

Western Panama: Tranquilo Bay w/ Mt. Totumas Extension Species List | March 2 – 13, 2024 with Naturalist Journeys



Compiled by guide Mason Flint with local guides Roger Morales (Tranquilo Bay Guide), Reinaldo Rodriguez (Mount Totumas Guide) and participants DJ, Henry, Lori, David, Dick, Kate, Jane, Laura, Robert, and Jim

Set on the south end of Isla Bastimentos in the Bocas del Toro Archipelago, Tranquilo Bay Eco Lodge provides a perfect base to explore the nearby islands and excursions on the mainland. With the expert guidance of Roger Morales and others at the lodge, we alternated between longer days and shorter days closer to the lodge. Except for light morning rain during one drive up to the Continental Divide and a decidedly wetter excursion to Green Acres Chocolate Farm, the weather cooperated with moderate temperatures and little wind. Birding around the lodge was wonderful, particularly the “magic tree” where we saw both Golden-collared and Red-capped Manakin together most days. Our boat excursions in the archipelago delivered great birds across many families. We saw Cuckoos (Mangrove and Squirrel), 13 species of hummingbird, Parasitic Jaeger, Red-billed Tropicbird, Jabiru, Brown and (rare) Red-footed Booby, flashy birds including Northern Emerald-Toucanet and Keel-billed Toucan, sneakier birds including White-flanked and Dot-winged Antwren, jewel-like Elegant Euphonia, and the curious sounds of Montezuma Oropendola.

At Mount Totumas, we explored a very different habitat, high in the mountains just a few miles from the border with Costa Rica. With the help of Reinaldo, the talented guide at the lodge, we explored many of the trails around the lodge area and relaxed by the feeders and the blind. Highlights included Spotted Wood-Quail, 15 species of hummingbird including high-altitude specialists such as Talamanca and Volcano Hummingbird, amazing looks at Resplendent Quetzal (including a pair making repeated visits to a nest site), seeing (and hearing!) Three-wattled Bellbird, and dozens of others.

Our group included a handful of participants (particularly Dick and Laura) who were knowledgeable about reptiles, amphibians, and butterflies and captured many beautiful photographs. Although our checklist doesn't include butterflies, we identified many including Smooth-banded Sister, White Peacock, Banded Peacock, Mexican Silverspot, Julia Haleconia, and Orange Mapwing.

We finished the trip with 276 species of birds, 14 species of mammals, and at least 17 species of reptiles and amphibians. The eBird trip report link below provides details including photos captured by guides and clients.

[Western Panama: Tranquilo Bay with Mount Totumas Extension - March 2-23, 2024 - eBird Trip Report](#)

MAMMALS (14):

Derby's Woolly Opossum *Caluromys derbianus* — We recorded this species on at least two nights at the Tranquilo Bay Lodge feeders.

Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth *Bradypus variegatus* — We saw many every day around the Tranquilo Bay lodge garden including adults with young.

Hoffmann's Toe-toed Sloth *Choloepus hoffmanni* — Less common than the three-toed sloth, we first saw this species during our "bio-break" by the Super Centro El Economico and again at Isla Popa a few days later.

Red-tailed Squirrel *Sciurus granatensis* — This diminutive rufous squirrel was a regular visitor at the feeders at Mount Totumas.

Panamanian White-faced Capuchin *Cebus imitator* — Families visited the Tranquilo Bay lodge porch area every day. We enjoyed watching them feed on bananas and slurping from the hummingbird feeders.

Mantled Howler Monkey *Alouatta palliata* — Heard daily and seen a few during at Mount Totumas.

Central American Spider Monkey *Ateles geoffroyi* — Seen or heard two days at Mount Totumas.

Panamanian Night Monkey *Aotus zonalis* — Another highlight at Tranquilo Bay, these nocturnal monkeys appeared on the lodge deck area after dark on at least two nights during our stay.

White-nosed Coati *Nasua narica* — Mason saw one at the blind at Mount Totumas.

Crab-eating Raccoon *Procyon cancrivorus* — Similar to the racoons we see in the United States, we saw them on at least three days at Tranquilo Bay.

Lesser White-lined Bat *Saccopteryx leptura* — Seen daily perched under the eaves of Dick's cabin.

Common Bottlenose Dolphin *Tursiops truncatus* — Surprisingly, we only saw dolphins once, during our first full day at Tranquilo Bay.

Water Buffalo *Bubalus bubalis* — Admittedly not wild animals but we enjoyed watching several wallowing in the mud along Camino Punta Robalo.

Spotted Paca *Caniculus paca* — David and Lori spotted one by their cabin our first night at Mount Totumas and the Paca-whisperers and Mason saw another at the same spot two days later.

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS (17):

Spectacled Caiman *Caiman crocodilus* — First seen along Camino Punta Robalo, again during our rainy visit to Green Acres Chocolate Farm and on our night walk at Tranquilo Bay.

Boa Constrictor *Boa constrictor* — The lodge staff at Tranquilo Bay showed us one after dinner one evening.

Green Iguana *Iguana iguana* — Seen at least twice including during our boat trip through the Changuinola Canal.

Green Basilisk *Basiliscus plumifrons* — Seen on the Changuinola Canal.

Brown Basilisk *Basiliscus vittatus* — Seen on at least three days, first during our loop walk at Tranquilo Bay.

Helmeted Basilisk *Corytophanes cristatus* — Recorded twice at Tranquilo Bay.

Emerald Swift *Sceloporus malachiticus* — Also known as Green Spiny Lizard, we saw these at Mount Totumas.

Border Anole Cryptic Slender Anole *Anolis limifrons* — Also known as Slender Anole, recorded on March 8.

Central American Whiptail *Holcosus festivus* — Also known as Middle American Ameiva, seen on our last full day at Tranquilo Bay.

Northern Turniptail Gecko *Thecacactylus rapicauda* — Recorded on our first full day at Tranquilo Bay.

Red-eyed Tree Frog *Agalychnis callidryas* — We saw one perched up in...a tree...during our night walk at Tranquilo Bay.

Striped Rocket Frog *Allobates talamancae* — Also known as Talamanca Rocket Frog, recorded twice including our rainy morning at the chocolate farm.

Strawberry Poison Dart Frog *Oophaga pumilio* — Seen on at least three days in various color morphs.

Green-and-black Poison Dart Frog *Dendrobates auratus* — Seen at Green Acres Chocolate Farm when amphibians were easier to find than birds due to rain.

Green Climbing Toad *Incilius coniferus* — Seen during our loop walk at Tranquilo Bay.

Valiant's Frog *Lithobates vallianti* — This was another of our treats during the night walk at Tranquilo Bay.

Savage's Thin-toed Frog *Leptodactylus savage* — And yet another amphibian that we saw during the night walk at Tranquilo Bay.