



## Tico Tours Panama: Summary

The long Isthmus of Panama offers a varied avifauna. Over 969 bird species with 107 regional endemics distributed in five Endemic Bird Areas. In addition to this, over 100 of the species are from South American origins or not found in the rest of Central America. The period of lightest rainfall and best birding is from mid December to mid April. The dry season mid December –mid April; the green season (April-November) offers good morning birding because usually it rains more in the afternoon; local weather conditions change in every region within different times of the year. Most tours offer comfortable lodges and hotels with private rooms, bathrooms and hot water, located next or within the Rainforest.

Our tours are designed to maximize the number of species and reserves to be seen. However we won't be in a rush, just to get huge numbers. The walks are at slow pace, this allows for bird and wildlife photography. We visit several private reserves, gardens and feeders where is easier to find many of the key species. The driving and the flights are scheduled during hot hours where the activity is slower. The afternoon plans allow for those who would like to have some rest to do that at the lodges, for most of the programs. Beside the birds, many other animals may be seen including monkeys, sloths, iguanas, frogs, toads, and rodents such as Agouti, Paca, and Capybara.

Geographic birding in Panama can be divided into three major zones, Central Panama, Western Panama and Eastern Panama. Tico Tours offers scheduled tours to all of these areas and customized tours can be arranged to take in any or even all 3 areas. The long narrow country provides easy access to the mountains and lowlands on both sides. A good road system in the country provides good access to most birding spots except wild Darien.

## Central Panama - Birding the Panama Canal Rainforests

This area can be described as one of the most accessible and rich birding areas in the world. The major spots are less than one hour from your hotel in Panama City. This area includes what is known as the Panama Canal Watershed, several national parks were created within this area. This land comprises about 5 % of the national territory, and 650 bird species are known from the Panama Canal Watershed (Engelman et al. 1995). This represents two-thirds of the Panamanian avifauna!. This area covers a variety of habitats like moist tropical forests, Pacific lowland forests, Caribbean lowland wet forests, Pre-mountain forest (foothills) and wetland areas.

## Western Panama & Chiriqui Highlands

Western Panama has some of the most awesome Central American Birds, The Resplendent Quetzal, Bare-necked-Umbrellabird and Three-wattle Bellbird just to mention some. Traveling to western Panama can be very easy due to the good road system to most of the destinations, although to reach some national parks a 4x4 is required. There are three endemic bird areas in western Panama: Pacific lowlands, Caribbean lowlands and The Western highlands with the highest concentration of endemics. There are several provinces contained in the western part of Panama: Cocolé, Veraguas, Herrera, Los Santos, Chiriqui and Bocas del Toro.

## Eastern Panama & Darien

The Eastern part of Panama contains unique avian species not found in the rest of Central America, some species are mostly related to South American Birds. The avifauna in this region is highly diverse. Darien within this area is home of sensational birds, such as the Harpy Eagles, the Golden-headed Quetzals and four species of Macaws. Traveling in most of this region is difficult, roads are bad and rivers are the main means of transportation, especially in Darien. The travel to Darien can be done by air. This area includes the Eastern part of Panama province; Cerro Azul, Tocumen Marsh, San Blas region (Nusagandi) and wild Darien province.

Panama has 11 endemic birds, Brown-backed Dove, Azuero Parakeet, Escudo Hummingbird, Glow-throated Hummingbird, Stripe-cheeked Woodpecker, Coiba Spinetail, Beautiful Treerunner, Yellow-green Tyrannulet, Pirre Bush-Tanager, Green-naped Tanager, and Yellow-green Finch.