

# ECOTOURISTIC LEISURE

## CANOEES (CAYUCOS) RACE

Cayucos are wood canoes. For the ones that want to enjoy a true spectacle, a week before the Holy Week, the canoes race from ocean to ocean takes place.



Contendores en las esclusas / Cayuco racers at canal locks

## RIVER RAFTING

Rivers which cross the thicker Panamanian jungle areas are another important feature of the country's geography, and you can have fun by several ways. For instance, in Chiriqui Province you can enjoy the safe practice of River Rafting during the whole year, which has been considered as class 4 by its rapids, and provides a challenging opportunity from April to December.



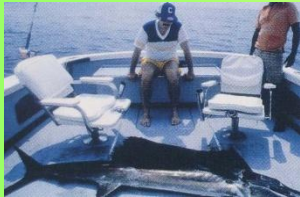
## BIRDWATCHING

Panama is considered for many people as the No.1 destination in the world for bird watching. In fact, every year the Panama Audubon Society carries out a Christmas count of birds, keeping the record of greater number of birds observed by several years.



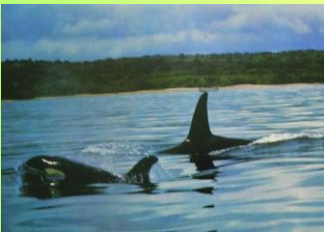
## SPORTS FISHING.

170 World Records of fishing have been broken in the Panamanian Pacific Ocean. Piñas Bay is a Panamanian site that is a well-known tourist spot for sports fishing. Within an area of 32 Km<sup>2</sup>, in this bay you can find a resort specialized in fishing. Besides Piñas Bay, Alajuela Lake and Gatun Lake, there are many other locations famous for marine sports such as fishing, water skiing, jet ski, windsurf and swimming.



## WHALES WATCHING

Humpback whales or "Yubartas" reproduce in the hot and crystalline water nearby Coiba Island National Park, which is approximately 19.2 Km. from the Pacific coasts of Veraguas Province. When they become adults, the enormous female humpbacks whales can reach 15 to 17 meters-long, while the males grow around 14 to 15 meters-long, and the width range of both of them are 3.5 to 3.65 m. Normally, each one weights between 40 and 50 tons or more. The best season to watch whales is between July and August.



## NATURAL BIODIVERSITY

The rich biodiversity of Panama is attributed to its singular geographical configuration and its position. At a short distance from the coast in Bocas Del Toro archipelago, there are hundreds of islands and thousands of coral reefs protected. The beautiful beaches provide the opportunity to practice marine sports such as snorkeling, scuba diving and swimming.

The Biodiversity Museum, designed by world famous architect Frank Gehry, is close to completion within this year and is located next to the Pacific Entrance of the Canal. It is expected to open at the beginning of 2014.



Barro Colorado Natural Monument is a wildlife refuge used as natural laboratory by the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute. Barro Colorado has 5,346 ha. of tropical rainforest deeply studied in the planet, and it is located in the heart of the Panama Canal watershed.



The great variety and accessibility to ecotouristic attractions has transformed Panama into an important destination for nature fans. Tourists go on expeditions to witness the infinite biodiversity and beauty of Panamanian fauna and flora, as well as to experience a lot of excitement with other tourist attractions.



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# PANAMA

Crossroads of the World  
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The origin of the word "Panama" is Pre-Columbine and means "abundance of fish, butterflies, and birds".

The biodiversity is amazing and is accessible to the visitors.

In different zones of the country, it can be enjoyed vegetation and unique and endemic fauna in the region, which creates an Isthmus of convergence in the Americas for thousands of species of flora and fauna.

## Ecotourism: Discovering the Nature

Since Mother Nature chose Panama as an encounter point for her creatures, serving like a bridge of natural land that unites North and Central America with South America, wild species from the whole Continent inhabit in Panama.

# NATURAL PRODIGIES

FLOWERS: More than 10,000 species; ORCHIDS: 1,200 species;  
 TREES: More than de 1,500 varieties; FERN: 678 species; BIRDS: 990 species;  
 BUTTERFLIES: 1,500 species; MAMMALS: 225 species; REPTILES: 214 species;  
 AMPHIBIAN: 143 species.

In the skies of Panama, during the months of October and November, millions of birds fly coming from North America towards South America, looking for food and warm.



## FAUNA VARIETY

### Harpy Eagle (Harpia-Harpyja)

Considered the National Bird of Panama and the Symbol of Nature Conservation, it is one of the most powerful birds of prey in the world. It eats animals that live on the trees such as monkeys, sloths and iguanas. Once the nest is already done, the female eagle puts two eggs and incubates them for fifty-five days. However, in normal conditions just one young pigeon survives. Harpy Eagle is characterized by its abundant and gorgeous plumage. It measures a meter of height, and reaches 2 meters with wings opened. The largest threats for this species are deforestation and hunting. This bird is being protected and conserved by country laws and Panama is pioneer in the rescue of this impressive bird.



### Green Iguana (Iguana- Iguana).

It lives on the trees (to a height of 15 to 30 meters). Although, for many people iguana meat is a very delicious dish, people preferred to help increase iguana's population, as a measure to prevent the extinction of this animal.



### Golden Frog (Atelopus Zeteki).

It is famous by its gold-yellow color skin, which has poison within it. Its length oscillates between 35 and 42 mm. It sings and communicates to its mates with sign language by moving its front legs in order to defend its territory or to attract pairs. It can be observed in Valle de Antón.



### Marine Turtles

Panama is one of the most important places of the Pacific side that gathers each year around 30,000 marine turtles, who are coming back to the beaches for placing their eggs. Isla de Caña in Azuero Peninsula is the favorite place to observe them, between May and September, which is the main period for turtles nest-building.



## FLORA IN ITS SPLENDOR

Panama has plenty of orchids: 1,200 species, and among the best-known ones is the National Flower the Holy Spirit (Peristeria Elata). This wild flower is born and grows in humid trunks. It can be appreciated from July to October.



# NATIONAL PARKS

More than the 30% of the land mass is protected through 15 national parks (three of them are recognized by UNESCO as World Heritage), 12 forest reserves and 10 wildlife refuge.

### DARIEN NATIONAL PARK - World Heritage, UNESCO 1981.

It is considered a World Biosphere Reserve. It protects an area of more than 1.2 million acres of exuberant tropical forests that have not been touched, along the border with Colombia. There are more than 300 species of birds, including the Harpy Eagle, four species of macaws and also the famous Pico Iris Toucan. Cougar is one of the five species of cats that live in this park.



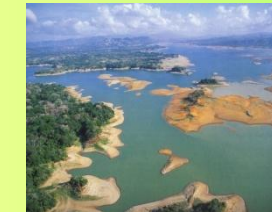
**Coiba National Park - World Heritage, UNESCO 2005.** One of the greater marine surface protected park in the world (total area 270,125 ha. – where 53,528 ha. are insular territory and 216,543 ha. are marine areas. It is characterized by the most extensive coral reef of the Pacific coast and the broad variety of whales.



**La Amistad International Park (PILA, in Spanish) - World Heritage, UNESCO 1983 and extended in 1990.** Managed jointly by the parks authorities of both Panama and Costa Rica, this park keeps intact one of the oldest tropical forests of highlands in Central America. Animals such as wild cats of great size, the powerful jaguar and many amphibious, mammalian, and endemic birds live inside the park, as well as the colorful orchid *Dracula Tubeana* grows there everywhere.



**Metropolitan National Park -** Located inside the limits of Panama City. It is the closest protected tropical forest to an urban area in the Americas. In this park, you can take a walk through the marked paths while enjoying the surrounding orchids, trees, birds and butterflies such as *Morpho* kind ones.



**Soberania National Park –** Located only 25 minutes far from Panama City, this park protects the *Panama Canal watershed*. Within the park's boundaries there is the only one aviary in the world for the Harpy Eagle. The Pipeline Road has the honor to keep the World Audubon Society Record of greatest numbers of birds in Christmas time for 19 consecutive years.

Other National Parks:

- Isla Bastimentos Marine National Park
- Volcan Baru National Park
- Chagres National Park
- Sarigua National Park