Puerto Rico is the smallest of the Greater Antilles in the West Indies, yet it has a high degree of plant and animal endemism as result of evolution in isolation on an oceanic island. This is reflected in its birdlife: out of about 367 species, 17 are endemic, 13 are subspecies only found in this small archipelago*, while still others are endemic to the Antillean Subregion. One-hundred twenty species regularly breed in Puerto Rico and during migration it is visited by additional bird species.

WILLIAM SUAREZ BIRDING TOURS offers ornithological survey programs to this beautiful island, providing magnificent opportunities to explore the unique and varied insular habitats of the West Indies. Our tours of the island cover a wide range of habitats—montane rainforests, elfin woods, mangrove swamps, and dry coastal scrub—with their endemic birds and other specialties.

Each tour begins and ends in the capital city of San Juan, located in the northeastern part of the main island. Because Puerto Rico is a commonwealth of U.S., there are no special entry requirements for American birders. English, in addition to the official Spanish, is spoken widely throughout the island. The official currency is the U.S. dollar. The national bird from Puerto Rico is La Reina Mora, the Puerto Rican Spindalis (Spindalis portoricensis).

* A trinomium indicates endemic subspecies.
Planned Itinerary

DAY 1: Tuesday, Feb. 17. —Arrival and "Bienvenida" (Welcome) to Puerto Rico

Arrival and transfer from Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport in San Juan to the hotel, in which members of the group will check into their reserved rooms. At 7:00 p.m. participants will meet the leader in the lobby for a welcome orientation and discussion of trip plans before dinner. Night in San Juan.

DAY 2: Wednesday, Feb. 18. —The Eastern Region (Fajardo, Humacao, and Aguas Buenas)

This morning we will drive southeast to search the Fajardo area in the easternmost part of the island. Our main objective is to see the two hummingbirds restricted to this region: Green-throated Carib (Eulampis holosericeus) and Antillean Crested Hummingbird (Orthorhyncus cristatus). After our search for these species we will go to the Humacao wetlands. This beautiful site has a superb array of wetland habitats —freshwater, brackish, and saltwater ponds and lagoons —home to endangered species such as the West Indian Whistling-Duck (Dendrocygna arborea), Caribbean Coot (Fulica caribaea), and many other aquatic birds. Other possible species during this morning can be the endemic Puerto Rican Woodpecker (Melanerpes portoricensis), Puerto Rican Flycatcher (Myiarchus antillarum), and the endemic subspecies of Common Ground-Dove (Columbina passerina portoricensis), Bananaquit (Coereba flaveola portoricensis), Yellow-faced Grassquit (Tiaris olivaceus bryanti), Black-faced Grassquit (Tiaris bicolor omissus), and Greater Antillean Grackle (Quiscalus niger brachypterus). Additional species include Brown Booby, Brown Pelican, Magnificent Frigatebird, Red-tailed Hawk, Semipalmed Plover, Laughing Gull, Royal Tern, White-winged Dove, Mangrove Cuckoo, Red-legged Thrush, Scaly-breasted Munia and Bronze Mannikin, among others. After lunch we will drive northwest to get our views of the endemic subspecies of the Plain Pigeon (Patagioenas inornata wetmorei), which is found west to Aguas Buenas. After finishing the birding session in the late afternoon, we return to the capital city. Night in San Juan.

DAY 3: Thursday, Feb. 19. —Laguna Tortuguero and Rio Abajo

In the morning we will drive to the northwest and along the north coast road to explore the freshwater lagoon Laguna Tortuguero where several aquatic birds and other species such as Ruddy Quail-Dove
(Geotrygon montana), Puerto Rican Lizard-Cuckoo (Coccyczus vieilloti), Antillean Mango (Antrachyrothorax dominicus aurulentus), Puerto Rican Vireo (Vireo latimeri), Caribbean Martin (Progne dominicensis), and Adelaide's Warbler (Setophaga adelaidae), among other West Indian specialties and endemics, can be found. In the afternoon we will drive to the southwest, to visit Río Abajo State Forest. A visit to this beautiful locality is a must, because located here is the Vivaldi Aviary, home of the captive breeding program for the critically endangered Puerto Rican Parrot (Amazona vittata). The probability of seeing free-flying released birds is low, but not impossible, as we have had several sightings at this location. Other possible species in this locality are Key West Quail-Dove (Geotrygon chrysia), Puerto Rican Tody (Todus mexicanus), Lesser Antillean Pewee (Contopus latirostris blancoi), Loggerhead Kingbird (Tyrannus caudifasciatus taylori), Puerto Rican Spindalis, and Puerto Rican Bullfinch (Loxigilla portoricensis), among others. After our birding session in the afternoon we will drive to the southwestern coast of the island. Night near Guánica.

DAY 4: Friday, Feb. 20. —The Southwestern Region (Punta Cuchara, Guánica, La Parguera, and Laguna Cartagena)
Early in the morning we will depart the dry coast for the wet montane and cloud forest habitats in Susúa and Maricao State Forests, reserves in the mountain range of western Puerto Rico. This morning we search Susúa State Forest where the Key West Quail-Dove, Puerto Rican Tody, Caribbean Elaenia, and Pearly-eyed Thrasher occur. In the afternoon, our birding session will be in Maricao State Forest. This locality is home to endemic and rare species such as the relatively recently discovered and described Elfin-woods Warbler (Setophaga angelae). Also occurring in this locality are Green Mango (Anthracothorax viridis), Puerto Rican Emerald, Puerto Rican Spindalis (Spindalis portoricensis), Puerto Rican Tanager (Nesospingus speculiferus), Puerto Rican Oriole (Icterus portoricensis), Antillean Euphonia (Euphonia musica sclateri), and other endemics and specialties. A very rare Puerto Rican endemic subspecies of Sharp-shinned Hawk (Accipiter}

Puerto Rican Lizard-Cuckoo, Puerto Rican Screech-Owl (Megascops nudipes), Puerto Rican Emerald (Chlorostilbon maugaeus), Puerto Rican Tody, Puerto Rican Flycatcher, Puerto Rican Vireo, Adelaide’s Warbler, and Puerto Rican Bullfinch. Also possible are Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, White-winged Dove, Zenaida Dove, Common Ground-Dove, Mangrove Cuckoo, Antillean Mango, Puerto Rican Woodpecker, Caribbean Elaenia (Elaenia martinica), Lesser Antillean Pewee, Northern Mockingbird, Pearly-eyed Thrasher (Margarops fuscatus), Bananaquit, Greater Antillean Grackle, Venezuelan Troupial, and others. In the afternoon, we will explore a locality covered by mangrove wetlands, La Parguera, home of the endemic, endangered Yellow-shouldered Blackbird (Agelaius xanthomus). After our search for this species, we will also search Laguna Cartagena, which is a wildlife refuge, with diverse birdlife such as waterfowl, shorebirds, and wading birds including West Indian Whistling-Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Great Egret, Green Heron, Glossy Ibis, Sora, Yellow-breasted Crane, Purple Gallinule, Common Gallinule, Black-necked Stilt, and others. Additional species in the nearby habitats include Mangrove Cuckoo, Bananarquit, Black-faced Grassquit, Greater Antillean Grackle and some introduced and well-established taxa such as the beautiful Venezuelan Troupial and Orange Bishop. Night near Guánica.

DAY 5: Saturday, Feb. 21. —The Mountain Ranges (Susúa and Maricao)
The cost for this 2015 birding trip to Puerto Rico is $2,300 for double occupancy. Single occupancy is optional for an additional $450 (single supplement). A deposit of $500 per person is due upon initial registration. Final payment is due October 17, 2014. There will be a limit of 8 participants.

The tour INCLUDES a full time professional guide (Dr. William Suárez, ornithologist and paleornithologist), accommodations in comfortable standard hotels, motels, or their equivalents from Day 1 through Day 6, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on Day 7, cold bottled water, and checklist. All applicable park entrance fees, all on-island transportation including transfers from the airport and hotels on Day 1 and Day 7 are covered by the cost of your tour package as well. The tour fee does NOT INCLUDE visa fee, airfares, airport taxes, tourist card fee, luggage costs, trip insurance, gratuities, phone calls, laundry, alcoholic beverages, tips to local drivers, or other items of a personal nature.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Reservations for tours require a deposit of $500 per client, of which $200 is non-refundable. Space is reserved on a first come, first served basis upon receipt of deposit. Reservations made by telephone are considered accepted once the deposit is received, which must occur within 15 business days. All payments must be made in U. S. dollars by check, money order, or bank transfer. Total payment of the tour must be made within 120 days prior to tour departure. If cancellation notice is received 120 (or more) days before departure, the deposit (excluding the non-refundable $200) will be refunded. If notice of cancellation is received within 119 to 70 days of departure, 50% of the deposit is not refundable. If notice of cancellation is received within 70 days of departure, all deposits and payments are non-refundable. If a tour is cancelled by WILLIAM SUAREZ BIRDING TOURS, all deposits, including additional payments for extensions of the tour, will be refunded. WILLIAM SUAREZ BIRDING TOURS reserves the right to cancel any tour, or part of it, at any time, if any danger or risks for our participants exist or is evident (e.g., risk of sickness, extreme weather conditions such as hurricanes, and dangerous situations due to political or social conflicts, etc.). Single rooms are provided for participants requesting and paying the single supplement in the Registration Form. Certain small lodges never provide single rooms if they are heavily booked. In such cases the portion of the single supplement applicable to the lodge(s) will be refunded. For other participants, if a roommate is not available during the trip, a single room supplement will be charged.

DAY 6: Sunday, Feb. 22. —The Northwestern Coastal Region

We will leave early in the morning and move to the northwestern corner of the island to explore the elevated coastal area between Barceloneta and Isabela for seabirds including White-tailed Tropicbird (*Phaeton lepturus*), which is possible at this time of the year. Brown Booby, Magnificent Frigatebird, gulls, and terns are also possible. In the afternoon our itinerary will be flexible depending of the time available. If time permits we can explore additional localities in northern Puerto Rico (e.g., Cambalache). After the birding session, we will drive east to San Juan for our last night. Night in San Juan.

DAY 7: Monday, Feb. 23. —Departure and "Hasta Luego" (Good-bye) to Puerto Rico

Day of transfer from the hotel to the International Airport Luis Muñoz Marin, for departures of the members of the group.

striatus venator) is also possible. We will wait here the sunset for our view of the Puerto Rican Screech-Owl. Night near Guánica.

This itinerary is meant as a guide and subject to change as a result of weather, bird activities, and human conditions. FINAL INFORMATION about this tour to Puerto Rico will be sent to each registrant about four weeks before the trip date, along with instructions for transportation from the airport to the hotel locations in the capital city of San Juan, etc. For more information about this trip, contact Dr. William Suárez (wsbirdingtours@birdlover.com) or call (561-452-6895).
William Suárez was born in Havana, Cuba. He spent his childhood exploring in the countryside, where he was fascinated by the natural beauty of his native island, the largest of the West Indies. After graduating from the University of La Havana, William extended his knowledge of the fauna of Cuba and the Caribbean, including the fossil record, evolution, biogeography, and taxonomy of the region's wildlife. He rapidly became one of the outstanding authorities on Caribbean birds and mammals. As a curator of the National Museum of Natural History of Cuba, at La Havana, William conducted research on the taxonomy and evolution of birds at many museums throughout the United States and Canada, where he has collaborated with many excellent scientists, especially Dr. Storrs L. Olson of the U.S. National Museum of Natural History. His detailed studies of the fossil and living mammals of Cuba, a fauna dominated by bats and a group of Antillean rodents colloquially known as the "hutias," resulted in a monumental publication, *Compendio de los Mamíferos Terrestres Autóctonos de Cuba, Vivientes y Extinguidos* (with Cuban coauthors). Dr. Suárez is widely regarded as an authority on Cuban birds, living and extinct. He has named several new genera and species of birds, including revision of the nomenclature for Cuban Bare-legged Owl and describing the only teratorn (a condor-like vulture) know outside the continental Americas, which inhabited the West Indies. The largest eagle ever to have existed in the Americas, known by fossils from the Quaternary of Cuba, bears his name: *Gigantohierax suarezi*. Certainly, in great part due to the efforts of Dr. Suárez, the evolutionary history of birds of the West Indies is much better understood as a result of his discoveries and studies.

In addition to his professional research on birds and mammals in the field and in museums, Dr. Suárez has been guiding birding tours through the Cuban archipelago for more than 14 years, and is well-known by birders in America and Europe. Further, William has extensive birding experience in the USA, Canada, and other of the West Indies. Dr. Suárez is one of the only two professional bird guides in Cuba; the another being his colleague Arturo Kirkconnell, also curator of the National Museum of Natural History of Cuba. Now, Dr. Suárez is extending his birding tours throughout the West Indies as the leader of WILLIAM SUAREZ BIRDING TOURS, where he is combining his knowledge of science and love for birds to provide the highest level of birding experiences for those participants who have a keen interest and desire for an exceptional excursion to the Caribbean islands.

Dr. James Wiley
Coauthor of "Birds of the West Indies"

**IMPORTANT**

WILLIAM SUAREZ BIRDING TOURS conducts tours in the wild, often in remote localities where medical care and sanitary conditions may be rudimentary or absent, with communication deficient or lacking, and transportation difficult. We expect participants on our tours to be prudent and take reasonable care for their own safety and to recognize that WILLIAM SUAREZ BIRDING TOURS is not offering any guarantee of safety for any person. Accordingly, you will be sent a Release and Indemnity Agreement releasing WILLIAM SUAREZ BIRDING TOURS from liability for your safety within the limits of the law. Participants must sign and return the mentioned document along with the Registration form and payment at the corresponding dates prior to departure.

**REGISTRATION**

Please complete the Registration and Release and Indemnity Agreement forms and return them, with a deposit of $500 per person, payable to:

WILLIAM SUAREZ BIRDING TOURS
P. O. Box 16477  West Palm Beach  FL 33416

Total tour payment is due 120 days prior to departure date, or by October 17, 2014. You will be billed, or notified by email, for the final payment at 120 days, or little later as soon as the tour has reached and its operative capacity. Since your airline tickets and other necessary trips payments from your side and not related with our company are generally nonrefundable, please do not finalize these purchases until you have received final billing for the tour or notice that the tour will be finally conducted.