Western Panama: Tranquilo Bay
with Naturalist Journeys

March 2 – 9, 2024

w/ Mt. Totumas Ext. March. 9 – 13

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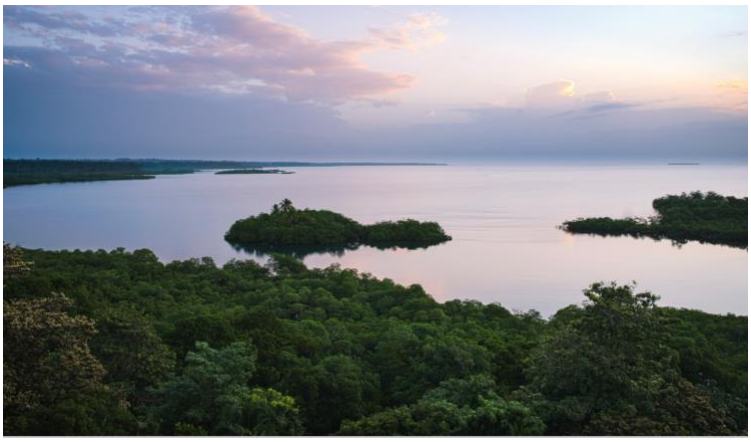

Looking for a true birding vacation? Imagine yourself immersed in nature on an island, where your home is a cluster of six luxury cottages in a forest clearing, including a 100' tower that gives you stunning views of the sea. Tranquilo Bay Eco Adventure Lodge is perched on a small hill overlooking the Caribbean Sea, a path through the forest leads down to the dock and turquoise colored bay.

The lodge's central location within the archipelago of Bocas del Toro permits us to explore some of the most biologically diverse areas within Panama and Central America. The lodge is surrounded by a 200-acre private conservation reserve adjacent to Bastimentos National Marine Park, encompassing the convergence of three distinct ecosystems.

Tranquilo Bay is a birding paradise. As the orientation of Panama's Isthmus connecting two continents is oriented east and west, this trip lets you focus on the northwest corner of this diverse nation—a place where lush mountains meet the sea. Tranquilo Bay's canopy observation tower soars 100' above sea level; bringing you to the top of the forest canopy for a panoramic bird's-eye view of three distinctly different ecosystems within Bastimentos Island National Marine Park.

On-site there are over 250 species of birds. The greater Western Caribbean Slope bird list covering areas we visit on field trips includes over 500 species. Some of the specialty birds include: both Lovely Cotinga and Snowy Cotingas, Three-wattled Bellbird, Green Ibis, and the Nicaraguan Seed-finch. Bird Island visited by boat lets you get up close and personal with stunning Red-billed Tropicbird, Brown Booby and more. On-site specials include: raptor migrations, a Golden-collared Manakin lek, southernmost distribution of the Stub-tailed Spadebill, and intimate sightings of bathing hummingbirds.

The bird watching, wildlife, and photo opportunities from this incredible vantage point are truly sublime. During the day, as thermals start rising off of the Caribbean Sea, raptors will soar for hours. The tower is an excellent place to scan for Black Hawk-Eagle; Mangrove Black-Hawk; Bat, Laughing, and Peregrine falcons; Double-toothed Kite; and White Hawk. The beautiful and regionally endemic Snowy Cotinga can be seen from the tower along with large groups of Montezuma Oropendolas, hordes of parrots, Olive-throated Parakeets, White-crowned and Scaled pigeons, Blue Dacnis, three species of honeycreepers, Tropical Gnatcatchers, Three-wattled Bellbird, Osprey, several species of hummingbirds, Lineated and Black-cheeked woodpeckers, Magnificent Frigate Birds, Brown Pelicans, multiple swifts and swallows, Common and Lesser Nighthawks, tanagers, euphonias, and many flycatchers.

All of nature here is replete with variation. Many species of mammals such as Crab-eating Raccoon, Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth, Central American Wooly Opossum and Panamanian Night Monkey to name a few. Reptiles found at the lodge and on field trips include several species of colorful poison dart frogs. And we find beauty and fascination in tropical plants and a wide array of butterflies, moths and other large insects. Unpack once, enjoy time with fun travel companions as you learn from experts, and know you will be well-taken care of. It's hard to beat the fine hospitality and truly great dining that await us at Tranquilo Bay Eco Adventure Lodge.

Tour Highlights

- Unpack once—this is a true birding vacation
- Sample island cuisine carefully prepared fresh for you each day
- From the lodge observation tower, gaze out to a maze of islands and a kaleidoscope of species including raptors aloft.
- To your birding time add the chance to swim, paddleboard, snorkel or take photographs to your heart's content
- Bird the Fortuna Road sampling species at varied elevations in some of Central America's finest remaining forest
- Feel the pulse of migration as warblers, shorebirds, tanagers and more return from summering in the USA and Canada
- Watch the sky for a river of Swainson's or Broad-winged Hawks on the wing of southward migration. From the Changuinola River Valley kettles and flights can be staggering!
- Explore the mangroves—bustling with life and colorful wading birds
- Watch for seabirds, dolphins and sea turtles over the coral reefs of the Caribbean Sea
- Observe hummingbird behavior and take time to photograph resident birds at the feeders

Tour Summary

8-Day / 7-Night Western Panama Tour
$3390 DBL / $4290 SGL, from Panama City
Airport is Tocumen International Airport (PTY)

Day-to-Day Itinerary

Sat., Mar. 2

Arrivals | Boat to Tranquilo Bay | Birding on-site | Welcome Dinner

Welcome to Paradise. To reach it, you need to board an AirPanama flight from Panama City's Albrook Airport and head across this isthmus nation to the Caribbean side, landing in Western Panama at Bocas del Toro, a small town with airstrip on the main island of an archipelago of jewel-like islands prized by fisherman, fans of snorkeling and birders. It's a short flight (about 45 minutes) and friendly staff from the lodge will be there to greet you. Then its five minutes to the dock, about 45 minutes by boat out to the island and you are there—tranquility!

If you take the morning flight, you have much of the day to enjoy the lodge trails. Once rooms are ready, you can check into your delightful accommodations. There are just six deluxe air conditioned cabanas at Tranquilo Bay. Each cabana features a spacious tiled interior with French doors opening to a large, covered elevated porch area. They each have a large bathroom with a walk-in shower, a water heater and an air conditioner. Two have king size beds, three have queen size orthopedic beds and four have two double orthopedic beds. Each cabana is tastefully and comfortably appointed with locally handcrafted furniture.

Once settled, there is ample birding on the grounds of the lodge. For those arriving in time, we head out to the observation tower for the first night of a great ritual, watching sunset from the canopy level. From the tower's vantage, as the sun sets on Tranquilo Bay, surreal hues of indigo, lavender, and orange paint the western sky over the surrounding forest and stunning Talamanca Range.

Those on the afternoon flight will still get to the lodge in daylight and perhaps to join us on the tower. We then gather as a group to enjoy introductions, hear the plan for the week, and enjoy a cold drink of your choice and a good dinner—the first of many! Then tuck into your private casita to listen to tropical night sounds as you drift off to sleep.
Accommodations at Tranquilo Bay (D)

Sun., Mar. 3 Isla Popa | Tranquilo Bay

Each of the islands in the Bocas del Toro archipelago has interesting wildlife and high levels of endemism, however, Isla Popa the second largest island in the chain, has more species of birds and mammals due to its close proximity to the mainland. A leisurely boat ride of about two kilometers brings us to a dense gallery forest surrounded by the rich mangrove lagoons of nearby Isla Popa. This is an easy but bird-rich first field day.
We watch birds in this phenomenal area mainly by boat; peacefully enjoying flights of Keel-billed and Black-mandibled toucans, Crimson-fronted Parakeets, Brown-hooded Parrots, Slaty-tailed Trogon, Golden-hooded Tanager, Plumbeous and Swallow-tailed kites, Pale-billed, and Lineated woodpeckers, Mangrove Cuckoo, American Pygmy Kingfisher, and hopefully we will see male Snowy Cotingas perched conspicuously out in the open, showing off their shining plumage in the sun. This mangrove lagoon has some beautiful Turtle Sea Grass where we can have good looks at sponges, starfish, urchins and Upside-down Jellyfish.

We return to the lodge for lunch and some down time for rest and relaxation, a swim or time to pursue photography or more birding. WIFI and laundry are available throughout the week.

In the afternoon as it cools down and activity increases, we explore one of many forest trails at the lodge. One follows a winding spring creek which creates a favorite locale for resident hummingbirds to bathe. The lodge guides have set up benches to use as viewing stations for us to comfortably observe and photograph this daily high-octane spectacle. Band-tailed Barbthroat, Purple-crowned Fairy, Crowned Woodnymph, and other hummingbirds fight ruthlessly for the best bathing positions. Once they get their turn at the fresh water, each species has its own dance like preparations before taking its first splash. Red-capped Manakin, Prothonatary Warbler, and Chestnut-backed Antbird might be found along the creek's shallow edges hoping for a bath as well. There are various levels of activity throughout the day; however, the most consistent action can be observed in the late-afternoon time just ahead of evening.

At day's end, we tally up our daily bird and mammal sightings for all that wish to do so, meeting up in the bar either before or after a delicious dinner, depending on the day's activities and where it best fits in.
Accommodations at Tranquilo Bay (B,L,D)

Mon., Mar. 4
Fortuna Forest Reserve | Talamanca Mountains Continental Divide

An adventure today! Expect an early start as we head inland to go up to the Talamanca Mountain Range and its Continental Divide (600-1300 meters) The Continental Divide of the Talamanca Range, between the provinces of Bocas del Toro and Chiriqui, is one of Panama's premier birding and wilderness areas. It holds some of the best remaining contiguous forest cover in Central America. Today we will focus on the area known as Umbrellabird Road, between the Continental Divide and north of Fortuna Reservoir. True to its name, this is the best area to find the fabulous Bare-necked Umbrellabird, especially between the months of March to September, which is considered to be the breeding season.

Fortuna Forest Reserve, established in 1976, is a species-rich area and part of BirdLife International Endemic Bird Area Costa Rica and Panama Highlands. The distinct avifauna in this globally important area include many regional endemics and restricted range species. Our visit here is sure to produce some outstanding birds with opportunities to see: Black-headed Nightingale-Thrush, Red-faced Spinetail, Ashy-throated Bush-Tanager, Golden-browed Chlorophonia, Black and Crested guans, Blue-and-Gold Tanager, Black-thighed and Black-faced grosbeaks, and Golden-winged Warbler to mention a few.

After some grand birding, we enjoy a picnic lunch while overlooking the beautiful vistas of Lake Fortuna. Typical species as we then continue birding might include: Azure-hooded Jay; Sulphur-winged and Barred parakeets; tanagers galore: Bay-headed, Rufous-winged, Flame-colored, White-winged, Carmiol's, Cherrie's, Hepatic, and Spangled-cheeked; Slate-throated Redstart; Tropical Parula; Blue-and-White Swallow; Rufous-winged; Golden-olive and Smoky-brown woodpeckers; Elegant and Tawny-capped euphonias; Slaty Flowerpiercer; Golden-bellied Flycatcher; and the gorgeous Orange-bellied Trogon. Wow!

Several resident tropical raptors are possible to see at this elevation including Ornate Hawk-Eagle, Barred Hawk and Great Black-Hawk. And right now in April, migrants are pouring through - Swallow-tailed Kite may form abundant kettles joined by Plumbeous Kite, and at times thousands of Swainson's or Broad-winged Hawks. More wonderful bird possibilities in this forest worth mentioning include Blue-throated Toucanet; Red-headed and Prong-billed barbets; White-crowned and White-ruffed manakins; Broad-billed Motmot; Green-thorntail, Snowy-bellied, Stripe-tailed, and Rufous-crested coquette; and Black-bellied Hummingbirds. We also look for mammals, especially here the elusive Tayra, a weasel like Neotropical mammal with wrinkled facial skin.
After a full day we descend back to the dock to head for home sweet home. A relaxing boat ride back to the lodge across the sea might produce Brown Boobies, Black and Royal terns, Willet, Mangrove Swallow, and perhaps Bottlenose Dolphins.

After a full and rewarding day, we arrive back at the lodge in the early evening where we can discuss our lists and share the day's best photos over appetizers and drinks on the veranda followed by a tasty dinner.
Accommodations at Tranquilo Bay (B,L,D)

Tues., Mar. 5 Finca de Cacao—The Chocolate Farm | Tranquilo Bay

After birding from the lodge's terrace with Panamanian coffee and a casual breakfast (a little later than usual after our full day yesterday), we enjoy a calm 20-minute boat ride through Dolphin Bay to Buena Esperanza. The collection of tropical flora found at this location represents the best plants and therefore, butterflies in the archipelago.

A superb water garden and natural creek running through the property also attract many species of mammals, reptiles and multicolored amphibians. The psychedelic green and black poison dart frogs, *Dendrobates auratus*, can be prolific with sufficient moisture.

The landowners, who live onsite, protect this beautiful piece of mainland forest, by using the property to operate an artisanal chocolate farm. Cacao trees, grown to produce organic chocolate, thrive under the shade of the forest canopy. Under this stunning canopy we will be searching for three species of trogon: Slaty-tailed, White-tailed, and Gartered; Purple-throated Fruitcrow; Black-chested Jay; Pale-billed Woodpecker; Pied Puffbird; Black-capped Pygmy Tyrant; both Montezuma and Chestnut-headed oropendolas; Keel-billed and Black-mandibled Toucans; Cocoa Woodcreeper; and many more species. Mammal sightings might include Mantled Howler Monkey, Kinkajou, Three and Two-toed sloths, squirrels, and Greater White-lined Bats.

After returning to Tranquilo Bay for lunch and a hammock siesta, birding excursions to the canopy observation tower, forest trail system, and hummingbird bathing station will be available options. For anyone wanting water activities, guided sea kayaking or snorkeling amidst the alluring coral reefs can also easily fill your afternoon. Or enjoy a swim or soothing paddleboard excursion (okay a nap may be in order too!) Watching the sunset is on the menu as well.

Dinner entrees vary nightly—one night we may serve seafood and the next night it may be South American beef, vegetarian options always available. Tonight, in honor of the day's activities, we end with a little something chocolate to close the day.
Accommodations at Tranquilo Bay (B,L,D)

Wed., Mar. 6 San San Pond Sak Wetlands (Soropta Canal)

Today will be a tranquil day of "birding by boat" within several lush, coastal, wetland habitats. San San Pond Sak Wetlands is a designated Ramsar site, as well as, part of the La Amistad UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. The area is rich with varied habitats including Atlantic wet lowland forest, Raphia palm swamp, fresh-water river course, ocean impact beachfront, and mangroves.

Access to this verdant wildlife area will be via boat through the historic Snyder Canal, as birds conveniently fly through the gallery forest back and forth across the waterway. After the Snyder Brothers finished construction in the late 1890s, the canal was used to transport bananas from the Changuinola River Valley, to the protected waters of Almirante Bay at Boca del Drago, where they were loaded onto transport ships. Panama's first canal was vital to establishing The United Fruit Company, and the very beginnings of what would become, "The Banana Republic".

This is an excellent place to find many lowland bird species, northern and altitudinal migrants, raptors and shorebirds. All six species of kingfishers known to the Americas can be found here and we will be watching closely for regional endemics like the diminutively distributed Nicaraguan Seed Finch, White-collard Manakin (Almirante race), Olive-backed Euphonia, Black-cowled Oriole, Canebrake Wren, and Three-wattled Bellbird. Also possible are, Masked Duck, Common Gallinule, Least Bittern, Pied-billed Grebe, Great Potoo, Northern Jacana, and Bare-throated Tiger-Heron.

Raptor sightings might include Yellow-headed Caracara; Bat, Laughing and Peregrine falcons; Osprey; and Pearl Kite. From the high branches of fruiting trees down to the grassy and shrubby edge, we might find Passerini's and Golden-hooded tanagers, Olive-crowned Yellowthroat, Red-breasted Blackbird, Buff-throated Saltator, Groove-billed Ani, Squirrel Cuckoo, chatters of Olive-throated Parakeets, Streaked and Scissor-tailed flycatchers, and the minute Common, Black-headed and Slate-headed Tody-flycatchers.

With any luck, mammal sightings might produce Mantled Howler Monkey, Crab-eating Racoon, White-nosed Coati, Neotropical River Otter, West Indian Manatee and Bottlenose Dolphin. Soropta Beach, important for migrating and resident shorebirds, is also a nesting ground for Leatherback and Hawksbill sea turtles, in addition to Green Iguanas, Basilisk Lizards, Common Boa Constrictor, Spectacled Caiman and American Crocodile.
Here on the beach, we enjoy a picnic lunch with fresh sea breeze and the shorebirds. This is a rough life, but someone has to do it! This vibrant river mouth and beachfront might produce views Parasitic and Pomarine jaegers; Wilson's, Collared, and Semipalmated plovers; Ruddy Turnstones; Sanderlings; Least, Pectoral and Semipalmated sandpipers; Common and Lesser nighthawks; Lesser and Greater yellowlegs; four species of tern; and Roseate Spoonbill.

In the afternoon, sea conditions permitting, we pass just two miles offshore to a breathtaking rookery and reserve known as Swan's Caye, for beautiful close-up looks at Panama's only known breeding colony of Red-billed Tropicbirds, as well as, Brown Boobies and Magnificent Frigatebirds.

We return to the lodge in the late afternoon. Dinners vary based upon the local ingredients available; however, by now it's no surprise that you should expect three or four delicious courses each night.
Accommodations at Tranquilo Bay (B,L,D)

Thurs., Mar. 7 Tranquilo Bay | Forest Trails | Pineapple Hill

Today, after enjoying some early morning birds from the canopy observation tower or the lodge's veranda, we will delight in a breakfast including highland coffee and fresh tropical fruit juices.

Following breakfast, we enter a forest trail in search of Chestnut-backed Antbird, White-flanked and Dot-winged Antwrens, Black-crowned Antshrike, Red-throated Ant-Tanager, Tawny-crested Tanager, Rufescent Tiger-Heron, and the geographically misplaced Stub-tailed Spadebill.

After a short hike we will arrive at Pineapple Hill, a small elevated clearing at the forest's edge, which is an important forage area for a multitude of Neotropical and migratory species. This is an excellent place to get

good looks at feeding birds like Golden-collared and Red-Capped manakins; three species of honeycreepers; Passerini's, Scarlet, White-lined, and Summer tanagers; Baltimore Oriole; Band-tailed Barbthroat; Green-breasted Mango; White-necked Jacobin and Purple-crowned Fairy hummingbirds; Scaled Pigeon; Double-toothed Kite; Roadside Hawk; and the often hard to see but noisy White-throated Crake.

Once we are ready to move on, another forest trail will take us to a Golden-collared Manakin lek. During the mating season, from about December-August, active courts in each lek should have displaying males. Further along this trail, walking brings us to an area of high forest canopy, where Three-wattled Bellbirds like to spend midday. When the sun is a little strong, this canopy specialist likes to perch underneath the leaves in the cooler shade, presenting a nice opportunity with less backlighting for the photo enthusiast.

On the way back to the lodge, to enjoy a homemade lunch in comfort, we will search the forest floor for the famous Isla Bastimentos Red Poison dart Frog. This morph of *Oophaga pumilio*, is studied onsite by the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute who are researching its evolutionary traits.

After a short siesta, we can focus our efforts in the mangrove forest looking for several species of herons, Green Ibis, Mangrove Black Hawk, all six kingfishers known to the Americas, Mangrove Cuckoo, Wimbrel, Willet, Prothonotary Warbler, and the resident Yellow Warbler or "Mangrove Warbler" whose males exhibit a stunning red hood.

In the evening we will climb the canopy tower to watch from a bird's-eye view, the pandemonium of Red-lored and Mealy parrots paired up and returning home, as groups of chattering Blue-headed Parrots join in the chorus. Some previous guests have dubbed these daily flights "The Invasion of Tranquilo Bay." We will also have a good chance of up-close looks at White-crowned and Scaled pigeons; Black-crowned and Masked tityras; Lineated and Black-cheeked woodpeckers; Blue-grey, Palm, and Plain-colored tanagers; White-vented Euphonia; and scores of flycatchers.

Once we watch the beautiful tropical sun set over the Talamanca Range, we can walk back to the lodge for hard earned drinks, appetizers, and a delicious meal.
Accommodations at Tranquilo Bay (B,L,D)

Fri., Mar. 8 Palo Seco Protection Forest

Today we do a lower section of the scenic Talamanca range, this time exploring lowlands to foothills elevations (Sea level to 600 meters). Fueled up with a delicious Panamanian breakfast, we will leave the dock at 6:00AM and travel by boat to the town of Punta Robalo on the mainland.

Today we will be birding in the Palo Seco Protection Forest, 167,000 hectares, which is one of the most vital areas of La Amistad Biosphere Reserve. This incredible area consisting of wet Atlantic forest, foothills, and watersheds, is part of BirdLife International Endemic Bird Area Central American Caribbean Slope. It is a hotbed for restricted range species and altitudinal migrants, like the Three-wattled Bellbird, and is one of the most important protected areas in the Neotropics. Snowy Cotinga; Chestnut-colored and Cinnamon woodpecker;

Rufous-tailed Jacamar; Crimson-colored, Speckled, Emerald, and Silver-throated tanagers; Lattice-tailed Trogon; Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer; Green Hermit; Slaty Spinetail; Dull-mantled Antbird; and Band-backed and Black-throated wrens are all possibilities on the outing.

Mammal sightings in the area might include sloths, Mantled Howler Monkeys, Red-brocket Deer, squirrels, and several species of bats. We also make every effort to see the elusive Lanceolated Monklet. A fresh picnic lunch will be served in the field. Other lowland specialties on our long list of species possible might include: Brown Jay, White-crowned Parrot, White-collared Seedeater, Olive-crowned Yellowthroat, Cinnamon and White-winged Becards, Long-billed Gnatwren, Wedge-billed Woodcreeper, Black-and-Yellow Tanager, Buff-rumped Warbler, Torrent Tyranulet, Crimson-fronted Parakeets, and Red-fronted Parrotlet.

In the late afternoon we will work our way back through the lowland foothills scanning for kettles of raptors, Snowy and Blue Cotingas, and finally ending with views of some marsh birds such as various sandpipers, three species of ibis, Southern Lapwing, Blue-winged Teal, Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, and the always stunning Common Gallinule.

We return to the lodge in the evening. While dinners at Tranquilo Bay are delicious and varied, this is our last evening and so we celebrate a bit, recounting highlights of the journey. The chef uses local fruits, vegetables, and chocolate to craft this meal—delicious! Afterwards, we do our final species tally.
Accommodations at Tranquilo Bay (B,L,D)

Sat., Mar. 9 Departures from Tranquilo Bay

No one wants to go, but its time! Again, there are at least two flights a day, so depending on your International air plans, you can book accordingly. As some flights leave Panama in the evening, with luck you can enjoy more time here ahead of leaving. Those wanting an early morning International flight will need to overnight in Panama City. The domestic flight comes in to Albrook Airport, depending on traffic we suggest you allow 45 minutes to an hour to make the 23 km trip by taxi. *(B)*

Optional Mt. Totumas Extension

Departing from Tranquilo Bay after saying good-bye to those not with us on this extension, we bird much of the day in lush forest as we wind our way up the mountain with our guides from Tranquilo Bay. At a meetup point, we say a fond good-bye as the next part of our adventure begins and we meet the guides and four-wheel drive vehicles from Mt. Totumas to continue into our mountain lodge.

After immersion in the coastal sun and heat, we remind you that for this part of our trip to bring a fleece! You've arrived to the cloud forest, a wonderful, sometimes wet, verdant realm replete with fantastic vegetation and birds. Your new home is a 400-acre cloud forest private reserve that lists over 250 species of birds, three species of monkeys, and more. The Continental Divide of the Talamanca Range, between the provinces of Bocas del Toro and Chiriqui, is one of Panama's premier birding and wilderness areas. It holds some of the best remaining contiguous forest cover in Central America. Settle into your new digs, cozy mountain cottages, and enjoy dinner

and then night sounds of the forest.
Accommodations at Mt. Totumas (L,D)

Sat., Mar. 9 – Tues., Mar. 12 Talamanca Mountains | Continental Divide

We have three full days to explore this mountain realm with our expert local guides. We are situated on a private reserve adjacent to La Amistad National Park, Central America's largest highland preserved wilderness. This species-rich area is an important part of BirdLife International Endemic Bird Area Costa Rica and Panama Highlands. The distinct avifauna in this globally important area include many regional endemics and restricted range species. Our visit here is sure to produce some outstanding birds with opportunities to see Black-headed Nightingale-Thrush, Red-faced Spinetail, Ashy-throated Bush-Tanager, Golden-browed Chlorophonia, Black and Crested Guans, Blue-and-gold Tanager, Black-thighed and Black-faced Grosbeaks, and Golden-winged Warbler. Our days are filled with birding and nature with trail walks and four-wheel drive vehicle excursions, and time at waterfalls, fruiting trees, and places with incredibly scenic vistas. We have fun too, learning about local foods, taking a visit to a coffee farm, and enjoying a chance to soak at Los Pozos Hot Springs. The lodge's hummingbird feeders are busy and give photographers a chance to capture images on natural perches.

Resplendent Quetzal move about seasonally but start their return by late January. Colorful birds vie with quetzals for attention. Mixed flocks here include Elegant Euphonia and Golden-browed Chlorophonia—both a treat to find. They are often joined by wintering species we know from home, such as Philadelphia and Red-eyed Vireos, Golden-winged, Wilson's and Blackburnian Warblers, and Baltimore Oriole. At times this lush dense forest can seem quiet … then it explodes with activity. Speckled and Silver-throated Tanagers, Scarlet-thighed Dacnis, and Common Chlorospingus may highlight one flock, then around the corner we catch up with Plain Xenops, Buffy Tuftedcheek, Streak-breasted Treehunter, and Spotted Barbtail.

In addition to the ever-present Rufous-collared Sparrow that sing by the lodge, we look for Large-footed Finch and the possible trio of Chestnut-capped, White-naped, and Yellow-thighed Brushfinches. We hope that the elusive Wrenthrush and Silvery-fronted Tapaculo alert us to their presence by song. Long-tailed Silky-flycatcher, Flame-colored Warbler, and Flame-colored Tanager are often on the trip-end favorites list for many.

Listen to the music of Black-faced Solitaire, Ruddy-capped Nightingale Thrush, and Mantled Howler Monkey. Along streams and pathways we watch for Slate-throated and Collared Redstarts and Torrent Tyrannulet. Slaty Flowerpiercer is a nectar robber often seen alongside feeding hummingbirds. Legitimate pollinators in these highlands are several and include Violet Sabrewing, Fiery-throated Hummingbird, White-bellied Mountain-gem, Green-crowned Brilliant, Long-billed Starthroat, Scintillant and Snowy-bellied Hummingbirds, and both Brown and Lesser Violetear. Woodpeckers we hope to spy include Smoky-brown and Hairy feeding in the same area and Spotted, Streak-headed, and sometimes Spot-crowned Woodcreepers.

Learn more about the ecology and geology of the fascinating Chiriqui Highlands, shared with Costa Rica and home to endemic species such as Black Guan, Chiriqui Quail-Dove, Magenta-throated Woodstar, Prong-billed Barbet, Sulphur-winged Parakeet, Yellow-winged Vireo, and more. Here and in the montane foothills adjacent we look for Azure-hooded Jay; Sulphur-winged and Barred Parakeets; tanagers galore: Bay-headed, Rufous-

winged, Flame-colored, White-winged, Carmiol's, Cherrie's, Hepatic, and Spangle-cheeked; Slate-throated Redstart; Tropical Parula; Blue-and-white Swallow; Tawny-capped Euphonia; Golden-bellied Flycatcher; and the gorgeous Collared Trogon. Wow! Other lasting memories come from sightings of Squirrel Cuckoo, Ornate Hawk-Eagle, Northern Emerald-Toucanet, and the impressive Red-headed and Prong-billed Barbets.

The lodge prides itself in its farm to table restaurant where local chef, Alma, brings her expertise in Asian and European cuisine.
Accommodations at Mt. Totumas (B,L,D)

Wed., Mar. 13 Departures from David

No one wants to go, but it's time! We set the departure for this tour from the Pacific-side lowland town of David so that you can best match onward flights to your outbound international flight. We are able to accommodate the direct flight to the Panama City Airport, even if it means an early start on COPA. For past tours this flight was at 9:40 AM. If you see a flight before that please ask us—it might be best to overnight in David and fly out early tomorrow. *(B)*

Tour Details

Plan Ahead!

Protect yourself with Allianz Travel Insurance. As of January 2017, Naturalist Journeys pays 100% of your flight carbon offset.

Cost of the Journey

Cost of the main tour is **$3390 DBL / $4290 SGL**, from Panama City, based on double occupancy and includes 7 nights' accommodations; meals as specified in the itinerary, in-country domestic flight from Panama City, group airport transfers, professional guide services, local park and other area entrance fees, and miscellaneous program expenses. **Cost of the journey does not include** airfare from your home to Panama City, or items of a personal nature, such as drinks from the bar, telephone, and local guide gratuities.

Cost of the extension is **$1290 DBL / $1490 SGL** per person and includes transfer and all services at Mt. Totumas, meals, accommodations and lodgings, guided outings. It does not include the flight from David to PTY.

Travel Information

Arrive to Panama City (PTY) no later than evening on March 1. We book your March 2 AirPanama flight to Bocas del Toro. These flights leave from the domestic Albrook airport, about 30 minutes from PTY. Travelers are met by lodge staff in Bocas del Toro. Plan your departure flights for the evening of March 9 if you do not take the extension. If you take the extension, please plan flights out of David (we suggest COPA Airlines) at leisure on March 13, but watch connection times with your international flight. Check all flight times with Naturalist Journeys before booking. **Need help with travel?** We pay the ticket fee for our travel agent Pam Davis of Willamette Travel. Email pamd@wittravel.com for help.

Pace of the Journey

This is a true birding vacation, with one hotel to base from with trips venturing off the island for habitat variety. Just out your door you can swim, snorkel, paddleboard, watch hummingbird feeders or walk the lodge trails. The lodge has a 100' tower with a fabulous view of the islands. There are 200+ species possible on the island and 450+ with field trips. Pace yourself to join as many of the outings as you like.

Weather

The climate in Western Panama varies tremendously depending upon altitude and geography. Temperatures at Tranquilo Bay in lowland rainforest average 86 degrees with a consistent humidity around 82%. The cloud forest in the highlands can be much cooler.

Photo Credits

Montezuma Oropendola, Maggie Tieger (MT); Marine Park, MT; Mantled Howler Monkey, Joe Tieger (JT); Yellow-throated Toucan, JT; Cabana, courtesy of Tranquilo Bay; Striated Heron, JT.

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