

Brazil

Atlantic Forest Special



Tuesday 25 July – Thursday 03 August 2017

Leaders: David Walsh and local guides

Friday 01 September – Sunday 10 September 2017

Leaders: Simon Boyes and local guides

2017 Cost **£3,299** single room supplement **£80**

Brazil is one of the world's most exciting birding destinations. The Atlantic Forests in the south-east of the country have been seriously depleted over the last two centuries; nevertheless, the majority of Brazil's endemic birds are found in this region, with over 60 of them on the checklist for our tour. Just 90 minutes from Rio de Janeiro, REGUA (Reserva Ecológica de Guapiaçu) aims not only to protect the rainforest and its biodiversity from deforestation, hunting and the removal of forest products but also restore habitat using local resources. A mouth-watering 470 species have been recorded on the reserve, probably more than at any site in Brazil outside the Amazon region. We are indeed fortunate to be able to spend our one-centre tour at REGUA's comfortable lodge where we will be well-looked after, with lovely home cooking, attentive staff and outstanding local guides; after a great day in the field we can cool off in the swimming pool or relax with a glass of Caipirinha, a delicious Brazilian cocktail. The lodge's garden is home to a superb variety of hummingbirds and tanagers, whilst the adjacent wetland teems with wildlife. There is an extensive network of trails accessed by foot or after a short ride in the vehicle, and we hope to see a great variety of Atlantic Forest endemic birds which may include White-necked Hawk, Crescent-chested Puffbird, Brazilian Tanager, Pin-tailed Manakin, Black-cheeked Gnatcatcher and Filled Coquette. In addition, an evening excursion to look for Giant Snipe will live long in the memory!

As well as exploring the trails and wetland close to our lodge we will make three or four day-trips not only to see extra species but also experience a different range of habitat and scenery. We will look for Restinga Antwren, Sooretama Slaty Antshrike and numerous waterbirds along the coast near Cabo Frio, whilst Three-toed Jacamar, Blue-winged Macaw and other dry forest specialities can be seen near Carmo. Green-crowned Plovercrest, Black-and-gold Cotinga and Hooded Berryeater are just three of the most sought-after species in the mountain forests near Nova Friburgo.

July and September are both excellent times for birdwatching at REGUA, with similar species totals expected. Being in the middle of the southern winter, July is often a little cooler, and some species such as the rare Shrike-like Cotinga and Black-legged Dacnis are easier to see. In contrast, September has the advantage of being in the southern spring and, as a result, there may be more activity and birdsong in the forests; Black Jacobin will have returned to the lodge garden.

From gaudy toucans, through brightly coloured tanagers, manakins and hummingbirds, to the secretive antbirds of the forest, plus furtive crakes, roosting owls and the daily spectacle of roosting herons and egrets, there really is something for everyone on this tour!

Please note that this part of Brazil is non-malarial and there is no yellow fever. The September holiday can be extended by joining our Pantanal tour; please ask for a special price.

ITINERARY

Days 1 to 8

We leave London on a direct flight to Rio de Janeiro, arriving in the evening. Having been met by our driver, we make the 90 minute journey to our well-appointed lodge at REGUA, situated next to an area of restored wetlands and set against the backdrop of forested mountains. We stay at the lodge throughout this tour. Our program is flexible; advised by our local guides, we will complement birding along the trails near our base with some day-trips by minibus.

On our first morning, birds will appear in the half-light in the lodge's garden! Swallow-tailed Hummingbird, Violet-capped Woodnymph and Glittering-throated Emerald will be whizzing around the hummingbird feeders, whilst Violaceous and Orange-bellied Euphonias, Sayaca Tanagers and Red-rumped Caciques take advantage of the bananas on the bird tables. Common Marmosets appear regularly, often in family groups. A huge variety of birds come and go in the garden's trees, from Blue Dacnis and Orange-winged Parrot to Crescent-chested Puffbird and the stunning Brazilian Tanager. It will be hard to tear ourselves away, but a short walk to the bird-rich wetland will continue our well-paced introduction to the area's avifauna. Masked Water Tyrant, Band-tailed Hornero, Yellow-lored Tody-Flycatcher, Black-capped Donacobius and Yellow-chinned Spinetail inhabit the bushes near the water, and we will spend time getting to grips with the birds



Blue-winged Macaw

themselves and their long names! The more open areas provide opportunities to scan the sky for raptors before, keeping alert for Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Blond-crested Woodpecker, Channel-billed Toucan and White-bearded Manakin in the trees, we turn our attention to the water. Amazon, Green and Ringed Kingfishers, Capped Heron, Rufescent Tiger Heron, Anhinga, wild Muscovy Duck and White-faced Whistling Duck are all likely, with Capybaras and Broad-snouted Caimans providing alternative entertainment. On at least one afternoon we return to the wetland in search of Rufous-sided Crake and Blackish Rail before marvelling at the spectacular roost of herons and egrets, visible from a tower just a minute's walk from the lodge. The dusk sounds of Pauraque, Ferruginous Pygmy Owl and Slaty-breasted Wood Rail will become familiar.

REGUA has a number of excellent trails within 15 minutes' drive of the lodge. The Waterfall Trail is worthy of almost a full day as it heads into the heart of the forest, so we will take a packed lunch. Slowly but surely we begin to increase our bird list as each corner and recess reveals different Atlantic Forest specialities. Southern Antpipit and Red-legged Honeycreeper are two of numerous possibilities in an open area, whilst Saw-billed Hermit, Pin-tailed and Blue Manakins, Black-cheeked Gnatcatcher, Black-throated Trogon, Pale-browed Treehunter, Black-capped Becard, Rufous-capped Motmot and Spot-billed Toucanets are targets once we are inside the forest proper. The loud clanging song of Bare-throated Bellbird will resound in the canopy. Brazilian Laniisoma (Shrike-like Cotinga) is a REGUA speciality, but it is an altitudinal migrant and even harder to see in September than in July. The Waldenor Trail is shorter but also reaches excellent forest habitat. As elsewhere, if we find a feeding flock we can expect Brassy-breasted, Red-necked and Green-headed Tanagers as well as various woodcreepers and flycatchers, whilst Star-throated Antwrens scold from the undergrowth. If we are lucky we may find the diminutive Frilled Coquette feeding on flowers in one of the clearings. Outside the forest, the lowland fields in and around local villages are worthy of exploration and we hope to find Red-cowled Cardinal, White-rumped Monjita, Long-billed Wren, Whistling Heron and Limpkin. Here and elsewhere the numbers of vultures and caracaras will impress us. Last but not least, REGUA is a great place to find the poorly known Giant Snipe, so on one afternoon we will head to the grasslands, enjoying the sights and sounds as dusk approaches before looking for our main quarry once it is almost dark.

The town of Nova Friburgo is the starting point from which to explore the highlands. At the Macae de Cima reserve we transfer from our minibus onto a truck and, heading uphill, we make for a remote garden in the forest, the former home of a renowned naturalist. Having replenished the hummingbird feeders, we hope to enjoy superb views of White-throated Hummingbird, Brazilian Ruby, Scale-throated Hermit and, best of all, Green-crowned Plovercrest. Along the track we search for a number of sought-after species including Black-and-gold Cotinga, Hooded Berryeater, Surucua Trogon, Bertoni's Antbird, both Golden-crowned and White-rimmed Warblers and a number of tyrannulets and woodcreepers. It is possible that we may make a second excursion into the hills, to Pico de Caledonia, one of the highest peaks in the Serra dos Orgaos range. Targets here include Swallow-tailed and Grey-winged Cotingas, Bay-chested Warbling Finch,



Surucua Trogon

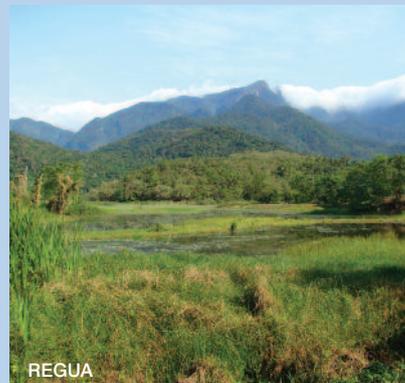
Diademed Tanager, Rufous-tailed Antthrush and Sharp-tailed Streamcreeper, whilst both Orange-eyed Thornbird and Cinnamon Tanager are found in the more open areas.

After an early start, our longest journey takes us north to a remnant of dry forest near Carmo in search of the rare Three-toed Jacamar. The arid environment is in stark contrast to the more humid forest near our lodge and supports a different suite of birds. Serra Antwren, Sepia-capped Flycatcher, Grey Pileated Finch, Glittering-bellied Emerald and Rufous-fronted Thornbird provide an excellent supporting cast to the jacamar. Travelling through the grassland landscape we can look for the weird Red-legged Seriema that roams the open areas as well as White-tailed Hawk, Blue-winged Macaw, White-eyed Parakeet, White-eared Puffbird and the aptly-named Firewood-gatherer. Southern Yellowthroat and the spectacular Streamer-tailed Tyrant both inhabit damper areas.

On one day we head towards the town of Cabo Frio on the coast east of Rio de Janeiro. Urban development means that only ten percent of the Restinga habitat remains, but in its bushes, ferns and palms rich in bromeliads we have a good chance of finding Restinga Antwren as well as Sooretama Slaty Antshrike, Hangnest Tody-Tyrant and Tropical Parula. Overhead Magnificent Frigatebirds will provide a distraction from the passerines! Nearby we will visit some coastal lagoons, home to a variety of water-associated species such as Kelp and Grey-headed Gulls, Royal and Cayenne Terns, White-backed Stilt, White-cheeked Pintail, Roseate Spoonbill, Little Blue Heron, Yellowish Pipit and perhaps some passage waders.

Days 9 & 10

After a final morning's birdwatching in the REGUA reserve we leave for the airport at Rio de Janeiro, where we catch our direct evening flight to London arriving around lunchtime the following day.



REGUA

Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Depart London and transfer to REGUA
- Days 2-8** REGUA
- Day 9** Depart Rio de Janeiro
- Day 10** Arrive London

Party Size

Maximum of nine clients.

Accommodation

Comfortable accommodation in twin/double and single rooms with private facilities.

Transport

By minibus.

Includes

All flights, meals, accommodation, transport, entry fees, services of the leaders, airport taxes and tips.

Gradings

- Good
- 280
- Mainly Hot
- Low
- Special
- Moderate
- Good
- Moderate
- Scheduled



Three-toed Jacamar