



GUYANA BIRDING

PRESS RELEASE

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Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA) and Guyana Trade and Investment Support (GTIS) Launch Birding Tourism Program



GEORGETOWN—Within Guyana's interior, the Guiana Shield (one of four pristine tropical rainforests left in the world) converges with the Amazon Basin. The unique geography that results creates a myriad of habitats for birds, ranging from coastal waters to mangroves, marshes to savannahs, and mountains to tropical rainforests. More than 800 species of birds from 72 different families call Guyana home. Georgetown alone hosts more than 200 species from 39 families. Impressive numbers indeed, but Guyana still remains relatively unknown within international birding communities. Following the launch of the GTA-GTIS Birding Tourism Program, Guyana will soon have a profile as an ideal destination for birdwatchers the world over.



The launching ceremony will take place at 11 am on Wednesday, July 26, 2006 at the Georgetown Botanical Gardens & Zoological Park. Guyenterprise Managing Director, Vic Insanally will chair the ceremony. Tourism Consultant Donald Sinclair; Chairman of the GTA, Brian James; United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission Director, Dr. Fenton Sands; and Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, Hon. Manzoor Nadir, will make remarks. A question and answer period led by GTA and GTIS representatives will follow.

The birding program targets the travel trade as well as media and consumers. It includes birding guide training, development of birding tourism marketing materials including a website, www.guyanabirds.com, media relations and PR activities, and development of partnerships with international birding tour operators. Representatives from Guyana attended the American Birding Association Annual Convention in June, and in August will be participating in the British Birdwatching Fair in Rutland, UK.



Birding tourism in Guyana is seen as beneficial on many levels. It contributes to conservation by focusing on unique places, sustainable activities and small groups of people highly interested in nature and preservation. The typically small-scale operations do not have high impacts on the environment and give local people opportunities to obtain employment and business benefits, while encouraging communities to conserve and protect their natural heritage. Birders are also generally well-educated middle aged and older people with the time and money to travel far and wide in search of the Neotropical birds on their checklists, many of which are found in Guyana.

The Birding Tourism Program is receiving support from GTIS, a joint project of the Government of Guyana and USAID. The birding initiative's success relies on the involvement of several partners, including GTA and the Government of Guyana; Guyana's tourism private sector, represented by THAG and its members; and the birding experts of the Guyana Amazon Tropical Birds Society (GATBS). GTA-GTIS is encouraging other donor agencies and NGO partners to become involved and provide assistance in the development and delivery of the birding tourism program.

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