

## Day 8

### AM: Canopy Tower & Semaphore Hill Road

Your guide will be waiting for you at the Observation Deck for early morning birding. Photographers will find the sunrise on the Tower spectacular. While you look for birds, you can enjoy hot coffee and tea. Some species that we are likely to see are Green & Red-legged Honeycreepers, Green Shrike-Vireo, Scaled Pigeon, Red-ored Parrots, Keel-billed Toucan, Collared Araçari, flycatchers of various kinds and raptors, including King Vulture and Black Hawk-Eagle! After breakfast, at mid-morning, you'll start exploring Soberanía National Park by taking a pleasant walk down Semaphore Hill Road. This winding, shady paved road, festooned on the shoulders by wildflowers of many types, is a little more than a mile long and crosses a large creek about half-way down. The bird list here is extensive, and includes birds from the forest interior as well as edge-dwellers. Plain Xenops, Lesser Greenlet, Black-breasted & White-whiskered Puffbirds, Bay-headed & White-shouldered Tanagers, and Broad-billed & Rufous Motmots. Great Tinamou is often heard, but harder to find. This road is also great for raptors—White, Tiny & Great Black Hawks have been seen, and during migration it's easy to see more than 10 species of warblers and other songbirds in one morning. Watch for northern tamandua or Panamanian night monkeys, as well as frogs, snakes, and lizards on the way down. Your morning list will be impressive, as we catch a ride back just in time to enjoy a delicious lunch at the Canopy Tower.



Left: Brown-throated three-toed sloth. Right: Mantled howler. Images courtesy of the Canopy Family.

### PM: Ammo Dump Ponds & Environs (15 min. from Canopy Tower)

The Ammo Dump Ponds are located just past Gamboa on the way to Pipeline Road. It is the best place to see the elusive White-throated Crake, as well as a host of other waterbirds. Least Grebes and Purple Gallinules are common, and Rufescent Tiger-Heron and American Pygmy-Kingfisher are also resident. Here, we often find Greater Ani, Red-legged Honeycreeper, and Southern Lapwing. Bordering the Panama Canal, you may see ships coming through on their way to the ocean. You may even see a lesser capybara, Panama's largest rodent! Dinner at Canopy Tower.

## Day 9

### AM: Pipeline Road Entrance (20 min. from Canopy Tower)

After breakfast you board the Birdmobile or the Rainfomobile, both open-air vehicles, that take you to Pipeline Road, one of the premier birding spots in the world! We will concentrate our efforts at the beginning of Pipeline, where we will look for Gray-necked Wood-Rail, Yellow-tailed Oriole, Masked Tityra, Rosy Thrush-Tanager, Forest Elaenia, Red-throated Ant-Tanager, Squirrel Cuckoo, Gray-headed Chachalaca.

Other birds recorded here are Black-bellied & Buff-breasted Wrens, Golden-collared Manakin, Gartered, Slaty-tailed, Black-throated, White-tailed & Black-tailed Trogons, and Purple-crowned Fairy. During migration this entrance road is excellent for migrant warblers, flycatchers, grosbeaks and tanagers. Lunch at Canopy Tower.

### PM: Summit Gardens/Harpy Exhibit (10 min. from Canopy Tower)

Summit Gardens is a center for recreation, education and conservation, dedicated to reflect and enhance Panama's tropical and cultural diversity. The botanical gardens are great for migratory warblers and other forest-edge species, including a colony of Chestnut-headed Oropendolas, Laughing Falcon, Gray-lined, Crane & Great Black Hawks, Collared Forest-Falcon, Masked Tityra, Yellow-rumped Cacique, and Blue Cotinga. This park is the best place to find Streak-headed Woodcreeper, a difficult species to get elsewhere. The Harpy Eagle is Panama's national bird, and this park has an exhibit, including a life-size nest and interpretive panels, tracing the importance of the Harpy in Panamanian history and culture dating back to Pre-Columbian times. Dinner at Canopy Tower.

## Day 10

### Departure

If time permits, after breakfast you may have one last look from the Observation Deck. Then we take you to the airport for your return flight home, with awesome memories of birds, mammals, wildflowers, butterflies and everything else you experienced while birding at the Canopy Tower!

*Please note that this itinerary may change without prior notice due to weather, alterations in habitat or other conditions.*

*Depending on interest, an extension to the Panama Canal may be available. Please see website for details.*

### Your Leaders

**Katrina Hucks**, Avian Biologist, fell in love with birds in college. Since then, she has traveled to various regions of the US for avian research, attended scientific conferences in Canada and Japan, and traveled to Belize for birding. Before coming to work at Hawks Aloft, she volunteered as the Hawk Counter, counting migratory raptors in central Panama at the Canopy Tower.

**Gail Garber**, Executive Director, discovered her passion for birds 30 years ago. Since then, she has dedicated her life to avian studies, education, and other aspects of Hawks Aloft. She has traveled extensively for birding, and lead birding tours in the US and to New Zealand, Ecuador, Peru, and Costa Rica.

In addition to your Hawks Aloft guides, Canopy Family guides will accompany us on our journey as local experts.

### Pricing

Cost includes meals, accommodations, and itinerary activities. Does not include airfare, tips, alcoholic beverages, or incidental expenditures (e.g. souvenirs). Travel insurance strongly recommended.

Cost based on double occupancy: \$3200 (due August 11, 2019)  
Deposit: \$500 (due at registration)  
Please visit <http://hawksaloft.org/member-events/> for registration and more information.

# Discover the Darién and Canal Zone of Panama with Hawks Aloft & the Canopy Family!

## November 9 - November 18, 2019



Blue-gray Tanager

Harpy Eagle

Panama is a biologically and culturally diverse country connecting North and South America. It is a haven for wildlife watchers of all kinds, especially birders. The Canopy Family has operated ecotourism lodges in Panama since 1999. Their mission is “to share the nature, history and culture of the Republic of Panamá with passion and enthusiasm, focused on customer satisfaction and guided by the principles of conservation and social responsibility.”

Hawks Aloft, Inc. is based in Albuquerque, NM, and works to conserve indigenous wild birds and their habitats through avian research, conservation education, raptor rescue, and cooperation with others. Hawks Aloft has offered trips to Ecuador, Peru, Guatemala, and other international destinations at least once a year to experience diverse wildlife and new cultures. Join Hawks Aloft and the Canopy Family on the trip of a lifetime!

### Trip Highlights

- Look for Harpy Eagles!
- Visit the Darién region of Panama, a vast area of the eastern part of the country with no roads and diverse wildlife. Stay at the Canopy Family's Canopy Camp.
- Explore local culture, including a native Embera village.
- Relax and enjoy rainforest-level views from the famous Canopy Tower.

**Hawks Aloft, Inc.**  
*Conservation, Avian Research & Education*



Wildlife tours will be available during the morning and afternoon. You are free to attend or refrain from tours as you wish.

### Day 1: Arrival in Panama

Arrive at Riande Aeropuerto Hotel in Panama City, 5 minutes from Tocumen International Airport. While you acclimatize to the tropical heat and have a cold drink, you can watch the birds on the grounds of the hotel, such as Clay-colored Thrush, Variable Seedeater, Tropical Kingbird, Blue-gray Tanager, and others. All meals except dinner will be on your own. The tour starts early the next morning!

### Day 2: Bayano Lake & transfer to Canopy Camp

After an early breakfast at Riande Aeropuerto Hotel, we will depart for Canopy Camp Darien! We will make stops along the way of the 5 hour journey. As we drive along the Pan-American Highway, scan for roadside birds and raptors. We will stop at Bayano Lake, a reservoir supporting waterbirds such as Anhinga and Bare-throated Tiger-Heron. Trails and other stops can produce Black Antshrike, Blue Cotinga, Golden-collared Manakin, and more. Lunch will be in Torti, a great opportunity to observe hummingbirds. Dinner at the Canopy Camp. Explore the feeders and surrounding rainforest; ample opportunities for wildlife and landscape photography exist here.

### Day 3: Canopy Camp Trails

**AM:** Meet before sunrise to enjoy coffee, tea, and the Camp's many resident bird species. Yellow-throated and Keel-billed toucans call from the towering Cuipo trees; Red-lored and Mealy Parrots fly overhead; Golden-headed Manakins sing from the surrounding forests; Sapphire-throated Hummingbird visit the flowers around camp. After a 7:30 breakfast, we will head to "Nando's Trail," in hopes of finding Tiny Hawk, Black Antshrike, Olive-backed Quail-Dove, Black-tailed Trogon, and Royal Flycatcher. We will also be looking for groups of Red-throated Caracara, King Vulture, and Short-tailed Hawk overhead in the clearings. Ornate Hawk-Eagle, Plumbeous and Zone-tailed Hawks are also possible. Lunch at Canopy Camp. For non-birders, mammal and reptile life is also abundant. Some mammals you may see around the Canopy Camp include Central American agouti, two- and three-toed sloths, and white-faced capuchin.

**PM:** After lunch, we will visit the forest and swampy meadows toward Yaviza. Black Oropendola, Pied Water-Tyrant, Bicolored Hawk, Black-collared Hawk, Pearl Kite, White-tailed Kite, and Yellow-hooded Blackbird can all be found as we head farther into Darién today. Dinner at Canopy Camp.

After dinner we will gather to look for owls, including Striped, Crested, Barn, Black-and-white and Mottled Owls, as well as Common and Great Potoos and nocturnal mammals.



Canopy Camp in the Darien Region of Panama. Image courtesy of the Canopy Family.

### Day 4: El Salto Road, Tierra Nueva Foundation, Las Lagunas Road, Aruza Lagoons

**AM:** Meet for an early breakfast, then head to El Salto Road, ending at the Rio Chucunaque. Regional specialties seen here are Golden-green Woodpecker, Blue-and-gold and Chestnut-fronted Macaws, and Black and Crested Oropendolas. After breakfast, we visit the Fundación Tierra Nueva. The Fundación Tierra Nueva is a non-profit organization whose main mission is "working towards the sustainable development of people of the Darién Rainforest." The property is the home of a technical school focusing on applications in agriculture. We will explore the trails of this large property, in hopes of finding Streak-headed Woodcreeper, Slaty-backed Forest-Falcon, and Great Curassow. Lunch at Canopy Camp. **PM:** Explore the road and ponds around Las Lagunas. Along the roadsides, we hope to find Spot-breasted Woodpecker, Rufescent Tiger-Heron, Ringed and Amazon kingfishers, Fork-tailed Flycatcher, Giant and Shiny cowbirds, Crested Oropendola, Laughing Falcon and Aplomado Falcon. If we're lucky, we may get a glimpse of a Chestnut-fronted Macaw or a shy Little Cuckoo, both having been seen along this road. At the lagoons, we hope to find Pied Water-Tyrant, Capped Heron, the beautiful Yellow-hooded Blackbird and the extraordinary Black-capped Donacobius. We drive back to Canopy Camp as dusk draws near, watch for Common Pauraque and Tropical Screech-Owl along the way! Dinner at Canopy Camp.



Left: Golden-headed Manakin. Right: Green-and-rufous Kingfisher. Images courtesy of the Canopy Family.

### Day 5

#### **AM: Quebrada Felix (30 minutes from Canopy Camp)**

We will meet for an early breakfast at the Canopy Camp. This morning we visit Quebrada Felix—this newly discovered site awaits us to be explored! Quebrada Felix is nestled in the base of the Filo del Tallo Hydrological Reserve, and is just a short drive from the Canopy Camp. Surrounded by tall trees and mature lowland forest, we will walk the rocky stream in search of some of Panama's most wanted species. Here, we will try for our endemic, the Stripe-cheeked Woodpecker. It is also a great spot to find Fasciated Tiger-Heron, Green-and-rufous Kingfisher, Bicolored Antbird, Golden-crowned Spadebill, Double-banded Graytail and much more. Crested and Solitary eagles have even been spotted here, a great testament to the mature forest of the area. Quebrada Felix is becoming a favorite spot among our guides and recent visitors! Lunch at Canopy Camp.

#### **PM: Lajas Blancas (15 minutes from Canopy Camp)**

This afternoon we explore the open areas and mixed forests of Lajas Blancas. Lajas Blancas is the closest Embera Indigenous community to the Canopy Camp, a large community with a population of over 1000 residents.

Indigenous Embera villages boast colorful hand-woven baskets and other crafts. Traditionally, Embera communities were established along waterways, with community members practicing the skills of making dugout canoes and fishing. This will be an opportunity to shop the colorful handicrafts of the Embera community! The area around the community boasts great birding and the opportunity to find many Darien specialties! After turning off the Pan-American Highway, we drive through pasture and open farmland—a great place to see One-colored Becard, Great Potoo, Black Antshrike, and Black Oropendola. During the dry season, a bridge across the Chucunaque River provides us easy access to some mature secondary forest where Double-banded Graytail, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, White-winged and Cinnamon Becards, Cinnamon and Golden-green Woodpeckers, manakins and others can be found. Beyond the community, the road continues and there is much more forest, including primary forest at its far reaches, waiting to be explored. Dinner at Canopy Camp.

### Day 6

#### **Harpy Eagle (~45 minutes from Canopy Camp) FULL DAY**

*Harpy Eagles live in remote mature forest, and a full day trip is required to visit the site available. Subject to change based on current nest locations. The following description gives you an idea of what a Harpy Eagle excursion entails:*

The Harpy Eagle is our target for the day! Today we will start very early, long before sunrise, and drive to Yaviza, at the end of the Pan-American Highway. We will board a "piragua"—a dugout canoe, and traverse the still waters of the Chucunaque and Tuira rivers. The river edges offer shrub and grass habitat, as well as mudflats and beaches depending on the water level. There are plenty of birds to see along the riverside: Cooi, Striated and Capped Herons, Green Ibis, Pied Water-Tyrant, Yellow-hooded Blackbird and both Crested and Black Oropendolas. White-tailed Kite, Black-collared Hawk and Common Black-Hawk may be found cruising overhead.

Upon arrival in El Real, we can scan the open areas for Spot-breasted Woodpecker and Great Potoo. We will meet a local truck and head south out of town past the airstrip, to the trailhead toward the border of Darien National Park! This trail is wide, traversing through lowland rainforest and alongside a river. If very lucky, we may see Harpy Eagle or Crested Eagle, both of these magnificent raptors roam the dense forests here. Hopefully with some success this morning, we can rest and have a picnic lunch in the field, and continue to bird along the trail. Other large forest eagles, including Ornate Hawk-Eagle and Crested Eagle, can also be found in the area, as well as Green-and-rufous Kingfisher, Agami Heron, Red-throated Caracara, Chestnut-fronted and Great Green Macaws, Scarlet-browed Tanager and more. After lunch, we will make our way back to the Canopy Camp. Along the Pan-American Highway, we can scan for bird activity as the sun sets on the horizon. Dinner at Canopy Camp.



Harpy Eagle chick in nest. Images courtesy of the Canopy Family.



Canopy Tower, nestled in Soberanía National Park, is a former military radar tower converted into an ecolodge with an observation deck that looks out over the canopy of the rainforest. Images courtesy of the Canopy Family.

### Day 7

#### **AM: San Francisco Nature Reserve (2.5 hrs from Canopy Camp)**

We will wake before dawn to pack and have an early breakfast, say our goodbyes to the Canopy Camp, and start our journey back to Panama City. We will stop at San Francisco Nature Reserve, a private forest reserve owned and managed by the St. Francis Foundation, covering 1,300 acres in eastern Panama Province, and we will spend the morning at this fantastic site. The San Francisco Reserve was established in 2001 by Father Pablo Kasuboski, an American priest from Wisconsin who came to Panama in 1988. The reserve serves as a wildlife refuge and protects the headwaters of the main rivers of the area. The foundation created by Padre Pablo, as Father Kasuboski is called, also works on infrastructure development in the area by building and maintaining aqueducts, roads, schools and churches. In fact, the St. Francis Foundation built and maintains the largest private rural aqueduct in all of Panama and Central America. The reserve has a variety of habitats including primary, secondary and riparian forests, forest edge, fields, farmland, ponds and wetlands. During our morning here, we will explore the some of the different habitats along the short road that enters the reserve. We will hope to find Broad-billed Motmot, Collared Aracari, Central American Pygmy-Owl, and if we're very lucky, a Black-and-white Hawk-Eagle soaring overhead! Lunch in Torti.

#### **PM: Return to Panama City / Canopy Tower**

After lunch, we head back to Panama City to transfer you to the Canopy Tower, located at the top of Semaphore Hill in the rainforest of Soberanía National Park. A member of our staff will greet you as you arrive at the Tower, and you will be provided with an orientation on the use of the facilities. Visit the dining/bar area and enjoy a refreshing drink, as well as spend time on the Observation Deck. The view from the platform is incredible! Here, you get a unique eye-level perspective of the rainforest canopy. Many birds, including toucans, parrots, tanagers of various types, hawks, and dozens of others, as well as two- and three-toed sloths, mantled howlers, Geoffroy's tamarins, white-nosed coatis, and others are commonly seen. From this vantage point you can also see ships transiting the Panama Canal, the majestic Centennial Bridge, and miles of rainforest! You may also want to watch the hummingbird feeders at the base of the Tower for Long-billed Hermit, White-necked Jacobin, and White-vented Plumeleteer. Occasionally, a Snowy-bellied Hummingbird is spotted! Dinner at Canopy Tower. Bring your flashlight to dinner, as nocturnal birds and mammals are often spotted from the dinner table! The observation deck at night boasts the lights of Panama City, not to mention the starry night sky, perfect for nighttime photography!