

BIRD TREKS

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

ASA WRIGHT NATURE CENTRE & SEA TURTLES!

Dates Thursday, 10 May through Saturday, 19 May 2012: 10 days and 9 nights in Birding and Nature Paradise, very close to South America!

We'll visit **The Asa Wright Nature Centre**, which is located at 1200 feet in Trinidad's North Range. Asa Wright is a place of luxuriant beauty and home to an important and easily observed colony of rare **Oilbirds**. Birding any time of the day (or night) from the veranda is an unforgettable experience.

Coroni Marsh by boat, for an excursion filled with **Scarlet Ibis**, many additional long-legged waders, and lots of pleasant surprises (perhaps a potoo).

The **Blue Waters Inn** on Tobago, with side trips to **Little Tobago Island** for nesting seabirds and to the **Rain Forest Preserve** for the beautiful **White-tailed Sabrewing**. The snorkeling at Blue Waters is FANTASTIC!

Some of the many birds that we may see include . . .

Little Tinamou	Southern Lapwing
Least Grebe	Royal Tern
Red-billed Tropicbird	Eared Dove
Brown Booby	Red-bellied Macaw
Red-footed Booby	Green-rumped Parrotlet
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	Orange-winged Parrot
Striated Heron	Smooth-billed Ani
Scarlet Ibis	Oilbird
Cocoi Heron	Gray Potoo
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck	Blue-crowned Motmot
White-cheeked Pintail	White-tailed Trogon
Gray-headed Kite	Green Kingfisher
Pearl Kite	Rufous-tailed Jacamar
Common Black-Hawk	Channel-billed Toucan
White Hawk	Silvered Antbird
Savannah Hawk	Black-faced Antthrush
Ornate Hawk-Eagle	Pied Water-Tyrant
Peregrine Falcon	Boat-billed Flycatcher
Rufous-vented Chachalaca	Bearded Bellbird
Purple Gallinule	Golden-headed Manakin



Blue-crowned Motmot - - Kim Schutsky

Long-billed Gnatwren
Golden-crowned Warbler
Bicolored Conebill
Silver-beaked Tanager
Turquoise Tanager
Yellow-rumped Cacique
Moriche Oriole

[Sea Turtles and day-by-day agenda begin on page 2]

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

10 - 19 May 2012

On one of the first few evenings on Trinidad, we will have a special added attraction as we include a nighttime visit to the nesting beaches of the spectacular **Leatherback Sea Turtle**. Conditions permitting, we will experience one of the most remarkable moments in the natural world as we watch these incredible creatures excavate nest sites and lay their eggs, before returning to their ocean world. This is something that cannot be experienced earlier in the season, as the turtles have not yet begun nesting.



Leatherback Sea Turtle, nesting.

- - Jeff Bouton, Leica Optics

DAY AGENDA

- 1 We typically arrive in the afternoon or evening at Trinidad's Piarco International Airport in the capital city of Port-of-Spain, then transfer by van to the Asa Wright Nature Centre and Lodge. We'll settle in for our first of SIX nights at Asa Wright, probably to the calls of a **Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl** and **Tink Frogs**.
- 2 We have five entire days to explore the varied habitats in and around Asa Wright. These include the grounds with its feeders and beautiful plantings, numerous local trails, and day trips to a variety of wetlands and other habitats. If this is your first tropical experience you could easily see 20 or more life birds from the veranda before breakfast, including **Guianan (Violaceous) Trogon**, **Channel-billed Toucan**, **Chestnut Woodpecker**, **Bearded Bellbird**, **Rufous-browed Peppershrike**, and **Bay-headed Tanager**. On a typical day, birding will be offered before and after breakfast, with another walk following our afternoon siesta. All of these walks are optional, as you may choose to bird from the veranda, take a swim in the crystal-clear natural pool, or explore on your own.
- 3 Early in the day we'll hike to Dunstan Cave to view the unique nocturnal **Oilbird**, a species that you are unlikely to see at any other time in your life! The afternoon will be spent exploring the grounds for local specialties, perhaps looking for the small flock of **Trinidad Piping-Guans** that has been nearby for the past few years. Later this afternoon we will enjoy a special added attraction as we include a late day visit to Matura Beach, on the East Coast of Trinidad, to witness the nesting of the **Leatherback Sea Turtles**. Your local guides are affiliated with an award-winning, world-renowned conservation group that patrols this 12-mile stretch of pristine beach. Conditions permitting, tour participants will experience one of the most remarkable moments in the natural world as you watch these incredible creatures -- the largest of all sea turtles --- crawl up onto the sand, excavate nests and lay their eggs, before returning to their ocean world. I have done this several times. It is an evening to remember.

[Day 4 begins on page 3]

- 4 After a morning on the grounds of the lodge, we will head a fantastic new hummingbird site called Yerreté, with the possibility of 10-12 different hummingbird species. Then it is off to some sewage ponds and rice fields for a nice variety of aquatic species that has included rarities such as **Little Egret**, **Saffron Finch**, and **Long-winged Harrier** on past tours. We will take an afternoon boat ride on Caroni Marsh, where the main spectacle is the flight of thousands of **Scarlet Ibis** and other long-legged waders from their feeding grounds to their mangrove roosting areas. We may also see **Gray Potoo**, **Bicolored Conebill**, **White-cheeked Pintail**, **Clapper Rail**, and **Red-capped Cardinal**. Our drive home through the rice fields has produced great looks at **Barn Owls**. Dinner awaits upon our return to Asa Wright.
- 5 We will spend a full day at Nariva Swamp on Trinidad's East Coast. This is Trinidad's largest freshwater herbaceous swamp, dotted with Moriche Palms and the unique stilt-rooted rhizophora mangrove. New species that we may see en route to Nariva include **Savannah Hawk**, **Red-breasted Blackbird**, **Southern Lapwing**, **White-headed Marsh-Tyrant**, and **Green-rumped Parrotlet**. At the marsh we'll look for **Pinnated Bittern**, **Pearl Kite**, **Purple Gallinule**, and **Wattled Jacana**, with an excellent possibility for **Red-bellied Macaw** and **Crimson-crested Woodpecker**. What a day!
- 6 I meet with the local guides upon arrival at Asa Wright to determine the exact schedule of activities during our incredible week. We may change things around between one day and another, but it will always be for your benefit. Every evening after the checklist we will review the itinerary for the following day. We will visit all of the above locations, and possibly one or two others. And the grounds at Asa Wright are so productive and beautiful that we allow time for exploring locally. For example, we don't want to miss the mid-day soaring **White Hawks** and **Ornate Hawk-Eagle**, the late day **Short-tailed Nighthawk**, or the after-dinner night exploration walk that is always exciting and educational. Then there is swimming in the natural pool in the heat of the afternoon, tea at 4 PM, rum punch at 6 PM, and three incredible meals each day. It is a truly magical place!
- 7 This morning we leave Asa Wright and fly to Trinidad's sister island of **Tobago**. This island forms the final link in the chain of mountain ranges extending from Venezuela, on the edge of the South American Continental Shelf. After birding the Bon Accord Wetlands near the airport, where we have found **Western Reef-Heron** and **Little Egret** on past tours, we'll go to Grafton Estate for a nice mixture of songbirds, hummingbirds, and chachalacas. Late in the afternoon we move into the **Blue Waters Inn** for our next three nights. We will explore the grounds and become acquainted with some new birds on the shores of Batteaux Bay. We'll also enjoy **Blue-crowned Motmots** that have the intriguing habit of roosting atop our porch lights.



Red-billed Tropicbird
nesting on Little
Tobago Island.

- - *Kim and David Schutsky*

[Day 8 begins on page 4]

- 8 Today's plan is to visit Little Tobago Island by glass-bottom boat. Little Tobago is one of Trinidad's most important wildlife sanctuaries, with nesting colonies of **Red-billed Tropicbird**, **Red-footed** and **Brown Boobies**, and **Brown Noddy**. We are likely to see all of these species plus **Magnificent Frigatebird**, **Blue-crowned Motmot**, and **Venezuelan Flycatcher**. **Hawksbill** and **Green Sea Turtles** are possible during our short boat crossing and sometimes from the dock. There will be ample opportunity to snorkel and explore the reef and its inhabitants from shore or by boat.
- 9 Our final adventure on Tobago is a visit to the Rainforest Preserve at an elevation of 2000 feet. We are likely to see **Rufous-tailed Jacamar**, **Blue-backed Manakin**, **White-tailed Sabrewing**, and **Yellow-legged Thrush**, plus additional forest-interior specialties. **Green Kingfisher** is possible near the river. We'll return to the Blue Waters Inn for another night on the shores of Batteaux Bay.
- 10 Our Trinidad & Tobago adventure comes to an end. We'll make an early transfer to the Tobago Airport and an early flight back to Trinidad. Flights home can be scheduled for mid-morning or later.

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Click on this link for a **map of the tour route**:

<http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?hl=en&ie=UTF8&msa=0&msid=117812928873209532533.0004600f0bed0dc700cec&ll=10.70649,-61.282425&spn=8.078978,14.282227&z=7>

NOTE The evening at Matura Beach to see the nesting of the **Leatherback Sea Turtles** is truly an experience to remember. Each female turtle chooses an appropriate location, digs a hole with her back flippers, and deposits her eggs. She then covers the eggs and camouflages the area, to deter predators. Her final task is to walk back into the ocean, her job finished for the night. WOW!



Bob Schutsky will be your tour leader.
- - *Mary Brenner*,
tour participant



Golden Tegu Lizards are common at Asa Wright.

[Final details on page 5]

LEADER The Tropical Birding Adventure to the two-island nation of **Trinidad & Tobago** will be led by **Bob Schutsky**, with the added advantage of resident guides at both of our locations. Bob has conducted tours to the tropics since 1993 and has led numerous tours to Trinidad & Tobago.

PRICE \$3995 per person based upon double occupancy. Single accommodations are available at an extra charge of \$625. In the unlikely event that single accommodations are unavailable at either location, you will be refunded that portion of your extra charge.

INCLUDES Expert guide service, all ground and boat transportation within Trinidad & Tobago, the round trip flight from Trinidad to Tobago, entrance fees, **ALL meals**, and lodging for nine nights. **ALL tips** are also included in the tour fee, except for anything extra that you may wish to give to your tour leader(s), local guides, and boat captains.

Does not include the cost of alcoholic beverages, items of a personal nature, departure tax, or international airfare to and from Trinidad. Upon request Bird Treks will help you obtain the best possible airfare and coordinate your flight into Trinidad and out of Tobago.

EXTRA SERVICES We offer the services of our exclusive Bird Treks travel agent, **Lori Heathcote**, in arranging our air travel. Lori has 26 years of experience in the travel industry and is a veteran birder. Contact her through Bailey Travel at **1-800-224-5399** or **717-854-5511**, or you can e-mail Lori directly at **lori@baileytravel.com**. By dealing with Lori you have the security of a 24-hour toll-free telephone number in case of any travel emergency. She can also assist you with all pre- and post-tour travel plans. There may be a fee for these services.

DEPOSIT A \$1000 deposit will assure your reservation on the tour. The balance is due 10 February 2012. Please send your deposit **SOON** so that we can help you secure the least expensive airfare to Trinidad and guarantee your spot on the tour. This is a very popular destination and the tour may fill quickly.

REFUND AND CANCELLATION POLICY With written notice more than 90 days prior to the first day of the tour, 100% of your deposit will be refunded, minus a \$100 service fee. With 30-90 days notice, you will receive a 50% refund of the full cost of the tour. No refund can be made with less than 30 days notice. You will receive a full refund if you provide a replacement for your spot on the tour. No partial refund can be given once the tour begins. We **STRONGLY RECOMMEND** that you purchase trip cancellation insurance to protect your investment. Contact **Allianz Global Assistance** (formerly Access America) and mention **BIRD TREKS ACCAM # F021096**. You can apply via the Internet at **www.allianztravelinsurance.com** or by phone at **1-800-284-8300**.

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