

Field Guide to the Birds of Suriname

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Foreword

In February 1984, I arrived for the first time ever in Paramaribo, the capital of Suriname. Having been a birdwatcher in Europe for more than 10 years, I was immediately struck by the vivid colors of the Great Kiskadees, Blue-gray Tanagers, and the Brown-throated Parakeets flying in and around the mahogany trees in the center of the city.

Since then, birdwatching in Suriname has been one of my passions. Serving as Regional Representative of the WWF Guianas Program from 2006 till 2014, we have supported many conservation projects, including bird population censuses, setting up and supporting management of protected areas, conducting birding education courses, and many more projects.

Suriname is endowed with many pristine tropical ecosystems in more than 90% of its territory. Being part of the Amazon biome, it has a healthy biodiversity, with more than 5,000 species of plants, nearly 200 species of mammals, and more than 740 bird species. The number of bird species is almost as great as in all of Europe or the entire North American Continent. Yet, the country is little known among birdwatchers from abroad. This is mostly due to difficult airline connections and lack of suitable ecotourism facilities in the interior.

Ecotourism can be an important sustainable income for Suriname. We hope that with the publication of the *Field Guide to the Birds of Suriname* a new impetus will be given to the development of birding tourism resulting in better protection and management for the country's critical ecosystems.

As avid birdwatchers, we had to rely on field guides of neighboring countries for our trips, as well as on bird songs (important in the rainforest!) recorded in French Guiana and Venezuela. Then, when back in Paramaribo, we checked our observations with the scholarly tome *Birds of Suriname* (Haverschmidt and Mees 1994), the *Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Suriname* (Ottema *et al.* 2009), and, last but not least, the website *Birds of Suriname*, compiled by Jan Hein Ribot.

For all birdwatchers and nature lovers living in or visiting Suriname, there is now a pocket field guide that can easily be taken along into the

Jan Joost ter Pelkwijk enjoyed nature and he inspired many naturalists through his color pencil and pen drawings, and through his scientific and semi-popular papers. To mark his 100th birthday and his interest in Suriname's nature, in particular its birds, we wish to honor him with the publication of the *Field Guide to the Birds of Suriname*.