



TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO BIRDING ADVENTURE 2018

15- 25 JANUARY 2019



Tufted Coquette is one of the key species we search for on this trip
(photo by Mukesh Ramdass).

Trinidad and Tobago are a remarkable set of islands. Located in close proximity to the mainland of South America, the islands enjoy both mainland and Caribbean species. With the Northern Range of mountains, savannas, beaches, and tropical swamps there is a great variety of birds to enjoy in Trinidad. Tobago also has some nice seabird colonies, making for a well-rounded species list, including several sought-after regional endemics. Combined with the islands' lovely beaches, friendly people, and a wonderful mix of carib/creole/Indian cuisine, this is a great destination to do some fantastic birding.

Please note that the detailed itinerary below cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually slightly) due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides and other factors.

Itinerary (11 days/10 nights)

Day 1. Arrival, transfer to Asa Wright Nature Centre

After arrival at Piarco Airport in Trinidad we will transfer to the Asa Wright Nature Centre, which is our base for the next several nights. This is one of the most pleasant, easy, and rewarding locations for birding in the tropical Americas. Our stay here will give us the chance to explore various different types of habitat around northern Trinidad.

Overnight: Asa Wright Nature Centre, Northern Range, Trinidad

Day 2. Asa Wright Nature Centre and Oilbird cave

This morning we wake to the sounds of the forest all around us. We'll check the feeders and enjoy some birds from the magnificent veranda before breakfast. After breakfast we'll walk some of the trails to look for species like **Green-backed Trogon, Channel-billed Toucan, Bearded Bellbird, Chestnut Woodpecker, White-bearded Manakin, Rufous-browed Peppershrike, Crested Oropendola, Bat Falcon, Blue Dacnis, Grey-headed Dove, Yellow Oriole, and Turquoise and Bay-headed Tanagers. Ruby-topaz Hummingbird, Tufted Coquette, Blue-chinned Sapphire, and Rufous-breasted Hermit** often visit the feeders, while **Barred Antshrike and Green Honeycreeper** are among the many species that can be easily seen around the lodge.

This afternoon we visit Dunston Cave, where we can enjoy the breeding colony of **Oilbirds**. This is one of the most accessible oilbird caves in the entire world, but access is limited, to protect this rare species. The forest around the cave is also good for species like **Red-crowned Ant Tanager, White-bearded Manakin, Black-faced Antthrush, White-bellied Antbird, and Grey-throated Leaf-tosser. Chestnut-collared Swift** can be seen circling the skies above, as they nest here as well.

We leave Dunston Cave to get to Aripo in the evening to do some night birding. Our target species will include **White-tailed Nightjar, Pauraque, Common Potoo, Tropical Screech Owl, and Western Barn Owl.**

Overnight: Asa Wright Nature Centre, Northern Range, Trinidad

Day 3. Nariva Swamp

Today we make our way out of the Northern Range to Nariva Swamp, the largest freshwater swamp on the island. Along its edges are “palm islands”, where the tall moriche palm is common. Along the way we will look first in the lowland habitats for species like **Savanna Hawk, Red-breasted Blackbird, Southern Lapwing, Black-crested Antshrike, Rufous-breasted Wren, Spectacled Thrush, Yellow-hooded Blackbird, and Green-rumped Parrotlet**. There is a good area of mangroves as well as a coastal freshwater marsh, and we’ll check both for **Pinnated Bittern, Pearl Kite, Azure Gallinule, Pied Water Tyrant, American Pygmy Kingfisher, Yellow-chinned Spinetail, Wattled Jacana, and Red-bellied and Blue-and-yellow Macaws**.

Overnight: Asa Wright Nature Centre, Northern Range, Trinidad

Day 4. Blanchisseuse Road

Today we head over the Northern Range towards Blanchisseuse. Along the way we’ll look for **Swallow-tailed Kite, Common Black Hawk, Ornate Hawk-Eagle, Bat Falcon, White-necked Thrush, Bay-headed Tanager, Rufous-browed Peppershrike, Yellow-olive Flatbill, Cocoa Woodcreeper, White-tailed Trogon, and Rufous-tailed Jacamar**, along with some of the more skulking forest birds like **Silvered Antbird** as well as **Speckled Tanager** and **Blue Dacnis**.

We’ll head back to Asa Wright for the afternoon to catch up with the feeders or check out one of the manakin leks. We’ll need to head to bed early tonight, as we have an early wake-up tomorrow.

Overnight: Asa Wright Nature Centre, Northern Range, Trinidad

Day 5. Grande Riviere

3:00 a.m. wakeup call! We need to leave early to get to Grande Riviere, about a three-hour drive, to be in place at dawn to search for the endemic **Trinidad Piping Guan**, known locally as Pawi. The population of this bird is extremely low, around 200 birds, so we’ll make a special effort to see this critically endangered species. We might find **Short-tailed Nighthawk** along the road on the way to see the guan. We’ll have a chance at some more forest birds here as well, like **Green-backed Trogon, Trinidad Euphonia, and White-bellied Antbird**.

We’ll spend the whole morning birding here, including a hot brunch, before transferring back to Asa Wright, arriving in the late afternoon, which you’ll have free to rest up after our early morning. We can also continue birding around the grounds for birds we may have missed, like **Lineated Woodpecker, Rufous-breasted Wren, and Golden-fronted Greenlet**.

Overnight: Asa Wright Nature Centre, Northern Range, Trinidad

Day 6. Aripo Savannas and Yerreté

Though we’d been here once already to do some night birding, we now explore one of Trinidad’s few open grassy areas, Aripo Savannas. This will provide yet another suite of new species. The open savanna habitat is good for species like **Plumbeous Kite, Grey-headed Kite, Yellow-headed Caracara, Orange-winged Amazon, Trinidad Motmot, Shiny Cowbird, Giant Cowbird, Yellow-rumped Cacique, Neotropical Palm Swift, and Squirrel and Striped Cuckoos**. **Lesser Elaenia, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, White-flanked Antwren, Blue-black Grassquit, and Ruddy-breasted Seedeater** are also likely to be seen. Aripo Savannas is an area of extremely acidic soil with poor drainage; it is a remnant of what once was a major habitat type of lowland Trinidad. These remnant savannas are now surrounded by extensively altered

landscapes, where sugar cane is grown and small-scale agriculture and housing developments sprawl.

We will depart before noon with picnic lunches for Yerreté (the Arawak word for hummingbird), an idyllic private home in Trinidad's Maracas Valley, which the owners have converted into a hummingbird haven. Twelve of Trinidad's thirteen species of hummingbird have been recorded here. The many feeders are abuzz with species like **White-chested Emerald**, **Ruby-topaz Hummingbird**, **Black-throated** and **Green-throated Mangos**, **Brown Violetear**, **Long-billed Starthroat**, **White-necked Jacobin**, **Rufous-breasted Hermit**, and **Copper-rumped Hummingbird**, and the feeders also attract **Purple** and **Green Honeycreepers**.

Overnight: Asa Wright Nature Centre, Northern Range, Trinidad

Day 7. Waterloo Marshes and Caroni Swamp

Today we visit Waterloo and the marshes around there for some waterbirds. There will be ample chances for **Blue-winged Teal**, **Masked Yellowthroat**, **Black-bellied Whistling Duck**, and **Common Gallinule**. Near the Orange Valley fishing pier we're likely to see **Laughing Gull**, **Black Skimmer**, **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, and possibly **Royal Tern**. We'll also have a chance to see **Yellow-crowned** and **Black-crowned Night Herons**, **Willet**, **Greater Yellowlegs**, and **Whimbrel**. In another area of the Waterloo marshes we will likely see **Semipalmated** and **Western Sandpipers** as well as **Large-billed Tern**.

From the Waterloo marshes we head to Caroni Swamp to sail through these mangrove swamps in search of its more specialized denizens, like **Neotropic Cormorant**, **Anhinga**, **Striated Heron**, **White-cheeked Pintail**, **Pied Water Tyrant**, **Limpkin**, **Tricolored Heron**, **Roseate Spoonbill**, **Bicolored Conebill**, and **Masked Cardinal**. Our day will end with the spectacular flight of **Scarlet Ibises** returning to their mangrove roosts at dusk, truly one of the world's most dramatic natural moments. Returning to the boat dock, we will search the mangrove-lined channels for the mysteriously-sounding **Common Potoo**.

Overnight: Asa Wright Nature Centre, Northern Range, Trinidad

Day 8. Tobago

We leave early to catch our flight to Tobago. Tobago forms the final link in the chain of mountain ranges extending from the Venezuelan Coastal Range on the very edge of the South American Continental Shelf. Tobago's climate and rainfall more closely resemble that of the Lesser Antilles, meaning that Tobago is drier and windier than its sister island of Trinidad. We'll do some marsh birding at Hilton Ponds and Bon Accord marshes, which will give us a chance for species like **Rufous-vented Chachalaca**, not present in Trinidad, **White-cheeked Pintail**, **Eared** and **White-tipped Doves**, wintering birds like **American Avocet** and **Grey Plover**, as well as local birds like **Anhinga**, **Brown-crested Flycatcher**, **Scrub Greenlet**, **Spectacled Thrush**, and **Barred Antshrike**. We may also stumble upon a **White-tailed Nightjar**. We'll have a picnic lunch at Grafton House estate and then take a leisurely drive to the lovely northern coast. We will check into the beachfront Blue Waters Inn in time for dinner.

Overnight: Blue Waters Inn, Speyside, Tobago

Day 9. Little Tobago island

This morning, weather permitting, we will depart by boat for Little Tobago island, one of this nation's most important wildlife sanctuaries. As we cross over to the island we will watch for leatherback and hawksbill turtles and enjoy spectacular views of one of the Caribbean's most

beautiful and pristine coral formations, all from the comfort of our glass-bottom boat. Upon landing we will explore the island for **Red-eyed Vireo**, **Brown-crested Flycatcher**, and **Pale-vented Pigeon**. In addition, depending on the time of the year, we will explore the nesting colonies of **Red-billed Tropicbird**, **Red-footed Booby**, **Brown Booby**, **Sooty Tern**, and **Brown Noddy**.

Overnight: Blue Waters Inn, Speyside, Tobago

Day 10. Tobago Main Ridge Forest Reserve

Today we'll visit the Tobago Main Ridge Forest Reserve (Gilpin Trace), where Tobago's best mountain forests are found, at elevations of over 2,000 feet. Established on April 13, 1776, the Tobago Main Ridge Forest Reserve is the oldest legally protected forest reserve, geared specifically towards a conservation purpose, in the world. We'll hike this amazing forested interior to look for **White-tailed Sabrewing**, once thought to be extinct but rediscovered here in the 1960s. We will also seek out **Blue-backed Manakin**, **Rufous-breasted Hermit**, **Rufous-tailed Jacamar**, **Stripe-breasted Spinetail**, **Buff-throated** and **Olivaceous Woodcreepers**, **Plain Antvireo**, **Rufous-breasted Wren**, **Fuscous Flycatcher**, **Golden-olive Woodpecker**, **White-lined Tanager**, **Yellow-legged Thrush**, and other Tobago specialties such as **Red-crowned Woodpecker** and **Northern White-fringed Antwren**.

Overnight: Blue Waters Inn, Speyside, Tobago

Day 11. Departure

After breakfast we will transfer to Tobago Airport for our flight to Trinidad, which takes 35 minutes. From here you will either fly home or catch a flight (usually at 2 p.m.) to Georgetown, Guyana, if you are joining our Guyana tour.

This tour can be combined with our **Guyana: 3-part Birding Adventure 2019** tour.

Duration:	11 days
Limit:	6 – 8
Date:	15 – 25 January 2019
Start:	Trinidad
End:	Trinidad
Price:	US\$6145 per person sharing
Single supplement:	US\$1836

Price includes:

Airport transfers

Accommodation

All meals

Early morning and afternoon coffee/tea service at Asa Wright Nature Centre

One complimentary rum punch

Guided walks and evening programs at Asa Wright Nature Centre

Price excludes:

International flights

Domestic flights Trinidad – Tobago – Trinidad

Personal insurance

Alcoholic beverages

Gratuities

Laundry

Personal expenses such as gifts