



**TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO BIRDING TOUR: AN
INTRODUCTION TO NEOTROPICAL BIRDING**

30 NOVEMBER – 11 DECEMBER 2023

28 NOVEMBER – 09 DECEMBER 2024

27 NOVEMBER – 08 DECEMBER 2025



White-necked Jacobin may well be one of the first birds of the trip and is one of the many hummingbird species which should attend the feeders at the Asa Wright Nature Centre.

For their small size of less than 2,000 square miles (5,130 square kilometers), the tiny isles of Trinidad and Tobago host a staggeringly high diversity of bird species, with more than 500 species recorded. Situated just seven miles (11 km) north of Venezuela and the South American mainland, the biodiversity of the twin isles is comprised of a blend of both Amazonian and West Indies wildlife, which makes this a unique birdwatching destination.

Our tour starts in Trinidad, famous for its vibrant mix of cultures, excellent tropical weather, and great hospitality. During our time on Trinidad, we stay at the Asa Wright Nature Centre, a world-leading conservation-focused ecolodge. Asa Wright is well known among birdwatchers – its extensive grounds wind through pristine rainforest which boast **Bearded Bellbird** and the most accessible **Oilbird** roost in the world, while relaxed birdwatching from the veranda allows close viewing of charismatic and colorful species, such as **Ruby-topaz Hummingbird** and **Tufted Coquette**.



*The gorgeous **Green Honeycreeper** is a common sight around the Asa Wright grounds.*

We will explore Trinidad's wetlands, savannah, forests, and coastline, using Asa Wright as our comfortable base, while we seek specials such as **Black Hawk-Eagle**, **Masked Cardinal**, **Lilac-tailed Parrotlet**, and **Red-bellied Macaw**. During a scenic boat cruise, we'll witness the breathtaking spectacle of thousands of **Scarlet Ibis** as they return to roost. After five nights at Asa Wright, we will spend time in the northeast, where we target Trinidad's one true endemic, the **Trinidad Piping Guan**. A species once widespread across Trinidad, it is now red-listed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as Critically Endangered and clings on in the remote forests of Trinidad's mountainous northern range.

The tour ends on Tobago, which has a distinctly more Caribbean flavor and is even more picturesque than its larger neighbor, with lush, forested heights sloping gently into beautiful

tropical beaches, surrounded by diverse coral reefs. Here we will seek species that are not found on Trinidad, which include the localized **White-tailed Sabrewing**, only found here or on the Paria Peninsula in Venezuela. Despite its name, the endemic **Trinidad Motmot** is much more abundant on Tobago, as is **Rufous-tailed Jacamar**. After exploring the wetlands and forests of Tobago we finish our birding with a glass-bottom boat trip to Little Tobago Island to get up close with some spectacular seabirds which nest on the island, such as beautiful **Red-billed Tropicbirds**.



*We will target **Scaly-naped Pigeon** at the southernmost point of its range on Little Tobago Island.*

This is a relatively easy tour, in which we hope to become accustomed to many neotropical bird families at leisure, with great photographic opportunities of many spectacularly colorful species. Additionally, we should find the two endemics without too much trouble. This birding trip has been designed so that we have time to enjoy the wonderful birds of the islands at a steady pace, taking advantage of the relaxing Caribbean culture.

We offer other great tours to the Caribbean region including Cuba, Dominican Republic, and Jamaica, as well as birding tours to Guyana or Colombia. These destinations may be combined with Trinidad and Tobago to give a more complete exploration of the region! Please do not hesitate to ask any questions.

Itinerary (12 days/11 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Port of Spain

On arrival at Piarco International Airport, you will be met by your guides and taken the short distance into Trinidad's northern range to start our five-night stay at the famous Asa Wright Nature Centre. Here the group will have the chance to meet over dinner, discuss the tour and enjoy the breath-taking views from the veranda.

Overnight: Asa Wright Nature Centre

Day 2. A gentle introduction to birding in Trinidad

Today, will serve as a good introduction to birdwatching in Trinidad, and true to Caribbean style, we will do so at a comfortable pace. We will spend an entire day within the grounds of the Asa Wright Nature Centre where over 200 bird species have been recorded. Watching from the veranda we hope to be joined by vibrant **Purple, Green and Red-Legged Honeycreepers, Violaceous Euphonia, Turquoise Tanager**, and more than 10 hummingbird species are regularly seen here, including the impressive **Tufted Coquette, Long-billed Starthroat, and Ruby-topaz Hummingbird**. The veranda provides a good viewpoint across the forested valley, and we may spot **Black Hawk-Eagle, Scaled Pigeon, Lilac-tailed Parrotlet, Orange-winged Amazon**, or our first **Channel-billed Toucan** over the forest canopy below.



*The beautiful **Purple Honeycreeper** can be seen from Asa Wright's veranda (photo Fraser Bell).*

Around the network of well-maintained trails, we will seek **Squirrel Cuckoo**, **Ferruginous Pygmy Owl**, the endemic **Trinidad Motmot**, and if we're lucky, we may find a lek of displaying **White-bearded** or **Golden-headed Manakins**. Asa Wright is home to all three species of trogon found within Trinidad, and the highly ventriloquial **Bearded Bellbird**, whose deafening call resembles that of a hammer hitting an anvil. In the afternoon we will have a memorable visit to the Dunstan Caves' active **Oilbird** colony – their aroma and raucous calls will be hard to forget!

Overnight: Asa Wright Nature Centre



Ruby-topaz Hummingbird is one of the many outrageous hummingbirds we will encounter on the tour (photo Fraser Bell).

Day 3. Western coastal Trinidad

With an early departure from Asa Wright, we will travel to Trinidad's western coastline which, with extensive mudflats, mangroves and wetlands makes for exciting birdwatching. Walking along quiet waterways and water meadows, we will search for **Spotted Tody-Flycatcher**, **Pied Water Tyrant**, **Masked Cardinal**, **Bicolored Conebill**, **Long-winged Harrier**, **Black-crested Antshrike**, **Yellow-hooded Blackbird**, and if we're lucky, one of the specialized mangrove residents, such as **Mangrove Rail**, **Mangrove Cuckoo**, or **Rufous Crab Hawk**. At the mudflats of Orange Bay, we will enjoy aggregations of migratory shorebirds alongside resident waterbirds, before finishing the day with an afternoon boat trip through the Caroni Swamp.

We will traverse the network of channels between the mangroves, seeking out more of Trinidad's mangrove specials, such as **Green-throated Mango**, **Grey-cowled Wood Rail**, **Boat-billed Heron** and hope to find the small population of **American Flamingo** which have recently colonized the swamp. Our local guides excel in finding roosting **Tropical Screech Owl** and **Common Potoo**, as well as **Central American Tree Boa** and **Silky Anteater** in the twisted

branches of the mangroves. As the sun sets, we can enjoy the spectacle of thousands of **Scarlet Ibis** returning to roost on mangrove islets, an experience which could be the highlight of the tour for many.

Overnight: Asa Wright Nature Centre



*We will look for **Yellow-hooded Blackbird** in the marshes of western Trinidad.*

Day 4. East Trinidad

In the morning we will visit one of the last remnants of tropical savanna in Trinidad, at Aripo agricultural station. Exploring the farm tracks and quiet roads, we will look for **Striped Cuckoo**, **White-headed Marsh Tyrant**, **Red-breasted Blackbird**, **Yellow-chinned Spinetail** and **Savanna Hawk**, among many others, and if we're lucky, we may see **Ruddy-breasted Seedeater**, or **Brown-throated Parakeet**, both of which are now rare and localized in Trinidad.

Travelling east we plan to stop for some local food – doubles or Aloo Pie are often the favorites, then continue to the coast. Here we seek **Crested Caracara**, **Sulphury Flycatcher**, **White-tailed Goldenthrout**, and **Little Cuckoo**. In the afternoon we will explore the Nariva Swamp where while walking along small tracks we will seek **Pinnated Bittern**, **Limpkin**, **Wattled Jacana**, **Purple Gallinule**, and **Red-bellied Macaw**, and hope to find a flock of reintroduced **Blue-and-yellow Macaw**. With its quaint mix of agricultural paddies, interspersed with swamp forest and freshwater marshes it is an idyllic setting for an afternoon.

Overnight: Asa Wright Nature Centre



*Reintroduced **Blue-and-yellow Macaw** can once again be found in the wetland forests of eastern Trinidad (photo Riccardo Boschetti).*

Day 5. The Northern Range

On our final full day at Asa Wright Nature Centre, we will explore north of the centre along Blanchisseuse Road into the Arima Valley, stopping at several birding hotspots such as Las Lapas and Paria Junction. Our first stop early on will be from a viewpoint overlooking the forest below, where we will enjoy seeing flocks of **Blue-headed Parrot** as they leave their roost. The diversity of birds here is impressive, as most of Trinidad's forest species are present in the area, but our main targets are species which favor high altitude, including **Scaled Pigeon**, **Slaty-capped Flycatcher**, **Golden-crowned Warbler**, **Sooty Grassquit**, **Speckled**, **Hepatic** and **Swallow Tanagers**, and **Ornate Hawk-Eagle**.

Overnight: Asa Wright Nature Centre

Day 6. Transfer to Grand Riviere

We will enjoy a relaxed final morning to spend time on the trails and veranda at Asa Wright. We will continue to seek skulking species such as **Grey-throated Leaf-tosser**, **White-bellied Antbird**, **Little Tinamou**, **Black-faced Antthrush**, **Great Antshrike**, and less common species such as **Little Hermit**, **Chestnut Woodpecker** and **Euler's** and **Olive-sided Flycatchers**.

After lunch, we transfer to Trinidad's northeast where we will spend two nights at the remote village of Grand Riviere, which lies at the base of the extreme northeast of the Andes Mountain Range. If time allows on arrival, we may start to explore the local area, though some may instead choose a walk or swim on the beach right outside the hotel.

Overnight: Mount Plaisir Estate Hotel

Day 7. Birding Grand Riviere

An early departure will see us on the quest for Trinidad's secretive and threatened, **Trinidad Piping Guan**. Due to overhunting, it is confined to this remote region and we will make a special effort to find this bird. Watching from a viewpoint we hope to see the piping guans as they leave their roost and feed in nutmeg trees before they melt away into the forest canopy. After our vigil, we will continue to bird locally. This area is comprised of a mix of riverine forest and cultivated habitats which attract a range of interesting birds such as **Trinidad Euphonia**, **Swallow-tailed Kite**, **Black-tailed Tityra**, **Lilac-tailed Parakeet**, **Crimson-crested Woodpecker**, **Silvered Antbird** and **White-bellied Antbird**, while **Green** and **Ringed Kingfishers**, and **Little Blue**, and **Great Blue Herons** could be found along the coast, alongside migratory shorebirds. The afternoon will be spent at leisure, enjoying the peace of Grand Riviere.

Overnight: Mount Plaisir Estate Hotel



Grand Riviere is a great place for the majestic Swallow-tailed Kite.

Day 8. Departure for Tobago

On the final morning in Trinidad, you have the option to unwind on the beach or venture back into the forests of Grand Riviere, as hard-to-find species such as **Little Tinamou**, **Ferruginous Pygmy Owl**, **Lilac-tailed Parrotlet**, and **Bat Falcon** are all possible here. By mid-morning we will travel south for our transfer to Tobago along the scenic coastal road. After a short flight we will transfer to a stunning and friendly ecolodge nestled on the edge of Tobago's rainforest, our base for the next two nights. Tonight, there may be the option of night birding from our hotel, to seek **White-tailed Nightjar**, **American Barn Owl**, and the secretive **Striped Owl**.

Overnight: Cuffie River Retreat

Day 9. South Tobago wetlands

Early morning will see us exploring the south of Tobago, an exciting prospect considering the wetlands here are a hotspot for migratory species overwintering from North America. Within extensive mangroves and overgrown pools, we will target **Wilson's Snipe, White-cheeked Pintail, Least Grebe, Anhinga, Mangrove Cuckoo, Scrub Greenlet**, roosting **Common Potoo**, alongside a supporting cast of wintering **Semipalmated** and **Western Sandpipers, Lesser and Greater Yellowlegs, Hudsonian Whimbrel, Sora**, and maybe an early **Caribbean Martin**.

We will lunch at the coast whilst keeping an eye out for passing gulls, terns and waders and return to our secluded lodge for the afternoon, to explore the surrounding forests and scrub. Within the remote mountainous valley, we target Tobago's forest birds, such as **Venezuelan Flycatcher, Rufous-vented Chachalaca, Red-crowned Woodpecker, Northern White-fringed Antwren, Blue-backed Manakin, White-winged Becard**, and **Trinidad Motmot**, whilst around the mountain streams we will look for **Green Kingfisher, Rufous-tailed Jacamar**, or **Northern Waterthrush**. The quiet trails are a wonderful place to spend an afternoon.

Overnight: Cuffie River Retreat



Mangrove Cuckoo is one of the mangrove specials we will seek in southern Tobago.

Day 10. Little Tobago Island

An easy morning will be spent birding the trails of the lodge, watching near the bird feeders, or enjoying the pool. In the late morning we will depart for Speyside from where we board an afternoon boat trip to Little Tobago Island. **Magnificent Frigatebird** will escort us on our journey and through the glass-bottom boat we will keep our eyes peeled for tropical marine species including **Hawksbill Turtle**. Little Tobago Island has an interesting history, having once hosted

an introduced population of New Guinea's Greater Bird-of-paradise! These are long extinct on the island; and it is instead a paradise for tropical seabirds where **Red-billed Tropicbird**, **Brown** and **Red-footed Boobies**, **Laughing Gull**, and **Audubon's Shearwater** nest. Here we hope to also find **Scaly-naped Pigeon**, a Caribbean species at its most southerly limit. After exploring the island there is the opportunity of snorkeling to enjoy the diverse reefs just offshore.

Overnight: Cuffie River Retreat



*One of the many **Magnificent Frigatebirds** which will likely investigate our group during our visit to Little Tobago Island (photo Fraser Bell).*

Day 11. Main Ridge

Our final morning will be an early start to ensure we arrive early at Tobago's main ridge. This mountain range offers us the best chance for Tobago's special forest species. Our first stop will be at a viewpoint overlooking the forest, where we will watch commuting birds leaving the forest and raptors, such as impressive **Great Black Hawks**, soaring over the canopy. Walking quiet mountainous roads, or forested trails, we will target **Trinidad Motmot**, and **Rufous-tailed Jacamar** which are much more common here than in Trinidad, alongside **Blue-backed Manakin**, **Stripe-breasted Spinetail**, **Fuscous** and **Venezuelan Flycatchers**, **Yellow-legged Thrush**, **Grey-throated Leaf-tosser**, **Olivaceous Woodcreeper**, and the endangered **White-tailed Sabrewing** as it visits heliconia and banana flowers. This large and impressive hummingbird is arguably our most important target on Tobago, being confined only to Tobago and the Praia Peninsula in Venezuela.



*We should find several **Rufous-tailed Jacamar** throughout the tour.*

After a good day, we will have our final group dinner of the tour where we will discuss the ‘bird of the trip’ – it is sure to be a tough task!

Overnight: Cuffie River Retreat

Day 12. Return flight

Today you will have time at leisure, prior to your departure from Robinson International Airport.

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:	12 days
Group size:	3-8 (2023) 4-8 (2024/2025)
Dates:	30 November – 11 December 2023 28 November – 09 December 2024 27 November – 08 December 2025
Start:	Piarco International Airport, Trinidad
End:	Robinson International Airport, Tobago
Prices:	US\$6,350 per person sharing – based on 4 – 8 clients, or US\$6,790 per person sharing – based on 3 clients (2023) US\$7,150 per person sharing – based on 4 - 8 participants (2024) US\$TBC (2025)
Single supplement:	US\$890 (2023) US\$1,390 (2024) US\$TBC (2025)

Price includes:

Meals/Water
Accommodation
Transport
Guiding fees
Internal flight between Trinidad and Tobago

Price excludes:

International flights
Personal insurance
Alcoholic beverages
Gratuities (please see our [tipping guidelines blog](#))
Laundry service
Personal expenses such as gifts