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SOUTH EAST BRAZIL – ATLANTIC FOREST BIRDING TOUR

8 DAY/ 7 NIGHT TOUR

OVERVIEW

Brazil is the most biodiverse country in the world and the only country in the world that has the equator and the Tropic of Capricorn running through it. It is also the only country to have contiguous territory both inside and outside the tropics. Brazilian topography is also diverse and includes hills, mountains, plains, highlands, and scrublands. Much of the terrain lies between 200 metres (660 ft) and 800 metres (2,600 ft) in elevation. The highest point in Brazil is the Pico da Neblina at 2,994 metres (9,823 ft), and the lowest is the Atlantic Ocean.

Brazil's large territory comprises different ecosystems, such as the Amazon rainforest, recognized as having the greatest biological diversity in the world, with the Atlantic Forest and the Cerrado sustaining the greatest biodiversity.

The Atlantic Forest extends along the Atlantic coast of Brazil from Rio Grande do Norte state in the north to Rio Grande do Sul state in the south, and inland as far as Paraguay and the Misiones Province of Argentina. The Atlantic Forest has ecoregions within the following biome categories: seasonal moist and dry broad-leaf tropical forests, tropical and subtropical grasslands, savannas, and shrublands, and mangrove forests. The Atlantic Forest is characterized by incredibly high biodiversity and endemism.

Our Atlantic Forest birding tour is based at the beautiful Eco-Lodge Itororó, a fantastic eco-lodge surrounded by rainforest at an altitude of 1200m. Tucked away in its own private valley of 50 acres, the property is located within the 60000ha Tres Picos State Park, just 2.5 hours from Rio de Janeiro.

The lodge offers comfortable accommodation together with great birding opportunities and easy access to a whole host of other birding sites within the local area. There are a total of 4 trails leading from the main lodge, all differing in distance and with an amazing diversity of birds to be found on them. To date we have recorded over 180 species within the lodge grounds, of which over 60 are Atlantic Forest endemics!

The Eco-Lodge Itororó is also the base and forum for an active ecological engagement. The goal is to restore the Atlantic Forest in this region and eliminate non-native vegetation. The pilot-project is showing that things are on the right track. In the areas in which non-native forests have been eliminated, the recovering Atlantic Rainforest is thriving. More and more animals and birds coming back into the area since the project started.

DAILY SUMMARY

DAY 1	Arrival in Rio de Janeiro and transfer to Eco-Lodge Itororó
DAY 2	High Altitude Excursion to Pico de Caladonia
DAY 3	Lodge grounds full day
DAY 4	Wetlands and lowland forest excursion
DAY 5	Three-toed Jacamar and open country birding
DAY 6	Cedae and Theodoro Trails full day
DAY 7	Macaé de Cima and Lodge Trails full day
DAY 8	Birding the lodge grounds and departure

DETAILED DAILY ITINERARY

DAY 1: Arrival in Rio de Janeiro and transfer to Eco-Lodge Itororó

After arriving on your flight into Rio de Janeiro–Antonio Carlos Jobim International Airport you will be met by a Nature Travel Birding guide and a local driver/guide and we will embark on our road trip of about two and a half hours Northeast to the Tres Picos National Park and our home for the trip, the Eco-Lodge Itororó .

Upon arrival at the lodge we will quickly settle in and spend the remainder of the day birding around the lodge grounds and trails. Species we hope to see include Black Hawk-Eagle, Spot-winged Wood-Quail, Maroon-bellied Parakeet, Scale-throated Hermit, Violet-capped Woodnymph, White-throated Hummingbird, Brazilian Ruby, Black-throated Trogon, Spot-billed Toucanet, Yellow-browed Woodpecker, Pallid Spinetail, White-collared Foliage-gleaner, White-throated and Scaled Woodcreeper, Black-billed Scythebill, Bertoni's and Ochre-rumped Antbird, Brazilian Antthrush, Blue and Pin-tailed Manakin, White-rimmed Warbler, Fawn-breasted, Golden-chevroned Azure-shouldered, Ruby-crowned and Brassy-breasted Tanagers, Uniform Finch and Green-winged Saltator amongst others.

DAY 2: High Altitude Excursion to Pico de Caladonia

This full day excursion is aimed at seeing the small number of endemics that exist above 1500 meters. Our day begins with a 20 minute drive to get as high as possible towards 2000 meters in altitude. This depends heavily upon the weather and road conditions.

Once at our destination we leave the transport behind for the remainder of the day and start our days birding. As we gain altitude and continue our walk up a steep road we see

a change in the habitat, small stunted trees surrounded by bamboo and other low vegetation provide the first areas in which we hope to see Bay-chested Warbling Finch, Diademed Tanager, Blue-billed Black Tyrant and Rufous-tailed Antbird.

As we walk further uphill we begin to enter the habitat where we stand a good chance of seeing the rare and endemic Grey-winged Cotinga, Serra do Mar Tyrannulet, Swallow-tailed Cotinga and Black-and-gold Cotinga. We shall also try in this area for Brazilian Antthrush and Mouse-colored Tapaculo. Almost at the summit we hope to encounter the rare and endemic Itatiaia Thistletail.

DAY 3: Lodge grounds full day

Today we will spend a full day in the lodge grounds walking the Blue Circular Trail and the Orchid Garden Trail. These two trails offer fantastic birding through native bamboo and primary and secondary forest giving us the chance of seeing many Atlantic forest endemics without even leaving the grounds!

Today we hope to see some of the following species: Brown Tinamou, Dusky-legged Guan, Spot-winged Wood-Quail, Black Hawk-Eagle, Black and White Hawk-Eagle, Barred Forest-Falcon, Maroon-bellied Parakeet, Scaly-headed Parrot, Scale-throated Hermit, White-throated Hummingbird, Brazilian Ruby, Surucua and Black-throated Trogon, Saffron and Spot-billed Toucanet, Yellow-eared and Yellow-browed Woodpecker, Rufous-capped, Pallid, Grey-bellied and Chicli Spinetail, White-browed, White-collared, Buff-browed and Buff-fronted Foliage-Gleaner, White-throated, Lesser, Scaled and Olivaceous Woodcreeper, Black-billed Scythebill, Giant and Variable Antshrike, Star-throated Antwren, Bertonis, Ochre-rumped and Dusky-tailed Antbird, Rufous-backed Antwren, Rufous-tailed Antthrush, Cryptic Antthrush, Rufous Gnateater, Spotted Bamboowren, Mouse-colored and White-breasted Tapaculo, Gray-capped Tyrannulet, Gray-hooded Flycatcher, Drab-breasted Bamboo-Tyrant, Gray-hooded Attila, Bare-throated Bellbird (absent April - July), Sharpbill, Greenish Schiffornis, Rufous-crowned Greenlet, Yellow-legged Thrush, White-rimmed Warbler, Half-collared Sparrow, Chestnut-headed, Black-goggled, Ruby-crowned, Azure-shouldered, Golden-chevroned, Fawn-breasted, Brassy-breasted and Burnished-buff Tanager, Uniform Finch and Green-winged Saltator.

DAY 4: Wetlands and lowland forest excursion

Today we will take a drive of just over an hour to the Reserva Ecológica de Guapi Acu where we will spend a full day exploring the wetland areas together with the lowland forest.

Species we expect to see here amongst others include Whistling and Capped Heron, Brazilian Teal, Masked Duck, Grey-headed Kite, Savanna Hawk, Limpkin, Yellow-chinned Spinetail, White-headed Marsh Tyrant, Yellowish Pipit and Chestnut-capped Blackbird.

Surrounding the wetland is lowland forest, a habitat very difficult to encounter as much of this habitat has been destroyed. We venture into this forest in the hope of finding species such as Reddish Hermit, White-chinned Sapphire, Rufous-capped Motmot, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Crescent-chested Puffbird, Yellow-throated Woodpecker, Chestnut-backed Antshrike, White-flanked Antwren, Unicolored Antwren, Brazilian Laniisoma (Shrike-like Cotinga) and Long-billed Wren.

DAY 5: Three-toed Jacamar and open country birding

Many birders who visit south-east Brazil go in search of the small, distinctive and endemic Three-toed Jacamar. On this full day excursion we visit several sites where this bird is regularly found. Along the way we pass through a variety of habitats and cover a fair distance (140 km) stopping regularly en route to look for other species.

Our target bird is the Three-toed Jacamar, however... other birds we could encounter include Whistling and Capped Heron, Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture, Savanna Hawk, White-tailed Hawk, Laughing Falcon, Aplomado Falcon, Red-legged Seriema, Blue-winged Macaw, White-eyed Parakeet, Blue-winged Parrotlet, Striped Cuckoo, Planalto Hermit, Glittering-bellied Emerald, Sapphire-spangled Emerald, Amethyst Woodstar, White-eared Puffbird, Crescent-chested Puffbird, Black-necked Aracari, White Woodpecker, Band-tailed Hornero, Orange-eyed Thornbird, Ochre-faced Tody-Flycatcher, Gray and White-rumped Monjita, Streamer-tailed Tyrant, Yellow-browed Tyrant, Long-tailed Tyrant, White-rumped and Tawny-headed Swallow, Black-capped Donacobius, Curl-crested Jay, Magpie, Hooded, Hepatic, Brazilian and Gilt-edged Tanagers and Hooded Siskin.

DAY 6: Cedae and Theodoro Trails full day

After a 35 minute drive from the lodge we arrive at the beginning of the Cedae Trail. We will spend the morning birding this great trail that starts at approximately 600m in altitude.

Our targets for this morning include Plain Parakeet, Saw-billed Hermit, Black-throated Trogon, Rufous-capped Motmot, Buff-bellied Puffbird, Saffron and Spot-billed Toucanet, Channel-billed Toucan, White-barred Piculet, Yellow-eared Woodpecker, White-browed Foliage Gleaner, Pale-browed Treehunter, Black-capped Foliage Gleaner, White-eyed Foliage Gleaner, Plain-winged Woodcreeper, Lesser Woodcreeper, Spot-backed Antshrike, Rufous-capped Antthrush, Spot-breasted and Plain Antwren, Star-throated Antwren, Ferruginous Antbird, Streak-capped Antwren, White-shouldered Fire-Eye, Black-cheeked Gnateater, Blue Manakin, Pin-tailed Manakin, Gray-hooded Flycatcher, Oustalet's Tyrannulet, Eared Pygmy-Tyrant, Black-tailed Tityra, Rufous-headed, Yellow-backed, Olive-green, Flame-crested, Green-headed and Red-necked Tanagers and Black-throated Grosbeak.

After birding this trail we will then take a short drive to the beginning of the Theodoro Trail. Commencing at 1100m in altitude this path offers superb birding.

Birds that can be seen include Mantled Hawk, Plain Parakeet, Scale-throated Hermit, White-throated Hummingbird, Surucua Trogon, Yellow-eared Woodpecker, Yellow-browed Woodpecker, Streaked Xenops, White-browed Foliage Gleaner, Buff-fronted Foliage Gleaner, Sharp-tailed Streamcreeper, White-throated Woodcreeper, Variable Antshrike, Star-throated Antwren, White-shouldered Fire-eye, Slaty Bristlefront, Brazilian Antthrush, Variegated Antpitta, Sharpbill, Gray-hooded Atilla and Brazilian Laniisoma.

DAY 7: Macae de Cima and Lodge Trails full day

After a 20 minute drive from the lodge we arrive at the beginning of the track towards Macae de Cima. Depending upon weather conditions we may leave the minibus and take a gentle walk or the minibus will accompany us for the next few hours.

Birds we hope to see on this trail include Plumbeous Pigeon, Scale-throated Hermit, Plovercrest, White-throated Hummingbird, Brazilian Ruby, Yellow-browed Woodpecker, Rufous-capped Spinetail, Pallid Spinetail, Orange-eyed Thornbird, White-collared Foliage-Gleaner, Giant Antshrike, Tufted Antshrike, White-bearded Antshrike, Bertonis Antbird, Ochre-rumped Antbird, Rufous Gnateater, Black and Gold Cotinga, Bare-throated Bellbird, Pin-tailed Manakin, Serra do Mar Tyrant-Manakin, Drab-breasted Bamboo-Tyrant, White-rimmed Warbler, Chestnut-headed Tanager, Azure-shouldered Tanager, Brassy-breasted Tanager and Green-winged Saltator. After lunch we will return to the Lodge and go after some of the remaining target endemics for the rest of the afternoon.

DAY 8: Birding the lodge grounds and departure

If time allows the morning will be spent birding the lodge grounds and trails in search of any new or missed species before departure back to Rio de Janeiro.

Night Birding: Within the Itororo Lodge grounds we are lucky enough to have Long-trained Nightjar, Common Pauraque, Short-tailed Nighthawk, Tropical Screech-Owl, Rusty-barred Owl, Striped Owl and various other night birds. During the course of the week we will go out searching for various species on 2 or 3 nights.

End of Tour

Please note that the order of the itinerary may change due to weather conditions.

INCLUSIONS:

- 7 nights full board accommodation on a twin/double share basis
- All ground transportation including return transfers from Rio de Janeiro to Itororo Lodge
- Mineral water, tea and coffee
- Wi-Fi
- Full time services of bird guide

EXCLUSIONS:

- International flights to Rio de Janeiro
- Beverages
- Laundry service
- Telephone calls
- Personal travel and medical insurance
- Any other personal items

Thank you for choosing Nature Travel Birding.