BRAZIL: RIO DE JANEIRO ENDEMICS AND CHERRY-THROATED TANAGER

06–19 OCTOBER 2027
06–19 OCTOBER 2028

*The strikingly colored **Cherry-throated Tanager** will be targeted at Mata dos Caetés Private Reserve (photo Gustavo Magnano).*

Overview

For those who have already explored the classic Atlantic Forest circuit of São Paulo, including Intervales, Itatiaia, and Ubatuba, this carefully designed extension takes you deeper into one of South America's richest and most rewarding birding regions. This Brazilian birding tour focuses on highly localized endemics and some of Brazil's rarest birds, highlighting the extraordinary conservation importance of these forests. Many of our targets survive only in small, fragile remnants of habitat.

Our Rio de Janeiro Endemics and Cherry-throated Tanager tour explores the varied landscapes of Espírito Santo and Rio de Janeiro, from lowland coastal forests to lush montane Atlantic Forest. Beyond its famous beaches and vibrant culture, Rio de Janeiro offers outstanding birding, including some of Brazil's most range-restricted and threatened species. Highlights include **Three-toed Jacamar**, **Purple-crowned** and **Green-crowned Plovercrests**, and the *littoralis* subspecies of Serra Antwren (sometimes treated as a distinct species, Restinga Antwren), found in specialized coastal habitats.

Our stay at the renowned REGUA Lodge provides access to prime Atlantic Forest birding, with excellent chances for key targets such as **Brazilian Laniisoma** and the elusive **Giant Snipe**. Furthermore, our visit to the charming Itororó Lodge, surrounded by the rich Serra dos Órgãos National Park, will provide chances for **Sharpbill**, **Black-and-gold Cotinga**, and the scarce **Grey-winged Cotinga**.

In Linhares and Vitória, we target two of Brazil's most coveted birds: the **Red-billed Curassow** and the Critically Endangered **Cherry-throated Tanager**, one of the rarest birds on the planet, with an estimated population of fewer than 50 individuals.

We also offer a short post-tour extension giving you the opportunity to observe the charismatic **Golden Lion Tamarin**, a flagship species of Atlantic Forest conservation.

*The highly sought-after **Red-billed Curassow** (photo Gabriel Bonfa).*

Detailed Itinerary (13 days/12 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Vitória

You will arrive at Vitória airport and be transferred to the hotel. The remainder of the day is at your leisure to rest and prepare for the exciting days ahead.

Overnight: Vitória

Day 2. Augusto Ruschi Biological Station and Vale Natural Reserve

We begin at Augusto Ruschi Biological Station, searching for the endemic **Minute Hermit**, along with **Ruby-topaz Hummingbird**, **Amethyst Woodstar**, **White-bellied Tanager**, **Red-legged Honeycreeper**, **White-crowned Manakin**, **Channel-billed Toucan**, **Yellow-eared Woodpecker**, **Red-rumped Cacique**, **Tropical Parula**, and **Chivi Vireo**.

In the afternoon, we will explore Vale Natural Reserve, part of the largest remaining tract of coastal lowland Atlantic Forest in southeastern Brazil, adjoining the Sooretama Biological Reserve. This globally significant area supports the largest remaining population of the **Red-billed Curassow**. Birding along the reserve roads may also produce **Black-headed Berryeater**, **Ochre-marked Parakeet**, **Plumbeous Antvireo**, **Red-browed Amazon**, **Maroon-faced Parakeet**, **Ringed**, **Red-stained**, and **Cream-colored Woodpeckers**, **Collared Trogon**, **Thrush-like Schiffornis**, **Screaming Piha**, **Cinereous Mourner**, the endemic **Sooretama Slaty Antshrike**, and **Solitary Tinamou**.

Overnight: Linhares

*Vividly colored **Ochre-marked Parakeets** will be searched for in the Atlantic Forest (photo Gabriel Bonfa).*

Day 3. Vale Natural Reserve

We will have a full day devoted to this exceptional reserve, targeting additional specials such as **Black-cheeked Gnateater**, **Southern White-fringed Antwren**, **Scaled Pigeon**, **Robust Woodpecker**, **Green-headed Tanager**, **Masked Water Tyrant**, **Rufous-capped Antthrush**, **Sepia-capped Flycatcher**, **Rufous-headed Woodpecker**, **Rufous-throated Sapphire**, **White-necked Hawk**, **Least Pygmy Owl**, **Black-necked Aracari**, **Blond-crested Woodpecker**, **Blue-winged Macaw**, **Eared Pygmy Tyrant**, **Yellow-green Grosbeak**, and further chances for **Red-billed Curassow**.

Overnight: Linhares

Day 4. Santa Teresa and Aargau Lodge

Today, we travel to Santa Teresa, a charming mountain town and historic center of hummingbird research, closely associated with the pioneering work of Augusto Ruschi. Atlantic Forest covers nearly 40% of the municipality, making Santa Teresa one of Espírito Santo's biodiversity hotspots. Birding around feeders and forest trails may yield **Wied's Tyrant Manakin**, **Frilled Coquette**, **Gilt-edged Tanager**, **Black-billed Scythebill**, **Streak-capped Antwren**, **Salvadori's Antwren**, **Pin-tailed Manakin**, **Rufous-brown Solitaire**, and **Green-winged Saltator**, alongside a dazzling selection of hummingbirds including **Black Jacobin**, **Scale-throated Hermit**, **White-vented Violetear**, **Brazilian Ruby**, and **Violet-capped Woodnymph**. At dusk, we will search for the elusive **Giant Snipe**.

Overnight: Pousada Aargau Lodge, near Caxixe (or similar)

*The colorful **Brassy-breasted Tanager** may be seen in Vale Natural Reserve (photo Riccardo Boschetti).*

Days 5–7. The search for Cherry-throated Tanager

Three full days are devoted to one of South America's greatest ornithological prizes: the **Cherry-throated Tanager**, at the Mata dos Caetés Private Reserve. Rediscovered in 1998, after being known only from a single museum specimen, this canopy-dwelling tanager remains perilously close to extinction. With just a few dozen individuals believed to survive, encounters cannot be guaranteed. Nevertheless, searching for this species in pristine Atlantic Forest is a privilege in itself, within an area that supports over 270 bird species.

Mata dos Caetés Private Reserve protects one of the last meaningful remnants of Espírito Santo's lowland Atlantic Forest, a Critically Endangered habitat that holds a remarkable concentration of regional endemics. Birding here is focused and often intense, yet highly rewarding, as we work narrow forest trails and vine-tangled edges in search of some of Brazil's rarest birds. Mixed feeding flocks can be especially productive, and patience is often rewarded with close views of species that occur almost nowhere else on Earth. Some of the other key species we will search for here include **Seven-colored Tanager**, **Orange-bellied Antwren**, **Band-tailed Antwren**, **Black-cheeked Gnateater**, **White-winged Cotinga**, **Pernambuco Pygmy Owl**, **Plain-winged** and **Lesser Woodcreepers**, and **Variable Antshrike**.

Overnight: Pousada Aargau, near Caxixe (or similar)

*The charismatic **Black-cheeked Gnateater** is one of our many targets in Mata dos Caetés Private Reserve.*

Day 8. Flight to Rio de Janeiro, and birding REGUA

This morning, we will fly from Vitória to Rio de Janeiro and then transfer to the Reserva Ecológica de Guapiaçu (REGUA), one of the finest Atlantic Forest reserves in Brazil. Here, target species include **Black-legged Dacnis**, **Russet-winged Spadebill**, **Brazilian Laniisoma**, and **Giant Snipe**. **Lowland Tapir** is occasionally seen near the lodge, while at night, we search for **Tawny-browed Owl**.

Overnight: REGUA Lodge, Cachoeiras de Macacu (or similar)

Day 9. A full day of birding at REGUA

We will spend a full day exploring REGUA's trails and forest edge, with chances for **Red-necked Tanager**, **Brazilian Tanager**, **Reddish Hermit**, **Black Jacobin**, **Unicolored Antwren**, **Southern Antpipit**, **Eye-ringed Tody-Tyrant**, **White-thighed Swallow**, **Rufous-capped Motmot**, **Surucua Trogon**, **Rufous-tailed Jacamar**, **Yellow-fronted Woodpecker**, **Spot-backed Antshrike**, **White-throated Woodcreeper**, **Black-capped Foliage-gleaner**, **Swallow-tailed Manakin**, and possibly **Brown Tinamou**.

Overnight: REGUA Lodge, Cachoeiras de Macacu (or similar)

***Red-necked Tanager**, one of the many delightful tanager species on offer during this tour.*

Day 10. Saquarema and Itororó Lodge

We travel along the coast toward Saquarema, searching for the local subspecies of **Serra Antwren**, sometimes split as Restinga Antwren (*Formicivora serrana littoralis*), a range-restricted subspecies confined to specialized coastal vegetation.

We then ascend into Serra dos Órgãos to Itororó Lodge, set at 3,900 feet (1,200 meters) amid pristine Atlantic Forest. Surrounding habitats may produce **Orange-eyed Thornbird**, **Bare-throated Bellbird**, **Whiskered Myiobius**, **Ruby-crowned Tanager**, **Short-tailed Grey Tyrant**, **Brassy-breasted Tanager**, **Bertoni's Antbird**, and **Variable Antshrike**.

Overnight: Itororó Eco Lodge, near Nova Friburgo (or similar)

Days 11–12. Birding Três Picos State Park

We have two full days in Três Picos State Park, including the iconic Pico da Caledônia, to target a superb collection of Atlantic Forest specials. Highlights include **Sharpbill**, **Sharp-tailed Streamcreeper**, **White-shouldered Fire-eye**, **Variegated Antpitta**, **Giant Antshrike**, **Spot-breasted Antvireo**, **Large-tailed Antshrike**, **Serra do Mar Tyrannulet**, **Sharp-billed Treehunter**, **Green-crowned Plovercrest**, **Mouse-colored Tapaculo**, **Diademed Tanager**,

Uniform Finch, **Thick-billed Saltator**, and the striking **Black-and-gold** and **Grey-winged Cotingas**.

Overnight: Itororó Eco Lodge, near Nova Friburgo (or similar)

*The unusual and highly localized **Three-toed Jacamar** (photo Daniel Mello).*

Day 13. Sumidouro birding and departure from Rio de Janeiro

We explore the Sumidouro region in search of the **Three-toed Jacamar**, along with **White-eared Puffbird**, **Chestnut-vented Conebill**, **Toco Toucan**, **Ferruginous Antbird**, **White-bearded Manakin**, **Yellow-eared Woodpecker**, **Firewood-gatherer**, and, with luck, **Ash-throated Crake**. After lunch, we transfer to Rio de Janeiro airport where our tour concludes.

*The beautiful **Golden Lion Tamarin** near Rio de Janeiro (photo Ricardo Boschetti).*

However, the fun doesn't need to stop here; we are pleased to offer the possibility of a short extension to Fazenda dos Cordeiros to target the incredible Golden Lion Tamarin. Please contact us for more details about this exciting extension if you are interested.

White-bearded Manakin *may be seen in the forests of the Sumidouro Region.*

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 guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling or other factors.

Tour Details

Duration:	13 days
Group size:	6–8
Dates:	06–19 October 2027 06–19 October 2028
Start:	Vitória, Brazil
End:	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Prices:	US$ 7,650 per person sharing (2027) US$ 8,350 per person sharing (2028)
Single supplements:	US$ 830 (2027) US$ 870 (2028)

Please note, for the Golden Lion Tamarin visit, participants must be vaccinated against Yellow Fever and COVID-19 and wear a face mask.

Price includes:

All accommodation (except when otherwise indicated)
All meals (from lunch on Day 1 until lunch on Day 13)
Private ground transportation
Admission fees
Private tour leader
Local guides
Water

Price excludes:

International and domestic airfares
Medical and tour cancellation insurance
Personal expenses (drinks, alcoholic drinks, laundry, gratuities, phone calls, internet access, excess luggage fees, etc.)
Any activities not described in the itinerary