



PANAMA'S DARIÉN LOWLANDS

Canopy Camp

January 13 – 21, 2027

This tour to the lowlands of eastern Panama fuses the rich diversity of tropical birds for which Panama is justly famous with the classic atmosphere of a luxurious African tented camp. We will be quartered in the Canopy Camp, courtesy of Raúl Arias de Para, whose vision for sustainable ecotourism and devotion to preserving Panama's birds and wild places introduced the birding world to the famed Canopy Tower in the Canal Zone and the Canopy Lodge in El Valle. Located in the lowlands of Darién, just a four-hour-drive (via the Pan-American highway) from Panama City, and tucked at the base of some low-lying hills whose forested slopes are part of a protected zone, this camp will provide a comfortable base for a great week of Neotropical birding. Our accommodation will be in spacious, walk-in, African-style tents, mounted on platforms, and replete with comfortable beds, fans, and private bathrooms with showers and flush toilets. Keeping with the tradition established by the other Canopy lodges, the camp will offer imaginatively prepared, tasty meals, and an abundance of cold drinks.

The camp clearing affords a fabulous view of the surrounding forest and is bordered by Heliconia thickets that buzz with the activity of Pale-bellied and Rufous-breasted hermits, and reverberate with the cascading songs of White-bellied Antbirds. Planted stands of Vervain swarm with a variety of hummingbirds, from Blue-chested and Sapphire-throated to the dazzling Blue-

throated Goldentail. Dawn brings a flurry of activity and a cacophony of avian sound, dominated by the screeching calls of commuting parrots, the yelping of Yellow-throated Toucans, and the incessant croaking of Keel-billed Toucans, but sometimes also including the raucous calls of Red-throated



Caracaras, the noisy chattering of White-headed Wrens, and the plaintive whistles of Barred Puffbirds. Our mornings and late afternoons will be spent exploring the camp trail system and a number of nearby sites, where, in addition to seeing a broad cross section of toucans, trogons, motmots, woodcreepers, antbirds, tanagers, and other tropical birds that typify the Canal Zone, we will also search for a number of special birds whose Panamanian ranges are (in most cases) largely restricted to the far eastern lowlands and foothills, among them: Capped and Cocoli herons; Bare-throated Tiger-Heron; three species of macaws (Great Green, Blue-and-yellow and Chestnut-fronted); Spectacled Parrotlet; Gray-cheeked Nunlet; Rufous-tailed and Dusky-backed (rare) jacamars; Black-tailed Trogon; Red-rumped, Spot-breasted, and Golden-green woodpeckers; Red-billed Scythebill; Double-banded Graytail; Black Antshrike; Rufous-winged Antwren; Bare-crowned Antbird; Black-billed Flycatcher (rare); Sooty-headed Tyrannulet; Yellow-breasted Flycatcher; Choco Sirystes; One-colored Becard; Golden-headed Manakin; Black-capped Donacobius; White-eared Conebill; Orange-crowned Oriole; and Black Oropendola.

In 2016, Canopy Camp personnel began interfacing with local guides, biologists, and landowners from the surrounding region (including several indigenous communities) and Darién National Park, regarding the location of active Harpy Eagle nests in the region. This outreach revealed multiple active nests, and resulted in our last three groups being treated to exceptional views of these iconic raptors at their nests (One VENT group was even treated to a chance encounter with a perched Harpy Eagle at the Canopy Camp!). Although sightings of Harpy Eagles can never be guaranteed, Harpy Eagle chicks have prolonged nestling and fledging periods (and continue to be fed by the adults in the vicinity of the nest for months after fledging), and adults tend to return to the same nests every other year, meaning that there is a decent chance that at least one known nest in the area may be active for several months out of each year. The Canopy family and their local contacts can be counted on to maintain a “finger on the pulse” of local Harpy and Crested eagle nesting activity. Accordingly, our itinerary will maintain the built-in flexibility to take advantage of conditions on the ground in prioritizing any opportunities to visit active Harpy (and/or Crested) Eagle nests.

This tour can be taken by itself or in combination with Panama: El Valle’s Canopy Lodge (January 20-27, 2027), also led by Erik Bruhnke.

January 13, Day 1: Arrival in Panama City and Transfer to Crowne Plaza Panama Airport Hotel

Participants arriving into Panama City's Tocumen International Airport anytime this afternoon or evening, after clearing customs and gathering luggage, should take the courtesy shuttle to the nearby Crowne Plaza Panama Airport Hotel where a room will be reserved in your name.

NIGHT: Crowne Plaza Panama Airport Hotel, Tocumen

January 14, Day 2: Tocumen to the Bayano Valley, and on to the Canopy Camp, Darién

An early start will take us to the lowlands of eastern Panama Province and the region surrounding Bayano Reservoir. Much of the area between here and Panama City has been deforested and converted to cattle pasture, but there is still extensive, selectively logged forest beyond the reservoir. The margins of the reservoir are good places to find Cocoli Heron, Bare-throated and Rufescent tiger-herons, Pied Water-Tyrant and several species of kingfishers. However, it is in the forest where we will



Barred Puffbird © Erik Bruhnke

concentrate our time. The forest here has an interesting composition, with pockets of drier, semi-deciduous forest dominated by towering Cuipo trees interdigitated with more typical humid evergreen forest. Several bird species more typical of Colombia and the Darién lowlands reach the western (northern) limit of their ranges in the Bayano region, and finding these will be our primary focus. However, the forest here is often extremely birdy, and affords abundant opportunities for seeing many species typical of the Canal Zone, none of which will be ignored. Among the many Bayano birds that we might hope for are Barred Puffbird, Red-rumped and Golden-green woodpeckers, Red-billed Scythebill, the range-restricted Black Antshrike, Rufous-winged Antwren,

Streaked Xenops, One-colored Becard, White-eared Conebill and Orange-crowned Oriole. This has also proven to be a particularly good spot for some species of wider distribution, among them, Crane Hawk, Black-tailed Trogon, Bare-crowned Antbird, Cinnamon Becard, Blue Cotinga, Golden-collared Manakin, Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher and Plain-colored Tanager. We'll probably devote a few hours to birding this interesting region before continuing on to the town of Tortí. We'll plan to have lunch in Tortí at a restaurant where past groups have enjoyed close studies of Long-billed Starthroat, Black-throated Mango, and Scaly-breasted, Rufous-tailed, Snowy-bellied and Sapphire-throated hummingbirds attending the hummingbird feeders. Depending on when we arrive in Tortí after earlier birding experiences, we may have time for some local birding prior to lunch.

After lunch, we will continue our drive eastward into the Darién. Much of the countryside east of the Bayano region has been deforested, but this open country can be good for Savanna Hawk, Yellow-headed and Crested caracaras, Pearl Kite, Fork-tailed Flycatcher, Red-breasted Blackbird and a number of other species. We'll arrive at the Canopy Camp in the late afternoon, with time to settle in to our beautiful accommodations before dark and perhaps with time to enjoy the late flurry of bird activity around the camp clearing.

The Canopy Camp is designed in the tradition of African-style luxury tented camps. The spacious, walk-in tents are mounted on platforms, replete with comfortable beds, fans, and adjoining (right outside the tent, on the same deck) private bathrooms with hot-water showers and flush toilets. The tents are well spaced through the camp clearing, maximizing privacy. Keeping with the tradition established by the other Canopy lodges (Canopy Tower, Canal Zone and Canopy Lodge, El Valle), the camp will offer imaginatively prepared, tasty meals, and an abundance of cold drinks. This will be a never before afforded opportunity to bird the lowlands of Darién in comfort!

NIGHT: Canopy Camp, Sanson, Darién

January 15-19, Days 3-7: Darién Lowlands Based out of the Canopy Camp

The Canopy Camp is tucked at the base of a jagged line of low-lying hills whose forested slopes are part of a protected zone. The camp clearing affords a fabulous view of the surrounding forest, and is

bordered by *Heliconia* thickets that often buzz with the activity of Pale-bellied and Rufous-breasted hermits, and reverberate with the cascading songs of White-bellied Antbirds. Dawn brings a flurry of activity and a cacophony of avian sound, dominated by the screeching calls of commuting parrots, the yelping of Yellow-throated Toucans, and the incessant croaking of Keel-billed Toucans, but also often including the raucous calls of Red-throated Caracaras, the liquid gurgling of an active colony of Chestnut-headed Oropendolas, the noisy chattering of White-headed Wrens, the incessant calls of Piratic Flycatchers and the plaintive whistles of Barred Puffbirds. The entrance road to the camp and parts of the main camp clearing are lined with Vervain, whose flowers attract multitudes of hummingbirds, including Blue-chested, Sapphire-throated, Rufous-tailed, and Blue-throated Goldentail. Even the spectacular Ruby-topaz Hummingbird, a rarity anywhere in Central America, has been recorded here over the years, after first being found by our inaugural tour to the camp. We'll have five full days available for exploring the camp trail system and a number of nearby sites, where, in addition to seeing a good cross section of toucans, trogons, motmots, woodcreepers, antbirds, tanagers, and other tropical birds that typify the Canal Zone, we will also search for a number of special birds whose Panamanian ranges are (in most cases) largely restricted to the far eastern lowlands and foothills, among them: Capped Heron; Spectacled Parrotlet; three species of macaws (Great Green, Blue-and-yellow and Chestnut-fronted); Gray-cheeked Nunlet; Rufous-tailed and Dusky-backed (rare) jacamars; Black-tailed Trogon; Red-rumped, Spot-breasted, and Golden-green woodpeckers; Red-billed Scythebill; Double-banded Graytail; Black Antshrike; Rufous-winged Antwren; Bare-crowned Antbird; Black-billed Flycatcher (rare); Choco Sirystes; One-colored Becard; Golden-headed Manakin; Bicolored Wren; Black-capped Donacobius; White-eared Conebill; Orange-crowned Oriole; and Black Oropendola.



Crested Eagle © Erik Bruhnke

Our exact day-to-day itinerary will be kept flexible, allowing us to take advantage of local weather and birding conditions, including the known presence of any active Harpy and/or Crested eagle nests. However, our time here will certainly include one or more mornings birding a wonderful stretch of forested road at El Salto, an excellent area for raptors, as well as for multiple species of trogons and woodpeckers, Whooping Motmot, Gray-cheeked Nunlet, Barred Puffbird, Double-banded Graytail, Black Antshrike, Bare-crowned Antbird, Yellow-breasted Flycatcher, Black-bellied and White-headed wrens, and Yellow-backed Orioles, among many others. Trails at El Salto and nearby Tierra Nueva, as well as those at the Canopy Camp, will allow us access into the heart of the forest, maximizing our chances of ferreting out the more secretive forest interior species. We'll also hope to spend one full day birding by boat along the Río Chucunaque and Río Tuquesa to an Emberá community called Nuevo Vigia, which could be particularly good for finding raptors, parrots and the rare Dusky-backed Jacamar. On most other days, we'll return to the camp for lunch and siesta, with late afternoons typically devoted to birding forest-edge, open country and marshes. This is often the best time to see the spectacular and regional Black Oropendola; either on a devoted afternoon in one area, and we also may have a chance for the species while birding on the way to Nuevo Vigia. On at least one night, we'll plan some night-birding activities, which could afford us views of some nocturnal mammals as well.



Dusky-backed Jacamar © Erik Bruhnke

NIGHTS: Canopy Camp, Sanson, Darién

January 20, Day 8: Canopy Camp to Panama City

After a final morning of birding in the Darién lowlands, we will spend the afternoon retracing our route back to Panama City, perhaps with one more stop at Lake Bayano. Conversely, depending on what we've already seen (or missed), we often leave camp immediately after breakfast and drive directly to Tortí, where we would spend the remainder of the morning birding the nearby San Francisco Reserve. This private reserve has some lovely tall forest (offering such possibilities as Great Jacamar, White-fronted Nunbird, and the Panama endemic Yellow-green Tyrannulet), as well as brushy

fields and second growth that could produce a number of new birds. After lunch at a restaurant in Tortí, we will begin making our way back to Panama City where we will enjoy a farewell dinner.

Participants continuing on Panama: El Valle's Canopy Lodge (January 20-27, 2027) will be transferred after the farewell dinner to the Radisson Hotel Panama Canal where you will spend the night.

NIGHT: Crowne Plaza Panama Airport Hotel, Tocumen

January 21, Day 9: Departure for Home

Participants can use the hotel's complimentary shuttle service to Tocumen International Airport for morning or afternoon flights home.

ESSENTIAL TOUR INFORMATION

TOUR SIZE: This tour will be limited to 10 participants. However, VENT reserves the right to increase the tour limit by one in order to accommodate a couple when only one space is available.

TOUR LEADER: Erik Bruhnke with the assistance of local guides



Erik Bruhnke has loved birds since he was a child looking at chickadees. In 2008 he graduated from Northland College in Wisconsin with a Natural Resources degree. Erik taught field ornithology at Northland College for three semesters. Between 2009 and 2014, he spent his summers conducting field research focused on breeding bird transects in Upper Michigan, point counts for a breeding bird atlas in Minnesota and Wisconsin's Northwoods, vegetation and breeding bird surveys throughout wind farms in North Dakota's prairie potholes, and cavity-nesting surveys in the Cascade Mountains of Oregon. A devoted raptor nerd, he is drawn to hawkwatches. He worked as an interpreter for six seasons at Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory in Duluth, Minnesota; counted migrating raptors at the Corpus Christi HawkWatch in Texas in 2015; and was the 2016 and 2017 hawk counter at the Cape May Hawkwatch in New Jersey. Erik's wildlife photography has won national awards, and he's written for the American Birding Association's *Birder's*

Guide, *BirdWatching* magazine, and *Bird Watcher's Digest*. When not leading birding tours, Erik often leads field trips and speaks at birding festivals. He also enjoys hiking, kayaking, cross-country skiing, and just being out in the snow. In his free time he loves to cook and bake.

TOUR COSTS & PAYMENT INFORMATION

TOUR FEE: \$5,675 per person based on double occupancy or \$6,650 for a person requiring single accommodation. This includes all meals from breakfast on Day 2 through dinner on Day 8, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, all ground transportation during the tour, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does **not** include airfare to nor from Panama City. The fee also excludes laundry, personal expenses, and other items of a personal nature. For information about gratuities, please see the “TIPPING” sub-section below. If the minimum group size is not met, each participant will be charged a small-group supplement—shared equally and communicated in advance—to allow the tour to proceed.

REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT: You may register for this tour through the VENT [website](#) or by calling our office (512-328-5221). The initial deposit for this tour is \$1,000 per person. At 180 days VENT will collect a second deposit that brings the total deposit amount to 40% of the tour price. We accept MasterCard and Visa for both deposits.

PAYMENTS: All tour payments may be made by credit card (MasterCard or Visa), check, money order, or bank transfer (contact the VENT office for bank transfer information). These include initial deposits, second deposits, interim payments, final balances, special arrangements, etc. Full payment of the tour fee is due 120 days (September 15, 2026) prior to the tour departure date.

EXTRA ARRANGEMENTS: Should you wish to make arrangements to arrive early or extend your stay, please contact the VENT office at least two months prior to your departure date. We can very easily make hotel arrangements and often at our group rate, if we receive your request with enough advance time.

FUEL SURCHARGES: Our prices are based on fuel prices at the time of itinerary publication. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, it may be necessary to institute a fuel surcharge.

TIPPING: An important part of the value of a VENT tour is knowing that tips for local service providers at our destinations—restaurant staff, hotel staff, drivers, local guides, and various other support staff—are included in your tour fee. If you would like to offer any of your local guides an additional tip, \$5 to \$10 a day is a common amount.

Tips for your VENT tour leader(s) are **not** included, but it is customary to tip one or both if you feel that you have received exceptional service. To assist in your planning, we recommend tipping your VENT tour leader(s) \$15 to \$20 per day, or the equivalent of approximately 2–4% of the tour fee.

If you plan to give tips by cash, they should be given directly to your tour leader at the end of the tour and **not** sent to the VENT office. Some of our tour leaders use mobile payment applications such as Venmo, PayPal, and Wise. If you would like to use this method, please ask your tour leaders directly whether they can accept tips through such an application.

We emphasize that tipping is optional and that these amounts are only recommendations. The amount you decide to tip is based entirely on your experience and at your discretion.

CANCELLATION & REFUNDS

CANCELLATION BY PARTICIPANT:

- **More than 120 days prior to the tour start date:** A refund of all monies paid will be issued, less 50% of the deposit (including initial and second deposit)
- **120 days or fewer prior to the tour start date:** No refund will be provided.
- **Optional add-ons:** Some tours offer optional add-ons that are designated as non-refundable. Any such add-ons are clearly identified as non-refundable at the time of booking. By selecting and purchasing an optional add-on, the participant acknowledges and accepts its non-refundable status. Fees paid for non-refundable add-ons are not refundable under any circumstances, regardless of when the tour is cancelled.

This cancellation policy applies to all participants and all tours (Pre-Tours and Extensions are considered self-contained tours separate from the main tour). Because unexpected events can occur, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance.

CANCELLATION BY VENT:

If VENT cancels a tour prior to departure without cause or good reason, VENT will provide the participant a full refund, which will constitute full settlement to the participant.

If VENT cancels or delays a tour or any portion of a tour as a result of any Force Majeure event, VENT will use its reasonable best efforts to refund any payments on the balance of the tour fee to participant; provided that, VENT will have no obligation to provide a participant with a refund and will not be liable or responsible to a participant, nor be deemed to have defaulted under or breached any applicable agreement, for any failure or delay in fulfilling or performing any term of such agreement. A “**Force Majeure**” event means any act beyond VENT’s control, including, without limitation, the following: (a) acts of God; (b) flood, fire, earthquake, hurricane, epidemic, pandemic or explosion; (c) war, invasion, hostilities (whether war is declared or not), terrorist threats or acts, riot or other civil unrest; (d) government order, law or actions; (e) embargoes or blockades; (f) national or regional emergency; (g) strikes, labor stoppages, labor slowdowns or other industrial disturbances; (h) shortage of adequate power or transportation facilities; and (i) any other similar events or circumstances beyond the control of VENT.

This VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy does not apply to air tickets purchased through VENT or to any special arrangements, such as additional hotel nights, that fall outside of the services described in the tour itinerary.

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of \$50,000. CST #2014998-50.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

MEDICAL EVACUATION INSURANCE/PROTECTION REQUIREMENT: This tour visits remote locations where immediate access to primary medical care may not be available. **For this reason, travel insurance/travel protection which covers you for emergency evacuation is required for participation on this tour.** This coverage is included in the **Ripcord Rescue Travel Insurance™** program. Alternatively, comparable service can be obtained through **Medjet** and its **MedjetAssist** plan. If you choose not to purchase insurance/travel protection through Ripcord or Medjet, you are required to obtain it through another provider. Please refer to the TRAVEL INSURANCE/TRAVEL PROTECTION section for additional information.

SUGGESTED OPTIONS: To safeguard against losses due to illness, accident, or other unforeseen circumstances, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance as soon as possible after making a deposit. VENT has partnered with **Redpoint Travel Protection** as our preferred travel insurance provider. Through Redpoint, we recommend its comprehensive Ripcord plan, which includes a medical evacuation benefit. With this in mind, it is important to note that medical evacuation is not offered by Redpoint as a stand-alone policy or benefit. For travelers not interested in comprehensive travel insurance, VENT recommends **Medjet** and its **MedjetAssist®** plan. Medjet is not an insurance company, and Medjet Assist is not an insurance product; rather, Medjet is a membership-based air-medical transport company specializing in moving hospitalized travelers from an admitting hospital to a medical facility of choice. Medjet does not provide medical evacuation service from the point of injury or illness; yet, the MedjetAssist plan offers robust enough travel protection to satisfy the medical evacuation insurance requirement in place for many VENT tours.

About Redpoint Travel's Ripcord Plan

Ripcord is a completely integrated travel insurance program with single contact for emergency services, travel assistance, and insurance claims. Critical benefits include comprehensive travel insurance for trip cancellation/interruption, medical evacuation from your point of injury or illness to your hospital of choice; medical expense coverage, death of pet, and much more. Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as evacuation coverage in case of a natural disaster or political or security reasons, waiver for pre-existing medical conditions exclusion, and a "Cancel for Any Reason" benefit. Ripcord is available to U.S. and non-U.S. residents.*

For a price quote or to purchase travel insurance, please visit: [Ripcord Travel Insurance](#); or click the **Ripcord** logo on our website (click Help > Preparation and Insurance > Trip Insurance); or call +1-415-481-0600. Pricing is based on age, trip cost, trip length, and level of coverage.

*To be eligible for the pre-existing medical condition exclusion waiver and the optional Cancel for Any Reason (CFAR) upgrade, you must purchase your policy within 15 days of making your first trip payment. The CFAR benefit provides reimbursement for 75% of covered costs, and increases the policy premium by approximately 50%. Policies may be purchased either for the full value of

the tour fee at the time of deposit or in segments as individual tour payments are made (deposit, second deposit, final balance, additional arrangements, etc.). The “pay as you go” approach reduces up-front expense and ensures that the amount paid toward your full policy premium is in proportion to the amount paid toward the full tour fee. If you choose to “pay as you go,” you must cover each deposit or payment within 15 days, and insure all non-refundable trip costs in order to maintain the CFAR benefit. Please refer to the policy for a full description of coverage.

Redpoint considers COVID-19 illness as any other seasonal respiratory illness. Providing only a positive Covid-19 test result will likely not be considered a covered event per the terms and conditions of the company's policy. Redpoint maintains a [Coronavirus FAQ page](#) on its website that addresses questions and concerns travelers may have regarding COVID-19 and Redpoint's policy. We strongly recommend that you visit the page for an overview of relevant topics.

About Medjet’s MedjetAssist Plan

MedjetAssist is a membership program that functions like AAA for motorists. The company’s primary service is air medical transport. Critical benefits of MedjetAssist include a staff on call and ready to provide assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; all-expenses-paid air medical transport in the United States and internationally to medical facility of choice, regardless of medical necessity; repatriation of remains; and no exclusions for pre-existing conditions.

For travelers under 75, MedjetAssist may be purchased as Short-Term Memberships of 8, 15, 21, and 30 days, or Regular Annual Memberships from 1 to 5 years. For travelers 75–84, Medjet offers a Diamond Membership that is the same program but with a few additional conditions.

For a price quote or to purchase MedjetAssist, please visit: [Medjet.com/VentBird](https://www.Medjet.com/VentBird) or call 1-800-527-7478. Pricing is based on type and term of membership.

GETTING THERE & REQUIRED TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

AIR TRAVEL: Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return. Per person fees apply for each set of travel arrangements: \$50 domestic; \$75 international.* Many of our travelers choose to make their own air travel arrangements, but we emphasize the benefits to using our services. If

you book your air arrangements yourself, Victor Emanuel Travel is unable to provide support in managing any flight delays and/or cancellations that could occur before and during a tour. When you purchase air tickets through Victor Emanuel Travel, our staff has ready access to your air ticket record and can provide assistance as problems arise. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements. **Please be sure to check with the VENT office prior to purchasing your air ticket to confirm that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. VENT cannot be held responsible for any air ticket penalties.**

*An air ticket will be purchased by Victor Emanuel Travel on behalf of the traveler with the traveler's consent. A purchase is considered final upon receipt of payment. If a ticket is subsequently reissued at the behest of the traveler (i.e. voluntary change of plans), the same fee rates apply for the reissue process, in addition to any fees that may be charged by the airline.

BAGGAGE: Please limit baggage to one piece of luggage and one carry-on. The airlines now strictly enforce baggage regulations. Excess baggage charges, which can be substantial, are the personal responsibility of each participant. Please consult your pre-departure materials and/or airline to find out specific weight restrictions.

As a precaution against lost luggage, we suggest that you pack a change of clothes, toiletries, medications, important travel documents, optics, and any other essential items in your carry-on bag. Due to ever-changing circumstances in the government's attempts to improve airport security, we recommend that you check the website of the [Transportation Security Administration \(TSA\)](#) for information pertaining to permissible carry-on items.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

PASSPORTS: A passport valid for at least three months beyond your planned departure from Panama is required.

VISAs: Visas are not required for U.S. citizens traveling to this destination. If you hold a passport from another country, please check with your consulate or embassy for the most accurate guidance.

IMPORTANT: The visa details above are current for U.S. citizens as of July 7, 2026. Because entry requirements can change without notice, we kindly remind all participants to double-check the

latest information before traveling. Travelers using non-U.S. passports are responsible for confirming any entry requirements that apply to their home country.

IMPORTANT: Please provide the VENT office with a copy of the photo page of your passport. This is required in order to pre-arrange group entry into the Darién.

CANOPY CAMP ACCOMMODATIONS: The Canopy Camp has a total of eight tents including two Tent Suites and six standard tents. Both Tent Suites, one of which has a queen bed while the other has two twin beds, have more space than a standard tent and are offered to couples or pairs for an additional **\$300** per person. All units will be pre-reserved on a first-come, first-served basis. All tents have private bathrooms with flush toilets and warm water showers.

CLIMATE: The climate in the Darién lowlands and eastern Panama Province is usually warm, with mornings in the 70s to 80s. Conditions at midday can be humid and very warm, with temperatures reaching into the 90s. Rainstorms may occur at any time of year, but are more likely during the rainy season, which runs from May into early December, when a shower of some sort is expected almost daily. Generally, the weather in eastern Panama is warm and pleasant, with our activities corresponding to the cooler parts of the day and heightened bird activity.

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS: Participants should be prepared for early starts with full mornings of activity. Regardless of our morning activities, we will be returning to camp for lunch and a mid-afternoon break on most days based out of the Canopy Camp (exceptions would involve all-day excursions to Nuevo Vigia and/or targeted visits to Darién National Park or other areas to visit active Harpy Eagle or Crested Eagle nests). Late afternoon excursions of a few hours will be less physically rigorous, and will mostly involve roadside birding. Most walking on this tour will be along lightly traveled roads or trails of easy to moderate grade. We may spend some time on one or two trails that are somewhat hillier and require greater exertion, such as along Nando's Trail at the Canopy Camp (which has some moderate-to-considerably steep sections for those who require walking assistance). None of the regularly planned hiking will involve distances of much more than a mile, but we will likely be on our feet for much of the morning most days. Again, targeted excursions to active eagle (Harpy or Crested) nests may involve much longer and/or more challenging hikes, as well as the possibility of longer time spent on rivers in motorized dugout canoes. Your tour leader and local guide

will provide you, in advance, with detailed information regarding the physical requirements of any such “special excursions,” allowing you to make an informed decision regarding your options.

CLOTHING: As is the case for all our tropical tours, lightweight field clothing is the norm for Panama. This includes several pair of lightweight field pants, along with cool and comfortable long-sleeved shirts. A hat and sunscreen are recommended for protection from the sun. Dark-colored or neutral clothing is suggested, as white or bright colors may frighten secretive birds. Lightweight and comfortable walking shoes are recommended, since some days we will spend a good bit of time on foot. Some participants may find sturdier hiking shoes preferable for trail walks. A small umbrella and/or rain gear are essential as well.

CURRENCY: The U.S. Dollar is the official currency of Panama. VISA and American Express are most commonly used, but MasterCard is also accepted.

LAUNDRY SERVICE: Canopy Camp currently offers laundry services to their guests (subject to change).

EQUIPMENT: You should pack a pair of binoculars that are in good condition, along with a belt pack or day pack (good for carrying books, sunscreen, camera, etc., and particularly useful should we end up hiking a long distance to a Harpy or Crested eagle nest). As a precaution, it’s a good idea to pack your binoculars, a change of clothing, toiletry items, medications, and travel documents in your airline carry-on bag. Your leaders will have a spotting scope; but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so.

INTERNET ACCESS: Wi-Fi is available in the common areas of the Canopy Camp but not in the individual tents. However, expect service to be sporadic due to its remote location. Wi-Fi is available at the Crowne Plaza Panama Airport Hotel.

MISC:

- Departure Tax - US \$40 (included in the price of your air ticket)
- Electricity - 120 volts; plugs are the flat 2-pin American type.
- Language - The official language is Spanish, but English is spoken.
- Time - Eastern Standard Time

HEALTH & SAFETY

HEALTH: VENT follows Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for standard travel precautions, which includes vaccination against a variety of preventable diseases. Among these so-called Routine Vaccinations are measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, poliovirus vaccine (boosters for adult travelers), and Varicella (Chickenpox). You should also be up-to-date with Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B vaccinations.

If you are taking personal medication, prescription or over-the-counter, be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the tour safely. Please consult your physician as necessary. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medication.

COVID-19: We continually emphasize that our number one priority is the health and safety of our customers and employees. Although VENT no longer maintains any of its COVID-era prevention protocols, we strongly recommend best practices for protecting yourself and your fellow travelers against COVID-19 illness. These measures include receiving the primary series vaccinations for those eligible, staying “Up to Date” with COVID-19 booster shots, wearing high filtration N-95 or KN-95 masks when in airports and on airplanes, and avoiding risky social settings in the lead-up to your tour. These recommendations are firmly rooted in CDC guidance for avoiding COVID-19.

SUN EXPOSURE: The sun’s ultraviolet rays are dangerous under prolonged exposure (sometimes only a matter of minutes), even in winter and early spring. Anytime you are outdoors you will want to protect your skin, including your lips, eyes, nose, and ears. A severe sunburn is potentially very painful and will affect your level of enjoyment. Always protect yourself when outdoors and be sure to bring an ample supply of high SPF sunscreen and lip balm. We strongly recommend the use of ultra-violet blocking, polarized sunglasses.

BITING INSECTS: Remove if not a concern, otherwise expand on it.

INSECT REPELLENTS: There are insect repellents for the skin and an insect repellent used to treat clothing that should not be applied to the skin.

Insect repellents for the skin are commonly available in three forms:

- **DEET:** (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide): A chemical compound that is marketed under various brand names (OFF!®, Cutter™, Ultrathon™, etc.) and offered in a variety of formulations including sprays, lotions, time-release preparations, and disposable wipes. The formulations will state a percentage of the active ingredient DEET on the packaging. DEET may be applied to exposed skin directly and/or sprayed on clothing. Please be careful when applying DEET as it can damage plastics and lens coatings.
- **Picaridin:** A synthetic formulation that is derived from piperine, a substance found in plants that produce black pepper.
- **Herbal insect repellents:** Various mixtures of organic ingredients such as oils from eucalyptus, citronella, cedar, and other herbs. The herbal repellents are more difficult to categorize because of the difference in ingredients from one brand to another. There is considerable variation in their effectiveness.

Insect repellent for clothing is marketed in one approved formulation:

- **Permanone® (Permethrin):** is an odorless spray-on repellent that may be used for pre-treatment of clothing, gear, and tents. It should not be used directly on the skin or sprayed on clothing while it is being worn. The pre-treatment process requires a number of hours to complete and must be done outdoors, so it is best completed in advance of travel. Do-it-yourself pre-treatment must be repeated more often than commercial treatment using Insect Shield® technology. It is available at various outdoor stores and can easily be found online.
- **Insect Shield® apparel:** Clothing pre-treated with Permanone is made by a variety of manufacturers. It is available for purchase from some sporting goods suppliers. The clothing is advertised as retaining its repellency for up to 70 washings.

The US EPA offers a search tool to help choose a repellent that is best for a particular situation. For example, some repellents work for mosquitoes, but not for ticks.

<https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/which-insect-repellent-right-you>

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta Georgia. The CDC

operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line at 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636), or you can check their website at www.cdc.gov/travel. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/new_e.html (click on travel health).

SUGGESTED READING & TRIP PREPARATION

A number of traditional booksellers and online stores list excellent inventories of field guides and other natural history resources that will help prepare you for this tour. We recommend www.amazon.com which has a wide selection; www.buteobooks.com and www.nhbs.com which specialize in ornithology and natural history books; and www.abebooks.com for out-of-print and hard-to-find titles.

Field Guides

Birds:

Angehr, George R. and Robert Dean. *The Birds of Panama: A Field Guide*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010. (This is the newest all-round field guide for birds of Panama. Recommended)

Ridgely, Robert S. and John Gwynne. *A Guide to the Birds of Panama*. (Second Edition). Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.

Mammals:

Emmons, Louise H. *Neotropical Rainforest Mammals: A Field Guide*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997.

Butterflies:

Glassberg, Jeffrey. *A Swift Guide to the Butterflies of Mexico and Central America*. Sunstreak Books Inc., 2007.

Background Reading:

Ventbird.com | Panama's Darién Lowlands

Natural History:

Chapman, Frank. *My Tropical Air Castle*. New York: Appleton and Company, 1929. Fun reading by an early ornithologist in Panama. Out of print; try www.abebooks.com.

Chapman, Frank. *Life in an Air Castle*. New York: Appleton-Century Co., 1938. Out of print; try www.abebooks.com.

Forsyth, Adrian and Ken Miyata. *Tropical Nature*. New York: Charles Scribner, 1987. Excellent introduction to many fascinating aspects of the tropical rainforest.

Hilty, Steven. 1994. *Birds of Tropical America*. Shelbourne, VT: Chapters Publishing, 1994. Subtitle: "A watcher's introduction to behavior, breeding and diversity."

Kricher, John C. *A Neotropical Companion*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999. An excellent introduction to the rainforest.

Human History:

McCullough, David. *A Path Between the Seas: The Creation of the Panama Canal*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1999. An excellent history of the construction of the Panama Canal.

CLO Apps

eBird. Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Among the largest and most successful citizen science projects in existence, eBird is an essential tool in promoting bird study and conservation. Among a range of benefits, eBird allows users to keep a variety of lists in a single application. When taxonomic

splits are incorporated, lists are automatically updated. Additionally, trip leaders can share daily lists, so one only need accept a shared list and it will upload to your files. **Highly recommended.**

Merlin Bird ID. Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Merlin is an app designed as a birding coach for beginning and intermediate birdwatchers. Excellent for use in the field, Merlin asks the observer a series of questions about his or her bird sighting, including date and location, and color, size, and behavior of a bird. Merlin then processes the viewer's responses to present a shortlist of possible identifications, from which the user can choose the likely bird. Species profiles include a brief physical description, photographs, and sound samples. The Photo ID feature allows anyone with a camera to snap a photo and obtain a list of suggestions. Merlin's Sound ID feature allows identification of birds through audible recognition. To use Merlin, download the app and the appropriate regional "pack." Highly recommended.

TERMS, CONDITIONS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc., a Texas corporation, and/or its agents (together, "**VENT**") act only as agents for the participant in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, or airplane and assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity which may be occasioned either by reason of defect in any vehicle or for any reason whatsoever, or through the acts or default of any company or person engaged in conveying the participant or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT accepts no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in airfare or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, terrorism, or other causes. All such losses or expenses will be borne by the participant, as tour rates only provide for arrangements for the time stated.

VENT reserves the right (i) to substitute hotels of similar category, or the best reasonable substitution available under the circumstances, for those indicated and (ii) to make any changes in the itinerary that are deemed necessary by VENT or which are caused by third party transportation schedules (i.e. railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, etc.).

VENT reserves the right to substitute leaders or guides on any tour. Where VENT, in its sole discretion, determines such substitution is necessary, it will notify tour participants.

VENT reserves the right to cancel any tour prior to departure with or without cause or good reason. See the VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy set forth above.

Tour prices are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect on July 1, 2026, 2026 and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change thereto.

VENT reserves the right to decline any participant's Registration Form and/or refuse to allow any participant to participate in a tour as VENT deems reasonably necessary, in its sole discretion.

VENT also reserves the right to remove any tour participant from any portion of a tour as VENT deems necessary, in its sole discretion, reasons for such removal include but are not limited to, medical needs, injury, illness, inability to meet physical demands of a tour, personality conflict or situations in which such removal is otherwise in the best interest of the tour, the tour group and/or such participant. A participant may also voluntarily depart from a tour. If a participant is removed from a tour or voluntarily departs from a tour, such participant will be responsible for any expenses associated with such removal or departure, including but not limited to, transportation, lodging, airfare and meals, and VENT will have no obligation to refund or reimburse any such removed or departed participant for any tour payments or deposits previously paid by such participant.

Baggage is carried at the participant's risk entirely. No airline company, its employees, agents and/or affiliates (the "**Airline**") is to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time participants are not on board the Airline's aircraft. The participant ticket in use by any Airline, when issued, will constitute the sole contract between the Airline and the purchaser of the tickets and/or the participant. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for VENT tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airlines Reporting Corporation.

View the complete [Terms and Conditions](#) on our website.

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