Eagle-Eye Tours



Guyana Trip Report January 2026

Link: Guyana Trip Report January 2026

Day 1

Another excellent trip to wonderful Guyana started out looking rather wet. This is the dry season, but nobody told Georgetown. Fortunately, the sun came out long enough for us to enjoy the kind offer from our ground operator, Ron Allicock, to pre-empt the official start of the tour with a visit to the city's National Park. Our local guide, Neil, took us for a very pleasant 2-hour stroll around the park perimeter with plenty of birds present as an introduction for the next 12 days of birding: Greater Ani, a host of Yellow-crowned Night-herons, an active nesting colony of Western Cattle Egrets, and widespread species such as Roadside Hawk, Gray Kingbird and Wing-barred Seedeaters. The highlight would have been the views of highly range-restricted Blood-coloured woodpecker, but this was superseded by the Georgetown mermaids: West Indian Manatees were introduced into various drainage canals and ponds in the city way back in the late 19th century to keep the waters clear of choking vegetation. Small numbers have persisted and we spent a while with these engaging creatures.



Roadside Hawk at National Park © Paul Prior

Day 2

An early start set the tone for the rest of the tour and by 6:30am we were at the boat-launch on the Mahaica River. But first, Neil pulled in a Grey-breasted Crake hiding in a nearby patch of wet vegetation. Recent rain had left the terrain rather slick, but we boarded Nareese's boat and started slowly motoring upstream… to more rain.



Viewing Hoatzins along the Mahaica © Paul Prior

We waited this out under brollies and a convenient boat-shelter, and then the sun burst forth and various birds climbed atop the riverside Mucca-Mucca to dry out, affording us great looks at Hoatzins, Little Cuckoo, Black-capped Donacobius and Spot-breasted Woodpeckers. The Silvered Antbirds were a little less forthcoming but in the end we all got excellent looks.



Spot-breasted Woodpeckers drying after the rain © Paul Prior



Guyana's national bird – the Hoatzin, aka Stinky Nana © Paul Prior

Back at Nareese's house, we were treated to a tasty chicken and dahl curry brunch, and then set off on the drive home via a stop for roadside Rufous Crab-Hawks, and a chance to scan the mudflats for Scarlet Ibis, and various shorebirds, while Blood-coloured Woodpecker and Bicoloured Conebill fed in the adjacent mangroves. Later in the afternoon we completed our first full day of birding with a visit to the Georgetown Botanical Gardens. Here we were treated to great looks at various parrots, including the highly endangered Festive Amazon, and more woodpeckers (Lined, Crimson-crested, and yet another two Blood-coloured Woodpeckers!). Zone-tailed Hawks shared the sky over the Gardens with Snail Kites, and the ditches were alive with various frogs bubbling and squeaking through the late afternoon.



Female Blood-coloured Woodpecker at Georgetown Botanical Gardens © Paul Prior

Day 3

Various local circumstances conspired to push our Kaieteur visit to the early afternoon and so we took advantage of a leisurely breakfast, followed by a visit to the nearby seawall to scan the mudflats where Hudsonian Whimbrel and various herons were foraging, while handsome Yellow-hooded Blackbirds fed in the adjacent mangrove shrubs.



Yellow-hooded Blackbird along the Georgetown sea wall © Paul Prior

Finally, we made our way to Ogle airport. The hour-long flight took us over endless rainforest, and then a flyby over the majestic cascade. On the ground, we were informed that the aforementioned circumstances would limit our visit and so we made straight for the waterfall via what was perhaps the best Guyanan Cock-of-the-Rock encounter in all my 10 years of visits.



Guyanan Cock-of-the-Rock, Kaieteur's other spectacle © Paul Prior



Kaieteur never fails to impress © Paul Prior

The waterfall was its usual spectacular self, and meanwhile, a huge flock of over 1000 White-collared Swifts screamed overhead, bothered by a pair of Orange-breasted Falcons; a lone Cliff Flycatcher sallied out over the awesome gorge.



Cliff Flycatcher hanging out over the Kaieteur gorge © Paul Prior

Much too soon we were whisked away from Kaieteur over more near-pristine forest to the Fairview airstrip and the nearby Iwokrama River Lodge. Here there was just enough daylight left for us to enjoy first looks at the dapper little Pied Plovers running across the lawn between the Giant

Cowbirds, before the Ladder-tailed Nightjar and Crab-eating Foxes began their nocturnal foraging, and the riverside frog chorus started in earnest.



Pied Plover on the lawn at the lodge © Paul Prior

Day 4

Breakfast over, we boarded the lodge's motorboats and beat the Fairview ferry to the north bank of the mighty Essequibo River. In the relative cool of the early morning, we hiked the main road, taking occasional lifts from Devon, who'd followed us in his bus. This took us through Kurukukari, an area of white-sand, hosting assorted Guyanan Shield species, such as Bronzy Jacamar, Rufous-crowned Elaenia, and Black Manakin. Scanning the canopy snags in the distance, we happened upon several dazzling denizens of the forest: males and females of both Spangled and Pompadour Cotingas, and then in a nearby flowering Monkey Brush Vine, a fine assortment of honeycreepers and hummers: Red-legged and Green Honeycreepers, Grey-breasted Sabrewing, Fork-tailed Woodnymph, and a female Racket-tailed Thornbill. As we continued the return hike we were we were treated to a flyover by a superb White Hawk and then bumped into a small group of Golden-handed Tamarins.



White Hawk circling low overhead at Kurukukari © Paul Prior

After lunch, most folks retired to cabins for the now routine siesta, reconvening at 3:30pm for a hike along the lodge entrance road. Forest birding can be tricky, but we had several pairs of young eyes (including within our group) to help us spot goodies, such as Black-bellied Cuckoo, Waved Woodpecker, and White-faced Saki monkey! With dusk, fast approaching, Devon and Rensford turned up and drove us several miles south to our rendezvous with the weird and wonderful White-winged Potoo, and then on the return drive, we came across a Pale-throated Sloth having a good ol' scratch up in a roadside Cecropia Tree.

Day 5

We began a very productive drive to Atta Lodge at 7am, encountering all but one of the local Toucans, including Guianan Toucanet and both Aracaris; Cream-coloured and Chestnut Woodpeckers, Caica and Black-headed Parrots, Ochre-bellied and Yellow-throated Flycatchers. We reached Atta by 11:30am and so were afforded a short break before lunch (giving us the chance to meat the habituated Black Curassows that live in the vicinity) and then with the midday heat in full effect most people opted to siesta - all but two hardy souls who joined the lodge guide Dillon for a hike up to the canopy platforms. Not a great deal in the canopy, but they did happen upon a Ferruginous-backed Antbird en route.



Tutti, Frutti and Little Richard – the local Black Curassows © Paul Prior

We convened for a hike along the lodge entrance road at 3pm, encountering Great Jacamar, Golden-winged Parakeets, and a troupe of Cayenne Jays. As we reached the main road, we were greeted by Fasciated Antshrike, a pair of Black-spotted Barbets, a lone Pied Puffbird, Red-throated Caracara, and a brief look at Dusky Antbird.



Red-throated Caracara at the entrance to Atta © Paul Prior

From here, we walked south along the road to the bridge where, aside from some very active Dragonfish, there was not much on show. And so we moved to our final stop: Moshparu, where we

had tantalizing glimpses of a pair of Crimson Topaz, but good looks at Red-fan Parrot and Green Oropendula while we waited for owl-time (which occurs shortly after sundowners…). Once darkness was upon us, Neil and Dillon initiated the broadcast and sure enough pretty soon a Black-banded Owl came in to investigate.



Viewing the Black-banded Owl © Paul Prior

Day 6

Up early for the group hike to the canopy walkway. As a group together with our two local guides we were above the platform holding-capacity and so while I retreated to the main trail to be entertained by “lesser bullet ants” and orchid bees, the rest of the gang were treated to great looks at a mixed flock, which held a half dozen Paradise, Spotted, and Bay-headed Tanagers.



Canopy platforms at Atta © Paul Prior

In the super-canopy, above the platform, they spotted Short-tailed Pygmy-Tyrant, Bright-rumped Attila and Buff-chested Greenlet. The return hike took us along the back loop-trail where the front-runners were lucky enough to glimpse a quartet of Grey-rumped Trumpeters and we all made the most of the opportunity to ogle the Screaming Pihas screaming. Refreshed by a siesta, Devon and Renford drove us north along the main road to Koiparu Wetland where both Red-and-green and Scarlet Macaws stood sentry on the wetlands snags. The intention was then to drive to the nearby Koiparu Bridge to wait for owls but approaching rain put paid to that plan, although not before we spotted Guianan Woodcreeper, Variable Chachalaca, and enjoyed the dusk carolling of a Cocoa Thrush.

Day 7

Once the group had made the most of the confiding pair of Guianan Warbling Antbirds in the vicinity of the lodge's dining area, we made our departure and arrived early for a post-dawn attempt for Red-and-black Grosbeak. The birds were heard but sadly preferred to disappear deeper into the forest. After sharing great looks at a feeding Spix's Guan with us, Dillon headed north on his hike back to Atta, leaving us to enjoy a truly purple patch of birding.



Spix's Guan foraging close to the road © Paul Prior

There were a couple of different mixed feeding-flocks, converging upon us - almost too many birds to take in! On the east side of the road, a convenient leafless canopy crown hosted Plumbeous Euphonia, various honeycreepers, Guianan Tyrant, Blackpoll Warbler, and a pair of Blue-backed Tanagers. On the westside low in the roadside shrub vegetation there were Long-billed Gnatwrens, a group of Guianan Streaked Antwrens, and sat high on a nearby snag Guianan Puffbird.



Guianan Streaked Antwren, female © Paul Prior

We continued on towards the Park Gates, but before reaching them, we ducked onto the west side

Cock-of-the-Rock Trail. We'd already had under unbeatable views of this species at Kaieteur, but this trail also brought us great looks at Amazonian Motmot, Mouse-coloured Antshrike, rather unsatisfactory looks at Black-tailed Trogon, and a couple of long-nosed bat species, roosting near the Cock-of-the-Rock's nest site.



Lesser Dog-like Bat (Peropteryx macrotis) roosting at the Cock-of-the-Rock site © Paul Prior

After a relatively short drive, we reached Surama where we were greeted and allotted rooms and benabs by Jackie and Lurendo. The heat was now really turned-up and people were happy to siesta, but then keen to bird again by 3:3pm. First stop was the Great Potoo Grove where we found Oscar (The Grouch) roosting camouflaged near a gorgeously conspicuous Cattleya orchid.



Oscar The Grouch – aka Great Potoo © Paul Prior



Cattleya violacea © Paul Prior

From here, as the air cooled, we headed out to the Heaven Savannah (along Mountain Trail) where we found White-naped Xenopsaris, Plain-crested and Lesser Elaenia, Grassland Sparrow and day-roosting Lesser Nighthawks.



Plain-crested Elaenia © Paul Prior

Finally, we drove back along the Surama Road in search of owls, failing on Tawny-bellied Screech but getting spectacular views of not one but three Spectacled Owls (two adults plus one juvenile).



Juvenile Spectacled Owl along the Surama Road © Paul Prior

Day 8

Oh, Harpy days were here again! We drove off across the Surama Savannah early, Devon dropping us as far as the muddy, bumpy track would allow. We continued on foot for another 20 minutes and reached the river in good time, stopping only to check out the Jaguar prints – evidently of a mother and cub. At the river we were greeted by the sight of an apparently unperturbed Blue-throated Piping Guan.



Blue-throated Piping-Guan at the Burro-Burro "dock" © Paul Prior

We boarded the boats and then headed down stream, our boatmen expertly negotiating a series of logs, trunks, and snacks. The two boats shared the lead and one lucky boat happened to be in front for brief but close looks at a very skittish young Tapir that ran up the bank slope and into the forest. Otherwise, we were all treated to repeat looks at Ringed, Amazon, and Green Kingfishers, flighty Green-and-Rufous Kingfisher, Spotted Puffbird, Black-chinned Antbird, and lots of caciques and Oropendulas.



Borro-Borro River © Paul Prior

At last we reached the Harpy location and began an anticipated patient wait for this huge target. The enormous nest in a massive tree on the west bank was visible from the viewing area established on the east bank and for a while this was all that was visible. We had been told that the young eagle was now fully-fledged, but not yet independent and the expectation was that she would be sitting patiently awaiting a parent bringing prey (once every few days). After several minutes, Neil spotted the youngster standing on an almost completely obscured perch, given away primarily by her occasional whining and accompanying wing shrugs. Further searching provided another viewpoint where scope views of her crested head was available. We opted to wait in the hopes she would change position. Picnics were consumed, and then suddenly she took off, flew across the opposite canopy-opening and landed in glorious plain sight. Bingo! Truly special.



Juvenile Harpy Eagle along the Borro-Borro River © Paul Prior

Elated, we headed back to the boats and began the long voyage up stream; we had arranged to meet the vehicles at the same impasse and so the group set off at pace. En route, Neil, walking with the rear-guard, noticed ants swarming across the track, and he decided to investigate. Sure enough this lucky foursome found the main swarm a short way off trail, attended by Rufous-throated Antbirds, various woodcreepers, and Rufous-winged Ground-cuckoo. Having cashed in with such amazing luck the same foursome returned to the main trail where 100m further on they passed below a small group of moaning, lekking Capuchinbirds. Quite wonderful. In the late afternoon, after the routine siesta, we taxied over to Itch Pond where a pygmy owl broadcast brought in a selection of 6 hummingbird species: White-chested, Blue-tailed and Glittering-throated Emeralds, Black-throated Mango, Green-tailed Goldenthroat, and a Copper-tailed Hummingbird. Nearby there were Sulphury Flycatchers while at Itch Pond itself there were Lesser Kiskadees and a breod of baby Spectacled Caiman. On the adjacent drying wetland there were a couple of Jabiru, Black-collared Hawks and a wintering Solitary Sandpiper. As dusk drew in Red-bellied Macaws gathered to roost in the Moriche Palms, a Bat Falcon started its nightly batting, and various night birds struck up their twilight calling: the spooky descending minor scale of the Common Potoo, the low-trilling of Tropical Screech-Owl, and the hoarse yelps of Common Pauraque. The potoo and the pauraque showed very well in our spotlights, but the owl was not so obliging.



Common Pauraque © Paul Prior

Day 9

It was decided that the entire group should return to the site of yesterday‘s ant swarm. Everyone was game for this, so Devon drove us once more to the impasse and we hiked back towards the Burro-Burro, stopping only for views of a Black-faced Hawk that was calling from the canopy. Once Neil had located the ant-swarm on the track, he set off into the bush to confirm that the birds were still in attendance. Sure enough they were. We quietly trekked in and were soon watching dozens of Rufous-throated and White-plumed Antbirds, Plain-brown and White-chined Woodcreepers, and then a single Rufous-winged Ground-Cuckoo.



Rufous-winged Ground-Cuckoo © Paul Prior

Back on the main trail, we now went in search of the Capuchinbirds; this took longer, but eventually a solo bird was found, sitting quietly in the canopy, allowing prolonged scope views.



The weird and wonderful Capuchinbird © Paul Prior

It was now farewell to Surama, the rainforest and to Neil, but not to fear, Gary was here! Gary was given the unenviable task of following on from where Neil had left off. Within the first few minutes, we came across a feeding mob of Black Vultures with four King Vultures in the melee.



King Vulture along the Surama road © Paul Prior

A great start, but not to last; to be fair the heat was stifling at such a late morning hour, and there was zero shade along the Surama road. Defeated, we retired to the shady hammocks at Madonna's Restaurant and dozed to the mocking sounds of the adjacent Cacique colony (both Yellow- and Red-rumped), while Madonna prepared yet another lunchtime feast, topped off with a delicious farine (casava meal) birthday cake for one of our number. The heat if possible was now even more intense and an urgent need for fans or perhaps even a swimming pool pushed us to drive on to Rock View Lodge, where Colin and Velda obliged us with both. The heat was much reduced by 4pm and so Devon and Renford drove us back north to Comudi Bash where a roadside flock included our first Burnished-buff Tanagers, a female Grey Seedeater, Cinereous Becard, and Glittering-throated Emerald. A little further along, the small roadside reservoir presented us with Black-collared Hawk and Grey-cowled Wood-Rail while hereabouts the roadside trees held Forest Elaenias, Bananaquits, Lesser Kiskadees, more Blackpoll Warblers, and an Ochre-lored Flatbill. Back at the lodge, yet more good eating ensued after we'd completed the day's checklist during Colin's happy-hour invitation.

Day 10

An early breakfast had us on the road, heading to the Kwatamang Landing boat-launch where our two trusty vessels awaited. A gorgeous, clear, still morning presented us with views of a sandbar full of Black Skimmers, a single Large-billed Tern, Ospreys, and assorted herons and kingfishers. But to my mind, we encountered the best bird early on in the cruise: a pair of Collared Forest-Falcons, which gave stunning views as they flew right over our boats from their riverside perches.



Green Kingfisher © Paul Prior

Turning into one small sheltered bay which was occupied by several menacing looking Black Caiman, we were serenaded by a very responsive Cinnamon Attila. It was here that we also came across Green Kingfisher, Golden-collared Woodpecker, a pair of Green Ibis, and a handful of mid-sized Amazon Water Lilies. Continuing downstream past almost inaudible Crestless Curassows we

pulled up onto a sandy beach and started our hike to the main Lily Pond, only to be turned around when Captain Eli discovered a hive of African Honey-bees right over the trail. Sadly, there was no way around without risking disturbing the nest, and so we had to make do with scope views of the distant lilies. Disappointing but better safe than sorry (and severely stung!).



Golden-collared Woodpecker © Paul Prior

We headed back to the boats and started the trip back up river but not before one of our number spotted a Capped Heron. Our return trip took us past Red Howler Monkeys, a very confiding young Rufescent Tiger-Heron, and repeat views of many of the birds we'd encountered on our downstream voyage.



Rufescent Tiger-Heron, juvenile © Paul Prior

Back to the lodge for lunch and then siesta or swim, or a couple of us explored the Rock View grounds for already encountered species such as Yellow-bellied Elaenia, Black-crested Antshrike, Chivi Vireo, Yellow Oriole and Brown-crested Flycatcher.



Yellow Oriole © Paul Prior

After tea, coffee and cookies, we piled into the vehicles for a drive south to the Mora wetland area. First, making a stop at a rather gruesome location, the local abattoir, where roadside puddling held more Solitary Sandpipers, a flock of Yellow-hooded Blackbirds, our first Red-breasted Meadowlarks, both White-headed Marsh-Tyrant and Pied Water-Tyrant, and about 450 Black Vultures waiting patiently on trees and fences surrounding the compound.



Red-breasted Meadowlark © Paul Prior

We continued south and found a trail along the dry creek in the riparian forest. Here we were treated again to a good response to the whistled pygmy-owl imitations. First to react were hummers, including the hoped-for Long-billed Starthroat, and then great looks at Pale-eyed pygmy-Tyrant, Ochre-lored Flatbill, Flavescent Warbler, and finally Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl itself. There were Blue-backed Manakins calling a little further along the creek bed but only a couple of people managed to catch a glimpse.



Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl near Moura Wetland © Paul Prior

Then our final stop: the Maura wetlands themselves, although now rather dry. But well worth the visit because as soon as we'd positioned ourselves on the bridge, one of our number spotted our Aplomado Falcon!



Waiting for Least Nighthawks at Moura Wetland © Paul Prior

This was soon followed by Least Nighthawks passing close overhead and then a very happy crew were driven back to Rockview for supper and an early night in anticipation of a very early start on the following day.

Day 11

Four o'clock start! We had places to be and mammals to see. The only creature we saw as we drove south in the dark was what we decided was a Crab-eating Raccoon. Then as dawn broke, we stopped to scan the savannah, locating a Crab-eating Fox by distant eye-shine. Continuing to the Karasabai Junction, past White-tailed Kites and a single road-crossing Crested Bobwhite, we pulled up a few, hundred mere along the rutted track alongside bizarrely shaped black, brown, and grey object: a Giant Anteater – with a tiny youngster on her back! We watched in silence as this magical creature slowly ambled deeper into the savannah, en route to some daytime shade.



Mother and young Giant Anteater on the road to Karasabi © Paul Prior

Devon and Rensford continued driving us in the direction of Karasabai, stopping for half an hour "overlooking"Moraira Pond (the Mucca-Mucca was rather too tall to properly "overlook"). Here we encountered our first Purple Gallinules, and some Limpkin, while in the dusty track-side vegetation a pair of Ground-doves proved to be Plain-breasted. Onwards into town with a brief stop to fetch Uncle Ali, the parakeet ranger, and then into the main valley where there should've been Sun Parakeets. We walked and worked the road for hours, picking up Laughing Falcon, Sooty-capped Hermit, a Hepatic Tanager, Finsch's Euphonia, Tropical Gnatcatcher, Blue-tailed Emerald, and Black-crested Antshrike along the way. But not a peep from the parakeets until Gary caught sight and sound of a distant small group dashing north, into even more distant foothill forest cover.



Sooty-capped Hermit © Paul Prior

We retired for lunch in town and the consensus was to give up on the PKs and head to our last night's lodging at Manari. Just one stalwart opted to stay and continue the search and so we split the buses with one bus driving off to the cold showers, shade and fans while myself and just one of the group continued the search. Sadly, it was all in vain, parakeet-wise, but we did come across a nice mixed flock of Bananaquits, Pale-eyed Pygmy-Tyrant, Southern White-fringed Antwren, a pair of Spectacled Thrushes, and White-tipped Dove.



White-tipped Dove © Paul Prior

We admitted defeat, dropped Ali off at his house in town, and then Devon drove us the long haulto Manari, where we arrived in time to join Gary and the crew birding the lodge grounds for Bicoloured Wren, American Kestrel and flyover Red-bellied Macaws and Yellow-crowned Amazons.

Day 12

Our last birding outing required another early start and a new fleet of vehicles: Jeremy Dante and Kurt arrived in their three 4WD vehicles, and we moved off into the darkness. Dawn breaks quickly on the savannah and we soon found Double-striped Thick-knees, but had to hurry on to make the most of our time at the Ireng River for two very special targets. Our first port of call drew a near complete blank, although we could hear the spinetail deep in the riparian scrub. We backtracked and got distracted by a stunning Venezuelan Troupial … and some very fresh Capybara poop. We ducked along a narrow trail into the dense dry-forest and set up to wait for the target antbird. But while we waited, the Hoary-throated Spinetail decided to crash the party, hopping about unobstructed over the leaf-litter and through the tangle of dry shrubs and vines. Fantastic looks at this highly range-restricted species. Gary had heard the Antbird a little further along the trail and sure enough having set ourselves in a likely spot, a handsome Rio Branco Antbird came right in and showed off. This bird has an even more restricted range than the Spinetail. Anyway, now we could turn back to proper birding and sure enough we found a couple of mixed flocks. The first had

Orange-backed Troupial, White-bellied Piculet, and Mouse-coloured Tyrannulet; the second flock was even better with Straight-billed Woodcreeper, Rufous-browed Peppershrike, Chestnut-vented Conebill, and a Little Woodpecker. Back to the trucks for celebratory juices and H2O, we then began the drive back to Manari, intending two stops. The first of these bagged us a pair of too-cute Burrrowing Owls, and a very responsive Yellowish Pipit. The second stop was at one of the several wetlands, this one still holding some water, and therefore several Limpkin, a pair of Maguari Storks, multiple Wattled Jacanas, and the targeted White-throated Kingbird. The strangest sighting of the morning, however, came from one of the group who spotted a large black-and-white raptor perched on the far side of the wetland: Black-and-white Hawk-Eagle. Unmistakable but completely out of place.



Yellowish Pipit © Paul Prior

And that was it. We had lunch date to keep and a plane to catch. Lisa provided one last slap-up feast for lunch and then we made for Lethem Airport and the flight north on our little 12-seated charter (replacing the canceled scheduled flight – huge thanks and praise to Ron who had come through for us as ever). The flight took us back over the extensive savannah and then over the vast rainforest, only this time it seemed the scars left by gold mining enterprises were more apparent than I'd previously noticed. The forest is still spectacularly continuous, but this incredibly biodiverse area needs more attention; perhaps with such attention and the tourist support for lodges such as Iwokrama, Atta and Surama, governments will come to understand the value of near-pristine habitats, a value way beyond gold. The group that travelled here with Eagle Eye Tours in 2026 surely now has a real personal understanding. Spread the word- as the tee-shirts demand: Keep the Rupununi (- and the Essequibo -) Wild.



Our group, Ireng River

Guyana Birding Tour bird list Jan 11 - 23, 2026