

When to Visit Trinidad and Tobago: What's Special Each Month of the Year



482 species of birds have been recorded in Trinidad and Tobago: 257 are year-round residents and 57 regular seasonal migrants. The species list for Tobago alone stands at 259, of which 97 occur year-round.

The islands of Trinidad and Tobago are tropical, there is good birding year round with no equivalent to northern hemisphere migration, though some North American Migrants spend the winter there, and some Austral migrants come up from South American to breed. Tropical birds respond more to the timing of their food, and move around accordingly.

Trinidad and Tobago is as far south as Colombia, so properly South American. The main breeding time for resident birds (April and May) is just as northward migrants leave, though larger species start earlier.

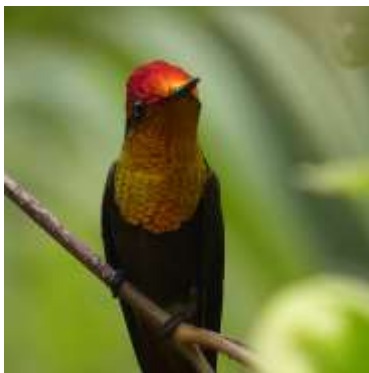
Specialties Seen Year Round:

- Trinidad Piping-Guan
- White Hawk
- Ornate Hawk-Eagle
- Black Hawk-Eagle
- Pearl Kite
- Long-winged Harrier
- Black Skimmer
- Scaled Pigeon
- Striped Cuckoo
- Squirrel Cuckoo
- Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl
- Tropical Screech-Owl
- Common Potoo
- Oilbird
- Band-rumped Swift
- Gray-rumped Swift
- White-tailed Sabrewing
- White-necked Jacobin
- Rufous-breasted Hermit
- Green Hermit
- Little Hermit
- Tufted Coquette
- Long-billed Starthroat
- Blue-chinned Sapphire
- White-chested Emerald
- Copper-rumped Hummingbird
- Green-backed Trogon
- Guianan Trogon
- Collared Trogon
- Trinidad Motmot
- Channel-billed Toucan
- Rufous-tailed Jacamar
- Ringed Kingfisher
- American Pygmy Kingfisher
- Golden-olive Woodpecker
- Chestnut Woodpecker
- Lineated Woodpecker
- Blue-headed Parrot
- Red-bellied Macaw
- Great Antshrike
- Barred Antshrike
- Black-crested Antshrike
- Cocoa Woodcreeper
- Black-faced Antthrush
- White-bellied Antbird
- Forest Elaenia
- Sulphury Flycatcher
- Bearded Bellbird
- White-bearded Manakin
- Golden-headed Manakin
- Blue-backed Manakin
- Black-tailed Tityra
- White-winged Swallow
- Rufous-browed Peppershrike
- Rufous-breasted Wren
- Long-billed Gnatwren
- White-necked Thrush
- Silver-beaked Tanager
- Blue-gray Tanager
- Speckled Tanager (higher in forest)
- Turquoise Tanager
- Bay-headed Tanager
- Blue Dacnis
- Purple Honeycreeper
- Green Honeycreeper
- Red-crowned Ant-Tanager
- Masked Cardinal
- Yellow Oriole
- Crested Oropendola
- Violaceous Euphonia

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January

- Dry season is January to May, though rain is possible any time of the year. In the dry season, storms are short and sun intensity high
- Peak season for international visitors escaping winter in northern hemisphere
- Flowers scarce, more activity at feeders
- December to March sees migrants from North America mixed with local species
- November to March, peak numbers for roosting **Scarlet Ibis**
- January to July, best time for **Cocoi Heron**
- Seabird breeding season on Little Tobago Island – **tropicbirds and boobies**
- **Audubon's Shearwater** in burrows, Little Tobago Island
- **Ruby Topaz Hummingbird**, predominately lowland species, present January through August in Aripo savanna and on Tobago for breeding and post breeding before dispersal to Venezuela



February

- Dry season (rains less), sun intensity high
- Peak season for international visitors escaping winter in northern hemisphere
- Flowers scarce, more activity at feeders
- December to March sees migrants from North America mixed with local species
- November to March finds peak numbers for roosting **Scarlet Ibis**
- **Swallow Tanagers** arrive late Feb/early March, nest at AWNC, April to mid-June feeding young, and stay through August
- **Broad-winged Hawks** migrate through Trinidad by the hundreds in February; also a resident race in Tobago
- **Swallow-tailed Kite** seen in Grand Riviere, flying up valley catching insects
- **Caribbean Martin**, February through October; come to breed by the thousands but post breeding is a mystery
- **Plumbeous Kite**, breed at Trinity Hills, see at Asa Wright, northern range, Arima Valley
- **Large-billed Tern**, on the west coast of Trinidad from late February through October in post breeding dispersal
- Seabird breeding season on Little Tobago Island– **tropicbirds and boobies**
- **Audubon's Shearwater**
- **Broad-winged Hawk**
- **Ruby Topaz Hummingbird**

March

- Dry season (rains less), sun intensity high
- Peak season for international visitors escaping winter in northern hemisphere
- Flowers scarce, more activity at feeders
- December to March sees migrants from North America mixed with local species
- Northward migrants leave at the end of the month
- **Raptors** on nests from March on
- November to March finds peak numbers for roosting **Scarlet Ibis**
- Seabird breeding season on Little Tobago Island begin to decline

April

- Rains start late April or early May, triggering prime breeding season
- April to September is the Austral Winter when South American migrants head north to Trinidad and Tobago, and mix with local species
- Heliconia plants flower April through August, providing important nectar sources for **hermit hummingbirds**
- Great time for species on leks, **manakins and bellbirds**
- **Swallow Tanagers** arrive late Feb/early March and stay through August
- January through May see **Ruby-topaz**

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- **Audubon's Shearwater** in burrows, Little Tobago Island, December to early May
- **Yellow-billed Tern** in post breeding dispersal March through October
- **Cocoi Heron**
- **Plumbeous Kite**
- **Swallow-tailed Kite**
- **Large-billed Tern**
- **Ruby Topaz Hummingbird**
- **Caribbean Martin**
- **Swallow Tanager**



Hummingbirds

- **Leach's Petrels** occasionally pass inshore at Manzanilla
- **Collared Plover**, mid-April through October
- **Swallow-tailed Kite** seen in Grand Riviere, flying up valley catching insects
- April to late September, **Scarlet Ibis** nest; fewer numbers are seen
- On Little Tobago Island, more noddies and terns, fewer tropicbirds and boobies; **Roseate Tern, Bridled Tern, Sooty Tern** come to Tobago to breed, late April through July
- **Leatherback Turtle** nesting
- **Audubon's Shearwater**
- **Cocoi Heron**
- **Large-billed Tern, Yellow-billed Tern**
- **Plumbeous Kite**
- **Ruby Topaz Hummingbird**
- **Caribbean Martin**
- **Swallow Tanager**

May

- Rains start late April or early May, triggering prime breeding season
- **Resident warblers** breed
- April to September is the Austral Winter when South American migrants head north to Trinidad and Tobago, and mix with local species Great time for species on leks, **manakins and bellbirds**
- April to late September, **Scarlet Ibis** nest; fewer numbers are seen as they fly over roosting area
- **Audubon's Shearwater** in burrows, Little Tobago Island through early May
- **Leatherback Turtle** nesting
- **Cocoi Heron**
- **Plumbeous Kite**
- **Swallow-tailed Kite**
- **Collared Plover**
- **Large-billed Tern, Roseate Tern, Bridled Tern, Sooty Tern, Yellow-billed Tern**
- **Ruby Topaz Hummingbird**
- **Caribbean Martin**

June

- June to December is the wet or "green" season. Short showers provide rain several times a day, but the sky clears in between.
- Rains bring out insect life, with much bird activity. Resident tropical birds are actively breeding and easy to see
- **Swallow-tailed Kite** seen in Grand Riviere, flying up valley catching insects
- April to September is the Austral Winter when South American migrants head north to Trinidad and Tobago, and mix with local species April to late September, **Scarlet Ibis** nest; fewer numbers are seen as they fly over roosting area
- **Nacunda Nighthawk**, the easiest to identify uncommon but annual June through October, roost in groups on ground, see only in early morning.
- Most likely to see the austral wanderer, **Jabiru** in June and July
- **Leatherback Turtle** nesting
- **Cocoi Heron**
- **Plumbeous Kite**

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• **Swallow Tanager**



- **Swallow-tailed Kite**
- **Collared Plover**
- **Large-billed Tern, Roseate Tern, Bridled Tern, Sooty Tern, Yellow-billed Tern**
- **Ruby Topaz Hummingbird**
- **Caribbean Martin**
- **Swallow Tanager**

July



- Best month to see highest numbers and most variety of hummingbirds
- Best month for butterflies
- Great time to bring families
- July to November is hurricane season in the Caribbean. Storms pass further north above Trinidad, but it is a great time to find rare species blown off course.
- April to September is the Austral Winter when South American migrants head north to Trinidad and Tobago, and mix with local species April to late September, **Scarlet Ibis** nest; fewer numbers are seen at roosting area
- Most likely to see the austral wanderer, **Jabiru** in June and July
- **White-collared Swift**, twice the size of other swifts, are present July through October.
- **Leatherback Turtle** nesting
- **Cocoi Heron**
- **Plumbeous Kite**
- **Swallow-tailed Kite**
- **Collared Plover**
- **Large-billed Tern, Roseate Tern, Bridled Tern, Sooty Tern, Yellow-billed Tern**
- **Nacunda Nighthawk**
- **Caribbean Martin**
- **Ruby Topaz Hummingbird**
- **Small-billed Elaenia**
- **Swallow Tanager**

August

- High numbers of **herps**
- Great time to bring families
- April to September is the Austral Winter when South American migrants head north to Trinidad and Tobago, and mix with local species
- **Leatherback Turtle** nest into early August
- April to late September, **Scarlet Ibis** nest; fewer numbers are seen as they fly over roosting area
- **Collared Plover**, see in large numbers in August on mudflats, golf course, airfield
- **White-rumped, Stilt and Pectoral Sandpipers** pass through in good numbers
- **Fork-tailed Flycatcher**, in pre-migratory roost, by the thousands in grasses and wet meadows, mid August to mid-September
- **Applomado Falcon**, several seen each year, most often August to October
- **Plumbeous Kite**
- **Swallow-tailed Kite**
- **Nacunda Nighthawk**
- **White-collared Swift**
- **Caribbean Martin**
- **Ruby Topaz Hummingbird**
- **Small-billed Elaenia**
- **Swallow Tanager**



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September

- High numbers of **herps**
- April to late September, **Scarlet Ibis** nest; fewer numbers are seen as they fly over roosting area
- **Buff-breasted Sandpiper**, annual visitor late Sept to late October, found on grass, golf courses along with **American Golden Plover**, **Upland Sandpiper** and **Pectoral Sandpiper**
- **Fork-tailed Flycatcher**, in pre-migratory roost, by the thousands in grasses and wet meadows, mid August to mid-September
- **Plumbeous Kite**
- **Collared Plover**
- **Large-billed Tern**, **Roseate Tern**, **Yellow-billed Tern**
- **Nacunda Nighthawk**
- **White-collared Swift**
- **Caribbean Martin**



October

- Fewer crowds, cooler effective temperature, Oct to mid-December
- Fruiting trees great for photography
- **Scarlet Ibis** begin returning to their roost in larger numbers in mid-October
- **Buff-breasted Sandpiper**, annual visitor late Sept to late October, found on grass, golf courses along with **American Golden Plover**, **Upland Sandpiper** and **Pectoral Sandpiper**
- **Collared Plover**
- **Large-billed Tern** and **Yellow-billed Tern** remain in smaller numbers
- **Nacunda Nighthawk**
- **White-collared Swift**
- **Caribbean Martin**



November

- The rainiest month, though sun regularly shines through between storms.
- Fewer crowds, cooler effective temperature, Oct to mid-December
- From November through March, flowering **Immortelle** trees attract over 20 bird species – a time of peak nectar production.
- November to March have peak numbers for roosting **Scarlet Ibis** on Caroni Marsh
- Begin seabird breeding season on Little Tobago Island– **tropicbirds and boobies**

December

- As rains ease, many trees come into flower, attracting nectar-eating species.
- Fewer crowds, cooler effective temperature, Oct to mid-December
- December to March sees migrants from North America mixed with local species
- November to March have peak numbers for roosting **Scarlet Ibis**
- Seabird breeding season on Little Tobago Island– **tropicbirds and boobies**