



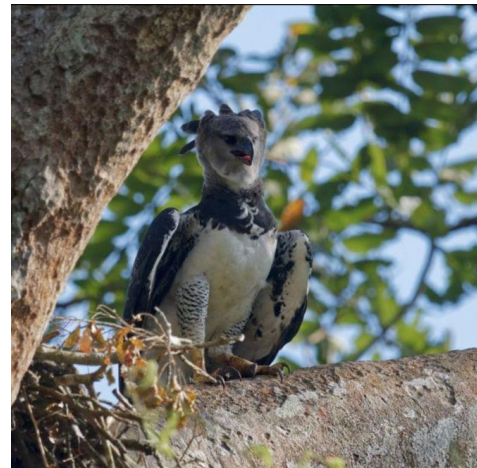
PANAMA CANOPY CAMP & THE DARIÉN

**Guides: Adam Sell + Local Guide
March 23-30, 2025**

Cost: \$4450 per person sharing

Single Supplement: \$908

Maximum group size: 10 participants



Few places in Central America invoke feelings of tropical wilderness like Panama's Darién province. The Panamerican Highway has one and only break along its passage to Tierra del Fuego. The "Darién Gap", as it is known, spans across the southeastern end of Panama from the end-of-the-road town of Yaviza to the border of Colombia. This wild region includes Darién National Park, Central America's largest, with over 1,000,000 acres protected, and many indigenous regions with unspoiled forest. We will be staying just west of Yaviza and will take in some of the best of Darién birding from our home base at the world-famous Canopy Camp. A part of the Canopy Family, Panama's leading eco-tourism company, the camp has become renowned for exceptional birding, delicious food, and comfortable accommodations.

The Darién region includes 25-30 species not regularly found in the Canal Zone, including some restricted to the Chocó bioregion such as Dusky-backed Jacamar, Black Oropendola and Gray-cheeked Nunlet. In recent years, the Canopy Camp has been one of the best locations in the neotropics to see Harpy Eagles, and we will be devoting a day to finding them. Beyond specialties, we will see a wonderful array neotropical species, many from the beautiful grounds and trails of the Canopy Camp.

ITINERARY

Day 1, Sun, March 23. Arrival in Panama City. Transfer to Riande Airport Hotel

Today is an arrival day. After arriving in Panama City's Tocumen Airport, you will be transferred to our nearby hotel where we will meet as a group for an orientation dinner. Tomorrow, our adventure to the Darién begins!

Day 2, Mon, March 24. Bayano Lake and Transfer to Canopy Camp

Today will have an early start for our long travel day into the remote Darién Region near the Panama/Columbia border. The journey to our final destination is approximately 7 hours, but we will make stops along the way in exciting birding areas. As we drive east along the Pan-American Highway, we will scan for roadside birds and open-field raptors including Savanna Hawk and Crested Caracara. Our first scheduled stop will be at the bridge at Bayano Lake, a great opportunity to stretch our legs and see what we can see along the lakeside. This reservoir supports great numbers of water birds, including a large colony of Neotropic Cormorants, as well as Anhinga, Cocoi Heron, and the rare Bare-throated Tiger-Heron. We will scan the water's edge for Purple Gallinule, Pied Water-Tyrant, Smooth-billed Ani, and Ruddy-breasted Seedeater. A short trail leading from the water's edge is a great place to search for Black Antshrike, Bare-crowned Antbird, Rufous-winged Antwren, and Golden-collared Manakin.

At another great stop along the way, the Río Mono Bridge, the surrounding forest is home to One-colored Becard, Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher, Blue Cotinga, Pied Puffbird, Orange-crowned Oriole, Blue Ground-Dove, and more. We will also scan the river below for Green-and-rufous Kingfisher and the elusive Fasciated Tiger-Heron. While enjoying a lovely Panamanian lunch at the Restaurante Avicar, the hummingbirds at the feeders will no doubt capture our attention, as Long-billed Starthroat, Sapphire-throated Hummingbird, Scaly-breasted Hummingbird, Black-throated Mango, and more take their lunch as well.

After lunch, we will head back to the Pan-American Highway and continue, arriving at Canopy Camp Darién before daylight fades. After a delicious dinner of fresh American and Panamanian fare, we will listen for owls around the grounds and settle into our luxurious safari-style tents, each with their own observation deck!

Day 3, Tue, March 25. Canopy Camp Trails and Panamerican Highway to Yaviza

We will meet before sunrise for a hot drink and enjoy the sounds of the dawn chorus. Yellow-throated and Keel-billed Toucans call from the towering Cuipo trees; Red-lored and Mealy parrots fly overhead; White-bellied Antbird, Bright-rumped Attila, White-headed Wren, and Golden-headed Manakin sing from the surrounding forests; while Pale-bellied Hermit and Sapphire-throated Hummingbirds visit the flowers around camp. Rufous-tailed Jacamar and

Barred Puffbird are also seen frequently around the lodge. After breakfast, we will work our way into the forest on “Nando’s Trail,” in hopes of finding Tiny Hawk, Black Antshrike, Great Antshrike, Olive-backed Quail-Dove, Cinnamon Becard, Black-tailed Trogon, Double-banded Graytail, Gray-cheeked Nunlet, Yellow-breasted Flycatcher, Royal Flycatcher, and Russet-winged Schiffornis. We will also be looking for Red-throated Caracara, King Vulture, and Short-tailed Hawk overhead in the clearings. Ornate Hawk-Eagle, Plumbeous Kite, and Zone-tailed Hawks are also possible.

After lunch, we can enjoy the hummingbirds and other species around the camp, dip our feet in the rocky stream or have a siesta. Then we will head an hour southeast to bird the forests and swampy meadows along the road toward Yaviza, at the end of the Pan-American Highway. Black-billed Flycatcher, Sooty-headed Tyrannulet, Jet Antbird, Black Oropendola, Pied Water-Tyrant, Bicolored Hawk, Black-collared Hawk, Pearl Kite, White-tailed Kite, Limpkin, Spot-breasted Woodpecker, Ruddy-breasted Seedeater, Yellow-hooded Blackbird, Black-capped Donacobius, and Red-breasted Blackbird can all be found as we head farther into Darién today.

We will return to camp in time to freshen up for dinner. After dinner, we will gather to look for owls, including Striped, Crested, Barn, Black-and-white, and Mottled Owls, as well as Common and Great Potoos and likely some nocturnal mammals. We will end the day with our checklist, tallying our sightings for our first full day at the Canopy Camp!

Day 4, Wed, March 26. El Salto Road, Las Lagunas Road and Aruza Lagoons

We will meet for an early breakfast before heading to El Salto Road for the morning. El Salto Road extends 6 km north from the Pan-American Highway and ends at the mighty Río Chucunaque. This open road and surrounding dry forest is a great place to search for regional specialties including Golden-green Woodpecker, Double-banded Graytail, Blue-and-gold, and Chestnut-fronted Macaws, Black and Crested Oropendolas, Blue Cotinga, White-eared Conebill, Black-breasted Puffbird, Orange-crowned Oriole, and the majestic King Vulture. A trail at the end of the road will take us into low-canopy forest, where we hope to find Bare-crowned Antbird, Pale-bellied Hermit, Olivaceous Piculet, Streak-headed Woodcreeper, and Forest Elaenia.

This afternoon we will bird along the road to Las Lagunas. This road extends 12 km south off the Pan-American Highway through open farmland, dry scrub and roadside habitat. The road eventually crosses a small stream and ends at small ponds. Along the roadsides, we hope to find Red-breasted Blackbird, Spot-breasted Woodpecker, Yellow-breasted Flycatcher, White-headed Wren, Smooth-billed and Greater Ani, Muscovy Duck, Rufescent Tiger-Heron, Southern Lapwing, Blue-headed Parrot, Laughing and Aplomado Falcons, Striped Cuckoo, Scaly-breasted Hummingbird, Ringed and Amazon Kingfishers, Fork-tailed Flycatcher, Buff-breasted Wren, Bananaquit, Giant and Shiny Cowbirds, and Crested Oropendola. If we’re lucky, we may get a glimpse of a Chestnut-fronted Macaw or a shy Little Cuckoo, both having been seen along this road. At the lagoons, we hope to find wetland birds like Pied Water-Tyrant, Capped Heron, the

beautiful Yellow-hooded Blackbird, and Black-capped Donacobius. We will drive back to Canopy Camp as dusk draws near and will watch for Common Pauraque and Tropical Screech-Owl along the way.

Day 5, Thu, March 27. Harpy Eagle Full-day Trip

One of the most spectacular birds of the Darién and all of the neotropics is the Harpy Eagle—Panama’s elusive National Bird. Powerful and majestic, Harpy Eagles live in intact dense lowland rainforest. The Harpy Eagle is our target for the day! Today we will start very early, long before sunrise, and drive to Yaviza, at the end of the Pan-American Highway. Arriving at dawn in Yaviza, we will board a “piragua”—a dugout canoe, and traverse the still waters of the Chucunaque and Tuirá rivers. The river edges offer shrub and grass habitat, as well as mudflats and beaches depending on the water level. There are plenty of birds to see along the riverside. After our piragua ride, and depending on where the eagles are being seen, we will be hiking or even going by horseback to visit these beautiful apex predators. The birding is also good in this region and we will be especially looking for Great Green Macaws, Red-throated Caracara, and Black Oropendola.

After lunch and a break, we will retrace our steps and start our way back to the Canopy Camp. We will plan to arrive back at the Canopy Camp by dinnertime where we can reminisce about the fantastic day we had!

Day 6, Fri, March 28. Quebrada Felix and Lajas Blancas

We will meet for an early breakfast at the Canopy Camp. This morning we bird Quebrada Felix—this newly discovered site awaits us to be explored! Quebrada Felix is nestled in the base of the Filo del Tallo Hydrological Reserve, and is just a short drive from the Canopy Camp. Surrounded by tall trees and mature lowland forest, we will walk the rocky stream in search of some of Panama’s most wanted species. Here, we will try for Black-crowned Antpitta, Scaly-throated Leaf-tosser, Speckled Mourner, Ocellated Antbird, Rufous-winged and Moustached Antwrens, White-fronted Nunbird, Wedge-billed Woodcreeper, Royal Flycatcher and our endemic Stripe-cheeked Woodpecker. It is also a great spot to find Fasciated Tiger-Heron, Green-and-rufous Kingfisher, Bicolored Antbird, Golden-crowned Spadebill, Double-banded Graytail and much more. Crested and Solitary Eagles have even been spotted here, a great testament to the mature forest of the area. Quebrada Felix is becoming a favorite spot among our guides and recent visitors.

This afternoon we explore the open areas and mixed forests of Lajas Blancas. Lajas Blancas is the closest Embera Indigenous community to the Canopy Camp, a large community with a population of over 1000 residents. Just 15 minutes away, the area around the community boasts great birding and the opportunity to find many Darien specialties! After turning off the Pan-American Highway, we drive through pasture and open farmland—a great place to see One-colored Becard, Great Potoo, Spot-breasted Woodpecker, Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet, Yellow-breasted Flycatcher, Black Antshrike and Black Oropendola. During the dry season, a bridge across the Chucunaque River provides us easy access to some mature secondary forest

where Double-banded Graytail, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, White-winged and Cinnamon Becards, Cinnamon and Golden-green woodpeckers, manakins and others can be found. Beyond the community, the road continues and there is much more forest, including primary forest at its far reaches, waiting to be explored. Dinner at Canopy Camp.

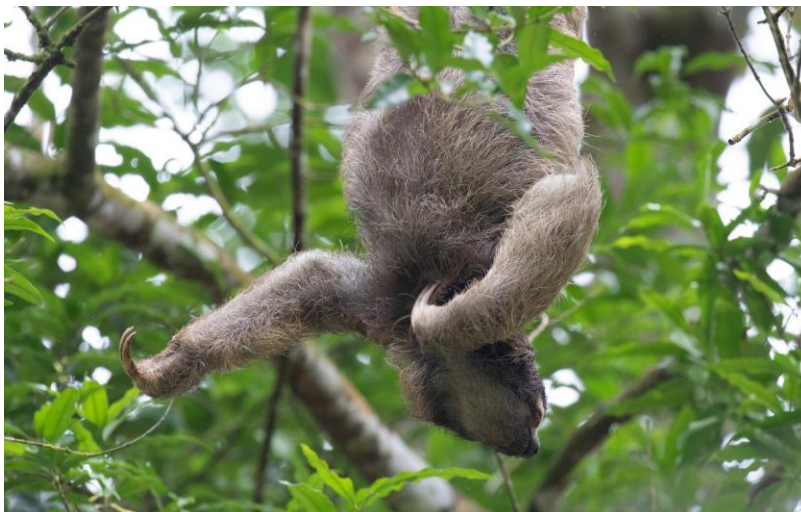
Day 7, Sat, March 29. San Francisco Nature Reserve and return to Panama City

We will wake before dawn to pack and have an early breakfast, say our goodbyes to the Canopy Camp, and start our journey back to Panama City. On our way, we will stop for birding at San Francisco Nature Reserve, a private forest reserve owned and managed by the St. Francis Foundation, covering 1,300 acres in eastern Panama Province. The San Francisco Reserve was established in 2001 by Father Pablo Kasuboski, an American priest from Wisconsin who came to Panama in 1988. The reserve serves as a wildlife refuge and protects the headwaters of the main rivers of the area. This location has a variety of habitats including primary, secondary, and riparian forests, forest edge, fields, farmland, ponds, and wetlands. During our morning here, we will explore the some of the different habitats along the short road that enters the reserve. We will hope to find Great Jacamar, Broad-billed Motmot, Collared Aracari, Russet-winged Schiffornis, Royal Flycatcher, White-fronted Nunbird, Brownish Twistwing, Yellow-green Tyrannulet, Central American Pygmy-Owl, Blue and Plain-breasted Ground-Doves, and if we're very lucky, a Black-and-white Hawk-Eagle soaring overhead or a Wing-banded Antbird along the trails!

We will eventually head back to Panama City, stopping for lunch along the way. We will end our tour at the Crowne Plaza Airport Hotel for the night.

Day 8, Sun, March 30. Departure day

Our final morning! We will meet for a farewell breakfast and prepare for our shuttles from the Crowne Plaza Airport Hotel to Tocumen Airport. You can schedule your departure for any time this day.



Three-toed Sloths are welcomed daily visitors in Panama

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Contact and registration information

To sign up, each participant should complete the [booking form](#). Once we receive the form, we will send you information about paying the trip deposit. If you have any questions before registering, please contact the office at info@redhillbirding.com.

Timing

The trip will **begin on Thursday, March 23, 2025 in Panama City, Panama**. The tour will **end on Thursday, March 30, 2025 in Panama City, Panama**. The main airport in Panama City is Tocumen International Airport (PTY).

Upon arrival on March 23, there are free airport shuttle transfers to our hotel provided by the Riande Airport Hotel. The shuttles run 24 hours a day and leave for the airport every 30 minutes. More information about transfers to the hotel will be provided to the group after booking. If you would like to arrive the night before, we can book you a room at Riande Airport Hotel which includes breakfast. The 2023 price was \$110/night.

Please do not book your flights until we confirm that the minimum number of participants (6) have registered for this tour.

Price

The price of the trip is **\$4450** per person sharing and the single-room supplement is **\$908**. The Canopy Family charges a per person rate rather than a per room, so the single supplement is higher than usual for our tours. The price includes all meals, from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 8, all transportation and accommodation during that period; internal flights (if applicable); bottled water and non-alcoholic beverages with meals; a Red Hill Birding guide and a local guide for the duration of the trip; tips for the local guides and drivers; and all entrance fees. The price **does not include** international airfare; visa fees; alcoholic beverages outside of wine at dinner; snacks; laundry; tips for the Red Hill Birding guides; tips for hotel staff; or other items of a personal nature.

A deposit of **\$1000** is due upon booking to secure your reservation for this tour (**\$2000** if joining both tours) and full payment is due by **December 15, 2024**.

Physical difficulty

This trip is **physically moderate**. The terrain is varied, but with few relatively steep trails. We will be birding along roads, wide trails, and narrow trails. Some trails may be slippery after rain, and others may be slightly flooded and muddy. The hike for Harpy Eagle could take up to 2 hours in a hot and humid environment. It is also necessary to get in and out of canoes from a dock and along banks of rivers, which can be slick. All in all, we will be walking quite a bit, but we will be walking at a “birding pace.” There is excellent birding right at the Canopy Camp, so there is always the option to stay back if you do not feel up for a particular outing.

Pace

The pace of the trip is **moderate**. A typical day will have us up early to take advantage of early morning bird activity and to beat the midday heat. We will sometimes take breakfast into the field with us. Some days will include a mid-day siesta after lunch before returning out in the cooler afternoon temperatures and finishing with time for a short rest before dinner. There will be optional night-time outings to look for owls, nightjars, and other nocturnal creatures.

Weather

Panama is solidly a neotropical country, and we will be visiting during the “dry season”, when daily rain is not expected, but always a possibility. We will make every effort to avoid being outside during the rain, but it is important to have good rain gear and waterproof hiking shoes. The weather will be hot and humid in the lowlands at the Canopy Camp.

Photography

The photographic opportunities in Panama are **good**. Bird photography inside the forest is always difficult, but some of our birding is along roads and wide trails, where there is better light. Photography from the Canopy Camp can be excellent. That said, this is primarily a birdwatching tour, so while there will be ample opportunities for photography along the way, we will not be making special considerations for photographers.

Accommodations & Food

The accommodations and food on this tour are excellent. The Canopy Family is famous for their excellent cuisine. Wireless internet is provided for free in the common area of the camp. We will be staying in safari-style “tents”, each with their own beds, windows, electricity and attached bathrooms. Bottled water will be provided throughout. In the hot climate, it is important to stay hydrated. Soda, wine, and coffee/tea are included with meals; additional alcoholic beverages are extra.

Packing considerations

You will generally want to wear comfortable, light-weight clothing. Long sleeves and long pants are recommended for sun protection. Comfortable, waterproof walking/hiking shoes are a must. Light-weight, quick-dry clothing that will allow you to stay cool in the tropical heat and dry quickly after rains is best. Although we are in the dry season, appropriate rain gear or an umbrella would be wise, as the tropics can always have rain.

In terms of gear, you will want to bring the usual binoculars, field guide, hat, camera, and other gear you are accustomed to going birding with. It is critical to stay well-hydrated, so please bring a reusable water bottle. For coffee drinkers, a travel coffee mug is a nice thing to have along in the morning. Panama at this time of year is generally sunny, so bring sunscreen and a hat. Biting insects are rarely a problem at the camp and where we are birding, but some mosquitoes will be around in areas with standing water, so some bug spray will be helpful. A flashlight (preferably a headlamp) will be useful during our night-time outings. Electricity is available at all lodges. Be sure to bring enough extra batteries and memory cards for cameras. No adapters for electricity are needed.

As always, the essentials, such as binoculars and medications, should be packed in carry-on bags in case of lost luggage.

eBird

Your Red Hill Birding guide and/or local guides will eBirding the entire tour. If you have an eBird account, they will collect your username/email address in order to share those lists and will share them when it is convenient. You are welcome to edit your lists to add/remove species, edit text, or change numbers as much as you would like, since any edits you make to your lists do not change others' lists. And we love it when participants add photos and sound recordings to the checklists!

The leader will also provide an eBird Trip Report after the tour and will add participants who have an eBird account to the report; this way, you can see your personal trip details and those of the whole group. These trips reports are accessible to anyone who has the link, so participants who do not have eBird accounts can still view the trip report to see the trip list, photos, and any added text.

Resources

The best field guide for Panama is *The Birds of Panama: A Field Guide*, by George Angehr and Robert Dean. *Birds of Central America: Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama*, by Andrew C. Vallely and Dale Dyer is also excellent, but obviously covers more than our tour area. *The New Neotropical Companion* by John Kricher provides a highly readable and extremely informative introduction to tropical ecology, with a lot of great information about birds.

The Merlin Bird ID App by Cornell University has a very nice “bird pack” for Panama, which can be downloaded for free and has photos, information, and sound recordings of the birds we will encounter. It is highly recommended.

Money

The currency in Panama is the Balboa, the value of which is tied 1:1 with the American dollar. Dollars are accepted and circulated as legal currency. There is no need to change money.

Tipping

We aim to provide exceptional service, using guides that are knowledgeable, interesting, personable, and experienced. While tipping is never expected, if you feel that your guides went above and beyond, you are welcome to leave them a gratuity. **Note that the tip for our local guides and drivers are included in the tour price.**

Travel insurance

We do not require travel insurance for trips to Panama. However, we recommend purchasing it to help protect you against the unexpected. For your convenience, we offer travel protection through Travelex Insurance Services. For more information on the available plans or to enroll, go to www.travelexinsurance.com or contact Travelex Insurance Services at 800-228-9792 and reference location number 13-0441.

Travelex Insurance Services, Inc CA Agency License #0D10209. Travel Insurance is underwritten by, Berkshire Hathaway Specialty Insurance Company, NAIC #22276. 55Y

Note that to be eligible for some benefits, travel insurance must be purchased within 1-2 weeks of paying the trip deposit.



Our luxurious tents at the Canopy Camp. Each have their own view of the forest!