



ORIOLE BIRDING



TOUR REPORT EASTERN PANAMA 1ST – 9TH DECEMBER 2019

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MONDAY 2ND DECEMBER – *Hot and humid with showers, 30C*

Having met up at the Riande Airport hotel in Panama City last night, following the conclusion of our Central Panama tour (four clients staying on for this trip, joined by three new folks), we rose early this morning for a 0545 breakfast and departure. Our day would involve heading east along the Pan-American Highway, which is now vastly improved by a new tarmac road all the way to the camp, making the journey time not only considerably shorter but also more comfortable! As we loaded up outside the hotel we saw our first trip birds – **Tropical Mockingbird**, **Saffron Finch**, **Ruddy Ground-dove** and the like. After a short stop for provisions, we set off on the journey east towards Darien, with our first stop around 90 minutes into the journey at the edge of Bayano Lake. This freshwater body is an artificial lake created for hydroelectric power, and we spent about an our birding the waterside and forest margin just beyond the bridge. **Great Blue**, **Green**, **Little Blue** and **Bare-throated Tiger**-herons were all noted, along with a fine **Ringed Kingfisher**, **Osprey** and several **Grey-breasted Martins**. A **Bat Falcon** was also perched on the bridge itself, giving a nice scope view. The surrounding trees provided us with a wealth of birds to kick things off – **Blue-grey**, **Palm**, **Plain-coloured** and **Crimson-backed Tanagers**, **Red-crowned Woodpecker**, **Barred Antshrike**, **Orchard Oriole**, **Great Kiskadee**, **Panama Flycatcher** and **Yellow-margined Flycatcher** were all noted in one small area. A **Jet Antbird** was a highlight, and showed really well, while **Blue-black Grassquit** and **Variable Seedeater** were among the other small birds noted.



Black-throated Mango – common at the feeders in Torti

Back in the van, we drove another hour to reach the small town of Torti, where we would be having lunch at a roadside restaurant. We called in to use the facilities, but got sidetracked by the hummingbird feeders! **Long-billed Starthroat**, **Sapphire-throated Hummingbird**, **Black-throated Mango**, **Scaly-breasted Hummingbird**, **Rufous-tailed Hummingbird** and **Snowy-bellied Hummingbird** were all on a plate for us at close quarters here. A stunning male **Blue Dacnis** was also visiting the bird table – we were going to enjoy our lunch stop here later! First though, we headed a short distance down to the river and did an hours birding there. Common birds around were **Common Tody-flycatcher**, **Roadside Hawk**, **Yellow Warbler** and **Southern Lapwing**. A muddy puddle held both **Spotted** and **Solitary Sandpipers** and a pair of **Amazon Kingfishers** were at the river. We had to shelter for a few minutes from a heavy shower, before continuing along the river a bit seeing **Tricoloured Heron**, a superb pair of **Barred Antshrikes** and both **Ringed** and **Green Kingfishers**. **Orange-chinned Parakeets** were really common and swirling around in noisy flocks, and while watching these one of our target birds for Darien popped up in a dead tree – **Spot-breasted Woodpecker**. We all had a really long scope view of this speciality. Back at the restaurant, and more great views of the hummingbirds over lunch and a nice break out of the sun.



Barred Antshrike – great views around Bayano Lake today

From Torti we had just over an hours drive to go to reach the camp. We sailed along the highway, stopping for a checkpoint, and then passed into Darien Province. A roadside stop here turned into a real cracker as we pulled over to scope two **Savannah Hawks** right beside the highway. While watching the hawks, we noticed a small marshy area in the field was full of birds – **Black-bellied Whistling Ducks**, **Blue-winged Teals**, **Greater Yellowlegs**, **Wattled Jacana** and **Solitary Sandpiper**. Suddenly, everything went nuts and we noticed a large raptor cruising in – it was a **Great Black Hawk**! It landed in the field right in front of us, and we could see its huge head and bill through the scope. It then took flight again and headed right past us – what a bird! We spent some more time watching the pool, picking up **Red-breasted Blackbird** and **Fork-tailed Flycatcher** in the surroundings, before continuing on our way.

We reached the Canopy Camp around 4pm – what a fantastic place, and we were so excited to be here! After a quick welcome meeting and check into our tents, we were straight out birding in the

gardens. Chestnut-headed Oropendolas were nesting above the lodge, we scoped Yellow-throated and Keel-billed Toucans in the surrounding trees and watched Bananaquits, Summer Tanager, Red-crowned Woodpecker, Rusty-margined Flycatcher and Fulvous-vented Euphonia just around the garden. Hummingbirds were a real show stopper again though – Blue-chested Hummingbird, Violet-bellied Hummingbird, White-vented Plumeleteer, Blue-throated Goldentail, Long-billed Starthroat and Pale-bellied Hermit were all here at the feeders! We hardly knew which way to look. We ended our somewhat frantic afternoon with a wander down through the garden to see the whole place and get our bearings in daylight. Cinnamon Becard, Black-tailed Flycatcher, Collared Aracari and a fantastic view of Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth capped off a really exciting day.



Savannah Hawk – a great roadside stop near the camp!

TUESDAY 3RD DECEMBER – *Humid day with thunderstorms, 28C*

Our first morning at the Canopy Camp was an exciting one, and we couldn't wait for it to get light so we could start birding around this amazing place! After a 0630 breakfast, we spent some time just around the grounds seeing many of the regular species such as the amazing nesting Chestnut-headed Oropendolas doing their displays, and the plethora of hummingbirds. Collared Aracari, White-tailed Trogon, Red-lored Parrot, Keel-billed and Yellow-throated Toucans and Tennessee Warblers were all easily seen. Suddenly Carlos and Eliecer became quite excited as a large raptor was seen flying through the trees. Thinking it may be a Black Hawk-eagle, Carlos began whistling the call and sure enough, this stunning raptor floated in and landed in the trees right above the camp! We watched in amazement as it sat there calling, looking around for the sound, before flying off into the forest. What a moment!

A huge flock of Orange-chinned Parakeets had been whirling around making a right din, and briefly they all settled in the trees above the camp and allowed us to enjoy their perfect camouflage among the green cecropia leaves. Only when they moved could we really spot them! A Giant Cowbird also appeared briefly at the oropendola tree (it is a brood parasite of this species) and we had great views

of Cinnamon Woodpecker and Pied Puffbird together on top of a dead tree. Taking the entrance road for a little way, we had superb views of Whooping Motmot, canopy views of Yellow-throated Flycatcher and the subtle Yellow-olive Flycatcher. Red-eyed Vireo, Bay-breasted Warbler and Summer Tanager were also around and we had a good Darien speciality in the form of the Black Antshrike. This bird was singing in a thicket at the back of the hummingbird garden, and we all managed a good scope view. A bird we had seen on the first tour but which had been really difficult was the White-bellied Antbird – today it gave itself up for us completely, perching in the open in a typical spot low down in a shady thicket. Black-bellied Wren was more tricky, moving up in a tangle of vines, but we managed some glimpses. Eliecer heard a Blue-black Grosbeak calling and we were treated to a really close encounter with this lovely bird, with its glossy plumage and huge bill. Right at the end of the walk, another Darien special showed really well for us in the form of a pair of Grey-cheeked Nunlets – a delightful small member of the puffbird family.



White-faced Capuchin Monkey – frequent visitors to Canopy Camp

Back in camp, and we had a coffee break before tackling Nando's Trail. Two new species for us just by the main camp buildings though were a pair of Olivaceous Piculet working in the trees above, and an adult King Vulture over the ridge behind. On the trail, we were targeting the leks of two species of manakins and we saw both really well. The first was Golden-collared Manakin, whizzing and clicking with buzzing electrical sounds as they perched a few feet off the ground in a slightly open area – their 'arena'! After enjoying these birds for a bit, we hiked on to the second spot and found the Golden-headed Mankin, which was more difficult to see as it prefers to display up in the canopy. Still, we had great scope views of it performing its 'moonwalk' dance! On the way back down, a Russet-winged Schiffornis perched by the trail – birds were few and far between in this dense forest interior, but they were good ones! We then made haste back to the camp, as thunder and lightning

was approaching. We just made it as the heavens opened and a real tropical storm drenched the camp. We were glad to be sheltering with a nice cup of tea while it was going on!



Grey-cheeked Nunlet – superb views of a pair at the camp

After lunch, we met around 1430 and took a drive out along the Pan-American highway to look for some more birds of open country. A couple of impromptu stops along the way were for really nice birds – the first of which was a Limpkin in marshy grassland by the side of the road. This also produced Striated Heron, Yellow-crowned Euphonia, Fork-tailed Flycatcher and a superb **Spot-breasted Woodpecker**; but the best was a really good view of **Black-capped Donacobius**. This species, formerly in with the wrens, is now in its own family, and is a real Darien Speciality. A little further down the highway we stopped for a cracking view of adult and juvenile **Pearl Kite**, perched in a bamboo. The young bird was giving a high-pitched begging call which was new to our guides – it's always great when they see or hear something new as well! Soon we reached an area of marshy grassland and cattle fields, and here we took a short walk. The heat of the day had gone over and the temperature was pleasant for birding. **Ruddy-breasted Seedeater**, **Blue-black Grassquit**, **Lesser Kiskadee** and **Pale-vented Pigeon** were all easily seen here, while **Smooth-billed Anis** were confiding along the track. We heard two birds here which we failed to see – **Grey-breasted Crake** and **Striped Cuckoo**, the latter calling monotonously but remaining too far away. **Yellow-tailed Oriole**, more excellent views of Fork-tailed Flycatcher and group of **Black-chested Jays** were also seen. As we returned to the van, half a dozen **Red-lored Parrots** dropped into the trees in front of us and gave us our best views yet of this species.

We ended the day along at Yaviza, at the very end of the Pan-American highway. We would not have been able to reach here sensibly in an afternoon trip prior to the new road, but it really has now made a huge difference to moving around in Darien. In fact, Yaviza is now only around half an hours drive from the turning to the camp off the highway. We stopped by the cemetery to look for Bicoloured Wren which is a very localised and tricky species – no sign, but instead we found **Orange-crowned Oriole**, **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** and **Yellow-bellied Elaenia** here. There were also many other common birds in the trees and overhead we picked up three **Short-tailed Swifts**. Just as we were about to leave for home, the **Bicoloured Wren** started calling and we had ace views of a pair climbing on the mossy trunks above us in typical fashion – great stuff! The wasn't even quite done either, as we had a super view of a **Common Parakeet** on the track back into the camp at dusk. A busy day!



White-tailed Trogon at Canopy Camp

WEDNESDAY 4TH DECEMBER – *Heavy rain showers and overcast, 28C*

Today was our big day! Every season the Canopy Camp guides make a big effort to locate the nest of at least one **Harpy Eagle** pair in Darien, by engaging with local people who sometimes know where the birds are to be found, or who have a nest on their land. Often these can be a long way from roads and therefore too difficult to access, though normally they have at least one active nest site which is accessible to their clients by a combination of road, river and hiking. Today we would visit one such site, only operational for the last two months and so quite a new location. It involved an early departure at 0530, and first to drive to the end of the Pan-American highway to Yaviza. Here we joined a motorised canoe and made a short trip along the river of around fifteen minutes, to the land of a local man and his family who would meet us for the hike on to the Harpy nest area. The boat ride

produced our first **Black Oropendola**, and along the hiking trail we were treated to great views of a **Capped Heron** which flew in and landed in a tall tree in the cattle pasture – a tricky bird to connect with. It came on to rain heavily, and we got thoroughly wet, and this also made the trail very muddy and slippery. It was quite tricky, and soon the rain cleared to hot, humid hazy sunshine so we were being dealt all aspects of the elements! The hike in took around one hour, and we paused on the rise of a ridge to take in the view of the forest, with its huge emergent Cuipo trees (favoured by nesting Harpy's) towering above the skyline. Eliecer then gave a big grin and grabbed his scope – he had something! He casually called 'Harpy!' and there in the distant forest edge was the male **Harpy Eagle**, perched in the open and drying his wings from the passing rain storm. We had a good scope view, and could see his massive talons and then as he turned before flying into the forest to hunt, his boldly barred tail. We were elated, and the hike so far had already been worthwhile – but there was more to come.



Harpy Eagle – no words!

We took a breath and watched **Pearl Kite**, **Crested Oropendola** and **Long-tailed Tyrant**, before pushing on towards the nest site which was inside the adjacent forest. We crossed a small stream and pushed on through the trees, having the mosquitoes to contend with now the rain had passed. Soon we reached a massive Cuipo tree, and could see the huge stick nest of the **Harpy Eagle** nestled in the fork of its trunk. As we descended the last section of the trail, we heard the woosh of large wings overhead – it was the female eagle, moving perch to be close to the nest. She had probably been brooding the chick during the rain, and now she was perched on a big bough overlooking her small chick, with her wings drooped into the sun to dry. We drank in the most amazing views of this majestic bird – time stood still for us, but we must have been around 45 minutes here. She didn't move too much, just once to change branches – she was clearly focussed on getting dried out and

seemed unperturbed by our presence way down below. We could totally fill our boots with scope views and photos of what was the main target trip bird for all of us, and a true once in a lifetime experience to boot. We hiked back up out of the forest, to a rest spot under a shelter renovated by the family for visiting birders, and enjoyed snacks and cold drinks. From here, we had to slip and slide back through the corn plantation to the river – a superb **Grey-lined Hawk**, and a **Black-faced Ant-thrush** crossing the trail being the main highlights on the return. Once back at the river, we re-joined our boat man and headed downstream about ten minutes further, to try for **Black-collared Hawk**. It wasn't around, but we had great views instead of **Common Black Hawk**, **Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture**, **Zone-tailed Hawk**, **Cocoi Heron**, **Yellow-crowned Night-heron** and many other common waterbirds. We reached Yaviza again about noon, and from here drove back to the camp for lunch. A **Northern Tamandua** on the camp entrance track round off what would surely be the most exciting day of our time in Panama.



Golden-headed Manakin at the camp

After a lazy afternoon (we needed to get cleaned up and dried out!) we met up again at 1630, for a short walk around camp to end the day. There was actually plenty to see just around the camp in the late afternoon – a stunning male **Golden-headed Manakin** was right by the dining area, and eleven species of hummingbirds were recorded. **Spot-crowned Barbets** were also around, and we saw a **Hoffman's Two-toed Sloth** and **Geoffrey's Tamarin Monkeys** too. Our short walk out along the entrance road produced some nice sightings – both **Toucans**, **Mealy Parrot**, **Whooping Motmot**, **Brown-capped Tyrannulet**, **Acadian Flycatcher**, **Buff-breasted Wren** and best of all a lovely **Red-rumped Woodpecker**. After our exertions in the morning, it was nice to have a relaxed evening and a few drinks to celebrate our Harpy Eagle!

THURSDAY 5TH DECEMBER – *Sunny day after torrential overnight rain, 30C*

We had a very civilised breakfast time of 0630 this morning, which meant a good nine hours sleep for everyone! At least we would have, if it were not for a huge electrical storm over camp at around 0100, with the rain continuing until daybreak. Two excellent new birds were seen around camp just before we left – **White-headed Wren** (a real Darien speciality) and a very obliging **Double-toothed Kite**. We took a drive out for our morning session to El Salto road, which runs north off the Pan-American Highway to the Chucunaque River. This proved a productive spot for us, with a tactic of walking a section then moving the van and driving a little bit. This meant we could cover the whole 7km stretch to the river. We got right into a good mixed flock early on, with several warblers, **Yellow-throated Vireo**, **White-shouldered Tanager**, **Plain-brown** and **Streak-headed Woodcreepers**, **Red-rumped Woodpecker**, **Yellow-margined Flycatcher** and good views of **Rufous-winged Antwren**. Great-crested and Panama Flycatchers were common, and we had lots of sightings of raptors – Roadside Hawk, Double-toothed Kite, **Broad-winged Hawk** and **Swainson's Hawk** all seen along or over this road. Other species seen along the walk included Streaked Flycatcher, **White-winged Becard** and **Black Antshrike**. A quiet spell followed, and it's often the way during these spells that it is the local guides always staying sharp that pulls something really good out of the bag. And so it was that Oscar heard a raucous call approaching fairly distantly, giving us enough time to all focus on the sky above the track behind us and see two stunning **Blue and Yellow Macaws** flying low over our heads – we would have missed them! A good session turned into a brilliant one in an instant!



Striped Cuckoo – finally gave itself up for us this afternoon

After drinks break, we continued towards the river, but had another impromptu stop as we passed through a Teak plantation as Eliecer spotted macaws over the road. But this was **Chestnut-fronted Macaw**, much smaller than the other species and feeding right in the open on the very top of a tree. We bundled out of the van for scope views of this superb parrot – a two macaw morning! At the river,

we saw **Grey-lined Hawk** perched, and heard both **Laughing Falcon** and **Rufous-tailed Jacamar** but they remained unseen. A side trail through scrubby undergrowth added fantastic views of a pair of **Golden-green Woodpeckers** – we had seen some really ace ‘peckers on this trip but this one was right up there! The localised **Bicoloured Conebill** also showed for us here, and we saw **Tropical Gnatcatcher** and a perched **Crane Hawk** too. A really good session, and the morning had flown by – time to head back to camp for lunch.

Our afternoon session began around 3pm, and we probably endured the hottest day of the trip today and it was still very warm as we headed a short distance from the camp by van for some birding. It was initially quiet, but we picked up another perched **Crane Hawk** and then things began to pick up with a few small birds such as **Pied** and **White-necked Puffbirds**, **Sooty-capped Tyrannulet** and **Eastern Wood Pewee**. **Red-rumped Woodpecker** was also seen again, and then we heard the call of **Red-billed Scythebill** close by. Maybe we would finally get a view of one of these fantastic birds! It was close to the track, but we just couldn’t see it – eventually though it shimmied round from the back of a trunk and we had fantastic scope views. What a bird! This would be a hard one to top, but we continued on and as the day finally cooled off we saw **Bright-rumped Atilla** perched in the open, **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** and then a fantastic **Striped Cuckoo** – we had been whistling this bird for several days so it was brilliant to finally catch up with one in the open. It was getting dusk as we headed back out down the road, and had a couple of nice treats to finish – firstly a beautiful **White Hawk** which we were able to scope up, and then another two **Common Parakeet** on the track leading back into the camp.



Common Potoo on the camp night drive

After dinner this evening we had a real treat in store, as we headed out with Eliecer and Oscar around the Canopy Camp for a spotlighting session in search of mammals and night birds. We could hear several species of owls around camp (these had been calling frequently over the previous nights) and these included **Crested**, **Mottled** and **Black and White Owls**, and we heard all of these species again

this evening. A Central American Woolly Opossum was in the trees behind the dining area and while we were watching this animal, an owl flew in and landed high in a cecropia behind. We would only see it from behind, but it looked large. Moving to a better angle, we could see it was a magnificent Spectacled Owl, and we all had an amazing view of it through the scope. Taking one of the open backed vehicles, we set off along the entrance track, with Common Opossum seen well and then a lovely Allen's Olingo in the canopy high above us. Behind the hummingbird garden, a Great Potoo was heard calling, and we had a try for it. Two then started calling to each other, one flying low over the truck in the spotlight – it looked massive! It landed in the open and we were able to pile off the truck and put the scope on it. What a stonking bird! We had often seen this species in day roosts on many of our tours, but never a night-time view like this! Leaving the Great Potoo, we continued beyond the entrance gate, and here we heard a Common Potoo calling with its distinctive 'Poor-Me-All-Alone' call ringing out through the night. Quite an eerie sound with thunder and lightning rumbled away in the background. Eliecer called the bird and it came close to the track, so we disembarked again and went on foot to look for it. We found it perched on a low branch, right over the track, and had the most amazing views of it in the scope. Two potoos in one evening is not bad! It was certainly a contender for trip highlight (behind the Harpy!) to see this secretive nocturnal creature stretching up and calling on a moonlit branch right in front of us. Back towards the camp, we saw first a roosting Red-lore Parrot, and then a large snake curled above the track, perhaps 1.5m in length – clearly some sort of Boa, but hard to tell which one. A really successful evening!

FRIDAY 6TH DECEMBER – *Early rain clearing, humid 25C*

Our morning session today was to travel back along the highway to the town of Meteti, about half an hour away, and then head up into the forest and the Filo del Tallo reserve. This was a new site for us, and provided the opportunity to walk some good trails to try for some of the more difficult species of the forest interior. One of these gave itself up almost right away, with a superb **Little Tinamou** – a bird we had been hearing for the last few days – walking across the trail right in front of us. The most common hummingbird here was actually the dazzling **Purple-crowned Fairy**, and we had some excellent views of both males and females. As we walked slowly along listening for calls, we picked off one or two nice birds such as **Black-crowned Antshrike**, **Black-bellied Wren**, **Wedge-billed Woodcreeper**, **White-flanked** and **Checker-throated Antwrens**, **Spotted Antbird**, **Forest Elaenia** and **White-shouldered Tanager**. A pair of **Black-throated Trogons** performed brilliantly right above the trail, and this was particularly nice since those on the first trip had missed this species. Cinnamon and Red-rumped Woodpeckers were also seen among the tangles of vines hanging from the taller trees, and a **Buff-rumped Warbler** was a nice addition to the list, in a typical spot by a small waterfall along the river. We could hear thunder and lightning approaching over the ridge beyond, and so opted to turn back rather than completing a longer circuit. A **Grey-cheeked Thrush** appeared briefly by the trail on our return, and we had excellent scope views of a **Speckled Mourner** perched in the canopy above. This was a bird we had heard, but not seen, on the previous tour. Back in camp at lunchtime and we had the usual opportunities to enjoy a range of hummingbirds, warblers and euphonias around the garden, as well as the Chestnut-headed Oropendolas busy at their nests. A Rat-eating Snake was coiled above the track in a tree, and was well observed using a scope from the verandah.

After lunch we took a short drive back to the highway and then almost straight across up a track into open cultivated land with a few larger trees. It was an overcast afternoon, but really humid, and we had our quietest session of the trip so far in terms of new species. There was still plenty to see though, and we had excellent views of a number of good birds close to the track with some nice photographic opportunities – **Keel-billed Toucan**, **Collared Aracari**, **Crane Hawk**, **Streak-headed Woodcreeper**, **Yellow-breasted Flycatcher**, **Spot-breasted Woodpecker** and **Black Antshrike** were among them. The area was fantastic for parrots, probably due to the corn plantations down in the valley bottom. There were scores flying around of three main species – **Blue-headed**, **Red-lore** and **Mealy Parrots** – and we enjoyed great perched views of all three. A pair of **Lineated Woodpeckers** were working in a dead tree beside the track, and gave our best views yet of this species. Our only new bird of the afternoon was a good one – the **Barred Puffbird**, which is found in

small numbers further west in Panama but is much easier to find in Darien. We eventually had really close views of one after Eliecer had whistled it closer for us! We probably walked about 1km down the track, and at the furthest point we added Cocoa Woodcreeper, Baltimore Oriole and Crested Caracara. We came back the same way, and picked up a male **Masked Tityra** in the treetops back by the van to end the day. A quieter day, but some great consolidation of many species seen previously which is always nice.



Barred Puffbird – what a beauty!

SATURDAY 7TH DECEMBER – Overcast with sunny spells but dry, 30C

Today was a full day exploring the area around the indigenous embera village at Nuevo Vigia, which was about an hours boat ride upriver along the Chucunaque. We enjoyed a really fantastic day here, helped by the cloudy conditions which did keep the temperature down for us. Motoring upriver in a dugout canoe, we saw a variety of excellent birds such as Anhinga, Amazon and Ringed Kingfishers, **Black Oropendola**, Crane Hawk, Keel-billed Toucan, **Crimson-crested Woodpecker**, Band-rumped Swift, Mangrove Swallow, **Yellow-tailed Oriole** and Common Black Hawk. The best bird though was a **Slaty Spinetail** – thanks to last nights rain, the river was so high we could get into its favoured area and achieve really close views. This is only possible on one or two days of the year according to our boatman, so we were lucky on this one. We passed the village, and continued on about a further ten minutes upstream to an area of coffee and cocoa cultivation on the banks of the river, where we would explore on foot. The birding was superb here, and we were soon seeing many species in the cool condition of the shady clearing. Cocoa, Plain-brown and **Northern Barred Woodcreepers** were all feeding here, with Streaked Flycatcher sallying in and **Grey-headed Tanager** also close by – presumably there were some ants about. A **Great Antshrike** called and showed for scope views, and Forest Elaenia, Yellow-breasted Flycatcher and Brown-capped Tyrannulet were in the canopy. One family of birds we were short on so far were the Jacamars, but we were about to make up for this in style. Firstly a **Rufous-tailed Jacamar** showed brilliantly for us, its emerald green upperparts

glinting in the sun. And then the bird we had come here to see put in an appearance – the range-restricted **Dusky-backed Jacamar**, found only in Darien and North-west Colombia but perhaps easier to connect with here than anywhere else. We had fantastic views of a pair at close quarters, and were really able to study and enjoy this rarity for as long as we wanted. In the same area we found **Black-tailed Trogon**, **Buff-throated Saltator** and **Grey-capped Flycatcher**, and a pair of **Double-banded Greytails** were building a nest – another Darien special. Wandering back to the boat, we then took the short ride back along to the village, where a tribal welcome awaited us!



Dusky-backed Jacamar – a real rarity

The embera helped us ashore and the young women were dressed in traditional clothes and body paint ready to perform a series of tribal dances for us over lunch, but they knew birding was our priority first as they were well used to such visitors, and in fact had provided us with a local guide to join us in the exploration of their forest. Here we saw some really good birds, starting with a **Pied Water-tyrant** in the marshy area beyond the village and then once we were inside the trees, a male **Black-tailed Trogon**, **Chestnut-sided Warbler**, **Black-tailed Flycatcher**, juvenile **Rufescent Tiger-heron**, **Rufous-breasted Hermit**, male **Golden-collared Manakin** and a gorgeous **Grey-chested Dove** were seen. The trail was flooded from last night's heavy rain, and we needed our wellies – the mosquitoes were also a little over-enthusiastic – but we soon reached the pools where we saw some even better birds. First a **Green and Rufous Kingfisher** appeared, a really tricky bird to connect with and a first for our tours, and then we saw a lovely **Boat-billed Heron**, **Ringed Kingfisher** and an adult **Rufescent Tiger-heron**. In the trees at the far side of the pool, Eliecer called **Bare-crowned Antbird** and we had really brief views of a male, and then a **Spectacled Parrotlet** perched beautifully for us in the canopy above. We could hear thunder rolling away in the distance, and with it now well past lunchtime, we opted to head back to the village.

We had our picnic lunch in a wooden shelter where the embera had prepared seating for us, and displayed their handmade goods for sale. They performed a series of dances for us too and seemed

genuinely happy to have us there – though of course we spent some money too! Back in the boat after lunch and we enjoyed a speedier trip back as we were running downstream, and there was also fewer stops for birds. This had really been a great way to round off our time at the camp and we were glad to get back there for some chill out time before our final dinner.



Green and Rufous Kingfisher at Nuevo Vigia

SUNDAY 8TH DECEMBER – *Low cloud and rain showers, 20C*

Our final day in Panama saw us depart the Canopy Camp around 0645 for the journey back to Panama City, with some birding en route. About half an hour west along the Pan-American highway, we stopped by some marshy pools where we had birded on day one – while we had been there, an elderly lady had stopped to talk to us, and told Eliecer that a pair of **Great Curassow** sometimes visited their garden. The camp team had obviously been in touch in the meantime to confirm this and to set up a visit for us, and we arrived at the house to be told the female curassow was in the garden right now! We were invited into the house, and through to the back garden where this magnificent bird was wandering around under the trees waiting for them to feed it! As soon as they threw some corn down, the male also appeared – what a stunner! From here we continued to Torti, and after pausing at the restaurant to order lunch for later, we carried on a further ten minutes to the San Francisco reserve.

It was raining quite heavily as we arrived at the reserve, but along the entrance track we had good views of **Slate-coloured Seedeater** (another new bird for our trips) and **Red-breasted Blackbird**. Thankfully, once we had reached the forest, the rain had all but stopped and we were able to enjoy a couple of hours birding in the dry. To begin with, things were really quiet – we saw a female **Golden-collared Manakin**, **Whooping Motmot** and **Golden-hooded Tanager**. Eliecer tried to call some birds for us but nothing much was responding, until his ears suddenly pricked up. The bird he had been whistling since we left the van called back – it was a **Great Jacamar**. It sounded pretty close, and in a

flash he was onto it, with fabulous scope views for everyone of this absolute beast of a bird and a perfect completion of our jacamar hat-trick. **White Hawk**, **Crimson-crested Woodpecker** and **Buff-rumped Warbler** were also in the same area, and we noted **Golden-fronted Greenlet** and **Olivaceous Flatbill** in the canopy. A **Broad-billed Motmot** was a nice addition to the list, posing in typical fashion right beside the trail, and Oscar pulled out a brilliant spot of a **White-whiskered Puffbird** way back through a little tiny window among the foliage. Trying another part of the trail to finish, we had very good views of a male **Red-capped Manakin**, the first for this part of the tour. We rejoined the van and wound our way back down to the entrance, where a quick stop to photograph some old vehicles resulted in us spotting a pair of **Barn Owls** roosting in the rafters of a shed! Back at the restaurant in Torti, and we were able to enjoy our lunch with **Streaked Flycatcher**, **Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet**, **Blue Dacnis** and of course an assortment of hummingbirds. The drive back to Panama City from here was around 2.5hrs, and we stopped at the Riande to freshen up in a day room and re pack our gear before taking the shuttle to the airport. Our flight left on time, and we connected on to our local airports in the UK the next day.



Great Jacamar – a superb parting shot at San Francisco reserve

SYSTEMATIC LIST

1. Little Tinamou *Crypturellus soui* – one crossed the track at Filo del Tallo, many others heard
2. Black-bellied Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna autumnalis*
3. Blue-winged Teal *Spatula discors*
4. Marbled Wood-Quail *Odontophorus gujanensis* – heard only on El Salto road
5. Pale-vented Pigeon *Patagioenas cayennensis*

6. Scaled Pigeon *Patagioenas speciosa*
7. Ruddy Ground-dove *Columbina talpacoti*
8. Blue Ground Dove *Claravis pretiosa* – seen only by two, flew off road
9. White-tipped Dove *Leptotila verreauxi*
10. Grey-chested Dove *Leptotila cassinii* – one perched in Nuevo Vigia forest
11. Squirrel Cuckoo *Piaya cayana*
12. Yellow-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus americanus* – one in Yaviza cemetery
13. Striped Cuckoo *Tapera naevia* – one at La Jas Blancas
14. Greater Ani *Crotophaga major*
15. Smooth-billed Ani *Crotophaga ani*
16. Groove-billed Ani *Crotophaga sulcirostris*
17. Common Parakeet *Nyctidromus albicollis*
18. Great Potoo *Nyctibius grandis*
19. Common Potoo *Nyctibius griseus*
20. White-collared Swift *Streptoprocne zonaris* – one over El Salto road
21. Short-tailed Swift *Chaetura brachyura*
22. Band-rumped Swift *Chaetura spinicaudus*
23. Lesser Swallow-tailed Swift *Panyptila cayennensis*
24. White-necked Jacobin *Florisuga mellivora*
25. Rufous-breasted Hermit *Glaucis hirsutus*
26. Pale-bellied Hermit *Phaethornis anthophilus*
27. Purple-crowned Fairy *Heliothryx barroti*
28. Black-throated Mango *Anthracochoax nigricollis*
29. Long-billed Starthroat *Heliomaster longirostris*
30. Scaly-breasted Hummingbird *Phaeochroa cuvierii*
31. White-vented Plumeleteer *Chalybura buffonii* – Tower feeders
32. Blue-chested Hummingbird *Amazilia amabilis* – common at Tower
33. Snowy-bellied Hummingbird *Amazilia edward* – common at Lodge
34. Rufous-tailed Hummingbird *Amazilia tzacati* – common throughout
35. Sapphire-throated Hummingbird *Lepidopygia coeruleogularis* – with Vereguan Mango
36. Violet-bellied Hummingbird *Juliamyia julie*
37. Blue-throated Goldentail *Hylocharis eliciae*
38. Grey-breasted Crake *Laterallus exilis* – heard only at Santa Libbada
39. American Purple Gallinule *Porphyrio martinicus*
40. Limpkin *Aramus guarauna*
41. Southern Lapwing *Vanellus chilensis*
42. Wattled Jacana *Jacana jacana*
43. Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularia*
44. Solitary Sandpiper *Tringa solitaria*
45. Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca*
46. Wood Stork *Mycteria americana*
47. Magnificent Frigatebird *Fregata magnificens*
48. Neotropical Cormorant *Phalacrocorax brasilianus*
49. Anhinga *Anhinga anhinga* – one at Summit Ponds
50. Rufescent Tiger-Heron *Tigrisoma lineatum*
51. Bare-throated Tiger-heron *Tigrisoma mexicanum*
52. Great Blue Heron *Ardea herodias*
53. Cooi Heron *Ardea cooi*
54. Great White Egret *Ardea alba*
55. Snowy Egret *Egretta thula*
56. Little Blue Heron *Egretta caerulea*
57. Tricolored Heron *Egretta tricolor* – one on river at Torti
58. Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*
59. Green Heron *Butorides virescens*
60. Striated Heron *Butorides striatus*
61. Capped Heron *Piherodius pileatus* – one on Harpy trek

62. Black-crowned Night-heron *Nycticorax Nycticorax* - adult at Bayano Lake
63. Yellow-crowned Night-heron *Nyctanassa violacea* - Chucunaque River
64. Boat-billed Heron *Cochlearius cochlearius* – Nuevo Vigia
65. Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus*
66. Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura*
67. Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture *Cathartes burrovianus*
68. King Vulture *Sarcoramphus papa* – one seen briefly over the camp
69. Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* - Bayano Lake
70. Pearl Kite *Gampsonyx swainsonii*
71. White-tailed Kite *Elanus leucurus* - one on way back to airport
72. Harpy Eagle *Harpia harpyja*
73. Double-toothed Kite *Harpagus bidentatus* – perched in camp
74. Crane Hawk *Geranospiza caerulescens*
75. Common Black Hawk *Buteogallus anthracinus* – one on Rio Chucunaque
76. Great Black Hawk *Buteogallus urubitinga* – one by Pan-American highway
77. Savannah Hawk *Buteogallus meridionalis*
78. Roadside Hawk *Buteo magnirostris*
79. White Hawk *Pseudastur albicollis*
80. Grey-lined Hawk *Buteo nitidus*
81. Broad-winged Hawk *Buteo platypterus*
82. Short-tailed Hawk *Buteo brachyurus*
83. Swainson's Hawk *Buteo swainsoni* – one over El Salto
84. Zone-tailed Hawk *Buteo albicaudatus* – over Chucunaque River
85. Black Hawk-eagle *Spizaetus tyrannus* – perched in camp
86. Barn Owl *Tyto alba* – two roosting at San Francisco
87. Crested Owl *Lophotrix cristata* – heard at Camp
88. Spectacled Owl *Pulsatrix perspicillata* – one on night walk
89. Mottled Owl *Ciccaba virgata* – Heard only, camp
90. Black and White Owl *Ciccaba nigrolineata* – Heard only, camp
91. Slaty-tailed Trogon *Trogon Massena* – heard only
92. Black-tailed Trogon *Trogon melanurus*
93. White-tailed Trogon *Trogon chionurus*
94. Black-throated Trogon *Trogon rufus*
95. Whooping Motmot *Momotus subrufescens*
96. Broad-billed Motmot *Electron platyrhynchum*
97. Ringed Kingfisher *Megaceryle torquata*
98. Amazon Kingfisher *Chloroceryle amazona*
99. Green Kingfisher *Chloroceryle Americana* – Torti river
100. Green and Rufous Kingfisher *Chloroceryle inda*
101. Barred Puffbird *Nystalus radiatus*
102. White-necked Puffbird *Notharchus hyperrhynchus*
103. Pied Puffbird *Notharchus tectus*
104. White-whiskered Puffbird *Malacoptila panamensis*
105. Grey-cheeked Nunlet *Nonnula frontalis*
106. Dusky-backed Jacamar *Brachygalba salmoni*
107. Rufous-tailed Jacamar *Galbula ruficauda*
108. Great Jacamar *Jacamerops aureus* – San Francisco
109. Spot-crowned Barbet *Capito maculicoronatus* – camp only
110. Collared Aracari *Pteroglossus torquatus*
111. Keel-billed Toucan *Ramphastos sulfuratus*
112. Yellow-throated Toucan *Ramphastos ambiguous*
113. Olivaceous Piculet *Picumnus olivaceus*
114. Black-cheeked Woodpecker *Melanerpes pucherani*
115. Red-crowned Woodpecker *Melanerpes rubricapillus*
116. Red-rumped Woodpecker *Dryobates kirkii*
117. Golden-green Woodpecker *Piculus chrysoclorus* – El Salto road

118. Spot-breasted Woodpecker *Colaptes punctigula*
119. Cinnamon Woodpecker *Celeus loricatus*
120. Lineated Woodpecker *Dryocopus lineatus*
121. Crimson-crested Woodpecker *Campephilus melanoleucos*
122. Laughing Falcon *Herpetotheres cachimans* – Fila del Tallo
123. Red-throated Caracara *Ibycter americanus*
124. Crested Caracara *Caracara cheriway*
125. Yellow-headed Caracara *Milvago chimachima*
126. American Kestrel *Falco sparverius*
127. Bat Falcon *Falco rufigularis*
128. Chestnut-fronted Macaw *Ara severa* – El Salto road
129. Blue and Yellow Macaw *Ara ararauna* – El Salto road
130. Orange-chinned Parakeet *Brotogeris jugularis*
131. Brown-hooded Parrot *Pyrilia haematotis*
132. Blue-headed Parrot *Pionus menstruus*
133. Red-lore Amazon *Amazona autumnalis*
134. Mealy Parrot *Amazona farinosa*
135. Yellow-crowned Parrot *Amazona ochrocephala* – supermarket car park on day one
136. Great Antshrike *Taraba major* – Nueva Vigia
137. Barred Antshrike *Thamnophilus doliatus*
138. Black Antshrike *Thamnophilus nigriceps*
139. Black-crowned Antshrike *Thamnophilus atrinucha*
140. Pacific Antwren *Myrmotherula pacifica* – heard only at Torti by river
141. White-flanked Antwren *Myrmotherula axillaris* – Filo del Tallo only
142. Checker-throated Antwren *Epinecrophylia fulviventr*
143. Rufous-winged Antwren *Herpsilochmus rufimarginatus* – El Salto road
144. Dot-winged Antwren *Microrhoplas quixensis* – brief view at San Francisco
145. Jet Antbird *Cercomacra nigricans* – Bayano Lake
146. Bare-crowned Antbird *Gymnocichla nudiceps* – Nuevo Vigia
147. White-bellied Antbird *Myrmeciza longipes* – Camp
148. Chestnut-backed Antbird *Myrmeciza exsul*
149. Spotted Antbird *Hylophylax naevioides* – Filo del Tallo only
150. Black-faced Antthrush *Formicarius analis* – one crossed trail on Harpy trek
151. Plain Brown Woodcreeper *Dendrocincla fuliginosa*
152. Wedge-billed Woodcreeper *Glyphorhynchus spirurus*
153. Northern Barred Woodcreeper *Dendrocolaptes sanctithomae* – Nuevo Vigia only
154. Red-billed Scythebill *Campylorhamphus trochilirostris* – Sanson Abajo
155. Cocoa Woodcreeper *Xiphorhynchus susurrans*
156. Steak-headed Woodcreeper *Lepidocolaptes souleyetii*
157. Plain Xenops *Xenops minutus*
158. Double-banded Greytail *Xenerpestes minlosi* – Nuevo Vigia
159. Slaty Spinetail *Synallaxis brachyura* – Nuevo Vigia
160. Golden-collared Manakin *Manacus vitellinus*
161. Red-capped Manakin *Ceratopipra mentalis* – San Francisco
162. Golden-headed Manakin *Ceratopipra erythrocephala*
163. Purple-throated Fruitcrow *Querula purpurata*
164. Russet-winged Schiffornis *Schiffornis stenorhyncha*
165. Speckled Mourner *Laniocera rufescens* – Filo del Tallo
166. Rufous Mourner *Rhytipterna holerythra* – San Francisco
167. Masked Tityra *Tityra semifasciata*
168. Black-crowned Tityra *Tityra inquisitor*
169. Cinnamon Becard *Pachyramphus rufus*
170. White-winged Becard *Pachyramphus polychropterus* – El Salto road
171. Black-tailed Flycatcher *Myiobius atricaudus*
172. Southern Bentbill *Oncostoma olivaceum* – El Salto road
173. Common Tody-Flycatcher *Todirostrum cinereum*

174. Black-headed Tody-flycatcher *Todirostrum nigriceps*
175. Olivaceous Flatbill *Rhynchocyclus olivaceus*
176. Yellow-olive Flycatcher *Tolmomyias sulphureus*
177. Yellow-margined Flycatcher *Tolmomyias assimilis*
178. Yellow-breasted Flycatcher *Tolmomyias flaviventris*
179. Brown-capped Tyrannulet *Ornithion brunneicapillus*
180. Yellow Tyrannulet *Capsiempis flaveola*
181. Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet *Tyrannulus elatus*
182. Forest Elaenia *Myiopagis gaimardii*
183. Yellow-bellied Elaenia *Elaenia flavogaster*
184. Sooty-headed Tyrannulet *Phyllomyias griseiceps* – Lajas Blancas
185. Bright-rumped Atilla *Atilla spadiceus*
186. Dusky-capped Flycatcher *Myiarchus tuberculifer*
187. Panama Flycatcher *Myiarchus panamensis*
188. Great Crested Flycatcher *Myiarchus crinitus*
189. Lesser Kiskadee *Pitangus lictor*
190. Great Kiskadee *Pitangus sulphuratus*
191. Boat-billed Flycatcher *Megarynchus pitangua*
192. Rusty-margined Flycatcher *Myiozetetes cayanensis*
193. Social Flycatcher *Myiozetetes similis*
194. Grey-capped Flycatcher *Myiozetetes granadensis*
195. Streaked Flycatcher *Myiodynastes maculatus*
196. Tropical Kingbird *Tyrannus melancholicus*
197. Fork-tailed Flycatcher *Tyrannus savana*
198. Eastern Wood-Pewee *Contopus virens*
199. Acadian Flycatcher *Empidonax virescens*
200. Pied Water-tyrant *Fluvicola pica*
201. Long-tailed Tyrant *Colonia colonus*
202. Scrub Greenlet *Hylophilus falvipes* – heard only
203. Lesser Greenlet *Hylophilus decurtatus* – heard only
204. Golden-fronted Greenlet *Hylophilus aurantiifrons*
205. Yellow-throated Vireo *Vireo flavifrons*
206. Red-eyed Vireo *Vireo olivaceus* – camp only
207. Black-chested Jay *Cyanocorax affinis*
208. Grey-breasted Martin *Progne chalybea*
209. Mangrove Swallow *Tachycineta albilinea*
210. Southern Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*
211. Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*
212. Scaly-breasted Wren *Microcerculus marginatus* – Heard only, San Francisco
213. House Wren *Troglodytes aedon*
214. White-headed Wren *Campylorhynchus albobrunneus* – Canopy Camp
215. Bicoloured Wren *Campylorhynchus griseus* – Yaviza cemetery
216. Black-bellied Wren *Pheugopedius fasciatoventris*
217. Buff-breasted Wren *Cantorchilus leucotis*
218. Long-billed Gnatwren *Ramphocaenus melanurus* – Heard only, San Francisco
219. Tropical Gnatcatcher *Polioptila plumbea*
220. Black-capped Donacobius *Donacobius atricapilla*
221. Grey-cheeked Thrush *Catharus minimus* – Fila del Tallo
222. Clay-coloured Thrush *Turdus grayi*
223. Tropical Mockingbird *Mimus gilvus*
224. House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*
225. Yellow-crowned Euphonia *Euphonia luteicapilla*
226. Thick-billed Euphonia *Euphonia lanirostris*
227. Fulvous-vented Euphonia *Euphonia fulvicrissa*
228. White-vented Euphonia *Euphonia minuta* – Dusky-backed Jacamar site
229. Red-breasted Blackbird *Leistes militaris*

230. Crested Oropendola *Psarocolius decumanus*
231. Chestnut-headed Oropendola *Psarocolius decumanus*
232. Black Oropendola *Psarocolius guatimozinus*
233. Yellow-rumped Cacique *Cacicus cela*
234. Orchard Oriole *Icterus spurius* – Juan Hombron
235. Yellow-backed Oriole *Icterus chrysater* – heard only
236. Orange-crowned Oriole *Icterus auricapillus*
237. Yellow-tailed Oriole *Icterus mesomelus*
238. Baltimore Oriole *Icterus galbula*
239. Giant Cowbird *Molothrus oryzivorus*
240. Great-tailed Grackle *Quiscalus mexicanus*
241. Prothonotary Warbler *Prothonotaria citrea*
242. Tennessee Warbler *Oreothlypis peregrina*
243. Bay-breasted Warbler *Stetophaga castanea*
244. Yellow Warbler *Stetophaga petechia*
245. Chestnut-sided Warbler *Stetophaga pensylvanica*
246. Buff-rumped Warbler *Myiothlypis fulvicauda*
247. Summer Tanager *Piranga rubra*
248. Scarlet Tanager *Piranga olivacea*
249. Rose-breasted Grosbeak *Pheucticus ludovicianus*
250. Blue-black Grosbeak *Cyanocompsa cyanoidea* – singing male by camp
251. Blue-grey Tanager *Thraupis episcopus*
252. Palm Tanager *Thraupis palmarum*
253. Golden-hooded Tanager *Tangara larvata*
254. Plain-coloured Tanager *Tangara inornata*
255. White-eared Conebill *Conirostrum leucogenys* – El Salto road
256. Grey-headed Tanager *Eucometis penicillata*
257. White-shouldered Tanager *Tachyphonus luctuosus*
258. Crimson-backed Tanager *Ramphocelus dimidiatus*
259. Red-legged Honeycreeper *Cyanerpes cyaneus*
260. Blue Dacnis *Dacnis cayana*
261. Bananaquit *Coereba falveola*
262. Blue-black Grassquit *Volatinia jacarina*
263. Variable Seedeater *Sporophila americana*
264. Slate-coloured Seedeater *Sporophila schistacea*
265. Ruddy-breasted Seedeater *Sporophila minuta*
266. Buff-throated Saltator *Saltator maximus*

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