



**JAMAICA BIRDING TOUR: ISLAND
ENDEMIC IN THE HEART OF THE
CARIBBEAN**

22 - 28 MARCH 2022

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The endemic Jamaican Tody is one of our special targets on this trip.

Birding Ecotours invites you to explore the island nation of Jamaica, an extraordinary country in the heart of the Caribbean Sea. Jamaica is famous for its beautiful tropical shores lined with coral reefs, exclusive beach resorts, Rastafarian culture, reggae music, Jamaica Blue Mountain Coffee and early James Bond adventures. Importantly for us, this island is also home to 30 endemic bird species, along with a good number of Caribbean specials shared only with neighboring islands in the Greater Antilles.

Being the third-largest island in the Caribbean, Jamaica hosts a wide array of habitats. On this tour we will explore various forested mountain ranges, lush lowland coastal bush, a number of wetlands and coastal shores, giving us what are sure to be some of the finest birding experiences in the entire Caribbean. Our week-long tour will give you a realistic chance of seeing all of Jamaica's bird endemics, some of which include the gorgeous **Red-billed Streamertail** (known locally as the doctor bird), **Jamaican Mango**, **Crested Quail-Dove**, **Jamaican Tody**, **Jamaican Owl** and **Jamaican Blackbird**, along with all the regional specials, in a comfortable time frame without rushing the trip. We will also make a special effort to look for **White-tailed Tropicbird**, a gorgeous seabird, while on the island.



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

This tour begins in the beautiful city of Montego Bay with a transfer to the Green Castle Estate, our lodge for the duration of the trip. The grounds here are large and expansive, offering amazing opportunities for birding. With several day trips planned to explore the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park and Ecclesdown Road, this tour is perfect for a great week of birding, targeting all of Jamaica's endemic bird species.

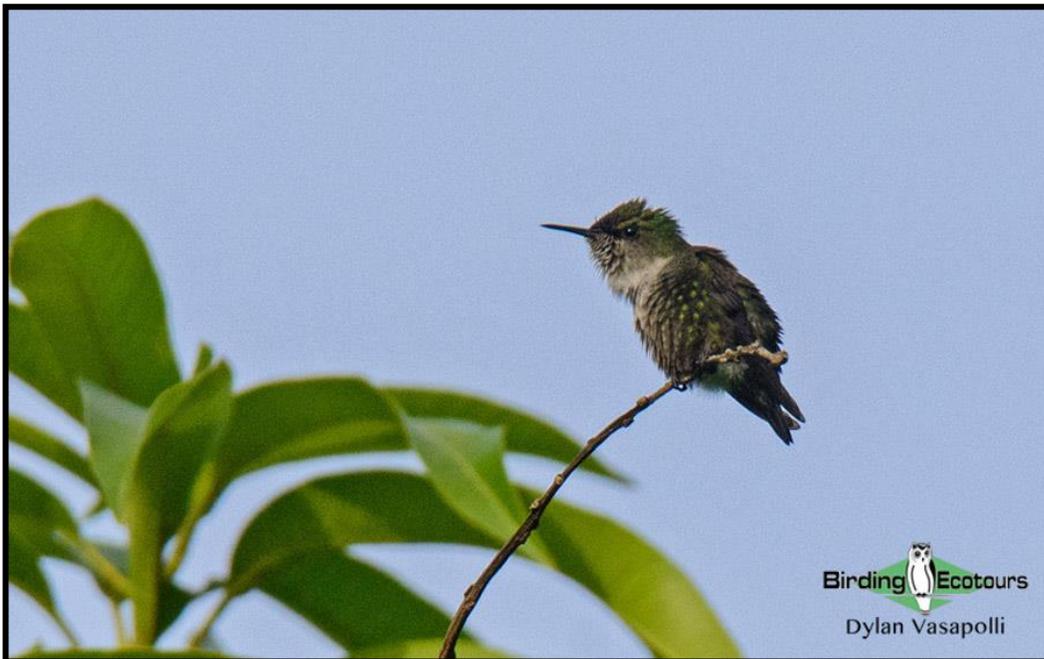
This trip can easily be combined with our preceding **Cuba: Endemics and Culture in Paradise** tour and our **Complete Dominican Republic** tour for a comprehensive birding experience in the Caribbean.

Itinerary (7 days/6 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Jamaica

Today is your arrival day (we suggest arriving before 3pm as we have a roughly 2.5-hour drive to our accommodation) and you can arrive at your leisure in Montego Bay, Jamaica. From the airport, we will transfer from the well-known resort town to our comfortable lodge situated in the northeast 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



The tiny Vervain Hummingbird should be seen on this tour.

Day 2. Birding Green Castle and surroundings

Today will be an introductory day, as we spend the duration of our time birding around our very birdy lodge acquainting ourselves with the local avifauna. A number of trails dot the expansive, largely forested property and we'll be sure to explore a number of them as we search for all the endemics and regional specials. In addition to the species mentioned for Day 1 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 and Grey Kingbird, Jamaican Vireo, Jamaican Oriole, White-chinned Thrush, Greater Antillean Grackle and Yellow-shouldered Grassquit among others.

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

Overnight: Green Castle Estate



Antillean Palm Swift can be seen around 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 3,937 feet (1,200 meters) 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.

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



*Migrant warblers such as this **Prairie Warbler** may be seen on their wintering grounds.*

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 more special birds of Jamaica and trying for better views of some of the species seen before. Aside from the species mentioned on Days 1 and 2, quite a few of the birds mentioned for Day 3 are possible as well. In addition, there is also the chance for some optional night-time birding after dinner, searching for **Jamaican Owl, Northern Potoo** and the local subspecies of **American Barn Owl**.

Overnight: Green Castle Estate

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 eleven miles (18 kilometers). 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 other specials as well and we will likely devote our time to the species we still need. This area is a stronghold for **Yellow-billed** and **Black-billed Amazons** (Parrots) 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



*The **Red-billed Streamertail** is often referred to as the “doctor bird” by locals and is Jamaica’s national bird.*

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 birds in the Blue or John Crow Mountains (Hardwar Gap) or on the Ecclesdown Road, we will undertake a trip into these areas to try once more. Or 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 (please note this may require additional costs).

Overnight: Green Castle Estate

Day 7. Departure from Montego Bay

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 Montego Bay where we fly home from. Please note, we ask if you can try to book afternoon or evening flights out of Montego Bay to allow for necessary travel time (at least 2.5 hours to the airport) and flight check-in formalities. If time allows, we can also visit the Cockpit Country and Rocklands Sanctuary for some final Jamaican birding before departing.

Don't forget to check out our **Cuba: Great Caribbean Birding and Endemics** tour and **Complete Dominican Republic** tour to extend your amazing Caribbean birding experience!

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. In addition, we sometimes have to use a different international guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling.

Duration:	7 days
Group Size:	4 – 8
Dates:	22 – 28 March 2022 22 – 28 March 2023
Start:	Montego Bay
End:	Montego Bay
Prices:	US\$3,530 per person sharing, assuming 4-8 participants (2022) US\$3,610 per person sharing, assuming 4-8 participants (2023)
Single supplements:	US\$390 (2022) US\$400 (2023)

Price includes:

Meals/Water
Accommodation
Transport
Guiding fees

Price excludes:

Flights

Personal insurance

Alcoholic beverages

Gratuities (please see our [tipping guidelines blog](#))

Laundry service

Personal expenses such as gifts

Potential optional cultural tour on Day 6