



## THE TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB

# GUYANA 2002

March 24 – April 3, 2002

Continuing its programme of visits to other territories in the region, the Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club organized an 11-day trip to Guyana in March and April 2002. The main objective of the trip was to visit the Rupununi Savannah and the Iwokrama International Centre for Rain Forest Conservation and Development. The itinerary included visits to the Amerindian communities of Surama, Annai and Fairview and to the Karanambu Ranch. The group also overnighed at the Emerald Tower eco-resort near Timehri Airport before setting out for the interior. The final day was spent in Georgetown.

Eighteen members took part in this trip. Owing to limited facilities at some of the locations to be visited, members were divided into two groups. Group "A" went by road to Iwokrama, then to Surama and on to the Karanambu Ranch in the Rupununi before flying back to Timehri. Group "B" travelled to Annai by air with a 2-hour stopover at Kaieteur Falls, and then continued by road to Surama and Iwokrama.

The images that follow are a compilation of photographs taken by members of both groups.

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### EMERALD TOWER

After their arrival from Trinidad the group stayed overnight at the Emerald Tower Resort, located off the highway a few miles from the coast. A blackwater creek, a tributary of the Demerara River, flows through the resort.



photo: JP



photo: JP

One bank of the creek has been partially cleared, creating a beach and recreation area. Guests are accommodated in wooden cabanas that blend with the surrounding forest.



photo: CH

These photographs show the lake and recreation area.

The white sand is the actual soil in the area, not imported material. Here it is in stark contrast with the water, which is coloured by decaying vegetation.



photo: CH



photo: CH

The vegetation along the creek is reminiscent of Trinidad's savannas. Moriche palms are common.





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Setting off to explore the creek.  
photo: DM



Tree-frog seen along the creek.  
photo: DM

The time spent at Emerald Tower was too limited to allow full appreciation of the wildlife. However, the bird life was evidently quite rich, with several species being sighted including toucans and Moriche orioles, and dozens of macaws congregating at the lake at dusk.

## IWOKRAMA



After the 7-hour drive from the coast, Group A gathers at the Essequibo river crossing near the Iwokrama Field Station..

photo: DM





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photo: DM

The group's introduction to the exotic wildlife of Guyana came even before their arrival at Iwokrama. This sloth was encountered during the journey.



photo: DM



photo: DM



Iwokrama Field Station

photo: CH



The Essequibo ferry.

photo: JP





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Iwokrama was the last stop on Group B's itinerary before returning to civilization. Members took the opportunity to clean up after "roughing it" for several days.  
photo: JP



With Iwokrama Ranger Dexter at one of the giant Mora trees in the Iwokrama forest.  
photo: DM



photo: DM





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The lookout point on Turtle Mountain affords visitors a panoramic view of the Essequibo valley.  
photo: DM



On the Turtle Mountain trail  
photo: DM



photo: GW  
Two views of the Essequibo River.  
Above: At the Iwokrama Field Station.  
Below: Near Lake Stanley.



photo: CH



Amerindian petroglyphs in the Essequibo, exposed at low water. They may have been swept downriver from their original location.  
photo: JP





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photo: DM



photo: DM

Two nights were spent at Muri Scrub Camp, a tarpaulin camp within the Iwokrama reserve. From here, forest walks were arranged; one of them was to Cowfly Camp and then upriver to a location where petroglyphs could be viewed. Accommodations (above) were somewhat less luxurious than those at the Field Station!



photo: DM



photo: DM



This poison-arrow frog was among several seen near Cowfly Camp after heavy rainfall.  
photo: CH





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photo: CH



photo: JP

The road to Iwokrama and the Rupununi is unpaved and heavily rutted at many points. These photos illustrate the obstacles that vehicles have to negotiate along this road.

The road takes a heavy toll on the vehicles - one of the 4x4's almost didn't make it to Georgetown.

Below: An emergency repair job on the Land Cruiser.



photo: CH





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At the village of Fairview, just upriver from the Field Station, the steps in the processing of bitter cassava were demonstrated. First, the cassava is grated (top left), then pressed to extract the toxic juices (above). The end product (lower left) is used to make farine.

photos: DM







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Visiting a family at Fairview  
photo: DM



Members of the local Wildlife Club display their banner. They were preparing exhibits for a regional meeting of conservation groups.  
photo: JP





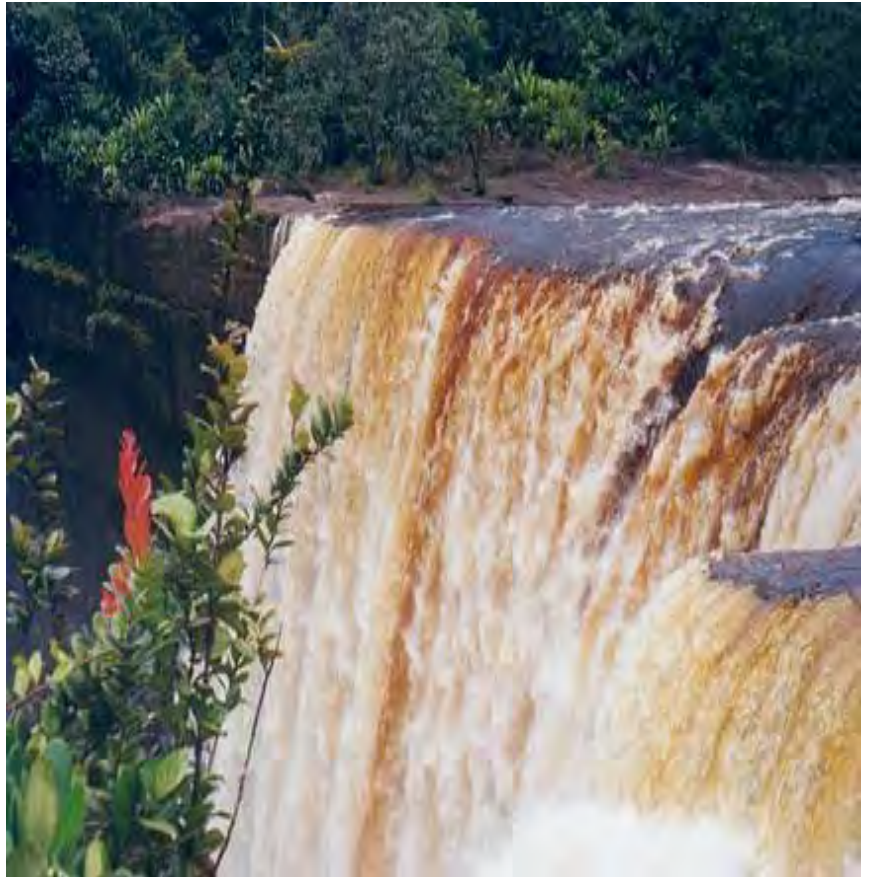
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### KAIETEUR FALLS

While the members of Group A were on their way to Iwokrama, Group B flew to Kaieteur Falls. After landing at the airstrip on the plateau above the Falls, they followed the trail along the rim of the gorge. The trail offers spectacular views from several points as one approaches the Falls. The trail ends on the river bank at the head of the waterfall.



The first view of the Falls from the trail along the rim.  
photo: JP



View from one of the closer observation points.  
photo: JP



On the trail to the Falls. The giant bromeliads in the background are a prominent feature of the vegetation.  
photo: JP





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Below are some of the flowering plants found on the Kaieteur plateau.



photo: CH



photo: CH



photo: CH





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photo: CH



photo: CH

## ANNAI & ROCK VIEW

From Kaieteur Falls, Group B went on to the North Rupununi where they stayed at Rock View Lodge, near the village of Annai. Trips were organised to the village, the foothills of the Pakaraima Mountains and the Rupununi River.



The transition from mountains to savannah  
photo: GW



General view of the savannah, with the  
Pakaraima Mountains in the background  
photo: DM



An Amerindian settlement at the foot of the mountains.  
Once an important industry in the Rupununi, cattle  
ranching is still done on a much reduced scale.

photo: JP





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photo: CH



photo: JP

The Amerindian (Makushi) village of Annai.  
Most of the buildings employ the traditional thatched roof and either mud walls (left) or the increasingly popular clay-block walls (right).



photo: DM



photo: JP

At Rock View Lodge.  
Left: Captive tapir, kept along with monkeys, tortoises and breeding agoutis in the Lodge's mini-zoo. Right: Dining under the mango trees.





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Some examples of vegetation found on the savannah  
photos: CH







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The Rupununi River, the major waterway in the region,  
flows a few miles south of Annai.

photo: JP

## SURAMA (PART 1 OF 2)

The village of Surama is located at the transition between the savannah and the mountains. This gives the area a rich diversity of ecosystems, and the villagers have capitalized on this to make their village an important centre for eco-tourism.



The paths of the two groups crossed at Surama. This joint photo was taken as Group A was leaving the guest house and Group B was taking up residence.

photo: DM



The Resource Centre (left) and the "old" Guest House building

photo: JP



Selwyn with our hosts

photo: DM





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The Anglican church  
photo: JP



Relaxing at Uncle Theo's home. The drinks  
are cooled in a solar-powered refrigerator.  
photo: DM



photo: DM



photo: DM

Almost all the young people of Surama are active in the conservation effort. Above, the young audience at the village school is invited to ask questions of the TTFNC members seated on stage. Below, our members are entertained with songs and dances based on wildlife-related themes.



photo: DM



photo: DM





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### SURAMA (PART 2 OF 2)



Carahaa Landing Camp on the Burro Burro River  
photo: JP



Boarding the boats for a trip down the Burro Burro  
photo: DM



Heliconia inflorescence  
photo: DM



Farewell photo at the Guest House.  
photo: DM





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### KARANAMBU (PART 1 OF 2)

After leaving Annai, Group A took to the boats for the two-hour trip upriver to Karanambu Ranch. Formerly a cattle ranch, Karanambu has been transformed by its owner Diane McTurk into the leading nature centre in the Rupununi.



Travelling up the Rupununi to Karanambu.  
photo: DM



Crested Caracara, perched along the river bank.  
photo: DM



Localized iron-rich deposits at  
Karanambu Ranch.  
photo: DM



Caiman were frequently seen along the Rupununi.  
Above: Spectacled Caiman.  
Below: A Black Caiman emerges from the water to feed  
on scraps of fish left along the riverbank.  
photos: DM





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Fishermen drying their catch.  
photo: GW



A highlight of the visit to Karanambu was the opportunity to meet the famous "Otter Lady", Diane McTurk. Here she is seen with some of the giant river otters she has nursed and released back into the wild.



photo: DM



photo: DM



photo: GW





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Dinner at the ranch.  
photo: DM



Typical ranch building.  
photo: DM



The Victoria Regia lily (*Victoria amazonica*),  
Guyana's national flower  
photo: DM





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Party boat?  
photo: DM



Laurent and Deo proudly display their catch.  
photo: DM



Peacock bass  
photo: DM





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All too soon, it's time to head home.  
photo: DM



Tired and pensive, the members of Group B  
reflect on their adventures.  
photo: DM





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### GEORGETOWN AND DEMERARA



The Demerara River at Timehri, a few miles upriver from Georgetown  
photos: JP



Bauxite works at Linden  
photo: CH





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Two of Georgetown's historic buildings: the Town Hall (left) and St. George's Cathedral (right.)  
The latter has the distinction of being the largest wooden structure in the world.

photos: JP



The interior of the Cathedral.

photo: CH



Street scene with Stabroek Market in the background

**The End**