

Barbados - “Gem of the Caribbean Sea”



Island Summary:

For many, Barbados quite simply epitomises the perfect Caribbean holiday destination - breathtakingly beautiful seas, white coral sands and swaying coconut trees lining the coasts. Visiting birders, however, discover that in addition to the quintessential tropical paradise, Barbados is also home to a fascinating fusion of regional specialities, migrants and vagrants not seen on many other islands. The perfect place to enjoy some relaxed birding at the beginning or end of your holiday.



Barbados is home to a number of regional indigenous species, such as this glorious Green-throated Carib and Antillean Crested Hummingbird (photo © Benjamin Young - Birding the Islands client)

Highlights:

Explore a sand dune-bordered saltmarsh and windswept sands on the southernmost point of the island for a selection of resident and migrant aquatic species, including the nominate subspecies of **Golden Warbler**, fabulously coiffed **Antillean Crested Hummingbird** (which on Barbados is the only subspecies in the region to have turquoise in its frontal shield) and bedazzling **Green-throated Carib**; an array of large shorebirds drawn to the seasonal waters swarming with fiddler crabs; as well as feasting **Little** and **Snowy Egret**, **Green Heron** and territorial **Belted Kingfisher**. Meander along flat, well-maintained coastal paths lining the rugged east coast, and with the deep sapphire blue waters of the Atlantic as a backdrop, enjoy an audience with such delights as **Black-whiskered Vireo**, **Caribbean Elaenia**, **Common Ground Dove** and **Scaly-naped Pigeon**, while in the skies overhead watch for **Black Swift** and **Caribbean Martin** streaking towards nests in limestone cliffs. On an island with few freshwater wetlands, aquatic species are concentrated in easily navigable ponds, often harbouring such treasures as **Masked Duck**, **Pied-billed Grebe**, the *Caribea morph* of **American Coot** and flocks of **Black-bellied Whistling Duck**. Graeme Hall

Swamp, the largest remaining mangrove wetland on the island, is an idyllic destination for migrant warblers such as **Northern Waterthrush**, **Prothonotary Warbler** and **Black-and-white Warbler**, as well as a fervently sought refuge for many a vagrant seeking suitable habitat following an erroneous Atlantic crossing - recorded sightings include: **Grey Heron**, **Eurasian Spoonbill**, **Purple Heron**, **Black Tern** and **Glossy Ibis**.



Barbados is one of the best islands in the region for views of Masked Duck (photo © Alexandra Chenery - Birding the Islands); Caribbean Martins breed on the island (photo © Yves-Jacques Rey-Millet - Birding the Islands client)

Other things to do in Barbados:

- Visit buildings and landmarks of cultural and historical significance to discover more about the history and heritage of her people.
- Enter into the 'spirit of the fete' aboard a catamaran cruise on the sparkling azure waters of the Caribbean Sea. Swim with the turtles, snorkel amongst shipwrecks and coral reefs, enjoy unlimited local drinks and tuck in to a scrumptious buffet lunch of local dishes, before heading back to dry land.
- Relax on the glistening white sand beaches that line the west coast, or take a refreshing walk along the rugged shores on the east of the island.
- Fancy something a little more adventurous? Try your hand at SUP (Stand up Paddle boarding); ride the waves at the world-famous 'Soup Bowl' in Bathsheba; or don your helmet for a bike tour of the island's lesser-known interior.
- Relax and rejuvenate with a private Yoga or Reiki session with our fully qualified Yoga teacher and Reiki Master, Alex, of *Spinning Arrow Yoga & Holistic Healing*.