

## **TRINIDAD**

### **MARCH 1-7, 2010**

## **TOBAGO EXTENSION**

### **MARCH 7-10, 2010**

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*This tour promises a wonderful entrée to the natural history of the American tropics and its varied bird life. Trinidad & Tobago have a diverse, but not overwhelming number of birds, plants, and animals. Here newcomers and experienced birders or naturalists alike can get acquainted with almost all of the New World families of birds and sharpen their skills on an avifauna of nearly 400 species.*

*The tour starts in the famous Asa Wright Nature Centre, a research centre that has hosted a veritable Who's Who of scientists, such as William Beebe and David Snow. Some of their pioneering studies of fruit-eating birds and of the relationships between frugivorous birds and their host plants are considered classics studies that have laid the foundation for later work by others. We will explore the grounds of the Asa Wright Nature Centre and also make a round of visits to other areas in Trinidad, including the famous Caroni Swamp, the Nariva Swamp, the montane forests at Blanchisseuse and Aripo, and the savanna regions on the island. Here you will be introduced to some of the fascinating natural history of the birds and plants of Trinidad.*

*During our stay at Asa Wright Nature Centre, we should see representative birds of many New World tropical families such as parrots, trogons, woodcreepers, antbirds, manakins, and motmots, as well as come to appreciate the fascinating expansion that several familiar groups, such as flycatchers and finches, have undergone. The Centre grounds are also home to one of the most accessible Oilbird roosting/nesting caves, and we will walk down to Dunstan Cave for a look at these avian wonders. During the field trips and natural history studies, we should encounter a number of particularly spectacular tropical birds, including the Scarlet Ibis, White Hawk, Blue-crowned Motmot, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Channel-billed Toucan, Bearded Bellbird, Golden-headed and White-bearded manakins, and a variety of tanagers, flycatchers, and finches. Early morning walks on the grounds of the centre will ensure an opportunity for repeated and often close observation of birds, as well as time to delve into the natural history of some of the fascinating birds, plants, and animals that we'll observe. Given the short distance walks and the proximity of birdlife to the centre, our Trinidad & Tobago program is one of our least strenuous Neotropical birding tours.*

*Participants wishing to have a broader understanding of this tiny but bird-rich country are offered an extension to the island of Tobago. Here we'll have great opportunities for repeated views of jacamars, trogons, and antbirds in an island setting where diversity is low but at the same time unique, as it holds a few endemic bird species not found in Trinidad as well as the best seabirding of the tour in Little Tobago, where tropicbirds, boobies, and frigatebirds abound.*

*Tobago will show us a somewhat different ecological picture than Trinidad. The climate of Tobago is noticeably drier than that of Trinidad, and there are striking differences in both the flora and fauna. Being smaller than Trinidad and also isolated from mainland South America for a much longer period of time, the bird life is less diverse—much more like a true island avifauna. A number of species are more numerous here than in Trinidad or South America. Visitors will notice, for example, that Barred Antshrikes and Bananaquits are found in every terrestrial habitat on the island. Further, a small number of birds, mostly species favoring drier habitats, occur here but not on Trinidad (although most certainly they were on Trinidad in the past). These include Rufous-vented Chachalaca, Red-crowned Woodpecker, Olivaceous Woodcreeper, White-fringed Antwren, Blue-backed Manakin, Venezuelan Flycatcher, Scrub Greenlet, and Black-faced Grassquit. A few of these will be seen, along with a number of waders and ducks, including perhaps the White-cheeked Pintail. In addition to the forest and birds, we think you will be enchanted by Tobago's lovely seashores—some of the prettiest anywhere.*

**March 1, Day 1: Arrival in Trinidad.** Participants should plan to arrive on the island of Trinidad today. You will be met at the airport and transferred to the Asa Wright Nature Center.

NIGHT: Asa Wright Nature Centre

**March 2-6, Days 2-6: Asa Wright Nature Centre and Day Tours out from the Centre.** We'll have six nights lodging and meals at Asa Wright, which are sure to be fondly remembered. Most mornings we'll bird early from the famed Asa Wright veranda. The nectar feeders and fruit trays swarm with Purple and Green honeycreepers, not to mention legions of Bananaquits, but make way for larger visitors like handsome Chestnut Woodpeckers and Blue-crowned Motmots. Silver-beaked Tanager wows the onlookers, with plumage like maroon velvet and a bill that glints like polished silver. Brilliant Turquoise and Bay-headed tanagers often visit the nearby "tremor tree," and Channel-billed Toucans call from a treetop perch. Hummingbirds swarm the feeders and challenge one another: flashy White-necked Jacobins, miniature Tufted Coquettes, glittering Blue-chinned Sapphires, White-bellied Emeralds and Copper-rumped Hummingbirds. Massive Crested Oropendolas clatter in, and huge Lineated Woodpeckers scale nearby trees.

A walk down the Discovery Trail should offer many new sights: snapping White-bearded Manakins, a perched Common Potoo, a Violaceous Trogon overhead, a tassel-tailed Green Hermit visiting ginger flowers. A bit of searching—and following its very loud "bok!" calls—will help us find a Bearded Bellbird male, for frame-filling scope views. Its long, rubbery wattles shake as it shouts out its many decibel call.

Each day on Trinidad opens new birding vistas. One day, we will bird our way north and at higher elevation along the Blanchisseuse Road. We'll look here for flocks of brilliant tanagers: Bay-headed and Speckled tanagers, mixed with vivid Blue Dacnis. With good fortune we may see the huge, rare Trinidad Piping-Guan—with blue face and silvery patches in the wings—the sole endemic bird species of Trinidad and Tobago.

We'll look for Lilac-tailed Parrotlets, which prefer arboreal termite nests to excavate their own nests in, and Red-bellied Macaws, which munch on enormous Moriche palm seeds. The final day culminates with a boat trip among the Caroni mangroves where, before sunset, the boat ties up opposite a mangrove covered island. Nearing sunset, flock after flock of stunning, impossibly red Scarlet Ibises fly in and perch in the mangroves on the island, joined by hundreds of Snowy Egrets and Tricolored Herons. We'll raise our rum punches to the red glow of thousands of Scarlet Ibises, an ideal ending to our days of great birding on Trinidad.

NIGHTS: Asa Wright Nature Centre

**March 7, Day 7: Departure for Home.** After breakfast this morning, transfers will be provided to Piarco International Airport in time for various morning departures. Participants taking the extension to Tobago will be transferred to the airport for the short flight to the nearby island.

## TOBAGO EXTENSION

### MARCH 7-10, 2010

**March 7, Day 1: Flight to Tobago; Transfer to Cuffie River Nature Retreat, Tobago.** As soon as we arrive on Tobago, we will drive to nearby Grafton Estate and then on to the Bon Accord Marshes and mangroves to do some birding. This will be an excellent opportunity to see Blue-backed Manakin, White-fringed Antwren, Blue-crowned Motmot, Copper-rumped Hummingbird, Barred Antshrike, Plain Antvireo, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, and many others. Here a considerable variety of birdlife is possible, including Red-crowned Woodpecker, Scrub Greenlet, Caribbean Martin, Black-faced Grassquit, Gray Kingbird, and Mangrove Cuckoo. In addition to such ducks as White-cheeked Pintail and Black-bellied Whistling Duck, a variety of sandpipers, and quite often a Little Egret as well as numbers of Green Herons and night-herons are also possibilities.

NIGHT: Cuffie River Nature Retreat, Tobago

**March 8, Day 2: Little Tobago Island.** After some optional early morning birding near the Cuffie River resort and after breakfast, we'll drive to Speyside near the east end of Tobago to take a glass-bottomed boat excursion to Little Tobago. En-route to the island, our boatman will point out a number of reef fish and corals as we cover the short distance to Little Tobago. This rocky islet just a couple of miles off Tobago's northeast coast is the nesting site for a number of seabirds. Though the breeding schedules of the various species are scattered throughout most of the year, there are sure to be some breeding species here now, and other species will be present as well. The island is rocky and the vegetation scrubby (mostly palms, cactus and *Bursera* or gumbo limbo), but it is possible to view seabirds quite closely while on this tiny island, and of course, photographic opportunities abound. Among the species breeding here are Red-billed Tropicbird and Red-footed and Brown boobies (the latter two are usually present). Also present are Magnificent Frigatebird and Audubon's Shearwater (the latter nocturnal and rarely seen by day around the island, although our guide may know of a nest site we can observe during the day). On the February 2003 tour, we saw a White-tailed Tropicbird flying among the scores of Red-billeds. A few land birds also breed here, including Brown-crested Flycatcher, Chivi Vireo, Blue-crowned Motmot, and Pale-vented Pigeon.

After birding on Little Tobago, we will return to the Cuffie River Nature Retreat to explore the grounds and trails in the afternoon. The lodge grounds are home to a wide range of the special birds that we will be seeking out during our time on Tobago—from parrots and hummingbirds to motmots, tanagers, trogons, manakins, jacamars, birds of prey, and many more. We'll take full advantage of our proximity to wildlife while staying at Cuffie River, birding in the morning before outings away from the lodge, and at other junctures when time is available to walk the grounds. The lodge also features excellent food, an elevated swimming pool and deck, and other amenities that will enhance our stay on Tobago.

NIGHT: Cuffie River Nature Retreat, Tobago

**March 9, Day 3: Highland Forest and the Gilpin Trace.** The lowlands of Tobago, especially the western end of the island, are noticeably drier than on Trinidad. As we drive into the mountains of the east-central part of the island, however, this distinction is less apparent and a few highland valleys receive as much as 120 inches of rainfall in a year. In this highland lies the trail known as Gilpin Trace, our primary birding destination today. Here, in 1988, our guide, Adolphus James, rediscovered the White-tailed Sabrewing, a lovely hummingbird that had not been seen since a hurricane in 1963. The species occurs only on Tobago and the Paria Peninsula of Venezuela. Now that its whereabouts on Tobago are known, we hope to see it, along with Stripe-breasted Spinetail, Olivaceous Woodcreeper, and the lovely Blue-backed Manakin, among others.

This morning's forest walk is the most arduous part of the trip as it may require walking in ankle deep mud on the forest trail. If you don't bring rubber boots, they can be rented locally for this walk. Our guide on the island will arrange for a person who rents the boots to meet us at the trailhead. It is also a beautiful walk in the tropical forest, with many bird possibilities and a waterfall at the end of the trail.

After a picnic lunch in the highlands with an overlook of Bloody Bay, we will bird on foot for a while along the paved road through the highlands, with a chance to see quite a variety of the island's forest species, from Crested Oropendola and White-necked Jacamar to Red-legged Honeycreeper and Venezuelan Flycatcher.

NIGHT: Cuffie River Nature Retreat, Tobago

**March 10, Day 4: Flight to Trinidad; Conclusion of the Tour.** After a final breakfast and birding at Cuffie River, we will drive to the airport for the short flight back to Trinidad, to connect with the afternoon flight departure.

**TOUR SIZE:** Each tour part is limited to 12 participants.

**TOUR LEADER:** David Ascanio and local guides

**David Ascanio**, a Venezuelan birder and naturalist, has spent the last 25 years guiding birding tours throughout his native country, Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, Guyana, the Dominican Republic, western Ecuador, and Panama. He is especially interested in bird vocalizations, and has a private library containing sounds of more than 70% of all the birds of Venezuela, including some which are the only ones known to science. David speaks excellent English and combines superb birding skills with an astonishing command of bird vocalizations. He has published several manuscripts about the birds of the *llanos* (plains) and the tepui endemics for which he has become an authority. He is an excellent communicator, has a great sense of humor, and is tireless in helping others find birds and wildlife. These traits have made him the most popular naturalist/guide in his country.

**FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:** The fee for Trinidad is **\$2,295** per person in double occupancy from Port of Spain, Trinidad. This includes all food from breakfast on Day 2 to breakfast on Day 7, lodging, ground transportation during the tour, and guide services provided by the leader. It does not include airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs. If the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small party supplement may have to be charged.

The single supplement for Trinidad is **\$720**. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations, or if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you.

**ACCOMMODATIONS AT ASA WRIGHT NATURE CENTRE AND CUFFIE RIVER NATURE RETREAT:** At Asa Wright single accommodations are often limited and singles may be asked to share. If so, you will be credited accordingly. Also note that "closer in" rooms can be requested for participants with mobility problems. At Cuffie River, rooms are spacious with fans, but are not air conditioned. Participants with mobility limitations should request rooms at lobby level.

**FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:** The fee for the Tobago Extension is **\$1,325** per person in double occupancy from Port of Spain, Trinidad. This includes all food from lunch on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 4, internal round trip air from Trinidad to Tobago and return, lodging, ground transportation during the tour, and guide services provided by the leader. It does not include airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs. If the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small party supplement may have to be charged.

The single supplement for the Tobago Extension is **\$200**. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations, or if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you.

**TOUR REGISTRATION:** To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The deposit for this tour is **\$500** per person per tour part. If you prefer to pay your deposit by check, your tour space will be held for 10 days to allow time for the VENT office to receive your deposit and completed registration form. If you prefer to pay your deposit using a credit card, your deposit must be made with MasterCard or Visa at the time of registration. The VENT registration form should then be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office. Full payment of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to the tour departure date.

**EXCHANGE RATE SURCHARGES:** In the erratic global financial markets of today, it is difficult to predict foreign currency exchange rates over the long term or at the time of operation of a tour or cruise departure. Tour prices are based upon the rate of exchange at the time of itinerary publication. If exchange rates change drastically, it may be necessary to implement a surcharge. If a surcharge is necessary, every effort will be made to minimize the amount. In many cases, these additional foreign exchange rate surcharges are passed to VENT by its vendors and suppliers.

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** Cancellation penalties and refunds are based on the following schedule: if cancellation is made 120 days or more before the tour departure date, the deposit less \$300 per person is refundable. If cancellation is made fewer than 120 days before departure date, no refund is available. This policy and fee schedule also applies to pre-trip and post-trip extensions, as well as any transfers from one tour to another. *We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance for your protection.*

<u>If you cancel:</u>	<u>Your refund will be:</u>
120 days or more before departure date	Your deposit minus \$300.
Fewer than 120 days before departure date	No refund available.

**FUEL AND FUEL SURCHARGES:** In the uncertain, often volatile oil market of late, it is difficult – if not impossible – to predict fuel costs over the long term, and more specifically, at the time of operation of this departure. Our prices are based upon the prevailing fuel rates at the time of itinerary publication. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, if the fuel rates increase significantly, it may be necessary to institute a fuel surcharge.

**TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EVACUATION INSURANCE:** A brochure and application form for optional coverage for baggage, illness, and trip cancellation can be obtained through the VENT office. **We strongly recommend that you purchase trip cancellation** insurance as soon as possible to protect yourself against losses due to accidents or illness. VENT recommends *Travel Insured International* as our preferred insurance provider. Check with your insurance agent regarding coverage you may presently have via other insurance policies that may cover illness during your trip. **Waiver for pre-existing conditions is available; however, stipulations apply** usually requiring the purchase of the insurance soon after registering. Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as work-related cancellation, medical upgrade, and a “Cancel for Any Reason” clause among others. Contact *Travel Insured International* prior to registration for details. Not all insurance providers provide the same levels of coverage. If you purchase insurance through a company other than *Travel Insured International*, please be advised that rules and stipulations may be different.

**Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of \$50,000. CST #2014998-50.**

**AIR INFORMATION:** Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements.

**CLIMATE:** The temperature averages about 72-95 degrees. The mornings at Asa Wright can be wet and cool. In the lowlands the weather is usually warm and depending on the location varies from dry to very humid. Although we're visiting the island in the dry season, expect some showers. The rain patterns have been erratic in northern South America and sometimes we have had some rains in the afternoon.

**CLOTHING:** Lightweight clothes are best for the field, including long-sleeved shirts and either long pants or shorts. Shorts are good on most days and are cooler. Bring a hat and raingear, including an umbrella. Sneakers or walking shoes are fine; we recommend a pair of walking shoes or lightweight hiking boots with a Vibram or other good gripping sole, as the trails at Asa Wright Nature Centre can be a bit slippery and/or muddy. Walking sticks are

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available at the Centre. Rubber boots are also useful because of potentially wet grass and muddy trails, and as protection against chiggers, but are not essential. Dress will be casual at all times.

**CONDITIONS:** Several of the outings on Trinidad, including the walk to the Oilbird cave at Asa Wright Centre, are moderately strenuous, as they follow paths up and down hillside slopes. Also, most of the accommodations at Asa Wright require walking up and down one or more flights of stairs. In Tobago there will be at least one walk into a forest trail and a steep (optional) walk on Little Tobago to search for breeding sea birds.

**LAUNDRY:** Laundry service is available at Asa Wright Nature Centre for a reasonable fee.

**CURRENCY:** U.S. dollars are accepted in Trinidad, but it is best to convert a small amount to local currency. There is a bank open until 10 p.m. every night at the airport. The Asa Wright Nature Centre may also convert small amounts and will accept U.S. dollars or credit cards for purchases of items in their store.

**DOCUMENTS:** A valid passport, along with an ongoing or return air ticket, is required. Visas are not required for entry by United States citizens for stays of less than two months. Non-United States citizens should check with their consulate/embassy for instructions. Please hold on to the immigration card you receive en route, and keep it along with your passport in a safe place. You must surrender this card on departure.

**EQUIPMENT:** You should pack a pair of binoculars that are in good condition, along with a belt pack or day pack (good for carrying books, sunscreen, extra digital storage media, etc.). As a precaution, it is a good idea to pack your binoculars, a change of clothing, toiletry items, medications, and travel documents in your airline carry-on bag.

Other items should include a flashlight or headlamp and extra batteries, an alarm clock, notebook and pens, sunglasses, hat, sunscreen, and plastic protective bags or coverings to protect anything you want to keep from dust or moisture. It is important to bring a water bottle, as we will spend some days in the field all day. Your leader will have a spotting scope, but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so.

**HEALTH:** At this time, no vaccinations are required for travel to Trinidad. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) highly recommend that your yellow fever and tetanus be up to date. In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta. The CDC operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line 877-FYI-TRIP (394-8747) or you can check their website at [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel). Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: [www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/new\\_e.html](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/new_e.html) (click on travel health).

At the Asa Wright Nature Centre and Cuffie River Nature Retreat, pitchers of purified water are provided and there is a large container of purified water on the veranda at all times if you run out. There are few insects, but you should bring pump or spray (no cans) repellent for chiggers, which are common in the grass around both lodges, or wear rubber boots.

If you are taking prescription medication or over-the-counter medicine, be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the tour safely. Please consult your physician as necessary. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medication.

As standard travel precautions, you should always be up to date with tetanus shots, and strongly consider inoculations against Hepatitis types A and B.

**A Note About Chiggers:** This tour visits areas where chiggers are known to occur. Chiggers are tiny parasitic mites found in most warm weather areas of the southern United States and the world's tropics. They are especially numerous in grassy areas, where, in the immature stage, they attach themselves to other animals or humans who make contact with the grass as they pass by. Chiggers do not suck blood and the majority of the world's species do not carry disease. They do feed on bodily fluids, however, through a process in which a di-

gestive enzyme is produced by the chigger which essentially liquefies the skin around the area where the chigger is attached. The chigger is not usually attached to the skin for more than a few hours before it either falls off or is knocked off. Our bodies respond by producing a hardened area as a defense against the chigger's digestive enzyme. Though the chigger may be long gone, it is the presence of the hardened area, and the body's natural process of reabsorbing it that typically causes intense itching, often lasting for a week or more. Chiggers like to attach themselves to areas of thin skin, like around the ankles, beltline, undergarment lines, knees, and elbows.

Chiggers can be avoided by following these procedures:

- Avoid walking, or standing in particular, in areas dominated by grass. These areas are where one is most likely to encounter chiggers.
- Tuck your pants into your socks to avoid direct skin-to-grass contact. Chiggers can find their way through clothing, but this is a standard and effective prevention technique commonly employed by many.
- Apply a cream-style insect repellent, such as "Cutters" to your body from the waist down BEFORE putting on your clothing.
- Spray your pants and socks with a spray repellent such as "Cutters" or "Off." Repellants with high concentrations of DEET (70-100%) are most effective. You do not need to apply these to your skin, only to clothing. (Be careful as DEET will damage plastics and lens coatings). Repel Permanone is an odorless aerosol insecticide that offers perhaps the best defense against chiggers. It is available at various outdoor stores and can easily be found online. It should only be applied to clothes and allowed to dry before you dress. Never apply Permanone directly to the skin. Permethrin is known to be a highly toxic chemical to insects. It is the active ingredient in Permanone, but is present in a small amount (0.5%).
- Powdered sulfur applied to waist, bottoms of pants, sock and boots is also effective at repelling chiggers. However, be warned that clothes will retain the sulfur odor for several washings.
- Shower at the end of each day in the field. Use a washcloth to vigorously rub your legs, feet, and ankles.

By following these methods, you should be able to avoid all chigger bites, as well as tick bites. If, however, you are bitten by chiggers anyway, you can reduce or eliminate the symptoms by applying benzocaine or hydrocortisone creams, calamine lotion, After Bite, or any number of anti-itch products.

**MISC:** Departure Tax - \$100 Trinidad (approximately US \$17 per person) – amount and conditions subject to change without notice.

Electricity - The Asa Wright Nature Centre operates on 110 volt current.

Language - The national language is English, often spoken with a lilt. Hindi dialects, French patois, Spanish, Chinese, and Urdu are heard in some areas.

Time - 1 hour ahead of Eastern Standard Time

**PHOTOGRAPHY:** Because of the many birds at feeders by the Asa Wright House, this is an excellent place for bird photography.

**SUGGESTED READING:** Our website at [www.ventbird.com](http://www.ventbird.com) offers an affiliated online store that carries a wide variety of items for birding and nature lovers, including over 6,000 books. A portion of the sales from the store benefits the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. You might also want to visit such other online stores as [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), and for those out-of-print and hard-to-find titles, [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com), or [www.buteobooks.com](http://www.buteobooks.com), which specializes in ornithology books.

***Birds:***

M. Kenefick, R. Restall & F. Hayes. *Birds of Trinidad & Tobago*. Yale University Press. 2007. . 256 pp. 107 color plates with species accounts. Checklist of the Birds of Trinidad & Tobago, T&T Rare Bird Committee, indexes of scientific and English names. ISBN: 9780300135572. A must for birders visiting Trinidad.

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Ffrench, Richard. revised edition. *A Guide to the Birds of Trinidad and Tobago*. Wynnewood, Pennsylvania: Livingston Publishing Company, 1991. Excellent field guide/handbook.

Hammick, John and Richard Ffrench. *Bird Song of Trinidad and Tobago: an Aid to Identification*. Mandarin Productions, 2004. [3 CD set with 179 species]

Hilty, Steven. *Birds of Tropical America*. Shelbourne, VT: Chapters Publishing Ltd., 1994. Subtitle: "A watcher's introduction to behavior, breeding and diversity."

Hilty, Steven. *Guide to the Birds of Venezuela*. Second Edition. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002. Better plates than Ffrench book.

Restall, Robin; Clemencia Rodner and Miguel Lentino. *Birds of Northern South America. An Identification Guide. Volume 2: Plates and Maps*. Helms Field Guides, 2007.

### **Other Vertebrates:**

Murphy, John C. *Amphibians and Reptiles of Trinidad and Tobago*. Malabar, Florida: Kreiger Publishing Company, 1997. Excellent thorough coverage of the islands' herps.

### **General Ecology:**

Forsyth, Adrian and Ken Miyata. *Tropical Nature*. New York: Scribners, 1984. A good layman's introduction to tropical biology. Highly recommended.

Kricher, John C. *A Neotropical Companion: An Introduction to the Animals, Plants and Ecosystems of the New World Tropics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989. Another good introduction to Neotropical biology.

Snow, David W. *The Web of Adaptation: Tropical Bird Studies*. Collins, 1976. Excellent introduction to the ecology of fruit-eating birds. Written in popular, readable style and based mostly on studies conducted in Trinidad. Good list of references. Recommended!

### **Fish:**

Chaplin, Charles C.G. *Fishwatcher's Guide to West Atlantic Coral Reefs*. Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Harrowood Books, 1972. Waterproof.

Greenberg, Idaz. *Guide to Corals and Fishes of Florida, the Bahamas and the Caribbean*. Miami, FLA.: Seahawk Press.

### **Trees/Plants:**

Duncan, E. Julian. *A Guide to the Wild Flowers of Trinidad and Tobago*. Asa Wright Center, 1993.

Hargreaves, Dorothy and Bob. *Tropical Trees Found in the Caribbean, South America, Central America, Mexico*. Kailua, Hawaii: Hargreaves Publishing Company, 1965. Available at Asa Wright Nature Center.

Hargreaves, Dorothy and Bob. *Tropical Blossoms of the Caribbean*. Kailua, Hawaii: Hargreaves Publishing Company, 1960. Available at Asa Wright Nature Center.

Seddon, S.A. and G.W. Lennox. *Trees of the Caribbean*. London: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1980. Available at Asa Wright Nature Center.

### **Cultural Background:**

De-Light, Dominique and Polly Thomas. *The Rough Guide to Trinidad & Tobago*. London: The Rough Guides, 2001. Current, thorough tourist guide with lots of background essays.

Naipaul, V.S. *A House For Mr. Biswas*. New York: Vintage International, 1961, 1989. The Nobel Prize winning author's most acclaimed novel about life in postcolonial Trinidad.

**TIPPING:** As noted in our itineraries, tipping (restaurants, porters, drivers, and local guides) is included on VENT tours. However, if you feel one or both of your VENT leaders or any local guides have given you exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are not expected and are entirely optional.

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc. (VENT) and/or its Agents act only as agents for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motor coach, boat, or airplane and assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity which may be occasioned either by reason of defect in any vehicle or for any reason whatsoever, or through the acts or default of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT and its agents can accept no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. All such losses or expenses will have to be borne by the passenger, as tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. The right is reserved to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. The right is reserved to substitute leaders on any tour. When this is necessary, notification will be given to tour members. No refund will be made for any unused portion of the tour unless arrangements are made in sufficient time to avoid penalties. The prices of the tours are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect on June 30, 2009 and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change therein. The right is reserved to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely. The airlines concerned and their agents and affiliates are not to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time passengers are not on board their aircraft. The passenger ticket in use by said airlines, when issued, shall constitute the sole contract between the airlines and the purchaser of these tickets and/or passenger. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for these tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airline Reporting Corporation.