



## **GUYANA: 3-PART BIRDING ADVENTURE**

**25 JANUARY – 9 FEBRUARY 2020**



**Guianan Cock-of-the-rock** is one of the key species we search for on this trip

Our tour to South America's "Biggest Little Secret" with its magnificent northern Amazon rainforest and numerous emerging birding hotspots offers an exploration of its unbelievably colorful and exciting birdlife, from the majestic **Harpy Eagle** to the stunning **Guianan Cock-of-the-rock** and, on a five-day extension, an opportunity to find **Sun Parakeet** and **Red Siskin**, both endangered, extremely range-restricted, and highly sought-after. The world's highest uninterrupted waterfall, Kaieteur Falls, can also be visited and admired on a two-day pre-tour. The pre-tour and the extension cannot be booked as independent tours.

This tour can be combined with our **Trinidad and Tobago Birding Adventure 2020** tour.

### **Pre-tour to Kaieteur Falls**

#### **Itinerary (2 days/2 nights)**

##### **Day 1. Arrival**

We will pick you up at the airport in Georgetown and transfer you to your hotel.

Overnight: Cara Lodge, Georgetown

Cara Lodge was built in the 1840s and originally consisted of two houses. It has a long and romantic history and was the home of the first Lord Mayor of Georgetown. Over the years the property has been visited by many dignitaries, including King Edward VII, who stayed at the house in 1923. Other dignitaries have included President Jimmy Carter, HRH Prince Charles, HRH Prince Andrew, and Mick Jagger. This magnificent home turned hotel offers the tradition and nostalgia of a bygone era, complete with service and comfort in a congenial family atmosphere.

##### **Day 2. Kaieteur Falls**

You will be picked up from the hotel and transferred to Ogle International Airport, where we might see **Red-breasted Blackbird** or **Snail Kite**. From here we'll take a flight to Kaieteur Falls.

The Kaieteur Falls, which were first seen by a European on April 29, 1870, are situated in the heart of Guyana on the Potaro River, a tributary of the Essequibo. The water of Kaieteur, one of the world's natural wonders, flows over a sandstone conglomerate tableland into a deep gorge – a drop of 741 feet, or 5 times the height of Niagara Falls.

There are no other falls in the world with the magnitude of the sheer drop existing at Kaieteur. Amerindian legend of the Patamona tribe has it that Kai, one of the tribe's chiefs (after whom the falls are named), committed self-sacrifice by canoeing himself over the falls. It was believed this would encourage the Great Spirit Makonaima to save the tribe from being destroyed by the savage Caribishi.

Kaieteur supports a unique micro environment with tank bromeliads, the largest in the world, in which the tiny, endemic **Beebe's Rocket Frog** (Golden Rocket Frog) spends its entire life, and the rarely seen **Guianan Cock-of-the-rock** nesting close by. The lucky visitor may also see the famous flights of **White-chinned** and **White-tipped Swifts** (or Makonaima Birds), which nest under the vast shelf of rock carved by the centuries of water, hidden behind the eternal curtain of falling water. Other species we might encounter here are **White-tailed Goldenthrroat**, **Musician Wren**, and **Orange-breasted Falcon**.

In the afternoon we'll fly back to Georgetown.

Overnight: Cara Lodge, Georgetown

### **Main Guyana Birding Tour**

#### **Itinerary (12 days/11 nights)**

##### **Day 1. Arrival**

We will pick you up at the Georgetown airport and transfer you to your hotel.

Overnight: Cara Lodge, Georgetown

Cara Lodge was built in the 1840s and originally consisted of two houses. It has a long and romantic history and was the home of the first Lord Mayor of Georgetown. Over the years, the property has been visited by many dignitaries, including King Edward VII, who stayed at the house in 1923. Other dignitaries have included President Jimmy Carter, HRH Prince Charles, HRH Prince Andrew, and Mick Jagger. This magnificent home turned hotel offers the tradition and nostalgia of a bygone era, complete with service and comfort in a congenial family atmosphere.

##### **Day 2. Abary River and Georgetown Botanical Gardens**

You will be picked up at your hotel in Georgetown and then we will transfer along the Eastern Coast of Guyana to the Abary River to look for **Blood-colored Woodpecker** and **Rufous Crab Hawk**, the first of the many range-restricted species we will be hoping to find on this tour. The woodpecker is only known from a narrow coastal strip, which runs eastward for just a few hundred miles from Guyana, and finding this species will be one of our main priorities. We will also look for the poorly-known **White-bellied Piculet**, which can be found in this area. An area of mangrove less than 50 kilometers from Georgetown is a good place to find **Rufous Crab Hawk**, a species which has been badly affected by the reduction of this habitat type. This is also a reliable site for the woodpecker and piculet, so we stand an excellent chance of seeing all three species. On our return journey to Georgetown we will visit some mudflats, where we are likely to find a range of waders as well as **Scarlet Ibis**, **Black Skimmer**, **Brown Pelican**, and **Magnificent Frigatebird**. We may also visit a heronry, where **Black-crowned** and **Yellow-crowned Night Herons**, **Little Blue Herons**, and **Western Cattle** and **Snowy Egrets** breed alongside **Snail Kites**.

We will have lunch at a local restaurant and then return to the hotel for a mid-day siesta.

At 15:00hrs we will transfer to the extensive and beautiful Georgetown Botanical Gardens, where, if we are lucky, we will have more views of **Blood-colored Woodpecker**. This astonishingly colorful *Veniliornis* is found only in the Guianas, and even there it is almost completely limited to the narrow coastal plain. The gardens host **Snail Kite**, **Grey Hawk**, **Pearl Kite**, **Carib Grackle**, and **Red-bellied** and **Red-shouldered Macaws**. We will walk on trails in the back on the gardens and may see **Yellow-chinned Spinetail**, **Black-crested Antshrike**, **Silver-beaked Tanager**, **Buff-breasted Wren**, **Golden-spangled Piculet**, and **Ashy-headed Greenlet**. Then we will return to your hotel.

Overnight: Cara Lodge, Georgetown

### Day 3. Transfer to Iwokrama River Lodge, birding the Iwokrama Forest

In the morning we will transfer once more to the Ogle International Airport, where we will board a scheduled flight for a journey over the Demerara and Essequibo Rivers and hundreds of miles of tropical rainforest to Annai.

We will have breakfast and a bathroom break at Rock View Lodge. Then we will transfer by 4x4 vehicles or by truck to the Iwokrama River Lodge.

The Iwokrama rainforest is a vast wilderness of one million acres. This protected area was established in 1996 as the Iwokrama International Centre for Rain Forest Conservation and Development. The Iwokrama Forest is in the heart of one of only four remaining untouched tropical forests of the world - the Guiana Shield of north-eastern South America. Iwokrama was established as a living laboratory for tropical forest management, because the unsustainable utilization of these forests would result in the extinction of half the world's plant and animal species and unknown changes to the global climate.

This is a protected area with a difference – the full involvement of people. Iwokrama is exceptional among conservation organizations because it joins with local people in every aspect of its work. From research to business, Iwokrama ensures local economic and social benefits from forest use and conservation. The forest is in the homeland of the Macushi people, who have lived here and used the forest for thousands of years. People are a veritable part of the ecosystem. The success of Iwokrama relies on the ownership of local people and the combined skills of specialists and communities. Iwokrama does what many international conventions have acknowledged as best practice: It has begun conservation locally and integrated conservation into the national development.

The afternoon is free to explore the trails around the lodge with an Iwokrama ranger. Iwokrama is home to many bird species, including **Capuchinbird, Black Nunbird, Chestnut-rumped Woodcreeper, Amazonian Antshrike, Brown-bellied Antwren, Spot-tailed Antwren, Todd's Antwren, Spotted Puffbird, Green Aracari, Guianan Toucanet, Guianan Red Cotinga, Pompadour Cotinga, Rufous-crowned Elaenia, Bronzy Jacamar, Chestnut and Waved Woodpeckers, Grey Antbird, and Strong-billed Woodcreeper.** Three other Neotropical species in the Iwokrama Forest of high interest are **White-winged Potoo, Rufous Potoo, and Rufous-winged Ground Cuckoo.**

The forest is also home to many mammals, and you may see **Red-rumped Agouti** and various species of monkey, including **Guianan Red Howler Monkey, Guiana Spider Monkey, Brown Weeper Capuchin, and Guianan Brown Capuchin.**

After dark we'll set out on the river in hope of finding one or another of its four species of caiman. We'll listen for night birds such as **Spectacled Owl, White-winged Potoo, Rufous Potoo, Long-tailed Potoo, Zigzag Heron, or Blackish Nightjar.** You may see one or another of the caimans and most certainly snakes, tree frogs, and, if lucky, maybe some mammals – perhaps even a **Puma** or **Capybara.**

Overnight at Iwokrama River Lodge

Iwokrama River Lodge is set overlooking the Essequibo River. Accommodation is offered in eight spacious timber cabins with shingle roofs, bathroom facilities, and verandas overlooking the river. Running water and flush toilets are standard; however, the water is not heated (which is rarely desired in the tropical heat). Electricity is provided by a combination of solar and diesel generator systems, and wireless internet access is provided for free in the main building. Meals are served buffet-style in the Fred Allcock dining hall, where you can mingle with the rangers and the administrative and scientific staff.

#### Day 4. Birding the Iwokrama Forest

Making another early start we will embark on the Essequibo River and circumnavigate Indian House Island, giving us a chance for the dawn chorus on the river, including five species of tinamou, **Marbled Wood-Quail**, **Band-rumped Swift**, **White-banded** and **Black-collared Swallows**, and **Guianan Streaked Antwren**, before returning to the lodge for breakfast. We then set out by boat for half an hour or less to the foot of Turtle Mountain. Here we explore the trails for a few hours. First we will visit Turtle Ponds, where anis, herons, and **Green** and **Green-and-rufous Kingfishers** hunt, and then there will be the arduous climb to an elevation of 900 feet for a view of the forest canopy below and chances of **Green Aracari**, **White Bellbird**, and a fly-by of one of five species of eagles. The trails may reveal **Little Chachalaca**, **Marail Guan**, **Black Curassow**, **Squirrel** and **Black-bellied Cuckoos**, **Long-tailed** and **Reddish Hermits**, **Blue-crowned Motmot**, **Guianan Puffbird**, **Collared Puffbird**, **Pygmy**, **Todd's**, **Spot-tailed**, **White-flanked**, **Grey**, **Long-winged**, **Rufous-bellied**, and **Brown-bellied Antwrens**, **White-lored Tyrannulet**, and **Helmeted Pygmy Tyrant**. On the return trip we will bird as we go and hopefully spot **Caica** and **Blue-headed Parrots**, **Blue-cheeked** and **Mealy Amazons**, **Cocoi Heron**, **Bat Falcon**, **Lined Forest Falcon**, and **Pied Plover**. We then visit Kurupukari Falls to see the Amerindian petroglyphs (dependent on the water level).

Overnight: Iwokrama River Lodge

#### Day 5. Transfer to Atta Rainforest Lodge and the Iwokrama Canopy Walkway

We will transfer before dawn along the road through the heart of the Iwokrama Forest, where there is a good chance to see the elusive **Jaguar**. The Iwokrama forest is rapidly gaining an international reputation for its healthy jaguar populations that seem not to be troubled by the appearance of curious humans. No promises, but many have been lucky! The road also offers excellent birding, including a locality known as Mori Scrub, characterized by an unusual low, sandy forest. This supports an interesting assemblage of bird species, among them **Rufous-crowned Elaenia**, **Black Manakin** and **Red-shouldered Tanager**. We will stop along the road at numerous locations and look for species such as **Guianan Red Cotinga**, **Pompadour Cotinga**, **Blue-backed Tanager**, **White-winged Potoo**, **Olive-green Tyrannulet**, **Rufous-winged Ground Cuckoo**, and **Marail Guan**.

The Iwokrama Canopy Walkway is situated at Mauisparu, near the southern boundary of the Iwokrama Reserve in central Guyana. The walkway has five suspension bridges leading to four platforms, the highest of which is over 30 meters above the ground, and these will allow great looks at a range of canopy species, many of which you would struggle to see well from the forest floor. Among the likely highlights are **Painted**, **Brown-throated**, and **Golden-winged Parakeets**, **Caica Parrot**, **Guianan Puffbird**, **Waved** and **Golden-collared Woodpeckers**, and **Spot-tailed**, **Todd's**, and **Ash-winged Antwrens**. The walkway is also an excellent place to look for various species of cotinga, including the poorly-known and range-restricted **Dusky Purpletuft**, and if there are any suitable fruiting trees nearby you stand a good chance of seeing this bird, as well as the more widespread **Purple-breasted Cotinga**.

Another area where we will want to spend some time is the clearing around the lodge, as this is one of the best places to see another of Guyana's "must see" birds, **Crimson Fruitcrow**. This species is seen here on a reasonably regular basis, as it often comes to feed in some of the nearby trees. The clearing is also a reliable site for **Black Curassow**, as there is a family party which has become habituated to people and regularly passes through the clearing. With reasonable luck you



should be able to add this bird to the impressive list of species you will see around the lodge and walkway.

Overnight: Atta Rainforest Lodge

Atta Rainforest Lodge is 500 meters from the base of the Canopy Walkway, offering comfortable private-room accommodation with en-suite bathrooms, delicious home-cooked meals, and traditional Amerindian hospitality. The lodge is surrounded by tropical rainforest, which offers a complete immersion in the rainforest experience. The main building is open-sided with views across the gardens to the towering forest on all sides and houses the bar, dining area, and kitchen.

### Day 6. Birding the Iwokrama Canopy Walkway and the Iwokrama Forest

Before dawn we will return to the vantage point of 35 meters up in the canopy, where we can bird easily and may see **Rufous-throated Sapphire**, **Green Aracari**, **Pygmy Antwren**, and **Guianan Streaked Antwren**. With some luck **Guianan Toucanet**, **Pompadour Cotinga**, **Buff-cheeked Greenlet**, and a host of crown specialists may come within our view. From this tree top vantage you can sometimes see **Guianan Red Howler Monkeys** and **Guiana Spider Monkeys**.

Apart from the Iwokrama Canopy Walkway itself you can enjoy wildlife and birdwatching walks on the trails around the area. For those interested in botany many of the trails have the key trees species marked. Many bird species, stunning insects, noisy amphibians, and playful primates make the surrounding forest their home, and you can be fairly certain to spot some extraordinary wildlife without even trying too hard. Deer and agouti are also regular visitors to the lodge. Serious birders will want to search the undergrowth for the rarely-seen **Rufous-winged Ground Cuckoo**.

As dark falls on the canopy walkway you may see **White-winged Potoo**. Night walks are also possible, and something interesting or new always seems to pop onto the scene, including the occasional **Jaguar** along the transnational road near the lodge.

Overnight: Atta Rainforest Lodge

### Day 7. Transfer to Surama Eco-Lodge

Again we will welcome the dawn chorus from the canopy walkway. **Short-tailed Nighthawks** settle in for the day, swifts take to the sky, **White throated** and **Channel-billed Toucans** yodel, and **Barred Forest Falcons** call. We will bird from the mid and upper canopy on the walkway, as flocks travel past, and look for **Paradise Jacamar**, **Guianan Puffbird**, **Yellow-throated Woodpecker**, and **Black-tailed** and **Black-crowned Tityras**. Or you can bird along the jungle trails, where antbird flocks include **White-plumed Antbird**, **Spot-winged Antbird**, **Ferruginous-backed Antbird**, **Long-billed Antwren**, **McConnell's Flycatcher**, **Grey-crowned Flatbill**, **Plain Xenops**, and **Wedge-billed Woodcreeper**.

We'll return to the lodge for breakfast before departure.

Our transfer from Atta Rainforest Lodge will proceed by 4x4 vehicle or 4x4 Bedford Truck (converted with forward facing seats and canopy) through the rainforest Corkwood area in the Iwokrama Forest. Here there is a comparatively short trail, which may allow us to hopefully see the amazingly brilliant **Guianan Cock-of-the-rock**. This trail is through interesting forest, and the guides can show the uses of the plants.

Then, if it is active, we may be able to visit a nearby **Harpy Eagle** nest. The nest itself is located in a huge emergent tree, and if we are extremely fortunate we may see one of the adult birds

bringing a sloth or monkey to the nest to feed their chick. The trek into the nest site is about an hour each way on a reasonable trail.

We will then continue on to the Amerindian community at Surama, located in the heart of Guyana. The village is set in five square miles of savanna, which is ringed by the forest-covered Pakaraima Mountains. Surama's inhabitants are mainly from the Macushi tribe and still faithfully observe many of the traditional practices of their forebears.

This isolated and idyllic location offers an escape from the concrete jungle to a serene and peaceful coexistence with nature. The guides have lived their entire lives in the rainforest and have an incredible understanding of nature and how to utilize its resources.

On arrival in Surama you will receive a warm welcome from local staff and settle into your accommodation at the Surama Eco-Lodge. A local guide will escort you for a short walk on trails to observe the forest and birdlife. As the afternoon cools your guide will take you on a tour of the village. You'll visit the local school, medical centre, and church, along with some of the village houses. Tonight enjoy an educational walk to observe wildlife and experience the mystique of the forest after dark.

Overnight: Surama Eco-Lodge

At Surama Eco-Lodge you will be treated to authentic Macushi hospitality, as if you were a guest in one of their homes. Lodging is provided in one of four traditional 'benab' buildings or the new cabin-lodge. All have attached bathrooms with running (cold) water and flush toilets. The buildings are simple, comfortable, and clean. Home-cooked meals are served in the central benab, and tea/coffee service is available around the clock. Electricity is solar-powered with a limited number of outlets provided in the central building for recharging cameras and other gear. Communication with the outside world is limited to VHF radio; however, a primitive internet connection is sometimes available in the village office, a 40 minute walk from the lodge. This is a place for getting away, not for modern conveniences!

### Day 8. Birding the Surama area

This morning we will attempt to locate another of the special birds which can be found around Surama, Rufous-winged Ground Cuckoo. While *Neomorphus* ground cuckoos are undoubtedly among the toughest genus of birds to locate anywhere in the Neotropics, Surama offers one of the best-known chances for seeing **Rufous-winged Ground Cuckoo**, and in order to maximize the odds of finding one we will use expert local guides to assist us. We will, however, still count ourselves extremely fortunate if we succeed in getting good looks at this extremely elusive species.

Although the Harpy Eagle and Rufous-winged Ground Cuckoo may be the two star attractions at Surama, there are plenty of other species to look for, and during our stay we hope to encounter **Red-legged Tinamou, Painted Parakeet, Dusky Parrot, Lilac-tailed Parrotlet, Pale-tailed Barbthroat, Rufous-throated Sapphire, Great and Paradise Jacamars, Guianan Puffbird, Black-spotted Barbet, Golden-spangled Piculet, Chestnut-rumped Woodcreeper, Northern Slaty Antshrike, Rufous-bellied, Spot-tailed and Todd's Antwrens, Dusky, Guianan Warbling, White-browed, White-bellied, Ferruginous-backed, and Rufous-throated Antbirds, Helmeted Pygmy Tyrant, Lemon-chested and Ashy-headed Greenlets, and Finsch's Euphonia**. We also plan to do some night birding and hope to locate **Tawny-bellied Screech Owl** as well as **Tropical Screech Owl, Lesser Nighthawk, White-tailed Nightjar**, and both **Great and Common Potoos**.

Overnight: Surama Eco-Lodge

**Day 9. Transfer to the Karanambu Lodge**

We will enjoy dawn breaking across the rainforest. You can choose from a forest walk to look for wildlife and birds or relaxation around the lodge before breakfast and departure.

If **Guianan Cock-of-the-rock** has not been seen earlier in the trip, then en route an **optional** trip to Wowetta, a Macushi Amerindian community, is available (please see rates below).

From Ginep Landing we take a boat trip on the Rupununi River to Karanambu Lodge. Depending on the river level, this trip offers an excellent opportunity to look for **Giant Otters**, as there are several family groups living along this stretch of the Rupununi River.

Karanambu, a 110-square-mile former cattle ranch, is the home of Diane McTurk, conservationist and world-renowned expert on giant otters. It is located in the North Rupununi, a region of southwestern Guyana known for its expansive wetlands and savanna as well as its biological and cultural diversity. Settled in 1927 by Tiny McTurk, Karanambu was once a working cattle ranch and balatá collection station. It is now an eco-tourist destination known as The Karanambu Lodge. Karanambu encompasses savanna, marshy ponds, riparian forest, and a 30-mile stretch of the Rupununi River.

The North Rupununi of southern Guyana is an extraordinary natural and pristine area. The landscape is an integration of four ecosystem types: wetlands, savannas, rivers, and forests. The number of species found here is much higher than expected given its size. There are at least 600 species of fish, along with 600 species of birds, and over 200 species of mammals. Karanambu is located roughly in the middle of this beautiful and fascinating biological hotspot. Endangered species like **Giant Otter**, **Black Caiman**, **Jaguar**, **Giant Anteater**, and **Arapaima** – all apex predators – are abundant. The seasonally-flooded savannas and forests also draw substantial fish migrations. There may be as many as 700 species of fish at Karanambu – more than anywhere else on earth.

This region is rich in history, too. The North Rupununi is the homeland of the Macushi and earlier peoples dating back almost 7,000 years. Village neighbors include the Macushi villages of Kwaimatta, Massara, Yupukari, Toka, and Simoni. Several prominent explorers and naturalists have written about their experiences here, including Robert and Richard Schomburgk, Charles Waterton, Evelyn Waugh, Gerald Durrell, and David Attenborough. Lake Amuku, not far from Karanambu, was once considered by Sir Walter Raleigh, and later by Alexander von Humboldt and others, to be the location of Lake Parime, on whose banks the golden city of “El Dorado” was said to be located.

The romance of the Rupununi pioneers lives on at Karanambu. The compound has the flavor of an Amerindian village. Because of the remoteness of Karanambu staff live on site, and the children can be seen and heard on the weekends and holidays, when they come “home” from schools in the nearby villages. This feeling of community is further enhanced by the accommodations, which are traditionally-made clay brick cabins.

With both the river and the savannas close at hand there is a wide variety of activities to be enjoyed at Karanambu. You are free to determine what you want to do based on your interests, the time of year, and whether the guides have found anything especially unique and interesting to see. Two guided excursions are provided each day – one early in the morning and another late in the afternoon and into the evening. As well as being the coolest times to be out, these are usually the best times to see the different birds and animals. Trips may be on the river by boat, on the savannas by Land Rover, or along forest trails on foot to the different ponds in the area.



Late in the afternoon we will travel by boat to look for wild giant otters and, as dusk falls to the ponds, to see the giant *Victoria amazonica* water lily bloom. On the return trip we will spotlight for black caiman, birds, and creatures of the night.

Overnight: Karanambu Lodge

Guest accommodation at Karanambu Lodge includes five Amerindian-style clay-brick thatched huts with veranda with hammocks, twin beds, and an attached washroom featuring a cool shower and flushing toilet. Two of the guest rooms are connected by a shared washroom. Solar panels provide limited electricity, and wireless internet is available across the central part of the grounds for most of the day.

### Day 10. Birding at Karanambu

Birding from daybreak to nightfall or later, we'll devote this entire day to exploring Karanambu and its varied habitats, traveling by boat to certain localities up- and downstream and by Land Rover to one or another forest patch. Grasslands host **Double-striped Thick-knee**, **Bi-colored Wren**, and **Bearded Tachuri**, while forest patches host **Ferruginous Pygmy Owl**, **Violaceous Trogon**, **Blue Ground-Dove**, **Plain-crowned Spinetail**, and **Great Antshrike**. The river is home to **Wood Stork**, **White faced** and **Black-bellied Whistling Ducks**, **Stripe-backed Bittern**, and **Pied Plover**. As we move around we may see **Least Grebe**, **South American Snipe**, **Rufous-throated Sapphire**, **Yellow Tyrannulet**, **Cliff Flycatcher**, and **Ruddy-breasted Seedeater**. We will also look for **Giant Anteater**.

Overnight: Karanambu Lodge

### Day 11. Flight to Georgetown, optional tour to the Demerara River

In the event you did not see a **Giant Anteater** the previous day, there is time to travel out to search the savanna again. We'll return to the lodge for breakfast before departure.

We will transfer to the Karanambu Airstrip to board a scheduled flight for a journey over the Demerara and Essequibo Rivers and hundreds of miles of tropical rainforest to land at Ogle Airport, from where we will transfer to Georgetown.

This afternoon we will have an **optional tour** to the Demerara River, where we will take a boat to see **Scarlet Ibis**. After this we will revisit the Georgetown Botanical Gardens and then return to the hotel.

Overnight: Cara Lodge, Georgetown

### Day 12. Departure

After breakfast you will be transferred to Georgetown's Cheddi Jagan International Airport for your flight home.

### Extension for Sun Parakeet and Red Siskin

#### Itinerary (5 days/4 nights)

#### Day 1 (Day 11). Sun Parakeet at Karasabi

This morning we will undertake the arduous drive from Karanambu towards Karasabi over rough roads, passing across the Rupununi Savannah that stretches across the central ranges of Guyana. Here **Apomado Falcon** hunts over the expansive plains and grasslands and **Stripe-tailed Yellow Finch** mixes with a variety of **Seedeaters** including **Grey**, **Plumbeous**, **Yellow-bellied**,

and **Ruddy-breasted**. Sightings of **Savanna** and **White-tailed Hawks** will see us through the Pakaraima Mountains and finally to the scattered village of Karasabi, where the residents are exceptionally friendly.

We will take time to visit with some of the locals and secure final permissions, since there are very few visitors to this region and we want to secure future relations and conservation efforts because these people ultimately control the fate of the Sun Parakeet.

From here we will embark on a boat journey between the scenic mountains that border Guyana, blanketed with deciduous hardwoods. This remote area is the only known site and possibly the only place left on earth where the critically endangered **Sun Parakeet** still survives in the wild. This vivid species once ranged widely across Suriname into northern Brazil, but after years of feverish illegal trapping, including rumors of entire planes jammed full with thousands of ill-fated birds, the world population now hangs in the balance with less than two hundred individuals thought to be remaining. We stand a very high likelihood of encountering these overpoweringly colorful parakeets as they fly through the valley and feed on the fruits of surrounding trees. The intense combination of yellow and red shared with the sheer sensation of watching one of the rarest and most beautiful birds on earth is an incredible experience that we will never forget.

Other more widespread birds we might encounter here include **Yellow-olive Flatbill**, **Streaked Flycatcher**, **Hooded Tanager**, **Small-billed Elaenia**, **Brown-crested Flycatcher**, **Red-eyed Vireo**, **Hepatic Tanager**, and **Green-rumped Parrotlet**.

After several hours on the river we will return to the landing and then drive to Lethem for overnight.

Overnight: Ori Hotel, Lethem

Ori Hotel provides the perfect place to rest and relax while in Lethem, whether in their three self-contained cabins or ten master rooms that boast air conditioning, en suite bathroom, and wi-fi access along with great views of Lethem. Their staff will make you feel like part of the family, with your security and comfort their number one priority. Ori Hotel also has a restaurant that prepares meals influenced by the blend of cultures represented in Lethem; their Tambaqui fish curry is famous.

## **Day 2 (Day 12). Transfer to Dadanawa Ranch, birding Towa Towan**

After breakfast we travel by 4x4 toward Dadanawa Ranch, birding on the way. We should see a variety of raptors and other open-country birds.

After establishing ourselves at Dadanawa Ranch we'll travel eastward and pass several shallow ponds before reaching Towa Towan, a high, rounded outcrop of blackened granite with a **Jabiru** nest near the summit and a small pond at the base surrounded by dense mucca mucca, a giant arum. We'll look for a number of flycatchers in surrounding *Curatella* glades, and in the late afternoon we'll hope to see nighthawks on the wing and witness the roosting of **Yellow-crowned Parrots**.

Overnight: Dadanawa Ranch

Dadanawa Ranch consists of a cluster of raised wooden buildings surmounted by a towering Brazil nut tree and more or less surrounded by low gallery forest along the Rupununi River.

### Day 3 (Day 13). Search for the Red Siskin

Another early start awaits us as we will be traveling to look for another endangered bird, **Red Siskin**. It was thought nearly extinct in Columbia and Venezuela because of 150 years of trapping for the pet trade, with only a few hundred left in isolated patches. That was until April 2000, when a team from the University of Kansas and the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History discovered a population of several thousand, for the first time in Guyana. There is an active local conservation society, which is studying and protecting the birds, and with their assistance we hope to get good looks at this stunning species.

Depending on how long our search for the Red Siskin takes, there should be time for some further birding in the area, although an alternative option is to visit some forested hills on the edge of the Kanaku Mountain range. We should see a variety of raptors and other open-country birds like **White-throated Kingbird**, **Red-shouldered Macaw**, and **Yellowish Pipit**.

In the afternoon we will transfer back to Lethem.

Overnight: Ori Hotel, Lethem

### Day 4 (Day 14). Birding the Ireng River

Early in the morning we will be joined by Jeremy Melville and team in Lethem and transfer by vehicle to the Ireng River. Today we will be turning our attention to two birds which apparently always have had restricted ranges, **Hoary-throated Spinetail** and **Rio Branco Antbird**. Both are only found in gallery forest along the Rio Branco and its main tributaries (all of which ultimately flow into the Amazon), and recent agricultural changes have seriously reduced the amount of available habitat for both birds. As a result the spinetail is now classified as endangered, with the antbird listed as near-threatened. To reach suitable habitat we will travel by 4x4.

During the trip we are likely to encounter species such as **Capped Heron**, **Muscovy Duck**, **Pale-legged Hornero**, and various hirundines while traveling. While the habitat needs of the antbird and spinetail are seemingly slightly different (the antbird prefers taller trees with vine tangles, while the spinetail is possibly a little more tolerant of some human disturbance), they can both be found along a comparatively short stretch of the Ireng River.

We will return to Lethem in time for an early afternoon flight back to Ogle, from where we will transfer to Georgetown.

This afternoon we will have an **optional tour** to the Demerara River, where we will take a boat to see **Scarlet Ibis**. After this we will revisit the Georgetown Botanical Gardens and then return to the hotel.

Overnight: Cara Lodge, Georgetown

### Day 5 (Day 15). Departure

After breakfast you will be transferred to Georgetown's Cheddi Jagan International Airport for your flight home.

*Please note that the itinerary 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.*

**Pre-tour****Duration:** 2 days**Limit:** 6 – 8**Date:** 25 – 26 January 2020**Start:** Georgetown**End:** Georgetown**Price:** US\$910 per person sharing**Single supplement:** US\$175**Main tour****Duration:** 12 days**Limit:** 6 – 8**Date:** 26 January – 6 February 2020**Start:** Georgetown**End:** Georgetown**Price:** US\$5920 per person sharing**Single supplement:** US\$1170**Optional trip at Wowetta** US\$243 (minimum 6 participants, or a surcharge)**Optional trip to Demerara River and Georgetown Botanical Gardens** US\$274**Extension****Duration:** 5 days**Limit:** 6 – 8**Date:** 5 – 9 February 2020**Start:** The Karanambu Lodge**End:** Georgetown**Price:** US\$1731 per person sharing**Single supplement:** US\$390**Optional trip to Demerara River and Georgetown Botanical Gardens** US\$274**Price includes:**Domestic flights in Guyana

Airport transfers

Double or twin accommodation

Full board (except where indicated below)

All road and river transfers

Activities as described

International and local guides

VAT

Kaieteur National Park entrance fee

Iwokrama Forest user fee

Iwokrama Canopy Walkway fee

Surama Village head tax

**Price excludes:**

Items of a personal nature  
Alcoholic drinks  
Departure tax  
International flights  
Visa  
Optional tours (trips to Woumetta and Demerara River and Botanical Gardens)  
Dinner on day 1 and day 2 (pre-tour)

### **Disclaimers**

#### **Body weight:**

Please be advised that all tour operators and customers must provide us with body weights of passengers booked to travel on our tour to Guyana for all internal flights. Failure to provide us with this information or incorrect information can cause delays to flights and inconvenience to other passengers, and in some cases either passengers and/or luggage may be taken off the flight. To ensure a holiday that is enjoyable and hassle-free, it is imperative that passengers provide us with this information. We appreciate that some people are sensitive about providing their body weight, but all customers and their baggage are weighed at check-in. This is procedure by the airline to ensure that the weight of the load is within the payload limit for the aircraft, and neither they nor Birding Ecotours will compromise on safety. All passengers are subject to removal of themselves or luggage from the flight if they are over the weight they provided and/or over the baggage allowance. Passengers are advised to provide a body weight with clothing similar to that which they would expect to travel in on the flight. Birding Ecotours cannot be held responsible for any passenger denied boarding or luggage not transported if they are over the weight provided. Weights supplied are provided to the airline in advance to ensure the flight is within the allowable payload.

#### **Condition restraints:**

You have selected a tour that is, in part, in remote areas. This adds to the adventure and opportunity to enjoy a true nature experience. However, due to the nature of the terrain, weather, road conditions, and other elements beyond our control some elements of the tours may have to be altered. The times of some activities may need to change or an activity might even be canceled due to current conditions. If an activity is canceled it will be replaced with an alternative activity that is more appropriate for the conditions. Advance notice will be given for any changes where possible, although at times changes may have to be made while the tour is in progress.

#### **Wildlife sightings:**

With any trip involving wildlife it is impossible to guarantee a sighting, but each trip is designed around known habitats. We will make every effort to ensure a sighting but cannot be held responsible if no sighting is made due to the wildlife itself, the weather, or any other elements beyond our control.