



# Panama

## *Canopy Tower*

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Tour Leader: Frank Stetler

September 7 - 14, 2026

## **Itinerary Overview:**

September 7: Arrival and Transfer to Canopy Tower

September 8: Observation Deck, Semaphore Hill Road, and Ammo Dump Ponds

September 9: Pipeline Road Entrance and Summit Garens

September 10: Plantation Trails, Chagres River, and Gamboa Feeders

September 11: Pipeline Road

September 12: Summit Ponds, Old Gamboa Road, Chagres River

September 13: Rainforest Discovery Center, Miraflores Locks

September 14: Departure from Panama City, Panama

\* This is a general itinerary, our day-by-day schedule (outside of travel days) can change based on local conditions and bird reports.

## **Detailed Itinerary:**

### **September 7: Arrival and Transfer to Canopy Tower**

Upon arrival at the airport, you will be met by our driver who will transfer you to the Canopy Tower, located at the top of Semaphore Hill in the rainforest of Soberanía National Park. A member of our staff will greet you as you arrive at the Tower, and you will be provided with an orientation on the use of the facilities. At this time we will answer any questions you may have. As your luggage is being ferried to your room, you may visit the dining/bar area and enjoy a refreshing drink. We highly recommend that you spend some time on the Observation Deck. The view from the platform provides some incredible Panamanian birding opportunities! Here, you get a unique eye-level perspective of the rainforest canopy. Many birds in the rainforest, including toucans, parrots, tanagers of various species, hawks, and dozens of others, as well as monkeys, two species of sloth, and other mammals are commonly seen. From this vantage point you can also see ships transiting the Panama Canal, the majestic Centennial Bridge, and miles of rainforest! You may also want to watch the hummingbird feeders at the base of the Tower for Long-billed Hermit, White-necked Jacobin, Violet-bellied & Blue-chested Hummingbirds and White-vented Plumeleteer. Occasionally, a Snowy-bellied Hummingbird is spotted! After all this Panama birding, dinner will be served at the Canopy Tower.

*Overnight: Canopy Tower*

### **September 8: Observation Deck, Semaphore Hill Road, and Ammo Dump Ponds**

This morning we won't be able to resist getting up at dawn, as the Mantled Howlers roar in the distance. From the observation deck with a hot cup of coffee or tea in hand, we will watch the mist rise from the valleys surrounding the tower as the morning bird activity starts. Red-lore and Mealy Parrots fly over the valleys and Scaled Pigeons perch in the treetops. Up close, Golden-hooded, Palm, and Plain-colored Tanagers, Fulvous-vented Euphonias, and Green Honeycreepers feed in the cecropia trees next to the tower. Green Shrike-Vireo, Squirrel Cuckoo, Black-cheeked and Cinnamon Woodpeckers, Masked Tityra, Black-breasted Puffbird, Cocoa Woodcreeper, and many others may be visible. We will

scan the distant treetops for Blue Cotinga, Gray-headed Kite, and Crane Hawk.

After a delicious breakfast, we will meet at the hummingbird feeders, where White-necked Jacobin, White-vented Plumeleteer, Long-billed Hermit, and Blue-chested and Violet-bellied Hummingbirds feed at the nectar feeders. This morning, we will walk slowly down Semaphore Hill Road, scanning the understory of the forest and the canopy above for forest birds, raptors, and anything else we may come across. Great Tinamou, White-whiskered Puffbird, Rufous and Broad-billed Motmots, Black-faced Antthrush, Red-capped and Velvety Manakins, White-shouldered Tanager, Crimson-crested Woodpecker, White-breasted Wood-Wren, Black-bellied Wren, Slate-colored Grosbeak, Black-crowned and Fasciated Antshrikes, Dot-winged, Checker-throated, and White-flanked Antwrens and many other understory species will hopefully be encountered. Collared Forest-Falcon, Black Hawk-Eagle, Double-toothed Kite, and Semiplumbeous Hawk are all possibilities for this morning!



*Red-capped Manakin*

In the afternoon, we'll bird at the Ammo Dump Ponds along the Panama Canal. This large lagoon supports a nice diversity of bird life, including Rufescent Tiger-Heron, Little Blue Heron, Green and Ringed Kingfishers, Greater Ani, Wattled Jacana, Purple Gallinule, Osprey, Snail Kite, and White-throated Crake as well as American Crocodile and Lesser Capybara. We will scan the edges for Crimson-backed Tanager, Streaked Saltator, Black-striped Sparrow, and three species of seedeaters.

*Overnight: Canopy Tower*

### **September 9: Pipeline Road Entrance and Summit Garens**

After breakfast, we'll board the Birdmobile or El Tinamu, both open-air vehicles, that will take us to Pipeline Road, the best place in Central Panama to find forest birds and one of the premier birding spots in the world! This morning we concentrate our efforts at the beginning of Pipeline, where we will look

for Greater Ani, Gray-cowled Wood-Rail, Yellow-tailed Oriole, Masked Tityra, Rosy Thrush-Tanager, Isthmian (formerly Plain) Wren, Streaked Flycatcher, Red-throated Ant-Tanager, Squirrel Cuckoo, Gray-headed Chachalaca, Southern Bentbill, Forest Elaenia, Panama Flycatcher, Blue Ground Dove and Little Tinamou. Other birds recorded here are Black-bellied and Buff-breasted Wrens, Golden-collared Manakin, White-necked Puffbird, Gartered, Slaty-tailed, Black-throated, White-tailed and Black-tailed Trogons, Purple-crowned Fairy, Yellow Tyrannulet, White-bellied and Dusky Antbirds, Fasciated and Black-crowned Antshrikes, and many more. During migration, this entrance road is excellent for migrant warblers, flycatchers, grosbeaks, and tanagers.

Summit Gardens is a center for recreation, education and conservation, dedicated to reflecting and enhancing Panama's tropical and cultural diversity. The botanical gardens are great for migratory warblers and other forest-edge species, including a colony of Chestnut-headed Oropendolas, Yellow-margined Flycatcher, Laughing Falcon, Gray-lined, Crane and Great Black Hawks, Collared Forest-Falcon, Tropical Pewee, Masked Tityra, Golden-fronted & Scrub Greenlets, Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet, Yellow-rumped Cacique, Giant, Shiny & Bronzed Cowbirds, and Blue Cotinga. This park is the best place to find Streak-headed Woodcreeper, a difficult species to get elsewhere on this tour. The Harpy Eagle is Panama's national bird, and this park has an exhibit, including a life-size nest and interpretive panels, tracing the importance of the Harpy in Panamanian history and culture dating back to Pre-Columbian times.

*Overnight: Canopy Tower*



*Laughing Falcon*



*White-necked Puffbird*

## September 10: Plantation Trails, Chagres River, and Gamboa Feeders

After breakfast, we take a short ride to the bottom of Semaphore Hill to Plantation Trail, one of our premier birding areas, often said to rival the Pipeline Road itself! This easy trail passes through mature rainforest and follows a small creek (Rio Chico Masambi) and is a reliable place to find Golden-crowned Spadebill. Oftentimes at the parking area near the entrance we find Black-chested Jays. Other birds to look for along the trail include Ocellated, Bicolored, Chestnut-backed, White-bellied & Spotted Antbirds; Broad-billed & Whooping Motmots, five species of trogon; White-whiskered Puffbird; hummingbirds (Blue-chested, White-necked Jacobin and others); Plain-brown, Northern Barred, Cocoa, and Ruddy Woodcreepers; Cinnamon, Crimson-crested & Black-cheeked Woodpeckers; White-breasted Wood-Wren; Song Wren; Dot-winged, Checker-throated & White-flanked Antwrens; Purple-throated Fruitcrow; Bright-rumped Attila; Gray-headed Tanager; Long-billed Gnatwren; Black-crowned and Fasciated Antshrikes; Red-capped and Blue-crowned Manakins; Great Tinamou; Ruddy-tailed, Royal, and Yellow-margined flycatchers; Yellow-rumped Cacique; Scaly-throated Leaf Tosser; and, occasionally, Great Jacamar or the endemic Yellow-green Tyrannulet!



*Northern Black-throated Trogon*

After lunch, we take a short drive to Chagres River and the accompanying fields and forest. First, we must stop at the Canopy Bed & Breakfast in the picturesque village of Gamboa to look at the bird feeders! With a beautiful backdrop of Cerro Pelado, the backyard at the Canopy B&B is teeming with bird life. At the fruit feeders, we are likely to see Red-legged, Shining & Green Honeycreepers, Lemon-rumped, Crimson-backed & Blue-gray Tanagers, Thick-billed Euphonia, Yellow-bellied & Variable Seedeaters, Whooping Motmot, and Gray-headed Chachalaca, with Central American Agoutis lurking about under the feeders. Next, we're off to Chagres River, the main tributary for the Panama Canal. The birding along the river banks and the forest edges of Gamboa Resort can be spectacular! Here, we search for Amazon, Green & American Pygmy Kingfishers, as well as Whooping Motmot and Cinnamon

Woodpecker. We could also see Gray-cowled Wood-Rail, Cocoi, Green & Striated Herons, Wattled Jacana, Pied-billed Grebe, Anhinga, Royal & Sandwich Terns, Brown Pelican, Neotropic Cormorant, Tricolored & Little Blue Herons, Rufescent Tiger-Heron, Mangrove Swallow, Black-chested Jay, Lesser Kiskadee, Rusty-margined Flycatcher, Yellow-billed Cacique, Black-bellied & Buff-breasted Wrens, Fasciated & Barred Antshrikes, Cinnamon Becard, Slaty-tailed Trogon, White-bellied Antbird, and even Slaty-backed Forest-Falcon and Blue Cotinga at times!

*Overnight: Canopy Tower*

### **September 11: Pipeline Road**

Today we will search for the area's most sought-after specialties, from the Great Jacamar and the Pheasant Cuckoo to the Rufous-vented Ground-Cuckoo and the Harpy Eagle, both recorded here. Eight species of wren, 5 trogons, 4 puffbirds, 3 motmots, and many tanagers and flycatchers, including the unusual Brownish Twistwing, are often found. Also, the calls of Streak-chested Antpitta and Black-faced Antthrush will lure us in! Army ant swarms are found occasionally, attended by a host of birds including Bicolored, Ocellated, and Spotted Antbirds. Plus, we will hunt for Golden-collared, Red-capped, and Blue-crowned Manakins, always high on a birder's list of favorites! Raptors include 3 forest-falcons, Tiny & Semiplumbeous Hawks, and Ornate and Black Hawk-Eagles soaring overhead. Other residents include Carmiol's & Sulphur-rumped Tanagers, Purple-throated Fruitcrow, Black-crowned and Masked Tityras, Cinnamon & Crimson-crested Woodpeckers, Scarlet-rumped Cacique, Red-lored and Brown-hooded Parrots, Collared Araçari, Speckled Mourner, Buff-throated Foliage-Gleaner, Keel-billed & Yellow-throated Toucans, and Black-striped, Northern Barred and Plain-brown woodcreepers! As we cross several rivers, we search for Sunbittern and Green-and-rufous Kingfisher. To maximize our time in the field, we enjoy a nice picnic lunch along Pipeline Road—but with scope and binoculars at the ready! After lunch, we search for more species, including the elusive Wing-banded Antbird, Spot-crowned Antvireo, Moustached Antwren, Ruddy Quail-Dove, and Marbled Wood-Quail!

*Overnight: Canopy Tower*

### **September 12: Summit Ponds, Old Gamboa Road, Chagres River**

Old Gamboa Road and the associated ponds at Summit are great places to find Canal Zone birds. At Summit Ponds we will scan for Green, Striated, Capped & Boat-billed Herons as well as Green, Ringed, Amazon, Green-and-rufous (rare) & American Pygmy Kingfishers, which are all resident here! We also seek out Rusty-margined & Streaked Flycatchers, Mangrove Swallow, Bat Falcon, Cocoa Woodcreeper and Lineated & Crimson-crested Woodpeckers. Going straight past the two ponds you'll be on Old Gamboa Road, one of the birdiest spots around. This road passes through a variety of habitats and has plenty of specialties, including Blue Ground Dove, Great Antshrike, Jet Antbird, Black-tailed & Royal Flycatchers, Lance-tailed & Golden-collared Manakins and the delightful Rosy Thrush-Tanager! We also will find species like White-bellied Antbird, Yellow-bellied Elaenia, Yellow-backed Oriole, Boat-billed Flycatcher, Yellow-headed Caracara and more. Also resident are Gray-headed Chachalaca, with Spectacled Owl a real possibility too, as the guides know where they often roost.

Here, along the banks and in the accompanying forest edges, Amazon, Green & American Pygmy Kingfishers, as well as Whooping Motmot, Cinnamon Woodpecker, and Cinnamon & White-winged Becards, are resident. We could also see species like Gray-cowled Wood-Rail, Green & Striated Herons, Black-tailed Flycatcher, Wattled Jacana, White-throated Crake and Anhinga. There have been good sightings of Rosy Thrush-Tanager here recently as well. Indigenous Embera trails lead from the river, and we often see Embera villagers fishing from their canoes. In the river we search for Least Grebe, Muscovy Duck, and Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, and along their trails we sometimes find Little Tinamou, Scarlet-rumped & Yellow-billed Caciques, Yellow-tailed Oriole and even Blue Cotinga!

*Overnight: Canopy Tower*



*Rosy Thrush-Tanager*

### **September 13: Rainforest Discovery Center, Miraflores Locks**

After breakfast we depart to the Panamá Rainforest Discovery Center, an ecotourism and environmental education facility created and administered by Fundación Avifauna Eugene Eisenmann. It is located off Pipeline Road adjacent to Soberanía National Park. The center contains several attractions, the best of which is a 100-foot-tall observation tower, with 4 rest platforms—each stopping at a different layer of the rainforest. The view from the top is incredible! Here, we scan for raptors like Double-toothed Kite and Semiplumbeous Hawk and canopy birds like Scaled Pigeon, Pied Puffbird, and Blue Cotinga. Also, we explore the 1.1 kilometer circuit of well-maintained forest trails, one ending at a pond, which is excellent for birds! Snail Kite, Wattled Jacana, Little Blue Heron, Least Bittern, and Sungrebe are often resident at the pond, and along the trails we look for White-necked & White-whiskered Puffbirds, motmots, trogons, manakins, antbirds, wrens, tanagers, flycatchers, and many others. The covered Visitor Center has several hummingbird feeders (attracting many species that may be photographed easily), bathrooms, lunch tables and a small gift shop with drinks and snacks.

This afternoon you have the option to relax on your own, catch up on some photography, or visit the Miraflores Locks Museum. In addition to seeing first-hand the operation of the Canal, with huge container ships negotiating the narrow locks, you may also explore the world-class museum there. Magnificent Frigatebirds can be seen gliding overhead, so you won't miss out on any Panama birding opportunities!

*Overnight: Canopy Tower*

### **September 14: Departure from Panama City, Panama**

If time permits, after breakfast you may have one last look from the Observation Deck. Then we take you to the airport for your return flight home, with awesome memories of birds, mammals, wildflowers, butterflies and everything else you experienced while birding at the Canopy Tower!

## **Trip Details:**

### **Cost:**

Price per person from Panama City, Panama: \$3,599

Single Supplement: \$0

Minimum Participants: 6

Maximum Participants: 10

### **Price Includes:**

2 Expert Guides

Ground Transportation in Panama

All Lodging

All Meals

Park Entrance Fees

### **Price Does Not Include:**

Airfare to and from Panama City, Panama

Airport Taxes

Passport and Visa Fees

Alcoholic Beverages

Personal Items

Travel Insurance

Tips

### **Deposit:**

A deposit of \$500 per person is required to hold your spot on this tour. The remaining balance is due no later than 3 months prior to the scheduled start date of the tour (June 9, 2026).

If you have any questions about this tour or would like to sign up for it, please contact us at [info@sabrewingnaturetours.com](mailto:info@sabrewingnaturetours.com), by phone at 317-324-8505, or register through our website at [sabrewingnaturetours.com](http://sabrewingnaturetours.com).

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