ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

Puerto Rico

Forgotten Greater Antilles

28th January to 2nd February 2022 (6 days)



Yellow-shouldered Blackbird by Clayton Burne

Surrounded by the turquoise Caribbean Sea, Puerto Rico is a rugged and mountainous island containing a wide variety of bird-rich habitats. Host to 17 endemics and numerous Greater Antillean and Caribbean restricted species, Puerto Rico has surprisingly been forgotten amongst its more illustrious neighbours - Cuba, Jamaica and Hispaniola. While the many endemics and near-endemics are the priority, the island also plays host to a number of wintering North American passerines. From the capital, San Juan, we will work our way through the northern coastline, cool slopes of Maricao and the dry forests of the south west. Our tour takes in the major habitats, offering us an excellent chance of seeing almost all the island's endemics.

THE TOUR AT A GLANCE…

THE ITINERARY

Day 1	**Arrival in San Juan**
Day 2	**San Juan to Manati via Bosque Cambalache State Forest & Arecibo**
Day 3	**Arecibo to La Parguera via Laguna Cartagena**
Day 4	**Maricao Forest Reserve & Cabo Rojo**
Day 5	**Lajas to San Juan via Bahia de Jobos Natural Reserve & Caguas**
Day 6	**Final departure**

TOUR ROUTE MAP…



THE TOUR IN DETAIL…

Day 1: Arrival in San Juan. After landing in San Juan, we will head to our hotel within the city. For those arriving early, you'll have the time to visit the historic Old City, hosting sections of the ancient defence walls as well as the 16th-century Fort San Felipe del Morro and the 17th-century Fort San Cristóbal. While taking in the history and culture of the city, you are likely to encounter some of the commoner island birds including Magnificent Frigatebird, Brown Pelican, Zenaida and White-winged Doves, Grey Kingbird, Red-legged Thrush, Northern Mockingbird, Bananaquit, Greater Antillean Grackle and possibly Pearly-eyed Thrasher.



Adelaide's Warbler by Forrest Rowland

The leafy gardens and tree-lined streets also host some of Puerto Rico's endemics, with Puerto Rican Woodpecker, Puerto Rican Oriole and Puerto Rican Spindalis all being distinct possibilities. This evening, we will all meet up for a welcome dinner, affording us the opportunity to meet our fellow participants and discuss our forthcoming adventures.

Day 2: San Juan to Manati via Bosque Cambalache State Forest & Arecibo. We'll depart San Juan early this morning en route to Bosque Estatal de Cambalache. Despite its small size, this is one of Puerto Rico's premier birdwatching sites and hosts many of the island's endemic birds.

We shouldn't have to move very far from the parking lot to find such gems as Puerto Rican Tody, Puerto Rican Lizard Cuckoo, Puerto Rican Vireo, Puerto Rican Bullfinch, Adelaide's Warbler and the ubiquitous Bananaquit. We will also spend some time searching for the sneaky Key West Quail-Dove.



Puerto Rican Tody by Clayton Burne

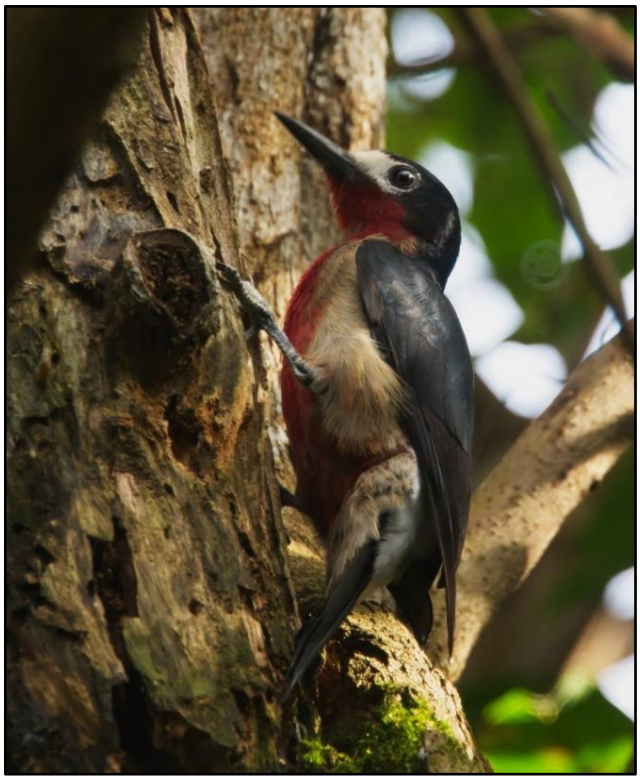
After lunch we'll make our way to the open farmlands, ponds and charcas near to Manati for a number of more widespread species such as Grasshopper Sparrow, Scaly-naped Pigeon, Glossy Ibis, Puerto Rican Woodpecker, Puerto Rican Flycatcher, Grey Kingbird and Cave Swallow, as well as the introduced Bronze Mannikin, Eurasian Collared Dove, Venezuelan Troupial and Orange-breasted Waxbill.

Day 3: Arecibo to La Parguera via Laguna Cartagena. We'll start the morning birding the Arecibo area for any species we may be missing, before continuing our journey to the bird rich

south western corner of the island. En route, we may stop at a series of hummingbird feeders, where we should be able to enjoy excellent views of Puerto Rican Emerald as well as both Green and Puerto Rican Mango's.

We will make some stops along the scenic coastal highway for White-tailed Tropicbird and Brown Booby before stopping at Laguna Cartagena, a former duck hunting preserve. Surrounded by abandoned agricultural lands, the wetland is now a National Wildlife Refuge. Aside from the commoner waders and wildfowl, our priority species here include Yellow-breasted Crake, Least Bittern, West Indian Whistling Duck, White-cheeked Pintail, the rare Masked Duck, Glossy Ibis, Sora and Caribbean Coot.

Later in the afternoon we will head to a stakeout in La Parguera for the endangered Yellow-shouldered Blackbird. The nearby mangroves are excellent sites for Mangrove Warbler and Clapper Rail.



Puerto Rican Woodpecker by Forrest Rowland

This evening we may head to the dry forests of Guanica for some twilight birding, with specific emphasis on finding the vocal, but difficult to see Puerto Rican Nightjar.

Day 4: Maricao Forest Reserve & Cabo Rojo. This morning we will make our way up the cool slopes of the Cordillera Central to Bosque Estatal de Maricao. We will spend most of the morning looking for the rather recently-described (1971) Elfin Woods Warbler. Resembling a Black-and-white Warbler (which winters on the island), this attractive but low density (±1800 individuals) endemic can be difficult to track down. While looking for the warbler, we are likely to bump into other endemic gems including the diminutive Puerto Rican Emerald and the much larger Green Mango.



Puerto Rican Tanager by Forrest Rowland

Puerto Rican Tanager was declared a monotypic family recently, and Maricao is perhaps the best place to find this species. Indeed, it can be fairly numerous, even calling incessantly at times. A number of additional endemics are present, including Lesser Antillean Pewee, Puerto Rican Vireo, Puerto Rican Oriole, Puerto Rican Spindalis, Antillean Euphonia and the resident endemic sub-species of Sharp-shinned Hawk.

This afternoon we will head back to the coast, spending the afternoon at Cabo Rojo. Here we should see a number of

waterfowl species, but or main targets are Antillean Mango, Caribbean Elaenia and Adelaide's Warbler. This woodland is perhaps one of the best places in the world to see Mangrove Cuckoo.



Puerto Rican Emerald by Clayton Burne

Day 5: Lajas to San Juan via Bahia de Jobos Natural Reserve & Caguas. We depart Lajas early this morning to traverse the entire southern coastline of Puerto Rico. Our first proper birding stop will be at Bahia de Jobos Natural Reserve. We'll be looking for Antillean Crested Hummingbird, Clapper Rail, a number of waders and shorebirds, as well as any endemics we may still be missing up to this point.

In the afternoon, we'll make a stop at Caguas to target Plain Pigeon and possibly enjoy further views of Green Mango, Puerto Rican Spindalis, Puerto Rican Oriole or Adelaide's Warbler.

Thereafter, we'll return to San Juan for the night.

Day 6: Final departure. This short tour of Puerto Rico concludes after breakfast today.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:

Tour dates, prices, single supplement rates, approximate flight costs and spaces available for this tour are displayed on our website. Please see under IMPORTANT NOTES below.

This includes:

- All meals from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 6;
- All lodgings;
- Ground transportation;
- Reserve entrance fees;
- Extra activities as mentioned in the itinerary; and
- All guiding services (including tips for local guides and services).

The tour fee does not include:

- Visa fees;
- **ANY** flights;
- Any drinks;
- Special gratuities; and
- Telephone calls, laundry and other items of a personal nature.

Single Supplement: The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single

accommodation. If RBL cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

IMPORTANT NOTES:
a) Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is however fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing (usually 4 months before the tour.) The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates, which are also quoted in the respective fixed currency.
b) Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration a small party supplement will have to be charged.
c) Furthermore, these costs are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.
d) Lastly, we may be forced to change or alter the itinerary and/or the designated Rockjumper leader at short or no notice due to unforeseen circumstances; please be aware that we will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.

Tipping: As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, restaurants etc.) are included on this tour. However, this does NOT include your Rockjumper leader. If, therefore, you feel that he has given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip him.

Special Notes:

- Much of our time is spent in vehicles in order to get to the best areas for birds and animals. The more luggage you pack the less room there is in the vehicle, so it is important for the comfort of your fellow travellers that you do not over-pack. Kindly stick to 20kg (44lb) for check in luggage and 8kg (+-18lb) for hand luggage.
- This tour does not require a high level of fitness; however, much of the forest birding will be on foot and may require a fair amount of walking (always at a slow pace).
- Crime is problematic in certain areas of Puerto Rico. Exercise caution as you would for any big city where crime exists. Do not unnecessarily flaunt cash and valuables and do not leave valuables exposed in the vehicle.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE DETAILS:
This tour **does not** include **ANY** airfares. The tour will start with a welcome dinner at our hotel near San Juan on day 1. Please ensure that you have arrived at our hotel in San Juan by 17:30. Further meeting details in this regard will be forwarded to you in due course. The tour will conclude after breakfast at San Juan International Airport on day 6.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your **Tour Confirmation** package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

FLIGHTS:
Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport, San Juan (IATA: SJU) is the main port of entry for international flights to Puerto Rico and is best serviced by American Airlines, Delta, United and British Airways. **Please DO NOT book any flights until you have consulted the Rockjumper office for confirmation on the status of the tour.**