the member discount.

Send your name(s), address, phone number, email address, name of the trip, your deposit, and membership fee (if applicable) to:

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