



JAMAICA ISLAND ENDEMIC & CARIBBEAN SPECIALTIES

December 11-17, 2024

**Guide: Adam Sell
& Local Guides**

Price: \$3395
Based upon double occupancy
Single room supplement: \$430

Check out the trip website here: redhillbirding.com/jamaica

To register, fill out the booking form here: redhillbirding.com/bookingform

This trip can be combined with the [Dominican Republic](#)! Sign up for both tours for \$300 off your invoice and a chance to see 60 island endemics!

Jamaica is the third largest island in the Caribbean and one of the most endemic-rich. With 28 endemic species and many more endemic subspecies, Jamaica is a great destination for birders to experience the unique ecology of island birds in comfortable settings and at a relaxed pace.

We will visit the Blue and John Crow Mountains and unique habitats like coastal scrub, lowland forest, and epiphyte-laden cloud forest. We have a great chance of seeing all of the island's endemic birds, including difficult ones like Crested Quail-Dove and Jamaican Blackbird and the two iconic species of streamertail hummingbirds. The pace will be relaxed, the Blue Mountain coffee will flow, and the excellent Jamaican food will be a perfect complement to our week of island birding.

ITINERARY

Day 1, Wednesday, December 11. Arrival to Kingston. Night at Kingston.

Today will be a devoted arrival day. We will pick you up from the airport and begin our transfer over to a nearby hotel for our first night in Jamaica. If we have time, we will search for some birds nearby.

Day 2, Thursday, December 12. Hellshire Hills and transfer to the Blue Mountains. Night at Starlight Chalet.

After breakfast at our hotel, we will head out to the western edge of Kingston to a unique habitat of arid scrub not found elsewhere on the island. Here we will focus on a few species that are easiest to find in this habitat, in particular Bahama Mockingbird and Stolid Flycatcher. If we have time, we can visit some nearby wetlands in hopes of finding numerous waterbirds, including Northern Jacana.

After lunch, we will begin the drive up into the Blue Mountains. This lush region is famous for its namesake coffee and its tropical forests. Our lodging in the mountains for the next two nights is somewhat basic (but with great food!) and puts us right at the doorstep of the best Blue Mountain birding. We will certainly spend some time in the afternoon familiarizing ourselves with the local avifauna.

Day 3, Friday, December 13. Full day birding the Blue Mountains. Night at Starlight Chalet.

Today is a fun day dedicated to birding the lush montane forests of the Blue Mountains. Most of the forest where we are birding is part of the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site thanks to incredible biodiversity and a unique cultural heritage. Naturally, the birding is excellent. Some endemics are easiest to find in this region including Ring-tailed Pigeon, Crested Quail-Dove, the endangered Jamaican Blackbird, White-eyed Thrush, Blue Mountain Vireo and Arrowhead Warbler. We should have incredible views of Red-billed Streamertail, Jamaica's national bird, right on the grounds of our hotel. Other good birds we will keep an eye out for include Ruddy Quail-Dove, Vervain Hummingbird, Greater Antillean Elaenia, Rufous-throated Solitaire, and migrants like Swainson's and Black-throated Blue Warbler, both of which spend the non-breeding season primarily in the Caribbean region.

Day 4, Saturday, December 14. Morning birding the Blue Mountains and transfer to Port Antonio. Night in Port Antonio.

We will start by spending a full morning birding the grounds and trails around Starlight Chalet in search of any species we have missed, with special attention on species like White-eyed Thrush, Rufous-throated Solitaire and Arrowhead Warbler, all of which are more difficult elsewhere on the island. After birding, we will begin dropping down into the Buff Bay River Valley as we make the drive to the northern coast town of Port Antonio. We will break for lunch on the drive. In the afternoon, we will settle into our new lodgings, which includes great birding on the

grounds. We will surely get some afternoon birding in, and, after dinner, we can check the grounds for the endemic Jamaican Owl and Northern Potoo.

Day 5, Sunday, December 15. Full Day around Ecclesdown Rd. and environs. Night in Port Antonio.

Today will be devoted to birding the foothills of the John Crow Mountain along Ecclesdown Road. This might be the most famous birding destination on the island, and we will focus on birding it for an entire day. A long list of highlights includes Jamaican-Lizard Cuckoo, Chestnut-bellied Cuckoo, Black-billed Parrot, Black-billed Streamertail, Jamaican Tody, Sad Flycatcher, Jamaican Vireo and Jamaican Crow. By this point, it is quite likely that we will have picked up all of the Jamaican endemics!

In the evening, we might bird some woodlands closer to the hotel to perhaps get better views or photos of birds like Jamaican Pewee, Rufous-tailed Flycatcher, Jamaican Becard, Orangequit, White-chinned Thrush and Jamaican Spindalis. We'll enjoy another sunset and meal back at our hotel and search again for Jamaican Owl if we haven't yet seen it well.

Day 6, Monday, December 16. Clean-up on species and return to Kingston. Night in Port Royal.

Our needs list will decide our day and we will chase down any missing targets we have on our lists. We might head back to the Blue Mountains, bird the John Crow Mountains, and if they are returned already, we can head to the eastside of the island to view some cliff-breeding White-tailed Tropicbirds.

After spending the day birding, we will make our way back to Kingston and spend a last evening near the airport.

Day 7, Tuesday, December 17. Departure Day

Today is a dedicated departure day. If there is time in the morning before our flights, we will enjoy some final Caribbean birds before making it over to the airport. Until next time!

IMPORTANT NOTES

Contact and registration information

To sign up, each participant should complete the [booking form](#). Once we receive the form, we will send you information about paying the trip deposit. If you have any questions before registering, please contact us at info@redhillbirding.com.

Timing and logistics

The trip will begin in Kingston, Jamaica on the **evening of December 11, 2024**. The international airport is Norman Manley International Airport (IATA: KIN). This is a dedicated arrival day, but if

you are hoping to arrive earlier, please reach out to us and we can look at arranging accommodations.

The trip will end in at the same location on the **morning of December 17, 2024**. This will be a dedicated travel day, and you may arrange your flights for any time.

If you are joining the Dominican Republic tour that ends on December 10, we will book the inter-island flight and the hotel on the night of December 10 and add the price to your final invoice. Due to unknown flight schedules, we need to allow one night between the tours. The night may be in Kingston, Jamaica, or it may be in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, depending on the flight schedule.

Currently, there are no entry requirements for Jamaica outside of a valid passport and there is no COVID-19 entry or exit requirements for travel to and from the United States. Please check the state department for the most updated visa and passport information before traveling.

Physical difficulty

This trip is **physically easy**. Most walking will be done roadside and for short distances. Trails will be easy and there are no vigorous hikes needed.

Pace

The **pace** of the trip is **easy**. A typical day will have us up early to take advantage of early-morning bird activity. On some days, we will have a siesta after lunch back before heading back out for more birding in the late afternoon as activity begins to pick back up.

Price

The price of the trip is **\$3395** per person and is based upon double occupancy. The single room supplement is **\$430**. The price includes all meals (excluding alcoholic beverages) from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 7; all transportation and accommodation during that period; a Red Hill Birding guide and fantastic local guide; any park entrance fees; and a bound checklist to keep track of sightings during the trip. It does not include alcoholic beverages, travel insurance, optional activities, snacks, laundry, tips (apart from local guide, driver and meals), or other items of a personal nature.

There is a \$300 discount for participants joining us on both the Dominican Republic and Jamaica tours! There is one night between tours to allow for flight schedules between the islands; we will book the flight and the hotel and add those prices to the final invoice.

A deposit of \$700 per person and the submission of the booking form will secure your place on the trip. Upon receiving your booking form, we will send you deposit details. Final payment is due by September 10, 2024. We accept payment by Zelle, check, and bank transfer/electronic check. We also accept payment by credit card with an additional 3.1% processing fee.

Hotels & Food

Accommodations in Jamaica are generally good. While lodging is not super luxurious, they are surrounded by excellent birds and birding opportunities. They all will have wonderful food, great hospitality, and are generally very nice places to stay. All will have en suite bathrooms.

Internet is available in every place we are staying but take that with a grain of salt. It often does not function as well as one might hope. Power outlets in Jamaica are Type A and Type B, the same plug configuration as the United States and Canada. They are 110V supply voltage and 50Hz, but most modern electronics have built-in converters that will convert it to the US standard of 120V and 60Hz.

Food in Jamaica is generally delicious and of excellent quality. We will have ample opportunities to sample the famous traditional cuisines. Vegetarian options are usually good and easy to come by. Please let us know of any food allergies or preferences in advance.

Weather

Jamaica is a tropical country, and the weather will generally be warm and humid. It will be cooler in the Blue Mountains, so a fleece or sweatshirt will be handy for early mornings. Even though we are travelling away from the wet season, rain can still be possible and having appropriate rain gear will be essential. We could also get plenty of sunshine, so plan accordingly with hat, sunscreen, and other sun protection. Bugs, including mosquitos will be around, but not a terrible nuisance. Bug spray will be helpful.

Packing considerations

You will generally want to wear comfortable, light-weight clothing. Long sleeves and long pants are recommended for sun and insect protection. Sturdy hiking boots will be beneficial on some trails and a warm sweater or mid-weight jacket is useful for cool mornings in the mountains. Even though we are visiting during the dry season, it is essential to pack a rain jacket or an umbrella for the trip.

In terms of gear, you will want to bring the usual binoculars, field guide and a hat. A reusable water bottle and, for coffee drinkers, a travel coffee mug, are useful to have along in the car during the day. You will want to bring sunscreen and insect repellent as well. Your guide will have a scope and speaker with calls/songs of the region handy.

Resources

The best field guide for Jamaica is the recently released *Birds of the West Indies Second Edition* by Herbert A. Raffaele and James Wiley. It covers all of the species on our tour and is thorough.

Another excellent tool is the Merlin Bird ID App by Cornell University. In it, you can download "bird packs" for regions all over the world. Included is a nice pack for the Caribbean that includes all the species we will target on this tour. This app is free and includes photos and audio, which is very helpful.

eBird

Your Red Hill Birding guide and/or local guides will be eBirding the entire tour. If you have an eBird account, they will collect your username/email address to share those lists and will share them out when it is convenient. You are welcome to edit your lists to add/remove species, edit text, or change numbers as much as you would like, since any edits you make to your lists do not change others' lists. And we love it when participants add photos and sound recordings to the checklists!

Your leader will also provide an eBird Trip Report after the tour and will add participants who have an eBird account to the report; this way, you can see your own personal trip details and those of the whole group. These trip reports are accessible to anyone who has the link, so participants who do not have eBird accounts can still view the report to see the trip list, photos, and any added text.

Travel insurance

We do not require travel insurance for international travel. However, we recommend purchasing it to help protect you against the unexpected. For your convenience, we offer travel protection through Travelex Insurance Services. For more information on the available plans or to enroll, go to www.travelexinsurance.com or contact Travelex Insurance Services at 800-228-9792 and reference location number 13-0441.

Travelex Insurance Services, Inc CA Agency License #0D10209. Travel Insurance is underwritten by, Berkshire Hathaway Specialty Insurance Company, NAIC #22276. 55Y

Note that to be eligible for some benefits, travel insurance must be purchased within 1-2 weeks of paying the trip deposit.



Jamaican Tody – an iconic endemic and Caribbean specialty