



**BIRDING TOUR NORTHEAST BRAZIL: ARARIPE MANAKIN,
LEAR'S MACAW AND OTHER ENDEMIC**

02 – 17 NOVEMBER 2023



The Araripe Manakin will be one of the main targets of our trip (photo Ciro Albano).

Our northeast Brazil birding tour is designed to explore a very remote corner of one of the largest countries on earth. This tour is an epic adventure which covers 2,175 miles (3,500km) across the states of Ceará and Bahia in 16 days. We will be birding along a route which includes breathtaking scenery and many unique neotropical ecosystems. In the search for an incredible set of birds (including loads of endemics, range-restricted species and some of the most threatened birds of South America) we will bird a wide range of ecosystems which will include the caatinga (dry scrub dominated by cacti), cerrado (Brazilian grasslands) and Atlantic forest.

We will spend our 16 days looking for sought-after species including the Critically Endangered (IUCN) and incredibly beautiful [Araripe Manakin](#), which was only discovered in 1996, and the Endangered (IUCN) **Lear's Macaw**. Other specials include avian jewels such as **Great Xenops**, **Pink-legged Graveteiro**, **Banded** and **White-winged Cotingas**, **Grey-breasted Parakeet**, **White-browed Antpitta**, **Gould's Toucanet**, **White-browed Guan**, **East Brazilian Chachalaca**, **Crescent-chested Puffbird**, **Diamantina Tapaculo**, **Slender Antbird**, **Giant Snipe**, **Sharpbill**, **Blue-winged Macaw**, **East Brazilian Pygmy Owl**, **Pygmy Nightjar**, **Ochre-backed Woodpecker**, **Ceara Gnateater** and the spectacular **Hooded Visorbearer**.

Please do join us on this fantastic birding adventure to northeast Brazil which surely ranks as a must-do tour for the most demanding of world listers, macaw lovers and intrepid birders.

Itinerary (16 days/15 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Fortaleza and transfer to Guaramiranga

You will arrive at the Fortaleza Airport and be met by your Birding Ecotours leader and local representatives then be transferred by land to Guaramiranga. As we still have some birding scheduled for this afternoon, it is recommended that all participants arrive in Fortaleza before noon, or if this is not possible, we recommend arriving the previous day (we can book a hotel and transfer for you). Our 75-mile (120 km) drive takes over two hours and will include a few birding stops en route. Some of these stops will involve roadside birding as well as a few short trails. Despite the busy day of birding we will ensure we arrive at Guaramiranga before dark. Some of the targets we expect to see on the first day include **Grey-breasted Parakeet** (one of the world's most-threatened parrots) and other species of great interest such as **Buff-breasted Tody-Tyrant**, **Ceara Gnateater**, **Ceara Woodcreeper**, **Ochraceous Piculet**, **Guianan Tyrannulet**, **Band-tailed Manakin**, **Gould's Toucanet** and **Grey-headed Spinetail**. We will pay special attention to some of the subspecies in the area (that could possibly be elevated to full species status) such as **Variable Antshrike**, **Red-necked Tanager** and **Rufous-breasted Leaf-tosser**.

Overnight: Guaramiranga

Day 2. Birding Guaramiranga and transfer to Quixadá

We will be transferred over land to Quixadá which will involve a drive of roughly 70 miles (110 km) which normally takes around two hours to complete. Today we will target species such as **White-naped Jay**, **Caatinga Parakeet**, **Pygmy Nightjar**, **Black-bellied Antwren**, **Pale Baywing**, **Caatinga Cacholote**, **Ochre-backed Woodpecker** and, if we are lucky, we might even see the rare and endemic **White-browed Guan**; a flock of these large caatinga-endemics usually comes to drink at a reservoir in the hotel area.

Overnight: Quixadá

Day 3. Birding Quixadá and transfer to Potengi and Sitio Pau Preto area

Potengi is a small town in the southern region of Ceará, part of the Chapada do Araripe area. Only recently has Potengi entered the world birding scene due to the efforts of a passionate birdwatcher and biologist who transformed his family property into a refuge for [caatinga](#) birds, the “[Sitio Pau Preto](#)”. We will stay in a small, family-owned lodge where we will feel right at home hosted by the biologist himself and his kind family. We will bird the area searching for many of the special birds of this unique habitat. For bird photographers, there are also feeders which attract a number of interesting species.



White-browed Antpitta is one of the caatinga specials we hope to find (photo *Ciro Albano*).

While here, caatinga specials will be the primary goal and should include the likes of **White-browed Antpitta**, **Caatinga Antwren**, **White-throated Seedeater**, **Scarlet-throated Tanager**, **Great Xenops** and **Red-shouldered Spinetail**. In addition to these species we shall track down the local races of **Lesser Wagtail-Tyrant**, **Greater Wagtail-Tyrant** and **Stripe-backed Antbird**. We will of course not forget the feeders, where we could see **Campo Troupial**, **Red-cowled Cardinal**, **White-naped Jay** and **Pileated Finch**. At the end of the day we have chances of seeing **Least Nighthawks** flying over the lodge.

Overnight: Sitio Pau Preto



Great Xenops, yet another caatinga special (photo Ciro Albano).

Day 4. Birding Potengi in the morning and transfer to Crato

After spending the morning birding in the Potengi area (searching for anything we may have missed above), we will be transferred to Crato (a roughly 2-hour drive) with some birding en route.

Overnight: Crato

Day 5. Birding Arajara Water Park and transfer to Canudos

We will spend the morning birding in the Arajara Water Park which is situated in the foothills of the Chapada do Araripe plateau, an area we simply cannot miss, for it is *the* only site in the world for the superb **Araripe Manakin!** After enjoying the Araripe Manakin, we will be transferred to Canudos, in the state of Bahia. The drive is 236 miles (380 km) long (roughly six hours) with a lunch stop en route. If we get there with time to spare, we could try for **Blue-winged Macaws** coming into roost, or rather explore the caatinga area near the lodge searching for any birds we may have missed the previous day.

Canudos has some of the most extraordinary scenes of the trip; the experience of hearing **Lear's Macaws** calling with the red sand cliffs contrasting with the indigo blue of the macaws is simply unforgettable. We usually stay in a lodge inside the Lear's Macaw Reserve, which many people love due to its laid-back atmosphere and tranquillity. We will also target **Bat Falcon, King Vulture, Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, Spotted Piculet, Stripe-breasted Starthroat** and the endemic race of **Blue-crowned Parakeet**.

Overnight: Canudos



*We should find **Lear's Macaw** at one of their roost sites (photo *Ciro Albano*).*

Day 6. Birding in Canudos and transfer to Chapada Diamantina

After some early morning birding around the lodge, we will start the long drive to Chapada Diamantina, a drive of over eight hours and covering 335 miles (540 km). Here we shall stay in the pleasant town of Lençóis.

Overnight: Lençóis

Days 7 - 8. Chapada Diamantina

We will spend the next two days exploring the Chapada Diamantina area, which must certainly rank as one of the most impressive places in Brazil. With astonishing landscapes, Chapada Diamantina is part of a long series of highlands linked to the Espinhaço Mountain Range, which extends from north of Minas Gerais through to Bahia. There is a high diversity of habitats such as caatinga, cerrado, campo rupestre (arid mountain shrubs), humid and gallery forests and, of course, a high diversity of birds (almost 400 species). Most of these beautiful landscapes and pristine habitat are part of the [Chapada Diamantina National Park](#), which protects 585 square miles (152,000 hectares). Our main targets are the striking **Hooded Visorbearer**, **Sincora Antwren** and **Diamantina Tapaculo**.



Hooded Visorbearer is one of our main targets in the Chapada Diamantina area (photo Ciro Albano)

We have a long list of birds to look for besides the three mentioned above, including **Collared Crescentchest**, **Helmeted Manakin**, **Pale-bellied Tyrant-Manakin**, **Surucua Trogon**, **Black-throated Saltator**, **Rufous Nightjar**, **Broad-tipped Hermit**, **Rufous-sided Pygmy Tyrant**, **Blue Finch**, **Shrike-like (White-banded) Tanager**, **Rufous-winged Antshrike**, **East Brazilian Chachalaca**, **Copper Seedeater**, **Green-winged Saltator**, **Gilt-edged Tanager**, **Horned Sungem**, **Grey-backed Tachuri** and **Serra Finch**.

Overnight: Lençóis

Day 9. Birding Chapada Diamantina and transfer to Boa Nova

Today we have another long drive to explore Boa Nova in the southwestern region of the Bahia state. Boa Nova is famous among birders due to its highly diverse bird community (more than 430 species recorded!), with typical elements of montane Atlantic forest, the caatinga biome, and a unique transitional area between the Atlantic forest and caatinga, known as “mata-de-cipó” (vine forest). We shall spend the next three days exploring different sections of this vast area.

Many globally threatened species occur in the area which motivated the Brazilian government to create a mosaic of protected areas in the region – [Boa Nova National Park](#) and [Boa Nova Wildlife Refuge](#), which protect 50 (13,000 hectares) and 57 square miles (15,000 hectares), respectively. While here, we shall look for **Slender Antbird** which is confined to the “mata-de-cipó” vegetation, where we could also find **Narrow-billed Antwren** and **Hangnest Tody-Tyrant**.



The brightly colored Red-necked Tanager (photo Anne Koke).

In the montane Atlantic forest, we will search for species such as **Striated Softtail**, **Bahia Spinetail**, **Rio de Janeiro Antbird**, **Fork-tailed Tody-Tyrant**, **Crescent-chested Puffbird**, **Rufous-headed Tanager**, **Black-billed Scythebill**, **Pallid Spinetail**, **East Brazilian Pygmy Owl**, **White-eyed Foliage-gleaner**, **Pin-tailed Manakin**, **Scale-throated Hermit**, **Spot-breasted Antvireo**, **Ferruginous Antbird**, **Grey-hooded Attila** and **Gilt-edged Tanager**. Here, we will also have chances of seeing the fantastic **Giant Snipe**. Hummingbird gardens can provide views of **Sapphire-spangled Emerald**, **Swallow-tailed** and **Ruby-Topaz Hummingbirds**, **Planalto Hermit**, **Stripe-breasted Starthroat** and a number of other delightful hummingbird species. The highlights in Poçoões include the rare **Wied's Tyrant-Manakin**, **White-bibbed Antbird**, **Greenish Schiffornis**, **Scaled Woodcreeper** and **Blue (Swallow-tailed) Manakin**.

Overnight: Boa Nova

Days 10 - 11. Birding Boa Nova

We will have two full days birding the Boa Nova area looking for many of the birds described above.

Overnight: Boa Nova

Day 12. Transfer to Camacan (Serra Bonita Reserve), birding en route

The Serra Bonita Reserve is an innovative, private conservation operation which was established to protect sub-montane forest in southern Bahia. This initiative was started thanks to the efforts of Vitor Becker and Clemira Souza who, after retirement, decided to dedicate their lives to the protection of this important and unique fragment of forest. Through the amalgamation of several rural property owners, the Serra Bonita Reserve now protects over 10 square miles (2,500 hectares) of fragile and pristine Brazilian Atlantic forest. Additionally, this is also one of the last remnants of scrub montane forest in the region, which covers an area of about 30 square miles (7,500 hectares), ranging in altitude from 650 to 3,200 feet (200 to 1,000 meters), within the municipalities of Camacan and Pau Brasil, Bahia.

The main targets in the highlands are the unique **Pink-legged Graveteiro**, **Bahia Tyrannulet**, **Plumbeous Antvireo**, **Salvadori's Antwren**, **Sharpbill**, **Lemon-chested Greenlet**, **Crescent-chested Puffbird**, the rare Atlantic race of **Rufous-brown Solitaire** (soon likely to be split), **Blue (Swallow-tailed) Manakin**, **Spot-backed Antshrike**, **Spot-billed Toucanet**, and **Sombre Hummingbird**. If we're lucky enough to find a big mixed flock, we have chances of seeing the rare 'Bahia Treehunter' subspecies of **White-browed Treehunter** that is still awaiting a formal description. Birds we may see at the feeders include **Maroon-bellied Parakeet**, **Red-necked, Green-headed, Golden-chevroned** and **Azure-shouldered Tanagers** and sometimes even the **Spot-billed Toucanet**. On the day we leave the reserve, we will spend some time birding in the lowlands where we will search for **Kinglet Manakin**, **White-eared (Maroon-faced)**, **Ochre-marked**, and **Golden-capped Parakeets**, **Black-necked Aracari**, **Thrush-like Wren**, **Yellow-rumped** and **Red-rumped Caciques**, **Chestnut-backed Antshrike**, and **Yellow-fronted**

Woodpecker. In recent years, we've often seen the beautiful and ultra-rare **Banded Cotinga** coming to feed on Açai Palm (ripe berries), near the headquarters of one of the properties in the lowlands. It's all about being in the right place at the right time!

Overnight: Serra Bonita



Maroon-bellied Parakeet can be seen at feeders in the Serra Bonita Reserve.

Day 13. Full day birding Serra Bonita Reserve

We shall have a full day to explore Serra Bonita Reserve where we should find many of the species mentioned above.

Overnight: Serra Bonita

Days 14 - 15. Birding the Serra Bonita Reserve lowlands and transfer to Porto Seguro

One of the most famous beaches on the southern coast of Bahia, Porto Seguro is the third biggest tourist destination in Brazil, so do not panic if there are many people out on the streets. The hustle and bustle of town will be left behind as we will be birding in Veracel Reserve, roughly 20 miles (32 km) inland of Porto Seguro.

This private area protects almost 27 square miles (7,000 hectares) of a unique type of lowland Atlantic forest known as “Mata de Tabuleiro”, which shares many elements (fauna and flora) with the Amazon forest. At some sites in the forest, the calls of **Screaming Pihás** and huge towering trees will bring back fond memories of birding in the Amazon.

We will look for **White-winged Cotinga**, **Hook-billed Hermit**, **Red-browed Amazon**, **Bahia Antwren**, **Band-tailed Antwren**, **Black-headed Berryeater**, **Ochre-marked Parakeet**, **Sooretama Slaty Antshrike**, and there will be extra chances for **Banded Cotinga** and many more. There will be some night birding as well, where we will look for **Black-capped Screech Owl**, **Tawny-browed Owl** and, with a lot of luck, **White-winged Potoo** which is very rare in the Atlantic forest. We will also bird the mangroves for specials such as **Bicolored Conebill**, **Plain-bellied Emerald**, **Mangrove Rail** and depending on the time of year, **Little Wood Rail**.

Overnight: Porto Seguro

Day 16. Transfer to the Porto Seguro airport to connect with your flight

You will be transferred to the Porto Seguro Airport to connect with your flight to Sao Paulo where you can catch your international flight connection.

Please note that the itinerary cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually slightly) due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides and other factors. In addition, we sometimes have to use a different international guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling.

Duration:	16 days
Tour Leader:	Eduardo Ormaeche
Group Size:	4 - 8
Dates:	02 - 17 November 2023
Start:	Fortaleza, Brazil
End:	Porto Seguro, Brazil
Price:	BRL40,700 per person sharing, assuming 4 -8 participants (2023)
Single Supplement:	BRL2,660

Price includes:

All accommodations during the tour
All meals from lunch on Day 1 to breakfast on the last day
All transportation
Tour leader and local guides
Entrance fees
Bottled water

Price excludes:

All flights
Lunch and dinner on Day 16
Extra accommodation, meals and transfers before or after the tour starts
Any activity not described in the tour
Personal expenses such as drinks, laundry, phone calls, etc.
Gratuities (please see our [tipping guidelines blog](#))