



# ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

## Jamaica

### Small Group Tour

#### Island Endemics

*25<sup>th</sup> March to 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023 (6 days)*



Jamaican Tody by Clayton Burne

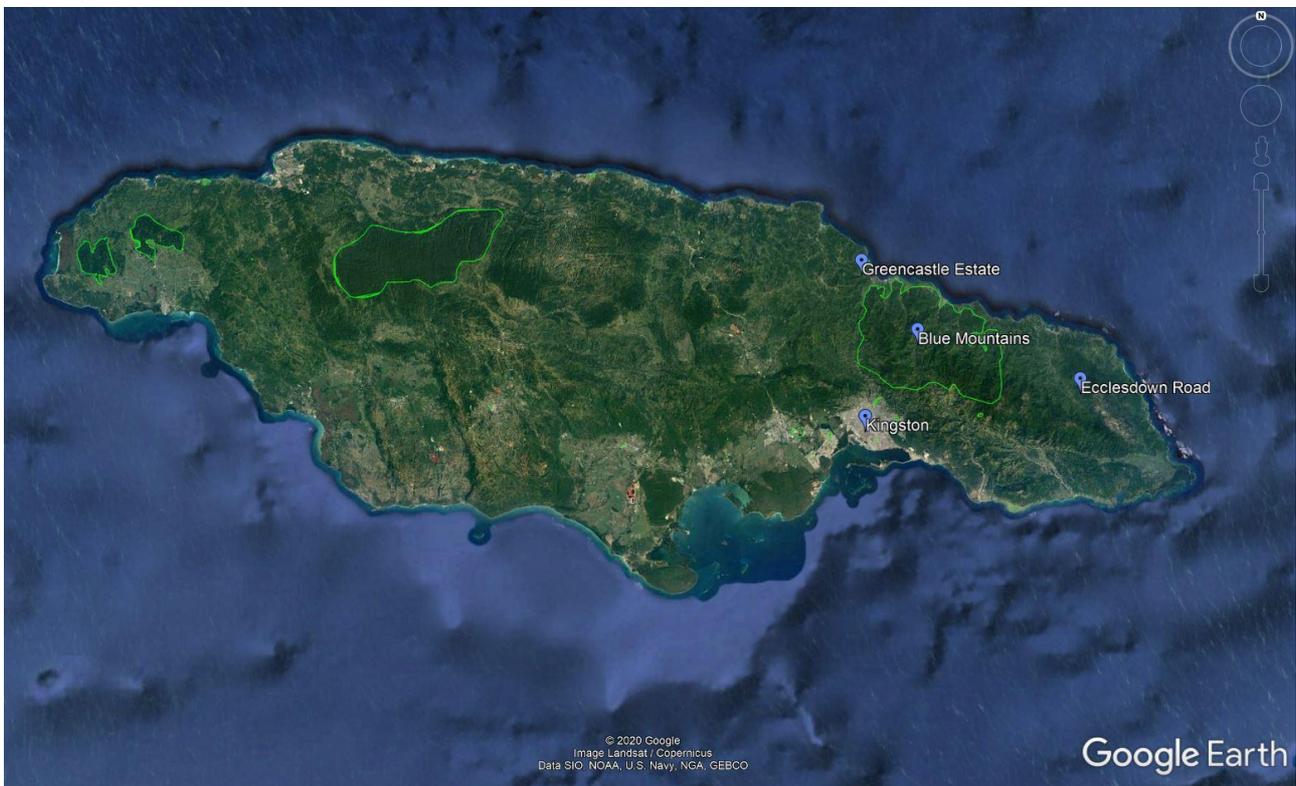
*Although perhaps better known for its luxurious beaches, outstanding coffee and great Reggae music, the island of Jamaica has much more to offer both the avid birder and more general naturalist alike. Ranking fifth in biodiversity among the world's islands, our 6-day Jamaican birding tour provides the perfect opportunity to encounter all 28 of the island's endemic bird species plus numerous other Greater Antillean specialities. This we will do by thoroughly exploring the island's great variety of habitats, from the evergreen forests of the Blue Mountains to the ultramarine waters of the northern coast. Just a few of the highlight species include Jamaican Owl, Jamaican Mango, Jamaican Becard,*

*Jamaican Tody, Crested Quail-Dove and both Red-billed and Black-billed Streamertails. Our lodgings are perfectly located to allow us to stay in the same place for the entire tour! Not only are our lodgings very comfortable, they are right in the middle of the specific, endemic laden forest we intend to bird.*

**THE ITINERARY**

<b>Day 1</b>	<b>Arrival in Kingston and transfer to Green Castle Estate</b>
<b>Days 2 &amp; 3</b>	<b>Birding Green Castle Estate</b>
<b>Day 4</b>	<b>Hardwar Gap and the Blue Mountains</b>
<b>Day 5</b>	<b>Ecclesdown Road</b>
<b>Day 6</b>	<b>Final departures</b>

**TOUR ROUTE MAP...**



## THE TOUR IN DETAIL...

**Day 1: Arrival in Kingston and transfer to Green Castle.** Your adventures in Jamaica start this afternoon in Kingston. From the international airport, we will take a group transfer to Green Castle Estate in the north of the island, where we shall be based for our entire stay in Jamaica.



**Red-billed Streamertails by Owen Deutsch**

The original Arawak and Taino indigenous people from South America first settled the island between 4000 and 1000 BCE and

named it Xaymaca, meaning the 'Land of Springs'. This is rightfully so as more than 120 rivers flow through Jamaica from the central mountain region to the coasts.

Depending on how much light we have available, we may be able to bird the gardens for our first Jamaican Endemics in the form of Jamaican Woodpecker, Jamaican Euphonia or the near-endemic Jamaican Oriole.

**Days 2 & 3: Birding Green Castle Estate.** During our next two days, we will be birding the environs of the Greencastle Estate along some of their 20 miles of private trails. Situated on a historic plantation overlooking the Caribbean. The nearby stone ruins of a 300-year-old windmill tower that once processed sugar cane serves as a poignant reminder of the island's deep-rooted and often painful history. Here Columbus claimed Jamaica for Spain after landing in 1494, but the island was later seized by the British to become one of the world's leading sugar-exporting, slave-dependent nations, resulting in a blend of cultures that has profoundly influenced the history of the entire West Indies.



**Jamaican Owl by Owen Deutsch**

The hummingbird feeders on the patio here attract the charming Jamaican Mango that sparkles lavender in the sunlight. From the lodge grounds, we can watch for Jamaican Lizard Cuckoo, Sad Flycatcher and Orangequits whilst also delighting in the antics of the tiny Vervain Hummingbird and dazzling Red-billed Streamertail (Jamaica's national bird), while also encountering an impressive number of North American migrants on their wintering grounds, including Black-throated Blue, Cape May and Prairie Warblers. Northern Parula, terrestrial Ovenbird and the tough Swainson's Warbler will provide more of a challenge.



Early mornings can be magnificent with endemics such as the cute and confiding Jamaican Tody, flocks of Ring-tailed Pigeon, Jamaican Oriole, vocal Rufous-tailed Flycatcher, the tiny Jamaican Pewee and robust Chestnut-bellied Cuckoo lumbering through the canopy. Curious White-chinned Thrushes and Jamaican Vireos can be watched at our leisure, while we will keep an eye overhead for both Yellow-billed and Black-billed Amazons, Olive-throated Parakeet and Jamaican Crow.



Crested Quail-Dove by Rich Lindie

Near endemics form a good part of our birding endeavours and we have good chances of finding the range-restricted Greater Antillean Bullfinch, Jamaican sub-species of Loggerhead Kingbird (possible future split) and Caribbean Dove. There is a slim possibility of finding the entertaining Arrowhead Warbler, though they are more reliable in the Blue Mountains.

Local ponds and dams host a handful tricky Caribbean species, including West Indian Whistling Duck and Caribbean Coot, while also hosting commoner species such as Blue-winged Teal, American Coot, American Wigeon and Ring-necked Duck. We will certainly spend a night or more searching for some of Jamaica's nocturnal inhabitants such as the endemic Jamaican Owl and the slightly more widespread Northern Potoo.

**Day 4: Hardwar Gap and the Blue Mountains.** Today we will leave Green Castle to spend a day in the coffee-famous Blue Mountains. Here the roadside birding takes us through the immaculate forest, laden with mosses, lichens, orchids, ferns and bamboo, where we will carefully watch for the secretive Ruddy and endemic Crested Quail-Doves. White-chinned and White-eyed Thrushes abound along the road edge.



Jamaican Euphonia by Clayton Burne

The ethereal songs of Rufous-throated Solitaire echo through the wet gullies and eventually we hope to be able to track down a fine specimen. We are also on the lookout for the range-restricted Greater Antillean Elaenia, confiding Blue Mountain Vireo and the tricky Arrowhead Warbler.

We will pay special attention to any subtle sounds of falling debris to help alert us to the presence of what we hope is our last target, the endemic Jamaican



Blackbird, which usually forage in bromeliads overhead. A stop at Hardwar Gap will give us spectacular views of the surrounding misty mountains, high above the capital city of Kingston. We stand a good chance of finding the scarce Yellow-shouldered Grassquit, which normally forages at the forest edge, as well as more widespread endemics such as Jamaican Spindalis. In the afternoon, we will slowly make our way back down the mountains towards Buff Bay and onwards to our lodgings.

**Day 5: Ecclesdown Road.** An early start will see us heading to the John Crow Mountains and the famous Ecclesdown Road, for our final assault on any remaining Jamaican remaining endemics. Here we have great chances of seeing a wide variety of species including such highlights as Black-billed Streamertail, Chestnut-bellied Cuckoo, Jamaican Crow, both Black-billed and Yellow-billed Amazons, Jamaican Elaenia and the bold Jamaican Becard.



Arrowhead Warbler by Rich Lindie

In the afternoon we shall head back to Green Castle Estate to enjoy a spot of afternoon garden birding. As well as enjoy our final dinner together before our departure tomorrow morning.

**Day 6: Final departure.** All good things must come to an end today. After breakfast, we shall depart our lodgings for the transfer to Kingston International Airport where our tour will come to an end.

### **FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:**

**Tour dates, prices, single supplement rates, approximate flight costs and spaces available for this tour are displayed on our website. Please see under IMPORTANT NOTES below.**

#### **The tour price includes:**

- All meals from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 6;
- Purified bottled water each day;
- All lodgings during the tour;
- All ground transportation;
- All national park and other reserve entrance fees; and
- All guiding services (including tips for local guides and services).

#### **...and excludes:**

- ANY flights;
- Visa fee (if applicable);
- Any drinks other than mentioned above;
- Special gratuities; and
- Telephone calls, laundry and other items of a personal nature.

**Single Supplement:** The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBL cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you



choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

**IMPORTANT NOTES:**

- a) Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is however fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing (usually 4 months before the tour.) The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates, which are also quoted in the respective fixed currency.
- b) Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration a small party supplement will have to be charged.
- c) Furthermore, these costs are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.
- d) Lastly, we may be forced to change or alter the itinerary and / or the designated Rockjumper leader at short or no notice due to unforeseen circumstances; please be aware that we will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.

**Tippling:** As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, restaurants etc.) are included on this tour. However, this does NOT include your Rockjumper leader. If, therefore, you feel that he has given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip him.

**Please note**

- Due to limited facilities, single accommodation is not always available on this tour.
- This tour does not require a high level of fitness; however, much of the forest birding will be on foot and may require walking for several hours at a time (always at a slow pace).
- Accommodations is of a very comfortable standard. Please note that more exclusive rooms on the estate attract a surcharge.

**ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE DETAILS:**

This tour **does not** include ANY airfares. The tour starts on **Day 1** at Kingston International Airport. Please make sure that you arrive in advance of 12:00 for a group transfer to our accommodation in northern Jamaica. The tour will conclude by late morning on **Day 6** at Kingston International Airport. **Please note: We strongly recommend that you book your return flights only AFTER 14:00 to ensure sufficient time for check-in and any other formalities.**

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your **Tour Confirmation** package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

**FLIGHTS:**

Norman Manley International Airport, Kingston (IATA: KIN) is the main port of entry for international flights into Jamaica and is well serviced by most international carriers. **Please DO NOT book any flights until you have consulted the Rockjumper office for confirmation on the status of the tour.**

