



**GOLDEN GATE
BIRD ALLIANCE**

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

**28 NOVEMBER – 09 DECEMBER 2024
27 NOVEMBER – 08 DECEMBER 2025**



*The beautiful near-endemic **White-tailed Sabrewing** is a major target on this tour (photo Fraser Bell).*

For their small size of less than 2,000 square miles (~5,100 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 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**, found only 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 taking 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 then bird our way across Tobago, exploring its wetlands and forests for specials such as **Blue-backed Manakin** and **Venezuelan Flycatcher**.



*We should find several **Rufous-tailed Jacamars** throughout the tour (photo Fraser Bell).*

After four nights on Tobago we transfer to 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 **Blue Dacnis** and **Tufted Coquette**.

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 end the tour with two nights 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.



*Watching the **Scarlet Ibis** returning to roost in the Caroni Swamp is such a memorable experience (photo Fraser Bell).*

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 to tranquil Tobago

On arrival at Robinson International Airport, you will be met by your guide and taken to the north-eastern tip of Tobago to start our two-night stay at a beautiful beach-front hotel. Here the group will have the chance to meet over dinner, discuss the tour and enjoy the breath-taking views across the bay.

Overnight: Blue Waters Inn



*The impressive **Great Black Hawk** is often seen during our time in Tobago (photo Fraser Bell).*

Day 2. Little Tobago Island

An easy morning around the hotel grounds will provide a great introduction to birding in Tobago, where we will inevitably encounter the raucous **Rufous-vented Chachalaca**, alongside **Red-crowned Woodpecker**, **Fuscous Flycatcher**, **Barred Antshrike**, **Northern White-fringed Antwren**, **Scrub Greenlet**, and the gorgeous endemic **Trinidad Motmot**. With luck we might see a **Great Black Hawk** soaring over the canopy, or **Belted Kingfisher** foraging along the shore. In the late morning we will board a 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** or **Green 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. Tonight, there may be the option of night birding from our hotel, to seek **White-tailed Nightjar**, and the secretive **Striped Owl**.

Overnight: Blue Waters Inn



Red-billed Tropicbird nest on the cliff tops of Little Tobago Island (photo Fraser Bell).

Day 3. Main Ridge

With an early start we depart for Tobago's Main Ridge mountain range which offers us the best chance for Tobago's forest specials. 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 more common here than in Trinidad, alongside **Blue-backed Manakin**, **Stripe-breasted Spinetail**, **Fuscous** and **Venezuelan Flycatchers**, **White-winged Becard**, **White-throated Spadebill**, **Yellow-legged Thrush**, **Grey-throated Leaf-tosser**, **Olivaceous Woodcreeper**, and the Endangered (IUCN) **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. Out of the forest, we visit a hummingbird garden to enjoy close views of Tobago's six hummingbird species, which alongside the near-endemic **White-tailed Sabrewing**, include **Black-throated Mango**, **White-necked Jacobin**, and the stunning **Ruby-topaz Hummingbird** - a migratory species which would have recently returned from South America.

Overnight: Magdalena Grand Resort



*Hummingbirds, such as this **Black-throated Mango**, will keep us entertained while on Trinidad and Tobago (photo Fraser Bell).*

Day 4. 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 resort where we can continue birding in the afternoon. Our resort boasts the most accessible mangrove walkway in Tobago, which makes it one of the best places to see **Mangrove Cuckoo**. The grounds host a variety of wetland habitats, where we will look for **Wattled Jacana, Purple Gallinule, Green-rumped Parrotlet, Black-faced Grassquit, Pale-vented Pigeon, Eared Dove**, amongst migratory waterbirds, warblers and swallows. The quiet grounds are a wonderful place to spend an afternoon and, as dusk falls, we will try to see one of the pair of resident **American Barn Owls** hunting over the golf course.

Overnight: Magdalena Grand Resort



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

Day 5. Transfer to Trinidad and the Asa Wright Centre

We board an early flight to Trinidad's Piarco International Airport and, on arrival in Trinidad, we will spend a short time birding wetlands near the airport for species including **Pied Water Tyrant**, **White-headed Marsh Tyrant**, **Yellow-chinned Spinetail**, **Saffron Finch**, **Ringed Kingfisher**, **Rufous-browed Peppershrike**, **Green-rumped Parrotlet**, amongst herons and waders. Our main targets are **Red-breasted Blackbird** and **Ruddy-breasted Seedeater**, which is now rare in Trinidad, having suffered due to its popularity in the pet trade. After our visit to Trinidad's bustling lowlands, we will be taken the short distance into the solitude of the northern range, to start our five-night stay at the famous Asa Wright Nature Centre.

Here the group will enjoy brilliant birding, and breath-taking views from the comfort of the veranda. Here we hope to be joined by vibrant **Purple**, **Green** and **Red-Legged Honeycreepers**, **Violaceous Euphonia**, **Turquoise Tanager**, and more than ten hummingbird species are regularly seen here, including the impressive **Tufted Coquette**, **Little Hermit** and **Long-billed Starthroat**. The veranda provides a good viewpoint across the forested valley, and we may spot **Black Hawk-Eagle**, **Short-tailed Hawk**, **Scaled Pigeon**, **Lilac-tailed Parrotlet**, **Orange-winged Amazon**, or our first **Channel-billed Toucan** over the forest canopy below. We will spend some time night birding the entrance road and grounds, searching for **Short-tailed Nighthawk**, **Spectacled Owl**, **Mottled Owl** and **Ferruginous Pygmy Owl**, amongst mammals, reptiles and amphibians, which the Asa Wright guides excel at finding.

Overnight: [Asa Wright Nature Centre](#)



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

Day 6. A gentle introduction to birding in Trinidad

Today, we will bird at a comfortable pace, true to Caribbean style. 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 the species mentioned for the previous day and many more, including skulking **Barred Antshrike** and **Long-billed Gnatwren**, alongside **Black-tailed Tityra**, **Cocoa** and **Plain-brown Woodcreeper**, while **Blue Dacnis**, **Bay-headed Tanager** and **Trinidad Euphonia** can be seen in the canopy of flowering trees. Around the network of well-maintained trails, we hope to see **Squirrel Cuckoo**, **Green Hermit**, **Crimson-crested** and **Lineated Woodpecker**, **Ferruginous Pygmy Owl** 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 hope to encounter on the tour (photo Fraser Bell).

Day 7. 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 (photo Fraser Bell).

Day 8. 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](#)

Day 9. The Northern Range

On our final full day at Asa Wright Nature Centre, we will explore north of the center 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 at 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](#)



*It's brilliant fun to watch lekking male **White-bearded Manakin** whirring around the forest trails (photo Fraser Bell).*

Day 10. Transfer to Grand Riviere

We will enjoy a relaxed final morning spending more time on the trails and veranda at Asa Wright. Here, we will continue to seek skulking species such as **Grey-throated Leaf-tosser**, **White-bellied Antbird**, **Little Tinamou**, **Black-faced Antthrush**, **Silvered Antbird**, **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 swim, or a walk on the beach right outside the hotel.

Overnight: Mount Plaisir Estate Hotel



*We should get great views of several beautiful hummingbirds on our Trinidad and Tobago tour, such as the range-restricted duo of **Little Hermit** (top) and **Tufted Coquette** (photos Fraser Bell).*

Day 11. 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**, **Black-tailed Tityra**, **Lilac-tailed Parakeet**, **White-bearded Manakin**, **Crimson-crested Woodpecker**, **Silvered Antbird**, **Little Tinamou**, **Ferruginous Pygmy Owl**, **Lilac-tailed Parrotlet**, **Bat Falcon** 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.

After one last 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: Mount Plaisir Estate Hotel



Trinidad Piping Guans are secretive birds, but we make a special attempt to see these endangered birds in northeast Trinidad (photo Fraser Bell).

Day 12. Departure

Today you will have time at leisure, prior to your departure from Piarco 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:	4-8 in 2024, 6-8 in 2025
Dates:	28 November – 09 December 2024 27 November – 08 December 2025
Start:	Robinson International Airport, Trinidad
End:	Piarco International Airport, Trinidad
Prices:	US\$7,150 per person sharing – based on 4-8 participants (2024) US\$7,240 per person sharing – based on 6-8 participants (2025)
Single supplement:	US\$1,390 (2024) US\$1,556 (2025)

Price includes:

Meals/Water
Accommodation
Transport
Guiding fees
Internal return 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