



GUYANA
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GUYANA BIRDING

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Guyana Enjoys the Spotlight at the British Birdwatching Fair

Rutland, England – The recent airing of the BBC’s three-part series on Guyana, *Lost Land of the Jaguar*, has generated tremendous excitement among travelers who now want to experience the country’s natural wonders for themselves, in particular the many birdwatchers who visited Guyana’s booth at the first day of the British Birdwatching Fair (“Birdfair”).

“I’ve got Guyana on the mind,” remarked Jane Fenton, Vice President of BirdLife International. Many other people commented that Guyana is now high on their list of places to visit. Elaine Kay, another keen birder visiting the show, took it one step further: “I’ve just booked to go to Guyana; [the program] gave me itchy feet,” she said.

This is the third year in a row that Guyana has been represented at Birdfair, which takes place from August 15th – 17th, 2008, at the Egleton Nature Reserve in Rutland Water, UK. The show features more than 300 exhibitors and thousands of visitors from around the world. The Guyana booth includes representatives from the Guyana Sustainable Tourism Initiative (GSTI) – a joint effort between the Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) / Guyana Trade and Investment Support (GTIS) project – as well as individuals from Wilderness Explorers and Club Caribbee, a UK-based tour operator now offering direct flights from London to Guyana.

This year marks Birdfair’s 20th anniversary, and for the first time the show has a special theme: the Caribbean. In celebration of this spotlight, more than 120 people danced to steel pan music and enjoyed rum punch (courtesy of Demerara Distillers Ltd.) at a barbecue sponsored by the Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago booths. The event provided an opportunity to network with tour operators, many of whom have expressed an interest in combining tours to the two countries.

Guyana was also featured in a special seminar by Ron Allicock, a ranger and birding guide at Iwokrama, and Tony Thorne, Managing Director of Wilderness Explorers, entitled “Guiana Shield Endemics: Where to Find Them In Guyana”. The two presented a slideshow of photos displaying many of Guyana’s speciality birds, as well as some of the more popular mammals found in the country. The lecture was a big hit with visitors to Birdfair, who filled the tent to near capacity.

Guyana is certainly becoming a more popular destination for birders, and the country’s strong presence at past birdwatching shows is beginning to show results. Compared to prior years, more and more people stopping by the booth said that they had already visited the country. Brian Reader and Pam Seago, who traveled to Guyana this past January with UK-based birding tour operator Ornitholidays, declared Guyana to be a “lovely country [with] lovely people.” Apparently one visit wasn’t enough, however, as both entered to win a free seven-day birding trip to Guyana sponsored by Club Caribbee, Wilderness Explorers, Cara Hotels, Rock View Lodge, Surama Village, GTA and USAID/GTIS. Birdfair continues for two additional days, which are certain to bring even more visitors to the Guyana booth.

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