



Harpy Eagle

Panama

with Tucson Audubon Society

Tour Leader: Rob Ripma

October 21 - November 3, 2024

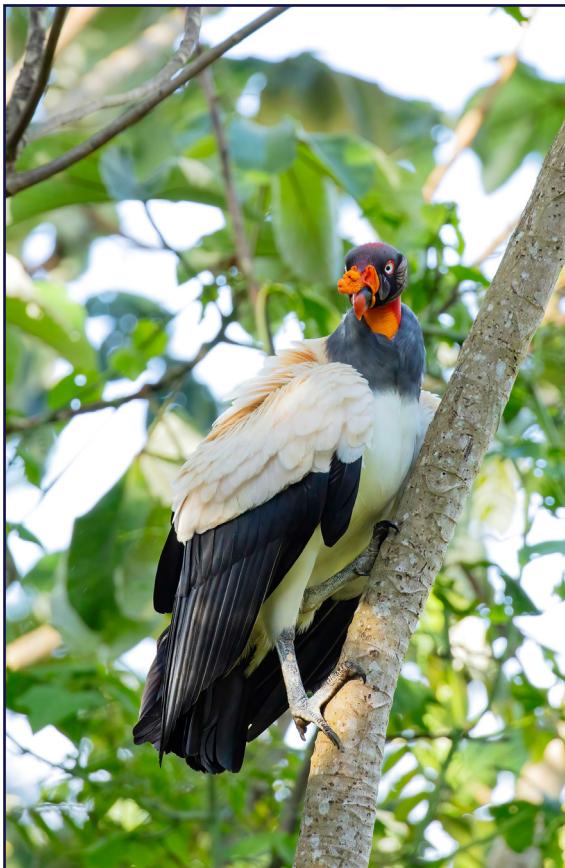
October 21 - Arrival in Panama City, Panama, and Transfer to Airport Hotel

The group gathered in the evening for a welcome dinner and to discuss the adventure we were about to embark on.

October 22 - Transfer to Canopy Camp with Birding Stops

After breakfast, we loaded up our bus and started our drive to Canopy Camp in the Darién. We stopped at a gas station for restrooms but quickly got distracted by birds, the best being a Double-toothed Kite that joined a group of Broad-winged Hawks! Our next stop was the Lago Bayano Bridge. We found our first Cocoi Herons of the trip and had our first taste of the incredible raptor migration with Swainson's and Broad-winged Hawks, and Turkey Vultures on the move!

We continued to Canopy Camp, and just after turning off the highway to head to the Camp, we found a small group of Red-throated Caracaras! Everyone exited the bus and spent time observing and photographing this fantastic species. We arrived at the Camp and were greeted by incredible activity at the hummingbird feeders. Blue-chested and Sapphire-throated Hummingbirds, White-vented Plumleteer, Black-throated Mango, and Pale-bellied Hermit frequently appeared at the feeders! It was time to sit down for lunch, but we kept our binoculars close and continued to add new species while we ate including Great Potoo and our only Gartered Trogan of the trip.



King Vulture

After settling into our rooms, we met for an afternoon walk around the property. Our main target was the vulture feeding station, where multiple King Vultures came to feed! Other highlights of our walk were Olivaceous Piculet, Double-banded Graytail, Ochre-lored Flatbill, and Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher.

October 23 - El Salto Road and Pan American Highway

Our morning started at El Salto Road, one of the best birding locations in the area. Once at the road, we loaded into the back of the open-air Birdmobiles and set off to see what we could find. We spent over three hours birding along the road, with our highlights being Black Hawk-Eagle, Pied Puffbird, Gray-cheeked Nunlet, Great Jacamar, Red-rumped Woodpecker, Chestnut-fronted Macaw, Purple-throated Fruitcrow, Black-bellied Wren, and Fulvous-vented Euphonia.

After lunch and a siesta at the Camp, we headed out to bird multiple stops along the Pan American Highway. Our first stop was at a small wetland where we added Rufescent Tiger-Heron, Spot-breasted Woodpecker, and Black-capped Donacobius. Next, we stopped to look at a Laughing Falcon, which flew from its perch, caught a snake, and then flew off! We also saw Black-collared Hawk, Red-breasted Meadowlark, and Large-billed Seed-Finch at this spot. Our last stop was at Yaviza Forest, where we watched a very cooperative group of seven White-fronted Nunbirds. We returned to the Camp for dinner and to prepare for our Harpy Eagle expedition the following day.

October 24 - Harpy Eagle Quest and Sansón Abajo

Everyone was excited to get going today! After an early breakfast, we drove to the end of the Pan-American Highway in Yaviza. We boarded two motorized dugout canoes for a short ride to a family farm where we would start our hike to the Harpy Eagle nest. Along the river, we had excellent views of four Blue-and-yellow Macaws!

After setting off on the trail, we found a small group of Black Oropendolas, a regional specialty and our only sighting of this species on our trip! A little farther along, we found three Orange-crowned Orioles. Although it was hot, the hike wasn't that long, and we arrived at the Harpy Eagle nest quickly. The setup of the blind to view the nest is fantastic, and everyone soon had terrific scope views of a female with a chick in the nest! We enjoyed the Harpy Eagles for a while before starting the hike back to our boat.

We spent more time birding along the trail on the hike back and found some wonderful species along the way. There was a very cooperative and low Blue Cotinga, our best looks at Black Ant-shrike, and our first White-eared Conebills of the tour.

After lunch and a siesta back at the Camp, we spent the late afternoon birding at Sansón Abajo. This road is just a short distance from Camp and is an excellent birding spot! Highlights during our two hours of birding here included Pearl Kite, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Red-billed Scythebill, and Black-crowned Tityra.



Blue Cotinga

October 25 - Puerto Lara and Quebrada Felix Abajo

As always, we were birding during breakfast at the Camp this morning and had several highlights, including White-necked Puffbird and Chestnut-fronted Macaw. After breakfast, we were off for more birding and a cultural visit to a native village.

Our first stop was at a local home that has a Great Curassow that comes in to feed with its chickens! Next, we made multiple stops along the road to Puerto Lara. Highlights during our stops included Stripe-cheeked Woodpecker, Gray-lined Hawk, White-eared Conebill, Boat-billed Heron, Crane Hawk, Ringed Kingfisher, and Golden-headed Manakin. We then had a tremendous cultural visit where we learned about the people's way of life and had the opportunity to shop for some of their fantastic crafts! We spotted two Savannah Hawks along the road returning to the Camp.

We spent our last afternoon in the Darién, birding at Quebrada Felix, just a short distance from the Camp. We found 73 species here in just two hours, including Striped Cuckoo, Capped Heron, Barred Puffbird, Gray-cheeked Nunlet, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, And Red-throated Caracara.

After dinner, we loaded into one of the Birdmobiles and set off owling along the entry road to Canopy Camp. While we heard three owl species, none came in for views. We did get some great views of

sloths along the way!

October 26 - San Francisco Reserve and Transfer to Canopy Tower

After breakfast and some final feeder watching, we bid farewell to Canopy Camp and started our drive to our next lodge, Canopy Tower, with a birding stop along the way. We arrived at San Francisco Reserve with storms threatening, but they still seemed distant, so we had some time to bird. The rain held off for quite a while, and we found some great birds during our time here, including King Vulture, a huge number of migrant raptors, Northern Black-throated Tropicbird, Bat Falcon, Rusty-winged Antwren, Western Olivaceous Flatbill, Long-tailed Tyrant, and White-eared Conebill. The rain started as we were about to be done birding for the morning.

We stopped in Metetí for lunch. The restaurant has some fruit feeders and hummingbird feeders, so we enjoyed more birding while having lunch. The highlight was a group of Orange-chinned Parakeets that made repeated visits.

We arrived at Canopy Tower late in the afternoon and settled into our rooms. We had planned to bird from the observation deck, but the rain continued, and we took the opportunity to rest and relax instead.

October 27 - Observation Deck, Semaphore Hill Road, and Ammo Dump Ponds

Our rainy conditions from the evening before led to extremely foggy conditions this morning that made birding difficult. Even with the fog, we found some great birds from the observation deck before breakfast, including Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher and Green Shrike-Vireo.

After breakfast, we took a walk down Semaphore Hill Road. Great Tinamous were calling, and we found one near the road, which allowed everyone to have beautiful views. Another highlight was finding a very cooperative Speckled Mourner, a difficult bird to see! Other highlights included Broad-billed Motmot, Fasciated Antshrike, Black-faced Antthrush, Northern Barred-Woodcreeper, Velvety Manakin, and White-breasted Wood-Wren.

After lunch, we birded the Ammo Dump Ponds just outside of Gamboa. With much work, the group enjoyed fantastic views of White-throated Crake! Other highlights were Purple Gallinule, Wattled Jacana, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, Isthmian Wren, and Yellow-tailed Oriole.

October 28 - Pipeline Road Entrance, Canopy B&B, and Gamboa Rainforest Resort Marina

Bird activity was high as we started our day birding along the entrance of Pipeline Road! Our list grew quickly as we found trogons, motmots, puffbirds, tanagers, and more. Then, things got extremely exciting when we found an ant swarm! We quickly added Chestnut-backed, Bicolored, and Ocellated Antbirds, Ruddy Woodcreeper, Northern Barred-Woodcreeper, and Gray-headed Tanager to our list. The ants also woke up a sleeping Rothschild's Porcupine, a rare species to see! As we continued, we found White-tailed and Northern Black-throated Trogons, Streak-chested Antpitta, and Black-striped Woodcreeper!

It looked like it would rain this afternoon, but we decided to head out birding anyway. Our first stop was at the Canopy B&B to see what was visiting their bird feeders. There was a lot of activity, mostly of common feeder birds, but we all enjoyed the chance to study and photograph these birds. Since the rain hadn't started, we continued to the Gamboa Rainforest Reserve Marina. We added a few new species to our list, including Snail Kite, Southern Beardless-Tyrannulet, and Olive-sided Flycatcher. The group also got great comparisons of Spectacled Cayman and American Crocodile!

October 29 - Pipeline Road and Summit Ponds

Our day started with an early breakfast before heading to Pipeline Road for the morning. Since we had birded the entrance to Pipeline Road the day before, we headed deeper into the forest before making our first stop. We spent the whole morning covering about 2 miles of Pipeline Road. Highlights for the morning included Moustached Antwren, Spotted Antbird, Streak-chested Antpitta, Golden-crowned Spadebill, Black-capped Pygmy-Tyrant, Rufous Mourner, and Song Wren. While driving down Semaphore Hill in the morning, one of our drivers thought he spotted an owl along the road. On the way back, we stopped to check, and it turned out to be a pair of Black-and-white

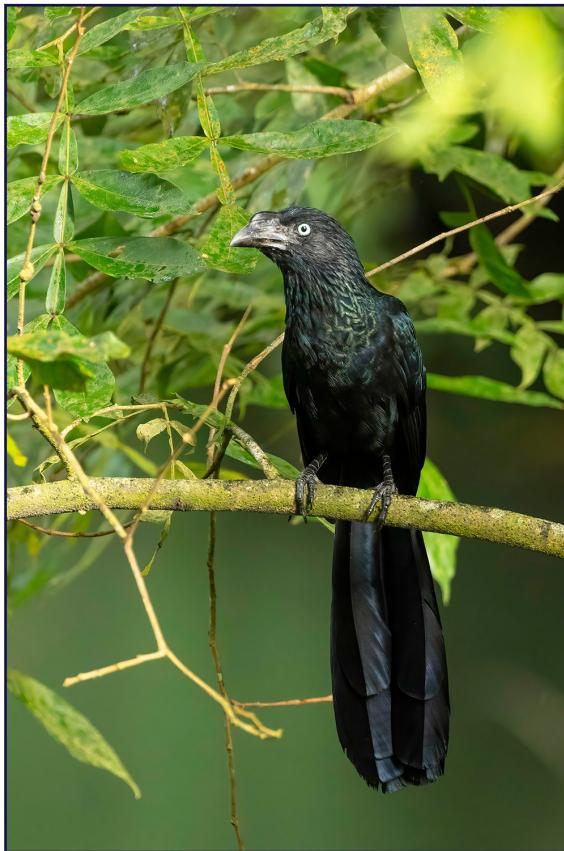


Golden-crowned Spadebill

Owls! While watching the owls, a Red-capped Manakin gave the group beautiful views.

Our final afternoon at Canopy Tower was spent birding Summit Ponds. Although we dealt with some rain, the birding was still quite good, and our highlights were Greater Ani, Boat-billed Heron, and Amazon, American Pygmy, and Green Kingfishers.

Back at Canopy Tower, we were treated to a beautiful cultural dance performance before a fantastic last dinner at this unique lodge.



Greater Ani

October 30 - Canopy Tower and Transfer to Canopy Lodge

After some final time on the observation deck at Canopy Tower, we loaded up our bus and departed for our final tour stop, Canopy Lodge. We arrived at the Lodge in time for lunch and settled into our rooms.

We then spent the rest of the afternoon birding the road and nearby Canopy Adventure, adding many of the common species of the area and some specialties such as Rufous-crested Coquette and Spot-crowned Barbet. We headed deep into the Canopy Adventure property to see a roosting Mottled Owl before the rain started, and then we headed back to the Lodge.

October 31 - La Masa, Las Minas, and Las Mozas

After watching the Canopy Lodge feeders for a few minutes after breakfast, we started on our way to La Mesa, with a couple of stops along the way. Our first stop was searching for a known roosting location for Tropical Screech-Owls; we were fortunate to find the pair there! Our next stop gave us nice looks at Gray-cowled Wood-Rail, and we heard but didn't see Barred Forest-Falcon.

Once we arrived at La Mesa, we quickly encountered a mixed flock. We enjoyed some wonderful birds, including Bay-headed, Silver-throated, and Emerald Tanagers, Chestnut-capped Warbler, and brief views of Green Hermit. Farther along the trail, we came across a Collared Trogon that allowed extended scope views. Other highlights for the morning included Northern Emerald-Toucanet, Spot-crowned Antvireo, Slaty Antwren, Eye-ringed Flatbill, and Black-faced Grosbeak. Another highlight of the morning was seeing an Eyelash Viper spotted by one of our local guides, Danilo.

In the afternoon, we visited a private property that Canopy Lodge can access for birding. This property has several species that can be very difficult to find elsewhere, including roosting Spectacled Owls and Rosy Thrush-Tanager. We had great luck with both species and wonderful views of Great Antshrike.

November 1: Full Day in the Pacific Lowlands

Canopy Lodge is close to the Pacific lowlands; we explored that area today. Along the way, we made several stops to look for birds and found some great specialties at these stops. At our first stop, we had a very cooperative pair of Wedge-tailed Grass-Finches as well as White-collared Swift and Garden Emerald. Our next stop had Striped Cuckoo, Lance-tailed Manakin, and Mourning Warbler. At our next stop, we worked hard for a Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl that eventually was very cooperative! Farther along, part of the group saw two Crested Bobwhites on the road, but they quickly disappeared, not to be seen again. While stopped for the bobwhites, we did have wonderful views of Brown-throated Parakeets in flight. While making a restroom stop at a gas station, we had our first Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture of the tour.

We stopped to have some drinks and snacks, but of course, we were also birding. Straight-billed Woodcreeper, Northern Scrub Flycatcher, and Panama Flycatcher entertained us during our stop. As we finished up, it started to rain, so we were restricted to birding from our vehicles for a bit. That didn't slow us down, as we found our first Fork-tailed Flycatchers of the trip! The rain slowed as we got to Juan Hombrón, which allowed us to get out and scan the fields. We found a variety of shorebirds and waders, but the highlight of this stop was Aplomado Falcon! The field also had five Savannah Hawks and down the road just a bit, there was a Gray Kingbird perched on the wires. Our last stop in the area was for Veraguan Mango, and we were not disappointed as it didn't take long to find this range-restricted species.

With all these amazing birds to see, we made it to the Canopy Family beach house late for lunch but happy with our fantastic morning of birding. While waiting for lunch to be prepared, we enjoyed

walking on the beach and added a couple of species, Whimbrel and Willet. After lunch, we drove back to Canopy Lodge in the rain, which did not let up for the rest of the day.

November 2: Canopy Adventure, Canopy Farm Feeders, Candelarios Trail, and Mata Ahogado



Wedge-tailed Grass-Finch

The day started as yesterday had ended, raining. Since it was raining, we stopped at several feeding stations and enjoyed the activity while protected from the rain. One of our local guides went out in the rain and found a Fasciated Tiger-Heron, which we were more than happy to go looking for, even with some rain. The group got terrific views of this incredible bird! The rain let up, so we headed to our primary birding location for the morning, Candelarios Trail. We spent the next two hours hiking this trail and found various great birds, including Gray-headed Kite, Checker-throated Stipple-throat, Sulphur-rumped Flycatcher, and Rufous-and-white and Song Wrens. The rain started back up just as we returned to our vehicles.

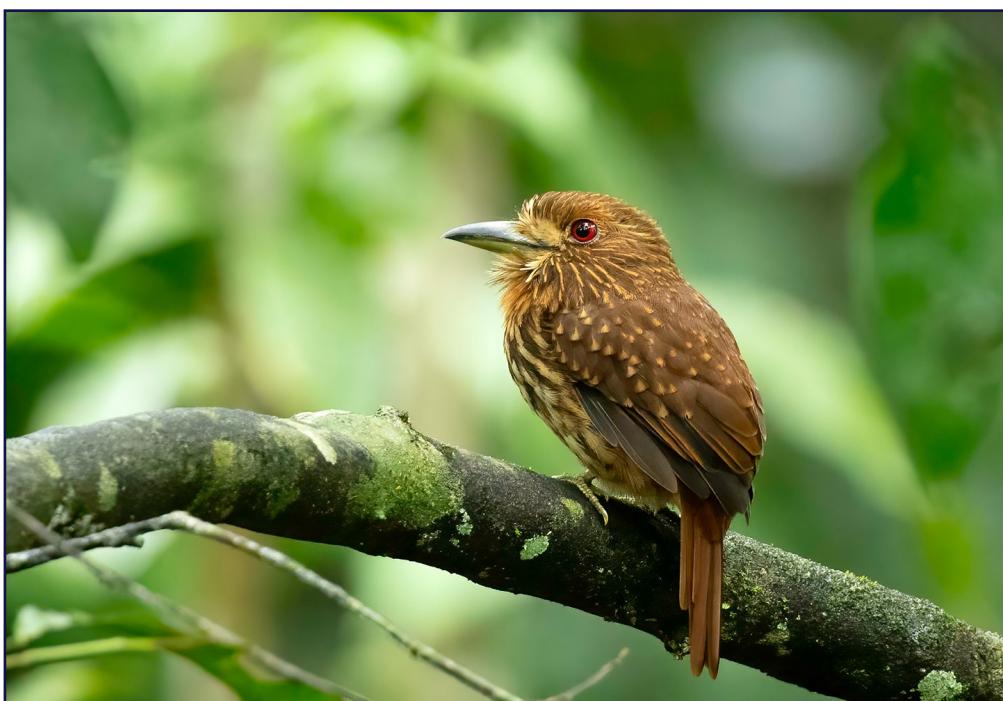
For our final afternoon of birding, we went birding in Mata Ahogado. Our first stop was a known location for Tody Motmot, and after much effort, we were rewarded with fantastic views of this tiny motmot. Our final birding stop was a set of bird feeders on private property. When we arrived, there were few birds to be seen, but as soon as the owners put out some fruit, there was an explosion of activity! We spent almost an hour enjoying the extraordinary diversity of species visiting the feeders. Some highlights included Gray-cowled Wood-Rail, Lesson's and Rufous Motmots, White-lined, Flame-rumped, and Crimson-backed Tanagers, Red-legged Honeycreeper, and Streaked Saltator.

November 3: Transfer to Panama City for Flights Home

There was no time for birding today as the group returned to Panama City for flights home. It was an incredible trip with 365 birds recorded and many fantastic mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. The group was excited to join Canopy Family's TLC Club for travelers who have visited all their lodges on one trip. We were even presented certificates to commemorate the occasion by Raul, founder of the Canopy Family!



Rothschild's Porcupine



White-whiskered Puffbird