



GUYANA
Naturally

GUYANA BIRDING

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International Tour Operators and Media Are in Guyana to Experience Tourism Product

GEORGETOWN – Eight guides from international tour operators and one travel and wildlife journalist will be in Guyana from April 18-28 on a tourism familiarization (fam) tour. This is the fifth fam trip to bring international tour operators and media to Guyana to sample and evaluate the country's sustainable tourism experience as a part of the Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA) – United States Agency for International Development (USAID) / Guyana Trade and Investment Support (GTIS) Guyana Sustainable Tourism Initiative (GSTI). (Formerly called the GTA-USAID/GTIS Birding Tourism Program, the name has changed to reflect the initiative's expansion to include a broader focus on nature, culture and volunteer tourism.)

The current fam trip is hosting some of the world's top tourism companies specializing in birding, natural history, and scientific tours. Participants include: Betchart Expeditions (US); Bird Holidays (England); Exotic Birding (US); Geographic Expeditions (US); Heatherlea (Scotland); Neblina Forest (Ecuador); Tourismus Schiegg (Germany); and Wildlife Travel (England). Angela Alleman, a freelance journalist who writes for the German-speaking press (Germany is a new and promising market focus for the GTIS program), will also be on the trip.

The participants of this fam trip will cross Guyana from north to south and pay visits to the Georgetown Botanical Gardens, Iwokrama Field Station and Canopy Walkway, Fair View Village, Rock View Lodge, Aranaputa Village, Surama Village, Karanambu Ranch, Dadanawa Ranch and Kaieteur Falls.

While on the trip, the participants will be learning about Guyana's birds, flora and fauna, culture and history from local guides based at each destination. Judy Karwacki of GTIS and Tony Thorne of Wilderness Explorers will be leading the tour. Iwokrama Ranger Ron Allicock will also be joining the group to act as an accompanying guide.

To gain support from tour operators and media it is important to give them opportunities to experience Guyana firsthand. Focusing on the small group tour market is beneficial because it will allow Guyana to develop better and more cost competitive tourism programs and create demand for local guides and other sustainable tourism related services and products within Guyana.

As a result of previous fam trips, more than 30 international tour operators are currently selling, designing and bringing birdwatching and natural history trips to Guyana. Thanks to the journalists that were also on the trips, Guyana has been featured in numerous international magazines and newspapers.

The FAM tours would not be possible if local tourism suppliers were not pledging their full support. For this program, GTA-GTIS is grateful for the generous contributions from Caribbean Airlines, Trans Guyana Airways, Cara Lodge, Grand Coastal Inn, Surama Ecolodge, Iwokrama International Centre, Rock View Lodge, Karanambu Ranch, Dadanawa Ranch, Community and Tourism Services (CATS). Special thanks goes to the Guyana Sustainable Tourism Initiative's inbound tour partner, Wilderness Explorers, who has played an integral role in the success of the program.

The Guyana Sustainable Tourism Initiative 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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