



Keel-billed Toucan (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*) by Martin Van Lokven

PANAMA

with Audubon South Carolina

February 24 - March 3, 2018



With more bird species than any other country in Central America and diverse ecosystems including rainforest and coastline, Panama is a perfect destination for bird and nature lovers. With your expert local birding guide, you'll discover Panama's tropical ecology and biological diversity while learning about the current conservation efforts to protect this country's important habitats. Visit many well-known birding trails, woodland habitats, tropical rainforests, Soberania National Park, Panama Bay Mudflats, and the iconic Miraflores Locks at the Panama Canal.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Visit Barro Colorado Island and Cerro Gaital Natural Monument, a lush 827-acre nature reserve home to more than 300 bird species.
- Immerse yourself in local culture at the craft market in the picturesque village of El Valle de Anton.
- Bird in iconic locations such as El Valle and Pipeline Road.
- Meet with Panama Audubon and learn about their regional education and conservation projects.

ITINERARY

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

FEBRUARY 24 - PANAMA CITY

Arrive in Panama City mid-afternoon. Meet your Panamanian guide and transfer to the hotel for check in. Meet for dinner and orientation at 7 pm in the hotel restaurant. *Overnight at Country Inn and Suites Amador. (D)*

FEBRUARY 25 - PANAMA CITY

After breakfast, head out for birding at Metropolitan Nature Park, perhaps the only forest reserve within a major capital city in Latin America. Despite proximity to Panama City, it boasts rich avifauna. Next, depart for the Panama Bay Mudflats. The timing of this visit is tide dependent. The mudflats are a Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar site), and a site of hemispheric importance by the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN). The Bay of Panama is important wintering habitat to thousands of shorebirds including Western Sandpiper, Semipalmated and Black-bellied Plovers, Willet, Whimbrel, and Short-billed Dowitcher. After lunch, meet with members of the Panama Audubon Society to talk about their work and the important bird areas of Panama. Return to your hotel for dinner and time at leisure. *Overnight at Country Inn and Suites Amador. (BLD)*

FEBRUARY 26 - EL VALLE

Early this morning travel to the Panama Canal's famed Miraflores Locks. Explore the museum and hopefully see a ship pass through the locks. Next, transfer to El Valle, situated approximately 60 miles west of Panama City. The picturesque village of El Valle de Anton is at elevation of 2,400 feet in the center of the gigantic crater of an extinct volcano. Afternoon visit to Cerro Gaital Natural Monument. The lush 827-acre nature reserve protects the mountainous terrain surrounding El Valle de Antón and is home to more than 300 bird species. Some of the best birding is along the fringes of the reserve where vegetation is less dense. Look for Tawny-crested Tanager, Chestnut-capped Brush finch, Orange-billed Nightingale Thrush, Green Hermit, Spotted Woodcreeper, and Barred Hawk. *Overnight at Canopy Lodge. (BLD)*

FEBRUARY 27 - EL VALLE

This morning, head to Las Minas for birding. The views are beautiful along the road; on a clear day one can see both the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. Specialties of the region include Black and yellow, Bay-headed and Emerald Tanagers, Tawny-capped Euphonia, Scale-crested Pygmy Tyrant, Spot-crowned Antvireo, Gray-headed Kite, and many more. After lunch visit the craft market in El Valle. Later continue to the Cara Iguana Trail for birding in the foothills in some of the last remaining examples of dry Pacific forest. Specialties here include Elaenia, Yellow, Olive and Panama Flycatchers, Pale-eyed Pygmy Tyrant, and more. Hummers to watch for are Garden Emerald, Long-billed Starthroat and White-vented Plumeleteer. *Overnight at Canopy Lodge. (BLD)*

FEBRUARY 28 - GAMBOA

Depart El Valle and travel to Gamboa. En route stop for birding at Juan Hombron for raptors such as the Savanna Hawk, and on occasion the elusive Aplomado Falcon. Other specialties include Veraguan Mango, White Ibis, Glossy Ibis, Bran-colored Flycatcher, Mouse-colored Tyrannulet, Northern Scrub Flycatcher, Bare-throated Tiger Heron, American Woodstork, and the Plain-breasted Ground Dove. Afternoon birding on the Gamboa hotel grounds and the Waterfall Trail looking for species such as Southern Nightingale Wren, Olive Tanager, and Rufous-vented Ground Cuckoo. *Overnight at Gamboa Rainforest Resort. (BLD)*

MARCH 1 - GAMBOA

This morning depart early for a boat journey to Barro Colorado Island in Gatun Lake to discover the splendor of a humid tropical forest. The

largest forested island in the Panama Canal waterway, Barro Colorado Island has been administrated by the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute since 1923. Walk on the trails to observe plants, mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles and insects, then return to the field station for lunch and a lecture by a Smithsonian investigator about their fascinating research. *Overnight at Gamboa Rainforest Resort. (BLD)*

MARCH 2 - GAMBOA

Depart with a boxed breakfast for the world famous Pipeline Road in Soberania National Park, a 55,000-acre woodland where nearly 400 species of birds have been recorded, including the Black Hawk Eagle, Black-cheeked Woodpecker and a great array of North American migrants. Later in the afternoon spend time birding at the Ammo Dump Ponds. Return to Gamboa Resort for dinner. *Overnight at Gamboa Rainforest. (BLD)*

MARCH 3 - FAREWELL!

Transfer to the Panama City airport for your flight back to the US. (B)

YOUR AUDUBON HOST

Matt Johnson is the Director of Bird Conservation and Engagement for Audubon South Carolina, the state arm of the National Audubon Society. He works on several citizen science and community engagement projects for Audubon, most notably with the iconic Prothonotary Warbler. His work with this "swamp canary" has taken him to Panama before, where he, in conjunction with colleagues from the Prothonotary Warbler Working Group, studied the wintering habitats of this species. Previously, Matt was the Education Director at the Francis Beidler Forest Audubon Center, and he worked as a lecturer at Clemson University. He also served as an associate producer for the Emmy award-winning nature show "Expeditions with Patrick McMillan". Matt has a BS in Wildlife Biology and a MS in Biological Sciences from Clemson. He has birded extensively throughout the US, as well as in Panama and Costa Rica.



LAND PRICING

\$2,925 (10 participants)

Cost includes meals, accommodations, and activities as indicated in the itinerary, in-country transportation, full-time local birding guide, donation to Audubon South Carolina, and carbon offset.

Does not include international airfare, gratuities for driver or local guides, or items of a personal nature. Holbrook can assist with your flight arrangements if desired.

THE FINE PRINT

Cost is based on a minimum of 10 participants in double occupancy rooms (with the maximum of 15, cost will be \$2,700). Single rooms are available at the additional amount of \$380 per person. A \$200 per person deposit and enrollment form are required by October 27, 2017 to reserve your space on the trip. This deposit is refundable excluding a \$100 cancellation fee until November 21, 2017, at which time non-refundable final payment is due. Travel/trip cancellation insurance is strongly recommended. For more information call Travel Insured at 800-243-3174 or visit www.travelinsured.com. Holbrook Travel's agency number is 15849.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO ENROLL:

Contact Debbie Sturdivant Jordan at debbie@holbrooktravel.com or 866-748-6146. Visit holbrook.travel/audsc-pn18



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