Eagle-Eye Tours



Panama Trip Report (Feb 13 - 22, 2026)

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Day 1. Arrival

We met at our hotel in Panama City this evening for a welcome dinner, introductions and to discuss the exciting days of birding ahead.

Day 2. Cerro Azul

After an early breakfast we departed for Cerro Azul, a gated community within Chagres National Park with a plethora of highland habitats overlooking Panama City. We were welcomed to the home of Jerry and Linda Harrison to view their incredible feeder set-up that they have maintained for 13 years. Our hosts excitedly pointed out hummingbirds and tanagers feeding in incredible densities just meters away. Highlights included Rufous-winged Tanager, Hepatic Tanager, Thick-billed and Fulvous-vented Euphonias, three honeycreepers (Green, Shining, and Red-legged), Rufous Motmot and an incredibly cooperative White-ruffed Manakin - all of which provided amazing photo opportunities! Over the morning we recorded seven hummingbird species, including Snowy-bellied Hummingbird, Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer, Crowned Woodnymph, and Blue-chested Hummingbird. On the return drive, we stopped to watch the migration of many Swallow-tailed Kites diving and swooping over the treetops.



Group at Cerro Azul © Jared Clarke



White-ruffed Manakin © Blair Dudeck



Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer © Blair Dudeck



Snowy-bellied Hummingbird © Blair Dudeck



Crowned Woodnymph © Blair Dudeck



Swallow-tailed Kite © Blair Dudeck

Day 3. Camino de Tanara, Chepo, Llano-Cartí Road, Tortí

This morning we boarded our bus and headed east from Panama City. Along the Camino de Tanara road, adjacent to cattle farms, we found grassland and edge species such as Sapphire-throated Hummingbird, Pied-water Tyrant, Wattled Jacana, Savanna Hawk, Panama Flycatcher, Fork-tailed

Flycatcher, Red-breasted Meadowlark, Amazon Kingfisher, and Saffron Finch. At nearby Chepo we saw Crested Caracara, Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture, Cinnamon Becard, White-browed Gnatcatcher, and excellent views of a pair of Laughing Falcons.



Pied Water-Tyrant © Blair Dudeck



Fork-tailed Flycatcher © Blair Dudeck



Cinnamon Becard © Blair Dudeck



Laughing Falcon © Jared Clarke

At Llano-Cartí Road it was blazing hot and windy. We set up a picnic lunch and were rewarded with a flyover Short-tailed Hawk and Brown-hooded Parrot. Continuing east along the Pan-American Highway, we stopped at the bridge overlooking Lake Bayano and saw Neotropic Cormorant, Little Blue Heron, Osprey, Common Black Hawk, and great looks at a juvenile Bare-throated Tiger-Heron. We then arrived in Tortí, settled into our home for the next few nights, and prepared for the next

day’s adventures.

Day 4. El Salto and Yaviza

We left before sunrise for the Darién province, a well-known region among birders. At our first stop at El Salto we immediately encountered the effects of above-average rains for the season as torrential showers hampered our birding attempts. Instead, we skipped ahead to Yaviza (the end of the Panamanian Highway at the Darién Gap) and watched local workers at the marina loading cassava and bananas into canoes along the Choco River. After the rain eased we birded the Yaviza Wetlands north of town and found four Black-tailed Trogons as soon as we stepped off the bus. Other highlight species included Muscovy Duck, Greater Ani, Purple Gallinule, Great Black Hawk, Ochre-lored Flatbill, and Ruddy-breasted Seedeater.



Yaviza Choco River © Jared Clarke



Black-tailed Trogon © Blair Dudeck

We returned to El Salto road later in the morning after the rains had (mostly) stopped. While eating our picnic lunch, several good birds appeared, including Blue Cotinga, Rufescent Tiger-Heron, Lesser Kiskadee, Rusty-margined Flycatcher, and Ochre-lored Flatbill. In the hot lowland forest, we encountered a mixed flock with Crested Oropendola, Black-chested Jay, Keel-billed Toucan, and Purple-throated Fruitcrow. Further along we found a lek of Golden-collared Manakins and had amazing looks at a pair of Crimson-crested Woodpeckers. We returned to Tortí that evening and enjoyed the hospitality of our wonderful hosts.



Rufescent Tiger-Heron © Blair Dudeck



Birding El Salto Road, Darien © Jared Clark



Purple-throated Fruitcrow © Blair Dudeck



Ochre-lored Flatbill © Blair Dudeck



Geoffroy's Tamarin Monkey © Jared Clarke

Day 5. San Francisco Reserve, Río Tortí

After an early breakfast at Hotel Avicar we visited the private San Francisco Reserve, run by the Franciscan church. The reserve protects old-growth Cuipo trees and a network of creeks important for local water supply. At the pond by the bus we began our bird list for the day with Streaked

Flycatcher, Lesser Kiskadee, Southern Rough-winged Swallow, Long-tailed Tyrant, and Gartered Violaceous Trogon. In the forest we had amazing looks at a group of Keel-billed Toucans foraging in a Cecropia tree and observed another lek of Golden-collared Manakins. Additional species included White-whiskered Puffbird, White-vented Plumeleteer, Tropical Royal Flycatcher, Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher, and Bay Wren.



Lesser Kiskadee © Blair Dudeck



Keel-biled Toucan © Blair Dudeck

On the walk back we scoped a male Blue Cotinga, White-necked Puffbird and a pair of Masked Tityra perched in the distant canopy, sunning themselves after a rain shower. At the reserve ponds we saw a magnificent pair of Ringed Kingfishers, plus Olivaceous Piculet, Black-cheeked Woodpecker, Crimson-crested Woodpecker, Crane Hawk, and Red-breasted Meadowlark. After lunch and a siesta we drove to the Río Tortí shore and added a cooperative Lineated Woodpecker, Barred Antshrike, Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet, Wood Stork, Streak-headed Woodcreeper, and Buff-throated Saltator. That night we had a very successful nocturnal excursion: excellent views of Common Potoo, Striped Owl, and American Barn Owl!



Common Potoo © Blair Dudeck



Striped Owl © Blair Dudeck



American Barn Owl © Blair Dudeck

Day 6. Tortí to Gamboa

At sunrise we birded along the Tortí River, which flows through the town just minutes from our hotel. Mixed flocks produced Striped Cuckoo, Black-crowned Antshrike, Common Tody-Flycatcher, Yellow-bellied Elaenia, Blue-headed Parrot, and Whooping Motmot. After breakfast, we walked

another stretch of the river and added White Ibis, Western Olivaceous Flatbill, Brown-capped Tyrannulet, and Buff-rumped Warbler. Mammal highlights included our first Three-toed Sloth and a very close (and loud!) troupe of Mantled Howler Monkeys. A group member then spotted a gorgeous Capped Heron perched over the river, which was the day's highlight! We finished morning birding around Tortí and drove west to our new base at the Gamboa Rainforest Resort.



Three-toed Sloth © Jared Clarke



Mantled Howler Monkey © Jared Clarke



Capped Heron © Blair Dudeck

Day 7. Pipeline Road and Ammo Dump Ponds

We began with a pre-breakfast walk around the beautiful hotel grounds, finding Gray-headed Chachalaca, Boat-billed Flycatcher, White-tipped Dove, Golden-hooded Tanager, Crimson-backed Tanager, and Flame-rumped Tanager. On Pipeline Road, we encountered four trogon species (Slaty-tailed, Black-throated, Gartered Violaceous, and White-tailed) and a fine assemblage of antbirds and understory species: Checker-throated Stipplethroat, White-flanked Antwren, White-whiskered Puffbird, Chestnut-backed Antbird, Bicolored Antbird, and Ocellated Antbird. We also heard Howler Monkeys, saw Central American Agoutis, and got good looks at Northern Barred-Woodcreeper, Song Wren, and Gray-headed Tanager.



Balcony View Gamboa Rainforest Resort © Jared Clarke



Crimson-backed Tanager © Blair Dudeck



Ocellated Antbird © Jared Clarke

After lunch we visited the Ammo Dump Ponds, where wetland and edge species abounded: Wattled Jacana, Purple Gallinule, nesting Rufescent Tiger-Herons, and glimpses of the elusive White-throated Crake. Other highlights included Striated Heron, Green Heron, Golden-collared Manakin, Scrub Greenlet, Isthmian Wren, Shiny Cowbird, and Black-throated Mango.



Wattled Jacana © Blair Dudeck



Purple Galinule © Blair Dudeck

A night outing back on Pipeline Road produced loud Black-and-white Owls and several roosting passerines, including a Velvety Manakin and Ochre-bellied Flycatcher.

Day 8. Rainforest Discovery Center and Río Chagres Boat Tour

We spent the morning on the Rainforest Discovery Center trails. En route we saw Black-breasted Puffbird, Gray-headed Tanager, Song Wren, and Slate-colored Grosbeak, and heard Black-faced Antthrush and Crimson-bellied Woodpecker. At the Center we added Broad-billed Motmot and another look at Purple-throated Fruitcrow, plus Golden-crowned Spadebill, Spotted Antbird, Dot-winged Antwren, and Long-billed Hermit.



Golden-crowned Spadebill © Blair Dudeck



Slate-colored Grosbeak © Blair Dudeck

After lunch, we spotted Collared Aracari and Short-tailed Swifts around the hotel parking area. Soon we were on a boat exploring the beautiful Río Chagres – the largest river in the Panama Canal basin. We enjoyed many species of waterbirds and raptors, and added new species, including Anhinga, Yellow-tailed Oriole, Yellow-rumped Cacique, Peregrine Falcon, Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks, Snail Kite, and dozens of Wattled Jacanas.



Boat tour Rio Chagre © Jared Clarke



Yellow-tailed Oriole © Blair Dudeck

After dinner we did a night walk around the hotel grounds. Bird highlights were Common Pauraque, a roosting Gray-cowled Wood-Rail, Black-and-white Owl, and a surprise Spectacled Owl. Mammal sightings included many bats, a two-toed sloth, and an incredible view of a Panamanian night monkey.



Gray-cowled Wood-Rail © Blair Dudeck



Black-and-white Owl © Blair Dudeck



Spectacled Owl © Blair Dudeck



Panamanian Night Monkey © Jared Clarke

Day 9. Metropolitan Natural Park and Casco Viejo

On our last morning in Gamboa we birded the hotel grounds and saw Keel-billed Toucan, Yellow-throated Toucan, Gartered Trogon, Green Shrike-Vireo, and Buff-throated Saltator. After breakfast we drove to Metropolitan Natural Park in Panama City, stopping at the Panama Canal to watch

vessels move toward the Miraflores locks. On the park trails we recorded Ruddy-tailed Flycatcher, Slate-colored Seedeater, Rufous-and-white Wren, Black-and-white Warbler, Black-chested Jay, and Bat Falcon. Just before leaving we found a small group of Lance-tailed Manakins, enjoyed great views of Common Squirrel Cuckoo, and ended with a cooperative Crimson-crested Woodpecker.



Squirrel Cuckoo © Blair Dudeck



Crimson-crested Woodpecker © Blair Dudeck



Birding Panama City © Jared Clarke

After lunch we birded coastal mudflats at low tide. Shorebirds were distant but we still saw Willet, Whimbrel, Western Sandpiper, Spotted Sandpiper, Wilson's and Semipalmated Plover, and Short-billed Dowitcher. Other coastal species included Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, White Ibis, Snowy Egret, Brown Pelican, Magnificent Frigatebird, Royal Tern, and Laughing Gull. We also found a roosting Cocoi Heron in mangroves and finished with a pair of Common Black Hawks overhead. We returned to the hotel for our farewell dinner and wrapped up our amazing Panama tour. Overall, we finished with 270 species and made countless memories.



Our group at Yaviza

[Panama birding tour eBird list (Feb 13 - 22, 2026)]