Guyana

Birds & Wildlife (Relaxed)

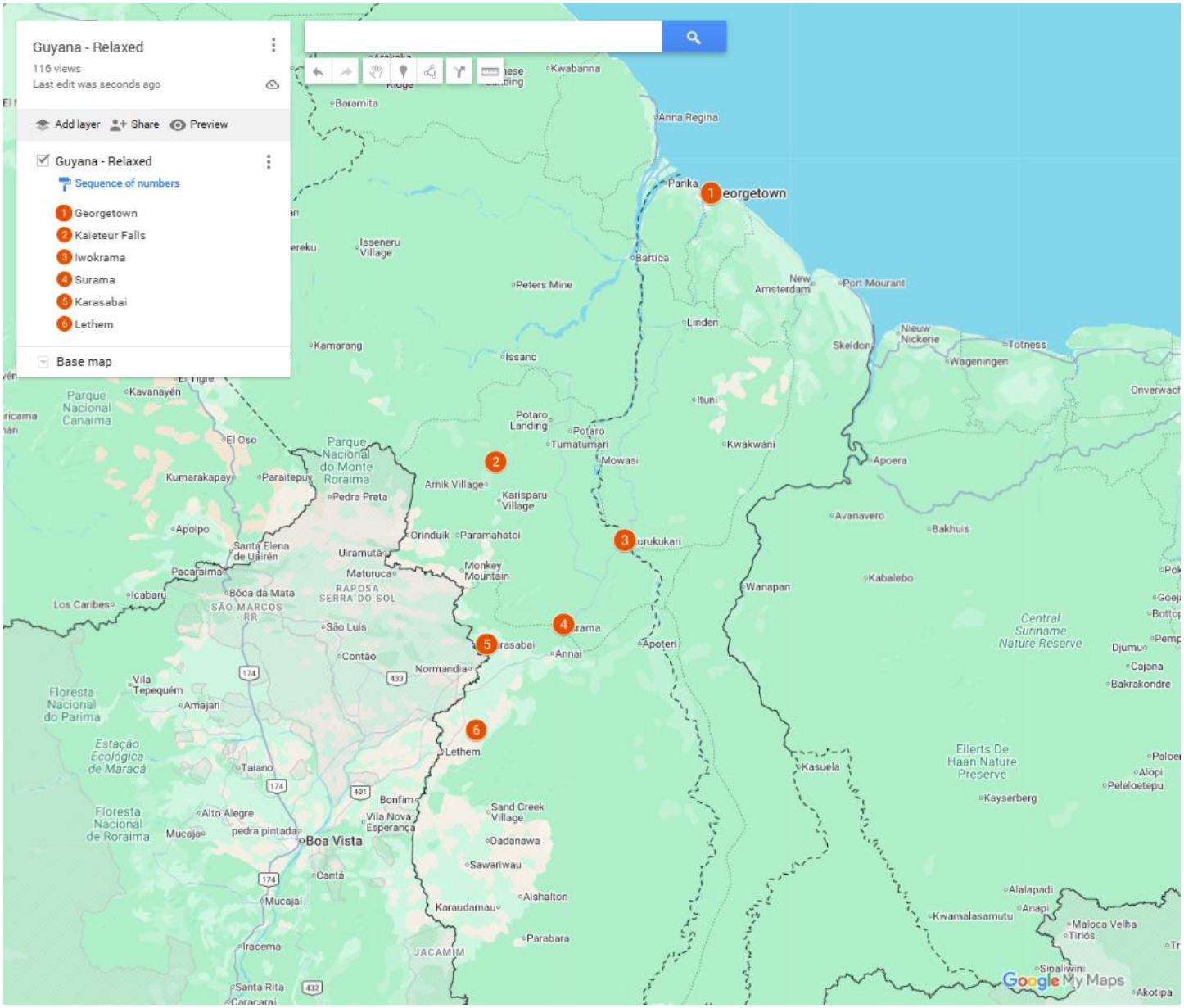
Giant Anteater by Adam Riley

Guyana, a small English-speaking South American country nestled on the Atlantic Coast east of Venezuela, has become recognised as one of South America's top birding and wildlife destinations. Due to a tiny population and an incredibly high proportion of undisturbed habitat, Guyana hosts some of the last relatively unexplored wildernesses on Earth. A variety of pristine ecosystems occur here, from lowland rainforests that stretch as far as the eye can see, to the savannahs and waterways of the famed Rupununi region, not to mention the dramatic Kaieteur Falls (one of the world's highest single-drop waterfalls), all of which ensures that this magical destination has something to offer every birder and nature enthusiast.

Numerous large macaws, Sun Parakeet, Guianan Cock-of-the-rock, Scarlet Ibis, Rio Branco Antbird, Guianan Red Cotinga, Capuchinbird, Crimson Fruitcrow, Grey-winged Trumpeter and Harpy Eagle are just some of the many birding highlights that can be anticipated on this tour! Mammals are also a major emphasis, and we can expect species ranging from the amazing Giant Anteater to various New World monkeys, plus a chance to see the elusive Jaguar!

Itinerary & Map

Day 1	**Arrival in Georgetown**
Day 2	**Georgetown & surrounds**
Day 3	**Georgetown; flight over Kaieteur Falls to Iwokrama River Lodge**
Days 4 & 5	**Iwokrama River Lodge & surrounds**
Day 6	**Iwokrama River Lodge to Surama Lodge**
Days 7 & 8	**Surama Lodge**
Day 9	**Surama Lodge to Karasabai & Sun Parakeet quest**
Days 10 & 11	**Rupununi savanna**
Day 12	**Ireng River; flight to Georgetown**
Day 13	**Final departure**



Birding sites in detail

Georgetown. We travel along the coast, eastward from Georgetown, to look for the first of many range-restricted species. These include the highly localised Blood-colored Woodpecker, an astonishingly colourful *Veniliornis* found only in the Guianas and almost wholly limited to the narrow coastal plain, plus the attractive Rufous Crab Hawk, a species that has been negatively affected by the destruction of its preferred mangrove habitat. We will also search for the poorly-known White-bellied Piculet that can be found here and the localised Plain-bellied Emerald. Other birding targets in these mangrove forests include Little Cuckoo, Straight-billed and Buff-throated Woodcreepers, the attractive Black-crested Antshrike, Sooty-headed, Southern Beardless and Mouse-coloured Tyrannulets, Pale-tipped Inezia, Boat-billed Tody-Tyrant, Spotted Tody-Flycatcher, White-winged Becard, Violaceous Euphonia, Hooded Tanager and Bicoloured Conebill.

Blood-colored Woodpecker by Lev Frid

Depending on tides, we may bird some nearby mudflats to for waders (a variety of northern migrants will be around), the brilliant Scarlet Ibis, Black Skimmer, Brown Pelican and Magnificent Frigatebird. A nearby heronry also allows opportunities to see more widespread species, including Black-crowned and Yellow-crowned Night Herons, Little Blue Heron, and Western Cattle and Snowy Egrets.

Georgetown Botanical Gardens. Despite being located in central Georgetown, the expansive grounds and large tropical trees, lawns and wetlands provide for exciting birding. Some of the species we are likely to see include Snail Kite, Yellow-headed Caracara, Wattled Jacana, Pale-vented Pigeon, numerous Ruddy Ground Doves, Red-shouldered Macaw, Green-rumped Parrotlet, the localised Festive Amazon, Yellow-crowned and Orange-winged Amazons in good numbers, Greater and Smooth-billed Anis, Yellow-chinned Spinetail, the cute Common Tody-Flycatcher, Pied Water-Tyrant, noisy Rusty-margined Flycatchers and Great Kiskadees, Tropical and Grey Kingbirds, the lovely Black-capped Donacobius, Tropical

Kaieteur Falls by Lev Frid

Mockingbird, Pale-breasted Thrush, Yellow Warbler, Yellow Oriole, Carib Grackle, Red-capped Cardinal, Blue-grey, Palm and Turquoise Tanagers, and the uncommon Wing-barred Seedeater.

Kaieteur Falls. From Georgetown we'll to Kaieteur, the world's highest free-falling waterfall. Though Venezuela's Angel Falls are greater in total height, their filamentous drop occurs by stages whereas Kaieteur is a single, massive, thundering cataract 100 meters (over 300 ft) wide, created as the Potaro River makes a sheer drop of 228 meters (almost 750 ft), nearly five times the height of Niagara! The spectacle is all the more impressive for its remoteness and it is altogether possible that we'll be the only persons viewing it at the time. Here we will also use the opportunity to look for White-chinned and White-tipped Swifts swirling over the gorge, and perhaps we'll be lucky enough to see the astonishingly colourful Guianan Cock-of-the-rock, White-tailed Goldenthroat or Musician Wren in the surrounding vegetation, or even Orange-breasted Falcon soaring over the gorge as it hunts for swifts.

Rufous Crab Hawk by Lev Frid

Iwokrama River Lodge. The forest that surrounds the Iwokrama Field Station is as diverse as it is extensive. We'll bird a number a number of different sites during our time here.

The riverine habitat near the field station offers open views from the river edge as well as from the comfortable thatch-covered dining area. Here we will keep our eyes out for a resident pair of Bat Falcons, Red-throated Caracara and congregations of Giant Cowbird and Pied Plover on the lodge lawns. Birdwatching along the riverbank in surrounding areas might produce our first sightings of the gaudy Sunbittern, Green Ibis or Capped Heron. A unique mammal also occurs in this area, the White-faced Saki, among other more widespread species such as Guianan Weeper Capuchin, Guianan Red Howler and Guianan Squirrel Monkey.

Guianan Red Howler Monkey by Adam Riley

Birding around the lodge clearing should produce Little Chachalaca, Lined Forest Falcon, flocks of Painted and Golden-winged Parakeets, Blue-tailed Emerald, Black-throated Trogon, Black Nunbird, the spectacular Pompadour Cotinga, Black-necked Aracari, the Red-billed form of White-throated Toucan, Ringed Woodpecker, Crested Oropendola, Moriche Oriole, White-shouldered Tanager, and Lesson's, Ruddy-breasted and Chestnut-bellied Seedeaters.

The Screaming Piha Trail, is home to an incredible density of its namesake; and,

between the piercing chorus of piha screams, we will listen and look out for Bronzy Jacamar, Chestnut and Variable Woodpeckers, Amazonian and Dusky-throated Antshrikes, Grey Antbird, Collared Trogon, Strong-billed, Plain-brown and White-chinned Woodcreepers, and White-crowned and Golden-headed Manakins.

Guianan Toucanet by Lev Frid

Heading towards Turtle Mountain, we may come across Harpy Eagle, Greater Yellow-headed and King Vultures, Grey-headed, Double-toothed and Plumbeous Kites, and both Great Black and secretive Black-faced Hawks. This section of the river is also good for Scaled Pigeon as well as Giant Otter. Upon reaching Turtle Mountain we will then explore the trails for a few hours, climbing to an elevation of about 900 feet (300m), allowing for stunning views of the forest canopy below and the marvellous Tepuis in the distance – provided the sky is clear! We also have a chance for fly-by views of one or more of five potential eagle species. In addition, this is one of the best stake-outs anywhere for the rare and localised Orange-breasted Falcon.

The trails in this section of the forest are normally active with rich mixed species bird flocks. Here we may look for the near-endemic Green Aracari, White Bellbird, Spix's and Marail Guans, Squirrel and the scarcer Black-bellied Cuckoos, Long-tailed and Reddish Hermits, Grey-breasted Sabrewing, Amazonian Motmot, Green-backed (Amazonian White-tailed) Trogon, Great Jacamar, the impressive Red-necked Woodpecker, attractive Collared Puffbird, White-lored Tyrannulet and Helmeted Pygmy Tyrant (which is often heard in the vine tangles above our heads). Careful searching of mid-level and sub-canopy flocks here have turned up Cinnamon-rumped Foliage-gleaner, Plain Xenops, Long-tailed, Wedge-billed, Amazonian Barred, Chestnut-rumped, Buff-throated and Lineated Woodcreepers, Mouse-coloured, Fasciated and Cinereous Antshrikes, Todd's, White-flanked, Brown-bellied and the localised Rufous-bellied Antwrens, Sepia-capped Flycatcher and secretive Golden-crowned Spadebill. Antbirds are also prolific and previous tours have enjoyed superb views of the remarkable White-plumed Antbird here as well as another army ant swarm follower, Rufous-throated Antbird.

Black Curassow by Adam Riley

In the evenings, we may drive along the various access road in search of Jaguar and nocturnal birds such as Common, Long-tailed and even Rufous Potoo, Blackish and Ladder-tailed Nightjars, and owls including Crested and Spectacled.

Mori Scrub. This area is characterised by an unusually low, sandy forest – which in turn, supports an interesting and unique assemblage of bird species, among them Rufous-crowned Elaenia, Black Manakin and

Red-shouldered Tanager. Other birds we will stop and look for include Guianan Red Cotinga, the stunning Blue-backed Tanager and, if we are very fortunate, a Rufous-winged Ground Cuckoo dashing across the road!

Giant River Otter by Adam Riley

Surama Lodge. Our simple but comfortable lodge is located literally right at the boundary between Guyana's massive rainforests and the vast, open Rupununi savanna, a stark habitat change that allows for a wide range of avian possibilities.

We'll spend time on the Burro Burro River in search of family groups of Giant Otter, possibly Lowland Tapir, and Red-faced Black Spider Monkeys, amongst other other mammals. On the bird front, this is a particularly great site for kingfishers and we may see Green-and-rufous, Green, Amazon and Ringed. A night walk back to our lodge could reveal nocturnal birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and insects, including swarms of fireflies.

The forest near Surama supports a great number of antbirds, and we will also be on the lookout for that wonderful phenomenon of Neotropical birding – army ant swarms! Often given away by excessive chatter or commotion, we can consider ourselves very lucky to be mixed in among one of these incredible spectacles, where hundreds of tiny creatures scurry for their lives away from the merciless army ants, thereby creating a frenzy of resultant bird activity. Among numerous woodcreepers, antbirds, and tyrant-flycatchers, two exceptional birds we are unlikely to see away from such ant swarms include the near-endemic Rufous-throated and the spectacular White-plumed Antbird – the latter of which must be seen to be believed for its remarkable head plumes! Other new species we hope to encounter during our stay here include several possible tinamous, White Hawk, Collared Forest Falcon, Dusky Parrot, Pale-tailed Barbthroat, Black-spotted Barbet, Cream-colored Woodpecker, Guianan Warbling, Black-throated and Dusky Antbirds, Grey Antwren, Ochre-bellied, Sulphury and attractive Yellow-throated Flycatchers, Whiskered Myiobius, Cinnamon Attila, Cinereous Mourner, Lemon-chested Greenlet, Buff-breasted Wren, Silver-beaked Tanager and the shy Pectoral Sparrow.

Guinan Cock-of-the-rock by Rob Williams

Potential mammals in the forested areas of Surama include troops of Guianan Weeper Capuchin and the starkly patterned White-faced Saki. The more open grassland habitat dotted with Sandpaper Trees near our lodge supports the remarkable King Vulture, Laughing Falcon, Lesser and

Yellow-bellied Elaenias, Glittering-throated Emerald, Grassland Sparrow and Buff-throated Saltator. Another star bird we will make a very special effort to locate during our stay here, and certainly one of the oddest-looking members of the cotinga family, is the fabulous Capuchinbird. Fortunately, there is a lek relatively close to our lodge, and we plan to visit this site where we might obtain great views as the males, sporting their bald blue heads, seek to attract females with their bizarre, cow-like groaning.

We also plan to do some night birding in the hope of locating the recently split Northern Tawny-bellied Screech Owl, Tropical Screech Owl, Lesser Nighthawk, White-tailed and Rufous Nightjars, and any one of four potoo species.

Green Aracari by Lev Frid

Another of the special birds that can be found around Surama is the Rufous-winged Ground Cuckoo. While Neomorphus ground cuckoos are undoubtedly amongst the toughest groups of birds to locate anywhere in the Neotropics, Surama offers one of the best-known opportunities for seeing this very sought-after and enigmatic species. To maximise our odds of finding one, we will use expert local guides to assist us. Nonetheless, we must count ourselves extremely fortunate if we succeed in securing even brief looks at this extremely elusive bird!

*In some years, there are active Harpy Eagle nests within reach of our lodge. Should there be a known, active nest during our tour - we will make every effort to visit it.

Karasabai Village. On arrvial in Karasabai, we will take the time to visit some of the locals residents in order to secure final permission to bird in the area. The reason for doing this is because there are very few visitors here, and we wish to ensure good future relations and ongoing conservation efforts, especially considering that these people ultimately control the fate of the Sun Parakeet.

Agami Heron by Lev Frid

This remote area is the only known site, and possibly the only place left on Earth, where the critically endangered Sun Parakeet still survives in the wild. This vivid species once ranged widely across Suriname into northern Brazil, but after years of feverish illegal trapping, including rumours of entire planes jammed full with thousands of ill-fated birds, the world population now hangs in the balance with fewer than 2,000 individuals. Nonetheless, we stand a very high likelihood of encountering these overwhelmingly colourful parakeets as they fly through the valley and feed on the fruits of surrounding trees. The intense combination of yellow and orange,

shared with the sheer exhilaration of watching one of the rarest and most beautiful birds on Earth, is an incredible experience indeed!

Sun Parakeet by Lev Frid

The riparian forest along this border with Brazil, offers us some very interesting opportunities – although our attention is firmly focussed on the parakeets of course. Other more widespread birds we might encounter include Toco Toucan, Yellow-throated and Streaked Flycatchers, Rufous-browed Peppershrike, Hooded and Hepatic Tanagers, Small-billed Elaenia, Brown-crested Flycatcher, Chivi Vireo, Orange-backed Troupial and Green-rumped Parrotlet.

Rupununi savanna. Grasslands host coveys of Crested Bobwhite, Savanna Hawks perched on fence posts at regular intervals, White-tailed and Short-tailed Hawks overhead, Crested Caracara in good numbers, diminutive American Kestrels, cryptic Double-striped Thick-knees, noisy Southern Lapwings, Plain-breasted Ground Dove, Fork-tailed Flycatcher, Bicoloured Wren, Eastern Meadowlark, Grassland Yellow and Wedge-tailed Grass Finches, and the near-threatened Bearded Tachuri, a member of the tyrant flycatcher family that has declined markedly in recent years due to its preference for undisturbed savanna grasslands.

Forest patches host Striped Cuckoo, Ferruginous Pygmy Owl, Blue Ground Dove, Plain-crowned Spinetail, Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet, both Barred and Great Antshrikes, and Tropical Gnatcatcher. In the vicinity, we might also come across Buff-necked and the far less common Sharp-tailed Ibis and if we are very fortunate, Crested Doradito.

The gallery forest near our lodge may produce Red-legged Tinamou (certainly by vocalisation, but we will also attempt to entice one into view), Guianan Trogon, Northern Slaty Antshrike, Black-chinned and White-bellied Antbirds, Blue-backed Manakin and the localised Pale-bellied Tyrant-Manakin, among many others.

Scarlet Ibis by Adam Riley

The river is home to Wood Stork, White-faced and Black-bellied Whistling Ducks, the rare Stripe-backed Bittern if we are fortunate, as well as families of endearing Giant Otters, the largest of the world's otters and one that is now endangered due to the loss of pristine habitat. Further explorations may reveal Least Grebe, South American Snipe, Yellow Tyrannulet, White-headed Marsh Tyrant, Cliff Flycatcher and Ruddy-breasted Seedeater. In the evening, we will spend some more time looking for nocturnal species such as Least and Band-tailed

Nighthawk, Pauraque and both White-tailed and Spot-tailed Nightjars. Here we may also find the remarkable Giant Anteater or Crab-eating Fox prowling through the grasslands.

Ireng River. We'll be birding this site for two exceedingly range restricted species, Hoary-throated Spinetail and Rio Branco Antbird. Both species are only found in gallery forest along the Rio Branco River and its main tributaries, all of which ultimately flow into the Amazon. Recent agricultural pressures have seriously reduced the amount of available habitat for these birds and as a result, the spinetail is now classified as endangered, with the antbird treated as near-threatened.

Yellow-billed Jacamar by Rob Williams

We will specifically target the Hoary-throated Spinetail and Rio Branco Antbird, although other interesting species may include Pale-legged Hornero and Chestnut-vented Conebill. Very few birders have ever ventured to this remote area, so a few avian surprises are certainly not out of the question!

Tour Grading & Key

Overall Ease		Moderate. Suitable for most birding / wildlife interest levels. Has some walking in hot & humid conditions. A few very early morning departures.
Birding Ease		Moderate. Partly rainforest birding with several low-density species. Easier in the savannah.
Accommodation		Medium standard, mostly quite simple. Some have no hot water; others have shared facilities. No aircon, fans dependent on electrical power.
Walking / Trails		Moderate walking. Some sections can be rough or uneven, others have short, steep sections. Canopy walkway requires walking up several flights of stairs. We aim to avoid tougher hikes.
Vehicles / Roads		Combination of regular minibus, 4x4's & an open back vehicles of various kinds. Some roads can be very bumpy or muddy after rains.
Photography		Worthwhile to good. No feeders or hides.
Annoyances		Mosquitoes and tiny bloodsucking flies can be numerous at some sites (weather dependent). Hot, with high levels of humidity.

Financial Arrangements and Important Notes

Tour dates, prices, single supplement, approximate flight costs and tour spaces are displayed on our website.

Tour inclusions:

- All meals from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 13;
- 2x Internal flights (both charter and scheduled);
- Bottled drinking water;
- All lodgings;
- All ground transportation during the tour;
- All reserve entrance fees;
- All guiding services
- Tips for local guides, drivers and services.

Tour exclusions:

- Visa fees;
- ANY non-included flights;
- Any beverages (including mini-bar charges at hotels) not noted above;
- Optional excursions;
- Special gratuities;
- 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.

Tipping: As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, restaurants etc.) are included on this tour. However, this does NOT include your Rockjumper leader/s. If you feel that they have given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip them at your discretion.

- **Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is 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. The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates.**
- **Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registrations, a small group supplement will be offered to confirm the tour.**
- **Tour prices are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.**
- **The designated tour leader/s may be changed at short due to unforeseen circumstances.**
- **The itinerary is indicative only. Changes may need to be made to the order in which the tour is conducted, or some of the venues we visit closer to departure. We will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.**

Our Relaxed series of tours are designed to focus on having an enjoyable holiday with a bird and wildlife focus. Where possible; we have reduced or removed long drives, single night stays and poor/rustic accommodation. We have also sought to reduce or remove difficult hikes, narrow/muddy trails and otherwise oppressive environmental conditions. Early starts and night birding are mostly optional, and we will not spend much time searching for difficult and/or skulking species. These tours are not suitable for hardcore birders and listers, or dedicated photographers.

- Guyana is generally very hot and humid. On most mornings we will be up and out very early to take advantage of the cooler temperatures and wildlife activity.

- This tour does require a moderate level of fitness and participants should be in good general health as most of the forest birding will be done on foot and may require walking for several hours at a time. Should you have any physical limitations, please notify us in advance of departure.
- Some of the vehicles we use are open topped, and time will be spent standing or sitting in the back where we can get a better view of the surrounding forest. We should expect some bumpy roads depending upon local road conditions.
- Accommodation is generally simple but comfortable throughout the tour, although air conditioning is not available. Mosquito nets are provided. Electricity is available at most sites.
- Biting insects can be numerous at time, and include mosquitos, gnats ('no see ums') and biting flies. The risk of malaria is low.
- The species mentioned in this itinerary have all been recorded on previous Rockjumper tours, but climatic factors play a huge role in the species composition each year regard.

Arrival and Departure Details

The tour starts with a welcome dinner on the evening of day 1. As this is an arrival day, you are free to arrive at any time. The tour will conclude after breakfast on day 13.

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.

Cheddi Jagan International Airport, Georgetown (IATA: GEO) is the primary port of entry and departure for international flights into Guyana.

Visa requirements differ by country, nationality of the traveller and duration and purpose of your intended stay. It may be necessary to obtain a visa or an electronic travel authorization in advance of your travel. It is therefore vitally important that you check with your travel agent/consulate/embassy for exact visa requirements.

DO NOT book any flights until the Rockjumper Team have officially confirmed the tour.