

PRESS RELEASE

August 23, 2010

## Guyana “On the Map” at 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual British Birdwatching Fair

**Rutland Water, England** – While on a 2010 birding familiarization (fam) tour in Guyana, Tim Appleton, the co-founder of British Birdwatching Fair, proclaimed, “Guyana is on the map.” During the interview with Bill Thompson, III, Mr. Appleton continued, “The reason it’s on the map has a lot to do with the fact that these fam tours are really working. And in Britain, for example, for the Birdfair last year 22,800 people attended and Guyana had a very obvious presence. They gave lectures, they brought people over from Guyana to talk to customers, and it’s this commitment that this country has got that will take it way beyond, I think, places like Costa Rica because I think that Guyana will keep the naturalness.”

With memories of recently seeing 350 different species of Guyana’s birds – including the Harpy Eagle, Guianan Cock-of-the-Rock, and Capuchinbird – Mr. Appleton was an excellent ambassador for Guyana at the 2010 British Birdwatching Fair (Birdfair), which took place at Rutland Water, England from August 20-22.

According to [www.birdfair.org.uk](http://www.birdfair.org.uk), Birdfair – now in its 22<sup>nd</sup> year – is “birdwatcher’s Glastonbury. Birdfair encompasses the whole spectrum of the birdwatching industry whilst at the same time supporting global bird conservation...There are hundreds of stands selling the latest products for wildlife enthusiasts...everything from scopes to sculptures, binoculars to bird food, eGuides to eco-holidays.”

The eco-holidays are why a group of representatives from Guyana attended Birdfair for the fifth consecutive year. The Guyana stand was staffed by Indranauth Haralsingh, Director of the Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA); Avalon Jagnandan, Coordinator of National Events and Projects for Guyana’s Ministry of Tourism, Industry & Commerce; Paul Waldron, Operations Manager at Iwokrama International Centre for Rainforest Conservation and Development; Kirk Smock with the Guyana Sustainable Tourism Initiative, a joint

program of the GTA and the United States Agency for International Development/Guyana Trade and Investment Support (USAID/GTIS) project; Tony Thorne and Claire Antell of the Guyana-based tour operator Wilderness Explorers; and birding guide Wallydyke (Wally) Prince.



At Birdfair, the team promoted Guyana to international tour operators, hundreds of potential visitors, and media. In addition to handing out materials and talking to visitors at the Guyana stand, Mr. Thorne and Mr. Prince presented a lecture titled, “Where to See the Specialty Birds of Guyana.”

There were more than 15 international tour operators advertising and selling Guyana trips at this year’s Birdfair; that number is up from only one or two companies that were selling Guyana at Birdfair just five years ago. The operators all reported strong interest in the country and many praised Guyana’s strategy of working to support them while also generating the necessary media coverage to help drive consumer demand.

Tim Earl, a guide for the tour operator The Travelling Naturalist said Guyana’s successful strategy has made



it “the best example in the world as a country that has embraced wildlife tourism.” Of the tourism fam trip that he was on, Mr. Earl said, “The fam trips are really good. We came back knowing all you need to know to sell Guyana.”

Mr. Earl relies on his in-country experience to market and sell Guyana to potential clients at events like Birdfair. He has now led two sold-out trips to Guyana and announced at Birdfair that The Travelling Naturalists’ 2010 trip just sold out. He then added, “I’m sure that eventually we’ll get to the stage of being able to sell two trips [to Guyana].”

Guyana was also well represented at Birdfair by the Greenheart Trust, an organization that works with grassroots conservation organizations in Guyana; Yupukari Village’s Rupununi Learners and Caiman House; and the South Rupununi Conservation Society and tour company Rupununi Trails, both based at Dadanawa Ranch.

Guyana’s strong presence at Birdfair has – as Mr. Appleton said – put the destination on the map. In the past, people came to the Guyana stand with questions about where Guyana is, what birds and wildlife are there, and why it’s worth visiting. Now, tour operators point to itineraries and pictures of Guyana in their catalogs and visitors can buy the Guyana guidebook at the Bradt Travel Guides stand.

Birders and nature lovers came to the stand to reminisce about recent trips to Guyana or to talk about an upcoming holiday there. Many now seek out the booth (instead of simply stumbling by it) as well, because they know of and about Guyana, have it on their list of destinations to visit in the near future, and have specific questions about planning their trip.

#### CONTACTS:

##### **Indranauth Haralsingh**

Director, Guyana Tourism Authority  
P: 592-219-0094  
E: haralsingh@yahoo.com

Of course, for those that have visited, Guyana often sells itself. As Mr. Appleton said during his last trip, “Guyana has the most staggering array of birds, from the wonderful Harpy Eagle to the exotic Guianan Cock-of-the-Rock and many wonderful woodland birds. It probably has more intact forest than any other country in the whole of South America...There are local communities who are actually caring about their environment and they see the value of looking after it. And now you’ve got a government that realizes the potential of using this wonderful resource and keeping it as it is rather than destroying it.”

Guyana’s participation at Birdfair will be followed by the annual Guyanese Summer’s Evening on 24 August in London. The GTA, Ministry of Tourism, Industry & Commerce, USAID/GTIS, Wilderness Explorers, Iwokrama International Centre, El Dorado Rum and Bradt Travel Guides are sponsoring the event.

This year’s feature presentations will be by explorer Colonel John Blashford-Snell on his experiences visiting the Wai Wai Amerindians in Guyana; Chris Parrot, co-founder of Journey Latin America speaking about his visits to Guyana; and Kirk Smock talking about his experience authoring the Bradt guidebook to Guyana. Iwokrama, Guyana Tourism Authority, El Dorado Rum, and Wilderness Explorers will also be providing updates on their latest developments.

For more on birding and tourism in Guyana, visit [www.guyanabirding.com](http://www.guyanabirding.com), [www.guyana.travel](http://www.guyana.travel) and [www.guyana-tourism.com](http://www.guyana-tourism.com). For more information on Birdfair, visit [www.birdfair.org.uk](http://www.birdfair.org.uk). The interview with Tim Appleton can be heard on Bill Thompson III’s *This Birding Life* podcast episode about Guyana: <http://www.birdwatchersdigest.net/podcasts/m4a/episode26.m4a>.

##### **Kirk Smock**

GSTI Senior Writer  
P: 592-223-7144  
E: ksmock@carana.com