



JAMAICA AT ITS BEST

23 - 29 MARCH 2021



Red-billed Streamertail, also known as the 'doctorbird', is one of the many sought-after birds to be found in Jamaica.

Birding Ecotours invite you to explore the island nation of Jamaica – an extraordinary country in the heart of the Caribbean Sea. Although Jamaica may be famous mainly for its beautiful tropical shores lined with popular reefs, exclusive beach resorts, Rastafarian culture together with its influential reggae music, Jamaica Blue Mountain Coffee, and early James Bond adventures, this island is also home to 30 endemic bird species along with a good number of Caribbean specialties shared only with its neighboring islands in the Greater Antilles. Being the third-largest island in the Caribbean, the country hosts a wide array of habitats, and our time on this tour will be spent exploring various forested mountain ranges, lush lowland coastal bush, and a range of dams, wetlands, and ocean-based shore birding, giving us what is sure to be some of the finest birding and birding experiences in the entire Caribbean.

Our well-designed week-long tour (7 days) will give you a real chance to see all Jamaican endemics, including the gorgeous **Red-billed Streamertail** (known locally as the doctorbird), **Black-tailed Streamertail**, **Crested Quail-Dove**, **Jamaican Tody**, **Jamaican Owl**, and **Jamaican Blackbird** among others, along with all the regional specialties in a comfortable time frame without rushing the trip. We will also make a special effort to look for **White-tailed Tropicbird** while on the island.



The beautiful White-tailed Tropicbird can be seen in Jamaica.

This trip can easily be combined with our two preceding Caribbean tours, **Cuba: Great Caribbean Birding and Endemics** followed by **Complete Dominican Republic**, for a very comprehensive Caribbean birding experience.

Itinerary (7 days/6 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Jamaica

Today is your arrival day, and you can arrive at your leisure in Kingston, Jamaica. Following your arrival we will transfer from the capital city to our comfortable lodge situated on the north of the island, where we will be based for the duration of the trip. If time permits we will embark on a birding walk around the lodge, getting familiar with Caribbean birds and perhaps seeing our first endemics such as **Jamaican Mango** and **Orangequit**.

Overnight: Green Castle Estate

Day 2. Birding Green Castle and surroundings

Today will be an introductory day, as we spend the duration of the day birding around Green Castle. A number of trails dot the large, largely forested property, and we'll be sure to explore a number of them as we continue on our quest to find all the endemics and regional specialties. In addition to the species mentioned for day one above we will also be on the lookout for **White-crowned Pigeon**, **Caribbean Dove**, **Zenaida Dove**, **Common Ground Dove**, **Yellow-billed Amazon**, **Olive-throated Parakeet**, **Red-billed Streamertail**, **Jamaican Mango**, **Vervain Hummingbird**, **Mangrove Cuckoo**, **Antillean Palm Swift**, **Jamaican Tody**, **Jamaican Woodpecker**, **Sad and Rufous-tailed Flycatchers**, **Loggerhead Kingbird**, **Grey Kingbird**, **Jamaican Vireo**, **Jamaican Oriole**, **White-chinned Thrush**, **Greater Antillean Grackle**, and **Yellow-shouldered Grassquit** among others.



Jamaican Mango (photo Alan van Norman) is one of the many endemics we will look for.

In addition to forests there are a few ponds scattered about the property along with a much larger reservoir. Wetland species for which we'll keep an eye out include **West Indian Whistling Duck**, **Masked Duck**, **Caribbean Coot**, and **Purple Gallinule**.

Overnight: Green Castle Estate

Day 3. Birding the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park

With an early departure from our lodge we will embark on a full-day trip deep into the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, focusing on birding the Hardwar Gap along with Silver Hill Gap and Cascade Falls. These locations all merge seamlessly into each other along a rugged mountain road. At approximately 1200 meters (3937 feet) above sea level all these areas on the cool western slopes of the Blue Mountains within the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park are classified as an Important Bird Area by BirdLife International. An impressive species list has been recorded in this area, including hard-to-find species such as **Jamaican Blackbird**, **Crested Quail-Dove**, and **Jamaican Lizard Cuckoo**. Also present are **Chestnut-bellied Cuckoo**, **Blue Mountain Vireo**, **Jamaican Vireo**, **Arrowhead Warbler**, **Jamaican Elaenia**, **Greater Antillean Elaenia**, **Jamaican Tody**, **Orangequit**, **Jamaican Spindalis**, **Jamaican Pewee**, **Jamaican Woodpecker**, **Rufous-tailed Flycatcher**, **Rufous-throated Solitaire**, **Yellow-shouldered Grassquit**, **White-chinned Thrush**, **White-eyed Thrush**, **Red-billed Streamertail**, **White-collared Swift**, **American Black Swift**, **Ring-tailed Pigeon**, **Jamaican Euphonia**, and **Jamaican Becard**.



One of the sought-after endemics of the island: Jamaican Tody (photo Alan van Norman)

Numerous migrant warblers and other common resident species can be found in these mountains as well. Throughout the day we may be able to find as many as 24 of the 30 Jamaican endemics. In the late afternoon we will transfer back to our lodge after a successful day.

Overnight: Green Castle Estate

Day 4. White-tailed Tropicbird trip and birding Green Castle

We have a morning excursion set aside to admire a **White-tailed Tropicbird** colony. These glorious birds breed alongside the rocky cliffs of the shoreline in a specific part of the island, and we will spend a while watching these elegant birds before returning back to Green Castle. Our afternoon will be spent exploring further sections/trails of the Green Castle property, searching for yet more species and trying for better views of some of the species seen before. Aside from the species mentioned on days one and two, quite a few of the species mentioned for day three are possible as well. In addition we also have the option of doing some night-time birding after dinner, searching for **Jamaican Owl**, **Northern Potoo**, and the local subspecies of **American Barn Owl**.

Overnight: Green Castle Estate



*At night we will search for **Northern Potoo** (photo Alan van Norman).*

Day 5. Birding the Ecclesdown Road

Today we will have an early departure from our lodge once more – this time to explore the Ecclesdown Road. This is arguably one of the country's most well-known birding sites, a seldom-used road that travels along the foothills of the John Crow Mountains for approximately 18 kilometers (11 miles). It is entirely flat and passes through secondary closed and open forests as well as small patches of farmland. We will spend the day slowly birding this area and will make

our way back to our lodge in the afternoon following another great day. Today we have chances for almost all of the Jamaican endemics along with many of the specialties here as well, and we will likely devote our time to the species we still need. This area is a stronghold, however, of **Yellow-billed** and **Black-billed Amazons** as well as **Jamaican Crow**, **Ring-tailed Pigeon**, **Crested Quail-Dove**, **Jamaican Blackbird**, and **Black-billed Streamertail**, all of which feature as some of our main target birds.

Overnight: Green Castle Estate

Day 6. Birding Green Castle Estate, Hardwar Gap or Ecclesdown Road

Our sixth day in Jamaica will be kept flexible, and we have a wide variety of options available to us. Should we have missed any notable species in the Blue or John Crow Mountains (Hardwar Gap) or on the Ecclesdown Road we will undertake a trip into the area to try once more. We can continue exploring the vast number of trails and natural vegetation present at Green Castle – nearly all of the country’s endemics have been recorded on the property, and time here will be put to good use with lots of excellent birds possible. Despite our long time here we are unlikely to have explored the entirety of the estate and all it has to offer. It will also be possible for us to arrange a cultural trip to experience a taste of what this lively Caribbean nation has to offer, should this interest you.

Overnight: Green Castle Estate

Day 7. Departure from Kingston

Following a spectacular tour, taking in the key birding sites and targeting all the possible specials, which with a bit of luck we will have all seen, this tour will conclude in the morning following breakfast, when we’ll transfer to Kingston, and home from there. Please note, however, that we ask if you can try to book afternoon flights out of Kingston to allow for necessary travel time and airport check-in formalities. If needed we can also visit the Hope Botanical Gardens in Kingston for some last Jamaican birding before departing.

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.

Duration:	7 days/6 nights
Limit:	4 - 8
Date:	23 – 29 March 2021
Start:	Kingston, Jamaica
End:	Kingston, Jamaica
Price:	US\$3,477 2021

Single supplement: US\$534 2021

Price includes:

Accommodation
Meals (from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 7)
Bottled water
Ground transportation from landing to departure
Guide fees
Entrance/admission fees

Price excludes:

All flights
Any drinks other than bottled water
Personal insurance
Items of a personal nature, e.g., laundry, gifts, etc.
Visa fees