

Birding Ecotours



**GUYANA: LOST WORLD – GUIANA SHIELD SPECIALISTS
AND SUN PARAKEET**

21 JANUARY – 03 FEBRUARY 2024



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

Guyana conjures up a vision of one of the last fantastic places on earth that still holds incredible landscapes covered by thousands of miles of untouched rainforest, pristine forest rivers, lakes with giant water lilies, rolling grassland and savannas, and magnificent, breathtaking waterfalls. Guyana gives visitors the sensation of being in a lost world.

This relatively small country found in northeast South America has become a mandatory destination for adventurous birders as it includes many species that are hard to find in adjacent South American countries, such as **Capuchinbird**, **Black Nunbird**, **Crimson Fruiterow**, **Blood-colored Woodpecker**, **Waved Woodpecker**, **Black Curassow**, **Crestless Curassow**, **Bearded Tachuri**, **Red-fan Parrot**, and **Rufous** and **White-winged Potoos**. It also offers great chances for **Harpy Eagle** if there are active nests in the area; with the help of our Birding Ecotours leaders and local guides we will do the best to find this most-wanted bird. In addition Guyana offers a unique set of species called Guiana Shield specialists, including **Guianan Toucanet**, **Guianan Trogon**, **Guianan Red Cotinga**, **Guianan Streaked Antwren**, and **Guianan Puffbird**, and there are good chances for some forest species including **White-plumed Antbird**, **Rufous-throated Antbird**, and with luck **Rufous-winged Ground Cuckoo**.



*The distinctive **Black Curassow** will be searched for at Atta Rainforest Lodge (John Christian).*

Our 14-day tour is designed to explore the best that the country has to offer to birders in two parts. The first part includes exploring the Kaieteur Falls and the lek of the gorgeous **Guianan Cock-of-the-rock**, the coast of Georgetown looking for the localized **Rufous Crab Hawk** and **Scarlet Ibis**, and the rainforests of Iwokrama River Lodge, Atta Rainforest Lodge with the magnificent Iwokrama Canopy Walkway, and Surama Eco-Lodge. The second part of the trip is focused on long 4x4 drives exploring remote Amerindian communities in search of two localized, endangered, and most-wanted species, **Sun Parakeet** and **Red Siskin**. We will make all possible efforts to provide you with these unique species as well as with the localized **Rio Branco Antbird** and **Hoary-throated Spinetail**.

Finally, Guyana also offers visitors good chances to encounter interesting wildlife, and sightings of **Giant Otter**, **Giant Anteater**, and even **Puma** and **Jaguar** are not uncommon in this fantastic country.



*We may get lucky with a **Puma** sighting (John Christian)!*

Itinerary (14 days/13 nights)

Day 1. Arrival at Georgetown and transfer to the hotel

You will arrive at Cheddi Jagan International Airport, located 25 miles south of the capital city, Georgetown, meet our local representative, and transfer to the hotel. Dinner is on your own account,

Overnight: [Cara Lodge, Georgetown](#)

Day 2. Mahaica River, Mudflats and Georgetown Botanical Gardens

Today we will have an early start to head to the Atlantic coast and check the mudflats for the beautiful **Scarlet Ibis**. We will continue towards the village of Mahaica, where we will take a boat trip along the Mahaica River. Among our targets will be Guyana's national bird, the bizarre and distinctive **Hoatzin**. We will also look for a host of other species, including **Rufous Crab Hawk**, a localized Guyana specialty. Other birds include **Black-collared Hawk**, **Black Hawk-Eagle**, **Long-winged Harrier**, **Barred Antshrike**, **Silvered Antbird**, **Striped Cuckoo**, **Little Cuckoo**, **Green-tailed Jacamar**, **Blood-colored Woodpecker**, **White-bellied Piculet**, **Mangrove Rail**, and **Mangrove Cuckoo**. Depending on the level of the tide we may be able to

check the shoreline for waders, including **White-rumped Sandpiper**, **Western Sandpiper**, **Hudsonian Whimbrel**, **Grey Plover**, **Short-billed Dowitcher**, and other coastal and typical aquatic species such as **White-cheeked Pintail**, **Tricolored Heron**, **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron**, **Little Blue Heron**, **Magnificent Frigatebird**, **Royal Gull-billed**, and **Least Terns**, and **Brown Pelican**.

After lunch we will visit the famous Georgetown Botanical Gardens. This parkland area with open grass, scattered trees, bushes, and several ponds is famous for holding good numbers of species, including the localized **Blood-colored Woodpecker**. In addition we will look for **White-bellied Piculet**, **Spotted Tody-Flycatcher**, **Yellow-chinned Spinetail**, **Rusty-margined Flycatcher**, **Southern Beardless Tyrannulet**, the impressive **Toco Toucan**, **Black-capped Donacobius**, **Wing-barred Seedeater**, **Straight-billed Woodcreeper**, **Black-collared Hawk**, and a colorful and noisy selection of parrots, including **Red-shouldered Macaw**, **Orange-winged Amazon**, **Yellow-crowned Amazon**, **Southern Mealy Amazon**, and **Festive Amazon**.

Flowering trees can provide hummingbirds such as **Black-throated Mango**, **White-chested Emerald**, and **Plain-bellied Emerald**.

Overnight: Cara Lodge, Georgetown



*The Georgetown Botanical Gardens usually hold a selection of parrots such as these **Southern Mealy Amazons**.*

Day 3. Kaieteur Falls – Iwokrama River Lodge

After breakfast at our hotel we will take a chartered flight over unspoiled pristine forest to Kaieteur Falls, the world's highest free-falling waterfall. Though Venezuela's Angel Falls is greater in total height, its filamentous drop occurs by stages, whereas Kaieteur is a single,

massive, thundering cascade 100 meters (328 feet) wide as the Potaro River makes a sheer drop of 228 meters (748 feet), nearly five times the height of Niagara Falls. The spectacle is even more impressive because of its remoteness; it is altogether possible that we will be the only people viewing it. Here we hope to find **White-chinned** and **White-tipped Swifts** swirling over the gorge. The other two targets are the astonishingly colorful **Guianan Cock-of-the-rock** and the most-wanted **Orange-breasted Falcon**. We should also be able to find the rare and endemic **Beebe's Rocket Frog** that lives in water held in the leaves of giant bromeliad plants.

Then our flight will take us to Fairview Village, from where we will be transferred to Iwokrama River Lodge in the heart of Guyana's beautiful rainforest. Arriving at the lodge by 3:00 p.m. we will settle in at our accommodation. During the late afternoon we will head out before dark. This will be our first opportunity to look for the localized **White-winged Potoo**. Returning after dark will give us the opportunity for night spotting. Even though wildlife is shy we have had impressive sightings in the past including **Kinkajou, Jaguar, Lowland Tapir, Green Anaconda, Ocelot**, and even **Puma**. The impressive forest surrounding the lodge protects a unique ecosystem in the heart of the Guiana Shield, where Amazonian and Guianan flora and fauna form one of the highest rates of biodiversity in the world. Our comfortable lodge has modern cabins, each with a balcony that overlooks the beautiful Essequibo River. There will be plenty to look at, with **Pied Plover, Black-collared** and **White-winged Swallows** over the river and a host of species in the surrounding forest edges. With luck we may come across **Spotted Antpitta, Rufous-capped Antthrush, Ringed** and **Waved Woodpeckers, Slaty-capped Shrike-Vireo, Helmeted Pygmy Tyrant, Black-necked** and **Green Aracaris**, and **Guianan Toucanet**, as well as **Red-rumped Agouti** and **Guianan Red Howler Monkey**, which are common forest dwellers here.

Overnight: Iwokrama River Lodge, Kurupukari Crossing

Day 4. Birding the Kurupukari White Sand Forest

After an early breakfast we will drive to the White Sand Forest just across the Essequibo River from our base. This unique habitat offers a good variety of white sand specialists, **Grey-winged Trumpeter, Black Manakin, Rufous-crowned Elaenia, Saffron-crested Tyrant-Manakin, Pale-bellied Mourner, Bronzy Jacamar**, with luck **Sapphire-rumped Parrotlet**, and **Lilac-tailed Parrotlet**. The forest also harbors **Black-headed Antbird, Black-throated Antbird, Spot-winged Antbird, Double-banded Pygmy Tyrant, Pelzeln's Tody-Tyrant, Red-shouldered Tanager, Guianan Schiffornis, McConnell's Flycatcher, Rufous-tailed Flatbill, Plain-crowned Spinetail, Dusky Parrot, Blue-and-yellow Macaw**, and, with good fortune the stunning **Guianan Red Cotinga** and **Red-billed Woodcreeper**. We will return to our lodge for lunch

In the afternoon we will walk the trails, hoping for an active ant swarm, which could provide sought-after species like **White-plumed Antbird, Spotted Antpitta, Rufous-throated Antbird, Ferruginous-backed Antbird, Chestnut-rumped Woodcreeper**, and if we are lucky the seldom-seen **Rufous-winged Ground Cuckoo**.

Overnight: Iwokrama River Lodge, Kurupukari Crossing

Day 5. Iwokrama River Lodge to Atta Rainforest Lodge

Today we will have an early start leaving Iwokrama River Lodge to explore the road to Atta Rainforest Lodge, looking for species such as **Black Curassow**, **Grey-winged Trumpeter**, **Guianan Toucanet**, and **Guianan Red, Purple-breasted, Pompadour**, and **Spangled Cotingas**. Canopy flocks can also produce **Ash-winged Antwren**, **Todd's Antwren**, **Spot-tailed Antwren**, **Buff-cheeked Greenlet**, **Lemon-chested Greenlet**, **Olive-green Tyrannulet**, **Zimmer's Flatbill**, **Guianan Tyrannulet**, **Yellow-throated Flycatcher**, and **Guianan Puffbird**. Before we arrive at our lodge we will look for **Rufous Potoo**. We have found the day roost for this very rare and elusive bird, and we will do our best to provide good views for our clients. After arrival at Atta Rainforest Lodge we will bird forest trails from the lodge during the afternoon.

Overnight: Atta Rainforest Lodge



Guianan Red Cotinga should be one of the many cotinga species on display at Atta Rainforest Lodge (John Christian).

Day 6. Atta Rainforest Lodge and Iwokrama Canopy Walkway

Another early start to visit the famous Iwokrama Canopy Walkway to look for passing flocks of canopy-dwelling species. Time will be spent looking for **Todd's Antwren**, **Spot-tailed**

Antwren, Short-tailed Pygmy Tyrant, Guianan Toucanet, Green Aracari, Painted Parakeet, Screaming Piha, Black-headed Parrot, Guianan Puffbird, Dusky Purpletuff, Paradise Tanager, Opal-rumped Tanager, Golden-sided Euphonia, Purple and Green Honeycreepers, Black-faced Dacnis, and Black Nunbird. This entire morning will involve birding on the canopy walkway and the trails around the lodge. This wonderful area is famous for its variety of colorful cotingas, and if we can locate a few fruiting trees, we will be in for an avian spectacle with possibilities of **Pompadour, Purple-breasted, and Guianan Red Cotingas** as well as **White Bellbird** and the most-wanted **Crimson Fruitcrow**. In the forest that surrounds the lodge we will look for **Red-legged and Variegated Tinamous, Black-faced Hawk, Grey-winged Trumpeter, Cayenne Jay, Amazonian Barred Woodcreeper, Red-billed Woodcreeper, Helmeted Pygmy Tyrant, Ferruginous-backed Antbird, Waved Woodpecker, and Chestnut and Red-necked Woodpeckers,** as well as **Guiana Spider Monkey and White-faced Saki.**



The beautiful Green Honeycreeper

After lunch we will spend the afternoon birding on the Kurupukari-Annai public road through the Iwokrama Forest. We can try again for **Black Manakin** and **Rufous-crowned Elaenia** as well as **Blue-backed Tanager, Swallow winged Puffbird, Black-chinned, Scale-backed, and Grey Antbirds, Guianan Streaked Antwren, Amazonian and Mouse-colored Antshrikes, Reddish Hermit, Tiny Tyrant Manakin, Rose-breasted Chat, Black and Red-throated Caracaras, Guianan Trogon, Golden-winged Parakeet, and Yellow-green Grosbeak.**

Early in the evening on our way back to Atta Lodge we will use a spotlight to do some night birding, mainly looking for owls and potoos. Next to a small wetland we could find **Sunbittern, Green-and-rufous Kingfisher, American Pygmy Kingfisher, and Crimson Topaz.** This is a

great place to look for potoos including **White-winged, Rufous, Great, Common, and Long-tailed Potoos** plus **Spectacled and Crested Owls**.

Overnight: Atta Rainforest Lodge

Day 7. Atta Rainforest Lodge to Surama Eco-Lodge

We'll have another early start to explore the environs of Atta Rainforest Lodge before breakfast for one last time. Our birding adventure continues with a transfer to Surama Eco-Lodge, birding on the way. We will scan treetops for **Marail Guan, Green Aracari, Guianan Puffbird, Dusky Purpletuft, Black-spotted Barbet, Harpy Eagle, Crested Eagle, Ornate Hawk-Eagle, Black Hawk-Eagle, Golden-collared Woodpecker, Black-bellied Cuckoo, Green Oropendola, and Crimson Fruitcrow**.



*The area around Surama Eco-Lodge can be good for **Ornate Hawk-Eagle** (John Christian).*

After lunch we will bird along the forest edges and visit nearby roosts of **Great Potoo**. We may find **Little Chachalaca, Grassland Sparrow, Wedge-tailed Grass Finch, Forest Elaenia, White-throated Toucan, Neotropical Palm Swift, and Finsch's Euphonia**, and time permitting we will try for **Ocellated Crake**. At dusk **White-tailed Nightjar, Least Nighthawk,**

Lesser Nighthawk, and **Tropical** and **Tawny-bellied Screech Owls** will hopefully be found near to the lodge.

Overnight: Surama Eco-Lodge, Surama

Day 8. Surama area, birding the Harpy Eagle trail

Today will be dedicated to looking for Harpy Eagle (if there is an active nest we might get a chance). A 30-minute drive from Surama Eco-Lodge will bring us to the Harpy Eagle trail. We will walk for an hour on a flat trail through virgin rainforest and hope to see **Harpy Eagle** at its nest. On past trips we have witnessed the adults bringing prey to the nest including monkeys, sloths, iguanas, macaws, and agouti. We also have a stakeout roost for **Long-tailed Potoo** and **Tawny-bellied Screech Owl**. Forest birding includes **Rufous-bellied Antwren**, **Collared Puffbird**, **White-throated Manakin**, **Cinnamon-crested Spadebill**, and **Common Scale-backed Antbird**.

Overnight: Surama Eco-Lodge, Surama



*The magnificent **Harpy Eagle** will hopefully be seen around Surama Eco-Lodge.*

Day 9. Surama to Caiman House - Northern Rupununi

This is our final morning birding forest trails near Surama. We will visit a nearby **Ornate Hawk-Eagle** nest. This will also give us the opportunity to look for understory skulkers such as **White-plumed** and **Rufous-throated Antbird**, **Spotted Antpitta**, **Black-throated Antshrike**, and **Rufous-bellied Antwren** again. After lunch we will depart for Caiman House. Our journey will take us across the North Rupununi Savannah. The road we'll follow skirts numerous gallery

forests and wetlands, offering great views of a variety of herons, ducks, **Jabiru**, **Pinnated Bittern**, **Plumbeous Seedeater**, **Bicolored Wren**, **Grey Seedeater**, **Grassland Yellow Finch**, **Yellowish Pipit**, **White-fringed Antwren**, **Crested Bobwhite**, **Green-rumped Parrotlet**, the colorful **Orange-backed Troupial**, and the agile **Aplomado Falcon**. On the drive we will make several stops to look for **Crested Doradito** and **Bearded Tachuri**, two key species on our target list. This is also the best chance of seeing **Giant Anteater**. We have a high success rate of spotting these giants on our tours. We will then continue our journey to Caiman House, where we hope to arrive by 6:00 p.m. in time for check in and enjoying dinner.

Overnight: Caiman House, Yupukari



Aplomado Falcon can be seen across the North Rupununi Savannah.

Day 10. Caiman House, Rupununi River excursion

This morning we will start with a cup of coffee before heading out by boat on the Rupununi River. We will be in small boats powered by a 15hps engine as we head downstream. Depending on the water level we will visit some of the many oxbow lakes found in this area and focus on seeing the rare **Crestless Curassow**; our best chances of seeing this bird are along the river banks as the birds come to drink water in the morning. We are also likely to find **Green-and-rufous** and **Amazon Kingfishers**, **Rufescent Tiger Heron**, **Agami** and **Capped Herons**, **Sungrebe**, **Sunbittern**, **Pied Plover**, **Boat-billed Heron**, **Bare-necked Fruitcrow**, and **Spot-breasted Woodpecker**. In addition we may be lucky enough to see **Giant Otter**, **Capybara**, **Black Caiman**, **Spectacled Caiman**, and many species of monkeys. We will return for lunch back at the lodge.

During the afternoon as the temperature cools down we will visit nearby gallery forest to look for **White-tailed Nightjar**, **Spot-tailed Nightjar**, and **Rufous Nightjar**. This is also a good opportunity to see hundreds of **Least** and **Lesser Nighthawks** as they feed at dusk.

Overnight: Caiman House, Yupukari

Day 11. Caiman House to Karasabai Village

Moving on, today we head for Karasabai Village, a distant border village perched between the northern Rupununi Savannah and Pakaraima Mountains along the Brazilian border. Here is where we are delighted to have a rare opportunity to see the highly endangered Sun Parakeet. In the early 1990s this species was on the brink of extinction due to extreme pressures from the pet trade, until local villagers took aggressive action to rehabilitate the population. A mere seven individuals that remained at that time have struggled to regain their former numbers, but signs are hopeful and the current population counts suggests that at least 300 birds are thriving in the area today. Karasabai Village is well off the standard tourist track, offering a government guesthouse with adequate but sparse accommodations for our group. Nonetheless local hospitality reigns, and when not on the trail looking for **Sun Parakeet** we'll have a great opportunity to meet and interact with an Amerindian community that sees very few tourists and is eager to share their stories and learn about a world outside their own. We will see plenty of other species during the day, but our main focus will be on finding and observing this gorgeous parakeet. After seeing the **Sun Parakeet** we will enjoy a delightful lunch before departing Karasabai Village in the afternoon and continue to Manari Ranch near the town of Lethem.

Overnight: Manari Ranch, Lethem



The beautiful and rare Sun Parakeet (John Christian).

Day 12. Full day tour for Red Siskin

Today we leave the lodge very early at 3:00 a.m. in our 4x4s to drive roughly 90 kilometers (56 miles) southeast of Lethem. The drive will take us about six hours depending on what we see along the way. The road is actually a traffic-less sand track meandering across the hilly savannas with many opportunities for spontaneous birdwatching stops. We can scan numerous wetland areas for **Maguari Stork**, **Brazilian Teal**, **White-tailed Hawk**, **Double-striped Thick-knee**, and **Bearded Tachuri**. Along the way we pass the Amerindian communities of St. Ignatius and Shulinab, where the traditional homes and lifestyles of Amerindian Guyana are on display and remind us just how far we've come. We will meet one of our local guides who has been studying the rare and localized Red Siskin, a bird only discovered in Guyana in 2000 and one of the holy grails of South American ornithology.



Red Siskin will be our target southeast of Lethem (John Christian).

Apart from the magnificent **Red Siskin** we will look for **Pale-bellied Tyrant-Manakin** and **Sharp-tailed Ibis**; both are most-wanted species, so our efforts will be concentrated on seeing these special birds, although many other species will be seen while searching for these targets. In the surrounding areas we could find **Little Chachalaca**, **Black-collared Hawk**, **Amazonian Scrub Flycatcher**, **Plain-crested Elaenia**, **Pale-tipped Inezia**, **Brown-crested Flycatcher**, **White-naped Xenopsaris**, **Burnished Buff Tanager**, **Rufous-browed Peppershrike**, **Tropical Gnatcatcher**, **Glittering-throated Emerald**, **Ashy-headed Greenlet**, **Hooded Tanager**, **Vermilion Flycatcher**, and **Flavescent Warbler**. We will enjoy a delightful lunch at Dadanawa Ranch before making our way back across the savanna to Manari Ranch.

Overnight: Manari Ranch, Lethem

Day 13. Takutu and Ireng Rivers excursion, flight to Georgetown

Another early morning start will have us leave our delightful base where we have access to the dry scrub and savanna alongside the Takutu and Ireng Rivers. Once again our 4x4s will come into play as we have to get to an area where two highly restricted and poorly known species occur, namely **Hoary-throated Spinetail**, and **Rio Branco Antbird**. We will explore wetlands as well as the dry desert for a variety of species such as **Pinnated Bittern**, **Black-bellied Whistling Duck**, **Masked Duck**, **Maguari Stork**, **Double-striped Thick-knee**, **South American Snipe**, **Pied-billed** and **Least Grebes**, **Crested Bobwhite**, **Pearl Kite**, **White-tailed Kite**, **Savanna Hawk**, **Aplomado Falcon**, **Brown-throated Parakeet**, **Red-bellied Macaw**, **Pale-legged Hornero**, **Fork-tailed Palm Swift**, **Sooty-capped Hermit**, **White-tailed Goldenthrout**, **Rufous-tailed Jacamar**, **White-bellied Piculet**, **Black-crested** and **Barred Antshrikes**, **Mouse-colored Tyrannulet**, **Yellow-olive** and **Ochre-lore Flatbills**, **Vermilion**, **Short-crested**, and **Fork-tailed Flycatchers**, **Yellowish Pipit**, and **Orange-backed Troupial**. Hopefully with two exceptionally rare birds under our belts we will return to our lodge for lunch. After lunch we will head to the Lethem Airport to board our flight to Georgetown.

Overnight: Georgetown Hotel



Double-striped Thick-knee should hopefully be seen on this tour.

Day 14. Georgetown, your international flight home.

You will be escorted to the international airport to connect with 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. In addition, we sometimes must use a different international guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling.

Duration:	14 days
Group Size:	5 - 8
Dates:	21 January - 03 February 2024
Start:	Georgetown
End:	Georgetown
Price:	US\$8,868 (which includes US\$ 1,250 for domestic and charter flights that we will book for you) – based on 5-8 participants (2024)
Single Supplement:	US\$488 (2024)

Price includes:

Domestic and charter flights within Guyana
All transfers airport/hotel/airport
All accommodation described in the itinerary
All meals (except where indicated)
All land transportation including 4x4 vehicles
River excursions
Entrance fees
Private tour leader services
Local guides
Bottles of water and snacks

Price excludes:

International flights
Visa
Medical and trip cancellation insurance
Any activity not included in the itinerary
Items of a personal nature (alcoholic drinks, laundry, phone calls, internet access) Meals on day 1
Soft/alcoholic drinks
Gratuities (please see our [tipping guidelines blog](#))