



**SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE: ENDEMIC BIRDING
ADVENTURE**

12-21 JULY 2027

12-21 JULY 2028



São Tomé Fiscal is one of the many endemics that we will search for on this birding tour.

Overview:

The scenically spectacular equatorial islands of São Tomé and Príncipe, situated in the Gulf of Guinea, boast 28 endemic birds and several distinct subspecies! Needless to say, they are a “must visit” location for any serious world birder. These islands are rarely visited by birders and give a big sense of adventure and can be combined with our equally adventurous (and just as exciting) Angola birding tour.

We no longer have to do any camping to stand a chance of finding our targets and will be birding with knowledgeable and experienced local guides. The rainforest-clad volcanic slopes of these islands make for amazing birding. Many of the endemics are nice and easy (e.g. **São Tomé Paradise Flycatcher**, **Príncipe Weaver**, and **São Tomé Weaver**), while some, such as the recently described **Príncipe Scops Owl**, along with **Príncipe Thrush**, **Príncipe White-eye**, **São Tomé Olive Pigeon**, **São Tomé Shorttail**, **São Tomé Grosbeak**, **São Tomé (Dwarf Olive) Ibis**, and **São Tomé Shrike** require a fair bit more effort (both physically and birding) to get to grips with, but we will endeavor to see all 28 of the endemics during this comprehensive São Tomé and Príncipe birding tour. Two of the other endemic birds to get excited about include **Giant Sunbird** and **Giant Weaver**, which, as their names suggest, are both huge! Another interesting endemic is **Dohrn’s Warbler** (Dohrn’s Thrush-Babbler), which has an interesting taxonomical history.

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 combination of stunning beaches and well-forested mountains. Both islands have decent tourist infrastructure (we recommend flying in from Lisbon, Portugal and out via Luanda, Angola if you plant to combine the tours). Accommodation is of a good standard on São Tomé and a very good standard on Príncipe. Food on both islands is excellent and adds nicely to the tour experience. We fly between the islands and take some boat trips to aid us getting around these remote islands.



Príncipe Scops Owl was only described in 2022 and we will hike into the forest while on Príncipe to look for this key and tough endemic bird.

Detailed 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 check in. Time permitting, you may be able to start a little personal São Tomé birding today where you might find **São Tomé Spinetail**, **São Tomé Paradise Flycatcher**, **São Tomé Thrush**, and **São Tomé Weaver**. The tour will start with a welcome meal in the evening.

Overnight: Pousada Roça São João, São João dos Angolares

Days 2 - 3. Two days birding at 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 on this mountain. We will take a tough hike up the mountain to try and get to the higher sections as early as possible, where two of the tougher birds, **São Tomé Fiscal** and **São Tomé Grosbeak** can be found.



***São Tomé Grosbeak** is Critically Endangered (IUCN/BirdLife International) and a tough bird to connect with. It was discovered in 1888 and seen in 1890, but then not recorded until it was rediscovered in 1991. It can only be (occasionally) found on Monte Carmo.*

In the lower and middle elevations of the mountain we will look for two other key species with limited distribution and a tendency to be tough to connect. Spending most of their time on the ground, we will seek out both **São Tomé Shorttail** (now considered to be an aberrant wagtail), and the tiny (by ibis standards) **São Tomé (Dwarf Olive) Ibis**.



São Tomé Shorttail is now considered to be closely related to Madagascar Wagtail and was thought extinct until it was rediscovered in 1987.



São Tomé Ibis (Dwarf Olive Ibis) was thought extinct until it was rediscovered in 1989.

As we are hiking up the mountain to get to where our two main targets reside, we may see other new birds, such as **São Tomé Oriole**, **São Tomé Prinia**, **São Tomé Thrush**, (São Tomé) **Chestnut-winged Starling**, **Giant Sunbird**, **Newton's Sunbird**, **Giant Weaver**, **São Tomé**

Weaver, and **Príncipe (São Tomé) Seedeater**. We will also keep our eyes peeled for **São Tomé Green Pigeon**, **Island Bronze-naped Pigeon**, **São Tomé Olive Pigeon**, and **(São Tomé) Lemon Dove**, all four are easier heard than seen, but we will make efforts to see them all. We might even find a day roosting **São Tomé Scops Owl**.



***São Tomé Thrush** is a common and large thrush found in a range of habitats on the island and it is usually one of the first birds heard in the dawn chorus, often way before it gets light.*

As we are driving between our accommodation and Monte Carmo we will stop at a few locations where we might find **(São Tomé) Malachite Kingfisher**, **São Tomé White-eye**, and **Black-capped Speirops**. We might also spot the stunning **White-tailed Tropicbird** flying overhead and have further opportunities for some of the more common and widespread endemics and a range of more abundant and much more widespread African species (both naturally occurring and introduced species).

Overnight (two further nights): Pousada Roça São João, São João dos Angolares

Day 4. Flight to Príncipe and an introduction to Príncipe birding

We are likely to have an early breakfast followed by a transfer to São Tomé airport for our short (c45 minute) flight to Príncipe. After our arrival on the island we will transfer the short distance to our accommodation for the next three nights. We will likely spend the remainder of the morning and the first part of the afternoon relaxing around our accommodation where we're likely to find several of the more common Príncipe endemics, such as **Dohrn's Warbler**, **Príncipe Speirops**, **Príncipe Sunbird**, and **Príncipe Weaver**.



Príncipe Sunbird is a common species and should be found easily around our accommodation.



Common on the island, *Príncipe Weaver* is an attractive species.

In the late afternoon we are likely to make our first attempt at finding the rare **Príncipe Scops Owl**. This will entail hiking out into the forest on a trail before it gets dark and then hiking back in the dark (hopefully after having seen the owl).

Overnight: Roça Sundy, Príncipe Collection, Santo António

Days 5 - 6. Príncipe birding

We will have two days of birding on Príncipe, these days will be planned based on what we are still trying to see, if required we can have further sessions to look for **Príncipe Scops Owl**. On one morning we will take a very early boat trip to the south of the island to look for the rare **Príncipe Thrush**. Whereas on São Tomé the thrush is very easy, this one is the opposite! The area we usually find the thrush can also be good for the increasingly tough **Príncipe White-eye**, along with **Príncipe Starling**. We can often find **Príncipe (Príncipe) Seedeater**, (Príncipe) **Blue-breasted Kingfisher**, and other species in this area. The sea crossing will likely take us past a small rocky outcrop where we may find **White-tailed Tropicbird**, **Brown Booby**, and **Western Reef Heron**.



Príncipe White-eye appears to be decreasing for unknown reasons.

Birding around our accommodation and the local area is likely to give further looks at most of the common Príncipe endemics and may also yield some interesting local subspecies of generally more widespread African species such as **African (Príncipe) Green Pigeon**, (Príncipe) **Malachite Kingfisher**, **Blue-breasted (Príncipe) Kingfisher**, **Velvet-mantled (Príncipe) Drongo**, **Splendid Starling**, **Chestnut-breasted Nigrita**, and (Príncipe) **Grey Parrot** – which is pleasantly common. Aerial feeders are likely to include **African Palm Swift**, **Little Swift**, and **São Tomé Swiftlet**.

Overnight (two further nights): Roça Sundry, Príncipe Collection, Santo António



Blue-breasted (Príncipe) Kingfisher is delightfully common on the island and often shows well.



Dohrn's Warbler is an interesting endemic species with a wide vocal range.

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

Hopefully this will prove to be another enjoyable day, and the exact plan will depend on how the previous few days have gone and the time of the flight 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, 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 widowbirds and some of the more common island endemics, more widespread naturally occurring African species and a range of introduced species. Our accommodation for the last three nights of our birding tour has outstanding views from the hills across to the capital São Tomé.

Overnight: Almada Negreiros (aka Roca Saudade) Guest House, Trindade

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

Staying close to the birding sites in the north of the island for the last couple of days of our São Tomé and Príncipe birding tour should be productive and will allow us to remain flexible. We'll still have early breakfasts so we can maximize birding time, though (or if you fancy a lay in and some rest by this point in the tour that will also be fine!). We'll be able to target all of the more common and widespread São Tomé endemics quite easily, though if we are needing anything more difficult we can also visit other parts of the island, such as Mount Carmo, easily from our base.

We might enjoy additional looks at species such as **São Tomé Scops Owl**, **São Tomé Oriole**, **São Tomé Green Pigeon**, **Príncipe (São Tomé) Seedeater**, **São Tomé Spinetail**, **São Tomé Paradise Flycatcher** and many others.

Overnight (two further nights): Almada Negreiros (aka Roca Saudade) Guest House, Trindade



São Tomé White-eye is an attractive endemic and is well camouflaged.

Day 10. Final birding and departure

We have time for a final birding session or a more relaxed start to the day (we should have seen all of the great birds São Tomé offers by now). After lunch we will return to the airport where the tour concludes.

Overnight: not included

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 (such as international and domestic flights). In addition, we sometimes have to use a different guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling or other factors.

Tour Details:

Duration: 10 days

Limit: 6–8

Dates: 12–21 July 2027
12–21 July 2028

Start: São Tomé

End: São Tomé

Price: EUR € 6,250 per person sharing based on 6 – 8 participants (2027)
EUR € 6,650 per person sharing based on 6 – 8 participants (2028)

Single supplement: EUR € 675 (2027)
EUR € 730 (2028)

Price includes:

Accommodation

Meals

Unlimited bottled water in the van

Entrance fees

Guiding fees

Price excludes:

International flights

Domestic flights (we will book this for you, estimated at €450 per person based on 2027 costs)

Travel insurance

Visas

Drinks

All items of a personal nature, e.g. laundry, gifts, etc.).

Gratuities (see [our tipping guidelines here](#))

Domestic flight important note:

Please note that the baggage allowance for our flight to Príncipe is 33 pounds (15 kg), with a €20 charge per 2.2 pounds (1 kg) over and above that (if there is space in the plane to carry it, it is a small <20 seater plane with limited space). We can arrange for you to store any bags you prefer to leave in São Tomé, which is advised. Hand luggage must be stored in a cupboard on boarding as there are no overhead luggage storage bins and no room under seats for anything other than a very small purse.