

Guyana: Unspoiled Wilderness Species List | October 17 – 29, 2024 with Naturalist Journeys



Compiled by Naturalist Journeys Tour Host: Stephen Grace
Guides: Garey Sway, Neil Allicock
Participants: Thomas, Heather, Marty, Alex

Summary:

Guyana's varied ecosystems—spanning lush rainforests, sparsely vegetated white sand forests, vast savannahs, coastal mangroves and mudflats, wetlands, mountains, and rivers—offer diverse habitats for an extraordinary array of bird species. Our group greatly admired the country's well-preserved environments and robust conservation initiatives, which play a crucial role in protecting this unique biodiversity. The tour was further enriched by our Macushi guides, whose generational knowledge provided invaluable insights into the land and its inhabitants, deepening our appreciation for this remarkable part of South America and highlighting the connections between the local culture and the natural world.

BIRDS:

339 species were recorded, of which 15 were heard only and 1 was introduced.

The eBird link below details the 339 species of birds our group observed during the tour. If you're new to eBird, be sure to click "Show All Details" on the right side of the list to expand the report and reveal where and when each of the birds were seen and how many.

[Guyana: Unspoiled Wilderness | October 17–29, 2024 | eBird Trip Report](#)

Guianan Shield Endemics:

The Guiana Shield, an ancient geological formation spanning Guyana, Suriname, eastern Venezuela, eastern Colombia, and northern Brazil, fosters extensive biodiversity through its isolated habitats. This remarkable region is home to a variety of species that are found nowhere else in the world. During our tour, we recorded 18 Guianan Shield endemics, underscoring the importance of conserving these distinctive ecosystems to protect their unique flora and fauna.

Rare and Noteworthy Sightings:

- **Harpy Eagle** (*Harpia harpyja*): Observing a mother Harpy Eagle feeding her chick was a rare, awe-inspiring moment, highlighting this apex predator's vital role in the rainforest.
- **Guianan Cock-of-the-rock** (*Rupicola rupicola*): Initially elusive, this brilliant orange cotinga captivated everyone when it finally appeared on the last day of our tour.
- **Hoatzin** (*Opisthocomus hoatzin*): With its prehistoric appearance and unique digestive system, the Hoatzin offered a striking example of evolutionary adaptation.

Some Highlights of Bird Diversity in Taxonomic Order:

- **Tinamou:** A secretive Great Tinamou (*Tinamus major*) was spotted on the bank of the Burro Burro River as our boat rounded a bend, providing a rare glimpse of this elusive bird.
- **Guans and Curassows:** Black Curassows (*Crax alector*) were easily viewed at Atta Rainforest Lodge, while we glimpsed an elusive Crestless Curassow (*Mitu tomentosum*) along the Rupununi River.
- **New World Quail:** Crested Bobwhites (*Colinus cristatus*) provided entertaining views as they scurried along the roads of the Rupununi Savannah.
- **Pigeons and Doves:** We recorded ten species of pigeons and doves, with the calls of secretive Plumbeous (*Patagioenas plumbea*) and Ruddy Pigeons (*Patagioenas subvinacea*) enriching the rainforest soundscape.
- **Cuckoos and Allies:** We saw Smooth-billed Anis (*Crotophaga ani*) daily and spotted Greater Anis (*Crotophaga major*), along with Striped Cuckoos (*Tapera naevia*), Little Cuckoos (*Coccyua minuta*), Squirrel Cuckoos (*Piaya cayana*), and Black-bellied Cuckoos (*Piaya melanogaster*) throughout the tour.
- **Nightjars:** Lesser (*Chordeiles acutipennis*) and Least Nighthawks (*Chordeiles pusillus*) were common, and we observed a couple of large Nacunda Nighthawks (*Chordeiles nacunda*) on the Rupununi Savannah at dusk, their white bellies illuminated by our van headlights.
- **Potoos:** The Great Potoo (*Nyctibius grandis*), known for its camouflage that allows it to blend seamlessly with tree limbs, was an unforgettable sight during our tour.
- **Swifts:** White-collared (*Streptoprocne zonaris*) and White-tipped Swifts (*Aeronautes montivagus*) at Kaieteur Falls put on a spectacular aerial show, showcasing their impressive flight skills.
- **Hummingbirds:** The Crimson Topaz (*Topaza pella*) was a true showstopper, complemented by an additional 17 hummingbird species—from Green-throated Mango (*Anthracothorax viridis*) to Black-eared Fairy (*Hylonympha macrocerca*)—bringing flashes of brilliance to our tour.
- **Rails, Coots, and Allies:** A close view of a Mangrove Rail (*Rallus longirostris*) in the open was a surprising highlight of our tour.
- **Sungrebe:** We enjoyed brief but beautiful views of the Sungrebe (*Heliornis fulica*), a striking bird found in shady wetlands and streams. Despite its name, it is neither a grebe nor fond of the sun.
- **Trumpeters:** The Gray-winged Trumpeter (*Psophia crepitans*), adorned with iridescent blue patches, was a striking sight in the Iwokrama Rainforest.
- **Thick-knees:** Spotting Double-striped Thick-knees (*Burhinus bistriatus*) standing in the road at 4:00 a.m. during our drive across the Rupununi Savannah was a surreal highlight. This unusual shorebird, with its knobby ankle joints (misleadingly referred to as “knees”) and large, owl-like eyes adapted for nocturnal life, made our early start and lost sleep worthwhile.
- **Plovers and Lapwings:** The Pied Plover (*Hoploxypterus cayanus*), spotted several times up close along the Rupununi River with its striking black and white plumage, is arguably one of the world’s most attractive shorebirds.
- **Jacanas:** Often seen and heard on the tour, the Wattled Jacana (*Jacana jacana*) is a common bird with an uncommon story: a female mates with multiple males, each of whom takes on the responsibility of raising the chicks.
- **Gulls and Terns:** Large-billed Terns (*Phaetusa simplex*) lived up to their name, brandishing enormous bills and towering over their Yellow-billed cousins (*Sternula superciliaris*) when standing in mixed flocks on the sandbars of the Rupununi River.
- **Hoatzin:** One of the planet’s most bizarre and fascinating birds, the Hoatzin (*Opisthocomus hoazin*) features wing claws and a specialized ruminating stomach. Observing this unique species closely on the Mahaica River was a true highlight of our tour.
- **Sunbittern:** On the Burro Burro River, we caught a brief glimpse of the Sunbittern (*Eurypyga helias*) with its elegant shape and striking wings as we navigated around a bend.
- **Storks:** The impressive Jabiru Stork (*Jabiru mycteria*), standing at a remarkable five feet tall, was a highlight of our time on the Rupununi Savannah.
- **Ibis and Spoonbills:** Buff-necked Ibises (*Theristicus caudatus*), with their striking ruby-red eyes, stood out prominently against the tawny grasses of the parched Rupununi Savannah. Green Ibises (*Mesembrinibis cayennensis*), adorned with iridescent emerald plumage, added to the beauty of the bright green grass along the Rupununi River. The breathtaking Scarlet Ibises (*Eudocimus ruber*) graced the mudflats at

Georgetown, their vibrant plumage a stunning sight as we watched from atop a seawall. We were also treated to a unique aerial perspective of these magnificent birds during our flight from Georgetown to Kaieteur Falls, showcasing their splendor in their natural habitat.

- **Herons:** Zigzag Heron (*Zebrilus undulatus*), Boat-billed Heron (*Cochlearius cochlearius*), Agami Heron (*Agamia agami*), and Capped Heron (*Ptilerodius pileatus*) were among the many impressive species encountered.
- **New World Vultures:** The majestic King Vulture (*Sarcoramphus papa*) soared above the rainforest canopy.
- **Hawks, Kites, and Eagles:** While the Harpy Eagle (*Harpia harpyja*) stole the show, we also observed the Ornate Hawk-Eagle (*Spizaetus ornatus*), Gray-lined Hawk (*Buteo nitidus*), and Black-faced Hawk (*Leucopternis melanops*), among many other notable raptors.
- **Owls:** An owl prowling at Surama revealed a Tawny-bellied Screech-Owl (*Megascops watsonii*), and on the Rupununi Savannah, we watched Burrowing Owls (*Athene cunicularia*) bobbing their heads as these charming birds stood outside their burrows.
- **Trogons:** Guianan Trogon (*Trogon violaceus*) and Green-backed Trogon (*Trogon viridis*) dazzled us with their vivid colors.
- **Motmots:** The Amazonian Motmot's (*Momotus momota*) electric blue plumage was a spectacular sight against the forest greenery.
- **Kingfishers:** All five of Guyana's kingfisher species—from the smallest, the American Pygmy Kingfisher (*Chloroceryle aenea*), to the largest, the Ringed Kingfisher (*Megaceryle torquata*)—were seen during the trip.
- **Puffbirds:** The Swallow-winged Puffbird (*Chelidoptera tenebricosa*) was common, while the Black Nunbird (*Monasa atra*) charmed us with its puffy body, big red bill, and dust-bathing behavior alongside the road.
- **Jacamars:** Looking like a cross between hummingbirds and kingfishers, these Neotropical gems shone with iridescent color in the sunlight. The Green-tailed Jacamar (*Galbula galbula*) was common, while the Great Jacamar (*Jacameroops aureus*) was particularly stunning.
- **New World Barbets:** The tiny toucan relative, the Black-spotted Barbet (*Capito niger*), was delightful to see perched in a tree.
- **Toucans:** These iconic Neotropical birds lived up to their reputation, captivating us with their bold colors and distinct calls. White-throated Toucan (*Ramphastos tucanus*) and Channel-billed Toucan (*Ramphastos vitellinus*) were frequently heard and spotted in flight, occasionally granting us clear views. Green Aracaris (*Pteroglossus viridis*) and Black-necked Aracaris (*Pteroglossus aracari*) were compelling additions to the Neotropical menagerie.
- **Woodpeckers:** The Blood-colored Woodpecker (*Dryobates sanguineus*), a Guianan Shield endemic with an extremely restricted range along the coast, was a great sighting around Georgetown. The White-bellied Piculet (*Picumnus spilogaster*), a sparrow-sized woodpecker, was a delightful find, and larger species such as the Red-necked Woodpecker (*Campephilus rubricollis*) and Chestnut Woodpecker (*Ceelus elegans*) brought activity and color to the forests.
- **Falcons and Caracaras:** Crested Caracaras (*Caracara plancus*) and Yellow-headed Caracaras (*Milvago chimachima*), along with Bat Falcons (*Falco ruficularis*), were abundant, with an Orange-breasted Falcon (*Falco deiroleucus*) along Rupununi Road as a highlight.
- **Parrots:** From the pint-sized Green-rumped Parrotlet (*Forpus passerinus*) to the majestic Scarlet Macaw (*Ara macao*), 19 parrot species added iconic tropical presence to our journey.
- **Antbirds:** Eighteen species, including the eye-catching Rufous-throated Antbird (*Gymnocichla ruficollis*, a Guianan Shield endemic) and White-plumed Antbird (*Pithys albifrons*), provided enchanting viewing on the rainforest floor. Seeing and learning about the range-restricted and critically endangered Rio Branco Antbird (*Cercomacra brasiliana*) was a highlight of the tour.
- **Ovenbirds and Woodcreepers:** Woodcreepers like Wedge-billed (*Glyphorhynchus spirurus*), Cinnamon-throated (*Dendrocincla rufigula*), and Striped (*Xiphorhynchus obsoletus*) were frequently encountered on rainforest forays, while Yellow-chinned Spinetail (*Certhiaxis cinnamomeus*) was seen often and well around Georgetown. Spotting a Hoary-throated Spinetail (*Synallaxis kollari*), a very range-restricted and

critically endangered species along the Ireng River after walking through thick jungle underbrush, was thrilling.

- **Manakins:** The dance display of Golden-headed Manakins (*Ceratopipra erythrocephala*) at a lek in a white sand forest was captivating.
- **Cotingas:** This quintessential family of the Neotropics provided much delight with species like Pompadour Cotinga (*Xipholena punicea*), Guianan Red-Cotinga (*Phoenicircus carnifex*), and Purple-breasted Cotinga (*Cotinga cotinga*), along with the unforgettable Guianan Cock-of-the-rock (*Rupicola rupicola*).
- **Becards and Tityras:** Black-tailed Tityras (*Tityra cayana*) were frequently spotted, with a White-naped Xenopsaris (*Xenopsaris albinucha*) observed at Rock View.
- **Tyrant Flycatchers:** An impressive array of 39 flycatchers, ranging from the ubiquitous Great Kiskadee (*Pitangus sulphuratus*) to the unmistakable Fork-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus savana*), and including the drab Mouse-colored Tyrannulet (*Nesotriccus murinus*) and resplendent Vermilion Flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*), contributed greatly to our bird diversity. A Cliff Flycatcher (*Hirundinea ferruginea*) perched near Kaieteur Falls left a lasting impression.
- **Crows and Jays:** The striking Cayenne Jay (*Cyanocorax cayanus*), a Guianan Shield endemic and the only Corvid of our tour, was a memorable sight at Surama.
- **Donacobius:** Two Black-capped Donacobius (*Donacobius atricapilla*) squabbling atop a bush made for a memorable sighting on the Mahaica River. This intriguing bird has long puzzled taxonomists due to its unique characteristics, defying easy classification within traditional bird families.
- **Swallows and Martins:** One evening along Rupununi Road, White-winged Swallows (*Tachycineta albiventer*) performed a captivating aerial display, moving in coordinated flocks across the water.
- **Gnatcatchers:** The Tropical Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila plumbea*), a lively and energetic bird, was a delightful find, darting through branches in search of insects.
- **Wrens:** The Bicolored Wren (*Campylorhynchus griseus*) was particularly handsome.
- **Mockingbirds and Thrashers:** The Tropical Mockingbird (*Mimus gilvus*) accompanied us throughout the tour.
- **Thrushes:** At Rock View, the Pale-breasted Thrush (*Turdus leucomelas*) was common, its distinctive red eye a beautiful detail upon closer inspection.
- **Pipits and Wagtails:** The Yellowish Pipit (*Anthus lutescens*) blended seamlessly into the Rupununi savannah grasses, its subtle plumage providing excellent camouflage.
- **Finches and Euphonias:** Violaceous Euphonia (*Euphonia violacea*) was a common sight, yet its vibrant colors always impressed. Finsch's Euphonia (*Euphonia finschi*), a Guianan Shield endemic, was a satisfying find.
- **New World Blackbirds:** The vibrant Yellow Oriole (*Icterus nigrogularis*) and Orange-backed Troupial (*Icterus croconotus*) stood out, and the bustling nesting colonies of Red-rumped Caciques (*Cacicus haemorrhous*) and Yellow-rumped Caciques (*Cacicus cela*) fascinated us with their complex social behaviors.
- **Cardinals, Grosbeaks, and Allies:** One of the tour's sweetest sounds was produced by an Amazonian Grosbeak (*Cyanoloxia rothschildii*), which finally revealed itself to two patient group members.
- **Tanagers:** Twenty-four species, such as Spotted Tanager (*Ixothraupis punctata*), Turquoise Tanager (*Tangara mexicana*), Guira Tanager (*Hemithraupis guira*), and Black-faced Dacnis (*Dacnis lineata*), showcased the beauty of this Neotropical family. The Red-capped Cardinals (*Paroaria gularis*) along the Rupununi River were particularly memorable.

The following is a list of the mammals and other species we were fortunate to observe during our tour.

MAMMALS: (11)

Paca (*Cuniculus paca*): This large, nocturnal rodent was seen crossing a road at Atta, its distinctive spotted coat providing excellent camouflage in the forest underbrush. Known for their strong burrowing abilities and unique

vocalizations, pacas play a crucial role in their ecosystem as seed dispersers, contributing to forest regeneration. Their shy nature makes them elusive, so witnessing one in the wild was a delightful encounter.

Red-rumped Agouti (*Dasyprocta leporine*): Seen briefly at Atta Rainforest Lodge. A skilled seed disperser, the agouti plays a crucial role in shaping tropical ecosystems by burying seeds like those of the Brazil nut tree, which can later grow into mature plants. This small rodent's selective hoarding behavior helps maintain forest diversity, making it an essential ecosystem architect.

Capybara (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*): Seen in the distance at the reservoir at JR Ranch, this largest rodent in the world was a charming sight as it foraged near the water's edge. Their social nature often leads them to gather in groups, and although we only caught a glimpse from afar, the sight of these gentle giants highlighted the rich biodiversity present in the wetlands of Guyana.

Proboscis Bat (*Rhynchonycteris naso*): Hundreds of these flying mammals were seen as we boated along the Burro Burro River. Known to locals as the Long-nosed River Bat, this species is easily identified by its distinctive, elongated nose and habit of roosting in large groups on tree trunks or branches overhanging water. Their excellent camouflage and stillness during the day make them nearly invisible, blending seamlessly with the bark—a fascinating adaptation to avoid predators. But when disturbed by our boat, they took to the air en masse, giving us great views.

Common Squirrel Monkey (*Saimiri sciureus*): This agile primate, a favorite food of the Harpy Eagle and known for its lively social behavior, was a delight to watch as it climbed and leapt through the palm trees at Moca-Moca, using its nimble limbs and prehensile tail to expertly balance and navigate the canopy.

Guyanese Red Howler (*Alouatta macconnelli*): Frequently heard at Surama with its deep, resonant calls echoing through the forest, this striking primate was spotted lounging along the Mahaica River and moving through the canopy at Moca-Moca. Its powerful vocalizations, which can carry for miles, and its vibrant reddish-brown fur make it an iconic presence in the forest.

Guiana Spider Monkey (*Ateles paniscus*): Also known as the Black Spider Monkey, this elusive primate, renowned for its extraordinary agility and long limbs, was heard a couple of times during the tour. Its distinctive whooping calls echoed through the rainforest, hinting at its presence. Though its shy nature kept it hidden, knowing it was close added a thrill to our exploration, a reminder of the mysterious life concealed within the dense jungle canopy.

Brown Capuchin (*Sapajus apella*): This adaptable and curious primate was observed at the Georgetown Botanical Gardens, near the Ireng River, and at Moca-Moca. Known for its intelligence and dexterity, the Brown Capuchin captivated us as it foraged and explored, skillfully leaping and maneuvering among branches. Notably, these primates exhibit remarkable tool use, often utilizing sticks to extract insects from crevices and even using millipedes to deter pests with their defensive chemical secretions. Their agile movements highlight a key distinction between New World primates, which are predominantly arboreal and often possess prehensile tails, and Old World primates, which typically spend much of their time on the ground.

Giant Otter (*Pteronura brasiliensis*): Spotted briefly on the Mahaica River and seen well on the Rupununi River, where several active otters hunted large fish. Their serpentine movements and social interactions provided a captivating display as they surfaced and dove, showcasing their remarkable hunting skills and teamwork. Observing these otters in their natural habitat was a delightful tour highlight.

Coati (*Nasua nasua*): A few of these inquisitive, intelligent, and social members of the raccoon family were observed on the bank of the Burro Burro River, giving us a good look at their long, flexible snouts, which provide an exquisite sense of smell. Known for their playful nature, coatis often forage in groups, showcasing their curiosity and agility as they dig through leaf litter and explore their surroundings for insects and fruits. Their adaptability to various habitats and their role as scavengers makes them important contributors to the ecosystem, aiding in seed dispersal and nutrient cycling.

Brazilian Porcupine (*Coendou prehensilis*): Jeremy, our guide at the Ireng River, was delighted to find this creature napping on a tree branch as we wandered through a gallery forest, its quilled back and long tail revealing its presence. Known for its arboreal lifestyle and gentle demeanor, the Brazilian Porcupine is primarily nocturnal and feeds on leaves, fruits, and flowers. Observing a species that a local guide had seldom seen was a special treat.

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS: (13)

Peter's Lava Lizard (*Tropidurus hispidus*): One of several small lizards observed during the tour, this vibrant reptile exhibits fascinating sexual dimorphism, with males displaying more vivid colors during mating season to attract females. Their ability to thrive in harsh environments makes them a remarkable study in resilience and adaptation.

Giant Ameiva (*Ameiva ameiva*): Seen around Atta Rainforest Lodge, this streamlined lizard, also known as the Amazon Racerunner, or Jungle-runner, is notable for its impressive speed, as well as its ability to thrive in diverse habitats.

Striped Forest Whiptail (*Kentropyx calcarata*): Seen at Surama and Atta, this agile lizard is known for its striking striped pattern and remarkable speed, which it uses to escape predators and adeptly hunt insects. Its fascinating reproductive strategy includes parthenogenesis, allowing females to reproduce without males, making it a rare example of asexual reproduction in reptiles.

Gold Tegu (*Tupinambis teguixin*): This large lizard was mistaken by our group for an iguana as it scurried along the road at Karasabai, until Neil set us straight. Renowned for their intelligence and social behavior, Gold Tegus are one of the few lizard species that exhibit parental care, with females guarding their nests and young, making them particularly interesting for studying social dynamics and evolutionary adaptations among reptiles. Remarkably, like mammals and birds, tegus exhibit REM sleep, indicating a high level of cognitive complexity and suggesting that their brains function in ways similar to those of more advanced vertebrates.

Black Caiman (*Melanosuchus niger*): Observed in the Rupununi River, their eyes and tails poking above the water as they swam. As one of the largest reptiles in the Amazon Basin, the Black Caiman plays a vital role as an apex predator, helping to maintain the balance of its ecosystem.

Spectacled Caiman (*Caiman crocodilus*): Seen on a shore of the reservoir at JR Ranch with its jaws agape. This smaller caiman is known for its distinctive bony ridge between its eyes, giving it a "spectacled" appearance.

Cane Toad (*Rhinella marina*): Native to Central and South America, Cane Toads are notorious for their impact on ecosystems where they have been introduced, often outcompeting local species for resources and preying on native fauna. However, in the Iwokrama Rainforest, where we observed these native amphibians, these large toads play a complex role as both predator and prey, contributing to the food web.

Red Snouted Treefrog (*Scinax ruber*): Often referred to as the "Bathroom Frog," this species made itself at home in toilet tanks at Atta Rainforest Lodge. Its sensitivity to environmental changes makes this frog an important bioindicator, reflecting the health of its habitat and signaling the presence of pollutants. It seems our bathrooms were toxin-free, allowing this frog to thrive.

Veined Tree Frog (*Trachycephalus typhonius*): One of these rainforest residents with suction cup toepads entered the common area at Surama just before dinner, sending us scrambling to identify the species before we ate. This frog is notable for its unique coloration and impressive vocalizations during the breeding season, contributing to the rich tapestry of sounds in its rainforest habitat. We were careful not to touch it because it exudes a toxic substance that serves as a defense against predators.

Golden Rocket Frog (*Anomaloglossus beebei*): A few group members observed this stunning little amphibian at Kaieteur Falls, where they patiently peered into the tanks of giant bromeliads that collect the mist from the cascading water. Endemic to the area surrounding the falls, this brilliantly colored frog, no larger than a thumbnail, is fascinating due to its specialized habitat requirements and its dual role in the ecosystem as both an insect predator and prey for larger animals. Its rarity and vulnerability to habitat loss underscore its importance as a critical species for conservation efforts, highlighting the need to protect its unique rainforest environment to ensure its survival.

Tropical House Gecko (*Hemidactylus mabouia*): Recognized for its distinctive night calls and ability to climb smooth surfaces, this species native to sub-Saharan Africa served as an effective insect predator in the ecolodges we stayed in.

Amazon Skink (*Mabuya spp.*): With glossy scales and vibrant coloration, these sleek lizards were seen slithering at Surama.

Rusty Whipsnake (*Mastigodryas boddaerti*): Spotted on the bank of the Burro Burro River, this slender and agile snake is known for its striking coloration and impressive climbing abilities.

OTHER ANIMAL TAXA:

Lemon Migrant Butterfly (*Catopsilia Pomona*): Seen flitting through the air in clouds of countless thousands, especially along the Burro Burro River, this butterfly's vibrant yellow wings were a striking sight.

Big Sulphur Butterfly (*Phoebis sennae*): This large butterfly added brilliant splashes of color to the clouds of Lemon Migrant Butterflies.

Blue Morpho Butterfly (*Morpho peleides*): Seen along the Burro Burro River and near Atta Lodge. An iconic symbol of the rainforest, the Blue Morpho is celebrated for its iridescent blue wings, which can reach up to 6 inches across. This butterfly is not only a striking visual presence in the rainforest but also plays a role in pollination and serves as an important part of the food web.

Longwings (*Heliconius spp.*): These striking butterflies, frequently observed during our tour, are renowned for their vibrant colors and distinctive wing patterns. By playing a crucial role in pollination within tropical ecosystems, their interactions with flowering plants illustrate the intricate relationships between species in these biodiverse environments.

Blue Morpho Dragonfly (*Morpho sulkowski*): Known for its vibrant blue coloration reminiscent of the famous butterfly, this dragonfly navigates the rainforest waterways, contributing to the ecosystem as both a predator of smaller insects and prey for birds and other wildlife. Scientists recently discovered that its wings are living tissue—highly unusual among insects.

PLANTS:

Giant Tank Bromeliad (*Brocchinia micrantha*): Found near Kaieteur Falls, this striking plant taller than a person is part of the pineapple family and is known for its rosette of leaves that create mini-ecosystems by collecting tanks of water, providing the habitat for the Golden Rocket Frog.

Victoria Water Lily (*Victoria amazonica*): Recognized as the world's largest lily pad, this magnificent plant boasts a white flower that turns pink upon pollination by beetles, which it traps overnight in a fascinating mutualistic relationship, showcasing the intricate connections within the rainforest ecosystem.

Lotus Flower (*Nelumbo nucifera*): Introduced from India, this beautiful flower was seen in ditches around Georgetown.

Monkey Ladder (*Bauhinia glabra*): This nitrogen-fixing liana, a woody vine climbing trees in tropical forests, often twists into whimsical shapes among the shadows. By enriching the soil through its symbiotic relationship with nitrogen-fixing bacteria, this species supports plant growth and biodiversity. Lianas like this play a crucial role in tropical ecology by providing habitat and food for wildlife, enhancing forest diversity, and connecting canopy layers, thereby contributing to the structural complexity and overall biodiversity of the forest.

Silk Cotton Tree (*Ceiba pentandra*): This emergent tree species, towering above the forest canopy, is notable for its impressive stature and flared buttressed roots, which provide stability in the shallow, nutrient-poor soils of tropical rainforests. These buttresses help support the tree's massive trunk and prevent it from toppling during heavy winds or tropical storms. One of these magnificent giants held the nest of a Harpy Eagle along the Burro Burro River, exemplifying the tree's significance as a nesting site for large birds of prey and its role in the diverse ecosystem of the rainforest.

Purpleheart (*Peltogyne spp.*): Highly valued for its durable and beautiful wood, Purpleheart is important for woodworking and crafts, making it a sought-after species in local economies.

Greenheart (*Chlorocardium rodiei*) This hardwood tree is significant for local people, providing materials for construction and boatbuilding, while also playing a crucial role in the forest ecosystem.

Brazilian Cedar (*Cedrela fissilis*): Known for its beautiful grain and durability, this large tree is sought after in woodworking, particularly for furniture and cabinetry, and has ecological value by providing food and habitat for wildlife.

Guanandi (*Calophyllum Brasiliense*): From the Iwokrama Canopy Walkway, we admired the wide-spreading crown of this tree that can reach impressive heights.

Cecropia (*Cecropia spp.*): A pioneer tree species that grows quickly in disturbed areas, Cecropia produces fruit that is vital for many bird species. Its unique relationship with ants, which protect the tree from herbivores, exemplifies the mutualistic partnerships found in tropical ecosystems.