

Trinidad's Birds & Butterflies

With Naturalist Journeys & Caligo Ventures

November 7 – 14, 2018

866.900.1146

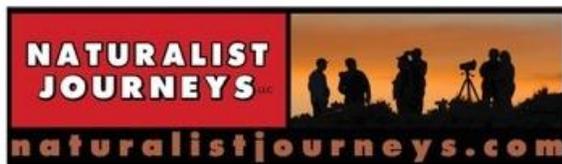
800.426.7781

520.558.1146

naturalistjourneys@gmail.com

www.naturalistjourneys.com

or find us on Facebook at
Naturalist Journeys, LLC





Naturalist Journeys and Caligo Ventures are pleased to announce our 2018 celebrity tour to the Asa Wright Nature Centre with author of *Guide to the Birds of Honduras*, Robert Gallardo. Join Robert for a fantastic week at the Centre and enjoy a fast-track study of butterfly identification, behavior, and ecology, complemented by the Centre's top-rate birding. All participants will receive a laminated butterfly guide produced by Rainforest Publications in 2015.

Enjoy world-famous birdwatching opportunities, and learn new skills discovering other winged gems — the butterflies. We plan outings to a wide variety of habitats, from montane forests to mangroves, and wetlands to working agricultural areas to find a wide variety of species. Robert shares his expertise through field time, skills, workshops, and presentations. Robert is currently working on a butterfly field guide and loves nothing more than exploring with a fine eye for detail. (Some butterflies are as tiny as your pinky nail!) With honed field skills and over two decades experience leading tours, Robert is an amazing person to spend time with.

Many birders have turned to butterfly watching as a stunning enrichment to their field time. There are many hours, particularly mid-day, when birds are resting and difficult to find. Insects are active, fun to photograph, and fascinating to watch and observe with complex behaviors that few notice. Their close relationship to plants is complex and revealing. Our Centre naturalists know where to find many of the butterfly food and host plants and help the group in the field. With some luck we may even find larvae, which are equally fascinating. We hope to have experts from the University of the West Indies join us for specific outings as well.

Tour Highlights

- Spend time with experts! Expand your horizons, increase your skills and learn
- Watch birds from the Asa Wright Nature Centre's famed verandah and trails
- Unpack just once for a full week at one of the world's leading ecolodges
- Enjoy a behind the scenes tour of the Centre's gardens, great for butterfly watching
- Explore Caroni National Park by boat and witness scores of Scarlet Ibis returning to roost
- Visit the University of the West Indies campus; at the Angostura Distillery see the Barcant Butterfly collection
- Search for elusive birds: Little Tinamou, White-bearded Bellbird, Cocoa and Plain-Brown Woodcreepers, White-bellied Antbird, and Black-faced Antthrush on the Centre's trails
- Join Citizen Science efforts to catalog information on butterflies and birds
- Learn about various tropical butterfly ecology topics during interesting lectures

Tour Summary

8-Day / 7-Night Birds & Butterflies Tour with Robert Gallardo

\$2150 from Port of Spain

Airport is Piarco International (POS)



Itinerary

Wed., Nov. 7 Arrival in Port of Spain, Trinidad | Transfer to Asa Wright Nature Centre & Lodge

Welcome to Trinidad! Arrive today at Piarco International Airport in Port-of-Spain (POS). Staff from the non-profit Asa Wright Nature Centre greet all arriving flights. From the airport it is about an hour's drive up into the mountains where we spend the next week (seven nights) in accommodations at the Asa Wright Nature Centre and Lodge. The original estate home serves as a common area for dining, relaxing, enjoying the "Birder's Bar," and for bird viewing from the famed verandah. You may arrive at any time today (staff will meet all incoming flights), though we recommend you arrive by early afternoon. If your flight is very late, you may wish to add a night to your stay and come in early, either direct to the Centre or we can pick you up next day at an airport hotel.

The Asa Wright Nature Centre lies at an elevation of approximately 1200 ft. in a habitat type known as Evergreen Seasonal Forest. Formerly the Springhill Estate, the grounds have returned to a wild state from once extensive coffee, cocoa, and citrus plantations. Some of these plants are still maintained alongside the wild second-growth forest vegetation at the Centre. Natural second-growth has taken over and festooned the abandoned plantation vegetation with vines and a host of epiphytes. The whole effect is one of being deep in a tropical rainforest.

Those arriving by 6:00 PM can enjoy their first rum punch while tallying up a host of species. For those arriving earlier, a walk within the forest is the perfect complement to time spent on the verandah, where Ruby-topaz Hummingbird, Tufted Coquette, Great and Barred Antshrikes, Squirrel Cuckoo, and both Purple and Green Honeycreepers are among the many species that can readily be seen. Those who arrive in time to take a walk start their tally of butterflies right from the flowering shrubs and trees that surround the Centre.

This evening we get to know each other and our guides over a delicious dinner, with fresh foods from the estate.
Accommodations at Asa Wright Centre (D)

Thurs., Nov. 8 Centre Tour | Verandah Birding | Centre Trails | Presentation by Field Guide Author Martyn Kenefick

Morning begins with the raucous noise of the Crested Oropendola, just one of several exotic sounds. A cup of fresh-roasted Trinidad coffee is waiting for you on the verandah. A first-time visitor might see 40 life birds before breakfast!

Our day starts with a guided tour of the several trails that traverse this rich and diverse wildlife sanctuary.



Leading down to the wilder sections, flowers and plantings grace the path and prove a magnet for butterflies. Birds are plentiful; along the trail we often find Guianan (Violaceous) Trogon, Channel-billed Toucan, Golden-olive and Chestnut Woodpeckers, White-bearded Manakin, Rufous-browed Peppershrike, and perhaps a mixed flock that includes Turquoise and Bay-headed Tanagers.

Centre naturalists lead this morning's walk, and along with spotting birds, they are well versed in insects and the plants they frequent. They are ready to help us find a number of species. In lush forests along the trail, we hope to spot Golden-headed Manakin and noisy Bearded Bellbird. In leaf litter along the trails we may find tarantulas, grasshoppers, and other species, including reptiles such as large Tegu Lizards. Red-rumped Agouti spend time where forest fruits drop beside the trail. A colony of Crested Oropendola ensures a steady stream of this species passing overhead. We keep watch for Orange-winged and Blue-headed Parrots, as well as raptors like Ornate Hawk-Eagle, Black Hawk-Eagle, and White Hawk.

Robert describes his work to catalog species and their habits while writing a field guide, and teach you handy tricks for field identification with families, camera work, and field notes. As you encounter butterflies, you start to build an understanding of the major groups and their characteristics, the use of light gaps, the groups that inhabit the canopy, longevity, and much more. Many of the species have great beauty and are common, like Erato Longwing (the "Postman") and Agnosia Clearwing. We look for tigerwings, metalmarks, and pixies, and everything stops for a flyby of the large and stunning morphos.

After lunch and some siesta time, we walk the long driveway area leading in to the Centre, from which many of the more elusive species of birds can be found. Martyn Kenefick, Trinidad's birding field guide author, joins our group. We look for Gray-throated Leaf-tosser and Illioneus Giant-Owl (or Caligo) butterfly. Tea is served daily in the late afternoon, followed by rum punch, a lovely custom to enjoy as we watch sunset with the birds from the verandah.

Keeping a good checklist for birds and butterflies is a goal of our time as well. We hope that Robert, our Centre staff, and participants of this workshop all help add to the Asa Wright Nature Centre's growing list of species. The island of Trinidad is known to host 617 butterflies, and with over 2100 species of flowering plants, there is



much to learn about pollination, host plants, diet, and life histories of these brilliant winged gems. Social insects like leaf-cutting and army ants are also readily seen.

After dinner, enjoy a special evening program by Martyn Kenefick on the significance of his book, *Birds of Trinidad and Tobago*. This is a talk he will be bringing to several Audubon chapters in 2019 on Caligo Ventures' sponsored visits to the States; you can enjoy it here! We thought it would be great fun to bring two field guide authors together, and for you a real perk of this type of workshop is the one-on-one time you get with experts. *Accommodations at Asa Wright Centre (B,L,D)*

Fri., Nov. 9 The Mountains: Blanchisseuse Road | Trinidad's Northern Range

Today we embark on a scenic, all-day excursion following a lush and winding mountain road that passes over the Northern Range to several scenic villages. Trinidad's Northern Range is an eastern extension of the Coastal Cordillera of Venezuela, a connecting range to the Andes.

We leave just after breakfast, to drive north on the Blanchisseuse Road into the upper elevations of the Northern Range forest. This is the only road on the island which bisects the Northern Range before finally descending to the Caribbean coastline. En route we reach the highest point possible by motor vehicle, some 2,200 ft. in elevation. We stop at a couple of neighboring gardens en route to check for butterflies, perhaps finding Gold-rimmed Swallowtail, Cattleheart, Flambeau, Banded Tigerwing, Julia and both White and Scarlet Peacocks. On shaded forest trails we look for more elusive satyr butterflies.

Our day is spent birding both quiet country roads and wide forest tracks seeking birds more easily found at this higher altitude. Speckled Tanager and several species of raptors like Ornate Hawk-Eagle can be real treats. We enjoy lunch and learning about cacao and chocolate production in the village of Brasso Seco where clean washroom facilities are available. And we put out the word to local gardeners that we are on the prowl for butterflies.

Today's bird species of note include Short-tailed Hawk, Blue-headed Parrot, Lilac-tailed Parrotlet, Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl, Collared and Green-backed Trogons, Golden-olive, Red-rumped, and Chestnut Woodpeckers, Stripe-



breasted Spinetail, Streaked Xenops, Dusky-capped, Slaty-capped, Streaked, and Euler's Flycatchers, Gray-breasted Martin, Rufous-breasted Wren, Long-billed Gnatwren, White-necked Thrush, Golden-fronted Greenlet, Speckled and Hepatic Tanagers, Blue Dacnis, and Golden-crowned Warbler.

Along with rich birdlife, we also have an opportunity to examine the fascinating world of leaf-cutter and army ants, and to photograph orchids, elephant ear philodendron, ferns, mosses, and other tropical flora. By changing elevation, we change vegetation and associated butterfly species.

Towards mid-afternoon we stop our northward journey at the village of Morne la Croix. Here we take afternoon tea and cake whilst looking for additional species like Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Pale-breasted Spinetail, Southern Rough-winged Swallow and Yellow-rumped Caciue before a late afternoon drive back south to the Centre in time for a shower before rum punch and dinner.

Accommodations at Asa Wright Centre (B,L,D)

Sat., Nov. 10 Nariva Swamp | East Coast of Trinidad

The east side of Trinidad hosts an ecosystem very different than that of Caroni on the west side. Where the Nariva River reaches the sea here, freshwater environments are comprised of herbaceous swamp and swamp forest, dotted with a few patches of mangroves like the area around Bush Bush Creek. Nariva is the largest freshwater herbaceous swamp on the island. Along its edges are "palm islands," where the tall Moriche Palm is common. Here too we see a unique mangrove community, made up primarily of the stilt-rooted rhizophora mangrove, which often reaches a height of 80 feet. Part of our drive follows the ocean shore down scenic "Coconut Alley." All these locales invite the opportunity for us to record new insect species.

As part of the day (water levels permitting) we walk into the Bush Bush Forest, an area that provides good birding, and a good chance to see Red Howler and White-faced Capuchin Monkeys and possible other mammals such as Prehensile-tailed Porcupine. This is a raised area of sandy soils, surrounded by wetlands, and site of much of the work of C. Brooke Worth described so well in his book, *A Naturalist in Trinidad*. For many years research on Yellow Fever was conducted here, as Trinidad hosted an internationally-acclaimed virus research lab. Many of the country's insects were surveyed and identified in studies associated with Bush Bush. In 1999, a reintroduction effort to restore Blue-and-yellow Macaw began here. The walk is in an area where permits are



required by the Forestry Department, in the sanctuary where hunting is not allowed, and thus it's a good place to look for mammals.

We leave Asa Wright Nature Centre after breakfast and travel south down the Arima valley before turning east. Now in the lowlands, Great Kiskadee and Tropical Kingbird regularly perch on overhead utility wires, Carib Grackle abound and Short-tailed Swift is the commonest aerial feeder. Open countryside and rough pasture allow us the opportunity to see a number of new bird species, including Cocoli Heron, Savannah Hawk, Gray-headed Kite, Yellow-headed Caracara, Wattled Jacana, Southern Lapwing, Green-rumped Parrotlet, Fork-tailed Palm-Swift, White-winged Swallow, White-headed Marsh Tyrant, and Pied Water-Tyrants. Yellow-chinned Spinetail rattle throatily from the grasses while Red-breasted Blackbird add a splash of color. This is also the only site where we can reliably find Grassland Yellow-Finches and there is a chance of finding Ruddy-breasted Seedeater.

We have a picnic lunch near the Manzanillo beach. We then drive slowly south through thousands of coconut palms looking for raptors sheltering from the midday sun. We should see Common Black-Hawk, Yellow-headed Caracara and Savannah Hawk and have a realistic chance of finding Pearl Kite, Gray-lined Hawk and Crested Caracara. Several stops near some roadside mangroves and freshwater wetlands offers the possibility of seeing a good variety of different butterflies, as well as American Pygmy Kingfisher, Black-crested Antshrike, Silvered Antbird and Brown-crested Flycatcher.

Water levels permitting, it is afternoon when we walk into the Bush Bush research area, with hopes of finding monkeys and macaws. We may spot Red Rim, Sara Longwing, Bordered Patch or Astarte 88 butterfly species at some point along the way.

This is a long, but interesting day and we return to the Centre for dinner.
Accommodations at Asa Wright Centre (B,L,D)

Sun., Nov. 11

Dunston Oilbird Cave | Afternoon Workshop & Garden & Coffee Area Visit

Trinidad is perhaps the easiest place to see the world's only fruit eating, nocturnal bird: The Oilbird, which navigates within the cave by echo location. The Oilbird is much, much bigger than anyone expects (almost the



size of a small harrier — it has a wingspan of up to 42 inches). The floor of the cave is littered with germinating palm seedlings. The Oilbirds swallow the palm fruit entirely, and after the pericarp is digested, they regurgitate the seeds. Oilbirds are very important to seed dispersal of a number of tropical trees. Centre staff have collected these seeds and planted them around the estate to enrich the habitat.

This morning we visit Dunston Cave, a beautiful riparian grotto located on the sanctuary, home to a breeding colony of the fascinating nocturnal Oilbird. Naturalists announce a walk down to Dunston Cave, home to our one of the most accessible Oilbird caves in the entire world. A walk along Guacharo trail gets you there in around 45 minutes. The trail can be steep in places, but there are hand-rails along the way. The forest is lush here, and we may find some new butterflies in the understory vegetation.

En route this trail provides the best opportunity to find Gray-throated Leaf-tosser and Red-crowned Ant-Tanager and perhaps your only chance of viewing, at a safe distance, a sleeping Fer-de-Lance. On the return you can retrace your steps, or connect to another of the Centre's several trails to make a longer loop. These are less traveled and a real prize sighting might be that of the elusive Little Tinamou.

The cave has a stream running through it; the water level is dependent upon recent rainfall. However you should not get more than your ankles wet. Please note that there is no flash photography at the cave.

Today we invite local Trinidad naturalists and Friends of the Asa Wright Nature Centre to a special Sunday lunch and a program by your guide Robert on his pioneering research for his book the *Guide to the Birds of Honduras*. Treat yourself to some amazing photos, videos, and stories. Take time to mingle with the Trinidad naturalist community members and staff.

Late-afternoon, we ask the Centre grounds manager to show us the coffee area, native plantings, and greenhouse, and we keep our eyes peeled for birds and butterflies as we go. Learn more about the Asa Wright Nature Centre's 50+ year history and the current conservation and education work being done.

Dinner is at the Centre, with an optional evening walk or program by the Centre's naturalists. Looking for some night life? Night moth spotlighting is a popular event, often described with the thrill of a treasure hunt.
Accommodations at Asa Wright Centre (B,L,D)



Mon., Nov. 12

Morning Talk | Wetlands & Gardens | Scarlet Ibis of Caroni National Park

Wake up to bird song, and enjoy breakfast in the great room of the former Springhill Estate. We may try for some of the Centre's more elusive species near the start of the Bamboo Valley trail: Cocoa and Plain-Brown Woodcreepers, White-bellied Antbird, and Black-faced Antthrush.

This morning Robert gives a talk on butterflies with information you can apply in the field. He shares some of the Centre's collection, goes over field guide use for butterflies, and helps you build your skills. An important thing to learn for each area you visit is the sequence of butterfly emergence, or seasonality, knowledge still being charted in Trinidad.

We then drive down to the lowlands to a wetland area near a delightful and small inn where we search some pond areas for new species, admire the Gray-throated Wood-Rails, and enjoy a garden lunch.

From here, we drive to Caroni Swamp, which comprises 6000 hectares of protected area, including National Park lands, its habitat being mainly mangrove forest. It holds a very specialized mangrove forest that contains several genera and species of mangroves, showing classic examples of plant adaptation in a unique brackish water community. Before our boat departs, we have the opportunity to seek out mangrove species from the roadside. Black-crested Antshrike, Rufous-browed Peppershrike, Straight-billed Woodcreeper, and Masked Cardinal are some of the possibilities.

After boarding our small tour boats, we explore to the west down the Blue River (or as Trinis call it, the Number 9 drain). This is a public waterway used both by fishermen and leisure boaters and from it we turn south into the permit controlled forestry reserve. We look for Mangrove Buckeye, White Crescent, Dirce Beauty, and other butterflies as we go. Our boat leaves around 4:00 PM, under the leadership of an experienced tour guide who visits the swamp daily. Robert and our Centre guide are also on board, and yes, the rum punch too!

While the highlight of the afternoon is the Scarlet Ibis spectacle, we spend an hour or so slowly navigating some of the mangrove channels seeking out specialties like Green-throated Mango, Greater Ani, and Bicolored



Conebill. Gliding through the peaceful mangrove habitat, watch for some of its more specialized denizens — Neotropical Cormorant, Anhinga, Striated Heron, White-cheeked Pintail, Large-billed Tern, Pied Water Tyrant, and striking Masked (Red-capped) Cardinal. Often, there are roosting Tropical Screech-Owl and a Common Potoo close to the water and we have a distinct chance of spotting a kingfisher or two with Green, Ringed, and American Pygmy all living in the swamp. There is also an outside chance of a Boat-billed Heron, the least confiding of our salt-water herons.

On the way, the boatman keeps a special eye out for Ruschenberger's Tree Boa roosting in the branches close to the river — these snakes feed almost exclusively on small birds and can grow to nearly eight feet in length. We also have a chance of a roosting Silky Anteater or even a Spectacled Caiman.

We then moor up, sip our rum punch, and wait for parties (by the hundreds!) of Scarlet Ibis, plus smaller numbers of Tricolored and Little Blue Herons and Snowy Egret flying into roost in the mangroves. Butterflies and other insects are also attracted to mangroves. This is truly one of the world's most dramatic natural moments. We leave as light begins to wane, retracing our steps back, arriving at the dock at dusk. En route we search the mangrove-lined channels for the mysterious-sounding Common Potoo and with luck nocturnal Boat-billed Heron. We then, return direct to the Centre for a late dinner.

Accommodations at Asa Wright Centre (B,L,D)

Tues., Nov. 13 University of the West Indies | Angostura Museum and Barcant Butterfly Collection

This morning we focus on the Centre's hummingbird feeders and plants, to make sure you get outstanding views and photo opportunities for gems such as the tiny and spectacular Tufted Coquette.

We then head down the mountain for a chance to see Trinidad's outstanding collection of butterflies, and to meet local experts. We build some field time in as well. Large trees line the walkways of the University of the West Indies where we visit the natural history museum and collections. We have lunch while on campus.

It does seem appropriate to connect rum to our target nectar feeders, and today we tour the Angostura Distillery on their 1:00 PM tour to learn the history of making rum *and* to see the totally amazing Barcant

Butterfly collection. Over 700 species are vividly displayed; Robert will be like a kid in a candy store, and it's a great place for him to share his insights and sense of wonder.

We leave in time to beat the traffic going "home" and enjoy our tea or rum punch and sunset from the verandah. Take a night walk with Centre naturalists down the driveway to find Ferruginous Pygmy Owl, tarantulas, and possibly peek at some sleeping birds!

Accommodations at Asa Wright Centre (B,L,D)

Wed., Nov. 14 Departures | Continue to Tobago

This morning you can enjoy some leisure time on the verandah until it's time to transfer to your flight. Not ready to go? Our Caligo Ventures travel planners are happy to help you add on some days on Tobago. A short flight hops hourly between the islands, and we work with two lodges there — one a small beach resort and the other an intimate forest lodge. Both offer great birding and guides to help you in the field.

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

Cost of the Journey

Plan Ahead!

Protect yourself with Allianz Travel Insurance. Please note, starting in January 2017, Naturalist Journeys pays 100% of your flight carbon offset.

Cost of the Journey

Cost of the journey (main tour) is **\$2150 DBL / \$2495 SGL**, from Port of Spain. Tour cost includes all accommodations, meals as specified in the itinerary, professional guide services, other park and program entrance fees and miscellaneous program expenses.

Tour cost does not include: round-trip transportation from your home city to Port of Spain, optional activities, or items of a personal nature like laundry, telephone charges, maid gratuities, or beverages from the bar.

Travel Information

Plan to arrive in Port of Spain on Nov. 7 by early afternoon if you wish to join the welcome dinner.

Plan departures for after 10:00 AM on Nov. 14, though earlier or later flights can be accommodated. Let your travel planner know if you would like to continue to Tobago; we're happy to help you plan!

Photo Credits

Autochton skipper, Noel Snyder; Copper-rumped Hummingbird, Rich Wagner | WildNaturePhotos; White Peacock, Buck Snelson; Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Tom Dove; Gianan Trogon, Rich Wagner | WildNaturePhotos; Blue Doctor, Noel Snyder; Scarlet Peacock, Mukesh Ramdass (MR); Ruby-topaz Hummingbird, Dave Ramdass; Purple Honeycreepers, Peg Abbott; Cassius Blue, Bob Behrstock; Golden-olive Woodpecker, Sandy Sorkin; Golden Tegu Lizard, Howard Topoff (HT); Unident Tigerwing, Noel Snyder (NS); Leaafcutter Ants, PA; Giant False Swallowtail, Caligo Ventures Stock (CVS); Longwing Butterfly, PA; Red Howler Monkeys, HT; Yellow-rumped Cacique, Mike Boyce (MB); Speckled Tanager, Greg Smith; Ruby-spotted Swallowtail, CVS; Blue-and-yellow Macaw, PA; Southern Lapwings, PA; Wattled Jacana, MB; Zebra Longwing, CVS; Yellow-headed Caracara, NS; 89 Butterfly, (MR); Oilbird, Hugh Simmons Photography (HS); Red-crowned Ant-Tanager, CVS; Gray-throated Leaf-tosser, CVS; Common Potoo, MB; Masked Cardinal, Rich Wagner | WildNaturePhotos (RW); Clear-winged Butterfly, Ray Mendez; Boat to Caroni Swamp, Lynn Tennefoss; Tree Boa, MB; Ibis and Egrets at Caroni, RW; Boat-billed Herons, Tom Dove; Tufted Coquettes, HS.