

BIRDING OUTBACK GUYANA

A Chronical of Ecotouring in the Savannas and Rainforests

by

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This diary along with photographs can also be viewed at
http://homepage.mac.com/Donald_Green/Guyana/

The Kuyuwini River

PREFACE

This journal started as an occasional letter of my birding activities to my daughter, Jennifer Green, who shares my interests in birds and has now joined me on these trips. It is, of course, an aid to my mind, which is all too eager to discard memories. However, these memories are so pleasant that to lose any part of them would be a shame. It is also for my companions to whom I'll try to get copies. If there are unifying elements in this document it is the birds, the birding, and the wildlife. But the travel through rivers, forests and savanna and the ecology of the tropics was as exciting as the birds and I've tried to comment on those aspects that caught my attention.

This account is based on my trip notes, the log of birds seen and locations visited which were kept daily by the participants, slides I took, and the blizzard of photographs which Ilze Belodis took on the first trip and most kindly distributed to each of the participants, those taken by Steve Mirick and Roger Stanley on the second trip, another blizzard of photographs taken by Polly Rothstein and given to us all on the third and fourth trips and Jennifer's journals and records on the Rewa, Maparri and Kwitaro expeditions. Most importantly it has been redacted, many errors corrected, much memory recalled, and extensively improved by Davis Finch, who, after wading through several versions of this journal, continues to modestly refer to his efforts as "micro-corrections". Would, that when I was an editor, I had as careful and effective reviewers as Davis. Would that he had better writers than me! It is not in my nature to agree with even his every assertion. Consequently, I accept responsibility for all the residual errors.

In addition to my fellow participants, the birders and the fisherman who made these trips a delight, I wish to thank Davis Finch for inviting me; Tony Thorne of Wilderness Explorers and his able assistants Karen Weldren and Louis Singh for their assistance in Georgetown and in making travel arrangements elsewhere; Duane De Freitas, the captain of each of these the expeditions and our host at Dadanawa; his able lieutenants, Oscar Dookie, Ashley Holland, Pip Hiscock and Malcolm Miller. For their warm hospitality and friendship; Dianne McTurk our host at Karanambu; Shirley Humphrys at Mountain Point; Sandy and Duane DeFreitas at Dadanawa and Sandy at Kwatamang Landing, and Colin Edwards at Rockview. A special thanks to all who participated in making these travels a happy and birdacious adventure; our drivers, Cecil and Carl Fredericks; our guides on land and water, Duane, Kenneth, Tommy Kenyon, Percy, Michael Phang, Magnus and Placid Stevens, Silveirio and Richard Winter and our companions; Alwin, Andy, young Duane, Justin, Leland, Leroy, Paula, Nikki, Sammy and Stephen. Probably nothing made this trip more enjoyable than the kitchens at Karanambu, at Dadanawa, on the Kuyuwini, Kwitaro, Maparri and the Rewa Rivers. I am pleased to acknowledge the superb cuisine of marvelous Marjory at Dadanawa, Maparri, Kuyuwini and the Kwitaro, and the chef-ly skills of Dookie, Duane and Stephen who, on the Rewa, knew what to do with a fish.

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I THE KUYUWINI RIVER

GEORGETOWN. One A.M., April 7, 1997, the spacious foyer of the Pegasus Hotel in Georgetown, Guyana is alive with clerks, guests, social nighthawks, Tony Thorne's Wilderness Explorers, and us, five birders from North America. We are greeted by an orchestra of chirping frogs resident in the upper reaches of the hall - a greeting unlike any hotel registration I've experienced. It is my first exposure to a country south of the U. S. border and, to the tropics. We are four individuals recruited by Davis Finch to bird Guyana: Travis MacClendon from Florida, Ken Cole from the District of Columbia, Ilze Balodis from Maine and myself, Don Green (New Hampshire). Except for me all have significant experience in birding in South or Central America.

Planning, medical shots, bird-book acquisition and finding a bit about Guyana (for instance, where and what it was!) was precipitated by a phone call from Davis hours after returning from a snowmobiling expedition to western Maine. Notice of three weeks, while short, reduced anticipation to an absolute minimum. Davis and I had met several years earlier as fellow members of the Seacoast Audubon Chapter and our friendship was cemented this winter by several days of futile search in Biddeford, ME for a white-phase Gyrfalcon. We missed it by 20 minutes. So, from the still frozen northeastern U. S. I'd come to within a modest few degrees of the equator. Guyana extends from almost 8° to ~1.5° latitude. It is almost the same length as our state of Florida, and a degree or so wider. While small, Guyana is the largest and westernmost of what was the three Guianas. It was once British Guiana but now, like its immediate eastern neighbor, Suriname, the former Dutch Guiana, it is an independent country. The easternmost of the three Guianas, French Guiana, is still a "department" of the Paris Metropole. The fact that English is widely spoken throughout Guyana makes it an exceptionally hospitable and comfortable place. The weather follows a generally predictable pattern. A major dry season extends for five months from August through November which is followed by an approximately two month Winter wet period until January. From January to April dry weather again predominates until the months of May and July when the most reliable rainy season occurs. The climate toward the end of the Spring dry season was warm and dry with gentle to nonexistent winds. Bug pests were virtually absent as well.

By any South American standard, Guyana is tiny, yet it has a varied topography and ecology. Along its Atlantic shore runs a narrow coastal plain dominated by sugar plantations. Inland the humid tropical forest is threaded by three major north-flowing rivers which are: west to east, the Essequibo, the Demerara, and the Berbice. The western side of the country is walled near its waist by the Pakaraima Mountains. About two thirds of the way to the south along the course of the Rupununi River, a western tributary of the Essequibo, the vast forests begin to break up into two very large savanna regions. These savannas are divided by the ancient east-west trending Kanuku mountains into Northern and Southern Savannas. Following brief stays with birding in Georgetown and a side trip to the spectacular Kaieteur Falls, longer stays were planned in the Northern Savanna region at Karanambu Ranch and at the Southern Savanna's Dadanawa Ranch. From Dadanawa an expedition was to be taken to the end of the southernmost drivable track at the Kuyuwini Landing. The Kuyuwini River, one of the major southern and western tributaries of the Essequibo, is close to the Brazilian border which in the southwest of Guyana follows the course of the Takutu River. At this point we would be just 2° from the equator.

After five hours of sleep, Ken Cole and I are up. The first bird I see is a martin sailing by the patio, then three more. These are **Gray-breasted Martins**, a Great Kiskadee calls and in a deciduous grove lining a nearby road a gray bird, the **Blue-gray Tanager**, hops about a tree top. Soon a black tanager-sized bird with a white wing linings emerges, a **White-lined Tanager**. This before I'm even out of the room! I walk out the hotel front door and am joined by Ken who begins my tutorial confirming the identities of some of the birds I'd seen and pointing out others, such as a rather nondescript **Palm Tanager**, and the **Rusty-margined Flycatcher**. Familiar birds were a rarity on the trip but this morning I saw three; a distant **Magnificent Frigatebird**, **Snowy Egret** and a **Tricolored Heron**. Ken spotted a **Yellow-bellied Elaenia** and a **Ruddy Ground-Dove**. Shortly thereafter we were joined by Davis and Travis who had a **Red-capped Cardinal**, a **Yellow Oriole**, a pair of **Pearl Kites** in a distant tree, and much closer, a **Yellow-chinned Spinetail**. In a large tree to the left of the front door we saw a hummingbird, a **Plain-Bellied Emerald**. Twelve life birds and I hadn't even had breakfast yet! We gathered for breakfast- the first of many splendid meals in Guyana and then boarded the Wilderness Explorers van for the trip to Ogle Airport. Ogle is in Georgetown and suitable for the twin-engined Britten Norman Islander which was to fly us to Kaieteur Falls. At Ogle a whole new cast of birds appeared, among them **Snail Kites** (incredibly close), **Shiny Cowbird** (which I'd seen in Naples, Fla.), **White-headed Marsh-Tyrant** (photographed at its nest), **Smooth-billed Ani**, **Southern Lapwing**, **Blue-black Grassquit**, **Tropical Kingbird** and **Tropical Mockingbird**. Three familiar birds were also present at Ogle: **House Wren**, **American Kestrel** and **Spotted Sandpiper**.

KAIETEUR FALLS was our first destination. The journey took us south up the Essequibo River. The Demerara River in the area of Georgetown flows through hundreds of square miles of sugarcane fields. A few dozen miles up the river the country becomes forest with few evident tracks or roads. Here and there are clearings the result of lumbering or mining for gold, diamonds and bauxite which are major economic activities. Our flight approaches a long plateau rising several thousand feet and tilting toward the west. Our flight is up a long narrow valley at the head of which is Kaieteur Falls. The falls is spectacular and all out of proportion to the modest river that feeds it. Its unique feature is the 748 foot free-fall of the water which is claimed

to be the highest un-interrupted fall of any waterfall in the world. Our pilot, Krishna Shankar, makes several passes around the falls then, after a shallow breath-taking dive toward and below the falls, climbs and lands at the small airstrip. We de-plane and led by Davis and our guide, Richard Winter, proceed to explore the area. Richard is an amerindian about 35 yrs old and has been a scuba diver in the rivers for placer gold, a game warden and now makes his living as a free-lance guide. He was very good at spotting birds and other wildlife, composing and taking photographs and describing the area. He tells us that the name of the falls commemorates Chief Kai who canoed to his death over the falls to appease the Caribs, a raiding coastal tribe, and thereby spared his people from annihilation. V. G. C. Norwood confirms this event and says that the vanquished tribe, the once powerful Piaroa (Ature), then fled westward. Kaieteur Falls was also the site where the Piaroas had earlier defeated the Parguaza and Amucao tribes. The last of the vanquished hurling themselves off the high cliffs. The history of conflict among local tribes as well as with foreign invaders, both amerindian and caucasian, is a constant uninterrupted saga until well into the 19th century.

Our first bird seen on landing is the **Greater Yellow-headed Vulture**. This is the vulture typically associated with dense tropical forest. Davis's immediate goal is to locate a reported **Rufous-crowned Elaenia**, a medium-sized flycatcher, which has only recently been found to occur at this site in Guyana. This is my initial introduction to Davis's bravura performance bringing in birds with his tape recorder. In short order this elaenia was "wired", responding and approaching closely to investigate the intruder. The recorder technique is not only effective in attracting birds but in poor viewing conditions, or with a very active small bird that has many similarly plumaged relatives with distinct voices, is a crucial tool in making the correct identification. Above the river were three types of swifts; the most numerous were **White-chinned Swifts** that flickered in large flocks at great height, among them a few significantly larger **White-collared Swifts**, **White-tipped Swifts** were more readily identified by their clearly delineated white throats. The top of the falls lies on a sheet of gravel-covered ledge that is everywhere saturated with water. Growing directly on this sheet are strikingly large terrestrial bromeliads- one was ten feet high and five to six feet in diameter, many were in excess of five feet high. Richard points out a small yellow frog, *Oxania beebeii*, in the bromeliad leaf wells. Ilze took a good photograph of them. The frog is named for, William Beebe, a well-known naturalist who studied and wrote of the Guianas in the early 1900s. On the path toward an overlook, Richard pointed out a snake under a trail foot-bridge, a "Carpet Labaria", a known poisonous species. A brilliant scarlet **Guianan Cock-of-the-Rock** occupied a lek site just along the trail and posed for several photographs. More gifted ears identified a Red-billed Toucan. A **Red-shouldered Tanager** was seen with a flock of foraging passerines. Richard led us to the top of the falls where I took several photos, then he posed us on a rock ledge and took a memorable photo the significance of which fully came to me only when the film was developed.

After a brief freshening-up, towels and a beer or two at the Islander, we took off for Karanambu. In the co-pilot's seat I had an unparalleled view. The flight was along the plateau edge, then over extremely rugged knife-edged "miserics" and inselbergs all covered with jungle that Ilze describes as "broccoli", as surely it looked. Eventually, the jungle began to break up into scrub and grasslands interspersed with typical riparian gallery forest along every watercourse. Soon we'd flown out over the unbroken Northern Rupununi Savanna. Without discernable preliminaries, Krishna banked once, lined up on a gravel runway and set us down at Karanambu's doorstep.

KARANAMBU lies 340 feet above sea-level on the west side of the Rupununi River in a grove of pretty mango trees dominated by one huge cashew tree that almost overhangs the airstrip. Various people have threatened to improve the runway by cutting it down, but that would seem a shame. Our hostess at Karanambu was Dianne McTurk who runs the ranch there. There is a lovely spacious, central thatched lodge and dining hall with several smaller outlying sleeping lodges. Dianne is a pleasant hostess, handsome, spare and tall. She is thoroughly in charge and clearly experienced in running the ranch. Her kitchen and dining operation was exceptional as were our sleeping and washing arrangements which included real showers. Her personality is forever captured by my photo of her on the radio which I call "Karanambu calling." Shortly after our arrival a radio conference commenced with Tony Thorne, Dianne's brother, Mickey McTurk at Ogle Airport, and various others including Guyana Airways Corp, the subject being the distribution of cash, advances, and payments, and the ordering of supplies needed to support us. Was there life before radio down here?

ON THE RUPUNUNI RIVER Davis didn't waste any time. After brief introductions, figuring out the schedule and finding our quarters, we launched a boat and explored down the river. An immediate objective was to examine a Jabiru nest in hopes of seeing a young bird. Our guide at Karanambu was Kenneth. He had made a real effort to learn the local birds on our terms and had his own copy of the "Birds of Venezuela" by Meyer de Schauensee and Phelps. Many and possibly all of the young men had some degree of formal education in village schools. Kenneth was clearly making the most of his. The wooden boat, about twenty-two foot long, was powered by a dependable 5-horse Mercury more than adequate to move easily along the river that was fifty to seventy feet wide with a current of approximately 1- 2 mph. The boat had been on shore for some time and so leaked prodigiously for the first day before it tightened up thoroughly. Kenneth had a younger assistant, Edgar, who was usefully employed bailing. This stretch of river is the home of the **Black Caiman**. Some were large running up to seven to eight feet but none to the nineteen foot length of a really big Black Caiman. They are everywhere plentiful but are wary of close approach. Davis doesn't believe they are hunted. They can be dangerous. My first scientific mentor, the anatomist and herpetologist, Warren F. Walker, Jr, had scars to testify to that.

Birding from an open, quiet, cruising boat is a luxury which offers superb uncomplicated views seldom seen in woodlands. An initial surprise was the appearance of Long-billed Starthroats, large hummers which, while generally uncommon, on this trip were quite frequently encountered along the riverbank shrubs. Treetops were occupied by Yellow-rumped Caciques, Crested Oropendolas, and Swallow-wings. Wherever the riverbanks approached the savanna scrub-lands Fork-tailed Flycatchers were present. This flycatcher, extremely common throughout the savannas, was apparently en route to its wintering grounds in northern South America. A dark crow-sized bird flying across the river was proclaimed to be a Bare-necked Fruitcrow (I didn't see enough of this cotinga to qualify as a sighting). The river sand-bars revealed Cocoi Heron, Little Blue Heron, Pied and Southern Lapwings, Spotted Sandpipers and three Black Skimmers. River bars were good places to see both Ruddy-breasted and Yellow-bellied Seedeaters. River snags provided resting places for a Neotropic Cormorant, Ringed and Amazon Kingfishers, as well as for White-winged and Southern Rough-winged Swallows. More secretive Green Kingfishers perched under the overhanging branches. Flycatchers were a constant with Lesser Kiskadees and Rusty-margined Flycatchers frequently present, Boat-billed Flycatcher, Yellow-breasted and Short-crested Flycatchers were seen. As well, a Forest Elaenia was heard. Black Vultures and an Anhinga flew over. In the top of a tall tree two different Columbidae sat; the larger was a Pale-vented Pigeon, the smaller, a Plain-breasted Ground-Dove. Several Yellow Orioles were seen as well as a Campo (Orange-backed) Oriole. Among other species spotted were Pied Water-Tyrant, and Yellow-crowned Parrots. Brown-throated Parakeets were common throughout the savanna riparian forest.

The Jabiru nest was unoccupied so we reversed direction toward the entrance of nearby Simoney Lake, and entered the eight to ten foot wide channel. Shortly, we emerged into an oxbow which is significantly wider than the river and must certainly be a major section of the river during the wet seasons. Here, a pair of Muscovy Ducks were resting on the opposite bank. A Striated Heron flew by and a Chestnut Woodpecker was spotted. A Striped Woodcreeper was called in by tape, and nearby we had a good view of a Pale-breasted Thrush. Around the bend, a family of amerindians had set up camp with a fish drying rack. Two men were actively fishing, one was tossing a lure by hand-line from their dugout toward the bank and rapidly drawing it to the dugout much as a bass fisherman would cast a lure into the shallows and rapidly reel it back, the other paddled the canoe parallel to the bank. With the briefest of salutes we backed off, so as not to disturb their activity. Dusk, always the best moment for viewing Caprimulgidae, was on us. We stopped to see the first Lesser Nighthawks, then navigated the narrow channel back to the main river. On the way we surprised a group of four Capybara which were not more than ten feet away as we came around a sharp bend. On the Rupununi, many Band-tailed Nighthawks and Lessers strafed the river for insects. We flushed a Green Ibis on the return. In virtually total darkness Kenneth found a Capped Heron perched in a tree on the bank. How he could do this remains a mystery. Among the birds heard but not seen were Straight-billed Woodcreeper, Lineated Woodcreeper, Tropical Gnatcatcher and Long-billed Gnatwrens, Buff-breasted Wren, Undulated Tinamou (I have yet to see a tinamou), Collared Forest-Falcon, Red-and-green Macaw, Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl, Pauraque, Glittering-throated Emerald, Green-tailed Jacamar, Red-billed Toucan and Lineated Woodpecker.

A delicious supper, preceded by that marvelous English custom of a "spot of something" (in Guyana almost exclusively rum punch) capped a day of more birds than I've ever seen in one fourteen-hour period. Exhausted and reeling from data overload I went to bed with the assurance of a 4:30 a.m. appointment for nightjars on the Karanambu Runway. The pattern of birding until breakfast, breakfasting, birding until lunch, lunching, then birding in the afternoon, often well into dark, was certainly well fixed by the end of the first day. It was followed rigorously.

By 5:00 A.M. on the runway, Caprimulgidae were everywhere; Pauraque called like Whip-poor-wills with streptococcus infected throats, the Lesser Nighthawk bubbled its monotonous trill and the throat flutter of one sitting close by was easily seen with the auxiliary lighting we'd brought. Band-tailed Nighthawks were seen and two White-tailed Nightjars were seen and their high pitched whistle heard. The faint (distant?) wail of a Grey (Common) Potoo was heard. I found this a very hard call to detect and usually only heard the first very loudest note. I've known for a decade of my high note insensitivity, but this call and Jennifer's detection of a Blue Grouse that I simply couldn't hear last spring in Yosemite convinces me my low register is also weak. Here we also heard a Tropical Screech-Owl and a dawn chorus of Little Chachalacas.

As the dawn crepuscule fled, a pair of Crested Caracaras were seen perched on low shrubs just off the runway. In the copse near the generator house, a group of birds mobbed a recording, among them were Brown-crested Flycatcher, Straight-billed Woodcreeper, Blue-tailed Emerald, Tropical Gnatcatcher, Black-crested Antshrike, Mouse-colored Tyrannulet, Common Toddy-Flycatcher, Ashy-headed Greenlet, and Glittering-throated Emerald. As we headed back along the runway Wood Storks, Great Egrets and a pair of Yellow-crowned Parrots flew over the river. Grassland Sparrow, Lesser Seed-Finch, Finsch's Euphonia, Burnished-buff Tanager, Pale-breasted Spinetail, Variagated Flycatcher, and a Yellow-bellied Elaenia were observed in the shrub edges of the river bank. At the compound Alvin, an amerindian fisherman, appeared with a very impressive catch suspended from a branch yoke by a split vine- the standard "rope" of the native. In addition to a fair representation of the types of fish in the river including piranha and cichlids he had a pirowrin, a catfish locally referred to as a banana fish. It had a most extraordinary color, cream flanks, with bright red fins, and a green vermiculated dorsum (photographed by Ilze and me). Dianne apparently arranged to have these fish prepared for our supper. Delicious! Following a pleasant breakfast we were dropped off from a Land Rover at the "Forest Patch".

THE FOREST PATCH is a nearby extensive piece of woodland distinct from the riparian gallery forest. En route several raptors were logged, Savanna Hawk (later found throughout the prairie), a pair of Plumbeous Kites, a Black-and-white Hawk-Eagle, a Swallowtail Kite and a Turkey Vulture. Along the forest edge we found White-lored and Slender-footed Tyrannulets, White-fringed Antwren, White-bellied Antbird and White-winged Becard. The more mature trees inside the forest yielded quietly sitting White-tailed and Violaceous Trogons, Green-tailed Jacamar, and a Spotted Puffbird, more actively a pair of Cream-colored Woodpeckers and a Lineated Woodpecker. Groups of foraging small birds included Black-chinned Antbird, White-flanked Antwren and Plain Xenops. A Helmeted Pygmy-Tyrant and a Forest Elaenia (photographed) were lured in by Davis's tape and seen well by all. Davis insists on everyone seeing the bird. His consistent mantra is "Did you all see the bird? Come over here. Stand here. Follow that branch until it crosses.. etc." If truth must be confessed these commands were mostly preceded by "Don". He is the consummate bird-spotter. Because of his familiarity with the particular species he is able to predict how and where a bird will respond to a taped call; the height, directness and closeness of its approach, whether it will perch or flit about or whether it will make only that single pass and disappear forever. The value added by having Davis as a guide is immeasurable.

LILY POND was our destination after lunch. We returned to the Rupununi River and boated upstream. As we launched the boat, two raptors were seen in quick succession; a Great Black Hawk seen briefly and a Bat Falcon that sat undisturbed close at hand on low trees at the river's edge. On a modestly steep (45°) bank a Swallow-Wing appeared to be excavating a burrow while in the trees above at least seven more sat--a lek? or was this a demonstration of nest-building skills? Under overhanging shrubbery on the far bank two Green Ibis foraged in the mud. Rounding a corner we surprised a beautifully plumaged adult Rufescent Tiger-Heron which froze in the open perched on a fallen tree presenting a splendid oars-length view as we motored by. A Squirrel Cuckoo, often previously heard, was seen well as it worked the upper branches of a lofty tree. A White-tipped Dove was spotted on the ground in heavy cover. The Brown-chested Martin replaces the Grey-beasted Martin in this savannah river environment. The Lesser Kiskadee was found among roots overhanging steep, bare banks of the river. A Pale-legged Hornero responded to a recording and was lured from a streamside thicket into view. Buff-throated Woodcreeper, Silver-beaked Tanager, Southern Beardless-Tyrannulet and Pale-tipped Tyrannulets were observed. We beached the boat and took the trail toward Lily Pond. In an isolated tree a pair of woodpeckers were perched. These were Spot-breasted Woodpeckers which responded to Davis' tape by making a close approach. Further along the trail a Jabiru flew by, circled and ultimately came to rest in an extremely large tree. What a marvelous, huge, formidable-looking stork! Our next bird was a Crimson-crested Woodpecker. Lily Pond was a gem, completely covered with the elegant, enormous Victoria Regia Water Lily pads, a plant I had not seen previously except in arboreta. While Great Egrets, Snowy Egrets and an Anhinga were there, the primary bird was the Wattled Jacana of which at least two dozen were present in both adult and immature plumages. Lily Pond is the sort of place you'd like to drift or swim around in, although I suspect that cayman or anaconda (neither of which I saw here) might have goals different from mine. Yellow-Crowned Parrots were heard and seen flying in the diminishing light.

April 9 at dawn we were again on the runway. The call of a Lesser Razor-billed (Crestless) Curassow was heard and Roseate Spoonbills were added to our list. To some, birding is listing. It is a sport much like any other competitive activity. Like most sports it runs against time. Thus, the absolute minimum to positively identify a bird, e.g., that requiring the least time, is what is required to "list" a bird. This need only be an impression for a distant bird, what can you confuse with a Jabiru? but for an antwren, an elaenia or pygmy-tyrant the closest excellent view may not be sufficient, the call is the key. These early hours where light is scarce favor those with good ears; Davis, Ilze and Ken (Travis seems to miss as many high notes as I do). For my own purposes (truth be told, I get a kick out of watching birds), I like a real nice view of the bird, sitting, walking, swimming, in flight, the voice, if possible. All of these are rarely achieved at a single sighting, but enough must be there for me to record it as a solid listing. In this text the first occurrence of a bird I have seen sufficiently well to count is listed in bold and underlined type, whereas others, too special to ignore but not seen well, are listed in simple type. Orange-winged Parrots, Rufous-browed Peppershrike, Brown-crested Flycatcher, Gravish Saltator, Barn Swallow and White-tailed Goldenthrout were new birds observed this morning near the runway.

CRANE POND was today's destination. Crane Pond is a floodable area which was not flooded at this season. In fact it seemed to have burned recently. Arson seems to be a way of life in the savanna regions. Is it an aboriginal practice or a newer one? Whichever, it is a frequent occurrence. The area did have a well-developed, sometimes flooded forest of the "varzea" sort and interesting birds. On the river the new birds seen were Red-eyed Vireo, White-browed Antbird, Boat-billed Flycatcher, Yellow Warbler and Amazon Kingfisher and for mammals, three wild Giant Otters. Near the trail to Crane Pond, a juvenile Great Black-Hawk was seen tearing a nest apart and its continually repeated call note was recorded by Davis. Along the Crane Pond trail in forest edge trees we identified White-chested Emerald, Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet, Cinereous Becard, Hooded Tanager and Long-billed Hermits. Golden-collared and Ringed Woodpeckers were both seen. At this point the first significant, but brief, rain shower drenched us and Ilze photographed the umbrella-shrouded party. As we returned to the boat, I spotted a new raptor, a Yellow-headed Caracara, in an isolated tree. Sightings of Little Blue and Striated Herons completed the morning.

On returning to the Karanambu Landing a domesticated Giant Otter (it reportedly sleeps in a barrel near the compound) was cavorting around two workers beating laundry over an upturned dugout. We took several pictures. His name is

Peter, and is enamoured of Dianne (as are we all) , and is a real charmer, obviously very curious about us but clearly confident that safety lay in proximity to the laundry team. There is no doubt that animals recognize individuals of other species; recently psychologists that work with rats have found that rats can distinguish the humans who feed them from those who experiment with them. This must be a long-time error in experimental design. Indeed, recognition ability extended to a wide range of species including non-mammals. There are, however, limits. Scallops just don't distinguish!

After lunch we explored a trail close behind the compound and found a very dull **Pale-bellied Tyrant-Manakin**, a **Streaked Flycatcher** and a female **Blue-backed Manakin**. The high trees near the river had some surprises. Below a large termite mound attached to a tree trunk several small bats were found by Kenneth. These bats had a distinctive pair of lighter parallel zig-zag stripes on their backs. Davis has identified them as White-lined Sac-winged Bats. This was a really astute job of spotting which reinforced my opinion of Kenneth's amazing intuitive sense for detecting wildlife. Overhead I glimpsed a **King Vulture** and several Wood Storks through gaps in the canopy. White-bellied, White-browed and **Dusky Antbirds** joined White-fringed Antwrens in mobbing a Ferruginous Pygmy Owl which sat stoically for a good view in a dense thicket.

THE GAC AIRSTRIP is several miles downstream and closer to the nearby mountains than the Karanambu Ranch airstrip. An afternoon treat was a drive to several open marsh habitats close by this Guyana Airways Corporation Runway. En route, typical savanna birds were seen including the very plentiful **Eastern Meadowlark** (singing a dialect), **Double-striped Thick-knee**, **Eared Dove** and Tropical Mockingbird. At the marsh, four Jabirus, a dozen Roseate Spoonbills, forty plus Great Egrets and 20 plus Snowy Egrets were seen. At least one hundred **White-faced Whistling Ducks**, fifteen **Black-crowned Night Herons**, a dozen **Cattle Egrets**, two **Buff-necked Ibises** and a **Limpkin** were seen. An **Aplomado Falcon** and a Snail Kite coursed over the marsh. Toward sundown a flight of **Red-bellied Macaws** passed well overhead heading for a distant roost in the river forest. While searching for an elusive Wedge-tailed Grass-Finch, we nearly walked on top of a **Burrowing Owl**. We had super views of dozens of **Least Nighthawks** in their buoyant flight over the prairie. In a thick brushy area Davis recorded a **Rufous Nightjar** calling in a voice reminiscent of a Chuck-will's-widow. A second one could be heard nearby as, of course, could the ubiquitous Parouque.

TRAVEL ON THE SAVANNA. An early morning walk near the "Neopelma Woods" produced **Lesser** and **Plain-crested Elaenias**, Pale-breasted Thrush, **Brown-chested Martin**, **Tropical Screech Owl**, Mouse-colored Tyrannulet and **Barred Antshrike**. After breakfast, we boarded the two Dadanawa Land Rovers and set off for Mountain Point with Duane De Freitas, Malcolm Miller, Julius and Elizabeth Denny, and the five of us. Duane, the manager of Dadanawa Ranch, is a self-reliant sailor/cowboy/ explorer. He's a natural leader, experienced in the region, and top-flight organizer. The perfect man to get us to the Kuyuwini River safely and back on schedule. Malcolm Miller, "Malachy" to Duane, is rail-thin, quite laid back, a very pleasant guy who loves fishing. We have that in common. Duane tells me he appreciates Malachy as a loyal friend and advisor. Especially valued because he says what he thinks straight out. I liked Malachy immediately. Not only because he shared my weakness for the occasional cigarette. The Dennys, are a young couple, he from England, she was brought up in Guyana and educated in England. Both are engaged in a world-spanning, year-plus, sabbatical. Traveling in these Land Rovers is a throwback to the early days of the automobile and for the same reasons; you're pretty much on your own a long way from the nearest service station and the roads are about what you could expect in the early 1900s. An added element is the age of these much repaired machines, possibly 40 years old. They're like the old ax; been in the family for 200 years "the same one, except for 30 new handles and a dozen blades." As a consequence, it was not ten miles before we had our first, as Travis elliptically put it, "mechanical", a flat tire. This one was easily predictable since I'd seen the flayed tire in Karanambu and wouldn't have driven out of the compound if it had been on my car. By the end of our Land Rover travels in Guyana we had all lost count of the mechanicals. I lost count at 10 (others claimed 14!). Passing out of the Karanambu Ranch land we spotted **Red-breasted Blackbird**, an **Osprey**, and the typical open savanna vulture, the **Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture**.

This was a day of travel and one in which my notebook inexplicably, but understandably, hid itself (writing in a moving Land Rover is an exercise in frustration). I'll extract data later from the party's notes. The route was along the western edge of the savanna, the Pakaraima Mts. on one side and eventually the Kanuku Mts. on our eastern flank. Our objective was Shirley Humphry's at Mountain Point. Just northwest of Shirley's, the Kanuku Mts. peter out in their westward extension. Along the way a Giant Anteater was seen knuckle-loping out in the savanna and Duane launched the Land Rover in hot pursuit eventually coming close alongside the animal. Close enough for Ilze and I to get good photos. I worry to myself, and Duane, about the effect on this animal of being chased by an auto. Such a large hairy critter must, I think, have a major heat disposal problem in this climate. But Duane assures me that this is the typical pace of the Giant Anteater.

Unlike our Great Plains, once described as an unending sea of grass, the savanna has much variety: minor water courses are fringed with Mauritius Palm, palmetto-like palms, tall grasses, flowering iris-like plants and various deciduous shrubs. Away from constant water the flatter terrain is close to barren. Small grass peduncles (6 inch high by 3 inch diameter) dot the plain separated by a foot or so. In the dry season these are fringed with a crown of last season's dry grass. On some slopes nothing grows, on others a well-developed shrub community exists. The savanna is not treeless but the trees seem to have a size limit, ca. 10-15 foot high. Curatella is the common tree I recognize. Complex leaves on others suggest legumes and acacia affinities. The overall image of the savanna is one of a starved land. It is starved, not of water as deserts are for in a climate of

180 inches of rainfall per year the savanna does not lack for water. But rather it is nutrient starved. This is the consequence of several factors: the soils are derived from ancient mountains whose roots are deeply buried by hundreds (perhaps thousands) of feet of mineral-depleted alluvial soil, the relative absence of geological and volcanic activity precludes the addition of new nutrients to the surface soils, and the intense rainfall carries away what minerals do leach from exposed rocks.

The singular difference between savanna and the adjacent rainforest is the latter's complex plant community. So tight are the nutrient economies in the rainforest that virtually all the nutrients are essentially always in plant, bacterial, fungal and animal matter. Thus, the rainforest is impervious to nutrient leaching by one of the highest rainfalls in the hemisphere. Such miserly grasping of every last atom of mineral by the forest community assures that its mineral nutrient inheritance will be passed to its heirs intact. In contrast, savannas lack the plant mass to protect a significant portion of their nutrients from leaching and thus are doomed to a nutrient impoverished state. Of course the rainforest can invade the savanna but in doing so the rainforest brings with it its own economical handling of nutrients. Both Stanley Brock (in *Jungle Cowboy*) and Duane De Freitas (pers. com.) commented on the habit of local amerindians of spontaneously burning the savanna during the dry season. This is also done in Australia by aboriginal tribes and was practiced in the Great Plains both of which are generally arid areas. Burning off is generally imagined to rejuvenate the grasslands by removing dried shrubs and recycling nutrients. Where major herbivores exist burning might improve grazing and ultimately lead to the redistribution of nutrients. But, if the ability of the savanna to sequester and retain mineral nutrient in the face of the tropical rainfall is so poor, perhaps freeing nutrients from the biomass and thereby increasing their ability to be leached is precisely the wrong thing to do to protect the limited supply of nutrients.

As we approached Lethem we drove on what was the most destructive road imaginable. The laterite soil, brick-hard and broken into uniform-sized rounded pebbles formed an endless series of moguls at right angles to the road much like those seen on an ungroomed snowmobile trail, or a beach washed by gigantic waves. The resultant wave action was sufficient to break a spring on one of the Land Rovers causing yet another "mechanical" which was jury-rigged on the spot. As so often is the case, our misfortune caught the attention of travelers who stopped to offer assistance. The first scheduled stop was at Lethem where an excellent lunch was served at the Savanna Inn about noon. Radio contact with Dadanawa both alerted them to our progress and insured that a new truck spring would be available along the route. Ilze, "hors de combat", peacefully stretched out on the patio keeping the dogs and lizards company. Land Rover travel is not without its hazards, but at this stop the beer was plentiful and ice cold. At Lethem, Malcolm introduced me to his son, a good-looking young man. Duane stopped to chat. As everywhere else information is valuable, but here in the outback knowing the condition of roads, bridges, recent rains, who is where, and where they intend to go, can be the difference between a trip and a disaster. As a consequence, Duane and Co. spend what anywhere in the U.S. might seem an inordinate amount of time "jawing."

Leaving Lethem we drove around the western end of the Kanukus to reach Macusi Village. This amerindian community is close by the western edge of the Kanuku Mts. and is a pleasant settlement of substantial thatched shelters, pigs, cows, horses, and people. A clinic and school building were evident. The trip listed relatively few new birds. Along the road **Crested Bobwhite**, **Vermilion Flycatcher**, **Grasslands Yellow-Finch** and **Yellowish Pipit** were seen. At Macusi Village I had my first look at **Brazilian Ducks** and **Fork-tailed Palm-Swifts**. There is a small but well-developed marsh that features low-growing vegetation on the right of the road and higher growing marsh plants on the left. The Macusi marshes seem a natural focal point for migrants passing between the savannas. Along the route, burning the fields was being practiced on this date. From Macusi Village we traveled southeastward toward Dadanawa and the turn-off to Shirley Humphreys's compound. On the drive two Buff-necked Ibises flew close over our Land Rovers.

AT MOUNTAIN POINT Shirley Humphreys's compound is set on the plain near a few wet spots and occasional patches of woods. Her ranch is a poem in isolation. Nearby here the Rupununi River flows through the Kanuku Mts and divides the savanna into Northern and Southern Savannas. To the south-west the Kanuku Mts are represented by a series of discreet isolated monadnocks that march off over the savanna into the sunset. The higher peaks separated by possibly 20 miles of savanna suggest "islands in the desert" similar to the Chiricahua and Huachuca mountains of southeast Arizona and hint to me of the possibility of unique species. The elevation at this site is 210 feet above sea-level. As our caravan drives into the yard we are met by Shirley with a graciousness and hospitality all out of proportion to her diminutive stature. Shirley lives here with only her pack of five or six indian hunting dogs but on the occasion of our visit a staff of cooks and assistants were helping her. Hers is a minimalistic life without electricity very little propane and much isolation. In a nearby grove is her husband's grave. He was a manager of Dadanawa Ranch who died following a tragic accident. She is a gracious, solicitous hostess and an aspiring bird-watcher. One of Davis' objectives in this trip was to deliver to her a copy of *The Birds of Suriname* by Francois Haverschmidt and Gerlof Mees. This is a very large, gorgeously illustrated and important book on the birds of the area. It weighs just under 7 lbs and as such constituted 28% of Davis's weight allowance! It was a most impressive gift which she clearly enjoyed.

As dusk enveloped us, the plain filled with more than fifty of the small Least Nighthawks with their light, bouncy flight. Among them were a few much larger nighthawks. These were **Nacunda** and were easily distinguished by their deliberate, slower wing beat, and comparatively almost ponderous (if any nighthawk's flight can be described as "ponderous") flight. We sleep this night for the first time in hammocks (backs willing). The hammock is second nature to the Guyanan, but takes a moderate amount of getting used to. Total exhaustion is perhaps the greatest aid in the use of the hammock by the uninitiated. This night it helped, indeed. In the morning stars, Ken, Travis, Davis and I set out to walk the prairie near the

Humphreys's ranch. This particular savanna gave the impression of being flooded for a part of the year and was clearly used as pasture for the horses which are Shirley's primary, possibly sole, source of income. Resident in the higher, thinner short grass/forb growth of the pasture was a 4-inch mini-flycatcher, the **Bearded Tachuri**. This slim, crested, little fellow is very hard to spot due to its small size and coloration which blends well with the grass stems on which it perches. In addition, this ventriloquistically-talented bird seemed to me to be calling from farther away than it was. When Davis played its song on a tape, there was a distinct "brrrrrr" at the end of the taped song. Examination of the bird actually singing showed that the end of the song was punctuated by a rapid fluttering of the wings and a plainly audible burping noise was associated with the wing action.

At breakfast a large **Bicolored Wren** searched along the thatch of a nearby out-building. All had a good close view. A walk about the marsh behind the compound revealed a pair of Yellow-chinned Spinetails and the usual marsh birds (Brazilian Duck, Buff-necked Ibis, Jabiru, Great Egrets, and White-headed Marsh Tyrants). Following breakfast we drove to Sawariwau River, a small creek nearby which drains into the Amazon Basin via the Takutu River on to the Rio Branco and the Rio Negro. At this point we are at North 02° 56' 655 and West 59° 40' 444. On the way the flat short-grass fields were pebbled with termitaries so many that it was impossible to drive there without neatly planing the tops of those in our path. Unquestionably, termites are the major tropical herbivore. They were not absent from any of the environments we studied. In the varzea, termitaries were characteristically on tree trunks high above the flood levels and long tunnels connected them to the ground. Along the creek, whose bed was alternately dry and pooled but not perceptively flowing, we found Green Kingfisher. On the banks and at the water's edge grew patches of a wrist-thick single stalked arum. This water plant is called "mucca-mucca" the poultice of which is alleged to be an effective demulcent for the treatment of hemorrhoids (Preparation H, look out!). Straight-Billed Woodcreeper, Black-crested Antshrike, Common Tody-Flycatcher, Pale-Legged Hornero and Variegated Flycatcher responded to a Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl call, as did the real McCoy! A **Plumbeous Seedeater** was spotted here as well.

AT DADANAWA RANCH. At about 2 P.M. on April 11 we set out on the short run to Dadanawa. It is a slight climb to Dadanawa at an elevation of 340 feet. The savanna here was quite open and the horses, a herd of mares with foals, were strikingly beautiful. Most seemed larger than those the Wapashana rode. On encountering the amerindian cowboys it was clear that the descriptions from Stanley Brock's "Jungle Cowboy" were right on the nose. The equipment included hand-braided rawhide lariats, two-toed stirrups, saddles and hats. Though Stanley Brock's book has a great deal of popular interest material about pet jaguars, tapirs, cougars and much more, there is probably no more accurate depiction of the Dadanawa Ranch (North 02° 50.005, West 59° 31.339'). Little seems to have changed from his descriptions, its people or the Land Rovers which I'm sure were the exact same vehicles described in the book. I felt at home and the staff did everything to insure that continued. Probably reading that book prepared me better for every aspect of the trip than anything short of actually being there. For its medical insight the book is equally valuable. Shortly after arrival my notebook turned up in the bottom of my bag and a more accurate record was restored. A quick stalk along the Rupununi River was arranged. Davis called in a **White-barred Piculet**. Ilze spotted a large, dark, peregrine-like falcon so high that no color could be seen. The most likely large falcon encountered would be an Orange-breasted Falcon, not a peregrine. Still, not enough detail seen for me to list it. A characteristic fast warbler-like call was answered by tape and revealed a **Flavescent Warbler** in dense stream-side brush. Further along we lured in a male Blue-backed Manakin, a missed target bird for much of the Karanambu stay. Burnished-buff Tanager and **Bananaquit** completed the day. Early the next morning we returned to the normal routine. A walk along the road to the ranch gate turned up a **Black-collared Hawk**, a rather sedentary, slow-moving large bird. We didn't see it soar but its heavy flapping flight down the course of the river suggested it was anything but light on its wings. Although the call of the **Striped Cuckoo** had followed us everywhere this was my first good view of the bird. Two **Little Woodpeckers** were first glimpsed and later seen very well. A Yellow-breasted Flycatcher and a **Greenish Elaenia** were identified. In response to the tape, a socially-minded **Little Chachalaca** flew over a river pool and almost instantly disappeared after landing in a tree. While we heard this bird each morning in every riparian forest this was our first good view. Unlike South Texas's heedless Plain Chachalaca (*Oreortyx vetula*), I suppose it is hunted and has developed wariness.

BUSH ISLAND was our first objective for the day. "Bush islands" are isolated forested patches surrounded by the savanna. Although during the wet season some might be inundated, their islandness has to do with their being surrounded by grass, not water. The trees were quite lofty, but not so much as a well-developed rainforest and except near the edges they had the open gallery character of woodland. Our guide "Silveirio" did a good job of seeing that we didn't get lost. He had the eyes of a hunter and missed very little, but I don't believe his heart was into bird-watching. Here we lured a pair of Buff-throated Woodcreepers to us. The incessant loud stridulations of many cicadas over-whelmed the songs and call notes of the birds making detection of birds simply impossible at times. Cicadas were also visible and I did get a decent close photo of one cicada with the sun shining gold on its long wings. Their size is at least twice that of the northeast's Seventeen Year Locust. Also seen were White-winged Becard, Ashy-headed Greenlet and Red-eyed Vireo, always an attendant at mobbing scenes in summertime New Hampshire and in Guyana. A Brown-crested Flycatcher was seen as were **Gray Seedeaters**. The savanna near Bush Island is grassy and supports a species of Curatella trees, so called "sandpaper trees." These trees follow a strategy to discourage herbivores by depositing silica in their leaves: this sort of energy expenditure probably works only in the tropics where leaves can persist for a year (or more?) but might be wasteful for large temperate-zone trees where leaves are shed regularly after only five months. The use of silica is frequent in many other life forms, for instance, radiolarians, diatoms, sponges, horsetails (Equisetium) but in higher life forms it is a minor component of bone and cartilage. The Curatella scrub habitat, especially the

weedy hillsides overgrown with chest-high grasses, is an indicator for the Amazonian Scrub-Flycatcher a pair of which Davis found readily.

After lunch we went on the Guyanan equivalent of a New England "Snipe-Hunt." Two young boys had spotted a "Harpy Eagle nest" not five minutes walk and a small paddle from the ranch buildings. So we went over to check it out. If ever they were there, they left without a trace, even taking their nest with them! Later, it turned out, the boys did locate a Black-collared Hawk's nest. On this afternoon Davis had planned a trip to Towa Towan a nearby isolated bald - we'd call it a "Cap" in Maine. However, I was overcome with an undeniable urge to not confine my alimentary canal to the back of a Land Rover! Thus, I missed a unique sighting...Sharp-tailed Ibis which had rarely, if ever, been seen in this neighborhood and was not to be seen again on this trip.

THE KUYUWINI EXPEDITION was the *piece de resistance* of this trip and the next morning (April 13th) we set off for the Kuyuwini River almost due south of us. The party consisted of Duane, Malcolm Miller, Carl Fredericks (driver extrodinaire), Pip (who was that masked man, anyway?), Elizabeth and Julius Denny, our kitchen staff comprising Marvelous Marjory Antone, the very helpful Stephen Raimondo and we five in two Dadanawa Land Rovers. The overall logistics for this trip was truly impressive: at least 18 individuals, three vehicles (including a tractor), three campsites, a boat, radio and solar panels, food and incidentals for all. We drove first to Aishalton where we were met by the village captain, Tony James. Here arrangements were made for fuel to be deposited there from Dadanawa for our return trip. The trip over the savanna with a deep ford near Aishalton was dry. So was the general store..no beer. But we sat about and, as usual, hospitality in the form of cool juices appeared. We were honored royalty. Again, the protocol of jawing, admiring the new addition, trying out the new radio, or appreciating the new solar power supply was an essential feature of the trip.

Aishalton left, we drove to a nearby boulder field where an astonishing variety of petroglyphs had been inscribed and, more recently, highlighted in chalk by the local school classes. These were on large (30-50-foot diameter) smoothly rounded breast-shaped black boulders. The source of these boulders is likely the nearby ledges but what agency has smoothed them. Are they the work of man or some other agency? Water seems unlikely. Could heat spallation do it? Were aeolian forces responsible? Nowadays the eastern winds couldn't do it. Perhaps before the Andes rose 20-30 million years ago these rocks rested on some shore and were blasted by western winds. These petroglyphs are a marvelous feature, made more mysterious by our sudden insights into the possible meanings, the recognition of a cicada, other animals, or of sun and water, and certainly of people.

The trip continued through another Wapishana village, Karaudanawa where Magnus and Placid Stevens, two of our most competent guides, lived. Both were already ahead of us at Kuyuwini Landing. En route, we were to stop this night at a camp on the Parabara Savanna. Our path intersected a number of small streams which generally had little water at this time but were surrounded by riparian forest and edged with jungle. Occasionally we had to plunge into brush covering the road, or ride on corrugated ditches. Generally the trip was uneventful with only four or five of the usual pauses for flats, break-downs and stuck vehicles. The last pitch was through "Thirteen Mile Woods" (actually less) a mature forest of really tall trees. Our trip was made simpler by an advance crew consisting of Joe, Percy and two or three others who with a tractor had been sent ahead and broken trail, removed logs and cleared brush. The savanna raptors were: Savanna Hawk, American Kestrels, Aplomado Falcon, White-tailed Hawk, Swallow-tailed and Plumbeous Kites and Yellow-headed and Crested Caracara. Vultures were Lesser Yellow-Headed, Black and Turkey. Pigeons seen were Pale-vented, Ruddy and Plumbeous while doves seen included Eared Dove the ubiquitous Common Ground-Dove and, in riparian forest, the White-tipped Dove. Swallow-wings were throughout.

AT PARABARA SAVANNA (02° 11'. 956, West 59° 22'. 262) we birders eloped to the forest while everyone else set up camp. The forest here is composed of really high mature trees with tops approaching 100-120 ft. We hear howler monkeys some distance away vocalizing and thrashing about the treetops. It is a fully birdacious place. Red-and-green, Red-bellied, and Red-shouldered Macaws were seen, as were Caica, Dusky and Blue-headed Parrots, Spotted and Pied Puffbirds, Long-tailed Hermit and Black-eared Fairy, Squirrel Cuckoo, White-tailed Trogon, Channel-billed Toucan (my first sighting of a non-captive toucan) as well as a probable Yellow-throated Woodpecker were seen in these deep woods. I excitedly called out a "large black" bird resting on a limb which turned out to be a much more modest sized Purple-throated Fruitcrow. Several of these cotingas were subsequently seen. The most commonly heard and most identifiable noise in these deeper woods was the Screaming Piha. This dowdy bird distinguished by its total lack of distinctive marking illustrates the complementarity principle that the duller the bird the more spectacular the voice, the bower or the display. It is a difficult bird to find in spite of its voice, I have yet to do so.

Buff-throated and Lineated Woodcreepers were seen and heard. A Mouse-colored Antshrike was seen. A Rufous-throated Antbird was heard by Davis the only record of this bird on the trip. A Thrush-like Antpitta was heard. Among the flycatchers, several Mouse-colored Tyrannulets and a pair of Sirystes were seen. The Sirystes were a novel find for the area although not an unexpected one. Forest and Yellow-bellied Elaenias, Painted Tody-Flycatcher and Yellow-breasted Flycatchers were only heard. A Helmeted Pygmy-Tyrant was observed well. A White-breasted Wood-Wren and a pair of Fulvous-crested Tanagers were found. Attempts to call a Pectoral Sparrow into my view were fruitless, although I suspect the rest of the

party at least shared a glimpse. I nick-named this elusive but quite vocal bird of the dense jungle edges, the "spectral sparrow." I have yet to see it.

Davis spotted a Lineated Woodcreeper and we watched it deposit nesting material in a hollow 60-70 feet up in a 100+ ft high deciduous tree. As we stepped backward off the road to reduce the angle we were suddenly assaulted by wasps. I think three of us (Travis, Davis and I) were stung. In my case I was wearing a short-sleeved shirt for the first time during the trip. A wasp worked his way to my left armpit and stung me at least five times there. The wasp is called locally "marabunta", the similarity to the term moribund was not lost on me as the sting site eventually became infected. Percy who was guiding us at that time pointed out the wasp nest, about the size of a standard baseball, and covered with small black wasps which were about half the size of our typical Vespa. The nest was suspended from a leaf in a shrub a meter from the road edge. In reviewing our Land Rover ride to the Parabara Savanna several of us had been "bitten" by what were thought to be "fire ants." Small bites or stings, but essentially ignorable. These were apparently marabunta stings that did not penetrate our clothing sufficiently to inject venom well.

Our camp at Parabara was a simple, well-built rectangular, gabled shelter, roofed with an orange polyethylene tarp and hung with hammocks. A spring hole nearby had adequate water for bathing and, in retrospect, for drinking. Between the vehicles and the shelter we all fitted in and the night was anything but warm. I'd bet it went into the mid-sixties. The clear night gave a good view of the Hale-Bopp Comet just above the northern horizon, the Southern Cross in the opposite quadrant and a host of stars on which Davis expounded from his wealth of astral knowledge. In the morning, April 14th, we toured the camp environs and then returned to the woods road. In a near fruit tree **Blue-backed** and **Opal-rumped Tanagers** were found. On our return to the forest road we observed two woodpeckers; **Waved** and Golden-collared. A **Black-capped Becard** is called in. A new jacamar is seen, the **Paradise Jacamar**, not at all bright colored but its "sharp at both ends" profile is unmistakable. This is a really birdy high forest with macaws and parrots flashing by over a towering 100+ foot canopy. Antbirds of various forms abound: a pair of Dusky Antbirds, a **Black-headed Antbird** is seen and its Tufted Titmouse-like call is repeatedly heard, a **Slaty Antshrike** responds to our call. A **Reddish Hermit** is seen visiting a near flowering tree. Among the first birds seen while we walked along the road were **Black-banded Woodcreeper**, a **Blue-black Grosbeak**, a **Fork-tailed Woodnymph**, and a Pied Puffbird. High in the tree-tops a **Green Oropendola** was seen and several glimpses of the whitish **Cayenne Jay** ultimately coalesced into a complete picture. Dusky or Caica Parrots flew by and a Chestnut Woodpecker was seen well. Among **Flycatchers** were Streaked, **Yellow-throated** (recently separated from White-ringed), **Painted Tody-Flycatcher** and the Sirystes. Very obvious in the highest treetops the profiles, the electric-blue color and the brilliant red legs of **Red-legged Honeycreepers** were seen. Unquestionably these were Red-legged Honeycreepers but two birds we saw had very short bills and suspicions are raised that Short-billed Honeycreepers could be here as well.

About 12:30 PM we set out from the Parabara Camp embarking over the swampy savanna. The path followed the center of the savanna for a way then took a sharp turn to the left up a long slight rise which turned out to be very soft ground. Inauspiciously, the lag vehicle managed to get stuck on level ground before we reached the rise. Bailing out of the vehicles, pushing and walking were the order of the moment. Finally both vehicles managed this stretch which traction-wise was one of the worst sections of road. Now the track went into woodlands out onto the savanna again repeatedly as we traversed ever-larger stream and creek beds. Their direction was from north to south but at this season none had a significant flow of water. Each stream bed was heralded by a steep decline into a ravine followed by an equally steep ascent. There was plentiful evidence of at least occasional human occupation including tree carvings with anatomical details that only Larry Flynt dare publish. Near one of these streams was an abandoned and deteriorating simple thatched lean-to sufficient for not more than two people. In the stream itself was the bony shell (approximately 18" long) of a large turtle. During the wet season, I imagine the smaller streams are occupied by much larger and more accessible prey. Weirs and nets across these streams at the beginning of the dry season must be an effective way to harvest retreating fish and turtles.

The path had its share of swampy land, corduroy road and overhanging vines. These vines are sometimes "razor grass", the equivalent of organic barbed wire, which like barbed wire can cause real damage as one drives through the jungle. Calling out the hazard and ducking were essential for those in the rear of the Land Rover. As we approached the Kuyuwini River Forest there was a major (30 min) "mechanical." In the middle of one creek the second Land Rover slipped its gear-shift linkage and remained stuck in reverse. The pause was an opportunity to bird so we struck out up the trail. In a creek bottom we found **Sulphury Flycatchers** and a few of the common species. When the repair was made, the trucks approached us as we continued out of the jungle into the savanna. There Travis made the discovery of the trip. High in a distant emergent whose umbrella top towered over the forest canopy sat a large reddish crow-like bird. Glasses and Ken's scope revealed this to be a **Crimson Fruitcrow**, a bird not listed in our guide but one that I had read about in D. W. Snows' *The Cotinga* from Maggie Wittner's library. As we approached it across the field, it took off and flew in level powered flight across the next creek. According to Davis it is a rare bird with a rather limited and small range. As dedicated a South American birder as he is, Davis had seen it only twice before. A real high moment. We were all thrilled but Davis was ecstatic! This bird was at North 02° , 08'.987, West 59° ,16'.172.

The track continued in forest, breaking out from time to time into small savanna glades frequently marked by the Mauritius Palm or Palmettos. In one we spotted our first **Black Caracara**. This bird seems to prefer the smaller savanna

clearings. Finally the trail continued through pretty much continuous high gallery forest with occasional dips into broader ravines. The last pitch up to the Kuyuwini River from a nearly dry streambed was imposing; slippery with wet clay, deeply rutted, and at least a 30° climb for 150 feet. The lead Land Rover hung up about 20 feet up the trail, tires blocked to prevent slip-back, it sat unmoved by human pushing. The first idea was to winch it up, but firmer minds prevailed. A hawser was provided and a dozen stalwarts were organized by Ilze, in her very best summer-camp counselor form, on either side of the rope. We then pulled the Land Rover up the hill with some grunting and much elation. The second, pulled by the first, came more easily. The run from there to the Kuyuwini Landing was without incident. Kuyuwini Landing (North 02° 05.53', West 59° 15.03') is a hardrock ledge that crosses the river and at extreme low water is probably wadable. It provides a good spot to launch boats and Duane had a 20-foot aluminum river boat which he had hauled in. As well, the amerindians had several dugout canoes. Percy and several other workers cleaned fish and later Placid and Magnus hunted for paca. Our gear and, in time, we ourselves were transported about a mile down the nearly currentless river to our campsite at Farine Pan Falls (North 02°, 14. 229' West 59° 15.00). The elevation at this point was measured by Davis at 600 ft above sea-level. The track on our map (1975 edition) continues for 25 miles ending at the Kassikaityu River but now there is no evidence of it beyond the Landing. The forest exerts its claim over the land rapidly.

THE KUYUWINI CAMP. We settle into the camp, bathe in the river, dry, and bird for a bit around camp. The shelter is the standard open rectangular gabled frame structure, tarpaulin covered and apparently newly constructed or re-constructed. At one end a thatched cooking area faced the building and a platform of logs had been built to bring the cooking equipment to waist height. This equipment was placed on "boards" made from two inch thick tree bark and the immediate cooking area was framed by similar bark boards to protect it from the elements. The bark is light colored but all of it had been gouged on the external surface to make an attractive design of red marks. This design could be art plain and simple, but may denote tribal "ownership" or even represent some traditional rite respecting the tree. It would be interesting to know. Just beyond the camp we found the trees from which the bark had been cut. These were a relatively smooth-barked species possibly thirty to thirty-six inches in diameter. They had been dropped with a chain saw, sawed into five or six foot logs and the bark then cut in the long dimension and peeled off to make the boards. The tree is a latex-rich species (bulletwood?) and the cambium region of the stump was ringed with eruptions of latex some piled up to four or five inches in height.

After sharing rum punch we ate a supper of fresh fish caught in the Kuyuwini and "bakes" prepared by Marjory. A novel beverage appears. It is made from the millimeter thick inner layer of a brown nut of a palm said, probably incorrectly, to be "Cokerite Palm". Released by boiling, the resulting milky fluid is barely sweet and tastes faintly like a malted milk-shake. Bates reports a similar potion, milky with a nutty flavor, from the pulp coats of the "Bacaba tree", a palm he identified as "*Oenocarpus distichus*." A closely related palm, called "manaka" (*Oenocarpus bacaba*) occurs widely throughout Guyana and is probably what we had. A drink of similar type is also prepared from the fruit of *Euterpe oleracea*, called locally "lu". No one has any complaints. That night is spent in a hammock. There are several potential positions that can be assumed in a hammock but all are uncomfortable, and mine seemed to defy gravity. On April 15th in the 5 A.M. dawn, I struggle out of my hammock and mosquito net and, completely disoriented, begin a search for the john. Happily, success is not too far away, nor too long in coming. But once up, I stay up. April 15, today we go back up the river to the Landing and hunt the road for birds. Here, more than anywhere, Davis insists that I'll see the bird - and we saw them. On the boat to the Kuyuwini Landing we saw Amazon Kingfisher, **Band-rumped Swifts**, White-winged and **White-banded Swallows** and Gray-breasted Martins, **Scarlet** and **Blue-and-yellow Macaws**, **Golden-winged Parakeets** and Orange-winged Parrots. At the landing four **Red-fan Parrots** were present. Among parrots these are the most spectacularly patterned with a light grey beige streaked head, vermilion feathers edged with blue on the nape and breast, back parrot-green and primaries and tail dark. Unlike most of the parrots which we saw only in fleeting passage, these birds remained conspicuously sitting in a tree near the landing flooded by great early morning light. The road transects a riparian forest first through the thick shrubs near the river, then through the jungle tangle along the more open edges, and farther along the trail into the much higher trees characteristic of the rain forest. Where the road has created extensive openings various stages of successional growth are obvious. Along road edge were found Streaked Antwren (a male), White-flanked Antwren and finally the **Thrushlike Antpitta** was detected sitting on a log on the forest floor doing its best to passively respond to our tape by vocalizing. This is a hard bird to see!

Magnus was our guide today and really just let us do our thing while he whittled. Curious about the objective of his work, I enquired. What was the wood? Leopard wood. An attractive wood named for its reddish black-spotted grain. What was it? The shape was dagger-like and as he worked a familiar shape appeared. Unmistakably, a net-shuttle virtually identical to one I'd whittled out of an old shutter piece in my youth when I was into net-making. A useful tool considering the supply of fish needed by the 18 of us. Keeping the hands occupied seemed to characterize Magnus and Placid. Placid made several wallets and bags from palmetto leaves, and Magnus prepared plant stems slit into strips 1/8th inch wide and 40 inch long for basket weaving.

Amazonian Antshrike, a male **Great Antshrike**, **Pygmy Antwren**, a female **Rose-breasted Chat**, **Wedge-billed Woodcreeper**, Striped Woodcreeper, and Yellow-throated Woodpecker were present. **Buff-cheeked Greenlet**, **Sooty-headed Tyrannulet**, **Golden-Spangled Piculet** and **Long-billed Gnatwren** were seen. Another of the region's honeycreepers was found, a pair of **Green Honeycreepers**, **Blue Dacnis**, **Gravish Mourner** (rivaling the Screaming Piha in its dowdiness), several **Cinnamon Attila** and a female **Black-spotted Barbet** sporting a brilliant red throat, were seen. A pair of Yellow-

crowned Elaenia were observed as was our only Sulphur-rumped Flycatcher of the trip. Also listed anew this day were Wing-barred Piprites, White-bearded Manakin, Corava Wren, Slate-colored Grosbeak, Violaceous Euphonia and, while it had been seen by everyone else yesterday, today I saw my first Guira Tanager and a Spotted Tanager.

One casualty of my early morning struggle with hammock and sleeping net was the loss of my hearing aid. I'd searched for it to no avail and then mentioned it to Steven who looked for it. Later Placid and Percy hunted for it. Percy found it by digging in the dirt beneath my hammock where I had apparently stepped on it and buried it completely. Thus, I was very pleasantly surprised when Percy and Placid walked up to me in the woods at Kuyuwini Landing and presented me with this still functional treasure.

In the afternoon we birded briefly in the jungle behind the camp, found a Scale-backed Antbird and tried unsuccessfully to lure a vocalizing Black-faced Anthrush. We then boated from below the Farine Pan Falls a mile or so down the river. The river here has high banks and presumably because of the flood stage they are mostly bare and overhung with vines, pendulous shrubs and branches. In contrast to the Rupununi River no caiman were seen here although fish and other prey were plentiful. I wonder if they are absent, or more wary here where they might be less protected and more prized as game. We found a Red-throated Caracara in a high tree. Also seen were Red-billed Toucan, Grey-breasted Sabrewing, Spot-backed Antbird, and a Green-and-Rufous Kingfisher. A tropical thunderstorm threatened us and out came the umbrellas but little rain fell then. Much more fell during the night. The meat at supper included a labba (*Agouti paca*), a very tasty rodent, shot by Placid.

April 16. Dawn bathing calf-deep in the Kuyuwini River is a quiet experience. First sounds are the chuckle of water flowing around the rocks at Farine Pan Falls and the all-night persistent "Brrrap" of two nearby treefrogs singing in, then out, of phase, counterpoised by the murmur of Marjory to Stephen and his response, as they prepare the morning meal for birders too single-minded to object to a 4:30 A.M. rising. The extremely low, quiet voice of the Wapishanas and even the ranch workers has been a shock. So below the range of the normal sounds of the civilized north where aggressive sound is a constant from the over-lugged tires roaring by to the blaring of TVs, car radios, emergency vehicles. Even the normally reserved New Englander is an order of magnitude louder than the Wapishanas. I realize how much hearing I've lost when I can't understand even Duane or Malcolm when they're speaking to me in their normal tones. Like the Wapashana, they murmur. A very far off roar of red howler monkeys slides into my consciousness. Now there's a noisy primate!

My mind, seeking symmetry, locks on civilization and I suddenly realize how this civilization I now view near the edge of the Amazon basin is in ways a more matured one than that in which I normally reside. It has survived fairly intact, however dramatic the changes, only slowly changing with the centuries. The escape velocity at which modern industrial civilization proceeds insures that nothing lasts. Everything is re-born, re-worked and destroyed in the process. My own research area is a testament to this, it has been "back-watered" and hardly any problem in bacterial virology or basic bacteriology is now funded although many significant problems still exist. Studied issues have moved on to trendy and admittedly more utilitarian, medically significant or potentially more lucrative projects on eucaryotes. In contrast, this quiet civilization at the edges of the "busy" world has had the opportunity to define itself, to integrate its behavior with the environment and evolve a compatible life style. There are even more isolated first people, the Wai Wai, thirty miles to the south where the old track from the Landing once ended, who retain even more of the original way. The Wapashianas have integrated their society into the cattle industry thus making use of their hunting skills since cattle ranching in the savannas of southern Guyana is mostly a hunting skill. The ease with which Placid, who with his New England Firearms 12-gauge "Pardner", has provided us with a Labba (paca) each day testifies to that skill. They, at least the men, are consummate horsemen. Percy, who has been with us as a helper, carries a bow and three fifty-inch long, steel-tipped fishing arrows. A very lethal looking set-up. Subsequently, Percy showed up at the ranch in the typical vaqueiro equipment. Ecotourism (that's us) is an even more compatible paradigm which is now being adopted by the Wapashana. When I discussed this passage with Davis months later, he wrote me "Yes but believe me, we are among the very first ecotourists these people have seen." A carefully regulated ecotourism may do more to preserve their natural environment than any superimposed view of civilization.

Now more noise from the camp as our party rises. The first truly audible bird noises, the loud notes of, my guess, a Cinereous Tinamou come to ear. It is still too dark to find soap, toothbrush, or dop kit on the Farine Pan rock shelf, just light enough to find my clothes without a flashlight. Last night it rained and the camp on the Kuyuwini River is in mild disarray. Hammocks hung in the open at dusk have been jury-rigged under the shelter pretty much in any way they'll hang. Malcolm is laid out flat, asleep on one bench of the table sheltered from the rain by the thatch of the cooking hut. Marjory and Stephen work quietly around him. I sit down at the opposite side of the table, sip coffee and wait for Davis to muster the troops for a quick birding foray into the nearby woods. One of Davis' trail kit requirements, in addition to water, is an umbrella. Last night I'd put mine, opened to dry out, on top of the tent tarp and in extracting it this morning I loosened a few gallons of cold rain water from the tarp suddenly and unexpectedly on Davis' head. A cold wet morning shower! Sorry, Davis.

From 5 to 7 A.M. we birded behind the camp and turned up a Spot-backed Antbird, a Gray Antwren, and a Buff-throated Foliage-gleaner. The plan today is to go across the river to a nearby small savanna through low, thick jungle into a rather open and thin forest. Placid wielding the typical Guyanan brush tool, a cutlass not different from a pirate's, had cleared

the path through to the savanna yesterday and the going was easy. Initially we spotted Fasciated Antshrike, had good looks at Coraya Wrens, and spent some time listening to the differences between Plumbeous ("Why' don't you' go?") and Ruddy ("Acapulco") Pigeons. A Strong-billed Woodcreeper was seen. While we'd barely glimpsed Red-throated Caracara yesterday, today we managed to be mobbed by them. Their loud scream was easily imitated and at least four of these excited birds kept a constant tree-top screaming--earning the name by which our guides, Magnus and Placid, call them, "the anti-man" bird. Somehow we finally lost them and while concentrating on identifying some monkeys, we heard a harsh bray. Quickly, Davis' tape came up with a response, a Capuchinbird, an unexpected bird new to the area. It was the size of a crow, but stouter and grayish. It flew in, perched and calmly looked down on us from the upperstory. The call is such that this bird is accurately nick-named the "calf-bird." This thin, medium height wood produced a pair of Red-necked Woodpeckers, sporting flame-colored heads, tan-washed underparts and yellowish bills, and after some search, a White-necked Thrush. The Olive-backed Foliage-gleaner was also found. At the edge of the savanna in fairly thick cover we encountered a foraging mixed flock of birds. In this part of Guyana the composition of these foraging flocks is, according to Davis, reasonably predictable: Saturnine or Dusky-throated Antshrike, Gray Antwren, Chestnut-rumped Woodcreeper, Cinereous Antshrike and Olive-backed Foliage-gleaner all were present in this group. As we approached and entered the small savanna we found Black-headed Parrot, a Black Caracara, a perched White Hawk and soaring; two Black Vultures and three King Vultures. This environment with its Mauritius palms seemed to Davis to be Yellow-green Grosbeak territory and in short order, Davis called one in. In the dried muddy spots in this savanna were the characteristic three-toed tracks of the tapir- the largest native jungle-grazing tropical mammal in South America. After a brief exploration of the savanna we hurried back to camp with Placid and Magnus for lunch.

In the afternoon, we went up the river stopping at the Farine Pan Farm on the left hand bank. Here, in a thatched structure, a large shallow 5-6 foot diameter steel pan rested inverted on a bricked fireplace. This is used in the preparation of farine for drying and baking the washed and strained manioc root. "Matapi", tubes woven from palm frond that are used to press the toxic cyanide-laden juices out of the mashed root, hung from the rafters. The expressed juice when boiled is a non-poisonous sauce called "cassareep" that is an essential for stews, soups and the general pot-luck meal. Neither manioc plants nor farmers were in evidence but a bunch of ripe bananas was left on a table presumably as an exchange item. White-bearded Manakin, Black-headed Parrot and Mouse-colored Antshrike were among the birds seen in the afternoon. For supper our hunters had shot a labba. Duane had earlier promised me to prepare a curried labba. I assumed that he'd kept his word. In addition to the curry, the labba was served as roasted pieces. What is there to say? Great location! Great food! Great company!

On the morning of the 17th we broke camp and, in order to get us out of the workers way, we were quickly paddled up to Kuyuwini Landing. Along the way, Dusky Parrot, Blue-and-yellow Macaw, Black Caracara, Neotropical Cormorant, as well as Green and rufous and Ringed Kingfishers were seen. The ever-present voice of the Screaming Piha was heard as was that of the Little Tinamou. A unique audible here was the Slaty Grosbeak. In the high trees along the river Red-billed Toucan were obvious and in the trees just at the edge of the jungle Guianian Toucanet and Green Aracari were seen well. Showers moved us back and forth between the jungle path and the shelter at the landing. On one foray in quick succession we found two exciting birds: several Spot-winged Antshrikes foraged in the low trees surrounding the clearing at the beginning of the Landing Road, and a Rusty-breasted Nunlet was found sitting motionless and silently just inside the jungle edge. Both species were new for Guyana.

RETURN TO DADANAWA. We left Kuyuwini Landing at about 10:30 A.M. The trip out was as eventful as that going in. Placid on his bike made considerably better time and was ahead of us most of the time. At one point he returned to say the he'd found a flock of Gray-winged Screammers, which we failed to find. We lunched on the road. As always Marjory pulled a fine meal out of her bag of tricks. We suffered at least one rope-pull and a general dismounting at the marsh road near the beginning of the Parabara Savanna in which I managed to plaster myself with a goodly coating of mud while assisting a Land Rover. Luckily, the spring there was an effective bath for Stephen, Duane and me. Placid beat us to the Parabara Savanna camp and we found him collecting palm nuts for his family. His task was well along by the time we arrived. We stayed only long enough for a group photo at the Parabara camp. Shortly after our departure we encountered the marabunta, probably the same wasp nest at the Lineated Woodcreeper tree. Most of us escaped with minor stings, but Davis was stung on his right forehead and swelled up considerably, nearly closing his right eye. The drive out from there was easy. In an open grassy area of the savanna we stopped to wait for the second Land Rover which had lagged out of sight. A brief walk into the grassland turned up good views of three Wedge-tailed Grass-Finches.

On the road just short of Karaudanawa Village, Duane suddenly and inexplicably braked hard on a clear road. Those standing in the back were heavily thrown to the bar supporting the roof tarp. Ouch! The cause was a small puppy wandering in the road through the uninhabited Savanna. We picked it up and it found a new home with Magnus. Magnus's house was pleasant and filled with family of a dozen at least. Magnus has ten children and clearly grandchildren aplenty. After a brief visit we left at about sundown, picked up Placid at his house, and headed for Aishalton. On the approach to Aishalton we lost contact with Carl Fredericks' s Land Rover. When we sent out for a few beers we learned that he taken a wrong turn and (most surprisingly?) when they accidentally encountered the local waterhole they settled down. One of the "modern" acquisitions in Aishalton is a very loud, full-bore, major stereo system in the town center. In contrast to my appreciation of silence on the Kuyuwini River, Aishalton on a Thursday night was a decibel hell. The last leg of the trip was in the dark, Carl's Land Rover with a defective

alternator/generator lost its headlights. A spare battery provided the power to light his way to Dadanawa where at about 11:30P.M. we arrived, to be fed and bedded.

On the 18th after breakfast we decided to run out to Towa Towan with Carl Fredericks and Placid Stevens visiting the ponds and marshes along the way. A medium-sized animal was glimpsed along a marsh edge and we all loped off after what turned out to be a Coatimundi. While beating the marsh grass for it, we turned up a **Pinnated Bittern** in addition to Brazilian Duck, Jabiru, Great Egrets and a Striated Heron. Towa Towan has several mucca-mucca-lined pools at its base which were dark with streams of swimming tadpoles. It is apparently a frequently used campsite. When we arrived we found a log smoldering and plentiful skeletons of fairly hefty snakes. While crossing a dry grassy stretch between two groves of trees most of the party carefully stepped over a long vine lying on the grass. I gave it a second look and it came alive. It was a **Vine Snake** (*Oxybeli aneus*). The body was evenly tan color, very long (6-7 ft) and slender, no more than 3/8ths of an inch diameter at any point. The head was quite pointed, the neck was extremely thin, the throat yellow, and a dark horizontal line ran through the eye. In spite of Travis's best efforts to grab it the snake slid up a tree and before our eyes vanished so perfect was its camouflage. Since this ground had been pretty well worked, in spite of the fact that birds were plentiful, we saw no birds we hadn't already seen.

MANARI, LETHEM AND GEORGETOWN. Around 3:00 P.M. we said farewell to Dadanawa and headed for Lethem and Manari Ranch where we would stay with Louis (Louie) Orella. At Macusi village we found several **Purple Gallinules** in the marsh (not life birds for me, but a bird I'd not seen for 50 years). In Lethem we stopped briefly at the Savanna Inn to meet Louie who had stopped there for a refreshment with the unrealistic objective of transporting two dozen eggs by motorcycle to the ranch. Eventually we transported Louis, the eggs, and the party to the ranch by Land Rover.

Travis had commented on a foot problem. There seemed to be a swelling on the edge of his footpad. Duane quickly identified it as "chigoes." The problem is the egg case of a sand-flea which is implanted on the footpads and at the edges of hooves in a variety of mammals. As the eggs develop they enlarge and cause irritation. This seemed to confirm my conviction that wearing socks to bed at night was a reasonable prophylaxis. An operation was undertaken to remove the egg case. In short, Duane used a sterile needle to lift the epidermis, probe the egg case and pry it out. This is one of the several operations described by Stanley Brock. Travis survived. I took a shower instead of joining the watching gallery. About this time I began to feel the effects of my wasp stings and found it painful lifting my arm.

Up at 4:30 a.m., Duane left us birding at Lethem's "luxurious" Guyana Airways Terminal where we found no novel species. While waiting for our flight, Davis and Travis chatted with George "Laurice" Franklin, a native guide noted for his knowledge of Harpy Eagles and their nesting sites. At 8:00 A.M. we departed on a DeHaviland High Wing 20-passenger turboprop plane landing 20 minutes later at Annai en route to Georgetown. During our 9-minute stopover we met Colin Edwards who runs "Rockview" an Ecotour Resort and other biologists boarded. At 9:42 A.M. we arrived in Timehri Airport in Georgetown where Karen and Louis of Tony Thornes's staff met us. As we reached the outskirts of Georgetown, we found a **Rufous Crab-Hawk** perched on a transmission wire over a salt marsh. Good view.

My infected bursitis-plagued shoulder was steadily deteriorating such that I couldn't lift my arm much less hold three pounds of 10 power binoculars with it. Ken Cole had been concerned about the fact that shoulder pain is often associated with cardiac problems. But this was pain and immobilization due to swelling and I decided that a physician was in order. Tony recommended that I visit his own physician who was also the Pegasas Hotel doctor. I was chauffeured to Dr. Balwant Singh's clinic by Louis with Karen where I was thrust ahead of everyone in the waiting room. In short order Dr. Singh examined me, prescribed and gave me a week's supply of an antibiotic (Cephalexin) and three days supply of pain-killers (Voglaren), commented on my weight, told me to lose forty pounds, charged me \$28.00 U.S. for the visit and in 8 hours I was virtually cured. Absolutely the most effective medical treatment I've ever had, and, by far the cheapest since I was about eight years old! I have since made arrangements to add a suture and antibiotic kit to my travel pack and lost twenty pounds!

After lunch we were shepherded to the Georgetown Botanical Park. This park has a variety of open, forested and aquatic habitats and is an easy and interesting spot to bird. Here we found a number of new species: **Greater Ani**, **Scarlet Ibis**, **Long-winged Harrier**, a **Great Horned Owl**, **Black-throated Mango**, Spotted Tody-Flycatcher, **Black-capped Donacobius**, **Variable Seedeaters**, **White-bellied Piculet**, Blue-Gray, **Hepatic**, **Silver-beaked** and **Turquoise Tanagers**. One specialty of the area which we did not see is the Blood-colored Woodpecker. A particularly impressive sight was a kettles of more than thirty Snail Kites that sported over us for several minutes. In a heron rookery we observed manatees in the shallows under the nests possibly seeking minerals. We also had a fleeting look at a mongoose.

Finally feeling the effects of my failed arm, I begged off and headed for the hotel. I had the distinct impression that Davis felt I'd be all right if I could just see one more bird. The rest of the party headed for the seawall for shore and sea birds. After a couple of hours of sleep I awoke totally refreshed and with marginally restored use of my arm. We dined at 8:00 in the Pegasus, and left for a brief nap only to arise at midnight in order to arrive in Timehri Airport by 2:00 A.M. so we could take off at 6:00 A.M. At 2:00 A.M., the airport is the definition of chaos. A tradition among Guyanese is to "see off" their relatives, friends etc. All of Georgetown was there. The only unsatisfactory aspect of the Guyana trip was our exposure to the embarkation process which is primitive and tedious. The four-hour hyphen from 2:00 A.M. to 6:00 A.M. was spent actively. First a long line

to check passports and tickets, then an even longer process to ascertain that visas were in order and a "departure" tax had been paid, then a visit to the duty-free shop where happily I was introduced to a genuine exportable treasure of Guyana, El Dorado- a 15 year old Demerara Rum.

In the plane I sat next to a Guyanese transplanted to Queens, New York, a fireman, he had just finished a whirlwind one-week stay in Guyana. It is a requirement on return that you meet every relative you've ever heard of, and then some. But there are other activities, too. He and his cousin paid an overnight visit to the gold fields "up north" where drinking, carousing and prostitution are much bigger business than gold. He seemed as satisfied, even exhausted, with his adventure as was I with my, rather different, adventure. Uneventful describes my flight to New York and subsequent shuttle to Boston, and bus to Portsmouth.

This trip to the Kuyuwini River in Guyana was a fantasy. It would have been unimaginable without doing it, simply an experience without parallel in my fairly long life. Certainly, it was the kind of experience I look forward to repeating.