



Trinidad and Tobago

With  Black Swamp
Bird Observatory

Tour Leader: Rob Ripma
Guest Leaders: Kenn and Kim Kaufman
June 19-29, 2026

Itinerary Overview:

June 19: Arrival - Transfer to Grande Riviere Coast
June 20: Monte Video Trace
June 21: Morning Birding - Transfer to Asa Wright Nature Centre
June 22: Northern Range and Blanchisseuse Road
June 23: Aripo Savannah and Nariva Swamp
June 24: Waterloo, Brickfield, and Caroni Swamp
June 25: Oilbird Cave - Transfer to Tobago
June 26: Gilpin Trace - Main Ridge Forest Reserve
June 27: Coastal Birding and Arrival at Blue Waters Inn
June 28: Little Tobago Island by Glass-Bottom Boat
June 29: Relaxation and Departure

Detailed Itinerary:

June 19: Arrival - Transfer to Grande Riviere Coast

Upon arrival in Port of Spain, you will be welcomed at the airport and transferred to Mt. Plaisir Estate Hotel. This beachfront ecolodge is nestled between lush tropical rainforest and the Caribbean Sea. The drive across the island is scenic and offers a soft start to our birding, with possible sightings of Tropical Kingbird, Yellow-headed Caracara, and Smooth-billed Ani along the way.



White-bellied Antbird

Once settled at the lodge, we will begin birding right from the property. Grande Riviere is an outstanding location for some of Trinidad's forest specialties. We will scan the surrounding trees for Channel-billed Toucan, Crimson-crested Woodpecker, Black-tailed Tityra, and both Silvered and White-bellied Antbirds. Raptors such as Plumbeous, Gray-headed, and Swallow-tailed Kites are also possible overhead.

This coastal area is one of the very best places in the world to see nesting Leatherback Sea Turtles. After dinner, we will walk the beach for our first opportunity to witness these endangered giants emerging to lay eggs. It is a truly unforgettable experience.

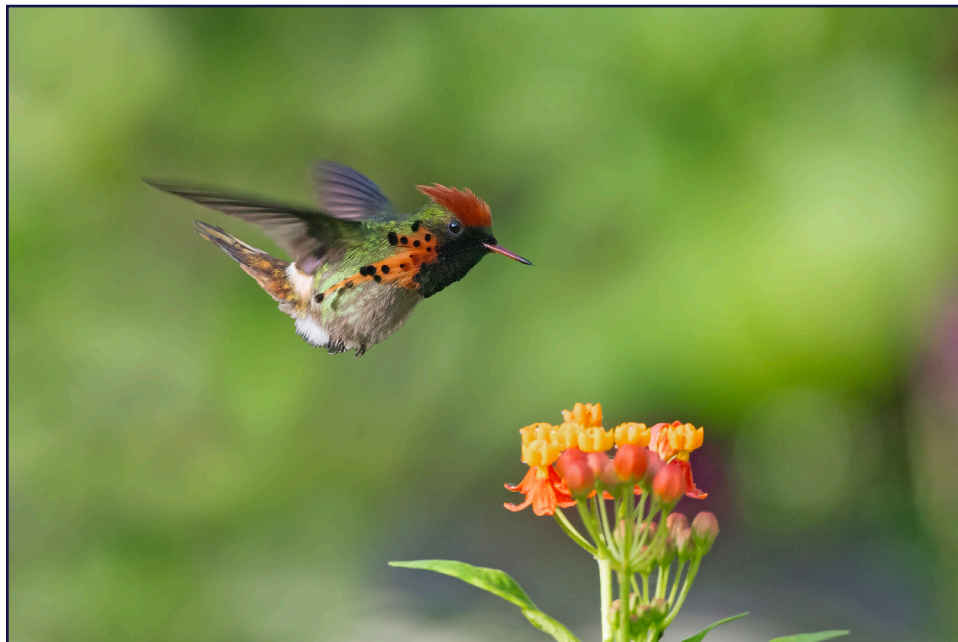
-Overnight: Mt. Plaisir Estate Hotel

June 20: Monte Video Trace

This morning, we will start early as we head into Monte Video Trace, one of the best-known sites to search for the critically endangered Trinidad Piping-Guan. These remarkable cracids, locally known as “Pawi”, are found only in Trinidad and can often be seen feeding or perched quietly in the nutmeg trees along the forested ridge. The walk up is peaceful and slow-paced, with excellent birding throughout.

Along the way, we will also look for species such as the Golden-headed Manakin, Red-legged Honeycreeper, and White-flanked Antwren. Antbirds are active here too, especially Silvered and White-bellied, calling from dense undergrowth. After a rewarding morning, we will return to Mt. Plaisir for lunch and a bit of relaxation and birding on the property. After dinner, we will take another beach walk for a second chance to watch Leatherbacks, being careful to maintain a respectful distance and minimize light to protect these nesting females.

-Overnight: Mt. Plaisir Estate Hotel



Tufted Coquette

June 21: Morning Birding - Transfer to Asa Wright Nature Centre

We will enjoy a relaxed morning birding around the lodge before heading south to the world-famous Asa Wright Nature Centre, situated in the Arima Valley. As we drive, we will pass through foothill forests and rural villages that often produce surprise sightings of toucans, parrots, or raptors. We will

arrive in time for lunch and a warm welcome from the lodge staff, accompanied by a refreshing local fruit juice or a classic rum punch, served on the veranda.

The Asa Wright veranda is one of the most legendary birding spots in the Neotropics. With feeders just a few feet away, we will enjoy constant views of hummingbirds like Tufted Coquette, White-necked Jacobin, and Copper-rumped Hummingbird. Bananaquits, tanagers, and honeycreepers abound. The forest edge is often active with motmots, antwrens, and the deep croaks of the Bearded Bellbird echoing in the distance. After dinner, we will take a short night walk to look for Common Potoo, nocturnal mammals, and other night creatures.

-Overnight: Asa Wright Nature Center

June 22: Northern Range and Blanchisseuse Road

Today, we will explore Trinidad's lush Northern Range along the famous Blanchisseuse Road. This route winds through dense foothill forest and offers some of the most diverse birding on the island. We will stop frequently to explore key birding areas, such as Las Lapas Trace and Paria Junction, which are excellent for observing mixed flocks of tanagers, flycatchers, trogons, and manakins. We will enjoy lunch in the village of Brasso Seco, where we will be treated to local cuisine and a demonstration at an active cocoa plantation. Expect to see and hear species like Swallow Tanager, Speckled Tanager, Blue-headed Parrot, Bat Falcon, and several woodcreepers and antbirds. This is a relaxed but productive day of forest birding, with the ever-present chance of surprises like an Ornate Hawk-Eagle or a lekking manakin right off the road.

-Overnight: Asa Wright Nature Center

June 23: Aripo Savannah and Nariva Swamp

We will start the day in the open grasslands and scattered scrub of Aripo Savannah, where dry-country birding offers an entirely different suite of species. Savannah Hawk, Red-breasted Meadowlark, Wattled Jacana, and Green-rumped Parrotlet are all possibilities. We will also scan for Pinnated Bittern, Fork-tailed Palm-Swift, and various tyrant flycatchers. If water levels are correct, species such as the Grassland Yellow-Finch and Ruddy-breasted Seedeater may also be present.

From there, we will travel along the east coast's "Coconut Alley", where perched raptors like Yellow-headed Caracara and Plumbeous Kite often line the palm trees. We will enjoy a beachside lunch before entering Nariva Swamp, a wetland mosaic of herbaceous marsh, mangrove forest, and palm islands. This is one of Trinidad's best areas for waterbirds and rarities. With luck, we may encounter Purple Gallinule, Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Red-bellied Macaw, or even something unexpected like a Jabiru or Double-striped Thick-knee.

-Overnight: Asa Wright Nature Center

June 24: Waterloo, Brickfield, and Caroni Swamp

Today, we will explore Trinidad's west coast, starting with the expansive tidal flats near Waterloo and Brickfield. These shallow mudflats are magnets for migratory and resident shorebirds. Depending on the season, we may find Wilson's Plover, American Golden Plover, Hudsonian Godwit, and several species of sandpipers and dowitchers. Large-billed and Yellow-billed Terns are often present, and this is one of the best areas on the island to look for rarities. Another significant area of interest is the beautiful Hindu Temple of the Sea, which is visible from our birding areas and is well worth visiting.



Scarlet Ibis

In the afternoon, we will head to the famous Caroni Swamp for a private boat tour through the mangrove-lined channels. As we drift through this unique habitat, we will look for Bicolored Conebill, Straight-billed Woodcreeper, Green-throated Mango, and Black-crested Antshrike. The trip ends with one of Trinidad's most iconic spectacles, hundreds of Scarlet Ibis flying overhead as they return to their roosting site at sunset. With luck, we may also spot a Ruschenberger's Tree Boa or even a Silky Anteater tucked into the mangroves.

-Overnight: Asa Wright Nature Center

June 25: Oilbird Cave - Transfer to Tobago

We will begin the day with a walk to Dunston Cave, one of the best places in the world to see Oilbirds. These large, nocturnal, fruit-eating birds use echolocation to navigate through pitch-black caves and are found only in parts of northern South America, southern Central America, and Trinidad. It is a surreal experience to observe them in the daytime, roosting in the shadows just above us while the sounds of dripping water echo in the background.

After lunch, we will transfer to the airport for our short flight to Tobago. Upon arrival, we will be met and transferred to our first lodge on the island, Cuffie River Nature Retreat. This peaceful ecolodge is located on the edge of the Tobago Main Ridge Forest Reserve and offers comfortable accommoda-

tions surrounded by lush tropical vegetation. The lodge grounds themselves are excellent for birding, with Rufous-vented Chachalacas, Trinidad Motmots, and Barred Antshrikes often visible right outside the rooms.

-Overnight: Cuffie River Natural Retreat

June 26: Gilpin Trace and Main Ridge Forest Reserve

This morning, we will head into the heart of Tobago's Main Ridge Forest Reserve. Our destination is the Gilpin Trace, one of the most reliable trails on the island for finding Tobago's forest specialties. We will take our time along the trail, listening and scanning for species like White-tailed Sabrewing, Blue-backed Manakin, Yellow-legged Thrush, Collared Trogon, and Olivaceous Woodcreeper. The forest here is rich and quiet, with excellent opportunities to see both understory skulkers and canopy birds.

After a full morning of birding, we will return to Cuffie River for lunch and an afternoon of relaxation. For those who want to explore more, we can venture into the grounds or nearby trails, while others may enjoy a quiet moment on the veranda or a swim in the saltwater pool. The slower pace of Tobago is a welcome change, offering a chance to enjoy the birds and the beauty of the surroundings without needing to go far from the lodge.

-Overnight: Cuffie River Natural Retreat

June 27: Coastal Birding - Arrival at Blue Waters Inn

We will spend the morning birding around Cuffie River or making additional stops en route as we travel to our final lodge, Blue Waters Inn. This beachfront hotel is tucked into a quiet cove on the northeastern tip of Tobago, with each room facing the sea. Surrounded by birdsong and the sound of gentle waves, it is the perfect place to relax as we near the end of the tour.

The lodge's gardens and nearby trails are suitable for casual birding, with chances for Pale-vented Pigeon, White-fringed Antwren, Brown-crested Flycatcher, and Scaly-naped Pigeon. If you prefer to unwind, the ocean is just a few steps away, and the calm water is ideal for swimming, snorkeling, or simply enjoying the view from a beach chair.

-Overnight: Blue Waters Inn

June 28: Little Tobago Island by Glass-Bottom Boat

After a relaxing morning, we will board a glass-bottom boat for our afternoon visit to Little Tobago Island. This small island off Tobago's northeast coast is one of the most important seabird nesting colonies in the southern Caribbean. Once ashore, we will follow a gradual trail through dry tropical forest to a clifftop overlook, where we will have close-up views of Red-billed Tropicbirds, Brown Boobies, Red-footed Boobies, and Brown Noddies gliding along the cliffs.

We may also see Bridled and Sooty Terns or other pelagic species. On the return trip, we will cruise slowly along the reef near Goat Island, watching for tropical fish through the boat's glass panels and possibly spotting a hawksbill turtle near the surface. This boat trip is a highlight of the tour and a perfect way to end our time on Tobago.

-Overnight: *Blue Waters Inn*

June 29: Relaxation and Departure

Our final morning is free to relax and enjoy the beachside setting at Blue Waters Inn. Take a last walk along the shore, enjoy breakfast overlooking the ocean, or watch for a few more birds in the surrounding vegetation. After checkout, we will transfer to the airport for our short flight back to Trinidad, where you will connect with your international departure home.



Turquoise Tanager

Trip Details:

Cost:

Price per person (double occupancy), from Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago: \$6,899

Single Supplement: \$800

Min Participants: 6

Max Participants: 10

Price Includes:

- 2 Expert Guides
- Ground Transportation in Trinidad and Tobago
- All Lodging
- All Meals
- Park Entrance Fees
- A portion of proceeds donated to Black Swamp Bird Observatory

Price Does Not Include:

- Airfare to and from Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
- Airport Taxes
- Passport and Visa Fees
- Alcoholic Beverages
- Personal Items
- Travel Insurance
- Tips

Deposit:

A deposit of \$500 per person is required to hold your spot on this tour. The remaining balance is due no later than 3 months prior to the scheduled start date of the tour (March 21, 2026).

If you have any questions about this tour or would like to sign up for it, please contact us at info@sabrewingnaturetours.com, by phone at 317-324-8505, or register through our website at sabrewingnaturetours.com.

Responsibility/Disclaimer Statement:

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