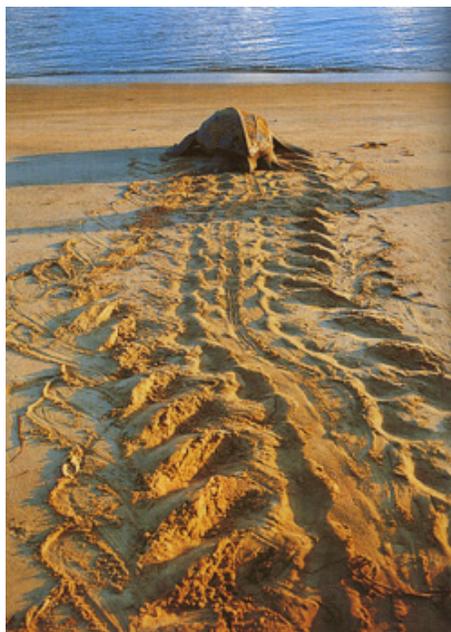




Best of Trinidad: Asa Wright Nature Centre & Grand Riviere, the Lush Stronghold of the Trinidad Piping Guan and Nesting Leatherback Turtles (April through July)

This tour is designed to showcase the best of Trinidad. Compared to our classic Ten-Day, Two-Island tour, it is more flexible in pace, with options to pursue your interests, be they birding, butterflies, photography, or simply relaxing in a tropical setting (and let the birds come to you). It is ideal for returning guests, or for couples or friends with diverse interests. It also fits well into a calendar week, great for those with limited time. Two fine lodges are featured for variety.

First and foremost, you stay at the Asa Wright Nature Centre (AWNC), enjoying the famous verandah and venturing off the grounds to see the Scarlet Ibis at Caroni National Park and scenic mountain terrain of the surrounding Northern Range. If you are keen on birding, there are opportunities for optional fieldtrips farther away, such as the full-day outing to Nariva Swamp. Avid photographers may hire a photography expert (subject to availability). After five nights at AWNC, spend your last two nights at a boutique, beachfront lodge on Trinidad's northern coast, where lush forests provide a stronghold for the endangered Trinidad Piping-Guan. In addition to the Piping-Guan, from March to July the beach is ideal for viewing nesting Leatherback Turtles (and later in the season you can witness the hatchlings emerging).



Tour Highlights: Best of Trinidad:

- Travel with AWNC's expert guides, who share robust knowledge and friendly, world-class guiding skills
- Savor five nights at the classic AWNC; relish morning coffee and birding on the famous verandah
- Gain exclusive access to enigmatic Oilbirds in the grotto of Dunston Cave
- Witness skies turned crimson with thousands of Scarlet Ibis coming in to roost in Caroni National Park
- Enjoy optional excursions if you'd like more birding or photography experiences
- Relish two nights at Mt. Plaisir Estate Hotel in Grande Riviere
- Look for the highly endangered Trinidad Piping-Guan while at Grande Riviere
- See the largest turtle, the Leatherback, nesting on the beach at Grande Riviere, and possibly see emerging hatchlings



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DAY 1: Arrive & Explore at Asa Wright Nature Centre (AWNC)

Upon arrival at Piarco International Airport, you are met by an AWNC guide for a one hour drive from the bustling metropolis of Port of Spain to the quiet seclusion of the Centre, about an hour's trip up into the Northern Range. Lush forests of the Arima Valley offer untamed vistas and provide the perfect place to learn about Trinidad's abundant natural heritage.

Step out onto the Centre's wide verandah to marvel at the almost tame hummingbirds, tanagers, honeycreepers, Bananaquit, and other birds that frequent the feeders. The views of the valley (and the birds) are breathtaking. Beyond the verandah, an extensive trail system beckons. If you arrive early the entrance road is an easy walk, where under a lush canopy Trinidad Motmot and a host of other species can be found. Centre naturalists are there to help identify species. Tea time is at 4:00 PM, followed by Rum Punch at 6:00 PM and then dinner.

Birding and Wildlife Highlights

Commonly Found at the Feeders: White-chested Emerald; White-necked Jacobin; Blue-chinned Sapphire; Rufous-breasted and Little Hermits; Copper-rumped Hummingbird; Crested Oropendola; Blue-gray, Palm, White-lined, Silver-beaked and Turquoise Tanagers; Barred Antshrike; Tufted Coquette; both Purple and Green Honeycreepers; and Violaceous Euphonia.

Spot From the Verandah: Double-toothed Kite; Scaled Pigeon; Black-tailed Tityra; Common Black, Gray-lined, White and Zone-tailed Hawks; Channel-billed Toucan; Bearded Bellbird; Yellow-breasted, Yellow-olive, Piratic and Boat-billed Flycatchers; Tropical Pewee; Tropical Kingbird; Tegu Lizard; and Red-rumped Agouti.

Note: If your flight arrives late, consider arriving a day early (additional cost), and enjoy an unscheduled morning. While our guides meet all flights, many travelers prefer to start the group tour well-rested.

DAY 2: Introductory Walk into AWCN's Forests / Optional Night Birds Excursion



This morning begins with 6:00 AM coffee and tea served on the verandah, and a Centre naturalist on duty to help you spy as many as 40 life birds before breakfast! After breakfast, enjoy an introductory walk on the Centre's Discovery Trail, learning more about the forest and discovering additional species. Many enjoy the challenge of spotting the Bearded Bellbird, as their distinctive "bonk!" echoes throughout the forest. Near a known bellbird lek in the trees are two species of manakins attending their leks closer to the ground.

Tonight there is the option to join a night-birding fieldtrip to lower elevation areas, departing from the Centre between 3:00 and 4:00 PM. Don't worry about missing out — your rum punch and hot dinner are packed to go. An unused airfield is the first birding stop (pre-sunset), then you venture to the Aripo Livestock Station where you enjoy dinner, then set off on a slow drive looking for target species.

Morning Birding Highlights: Trinidad Motmot; both Cocoa and Spectacled Thrushes; Ruddy Ground-Dove; Gray-fronted Dove; White-bearded and Golden-headed Manakins; Green-backed and Guianan Trogons; Channel-billed Toucan; Chestnut Woodpecker; Rufous-browed Peppershrike; both Turquoise and Bay-headed Tanagers; Green Hermit; Tufted Coquette; Black-throated Mango; Forest Elaenia; Ochre-bellied Flycatcher; Yellow Oriole; White-necked Thrush; Rufous-breasted Wren; White-flanked Antwren; Long-billed Gnatwren; and Bearded Bellbird.

Night Bird Outing Possibilities: Fork-tailed Palm-Swift; Sulphury Flycatcher; Moriche Oriole (extremely rare); White-tailed Nightjar; Common Pauraque; Tropical Screech-Owl; Barn Owl; and Spectacled Owl.

DAY 3: Birding Trinidad's Northern Range



Today's scenic, day-long excursion takes us high into the Northern Range on the Blanchisseuse Road. You make frequent birding stops and then enjoy a local lunch in picturesque Brasso Seco (minimum of 4 participants; if minimum is not met, a picnic lunch will be provided). You then continue through the mountains to the village of Morne la Croix for afternoon tea and cakes (yum!) as you enjoy watching parrots head in to roost.

Today also offers the opportunity to examine the strange world of leaf-cutter and army ants, as well as the chance to photograph butterflies, orchids, and other tropical flora.

Northern Range Birding Highlights: Swallow-tailed Kite; Common Black Hawk; Bat Falcon; Collared Trogon; Ornate Hawk-Eagle; Channel-billed Toucan; Trinidad Piping Guan; Short-tailed Hawk; both Streaked and Euler's Flycatchers; Rufous-tailed Jacamar; Blue-headed Parrot; Lilac-tailed Parrotlet; Orange-winged Parrot; Collared Trogon; Golden-olive; Red-rumped and Chestnut Woodpeckers; Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl; Stripe-breasted Spinetail; both Cocoa and Plain-Brown Woodcreepers; Dusky-capped, Slaty-capped and Rufous-breasted Wrens; Long-billed Gnatwren; Golden-fronted Greenlet; both Speckled and Hepatic Tanagers; Yellow-rumped Cacique

DAY 4: Quiet Day at AWCN / Optional Nariva Swamp / Optional Photo Tour



Today can be a relaxing day to enjoy the scenic beauty of AWCN if you choose. With 200 acres of grounds and the always-spectacular verandah, there's plenty to do without leaving the Centre! Join Centre naturalists on walks if you wish.

If you choose the optional day-trip to Nariva Swamp, this morning you depart for the lowlands of the Aripo Agricultural Station where the open countryside and semi-wild pastures offer new bird species. Once you thoroughly explore the Station, you drive to the Atlantic Coast for a picnic lunch and possible seabird sightings on the beach at Manzanilla.

“Coconut Alley” leads you through beachside habitats before you enter Nariva Swamp. Here, the Nariva River reaches the sea; freshwater environments of herbaceous swamp and mangrove swamp forest make for spectacular birding.



We end today’s excursion in search of two species of large macaws, as well as Red Howler and White-faced Capuchin Monkeys at Bush Bush Wildlife Sanctuary. This is a very full day with many stops and discovery of species found nowhere else on the island.

And if you are a photographer, no matter what your level of experience, you can choose to work with a professional photographer today, either at the Centre or on a foray nearby. Contact us to check availability.

Birding Highlights:

At the Aripo Ag Station: Great Kiskadee; Tropical Kingbird; Carib Grackle; Short-tailed Swift; Cocoli Heron; Savannah Hawk; Gray-headed Kite; Yellow-headed Caracara; Wattleed Jacana; Southern Lapwing; Green-rumped Parrotlet; Fork-tailed Palm-Swift; White-winged Swallow; White-headed Marsh-Tyrant; Pied Water-Tyrant; Yellow-chinned Spinetail; Red-breasted Blackbird; Grassland Yellow-Finch; and Ruddy-breasted Seedeater

Gazing out to Sea: Magnificent Frigatebird; Brown Pelican; Leach’s Petrel

South Towards Nariva: Common Black-Hawk; Yellow-headed and Crested Caracaras; Savannah Hawk; Pearl Kite; Gray-lined Hawk; Plumbeous Kite; Green and American Pygmy Kingfishers; Black-crested Antshrike; Silvered Antbird; Brown-crested Flycatcher; Pinnated Bittern; Black-bellied Whistling-Duck; Purple Gallinule; Yellow-hooded Blackbird; White-tailed Goldenthrout; Long-winged Harrier; Yellow-crowned Parrot; and Red-bellied, Blue and Yellow Macaws

DAY 5: Rare Oilbirds / Caroni Marsh



This morning, enjoy coffee, tea, and breakfast on the verandah, followed by a walk to see the Centre’s resident Oilbirds. We start on a short, but steep, path to Dunston Cave, a riparian grotto at AWNC. You enjoy exclusive access to a breeding colony of Oilbirds — queer nocturnal, fruit-eating birds that congregate here at one of the world’s most accessible nesting caves.

By mid-afternoon you depart for Caroni Swamp, birding along the way, and then arrive at a dock in Caroni National Park. There is a Visitor Center and restrooms here, and the mangroves are good to

check for new species. From here you bird by boat (watch for Ruschenberger’s Tree Boa and Silky Anteater, too), then moor up at a quiet spot in the mangroves to let the sunset show begin. Hundreds, and sometimes thousands, of Scarlet Ibis cloud the sky as they come in to roost. Tonight’s experience is one you won’t soon forget.



If there is interest today, we can include an optional outing to Yurette, Trinidad’s famous “Home of the Hummingbirds.” This private home in the Maracas Valley swarms with hundreds of hummingbirds. In fact, 13 of the Island’s 16 species have been recorded here. This option (additional cost) would be arranged en route to Caroni, with a picnic lunch.



Birding Highlights

Species You May Encounter at Yurette: All the species of AWNC, plus Brown Violetear; Ruby Topaz Hummingbird; Black-throated Mango; and Long-billed Starthroat

On the Outing to Caroni: Long-winged Harrier; Yellow-hooded Blackbird; Bicolored Conebill; Masked (Red-capped) Cardinal; Straight-billed Woodcreeper; Green-throated Mango; Northern Waterthrush; Anhinga; Striated Heron; White-cheeked Pintail; Large-billed Tern; Pied Water-Tyrant; Common Potoo; and Scarlet Ibis.

DAY 6: Aripo Ag Station / Birding Transfer to Grande Riviere



This morning we say goodbye to the Centre and staff, then travel south down the Arima Valley before turning east. In these Northern Range foothills lies the Aripo Agriculture Research Station, which breeds a cross of Water Buffalo and Brahma cattle. The Research Station’s open countryside and rough pasture allow us to seek plenty of new species.

From here we depart for Grand Riviere, spending much of the afternoon in travel. We enjoy lunch en route and make scenic stops on the rugged coastline.

Endemic Trinidad Piping Guans, known locally as Pawi, lure us to this side of the island. In Grande Riviere, you uncover this critically endangered bird’s final stronghold. Experts estimate there may be fewer than 300 left on Earth.

For part of the year Grand Riviere’s beaches are home to the world’s densest congregation of nesting Leatherback Sea Turtles. On some nights, hundreds of these gigantic turtles populate the beach. Most



nest between April and July, however they're also likely to be seen from March through August, and occasionally they are spotted at other times of the year. During turtle season you could see dozens of nesting Leatherbacks overnight. Upon arrival in Grande Riviere, buy a turtle permit (about \$16) from the local nonprofit, which has an office right next door to your hotel. In the evenings they guide you out to the beach to witness the graceful and moving sight. No flash photography is allowed but with luck there will still be some of these giants on the beach at dawn, so you can photograph them. From May onward, there should be hatchlings

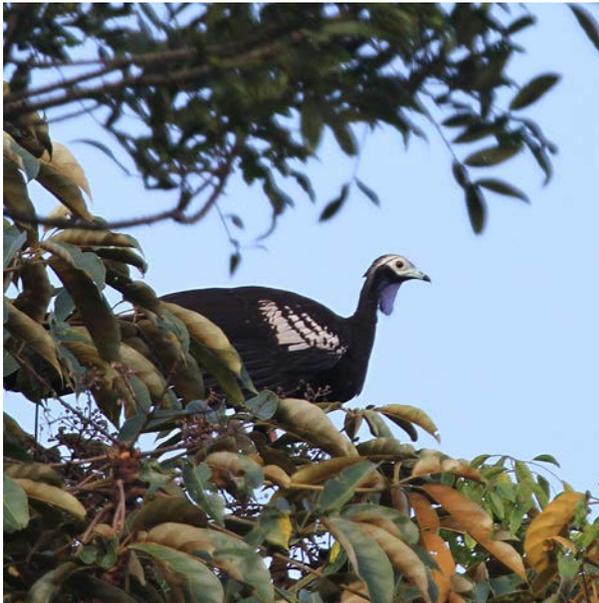
emerging; if so, you can see the drama of the babies' race to the sea in spite of vultures and frigatebirds.

As we arrive at our hotel, relax and enjoy gourmet local cuisine while dining alfresco at the eccentric and relaxing Mt. Plaisir Estate Hotel. Our rooms overlook the beach, so you enjoy a perfect view of nesting turtles. Leave your patio door open at night and drift off to sleep as waves crash on the beach below.

Birding Highlights

Aripo Ag Station: Great Kiskadee; Tropical Kingbird; Carib Grackle; Short-tailed Swift; Cocoli Heron; Savannah Hawk; Gray-headed Kite; Yellow-headed Caracara; Wattled Jacana; Southern Lapwing; Green-rumped Parrotlet; Fork-tailed Palm-Swift; White-winged Swallow; White-headed Marsh Tyrant; Pied Water-Tyrant; Yellow-chinned Spinetail; Red-breasted Blackbird; Grassland Yellow-Finch; Ruddy-breasted Seedeater

DAY 7: Morning in Search of Piping Guans / Afternoon Free / Evening with the Turtles



Once hunted to near extinction, the Trinidad Piping Guan (locally known as Pawi), has been the focus of considerable local conservation efforts. The bird has responded well, slowly increasing in numbers and visibility. This morning we will scrutinize the wild nutmeg trees that are their preferred feeding habitat.

The birding is excellent in Grande Riviere and the morning may reveal 60 or more species. Much of the birding is done from a wide forested track, where you can easily enjoy superb viewing areas. Having hopefully found the Pawi, we will continue driving down a steeply wooded slope into riverine forest where we continue birding.

Rest up this afternoon if you want to spend part of

the night again with the turtles.

The food and hospitality of Mt. Plaisir are excellent. Since we rose early for birding, the afternoon is free for time to explore and enjoy the beach.

Birding Highlights:

At Grand Riviere: Trinidad Piping Guan; Southern Lapwing; Lilac-tailed Parakeet; Gray-headed and Plumbeous Kites; White Hawk; Bat Falcon; Linnated and Crimson-crested Woodpeckers; Grayish Saltator; Silvered and White-bellied Antbirds; Black-tailed Tityra; Trinidad Euphonia; and mixed flocks of colorful tanagers.

DAY 8: Return to Port of Spain and Departures

Today our week in Trinidad comes to an end. We strongly encourage you to make afternoon return flights since we are at least two hours from the airport (and you need to be there at least 2.5 hours ahead of your flight). If you must take an early flight, consider adding a night to your trip, and stay here to enjoy the day, and then leave for an airport hotel late in the afternoon. If you MUST leave early, a special transfer can be arranged at an additional expense.



Book Your Tour Today! Call us at 800.426.7781 or email us at info@caligo.com.

Itinerary subject to change due to weather, road condition, access and other real-world factors. The order of the trips may also change. Should a location or region become unavailable, we will make every effort to visit an equivalent location or region.



Photo credits:

Pg. 1: Trinidad Piping-Guan, Dave Ramlal (DR); AWNC entry and AWNC breakfast room, Bud Ferguson. Leatherback, Howard Topoff. Pg. 2: Barred Antshrike, Peg Abbott (PA); Crested Oropendola, Jeff Bouton, Black-throated Mango, Janice Petko, Copper-rumped Hummingbird, Buck Snelson (BS). Pg. 3: White-bearded Manakin, PA; Golden-headed Manakin, BS; Bearded Bellbird, Mike Boyce (MB). Pg. 4: Bananaquit, MB; Bay-headed Tanager, MB; Blue-gray Tanager, MB; White-headed Marsh-Tyrant, MB; Pinnated Bittern, DR; Yellow-chinned Spinetail, MB. Pg. 5: Coconut Alley, PA; Oilbird, MB. Pg. 6: Caroni Birders, Dodie Logue (DL); Brown Violetear, Bob Behrstock, www.naturewideimages.com; Smooth-billed Ani, PA;

Pg. 7: Grand Riviere beach, PA; Piping Guan, PA; Group at Grand Riviere with Nicolas, DL; Group Aripo Ag. Station, PA.