



Birding the Islands Ltd: The Perfect Combo
19-29 November 2017

Barbados:



The view out of the plane window as we arrive into Barbados

Day 1

You get the feeling it's going to be a great birding trip when the first day kicks off with an endemic chick rescue!

Making our way to breakfast a few of us heard the plaintive cries of a young Barbados Bullfinch on the stairwell. Distinguished from their Lesser Antillean counterparts by both genders being a soft neutral brown with russet wing bars, this little bird had not long fledged, but somehow managed to find itself trapped in the stairwell. Fortunately we return him to the safety of a bougainvillea hedge before he is trodden on and within minutes the parents are making up for lost time by frantically flying back and forth, beaks laden with grub, attempting to satiate a seemingly insatiable appetite.

The lil guy safe and sound! >>



After a leisurely breakfast on the seaside verandah, enjoyed while overlooking the turquoise waters and white sandy beaches for which the southern coastline is so renowned, we make our way to Chancery Lane Marsh. Here John has quite the introduction to Bajan wildlife when a large male Green Vervet (monkey) ascends a rocky limestone outcrop and leaps to within a metre or so of his feet. This turns out to be a scout, and shortly thereafter the whole troop becomes visible, popping their olive green heads out from amongst the button mangroves that thrive here in the southernmost tip of the island. The marsh stretches as far as the sand dunes lining the beach to the south and below us are a number of species taking advantage of the great weather and prime feeding conditions. Tricoloured Heron, Belted Kingfisher, Caribbean Coot, and a host of migrant waterfowl are dotted amongst the wetland below us. From our lofty viewpoint we follow well worn paths down through the grassland to the east of the marsh where we enjoy an entertaining display by a cohort of male Grassland Yellow Finch and meet the plucky Black-faced Grassquit.



We later take the scenic east coast road that snakes its way along the rugged Atlantic coastline of the island to a sheltered lily pond and reliable site for Masked Duck. Local knowledge pays off as we are rewarded with incredibly close views of two males - their brilliant blue beaks gleaming in the tropical sun.

<< The north of the island is known for wild seas, but it makes for a spectacular picnic site!

At only 21 miles long, even with regular stops, it doesn't take long to travel the length of the island and before we know it we are standing at its northernmost tip - a haven for migrant shorebirds, and regular flight route of Caribbean Martins. Here, perched atop the highest cliffs on the island and gazing out across the deep blue waters of the Atlantic, we enjoy a delicious picnic of roti and bajan conkies washed down with coconut water straight from the shell. Now this is what life in the tropics is all about!



^^Barbados is one of the easiest islands on which to get incredibly close views of migrant shorebirds. This one small wetland provided us with Pectoral, Least, White-rumped, and Semipalmated Sandpipers, along with both Lesser and Greater Yellowlegs ...and this was taken with a cellphone!

Day 2

We begin the day in a mangrove wetland home to one of the greatest concentrations of flora and fauna on the island. After entering the Graeme Hall Nature Reserve at daybreak we make for the ornate Leaf Deck from which we are granted fabulous views of the 34 acre wetland . Gazing out across the brackish waters of the main lake, the rising sun reflected in it's tannin-rich waters, the dorsal fins of massive Atlantic Tarpon begin to breach the surface and Red-eared Sliders seek out their favoured perches on the long tendril like roots of Red Mangroves. It is early enough that Snowy and Little Egrets have not left their roosts and even those nocturnal specialists the Black-crowned Night Herons have not yet retreated in response to the sun's advance.



Dawn on the Leaf Deck at Graeme Hall Nature Reserve

Although now sadly closed to the public, as a former employee, myself and my group are granted exclusive access to the impressive boardwalk winding its way through the reserve and we make use of this opportunity by getting unrivalled views of a host of forest dwelling species, from Scaly-naped Pigeons and Zenaida Doves to Bananaquits and Green-throated Caribs. Overhanging Flamboyant Tree limbs support the dainty figures of Caribbean Elaenias and Black-whiskered Vireos and observation blinds offer perfect cover from which to watch skulking herons. In the beautifully flowering White Wood Trees so common on the island, the terse sharp call of Carib Grackles (surely soon to be split to the Barbados Grackle due to the striking variation in sexual dimorphism in these birds, compared to those on other Lesser Antillean islands) and trill song of Gray Kingbirds greet the coming dawn, while a sole male Golden Warbler announces his interest in a nearby female through melodious song. Hours while away here in this perfect patch of paradise and the birding is easy, relaxed and rewarding.

For those in the group who are interested in exploring underneath as well as above the waves, a snorkelling trip to the Folkstone Underwater Reserve follows, where we have the opportunity to fully immerse ourselves in that glorious Caribbean Sea and get acquainted with inhabitants of one of the most famous coral reefs on the island.



<< A Green Heron hunting amongst red mangrove roots at Graeme Hall Nature Reserve - photo by Birding the Islands client John Dyson

St.Lucia:

Day 3

I'm writing this entry as the gentle lapping of the hotel pool drifts up to my balcony overlooking the dense forested mountains of St.Lucia's interior. There is a thoroughly pleasant ocean breeze sweeping over the nearby hillsides and ever so softly the sweet sounds of '60s calypso waft upward from the coastal village of Dennery perched on the edge of the Atlantic Ocean.

While in St.Lucia we stay at locally-owned and operated Foxgrove Inn >>



We are in St. Lucia, and this truly is an idyllic island for nature enthusiasts. Towns and settlements are very much concentrated along the flat coastal areas while the interior is defined by mountainous terrain impractical for large scale development. Such a topographical deterrent has been instrumental in preserving the extensive pristine habitat essential for the multitude of bird species that thrive here. Our first day birding here has been absolutely superb!

At 8:30 in the morning we had caught a Liat flight from Barbados and jetted across the Caribbean Sea until the dark green silhouette of volcanic St.Lucia came into view. The birding began with a visit to a favored haunt of all three indigenous hummingbird species . The first to greet us - the imposing (in hummingbird standards) Purple-throated Carib. Initially seen perched at eye level on a bare guava branch, this dominant male was a constant ball of nervous energy, incessantly swinging his head from side to side (the sunlight dancing from one side of his opal throat to the other) as he scanned his preferred feeding flowers for signs of would-be invaders. Keeping limbered up with the odd wing stretch he would shoot off in the blink of an eye were any rival to intrude on his patch. He reluctantly shares this territory with the two other species of hummingbird that call this charming and peaceful island Home, and as we strolled through a landscape dotted with an array of tropical flowers and fruits the chatter and buzz of several hummers constantly surrounds us.

From this secret site in the north east we'd driven a short distance through groves of bananas bursting with crop to the spectacular Bay of Anse Louvet, an ideal location to begin to explore the many wonders of St.Lucia's dry forest.



Once here a flash of yellow signals the arrival of our first endemic - the adorable and intricately patterned St.Lucia Warbler. Gazing down upon us with a soul searching stare exacerbated by immaculately framed eyes, he was quickly joined by the equally dainty and almost mouse-like St.Lucia Peewee, before both were chased off by the arrival of the comparatively heavy-set and burly Scaly-breasted Thrasher.

<<This gorgeous St.Lucia Warbler was the first of several endemics seen by us in the dry forest (photo by Birding the Islands client: John Dyson)

The subtle "chuck chuck chuck" of the St.Lucia Wren beckoned us further still along this unassuming path, stretching through a forest positively teeming with regional wonders. Lesser Antillean Flycatcher, Grey Trembler, St.Lucia Black Finch and a family of five extremely rare White-breasted Thrasher all being seen here for the first time.

Birding here allowed us the opportunity to occasionally gaze out through the cecropias towards the stunning coastline, our vista further enhanced by the flitting of flambeau butterflies - delicate flames of the forest dancing at mid story amongst the trees. Before we left, calls higher up were the signal for binoculars to train on the canopy, and resulted in our first sighting of the dazzling Antillean Euphonia.

Driving along the winding roads and motorways of the north of the island on our way to our next destination we had stopped for a refreshing Piton lager at a kabawé (local bar) where we met Papa - busy making coconut oil, and reminiscing about the good ol days when St.Lucia housed 28 million coconut trees, and business was booming, but after corn oil became "d nex bess new ting" his is a trade now left in the hands of a few determined small farmers. Papa is quite a character. Like many of the inhabitants of these deeply rural communities he is still tied to the land, having repressed the urge to dash for the bright lights of Castries. During our time on island we meet others like Papa, whose charming life stories are refreshingly representative of the Caribbean of yesteryear.

To say that we were well fed on the trip is an understatement. We frequented numerous local establishments and were rewarded with a true taste of the Caribbean. On offer here at a Kabawé - Creole yard fowl, yam, plantain, rice and peas, coleslaw, and macaroni pie!

Back at the Foxgrove Inn and after a delicious dinner of trigger fish prepared to perfection by the brilliant head chef (a local st.lucian who honed his skills in Paris) we



revelled in sitting back, relaxing and recounting the highlights of the days birding over a cocktail (or two).

Day 4

We hear them first, that telltale cackle of parrots the world over, echoing across the Mont Gimie valley. Then we see them - flying in from the direction of the nearby Des Cartiers Rainforest, a pair of glorious St. Lucian parrots, the sun glinting off of their vibrant red, blue and yellow secondaries. We had parked ourselves directly opposite a golden apple tree frequented by parrots in the area, and true enough, this pair didn't disappoint. The female perched in the uppermost branches of the tree and the male opted for a thick branch below. Almost immediately they begin to feed, their beaks slicing into the succulent flesh of the ripening golden apples, our scope offering a detailed window into their everyday lives. We beckon two farmers who had just arrived over to have a look. Not always a friend to farmers (as the multitude of singly bitten golden apples littering the base of the tree would indicate) these men nonetheless slowly make their way over, and as the first one lowers his eye to the scope his beaming smile is that of a man who, while reliant on these fruits for a living, can apparently not help but be

impressed by the incredible beauty of the aptly named *Amazona versicolor*.



<<We got excellent views of these St. Lucia parrots feeding (photo by Birding the Islands client: John Dyson)

By mid morning we enter the Des Cartiers rainforest itself, a habitat defined by giant tree ferns, royal palms heavy with fruit and towering emergents with gargantuan buttress roots. We make our way up a gentle incline to a lofty viewpoint where we are soon treated to our second sighting of the island's national bird. On this

occasion there are three Amazonas (probably two parents and their sole offspring) screeching and flapping in that heavy laborious way of all parrots, dutifully following the linear route of the river snaking its way along the valley floor below. The flashing of their wings light up the dark verdant greens of the forest - a fantastic sight.

Suddenly, darkening clouds signal the arrival of the only rain we encounter on the entire trip. It is a sharp, heavy downpour of about fifteen minutes, but as we shelter in an observation hide, far from being an inconvenience, it is instead a moment to savor and cherish. Here deep within primary rainforest the life giving rain that nourishes such a variety of species is a wonderful spectacle to experience, and the effect it has on the forest birds is equally remarkable. Purple-throated Caribs and Bananaquits begin a comical dance in the tree canopies - ruffling and fluttering their bodies up against the compound leaves of mimosa trees and letting the water that has gathered there wash over their tiny bodies. The rain stops just as suddenly as it began, and with it, the as yet unseen St. Lucia Oriole and Rufous-throated Solitaire make an appearance from deep within the tree cover into the emerging sunshine where they erupt into song. Lesser Antillean Swifts also arrive in the skies overhead and begin to stoop and wheel in mid air in search of the host of insects that have taken flight after the rains. Life is truly all around us here in St. Lucia.



Heading into Des Cartiers...

Along the breathtaking west coast of the island we stop for lunch at a popular eatery where pickled octopus is the special of the day. While taking a stroll down to the beach to scan the waters for Brown Boobies, Magnificent Frigatebirds, and a host of terns and gulls, we are somewhat surprised to see the impressive outline of neighbouring Martinique rising from a band of low lying cloud gathered on the horizon.

Trinidad:

Day 5

Flying into Trinidad, one is greeted by vast swathes of mangroves and the extensive channels of water connecting them. As we fly in low over the treetops we beam from ear to ear at the sight of Trinidad's national bird, the stunning Scarlet Ibis, serenely flying over the Caroni Swamp below. What a magnificent sight. There are surely few reds in nature more vibrant than that of the ibis!

We arrive at our accommodation for the next 4 days, the internationally renowned Asa Wright Nature Centre and immediately make our way to the verandah of the main lodge, a setting for what is surely one of the most incredible birding experiences in the Western Hemisphere. On the verandah with its stunning backdrop of hundreds of acres of lush, rich tropical rain forest we are instantly surrounded by dozens of hummingbirds feeding on lantana sage, viburnum and numerous feeders dangling at eye level from the roof of the lodge. There is a

furious buzzing of wings as the diminutive but courageous Black-throated Mango whizzes passed my ear to see off three White-chested Emeralds who according to the affable lady tending the bar have encroached on his favourite feeder.

While busy watching two intricately patterned Green Hermits (the giants in this collection of miniature hummers) do battle amidst a dense patch of heliconias beneath us, a call goes up that gets everyone's attention - Long-billed Starthroat!

>> *We were amazed at the beak to body ratio of this Long-billed Starthroat (photo by Birding the Islands client: John Dyson)*



We all rush to the east side of the deck to catch a glimpse of this infrequent visitor to the verandah.

A star attraction indeed. And yet still they come, White-necked Jacobins resembling the ornate pendulum of a cuckoo clock swaying from side to side directly in front of our noses, their colours perfectly highlighted in the tropical sun. The deepest blue, most emerald of greens and that beautifully patterned white neck - incredible. Blue-throated Sapphires and Copper-rumps, so close you can see their minuscule white-socked feet gripping the feeders, are joined by dazzling Purple Honeycreepers, Yellow Orioles and Bay-headed Tanagers. By this point, we've been out here for two hours, but no one wants to leave. We are fully captivated by the array of sights and sounds all around us, and are unanimous in our decision to stay put and soak it in.



White-chested Emerald and wasp seen from the verandah at Asa Wright

Raucous calls signal the arrival of a flock of Crested Oropendolas swooping in to survey proceedings, their magnificent blue eye rings glinting in the sun. Looking a little further afield to a massive emergent laden with epiphytes and said by locals to represent the beginning of the forest, an Olive-green Woodpecker determinedly hammers its beak against the trunk, not feeding we soon realize, but instead chiselling out a hole for this year's young. A flash of copper below gets my attention - it's the glinting scales of a massive Tegu lizard slowly sauntering out of the hibiscus hedge and into the blazing sun. As I'm shaking my head in disbelief trying to fathom the scale of life all around us, a gong sounds - lunch time, everybody to the buffet table!



<<Purple Honeycreepers were all around us (photo by Birding the Islands client: John Dyson)

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The rest of the daylight is spent exploring the Centre's easily navigable trails where White-lined Tanager, Cocoa Thrush, Bare-eyed Robin, White-bearded Manakin and a host of other fabulous species are seen.

>>Tegu Lizards are frequently seen at Asa Wright (photo by Birding the Islands client: John Dyson)

17:30 signals a shift in personnel as members of the night watch begin to build in number and those active during the day slowly fade back into the forest. Scores of Pallas's Long-tongued Bats now take to the feeders, gripping them as the hummingbirds do and slurping to their hearts content. House Geckos become more active, darting out from behind large leaves to grab unsuspecting moths, and frogs sing...and how they sing. Every imaginable peep, whistle, boom and grunt can be heard emanating from the deep dark beyond.



After a delicious buffet dinner with an extensive selection of lamb, chicken, steak, array of locally grown vegetables and rice and sweet potato, finished off with pineapple yoghurt, cheesecake and brownies we gather at 8 for a night walk led by a knowledgeable guide based at the Centre. She leads us down the well tarmacked winding driveway entrance to Asa Wright bordered on both sides by the forest. Whip Scorpions, giant stick insects, a Velvet Worm, a sleeping Owl Butterfly, and a roosting Green Honeycreeper are all highlights, but the star of the show is a slumbering Great Antshrike. Everyone is thrilled.

Day 6

We begin the day by heading to the upper level of the car park to scan the Vervain Verbena for the one hummingbird that had proved elusive on the verandah, but the one that everyone wants to see on Trinidad - the Tufted Coquette. Small species after small species are sighted, identified, enjoyed, but ultimately abandoned. Then, the merest whisper of a pale tail band. "Was that it?" "I don't know, that bunch of flowers is blocking the rest of it, but wait...it's moving!" Eventually it flits out from behind the shrub, turns on a profile and myself along with Jane and Don, a lovely couple from the UK who my group and I spent many a delightful evening with swapping birding tales out on the verandah, get a chance to see those fabulous black spotted orange sideburns . Yesss! Successsss! A male Tufted Coquette! He continues feeding by effortlessly whizzing from one flower to another. This is a very small bird that from a distance could easily be mistaken for a moth or bumble bee. Small, but utterly magnificent. Indeed so magnificent that within minutes he's won the affection of a female, who together provide Jane, Don and I with our first sighting of an "on the wing mating". They zip by our feet at high speed perfectly matching the others wing beats, resembling in that split second a couple of daredevil para-gliders, before disappearing up and over a crest. What a privilege.

Hummingbirds had been the order of the early morning, but now it was time to concentrate on the owner of that astonishing metallic call that we'd heard emanating from the depths of the surrounding forest pretty much since we arrived. We follow the call to a majestic nutmeg tree, and there on a branch perched at mid story is the most incredibly attired bird I think I've ever seen. An oversized jet black mouth, subtle but fabulous cinnamon, white and black plumage, but the showpiece - that extravagant beard. The impressive wattles dangle mid-chest and quiver as he produces that remarkable call, announcing his intention to outcompete other males and in so doing lure a female into his territory. The Bearded Bellbird is surely a must-see for every birder.

Having been treated to such an entertaining and close encounter with the bellbird, we moved a little further down the trail and soon heard the high pitched call of yet another target species - the Golden-headed Manakin. No sooner had we heard the call than a magnificent gold streak darted across the trail. Wow! What a bird! It was a splendid male and he soon began to display, hopping from one low hanging branch to another and then back up to his original spot , every move accentuated by that unmistakable gold head - perfectly defined against his jet black body.

Day 7



This was a favourite feeding flower for this Green Hermit (photo by Birding the Islands client: John Dyson)

The next morning began as many others do at Asa Wright, with breakfast and a hot beverage enjoyed on the balcony gazing out across the sprawling Arima rainforest. As the hummingbirds, honeycreepers and tanagers made their customary way to the surrounding flowers and fruit trees, a family of six agouti foraged nearby and a dazzling Blue Morpho darted in and out of the hibiscus below.

Then over the morning coffee chatter a cry went out: WHITE HAWK!! Everyone on the balcony rushed to the eastern end of the deck with such urgency that had we been on a ship we would surely have capsized. But our enthusiasm is justly rewarded with stunning views of this beautiful and majestic raptor.

The raucous call of a pair of Orange-winged Parrots interrupts our viewing session and those of us not fixed to a scope use our bins to hone in as these noisy but lovely smaller Amazonas leave their roosts and make their way to a favourite feeding tree.

This Orange-winged Parrot watched us as we had breakfast (photo by Birding the Islands client: John Dyson) As it turns out this tree happens to be right above our breakfast tables and we soon all shift en masse to the western side of the balcony where we enjoy the company of these wonderful birds. The always entertaining oropendolas are already gathered in the same tree, but a distinctly smaller bird soon adds to the growing menagerie - a Guianan Trogon! The day just keeps getting better and better and by mid afternoon we actually add two other species of trogon (Collared and Green-backed), a slough of antbirds and wood creepers as well as a stunning male Scaled Pigeon to our list.

Day 8

The next day we make for Aripo Savannah and Aripo Heights where we have fabulous views of two more raptors - a low flying Grey Hawk buzzing a stand of bamboo, and a pair of Short-tailed Hawks.



The brilliant birding continues and as it so happens, today is the day that I make an astonishing discovery: it is impossible for me to watch Green-rumped Parrotlets << for longer than 5 minutes and not have my heart melt. I don't often use the word cute when birding, but I can't help myself with this bird. What an utterly adorable little puffball of a bird, with its soft cream coloured beak, delicate facial features, and small compact body. A perfect parrot in miniature.

While I am staring spellbound at "my" parrotlets, Ken has been scanning a nearby lily pond and soon gives the cry many of us had been hoping for ..."caiman"! A young

Spectacled Caiman had emerged from the water and made its way out onto an exposed bank to bask in the warmth of the tropical sun. With gaping jaws, and subtle movements that allow the sunlight to dance across its glistening scales it is the star of the show, until, staggering out of my parrotlet/caiman induced stupor, I catch sight of a Masked Cardinal flitting in the branches of a nearby mangrove. Cue even more excitement and much snapping of cameras.

Our final stop today is the Caroni Swamp which we'd seen on our flight into Trinidad and which is one of the most famous wetlands in the Caribbean. We still have some biscuits and coconut bread left over from the four course picnic that Asa Wright had packed for our day trip and we decide to take these, along with the unopened bottle of rum punch, to enjoy while on our boat tour of Caroni!



Heading out into Caroni Swamp (as you can see from the smile, Ken was already into the rum punch!)

There is no sight in Trinidad quite like that of the ibis coming in to roost in Caroni. The vivid reds are further enhanced by our being able to see them against the dark green of the mangroves, and as they arrive from every direction they are so often framed against the brilliant blue of the tropical sky. The colours are truly staggering and this spectacle is something that every nature lover will revel in. As we turn and head for home the boatman shows off his exceptional eyes by firstly spotting two sleeping Cooks Tree Boas and secondly by negotiating the channels through the mangroves in the dark. Well, someone has to drive...

>>Scarlet Ibis flying over our head on their way to their roosts for the evening (photo by Birding the Islands client: John Dyson)



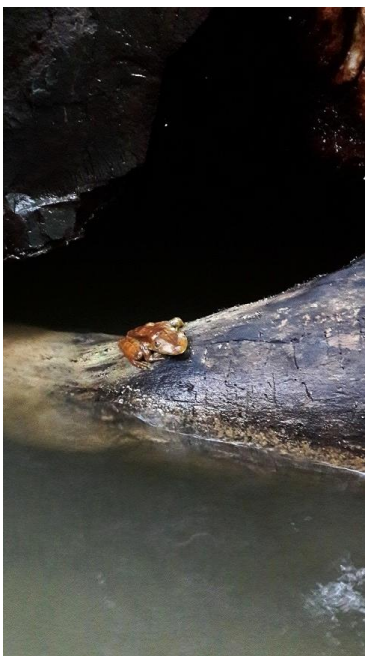
<<They make a spectacular contrast against the dark green of the mangroves (photo by Birding the Islands client: John Dyson)

Day 9

On our last full day of the trip, we take the highly anticipated walk down to the oilbird cave . In an effort to control the number of people who have access to the cave, this little trafficked trail must be taken with an Asa Wright guide. Restrictions to access make wildlife bolder and a new sighting at the start of this trail is a Giant Ameiva , an 18" two-toned lizard with a spectacular green/bronzed halved body. In terms of novelties though, this proves to only be the beginning, for on this secluded trail lined with fresh water springs and small waterfalls we see three endemic species. The first is the spectacular Trinidad Mot-Mot. What an impressive bird! The turquoise blue on its head reminding me instantly of the ocean colour around my home island of Barbados and its long dangling pendulum of a tail proving to be positively hypnotic. The odd design of the tail is actually a case of self-mutilation as all young in the nest instinctively pluck feathers from just above the base of their tail to create the odd gong at the base. We enjoy spectacular views of this oft-elusive bird a mere 15 feet away!

Our second endemic proves to be a little more foreboding as our knowledgeable guide points to the well hidden lair of a Trinidad Chevron Tarantula...and it's occupied. Continuing on the path we soon arrive at the mouth of the cave. Here perched on the lush ferns overhanging the spring that winds its way into the cave we enjoy brilliant views of the charming little Trinidad Stream Frog . While stooping over to have a better look at this third endemic species of the day, the most unearthly and sinister call erupts from within the cave. My hair stands on end, and all of us bar the guide recoil in fright, whereupon he laughingly explains that this is the call of the Oilbird. We venture in and are soon rewarded with unbelievably close views of the prehistoric-looking species that early explorers referred to as El Diablo! For a cave dweller, the bird itself is huge, with a wingspan of almost four feet and a sharp hooked beak (perfectly designed for plucking palm fruits off the trees at night) that only adds to its sinister appearance. A remarkable bird, probably the most remarkable I've seen in all my travels (after the Hoatzin).

As we exit the cave mouth and our eyes readjust to the light, a quick glance skywards is rewarded by the sight of a flock of dainty and beautiful Turquoise Tanagers flitting amongst the forest canopy. We are well and truly back to the land of the living!



To wind down this perfect day I take a leisurely walk along the Heliconia Trail, the sound of running water steadily increasing as I near its lowest point. There, perfectly nestled within four moss covered boulders is a crystal clear natural pool. A series of small waterfalls cascade into it from two different directions, causing intricate swirls to form on the surface of the water. It looks very inviting indeed. Making my way through a stand of glorious flowering heliconia I am soon fully submerged in the refreshing spring water. Gliding across the pool my eyes are drawn skyward to the overhanging palms and bamboo, higher still to the cecropias and mangoes and the tanagers quenching their thirst from the epiphytic plants clinging to their branches. Later I catch a glimpse of an odd shape on a log just above the water line. I am not alone in this little slice of Eden. I'm sharing the pool with a massive googly-eyed Giant Tree frog. A deep russet orange with those tell-tale long suction capped toes splayed out before him, he allows me to drift ever closer until I am literally inches away, his big beautiful eyes staring deeply and intelligently into mine. His relaxed nature and reluctance to jump away hint at this very much being "his pool", but in this tranquil, utopian setting, perhaps there's room for one more.

Barbados:

Day 9

We arrive back to Barbados mid afternoon, the perfect time to visit the very beaches we'd seen an hour earlier from the air.

A rum cocktail at sunset draws the curtain on our Caribbean odyssey, but just before all of our eyes fix on the horizon in the hope of seeing that famous green flash, a final glance into the clear water below is rewarded by the sight of four hawksbill turtles simultaneously coming to the ocean surface for air! If I had not experienced it, I would not have believed it, and the same could be said of our tour; a perfect setting, a perfect spectacle, a fitting end to Birding the Islands: The Perfect Combo!