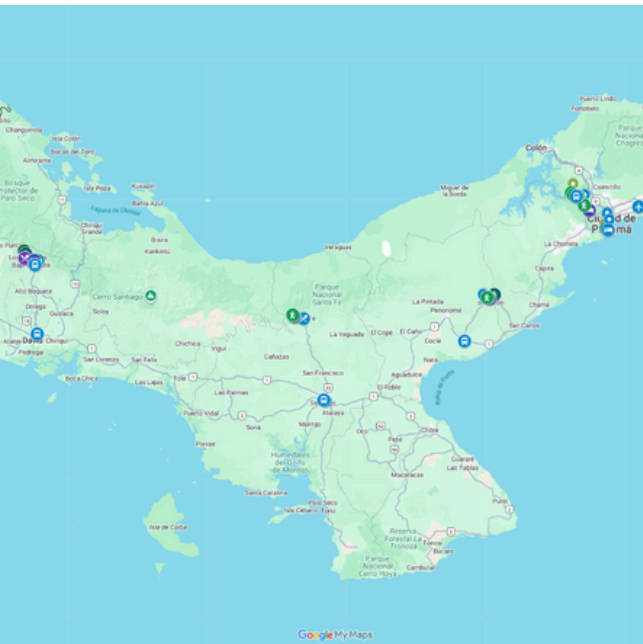


Panama



In June I went on a short trip to **Panama**. It wasn't anything spectacular in terms of mammals, but I'll still share a short report here.

After landing in Panama City, I headed straight to **Gamboa**. There weren't many accommodation options in the area, so I decided to treat myself a bit and stayed at the Summit Rainforest Golf Resort for the first two nights and the Gamboa Rainforest Resort for the third night. Right after arriving, I went to the famous **Pipeline Road**, where I saw several *Dasyprocta punctata* (**Central American Agouti**) and a large group of *Alouatta palliata* (**Mantled Howler Monkey**). I had high expectations for this area, but in the end they weren't fully met. Birdwise it also wasn't too impressive. On the way back to the bus stop I came across a family of *Basiliscus basiliscus* (Common Basilisk) and an adult *Iguana iguana* (Green Iguana). On the football field near the bus stop there were several *Ctenosaura similis* (Black Spiny-tailed Iguana) grazing. I then took a bus to the Golf Hotel to check-in. Around a pond on the grounds I found another several basilisks and iguanas, and a lonely *Nasua narica* (**White-nosed Coati**) roaming across the golf course.

In the evening I was pretty tired from long day, so I only did a "short" trail right behind the hotel. Something was rustling in the tree canopy every few minutes, but I wasn't able to locate it. About halfway along the trail I came across a *Tamandua mexicana* (**Northern Tamandua**), but it quickly disappeared into the bushes before I managed to take a photo. In the end, I choose wrong way or maybe the trail didn't make a loop despite the map at the beginning of the trail, so I accidentally reached a wide road outside the hotel grounds, where I spotted a small cat-like animal - judging by the eyes and movement probably, but I couldn't get a clear enough photo to be sure, it was too far away. I watched it for a while with a thermo camera on the opposite slope. Back in the hotel area I found some kind of feeding station where I was hoping to see *Saguinus geoffroyi* (Geoffroy's tamarin) during the day (in the end I didn't see a single one on the whole trip). At that moment, though, a group of *Aotus zonalis* (**Panamanian Night Monkey**) was moving around nearby. All in all, not a bad first day!

The next morning, after breakfast, I explored the hotel surroundings. In the local lagoons there were several *Caiman crocodilus* (Spectacled Caiman). In the afternoon I went to the **El Charco waterfall**. Towards evening a *Ramphastos sulfuratus* (Keel-billed Toucan) flew over, along with several parrots of the genus *Amazona*. In the stream I saw a young *Caiman crocodilus* (Spectacled Caiman). And among the roots by the path I noticed a *Proechimys* sp. (**Spiny Rat** - I hope I identified that correctly?). Unfortunately, I didn't have much time to explore, since the official opening hours were over and the local guard didn't look too happy about me being there. So I moved on a bit further to **Plantation Road**. Apart from a few anoles (*Anolis* sp.), I didn't see much there, and I didn't go far because my backup headlamp stopped working. In the end, I saw the most species along the roadside: my dream reptile *Polychrus gutturosus* (Berthold's Bush Anole), *Anolis biporcatus* (Giant Green Anole), *Agalychnis callidryas* (Red-eyed Tree Frog), several *Iguana iguana* (Green Iguana) sleeping in the trees, and high up in the branches a *Bassaricyon gabbii* (**Northern Olingo** - is that right?).

Back at the hotel I walked around the grounds once more and came across two *Didelphis marsupialis* (Common Opossum) and a *Dasyus novemcinctus* (Nine-banded Armadillo).



Amazona sp. flock



Gonatodes albogularis - Yellow-headed gecko



Nasua narica - White-nosed Coati



Basiliscus basiliscus - Common basilisk

On the third day, right after breakfast, I moved to **Gamboa**, left my things at the hotel, and walked the **Laguna Trail** in the hotel's reserve. It was quite a nice and short trail, and it looked really promising. Around me there were ***Dasyprocta punctata*** (**Central American Agouti**) running about, and *Baryphthengus martii* (Rufous Motmot) flying around. I planned to return here in the evening. But mainly I decided to give the **Pipeline Road** another try in the afternoon and early night and see if it would be more rewarding this time.

The hotel was very pleasant, with nice rooms that had balconies where you could watch birds around the grounds and iguanas right in the trees below. In the evening, on my way to **Pipeline Road**, I encountered a huge flock of amazon parrots (*Amazona autumnalis* – Red-lored Amazon, *Amazona farinosa* – Mealy Amazon). They were flying not only over the town but also later above Pipeline Road. Considering I was there at the beginning of the rainy season, it hardly rained at all and everything was very dry. That probably made it impossible for me to find the *Lepidophyma flavimaculatum* (Yellow-spotted Night Lizard), which should occur in the area. I went for an evening walk up to **Radio Hill**, but once again this location didn't impress me much. Apart from a group of ***Alouatta palliata*** (**Mantled Howler Monkey**) sitting in the same tree as on the first day, and the flock of amazons, I didn't encounter much else. I really can't explain why I saw far fewer animals at such a famous site than anywhere else in Panama. By the time I made my way back after dark, the number of sightings hadn't improved. Only at the entrance booth did I spot a ***Sylvilagus gabbi*** (**Central American Rabbit**). Otherwise, apart from *Nyctidromus albigollis* (Common Pauraque), there wasn't a soul around.



Brotogeris jugularis - The orange-chinned Parakeet



Anolis sp.



Aotus zonalis - Panamanian Night Monkey



Proechimys sp. - Spiny Rat ?

*Bassaricyon gabbii* - Northern Olingo ?*Polychrus gutturosus* - Berthold's Bush Anole*Baryphthengus martii* - Rufous Motmot

So I decided to try the **Laguna Trail** near the hotel once more. Right by the road I came across a ***Dasypus novemcinctus* (Nine-banded Armadillo)**.

The next morning I woke up unexpectedly early because the huge flock of amazons decided to have a noisy breakfast in the tree right outside my room. I took advantage of it and gave the hotel grounds another chance. At least I managed to see a pair of very shy ***Ramphastos sulfuratus* (Keel-billed Toucan)** flying from tree to tree.

Early in the morning I headed back to Panama City, and then took a bus to **Valle de Antón**. I really have to praise Panama for this – whenever I arrived at a bus terminal almost anywhere, I managed to catch a bus within 20 minutes.

I went to Valle de Antón mainly because of a very special lizard species, ***Enyalioides groi* (Dunn's Spinytail Lizard)** and I had big luck to succeed in this mission. I was also looking forward to exploring the nearby trails. Right after checking-in, I walked to **Piedra Pintada**. It is really beautiful there. Along the way I saw ***Ramphastos sulfuratus* (Keel-billed Toucan)**, and on the ridge a ***Porthidium lansbergii* (Lansberg's Hognose Viper)**. In the town park I then saw ***Sciurus variegatoides* (Variegated Squirrel)**.

In the evening I went for a night walk again on the Piedra Pintada trail. I wasn't thrilled by the huge number of **barking dogs all around**, but fortunately it went without problems. Still, I didn't make any great finds this time either. I also tried walking along the road up to Canopy Lodge, but apart from the dogs I didn't see much. In the morning I wanted to get to the entrance of the **Mirador Cerro El Gaital** trail as early as possible. I was surprised to find the trail looked closed, but next to the fenced entrance booth there was a small path that visitors were clearly using freely. On the ground everywhere there were tiny ***Anolis humilis* (Slender Anole)**. From the viewpoint I saw a ***Bradypus variegatus* (Brown-throated Sloth)**, and later another one on my way back to town. After that, I tried some night herping on the trail, but part of the trail was blocked by a huge clump of epiphytes that had fallen from a tree, so I shortened my walk considerably. I made more sightings along the road into town anyway, for example ***Oxybelis brevirostris* (Garfish Snake)**.

Originally, I had planned to continue to Santa Fe to avoid unnecessary long transfers and skip Bocas del Toro. But the weather was unexpectedly great, and I discovered a convenient connection from Santiago straight to Bocas, so I decided to change my plans. I took a bus from Antón to Santiago and planned to wait there for the night bus. But as soon as I got off the bus, I noticed that the company for transfer from Santiago to Bocas had canceled all departures. I got back on a bus continuing to David. Only after it started moving did I realize that the cancellations were probably not due to the weather, but possibly because of protests in the area (which happen often). While arranging accommodation on Bastimento Island, the owner confirmed that the area was completely closed off and inaccessible by bus, only reachable by air. This was a huge blow to my plans, but I was already on the bus to David, from which I had originally planned to find an alternative connection. So I had to spend an unplanned night in **David** and come up with a backup plan, which complicated the following days. I decided to go to **Boquete** and spend at least one day there. The small town square with Parque Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra was worth mentioning, where ***Sciurus variegatoides* (Variegated Squirrel)** and ***Iguana iguana* (Green Iguana)** were present. In the morning, after arriving in Boquete, I explored the private trails around **Finca Lérida Farm**. It was great for birdwatching, but I was quite disappointed with the staff. From 4 PM, the forest trails were closed, and the receptionist even claimed that the birds were already asleep, so it wasn't worth

*Ctenosaura similis* - Black Spiny-tailed Iguana



Iguana iguana - Green Iguana



Chlorestes julie - Violet-Bellied hummingbird



Dasyprocta punctata - Central American Agouti

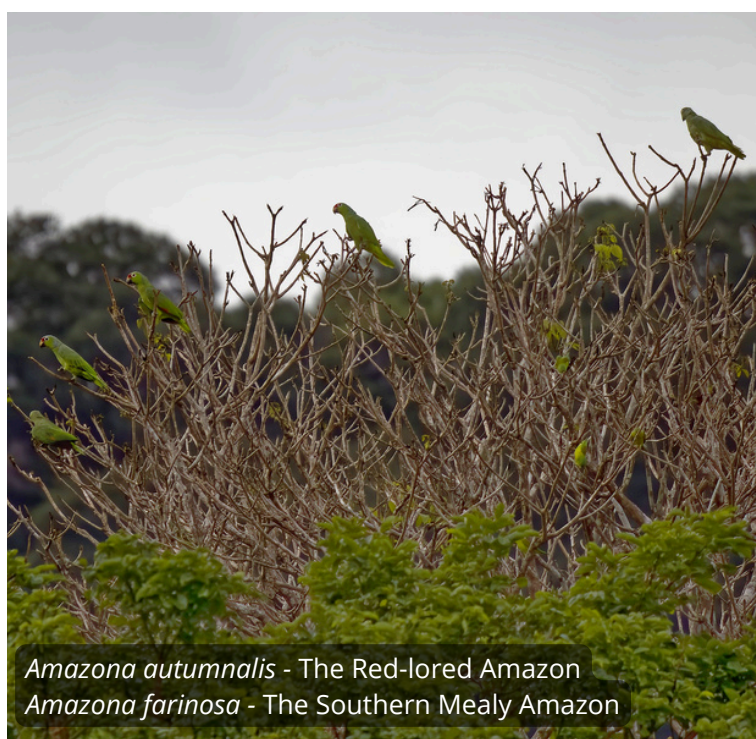
– which of course wasn't true, but I respected the rule. Unfortunately, all the trails I planned to visit in the evening were private and inaccessible at night, so the night walk wasn't very productive. The next early morning I visited the **Quetzal Trail**. Right at the start I saw **tapir tracks** in the mud. Almost every fence post had an *Anolis kemptoni* (Kemp's Anole) perched on it. It wasn't a good season for quetzals, unfortunately I only heard them but didn't see them. Apart from *Sciurus granatensis* (Red-tailed Squirrel) and *Alouatta palliata* (Mantled Howler Monkey), I didn't encounter any mammals. Next time I'd like to spend more time here and plan accommodation closer to the trails.

At the end of the trip I moved to **Santa Fé**. On the first day I arrived relatively late, so I only managed to check-in. I found accommodation near Santa Fé National Park. During the day I watched birds around the cabin, including *Pteroglossus torquatus* (Curl-crested Aracari) and *Ramphastos sulfuratus* (Keel-billed Toucan), and I also heard *Ramphastos ambiguus* (Black-mandibled Toucan). Through iNaturalist I arranged a meeting with a **local guide, Edgar**, to increase my chances of seeing wildlife. In this area I mainly wanted to see *Corytophanes cristatus* (Helmeted Basilisk), but apparently there was also a decent chance of seeing a jaguar (I didn't). The evening expedition was plagued by terrible weather – heavy rain, slippery clay – and I didn't manage to find much. Edgar did find a beautiful *Bothriechis nigroasper* (Black-speckled Palm Pit Viper) and one *Corytophanes cristatus* (Helmeted Basilisk), as well as a *Leptodeira ornata* (Northern Cat-eyed Snake). I was very happy to find an *Echinanura panamensis* (a secretive Teiid lizard), I didn't expect to see any, as they are quite shy and hidden in leaf litter.

On the last day, I returned to **Panama City** and wanted to visit **Parque Natural Metropolitano** to try to see some tamarins. Unfortunately, the park closed relatively early and seemed strict about it, so I was quite annoyed and spent my time exploring the city instead. The next morning, I also tried **Cerro Ancón**, but I didn't have much time before my flight. According to the official opening hours, it should have been open from 7 AM, but by 6 AM early runners were already leaving the park, and no one paid attention to them.



Sciurus granatensis - The red-tailed squirrel



Amazona autumnalis - The Red-lored Amazon
Amazona farinosa - The Southern Mealy Amazon



Sylvilagus gabbi - Central American Rabbit



Dasypus novemcinctus - Nine-banded Armadillo



Sciurus variegatoides - Variegated Squirrel



Didelphis marsupialis - Common Opossum



Ramphastos sulfuratus - Keel-billed Toucan



Amazona autumnalis - The Red-lored Amazon



Valle de Antón



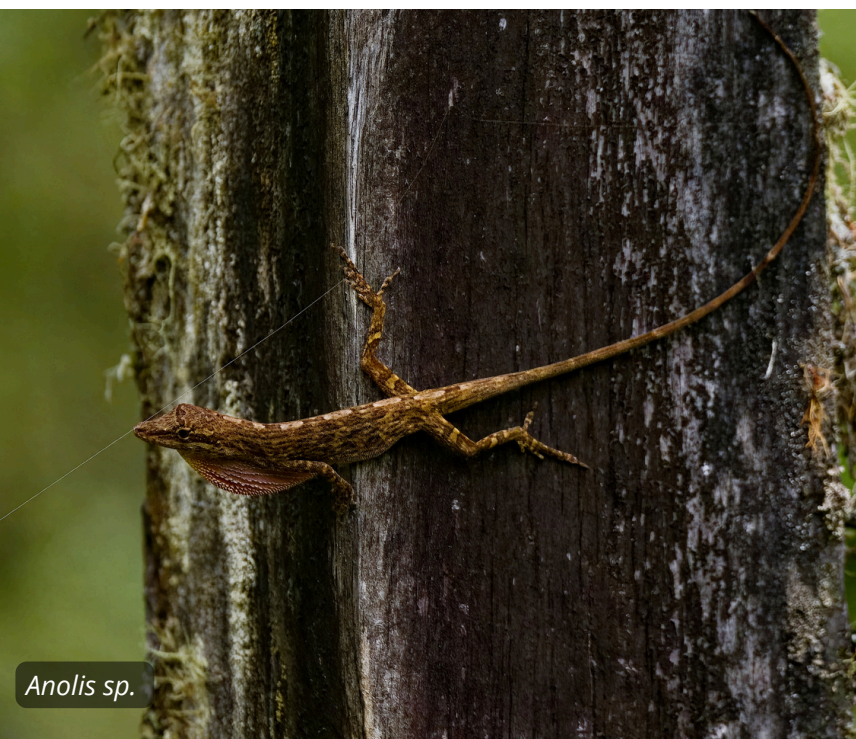
Bradypus variegatus - Brown-throated Sloth



Anolis humilis - Slender Anole



Tapirus bairdii - The Baird's tapir



Anolis sp.



Alouatta palliata - Mantled Howler Monkey





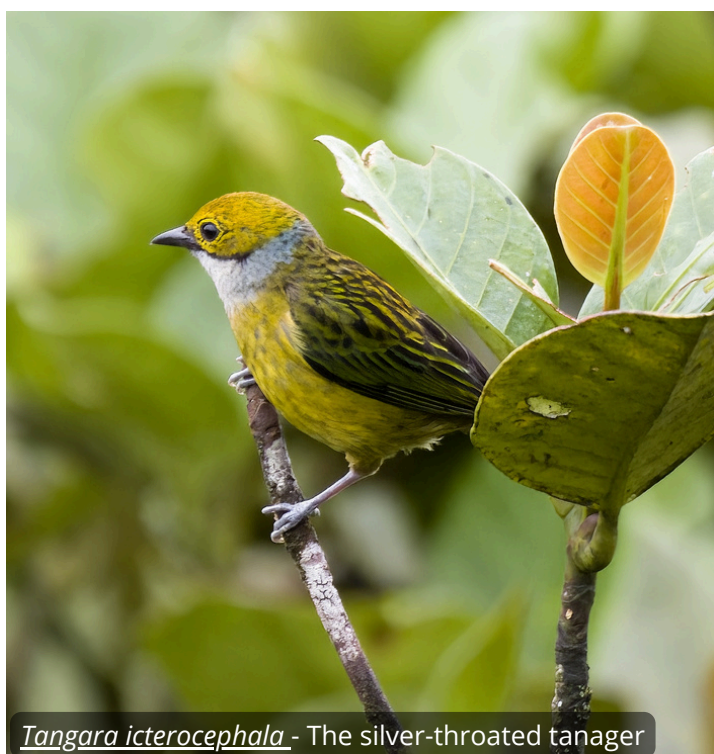
Pionus menstruus - The blue-headed parrot



Bradypus variegatus - Brown-throated Sloth



Enyalioides groi - Dunn's Spinytail Lizard



Tangara icterocephala - The silver-throated tanager



Caiman crocodilus - Speckled Caiman



Mimetica incisia - Leaf Katydid

List of Mammals

<i>Dasyprocta punctata</i>	Central American Agouti	Gamboa
<i>Nasua narica</i>	White-nosed Coati	Summit Rainforest Hotel Golf areal
<i>Bassaricyon gabbii</i>	Northern Olingo	Soberanía
<i>Tamandua mexicana</i>	Northern Tamandua	Summit Rainforest Hotel Golf trail
<i>Didelphis marsupialis</i>	Common Opossum	Summit Rainforest Hotel Golf areal
<i>Dasybus novemcinctus</i>	Nine-banded Armadillo	Summit Rainforest Hotel Golf, Laguna Trail Gamboa
<i>Sylvilagus gabbi</i>	Central American Rabbit	Pipeline Road
<i>Tapirus bairdii</i>	Baird's Tapir (tracks)	Quetzal Trail Boquete
<i>Sciurus variegatoides</i>	Variegated Squirrel	Valle de Antón, David
<i>Sciurus granatensis</i>	Red-tailed Squirrel	Boquete
<i>Alouatta palliata</i>	Mantled Howler Monkey	Pipeline Road, Quetzal Trail
<i>Proechimys</i> sp.	Spiny Rat	El Charco trail Soberanía
<i>Bradypus variegatus</i>	Brown-throated Sloth	Valle de Antón
<i>Aotus zonalis</i>	Panamanian Night Monkey	Summut Rainforest Hotel Golf