

**HOLIDAY SEASON IN PANAMA:  
NEW YEAR AT PANAMA'S  
CANOPY TOWER**

**DECEMBER 27, 2009 – JANUARY 3, 2010**

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## **Panama: New Year at Canopy Tower**

### **December 27, 2009-January 3, 2010**

It is no secret that Panama is one of the premier birding destinations in the Neotropics. Even less a secret is the Canopy Tower, a premier birding destination near Panama City. One quickly becomes aware of its fame by the numerous magazine covers featuring the Canopy Tower that are found framed and hung around the dining area of the Tower itself. There are good reasons for so many magazines wishing to do a cover story about the Canopy Tower, one being its ideal location within the Soberania National Park, offering spectacular birding opportunities. Although its close proximity to various other birding locations is a plus, there is nothing like waking up to the dawn chorus and walking up atop the Tower to gaze upon the numerous tropical birds flying over the forest canopy, with views of the Panama Canal and Panama City skyline to remind us that this birding location is unique.

So it is no wonder that our New Year tour starts atop the Canopy Tower early in the morning where we enjoy a cup of coffee or tea while watching the sun rise over the forest canopy. In no time we exchange our warm drinks for our binoculars as the canopy comes alive with various species of birds. Our tour began with Red-shouldered Parrots flying in the early morning sunlight and perching in a tree as we all looked on. Shortly after, a Scaled Pigeon demanded our attention as it conspicuously sat out on an open branch. Soon after admiring the pigeon's bright red bill and its breast feathers with white central spots and prominent black edging—giving it a scaled appearance—our attention was refocused on a pair of Keel-billed Toucans that had alighted in an adjacent tree. These two toucans began croaking, calling, and bobbing their multicolored bills and heads, tossing them from side to side in unison. A Green Shrike-Vireo soon diverted our attention as it began singing in a densely leafed tree just next to the Tower. After a few minutes of its tirelessly repeated three-note call, it pleased us all by hopping out on an exposed branch. We quickly focused our binoculars to admire its bright grass-green plumage and conspicuous blue band on the hind neck. It turned to show off its bright yellow throat as it continued calling before hopping back inside the canopy. As Short-tailed Hawks and a Zone-tailed Hawk took advantage of the early morning thermals and Mealy Parrots circled the Tower, a Purple-crowned Fairy hummingbird fed on a flowering vine atop the canopy near the Tower. And to think this was all taking place before we'd even had breakfast.

It is no wonder birds and birders alike flock to Panama for the holidays. It never ceases to amaze me what surprises await those who join a "Holiday Season in Panama" tour. One of the highlights

of our tour was the Yellow-Green Tyrannulet, which is found only in central and eastern Panama. We came across this Panamanian endemic in an area of second-growth woodland in the Bayano Lowlands. A pair was seen with a mixed flock and gave each of us very accommodating views as they fed in the low trees just above us. Another very special species seen in the same flock was the White-eared Conebill. We saw a pair feeding, gleaning in the terminal foliage and branches just above our heads. Also on the same trail we saw a Black Antshrike. This species, found only in eastern Panama and northern Colombia, was not shy at all as it fed beside the trail. Another memorable highlight was the Blue Cotinga perched in the canopy, seen from the Discovery Center Tower at Pipeline Road. It was an added bonus to the incredible views as we watched the sun set on the forest canopy. No less than five species of parrots circled the Tower and perched in the surrounding trees, including the Brown-hooded Parrot and Blue-headed Parrot, whose colors stood out in the evening sunlight as Blue Dacnis, Green Honeycreeper, Red-legged Honeycreeper, and Golden-hooded Tanager moved through the branches nearby.

I must not fail to mention the Great Potoo we saw on a day perch. We watched as it sat motionless, high in the tree, looking like an extension of the snag it sat on. Another night bird we saw perched by day was a pair of Spectacled Owls. These large, beautiful owls were very much aware of us as we gazed at them in awe and wonder. A memorable moment was provided by a pair of Red-capped Manakins along the entrance road to the Canopy Tower. We all looked on as they flew rapidly from perch to perch before remaining motionless on a low branch beside the road. We also had a great view of a Blue-capped Manakin that responded to playback, and flew in and sat at eye level while we were birding along Pipeline Road. These are just a few of the many memorable moments we experienced.

Of course, among the various species of hummingbirds, four species of trogons, four species of puffbirds, and various species of tanagers and antbirds, I could go on and on mentioning the thrill and enjoyment we experienced watching these tropical marvels. I am sure those on our "Holiday Season in Panama" tours will fondly recall these and many more moments as they reminisce about the wonderful time they had birding Panama. So next winter, when the cold climate has sent the birds south for warmer weather, I suggest you join a VENT tour to the Canopy Tower and witness for yourself why so many magazines write about this premier birding destination of the Tropics. I'm sure you will agree that its fame is well-deserved

## Itinerary

- December 27, 2009- Canopy Lodge Pre-trip participants transfer to Canopy Tower, while rest of group arrives at Canopy Tower. Birding from Tower.
- December 28, 2009- Early morning birding from Tower, after breakfast birding along Semaphore Hill. Afternoon spent birding at Carmen's house and Ammo Dump Ponds.
- December 29, 2009- Day Trip to Bayano lowlands and evening birding from Tower.
- December 30, 2009- Day birding at Pipeline Road and Discovery Center.
- December 31, 2009- Day Trip to Caribbean side of Panama and Achiote Road, returned by trans-continental train ride back to Pacific. Some witnessed fireworks display atop Tower.
- January 1, 2010- Pre-breakfast birding from Canopy Tower, after breakfast birding along Plantation Road. Afternoon birding was spent at Summit Pond plus a Night Ride for Owls and Mammals.
- January 2, 2010- Morning birding at Parque Natural Metropolitano (Metro Park), afternoon birding at Tower and Mira Flores Locks.
- January 3, 2010- Departures for home.

## Bird List

### Tinamous

Great Tinamou  
Little Tinamou

### Ducks, Geese, & Swans

Muscovy Duck  
Blue-winged Teal

### Guans & Chachalacas

Gray-headed Chachalaca

### Tinamidae

Tinamus major  
Crypturelius soui

### Anatidae

Cairina moschata  
Anas discors

### Cracidae

Ortalis cinereiceps

**Grebes**

Crested bobwhite

**Pelicans**

Brown Pelican

**Cormorants**

Neotropic cormorant

**Frigatebirds**

Magnificent Frigatebird

**Hérons, Egrets, & bitterns**

Rufescent Tiger-Heron

Great Blue Heron

Great Egret

Snowy Egret

Little Blue Heron

Tricolored Heron

Cattle Egret

Green Heron

Boat-billed Heron

**Storks**

Wood Stork

**New World Vultures**

Black Vulture

Turkey Vulture

King Vulture

**Hawks, Eagles, & Kites**

Osprey

Gray-headed Kite

White-tailed Kite

Snail Kite

Crane Hawk

White Hawk

Savanna Hawk

Gray Hawk

Short-tailed Hawk

Zone-tailed Hawk

Black Hawk-Eagle

**Podicipedidae**

Colinus cristatus

**Pelecanidae**

Pelecanus occidentalis

**Phalacrocoracidae**

Phalacrocorax brasilianus

**Fregatidae**

Fregata magnificens

**Ardeidae**

Tigrisoma lineatum

Ardea herodias

Ardea alba

Egretta thula

Egretta caerulea

Egretta tricolor

Bubulcus ibis

Butorides virescens

Cochlearius cochlearius

**Ciconiidae**

Mycteria americana

**Cathartidae**

Coragyps atratus

Cathartes aura

Sarcoramphus papa

**Accipitridae**

Pandion haliaetus

Leptodon cayanensis

Elanus leucurus

Rostrhamus sociabilis

Rostrhamus sociabilis

Leucopternis albicollis

Buteogallus meridionalis

Buteo nitidus

Buteo brachyurus

Buteo albonotatus

Spizaetus tyrannus

**Falcons & Caracaras**

Salty-backed Forest-Falcon (h)  
Collared Forest-Falcon  
Crested Caracara  
Yellow-headed Caracara  
Bat Falcon

**Rails, Gallinules, & Coots**

White-throated Crake  
Gray-necked Wood-Rail  
Purple Gallinule  
Common Moorhen

**Plovers & Lapwings**

Southern Lapwing

**Jacanas**

Wattled Jacana

**Sandpipers & allies**

Spotted Sandpiper  
Whimbrel

**Gulls & Terns**

Laughing Gull  
Black Tern  
Royal Tern

**Doves & Pigeons**

Rock Pigeon  
Pale-vented Pigeon  
Scaled Pigeon  
Short-billed Pigeon  
Ruddy Ground-Dove  
White-tipped Dove  
Gray-chested Dove

**Parrots, Macaws, & Allies**

Orange-chinned Parakeet  
Brown-hooded Parrot  
Blue-headed Parrot  
Red-lore Parrot  
Mealy Parrot  
Yellow-crowned Parrot

**Falconidae**

*Micrastur mirandollei*  
*Micrastur semitorquatus*  
*Caracara cheriway*  
*Milvago chimachima*  
*Falco ruficularis*

**Rallidae**

*Laterallus albigularis*  
*Aramides cajanea*  
*Porphyrio martinica*  
*Gallinula chloropus*

**Charadriidae**

*Vanellus chilensis*

**Jacanidae**

*Jacana jacana*

**Scolopacidae**

*Actitis macularius*  
*Numenius phaeopus*

**Laridae**

*Larus atricilla*  
*Chlidonias niger*  
*Thalasseus maxima*

**Columbidae**

*Columba livia*  
*Patagioenas cayennensis*  
*Patagioenas speciosa*  
*Patagioenas nigriostriis*  
*Columbina talpacoti*  
*Leptotila verreauxi*  
*Leptotila cassini*

**Psittacidae**

*Brotogeris jugularis*  
*Pionopsitta haematotis*  
*Pionus menstruus*  
*Amazona autumnalis*  
*Amazona farinose*  
*Amazona ochrocephala*

**Cuckoos**

Squirrel Cuckoo  
Greater Ani  
Smooth-billed Ani

**Typical Owls**

Crested Owl  
Spectacled Owl  
Mottled Owl

**Potoos**

Great Potoo

**Swifts**

Vaux's Swift  
Short-tailed Swift  
Band-rumped Swift  
Lesser Swallow-tailed Swift

**Hummingbirds**

Western Long-tailed Hermit  
Stripe-throated Hermit  
White-necked Jacobin  
Black-throated Mango  
Violet-crowned Woodnymph  
Violet-bellied Hummingbird  
Blue-chested Hummingbird  
Snowy-bellied Hummingbird  
Rufous-tailed Hummingbird  
White-vented Plumeleteer  
Purple-crowned Fairy

**Trogons**

White-tailed Trogon  
Black-throated Trogon  
Black-tailed Trogon  
Slaty-tailed Trogon

**Motmots**

Blue-crowned Motmot  
Rufous Motmot  
Broad-billed Motmot

**Kingfishers**

Amazon Kingfisher

**Cuculidae**

Piaya cayana  
Crotophaga major  
Crotophaga ani

**Strigidae**

Lophostrix cristata  
Pulsatrix perspicillata  
Ciccaba virgata

**Nyctibiidae**

Nyctibiidae grandis

**Apodidae**

Chaetura vauxi  
Chaetura brachyura  
Chaetura spinicaudus  
Panyptila cayennensis

**Trochilidae**

Phaethornis longirostris  
Phaethornis striigularis  
Florisuga mellivora  
Anthracothorax nigricollis  
Thalurania colombica  
Damophila Julie  
Amazilia (Polyerata) amabilis  
Amazilia (Saucerottia) edward  
Amazilia tzacatl  
Chalybura buffonii  
Heliathryx barroti

**Trogonidae**

Trogon viridis  
Trogon rufus  
Trogon melanurus  
Trogon massena

**Momotidae**

Momotus momota  
Baryphthengus martii  
Electron platyrhynchum

**Alcedinidae**

Chloroceryle amazona

Green Kingfisher  
American Pygmy Kingfisher

### **Puffbirds**

White-necked Puffbird  
Black-breasted Puffbird  
Pied Puffbird  
White-whiskered Puffbird

### **Toucans**

Collared Aracari  
Keel-billed Toucan  
Chestnut-mandibled Toucan

### **Woodpeckers & Allies**

Black-cheeked Woodpecker  
Red-crowned Woodpecker  
Cinnamon Woodpecker  
Lineated Woodpecker  
Crimson-crested Woodpecker

### **Ovenbirds & Woodcreepers**

Plain Xenops  
Plain-brown Woodcreeper  
Olivaceous Woodcreeper  
Northern Barred-Woodcreeper  
Straight-billed Woodcreeper  
Cocoa Woodcreeper  
Streak-headed Woodcreeper

### **Typical Antbirds**

Fasciated Antshrike  
Black Antshrike  
Western Slaty-Antshrike  
Checker-throated Antwren  
White-flanked Antwren  
Slaty Antwren  
Rufous-winged Antwren  
Dot-winged Antwren  
Dusky Antbird  
White-bellied Antbird  
Spotted Antbird  
Bicolored Antbird

*Chloroceryle americana*  
*Chloroceryle aenea*

### **Bucconidae**

*Notharchus macrorhynchos*  
*Notharchus pectoralis*  
*Notharchus tectus*  
*Malacoptila panamensis*

### **Ramphastidae**

*Pteroglossus torquatus*  
*Ramphastos sulfuratus*  
*Ramphastos swainsonii*

### **Picidae**

*Melanerpes pucherani*  
*Melanerpes rubricapillus*  
*Celeus loricatus*  
*Dryocopus lineatus*  
*Campephilus melanoleucos*

### **Furnariidae**

*Xenops minutus*  
*Dendrocincla fuliginosa*  
*Sittasomus griseicapillus*  
*Dendrocolaptes sanctithomae*  
*Xiphorhynchus picus*  
*Xiphorhynchus susurrans*  
*Lepidocolaptes souleyeii*

### **Thamnophilidae**

*Cymbilaimus lineatus*  
*Thamnophilus nigriceps*  
*Thamnophilus antrinuch*  
*Myrmotherula fulviventris*  
*Myrmotherula axillaries*  
*Myrmotherua schisticolor*  
*Herpsiliochmus rufimarginalus*  
*Microrhophias quixensis*  
*Cercomacra tyrannina*  
*Myrmeciza longipes*  
*Hylophylax naevioides*  
*Gymnopithys leucaspis*



### **Antthrushes & Antpittas**

Black-faced Antthrush  
Streak-chested Antpitta

### **Tyrant Flycatchers**

Brown-capped Tyrannulet  
Southern Beardless-Tyrannulet  
Forest Elaenia  
Yellow-bellied Elaenia  
Yellow-green Tyrannulet  
Paltry Tyrannulet  
Southern Bentbill  
Common Tody-Flycatcher  
Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher  
Olivaceous Flatbill  
White-throated Spadebill  
Golden-crowned Spadebill  
Ruddy-tailed Flycatcher  
Dusky-capped Flycatcher  
Great-crested Flycatcher  
Lesser Kiskadee  
Great Kiskadee  
Boat-billed Flycatcher  
Rusty-margined Flycatcher  
Social Flycatcher  
Streaked Flycatcher  
Tropical Kingbird  
Fork-tailed Flycatcher

### **Genera incertae sedis**

Cinnamon Becard  
Masked Tityra  
Black-crowned Tityra

### **Cotingas**

Blue Cotinga  
Purple-throated Fruitcrow

### **Manakins**

Golden-collared Manakin  
Blue-crowned Manakin  
Red-capped Manakin

### **Formicariidae**

Formicarius analis  
Hylopezus analis

### **Tyrannidae**

Ornithion brunneicapillus  
Camptostoma obsoletum  
Myiopagis gaimardii  
Elaenia flavogaster  
Phylloscartes flavovirens  
Zimmerius villssimus  
Oncostoma olivaceum  
Todiostrostrum cinereum  
Todiostrostrum nigriceps  
Rhynchocyclus olivaceus  
Platyrrinchus mystaceus  
Platyrrinchus coronatus  
Terenotriccus erythrurus  
Myiarchus tuberculifer  
Myiarchus crinitus  
Pitangus lictor  
Pitangus sulphuratus  
Megarynchus pitangua  
Myiozetetes cayanensis  
Myiozetetes similis  
Myiodynastes maculatus  
Tyrannus melancholicus  
Tyrannus savanna

Pachyramphus cinnamomeus  
Tityra semifasciata  
Tityra inquisitor

### **Contingidae**

Continga natteririi  
Querula purpurata

### **Pipridae**

Manacus vitellinus  
Pipra coronata  
Pipra mentails

**Vireos & Allies**

Scrub Greenlet  
Golden-fronted Greenlet  
Lesser Greenlet  
Green Shrike-Vireo  
Rufous-browed Peppershrike

**Swallows**

Gray-breasted Martin  
Southern Rough-winged Swallow  
Barn Swallow

**Wrens**

Black-bellied Wren  
Bay Wren  
Rufous-breasted Wren  
Rufous-and-White Wren  
House Wren  
White-breasted Wood-Wren  
Song Wren

**Old World Warblers**

Long-billed Gnatwren  
Tropical Gnatcatcher

**Thrushes & Allies**

Clay-colored Robin

**Mockingbirds & Thrashers**

Tropical Mockingbird

**New World Warblers**

Tennessee Warbler  
Yellow Warbler  
Chestnut-sided Warbler  
Bay-breasted Warbler  
Prothonotary Warbler  
Northern Warbler

**Genus incertae sedis**

Bananaquit

**Tanagers & Allies**

Rosy Thrush-Tanager  
Gray-headed Tanager

**Vireonidae**

Hylophilus flavipes  
Manaacus viteliinus  
Hylophilus decurtatus  
Vireolanlus pulchellus  
Cyclarhis gujanensis

**Hirundinidae**

Progne chalybea  
Stelgidopteryx ruficollis  
Hirundo rustica

**Troglodytidae**

Thryothorus fasciatoventris  
Thryothorus nigricapillus  
Thryothorus rutilus  
Thryothorus rufalbus  
Troglodytes aedon  
Henicorhina leucosticta  
Cyphorhinus phaeocephalus

**Sylviidae**

Ramphocaenus melanurus  
Polioptila plumbea

**Turdidae**

Turdus grayi

**Mimidae**

Mimus gilvus

**Parulidae**

Vermivora peregrina  
Dendroica petechia  
Dendroica pensylvanica  
Dendroica castanea  
Protonotaria cilrea  
Seiurus noveboracensis

Coereba flaveola

**Thraupidae**

Rhodinocichia rosea  
Eucometis penicillata

White-shouldered Tanager  
Red-crowned Ant-Tanager  
Red-throated Ant-Tanager  
Hepatic Tanager  
Summer Tanager  
Crimson-backed Tanager  
Flame-rumped Tanager  
Blue-gray Tanager  
Palm Tanager  
White-eared conebill  
Plain-colored Tanager  
Golden-hooded Tanager  
Scarlet-thighed Dacnis  
Blue Dacnis  
Green Honeycreeper  
Shining Honeycreeper  
Red-legged Honeycreeper

### **Buntings, Sparrows, & Allies**

Blue-black Grassquit  
Variable Seedeater  
  
Thick-billed Seed-Finch  
Saffron Finch  
Orange-billed sparrow  
Black-striped Sparrow

### **Saltators & Cardinals**

Buff-throated Saltator  
Black-headed Saltator  
Slate-colored Grosbeak  
Blue-black Grosbeak

### **Troupials & Allies**

Great-tailed Grackle  
Yellow-backed Oriole  
Yellow-tailed Oriole  
Baltimore Oriole  
Yellow-billed Cacique  
Yellow-rumped Cacique  
Scarlet-rumped Cacique  
Chestnut-headed Oropendola

### **Siskins, Crossbills, & Allies**

Yellow-crowned Euphonia  
Thick-billed Euphonia

Tachyphonus luctuosus  
Habia rubica  
Habia fuscicauda  
Piranga flava  
Piranga rubra  
Ramphocelus dimidiatus  
Ramphocelus flammigerus  
Thraupis episcopus  
Thraupis palmarum  
Conirostrum leucogenys  
Tanagara inornata  
Tanagara larvata  
Dacnis venusta  
Dacnis cayana  
Chlorophanes spiza  
Cyanerpes lucidus  
Cyanerpes cyaneus

### **Emberizidae**

Volatinia jacarina  
Sporophila (corvine)  
americana  
Oryzoborus funereus  
Sicalis flaveola  
Arremon aurantirostris  
Arremon conirostris

### **Cardinalidae**

Saltator maximus  
Saltator atriceps  
Saltator grossus  
Cyanocompsa cyanoides

### **Icteridae**

Quiscalus mexicanus  
Icterus chrysater  
Icterus mesomelas  
Icterus galbula  
Amblycercus holosericeus  
Cacicus cela  
Cacicus uropygialis  
Psarocolius wagleri

### **Fringillidae**

Euphonia luteicapilla  
Euphonia laniirostris

Fulvous-vented Euphonia  
Lesser Goldfinch

Euphonia fulvicrissa  
Carduelis psaltria

### **Old world Sparrows**

House Sparrow

### **Passeridae**

Passer domesticus

### **Mammal List**

#### **Opossums**

Common Opossum

#### **Didelphidae**

Didelphidae marsupialis

#### **Sloths**

Hoffman's Two-toed Sloth

Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth

#### **Megalonychidae & Bradypodidae**

Choloepus hoffmanni

Bradypus variegates

#### **Armadillos**

Nine-banded Armadillo

#### **Dasypodidae**

Dasypus novemcinctus

#### **Tamarins**

Geoffroy's Tamarin

#### **Caliitrichidae**

Saguinis geofftoyi

#### **New World Monkeys**

White-throated Capuchin

Mantled Howler Monkey

#### **Cebidae**

Cebus capucinus

Alouatta palliata

#### **Squirrels**

Variegated Squirrel

#### **Scluridae**

Sciurus variegatoides

#### **Capybara**

Capybara

#### **Hydrochaeridae**

Hydrochaeris hydrochaeris

#### **Agoutis**

Central American Agouti

#### **Dasyproctidae**

Dasyprocta punctata

#### **Raccoons & Allies**

White-nosed Coatimundi

Olingo

Nasua narica

Bassaricyon gabbii

#### **Neotropical Fruit Bats**

Tent-making Bat

#### **Stenodermatinae**

Uroderma bilobatum

#### **Porcupines**

Rothschild's porcupine

#### **Erethizontidae**

Coendou rothschildi