

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **International Tour Operator Reports Guyana Birdwatching Trip a Success**

**GEORGETOWN** – Eagle Eye Tours, a Canadian tour operator based that specializes in worldwide birdwatching trips, recently completed its first group tour to Guyana. The tour, which took place from January 10-20, was added to the company’s roster of destinations after co-owner and tour guide, Richard Knapton, came to Guyana as part of a birdwatching product familiarization trip sponsored by the Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) / Guyana Trade and Investment Support (GTIS) project Birding Tourism Program.

The North American participants spent eleven days in Guyana, with birdwatching stops at Georgetown Botanical Gardens, Iwokrama Field Station, Iwokrama Canopy Walkway, Surama Village, Rock View Lodge, Wowetta Village, Karanambu Ranch, Kaieteur Falls and Shanklands Rainforest Resort. Mr. Knapton, who has led tours to more than 20 countries in his 20 years spent as a guide, led the group along with several Guyanese birdwatching guides.

Reflecting on his recent trip, Knapton said that Guyana may not have the same number of species as other South American countries such as Ecuador and Peru, but “there are superlative groups of birds in Guyana, with standouts like the Guianan Cock-of-the-Rock and Harpy Eagle.” Knapton also added that, “many birdwatchers want to see Guiana Shield species...and this makes Guyana a highly competitive [birding] destination.”

Of the birds seen in Guyana, he said his clients were very pleased with the variety of species they saw on their trip, with too many highlights to list. Knapton also pointed out that many were pleased to see such healthy populations of Macaws in the interior, as that’s “an indication of pristine forest that is unfragmented.” Continuing on this note, Knapton added that, “One of the beauties of Guyana is to fly south over the forest and see it unbroken from horizon to horizon. That is extremely reassuring.”

Mr. Knapton first came to Guyana in November 2006 on a familiarization trip with several other international tour operators and media. When asked if this had an impact on his company’s decision to create a tour to Guyana, he said, “Absolutely. It’s our policy to be [personally] familiar with a destination.” Eagle Eye Tours began designing and selling a Guyana tour immediately after the trip, and while the normal turnaround time to advertise and sell a new destination is one year, Knapton reports that he was very pleased with how quickly the Guyana tour sold out.

Noting that Eagle Eye has already received interest in their next Guyana tour planned for January 2009, he said this “speaks volumes for the destination.” And then clarified by adding, “There is a darn good chance of Guyana becoming a hot Neotropical birdwatching destination.”

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). For more information visit [www.guyanabirding.com](http://www.guyanabirding.com).

### **MEDIA CONTACTS:**

**Indranauth Haralsingh**  
Director, Guyana Tourism Authority  
P: 592-223-6351  
E: [haralsingh@yahoo.com](mailto:haralsingh@yahoo.com)

**Kirk Smock**  
GTIS Public Affairs  
P: 592-223-7144  
E: [ksmock@carana.com](mailto:ksmock@carana.com)

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