Full Detailed Itinerary - Puerto Rico: Enchanted Island Endemics

Day 1: Arrival in San Juan; transfer to Manati

Following an early afternoon arrival in the Puerto Rican capital, at 13h00 we will gather and drive west towards Manati, perhaps picking up the first of our Puerto Rican endemics in the afternoon, including Puerto Rican Woodpecker. In the evening we will make our first foray into night birding, checking a local forest for the endemic Puerto Rican Screech-Owl.

Day 2: Manati to Southwest Puerto Rico

The first option of the morning will depend on local regulations at the time. If possible, we will check a local protected area for Puerto Rican Parrot, the toughest and rarest of the endemics, Critically Endangered with a global population numbering in the low hundreds this is one of Earth's rarest birds. After that, we will check another local reserve for hummingbirds. Puerto Rican Emerald, Puerto Rican Mango and Green Mango all occur there. After this stop, we will head south to the drier southwest corner of the island, visiting some wonderful wetland areas (Laguna Cartagena) in the afternoon, which could yield West Indian Whistling-Duck, Masked Duck, Least Grebe, and a host of ducks, shorebirds, and other waterbirds. The scrubby edges are also home to Caribbean Elaenia, Puerto Rican Flycatcher, Gray and Loggerhead Kingbirds, Pearly-eyed Thrasher, Black-faced Grassquit, and the lemon-yellow Adelaide's Warbler. We will check into a delightful coastal resort near the town of Guanica for a three-night stay, checking the mangroves on the edge of town for the endangered Yellow-shouldered Blackbird coming into roost in the afternoon.

Day 3: Maricao State Forest and Cabo Rojo

In complete contrast to our afternoon in the coastal lowlands, the afternoon before, we will welcome the shade and elevation of the forest on this morning (around 2600ft/800m), when we visit Maricao State Forest, north of our base. This beautiful area of montane forest hosts some real top-quality specialties, we will seek out Elfin Woods Warbler among the forest vines, and small, active groups of Puerto Rican Tanagers (an endemic family) roaming the mid-story. Other island specialties we will be seeking, include the shimmering Green Mango, striking Puerto Rican Lizard-Cuckoo, Puerto Rican Vireo, the scarce Antillean Euphonia, Puerto Rican Bullfinch, and the tangerine-breasted Puerto Rican Spindalis. Wintering warblers from the boreal north may also be present, like Black-throated Blue and Black-and-white Warblers, and American Redstart. There may be time in the afternoon, to cover some more coastal areas west of La Parguera, for another dose of shorebirds and wetland species. In the evening, we will check a local spot for the local Puerto Rican Nightjar, before returning to our delightful beachside hotel.

Day 4: Wildcard day in Southwest Puerto Rico

Today will have some flexibility to it, and it is deliberately left open so we can roam where need to, depending on how we have done with the other endemics of Puerto Rico. We will pick sites, depending on what gaps we are seeking to fill on our list. There are nearby mountain rainforests, like Maricao, coastal scrub sites all around, and humid forests to the south, all within easy reach. Whatever, we decide, we will return to Guanica on the south coast for a final night.

Day 5: Guanica to Northeast Puerto Rico

We will swap the dry southwest of the island, for the wetter northeast corner, where we will be seeking two particular hummingbirds; Green-throated Carib and Antillean Crested Hummingbird. These will be searched for at a variety of sites near Naguabo, where we will stay for the final night of the tour.

Day 6: Departures from San Juan

After breakfast, we shall pack up and leave for the airport as a group, maybe stopping for any of the hummers, or other targets, if we still need them, completing our circumnavigation of Puerto Rico by getting to the airport in time for departures after midday (12h00).

Toll free from the USA & Canada: (800) 348-5941

International number: +1-409-515-9110

Toll free from the UK: +0800-046-5654

Email: info@tropicalbirding.com