

Birding Ecotours



SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE: 10-DAY BIRDING ADVENTURE

08-17 JULY 2023

08-17 JULY 2024



São Tomé *Green Pigeon* (Paul van Giersbergen) should be seen on this tour.

The scenically spectacular, equatorial islands of São Tomé and Príncipe boast 25 endemic birds! Needless to say, therefore, they are a “must” for any serious world birder. We aim for all 25 of these endemics during our comprehensive tour (but of course might not get them all). We no longer have to do any camping to stand a chance at finding our targets. The rainforest-clad volcanic slopes of these islands make for amazing birding, also including a host of other species apart from the endemics. While our focus is very much on birds, we’re likely to encounter a great diversity of other wildlife as a byproduct of the birding.

São Tomé is the larger island and has a population of just under 200,000 people, whereas Príncipe is smaller with only 5,000 people. You will enjoy the friendly atmosphere and idyllic setting – a combo of stunning beaches and well-forested mountains.

This tour can be combined with our **Angola Birding Tour** immediately prior and/or our **Birding Tour Gabon: 14-day Birding Adventure** immediately after.



São Tomé Paradise Flycatcher (photo Paul van Giersbergen) should be seen on the islet of São Miguel.

Itinerary (10 days/9 nights)

Day 1. Arrival by air on the island of São Tomé

We’ll meet you on arrival at the airport and take you to your hotel for checking in. Time permitting, we may be able to start a little birding today.

Overnight: Roca Joao Guest House (mid range) or similar

Days 2-3. Birding Monte Carmo

For the next two days we have early breakfasts and packed lunches to maximize birding time in the famed Monte Carmo Forest. The trails here can be challenging and slippery but the avian rewards are high. Most of the island's endemics and specials can be found here, and we will look for species such as **Giant Weaver**, **São Tomé Weaver**, **São Tomé Paradise Flycatcher**, **São Tomé Prinia**, **Black-capped Speirops**, **São Tomé Chestnut-winged Starling**, **Giant Sunbird**, **Newton's Sunbird**, **São Tomé Oriole**, **São Tomé Scops Owl**, **Red-headed Lovebird** and many others.

Overnight: Roca Joao Guest House (mid range) or similar

Day 4. Flight to Príncipe and birding there

Please note that the baggage allowance for our flight to Príncipe is 33 pounds (15 kg), with a €5 charge per 2.2 pounds (1 kg) over and above that. We can arrange for you to store any bags you prefer to leave in São Tomé.

Usually, the first morning is pretty much spent getting to Príncipe (after breakfast) and checking into our hotel there. The afternoon – and next two days – is spent on exciting birding forays. The list of possible new additions to our list is long and very exciting! We'll search for several birds with Príncipe in their names – **Príncipe Speirops**, **Príncipe Sunbird**, **Príncipe Starling** and **Príncipe Weaver**. We'll also look for **São Tomé Spinetail**, **Dohrn's Thrush-Babbler**, and some more widespread but still very special birds, including **Blue-breasted Kingfisher**, **Grey Parrot**, **African Green Pigeon**, and many others.

Overnight: hotel or guest house in Príncipe

Day 5. Continued Príncipe birding

After an early breakfast, we embark on a boat trip to a remote and pristine part of Obo National Park looking for more endemics including the four species mentioned earlier with Príncipe in their names if we are still missing any of them. We should also add a good number of more widespread African bird species here.

We plan to spend the whole day birding in the park, with a packed lunch. In the evening we plan to head to a different part of the island to look for the recently discovered **Príncipe Scops Owl**.

Overnight: hotel or guest house in Príncipe

Day 6. Final day of Príncipe birding

After another early breakfast, we'll go by boat again but this time to a different part of the islands. We'll visit amazing seabird colonies at Tinhas and Bone de Jokey. We hope to find more island endemics here, but we should also enjoy seeing **White-tailed Tropicbird**, **Brown Booby**, **Common Noddy**, **Black Noddy**, **Sooty Tern**, **Bridled Tern** and some good shorebirds.

The **Príncipe Seedeaters** at Bone have larger bills than the ones on the “mainland” so we’ll spent time trying to see them.

After taking the boat back to our accommodation, we can try again for **Príncipe Scops Owl** if we missed it the night before.

Overnight: hotel or guest house in Príncipe



Príncipe Speirops (photo Paul van Giersbergen) should be seen

Day 7. Birding Príncipe, flight back to São Tomé, birding São Tomé

Hopefully this will prove to be another very spectacular birding day, trying to clean up on Príncipe in the early morning if needed, before flying back to São Tomé. When we get back to São Tomé, we head to the hotter, dryer, northern part of the island (compared to Monte Carmo Forest which we focused on at the start of the tour). We do also have buffer time available in case we missed any of the forest endemics previously though, e.g. because of rain, and we try to keep the schedule flexible.

We hope to see more waders (shorebirds) this afternoon, as well as species like **Harlequin Quail**, colorful bishops and widows and some of the more common island endemics.

Our accommodation for the last three nights of our birding tour in Monte Café has outstanding views from the hills across to the capital São Tomé

Overnight: Mid-range Almada Negreiros Guest House

Days 8-9. Macambrara, Botanical Gardens and Obo National Park

Staying close to the birding sites for the last couple of days of our São Tomé and Príncipe birding tour should be productive. We'll still have early breakfasts so we can maximize birding time, though.

Our targets one morning will include **São Tomé Scops Owl**, **São Tomé Oriole**, **São Tomé Green Pigeon**, **São Tomé Seedeater**, **São Tomé Spinetail**, **São Tomé Paradise Flycatcher** and many others. We also plan to visit one of the beautiful waterfalls.

In the afternoons and evenings, we will aim to clean up on the endemics, likely visiting the botanical gardens and Obo National Park.

We have buffer time so if we need to head to a different part of the island for anything we are missing, that will be possible.



Yet another endemic, São Tomé Ibis (photo Paul van Giersbergen)

Day 10. Final birding and departure.

We have time to clean up on any species we may have missed previously, but we'll likely be able to enjoy a more leisurely breakfast enjoying the spectacular view before heading out for a final morning of birding. We'll return to our accommodation for lunch, then have time to freshen up before our flights as we will arrange a late checkout with the hotel.

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:	10 days
Limit:	4 – 8
Dates:	8-17 July 2023 and 2024
Start:	São Tomé
End:	São Tomé
Price:	€4840 per person sharing assuming 6-8 participants, or €5591 per person sharing assuming 4-5 participants, <i>plus €300 for the domestic flight which we book for you</i>
Single Supplement:	€560

Price includes:

Accommodation
Meals
Unlimited bottled water in the van
Entrance fees
Guiding fees

Price excludes:

Flights but we book the domestic flights for you so that everyone can be on the same flight
Travel insurance
Visas
Drinks
All items of a personal nature, e.g, laundry, gifts, etc.).
Gratuities (see our tipping guidelines [here](#))