

ITINERARY
TRINIDAD & TOBAGO
December 27, 2026 – January 5, 2027



The Bearded Bellbird is known for its loud, clanging call. While it can be difficult to track down on the mainland, due to its discontinuous distribution, we've seen, and heard, this interesting bird on our visits to Trinidad and Tobago. Photograph by participant Beth Potter.

We include here information for those interested in our 2026 Field Guides Trinidad & Tobago tour:

- a general introduction to the tour
- a description of the birding areas to be visited on the tour
- an abbreviated daily itinerary with some indication of the nature of each day's birding outings

Those who register for the tour will be sent this additional material:

- an annotated list of the birds recorded on a previous year's Field Guides trip to the area, with comments by guide(s) on notable species or sightings
- a detailed information bulletin with important logistical information and answers to questions regarding accommodations, air arrangements, clothing, currency, customs and immigration, documents, health precautions, and personal items
- a Field Guides checklist for preparing for and keeping track of the birds we see on the tour
- after the conclusion of the tour, a list of birds seen on the tour

The islands of Trinidad and Tobago, often considered part of the West Indies, lie only ten miles off the coast of Venezuela at their closest point. Biologically, they are most truly South American. To the birder not yet familiar with the riches of the "Bird Continent," they offer a perfectly balanced introduction. Many of the typical Neotropical bird families are represented here, including such exotic ones as motmots, jacamars, toucans, woodcreepers, ovenbirds, antbirds, cotingas, and manakins. Since the diversity within these families is less on the islands than on the adjacent mainland—often with just a few representatives—each new group can be enjoyed without imparting panic to the observer.

On Trinidad and Tobago, we'll encounter some wonderful Neotropical scenes: the whirring flash of a tiny male White-bearded Manakin, instantly transposed from one perch to another during a courtship dance; the explosive call of a Bearded Bellbird overhead, its "beard" of string-like throat wattles dangling loosely; the eerie descent to the cave of the

Oilbirds, those nocturnal, fruit-eating wonders; and, we hope, an army ant swarm, with its characteristic avian following intent on devouring hapless insects disturbed by the raiding ants.

Trinidad, measuring about forty by fifty-five miles and much closer to the mainland, is the larger and more diverse of the two islands. Here, while based at the Asa Wright Nature Centre, we'll explore the rainforest of the island's Northern Range, the drier savanna and scrub habitats near the old Waller Field air base, and the freshwater marsh at the edge of the island's huge Nariva Swamp. But we won't have to go very far to enjoy birding during our stay at Asa Wright. The Centre's grounds are full of birds, with tanagers and honeycreepers crowding the feeding trays at the veranda, hummingbirds buzzing at the garden flowers, and Crested Oropendolas hanging upside down in vocal display from adjacent trees.



*The Tufted Coquette has an interesting distribution on the islands; they are found on Trinidad, but not on Tobago.
Photograph by guide Marcelo Barrieros.*

After one morning of filling in the checklist with shorebirds and waders on the west coast, we'll travel to Caroni Swamp, a huge expanse of mangroves. As the day winds to a close, we'll make our way through the swamp to the fabled evening roost of thousands of Ibis. At dusk the spectacle is unforgettable, as various herons and egrets, and long lines of Scarlet Ibis—luminescent in the waning light—drift in to roost, perching like Christmas ornaments among the mangroves.

Tobago, though only one-sixteenth the size of Trinidad, has some special attractions of its own. From its palm-lined, coral-sand beaches and emerald seas to its massive stands of creaking giant bamboo, Tobago offers a more "Caribbean" atmosphere and setting. Its avifauna, too, is curiously distinct from that of Trinidad, combining a stronger West Indian element (White-cheeked Pintails, an abundance of Bananaquits) with a number of species characteristic of Venezuela but not occurring on Trinidad (e.g., Rufous-vented Chachalaca, Red-crowned Woodpecker, and the beautiful Blue-backed Manakin). And here, as in oceanic island avifaunas the world over, species that have survived have often flourished, developing somewhat broader ecological niches than their counterparts on Trinidad and the mainland (Trinidad Motmot comes to mind). In the beautiful and lush forests of the mountain interior, we'll search for the rare and local White-tailed Sabrewing, nearly wiped out in a 1963 hurricane.

One of the highlights of this part of the tour is a visit to Little Tobago Island, just offshore from our hotel. It was made famous, ornithologically speaking, as the site of a failed attempt to introduce Greater Bird-of-Paradise to the region, but it still has much appeal for the birder. We'll hike to the windward overlook and watch as Brown and Red-footed boobies, Magnificent Frigatebirds, and Red-billed Tropicbirds demonstrate their superior flight skills, riding updrafts from the cliffs below; some will pass by within yards of where we stand!

Trinidad and Tobago have long been field laboratories for some of the most familiar names in tropical biology, from Chapman, Finsch, and Cherrie to Gilliard, Beebe, Bond, and the Snows. Discover for yourself the allure of the tropics. You'll see what brings naturalists and birders back again and again.



We want to be sure you are on the right tour! Below is a description of the physical requirements of the tour. If you are concerned about the difficulty, please contact us about this and be sure to fully explain your concerns. We want to make sure you have a wonderful time with us, so if you are uncomfortable with the requirements, just let us know and we can help you find a better fitting tour! Field Guides will not charge you a change or cancellation fee if you opt out within 10 days of depositing.

Physical requirements of this tour

- **TRAILS & WALKING:** Moderate amounts of walking (1-3 miles per day) along trails, some of which are on level ground, but some trails are narrow, uneven, and sometimes muddy, with obstacles such as tree roots. At Asa Wright Nature Center, some of the rooms are uphill from the dining room and veranda, so some up and down can be expected on the lodge grounds, too. The trail to the Oilbird cave has steep, sometimes slippery sections, and the trail to Little Tobago overlook is also steep. Walking sticks can be useful.
- **POTENTIAL CHALLENGES:** Due to the narrow roads in Trinidad and Tobago, we travel in mid-sized vans. While these are certainly ample for our groups, participants will be expected to rotate seating (the guide will address how this will work at the beginning of the tour) each day. Those who are particularly sensitive to motion might find that motion sickness medication is helpful for negotiating the windy roads that we'll explore throughout the tour.
- **PACE:** The pace is relaxed to moderate on this tour, but some days are long and heat can add to fatigue. After breakfast (coffee/tea are available before 6 AM), we bird until lunch time. If we're birding away from the lodge for the day, we'll pack a picnic lunch; in other cases, we'll return to the lodge for lunch. On some days, we'll bird up until a late afternoon break, while on other days, we'll have the flexibility for a siesta after lunch. On several evenings, we'll also offer optional outings to look for nocturnal birds and other animals.
- **WEATHER:** Temperatures will range from the 60s at night to the 90s F during the day. Rain showers are possible, and humidity will be relatively high on Trinidad.
- **BATHROOM BREAKS:** Whenever possible, we use indoor restrooms, but on occasion, participants must be prepared to make a comfort stop in nature.
- **OPTING OUT:** Participants can easily opt to sit out a day or sometimes a half-day at Asa Wright Nature Centre or Blue Waters Inn - except on travel days.

If you are uncertain about whether this tour is a good match for your abilities, please don't hesitate to contact our office. If they cannot directly answer your queries, they will put you in touch with the guide.

About the Trinidad Piping-Guan: On our itinerary, we have a low to moderate chance of encountering the Trinidad Piping-Guan, an endemic Cracid found only in Trinidad's Northern Range. For those who might be interested in booking a pre- or post-trip extension through Asa Wright Nature Center to seek the Trinidad Piping-Guan in Grand Riviere at the northeastern corner of Trinidad, please contact our office.



*We'll visit the Caroni Swamp, where we'll see thousands of Scarlet Ibis as they flock to their evening roost.
Photograph by guide Doug Gochfeld.*

Itinerary for Trinidad & Tobago

Day 1, 27 Dec. Flight to Trinidad. Many flights from the central or western US arrive very late into Port of Spain. There are flights from Miami and New York that arrive early in the day but will require an overnight in Miami or New York for participants not originating in the East Coast. Rather than risk a late arrival followed by a 45 minute drive to Asa Wright **we strongly suggest you plan to arrive a night early, either in the US or Port of Spain.** We start birding early the morning of Day 2 and you will wish to be rested and ready. As we must book the day's activities in advance and coordinate with other groups we won't be able to accommodate late arrivals.

We will meet on the Veranda at the Asa Wright Nature Centre at 7:30pm on Day 1 to discuss the week's plan. Night at the Asa Wright Nature Centre.

Days 2-6, 28 Dec – 1 Jan. Birding on Trinidad. We'll spend these days exploring the many rich birding habitats of Trinidad, with our coverage divided between two radically different parts of the island—the forested Northern Range and the central lowlands, which, in spite of a high human population, still have some great birding. Some of our activities will depend on current information, tides, the weather forecast, and other variables, but we'll work it out with the Centre staff upon arrival and pass the day-by-day plan on to you then. Our introduction to Trinidad's birds will start right on the very birdy grounds of the Asa Wright Nature Centre, located in the Arima Valley on the south slope of the Northern Range.

Our first morning will be hectic, with dozens of hummingbirds, honeycreepers, and tanagers having a mass breakfast on the Centre's legendary feeders, while toucans, bellbirds, oropendolas, or even an Ornate Hawk-Eagle might perch further out on a matchwood snag. As we traverse the Northern Range along the Blanchisseuse Road, the quality forest we first encountered at the Centre continues in breathtaking beauty and is home to a host of much-anticipated species, including White Hawk, Blue-headed Parrot, Green-backed Trogon, Black-faced Antthrush, Gray-throated Leaf-tosser, Golden-headed Manakin, Speckled Tanager, and more. Trinidad's lowlands are much altered but still contain some very important habitats. We'll visit the Nariva Swamp on the east coast, searching for highlight species like Pinnated Bittern, Silvered Antbird, Black-crested Antshrike, Ringed and Green kingfishers, and numerous raptors.

The Caroni Swamp on the west coast is quite different in character: it is primarily a mangrove swamp and the site of one of nature's most spectacular shows—the evening roost of the Scarlet Ibis. In recent years, the ibis have also been joined by a flock of American Flamingos in the lagoon. We'll also make a trip to Waterloo, a coastal area south of Caroni that can be hopping with shorebirds, gulls, terns, and herons. The rest of our lowland birding will be divided between some remnant forest blocks, second growth and scrub around Waller Field, and the Aripo savanna, where we will seek out the dozens of open-land species present. Nights at the Asa Wright Nature Centre.

Day 7, 2 Jan. Travel to Tobago and birding the western end of the island. Today, we'll leave our base at Asa Wright and travel to the airport for the short flight to Tobago. Our birding on Tobago will begin right away with a drive through the nearby community of Bon Accord, where we might find waterbirds and our first Caribbean Martin, Black-faced Grassquit, and Eared Dove. A visit to the sewage ponds at Tobago Plantations brings the chance of Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Purple Gallinule, Mangrove Cuckoo, Red-crowned Woodpecker, Scrub Greenlet, and—if we're very lucky—Masked Duck. After lunch, we'll head to our hotel in Speyside (at the east end of the island), arriving by late afternoon. Night at Blue Waters Inn.

Day 8, 3 Jan. Birding the Central Highlands. The mountain forests of Tobago have recovered considerably since Hurricane Flora smashed the island in 1963. We'll devote much of our day to birding in the lush forest of the Main Ridge in search of several island specialties, including the rare but recovering White-tailed Sabrewing and the spectacular Blue-backed Manakin. Other possibilities here include Great Black-Hawk, Olivaceous Woodcreeper, Yellow-legged Thrush, Fuscous and Venezuelan flycatchers, Stripe-breasted Spinetail, White-throated Spadebill (rare), and Plain Antvireo. We'll have free time in the afternoon to enjoy the picturesque shoreline and waters of our hotel. Night at Blue Waters Inn.



While many of the birds we'll see can also be seen on mainland South America, the distribution of these birds on the islands is quite interesting. For example, the Northern White-fringed Antwren is found on Tobago, but not on Trinidad.

Photograph by guide Eric Hynes.

Day 9, 4 Jan. Little Tobago Island. Located just offshore from our seaside hotel, Little Tobago is a small but interesting island that is home to several fascinating species of seabirds. The trip across takes about 20 minutes and can be rough in windy weather; those who are prone to seasickness should take the appropriate measures. Once on Little Tobago, we will climb slowly (up many concrete steps and a wide, dirt trail) to the lookout, where we should be able to see both Brown and Red-footed boobies (the latter in two color morphs) at nests. Even more spectacular are the Red-billed Tropicbirds, which glide past only a few yards away or sit on nests tucked under nearby cacti or broadleaf plants. On our way back to the main island, we might take a bit longer and travel slowly over Angel Reef or the Japanese Garden, giving us an excellent chance to see many spectacular corals and reef fish through the glass bottom of our boat. After lunch at Blue Waters Inn, we'll head to the Tobago airport for the short flight back to Trinidad. Once we arrive, we'll transfer to our hotel, which is located right near Trinidad's Piarco International Airport. Our final dinner will be nearby. Night at Holiday Inn Express Suites in Trincity.

Day 10, 5 Jan. Departure for home. You may schedule your departure for any time today. *Have a safe trip home!*

About Your Guide

Megan Edwards Crewe has been birding since childhood, when she discovered she could have her father all to herself (rather than sharing him with her brothers and sisters) if she was willing to get up very early on Saturdays and tromp around the woods in search of birds. After graduating with a degree in biology from Purdue University, she sampled an impressive variety of jobs before discovering Field Guides. Since joining the company more than two decades ago, Megan—who brims with information and enthusiasm—has delighted in sharing the wonders and adventures of birding and the natural world with participants.

One unexpected bonus of the job has been meeting her British husband Mike, with whom she co-led a trip to France in 2000. They've bounced back and forth across the Atlantic since then, and are now settled in a small coastal village in Norfolk, England, where they're enjoying long walks around their "local patch" and slowly converting their half-acre garden into a wildlife refuge. She has led 18 previous trips to Trinidad & Tobago, and is looking forward to getting back to the islands.

Visit <https://fieldguides.com/guides> for Megan's complete tour schedule; just click on her photo.

*"I like **Megan** because she is so clear about what to expect, she gives you tidbits about the birds the whole time you are out in the field and she has wonderful eyes for spotting birds. She has a gentle sense of humor and she gives each of her participants her full attention." L.R., Guyana*

Financial Information

FEE: \$5995 from Port-of-Spain

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$850

DEPOSIT: \$600 per person

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: June 30, 2026

LIMIT: 10

Other Things You Need to Know

TOUR MANAGER: The manager for this tour is Sharon Mackie. Sharon will be happy to assist you in preparing for the tour. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call her!

ACCOMMODATIONS: The Asa Wright Nature Centre, the Blue Waters Inn, and the Holiday Inn Express offer fine, modern accommodations. All rooms have private bathrooms, and both Blue Waters Inn and the Holiday Inn Express have air-conditioning; rooms at the Asa Wright Nature Centre have ceiling fans.

DOCUMENTS: Be sure to verify the latest entry requirements for each country you will visit or transit.

Passport: A current passport valid for six months beyond the date of your return is necessary for US citizens to enter Trinidad and Tobago. It should be in good condition, and have at least one blank page for each country on your itinerary. If you are not a US citizen, please check with the Trinidadian consulate nearest you for entry requirements.

Yellow Fever Vaccination card: Yellow Fever is widespread in many parts of Trinidad and we recommend all travelers to Trinidad be vaccinated against the disease. Please check the CDC for current information <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/trinidad-and-tobago> and consult with your physician about whether the vaccine is appropriate for you (there are contraindications for some individuals).

AIR ARRANGEMENTS: This tour begins and ends in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad (Piarco International Airport, POS)

Arrival: Port of Spain, December 27, by 7:30 PM. **Please be aware** that many flights from the central or western US arrive very late into Port of Spain. There are flights from Miami and New York that arrive early in the day but will require an overnight in Miami or New York for participants not originating in the East Coast. Rather than risk a late arrival followed by a 45-minute drive to Asa Wright, **we strongly suggest you plan to arrive a night early, either in the US or Port of Spain.**

Departure: Port-of-Spain, January 5, any time.

Please wait to purchase airline tickets until we notify you that the tour is confirmed to operate. At that time, we'll be glad to assist with your flight arrangements at no service fee.

LUGGAGE: Please be aware that many airlines have recently modified their luggage policies and are charging additional fees for checked bags. Updates could easily occur before your departure, so you may wish to contact your airline to verify the policy. Additional charges for bags on any flights, whether these are covered by the tour fee or not, will be the client's responsibility.

SMOKING: Almost all of our clients prefer a smoke-free environment. If you smoke, please be sensitive to the group and refrain from smoking at meals, in vehicles, and in proximity to the group on trails and elsewhere.

TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS: **The tour fee is \$5995 for one person in double occupancy from Port-of-Spain.** It includes all lodging from Day 1 through Day 9, all meals from breakfast on Day 2 through dinner on Day 9, round-trip air from Port-of-Spain (Trinidad) to Crown Point (Tobago), all ground transportation, entrance fees, lodge staff, local guides and drivers, and the guide services of the tour leader(s). Tipping at group meals and for drivers, porters, and local guides is included in your tour fee and will be handled for the group by your Field Guides leader(s). However, if you would like to recognize your Field Guides leader(s) or any local guide(s) for exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are optional and not expected.

The above fee does not include your airfare to and from Port-of-Spain, airport taxes, visa fees, any checked or carry-on baggage charges imposed by the airlines, any alcoholic beverages, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

The single supplement for the tour is \$850 for those requesting a single room. If you do not have a roommate but wish to share, we will try to pair you with a roommate from the tour; but if none is available, you will be billed for the single supplement. Our tour fees are based on double occupancy; one-half the cost of a double room is priced into the tour fee. The single supplement is calculated by taking the actual cost of a single room and subtracting one-half the cost of a double room (plus any applicable taxes).

TOUR REGISTRATION: To register for this tour, please contact us at fieldguides.com/contact-us/. Our office will be in touch with you by email by the next business day (Mon-Fri) with instructions on how to complete our electronic registration form and medical questionnaire. (We are no longer accepting the paper version.)

Please send your deposit of \$600 per person; see <https://fieldguides.com/payment-options/> for our Payment Options. **Full payment of the tour fee is due 180 days prior to departure, or by June 30, 2026.** We will bill you for the final payment at either 180 days or when the tour has reached sufficient subscription to operate, whichever date comes later. Since the cost of your trip insurance and airline tickets is generally non-refundable, please do not finalize these purchases until you have received final billing for the tour or have been advised that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate by your tour manager.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Refund of deposit and full payment, less \$100 handling fee, will be made if cancellation is received up to 180 days before departure. If cancellation occurs between 179 and 90 days before the departure date, 50% of the full tour fee is non-refundable, which would include the full deposit if the final payment has not yet been paid. Thereafter, all deposits and payments are not refundable and non-transferable.

Our cancellation policy only applies to payments made to Field Guides for tour (and any services included in those fees). Airline tickets not included in the tour fee and purchased separately often carry penalties for cancellation or change, or are sometimes totally non-refundable. Additionally, if you take out trip insurance the cost of that insurance is not refundable, so it is best to purchase the policy just prior to making full payment for the tour or at the time you purchase airline tickets, depending upon the airline's restrictions.

The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure. In most such cases, full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. Note this exception, however: If you have been advised pre-tour that there is a non-refundable portion of your tour fee no matter the reason for Field Guides cancellation of the tour, that portion will not be refunded. The right is reserved to substitute in case of emergency another guide for the original one.

TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EMERGENCY INSURANCE: We strongly recommend purchasing trip cancellation (including medical emergency) insurance to protect your investment in case of injury or illness to you or an immediate family member before or during a trip. Because we must remit early and substantial deposits to our suppliers, we cannot offer refunds for cancellations outside of our Cancellation Policy. If a participant is unable to join or continue a tour due to

illness, all related expenses will be their responsibility, and no refunds can be issued for missed days. Please wait to purchase insurance until we notify you that the tour is confirmed to operate, as most policies are non-refundable.

For full details, visit our Trip Cancellation Insurance page at <https://fieldguides.com/trip-cancellation-insurance/>.

RESPONSIBILITY: For and in consideration of the opportunity to participate in the tour, each tour participant and each parent or legal guardian of a tour participant who is under 18 agrees to release, indemnify, and hold harmless Field Guides Incorporated, its agents, servants, employees, shareholders, officers, directors, attorneys, and contractors as more fully set forth in the Release and Indemnity Agreement on the registration form. Field Guides Incorporated acts only as an agent for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, or other means, and assumes no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity caused by defect in such vehicles or for any reason whatsoever, including the acts, defaults, or bankruptcies of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. You acknowledge and agree that Field Guides Incorporated is not responsible for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. The tour participant shall bear all such losses and expenses. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely.

Participants should be in good health and should consult a physician before undertaking a tour. If you have questions about the physical requirements of a tour, please contact our office for further information. Participants should prepare for the tour by reading the detailed itinerary, the information bulletin, and other pertinent matter provided by Field Guides. Each participant is responsible for bringing appropriate clothing and equipment as recommended in our bulletins.

THE RECEIPT OF YOUR TOUR DEPOSIT SHALL BE DEEMED TO BE CONSENT TO THE ABOVE CONDITIONS. EACH TOUR PARTICIPANT AND EACH PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN OF A TOUR PARTICIPANT WHO IS UNDER 18 SHALL SIGN AND DELIVER THE RELEASE AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION.

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