

Reef and Rainforest Tours



The Beautiful Birds and Wondrous Wildlife of Panama

15 Days Group Tour
Led by Local Naturalist Guides

11 – 25 January 2012
05 – 19 February 2012
18 March – 1 April 2012
19 April – 03 May 2012

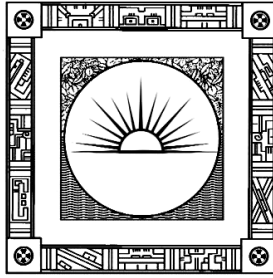


The Beautiful Birds and Wondrous Wildlife of Panama Group Tour

ITINERARY IN BRIEF

Panama possesses an astonishing array of bird species including five macaw species, the three-wattled bellbird, and the world-renowned resplendent quetzal. This group tour is an in-depth exploration of avian diversity across the isthmus, offering impressive and rewarding birdwatching opportunities, even for the most discerning birder.

- Day 01 Depart **LONDON HEATHROW**. Arrive **PANAMA CITY**. Met and tfr to the hotel. O/n **GAMBOA RAINFOREST RESORT, FB**.
- Day 02 Visit **SOBERANIA NATIONAL PARK**. Explore **PIPELINE ROAD, SUMMIT PONDS** and **PLANTATION LOOP**. O/n **GAMBOA RAINFOREST RESORT, FB**.
- Day 03 Drive to **ESCOBAL** and **ACHIOTE** on the Caribbean side of Panama. Return to the hotel. Late afternoon birding in the resort grounds. O/n **GAMBOA RAINFOREST RESORT, FB**.
- Day 04 Visit the Metropolitan Nature Park. Fly to **DAVID**. Met and tfr to the hotel. Afternoon visit to a coffee farm. O/n **HOTEL BAMBITO, FB**.
- Day 05 Morning wildlife watching in **LA AMISTAD INTERNATIONAL PARK**. Afternoon in **VOLCAN BARU NATIONAL PARK**. O/n **HOTEL BAMBITO, FB**.
- Day 06 Morning drive to **TAPIR'S CANYON**. Continue the drive to **BOQUETE**. Afternoon birding in hotel grounds. O/n **FINCA LERIDA LODGE**
- Day 07 Morning to explore **FINCA LERIDA PRIVATE RESERVE**. Afternoon tfr to the airport for flight to **PANAMA CITY**. Met and tfr to the hotel. O/n **HOLIDAY INN PANAMA CANAL, FB**.
- Day 08 Catch charter flight to **SANTA CRUZ DE CANA**, in **DARIEN NATIONAL PARK**. Explore the Boca de Cupe Trail and surrounding area. O/n **CANA FIELD STATION, FB**.
- Day 09 Day to explore the **MINE TRAIL** and the **SETEGANTI TRAIL** in search of bird life. O/n **CANA FIELD STATION, FB**.
- Day 10 Hike to the **PIRRE CLOUD FOREST**. O/n **PIRRE CAMP, FB**
- Day 11 Morning hike to the top of **PIRRE MOUNTAIN**. Late afternoon birding around the tented camp. O/n **PIRRE CAMP, FB**.
- Day 12 Morning descent to the field station. Afternoon bird watching surrounding the field station. O/n **CANA FIELD STATION, FB**.
- Day 13 Morning charter flight to **PANAMA CITY**. Met on arrival and visit the old Panama mudflats (tide level permitting). Later, stop also at **COSTA DEL ESTE** for more bird watching. Farewell dinner. O/n **HOLIDAY INN PANAMA CANAL, FB**.
- Day 14 Morning at leisure. Later, transfer to Tocumen International Airport. Depart **PANAMA**.
- Day 15 Arrive **LONDON HEATHROW**.



ESCORTED GROUP TOUR THE BEAUTIFUL BIRDS AND WONDROUS WILDLIFE OF PANAMA

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 01

Depart LONDON HEATHROW and fly via AMSTERDAM to PANAMA CITY. Arrive Tocumen International Airport in Panama City. Met on arrival at the airport and transfer (1 hour) to the hotel near Soberania National Park. O/n GAMBOA RAINFOREST RESORT, BB. Set on the banks of the Chagres River the resort is in a stunning location surrounded by nature. Originally built in the 1930's to house Panama Canal employees, the wooden villas have been tastefully renovated to retain their original character. The resort offers a choice of restaurants and bars and boasts a spa and large swimming pool.



Day 02

Early morning transfer to SOBERANIA NATIONAL PARK. Reach the world-renowned PIPELINE ROAD by vehicle and commence the hike from the entrance. Pipeline Road is the site of the Audubon Society's 1996 world Christmas Bird Count when over 500 species of birds were identified in a period of 24 hours. During World War II, a pipeline was built along the Panama Canal to transport fuel from one ocean to the other in the event the waterway was attacked. Fortunately, it was never used. Today, the road built to maintain the pipeline provides excellent access to primary rainforests within Soberania National Park. (Contd.../)



(2).../ BEAUTIFUL BIRDS AND WONDROUS WILDLIFE OF PANAMA, 2009

(Contd.../) Only 45 minutes from Panama City, Soberania's 293,000 acres contain some 525 species of birds including the black hawk-eagle, black-cheeked woodpecker, black-breasted puffbird, broad-billed motmot, keel-billed toucan, blue cotinga, purple-throated fruitcrow, masked tytira, violaceous trogon, fasciated antshrike, shining honeycreeper, and a great array of migrants (during the North American winter months). Soberania is also home to 105 species of mammals including large felines, tamandua, agouti, two and three-toed sloth, white-faced capuchin, howler monkey, spider monkey, the endemic red-naped tamarin and 59 endemic plant species in



four life zones. A picnic lunch will be served at Summit Ponds. After lunch, continue the walk to Plantation Loop, along a low ridge to find some humid forest birds. O/n GAMBOA RAINFOREST RESORT, FB.

Day 03

Early morning pick up from the resort and drive to Escobal and Achote. Located on the Caribbean side of Panama, these areas are renowned for their bird watching potential. Search for the black hawk eagle, spot crowned barbet, brown hooded parrot, pied puffbird, rufous-crested coquette, Montezuma oropendula, black bellied wren, and less common species such as gray-cheeked nunlet and white headed wren. Return to the hotel for late afternoon birding around the resort. O/n GAMBOA RAINFOREST RESORT, FB.

Day 04

Morning drive to Metropolitan Nature Park, the only protected rainforest within capital city limits in Latin America. Specialties here include lance-tailed manakin, orange-billed sparrow, green honeycreeper, rufous and white wren.

Catch a flight late in the morning to DAVID, capital of the Chiriqui province. Chiriqui province is known as "Panama's breadbasket" having some of the most breathtaking scenery in Central America. Met on arrival at the airport and transfer by road to the western side of



the Baru Volcano to the town of Volcan. Lunch at the hotel on arrival. Afternoon visit to a coffee farm which offers great birding, including species such as rufous-browed peppershrike, white-winged tanager and fiery-billed aracari, in a transitional area between the highland and lower foothills of the western mountain range. O/n HOTEL BAMBITO, FB.

(3).../ BEAUTIFUL BIRDS AND WONDROUS WILDLIFE OF PANAMA, 2009

Day 05

Morning visit to LA AMISTAD INTERNATIONAL PARK. Shared with neighbouring Costa Rica and recognized in 1982 as a World Biosphere Reserve and UNESCO World Heritage Site, LA AMISTAD is located on the Central American natural land bridge. This area benefits from species overlap and, with great ranges in altitude, precipitation, soil and temperature, biodiversity here is at its best. Morning spent hiking and exploring La Amistad in the area of El Retoño in search of the Resplendent Quetzal, Silvery-fronted Tapaculo, Andean Pygmy-Owl, Barred Becard, Black and Yellow Silky Flycatcher among many other western highland birds.



After lunch at a local restaurant, drive to BARU VOLCANO NATIONAL PARK, located along the Talamanca mountain range. The Baru volcano and La Amistad parks are part of the Mesoamerican Biological corridor. Here there will be the opportunity to search for the resplendent quetzal. O/n HOTEL BAMBITO, FB.

Day 06

Morning drive to Tapir's Canyon, in search of lesser elaenia, bay-headed tanager, crested oropendola and a myriad of other species. Continue the drive to Boquete, descending to the lowlands through rice, corn and sugarcane fields. Arrive in BOQUETE, a countryside town dotted with flower, fruit and vegetable farms, coffee plantations and lush tropical cloud forest. Afternoon birding in the grounds of the hotel.



O/n FINCA LERIDA LODGE, FB. This small, comfortable eco-lodge is situated South of Baru Volcano, within an 800-acre private cloud forest nature reserve, approximately 1600 metres above sea-level. The lodge has comfortable rooms, a lounge area with an open fire to ward off the chilly evenings and small restaurant serving fresh and extremely good coffee from the lodge's private coffee plantation. Breathtaking views of the surrounding highlands and excellent birding can be found on the lodge's trails or simply from one's verandah.

(4).../ BEAUTIFUL BIRDS AND WONDROUS WILDLIFE OF PANAMA, 2009

Day 07

Morning to explore FINCA LERIDA, a privately owned reserve just outside Baru Volcano National Park. At an elevation of 2,286 metres above sea level, there is an opportunity to look for the elusive resplendent quetzal, three-wattled bellbird, black-faced solitaire, volcano hummingbird, long-tailed silky flycatcher and prong-billed barbet in their cool habitat of orchids, bromeliads and wild avocados. After a picnic lunch in the cloud forest, return to the hotel. Afternoon transfer to the airport for flight to Panama City. Met on arrival at the airport and transfer to the hotel. O/n HOLIDAY INN PANAMA CANAL, FB.



Day 08

After breakfast, transfer to the airport and board a charter flight to SANTA CRUZ DE CANA, in DARIEN NATIONAL PARK and WORLD BIOSPHERE RESERVE. CANA is located in the foothills of Pirre Mountain, which stands like an island in the most remote area of Panama. Few places in the world rival Cana in birding potential. After settling at the field station, explore the Boca de Cupe Trail and surrounding area in search of blue and gold, red and green, great green and chestnut-fronted macaws, black tipped cotinga, swallow tanager, red-throated caracara, ornate hawk-eagle and others. O/n CANA FIELD STATION, FB.



Day 09

Day to explore the Mine Trail, where rusting machinery was left to be overtaken by the jungle after the British gold mine ventures collapsed at the beginning of the last century. Species in this area include great curassow, crested guan, dusky-faced tanager, olivaceous piculet. Later, there will be time to explore the Seteganti Trail with mature forests which are good for various species of woodpeckers such as crimson-bellied, red-rumped, red-billed scythebill and brown violetear. O/n CANA FIELD STATION, FB.

Day 10

Commence a slow-paced 5-hour hike to the Pirre Cloud Forest. At 1200 metres above sea level, the Pirre Cloud forest is a good place to look for species such as beautiful treerunner, tooth-billed hummingbird, slaty antwren, tody motmot, yellow-eared toucanet, rufous-breasted ant thrush, immaculate antbird, rufous-vented ground cuckoo, pirre warbler, pirre hummingbird and Pirre bush tanager. O/n PIRRE CAMP, FB (screened tents with sleeping mats)



(5).../ BEAUTIFUL BIRDS AND WONDROUS WILDLIFE OF PANAMA, 2009

- Day 11 Morning hike to the top of Pirre Mountain, in search of the golden-headed quetzal, gray and gold tanager sharpbill, chlorophonia and several tanagers among other highland species. Late afternoon birding around the tented camp. O/n PIRRE CAMP, FB.
- Day 12 After breakfast, start the descent to the field station. The afternoon will be spent looking for birds in the area surrounding the field station. Possibilities include gray-cheeked nunlet, spotted barbtail, barred puffbird, yellow-green tyrannulet, jet antbird, black-crowned, fulvous-bellied, ochre-breasted and scaled antpittas, white-fronted nunbird, cinereous becard, golden-headed manakin. O/n CANA FIELD STATION, FB.
- Day 13 Morning charter flight back to PANAMA CITY. Met on arrival and visit the old Panama mudflats (tide level permitting) for a chance to see collared plovers, short-billed dowitchers, marbled godwit, whimbrel and others. Lunch at a local restaurant. Later, continue to bird at Juan Diaz scrub and mangrove area, and to Costa del Este for some last minute birding. Farewell dinner at a Panamanian cuisine restaurant. Return to the hotel. O/n HOLIDAY INN PANAMA CANAL, FB.
- Day 14 Morning at leisure. Later, pick up from the hotel and transfer to Tocumen International Airport. Depart PANAMA and fly via AMSTERDAM to LONDON.
- Day 15 Arrive LONDON.

Minimum group size is 6, maximum 12 plus the tour leader.

THE BEAUTIFUL BIRDS AND WONDROUS WILDLIFE OF PANAMA 2012

Departure Dates from London	Adult Price	Single Supplement
11 January 2012	£2,755	£435
05 February 2012	£2,715	£435
18 March 2012	£2,685	£435
19 April 2012	£2,685	£435

Please call 01803 866965 if you have any queries, would like to secure your place on the tour, and/or if you would like to extend the tour to include other locations.

EXTENSION IDEA:

Optional post trip extension to enjoy the sandy beaches and translucent waters of Bocas del Toro. Please contact us (01803 866965) for details.



IMPORTANT NOTES TO ACCOMPANY THE ABOVE ITINERARY

INCLUSIONS: All international flights from London with British Airways/American Airlines, all accommodation, all transfers, full board everywhere except day 14, all domestic flights, all excursions and activities as stated, assistance and guide services, reserve and museum entrance fees.

EXCLUSIONS: Not included: other meals, tourist card (US\$5 per person) personal items, alcoholic drinks, tips, travel insurance, entry visa.

TRIP CLASSIFICATION: Moderate/ long hiking 3-5 hours per day over variable terrain, slippery, muddy. Accommodation standards vary from hotel, comfortable lodges, field stations and tented camps.

NB: The naturalist guide will carry a spotting scope.

NB: Weight restrictions apply to luggage in both commercial and chartered flights within Panama. A maximum of 25 lbs. of checked luggage and 10 lbs. of carry-on per person is allowed. Arrangements can be made to store luggage that will not be needed while away from the city. Excess baggage charges assessed by commercial carriers are the responsibility of the passenger.

NB: All itineraries are subject to change without notice to take into account possible international and domestic flight schedule changes which can take place before departure date or during the tour, and other operational factors.

NB: The quoted price for the above itinerary is based on current airline fares (both international and domestic), fuel surcharges and flight taxes. These (and other tour costs) may be subject to unanticipated increases beyond our control at short notice, either before or after you have booked the tour, in which case the price would need to be revised accordingly.

NB: This tour involves some travel in remote areas. This adds to the adventure and increases the opportunity to enjoy a true wildlife experience. However, due to terrain, weather, road conditions, and other factors beyond our control, some elements of the tour may have to be altered. Times of some activities may need to be changes or even cancelled due to the conditions. If an activity is cancelled it will usually be replaced with an alternative activity that is more appropriate for the conditions. Advance notice will be given for any changes where possible, although at times changes may need to be made whilst the tour is in progress.

NB: With any trip involving wildlife it is impossible to guarantee a sighting, but each trip is designed around known habitats. Every effort will be made to ensure a sighting, but cannot be held responsible if no sighting is made due to the wildlife itself, weather, or any other elements beyond our control.

NB: Prices are based on specific airlines and specific economy seating classes. Flights are booked on an ad hoc basis and so early booking is recommended to take advantage of this fare availability. Prices may rise if a more expensive seat class needs to be booked. Please call for information on price variations for using alternative airlines or for seat upgrades.

NB: Adequate insurance cover is mandatory. Please supply us with details of your cover.

NB: All international flights should be re-confirmed at least 72 hours before departure.

NB: All domestic flights should be re-confirmed at least 36 hours before departure. During the group tour our representatives will provide this service. During extensions you should make the re-confirmations – your hotel should be happy to provide this service if requested.

NB: Once the tour has been booked and a deposit paid, any further changes initiated by the client may be subject to additional charges.

NB: Inclusive tours and excursions as stated in the itinerary will have been pre-paid. Once full payment has been made and/or clients are actually at their destination, should clients be disinclined to partake of any inclusive tour or excursion, no refunds will be possible.

NB: Visas are easily obtainable on arrival for EU residents. Please ensure your passport has six months validity from the date of return.

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