

Panama

Botany, Birds and Butterflies

A Greentours Itinerary

Day 1

Arrival in Panama and Transfer to the Canopy Tower

We'll arrive into Tocumen airport in the afternoon and transfer to Canopy Tower, arriving in time for dinner. Depending on arrival time, after settling into our rooms we may go to the observation deck. The Canopy Tower will be our base for the first five nights of the tour.

Day 2

Soberania National Park: Semaphore Hill, Ammo Ponds, Pipeline Rd and Old Gamboa Road/Summit Ponds

Most mornings at the Tower we will arise at sunrise and proceed to the observation deck for early bird activity, enjoying coffee/hot tea before breakfast at 7 am. Every morning we'll check whatever has arrived on the moth sheet too. After breakfast, we head toward Pipeline Rd, first easing down Semaphore Hill looking for mammals, interesting lowland plants, birds and butterflies. We are in Soberania National Park, and this primary forest is excellent for wildlife of all types. Mantled Howlers, Central American Agoutis and White-nosed Coatis are very possible, along with birds such as Great Tinamou, Broad-billed Motmot and, possibly, a Black-and-white Owl at a roost, amongst others. Near the bottom of Semaphore Hill, we will stop where White-lined Sac-winged Bats roost on the timbers on the underside of a bridge. Plants we may point out include the gesnerid, *Kohleria tubiflora*, along with *Heliconia latispatha* and *Heliconia platystachys* (two species particularly attractive to hummingbirds) with Marantaceous herbs, such as *Calathea* species. Other conspicuous shrubs here are *Psychotria poeppigiana* ('hot-lips') and *Psychotria marginata*. Aroids including *Monstera*, *Philodendron* and *Anthurium* species are conspicuous here. We will be on the lookout for our first blue morpho butterfly species here, too. Next stop, just fifteen minutes from the Tower, are the "Ammo Ponds," so named during WW II. Here, the Canal and railroad tracks are to the left, with herbaceous plants and vines scrambling over the vegetation. The ponds to the right are the best place to hear and see the elusive White-throated Crane, as well as a host of other waterbirds, including Rufescent Tiger-Heron, Wattled Jacana, and Purple Gallinule which are common here. Interesting plants in the ponds include the large fern *Acrostichum danaeifolium* and, growing in scattered clumps in the marshy grass, we should see many green tufts of *Habenaria repens*, an orchid whose spider-like green flowers blend with the vegetation. A common vine scrambling on *Ludwigia* and other shrubs is *Iseia luxurians* (*Convolvulaceae*), growing with *Hibiscus sororius*. Floating vegetation includes the small aquatic fern, *Salvinia radula*, along with 'water lettuce', *Pistia*

stratioides. Butterflies can be fairly abundant here. Tropical Buckeye, Queen, Glassy-winged Skipper, Cassius Blue, Golden White, White Yellow, Bordered Patch, Pompeius Skipper, Banded Longwing, Mimosa Skipper and various other skippers are possibilities. We can search the tree trunks for Gray and Brown Crackers with their habit of alighting with their bodies pointing straight downward. When scanning the pond for birds and plants, we have a chance to spot one of the resident Spectacled Caimans or maybe even a Capybara!

From the ammo ponds it is but a short drive to the forests of Pipeline Road., which boasts incredible biodiversity—with over 1500 plant species and 500 bird species having been recorded, as well as hundreds of species of butterflies, mammals, reptiles and amphibians. We will concentrate our efforts along the first section of Pipeline. Here, large *Ficus* trees and palms rule. Two palms, the majestic *Attalea butyracea* ('palma real') and spiky *Elaeis oleifera* ('corozo colorado') are common. We will point out a plethora of trees, shrubs, vines and herbs, including the exotic *Flemingia strobilifera* ('wild hops'), an unusual legume from Asia. Pipeline Road is renowned as a bird-watcher's paradise, but the mature secondary forest also houses an incredible array of other wildlife. We will search for butterflies in this lowland rainforest habitat. Common and Menelaus Morphos patrol the wide gravel road, while Ruby-spotted Swallowtail, Apricot Sulphur, Pale-clubbed and Sky-blue Hairstreaks, Periander, Barne's, Shaus', and Irena Metalmarks, Guyanan Sarota, Straight-lined Theope, Pale-banded and Whitened Crescents, Iphiclus Sister, East-Mexican Banner, Two-eyed Eighty-Eight, Whitened Bluewing, Red and Variable Crackers, are among other possibilities. Pipeline's birds can be overwhelming, with the strange calls of Purple-throated Fruitcrows, the monotonous calling of Black-faced Antthrushes and the scratchy sounds of antshrikes filling the air. Several species of trogon and antbird are always good possibilities, especially if we run into an ant swarm. Virtually anything is possible here in this amazing forest, including Harpy Eagle or even a Rufous-vented Ground-Cuckoo.

After lunch at the Tower and a bit of a rest, we'll head to Old Gamboa Road and the associated ponds at Summit, an area to best concentrate on the birds, but we will point out lowland plants, including a huge Monkey-ear Tree *Enterolobium cyclocarpum*, whose bizarre fruit are polished and sold in tourist shops. Also, this area supports several palm species, including *Oenocarpus mapora*, *Socratea exorrhiza* and the spiny, climbing *Desmoncus orthacanthos*. At shady Summit Ponds, we will scan for Capped and Boat-billed Herons, as well as Green, Ringed, Amazon and American Pygmy Kingfishers, which are all resident here. This area is usually the best spot for the impressive Crimson-crested Woodpecker. The Old Gamboa Road is now a wide footpath bordering open areas and patches of forest and passes through a variety of habitats holding plenty of specialties, including Blue Ground Dove, Great Antshrike, Jet Antbird, Lance-tailed and Golden-collared Manakins and the delightful Rosy Thrush-Tanager. This habitat is also a great place to search for butterflies like Golden White, Togarna Hairstreak, Lucianus Metalmark, Green and Hecale

Longwings, Whitened and Orange-patched Crescents, Banded and White Peacocks, Golden-snouted Sootywing, Two-eyed Eighty-Eight, Dusky Owl-Butterfly, Hermes and Plain Satyrs, Great White Longtail, Dimorphic and Trailside Skippers. Before going to sleep we will check the lighted moth sheet.

Day 3

Cerro Azul/Cerro Jefe

We have an early breakfast and depart to the foothills above the airport to a famous biological hotspot, Cerro Jefe/Cerro Azul, less than two hours from the Tower.

Temperature will be much cooler as we ascend the foothills of the San Blas Mountains toward Cerro Jefe (1007 m.), the tallest peak in the area. The cloud forests here have been a mecca for botanists since the 1960s as it is renowned as an area of high endemism. Of the approximately 10,000 plant species recorded in Panama, 1,300 are endemic. Roughly 250 of these are found on Cerro Jefe – and more than 80 are found only on Cerro Jefe! And though the flora here is generally well-known, surprises are yet to be discovered. Your guides have discovered/co-published nine new plant species here, including the orchid *Epidendrum adsettii*, four mistletoes (three *Dendrophthora* spp. and new name, *Oryctanthus callicarpus*), *Eschweilera roseocalyx* (Lecythidac. tree), *Syngonium adsettiorum* (Araceae), as well as *Sloanea harrisoniorum*, an Elaeocarp. tree named by Dr. Terry Pennington (KBG) to honour the collectors. Here, the orchid, gesnerid, bromeliad and aroid diversity is astounding! We should find twenty or more species of orchids, many of them miniatures, including *Dresslerella pertusa*, *Dryadella butcheri*, *Specklinia dressleri*, *Platystele ovalifolia*, one of the smallest orchids in the world, *Pleurothallis* species, *Scaphyglottis* species. and many others. Most of the orchids we will find will be epiphytes growing on the wet, mossy branches of trees, but *Habenaria wercklei* is a green-flowered terrestrial we hope to find. Bromeliads in Cerro Azul are common, and we will see impressive *Aechmea strobilina* and *Guzmania musaica*. Gesneriaceae are diverse here, with several *Columnea* species possible, along with the scarlet-flowered Campanula relative, *Centropogon coccineus*. One of the highlights of the day will be lunch at your guides' house where ten hummingbird feeders and three tray feeders attract hummingbirds, tanagers, euphonias, woodpeckers, motmots and, possibly, a small troop of Geoffroy's Tamarins, Panama's smallest monkey. Our bird targets in these cloud-forested hills will include Silver-throated, Emerald, Speckled, Rufous-winged, Bay-headed, Black-and-yellow, Golden-hooded and Hepatic Tanagers. We will always be on the lookout for specialty hummers, including Rufous-crested Coquette and Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer, as well as Violet-capped, Violet-headed and Snowy-bellied Hummingbirds., We will keep a keen eye out for the endemic Stripe-cheeked Woodpecker, along with Lineated Woodpecker, Black-striped and Cocoa Woodcreepers, Red-capped and White-ruffed Manakins and White-vented and Tawny-capped Euphonias. Blue Cotinga is sometimes seen from the upper deck at the Harrison house. Butterflies are widespread. We will head back to the Tower by mid-afternoon, to refresh, relax and catch up on our ever-expanding species lists.

Day 4

Metro Park and The Observation Deck

After our early morning observation deck viewing/checking moth sheet rituals and breakfast, we will head to Metropolitan Natural Park ('Metro Park'), which encompasses 265 hectares. It has the distinction of being the only large forested park within a metropolitan capital in Latin America. More importantly, it protects 192 hectares of dry lowland Pacific forest, yielding species that are difficult to find elsewhere. Botanically, it is interesting, and has the bonus of an easy access. Here we can see Wild Cashew *Anacardium ecelsum*, Yellow Bombin *Spondias mombin*, Guarumo de pava *Schefflera morototoni*, Roble *Tabebuia rosea* and Balso *Ochroma pyramidale*, the Balsawood of fame. We may also find both *Annona pupurea* and *Annona spraguei*, along with *Xylopia frutescent* trees with large up-turned branches, the bloated trunks of Cuipo *Canvanillesia platanifolia*, the spiny trunks of *Pachira quinata*, and many other specialties. A common herb we should find is *Calathea latifolia*, whose flowers may be purple or yellow. The Rubiaceous shrub, *Rondeletia panamensis*, can be found here as well. Bird specialities include the elusive, but beautiful, Rosy Thrush-Tanager, the striking Lance-tailed Manakin, Whooping Motmot, and many others. The drier forests and open areas offer great butterflying, with Tiger Mimic-Queen, Hermes Satyr, Tropical Buckeye, Erato Longwing, Emerald-patched Cattleheart, Great White Longtail, Stigma Skipper, Uzza and Thamyra Satyrs, Polydamas Swallowtail, Blue-gray Satyr, Lasus Metalmark, Statira Sulphur, Panna Skipper, Tropical Checkered-Skipper, Whitened Crescent and Brown, Plain and Great White Longtails being possibilities. The park offers a variety of habitats to explore, so our list here could be extensive. If weather holds, we often stay a bit longer and have a later lunch.

This afternoon we will take advantage of the observation deck to look for some canopy butterfly species! Possibilities include Thoas and Androgeus Swallowtails, Kite-swallowtails, Malachite, Amyntor Greenstreak, Spying Hairstreak, the eye-catching Mexican and Imperial Arcas, Tricolored Metalmark, Blue-based and Curve-lined Theopes, White-spotted, Three-toned and Two-spotted Preponas, Dia Leafwing, Molpe and White-posted Metalmarks, Two-eyed Eighty-Eight, Red-striped Leafwing, Orion Cecropian, Double-banded Banner, Banded Orange, Julia, Spot-celled and Iphicleola Sisters, Many-banded Daggerwing, Cramer's Satyr, the spectacular Regal Hairstreak, Costa-spotted Metalmark and White-tipped Cycadian! Many species of skippers can be seen from the tower, both up in the canopy and down at ground level, feeding at the verbena. We hope to see Dot-collared Firetip, White-tailed Longtail, Gilbert's Flasher, Corbulo Skipper, Broteas and Canal Scarlet-eyes, Dyson's Silverpatch and White-trailed Skipper. We will, of course, see a variety of birds and, by the end of today, we will have taught you the trees and vines seen from the Tower!

After dinner we will take a short excursion down Semaphore Hill, riding in the back of one of the open vehicles. Rolling quietly and slowly, we listen for owls and potoos and

use a spotlight to search for eyeshine or body forms of Western Night Monkeys, Tamanduas, Coatis, Kinkajous, Olingos, Porcupines and other nocturnal wildlife. This can be very productive and is always a favorite.

Day 5

Soberania National Park: Pipeline Road-Juan Grande section and Gamboa Rainforest Resort Grounds/Chagres River Environs

This morning we head back to Pipeline Road, the best place in Central Panama to find forest birds and one of the premier birding spots in the world! This excellent lowland rainforest is a great locale to spot puffbirds, motmots and trogons sitting quietly waiting for an insect to catch their eye. We will also search for Streak-chested Antpitta and Black-faced Antthrush. We will keep an eye and ear out for an army ant swarm and its attendant guild of birds, including Bicolored, Ocellated and Spotted Antbirds. Plus, we will look for Golden-collared and Blue-crowned Manakins, always guest favorites. Today we will enjoy seeing some of the butterfly species we saw on our first visit to Pipeline Road and should add species we missed on our first trek here. Plants to see here are *Renealmia cernua*, one of the native gingers, along with *Conostegia speciosa*, *Xyphydium caeruleum* and numerous trees, the most conspicuous being *Pentagonia macrophylla*, *Inga multijuga* and *Zanthoxylum panamense*, whose trunk has corky, sharp-tipped spines. There are always some botanical surprises along pipeline. We will have our snack at the Rainforest Discovery Center entrance, where there are souvenirs and a restroom. We'll return to the Canopy Tower for lunch.

After lunch, we take a short drive to the Chagres River, the main water shed for the Panama Canal, and the accompanying fields and forests. Here birding and butterflying will dominate our activities. We will search for Amazon, Green and American Pygmy Kingfishers, as well as Whooping Motmot and Cinnamon Woodpecker. We could also see Gray-cowled Wood-Rail, Cocoi, Green Herons, Wattled Jacana, Pied-billed Grebe, Anhinga, Royal and Sandwich Terns, Brown Pelican, Neotropic Cormorant, Tricolored and Little Blue Herons, Rufescent Tiger-Heron, Mangrove Swallow, Black-chested Jay, Lesser Kiskadee, Rusty-margined Flycatcher, Yellow-billed Cacique, Black-bellied and Buff-breasted Wrens, Fasciated and Barred Antshrikes, Cinnamon Becard, Slaty-tailed Trogon, White-bellied Antbird, and even Slaty-backed Forest-Falcon and Blue Cotinga can be seen! There is a good chance to spot a Spectacled Caiman or American Crocodile and, if lucky, a Capybara along the riverbank. The grassy edges are perfect habitat for butterflies including many satyrs and skippers. We will keep an eye out for longwings and sisters flying along the forest edge, as well as ID any interesting aquatic vegetation we see.

Day 6

Transfer to Canopy Lodge

No need to wake up early for today's trip. After a leisurely breakfast and a last look from the Observation Deck and those final hummingbird photos, we'll head west to El Valle de Antón, also known as Crater Valley. The village of El Valle is nestled in the caldera of a long dormant volcano that last erupted 5 million years ago. The resulting scenery is quite unique: a steep valley surrounded by jagged peaks, whose formations have elicited fanciful names as the "sleeping indian." We will arrive in time for lunch and afterwards you can get settled into your rooms before a brief orientation. Our home for the next six nights will be the Canopy Lodge, sister lodge of the Canopy Tower, a charming eco-lodge built next to a mountain stream and adjacent to the protected area of Cerro Gaital Natural Monument, an important cloud forest habitat housing many endemic plants. The lodge sits at 710m, and you will immediately appreciate the noticeably cooler temperatures here.

This afternoon will be devoted to the Canopy Lodge feeders and gardens and, if time permits, a short walk up the road towards the Canopy Adventure. Some of the birds that visit the feeders and gardens are Crimson-backed, Blue-gray, White-lined, Flame-rumped, Dusky-faced and Plain-colored Tanagers, Red-crowned Ant-Tanager, Thick-billed Euphonia, Chestnut-headed Oropendola, Streaked and Buff-throated Saltators, Lineated and Red-crowned Woodpeckers, Red-legged Honeycreeper, Yellow-faced Grassquit, Social Flycatcher, Ruddy Ground Dove, Barred Antshrike, Clay-colored Thrush, Rufous Motmot, Rufous-tailed, Snowy-bellied and Violet-headed Hummingbirds. Butterflies are often abundant, and we will check the butterfly-friendly flowers and plants, including verbena, lantana, and firebush (*Hamelia patens*). Cattleheart White, Mottled Scrub-Hairstreak, Lampeto Metalmark, Dirce Beauty, Banner Metalmark, One-spotted Prepona, Iphiclus Sister, White Satyr, Malachite, Eligius Flat, Falcate Skipper, Golden-snouted Sootywing and Radiant Skipper can be found around the garden and surrounding areas. The roadside vegetation and forest edge attract a wide variety of species including Thoas Swallowtail, Apricot Sulphur, Yellow-tufted Prepona, Starry Cracker, Zebra, Erato and Sara Longwings, Rayed Sister, Blue-and-orange Eighty-Eight, Simple Patch, Narva Checkerspot, Banded Peacock, Orange Daggerwing, Stub-tailed Morpho, Green Flasher and Rita's Remella. Interesting plants along the road include the rare *Passiflora megacorcea*. A peculiar Fabaceous vine, *Mucuna holtonii*, can be seen with fruit hanging on 4-meter-long stalks. The hard, shiny seeds within are one of the 'sea beans' that wash up on distant shores. Other cultivated species we may find on the grounds or along the adjacent road include the ornamental banana, *Musa velutina*, *Megaskepasma erythrochlamys* (Brazilian Red Cloak) and *Hedychium coronarium* (a white ginger from Asia), along with *Trimezia steyermarkii* ('Yellow Walking Stick'). Beyond the garden feeders are *Zingiber spectabilis* (Beehive Ginger, native to Malaysia) and *Etilingera elatior* (Torch Ginger, from Java). Also scattered about the grounds are giant specimens of *Eucalyptus deglupta* (Rainbow Eucalyptus, from SE Asia), a tree

whose peeling bark reveals a striped, multi-colored, slick trunk. Native trees within sight of the lodge are numerous, including 2 species of *Erythrina*, *Zygia longifolia*, *Castilla elastica* and *Bocconia frutescens*, to name but a few.

Day 7

Las Minas and La Mesa /Finca Macarena Area

The morning chorus of birds starts even before dawn, and the garden feeders attract colorful tanagers, euphonias and hummingbirds. We will take a quick look at the feeders before we head to our morning destination, Las Minas. This dirt track, used mainly for foot travel, extends through tropical scrubland and low canopy forest at 900 m, so can be quite foggy in the morning. It is a haven for plants, birds and butterflies! We will focus on all about equally at this site. This area is important, botanically, and we shall find several interesting endemic species. One such local endemic is bizarre *Psychotria correae*, whose white flowers poke out of a red, saucer-sized calyces, with the entire inflorescence hanging limp downward at the end of a foot-long peduncle! Other endemic or regional specialties we will find are *Aphelandra campanensis*, with bright red flowers, as well as at least three heliconias, including *Heliconia ramonensis*, *Heliconia wagneri* and *Heliconia irrasa*, whose bright red bracts attract White-tipped Sicklebills, a much sought-after hummer! Other interesting plants we will show you are the polygalacean *Monnina parasylvatica*, with small blue and white flowers; *Arthrostemma ciliatum*, a delicate, vine-like melastome whose buds are red but open a rose pink. Other possibilities include *Besleria* species. and a few orchids, as we have found *Stelis* species and *Epidendrums* here. If fortunate, we will find a large patch of *Sobralia chrysostoma*, quite a stunning orchid, an ephemeral whose blooms last but a day - and it only blooms in October. Bird specialties here include Black-and-yellow, Bay-headed and Emerald Tanagers, Tawny-capped Euphonia, Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant, Spot-crowned Antvireo, Gray-headed Kite, Barred Hawk, Bronze-tailed Plumeteer, Orange-bellied and Black-throated Trogons, Tawny-faced Gnatwren, Spotted Woodcreeper, Red-capped and White-ruffed Manakins and others. As the day continues to warm up, the first butterflies become active. Walking slowly along the road we will keep an ever watchful eye out for swallowtails, hairstreaks, brushfoots and skippers, which are particularly abundant here. Simple Sarota, several metalmarks, Tutia and Diasia Clearwings, Lycaste Tigerwing, East-Mexican Banner, Black-bordered Crescent, Isidora Leafwing, Sara, Sapho and Fine-lined Longwings, Hermes and Rufous-margined Satyrs, Pasture, Trailside and Pompeius Skippers and many more can be found along this road.

After lunch at the Canopy Lodge, we will botanise along the roadsides of La Mesa and the contiguous Finca Macarena. This part of the northern rim of El Valle is above 900 m and is often misty/foggy and is a visually pleasing blend of secondary forest, scrubby pastures, overgrown fincas and grassy borders. We will seek out plants, birds and butterflies. Plants here are interesting, with many Araceous species, including

Monstera, *Philodendron* and *Anthurium* species. Bromeliads we hope to see are *Guzmania donnell-smithii*, *Aechmea mexicana* and *Aechmea penduliflora*, along with two species of Begoniaceae, *Begonia glabra* and *Begonia convallariodora*. We will introduce you to the Piperaceae, showing you species of three genera: *Piper umbellatum*, *Manekia incurva* and *Peperomia* species. Our black pepper spice is *Piper nigrum*, from India and southeast Asia. Both Solanaceae and Apocynaceae are well-represented in this area, as well as Acanthaceae, with the most common being *Justicia secundiflora*, *Justicia aurea*, *Odontonema tubaeforme* and the widespread, cultivated *Megaskepasma erythrochlamys*. Also, here is where we look for such great birds as Spot-crowned Barbet, Cinnamon Becard, Scarlet-thighed Dacnis, Silver-throated, Golden-hooded and Tawny-crested Tanagers, Spot-crowned Antvireo, Spotted Woodcreeper and hummers, such as White-tipped Sicklebill, Rufous-crested Coquette and Crowned Woodnymph. Also resident are Northern Emerald-Toucanet, Bran-colored Flycatcher, Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant and Orange-bellied Trogon. Forest, field, scrubby pastures and gravel roads of the La Mesa and Finca Macarena area provide excellent habitat for a great diversity of butterflies. Here we will look for the tiny yet stunning metalmarks, including Panamanian and Godman's Sarotas and Deep-blue Eyed-Metalmark. This is also an excellent location for eighty-eights. Our list of species for the day should be impressive!

Day 8

Altos Del Maria

Departing early in the morning after breakfast, we drive from El Valle in air-conditioned 4x4 SUVs up into the cloud forested mountains of Altos del Maria (altitude above 1,000m). Our major emphasis at this cloud forest will be plants and birds. This private, gated community still has incredible forests with paved-road access giving sweeping vistas where on clear days one can see both coasts. Today's highlight will be exploring the partially cleared forested lots for orchids and other interesting plants. *Epidendrum pajitense* is common, but we will search for *Epidendrum lacustre* and *Epidendrum incomptum*. Other orchid possibilities are *Prosthechea vespa*, *Camaridium dendrobioides* and *Scaphyglottis punctulata*. On the edges, we should find an outstanding bellflower relative *Centropogon tortilis* whose lilac flowers are strangely contorted. We will also explore a paved nature trail through primary forest next to a meandering creek. We will hunt for bromeliads, orchids and other herbs and shrubs bordering the creek. This area has only recently been accessed, so anything is possible here, from Crimson-bellied Woodpeckers to new plant species! This nature trail is quite level and our pace, as always, will be slow. We will enjoy a picnic lunch along the banks of a picturesque lake; Altos del Maria holds an exciting variety of highland forest birds. Some we hope to see include Yellow-eared Toucanet, Black-headed Saltator, White Hawk, Barred Forest-Falcon, Orange-bellied Trogon, Spotted Woodcreeper, Red-faced Spinetail, Spotted Barbtail, Russet and Great Antshrikes, Tufted and Sulphur-rumped Flycatchers, White-ruffed Manakin, Ochraceous Wren, Gray-breasted Wood-Wren, Pale-vented Thrush, Green

Shrike-Vireo, Yellow-billed Cacique, Slate-colored Grosbeak, and Black-and-yellow, Bay-headed, Dusky-faced and Tawny-crested Tanagers. Even the bizarre Brown-billed Scythebill is seen here regularly. Hummingbirds we may spot include Band-tailed Barbthroat, the exquisite Snowcap, and Garden and White-tailed Emeralds. The higher elevation cloud forest not only offers great scenery, interesting plants, amazing birds, but also, some different butterfly species to search out. We will head back by mid-afternoon and, if anyone wishes to stop, this is a good opportunity to visit the popular El Valle artisan market. It is a great place to find hand-made Panamanian products and souvenirs. There is also an excellent bakery close by where you can get fresh bread, cookies, dough-nuts and pastries.

Day 9

Cerro Gaital Natural Monument and Cara Iguana

Cerro Gaital is the steep, forested, mist-shrouded mountain we can see from the Lodge. Cerro Gaital (3,500') is the namesake of Cerro Gaital Natural Monument, which protects more than 335 hectares of mature cloud forest. This morning we'll visit the highly biodiverse Cerro Gaital area, whose flora is rich in orchids, aroids, gesnerids, begonias, melastomes, and other fascinating and stunning plants. Orchids include *Epidendrum pseudoschumannianum*, locally known as 'San Jose', *Psycmorchis cristagalli* and, if fortunate, the holy grail of orchids here, *Peristeria elata* 'Dove Orchid', Panama's National flower. It is rare but blooms in October. But also present are impressive gesnerids, including *Columneas* and *Drymonias*, as well as *Glossoloma panamensis*, whose carmine, hairy flowers droop from the stem. *Verbesina lanata* treelets, when in bloom, will be attracting butterflies. A large rare terrestrial bromeliad is here, *Pitcairnia funkiae*, with reddish-maroon flowers. It stands 4ft tall. This area offers the chance to see Northern Emerald-Toucanet, Orange-bellied Trogon, Common Chlorospingus, Silver-throated Tanager, Black-headed Antthrush, Slaty Antwren, Spot-crowned and Plain Antvireos, Black-faced Grosbeak, Blue Seed-eater, Rufous-capped Warbler, Gray-headed Kite, White Hawk, Tawny-capped Euphonia, Northern Schiffornis, White-tailed Emerald, Green-crowned Brilliant, Violet-headed Hummingbird, and Crowned Woodnymph. We will slowly explore the first short forest trail, where even in the morning mist, we may see Dark and Banded Owl-Butterflies, as they seek out their daytime roosts. Mimosa Yellow, Clearwinged Mimic-White, Blue-patched Eyed-Metalmark, Tiger Mimic-Queen and Blue-gray Satyr can be seen flying low in the cloud forest understory. We will reach a clearing and a small wetland, where a great variety of butterflies can sometimes be found, particularly hairstreaks, metalmarks and skippers. Cattleheart White, Togarna and Fine-lined Hairstreaks, Golden and Bright-centered Euselasia, Azure-winged Eurybia, Lasus Metalmark, Westwood's and Thamyra Satyrs, Red-headed Firetip and Trailside Skipper can be found here. As mid-day approaches, we will return to the lodge for lunch.

In early afternoon, we will head to Cara Iguana. Here, a seldom-travelled paved road provides a perfect means to butterfly the weedy, forest edges. We will search

for skippers, metalmarks, and hairstreaks among others, always keeping a watchful eye out for crackers and daggerwings! We will mix in butterflying with some foothill birding in some of the last remaining stands of quality Pacific dry forest. Specialties we hope to find in this bird-rich habitat are Lesser Elaenia, Yellow-olive and Panama Flycatchers, Pale-eyed Pygmy-Tyrant, Yellow-bellied Elaenia, Lance-tailed Manakin, Rufous-breasted and Rufous-and-white Wrens, Rosy Thrush-Tanager, Tody and Lesson's Motmots, and Long-billed Gnatwren. We may also see such birds as the Striped Cuckoo, Little Tinamou, Common Potoo, Barred Antshrike, White-winged Becard, Tropical Screech-Owl, and Bat Falcon. Hummingbirds to watch for are Garden Emerald, Long-billed Starthroat, and White-vented Plumeleteer. Though mostly weedy at this location, interesting plants, especially vines, can be seen. The liana (woody vine), *Amphilophium paniculatum*, has duck-bill shaped purple flowers that appear to never open. The two lips of the flower are together but can be pried open rather easily - by a large bee - who upon entering is rewarded with nectar when fertilizing the flower. The bee can leave by pushing the petals apart again. Other vines here are mainly herbaceous *Cucurbitaceae*, including *Elatoriopsis oerstedii*, with green-striated bladderly fruit; *Sycidium tamnifolium* has cordate leaves and many, tiny five-parted, light-green flowers; *Rytidostylis carthagenensis*, which has bladderly soft-spined fruit; and *Melothria pendula* and *Melothria trilobata* having small yellowish flowers and miniature cucumber-like fruit.

Day 10

Pacific Dry Forest and Santa Clara Beach

After breakfast we are off for a full-day tour of mostly birding and butterflying at Juan Hombron and Santa Clara in the ecologically distinct Pacific lowland dry forest. As we drive west of El Valle and down towards the Pacific coast, we'll make several stops along the way for plants, birds and butterflies. Our first will be the road to Juan Hombron where we will check the forest and pasture edges for skippers, metalmarks, hairstreaks and tigerwings. Here we may see *Erythrina berteroana*, whose dull-red flowers and wider leaves are very different than the two species we see at the lodge. Among the birds we will be seeking out today are Yellow-headed Caracara, Roadside, Zone-tailed, Savanna and Short-tailed Hawks, Peregrine and Aplomado (rare) Falcons, White-tailed Kite and Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl. We will also search for Crested Bobwhite, Pale-eyed Pygmy-Tyrant, Golden-fronted Greenlet, Grassland Yellow-Finch, Rufous-browed Peppershrike, Fork-tailed Flycatcher, and Crested Oropendola. Hummers to be on the watch for in this unique scrubby area are the near-endemic Veraguan Mango and Garden Emerald. Next we head to Santa Clara and a beach house where we will enjoy our picnic lunch. Along the highway, we will pass large stands of 'teca', or teak (*Tectona grandis*), whose beautiful hardwood is legendary--and expensive! It is believed that 55,000 hectares of teak are planted in Panama. At the beach house we'll quickly scan the playa for Least, Western and Spotted Sandpipers, Sanderling, Blue-footed and Brown Boobies, Sandwich, Royal and Elegant Terns, Willet, Whimbrel, Franklin's and Laughing Gulls. The road in front of

the beach house is bordered by forest and fields and offers habitat for butterflies. But the best here is the atmosphere around the beach house, the cooler Pacific breezes, the smell of salty air and the call of seabirds and the soaring Magnificent Frigatebirds - all quite a contrast to the rainforests and misty cloud forests we have been exploring the past nine days.

Day 11

Valle Chiquito and the Canopy Adventure Trail

Today we're off to Valle Chiquito, just twenty minutes down the hill from El Valle. This valley is accessed by a newly paved road and passes through nicely forested woodlands crossed by two rivers. At 600m altitude, these forests contain a different suite of plants. Here, we will concentrate on the Asteraceae. Weedy species we will see are *Tridax procumbens*, *Acmella* species, *Ageratum* species, *Bidens pilosa*, *Emelia fosbergii* as well as the shrub *Bidens reptans*, and the local specialty, *Oyedaea verbesinoides*. Other interesting plants here are *Vascanellea cauliflora* (whose fruit grow out of the erect, unbranched trunk), *Canna tuerckheimii* and the Melastome, *Conostegia subcrustulata*. We'll look for Tody Motmot, Yellow-throated Vireo, Yellow-backed Oriole, White-bellied Antbird, Yellow-billed Cacique, Zone-tailed Hawk, Black Hawk-Eagle, Lance-tailed Manakin, Panama Flycatcher, Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher, Little Tinamou, Long-billed Starthroat, and Garden Emerald. Wrens are abundant here, with Black-bellied, Rufous-and-white, Bay, and Rufous-breasted Wrens all lurking about the thickets. As this area sits at a slightly lower elevation, we hope to see some different butterfly species. The roadside vegetation is perfect butterfly habitat. Aquamarine and Phaleros Hairstreaks, Zebra Longwing, *Thamyra Satyr* and *Panna Skipper* are common here. We will check under broad leaves for the stunning Pixie!

This afternoon we visit the Canopy Adventure, famous for its zip-line and El Macho waterfall! But to us the most important part is the excellent, closed-canopy forest. We will walk a few of the trails in search of birds and understory butterflies. If we are extremely lucky a Rufous-vented Ground Cuckoo will be hanging around the area. The zip-line guides are always on the look-out for one! Plants here include *Begonia urophylla*, *Ficus* species. and, at the spot to view the falls, the curious spiny *Chichicaste grandis*, a member of the *Loasaceae*.

Day 12

Departure

After breakfast and packing for the trip home, if time permits, we will enjoy the feeders and the lodge grounds, before saying our goodbyes and departing for the airport. Time to airport, about 3 hours.

If you would like to ask about any aspect of this holiday, please call 01298 83563 or email us at enquiries@greentours.co.uk.

To Book a on this Holiday please fill in the booking form which you can download from www.greentours.co.uk (also found in the Greentours brochure) and post to Greentours, 8 Eliot Close, Armitage, Rugeley, WS15 4UP, UK. Tel +44 (0)1298 83563. After booking your place you'll receive a confirmation letter and a detailed information pack will be dispatched twelve weeks prior to departure. Flower, bird and butterfly checklists are available.