



Tico Tours

Panama: Pipeline Road & Chiriqui Highlands

Duration- 7 Days

Day 1: Arrival to Panama Upon arrival to Panama you will be met in the Tocumen International airport by a bilingual, interpretive, and birding expert and escorted to your accommodations. From your lodging, guests can wander the tree-lined streets of this former Canal Zone neighborhood. Frequent evening and morning visitors to this area include a variety of tanagers, toucans, thrushes, flycatchers, and more. This evening we will host a “Get Acquainted” event with cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, and a tour briefing.

Day 2: Pipeline Road, Discovery Center, & Summit Ponds Pipeline Road and Summit Ponds located in and near Soberania National Park, with access to both forest and wetland birds, is considered by many to be two of the best birding locations in all of the tropics. In a single day it is possible to see up to 300 species. Due to the nature of the inhabitants of the forest it is not uncommon to encounter army ant swarms attended by antbirds. Mixed flocks are frequent flyers.

The many birds found within the park on Pipeline road include trogons, wrens, puffbirds, hummingbirds, hermits, and motmots. Forest-falcons are commonly heard and sometimes seen. Exploring the nearby wetlands one can often find Rufescent Tiger-heron, White-throated Crake, Wattled Jacana, Purple Gallinule, and many other aquatic species. But birds are not the only animals one encounters when exploring this area of Panama. Many other abound, including the monkeys, sloths, iguanas, frogs, toads, and rodents such as the Agouti, Paca, and Capybara.

Day 3: Achiote Road, & San Lorenzo National Park

Early this morning we will set out for the area of Escobal and Achiote Road, one of the sites of Panama Audubon Society's world-famed Christmas Bird Count, which regularly reports over 340 species in a 24-hour period. The road extends through open habitat and features a variety of Caribbean specialties not likely to

be seen on the Pacific side of the Isthmus. Here we will search for diurnal raptors and specialties such as Spot-crowned Barbet, Black Hawk-Eagle, Rufous-crested Coquette, Montezuma Oropendola, Brown-hooded Parrot, Black-bellied Wren, Pied Puffbird and rarities like Bare-crowned Antbird and the White-headed Wren.

San Lorenzo National Park is located on the cliffs at the mouth of the Chagres River where it finally meets the Caribbean Ocean. Fort San Lorenzo, well known for its historical significance, is also a great place to look for wildlife and birds. For the journey back to Panama you will enjoy a scenic ride through Soberania National Park flanking Gatun Lake on the Panama Canal Railway.

Day 4 - Chiriqui Highlands: Volcan and Cerro Punta

This morning we take the early morning flight to David and the Chiriqui Highlands located in western Panama. Upon arrival, we'll set out for Laguna de Volcan where we'll be looking for the Red-rumped Woodpecker and Chiriqui Yellowthroat.

Next, we'll move to Finca Hartman. The owners of this old farm, concerned about disappearing habitat, are allowing the majority of the land to revert back to forest. The area still used for farming is dedicated to shade-grown coffee under towering remnant rainforest trees, with some land still covered by highland cloud forest. Access roads ranging in elevation from 400-6000 ft provide a good altitudinal gradient for birding. Christmas bird counts on the finca yield nearly 200 species and over 280 species have been recorded in total, including Turquoise Cotinga and Elegant Euphonia.

Day 5: Parque Internacional La Amistad (PILA) and Los Quetzales

Parque Internacional La Amistad (PILA) lies along the Talamanca mountain range was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1990 due to the great importance it has for the preservation of biodiversity in Panama and the American continent. The park's plant and animal life is some of the most diverse in Panama. Among the nearly 600 types of birds identified in the area are such spectacular species as the Resplendent Quetzal, Three-wattled Bellbird, and the rarely seen Bare-necked Umbrellabird.

Exploring the area around Los Quetzales Inn, where we will be staying, is perhaps the best place to find Resplendent Quetzal called by many "the world's most beautiful bird. Many other highland specialties can also be found, including Black Guan, Prong-billed and Red-headed Barbets, Buffy Tuftedcheek, White-fronted Tyrannulet, Tufted Flycatcher, Barred Becard, Long-tailed Silky-Flycatcher, Black-faced Solitaire, Flame-throated Warbler, Collared Redstart,

Sooty-capped Bush-Tanager, Golden-browed Chlorophonia, Yellow-thighed Finch, and Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch.

Day 6: Panama City

Today we head back to Panama City but not before stopping at Macho de Monte to look for some of the lower elevation species as the River-side Wren, Bay-headed Tanager, Fulvous-vented Euphonia, Thick-billed Seed-Finch, and Crested Oropendola.

This afternoon we have two options. Dependent on the tide schedule, we may visit the ancient city of Panama Viejo. Founded in 1519 by the conquistador Pedrarias Dávila, Panamá Viejo is the oldest European settlement on the Pacific coast of the Americas. It was laid out on a rectilinear grid and marks the transference from Europe of the idea of a planned town. In 1671 the city was sacked and burned by the Welsh privateer, Henry Morgan. Today, the remaining ruins are a UNESCO World Heritage Site flanking the mud flats of the Bay of Panama, a key resting spot for millions of migratory sea birds. Within the ruins we find Saffron Finches, Crested Caracaras, and Yellow-crowned Amazon. Along the shores Black-necked Stilt, Southern Lapwing, and Black Skimmers are often seen.

Our second option, should the tides be out or too high, we can visit Metropolitan Nature Park, the only Tropical Forest Park within a capital city in all of Latin America. The area has remained largely undisturbed for the last 80 years and is a great place to experience dry, deciduous, lowland tropical forest.

What makes Metro Park so unique is that it is adjacent to the Panama Canal watershed land that consists of national parks and protected reserve land. Within the 265 hectares that make up Metro Park you can find up to 267 species of birds including national endemic Yellow-green Tyrannulet, Blue-crowned Motmots, Rufous-and-White Wrens, Lance-tailed Manakins, greenlets, flycatchers, honeycreepers, and tanagers. Among the many birds one also can find 3 species of monkeys, two and three-toed sloths, many reptiles, and much more. They don't know they've entered the city limits! From the Mirador, the park's highest point located at 150 meters above sea level, the view of the Bay of Panama and the islands of Perico, Naos, Flamenco, Taboguilla and Taboga and the Panama Canal entrance on the Pacific side, the Bridge of the Americas, and Ancon Hill is breath taking.

Day 7: Departure

Today we'll say "hasta luego" to this enchanting country and return home, where you'll be eager to share your incredible Panama birding experiences and your newly expanded life list!