



GUYANA
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GUYANA BIRDING

PRESS RELEASE

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Guyana Impresses

GEORGETOWN – According to the group of international tour operators and media currently visiting Guyana for a tourism product familiarization trip, the highlights so far are too many to list, but a few standouts include seeing: a Harpy Eagle near Surama; five wild Giant River Otters along the Rupununi River; a Guianan Gnatcatcher near the Abary River; the Blood-coloured Woodpecker at the Georgetown Botanical Gardens; a Giant Anteater at Karanambu Ranch; the Guianan Cock-of-the-Rock at Kaieteur Falls; and a 10- and 12-foot Black Caiman at Yupukari.

The visitors, which include three international tour guides, three journalists, and two representatives from a leading optics company, also reported enjoying the many cultural activities that have been woven throughout the trip. So far, these have included the Roy Geddes Steel Pan Museum in Georgetown, a Georgetown city tour, a village tour at Yupukari, a medicinal plant walk near Surama, a visit to the peanut butter factory at Aranaputa village, and cultural presentations by schoolchildren at Surama and Aranaputa villages.

The group is visiting Guyana from November 15-25 on a tourism familiarization trip that will allow them to sample and evaluate the country's sustainable tourism experience. The familiarization tour is 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).

Tour participants include a freelance environmental reporter and representatives from *Bird Watching* magazine, *Bird Watcher's Digest*, Leica Camera Sport Optics Division, Manu Expeditions Birding Tours, Wildside Nature Tours, and Andrew Mitchell of Island Holidays Plus.

Reflecting on the beginning of the trip at Botanical Gardens, Andrew Mitchell of Island Holidays Plus said, "It's a fantastic place to start a birdwatching trip. There are some key birds there." Mike Weedon of *Birdwatching* magazine said of the Abary trip, "All people in the group got four life birds [birds they have never seen before]. That's fantastic for the first session out." And about Karanambu Ranch, writer and artist, Julie Zickefoose, said, "It feels utterly unique, like there is no other place like it."

Participants on this familiarization trip have already spent time in and around Georgetown, Kaieteur Falls, Karanambu Ranch, Caiman House at Yupukari Village, Rock View Lodge, Aranaputa Village, and Surama Village. The group will spend the final few days at Iwokrama Field Station and Canopy Walkway and Fair View Village.

All participants have reported that they plan on promoting tourism in Guyana by writing articles, selling and bringing tours to Guyana, and publishing photographs. Upon leaving Surama, Ms. Zickefoose said, "Can we spend more time here?" It's a sentiment that has been shared by the group at every location visited on the trip.

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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