

Jamaica - "feel the vibe"



Island Summary:

Jamaica...just the name conjures the image of stunning white sand beaches, glittering turquoise waters and palm trees swaying in the breeze. The third largest island in the Caribbean, Jamaica boasts a wide variety of habitats - from coastal wetlands and moist montane forest to dry sweeping savannahs and verdant tropical forest - all of which combine to support a hugely impressive 28 endemic bird species and an incredible array of regional specialties. For its size, the levels of endemism amongst flora, reptiles, amphibians, and of course birds, are some of the highest and most distinctive in the world. Jamaica is an island positively bursting with life - truly a must for any birder!



Jamaican Mango and Jamaican Tody (photos © R Miller - Birding the Islands)

Highlights:

Head out under the light of your head torch in search of nocturnal dwellers such as the **Jamaican Owl** and Northern Potoo.

Explore areas of arid wilderness, which at first glance may seem a rather hostile and barren environment, for such species as **Jamaican Vireo**, **Jamaican Mango**, **Yellow-shouldered Grassquit**, near-endemic **Stolid Flycatcher (*stolidus*)**, **Greater Antillean Bullfinch (*ruficollis*)**, and **Bahama Mockingbird (*hillii*)**.

Enjoy up-close views of one of the island's two endemic *Amazona* species: **Yellow-billed Parrot**, and the majestic **Red-billed Streamertail** - endemic to Jamaica, and the island's national bird - is a spectacle not to be missed!

Discover such delights found in Jamaica's montane forests as the furtive **Crested Quail-Dove**, threatened **Jamaican Blackbird**, **Chestnut-bellied Cuckoo** (locally known as the "old man bird"), **Jamaican Lizard-Cuckoo**, **Blue Mountain Vireo**, **Jamaican Elaenia**, **Rufous-tailed Flycatcher**, **Arrowhead Warbler**, **Jamaican Woodpecker**, and the charming **Jamaican Tody** (which often offers very close encounters). Be

treated to good looks of **White-chinned** and **White-eyed Thrush**, while the simply spectacular and ultimately unique colouring of the endemic **Jamaican Spindalis** make it easily recognisable in its abundance.

Be sure to visit the single most endemic-rich site in the entire Caribbean, where the second of the island's endemic *Amazona* species **Black-billed Parrot** can be found, together with the jet black **Jamaican Crow**, and the glorious endemic **Black-billed Streamertail** - now restricted to the far east of the island. In addition, the endemic **Orangequit** should provide excellent views, and other endemics possible include **Jamaican Becard**, **Jamaican Pewee**, **Sad Flycatcher**, **Ring-tailed Pigeon**, and **Jamaican Euphonia**. Keep an eye out for near-endemics **Greater Antillean Elaenia** and **Vervain Hummingbird** (the second smallest bird in the world), too.



Black-billed Streamertail and Yellow-billed Parrot (photos © R Miller - Birding the Islands)

Other things to do in Jamaica:

- Dine, island style, and treat your tastebuds to the sizzle of authentic jerk, right here where it was born! Dining in Jamaica is a feast for the senses, and a culinary tour of the island is right up there on the 'must do' list.
- Sample the flavourful and world-renowned Blue Mountain coffee right at the source and experience the journey from bean to cup in the heart of the lush Blue Mountains.
- Gently float down the serene waters of Martha Brae River on a hand-oared bamboo raft, and drop in at Miss Martha's Herb Garden, where you can purchase the natural produce renowned for their medicinal and healing powers.
- Bathe in the cool waters of natural pools formed by cascading waterfalls.
- Take time to visit a beautiful tropical botanical garden retreat come art gallery, featuring the work of local artists