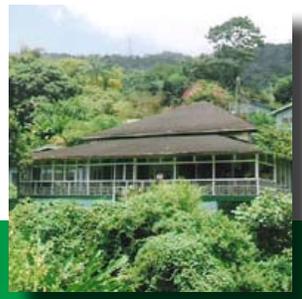




The Bellbird Newsletter



www.asawright.org

THE ASA WRIGHT NATURE CENTRE

May 2012



Participants of the workshop (photos by Kenneth Fournillier)

CANARI Outreach at Asa Wright

The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) three-day workshop on communication, networking and building partnerships was recently held at our rainforest retreat, Asa Wright Nature Centre. On the first day, workshop leader Ms. Celeste Chariandy, introduced the session by telling us the best ways to "sell" our groups. The community groups present hailed from Aripo, Blanchisseuse and Brasso Seco, three villages in which CANARI is carrying out ongoing work.

We discussed the elements and types of communication and networking. Several entertaining and educational activities were used to help us understand the material being taught. Attempting to get someone standing in a specific corner using only signs, speaking or writing is harder than you think.

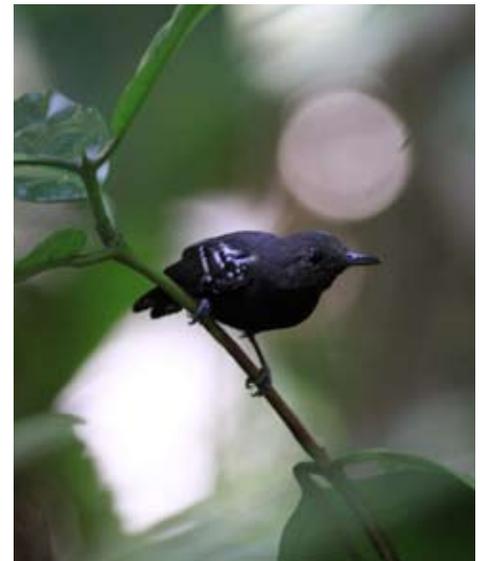
On day two we were privileged to listen to Mr. Dennis Sammy, president of Nature Seekers, as he chronicled the group's development. He provided refreshing insight on leadership and networking. The advice that truly stood out was that to improve one's group, one must start by improving oneself. This talk was followed by more interactive activities while Asa Wright's culinary delights provided the energy for us to remain alert.



The final day was one of re-examination of communication methods that have been successful and continue to be challenging for the community groups. Participants used a video presentation, Power Point presentation and a skit to get these messages across. Among the group presenters was Asa Wright's Mr. Kenneth Fournillier, president of the Blanchisseuse Environmental Art Trust (BEAT). Representatives from organisations such as IICA, UNDP, CDF and the CCIB, who witnessed these presentations, were able to address questions from the community groups.

Many persons left the workshop with a renewed sense of communication and its benefits thanks to CANARI facilitators Ms. Chariandy and Ms. Sandy.

White-flanked Antwren



White-flanked Antwren
(*Myrmotherula axillaris*)

The White-flanked Antwren is one of the most widespread species of its kind and is one of the most common in the lowland forests of the Orinoco. Its range extends from southern Honduras to Bolivia and eastern Brazil and, of course, Trinidad.

The males and females of this tiny 4-inch bird are dissimilar. Males are dark grey to black with white polka dots at the top of the wings. The edge of their tails appear to have been dipped in white. On the other hand, females are brown with yellowish underparts and rufous wings. The faint dots on their wings are barely noticeable. However, they have white flanks as do their male counterparts. For those who are unsure, flanks are the sides of a bird's belly which are just below its wings.

An inhabitant of our primary and secondary forests, the antwren's flanks are seen as flickers of white. It twitches its wings while foraging for its choice of insects and other small arthropods.

This antwren can also be heard chuckling rapidly, 'Chew- chew-cheew' or whistling a high-pitched 'queep'. It often follows flocks of other species, including antbirds and other antwrens.

Our tiny avian friend breeds from April to August and makes cup nests from leaves. Listen carefully for its song the next time you are at Asa Wright.

The AWNC blog www.asawrightnaturecentre.blogspot.com went live on May 8, 2012. After many long hours, including his own personal time off-duty, our tour guide, Richard Smith, launched AWNC into a new and dynamic media forum. Richard serves as our blog content manager, photographer and writer, in addition to his duties as tour guide.



Our team of very knowledgeable guides will be updating our blog with reports of exciting news of bird sightings, fascinating exploratory trips with our expert field guides, plus interesting news that will entice you to trek to our corner of the world, our piece of paradise. We promise you entertainment, good fun and, we hope, sufficient reason to come visit us.

During the month of May, our ever energetic manager, Janine Aqui, launched into an intense familiarisation of AWNC tours, field trips and exploratory field trips, which serves to educate and complement her marketing efforts. Her travels took her to Caroni, hours before sunrise - to catch the feeding birds on the mudflats and roost; Grande Riviere - to find the endangered Trinidad Piping Guan; Tamana - to witness the extraordinary exodus of bats leaving the cave to feed; the Aripo Agricultural Experimental Station - to see the multitude of species home to the location during the day and at night; Nariva Swamp - to be amazed by the bird life found in this Ramsar site (protected wetland); the old American Air Base - to lock in the 'bins'; the Moriche Oriole, Matura - to adopt a Leatherback turtle laying eggs for the first time; Salybia - to kayak up the Salybia River; the Aripo Savannah - the largest remaining savannah in Trinidad; Morne Bleu - to see the exquisite insects; Las Lapas - to spy on the Collared Trogon and the migrant Swallow Tanagers; Sudama Steps - to embrace the sanctity of this Hindu holy ground and



Photos by Richard Smith

to spot the Purple Gallinule and the Spotted Toady Flycatcher; the Pitch Lake - to be awed by the Large Billed Terns and Black Skimmers on the world's largest natural deposit of asphalt; the Point-a-Pierre Wildfowl Trust - to witness the peaceful haven and sanctuary for locally endangered wetland birds; Waterloo Mudflats - to marvel at the variety of shore birds; the Temple in the Sea - to pay homage to Siewdass Sadhu's quiet determination; and the Hanuman Statue - to be humbled by the largest statue of the Indian God outside of India. On property, Janine, along with a small team of staff members from each department, tackled all seven trails and the oilbird cave. Next on the trekking agenda is the Northern Range for forest birds.



WHAT'S THAT BIRD?

Have you seen a bird, an animal or a plant that you could not recognise or were uncertain about? Well, send us your photograph, along with location and your "guess" and we will try to identify the species for you and publish your question and our response here.

Email your question and pic to
asawrightconsedu@gmail.com

Getting it Wright!

For years our e-mail address had been 'asairight@tstt.net.tt', our name without the "w". This has now been changed to reflect Asa's full surname, so please correct this in your files to read asawright@tstt.net.tt.