

PANAMA'S BIRDS AND WILDLIFE WITH DON COHEN PHOTOGRAPHY



APRIL 5 ~ USA / PANAMA CITY / CANOPY TOWER

You are met after clearing customs at the Toucamen Airport in Panama City. Our guide transfers you to the Canopy Tower approximately 1 hour from the airport. The Canopy Tower lounge and observation deck are ideal places to set your tripod and camera in comfort, while a variety of monkeys, sloths, iguanas and birds are close enough for great eye-level pictures. Some photographers even decide to spend most of their time here -- and it's no wonder why! With wireless internet, an iMac to download pictures, cold refreshments at hand, couches, hammocks, your room just one floor down, and having wildlife this close and intimate -- all makes for an ideal photographic vacation!

On the ground floor we also have hummingbird feeders abuzz with activity. Here you will get great shots of perching hummers and maybe even that one-in-a-million spot-on flight shot!

At night the observation deck becomes a great place to take pictures of star trails. Also, from the observation deck the sunrise with the surrounding forest dotted with patches of fog and clouds make for great landscape photography.

The Bridge of the Americas and the skyscrapers of Panama City in the distance, also make wonderful photographic subjects. A closer subject, the Centennial Bridge, with its modern form and lighting, makes for a great shot as well.

With all these tools at your disposal, you will be assured of a great photographic experience at the Canopy Tower! Spend the night at the CANOPY TOWER.



APRIL 6 ~ CANOPY TOWER AND SEMAPHORE HILL ROAD / GAMBOA MARINA

We will start our day at sunrise on the observation deck on the Canopy Tower. The Canopy Tower's observation deck offers a great opportunity to scan the treetops, where we can often see Geoffroy's Tamarin, Mantled Howlers, Two- and Three-toed sloths, Red-tailed Squirrel and a variety of colorful birds that come to feed on



the Cecropia trees. Keel-billed Toucans, a colorful variety of tanagers, majestic raptors and even Blue Cotingas can be seen from the observation deck. Some of the bird species that we are likely to see from the observation deck are Green & Red-legged honeycreepers, Green Shrike-Vireo, Blue Cotinga, Scaled Pigeon, Mealy & Red-lore parrots, Keel-billed Toucan, Collared Araçari, flycatchers of various kinds and raptors, including King Vulture and Ornate Hawk-Eagle! Breakfast will follow. After breakfast, we will start walking down Semaphore Hill Road through the lush lowland rainforest of Soberania National Park to continue our search for mammals and other creatures. On this road there is a chance to find Brown-throated three-toed Sloth and Hoffmann's two-toed Sloth, as well as a Northern Tamandua and White-nosed Coati. This paved road is a little more than a mile long, and passes through some of the most beautiful forest around! Here we will get a chance to see mammals as well as birds and interesting plants, wildflowers and butterflies. The rare Silky Anteater, as well as the secretive

Tayra, have been spotted occasionally along this road. We also have a great chance for understory birds including Slaty-tailed and Gartered trogons, Rufous and Broad-billed motmots, and several species of antbirds. At the end of this walk, we will get picked up by one of our open-air vehicles and driven up to the CANOPY TOWER for lunch.

After lunch and a "siesta," we will drive north to Ammo Dump Pond, located in the small town of Gamboa. This is a great place to look for the world's second largest rodent, the Lesser Capybara, which can be found in or near the Chagres river. It is the best place to see the elusive White-throated Crake, as well as a host of other water birds. Least Grebes and Purple Gallinules are common, and Rufescent Tiger-Heron and American Pygmy-Kingfisher are also resident. Here, we often find Greater Ani, Red-legged Honeycreeper, Whooping Motmot (recent split from Blue-crowned), Yellow-tailed Oriole, Southern Lapwing, Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet, Tropical Kingbird, Scrub Greenlet, Lesser Kiskadee, Black-bellied Whistling-Duck and Panama, Social & Rusty-margined flycatchers and even an Olivaceous Piculet! Birding here will be excellent, as we add to our impressive list of birds! Also, in Gamboa's forested neighborhoods, we hunt for Red Squirrels and Central American Agouti, a large diurnal rainforest rodent. Depending on time, we will make a quick stop at the marina on the Chagres River, the main source of water for the Panama Canal. With a bit of luck, we can find a Neotropical River Otter and Variegated Squirrels. Water birds including Wattled Jacana, Striated Heron and the beautiful Snail Kite can be seen hunting here.

After dinner we board the Canopy Tower's open back Rainfomobile for a night drive down Semaphore Hill Road. Many Neotropical mammals are nocturnal, and night drives are the best way to find them! We hope this evening to find Panamanian Night Monkey, Paca, Central American Woolly Opossum and if lucky, a Rothschild's Porcupine! Spend the night at CANOPY TOWER. (B,L,D)

APRIL 7 ~ PIPELINE ROAD / SUMMIT GARDENS & OLD GAMBOA ROAD

This morning after an early breakfast, we will board the Canopy Tower's Birdmobile and spend the morning at the world famous Pipeline Road. Hundreds of species of birds, mammals and countless insects and plants have been recorded here. This 17-km gravel road with eleven creeks has much to be explored, and is a great place for mammals, including White-faced Capuchin, Mantled Howler, Central American Agouti, White-nosed Coati, Tayra and Collared Peccary. We will keep an eye on the openings of tree cavities for Rufous Tree Rat. There have also been sightings of three species of cats, namely



Jaguarundi, Ocelot and even, rarely, the Jaguar. Over 500 species of birds have been recorded here, so there are good chances we will enjoy quality sightings of Crimson-crested Woodpecker, White-tailed Trogon, Spotted Antbird and if lucky, Tiny Hawk! We head back to the CANOPY TOWER for lunch.



After lunch, we head up to the Summit Botanical Garden, just 10 minutes from the tower. Our main target here will be to find a roosting colony of Common Tent-making Bats under the large palm leaves at the entrance to the park. Other mammals are always a possibility. Great Black Hawk, Crane Hawk, Giant Cowbird, Yellow-backed Oriole and Masked Tityra also may be seen! After a short visit to the gardens, we will cross the road to explore the area of Old Gamboa Road and the adjacent Summit Ponds.

This site boasts the nearest access to Pacific Dry Forest from the Canopy Tower. The ponds are a great place to look for some secretive herons, namely Boat-billed and Capped herons, and the diminutive American Pygmy Kingfisher, along with Spectacled Caiman and Common Basilisk or “Jesus Christ Lizard”. Carrying on down Old Gamboa Road south, we hope to encounter Tayra, Red-tailed Squirrel, more Two-toed and Three-toed sloths, Jaguarundi, White-nosed Coati and other mammals we have yet to encounter. Back at the Canopy Tower, we will review our checklist and enjoy happy hour prior to dinner. During dinner, Little Mastiff Bats may be seen flying around the dining room as they head out for their evening hunt, and we will watch for the largest bat in the Americas, the False Vampire Bat, hunting around the Cecropia trees out the windows. Dinner at CANOPY TOWER.

This evening after dinner, we will head out on another night drive, targeting nocturnal mammals. Common Opossum, Northern Tamandua, Hoffmann’s Two-toed Sloth and Collared Peccary are some hopefuls on our night drives! Spend the night at CANOPY TOWER. (B,L,D)

APRIL 8 ~ CANOPY TOWER / CHAGRES RIVER / GAMBOA FEEDERS

This morning we concentrate at the Canopy Tower where they have five hummingbird feeders. The hummers that come regularly are White-necked Jacobin, White-vented Plumeleteer, Long-billed Hermit and Blue-chested, Violet-bellied, Rufous-tailed and Snowy-bellied Hummingbirds.

At the Canopy Lodge there are also four feeders around the lodge and two in the garden. There are also plenty of flowers and trees (Heliconias, Erythras and Verbenas) that attract hummers. Regular visitors to the feeders and the garden are Garden Emerald, Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer, Purple-crowned Fairy, Long-billed Starthroat, Green Thorntail, Rufous-crested Coquette, Green, Stripe-throated, and Rufous-breasted Hermits, Green-crowned Brilliant and Rufous-tailed, Violet-headed and Violet-capped Hummingbirds.



After lunch, we take a short drive to Chagres River and the accompanying fields & 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, Flame-rumped, Crimson-backed & Blue-gray tanagers, Thick-billed Euphonia, Yellow-bellied & Variable seedeaters, Whooping Motmot and Gray-headed

Chachalaca. 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-Necked Wood-Rail, Cooi, 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! Dinner and overnight at CANOPY TOWER. (B,L,D)

APRIL 9 ~ CANOPY TOWER / DAVID / MIRAFLORES LOCKS / CANOPY LODGE GROUNDS AND FEEDERS



One more magnificent morning on the observation deck or photographing the bird feeders before you are picked up for a visit you head to the Miraflores Locks Visitors Center, where you will visit multiple exhibits of the canal and have the opportunity to view the operations of the Panama Canal. Lunch here offers views of ships passing through the locks.

After visit to the Miraflores Locks, we'll board a comfortable air-conditioned van for the 2-hour ride to El Valle de Antón, also known as Crater Valley. We will spend three nights at this lovely village nestled in the crater of a long dormant volcano that last erupted 5 million years ago. The resultant scenery is quite unique: a steep valley surrounded by jagged peaks and filled with flowers, streams and verdant forests. We arrive in time for lunch. Our home for the next three nights will be the Canopy Lodge a charming eco-lodge built next to a bubbling mountain stream and adjacent to the protected area of Cerro Gaital Natural Monument. At 2,400-feet in elevation, you will immediately appreciate the noticeably cooler temperatures here! You will immediately want to scan the bird feeders and grounds! Crimson-backed, Blue-gray, White-lined, Flame-rumped, Dusky-faced & Plain-colored tanagers, along with Red-crowned Ant-Tanager are about, as are Thick-billed Euphonia, Chestnut-headed Oropendola, Streaked & Buff-throated saltators, Lineated & Red-crowned woodpeckers, Red-legged Honeycreepers, Yellow-faced Grassquit, Social Flycatcher, Ruddy Ground-Dove, Barred Antshrike, Clay-colored Thrush, Rufous Motmot; Rufous-tailed, Snowy-bellied & Violet-headed hummingbirds and Garden Emerald! Lunch and dinner at CANOPY LODGE. (B,L,D)

APRIL 10 ~ LAS MINAS TRAIL / CARA IGUANA

After breakfast (during which we watch for Orange-billed Sparrow calling off the end of the dining area), we head to Las Minas which is an excellent place to get a wide variety of birds. The road follows the ridge line with sweeping vistas of forested mountains, speckled with grasslands and small fincas. The views from here are fantastic. On a clear day near the summit both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans can be seen! Specialties of the region include Black-and-yellow, Bay-headed & Emerald tanagers, Tawny-capped Euphonia, Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant, Spot-crowned Antvireo, Gray-headed Kite, Barred Hawk, Bat Falcon, Ornate Hawk-Eagle, Swallow-tailed Kite, Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer, White-tipped Sicklebill, Green Thorntail, Orange-bellied & Black-throated trogons, Wedge-tailed Grass-Finch, Tawny-faced Gnatwren, Plain Antvireo, the endemic Stripe-cheeked Woodpecker, Spotted Woodcreeper, Red-capped & White-ruffed manakins, Band-



rumped Swift and Black Guan have all been recorded here! A forested slope here is also our best chance for Black-headed Antthrush! We get back in time for lunch at the CANOPY LODGE.



With a full stomach and some rest, we head to Cara Iguana Trail where we enjoy outstanding foothill birding in some of the last remaining examples of quality Dry Pacific Forest. Specialties we hope to find in this bird-rich habitat are Lesser Elaenia, Yellow-olive & Panama flycatchers, Pale-eyed Pygmy-Tyrant, Yellow-bellied Elaenia, Lance-tailed Manakin, Rufous-breasted & Rufous-and-white wrens, Rosy Thrush-Tanager, Tody & Whooping motmots and Long-billed Gnatwren. Also resident are Striped Cuckoo, Little Tinamou, Common Potoo, Dusky & White-bellied antbirds, Barred Antshrike, White-winged Becard, Tropical

Screech-Owl and Bat Falcon. Hummers to watch for are Garden Emerald, Long-billed Starthroat and White-vented Plumeleeter. During migration we look for Bay-breasted, Chestnut-sided, Black-throated Green & Worm-eating warblers. Dinner at CANOPY LODGE. (B,L,D)

APRIL 11 ~ ALTOS DEL MARIA

Departing early in the morning after breakfast, we drive from El Valle in air-conditioned 4x4 SUVs up into the mountains. As the sun rises over the highlands ahead of us, spectacular mountains, vast valleys and towering cliffs come into view! Set in the mountains on the continental divide east of El Valle, Altos del Maria provides a spectacular addition to our explorations. Ascending an excellent paved road, we will climb a ridge to our destination, an expansive area of cloud forest at 3,600 ft. This area harbors an exciting variety of highland forest birds. Some of the characteristic species of this cloud forest include Black-crowned Antpitta, Black-headed Saltator, White Hawk, Barred Forest-Falcon, Orange-bellied Trogon, Spotted Woodcreeper, Red-faced Spinetail, Spotted Barbtail, Russet & Great antshrikes, Tufted & Sulphur-rumped flycatchers, Rufous-browed Tyrannulet, White-ruffed Manakin, Ochraceous Wren, Gray-breasted Wood-Wren, Pale-vented Thrush, Green Shrike-Vireo, Yellow-billed Cacique; Black-and-yellow, Bay-headed, Dusky-faced & Tawny-crested tanagers; White-vented Euphonia, Slate-colored Grosbeak and Yellow-eared Toucanet. Even the bizarre Brown-billed Scythebill is seen here regularly. Hummers we may spot include Band-tailed Barbrthroat, the exquisite Snowcap, Garden & White-tailed emeralds, Purple-throated Mountain-Gem, White-tipped Sicklebill and Bronze-tailed Plumeleeter. After a picnic lunch in the field, we will drop down into a valley and climb to the ridge on the opposite side. Reaching some large swaths of mature humid forest along this ridge, we will explore some trails and roadside spots in search of even more forest birds. Around mid-afternoon, we will head back into El Valle for some relaxation time prior to dinner at the CANOPY LODGE. (B,L,D)



APRIL 12 ~ EL VALLE / PANAMA CITY / CANOPY BED AND BREAKFAST

Today after breakfast, you will be transferred back to Panama City and to Casco Viejo where you will enjoy a historical walking tour of this UNESCO World Heritage Site. Casco Viejo is home to the Presidential Palace, the Metropolitan Cathedral, the National Theater, the French Plaza and several other iconic landmarks that offer testament to the city's rich history, culture and heritage. From the top of old city's wall enjoy spectacular views of the Pacific Ocean dotted with local fishing boats near port and massive ships lined up waiting to cross the

Panama Canal as well as the impressive skyline of modern Panama City. After a delicious lunch at Casco Antiguo, you will be transferred to the Canopy B&B in the picturesque Canal town of Gamboa. Upon arrival, you will feel the rich history that this area boasts from the century-old one-way bridge entering town to the restored Canal Zone houses circa 1937. Enjoy a relaxing afternoon in Gamboa or enjoy shooting the fruit feeders and the lodge where you are likely to see Red-legged, Shining & Green honeycreepers, Flame-rumped, Crimson-backed & Blue-gray tanagers, Thick-billed Euphonia, Yellow-bellied & Variable seedeaters, Whooping Motmot and Gray-headed Chachalaca. Dinner and overnight at the Canopy Bed & Breakfast. (B,L,D)

APRIL 13 ~ PANAMA CANAL TRANSIT



Board a ship this morning for a half-day transit of the Panama Canal. Since Balboa crossed the isthmus in 1513, becoming the first European to see the Pacific Ocean, men dreamed of a canal to connect the Pacific and Caribbean. In 1904, the U.S. began construction of the Panama Canal. This modern marvel is now such an integral part of shipping that ships are measured in terms of their ability to travel through the Canal's locks. Our dramatic partial passage of the Panama Canal included the Gaillard Cut and Pedro Miguel and Miraflores Locks. This is the Canal's narrowest portion, with the Gaillard or "Culebra" Cut, taking us through an

eight mile channel cut through solid rock.

Tonight enjoy a farewell folkloric dinner show including traditional Panamanian cuisine accompanied by a dance and music presentation where you will learn about the local Pollera dress and its cultural value, the musicians and their instruments, songs, clothing and singing. After dinner, you will be transferred back to Canopy Bed and Breakfast. (B,L,D)

APRIL 14 ~ PANAMA CITY / HOME

Say good bye to your new Panamanian family and pack all your memory cards full of images from your wildlife adventure in Panama. Transfer to the airport at the appropriate time for your flight home. (B)