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GUYANA BIRDING

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Strong Interest Shown for Guyana at the British Birdwatching Fair



Rutland, England – Shortly after the British Birdwatching Fair opened on Friday morning, wildlife filmmaker Malcolm Rymer stopped by the Guyana booth to express interest in making a film highlighting the flora, fauna, avifauna and eco-lodges of Guyana. Malcolm has already filmed in such places as Brazil, Ecuador and Costa Rica and is now looking for a relatively unknown destination. Guyana, he believes, is just the place. After swapping his business card for handouts on Guyana, he turned to everybody at the booth and said, “You’re going to be very busy. Guyana is new and people are looking for new destinations.” His early prediction has thus far proved to be true.

Representatives from Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA) – United States Agency for International Development (USAID) / Guyana Trade and Investment Support (GTIS) Birding Tourism Program have returned to Rutland, England to attend the world’s largest birdwatching event, the British Birdwatching Fair (BBWF).



Birdwatchers and nature enthusiasts come to the BBWF to gather information on destinations around the world. Many plan their next trip based on what they learn while at the fair. Traffic at the Guyana booth has been steady, particularly from people – like Malcolm – who are looking for a new destination to visit.

Many visitors have already traveled in South America – Brazil, Venezuela, Peru, Ecuador – and are now looking to explore different countries. Word is spreading that Guyana is the new destination for neotropical birding. The Birdfair program has a section titled, “What’s New in 2007,” and in this Guyana is described as a “great place to start” for neotropical birding, where “you can see almost mythical birds.”

One person who is here to share his expertise on these mythical birds is Iwokrama Forest Ranger, Ron Allicock. Commenting on his first visit to the fair, Ron said, “Birdfair is the best marketing opportunity for a country to promote birdwatching.” Impressed with the interest being shown in his home country, Ron adds that, “I believe that after this event, we will have a lot of people coming to Guyana, and we must be prepared.”



Ron may be right. At last year’s event, there were roughly five international tour operators promoting Guyana at their booths. This year – thanks to the efforts of the birding tourism program – the number has more than doubled and there are now at least twelve international tour operators advertising, promoting and selling Guyana as a destination for their trips.

One of these tour operators – Ornitholidays – has been amazed with the interest shown in the Guyana tour they began selling after they visited the country on a familiarization trip organized by the birding tourism program. One week after they advertised a Guyana tour in their catalogue, it sold out. They now have bookings for 2009 and, based on the demand, are currently organizing a second Guyana trip.

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Strong Interest Shown for Guyana at the British Birdwatching Fair (page two)

The first day of the BBWF wrapped up with a presentation on the conservation of the endangered Red Siskin in Guyana. Justin de Freitas, President of the South Rupununi Conservation Society, gave a presentation on the society's efforts to protect Guyana's population of the rare bird that was discovered in 2000. Justin reported that interest in Guyana is also high at the Greenheart Trust booth, which is promoting conservation efforts in Guyana.

On Saturday, visitors to the BBWF will have another chance to hear a lecture on Guyana when Tony Thorne of Wilderness Explorers and Ron Allicock give a presentation on the birds of Guyana.

The Birding Tourism Program is receiving support from GTIS, a joint project of the Government of Guyana and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).



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