

Trip Report Guyana and Suriname - February/March 2011

Report by Sjef Öllers

Introduction

The main aim of this holiday was to get an introduction to the wildlife of the Guyanas with, as always, mammals and birds being the main focus. The birding far exceeded my expectations: sightings of purple-breasted and pompadour cotinga, Guianan red-cotinga, capuchinbird, Guianan cock-of-the-rock, purple-throated and crimson fruitcrow, scarlet ibis and two! harpy eagles were unforgettable. And then I have not yet mentioned white-winged potoo, slaty-backed forest-falcon, hoatzins almost at touching distance, blood-coloured woodpecker and arrowhead piculet (currently Surinam's only endemic). Mammal sightings were mildly disappointing, partly because the lodge where we wanted to focus on mammals was such a mess. Nevertheless, it was fantastic to see all eight possible monkey species (and see them well). Another highlight was kinkajou on several night walks. Seeing the manatees in Georgetown Botanical Gardens, despite being very tame, was great too. A jaguar was seen only for a few seconds when it crossed the road in Iwokrama.



Rufous Crab Hawk



Harpy Eagle

Travel Arrangements and Some Notes on Independent Travel

In Suriname both accommodations (Hotel De Plantage near Tamanredjo and Residence Inn in Paramaribo) were booked directly. Both have a good website: <http://www.deplantagecommewijne.com/> and <http://www.resinn.com/>.

In Guyana we made the bookings through Wilderness Explorers. We were late with booking the tour (only a few weeks in advance) and it required some effort to get everything booked. In the end, however, Wilderness Explorers managed to get a program booked that was almost exactly what we asked (February is high season and usually the busiest month of the year and indeed the accommodations in Surama, Karanambu and Iwokrama River Lodge were fully booked for several nights. On the other hand, Atta was quiet when we there). We were very pleased with the service by

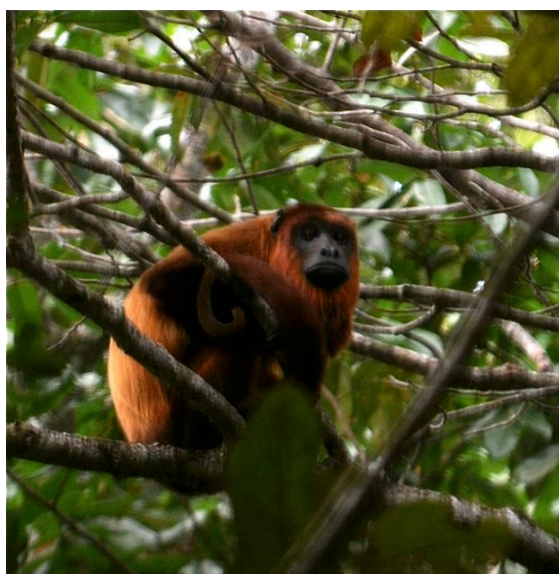
Wilderness Explorers. There was just one minor misunderstanding with one of the Georgetown excursions, but this was solved. They were very helpful with our early departure from Iwokrama and even helped settling cost issues with respect to our early departure there. All in all, highly recommended.

To a certain extent it is incomprehensible that the Guyanas are not better established as wildlife tourism destinations. The accommodations are of a comparable standard of what you get in popular places in Asia such as Borneo or Thailand, but with the same pristine and wild habitat found in Gabon, Congo-Brazzaville or remote (south)western Amazonia. All land- or river-based transfers in the interior of the Guyanas are wildlife trips themselves and not the depressing and seemingly endless transfers through the biodiversity wastelands (palm oil plantations, rice fields, monocultures of soy, etc.) that define, for example, most of Asia or Brazil. There are few places in the rainforest belt around the world I can think of that have the same unique combination of good accommodation and pristine habitat, so go to the Guyanas while they are still relatively untouched. For example, Brazil is putting a lot pressure on Guyana to pave the complete road through the interior (from the Brazilian border/Lethem to Georgetown). If that plan is carried out, the current charm of a place such as Atta Rainforest Lodge will be gone.

If you want to keep things fairly simple and don't want to rough it, then the lodges in Guyana's interior (Karanambu, Surama Eco-lodge, Rock View Lodge, etc.) should be your first choice. But if I had to go Guyana again, which I definitely will do, I would include a remoter place such as Maipaima Eco-Lodge and/or Rewa Eco-Lodge. An advantage of Guyana (over Suriname) is that the overall level of guiding seems to be higher, both in quantity and quality. We also seriously looked into a tour through the interior of Suriname. And while there is a good selection of lodges in the interior, often at amazing locations, tailor-made tourism for people with specific interests (bird- or mammalwatching in particular) is basically non-existing, whatever the lodges claim on their website. I contacted several lodges in the interior and none of them offered anything that I would call a tailor-made arrangement. The whole tourism industry in Suriname is focused on giving Dutch tourists (by far the largest percentage of tourists) their "jungle experience" (visiting the village chief, watch the women weave baskets, the two-hour jungle walk, swimming in the rapids, etc.). Nevertheless, if you are flexible, can guide yourself or are willing to spend extra money on a private guide, then an inland tour through Suriname should be really good, because the habitat around the lodges is generally superb. As far as I know, there is only one professional bird guide in Suriname (Otte Ottema, <http://www.planktonik.com/birdingsuriname/>) that can arrange guided birdwatching tours in Suriname. The semi-governmental nature conservation organization Stinasu and local tour operators can organize tours (with/without guides) too, but asking them to organize anything beyond their standard programs did not give me the impression that you would necessarily get what you asked for ("go with the flow" appears to be essential to enjoy Suriname). Mammalwatching seems to be non-existing as a tourist activity in Suriname. I haven't heard of any guide or company that could organize trips specifically targeted at seeing mammals. French Guyana should be a very exciting place to visit as well and has a good network of lodges throughout the country, and it is even more pristine than the other two countries (see here for locations <http://www.gepog.org/Photos-et-chants-doiseaux/O%C3%B9-observer-les-oiseaux-en-Guyane> (in French) and in particular the excellent article by Alexandre Renaudier in issue 5 of *Neotropical Birding*).

Travelling independently in Guyana is less of a problem than some travel guides and trip reports may lead you to believe, but you should allow for more time to cover travel distances, in particular if you refrain from flying into the interior. We met an

independent Canadian traveller who entered the country in the southwest coming from Brazil. Getting into the country sounded pretty straightforward and getting around by bus sounded quite easy too (see his experiences here: http://www.mytropicalvisions.com/frames_new.htm). The bus service between Lethem and Georgetown seems to function quite well in the dry season, but can be terrible in the rainy season. Nevertheless, even in the dry season longer delays as a result of bus breakdowns, road works and bad weather do occur. Rock View Lodge, Surama, and Atta are all easy to reach from the main road and cater for budget travellers. Iwokrama River Lodge allows people to camp, but my impression is that they actively discourage budget travellers. Karanambu would be more difficult to reach, but you could try to contact them by first stopping at Rock View Lodge. I am not sure whether they allow people to camp but it is definitely possible. The villages Wowetta, Aranaputa and Rewa also cater for budget travellers and offer fantastic birding and good mammalwatching opportunities. You may have to be a bit more flexible in the interior during the high season (mid-January to mid-March) when some places are fully booked, but the lodges in central Guyana are located fairly close to each other, so it should be no problem to relocate to a place with availability. To reach any place in the interior of Suriname, you will have to fly (flights are not that expensive though) or go on very long boat rides (taking days or even a week). Only Brownsberg can easily be reached overland and to a certain extent Voltzberg (with a combination of road and boat trip although this option is quite expensive if you travel independently)



Red Howler



Squirrel Monkey

Weather

Weather conditions were a little odd, since February is usually the driest month of the year. This year January had been extremely dry with little or no rain in most of Guyana and Suriname. So the “little” rainy season of December/January had now shifted to February. In inland Guyana the rain wasn’t too bad, usually heavy showers that lasted from 10 minutes up to 2 hours. The weather in Atta was a bit unusual, typically with rain, drizzle or heavy clouds in the morning, but sunny afternoons. However, in Suriname valuable birding time was lost due to the rain on a few days, mostly early in the morning and in the afternoon from 2-6 pm, but luckily there were never days with non-stop rain all day.

Equipment/Books

Because of the weight restrictions on the flights in the Guyanas more careful planning than usual was required. This was a bit unfortunate because the full gear (large spotlight, the “big” scope, heavy tripod and various lenses, etc.) would definitely have been worth taking. So we only had our binoculars, one DSLR with 80-400 mm lens, a pocket camera (Canon S90), a pocket scope (Nikon ED50) and light tripod, and our torches. I also took my MP3 player and a small speaker, which proved to be invaluable for identifying or calling in birds in the difficult rainforest habitat. Because we booked rather late, I quickly assembled a list of recordings through Xenocanto. I did manage to find recordings for most of the species but I didn’t have much time to check the quality of the recordings and out in the field I discovered a few bad apples that cost me a few birds. Anyway, with this “basic” kit we managed to go over the weight limit only a little bit.

Most birders take either *Birds of Venezuela* (Hilty et al.) or *Birds of Northern South America* (Restall et al.). *Birds of Venezuela* has great descriptions, but I really dislike some of the drawings and the book is heavy. *Birds of Northern South America* is a great double tome, but most people only take the book with the plates and maps. The volume with the text is very good, and what I like about the book with the plates is that it includes plumages for males, females and juveniles of many species. The quality of the drawings varies but overall they are quite good. However, in the end I decided to take two other books, *Field Guide to the Songbirds of South America* (Ridgely and Tudor) and *A Field Guide to the Birds of South America: Non-Passerines* (Rodriguez Mata, Erize, Rumboll), which together weighed less than Hilty and more importantly the former contains fantastic drawings by Guy Tudor (strangely also much better than his drawings in *Birds of Venezuela*). Nevertheless, I copied some of the antbird and flycatcher pages in Hilty and pasted those into Ridgely and Tudor’s book. This combination worked very well in my opinion. For the mammals I produced my own little guide by copying the relevant pages from *Neotropical Rainforest Mammals: A Field Guide* (Emmons et al.) plus adding some photos from the Internet for species not shown in Emmons’ book. I wrote the most important diagnostic features/issues to identify the species into my checklist. This worked well for the macro-mammals, but for bats and small rodents you would need specialist help. For general travel information, we had the Bradt guide *Guyana*, which I found good with reliable information, fair assessments of the accommodation, etc. For Suriname we checked some Dutch language guides at home (all poor and pretty useless, better info is found in the birding trip reports), but there is (or soon will be) a Footprint guide that covers the three Guyanas. The number of trip reports for both countries is still limited and I think it’s worth reading them all.



Itinerary

February 12:	Flight to Paramaribo, Suriname
February 13:	Hotel De Plantage
February 14:	Warappakreek Excursion
February 15:	Hotel De Plantage
February 16:	Flight to Georgetown, Guyana
February 17:	Excursion to Abary and Mahaica River
February 18:	Flight to Karanambu
February 19:	Karanambu Ranch
February 20:	Transfer to Atta Rainforest Lodge
February 21:	Atta Rainforest Lodge
February 22:	Atta Rainforest Lodge
February 23:	Cock-of-the Rock Trail - Transfer to Surama – Harpy Eagle Trail
February 24:	Surama
February 25:	Surama
February 26:	Transfer to Iwokrama River Lodge
February 27:	Iwokrama River Lodge – boat trips near the lodge
February 28:	Iwokrama River Lodge – Turtle Mountain full day
March 1:	Iwokrama River Lodge – Lodge Trails
March 2:	Iwokrama River Lodge – Turtle Mountain morning/Lodge Trails
March 3:	Transfer to Rock View Lodge
March 4:	Morning Rock View Lodge - Flight to Georgetown
March 5:	Flight to Paramaribo – Visit Cultuurtuin in Paramaribo
March 6:	Peperpot Plantage – Afternoon flight to Amsterdam



Jabiru

Accommodations

This Guyana/Suriname tour was one of our most enjoyable holidays so far. Few hotels or lodges with excessive or useless luxuries, no mass tourism hotel complexes, mostly just pleasant small-scale operations that understand who their customers are. Most accommodations are simple but nevertheless comfortable and have the most relevant luxuries such as a good bed and a clean toilet and shower.

Surama Lodge is a community-run eco-lodge and unlike many others it actually lives up to the moniker. The lodge is run professionally by the manager, Jackie, and all the staff including guides are local people from Surama; many if not all the guides have expert tracking skills and are very good spotters. Most food is local produce. The chalets are spacious and practical with good beds and large mosquito nets. Just like in Karanambu, bats may fly in and out of your chalet at night, which didn't bother me, but if you are prone to vampire nightmares, use your mosquito net, wear slippers (I did find one walking on the floor) and take a flashlight when going for a toilet break at night. Only a few guides are skilled birders, but most of the guides are familiar with the more spectacular species. Most guides are active or former (subsistence) hunters, so they know the mammals very well. Surama is surrounded (all at walking distance) by savannah, rainforest, forest islands on the savannah, a wetland, the Burro Burro river and Surama mountain, which forms a fantastic mix of habitats that complements the wetter rainforest habitat in Atta very well. Just for the overall pleasant and relaxed atmosphere at the lodge and the variety of habitats, this was my favourite place of the trip and the one that most exceeded my expectations.

Karanambu Ranch of Diane McTurk fame is somewhat comparable to Surama in that it has a wide variety of habitats (wetlands, savannah, gallery forest, seasonally flooded forest, etc.). It lacks an excursion to a rainforest-clad mountain top, but in return you get to visit the Victoria water lilies, which is a must see even for non-botanists like me (and usually the birdwatching from the boat is good and you may see the occasional mammal too). The savannah around the lodge is the place to see giant anteater, but apart from the occasional crab-eating fox, sightings of macro-mammals such as puma, jaguar, tapir, tayra, brocket deer, armadillos, coatis, etc. seem to be quite rare around the lodge, but you are guaranteed to see several monkey species. The food was nice and the guides range from good to excellent, although just like Surama only a few guides are skilled in more advanced bird identification. Guests stay in practical chalets with a large bathroom, but the mosquito net in our room had almost as much holes as it had netting. The whole place is professionally run and the hosts were very friendly. Lunch and dinner were elaborate affairs in a family-like setting. The only things that would need upgrading in my opinion are their jeeps, which are beyond old/charmingly rustic and not very suited for game drives if there are larger numbers of people staying at the place. Although I would probably go back to Karanambu (as we had not even seen half of what they offer), something intangible seemed to be missing. It was maybe a little too laidback and seemed more focused on "general interest" tourists that come to enjoy the overall nature experience. I may have also been biased because when we there, there was a Naturetrek group staying there as well, and while the group was very friendly and accommodating, the presence of the tour group rather dominated and determined what was going on.

Rock View Lodge is the most luxurious lodge in the area with very comfortable rooms, a swimming pool and a beautiful garden with quite a lot of birds. The food and guides were very good. The location close to Annai village (and, relatively speaking, one of the more densely populated areas in the region) makes it less suited for mammal watching; children still hunt mammals for fun, so densities are very low and some species may be

locally extinct. Close to the lodge there is a nice but short trail that will keep birdwatchers busy for several hours. The lodge offers several interesting excursions nearby but these would require a short drive (expensive at 4-6 USD per kilometre) or medium-long cycling distances. A great place to end a trip through Guyana's interior.

Atta Rainforest Lodge had the simplest accommodation from the places we visited. It has recently been upgraded from a hammock camp to a small youth hostel-style camp, but with private rooms (albeit very functional). Each room has two beds with good mosquito nets and a table and a chair. Showers and toilet are shared, but there are four shower/toilet blocks for 8-10 people. The food is excellent, the staff very friendly and the location right in the middle of the forest is unbeatable. What more do you need? I thought it was perfect and I really loved this place. For next year they are considering renting out bikes to tourists, which would be absolutely brilliant if this really takes off.



Atta Lodge - Restaurant

Iwokrama River Lodge (IRL): Before the visit to Guyana I assumed that IRL would be one of the highlights of the trip and had saved it as the last place to visit in the interior. It unfortunately turned out to be the lowlight. The first time I heard about Iwokrama forest and Iwokrama Research Station/Iwokrama River Lodge was about ten years ago. Iwokrama sounded like an incredible biodiversity hotspot with the added bonus of having a comfortable lodge from which to explore and experience all the splendour of Iwokrama forest. On paper they offer a variety of activities on foot, by vehicle and in boats. Day and night. Sounds brilliant, no? So what is wrong with IRL? In two words: poor management. In short: the excursions were a mess and poor value for money in their current form, the food logistics were badly organized, in peak season there are not enough guides, boats and vehicles to run excursions properly and to make matters worse they use the already limited resources (boats in particular) for other purposes than tourism at the hours that excursions should take place, and finally – this may not be a fact, just our perception – tourists are treated by the management in a patronizing way. You are tolerated, but being welcome feels different.

The lodge lies on the northern edge of the Iwokrama Forest in a less pristine part of the reserve with quite intense logging activities nearby and Fairview village only about 3-4 km away. Nevertheless, the location on the Essequibo River is scenic with good forest directly around the lodge and the chalets are beautiful with a big veranda to sit and relax

and watch over the river. The chalets are comfortable with good beds, ample storage room and a large bathroom. There is a good, but rather limited trail network around the lodge, but technically you are not allowed to visit the trails on your own (more on this below).

Food: we were there at the peak of the tourist season and they managed to run out of almost all stocks. As a result the food on most days was poor. Breakfast usually consisted of very greasy deep-fried bread typically with little or nothing to put on it, a fried egg and a tiny piece of watermelon. Jam, honey, peanut butter, marmalade, etc., and even butter on one morning were all not available during most days of our stay. Lunch and dinner were often bland and overcooked. Basic drinks such as beer, coke, sparkling mineral water, etc. all (had) ran out when we were there. If you take into account the upmarket pretensions of IRL and see what prices they ask for their food, then such “service” is just outrageous. In addition, none of the lodges in the interior had the kind of logistic problems or food shortages that IRL had, and they all face the same difficulties with getting food supplies there. The situation also seems to have less to do with the competence of the kitchen staff than with that of the management, because when food supplies finally arrived, the food was much better but still overpriced for what you get.

Excursions: This was by far the biggest annoyance. Apart from the first excursion, none of our excursions went according to plan (more details on this in the day-to-day accounts). On paper excursions last about 2-2.5 hours (typically from 6.15-6.30am to 8.30-9am and from about 4-4.30 pm to 6-6.30 pm), but most of our excursions were delayed, shortened and/or not carried out as agreed. A 50-minute cut in a two-hour excursion, as we experienced, is ridiculous and just poor value for money (and no discount offered by the lodge). The short excursions would be fine though, if you can get out on your own between 9 am and 4 pm, but the first thing you are told is that under no circumstances clients should walk the entrance road without a guide, let alone the trails. I heard from two tourists that management staff lectured them when they were found walking on their own on the entrance road. Whether they have these rules for safety or commercial reasons or both is unclear, but it was interesting to note that IRL does not seem to care about people’s safety when they leave and have to catch the bus in Fairview, because then one is allowed (if not forced) to walk the road by oneself. Even if you have paid your 15-USD guiding fee, there is no enthusiasm to go out on the trails between 9 and 4, because “there is nothing to see”. Of course I put this statement to the test and unsurprisingly there was plenty to see in daytime with a little patience and perseverance. Does IRL’s management really think that when most people come to one of the most spectacular rainforests in the world they prefer to sit on the veranda of their chalet for most of the day to see the grass grow on the lawn?

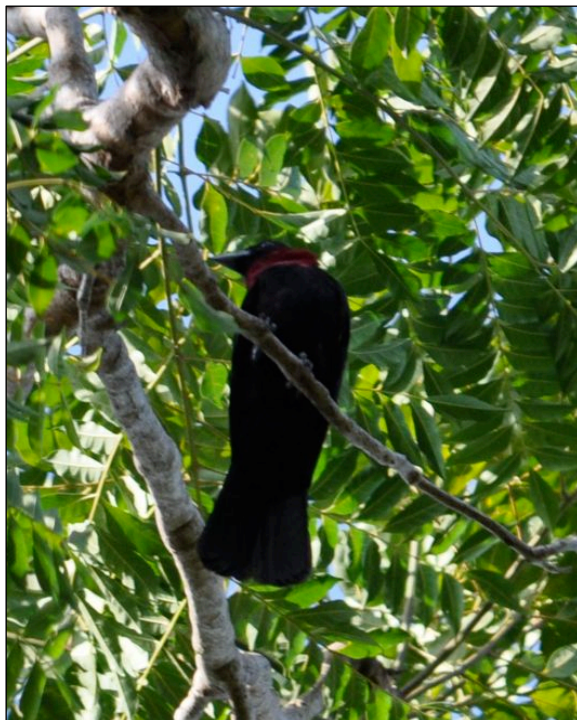
One of the reasons we had initially booked six nights at IRL was that I wanted to focus a bit more on night-time activities at IRL, and since spotlighting can vary greatly in success, a few additional nights would allow more flexibility if the weather wasn’t cooperating. Our initial plan was to do two or three night drives, an after-dark boat excursion and one or two nightwalks but we quickly gave up on the night drives. It was unclear whether vehicles would be available at all and in general there was no enthusiasm to do these drives. Besides that, 50 USD per person per night drive is very expensive considering the short distance that is covered (this we heard from other clients) and the run-down vehicles they use. Whether they have a proper spotlight to do game drives, I don’t know and I didn’t bother to ask. It was also interesting to see that the directors of Iwokrama all have their private 4x4s. While these cars appeared to be in good condition, the vehicle used to transport tourists was a tired-looking pick-up held together with duct tape. Again, if this were just a budget youth hostel-type place run by volunteers, this would be funny, endearing and acceptable, but it was representative for

the lacklustre and bureaucratic atmosphere at IRL. A real shame because in theory all the elements are there to make it a top wildlife lodge. It did cross my mind that maybe we were just unlucky, but when I see the predominantly negative/lukewarm comments about IRL on the TripAdvisor website (which sometimes need to be taken with a grain of salt), it is clearly a structural management problem and after having been there I must say that most comments on TripAdvisor unfortunately hit the nail on the head.

Guides: The guiding was definitely one of the few more positive things at IRL during our stay. As far as I could tell there were three guides on duty when we were there and they were all nice guys with good all-round knowledge. Our guide Egbert seemed to have the most extensive knowledge about birds and bird calls and was also very good with mammals and reptiles. The other two guides were also familiar with the more spectacular bird species (and to some extent their calls).

Oddly enough Atta Rainforest Lodge is also part of the Iwokrama organisation, but it is run as an independent unit by a very friendly and competent couple that seems to like and care about their job. Unsurprisingly, it makes all the difference.

Information on Hotel De Plantage in Suriname and accommodations in both capitals is included in the day-to-day accounts below.



Purple-throated Fruitcrow (male)



Capuchinbirds (males at lek)

Day-to-Day Account

February 12: Flight to Paramaribo

After a rather bumpy flight we arrived at about 4 pm on Suriname's international airport near Zanderij. The airport has money exchange facilities with pretty good rates and you can put cash euros and dollars in a machine and get Surinamese currency in return. Brilliant. After picking up our bags, Pieter, one of the owners of Hotel De Plantage, was waiting for us at the exit. From the airport it is about a 70 minute drive to the hotel, which actually has more a lodge (than hotel) feel: nine comfortable chalets, a nice pool and an elevated central dining room in a lush tropical garden setting. The lodge's garden adjoins a piece of good secondary rainforest. In the forest there is a network of short trails and – best of all – an observation tower. Around the lodge there are a few small swampy areas that attract a lot of birds and possibly also mammals but I wasn't lucky.

We arrived rather late in the afternoon at De Plantage so I only had time for a quick walk around the garden before it got dark. The walk only lasted 10 minutes, but I managed to get at least 40 chigger bites. A lesson quickly learned.

February 13: Hotel De Plantage

We get up at dawn and I can't wait to explore the forest, but it is raining. It hadn't rained all of January and three days before we came it had started raining heavily. After some exploratory walks in light rain mixed with short outbursts of very heavy showers we head back for breakfast around 8.30. Around 10am Pieter takes us on an interesting forest walk. We see brown capuchin and squirrel monkeys and common birds such as tropical kingbird, greater and lesser kiskadee, rusty-margined flycatcher, silver-beaked tanager, blue-grey tanager, palm tanager, bananaquit, yellow-rumped cacique and crested oropendola.

After a light lunch we explore the trails again. To reach the trails one has to cross a water-filled ditch via a small bridge, which is a good place to see kingfishers. We are lucky because the first kingfisher we see at the bridge is normally the most difficult one: green-and-rufous kingfisher! We spend some time on the tower, where we see more brown capuchin monkeys, but few birds. Next we explore the garden and the trails. Birding is slow in terms of variety, but eventually we find a pair of black-spotted barbets, a beautiful male blood-coloured woodpecker, blackish antbird and the only whiskered flycatcher of the trip.

Late afternoon we explore the entrance road, which proves to be very birdy. Green-throated mango, swallow-winged puffbird, turquoise tanager, and grey-crowned flatbill are some of the species seen.

In the evening it starts to rain again, so I give up on a spotlighting walk. Around 3.30 am Anja and I both wake up from a hissing sound that seems to come from the roof right above our heads. Initially I think it is an owl, so I decide to go out and look. Suddenly I hear a great potoo calling from the other side of the garden at the forest edge. I point my spotlight in the direction and indeed along the forest edge, the potoo is perched on a dead tree. Then, almost right above my head I hear the hissing sound again and now things click in my sleepy head, there is another potoo!! A second later the potoo flies off and I can follow him with my spotlight in the air. He makes a U-turn and eventually lands in a big tree close to the restaurant. I call Anja to come out and we have fantastic

views of both potoos and I even manage to get some documentary shots of the bird in the restaurant tree.

February 14: Warappakreek Excursion

I wake up around dawn and have a quick look around the lodge. In the fruiting trees next to the chalets squirrel monkeys and brown capuchins are gorging themselves on the fruits. In the water-filled ditch behind the lodge I surprise a green ibis. Around 7.30 in the morning we are picked up by ornithologist Otte Ottema and a driver from Waterproof, the company that runs the trips to Warappakreek (<http://www.waterproofsuriname.com/index.php/english/birdwatching>; the trip was well organized, recommended). The driver drops us off at a landing near the village of Alkmaar, where we board the boat. At the landing we are joined by a Dutch couple that are also interested in bird watching. We follow the Commewijne River upstream for some 20-30 minutes; we see some common waders and herons, and ospreys are very common along this stretch. After a short stop to pick up our lunch we head north through swamp forest and mangroves on a small river that eventually becomes a narrow creek. Straight-billed woodcreeper turns out to be common, but we also see buff-throated woodcreeper. Woodpeckers are well represented with lineated, crimson-crested, chestnut and the beautiful cream-colored woodpeckers. A green aracari (I only get flight views) is unexpected but we also see the more common black-necked aracaris.

Otte stops at a stake-out for crimson-hooded manakin to lure in the bird with tape playback. Initially the bird seems quite far away, but after a while it slowly comes closer. Eventually we have good views of this amazing bird. As far as manakins go it is a big one and even from a distance the red seems incredibly bright. A closer inspection through the bins shows that the plumage is a more subtle mix of bright crimson red, orange and yellow, which contrasts beautifully with the glossy black of the belly, wings and back. Definitely one of the best birds of the tour.

Pretty soon we also start to see our first rufous crab hawks. Both of green-and-rufous and American pygmy kingfisher keep darting in front of the boat, but eventually we have incredible views of a pair of pygmy kingfishers that perch on a small bush next to the riverbank. Closer to the Caribbean coast the landscape becomes more barren with large open spaces and stumps of dead trees. We pass some flats where scarlet ibises are usually seen, but the birds seem completely absent today.

After a few hours of boating through swamp forest and mangroves we reach the outlet where the Warappakreek spills into the ocean. Here we walk the short trail to the observation hut with views of the mud flats and the ocean. A nice variety of herons is present: great egret, snowy egret, little blue heron, tricolored heron and both night heron species. Still no scarlet ibises though. Initially the tide is still too high, so Otte suggests to call in some birds in the low-canopy coastal forest, but Anja decides to stay in the hut. We install ourselves in a shady spot and Otte plays recordings of spotted tody-flycatcher, straight-billed woodcreeper, pale-tipped inezia and black-crested antshrike, which all respond and show well, and we also see yellow oriole and bicolored conebill.

When we walk back to the hut, Anja tells us that a scarlet ibis had just landed in front of the hut but it took off before she could warn us. From the hut we observe how the tide starts to recede and increasingly larger flocks of waders are seen. Most of them are semi-palmated sandpipers. Around the hut snowy egret, great egret, little blue heron, tricolored heron, yellow-crowned and black-crowned night heron keep us entertained, but slowly various wader species including willet, both yellowlegs, black-bellied plover, and spotted sandpiper join the herons. I am surprised about the low numbers of gulls

and terns: only one yellow-billed and four gull-billed terns are seen. After about 30-40 minutes the ibises finally start flying past the hut and every now and then small groups of 2-5 ibises land some 50-100 meters in front of the hut. The incredibly bright orange colour of the birds against the background of the green mangroves and the blue sky is absolutely stunning. When a large area of mudflats is finally exposed around the hut, there is non-stop action of birds flying in and out, but by now it is late afternoon and unfortunately we really have to leave because the tide would get too low to get out of Warappakreek that day. When we board the boat and take a last look at the flats, we notice that two scarlet ibises have landed nearby. We approach them slowly to take some photos but with a fairly strong wind and shaking boat it is difficult to get good shots. On the way out we also notice a handful of least sandpipers. We head back to the mangroves and swamp forest, but the afternoon activity is significantly lower. We don't see any new species but get good views of some of the species seen earlier that day. Back at our lodge we thank Otte for a great day.

A spotlighting session around the garden and the observation tower is fruitless, but the potoos are again calling on the forest edge around the garden.



Scarlet Ibis and Yellow-crowned Night Heron at Warappakreek

February 15: Hotel De Plantage

Around dawn we walk to the tower in the hope to see an agouti or some other terrestrial mammal but nothing is seen. On the tower it is rather quiet, but eventually we see capuchin and squirrel monkeys pass through the canopy. Around 8 am a small bird flock finally passes through the highest tree next to the tower. A pair each of blood-coloured and chestnut woodpecker, violaceous euphonia, white-tailed trogon and black-crested antshrike are the most interesting species.

After breakfast we leave the lodge terrain and walk for 150-200 meters along the main road in the direction of Albina/French Guyana and then turn off to the right on a dirt road next to a straightened creek.

The initial impression is not very good. On both sides of the road the original vegetation has been cleared; there are ongoing building activities for an "ecoresort". I am not quite sure what this term means to the owners of this place because directly behind the resort several hectares of rainforest have been flattened to the last tree. However, a few hundred meters further on there is still secondary rainforest on both sides of the road,

and birding here is not very spectacular but quite entertaining with among others little cuckoo, black-crested antshrike, barred antshrike, yellow oriole, wing-barred seed-eater, roadside hawk, black-collared hawk and tropical gnatcatcher.

Around 10.30 it is becoming very hot and humid and very dark clouds are approaching from the northeast. We decide to walk back to the lodge. On the way back we pick up two raptors: one is clearly a slender-billed kite but the other one (after studying the photos at home) turns out to be an adult hook-billed kite, an uncommon bird for Suriname and a lifer for me. Only a few minutes after we get back, torrential rain starts, and which lasts for a few hours. We relax a bit at the lodge and I find a second slender-billed kite that seems to be sitting out the rain on a treetop next to the restaurant.

Around 2 pm the sky opens up again, so I head back into the forest, but the fun only lasts about 30-40 minutes and then another torrential shower soaks me completely. This pattern of very heavy showers and short dry periods continues all afternoon. Birding between the showers proves to be rather slow but several interesting species show up: cocoa thrush on the trails in the forest, green-rumped parrotlet (perched) on the entrance road and a forest elaenia from the tower.

Late afternoon I walk the trail that follows the ditch around the lodge and find another slender-billed kite, little cuckoo and American pygmy kingfisher. Even better are two green aracaris that are seen very well for at least twenty minutes. Around sunset it finally stops raining and after dinner I spotlight the garden and the trails in the forest on a fairly extended spotlighting session, but apart from some bats flying around in the forest, absolutely nothing is seen.



De Plantage

February 16: Flight to Georgetown

Early morning we walk the entrance road again, which passes along the edge of the forest. This morning I had gain heard the howler monkeys call from that area. We explore the area, but can't see the howler monkeys, who unfortunately have gone silent when we reach the area.

We continue our birding with a walk to the observation tower, but it is extremely quiet. After spending about an hour on the tower we decide to walk the trails one more time. This is a good decision as only some 150 meters into the trail I see a red-handed tamarin completely free on a tree trunk. I have very good views through the bins, but Anja initially can't see him from where she is looking. When I try to guide her in a better position to see the monkey, the monkey gets nervous and Anja unfortunately only sees him rushing up the tree. We check the whole area but can't find the tamarin, who seems to have disappeared in an area with dense tangles. In the same area we also find a group of brown capuchins.

After walking the trail Anja goes packing and I spend some more time in the forest, but I don't see anything of note. Around 11 we say goodbye to our wonderful hosts Pieter and Peter. Pieter brings us to the small Zorg en Hoop airport in Paramaribo.

After an unpleasant turbulent flight through rain clouds we arrive in a cloudy but dry Georgetown. We are picked up at the airport and after checking in in our hotel (Cara lodge: nice rooms, but the food in the restaurant is a bit bland) we make an afternoon excursion to the Botanical Gardens. Our guide Carlos shows us around. It is a national holiday, so it is very busy with people everywhere, picknicking in the gardens. Not ideal, but birdlife is still quite prolific and it is an enjoyable place. Some of the species seen are white-chested emerald, a single white-throated toucan, yellow-chinned spinetail, a pair of barred antshrikes, and limpkin. Parrots and parakeets are noisy and conspicuous; most common are orang-winged parrot, but we also see mealy parrot, yellow-crowned parrot, red-shouldered macaws, and brown-throated parakeets.

For a long time it looks like we will miss our target bird, festive parrot, but late afternoon we finally manage to find a pair quite far away, so we walk at high speed to the area. When we arrive the birds are luckily still around and in the end we have excellent views. On our way out we see several more in flight, and another pair perched in the distance.

The last 30 minutes before sunset we check out the pond where the manatees should be and we are lucky when we find an individual close to the water's edge. Eventually the beast approaches us because they have become used to people feeding them grass. Despite being almost as tame as a pet dog, it is very cool to see them up close.

February 17: Excursion to Abary and Mahaica River

An early 4.30 start and we are off to our first destination, Abary, which is basically a track near the Abary river that leads to the coast through a mixture of scrub, degraded forest, some remnant mangroves, coastal mud flats and pastures. This mixture of degraded habitats is nevertheless quite rich in bird species and it is an easy and pleasant walk. The walk produces (among others) white-barred piculet, blood-coloured woodpecker, boat-billed tody-tyrant, little cuckoo, greater ani, bicolored conebill, turquoise tanager, white-chested and plain-bellied emerald, lemon-chested greenlet, white-winged becard and one rufous crab hawk.

Next we drive to the Mahaica River. The turn-off from the main highway to the boat landing leads through pastures, rice fields and low scrub. Most interesting birds seen here are yellow-hooded blackbird, white-headed marsh-tyrant, pied water-tyrant, red-capped cardinal and Carib grackle.

After some 30-40 minutes we reach the boat landing and board the small motorboat. The boat passes through rice fields (partly abandoned) and farmland; the river is most

of the time lined with a narrow strip of bushes and trees (calling this degraded riverine vegetation a gallery forest would be an overstatement). Bird activity is not as high as I expected but a fairly constant trickle of species is seen, including a variety of heron species, four kingfisher species, black-necked aracari, and bat falcon. Unexpected is a zone-tailed hawk that flies almost right over our heads. Highlight for most will be the hoatzins, which can be seen at close range. We encounter two groups of about 6-8 birds. Some of the guides (including ours) unfortunately will throw sticks at the birds if they feel they are not “performing” well. Totally unnecessary as these hoatzins are very approachable and visible.

After about one hour boating upriver we stop at a small farm where we bird around the main house: red-breasted blackbird, black-capped donacobius, and green-tailed jacamar are the most interesting species. By this time it is quite hot and windy, which probably suppressed bird activity.

Due to a somewhat odd misunderstanding we did not go to Hope Beach to look for scarlet ibis, but when the issue was cleared we drove to the pontoon bridge in Georgetown and had a short birding session there, about 5-6 scarlet ibises were seen from the bridge roosting in the riverine vegetation. Directly next to the bridge we stopped for a short walk and got some good photo opportunities for little blue heron, tricolored heron and both night herons.



From left to right: Straight-billed Woodcreeper, White-bellied Piculet (female) and Blood-coloured Woodpecker (male)

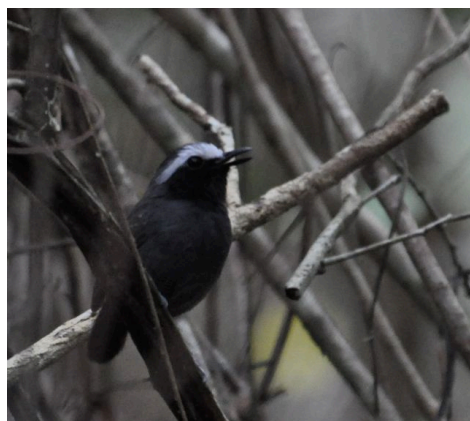
February 18: Flight to Karanambu

After an early breakfast we drove to the airport around 7 am. Take-off is at 8.30 for the 90-minute flight to Karanambu Ranch in central Guyana. It was very cloudy so unfortunately the flight wasn't very good for taking aerial pictures. After a short stop at Rock View Lodge/Annai we fly at low altitude under the clouds to Karanambu and despite the dull light, the views over the savannah/forest/wetland mosaic are fantastic.

After installing ourselves in our chalet in Karanambu, the sky has cleared and it is now warm and windy. I bird a bit around the chalet, but not much is seen. At lunch we meet the Naturetrek group that is staying here well.

In the afternoon both the Naturetrek group and the two of us depart in three boats to visit Buffalo Pond with the Victoria water lilies. The boat trip is enjoyable with anhinga, nesting jabiru, osprey, our first pied lapwings, four kingfisher species including green-and-rufous and, best of all, about ten black skimmers doing synchronized ballet over the water. We are lucky to be in the first boat, because when we enter Buffalo Pond we

almost immediately see six giant river otters leaving their burrows at the far end of the pond. The animals keep an eye on us for a minute or so and then disappear. By the time the second and third boat arrive, the otters unfortunately have gone. Around dusk we hear a collared forest-falcon, but the bird remains out of sight. Small numbers of band-tailed nighthawks hunt over the lake. Around sunset we also watch the spectacle of the opening of the water lily flowers. Spotlighting back to the lodge is a bit dull, but we do find a single boat-billed heron fishing along the river's edge.



White-browed Antbird (male)



Black Skimmers

February 19: Karanambu Ranch

In the morning both Anja and I and the Naturetrek group split up: Anja and half of the group go for a game drive on the savannah. I join the other half for some forest birding. We leave just after dawn and head straight to a capuchinbird lek. We can already hear the birds from the main trail, and then quietly approach the lek on a small side trail. Quickly the birds are located, but the sky is very grey with thick, low clouds and drizzle. Not great for photography, but what a bird!! Absolutely incredible to see them in action when they make their characteristic mooing calls. After this spectacular start we focus on understory birds: excellent views of white-browed antbird and white-bellied antbird are a good start. I am lucky to actually see a screaming piha, but otherwise the forest is surprisingly quiet. Blue-backed manakins are heard but won't come into view.

By the time we reach Honey Pond, the clouds start to get thinner and it is warming up, which seems to boost bird activity. At the lake edge we flush two undulated tinamous. Sunbittern is seen in vegetation along the far edge of the lake and we have good views of black caracara. We also score some of those rather dull tyrannulets: mouse-coloured, yellow-crowned and pale-tipped are all seen well. On the way back we see northern slaty antshrike, black-crested antshrike, rufescent tiger-heron and we flush a green ibis.

Anja's morning game drive had been disappointing with best birds being least nighthawk, double-striped thick-knee and vermillion flycatcher. The giant anteaters had not shown up this morning and no other mammals had been seen.

After breakfast it is still only 9.15 so Anja and I decide to go back on the trails. I show Anja the lekking area but the capuchinbirds are not around. The blue-backed manakins on the other hand are now more cooperative. I can easily whistle them in and we have great views of two males and a female-type bird. Crestless curassow is heard constantly but not seen. Closer to the Honey Pond lakes we surprise three undulated tinamous on the trail. The lake itself is rather quiet with only common birds around. On the way back though the forest we see Amazonian antshrike and another northern slaty antshrike.

After lunch Anja and I walk another forest trail. Bird activity is again surprisingly good: white-flanked and white-fringed antwren are new, and we see a host of birds that we had already seen this morning. On the edge of the airstrip next to the lodge I find a covey of 15 crested bobwhites.

Late afternoon Anja and I make a boat trip to Mobai Pond, another lake with Victoria lilies. The boat trip was fairly uneventful but we saw among others large-billed tern, pied lapwing, black-collared hawk, jabiru, osprey and Neotropic cormorant. On the short walk to the lake we finally find some mammals, a group of 30 squirrel monkeys and about ten brown capuchins. A group of ten wood storks is roosting in the treetops on the lake edge. The lake itself is very scenic and peaceful. In particular, the sight of black-crowned night-herons, wattled jacanas and purple gallinules walking on the water lilies adds to the overall atmosphere.

The spotlighting trip back to the lodge is unfortunately uneventful again. Afterwards I spotlight a bit around the airstrip and the road onto the savannah. Lesser nighthawk and pauraque are the only birds of note and no mammals (apart from unidentified flying bats) are seen.



Victoria Lilies (Karanambu)

February 20: Atta Rainforest Lodge

Yesterday evening we had been told that we would leave around 8 am. This gives us enough time to walk to the capuchinbird lek at dawn and do some birding around the boat landing after breakfast. We walk swiftly to the lek area and again the birds are heard clearly at least 200 meters before we can see them. The weather is again cloudy and dull, but there is less drizzle, so I am able to make a few decent pictures. The

(seemingly) synchronized but slightly out-of-phase calling of two males perched next to each other is brilliant. After spending some time with the capuchinbirds we walk back to have breakfast and quickly pack. After dropping off our luggage we bird around the boat landing, which is not bad with green-tailed jacamar, golden-spangled piculet and black-crested antshrike among others.

Around 8.15 we are on our way to Ginep landing, a boat ride of about two hours. Two green ibises, an aplomado falcon, a total of about ten jabirus, at least five ospreys and a flock of black skimmers are the most interesting sightings.

At Ginep landing we are picked up by a representative of Rock View Lodge. After a quick stop at Rock View Lodge we move on to Atta. It's hot and almost nothing is seen en route. Upon arrival in Atta we meet Aage and Karin from Denmark, who are more or less doing the same route as us but with less nights at each site. We also get introduced to our trainee guide Bernie.

After the first of several excellent lunches and dinners we walk one of the forest trails. The first hour of the walk is exceptionally quiet, but eventually things start moving again and we have great views of black spider monkeys and red howlers. On the entrance road to the lodge we have good views of a pair of variegated tinamous. On the main road the birding is good, in particular for woodpeckers, toucans/aracaris, parrots, macaws and raptors. We have only walked five minutes on the road when Bernie says he hears a Guianan red-cotinga (unfortunately I did not have the MP3 player because the battery had been empty and the player was still charging in my room). The bird keeps calling and after about ten minutes a restless medium-sized bird flies in. Bernie says it's a female Guianan red-cotinga. I see the bird moving up in the canopy and the size and shape seems right, but the colours on the bird are not even faintly red or orange/brown, more a mix of beige/pale brown. In the field guides that I have I couldn't find an image that shows the juvenile of this species, but if it was the cotinga, it must have been a juvenile/immature bird. Slightly disappointed we move on.



A few hundred meters on we immediately notice the typical shape of a "fat" medium-sized bird on a branch in the top of a dead tree. We put our bins on it and I almost can't believe it: it is a male pompadour cotinga! It seems that my cotinga spell is finally broken (after several trips to South America with rather disastrous scores for this favourite group of birds). Aage and Karin are birding a few hundred meters back down the road, so I wave at them and urge them to come our way. Aage takes a little sprint

and quickly puts up the scope, and we all have incredible views of the bird through Aage's scope. Brilliant start at Atta. Unfortunately, the bird flies off after some two minutes. However, a bit later a female pompadour cotinga and subadult spangled cotinga complete the show and also perch for a while. Other birds seen in this area are paradise jacamar, Spix's guan and grey hawk.

After exploring the main road south of the Atta lodge entrance, Bernie, Anja and I turn around and then walk a mile north on the main road in the direction that leads to Georgetown. A small bird perched on a dead snag, which I had already hastily dismissed as another swallow-winged puffbird, turns out to be a dusky purpleletuft. At one of the bridges we take a break and Bernie feels the urge to confess that this tourist guiding is no challenge for him and he is basically wasting his time. Right.

On the walk back to the lodge I suddenly see a red-and-black-looking bird dart across the road. When I get my bins on it, it is clear that it can be only one bird: a female crimson fruitcrow. I can follow the bird in flight with my bins for no more than a few seconds. The colours are fantastic but the bird flies very fast and disappears in the canopy. Just too short to really enjoy and call it a tick. We get some compensation in the form of good views of the very pretty chestnut and cream-coloured woodpeckers.

Around dinnertime I play the tape of a few owls and white-winged potoo, but none of the birds show up, not even the spectacled owl calling a bit deeper inside the forest. At night it rains quite heavily.

February 21: Atta Rainforest Lodge

The next morning it sounds like it is still raining but when I get up at dawn, it turns out that it's just the sound of drops falling from the leaves. I quickly get dressed and check out the garden, where I see two fairly large nightjars roosting on bare branches on the forest edge. Because of the twilight conditions I can't see them very well with the bins, so I put the spotlight on them but they don't like this. Both fly up and reposition themselves a bit higher up in the tree. From this distance and looking up to them it is difficult to make out which species they are. Eventually they fly up and circle a few times above the forest clearing. There are no white markings on the wings or tail, so they must have been short-tailed nighthawks.

After a short break for coffee and cookies Aage, Bernie, and me decide to check out the road before breakfast. Thick clouds still hang over the forest from last night's rain and the light is initially not that great. Birding is fairly disappointing and mostly common species are seen. A highlight is a perched scaled pigeon, quite spectacular as far as South American pigeons go.

After breakfast we say goodbye to Aage and Karin. After breakfast Bernie is nowhere to be seen so we decide to go out on our own. We first go back to the road, the sky is slowly opening up and it is getting a little bit warmer, so mid-morning the activity of both mammals and birds picks up a bit. On the entrance road we see two spider monkeys. The road is as always good for guans, toucans, aracarís, woodpeckers, parrots and the commoner raptors, but the cotingas are completely absent.

From the road we walk back to the lodge and then straight on to the canopy walkway. On the entrance road we have wonderful views of Guianan toucanet and black curassows. The views from the canopy walkway are great but the activity is very poor. There don't seem to be that many fruiting trees. Nevertheless, a few birds of interest turn up. Amazingly I find another dusky purpleletuft, again high in the canopy but quite

close and perched on a dead snag, but it flies off after a minute or so. Other species seen are black-tailed tityra, black-spotted barbet, Spix's guan and white-tailed trogon. And this pretty much sums up all the species seen on that session on the canopy tower.

Around noon we head back to the lodge for lunch. On the main trail from the tower back to the lodge we first bump into a small understorey flock that includes mouse-coloured antshrike and white-flanked antwren. In a fruiting tree we find a couple of the pretty painted parakeets. During lunch Bernie gives us the silent treatment, possibly because we were out all morning without him.



Guianan Toucanet



White-throated Toucan

After lunch we relax a bit and bird the clearing from the lodge's restaurant, and some chatting seems to appease Bernie. Around 2 pm we go out again and do a nice forest hike on a trail where Amazonian umbrellabird is occasionally seen. The forest is beautiful but bird- and mammalwise it is very quiet. Nevertheless, Bernie's sharp eyes locate a great jacamar. I manage to get my bins on it, but it flies off before Anja sees it. Eventually we reach the canopy walk and climb up for a second session. While I check out all the platforms to see if there is a platform with good activity, Bernie and Anja position themselves on the first platform. While Bernie seemed to be more inspired on the walk, he seems to have slipped into another crisis after only ten minutes on the platform. He seems completely absent for a while and then sighs: "I am so bored". After spending an hour on the canopy walk with our dispirited guide Anja and I give up too; absolutely nothing is happening in the trees around us.

Around 5 pm we walk back to the main road. On the entrance road, we see a couple of red howlers, almost certainly the same two we saw yesterday. On the main road we have the distant but interesting and rather unusual sight of three spider monkeys sunning themselves completely exposed in a dead tree without an obvious escape route to adjoining trees. Birding is enjoyable with mealy parrot, dusky parrot, black-headed parrot, caica parrot, red-fan parrot, red-and-green macaw, white-throated and channel-billed toucan, green aracari, cream-colored woodpecker and black nunbird among others, but nothing new is seen.

Before dinner we have a long chat with the friendly camp manager about the lodge, Iwokrama forest and his time in Georgetown. After another excellent dinner we go out

with Bernie for a spotlighting session. Things start off nicely with good views of a kinkajou, but the hoped for pacas and armadillos don't cooperate. Conditions aren't ideal with very high humidity (lots of scattering). On the road the humid air has thickened to a very fine and dense mist. However, a bigger problem is that the large bridge on the main road about 1 km south of the lodge entrance is being repaired. The workers have set up a big camp there and cleared a significant amount of the riverine vegetation. It is obvious that normally this area should be one of the best places to see larger mammals around Atta, but the large spotlights in the camp and the noise means we have to give up on that excellent spot. So we walk for a while on the road in the northern direction. Despite passing several promising grassy clearings and roadside pools and ponds, nothing is seen or heard.

February 22: Atta Rainforest Lodge

Anja skips the pre-breakfast walk. So just Bernie and me head to the main road, but we don't see anything new. Rose-breasted chat is heard, but won't show. Around 8 we return for breakfast and then go for another birding session along the main road. On the entrance road we score our first purple-throated fruitcrow, a beautiful male. Back on the main road we see footprints of an armadillo that definitely weren't there earlier this morning. Frustrating. It is cooler and less humid but sunnier than yesterday, and bird activity seems to have picked up. We decide to walk a few kilometres in the Georgetown direction on the main road. Good numbers of raptors are seen including the elegant swallow-tailed kite, grey hawk, plumbeous kite, greater yellow-headed vulture, and black caracara. Today Bernie is much more inspired, which helps a lot, because he is a good spotter. After having ticked numerous swallow-winged puffbirds, our perseverance to check every bird on a dead branch in the canopy finally pays off with sightings of a female pompadour cotinga and males of both spangled and purple-breasted cotinga within 5 minutes. Wow!!

Around 11am we return to the lodge and agree to do another walk with Bernie in the afternoon. After lunch Anja and I feel energetic enough to skip the siesta and we walk one of the forest trails. Bird activity is not bad for 1 pm. A white-crested spadebill is located next to the trail. Other species seen include chestnut and lineated woodpecker, a pair of white-lined tanagers, and poor views of Guianan warbling-antbird. Thrush-like pitta is heard every day at Atta, but never really close enough. We also surprise a red-rumped agouti along the trail edge.

Around 2.45 pm Bernie and the two of us head back to the road, and again check the main road in the southern direction. At the large clearing close to where the road works are taking place, we suddenly see two medium-sized birds frolicking through the canopy. The bright colours quickly give them away; both are crimson fruitcrows!! One is a male in impeccable plumage, the other bird with a rather messy plumage seems to be an immature bird. We put the scope on them and can enjoy them for at least 15 minutes. The male is a bit more jumpy and never sits still very long, but sits out in the open several times allowing fantastic views of its incredible plumage. The immature bird eventually sits down on an exposed spot in the subcanopy, where we can enjoy her for at least five minutes.

We continue on the road beyond the bridge where the roadworks are. A small canopy flock that includes yellow-backed tanager, blue dacnis, purple honeycreeper and a male black-faced dacnis keeps us entertained for a while. In the vicinity we also find a perched pied puffbird. While birding we make the classic mistake of walking backwards without really checking behind us but luckily we do notice the "stick" on the road in time. It is a very poisonous snake according to Bernie, but he only knows the local name.

It takes some fifteen minutes to convince the snake to move away from the road. A few kilometres down the road we find a clearing that gives access to several logging roads. Here I find two crane hawks but little else.

On the stroll back to the lodge, we surprise a red-rumped agouti in the middle of a grassy clearing, but Anja's reaction is a bit too enthusiastic, so the agouti races off in the undergrowth of some nearby bushes. We get back at the lodge around dusk. I am rather exhausted and decide to skip the nightwalk and do a pre-dawn walk next morning. We opt for a beer to celebrate our outrageous cotinga fest today and then have a long and enjoyable chat with Bernie and the lodge manager about a lot of things. The dinner is very nice again.



Atta Lodge – main road

February 23: Surama

In the morning it turns out that I have overslept because the alarm clock seems to be upset by the high humidity since it indicates it's 88 hours and 97 minutes when I wake up. Thankfully Anja has taken her mechanically driven time-reading technology as well, and it turns out to be 6.20 am. Darn, too late for a pre-dawn spotlighting session. Anja decides to take it easy with a late breakfast. Bernie and I go out for another session on the road at 6.30. The sky is dark grey and it is very humid with thick rain-filled clouds draped all over the forest. Amazingly enough my oversleeping is not completely without merits, because we do see a black-eared (common) opossum feeding at eye level along the entrance road, but it rather quickly disappears to the mid-stratum. Nothing new is seen on the road, but we have good views of marail and Spix's guan.

The people from Surama arrive at 8 am to pick us up, but we first have a last tasty breakfast. Luckily the sky has opened up a bit over breakfast. So it looks like things will stay dry on our visit to the Cock-of-the-Rock Trail. It is sunny when we head out on the short trail but within the twenty minutes that we manage to get eye to eye with our target, the clouds thicken again. A bit annoying and I have to crank up the ISO settings to get halfway decent shots. Even in the dark understorey it is amazing to see how bright the orange is. Despite having seen tons of photos and video footage of this bird, seeing

really is believing. The male initially stays well out of range of my camera flash, gently hopping around some 30 meters away from us. Our guide Ian and the two of us are seated on a slope at the edge of a rock face that overlooks a lower-lying area, which actually does look a bit like an arena. The bird is moving around in this area. While enjoying all the little details of his plumage from a distance, the bird slowly comes closer and closer. At some point, the bird lands a mere 4-5 meters away from us, and almost seems to show off. We get front views, side views, rear views. The Full Monty. Absolutely amazing and thankfully I get a few nice shots with the camera.



Guianan Cock-of-the-Rock (male)

On our walk back to the car a slow drizzle starts and gradually develops into rain, so we head straight for Surama lodge. About halfway on the minor road that ends at Surama, our driver hears some spider monkeys next to the road, he jumps out of the car and races up the rocky slope in the rainforest. The monkeys are nearby so we all scramble up the slope, and after searching about ten minutes we get to see them. Unfortunately it has started raining more heavily so it is difficult to take pictures, but it is really cool to be so close and eye to eye with these interesting monkeys.

At Surama there are a lot of visitors, but the atmosphere is odd when we arrive. There is a communal dining area, but a group of five American tourists is sectioned off from the rest. Quite quickly it is clear what the problem is: in this group of five, there is Richard, the worst nightmare of every tour operator. Richard seems quickly inconvenienced and continuously on the verge of either verbally abusing or threatening to sue someone. Luckily we also meet Aage and Karin again.

In the afternoon, Nick, a freelancer who works for a BBC team traveling through Guyana, and local guide Junior take the two of us and Aage and Karin to the Harpy Eagle Trail. The walk to the harpy nest takes something like 45-60 minutes if you don't stop very

often, but the trail leads through excellent forest and the temptation to stop every five minutes is very large. Despite the fact that it is mid-afternoon there is a slow trickle of birds including several interesting understorey birds such as rufous-bellied antwren, white-crested spadebill and spot-winged antbird. Most spectacular is a ferruginous-backed antbird, a real beauty, but it requires some perseverance to see it well.

Nick had already gone ahead of us to check the motion-sensitive camera directed at the harpy eagle nest. When Junior and the four of us arrive at the massive nesting tree, Junior finds the bird almost immediately, which is less obvious than it may sound. Initially the bird is right above of our heads, but after a while it repositions itself but quite quickly Junior relocates the bird again. The bird is now seated in a fairly open spot and we have fabulous views of the bird through Aage's scope.

After spending quite some time with the young harpy, we have to decide whether we slowly bird our way back to the car or whether we stay around the nest with the possibility of one of the parents returning to the nest. We opt for the latter, but unfortunately the parents don't return despite incessant calling of the juvenile. In the understory around the nest tree, bird activity is almost zero. I only get good views of a wedge-billed woodcreeper. Late afternoon we walk back to the car in a fairly high tempo. Junior spots a red brocket deer, but we all miss it. On the trail we also find an unidentified snake that blends into the forest floor colours remarkably well. A day earlier a fer-de-lance was found on the same trail, but luckily nobody stepped on it.

February 24: Surama

Already around 3.30-4 am it is very busy in the kitchen, but I can't be bothered to get up. After an hour of semi-sleep, me and everybody else in the camp is suddenly wide awake. Our chalet is directly next to that of Richard and his wife and most of their virtuoso verbal ballet makes it to our chalet undistorted: "we are going up that fucking mountain, that's what we're gonna do" and "go fuck yourself" is some of the ear candy to be enjoyed by all within 20 meters of their chalet, which - that particular morning - included the full kitchen staff, the guides, the lodge manager and most visitors.

When I get out of the chalet, I am glad to see that the weather has improved significantly. The sky is clear and any potential rain clouds are far away on the horizon. People who went up Surama Mountain yesterday, unfortunately only had rain, thick clouds and no views.

After an early breakfast we start walking from the lodge. It is a nice walk across the savannah and along small pockets of forest. All the time you are walking through Surama village, but the houses are so scattered, it feels more like passing through the occasional 4-5 house hamlet. It takes about 45-60 minutes to reach the base of Surama Mountain. The birding up to the base of the mountain is pleasant, but mostly common open-country birds are seen. After entering the forest we see Richard again only 300 meters into the forest. Since the American group had left with the van at the same time that we left the lodge on foot, it had taken him 50 minutes to walk 300 meters. Clearly not his favourite habitat. With one hand he was leaning against a big tree, with the other hand he was holding on to the guide, while his wife looked at the whole thing in horror and despair. Richard was in the same weight category as a full-grown silverback, albeit with a muscle/fat ratio based on a McDonalds diet, and seemed in imminent danger of cardiac failure. Back at the lodge we heard that everybody had tried to persuade Richard to do something else, but he had made a big scene and insisted on doing the hike.

We continued up the mountain through the beautiful forest, but the birding was a bit slow and I didn't want to spend too much time in the forest because I was eager to bird from the viewpoint in the hope to encounter some canopy flocks. The last part of the trail is steep and rocky, but should be no problem if you are reasonably fit. The panorama from the viewpoint is absolutely spectacular on a sunny day. One overlooks a V-shaped valley with lush rainforest and to the right there is a sweeping view over Surama village, the savannah, more rainforest and at the horizon another mountain chain. Better than the view from Turtle Mountain in Iwokrama in my opinion, and that is by all means a great view. The other three people of the American group had made it to the top easily and we got to chat with them a bit. They were really nice people and we really felt sorry for them, when they told us about their experiences with Richard and his wife.



View from Surama Mountain towards Surama village

The guides had taken a complete breakfast with coffee, pancakes, fruit, sandwiches, etc. up the mountain, which definitely added to the experience. While I was sipping from my coffee and munching away sandwiches, I suddenly noticed a medium-sized bird in flight that appeared to be completely white. For a second I thought it was a bellbird, but when I got the bins on it, I saw it was a male pompadour cotinga. In flight they are just as spectacular as when perched. What a bird! I could follow the bird in flight for a long time and when it finally landed it perched on the top of a tree, but it was on the far side of the valley opposite of us. Good views but a little too distant even with the scope. A bit later I was scanning some treetops and noticed something purple in a tree. Initially I thought it was just one of the large orchids that I had already seen on some of the other trees that morning, but there was something strange about it and when I put the scope on it, it turned out to be a male purple-breasted cotinga!! I also found another male pompadour cotinga preening its feathers in the same tree as the purple-breasted cotinga.

From the viewpoint we saw about 6-7 bird species that morning and a grand total of maybe 12-15 birds, but with three of them being male cotingas, I was in nirvana. The wind was quite strong that morning, which may have contributed to the poor activity of both mammals and birds. When the trees are fruiting, it is a good place to see canopy flocks. Red howler and black spider monkeys are the most commonly seen monkeys.

Because we are back at the lodge quite early, Anja and I explore a short loop trail through the forest in front of the lodge. The first part of the trail is alive with activity. We see several red howlers and a variety of birds, but the amount of mosquitos, army ants and biting flies on this stretch of the trail is quite unbearable. Odd. I did not realize yet that this would be one of the very few army ant swarms I would run into on the trip. If I had known this, I had spent some more time trying to tape in army ant-followers. I did try white-plumed and rufous-throated antbird, but got no response. The rest of the trail turns out to be fairly insect-free, but the bird activity is not great, but we flush another red-rumped agouti. After that we explore a trail on the savannah for half an hour with sightings of all four vulture species including three king vultures soaring together.

Lunch is our last opportunity to enjoy Richard's company. Compared with the experiences of the last 36 hours it is a rather tame affair with him ranting about the education system in the USA. There is a palpable tension release among the complete staff as soon as Richard gets on the bus to Iwokrama. It is hot this afternoon, so after lunch we take a little siesta and I update my checklists.

Around 3.30 pm, Aage, Anja, and I go for a walk together with the guides Ian and Gary through a mosaic of grasslands, shrub, forest remnants and seasonally flooded forest. Our first targets are great potoo and common potoo. In an area with open woodland Gary locates the great potoo within a few minutes. It is always great to see these birds on their roost in daylight. This individual is rather pale. Next Gary tests our spotting skills by having us look for the common potoo. We are looking at several low trees but with a dense tangle of branches. The high contrast light doesn't help either, but Anja finds the bird rather quickly, which impresses the guides and the two "real" birders.

We then walk to an area with scrub and small forest remnants. Here, Anja and I see our first moriche oriole and we have nice scope views of plumbeous pigeon. A pair of Cayenne jays flies in over our heads, but the birds are shy and I only get one in my bins for 3-4 seconds before it flies off.

With Richard gone, dinner is a pleasant and civilized affair. Only the two of us, Aage, Karin, and Nick and Terry from the BBC team are there.

After dinner Ian, Gary, Aage, Karin and I go out for a spotlighting session. We try for ferruginous pygmy owl. Unfortunately, the recording I downloaded from Xenocanto turns out to be very bad and the owl is calling from quite a distance. I play the recording of some of the larger owls, but there is no response. We do find a great tinamou roosting along the trail on a branch some 6-7 meters up.

February 25: Surama

Anja has had a bad night because she's got chigger bites all over her legs and feet from yesterday's walk on the savannah and they itched like crazy all night. After some internal conflict she nevertheless decides to join the morning walk. After coffee and cookies we head towards Carahaa Camp. The first few hundred meters pass through the savannah but then the trail leads through the forest all the way to the camp on the banks of the Burro Burro River. On the forest edge we try for spotted puffbird at one of their

regular haunts but the birds won't show. Guianan warbling-antbird shows well to everybody, except me, because where I stand there always seems to be one branch too many to see the complete bird in one clear view.

Suddenly Gary stops and whispers "white-faced saki calling". This is the monkey species I most wanted to see on this trip and after a few frantic scans through the mid-stratum we locate them. I first see a female and young male (with a very narrow and incomplete white face mask). Only seconds later a first adult male appears on the scene, quickly followed by a second one. They are clearly not happy with each other's presence, and during the first confrontation the female and young male disappear quickly, because they almost get caught up in the fight between the males. Then the two males chase each other through the sub-canopy at amazing speed. We start walking back to keep track of them. One of the males then descends to the ground quickly followed by the other, and to my surprise they race towards the track that we are walking on and then indeed appear on the track some hundred meters away from us and race along the track back in the direction of the lodge. The monkeys are chasing each other with amazing speed. We now have to run at full speed ourselves to keep up with the monkeys. The monkeys suddenly stop at the forest edge (where the savannah starts). Initially they are engaged too much in a fight with each other so we try to close the gap as much as possible. Unfortunately they notice us when we have approached them up to some 45-50 meters, which stops us in our tracks. Unfortunately, one male immediately heads onto the savannah. It is funny to first see him run on all fours and then walk a few steps bipedal before he jumps into a tree in a tiny forest island on the savannah. The other monkey seems to catch his breath for a few seconds and claim victory, which allows me to take two shots of him sitting on the ground. Then he heads off to the nearest tree. From the ground to upper canopy takes him 3-4 seconds; the agility and speed are just incredible.

We resume our route in the direction of Carahaa Camp and are still on an adrenaline high, when we first spot three male purple-throated fruitcrows, while only seconds later a capuchinbird starts calling right next to the trail. Our excitement for having to deal with two cotingas at the same time seems a little too much for the fruitcrows and unfortunately they leave quite quickly. A minute after we locate the first capuchinbird we find a second one a bit higher up, but he is difficult to see. A bit further on we also have good views of two paradise jacamars.

Just before we reach the first golden-headed manakin lek we bump into a raptor perched only 3-4 meters from the ground. It is clearly a forest-falcon, but initially it is seen from behind so it takes a few moments and a repositioning of the bird before we can see that the bird has a completely white and unbarred chest and belly. Slaty-backed forest-falcon, a genuine rarity!! An odd howl makes Gary and Ian stop in their tracks and race into the forest back to the riverbank. We can't find anything, but both think it was a contact call of bush dogs. We wait for a few minutes, but the call unfortunately is not heard again. Ok, now it is time to focus on the manakins and within seconds Gary locates a male golden-headed manakin. We get good views, but the birds are very jumpy and busy in the dense tangles of branches, so photo opportunities aren't great.

A bit further on we find another manakin lek, the area is more open so it is easier to see and follow the birds, but they still are very jumpy and seemingly agitated by our presence. Because we still had to take a proper breakfast we don't make it to Carahaa Camp and turn back at the second manakin lekking ground. At the forest edge close to the lodge we try for the puffbirds one more time. I am not very optimistic and despite considerable effort, we just can't see or hear the birds. So we walk onto the savannah but then Ian suddenly waves at us to come back. In the distance the puffbirds are indeed calling. I am impressed that Ian had heard that, because the call is very soft and distant,

but we race to the spot and eventually manage to tape them in and get great views of a pair of these pretty birds. Quite a morning altogether.

After breakfast we say goodbye to Karin and Aage. The guides and Anja take a break and I return to the trail to Carahaa Camp. It is already quite hot, but the birding is very good, in particular for antbirds, a lot of understory flocks are moving around. In particular, the antbirds respond well to (limited use of) the sound recordings. Dusky-throated antshrike, rufous-bellied antwren, white-flanked antwren, and dusky antbird are all seen well, and I finally also catch up with chestnut-rumped woodcreeper and get good views of white-barred piculet and golden-collared woodpecker. The manakins are still on their lek, but still won't pose favourably for photos. I was having such a good time checking out all the understory flocks that I completely forgot how late it was. I hadn't taken a watch, but at some point I really had to drag myself away from the forest back to the lodge. I am back at the lodge for lunch around 1.40 pm, so after a short siesta we are back on the trails by 3 pm. We take a trail that is less well maintained but leads through some spectacular open forest and roughly follows a riverbed with only a few pools of water left.

In a large fruiting tree we see painted parakeet and have excellent scope views of a black-headed parrot. Here, Gary also hears a great jacamar calling, and within a minute he locates the bird. The jacamar is sitting quietly on a branch midstorey and we have excellent views of the bird.

We finally also find an army ant swarm and play the song of rufous-throated antbird. It responds but the bird is far away. We repeat the call a few times, and it is slowly coming our way. Just when the bird seems to come into view, a very noisy group of red-throated caracaras manages to crash our party. Everything is gone.

We continue and at a section where the trail runs parallel to the riverbed again we find a very relaxed juvenile black hawk-eagle. The bird flies up a few times but keeps landing a bit further in the same direction of the trail. At a spot along the river where it is quite wide and has cut deep into the soil, the banks are 5-7 meters high, which has created a little clearing in the forest. Here Gary hears a Guianan red-cotinga. The bird is calling not too far away so I give it a try and play the call. First few times nothing happens and the bird seems to stay put. After a while I play the call again and try to reset the MP3 player to the beginning of the call. While I am fiddling with the MP3 player, I suddenly hear ooohs and aahs around me. Frantically I scan the subcanopy and see nothing. "It's there, right there in the open, in the tangles". Always frustrating when you are the only that misses the obvious. After a few seconds of despair I have the brilliant idea to look where the rest is looking at. They are all focused at something almost at eye level. I would never have thought this cotinga would descend that far down but when I look straight ahead, I can see the red colour glowing in the tangles even without my bins. The colours are absolutely amazing when I put my bins on it. This cotinga may be more common than the crimson fruitcrow, but I think that the male is actually even prettier. The head is strange and looks unusually flattened at the top, which is further emphasized by the intense red colour of the cap. The primaries and part of the secondaries have a stylish maroon/dark mauve colour, which subtly contrasts with the glossy brownish purple-black of the breast, neck and back of the bird. The belly, rump and tail are intense red again. Definitely in my top ten of South American birds seen so far (still a lot to go though). Just when I had taken in all the splendour of the bird, it suddenly dawns on me that this would be pretty good for a picture and slowly I bring the camera in position. Right then the cotinga seems to realize that there is no other male challenging his authority and he slowly works his way up through some tangles. Just when he seems to head into an open area again to offer a second photo opportunity, he immediately flies

off and remains out of sight. Ouch. Nevertheless, yet another unforgettable encounter with Guyana's cotingas, so missing the photo opportunity was a fairly minor issue.

We continue our way and pass through an area that seems to be secondary forest or poor soil forest; the undergrowth is denser and the trees are much lower. Here we hear a rufous-capped ant-thrush. It responds well to my recording and seems to come closer but then suddenly flies straight towards us. There is little more than 30 cm space between Gary and me and the bird darts right between us and then lands some ten meters in front of us in dense undergrowth. Every now and then I play the recording again at a low volume level but amazingly the birds manages to elude us despite the four of us looking at least 15 minutes intensely for the bird. Suddenly it flies up and disappears again, and now for good. In the same area Gary and Ian hear weeper capuchins. We have to wait a few moments but quite quickly we see a small troupe passing. I have excellent views of one of them when he stops to check us out and looks right in our direction. They have a rather strange pale olive colour, which contrast quite strongly with the dark "wedge-shaped cap" on their heads. They are shy and don't stay long enough to be able to take any pictures. [Surama has regular records of seven of the eight possible monkey species in the vicinity of the lodge. Only the bearded sakis are absent. At Surama they know places where the bearded sakis occur, but it is quite far from the lodge. The bearded sakis are also sometimes seen in the riverine forest at Karanambu Lodge or along the Essequibo River (but only on the northern bank outside the reserve) at Iwokrama River Lodge. In the accessible parts of Iwokrama Forest Reserve only four of the eight monkey species known in Guyana are regularly recorded, but probably six species occur.]

Eventually we reach the main trail that leads to Carahaa, but we walk back in the direction of the main lodge. Things have slowed down by now. Spotted antpitta is heard, but remains out of sight. It's been a long action-filled day and I am just too tired to go out for a nightwalk, so we celebrate the sakis and today's cornucopia of cotingas with a couple of beers and then head off to bed.



Lesser Nighthawk and Spotted Puffbird

February 26: Burro Burro River and transfer to Iwokrama Field Station

We get up early again for a pre-dawn breakfast and then walk in a steady pace to Carahaa Camp, from where our boat trip on the Burro Burro River will start.

Just before we enter the forest we have excellent views of a female white-browed antbird, which is completely different from the male but just as pretty. Along the forest edge we also encounter a larger group of Cayenne jays that allow better and longer

views than the ones seen two days ago. Things get really exciting when we hear the bill-snapping of a rufous-vented ground cuckoo quite close to the trail, but unfortunately the bird ignores our recording and moves away from us deeper into the forest. This was also one of the few days during the tour that we got a decent number of tickable hummingbird sightings: pale-tailed barbtail, long-billed starthroat (from the boat), black-eared fairy, and reddish hermit are all seen quite well.

We only stop a few times en route and reach Carahaa quite quickly. Near the river blue-throated piping-guan turns out to be common. I am a bit surprised that both mornings on the trail to Carahaa we don't see any terrestrial mammals, because there are enough footprints, and scats are occasionally seen as well.

The boat trip is nice, but the hoped for mammals such as coati, tayra, tapir and giant river otter don't show up. Birding is enjoyable, but a bit slow. Along the river we have good views of a male black-chinned antbird and the pretty white-banded swallows are easy to see on boulders in the river. We also flush a tiny hawk. Around 8.30 we have to turn around with the boat and return to Carahaa Camp, because Gary has to guide new clients at 10 am.

While Gary and Anja walk back to the camp (and see fresh puma and giant anteater tracks), Ian and I stay at Carahaa. It is a wonderful spot; it is great to watch the river and the forest on the opposite bank for any action. On the other side of the river we find little chachalaca, black-tailed tityra, several of the commoner tanagers, white-throated and channel-billed toucan and black-necked aracari. Best sighting is probably a couple of yellow-tufted woodpeckers, the only ones seen on the tour. The clearing around the camp also is quite birdy, but mostly common species are around. While checking the forest edge in a far corner of the camp I almost step on a blackish nightjar. It luckily lands again only a few meters away. Great views with the bins, but when I get the camera it decides to fly off in dense undergrowth. Ian comes over to check what I am doing and his hunting instinct kicks in when I tell him where the nightjar has more or less landed. After some bushwhacking and careful spotting, eagle-eyed Ian manages to find the extremely well-camouflaged nightjar on the forest floor in the dense undergrowth. Quite amazing.

I could have stayed here all day but after lunch we are scheduled to go to Iwokrama, so we slowly walk back to the lodge. Unfortunately, I have to ignore some interesting sounding understory flocks. A grey-winged trumpeter crosses the road but disappears in the forest before I get my bins on it.

Around 1 pm we depart for Iwokrama. Raptors are again well represented on the drive up through Iwokrama Forest. Plumbeous kite is very common, but we also see swallow-tailed kite, roadside hawk, grey hawk, bat falcon, and best of all a black-faced hawk. At Atta they are still working on the bridge and we have to wait about 30-45 minutes before we can continue. I bird a bit along the road at Atta, but little is seen.

About 45-60 minutes before we reach Iwokrama River Lodge, Ian and our driver are scanning the trees for raptors and cotingas, and I am the only one watching the road ahead. Suddenly a large spotted cat jumps on the road a few hundred meters ahead of us and I yell "stop, stop, on the road", but the cat only stops for 1-2 seconds and then walks off into the forest again. We race to the spot, and check out the forest, but the cat is gone. I am sure it was a jaguar; it was too large and heavy-set to be an ocelot, and several guides had told me that jaguar is much more common than ocelot in Iwokrama. Frustrating. Some fifteen minutes before reaching Iwokrama River Lodge a group of grey-winged trumpeters is found foraging next to the road.

Around 5 pm we arrived at Iwokrama River Lodge. The welcome at Iwokrama was: "why are you so late?" and the tone was not an inquiring one. Where I should have answered "And who might you be, unfriendly troll", I politely explained that we were twice delayed by road works and had done some birdwatching along the road. The unwelcoming person was a young Canadian woman who claimed to be the tourist manager, and I will refer to her as Shania. Shania gave us an embarrassingly bad introduction on the lodge and Iwokrama Forest. Then simple questions such as "how does the laundry service work?", "which excursions do you offer?" and "do you sell product X in the shop?" were met with a giggle and "oh, oh, I need to check on that", which she did in some cases. After the amazingly unprofessional start we were shown to our chalet, which was very nice. We stayed in the chalet furthest from the restaurant and closest to the entrance of one of the trails. It was late afternoon so we just relaxed a bit on the balcony of our chalet. On the grass around the chalets pied plovers, red-capped cardinals and giant cowbirds were feeding.

In the evening we went to the restaurant, where we saw the Naturetrek group again and had a quick chat with some of them. The food that evening was poor: overcooked, bland, and not enough. An independently traveling Canadian, Dan, joined us for dinner. He had made an interesting trip through Brazil and southern Guyana and was now heading to Georgetown. We had already seen him in Surama, but we only got to talk to him properly here in Iwokrama. We had barely finished our dinner and were still talking to Dan, when Shania suddenly barged in: she wanted to discuss tomorrow's program with us and introduce our guide Egbert. Oddly enough she started discussing the program with Dan still present. This was not only rude but also rather embarrassing because Dan had just told us about his troubles to get a guide or join another party. After a minute Dan himself decided to leave. After a chaotic discussion with Shania she eventually left and we could have a more useful chat with Egbert and then discussed which mammals and birds we were hoping to see.

February 27: Iwokrama – Indian House Island and Fairview

In the morning we did the Indian House Island excursion, which means that the boat takes you around the island in front of the lodge. The main reason to do this excursion was that Egbert had told us yesterday that bearded sakis are virtually guaranteed on the opposite riverbank of the Essequibo River.

Around 6.15am we walk to the boat landing. In the trees around the boat landing we see both red-necked and lineated woodpecker. Around 6.20 we are off to the other side of Indian House Island. In the morning the island seems very popular with toucans, aracaris, and macaws. There was a constant stream of them flying to and from the island. On the island we also find a red-throated caracara perched. Egbert then hears a ringed woodpecker. We quickly find him, but it is silhouetted against the sky. After a minute it first flies towards us and we get decent flight views in much better light but the bird then turns around again and lands on a different bare branch. When we try to approach it, it unfortunately flies off into the forest. The only monkeys we see are brown capuchin monkeys. In the riverine vegetation on the riverbank of the Essequibo River we get good views of a family of black-chinned antbirds. At the far end of the island there are some rapids and nice rainforest scenery. Black-collared swallows are usually resting or on the lookout on the rocks near the rapids. Overall a little tame but an enjoyable start.

Around 8.15 we are back at the lodge for (an abysmal) breakfast and then make a short walk on the entrance road with Egbert. A good sighting is a male black-throated trogon,

but otherwise not much is seen. We return to our chalet and I first update my checklist and we then both hang around on the veranda for a while. Before lunch I walk a bit along the water's edge, where a subadult great black hawk is patrolling the lawn in front of the restaurant on foot.

Lunch is edible, but the portions are again rather small. Dan joins us again for lunch and we chat a bit about traveling in general and his experiences with Iwokrama so far. They clearly see him as undesired (he is camping) and ignore him as much as they can.



Black-Collared Swallows

Both Anja and I had understood that we would go out for some birding with Egbert after lunch, but since he doesn't show up, it must have been a misunderstanding. Not in the mood to sit on the veranda all day, we decide to walk the entrance road. At the forest edge near the restaurant we see the great black hawk again and a few plumbeous kites. Along the road we find a loose and fast-moving flock of tanagers that includes white-shouldered tanager, blue dacnis and green honeycreeper. We also get glimpses of a dark-looking tanager with an apple green head, but it mostly remains hidden in the foliage and moves off too quickly to see whether it really was a paradise tanager.

In the afternoon Egbert had suggested to go to Fairview village where blue-and-yellow macaws usually come to feed and should be easy to photograph and then check for the sakis on the other bank of the Essequibo River. At the agreed time (4 pm) there is no boat and no guide. After asking around a bit our guide is having a late shower, but ten minutes later he is at the boat landing. The boat arrives more than twenty minutes late. Fairview still is a typical frontier settlement with people from all over Guyana trying to make a basic living on subsistence farming and hunting, but this place may in the future develop into a proper town with its strategic location on the river. Most guys are carrying bows/arrows, machetes, traps, etc., so the hunting pressure must be pretty high around the village. We walk through the village and check out the runway, but it is extremely quiet and no macaws. After a heavy shower, I suggest to Herbert that we should go looking for the sakis as it is already quite late. When we get back to the landing, the boat just arrives with a load of passengers. The lodge's boat has obviously

been used all afternoon as a water taxi for the villagers, and when we want to go for the sakis the boatman says that he has now run out of fuel. Brilliant! So back to the lodge. Another 20-25 minutes wasted before the fuel is found and then we finally get going again. By now the sun is already behind the treeline, and we only see silhouetted monkeys. Most of them are squirrel monkeys judging from the size but around dusk we see a silhouetted monkey roosting in a tree that looks like a bearded saki, but it is impossible to tell for sure. Tomorrow a trip to Turtle Mountain is planned and since we have to pass this stretch anyway, Egbert suggests that we go out very early tomorrow morning and then check the tree where the presumed saki has gone roosting.

Dinner is a mixed affair. The vegetables are quite nice, but the rice tastes like you would imagine cardboard tastes and the meat seems to come from a very, very old animal. After dinner the program for tomorrow is reconfirmed one more time. Because there aren't enough guides and boats, there will be six tourists plus two guides and a cook going to Turtle Mountain. Breakfast at 6 am, departure at 6.15, check for the sakis on the riverbank on the other side, and then onwards to Turtle Mountain around 6.45-7 am.

February 28: Full day Excursion to Turtle Mountain

At 5.45am all six of us are in the restaurant, fully equipped with daypacks, cameras, binoculars, etc. Strangely there is no activity at all in the kitchen. A bit after 6.00 the kitchen staff shows up and starts to work. At 6.15 the first breakfasts (one egg and some very greasy deep-fried bread) are served. We quickly finish our breakfast and then notice that neither the guides nor Shania are to be found. First we think that they are just late, but around 6.40 we are so fed up with this that we go looking for the guides and Shania ourselves. Around 7am everybody is finally in the boat and we can leave. Unsurprisingly the monkeys all have left last night's roosting tree, so we move on directly to Turtle Mountain (not all seems lost because we will have another opportunity this evening). From the boat we have good views of a small family of red howlers, a green ibis and the only collared plover of the trip.

We first walk to the Turtle Mountain hammock camp, where we have a short toilet stop. On the edge of the clearing I find a tiny hawk perched on a dead tree. The walk up the mountain is unfortunately a bit chaotic and unorganized. When we start the ascent up the mountain, I almost immediately hear red-and-black grosbeaks, but they remain out of sight. The rest of the group continues more or less straight to the top while I try to do some more birdwatching. I can hear the grosbeak constantly but quite far away and they don't react to playback.

After a while Egbert and I also reach the top. The view is spectacular and I am very pleased to see that the orange-breasted falcons (that Aage had already told me about) are still around. One of the adults is posting right above our heads overlooking the territory. The birds seem to be nesting in the rock cliffs right below us. Occasionally we see both birds hunting over the canopy right below us, very cool. Otherwise it is relatively quiet. Red-and-green macaws and greater yellow-headed vultures pass regularly but the canopy flocks and mammals are completely absent again. After enjoying the scenery for about an hour we slowly start to descend back to Turtle Mountain Camp to have lunch.

Egbert and I lag behind again to do some more birding, but despite serious efforts to find the grosbeaks, the birds just won't show. At the base of the mountain Egbert suggests to play a recording of yellow-billed jacamar. The recording is not very good, but the jacamar responds almost immediately and seconds later the bird sits right above our heads. Brilliant!

At the hammock camp one of the kitchen staff ladies has prepared a simple but nice lunch. After lunch the four other tourists go back to the lodge, and just Egbert, the cook, and the two of us remain. After a short siesta in the hammocks Anja and I explore the forest around the camp. As always on this tour, midday birding turns out to be enjoyable with a slow trickle of birds. We get excellent views of a male fasciated antshrike and a grey antwren pair. We check a little lagoon close to the boat landing, but we don't see much there. At the boat landing we find a group of at least eight red howler monkeys but they disappear immediately when they see us. In the afternoon we make a last attempt to see the grosbeaks, but the birds aren't calling at all, so eventually we give up.

Egbert had told us that the boat would be back at 4 pm in order to look for the sakis, so in the afternoon we slowly walked back to the landing. When we arrived there was no boat. In the beginning we thought the boat just had a little delay, so it would be silly to go back in the forest. In the end we had to wait until 6 pm!!! for the boat to arrive. Because we didn't know when the boat would return we just sat there and wasted our time at the landing. One of the guides finally came to pick us up. When we asked why he was late, we found out that someone in management had ordered him not to pick us up at 4, because the boat needed to do "other things". So this wasn't even a mistake, but lodge policy!! So much for tourists being first on their list of priorities. We sped as fast as we could to the area where the sakis usually are but when we arrived, it was clear that we were again far too late. The sun had already disappeared behind the horizon and whatever monkeys there had been, had already settled down for the night. We then went back downstream to look for the ladder-tailed nightjars. This was excellent. We arrived there at dusk and a couple of them were already hawking over the river. When it got darker more of them came out including several spectacular males. We then slowly spotlighted our way back to the lodge. We saw a fairly large owl on the far bank of the river. We were pretty sure it was a spectacled owl, but the owl flew off when we approached it to get better views. Mammal activity was poor (only some bats), but we did see an Amazonian tree boa.

In the evening I wanted to talk to somebody of the management about how things had been going so far, but they had all disappeared to Georgetown. So I discussed several things with Egbert, but of course there was little he could do. Egbert suggested doing another Indian House Island boat excursion, but by now we were done with their boat excursions. It was clear that Egbert was unhappy about the whole situation too and instead he offered that we would just take the boat to get to the other side of the river to the Kurupukari landing and walk the main road that leads to Georgetown; the sakis can sometimes be seen from the road there and there is sandy soil forest with different bird species to look for. We would explore the trails around the lodge for the rest of the day. A bit reluctant we eventually agreed to do this option.

March 1: Trails around Iwokrama Field Station

It was cloudy and gray this morning but luckily it stayed dry, and the sky cleared throughout the morning. A short boat ride brought us to Kurupukari Landing on the opposite bank and we started walking the main road. I still hadn't seen coraya wren and when we heard one close to the road, I tried to call him in. Initially, the birds remained out of sight, but with perseverance we eventually got good views of a pair. About 1 km inland from the riverbank, the forest type changes quite drastically to low forests and scrub. This sandy soil habitat harbours a different set of bird species. It took some 15-20 minutes for the birds to appear but then we scored in rather quick succession red-shouldered tanager and black-faced tanager and had poor views of black manakin. I also tried the call and song of rufous-crowned elaenia, but we didn't get a response (so

maybe they only occur in the Mori Scrub area of Iwokrama Forest). On the way back to the boat landing we hear dusky parrots calling and eventually Egbert locates one perched, which we could enjoy in the scope for a while. For some reason our boat had disappeared again when we arrived at the landing, but luckily one of the locals gave us a ride back to the lodge. Back at the lodge we check out the trees in the garden and find a couple of moriche orioles and a yellow-crowned tyrannulet showing its bright-coloured crown very well.

After breakfast we explore the Antbird Trail. It is rather quiet, but while looking at some red howlers, we suddenly hear a screaming piha calling loudly right behind us. When I turn around, the normally invisible piha is calling from an exposed perch only some 7-8 meters up. Quite cool. When we are almost back at the lodge we surprise a small group of grey-winged trumpeters. They are shy, but we get very good views of two of them when they walk on the trail towards us for a few meters.

After lunch I head back into forest on the Screaming Piha Trail. Quite quickly I find a few antbirds, but I am not completely sure which species they are. I first try the recording of dusky-throated antshrike. A second later I am literally surrounded by at least fifteen agitated antbirds. It's almost like the birds have been sucked in with a vacuum cleaner. Amazing. Most of them are indeed dusky-throated antshrikes but the flock also includes white-flanked antwrens, a male long-winged antwren, an unidentified female antbird, and a buff-throated and wedge-billed woodcreeper. After this burst of activity I see nothing for an hour. At a section of the forest with lots of tangles, I decide to give the manakins a try despite the fact that the forest seems completely devoid of life. I first play white-crowned manakin, and I can't believe my eyes when one appears out of nowhere and perches nicely on one of the tangles. This bird is much more relaxed than his golden-headed cousins. I can watch the bird at least fifteen minutes and even get a few shots. Of course I got cheeky after this, so a bit further on I tried white-bearded manakin as well, but no luck. Nevertheless, in this area I finally also get to see a helmeted pygmy tyrant. I had heard this bird almost every day in the interior, but I had always been distracted by more interesting species, so it was good to catch up with this one.

In the afternoon Egbert takes us on the trails, but we don't see much and it starts to rain rather heavily after one hour. We decide to walk back to the lodge as none of our target birds are calling and put all our cards on the night walk.

Before dinner we discuss the plan for tomorrow: early start at 6 am with a simple packed breakfast, so that the boat can drop us off at Turtle Mountain and then go back to do excursions with other clients. The boat will then pick us up early afternoon to have lunch at the lodge.

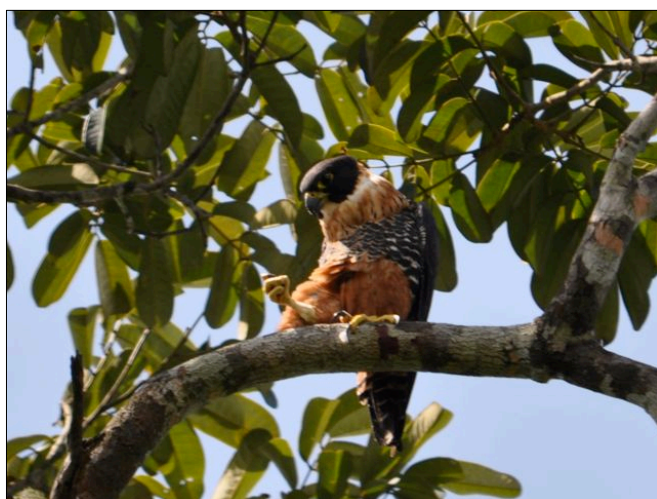
After an unexciting dinner Egbert and I go back to the Screaming Piha Trail to do some spotlighting. Quite quickly we find a black-eared (common) opossum. There are lots of bats flying in the forest and a medium-sized one gives me the creeps when it approaches from behind and hits the edge of my cap with one of its wings (for a second I thought it was a snake coming down from one of the branches). About halfway we hear a fairly bulky sounding animal rushing through very dense undergrowth, but we can't even get a glimpse of the beast. Egbert thinks it's a paca, which makes sense. It sounds like it's too small to be a tapir, but too ungraceful and noisy to be a deer or any small mammal. The highlight though is another kinkajou that shows rather well.

March 2: Turtle Mountain and Trails around Iwokrama River Lodge

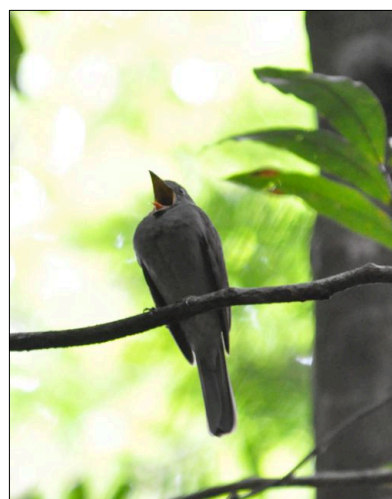
At 5.30 Egbert knocks on our door. The plan discussed yesterday for Turtle Mountain is not possible for some reason. This was clearly not his own idea, because he looks very unhappy when he tells us about it. He suggests that we reduce our Turtle Mountain trip to a pre-breakfast outing. This is exactly what we not wanted and completely pointless, because it is not nearly enough time to explore the area. Anja says right away that she is not coming along if this is our only option. For a few minutes we seem to be stuck in a cul-de-sac, but rather quickly Egbert and I think of a different plan, which seems to avoid all hurdles, and is even better than the original plan because we will have a full breakfast on top of Turtle Mountain. I have no idea what exactly made this plan possible and the other one not, but it does make you wonder though why IRL's management can't come up with such a plan if Egbert and I can do this in five minutes. After some quick on-the-spot arrangements by Egbert we are on our way to Turtle Mountain around 6.15. On the river the only sighting of note is green ibis.

At the base of the mountain I hear a spotted antpitta very close to the trail. We first try to see if we can find the bird ourselves, but it simply won't show and seems to be moving slowly away from us. I softly play the call of the bird but somehow it seems to have spooked the bird, because some 30 seconds it is calling from at least 100 meters away. We give up and only some ten meters further we hear the excited calls of black curassows and whom we then find walking on the path ahead of us.

On the way up to the mountain I almost exclusively focus on finding red-and-black grosbeaks. Again I can hear them high up in the canopy and at some point they pass over my head and I see one female in flight, but the birds move on swiftly and again don't seem to respond well to any of the six different and good recordings I have of them. In the rocky area near the top we try for collared puffbird, but no response. Mammalwise the best sighting is a relaxed group of howlers. On the top Egbert serves us a wonderful breakfast with hot coffee and fresh pancakes with honey. Very nice. We enjoy the lovely scenery with couples of red-and-green macaws flying on and off above the canopy. We also get good views of three green oropendolas, a common species that we only see sparingly during the tour. The orange-breasted falcon pair is present as well and one of them again perches nicely above our heads at the viewpoint.



Orange-breasted Falcon



Screaming Piha

Around 10 am we start our slow descent down the mountain. In the rocky area below the top we first stop for an odd sound that Egbert thinks comes from a wren. I play all the wren sounds I have but nothing happens. While scanning the area where the sound

comes from, I spot a ruddy quail-dove hopping onto a log on the forest floor. The assumed wren won't show though. Only a few meters further we find ourselves on a section with a steep slope and low trees, so the canopy level is almost at eye level and we get fantastic views of a male pygmy antwren. I see another small antwren, which is either Todd's or spot-tailed antwren, but even after playing the calls of both species I am still not sure as the bird seems to respond to both recordings with a non-distinctive call (at least for me). Still in the same area I also spot a flock of tanagers and honeycreepers, but they are at least 25-30 meters up in the canopy. I can clearly make out green and red-legged honeycreeper, but the tanagers are much more difficult, partly because they are moving around all the time. When I try to play the call of spotted tanager I accidentally click on dotted tanager to which some of the tanagers react very strongly. Since dotted tanagers are almost never recorded in Iwokrama, I try the recordings of both spotted and dotted tanager, but oddly the response seems stronger to the dotted tanager recording. I only get fairly decent views of two tanagers and I think they were spotted tanagers: grey-ish/dirty white bellies with a pale-green sheen from below and leaf green on the upper side. I couldn't see more details with the bins and they were moving too fast to put the scope on them.

Further attempts to locate the grosbeaks prove again fruitless. We can hear them rather close two times but again they won't move in our direction or respond well enough to the recording. While Egbert and I are trying for the grosbeaks, Anja descends to the base of the mountain and manages to find a group of very shy white-faced sakis and she only gets to see a female before they all disappear. Despite dipping on the grosbeaks it was a very enjoyable morning, but little did we know...the best was yet to come.

A little before noon our boat arrives and we head back to the lodge. Only five minutes later the boatman asks Egbert to check a tree on the far bank. Egbert checks the massive tree and quickly finds the target: an adult harpy eagle!! Unfortunately it is facing us with its back. Anja finds the bird rather quickly, but I had misunderstood the explanation and was looking at the right tree but wrong branch. With some help from Anja I find the bird, but just when he seems to turn around to face us, the bird flies off. The moment when the bird spreads its wings to take off is just unbelievable: everything about the bird seems to be massive, but the bird nevertheless lifts off almost effortlessly. Unfortunately, it does not cross the river but disappears into the forest. After this adrenaline injection I ask Egbert if we can have one last try for the sakis on the north bank of the Essequibo River and when we get in the area where they are usually seen, Egbert quite quickly locates a group of monkeys, which indeed turn out to be bearded sakis. Amazing animals and true fashionistas with their massive hairdo, neatly trimmed beards, elegant bushy tails, jet-black trousers and a retro 1970s caramel brown T-shirt.

Around 1 pm we arrive back at the lodge and directly go to the restaurant to have lunch. It is obvious that the new supplies have finally arrived, because the lunch is actually nice this time. After lunch we head to the office to settle the bill, but the guy in charge says he needs more time, so he suggests to settle the bill in the evening.

After lunch I walk the Screaming Piha Trail and much to my surprise I hear capuchinbirds calling only some hundred meters from the trail, but I can't see them. No new mammals or birds are seen, but as always just walking through this incredibly rich habitat with its strange insects, colourful flowers, bizarre fungi and beautiful butterflies is a joy in itself.

In the afternoon Egbert and I walk part of the Antbird Trail again in a last attempt to see spotted antpitta, but we dip again on this one. We do hear one bird but it is deep in the forest and won't come closer. It is rather quiet but we do see a few understory flocks

with antbirds, but no new species. Along the entrance road we notice a bird hopping around in some low shrubs: it turns out to be a female fasciated antshrike foraging just above the ground. Several times it dives to the ground to catch larger insects and is amazingly unconcerned about our presence. A heavy downpour unfortunately results in a rather abrupt ending of our afternoon walk.

After a pretty good dinner (they even had beer this time) we went back to the office to settle the bill, but they hadn't bothered to make up the invoice. So we agreed on a new time in the morning.



Scorpion

Red-nosed Tree Rat

Two expat girls, one from Holland and one from the Philippines, join us on the night walk, but show up without a flashlight! They are remarkably persistent and keen to do the walk. Their response to Egbert is funny: "well, your lodge offer night walks, so why don't you provide flashlights". With the girls chatting, stumbling and asking questions during most of the walk, the excursion seems completely doomed and unsurprisingly we don't see any large mammals. Nevertheless, we manage to freeze a red-nosed tree rat in Egbert's flashlight allowing me to take some pictures. Another nice addition is a scorpion on a tree. At the trail end of the Woodcreeper Trail we see another kinkajou, this time higher up and less visible. On our walk to the lodge along the entrance road, both spectacled and Amazonian pygmy owl are calling nearby and even respond to the recordings on my MP3 player, but despite trying from every possible angle on the road, we can't locate them and they always manage to relocate (unseen) to an area with even denser vegetation. A bit later we also hear tawny-bellied screech-owl, but rather far away. On one of the generator sheds we find a beautifully patterned Amazonian tree boa.

March 3: Transfer to Rock View Lodge

I get up at dawn and check out the entrance road one more time. It is quite busy with a lot of birds singing and foraging along the road. A new bird for the trip is a white hawk that crosses the road and I finally get good views of two Amazonian barred woodcreepers. Four shy brown capuchin monkeys are the only mammals seen.

After a relaxed breakfast we walk to the offices to pay the bill and again the bill is not ready. Sigh. We decide to get our bags so that the staff can start packing the car. Some 40 minutes later the bill has finally been made up and we are glad that we can leave.

Egbert joins us and we make a slow “game drive” down to Rock View Lodge. The driver is a very nice guy and good spotter. First we see two different groups of grey-winged trumpeters. In the second group there is even a couple that starts mating on the road. A bit further down the road we also see four black curassows crossing the road.



Grey-winged Trumpeters

Another great sighting is a purple-throated fruitcrow couple. The male flies off quite quickly, but the female stays around for some ten minutes. The next highlight is a crimson topaz and caica parrot feeding in the same tree. At some point the topaz starts hovering right above the parrot’s head, amazing sight; the parrot seems slightly irritated by the whizzing noise above his head and eventually gets out of the way.

A nice selection of raptors is seen again with swallow-tailed kite, plumbeous kite, king vulture, greater yellow-headed vulture, roadside hawk, and best of all an adult double-toothed kite.

About halfway we run into a convoy of shiny 4x4 vehicles. It is the Iwokrama management, each director with its own (otherwise empty) car! The director in the first car stops us and the cheerful expression on the face of our driver turns frosty. I can’t hear everything he is saying, but I could feel the cold wind of hardened bureaucracy blowing our direction. The other directors in the second and third vehicle were very engaged with their satellite phones (probably calling each other).

Quite close to Atta the driver suddenly stops and states with a serious face “white-winged potoo”. First I think he is joking, but indeed a minute later we are having scope views of this rather small potoo. I had already completely given up on this species, so this was a brilliant surprise. This stake-out along the road had recently been very reliable for seeing this species and the news had clearly been spreading among the guides and drivers.

En route the driver and I get to chat about the mammal sightings along the road, and obviously bush dogs are seen a few times a year when they cross the main road through Iwokrama or the Rupununi savannah south of Iwokrama. Jaguars are seen a few times every week (by drivers who drive the road almost daily and sometimes twice on a day), but as a tourist it is more a matter of luck since you are likely to drive the road only twice during a tour. Other cats are rarely seen on the road. Armadillos, tapir, paca, brocket deers and peccaries all seem to be fairly regular, but are more typically seen on late evening drives back home when they have dropped off tourists elsewhere.

Around noon we arrive at Rock View Lodge and check in in our very nice room. After a delicious lunch Hendricks shows us around on the birdy lodge grounds. Close to the restaurant we see our first painted tody-flycatcher and in the bushes and small trees

that surround the viewpoint next to the pool we see red-eyed vireo, white-fringed antwren, yellow oriole and southern beardless tyrannulet. In the vegetable garden we have excellent views of grey, plumbeous and chestnut-bellied seedeater.

An afternoon walk on the savannah around the lodge produces among others grassland sparrow, vermillion flycatcher, eastern meadowlark, buff-necked ibis, double-striped thick-knee and finally Finsch's euphonia. A spotlighting trip before dinner along the airstrip proves to be fruitless. Absolutely nothing is seen or heard.

Before dinner we chat a bit with the staff and a friendly German-British couple that we had seen earlier on the trip. They had had a superb sighting of a big jaguar lying directly next to the road on their transfer from Iwokrama to Rock View Lodge. Apart from this couple and the Naturetrek group we met nobody else who had seen a jaguar on their tour. Before dinner we were served freshly roasted cashew nuts and homemade lime-based rum punch, which I liked even better than Karanambu's rum punch. After an excellent dinner we decide to call it a day and go to bed.



The "Rock View" from Rock View Lodge

March 4: Rock View Lodge - Flight to Georgetown

In the morning we walk the Panorama Trail. It is a nice, but rocky trail that leads through rather dry forest to several viewpoints, which all have great views over the savannah and forest pockets. The trail is only a little short.

Birding is quite good and we find a couple of species that we had not yet seen: pale-eyed pygmy-tyrant and slate-headed tody-flycatcher. At one of the viewpoints we see another Finch's euphonia. White-bellied antbird and green-tailed jacamar show well, and an ashy-headed greenlet is only the second sighting for the trip. A blue-backed manakin also shows up for a few seconds and a rufous-browed peppershrike is heard, but we don't bother to track it down as we have seen this species quite often in the past. The highlight, however, is an amphibian. We are surprised to hear that poison dart frogs occur in these relatively dry forests. The frogs are surprisingly shy and they elude us several times but eventually Hendricks spots one of the spectacular frogs on the bark of the tree. I am not 100% sure but I think that the species is yellow-banded poison dart

frog. On the way back over the savannah burnished-buff tanager is the only species of note.



From left to right: Yellow Oriole, Pale-eyed Pygmy Tyrant, Green-tailed Jacamar

Around 8.45 we are back for breakfast, an elaborate affair with just too many tasty things to choose from. Our flight only leaves at 1 pm, so Anja and I head back to the Panorama Trail after breakfast. On the savannah we see a single barn swallow, a pair of American kestrels and a burnished-buff tanager. It is quite hot today and the forest along the trail has gone silent by 10am and we just enjoy the views over the savannah. Around 11 we head back to our room, pack our luggage, buy some souvenirs from the lodge and then relax in the lodge garden. The plane arrives on time. It is sunny and we have fantastic views over the savannah and rainforest islands when we take off. After a fairly relaxed flight we arrive in Georgetown. We are both tired, so the afternoon is spent relaxing and drinking some gin and tonics in the courtyard of the hotel.

March 5: Flight to Paramaribo – Visit Cultuurtuin in Paramaribo

The morning flight to Paramaribo is uneventful. Be aware of the taxi drivers at the small Zorg en Hoop airport: they tried to rip us off by claiming the price quoted to us was in US dollars and not Suriname dollars. In the end we managed to settle the issue and agreed on a price that made both parties being reasonably happy (we only had Suriname dollars anyway). We asked the taxi guy what he charged for a ride to the international airport and this was significantly more (20% or so) than what we got quoted from Residence Inn. You probably can get cheaper taxi rides from one of the taxis in the city, but we didn't bother. The prices that Residence Inn asked seemed reasonable so we hired a taxi through them for the drive to Peperpot next morning (about 5-6 euro if I recall correctly) and the airport (about 25 euro).

The restaurant inside The Residence Inn complex is better given a miss. The food is exceptionally poor and bland and prices are ridiculously high. In the afternoon we just took a sandwich and even that was bad. A one-minute walk down the road there are several restaurants, including one Korean and two Chinese restaurants. In the evening we went to one of the Chinese places, which served tasty food at reasonable prices.

After lunch we first went to the Cultuurtuin. We walked to the area, but first made a little detour to see the city centre of Paramaribo. After an hour's walk we reached the Cultuurtuin, it was hot and very windy. We were there from 3 to about 5 pm, clearly not the best time for birding. The habitat is quite varied with a few small forest-like areas, some ponds, swampy areas, fields, scrub, gardens, etc. I am sure the early morning birding here is pretty good, but I didn't like the vibe of the place (too many people, degraded habitat, fairly small) and it seems to be a place where people dump all kinds of

rubbish including empty cans, disused oil drums, old car tyres, etc. *Aedes* mosquitos must love this place. If I had known this beforehand, I would have gone to Peperpot this afternoon as well, which is more rewarding and pleasant. Unsurprisingly, we saw mostly common birds in the Cultuurtuin. Most notable were a male crimson-hooded manakin and lots of black-throated mangos feeding on trees with large orange flowers. There may have been green-throated mangos as well, but I couldn't identify one positively.

March 6: Peperpot Plantage – Afternoon flight to Amsterdam

Next morning we were up at dawn. After an early breakfast our taxi came to pick us up at about 7 am. Unfortunately it was raining quite heavily when we left and I decided to leave my camera at home. By taxi it is about 20-25 minutes to Peperpot from the city centre in Paramaribo. For some reason the driver wanted to drop us off at the far end on the Suriname River where the actual Peperpot plantation house is. When we got out it was still raining, but luckily it was more drizzly and not persistent rain.

The Peperpot area is now managed by WWF. A billboard in the “reserve” shows current and future plans for the area: about one quarter of the area will unfortunately be sacrificed for a golf course with high-end luxury accommodation. The old plantation house has been restored and will soon be open to tourists for overnight visits. They have also created a picknick area in the forest. At both ends of the main trail, there are little yellow cabins with guards; between both trail ends staff and occasionally locals race up and down on noisy mopeds. Most annoying, however, are the opening hours: the gates at both ends are now closed before 8.30 pm and after 5 pm. The trail system has been extended/restored, which is nice. Currently, it is still a great place to go birding but useless for mammalwatching if you respect the opening hours at the gate, and luckily it wasn't overrun with tourists when we were there (Sunday), but some of the future plans may affect the charm of this place.

Anyway, we first walked back on the unpaved road from the plantation house to the southern entrance (en route you pass some sluices). The road was good for birding, but mostly common species were seen. An arrowhead piculet was heard but too far to make me try to see it. It was only 7.30 when we arrived at the entrance gate and no way was I going to wait one hour here. So we just climbed around the gate and entered the reserve to walk the main trail, which is 3.2 km long and called Mopentibo Trail. Close to the entrance we met a friendly woman of the staff who was relaxed about us entering and we told her that we would pay the entrance fee to the reserve at the other end. This was fine. About halfway we met one of the staff on a moped and he was in charge of the money-box. He was a bit less pleased about our early entrance, but things remained friendly and in the end we could get tickets from him. Back to the birding: initially it was very quiet. It was very humid, but colder than usual which seemed to suppress the activity. Cinereous tinamous were calling all the time and one responded very well to a recording of its call, but it just wouldn't show in the thick green wall of secondary undergrowth. Early on we saw squirrel monkeys with some regularity and some of them were very tame. However, until 9 am not much was happening, but then it became drier and warmer and things started moving: blackish antbird, black-crested antshrike, squirrel and little cuckoo, straight-billed woodcreeper, white-tipped dove, gray-fronted dove, short-crested flycatcher, and cinnamon attila were some of the species seen. Along the trail we found a grey-breasted sabrewing perched. I also tried some of the smaller side trails but they were so infested with mosquitos that I quickly gave up.

Back on the main trail I waited at a fruiting tree where I found a small and loose flock passing through with hooded tanager, turquoise tanager and black-throated antbird. In the same area we had superb views of a couple of blood-coloured woodpeckers (I was

now cursing myself for leaving the camera in the hotel room). Close to the northern entrance we also saw violaceous euphonia and black-spotted barbet. The first kilometre on the main trail from the main northern entrance (which is visible from the main road between Paramaribo and Albina in the east) seemed particularly birdy and the forest is more open making birding easier. We were to be picked up by the taxi at the northern end around 11.45. By 11.15 I had only had flight views of the arrowhead piculet, currently Suriname's only endemic bird, so time was getting tight. In the area where they have built toilets and a picknick area (only a few hundred meters from the northern entrance), I played the recording again and now I heard two birds responding deeper in the forest and a bit later I saw the birds moving through the subcanopy. Every now and then I played the recording and eventually the birds came closer, but they always stayed some 20-30 meters away from us. It took until 11.35 to finally get scope views of the male perched. Phew. I really had to drag myself away from the place, because there were birds everywhere now but our taxi driver was already waiting.

Back at the hotel we packed and then relaxed a bit on the balcony at the front end of the hotel, which overlooks a stretch of wasteland that attracts birds: red-breasted blackbird, black-collared hawk, and osprey were the most interesting species. Around 2 pm our taxi picked us up and drove us to the international airport near Zanderij. The flight back was uneventful.

For any questions, comments, additions, wrong determinations, etc., please contact me at: [olpa \[at\] onsneteindhoven.nl](mailto:olpa[at]onsneteindhoven.nl)



Notes and Index to the Trip Lists

Apart from the books mentioned in the paragraph “Equipment/Books” I found a handy reference work when I got back home. Robert Ridgely and David Agro conducted a bird survey in Iwokrama Forest in the late 1990s. The results are published in the report *Birds of the Iwokrama Forest*, which can be found on the website of Iwokrama. The report has also been published here: Proceedings of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, 2005, vol. 154(1), pages 109-121 or doi: 10.1635/0097-3157(2004). I found this report extremely useful to double-check sightings. I wished I had known about it before going to Guyana. The same issue contains also contains papers on the mammals, fish, plants, etc. of Iwokrama. For Suriname’s birds, check this superb website by Jan-Hein Ribot: <http://www1.nhl.nl/~ribot/english/>.

As always, many birds of the more difficult categories (tyrant flycatchers, swifts, some antbirds, woodcreepers, hummingbirds, etc.) had to remain unidentified because I didn’t know the calls (or not well enough) or because views were very poor or too short. Most notable/surprising, however, were the low number of canopy flocks and army ant swarms encountered. This is reflected in the rather poor number of sightings for canopy-feeding birds and “ant swarm specialists”. The former may also be related to the fact that we only spent a total of about 2.5-3 hours on the canopy walk.

PLA = Hotel De Plantage and surroundings, Suriname

CUL = Cultuurtuin in Paramaribo, Suriname

PEP = Peperpot Plantage in Suriname

IRL = Iwokrama River Lodge and surroundings (Turtle Mountain, entrance road, main road close to the lodge, Fairview village, etc.)

AT = Atta Rainforest lodge and surroundings (canopy walkway, trails, entrance road, main road)

IWOK = Iwokrama Forest in general

KAR = Karanambu Ranch

GE = Georgetown area

SUR = Surama Lodge and surroundings

RVL = Rock view lodge and surroundings

GEBG = Georgetown Botanical Gardens



Double-Striped Thick-knee (Rock View Lodge)

Bird List

Great Tinamou *Tinamus major* – one roosting on a branch about 7 meters from the ground on the night walk at SUR on Feb. 24. Heard at Atta.

[Cinereous Tinamou *Crypturellus cinereus* – heard only at PLA and PEP]

[Little Tinamou *Crypturellus soui* – heard at Atta]

Undulated Tinamou *Crypturellus undulatus* – two flushed at KAR on the morning walk on Feb. 19 and another one seen well on the mid-morning walk on the same day

Red-legged Tinamou *Crypturellus erythropus* - heard on the morning walk on Feb. 19 and one flushed on the mid-morning walk on the same day

Variegated Tinamou *Crypturellus variegatus* - two seen well at Atta along the entrance road, heard at SUR.

Neotropic Cormorant *Phalacrocorax brasilianus* – between 1 and 5 daily at KAR, more than 10 on the boat ride to Ginep landing on Feb. 20, one on the Essequibo River at IRL.

Anhinga *Anhinga anhinga* – common at KAR, 1-2 daily on the Essequibo River at IRL.

Rufescent Tiger-Heron *Tigrisoma lineatum* – 1-2 daily at KAR, one at a roadside pond near Atta on Feb. 21, one at SUR, at IWOK two on March 1, one on March 2, one juvenile along the road on the transfer from IRL to RVL.

Cocoi Heron *Ardea coccyz* – one at Abary River, about 5 daily at KAR, more than 20 on the boat ride to Ginep landing on Feb. 20, 1-2 on most days at Atta and IRL.

Great Egret *Ardea alba* - about 5 on the Warappakreek excursion, more than 30 at GeBG, about 20 on the Abary/Mahaica River excursion, one seen over the Suriname River from Residence Inn.

Snowy Egret *Egretta thula* – about 50 on the Warappakreek excursion, about 20 on the Abary/Mahaica River excursion, about 10 daily at KAR, smaller numbers (1-3) at Atta (roadside ponds), CUL and Residence Inn in Paramaribo.

Little Blue Heron *Egretta caerulea* - about 40-50 on the Warappakreek excursion, 4-5 in GeBG, about 5 on the Abary/Mahaica River excursion, about 10 near the Pontoon Bridge in GE, 1-2 daily at KAR, singles at CUL and PEP.

Tricoloured Heron *Egretta tricolor* - about 5 on the Warappakreek excursion and about 5-6 on the Abary/Mahaica River excursion, about 4-5 near the Pontoon Bridge in GE.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* – common in cultivated habitats, seen at PLA, CUL, PEP, Abary/Mahaica River, and Georgetown area.

Green Heron *Butorides virescens* – two at Georgetown Botanical Gardens, 3 on the Abary/Mahaica River excursion, one at KAR, and about 5 at PEP

Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* – about 5-6 on the Warappakreek excursion, one at Georgetown Botanical Gardens, one on the Abary/Mahaica River excursion, and about 10 on the boat ride to Ginep landing on Feb. 20

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron *Nyctanassa violacea* - about 40-50 on the Warappakreek excursion and 3 on the Abary/Mahaica River excursion.

Boat-billed Heron *Cochlearius cochlearius* – one at KAR on the boat ride while spotlighting back to the lodge on Feb. 19

Scarlet Ibis *Eudocimus ruber* – at least 10 on the Warappakreek excursion and 6 roosting in riverine vegetation from the pontoon bridge at Georgetown

Green Ibis *Mesembrinibis cayennensis* – one at dawn at PLA on Feb. 14, one at KAR on Feb. 19, two on the boat ride to Ginep landing, one in IWOK on Feb. 27, three on the Essequibo River on March 1.

Buff-necked Ibis *Theristicus caudatus* – only seen at RVL where common

Jabiru *Jabiru mycteria* – one at the wetland close to the landing strip at KAR (seen from the plane), one seen by Anja on the savannah on Feb. 19 and an adult and young on the nest on Feb. 19 on the afternoon boat ride. A total of 10 on the transfer from KAR to RVL on Feb. 20.

Wood Stork *Mycteria Americana* – a group of 10 roosting on a tree top on the afternoon excursion on Feb. 19.

White-faced Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna viduata* – one seen by Anja on the savannah excursion

Muscovy Duck *Cairina moschata* – one on the Warappakreek excursion, 1-10 seen almost daily in Guyana's interior.

Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus* – very common, seen daily.

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura* – common, seen on most days, but in low numbers.

Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture *Cathartes burrovianus* – daily at PLA, several on the Warappakreek excursion and the Abary/Mahaica excursion, at least 3 on Feb. 24 at SUR
Greater Yellow-headed Vulture *Cathartes melambrotus* – about 1-4 daily in Guyana's interior.

King Vulture *Sarcoramphus papa* – three together (in flight) at SUR on Feb. 24, singles on Feb. 26 and 27, March 1 and 3, all in flight.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* – at least ten but probably more on the Warappakreek excursion, one at Georgetown Botanical Gardens, two on the Abary/Mahaica excursion, regular at KAR and at least five on the boat ride to Ginep, one over the Suriname River from Residence Inn.

Swallow-tailed Kite *Elanoides forficatus* – 1-4 daily in Iwokrama (both Atta and IRL)

Snail Kite *Rostrhamus sociabilis* – common on the coast of both countries, but particularly easy to see in Georgetown

Slender-billed Kite *Helicolestes hamatus* – a total of three sightings, one soaring outside the lodge grounds on Feb. 15, and one seen very well (probably the same bird) at PLA on Feb. 15 and 16.

Hook-billed Kite *Chondrohierax uncinatus* – one in flight outside the lodge grounds at PLA on Feb. 15

Double-toothed Kite *Harpagus bidentatus* – poor views of a juvenile on Feb. 21, great views of an adult perched along the road in Iwokrama on March 3

Plumbeous Kite *Ictinia plumbea* – between 3 and 10 seen daily at Atta, SUR and IWOK

Black-collared Hawk *Busarellus nigricollis* – one at PLA on Feb 13, 15 and 16. Three at Georgetown Botanical gardens. Two at KAR on Feb 18 and 19. One on Feb. 25 at SUR. One at CUL on March 5.

Tiny Hawk *Accipiter superciliosus* – one in flight on the boat ride at SUR on Feb. 26, one perched at the clearing of Turtle Mountain Camp on Feb. 27.

Crane Hawk *Geranospiza caerulescens* – two in a clearing along the main road at Atta on Feb. 22, singles at IWOK on Feb. 26 and 27.

Black-faced Hawk *Leucopternis melanops* – one along the road in Iwokrama on Feb. 26.

White Hawk *Leucopternis albicollis* – one on the entrance road to IRL on March 3.

Common Black-Hawk *Buteogallus anthracinus* – one on the Abary/Mahaica excursion,
Rufous Crab-Hawk *Buteogallus aequinoctialis* – about 6 on the Warappakreek excursion, and one on the Abary/Mahaica excursion.

Great Black-Hawk *Buteogallus urubitinga* – one on the mid-morning walk at honey pond in KAR, a total of four on the boat ride to Ginep landing, one at IRL on Feb 27, and two at IRL on Feb. 28.

Savanna Hawk *Buteogallus meridionalis* – two on the Warappakreek excursion, a few single birds at KAR, one at SUR, one at RVL, a single bird in the wasteland area in front of the Residence Inn on March 5 and 6.

Roadside Hawk *Buteo magnirostris* – a total of eight sightings: a few seen at PLA, singles at SUR, IWOK and RVL.

Grey Hawk *Buteo nitidus* – daily 1-2 at Atta along the road, one on Feb. 26 on the transfer through IWOK, also seen at CUL and PEP.

White-tailed Hawk *Buteo albicaudatus* – one on the savannah near KAR on Feb. 18

Zone-tailed Hawk *Buteo albonotatus* – one on the boat Abary/Mahaica River excursion, the bird was seen well at close range.

Harpy Eagle *Harpia harpyja* – a juvenile on the Harpy Eagle trail at Surama, an adult along the Essequibo river on March 2.

Black Hawk-Eagle *Spizaetus tyrannus* – a juvenile on Feb. 25, and a possible immature bird over the Essequibo River at IRL.

[Ornate Hawk-Eagle *Spizaetus ornatus* – heard only at SUR, identified by guide Gary]

Slaty-backed Forest-Falcon *Micrastur mirandollei* – a single bird perched about 3-4 meters from the ground in the forest at SUR on Feb. 25

[Collared Forest-Falcon *Micrastur semitorquatus* – heard only on Feb. 18 on the evening excursion at KAR]

Black Caracara *Daptrius ater* – two seen well at Atta on Feb. 19, singles twice at SUR, two on Feb. 27 and one on Feb. 28 at IWOK.

Red-throated Caracara *Ibycter americanus* – poor views of two on one of the forest trails at Atta, a single bird perched in the open on the morning boating excursion at IWOK on Feb 27. Four flying over IRL on Feb. 27 and four on the Antbird Trail on Feb 28.

Crested Caracara *Caracara cheriway* - common in cultivated areas, seen around Georgetown, Abary/Mahaica River, KAR, SUR, RVL, and CUL

Yellow-headed Caracara *Milvago chimachima* – common in cultivated areas and savannah, seen at PLA, Georgetown area, KAR, SUR, IRL, CUL, PEP.

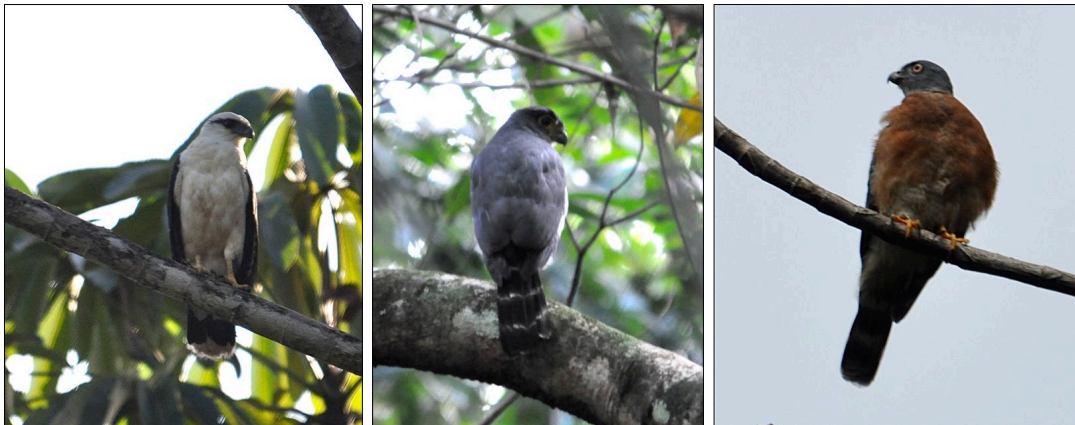
Laughing Falcon *Herpetotheres cachinnans* – one seen at the botanical gardens in Georgetown, heard on the Warappakreek excursion and at SUR.

American Kestrel *Falco sparverius* – one only seen by Anja on Feb. 19, and a pair at RVL on March 4.

Aplomado Falcon *Falco femoralis* – a single bird was seen perched on the boat ride to Ginep on Feb. 20. Another one was seen perched along the road at Atta on Feb. 21.

Bat Falcon *Falco ruficularis* – one on the Abary/Mahaica River Excursion, and twice at IWOK (Feb. 26 and March 2)

Orange-breasted Falcon *Falco deiroleucus* – a pair was seen perched, hunting and mating at the top of Turtle Mountain on both visits.



From left to right: Black-faced Hawk, Slaty-backed Forest-falcon, and Double-toothed Kite

Little Chachalaca *Ortalis motmot* –heard at PLA and Abary, one gave poor views at SUR on Feb 24. Good views of three in a cecropia tree at Carahaa on Feb. 26 in SUR, one at RVL on the Panorama Trail.

Marail Guan *Penelope marail* – between 2 and 6 daily at Atta.

Spix's Guan *Penelope jacquacu* – singles and pairs at Atta and SUR and one on the transfer from IRL to RVL. One at KAR was probably Spix's too.

Blue-throated Piping-Guan *Pipile cumanensis* - only seen at SUR along the Burro Burro River, where common.

[Crestless Curassow *Mitu tomentosum* – heard regularly at KAR, but usually quite far away]

Black Curassow *Crax alector* – several groups of both tame and wild birds were seen at Atta, a single bird was seen at Turtle Mountain on March 2, and four were seen on the road on the transfer from IRL to RVL on March 3.

Crested Bobwhite *Colinus cristatus* – a group of about 15 on the runway at KAR on the morning of Feb. 19 and four on the transfer from Ginep Landing to RVL on Feb. 20.

[Marbled Wood-Quail *Odontophorus gujanensis* – heard only on the Warappakreek trip]

Purple Gallinule *Porphyrio martinica* – four on Mobai Pond, KAR on Feb. 19

Sunbittern *Eurypyga helias* – two at Honey Pond on the morning walk on Feb. 19

Limpkin *Aramus guarauna* – one in Georgetown Botanical Gardens

Grey-winged Trumpeter *Psophia crepitans* – one was seen poorly when crossing the track to Carahaa at SUR, a group of six was seen well on the transfer from SUR to IRL on Feb. 26, a group of at least three was seen on the Screaming Piha Trail in IWOK, two groups (4 and 10 birds) were seen on the transfer from IRL to RVL. In the second group we saw two birds on the road doing a short courtship display and then mate.

Double-striped Thick-knee *Burhinus bistriatus* – at KAR two were only seen by Anja, two at RVL on Feb. 3.

Pied Lapwing *Vanellus cayanus* – between 2 and 4 were seen on sandy riverbanks at KAR on each river excursion. Between 5 and 15 were always present on the short grass at IRL, also seen on sandbanks on the Essequibo River in the IWOK area.

Southern Lapwing *Vanellus chilensis* – one near RVL on Feb. 17, three on the airstrip at KAR on Feb. 20 and large numbers (up to 40) around RVL.

Black-bellied Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* – at least 20 on the Warappakreek excursion.

Collared Plover *Charadrius collaris* – one on a sandbank in the Essequibo River at IWOK on Feb. 28.

Wattled Jacana *Jacana jacana* – one at PLA, about 8 in the botanical gardens in Georgetown, at least 15 on the Abary/Mahaica excursion, between 10 and 20 daily at KAR, singles at CUL and PEP

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularia* – at least 20 on the Warappakreek excursion, one near PLA, a few at SUR and a few daily on the grass around IRL.

Solitary Sandpiper *Tringa solitaria* – two near PLA, two at the Botanical Gardens in Georgetown, one on the Abary/Mahaica River excursion.

Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca* – about 5 on the Warappakreek excursion

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* – about 5 on the Warappakreek excursion

Willet *Tringa semipalmata* – about 10 on the Warappakreek excursion

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* – a few tens on the Warappakreek excursion

Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla* – thousands on the Warappakreek excursion

Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla* – about 5-6 on the Warappakreek excursion

Laughing Gull *Leucophaeus atricilla* – a few near Georgetown

Yellow-billed Tern *Sternula superciliaris* – one on the Warappakreek excursion, daily 2-4 in front of IRL and on the Essequibo River.

Large-billed Tern *Phaetusa simplex* – a few daily on river excursions at KAR, 1-2 daily in front of IRL and on the Essequibo River.

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* – four on the Warappakreek excursion

Black Skimmer *Rynchops niger* – a group of at least ten birds was seen on the afternoon boat excursion on Feb. 18, and at least ten on the boat transfer to Ginep Landing on Feb. 20. Three on a sand bank in front of IRL on the Essequibo River on March 1.

Rock Pigeon *Columba livia feral* (introduced) – common in cities.

Pale-vented Pigeon *Patagioenas cayennensis* – common, seen on most days

Scaled Pigeon *Patagioenas speciosa* – excellent scope views of one at Atta along the road on Feb. 21.

Plumbeous Pigeon *Patagioenas plumbea* – single bird at Atta on Feb. 21, and one at SUR on Feb. 24 in the scope in beautiful evening light, small groups were seen at IWOK on two days.

Ruddy Pigeon *Patagioenas subvinacea* - single bird at KAR and SUR, small groups were seen at IWOK on three days.

Eared Dove *Zenaida auriculata* - one on the Abary/Mahaica River excursion and one at KAR, paid no attention to it after those sightings.

Common Ground-Dove *Columbina passerina* - regular sightings, seen at PLA, Abary, KAR, Atta (road), SUR and RVL, CUL

Plain-breasted Ground-Dove *Columbina minuta* - less often seen than the above, several at KAR and one scoped at SUR, then stopped checking for them.

Ruddy Ground-Dove *Columbina talpacoti* - very common in cultivated and degraded areas.

Blue Ground-Dove *Claravis pretiosa* - heard on Feb. 23 by our guide Gary at SUR, a male was seen on Feb. 28 in undergrowth next to the trail between the boat landing and the Turtle Mountain hammock camp. Egbert told me he had never seen the species here, but I saw the bird at close range (10-15 meters). The black spots on the wings were clearly seen. It was shy but I could follow it for a few minutes and the bird never showed any intention to fly; it would always quickly walk into areas with good cover after crossing a more open area.

White-tipped Dove *Leptotila verreauxi* - common, seen on most days

Grey-fronted Dove *Leptotila rufaxilla* - heard regularly, but only seen at PLA and Atta

Ruddy Quail-Dove *Geotrygon montana* - one was seen walking over a log and through the undergrowth just below the top of Turtle Mountain.

Painted Parakeet *Pyrrhura picta* - two seen well at Atta on the trail that leads to the walkway. One at SUR, and one at IRL.

White-eyed Parakeet *Aratinga leucophthalma* - eight in flight over RVL, red and yellow markings on the underwings clearly seen and distinctive "cheerrry" call heard.

Brown-throated Parakeet *Aratinga pertinax* - most common parakeet in the region, seen at PLA, Georgetown Botanical Gardens, Abary/Mahaica, KAR, SUR, IWOK, PEP and CUL.

Red-and-green Macaw *Ara chloropterus* - the most common macaw in the interior when we were there, 5-15 daily at Atta, SUR and IRL.

Scarlet Macaw *Ara macao* - quite uncommon during our visit but 2-5 daily at Atta, and seen twice at IRL.

Blue-and-yellow Macaw *Ara ararauna* - between 3 and 10 daily seen around IRL.

Red-shouldered Macaw *Diopsittaca nobilis* - only seen a few times, more than 30 at GeBG, one guide-only sighting at Atta and four at IWOK on March 1.

Green-rumped Parrotlet *Forpus passerinus* - two (different) pairs seen perched at PLA on Feb. 15 and often seen as fly-over at PLA. No 100% positive identifications in Guyana, but a flyover couple at Abary may have been this species.

Golden-winged Parakeet *Brotogeris chrysoptera* - quite common, but unfortunately only seen well in flight, seemed most easy to see at IRL/Atta, but also recorded at SUR.

[Lilac-tailed Parrotlet *Touit batavicus* - quite a lot of flyovers of small parrotlets at Atta and occasionally SUR, most of which were probably this species, but never seen long or detailed enough for a tickable view]

Black-headed Parrot *Pionites melanocephalus* - rather poor views of three perched along the road at Atta on Feb. 20. Several groups seen in flight at Atta. Excellent scope views of one bird perched at SUR on Feb 25.

Caica Parrot *Pyrilia caica* - decent views of two perched along the road at Atta on Feb. 20. Superb views of one at close range eating flowers with a Crimson Topaz hovering above his head, seen on transfer from IRL to RVL.

Blue-headed Parrot *Pionus menstruus* - common, about 1-3 seen perched on most days in the interior, lots in flight, most easy to see at Atta, SUR and IRL.

Dusky Parrot *Pionus fuscus* - groups of three were seen perched twice at Atta, also seen in flight at Atta, one perched bird that was part of a bigger group was scoped at Kurupukari Landing.

Blue-cheeked Parrot *Amazona dufresniana* – two sightings at Atta of perched birds along the main road: one bird scoped in poor light on Feb 22 and another one in the scope in pretty good light on Feb 23.

Festive Parrot *Amazona festiva* – a total of six, of which two were seen at close range in GeBG on Feb. 16.

Orange-winged Parrot *Amazona amazonica* – the most common parrot, seen perched at PLA, IWOK, GeBG, but heard and seen in flight at almost every site visited

Mealy Parrot *Amazona farinosa* – quite common, seen perched at GeBG and Atta

Yellow-crowned Parrot *Amazona ochrocephala* – less common than the previous two, two seen perched at GeBG and one perched at SUR, otherwise only in flight

Red-fan Parrot *Deroptyus accipitrinus* – views in poor light of two perched at Atta on Feb 20, two groups of three birds were seen perched in the scope at Atta on Feb 21; one bird fanned his neck feathers.

Hoatzin *Opisthocomus hoazin* – two groups of about 6 and 8 birds on the Mahaica River.



Hoatzin

Little Cuckoo *Coccyua minuta* – Two at PLA on Feb. 15, one at Abary, two at PEP.

Squirrel Cuckoo *Piaya cayana* – 1-2 seen on about half the days in the interior in Guyana, one at PEP

[Striped Cuckoo *Tapera naevia* – heard only on the Warappakreek excursion]

[Rufous-winged Ground-Cuckoo *Neomorphus rufipennis* – one was heard snapping its bill frustratingly close the trail at SUR on Feb. 26, but the bird moved away from us rather quickly]

Greater Ani *Crotophaga major* – a group of 5-6 at Abary.

Smooth-billed Ani *Crotophaga ani* – very common, seen almost every day of the tour

[Tropical Screech-Owl *Megascops choliba* – heard at KAR]

[Tawny-bellied Screech-Owl *Megascops watsonii* – heard at SUR and the entrance road at IRL]

[Spectacled Owl *Pulsatrix perspicillata* – heard at Atta (lodge grounds) and the entrance road to IRL, one owl seen on the night boating trip on Feb. 28 was almost certainly this species but it flew off when we tried to get closer]

[Amazonian Pygmy-Owl *Glaucidium hardyi* – heard at IRL]

Short-tailed Nighthawk *Lurocalis semitorquatus* – two were seen at Atta over the clearing at dawn on Feb. 22 and 23. Also seen at KAR.

Least Nighthawk *Chordeiles pusillus* – Anja saw one at its daytime roost at KAR on Feb. 19, two were seen flying around the lodge at SUR on Feb. 24, two at their daytime roost on the ground under some bushes on Feb. 25

Lesser Nighthawk *Chordeiles acutipennis* – about 2-3 were seen flying near the lodge at SUR on Feb. 23 and 24, a few on their daytime roost in trees close to the lodge on Feb. 24 and 25.

Band-tailed Nighthawk *Nyctiprogne leucopyga* – a few perched on branches over the river and small numbers hawking over Buffalo Pond at KAR on Feb. 18 and 19.

Common Pauraque *Nyctidromus albicollis* – single birds were seen at KAR on Feb. 18 and 19. Heard at SUR.

White-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus cayennensis* - one flying at dusk in SUR near the lodge on Feb. 24 (poor views) and 25 (decent views).

Blackish Nightjar *Caprimulgus nigrescens* – one seen on its daytime roost at Carahaa Camp in SUR on Feb. 26.

Ladder-tailed Nightjar *Hydropsalis climacocerca* – superb views of at least 8 birds including several males on the night boat trip on Feb. 28. A female resting on a branch could be approached to about 2-3 m.

Great Potoo *Nyctibius grandis* – a couple was calling two nights almost non-stop in the garden at PLA, both birds were seen perched and one was seen flying over the lodge grounds. Superb views of one at its day roost in SUR

Common Potoo *Nyctibius griseus* – very good views of one at its day roost in SUR

White-winged Potoo *Nyctibius leucopterus* - excellent scope views of one at its daytime roost on March 3 on the transfer from IRL to RVL.



From left to right: Common, Great and White-winged Potoo

White-collared Swift *Streptoprocne zonaris* – only seen once, a group of about 30 was hawking for insects in light drizzle around the lodge at SUR.

[Chapman's Swift *Chaetura chapmani* – a small group of all-dark-looking swifts flying around Turtle Mountain seemed to be this species. The birds were also seen from above and they appeared all dark, the rump was slightly paler, but not as pale as shown in most guidebooks for this species (i.e., the rump appeared brown). However, I couldn't detect barbs at the tail ends. Most trip reports by birders/birding tour groups don't

report this species for Iwokrama, whereas Ridgely and Agro list this species as abundant??]

Short-tailed Swift *Chaetura brachyuran* – the most commonly seen swift during the tour, seen both on the coast and the interior.

[Grey-rumped Swift *Chaetura cinereiventris* – in what seemed a mixed group of swifts at Atta, several swifts appeared to be rather long-tailed with an extensive grey rump that basically extended down to the tail end. Not quite sure, but I think those birds were this species.]

Band-rumped Swift *Chaetura spinicaudus* – a group of about 10 was seen hunting low along forest/savanna edge in beautiful afternoon sunlight at SUR on Feb. 24. I am certain that it was this species and not Grey-rumped Swift, because the pale rump band was narrow and Restall states: “pale rump can look white when it catches the sun” and this was exactly the case with these swifts. Several sightings of swifts around IRL and Atta also seemed to be this species, but the light was often too poor to be completely sure. Ridgely and Agro list this species as abundant in their Iwokrama report and Short-tailed Swift as uncommon.

Fork-tailed Palm-Swift *Tachornis squamata* – only a handful sightings, seen at PLA, SUR, RVL, and CUL

Rufous-breasted Hermit *Glaucis hirsutus* - only seen a few times at PLA (probably the same bird every time)

Pale-tailed Barbthroat *Threnetes leucurus* – one sighting at SUR on Feb. 26

Long-tailed Hermit *Phaethornis superciliosus* – a total of five sightings, twice at Atta, once at SUR, and twice at IWOK

Reddish Hermit *Phaethornis ruber* – 1-2 seen daily at Atta and SUR, also a few scattered sightings at IWOK

Sooty-capped Hermit *Phaethornis augusti* – one at IWOK on Feb. 28, one at RVL on the Panorama Trail

Grey-breasted Sabrewing *Campylopterus largipennis* – seen well at IRL, RVL and PEP.

[White-necked Jacobin *Florisuga mellivora* – a possible female at PLA]

Green-throated Mango *Anthracothonax viridigula* – one male at PLA on Feb. 13

Black-throated Mango *Anthracothonax nigricollis* – at least 20 in orange-colored flowering trees at CUL

Crimson Topaz *Topaza pella* – often heard at Atta, one male finally seen on the transfer from IRL to RVL

Fork-tailed Woodnymph *Thalurania furcata* - a female-type bird on Turtle Mountain on March 2.

White-chinned Sapphire *Hylocharis cyanus* - a female identified by our guide at RVL

White-chested Emerald *Amazilia brevirostris* – one at GeBG, one on the Abary/Mahaica excursion

Plain-bellied Emerald *Amazilia leucogaster* - one on the Abary/Mahaica excursion, two sightings at SUR

Glittering-throated Emerald *Amazilia fimbriata* – the most common hummer during the trip, seen at PLA, KAR, Sur, IWOK, RVL, CUL, and PEP

Black-eared Fairy *Heliophryx auritus* – seen well at Atta, one near Carahaa in SUR, two at IWOK on March 1

Long-billed Starthroat *Heliomaster longirostris* – two birds seen on the boat trip on the Burro Burro River

Amazonian White-tailed Trogon *Trogon viridis* – heard almost daily in the right habitat, a total of 4 at PLA on Feb. 15, three on Feb. 16, one male on Feb. 20, two males on Feb. 21, three on Feb. 24, one pair on March 1, and one on March 4 at RVL.

Violaceous Trogon *Trogon violaceus* – fairly common, heard at PLA, 1-2 daily at Atta, one male on Feb. 25 at SUR, heard at PEP.

Black-throated Trogon *Trogon rufus* – one pair at Surama on Feb. 26

Black-tailed Trogon *Trogon melanurus* – one male (same bird) was heard often and then seen on Feb. 27 and March 1 on the first 100 m on the entrance road from the restaurant at IRL.

[Blue-crowned Motmot *Momotus momota* – heard only at Turtle Mountain on Feb 28]

Ringed Kingfisher *Megaceryle torquata* – common, heard at GEBG, one seen on the Mahaica River, 3-6 seen daily at KAR, 1-2 daily at KAR, two sightings at IWOK.

Amazon Kingfisher *Chloroceryle amazon* – one at PLA, at least 3 seen on the Abary/Mahaica River excursion, 2-3 seen daily at KAR, singles at Atta and SUR.

Green Kingfisher *Chloroceryle americana* – a total of four on the Abary/Mahaica River excursion, two at KAR on Feb. 18, one on March 2 near Turtle Mountain.

Green-and-rufous Kingfisher *Chloroceryle inda* – an incredible total of 5 sightings, one at PLA on Feb. 13, one on the Warappakreek excursion, one at KAR on Feb. 18 and another one on Feb. 19, one seen from the boat on the way to Turtle Mountain on March 2.

American Pygmy-Kingfisher *Chloroceryle aenea* – at least five on the Warappakreek excursion with superb views of a couple perched at less than 6-7 meters, one at PLA on Feb. 15 and 16, and one on the Abary/Mahaica River excursion.

White-necked/Guianan Puffbird *Notharchus hyperrhynchus* – one (probably the same bird) seen on the same perch along the road in Atta on Feb. 20 and 21, and one along the entrance road near IRL.

Pied Puffbird *Notharchus tectus* – one along the road in Atta on Feb. 22.

Spotted Puffbird *Bucco tamatia* – a couple seen on Feb. 25 and a single bird seen by Anja and Gary on Feb. 26.

Black Nunbird *Monasa atra* – common around Atta with 3-10 daily, smaller numbers at SUR, and only once at IWOK (but probably because I stopped looking by then)

Swallow-winged Puffbird *Chelidoptera tenebrosa* – very common at SUR and IWOK. Two at PLA on Feb. 13 and 15.

Yellow-billed Jacamar *Galbula albirostris* – one bird called in at the base of Turtle Mountain.

Green-tailed Jacamar *Galbula galbula* – one pair on the Abary/Mahaica River excursion. One pair at KAR near the boat landing on Feb. 19/20, one pair along the road at Atta on Feb. 22, one female at SUR on Feb. 25, a male on March 1, and one male at the Panorama Trail in RVL.

Paradise Jacamar *Galbula dea* – first four and then two on Feb. 20 at Atta. Two at SUR on Feb. 25.

Great Jacamar *Jacamerops aureus* – one at Atta on Feb. 21, superb scope views of one at SUR on Feb. 25.



Great Jacamar



Yellow-billed Jacamar

Black-spotted Barbet *Capito niger* – 1 pair at PLA on Feb. 13 and a male on Feb. 15 at PLA, one at Atta on Feb. 21, one male at PEP on March 6.

Green Aracari *Pteroglossus viridis* – one (not seen by me) at the Warappakreek excursion, two (or three) at PLA on Feb. 15, a total of eight! at Atta on Feb. 20, then between two and six birds at Atta on Feb. 21 and 22, one at SUR on Feb. 23, four on the transfer from IRL to RVL,

Black-necked Aracari *Pteroglossus aracari* – quite common, seen about every other day during the tour, most common around Atta and SUR, but also good numbers at PLA, and IWOK, only one on the Abary/Mahaica River excursion.

Guianan Toucanet *Selenidera culik* – three different sightings at Atta on Feb. 21 and a single bird at Atta on Feb. 22

White-throated Toucan *Ramphastos tucanus* - seen daily in good numbers at Atta, SUR and IWOK, usually 5-10 daily.

Channel-billed Toucan *Ramphastos vitellinus* - seemed significantly less common than the above species, but still 1-2 seen on most days at Atta, SUR and IRL.

Golden-spangled Piculet *Picumnus exilis* – one pair and one male seen at KAR on Feb. 20.

White-bellied Piculet *Picumnus spilogaster* – a total of seven birds on the Abary/Mahaica River excursion.

Arrowhead (aka Guianan) Piculet *Picumnus minutissimus* – one pair and one female at PEP on March 6, heard only at PLA.

White-barred Piculet *Picumnus cirratus* – one female at SUR on Feb. 25

Yellow-tufted Woodpecker *Melanerpes cruentatus* – two at Carahaa in SUR on Feb. 26.

Golden-collared Woodpecker *Veniliornis cassini* – one male at SUR on Feb. 24, one at SUR on Feb. 25

Blood-coloured Woodpecker *Veniliornis sanguineus* – one male on Feb. 13 and a pair on Feb. 15 at PLA, one male on the Abary/Mahaica River excursion, a pair and one male at PEP on March 6.

[Yellow-throated Woodpecker *Piculus flavigula* - heard only, I had seen this species very well in Brazil last year, so I did not actively look for it]

[Spot-breasted Woodpecker *Colaptes punctigula* – unfortunately heard only at KAR and PEP]

Waved Woodpecker *Celeus undatus* – strangely only seen once at SUR on Feb. 25 and not the greatest views, heard quite often though.

Chestnut Woodpecker *Celeus elegans* – a pair on the Warappakreek excursion, another pair at PLA on Feb. 15, 1-2 daily at Atta, one on March 2 at IWOK

Cream-coloured Woodpecker *Celeus flavus* – one seen well on the Warappakreek excursion, one on Feb 20 at Atta, a pair along the road at Atta on Feb. 21, one at SUR on Feb. 26, one at SUR on March 2.

Ringed Woodpecker *Celeus torquatus* – only one sighting of a bird perched and calling right out in the open, but in poor light. It then flew up and we could see its colours, but when we approached it at its new perch it flew off.

Lineated Woodpecker *Dryocopus lineatus* – quite common, 1-2 on most days at KAR, Atta, SUR and IWOK, also one the Warappakreek excursion and one at GeBG.

Red-necked Woodpecker *Campephilus rubricollis* – one at Atta on Feb. 21 and one at IRL on Feb. 27.

Crimson-crested Woodpecker *Campephilus melanoleucos* – quite regular: one at PLA on Feb. 14, three sightings at Atta on Feb. 20 and 21, one at SUR on Feb. 25, and one at IRL one Feb. 28.

Pale-legged Hornero *Furnarius leucopus* – a single bird at the Honey Lake in KAR on Feb. 19.

[Plain-crowned Spinetail *Synallaxis gujanensis* – heard at PEP]

Yellow-chinned Spinetail *Certhiaxis cinnamomeus* – four at GEBG, one on the Abary/Mahaica River excursion, two at KAR on Feb. 18.

Plain Xenops *Xenops minutus* – one at Atta on Feb. 21 and one at SUR on Feb. 23.

Plain-brown Woodcreeper *Dendrocincla fuliginosa* – one at KAR on Feb. 20

Wedge-billed Woodcreeper *Glyphorhynchus spirurus* – seven sightings of nine birds in total, seen at Atta, SUR and IRL

Amazonian Barred-Woodcreeper *Dendrocolapt certhia* – two seen well along the entrance road to IRL

Straight-billed Woodcreeper *Dendroplex picus* – three sightings at PLA, a total of eight birds on the Warappakreek excursion, one at GeBG, one at Abary, one at PEP

Buff-throated Woodcreeper *Xiphorhynchus guttatus* – one at PLA, one on the Warappakreek excursion, one at Atta on Feb. 21, two at SUR on Feb. 25 and one at IWOK on March 1

Fasciated Antshrike *Cymbilaimus lineatus* – a male at the foot of Turtle Mountain on Feb. 28, unbelievable views of a female out in the open at less than three meters on the entrance of IRL on March 2

[Great Antshrike *Taraba major* – heard only]

Black-crested Antshrike *Sakesphorus Canadensis* – one of the more common antshrikes, often heard, twice seen at PLA, three at the Warappakreek excursion, three at Abary/Mahaica, three at KAR on Feb.19, two pairs at PEP on March 6

Barred Antshrike *Thamnophilus doliatus* – a male outside the grounds of PLA of Feb. 15 and a pair on Feb. 16 in GeBG.

Mouse-coloured Antshrike *Thamnophilus murinus* – heard often, good views at Atta on Feb. 21, SUR on Feb. 23, and two pairs at IWOK on Feb. 28.

Northern/Guianan Slaty-Antshrike *T. punctatus* – two males at KAR on Feb. 19

Amazonian Antshrike *Thamnophilus amazonicus* – a male at KAR on Feb. 19

Dusky-throated Antshrike *Thamnomanes ardesiacus* – often heard, good views of 1 male at SUR on Feb. 25, at least 2 at IRL on Feb. 27 and more than 10 at IRL on March 1

Cinereous Antshrike *Thamnomanes caesi* – excellent views of a pair at SUR on Feb. 24, a pair twice at IWOK on Feb. 27 and 28.

[Brown-bellied Antwren *Epinecrophyllos gutturalis* – seen several times (or at least I thought I did) but never well enough to tick]

Pygmy Antwren *Myrmotherula brachyura* – superb views of a male near the top of Turtle Mountain, a second bird was present but not seen well

Guianan Streaked-Antwren *Myrmotherula surinamensis* – quite common, but only the male seen well during the boat trip on the Burro Burro River at SUR

Rufous-bellied Antwren *Myrmotherula guttata* – excellent views of a male on the Harpy Eagle Trail at SUR, decent views of a female on Feb. 25 at SUR

White-flanked Antwren *Myrmotherula axillaris* – one of the more visible “antbirds”, one pair at KAR on Feb. 19, a total of six birds at Atta, two sightings at SUR, one pair at Turtle Mountain on Feb. 28, a pair on the trails around IRL on March 1.

Long-winged Antwren *Myrmotherula longipennis* – a male was seen on the trails around IRL on March 1.

Grey Antwren *Myrmotherula menetriesii* – not the greatest views of two birds that were very probably this species at SUR, a pair seen very well and very close at Turtle Mountain

[Spot-tailed Antwren *Herpsilochmus sticturus* – one male-type, white-bellied, longer-tailed (not stub-tailed) antwren was probably this species but not seen or heard well enough to exclude Todd’s antwren]

White-fringed Antwren *Formicivora grisea* – quite common, a total of four at KAR on Feb. 19, one pair in the garden at RVL on March 3 and 4, one pair on the Panorama Trail at RVL on March 4.

Dusky Antbird *Cercomacra tyrannina* - a pair seen well at SUR on Feb. 25

Blackish Antbird *Cercomacra nigrescens* – only seen in Suriname, a pair at PLA on Feb. 13, a male at PEP on March 6

White-browed Antbird *Myrmoborus leucophrys*- excellent views of a male at KAR on Feb. 20, a female at SUR on Feb. 24

Guianan Warbling-Antbird *Hypocnemis cantator* – quite common, but bizarrely I was always in the wrong spot for this one to get really good unobstructed views, seen at Atta, SUR and IRL.

Black-chinned Antbird *Hypocnemoides melanopogon* – superb views of a male on the Burro Burro River, and a total of three seen well along the Essequibo River near IRL

[Silvered Antbird *Sclateria naevia* – heard several times, but never satisfying views]

Black-headed Antbird *Percnostola rufifrons* – one male seen and heard well in white sand forest across the Essequibo River outside IWOK. Note: the report by Ridgeley and Agro mentions that this species does not occur in Iwokrama forest itself but they did record it as well on the other side of the Essequibo River near Kurupukari (i.e., the ferry landing on the opposite bank of Fairview).

Spot-winged Antbird *Schistocichla leucostigma* – one pair on the Harpy Eagle Trail at SUR.

White-bellied Antbird *Myrmeciza longipes* – one at KAR on Feb. 19, one seen very well on the Panorama Trail at RVL

Ferruginous-backed Antbird *Myrmeciza ferruginea* - one seen on the Harpy Eagle Trail at SUR

Black-throated Antbird *Myrmeciza atrothorax* – one male and a pair at PEP. Initially I thought that the pair could be a spot-winged antbird couple (mainly because the male looked quite different from the first male I saw), but sightings of spot-winged antbird are extremely rare at this location, so after this discussing the sighting with Otte Ottema I changed it back to black-throated antbird.

[Rufous-throated Antbird *Gymnopithys rufigula* – one was starting to come in at SUR, but the arrival of four noisy red-throated caracaras made an abrupt end to our efforts]

[Rufous-capped Antthrush *Formicarius colma* - heard several times at IRL, Atta and SUR. A rather intense pursuit for this bird at SUR resulted in untickable views]

[Thrush-like Antpitta *Myrmothera campanisona* – heard daily at Atta and several times at IWOK, but not seen]

[Spotted Antpitta *Hylopezus macularius* - heard at Atta, SUR and IWOK. Despite some serious attempts to see it at IWOK, the bird would not come into view]

Southern Beardless-Tyrannulet *Camptosto obsoletum* – one at Abary, one on the transfer from IRL to RVL, one on the Panorama Trail at RVL.

Mouse-coloured Tyrannulet *Phaeomyias murina* – one at GeBG, one at Abary, one at Atta along the road, one on the Panorama Trail at RVL.

Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet *Tyrannulus elatus* – one at KAR on Feb. 19, one in the garden of IRL on March 1

Pale-tipped Tyrannulet/*Inezia Inezia caudata* – one came at less than 1 m after being called in by Otte Ottema on Feb. 14, one seen well at KAR on Feb. 19

Forest Elaenia *Myiopagis gaimardii* – one seen and heard at PLA on Feb. 15

Yellow-bellied Elaenia *Elaenia flavogaster* – quite regular, one at PLA, one at GeBG, a total of four on the Abrary/Mahaica Excursion, daily at SUR and one seen at RVL

Plain-crested Elaenia *Elaenia cristata* - seen a few times at SUR

Lesser Elaenia *Elaenia chiriquensis* – seen several times at SUR and KAR

Helmeted Pygmy-Tyrant *Lophotriccus galeatus* – heard often, but only one sighting at IRL on the trails

Pale-eyed Pygmy-Tyrant *Atalotriccus pilaris* - superb views of one at the Panorama Trail, RVL

Boat-billed Tody-Tyrant *Hemitriccus josephinae* - a total of four (one pair, two singles) seen at Abary

Slaty-headed Tody-Flycatcher *Poecilatriccus Sylvia* – one at the Panorama Trail at RVL

Spotted Tody-Flycatcher *Todirostrum maculatum* – one seen very well (at less than two meters) on the Warappakreek excursion

Common Tody-Flycatcher *Todirostrum cinereum* – three sightings at PLA, a couple at GeBG, daily in the garden at RVL, also on the Panorama Trail

Painted Tody-Flycatcher *Todirostrum pictum* – one in the garden at RVL on March 3

Yellow-olive Flycatcher *Tolmomyias sulphureus* – one at PLA on Feb. 15, two building a nest at SUR on Feb. 26

Grey-crowned Flycatcher *Tolmomyias poliocephalus* – two seen/heard at PLA on Feb. 13

Yellow-breasted Flycatcher *Tolmomyias flaviventris* – heard a few times, but only seen at KAR on Feb. 19.

White-crested Spadebill *Platyrinchus platyrhynchos* – one at Atta on the trails on Feb. 22, one on the Harpy Eagle Trail on Feb. 23

Whiskered Flycatcher *Myiobius barbatus* – one at PLA on Feb. 13

Vermilion Flycatcher *Pyrocephalus rubinus* – twice at KAR: one male seen by Anja on Feb. 19, two males on Feb 20, and two males around RVL on March 3.

Pied Water-Tyrant *Fluvicola pica* – several on the Warappakreek excursion on Feb. 14, two at GeBG on Feb. 16, two on the Abary/Mahaica excursion, and a total of four at KAR on Feb. 20

White-headed Marsh-Tyrant *Arundinicola leucocephala* – one male at Mahaica on Feb. 17, three seen by Anja only on Feb. 19 at KAR

Cinnamon Attila *Attila cinnamomeus* – a total of four sightings at PLA, three birds at PEP [Bright-rumped Attila *Attila spadiceus* – heard several times at IWOK, mostly white sand forest, did not look for it as I had seen it very well on previous trips]

Dusky-capped Flycatcher *Myiarchus tuberculifer* – one at GeBG, one at Abary, two sightings at SUR (Swainson's Flycatcher occurs at SUR as well, but the local guides determined them as Dusky-capped)

Short-crested Flycatcher *Myiarchus ferox* – at least two on the Warappakreek excursion, one at PLA, one at IWOK, and one at PEP

Brown-crested Flycatcher *Myiarchus tyrannulus* – a total of three on the Abary/Mahaica Excursion, several in and around RVL, one at PEP

Lesser Kiskadee *Pitangus lektor* – a few on the Warappakreek excursion, one at GeBG, one on the Abary/Mahaica Excursion, stopped looking after that

Great Kiskadee *Pitangus sulphuratus* – very common

Boat-billed Flycatcher *Megarynchus pitangua* – seen at PLA, GeBG, and SUR

Rusty-margined Flycatcher *Myiozetetes cayanensis* – very common

Tropical Kingbird *Tyrannus melancholicus* – very common

Grey Kingbird *Tyrannus dominicensis* – one at PLA, at least ten at GeBG, at least 15 on the Abary/Mahaica Excursion

Fork-tailed Flycatcher *Tyrannus savanna* – common at KAR and RVL, and a few at SUR

Streaked Flycatcher *Myiodynastes maculatus* – two on the Warappakreek excursion, one at KAR, and three sightings at SUR

Piratic Flycatcher *Legatus leucophaeus* – one at PLA, single birds on two days at SUR, and one in the garden at RVL.

Guianan Red-Cotinga *Phoenicircus carnifex* – poor views of what must have been an immature bird at Atta, superb views of a male at SUR on Feb. 25.

Guianan Cock-of-the-rock *Rupicola rupicola* – one male seen very well at the Cock-of-the-Rock trail.

Crimson Fruitcrow *Haematoderus militaris* – a female was seen in flight on Feb. 20 only for a few seconds, a beautiful male and what looked like a moulting immature bird were seen with the scope for about 15 minutes along the road at Atta on Feb. 22. The photo below shows the immature bird; note the unusual plumage with pale grey feathers on the wing, neck, chin and behind the eye. The red colour is “breaking through” on the forehead and is already well developed on the chin and throat (the latter not really visible in this photo). In this plumage it looks somewhat similar to a Guianan Red-Cotinga, but the heavy bill, large rounded (not flattened) head and greyish black legs (only visible with the scope) are typical for the fruitcrow. Moreover, I saw this bird

together with a male crimson fruitcrow and they were the same size (Guianan Red-Cotinga is significantly smaller).



Immature Crimson Fruitcrow

Purple-throated Fruitcrow *Querula purpurata* – a male was seen at Atta on Feb. 20, 3 males at SUR on Feb. 25 and a pair along the main road through Iwokrama on March 3. Capuchinbird *Perissocephalus tricolor* – at KAR five birds were seen on Feb. 19 and at least six on Feb. 20. Two were seen at SUR on Feb. 25. Heard calling along the Essequibo River on Feb. 28 and quite close to the Screaming Piha Trail on March 2.

Purple-breasted Cotinga *Cotinga cotinga* – quite good, but short views of a male along the road in Atta on Feb. 22. Stunning views of a male that remained in the same tree for at least 45 minutes were had from the viewpoint on Surama Mountain on Feb. 24.

Spangled Cotinga *Cotinga cayana* – a subadult bird on Feb. 20, and one on Feb. 22, both along the road near Atta.

Screaming Piha *Lipaugus vociferans* – singles seen on Feb. 19 and 20, and stunning close views of one on the Antbird Trail at IWOK.

[White Bellbird *Procnias albus* – twice heard only (Atta and SUR)]

Pompadour Cotinga *Xipholena punicea* – superb scope views of a male along the road in Atta on Feb. 20, a few minutes later a female was seen as well. Single females were seen again at Atta on Feb. 22 and 23. A male was seen in flight and then perched (but far away) from the viewpoint on Surama Mountain on Feb. 24, a second male was then seen in the same tree as the Purple-breasted Cotinga!

Black-tailed Tityra *Tityra cayana* – seven sightings of in total 13 birds, seen at IWOK, SUR, and Atta.

Dusky Purpleletuft *Iodopleura fusca* – one along the road in Atta on Feb. 20 and another one was seen fairly well from the canopy walkway on Feb. 21.

Cinereous Becard *Pachyramphus rufus* - a male was seen well in the GeBG.

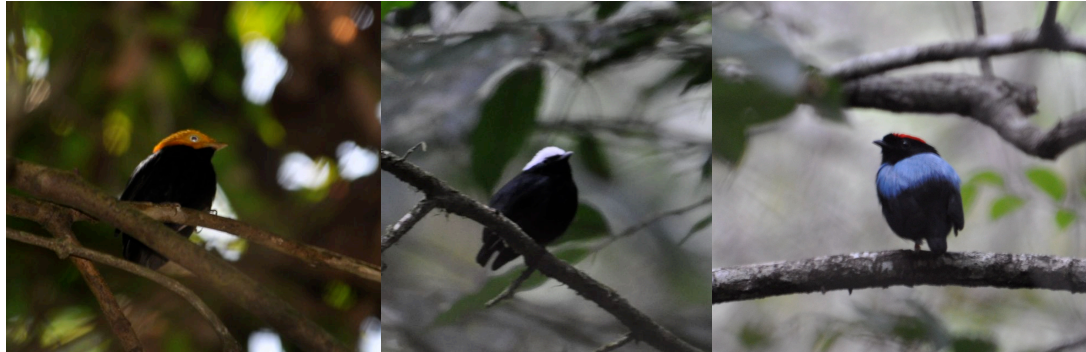
White-winged Becard *Pachyramphus polychopterus* - a male was seen at Abary.

Blue-backed Manakin *Chiroxiphia pareola* – two males and one female were seen very well at KAR on Feb. 19, one male was seen on the Panorama Trail on March 4.

Black Manakin *Xenopipo atronitens* – mediocre views of one in flight and shortly perched in the white sand forest north of Kurupukari.

White-crowned Manakin *Pipra pipra* – one reacted to tape play on the Screaming Piha trail at IRL.

Crimson-hooded Manakin *Pipra aureola* - a male was seen well on the Warappakreek excursion, a female or possibly juvenile male (the breast was vaguely orange/red) was seen at PLA on Feb. 13. Another male was seen in flight at CUL on March 5.
Golden-headed Manakin *Pipra erythrocephala* - two leks with several males attending were seen at SUR.



From left to right: Golden-headed, White-crowned and Blue-backed Manakin

Red-eyed Vireo *Vireo olivaceus* - one at RVL on March 3
Lemon-chested Greenlet *Hylophilus thoracicus* - a total of three at Abary, heard several times (SUR, IWOK, RVL)
Ashy-headed Greenlet *Hylophilus pectoralis* - one on the Warappakreek excursion, a probable one at PLA, and one at RVL on the Panorama Trail.
[Rufous-browed Peppershrike *Cyclarhis gujanensis* - heard only on the Panorama trail at RVL]
Cayenne Jay *Cyanocorax cayanus* - two on Feb. 24 and good views of at least three on Feb. 26
Black-collared Swallow *Pygochelidon melanoleuca* - at least 8 on the Essequibo River at IWOK, seen on three days
White-thighed Swallow *Atticora tibialis* - two on the Warappakreek excursion
White-banded Swallow *Atticora fasciata* - easy to see on the Burro Burro River at SUR
Southern Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx rufi* - a few scattered sightings in the interior
Grey-breasted Martin *Progne chalybea* - common, most seen in the coastal area
Brown-chested Martin *Progne tapera* - common, mostly seen in the interior
White-winged Swallow *Tachycineta albiventer* - quite common around water, seen on at Warappakreek and on most days in Guyana
Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* - one at RVL
Coraya Wren *Thryothorus coraya* - excellent views of one pair taped out of their hiding at the Kurupukari ferry landing (opposite Fairview)
Buff-breasted Wren *Thryothorus leucotis* - often heard, seen at PLA, RVL, and PEP
House Wren *Troglodytes aedon* - very common
Black-capped Donacobius *Donacobius atricapilla* - three sightings at seen at PLA, also at GeBG and Mahaica
Tropical Gnatcatcher *Polioptila plumbea* - one at PLA, one at GeBG, daily 1-2 at SUR, two sightings at IWOK, two sightings at RVL, one at CUL
Pale-breasted Thrush *Turdus leucomelas* - common, most easily seen at PLA, GeBG, CUL, PEP, and RVL
Cocoa Thrush *Turdus fumigatus* - one at PLA on Feb. 15, two different birds at SUR on Feb. 25
Spectacled Thrush/Bare-eyed Robin *Turdus nudigenis* - two sightings at PLA
[White-necked Thrush *Turdus albicollis* - heard only at Atta and IWOK]

Tropical Mockingbird *Mimus gilvus* – very common in cultivated/degraded habitat and savannah areas.

[Rose-breasted Chat *Granatellus pelzelni* – heard only at Atta]

Yellow Warbler *Dendroica petechial* – only four sightings: three at GeBG, one at SUR on Feb. 24, several at CUL, and one present in the garden of Residence Inn

Blackpoll Warbler *Dendroica striata* – one on the boat ride on the Burro Burro River at SUR

Bananaquit *Coereba flaveola* – common at PLA, Georgetown, Paramaribo, and RVL

Bicoloured Conebill *Conirostrum bicolor* – one on the Warappakreek excursion and one on the Abary/Mahaica excursion.

Black-faced Tanager *Schistochlamys melanopis* – one male in white sand forest at IWOK on March 1

Hooded Tanager *Nemosia pileata* – two at PEP

Guira Tanager *Hemithraupis guira* – one at SUR on Feb. 26

Yellow-backed Tanager *Hemithraupis flavicollis* – one at Atta on Feb. 22

White-shouldered Tanager *Tachyphonus luctuosus* - a pair on one of the trails at Atta on Feb. 22 and a small group on the entrance road at IRL on Feb. 27.

White-lined Tanager *Tachyphonus rufus* – a pair at PLA, and a pair at GeBG

Red-shouldered Tanager *Tachyphonus phenicius* – a pair in white sand forest at IWOK on March 1

Silver-beaked Tanager *Ramphocelus carbo* – very common, seen daily

Blue-grey Tanager *Thraupis episcopus* – very common, seen daily

Palm Tanager *Thraupis palmarum* – very common, seen daily

Turquoise Tanager *Tangara Mexicana* – a total of four sightings on Feb. 12 and 13 at PLA, but not seen there after that, four at GeBG, three on the Abary/Mahaica excursion, one at Atta, two at PEP

[Spotted Tanager *Tangara punctata* - on Turtle Mountain I saw a flock of tanagers and honeycreepers that responded very well to both the playback of Dotted and Spotted Tanager, but the birds were very high up and the birds that I saw (poorly) all looked like Spotted Tanager. Views not good enough to tick]

Burnished-buff Tanager *Tangara cayana* – one on the Abary/Mahaica excursion, one at KAR on Feb. 20, one juvenile on the entrance road at RVL on March 3, and one on the way to the Panorama Trail on March 4

Black-faced Dacnis *Dacnis lineata* – a male at Atta on Feb. 20 and 22, and a male at SUR on Feb. 24

Blue Dacnis *Dacnis cayana* – quite common, but not seen as often as expected, about 6-10 daily at Atta, about 3-4 daily at SUR, one female at IRL on March 1.

Green Honeycreeper *Chlorophanes spiza* – between 2-6 daily at Atta, 1 at IRL on March 1

Purple Honeycreeper *Cyanerpes caeruleus* – one pair in the scope at the clearing in Atta on Feb. 20, a female at Atta on Feb. 22, and a female at IRL on March 1.

[[Short-billed Honeycreeper *Cyanerpes nitidus* – I know that this species is rare/rarely reported from Iwokrama, but it may be interesting to report the following sighting: on the morning of Feb. 21 Aage, Bernie and me found a honeycreeper perched at canopy height in a bare tree directly next to the road. With the bins it was almost impossible to see any colour on the bird against the dark grey sky, but with Aage's scope we could clearly see it was a male *Cyanerpes* honeycreeper. From the first vantage point the bird seemed to be a purple honeycreeper, but from the angle we were looking it was difficult to see (the colour of) the legs. We then repositioned to a spot with slightly better light on the bird. From this position it was very obvious that the legs were red, not yellow. At some point I was looking through the scope and a sound from another bird made the bird look down surprised and bend his head sideways. So I could look at the crown of the bird but I could see nothing that hinted at the azure crown that a male red-legged honeycreeper should have and in my (limited) experience the azure colour of the crown usually is distinguishable, even in the poor light we had. I mumbled something about the

bill being short, but this is not necessarily a very reliable diagnostic feature in the field. It was mainly the missing azure crown (in combination with red legs) that triggered me to consider short-billed honeycreeper. In the end, we couldn't decide for sure what it was. Back at the lodge I made some quick descriptions and drawings in my notebook to make sure that the details were recorded when they were still fresh in my mind. Apart from the red feet to separate it from purple honeycreeper, good diagnostic features for short-billed honeycreeper (in comparison to red-legged honeycreeper) are the blue mantle on the back and a small black throat patch. The mantle for red-legged is black and the throat is blue. The back of the Short-billed Honeycreeper looks quite similar to that of Purple Honeycreeper. Unfortunately, I could not clearly see the mantle from both angles we looked at the bird and it was impossible to tell with certainty whether there was a black throat patch. Anyway, this is clearly a non-tickable sighting and probably it was a red-legged honeycreeper after all, but it may be worth to keep checking all those honeycreepers carefully.]]

Red-legged Honeycreeper *Cyanerpes cyaneus* – a male scoped on Feb. 23 at Atta, a pair flew in on a tree right above us at Turtle Mountain on March 2, another pair was seen in a canopy flock on Turtle Mountain on the same day.

Finsch's Euphonia *Euphonia finschi* – heard at KAR, Atta, IRL, but finally a pair seen along the RVL entrance road on March 3 and a male on March 4 on the Panorama Trail.

Violaceous Euphonia *Euphonia violacea* – four sightings at PLA, three birds at GeBG, one male at SUR on Feb. 24, a male at PEP on March 6

Greyish Saltator *Saltator coerulescens* – two at GeBG on Feb. 16

Buff-throated Saltator *Saltator maximus* – one at Carahaa on Feb. 26

[Red-and-black Grosbeak *Periporphyrus erythromelas* - heard regularly at Turtle Mountain but the birds didn't react that well to recordings of their calls and song, I had only poor silhouetted views of them flying around in the canopy. Only one female was seen in flight with the colours showing, but not really tick-worthy views]

Blue-black Grassquit *Volatinia jacarina* – seen at PLA, Warappakreek excursion, GeBG and Abary/Mahaica.

Grey Seedeater *Sporophila intermedia* – one female on Feb. 24 and one pair at close range in the vegetable garden at RVL on March 3.

Plumbeous Seedeater *Sporophila plumbea* – one pair at in the vegetable garden at RVL. A male on the entrance road to RVL.

Wing-barred Seedeater *Sporophila Americana* – common in and around Paramaribo, PLA, GeBG and Abary.

Ruddy-breasted Seedeater *Sporophila minuta* – at least five along the road at Atta, a pair at RVL.

Chestnut-bellied Seedeater *Sporophila castaneiventris* – one at SUR on Feb. 24, a male and three female-type birds in the vegetable garden at RVL.

Grassland Yellow-Finch *Sicalis luteola* – one at Abary.

Red-capped Cardinal *Paroaria gularis* – two at Mahaica, daily between 5 and 10 at KAR, a group of 8 in the garden of IRL.

Grassland Sparrow *Ammodramus humeralis* – common at KAR, SUR and RVL.

Eastern Meadowlark *Sturnella magna* – one on the savanna on the way to Atta on Feb 20, one around RVL on March 3 and two around RVL on March 4.

Carib Grackle *Quiscalus lugubris* – a few at PLA, >20 on the Abary/Mahaica excursion.

Yellow-hooded Blackbird *Chrysomus icterocephalus* – about 10 on the Abary/Mahaica excursion.

Red-breasted Blackbird *Sturnella militaris* – two males at the pontoon bridge in Georgetown, one male at RVL, and one male across the road at Residence Inn.

Shiny Cowbird *Molothrus bonariensis* – one at GeBG, >20 on the Abary/Mahaica excursion.

Giant Cowbird *Molothrus oryzivorus* – quite common at SUR on the savannah, daily between 10 and 20 on the grass of IRL.

Moriche Oriole *Icterus chryscephalus* - seen twice in open woodland at SUR and on three days in the garden of IRL.

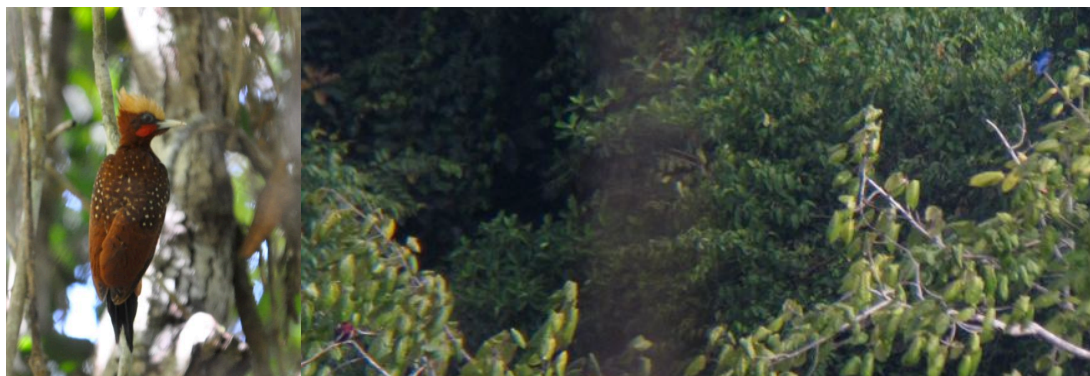
Yellow Oriole *Icterus nigrogularis* - small numbers at Warappakreek and PLA, five at GeBG, more than 10 on the Abary/Mahaica excursion, common in and around RVL.

[Red-rumped Cacique *Cacicus haemorrhous* - heard only once]

Yellow-rumped Cacique *Cacicus cela* - very common, seen almost daily

Green Oropendola *Psarocolius viridis* - two at the clearing of Atta lodge, a group of six along the road at Atta, a few seen both times from the viewpoint on Turtle Mountain.

Crested Oropendola *Psarocolius decumanus* - very common in both countries, seen on most days of the trip.



Left image: Chestnut Woodpecker male. Right image: Pompadour Cotinga lower left and Purple-breasted Cotinga upper right (apologies for the very poor quality: this "photo" was taken by handholding our pocket camera against the scope's eyepiece at the scope's lowest magnification; calling it digiscoping though would be an insult to the technique.

Mammal List

Black-eared (Common/Southern) Opossum *Didelphis marsupialis* – one at dawn in Atta on Feb. 23, one on the night walk at IRL on March 1.

[Giant Armadillo *Priodontes maximus* – not seen by us, but Egbert, the guide at IRL, told me he had seen one with a client three days before we arrived]

Golden-handed or Red-handed Tamarin *Saguinus midas* – one seen well at PLA on Feb. 16, but unfortunately only seen by me.

Red Howler Monkey *Alouatta seniculus* – a couple was seen at Atta on Feb. 20 and 21. Two at SUR on the loop trail near the lodge. On Turtle Mountain (Feb. 28) three groups of (at least) three, three and eight animals were seen. On March 1 two were seen on one of the trails at IRL and on the second trip to Turtle Mountain at least five were seen on the climb to the top. Heard only at PLA, RVL and KAR.

Black Spider Monkey *Ateles paniscus* – three at Atta on Feb 20, two groups (tree and two) were seen on Feb 21, at least two were seen on the entrance road to SUR on Feb. 23, and a single animal was seen on Feb. 24. Heard only at IRL.

(Guianan) Brown (or Black-capped) Capuchin *Cebus apella* – 10-20 daily seen at PLA, one on the Warappakreek excursion, a group of at least ten was seen at KAR on Feb. 18, one was seen on Feb 23, at least three on the Indian House Island boat trip on the bank of the Essequibo River outside IWOK on Feb. 27, at least one was seen on Turtle Mountain on March 1 and a group of four was seen on the entrance road at IRL.



Brown Capuchin (at De Plantage)

Weeper (or Wedge-capped) Capuchin *Cebus olivaceus* – one of a small group was seen very well at SUR on Feb. 25.

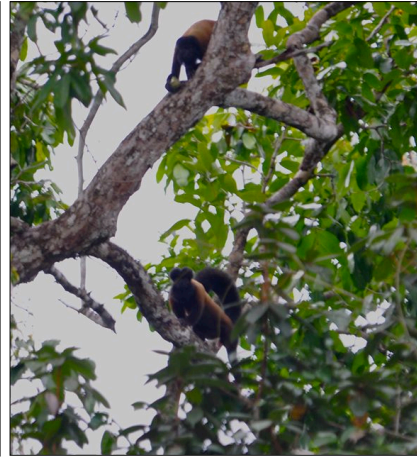
Common Squirrel Monkey *Saimiri sciureus* – 10-15 daily seen at PLA, also two on the Warrappakreek excursion, a total of about 30 at KAR on Feb. 18 and a handful on the afternoon excursion on Feb. 19, a group of at least three in IWOK on Feb. 27, about ten along the Essequibo river on Feb 28, at least ten at PEP on March 6.

Bearded Saki *Chiropotes chiropotes (sagulatus)* – one group of at least six animals was seen around midday at IWOK on the Essequibo River on March 2.

White-faced Saki *Pithecia pithecia pithecia* – two males, one subadult male and one female at SUR on Feb. 25, one female seen by Anja only at Turtle Mountain on March 2.



White-faced saki male



Bearded sakis

[Crab-eating Fox *Cerdocyon thous* – only a carcass on the main road through Iwokrama Forest]

Jaguar *Panthera onca* – one seen for about 3-4 seconds while crossing the road in IWOK.

[Puma *Puma concolor* – very fresh tracks were seen at SUR on Feb. 26]

Giant Otter *Pteronura brasiliensis* – six wild animals (Feb. 18) and two in captivity at KAR.

Kinkajou *Potos flavus* – one at Atta on Feb. 21, and one each on the nightwalks on March 1 and 2

Crab-eating raccoon *Procyon canivorus* – the tame animal at KAR was seen for a minute or so

[Red Brocket Deer *Mazama Americana* – one flushed on the Harpy Eagle trail, only the guide saw it]

Guianan Squirrel *Sciurus aestuans* – one at PLA on Feb. 16, one at SUR on Feb. 25

Red-nosed Tree Rat *Echimys didelphoides* – one animal seen on the night walk on March 2 is this species in my opinion (see photo). The animal was seen only about 10 meters from the riverbank of the Essequibo River. The animal was in an area with dense vegetation and it froze in the spotlight at about 3-4 meters above the ground.

Red-rumped Agouti *Dasyprocta leporine* – quite common, but difficult to see well. Seen at Atta, SUR and IWOK. A total of eight sightings, of which one was seen really well.

Lesser Sac-winged Bat *Saccopteryx leptura* – a small group was found roosting on one of the boat trips at KAR

Black-Bonneted Bat *Eumops auripendulus* – one was sleeping next to our toilet in our chalet in SUR. If the ones flying around at night were the same species, they must be pretty common.

Little Yellow-shouldered Bat *Sturnira lilium* – a few on the rocks at the Cock-of-the-Rock trail.

Greater Bulldog Bat *Noctilio leporinus* – many seen at night in KAR hunting over the river.

[Pallas Mastiff Bat *Molossus molossus* – The bats sleeping in one of the benabs at Turtle Mountain Camp seemed to be this species. I had good views of them with the bins but they got nervous and disappeared deeper in the crevices before I could photograph them]

Long-nosed Bat – a few seen roosting at IRL

West Indian Manatee *Trichechus manatus* - a tame animal was seen at touching distance in GeBG.



Manatee



Black-eared (Common) Opossum

Other Wildlife

Spectacled caiman *Caiman crocodylus* - common

Black Cayman *Melanosuchus niger* – common around IRL and KAR

Black Tegu *Tupinambis teguixin* - one at PLA, two at GeBG

Amazon Gecko *Coleodactylus Amazonicus* – common in Guyana's interior

Red-footed Tortoise *Chelonoidis carbonaria* - one found by our guide along the entrance road in Atta on Feb. 21

Rainbow Whiptail Lizard *Cnemidophorus Lemniscatus* - common at PLA

Green Ameiva *Ameiva Ameiva* – common

Green Iguana *Iguana iguana* – one at IRL, one at KAR

Common Mussurana *Clelia clelia* – a small one on Feb. 26 at SUR

Velvety Swamp Snake *Liophis typhlus* – one identified by Egbert on the transfer from IRL to RVL. A snake seen on the Harpy Eagle Trail looked very similar to this one, but I don't have a good guide to double-check this.

Amazonian Tree Boa *Corallus hortulanus* – one seen on the night boat cruise on Feb. 28, one on one of the generator houses at IRL on March 2

Vine snake species – one at the southern entrance of IWOK on the transfer to RVL

Yellow-banded poison dart frog *Dendrobates leucomelas* - one seen well and photographed on the Panorama Trail (RVL), where it seemed to be quite common.

Bolivian Toad-Frog *Leptodactylus bolivianus* or Amazonian Toad-Frog *Leptodactylus knudseni* – one at night on March 1 was one of these two species

Scorpion Sp. – the manager in Atta got one from the forest and showed it to us (and brought it back again), one each on both night walks at IRL.