

# Guyana

## Rainforests, Watercourses & Wilderness

**Saturday 27 February – Saturday 13 March 2010**

Leaders: Richard Coomber and local guides

2010 Cost **£4,299** single room supplement **£350**

**Saturday 26 February – Saturday 12 March 2011**

Leaders: Tony Pym and local guides

2011 Cost **£4,499** single room supplement **£370**



**T**his small country on the northeast shoulder of South America is seldom visited by birdwatchers, yet it offers all the avian richness of the lowland forests and savannas of adjacent Venezuela, and a tourist infrastructure that makes it accessible in greater comfort. Indeed, tourism in the country is experiencing a rapid development and some new lodges provide accommodation in pristine forest settings and interesting savanna habitats. This tour makes an ornithological reconnaissance of the country, visiting Guyana's coastal plain and its wilderness interior of untouched rainforest and intermediate and grassland savannas. Not only do these habitats hold over 800 bird species, but they are home to mammals such as the Jaguar, Puma, Giant River Otter, Giant Anteater and more than six species of monkey. Just over 70 of the country's bird species are endemic to the Guiana Shield (an area of ancient rocks shared with Brazil and Venezuela). Among these, perhaps the most colourful are the Blood-coloured Woodpecker, Guianan Cock-of-the-rock, White-throated Toucan, Red-shouldered Macaw and Green Aracari. The itinerary includes travel on a number of small watercourses and on the great Essequibo River, as well as a visit to Kaieteur Falls, surely one of the world's most imposing scenic wonders.

### ITINERARY

#### Days 1 & 2

We leave London in the afternoon on a scheduled flight and touchdown in Guyana early next morning. We then make the short journey into Georgetown and transfer to Cara Lodge, a lovely old wooden hotel built in the colonial style. After lunch we visit the beautiful Botanic Gardens where, if we are lucky, we may see the Blood-coloured Woodpecker, an astonishingly colourful *Veniliornis* found only in the Guianas. The gardens are also home to a variety of macaws, such as Blue-and-yellow and Red-shouldered, as well as Festive and Yellow-crowned Amazons. There is a fine colony of herons and egrets; and

we can look out for Lesser Kiskadee and Common Black Hawk.

#### Days 3 & 4

We travel along the coast to the Mahaica River, where a stop may produce the resident pair of Rufous Crab Hawks and a selection of migrant waders such as yellowlegs and Willet. This is also another site for Blood-coloured Woodpecker, as well as White-bellied Piculet. We can stop at the Demerara Harbour Bridge to look for feeding Scarlet Ibis, Black Skimmer and Magnificent Frigatebird. By the Essequibo River at Parika, we board a boat that takes us upstream to the Baganara Island Resort, our base for the next two nights. Baganara has excellent accommodation, and is the gateway to the

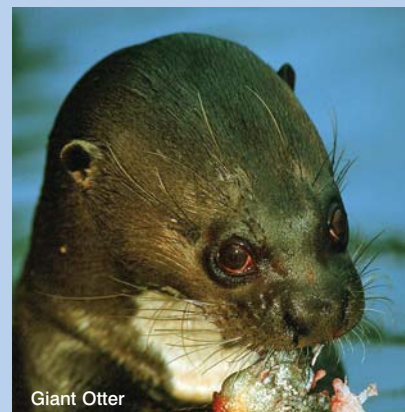
unspoilt rainforest of Guyana. The island occupies an area of 187 acres and a range of habitats. On or near the airstrip, we should find Collared Plover, Pied Lapwing and Red-breasted Blackbird. Scanning treetops may produce Black Caracara, Greater Yellow-headed Vulture, White-throated Toucan, Crimson-crested Woodpecker and Swallow-wing Puffbirds. The lawns of the resort attract Green Ibis, South American Snipe and Chestnut-bellied Seedeaters. In the more wooded areas, our sightings may include Plumbeous Pigeon, Black-eared Fairy, Golden-headed Manakin and Yellow-rumped and Red-rumped Caciques. One evening we take a boat to visit the uninhabited Parrot Island, where we watch the roosting flight of a remarkable number of Orange-winged Parrots.



Sunbittern



Hoatzins



Giant Otter

**Outline Itinerary**

- Day 1** Fly to Georgetown
- Day 2** Georgetown
- Days 3-4** Baganara
- Days 5-6** Karanambu
- Days 7-9** Annai
- Days 10-12** Iwokrama
- Day 13** Georgetown
- Day 14** Depart Georgetown
- Day 15** Arrive London

**Party Size**

Maximum of nine clients.

**Accommodation**

Comfortable accommodation in twin/double and single rooms at all the hotels/lodges, with private facilities.

**Transport**

By minibus, Land Rover and boat.

**Includes**

All flights, meals, accommodation, transport, entry fees, services of the leaders, airport taxes and tips.

**Gradings**

-  Good
-  280
-  Warm to Hot
-  Low
-  Special
-  Moderate
-  Good
-  Moderate
-  Scheduled



Yellow-billed Cacique

**Days 5 & 6**

We can birdwatch on the trails in the early morning and after breakfast we take a scheduled flight to Karanambu Ranch, our base for two nights. This is the home of Diane McTurk, widely known for her work rehabilitating orphaned Giant Otters. During our time at Karanambu we can make a boat excursion up the Rupununi River and visit a pond full of Royal Lilies with their giant tray-like leaves. On the way, we hope to see Cocoi and Capped Herons, Green Ibis, Jabiru and Crestless Curassow, as well as Ringed, Amazon, Green and Green-and-rufous Kingfishers. In the more immediate vicinity of the ranch, we walk in search of Blue-backed Manakin, Little Chachalaca, Black-crested Antshrike, White-fringed Antwren, Short-crested Flycatcher and Bare-necked Fruitcrow. The local savanna holds Black-collared and Savanna Hawks, Crested Bobwhite and Vermilion Flycatcher. Giant Anteaters roam the area in search of termites. After dinner, we venture out onto the airstrip in search of nighthawks and nightjars.

**Days 7 to 9**

We travel by boat down the Rupununi River to Ginep Landing. Herons and kingfishers will again be centre stage, but we will be looking out for raptors, such as White-tailed and Crane Hawks, and for Giant Otter and two species of cayman. At Ginep, we are met by vehicles and then transported across the savanna to Rock View Lodge at Annai, where we spend the next three nights. With its tropical gardens and flowering trees, our lodge resembles an oasis in the savanna, and attracts birds such as Glittering-throated Emerald, Burnished-buff Tanager, and Pale-breasted Thrush. Raptors include Northern and Yellow-headed Caracaras, Great Black-Hawk, Pearl Kite and Laughing Falcon. Other birds of these savannas are Jabiru, Limpkin, and Nacunda Nighthawk. On one full day, we travel by road to the Amerindian community of Surama. Its inhabitants are mainly from the Macushi tribe and still observe many of the traditional practices of their forebears. Plumbeous and Swallow-tailed Kites, Little Chachalaca, Red-and-green Macaw, Black Nunbird, Black-spotted Barbet, Pompadour Cotinga and Cayenne Jay are among the birds we may spot during the drive through the rainforest to Surama and back.

**Days 10 to 12**

We make an early start from Rockview, as we have breakfast and lunch booked at the Atta Canopy Walkway. On the way, we have good chances of

seeing Grey-winged Trumpeters crossing the road. The 35 metre high walkway at Atta provides a rare opportunity to view canopy birds at close hand, such as the Guianan Toucanet, Painted Parakeet, Guianan Puffbird and Paradise Jacamar. The forest-clearing setting of the lodge provides an excellent opportunity to spot Dusky Purpletuft, Pompadour and Purple-breasted Cotingas, Pied Puffbird, Red-necked Woodpecker and Black-tailed Tityras, whilst Black Curassows strut around the perimeter of the clearing. After lunch, we start our transfer to Iwokrama Research Station, where we spend the next three nights. Along the rainforest road we probably have our best chance of seeing top mammal and avian predators: Jaguar and Harpy Eagle, but we would be very lucky to see either, as they are shy and scarce. Iwokrama has excellent accommodation overlooking the Essequibo River. Our target species include the much-sought-after Capuchinbird, Screaming Piha, Red-throated Caracara, Great Jacamar, Green Aracari and Chestnut Woodpecker. Walking trails attract many species of monkeys, antbirds and tyrant-flycatchers. We also make two boat excursions. One will be downstream, hoping for Black Skimmers and Large-billed Terns resting on sandbanks, and for good views of White-throated and Channel-billed Toucans, Red-and-green and Scarlet Macaws, Black-headed Parrots and Painted Parakeets. The other boat-trip will be at dusk or even after dark, in search of caymans and Ladder-tailed Nightjars, tree-frogs and ghost bats.

**Days 13 to 15**

This morning we take a charter flight to Kaieteur, the world's highest free-falling waterfall. Though Venezuela's Angel Falls are greater in total height, their drop occurs by stages whereas Kaieteur is a single, massive, thundering cataract 100 metres wide, created as the Potaro River makes a sheer drop of 228 metres, nearly five times the height of Niagara. The spectacle is the more impressive for its remoteness: we may be the only people viewing it. Here we hope to find White-tipped Swifts swirling over the gorge, and perhaps we may be lucky enough to see Orange-breasted Falcon as it hunts for swifts. The astonishingly colourful Guianan Cock-of-the-rock has a lek (display-ground) in the forest here. After lunch we take a flight back to Georgetown and stay overnight at Cara Lodge, where we have our farewell dinner. Early next morning, there may be a bird-watching option before returning to Cara Lodge for breakfast. We then make our way to the airport for our homeward flight to London, where we arrive the next morning.