

Western Panama: Tranquilo Bay Species List | November 8 – 16, 2024 with Naturalist Journeys



Compiled by Naturalist Journeys guide James P. Smith with additional eBird checklists provided by local guides Roger and Astrid as well as tour participant Kit Muma. Outstanding field contributions came from Dyann, David, Nancy, Claire, Tom R., Bruce, Kit, and Tom K.

Tranquilo Bay Eco Adventure Lodge was our home for seven glorious days where we became immersed in the tropical ambience of the Bocas Del Toro archipelago situated on the Caribbean Coast of Western Panama. The lodge and surrounding reserve encompass some 200 plus acres of rainforest, mangrove and inshore waters providing a natural playground for wildlife enthusiasts and adventurers alike. Our near-daily boat excursions sometimes took us to the mainland where we birded the middle and higher elevation forest. Closer to home, the surrounding islands and canals provided a rich avian tapestry to this biologically diverse region. For those wanting a break from birding, kayaks, paddleboards, snorkeling and swimming were all open for use at the lodge's dock. Daily highlights were many and difficult to choose from but especially memorable was the visit of a family of Panamanian Night Monkeys at the lodge balcony on the very first evening of the tour! We had amazing encounters with two species of sloth, a fine male Emerald Basilisk 'dazzled' by the Chanquinola Canal and who could forget being surrounded by hundreds of Red-billed Tropicbirds, Brown Boobies and Magnificent Frigatebirds at Swan Cay?!

The eBird Trip Report link below details over 260 species observed or heard by the group during the tour. 'Leader only' or 'heard only' observations are indicated by comments in each report. If you're new to eBird, be sure to click on "Show All Details" on the right side of the list as this will expand the report to show you where and when each of the birds was seen. The rather high tally of 260 species is testament to our hard working and enthusiastic group, and the talents of our equally hard working local guides, Roger and Astrid.

[Western Panama: Tranquilo Bay | November 8-16, 2024 | eBird Trip Report](#)

Special thanks go to our gifted local leader Roger graciously assisted by guide in training Astrid, and to all the courteous, unflappable staff at Tranquilo Bay Eco Adventure Lodge who ran a near-seamless operation throughout.

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS (15 species recorded):

Spectacled Caiman *Caiman crocodilus* – just two smallish examples found, one on the Changuinola Canal and another in the newly created ‘frog pond’ at Tranquilo Bay.

Black Wood Turtle *Rhinoclemmys funerea*- one noted basking in the rushes along the Changuinola Canal on the 13th

Green Iguana *Iguana iguana* – a couple seen along the Changuinola Canal on the 13th

Emerald Basilisk *Basiliscus plumifrons* – a fine male seen up close along the Changuinola Canal was one of the highlights of the trip though a female close by went almost unnoticed.

Brown Basilisk *Basiliscus vittatus* – a fine specimen in the grounds of the lodge on the last full day.

Helmeted Basilisk *Corytophanes cristatus* – one of the more fascinating reptiles of the tour, spotted by Roger resting on a vertical stem close to the paved walkway near the lodge. A canopy dweller and apparently quite unusual to see it near ground level.

Middle American Ameiva *Holcosus festivus* – in the grounds of lodge almost daily including one especially friendly individual residing by the lodge stairwell!

Mourning Gecko *Lepidodactylus lugubris* – one or two seen in and around the cabanas at the lodge.

Border (Slender) Anole *Anolis limifrons*— singles found on a couple of dates at Tranquilo Bay.

Mesoamerican Boa *Boa imperator* – Roger spotted this beastie resting in a small tree near the service ramp on the last afternoon of the trip.

Salmon-bellied Racer *Mastigodryas melanolomus* – noted several times near the cabanas including on the afternoon as Jay escorted us to out lodging!

Savage Bull Frog *Leptodactylus savage* - one was seen several times during the week near the paved walkways at the lodge.

Talamanca Rocket Frog *Allobates talamancae*— fine views of one in the leaf litter by the Buena Esperanza road on the 12th.

Strawberry Poison Dart Frog *Oophaga pumilio*— Roger and Astrid took the group to several spots to illustrate the extreme color variation within this fascinating little species. They were found and noted on four days of the trip.

Green-and-black Poison Dart Frog *Dendrobates auratus*— beautiful views of these handsome amphibians by the Buena Esperanza road and at the Changuinola Canal.

MAMMALS (13 species recorded):

Dark Four-eyed Opossum *Philander melanurus* - Bruce and Kit spotted and photographed one on the lodge balcony on the first evening at Tranquilo Bay

Derby's Woolly Opossum *Caluromys derbianus*— one visited the balcony feeders at Tranquilo Bay Adventure Lodge on at least two evenings during our stay.

Nine-banded Armadillo *Dasytus novemcinctus* – one was spotted by Dyann during a night walk on the final evening at Tranquilo Bay.

Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth *Bradypus variegatus*— common and quite easily found but the grounds of Tranquilo Bay and as well as various locations on the mainland. Usually obliging and photogenic.

Hoffmann's Two-toed Sloth *Choloepus hoffmanni*— great views of one off the lodge balcony on the first evening with others found at Buena Esperanza, and by the service ramp at Tranquilo Bay.

Central American Agouti *Dasyprocta punctate* – one appeared all-too-briefly by the Radisson Panama Canal during the afternoon bird walk on the 8th.

Lesser White-lined Bat *Saccopteryx leptura* – small numbers seen roosting and flying around the cabanas at Tranquilo Bay. Easy to find.

Red-tailed Squirrel *Sciurus granatensis*— one noted by the Changuinola Canal on the 13th.

Panamanian White-faced Capuchin *Cebus imitator* — marauding, frequent visitors to the balcony feeders where they proved to be fairly bold and easily photographed.

Panamanian Night Monkey *Aotus zanalis* – incredible views of a family of four or five on the lodge balcony on the first evening at Tranquilo Bay, and on several evenings after that.

Mantled Howler Monkey *Alouatta palliata*— heard in mature wooded habitats on the mainland on just two dates though David and Astrid did manage to glimpse one individual in the canopy along the Changuinola Canal on the 13th.

Crab-eating Raccoon *Procyon cancrivorus* – a delightful family group found resting in the mangroves of Isla Popa.

Common Bottlenose Dolphin *Tursiops truncatus* – small numbers seen fairly frequently in Tranquilo Bay and around the archipelago in general.

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