

Western Panama: Tranquilo Bay Species List | January 18 – 25, 2025 Mt. Totumas Post-Tour Extension: January 25 – 29 With Naturalist Journeys



Compiled by guide Dave Mehlman with local guides Rogers Morales (Tranquilo Bay) and Reinaldo Rodríguez (Mt. Totumas). Our clients included Eileen, Ellyn, Jeff, Kathleen, Mark, Merri, Paul, Susan, and Tim.

This Western Panama tour was a memorable and amazing experience for all who came along. Starting from Panama City, we flew to western Panama's Bocas del Toro town and then began with the first of many fun boat trips among the island archipelago there. We based ourselves at the Tranquilo Bay Lodge on Isla Bastimentos—a lovely spot with birds and wildlife galore, comfortable accommodations, and excellent food. The feeders on the porch of the Lodge alone provided endless viewing of more Tennessee and Prothonotary Warblers than most of us had ever seen before, along with the amusing antics of the White-faced Capuchin monkeys coming for the bananas. Daily trips took us all over the region; some were on Isla Bastimentos itself or to nearby islands, but we also explored the adjacent mainland, venturing both into the lowlands and the higher elevations of the Cordillera Talamanca, and along the old Snyder Canal to the lovely Changuinola River. Rogers Morales, the super-guide at Tranquilo Bay, amazed us with his birding finding ability, picking out species after species regardless of where we went. This allowed us to accumulate an excellent species list of birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians (and a few odds and ends!), many of which were completely new ("lifers") for most on the tour.

Many in the group continued on for a short extension to the Mt. Totumas Cloudforest Lodge, located very high on the Pacific Slope of the Cordillera Talamanca in Chiriquí Province, not far from Volcán Barú (Panama's highest point) and the border with Costa Rica. This amazing place was literally perched in the clouds, surrounded by steep mountains and plunging valleys. The hummingbird feeders were an attraction for all of us, with constant activity of numerous species coming and going, fighting for a port to drink from. The fruit feeders were also fun to watch, bringing in Flame-colored Tanagers, Common Chlorospingus, and a Baltimore Oriole. Local guide Reinaldo Rodríguez, who literally knows every bird in the area, ably led us on the many trails and on one road trip and helped spot numerous incredible species, many of which were restricted-range endemics only found in western Panama and eastern Costa Rica. To top it off, the bajareque was in full flow in the mountains, producing rainbow after rainbow at almost any time of the day!

This truly was a memorable tour and adventure of a lifetime—we all carried back fond memories to treasure for a long time.

Following is a list of the birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and miscellaneous critters we were fortunate to observe during the trip.

BIRDS (291 species, of which 10 were heard only and 5 were seen by the guides only)

The eBird link below details the 291 species of birds our group observed during the tour. If you are new to eBird, be sure to click "Show all details" on the right side of the list to expand the report and reveal where and when each of the birds were seen and how many.

Western Panama (Tranquilo Bay + Mt Totumas) | January 2025 | eBird Trip Report

MAMMALS (16 species)

- Derby's Woolly Opossum** *Caluromys derbianus* — Seen on two evenings at Tranquilo Bay eating bananas
- Dark Four-eyed Opossum** *Philander melanurus* — Recorded on at least 2 days at Tranquilo Bay near the main building
- Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth** *Bradypus variegatus* — Remarkably ubiquitous in Bocas del Toro Province, especially on Isla Bastimentos; recorded on the first 7 days of the tour at Tranquilo Bay and on most field trips
- Hoffmann's Toe-toed Sloth** *Choloepus hoffmanni* — One seen and videotaped by Dave at Tranquilo Bay feeding on a cacao pod
- Lesser White-lined Bat** *Saccopteryx leptura* — Recorded on 4 days at Tranquilo Bay where they day-roost under the eaves of some of the cabins
- Seba's Short-tailed Bat** *Carollia perspicillata* — Seen one evening off the porch at Tranquilo Bay feeding on the bananas
- Variable Squirrel** *Sciurus variegatoides* — One see on the Fortuna field trip in the pines near Valle de las Minas
- Red-tailed Squirrel** *Sciurus granatensis* — Seen on one day on a mainland trip from Tranquilo Bay and again at Mt. Totumas
- Western Pygmy Squirrel** *Microsciurus mimulus* — One found at the high elevations near the Continental Divide on the Fortuna field trip
- Panamanian White-throated Capuchin** *Cebus imitator* — Came to the porch at Tranquilo Bay every day for the daily ration of bananas, with which they promptly absconded! Also seen once at Mt. Totumas on the lower elevation trip
- Mantled Howler Monkey** *Alouatta palliata* — Seen or heard on 7 days of the tour on several trips from Tranquilo Bay and on every day at Mt. Totumas
- Central American Spider Monkey** *Ateles geoffroyi* — Seen on 2 days at Mt. Totumas
- Kinkajou** *Potos flavus* — One of the more memorable sightings of the tour was a pair of these running through the tree tops at Buena Esperanza
- White-nosed Coati** *Nasua narica* — A lone individual, presumably a male, seen one day at Mt. Totumas climbing down a tree
- Crab-eating Raccoon** *Procyon cancrivorus* — Recorded on 5 days at Tranquilo Bay where they resided in the large tree in front of the porch
- Common Bottlenose Dolphin** *Tursiops truncatus* — A pod observed swimming from the boats on our way back from Punta Róbal from a field trip

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS (14 species)

- Spectacled Caiman** *Caiman crocodilus* — One was residing in the small pond off the Tranquilo Bay trails
- Green Iguana** *Iguana iguana* — Seen on the Snyder Canal/Changuinola River trip
- Green Basilisk** *Basiliscus plumifrons* — Seen on the Snyder Canal/Changuinola River trip
- Brown Basilisk** *Basiliscus vittatus* — Seen on the Snyder Canal/Changuinola River trip and once at Tranquilo Bay
- Middle American Ameiva** *Holcosus festivus* — Recorded one day at Tranquilo Bay
- Emerald Swift** *Sceloporus malachiticus* — Photographed at Mt. Totumas
- Canopy Anole** *Anolis lemurinus* — Recorded one day at Tranquilo Bay
- Cryptic Slender Anole** *Anolis cryptolimifrons* — Found on the Isla Popa hike
- Mediterranean House Gecko** *Hemidactylus turcicus* — This introduced species often was attached to walls and windows at Tranquilo Bay
- Brown Vinesnake** *Oxybelis aeneus* — One was literally hanging out by the steps up to the main porch at Tranquilo Bay and seen several times
- Green Climbing Toad** *Incilius coniferus* — Photographed at Isla Popa
- Red-eyed Tree Frog** *Agalychnis callidryas* — Seen on the night hike at Tranquilo Bay

Strawberry Poison Dart Frog *Oophaga pumilio* — A fascinating and intriguing case of color variation within a species, we found at least 2 different color variants of this species, one on Isla Popa and another along the Snyder Canal

Savage's Bullfrog *Leptodactylus savage* — Recorded on one day at Tranquilo Bay

Vaillant's Frog *Lithobates vaillanti* — Observed one night at Tranquilo Bay

MISCELLANEOUS (9 species)

Golden Silk Spider *Trichonephila clavipes* — Many of these large orb weaver spiders were at Tranquilo Bay

Hermes Satyr *Hermeuptychia hermes* — Photographed at Tranquilo Bay

Tetrio Sphinx *Pseudosphinx tetrio* — Several of these huge, red, black, and yellow caterpillars were found at Tranquilo Bay

Dyar's Swallowtail *Battus ingenuus* — Photographed at Tranquilo Bay

True Cattleheart *Parides eurimedes* — Photographed at Tranquilo Bay

Banded Peacock *Anartia Fatima* — Seen several times during the tour at various sites

Wide-bordered Satyr *Satyrotaygetis satyrina* — Photographed at Mt. Totumas

Moon Jellyfish *Aurelia aurita* — Seen from the dock and on some of the boat trips from Tranquilo Bay

Swamp Eel *Synbranchus marmoratus* — We saw one being eaten by the Jabiru at Punta Róbaló and another was at the hummingbird pool at Tranquilo Bay

LOCATIONS AND NOTES:

Day 1: Saturday, January 18, 2024; Panama City, Bocas del Toro (town), Tranquilo Bay Ecolodge

Day 2: Sunday, January 19, 2024; Tranquilo Bay Ecolodge, Punta Róbaló, Chiriqui Grande, Palo Seco Protective Forest, Continental Divide Road

Day 3: Monday, January 20, 2024; Tranquilo Bay Ecolodge, Isla Popa

Day 4: Tuesday, January 21, 2024; Buena Esperanza, Tranquilo Bay Ecolodge

Day 5: Wednesday, January 22, 2024; Snyder Canal, Changuinola River, Swan Caye (Bird Island), Tranquilo Bay Ecolodge

Day 6: Thursday, January 23, 2024; Tranquilo Bay Ecolodge, Fortuna Forest Reserve, Valle de las Minas, Palo Seco Protective Forest, Punta Róbaló

Day 7: Friday, January 24, 2024; Tranquilo Bay Ecolodge

Day 8: Saturday, January 25, 2024; Tranquilo Bay Ecolodge, Punta Róbaló, Fortuna Reservoir, Mt. Totumas Cloudforest Lodge

Day 9: Sunday, January 26, 2024; Mt. Totumas Cloudforest Lodge: Big Tree, Anciano, and Roble trails

Day 10: Monday, January 27, 2024; Mt. Totumas Cloudforest Lodge: lower elevation trip, Roble and Quetzal trails

Day 11: Tuesday, January 28, 2024; Mt. Totumas Cloudforest Lodge: Cascade, Puma, Big Tree, and Roble trails; entrance road

Day 12: Wednesday, January 29, 2024; David (Malek) Airport