

Puerto Rico Itinerary

[Link: Puerto Rico](#)

Tour Overview

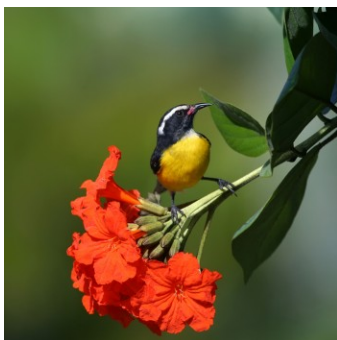
Puerto Rico, a truly delightful island, has a marvelous array of different habitats, from sandy beaches and mangroves to dry arid scrub forest and surprisingly lush and verdant tropical montane forests.

Puerto Rico has its fair share of endemics, ranging from the delightful and exquisite Puerto Rican Tody to the highly endangered and very local Puerto Rican Amazon. Some endemics such as Puerto Rican Bullfinch and Puerto Rican Woodpecker are widespread, while others are decidedly local, such as Elfin Woods Warbler, first discovered in 1971, Puerto Rican Nightjar, thought to be extinct before its rediscovery in 1961, and the endangered Yellow-shouldered Blackbird.

We also visit the José Luis Vivaldi Lugo Aviary, located in the Rio Abajo Forest Preserve, for a chance to see the critically endangered Puerto Rican Amazon in the wild.

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Puerto Rico



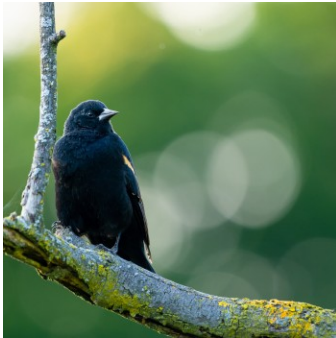
Our Puerto Rico birding tour starts at our hotel in San Juan for a meet-and-greet before supper. Night in San Juan.

Day 2: Rio Abajo State Forest



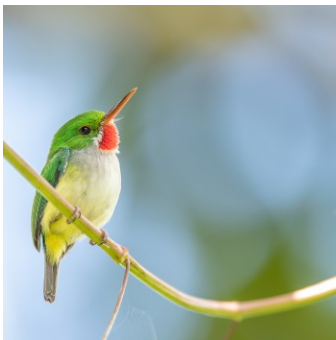
We leave very early this morning and drive to the Rio Abajo State Forest reserve, located south of the town of Arecibo. Our target species is the critically endangered Puerto Rican Parrot, one of the rarest birds in the West Indies. A breeding and reintroduction program is underway at the José Luis Vivaldi Lugo Aviary, located in the forest preserve; released birds have been breeding successfully in the wild for several years now, and we have a chance to see one of these wild individuals as we explore the forest. Here we have further opportunities to see Puerto Rico's endemic avifauna – species such as Puerto Rican Vireo, Puerto Rican Tody and Puerto Rican Lizard-Cuckoo – as well as opportunities for Ruddy and Key West Quail-Doves. Overnight in Arecibo.

Day 3: La Parguera



In the morning we drive to La Parguera in the southwest part of the island where we should see the endangered Yellow-shouldered Blackbird. Numbers of the blackbird appear to be on the increase, owing in part to a cowbird control program. In the afternoon, we head back to our hotel for a break so that we are well rested for an evening excursion to search for the endangered Puerto Rican Nightjar and the Puerto Rican Owl. Overnight in La Parguera.

Day 4: Maricao State Forest



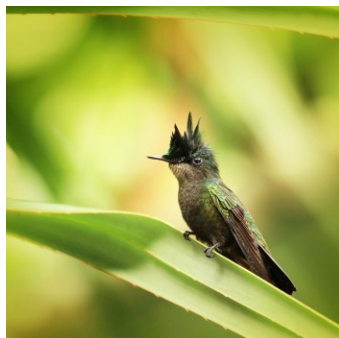
Today we visit Maricao National Forest, at the western end of the Cordilleran Central. At this higher altitude, lush forest covers the montane slopes, and a wide variety of the island's endemics can be found. Our main target bird here is the Elfin-woods Warbler, a secretive and fast-moving warbler discovered as recently as 1971, and we spend quite a bit of time searching for this species. Whilst doing so, we should encounter Green Mango, Puerto Rican Emerald, Puerto Rican Tody, Puerto Rican Pewee, Puerto Rican Tanager, and - with luck - Antillean Euphonia. Overnight in La Parguera.

Day 5: Guanica National Forest



Today we visit the dry scrub forest of Guanica National Forest, a new habitat with a new suite of birds for us, including Pearly-eyed Thrasher, Puerto Rican Vireo, Black-whiskered Vireo, Puerto Rican Bullfinch, Adelaide's Warbler, as well as the amazing Puerto Rican Lizard-Cuckoo. We also visit the coastal mangroves and sand spits along the coast, looking for shorebirds, Mangrove Cuckoo, Caribbean Eleania, and Venezuelan Troupial. Overnight in La Parguera.

Day 6: Humacao Nature Reserve



As we make our way back east along the south shore of the island, we will visit the Humacao Nature Reserve where we look for the near endemic Antillean Crested Hummingbird, Green-throated Carib, White-cheeked Pintail, Caribbean Coot, and other wetland species. We also have a very good chance of finding Mangrove Cuckoo here, and perhaps one of the several naturalised, introduced species (one year this was our only site for the handsome Tricoloured Munia). Overnight near Luquillo.

Day 7: El Yunque



The Caribbean National Forest covers about 25,000 acres (10,000 hectares) and receives high amounts of rainfall which result in dense rainforest on the lower slopes of El Yunque, a peak which rises to 3494ft (1065m). Higher altitudes have palm forests with dwarf forest on the highest peaks. There are plenty of endemic goodies here – the attractive Puerto Rican Woodpecker, Puerto Rican Tanager, Puerto Rican Emerald, the ever popular Puerto Rican Tody, Puerto Rican Spindalis, Puerto Rican Flycatcher and Puerto Rican Bullfinch. Scaly-naped Pigeon, Loggerhead Kingbird and Red-legged Thrush occur here, and Green Mangos are found near fast running water. In the evening we may try for the virtual endemic Puerto Rican Owl, an atypical screech-owl as it lacks ear tufts! We then drive back to San Juan where we spend the night.

Day 8: Departure

Our Puerto Rico birding tour ends today and you can transfer to the airport anytime today for the flights home.

What to Expect

Overview

The Puerto Rico tour is a moderately paced birding tour. Puerto Rico provides some surprisingly exciting birding. Most of the endemics are fairly easy to find, and we make determined efforts to find those that can prove elusive, such as Elfin Woods Warbler. We have some early morning starts and pre-breakfast journeys to maximize our time in the field. On some days, we make evening excursions to search for nocturnal species.

Food and Accommodation

Breakfast will usually be at the hotel. On most days we have a picnic lunch at a site or at a local restaurant. In the evenings, we eat at our hotel or a nearby restaurant, where we spend a relaxing evening to review the day's bird list and discuss the itinerary for the next day. We stay in a mix of accommodations from basic to mid-range.

Driving

Most days have a small to moderate amount of driving of 1-3 hours, although a couple days might be slightly longer. Roads are generally very good throughout our Puerto Rico birding tour.

Walking

Walking will be easy to moderate. The longest walk is approximately 2.5kms roundtrip to Rio Abajo. The walk to El Yunque is along a steep but paved road. There are opportunities to rest and wait if needed.

Weather

The weather should be warm and sunny, and rain is possible. A light, waterproof jacket is, therefore, advised, as are stout walking shoes or boots.

What's Included

Tour Price Includes

- All meals
- All accommodations (simple to modern)
- Ground transportation
- Guides - one EET guide with 4 - 5 participants, two EET guides with 6 - 12 participants
- Park, conservation and entry fees

Tour Price Does Not Include

- Flights to and from start/end location
 - Items of a personal nature
 - Travel Insurance
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