



Panama: Birding with Camera (BWC)® - CUSTOM TOUR



Guide: Ben Knoot
Trip Report written by: Ben Knoot

*All photos in this trip report were captured by the guide unless otherwise stated. This tour was very similar to the set-departure tour but closures and last minute changes altered many of our plans and locations. This was also a much more photography focused tour rather than birding, making it more of a custom tour than set-departure.

Tour Itinerary

November 30th	Day 1: Arrival/Afternoon in Metropolitan Park
December 1st	Day 2: Metropolitan Park and Cerro Azul
December 2nd	Day 3: Panama City to David and Birding Paradise
December 3rd	Day 4: Volcán Area
December 4th	Day 5: Day with Tamandúa Agency
December 5th	Day 6: Volcán Area to Panama City and Gamboa
December 6th	Day 7: Gamboa Area
December 7th	Day 8: Gamboa Area
December 8th	Day 9: Gamboa Area to Valle de Anton
December 9th	Day 10: La Mesa Area
December 10th	Day 11: La Mesa Area and Road to Altos de Maria
December 11th	Day 12: Juan Hombrón to Panama City
December 12th	Day 13: Cerro Azul and Afternoon Departures

Introduction

Panamá is a beautiful and small country that is home to nearly 1000 species of birds. Thanks to its location, varied topography, and tropical climate, visitors can have a taste of a variety of stunning birds. On this tour, we tried to see and photograph as much as possible in just 13 (really 12 full) days. This Isthmus links the great continents of North and South America, and this unique position bridging these two large landmasses, contributes to its extraordinarily high bird list, which offers a flavor of not only North and Central American birds, but also South American ones too. Like its immediate neighbor, Costa Rica; Panama also offers good accommodations to be based in while birding the famous nearby hotspots. This also means there are plenty of birds around to photograph.

The backdrop for our trip varied depending on location but in general, we were treated to stunning forests, wonderful mountains and of course, various melodic sound tracks we bird lovers all love. We were also treated to the iconic Panama Canal, a mind-boggling feat of engineering just as impressive today as it ever was. To the east of the this man-made channel, lies some of the most revered areas for tropical birding in the world, namely the Gamboa/Pipeline Road area, which is the number one site for birding in the country, and therefore was an early shoe in on this customized itinerary. We combined the exciting lowland birding of the Canal Zone with the pleasantly cooler sites of Cerro Azul to the east, and El Valle de Anton to the west, all of which are located within the Panamanian foothills, and brought us a markedly different suite of birds.

With so many great locations for birding, it is also a fantastic country for some field photography. Though Panama is frequented by US and other tourists quite often, it still has a wonderful taste of the wild and untamed. Nothing highlights this point more than the undertaking of field photography in this country. It is tough. Panama lacks the bird feeding stations neotropical bird photographers have come to love but more than makes up for that with its incredible rainforest photography, especially around the Metropolitan Park, Gamboa, El Valle and Volcán.

Over the tour went really well. We were treated to some amazing birds, great photographic opportunities and despite the changing seasons, great weather after the first day of rain. One thing is for certain in my mind. Panama is a terrific birding location and offers some challenging but rewarding photography. You just have to go and see if for yourself.

Highlights

Top 5 Bird Species

1. Resplendent Quetzal
2. Fiery-billed Aracari
3. Volcano Hummingbird
4. Golden-collared Manakin
5. Black-tailed Trogon

Top 5 Other Animals

1. Panamanian Night Monkey
2. Geoffroy's Tamarin
3. Hoffmann's Two-toed Sloth
4. Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth
5. White-nosed Coati

Day-to-Day Summary

Day 1: (Nov-30th) Arrival and Metropolitan Park

We began our trip at one of the coolest places for birding and bird photography in the heart of Panama City; [Parque Metropolitano](#). This is a great location but unfortunately for us about 30 minutes into our walk, it began to rain. Not drizzle, but absolutely dump buckets...this put a bit of a damper on our first afternoon but we were able to see a few good birds and take a few nice pictures. Highlights included; [Red-crowned Woodpecker](#), [Social Flycatcher](#), [Tropical Kingbird](#), [Rufous-breasted Wren](#), [Orange-chinned Parakeet](#) and probably the biggest highlight of the afternoon, a [Northern Waterthrush](#) that was hanging around a small puddle created by the downpour. We had a nice dinner and rested up for what we hoped would be a drier day.



Northern Waterthrush - Photo by Guest: Jen Wong

Day 2: (Dec-1st) Metropolitan Park to Cerro Azul

Well wouldn't ya know it...no rain! Well, at least for the first few hours or so...we hit [Parque Metropolitano](#) again with hopes of catching species we missed on the first afternoon. One of the biggest targets of the park is the skulking [Rosy Thrush-Tanager](#). We were able to find a fairly cooperative bird just a few minutes into our walk. Other highlights from our morning included; [Crane Hawk](#), [Whooping Motmot](#), [White-necked Puffbird](#), [Red-crowned Ant-tanager](#) and the [adorable and somewhat odd looking, Central American Agouti](#). Then...it started raining. However, at this point, it was time for brunch and after a quick break, we ventured up to Cerro Azul for the afternoon.



White-necked Puffbird - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

I made a quick change of plans and decided to take the group up to [Cerro Azul](#), specifically to some feeders I had stumbled on just a week before the trip. On the way up the mountain and after a quick stop at the bridge, we would occasionally step out to have a bit of a look around. Overall, the birding in this area is really fun and generally very productive. We were able to locate a few fun birds like; [Pearl Kite](#), [Stripe-cheeked Woodpecker](#) (an Endemic to Panama), [Spotted Sandpiper](#), [Fasciated Tiger Heron](#) and [Fulvous-vented Euphonia](#).



Fasciated Tiger Heron - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Spotted Sandpiper- Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

Next up, it was time to hit the feeding station. Now...something a bit interesting and unfortunate happened on the way to our destination. I had the location saved in my map and when the gate guard asked what address I was going to, I accidentally deleted the GPS spot! WHOOPS! With limited cell service, I was getting a bit nervous but thankfully, our amazing hosts found us and guided us to their house. LUCKY US! Out of respect and request from the homeowners, the specific location will not be mentioned in this report. What I can say however is that this feeding area is a wonderful location for a shoot. Lots of tanagers, hummingbirds and other seed eating specialties. A wonderful afternoon with wonderful people yielded; **Crimson-backed Tanager**, **Blue-gray Tanager**, **Palm Tanager**, **Plain-colored Tanager**, **Bay-headed Tanager**, **Thick-billed Euphonia**, **Yellow-faced Grassquit**, **Blue-black Grassquit**, **Variable Seedeater**, **Summer Tanager**, **Hepatic Tanager**, **Gray-headed Chachalaca**, **Clay-colored Thrush**, **Scarlet-thighed Dacnis** **White-necked Jacobin**, **Snowy-bellied Hummingbird**, **Blue-chested Hummingbird** and **Rufous-tailed Hummingbird**.



Crimson-backed Tanager - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Crimson-backed Tanager - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Snowy-bellied Hummingbird - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Blue-chested Hummingbird - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

Day 3: (Dec-2nd) Flight to David to Birding Paradise (near Volcán)

We began our day with a very early flight to David in Western Panama. This portion of the trip gives us a taste of highlands species. But first, after we landed and picked up our new wheels, we made a stop at one of the most “birdi-est” spots in the west; [Birding Paradise](#). Not only is the local guide truly one of kind but he is also a great guy and super friendly. Needless to say it was easy to spend the rest of our day here on his deck. We were treated to; [Fiery-billed Aracari](#), [Crested Oropendola](#), [Orange-collared Manakin](#), [White-ruffed Manakin](#), [Crowned Woodnymph](#), [Spot-crowned Euphonia](#), [Red-crowned Woodpecker](#), [Green Honeycreeper](#), [Baltimore Oriole](#), [Scarlet-rumped Tanager](#), [Silver-throated Tanager](#), [Golden-hooded Tanager](#), [Charming Hummingbird](#), [White-necked Jacobin](#), [Lesson’s Motmot](#) and many more amazing birds. Really,

too many to list. However, the “golden” species here is an incredibly tame, **Costa Rican Brushfinch**. A wonderful place indeed. After a quick drive to the hotel, we settled in with a nice dinner and prepared for the next day.



Fiery-billed Aracari - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Silver-throated Tanager - Photo by Guide: Ben Knot



Green Honeycreeper - Photo by Guide: Ben Knot



Costa Rican Brushfinch - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Charming Hummingbird - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Crowned Woodnymph - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

Day 4: (Dec-3rd) Volcán Barú Area

Today, the group woke early to travel up into the mountains, specifically [Sendero Quetzal](#). The name says it all, here, the big target is the stunningly gorgeous and iconic [Resplendent Quetzal](#). I am thrilled to say that after a few short minutes, we were able to locate both a male and a female. The parking area was also packed with birds like; [Collared Redstart](#), [Slate-throated Redstart](#), [Yellow-thighed Finch](#), [Scintillant Hummingbird](#), [White-throated Mountain-Gem](#), [Gray-breasted Wood-wren](#), [Rufous-collared Sparrow](#), [Mountain Elaenia](#). And the obvious favorite, a wonderful male [Resplendent Quetzal](#).



Collared Redstart - Photo by Guide: Ben Knot

After this wonderful hour or so, we started our walk up the road through a great patch of forest. Amongst the magnificent trees and vibrant moss covered rocks and branches, we found **Tufted Flycatcher**, **Black-faced Solitaire**, **Black-cheeked Warbler**, **Ochraceous Wren**, **Black-throated Green Warbler**, **Wilson's Warbler**, **Red-faced Spinetail**, **Ruddy Treerunner**, **Band-tailed Pigeon**, and a stunning **Flame-throated Warbler**. Well...that was a fantastic few hundred yards and we were almost to the clearing where'd we'd turn around. So we continued on but we weren't able to find anything. We arrived at the first clearing and faintly in the distance I heard a wonderful little bird, **Costa Rican Pygmy Owl**. I didn't really think anything of it, but I gave him a quick whistle and then all of a sudden, he was right above us! Super cool experience. He also brought the following birds with him; **Black-capped Flycatcher**, **Sooty-capped Chlorospingus**, **Long-tailed Silky Flycatcher**, **Rough-legged Tyrannulet**, **Golden-winged Warbler**, **Mistletoe Tyrannulet**, **Lesser Violetear** and **Yellowish Flycatcher**. An unbelievable morning but it was time to move on to our next location.



Flame-throated Warbler - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Black-faced Solitaire - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

Our second stop of the morning was [Parque Nacional La Amistad](#). Recently the trail system here had been under construction and unfortunately, when we arrived we found that still to be the case. So, we birded the road, the parking area and the lower parking area before the gate. As it was now a bit later in the morning, we only managed a few birds. Birds like; [Torrent Tyrannulet](#), [Yellowish Flycatcher](#), [Black Phoebe](#), [Gray-breasted Wood-wren](#), [Olivaceous Woodcreeper](#), [Acadian Flycatcher](#), [Mountain Thrush](#), and [Red-faced Spinetail](#) were all present and showing nicely. We called it a morning and returned to our hotel for a nice meal and a bit of rest.



Torrent Tyrannulet - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

The afternoon was spent in the open country as we drove to our prime location, [Laguna Volcán](#). The country side on the way gave us birds like, [Tropical Kingbird](#), [Roadside Hawk](#), [Broad-winged Hawk](#), [Rufous-collared Sparrow](#), [Summer Tanager](#), [Turkey Vulture](#), [Black Vulture](#), [Groove-billed Ani](#), [Isthmian Wren](#) and the ever present [Cattle Egret](#). The main reason for visiting the lagoon is to find the race of Olive-crowned Yellowthroat that will eventually be split called the [Chiriqui Yellowthroat](#). I am delighted to say that with a bit of effort, we found him and were able to get some pretty decent photos. Other good birds present around the lagoon were more of the same but we added [Lesser Greenlet](#), [Golden-fronted Greenlet](#), [Mourning Warbler](#) and [Tropical Parula](#). We called it a day after the light had faded, extremely content with our day.



Tropical Parula - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Olive-crowned Yellowthroat (Chiriqui) - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

Day 5: (Dec-4th) Day with Tamandúa Agency

Today was our day with Tamandúa. I found this agency on my recon trip and decided to have them take us around for the day. They have two private feeders for bird photography. The first required some serious 4x4 wheeling but after a slow and a quite fun trek up the farm road, we arrived at [Los Cúmbres](#). This was mainly a hummingbird station but with the chance to see Maroon-chested Ground Dove. Unfortunately, no ground dove but we did see [White-throated Mountain Gem](#), [Talamanca Hummingbird](#), [Volcano Hummingbird](#), [Lesser Violetear](#), [Scintillant Hummingbird](#), [Slaty Flower-piercer](#), and [Yellow-bellied Siskin](#). We went back down the road and had a really nice lunch provided by Tamandúa.



Volcano Hummingbird - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



White-throated Mountain Gem - Photo by Guide: Ben Koot

The afternoon was spent in [El Jardín](#). Here the fruit feeders and hummingbird feeders attracted a few new birds like; [Violet Sabrewing](#), [Stripe-tailed Hummingbird](#), [Snowy-bellied Hummingbird](#), [Chestnut-capped Brushfinch](#), [White-naped Brushfinch](#), [Rose-breasted Grosbeak](#), [Flame-colored Tanager](#), [Tennessee Warbler](#), [Silver-throated Tanager](#), [Clay-colored Thrush](#) and [Melodious Blackbird](#). A great day of some pretty easy photography. We called it quits and went back to the hotel for a nice meal and a good sleep.



Striped-tailed Hummingbird - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

Day 6: (Dec-5th) Volcán Barú Area and Flight to Panama City

I gave the group an option of what to do for the morning before our afternoon flight to Panama City. The decision was unanimous to return to [Sendero Quetzal](#) and [Parque Nacional La Amistad](#), essentially a repeat of our first amazing morning in this area. I was definitely okay with this plan as there was a pretty big target I had missed for the group here on the first morning. We saw many of the same birds, including another photoshoot with a stunningly long-tailed [Resplendent Quetzal](#). Thankfully, we added the one that I had missed on the first morning, the delightful and cleverly nicked named by a member of the group, “7Up Bird”, [Golden-browed Chlorophonia](#). Such a beautiful and fun little bird. We ended up seeing a pair that was indulging on berries for their morning meal. We made it all the way to the clearing again and started to head back down when I noticed another great target for the area lurking about in the trees, a [Northern Emerald Toucanet](#). Time to head off to La Amistad.



Resplendent Quetzal - Photo by Guide: Ben Knot

When we arrived, it was pouring with rain. I gave the group the option and we voted to wait it out for 20-minutes. I got impatient about a minute in and said I'd go look for a birds and come back if I found any. After a quick stroll, I was on my way back and just about to get back into the car when I heard the faint chipping of a **Black-and-Yellow Silky-Flycatcher**! I was super stoked as this was a new bird for us so I grabbed everyone out of the car and we had a great photoshoot with this species. As it was still raining we decided to head back to the hotel, have a nice brunch, pack up and head off to the airport. When we arrived at the airport, we had a quick walk around the garden and found a very cooperative **Orange-billed Nightingale Thrush**. As a fun surprise, I found a nesting **Scintillant Hummingbird** right outside our rooms! A sweet little goodbye as we packed up and headed off for the airport.



Black-and-yellow Silky Flycatcher - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Scintillant Hummingbird (from a respectful distance) - Photo by Guide: Ben Knot

We arrived in Panama City late and didn't have any time for shooting this afternoon so instead, we went straight to our hotel in Gamboa, had a nice dinner and went off to bed.

Day 7: (Dec-6th) Pipeline Road and Gamboa Rainforest Resort Grounds

For today, I took the group down one of the worlds most famous birding roads, the [Pipeline Access Road](#). From the parking area, we walked about 1800 meters down the road through the lush rainforest and found a variety of wonderful birds. Highlights from the morning included; [Great Tinamou](#), [Streak-chested Antpitta](#), [Ruddy Quail Dove](#), [Double-toothed Kite](#), [Slaty-tailed Trogon](#), [Black-tailed Trogon](#), [Gartered Trogon](#), [Rufous Motmot](#), [Crimson-crested Woodpecker](#), [Yellow-throated Toucan](#), [Keel-billed Toucan](#), [Ruddy-tailed Flycatcher](#), [Golden-crowned Spadebill](#), [Yellow-backed Oriole](#), [Rose-throated Fruitcrow](#), [Spotted Antbird](#), [Black-crowned Ant-shrike](#), [Dot-winged Antwren](#), and [Checker-throated Stipple-throat](#). A pretty fantastic morning in all respects. We left the road and returned to our hotel for a brief break and some food.



Golden-crowned Spadebill - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Spotted Antbird - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Streak-chested Antpitta - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Great Tinamou - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

For our afternoon, I took the group around the [Gamboa Rainforest Resort](#) grounds. The grounds have lakeshore access, forest trails, gardens and several great patches of second growth woodlands that hold a variety of birds. We started out with the lakeshore and photographed; [Southern Lapwing](#), [Wattled Jacana](#), [Spotted Sandpiper](#), [Little Blue Heron](#), [Cattle Egret](#), [Ruddy Ground Dove](#), [Barred Antshrike](#) and a wonderful adult [Yellow-headed Caracara](#).

Next we moved to a small marsh type area where we found; [Snail Kite](#), [Greater Ani](#), [Rufescent Tiger Heron](#), [Lesser Kiskadee](#), [Orange-chinned Parakeet](#) and a fantastic [American Pygmy Kingfisher](#). We walked the roads and trails and added; [Gray-lined Hawk](#), [Streaked Flycatcher](#), [Southern Beardless Tyrannulet](#), [Masked Tityra](#), [Lineated Woodpecker](#), and a [Purple Gallinule](#). After a wonderful afternoon, we returned back to the hotel for a nice meal and a good nights rest.



American Pygmy Kingfisher - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Lesser Kiskadee - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Rufescent Tiger Heron - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Wattled Jacana - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

Day 8: (Dec-7th) Rainforest Discovery Center and Summit Area

As it was now open, we woke bright and early and visited the [Rainforest Discovery Center tower](#) over the canopy for what we hoped would be a lovely morning of bird photography. It did not disappoint. On the top of the tower, we managed; [Brown-capped Tyrannulet](#), [Scaled Pigeon](#), [Masked Tityra](#), [Keel-billed Toucan](#), [Black-tailed Trogon](#), and everyone's favorite, [Black-breasted Puffbird](#).

As the sun grew pretty strong, we walked one of the trails and picked up [Russet-winged Schiffornis](#), [Red-throated Ant-tanager](#) and by far the highlight along the trail, a [White-whiskered Puffbird](#).



Keel-billed Toucan - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Black-tailed Trogon - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Black-breasted Puffbird - Photo by Guide: Ben Knot



White-whiskered Puffbird - Photo by Guide: Ben Knot

We arrived back to the [Rainforest Discovery Center](#) to photograph the hummingbirds and surrounding forest birds. We picked up; **Long-billed Hermit**, **Blue-chested Hummingbird**, **Violet-bellied Hummingbird**, **White-tailed Trogon**, **Gartered Trogon**, **Cinnamon Woodpecker**, **Black-striped Woodcreeper**, **Dot-winged Antwren**, **Black-crowned Ant-shrike**, **Golden-collared Manakin**, **Red-capped Manakin**, **Scarlet-rumped Cacique**, **White-shouldered Tanager**, and a **Blue Dacnis**. On the way out of the area we had a brief encounter with a **Bicolored Antbird** and **Spotted Antbird**. We took a brief rest before heading out for the rest of the day.



Long-billed Hermit - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Cinnamon Woodpecker - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Golden-collared Manakin - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

For the afternoon, I took the group over to [Summit Pond and Trails](#). As we stepped out of the car, I heard our first target, another skulking and difficult to photograph “ant-type” bird. I took the group into the thickets and we didn’t have to wait long for a wonderful [White-bellied Antbird](#) to make his appearance. This was a tough shooting condition. Windows were narrow, the conditions were dark and the bird was quick and evasive but there was some successful shooting of this tough bird!

We continued on walking the trails and were able to add; [Squirrel Cuckoo](#), [Plain Xenops](#), [Great-blue Heron](#), [Blue-crowned Manakin](#) and a wonderful pair of [Dusky Antbird](#). It was important for us to leave before all of the light had faded because we had a date with one of Panama’s awesome mammals. We arrived around the [Summit Resort](#) and found our target, the [Panamanian Night Monkey](#). We were also able to locate a [Hoffman’s Two-toed Sloth](#) and a wonderful [Ringed Kingfisher](#). Now that the light had completely gone, we called it a day and returned to our hotel.



Blue-crowned Manakin - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



White-bellied Antbird- Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Dusky Antbird - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Panamanian Night Monkey - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

Day 9: (Dec-8th) Rainforest Discovery Center and Hotel Grounds

Because we had such a great day yesterday, we decided to have a repeat this morning. We again visited the [RDC tower](#) in the canopy bright and early. We saw many of the same birds, adding even better photos to our galleries. After the tower, we revisited the discovery center and a few of the trails. After a lovely morning, we ended up adding [Green-shrike Vireo](#), [Chestnut-sided Warbler](#), [White-flanked Antwren](#), [Plain-brown Woodcreeper](#), [Bicolored Antbird](#), [Golden-collared Manakin](#), [Black-capped Pygmy Tyrant](#), [Southern Bentbill](#), [Chestnut-sided Warbler](#) and a [Gray-headed Tanager](#) to our galleries.



Bicolored Antbird - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



White-flanked Antwren - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Grey-headed Tanager - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

As we had a fairly long drive towards our next destination in Valle de Anton, we called it a morning and after some great food we left for our next hotel. After a quick check-in, we noticed a **Bat Falcon** roosting on one of the building windows. We would later realize that this is its favorite place to hang out for the afternoon, giving us plenty of chances to photograph this stunning little falcon.

We decided to bird the grounds and nearby roads for the afternoon. We had a fantastic walk around as we were able to focus on some of the more “common” birds and had them to our galleries. Birds like; **Black-chested Jay**, **Rufous-breasted Wren**, **Chestnut-capped Warbler**, **Yellow-bellied Elaenia**, **Yellow-faced Grassquit**, **Ruddy Ground Dove**, **Cocoa Woodcreeper** and **Streaked Saltator** were all welcome additions to our growing list. After a fantastic evening, we had a lovely dinner and turned in for the night.



Chestnut-capped Warbler - Photo by Guide: Ben Knot

Day 10: (Dec-9th) Las Minas, La Mesa, Cerro Macho, Cara Iguana and Cerro Gaital

This morning we rose early and walked the [Las Minas Trail](#). Our main target here was the unique [Black-crowned Antpitta](#). Oddly enough it is actually a gnat-eater but regardless, we ended up having a beautiful bird right at our feet. It was quite dark but when the light got a bit brighter we were able to get a few good ones. Also along the trail we were able to get additional photos of birds had already seen and we added; [Chestnut-backed Antbird](#), [Black-striped Sparrow](#), and a [Chestnut-headed Oropendola](#). I tried to walk the group up the trail a bit further but unfortunately a very dense fog made that a bit of a foolish idea so instead, I turned us around and moved on.

We went back down the road and briefly checked [Cerro Macho](#). This is a very fun walk along a river and a stunning waterfall. There weren't a massive number of new birds but we did add [Louisiana Waterthrush](#), [Rufous Motmot](#) and [Tawny-crested Tanager](#).



Tawny-crested Tanager - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

For the last hour or so of the morning, I took the group to Cara Iguana for some target birds. Unfortunately, it was quite slow and we didn't really pick up any new birds, so we left for brunch and a brief rest. Afternoon came and I decided we should go check out the roads around [Cerro Gaital](#). Again a pretty slow afternoon all together. We added [Bay Wren](#), [Lesser Goldfinch](#) and a [Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth](#) to our list but not much else.

Day 11: (Dec-10th) Las Minas, Cerro Gaital, Road to Altos de Maria, Hotel Grounds

Today the fog looked a lot less thick so we went back to [Las Minas Trail](#) to see if we could do better. Unfortunately there was a group of dogs patrolling the area and our bird was not as cooperative as I would've hoped but I thought about it and I would probably want to stay silent with a pack of hounds running around. We continued on up the road and I was relieved to hear a familiar call. One we had been missing. Then out of nowhere, she appeared, a beautiful female [Collared Trogon](#). She perched nice and close for us allowing some great photos. Not a few away I also spotted a pair of [Broad-billed Motmots](#) working a tree. They also perched rather well for some photos!



Broad-billed Motmot - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Collared Trogon - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

Just up the road another hundred yards or so I stopped on a grassy hillside and manage to pull out a **Wedge-tailed Grass-finch** for the group. On the way back down the trail we had a brief encounter with a **Stripe-throated Hermit** but they are quick little birds so photo opportunities were tough. We also managed to find a small mixed flock on the way down that comprised of; **Golden-collared Manakin**, **Song Wren**, **Emerald Tanager**, **Spotted Woodcreeper**, **Canada Warbler** and a **Scale-crested Pygmy Tyrant**. Next up we went back to **Cerro Gaital**. This time instead of just the roads we also walked the trail. The **Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth** was still hanging around the entrance so we had a nice photoshoot with him before taking to the trail. On the trail things were quite slow. After about an hour or so, we were only able to add **Tawny-capped Euphonia** and the significantly different looking **Dusky-capped Flycatcher**.



Wedge-tailed Grassfinch - Photo by Guide: Ben Knot

The afternoon adventure had us traveling up the steep and winding roads to [Altos de Maria](#). You can't actually bird the community without a local guide and since at the time of our trip no guides were around, we decided to just do the roads. The roads were fairly quite but we did have a nice shoot with a group of [Black-and-Yellow Tanagers](#). We returned back to the hotel for another walk around the grounds and due to the sharp eyes of one of the guests, we had a tremendous photoshoot with a very common but lovely, [Roadside Hawk](#). Beautiful light, a stunning perch and terrific composition made this one of the best shoots of the day.



Roadside Hawk - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

Day 12: (Dec-11th) Juan Hombrón to Panama City

Our last full day in Panama would be spent in the open country of [Camino de Juan Hombrón](#). Here the slow bumpy road holds fantastic birds from the freeway all the way to the Pacific Ocean. This road held a lot of new bird possibilities for us as well as “last-chance” opportunities for some birds we missed before or were looking for better photos of. We started the day with; [Crested Bobwhite](#), [Groove-billed Ani](#), [Smooth-billed Ani](#), [Sapphire-throated Hummingbird](#), and by far the big cooperater of the morning, a [Striped Cuckoo](#).

Continuing down the road, we also managed to pick up; [Yellow-crowned Euphonia](#), [Southern Lapwing](#), [Wattled Jacana](#), [Wood Stork](#), [Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture](#), [Gray-lined Hawk](#), [Yellow-headed Caracara](#), [Blue-black Grassquit](#), [Aplomado Falcon](#), [Rusty-margined Flycatcher](#), [Common Today Flycatcher](#), [Panama Flycatcher](#), [Rufous-browed Peppershrike](#), [Fork-tailed Flycatcher](#) and [Indigo Bunting](#).



Aplomado Falcon - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

Now at the beautiful Pacific Ocean, we were entertained by group of hunting **Blue-footed Booby**, **Brown Pelican** and pirating **Magnificent Frigatebird**. Along the sandy shores, Willets, Whimbrels and Spotted Sandpipers were furiously feeding. As it was now quite sunny and very warm, we called it a morning and made our way slowly back down the road. We picked up a few additional sightings though no great photos of; **Lance-tailed Manakin**, **Plain-breasted Ground Dove**, **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** and **Veraguan Mango**. We returned to our original hotel in Panama City. After a relatively unproductive afternoon, we returned for our last dinner of the trip.

Day 13: (Dec-12th) Cerro Azul and DEPARTURE

This morning we woke early to make it to **Cerro Azul** for our appointment with another private feeder. One of the first great successes of the day was a really cooperative and obliging **Scaly-breasted Wren**. We drove around looking for a variety of birds before the feeder station. We visited **Cerro Jefe** and found a great group of **Black-and-Yellow Tanager**.

When the time came, we visited the feeding area. Out of respect and privacy for the home owners, the specific location will not be given. At the feeders we were able to add a few new birds to our list and get some much better shots of a few key birds. Throughout the morning we saw and photographed; **Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer**, **White-vented Plumeleteer**, **Shiny Honeycreeper**, **Red-legged Honeycreeper**, **Green Hermit**, **Collared Aracari**, **Hepatic Tanager** and **Black-cheeked Woodpecker**.



Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Collared Aracari - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

The real reason for visiting these feeders and what I had nearly promised my guests, showed up just 20-minutes before we had to leave. A family of **Geoffroy's Tamarin** bailed me out and was a wonderful way to end our tour in Panama. We hit the road, packed up the rest of our stuff, got to the airport and said our goodbyes.



Geoffroy's Tamarin - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoop

Guests Top 5 Images







Summary

*Seen: Species was seen by at least the guide

*Photographed: At least one member of the tour other than the guide photographed this species and/or there was a good photographic opportunity whether it was taken or not

- In total **317** birds were seen
- In total **114** birds were “seen only”
- In total **203** birds were photographed and/or had a good opportunity to be photographed

Species	Seen	Photographed
<u>BIRDS</u>		
Tinamous		
Great Tinamou		
Guans, Chachalacas and Curassows		
Gray-headed Chachalaca		
New World Quail		
Crested Bobwhite		
Pigeons and Doves		
Rock Pigeon		
Pale-vented Pigeon		
Scaled Pigeon		
Band-tailed Pigeon		
Plain-breasted Ground Dove		
Ruddy Ground Dove		
Ruddy Quail Dove		
White-tipped Dove		
Gray-chested Dove		

Species	Seen	Photographed
Cuckoos		
Greater Ani		
Smooth-billed Ani		
Groove-billed Ani		
Striped Cuckoo		
Squirrel Cuckoo		
Yellow-billed Cuckoo		
Nightjars and Allies		
Common Pauraque		
Swifts		
White-collared Swift		
Vaux's Swift		
Lesser Swallow-tailed Swift		
Hummingbirds		
White-necked Jacobin		
Green Hermit		
Long-billed Hermit		
Stripe-throated Hermit		
Brown Violetear		
Lesser Violetear		
Purple-crowned Fairy		
Veraguan Mango		
Talamanca Hummingbird		
White-throated Mountain Gem		

Species	Seen	Photographed
Volcano Hummingbird		
Scintillant Hummingbird		
Violet Sabrewing		
Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer		
White-vented Plumeleteer		
Crowned Woodnymph		
Violet-capped Hummingbird		
Stripe-tailed Hummingbird		
Scaly-breasted Hummingbird		
Snowy-bellied Hummingbird		
Rufous-tailed Hummingbird		
Sapphire-throated Hummingbird		
Blue-chested Hummingbird		
Charming Hummingbird		
Violet-bellied Hummingbird		
Rails, Gallinules and Coots		
Gray-cowled Wood-rail		
American Coot		
Purple Gallinule		
Plovers and Lapwings		
Southern Lapwing		
Jacanas		
Wattled Jacana		
Sandpipers		

Species	Seen	Photographed
Whimbrel		
Willet		
Spotted Sandpiper		
Storks		
Wood Stork		
Frigatebirds		
Magnificent Frigatebird		
Boobies and Gannets		
Blue-footed Booby		
Cormorants and Shags		
Neotropic Cormorant		
Pelicans		
Brown Pelican		
Hérons, Egrets and Bitterns		
Rufescent Tiger-Heron		
Fasciated Tiger-Heron		
Great Blue Heron		
Great Egret		
Snowy Egret		
Little Blue Heron		
Tricolored Heron		
Cattle Egret		
Green Heron		
Ibises and Spoonbills		

Species	Seen	Photographed
White Ibis		
New World Vultures		
Black Vulture		
Turkey Vulture		
Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture		
Hawks, Eagles and Kites		
Pearl Kite		
Black Hawk Eagle		
Snail Kite		
Great Black Hawk		
Roadside Hawk		
Gray-lined Hawk		
Broad-winged Hawk		
Red-tailed Hawk		
Owls		
Costa Rican Pygmy Owl		
Trogons		
Resplendent Quetzal		
Slaty-tailed Trogon		
Black-tailed Trogon		
White-tailed Trogon		
Gartered Trogon		
Collared Trogon		
Black-throated Trogon		

Species	Seen	Photographed
Motmots		
Lesson's Motmot		
Whooping Motmot		
Rufous Motmot		
Broad-billed Motmot		
Kingfishers		
Ringed Kingfisher		
American Pygmy Kingfisher		
Puffbirds		
White-necked Puffbird		
Black-breasted Puffbird		
White-whiskered Puffbird		
Toucans		
Northern Emerald Toucanet		
Collared Aracari		
Fiery-billed Aracari		
Yellow-throated Toucan		
Keel-billed Toucan		
Woodpeckers		
Olivaceous Piculet		
Black-cheeked Woodpecker		
Red-crowned Woodpecker		
Crimson-crested Woodpecker		
Lineated Woodpecker		

Species	Seen	Photographed
Cinnamon Woodpecker		
Stripe-cheeked Woodpecker		
Falcons and Caracaras		
Collared Forest Falcon		
Crested Caracara		
Yellow-headed Caracara		
Laughing Falcon		
American Kestrel		
Aplomado Falcon		
Bat Falcon		
New World and African Parrots		
Orange-chinned Parakeet		
Blue-headed Parrot		
Red-lored Parrot		
Yellow-crowned Parrot		
Mealy Parrot		
Typical Antbirds		
Barred Antshrike		
Black-crowned Antshrike		
Black-hooded Antshrike		
Plain Antvireo		
Checker-throated Stipplethroat		
White-flanked Antwren		
Slaty Antwren		

Species	Seen	Photographed
Dot-winged Antwren		
Dusky Antbird		
White-bellied Antbird		
Chestnut-backed Antbird		
Bicolored Antbird		
Spotted Antbird		
Gnateaters		
Black-crowned Antpitta		
Antpittas		
Streak-chested Antpitta		
Ovenbirds and Woodcreepers		
Olivaceous Woodcreeper		
Plain-brown Woodcreeper		
Cocoa Woodcreeper		
Black-striped Woodcreeper		
Spotted Woodcreeper		
Streak-headed Woodcreeper		
Spot-crowned Woodcreeper		
Plain Xenops		
Ruddy Treerunner		
Red-faced Spinetail		
Manakins		
Lance-tailed Manakin		
White-ruffed Manakin		

Species	Seen	Photographed
Blue-crowned Manakin		
Golden-collared Manakin		
Orange-collared Manakin		
Red-capped Manakin		
Cotingas		
Purple-throated Fruitcrow		
Tityras and Allies		
Masked Tityra		
Russet-winged Schiffornis		
Rose-throated Becard		
Sharpbill, Royal Flycatcher and Allies		
Ruddy-tailed Flycatcher		
Tyrant Flycatcher		
Golden-crowed Spadebill		
Ochre-bellied Flycatcher		
Sepia-capped Flycatcher		
Black-capped Pygmy Tyrant		
Scale-crested Pygmy Tyrant		
Southern Bentbill		
Common Tody-Flycatcher		
Yellow-olive Flycatcher		
Yellow-margined Flycatcher		
Brown-capped Tyrannulet		
Southern Beardless-Tyrannulet		

Species	Seen	Photographed
Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet	Yes	No
Yellow-bellied Elaenia	No	Yes
Mountain Elaenia	No	Yes
Torrent Tyrannulet	No	Yes
Rough-legged Tyrannulet	Yes	No
Dark Pewee	Yes	No
Eastern Wood-pewee	Yes	No
Tropical Wood-pewee	Yes	No
Acadian Flycatcher	No	Yes
Yellowish Flycatcher	No	Yes
Black-capped Flycatcher	Yes	No
Black Phoebe	No	Yes
Bright-rumped Attila	Yes	No
Dusky-capped Flycatcher	No	Yes
Panama Flycatcher	No	Yes
Great-crested Flycatcher	Yes	No
Lesser Kiskadee	No	Yes
Great Kiskadee	No	Yes
Boat-billed Flycatcher	Yes	No
Rusty-margined Flycatcher	No	Yes
Social Flycatcher	No	Yes
Streaked Flycatcher	Yes	No
Tropical Kingbird	No	Yes
Gray Kingbird	Yes	No

Species	Seen	Photographed
Fork-tailed Flycatcher	Yes	No
Vireos, Shrike-babblers and Erpornis		
Rufous-browed Peppershrike	No	Yes
Scrub Greenlet	Yes	No
Lesser Greenlet	Yes	No
Golden-fronted Greenlet	Yes	No
Green Shrike Vireo	No	Yes
Yellow-throated Vireo	Yes	No
Yellow-winged Vireo	Yes	No
Philadelphia Vireo	Yes	No
Brown-capped Vireo	Yes	No
Crows, Jays and Magpies		
Black-chested Jay	No	Yes
Swallows		
Blue-and-white Swallow	Yes	No
Southern Rough-winged Swallow	Yes	No
Gray-breasted Martin	Yes	No
Barn Swallow	Yes	No
Mangrove Swallow	Yes	No
Gnatcatchers		
Tawny-faced Gnatwren	Yes	No
Long-billed Gnatwren	Yes	No
White-browed Gnatcatcher	Yes	No
Wrens		

Species	Seen	Photographed
Scaly-breasted Wren		
House Wren		
Ochraceous Wren		
Black-bellied Wren		
Rufous-breasted Wren		
Rufous-and-white Wren		
Isthimian Wren		
Bay Wren		
Buff-breasted Wren		
White-breasted Wood-wren		
Gray-breasted Wood-wren		
Song Wren		
Mockingbirds		
Tropical Mockingbird		
Thrushes and Allies		
Black-faced Solitaire		
Orange-billed Nightingale Thrush		
Swainson's Thrush		
Mountain Thrush		
Clay-colored Thrush		
Silky-flycatchers		
Black-and-yellow Silky-flycatcher		
Long-tailed Silky-flycatcher		
Finches, Euphonias and Allies		

Species	Seen	Photographed
Golden-browed Chlorophonia		
Yellow-crowned Euphonia		
Thick-billed Euphonia		
Spot-crowned Euphonia		
Fulvous-vented Euphonia		
Tawny-capped Euphonia		
Lesser Goldfinch		
Yellow-bellied Siskin		
Thrush-Tanagers		
Rosy Thrush Tanager		
New World Sparrows		
Sooty-capped Chlorospingus		
Black-striped Sparrow		
Costa Rican Brush Finch		
Orange-billed Sparrow		
Chestnut-capped Brushfinch		
White-naped Brushfinch		
Rufous-collared Sparrow		
Yellow-thighed Brushfinch		
Troupials and Allies		
Eastern Meadowlark		
Crested Oropendola		
Chestnut-headed Oropendola		
Scarlet-rumped Cacique		

Species	Seen	Photographed
Yellow-rumped Cacique	Yes	No
Orchard Oriole	Yes	No
Yellow-backed Oriole	Yes	No
Baltimore Oriole	No	Yes
Melodious Blackbird	Yes	No
Great-tailed Grackle	No	Yes
New World Warblers		
Louisiana Waterthrush	No	Yes
Northern Waterthrush	No	Yes
Golden-winged Warbler	Yes	No
Black-and-white Warbler	Yes	No
Flame-throated Warbler	No	Yes
Tennessee Warbler	No	Yes
Mourning Warbler	No	Yes
American Redstart	Yes	No
Tropical Parula	No	Yes
Bay-breasted Warbler	Yes	No
Yellow Warbler	Yes	No
Chestnut-sided Warbler	No	Yes
Black-throated Green Warbler	Yes	No
Chestnut-capped Warbler	No	Yes
Black-cheeked Warbler	No	Yes
Costa Rican Warbler	Yes	No
Buff-rumped Warbler	Yes	No

Species	Seen	Photographed
Canada Warbler		
Wilson's warbler		
Slate-throated Redstart		
Collared Redstart		
Olive-crowned (Chiriqui) Yellowthroat		
Mitrospingid		
Dusky-faced Tanager		
Cardinals and Allies		
Hepatic Tanager		
Summer Tanager		
Flame-colored Tanager		
Red-crowned Ant-tanager		
Red-throated Ant-tanager		
Rose-breasted Grosbeak		
Blue-black Grosbeak		
Indigo Bunting		
Tanagers and Allies		
Gray-headed Tanager		
White-shouldered Tanager		
Tawny-crested Tanager		
Scarlet-rumped Tanager		
Crimson-backed Tanager		
Blue-gray Tanager		
Palm Tanager		

Species	Seen	Photographed
Golden-hooded Tanager		
Spangle-cheeked Tanager		
Plain-colored Tanager		
Emerald Tanager		
Bay-headed Tanager		
Silver-throated Tanager		
Scarlet-thighed Dacnis		
Blue Dacnis		
Shining Honeycreeper		
Red-legged Honeycreeper		
Green Honeycreeper		
Black-and-yellow Tanager		
Slaty Flowerpiercer		
Wedge-tailed Grassfinch		
Blue-black Grassquit		
Variable Seedeater		
Bananaquit		
Yellow-faced Grassquit		
Buff-throated Saltator		
Streaked Saltator		
<u>MAMMALS</u>		
Hoffmann's Two-toed Sloth		
Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth		
Geoffroy's Tamarin		

Species	Seen	Photographed
Panamanian Night Monkey		
White-faced Capuchin		
Mantled Howler Monkey		
Variegated Squirrel		
Red-tailed Squirrel		
Central American Agouti		
White-nosed Coati		
White-tailed Deer		