

The Best of Brazil's Atlantic Rainforest

Naturetrek Tour Itinerary

Outline itinerary

Day 1	Depart UK, overnight flight to Rio
Day 2	Eco-lodge Itororó
Day 3	Pico de Caladonia
Day 4	Three-toed Jacamar Excursion
Day 5	Macaé de Cima
Day 6	Eco-lodge Itororo Blue/White Trail
Day 7	Eco-lodge Itororo/REGUA
Day 8	REGUA Green Trail
Day 9	REGUA Wetlands/Transfer to Rio
Day 10	Arrive UK

Departs

January/October

Dates and Prices

See website (tour code BRA05) or brochure
NB. Room upgrades are available on request

Grading

Grade A/B. Most walks on this tour are undemanding, however, the High Altitude excursion at Pico de Caledonia and the Green Trail at Regua require a little experience in walking in montane and uneven terrain.

Focus

Birds

Highlights

- Explore the stunning Atlantic Rainforest
- Enjoy a host of exotic species, from Toucans to Hummingbirds
- Over 80 species of endemic birds possible
- Comfortable lodges, with a flexible programme
- Unique Atlantic rainforest
- Expertly guided by Andy Foster



Green-headed Tanager, Violaceous Euphonia, Blue Dacnis



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Introduction

The Atlantic rainforests of south-eastern Brazil offer the visiting birder a wealth of species that include a large number of endemics. Less than 7% of the original forest cover now remains in the state of Rio de Janeiro but, thankfully, the majority of this is now protected. Half of the 103 bird species designated as 'endangered' in Brazil occur in the Atlantic forests and many other rare species are known only from this area. This rare habitat provides a wonderful base for this tour, our time here being split between two very comfortable lodges, both situated in protected areas.



Swallow-tailed Hummingbird

Eco-lodge Itororó, located in the Tres Picos State Park, is situated at an altitude of 1200 metres and offers the perfect location from which to observe a whole host of endemic birds. Over 170 species of bird have been recorded in the lodge's grounds alone and the feeders here offer a quite remarkable opportunity to photograph a stunning mixture of colourful tanagers, parakeets and toucanets. Using the lodge as a base, we will access the higher altitude areas for the first five days of the tour, where we can expect to see a dazzling array of species. Highlights are likely to include Spot-billed and Saffron Toucanets, Swallow-tailed Cotinga, Black and Gold Cotinga and the stunning Plovercrest.

The Guapi Assu Bird Lodge is beautifully situated on a small hill overlooking the restored wetland area of the Reserva Ecologica de Guapi Assu (REGUA). The wetlands, together with the surrounding lowland forests, provide the perfect contrast to the higher areas explored earlier in the tour and here we are likely to encounter an exciting variety of new species. Exploring the lowland areas of the Atlantic forest many new birds are likely and include Rufous-sided Crane, Giant Snipe, Rufous-capped Motmot, Channel-billed Toucan, Tawny-browed Owl, Swallow-tailed Hummingbird, Flame-crested Tanager, Green-headed Tanager, Red-necked Tanager and Shrike-like Cotinga.

Throughout the tour we can expect day temperatures in the range 20 - 30°C dropping to 15°C, or lower at night. Precipitation is possible and could be heavy but is unlikely to be prolonged at this season. Based in two very comfortable lodges with a plethora of birds on their doorsteps, excellent photographic opportunities, and a flexible itinerary that allows you to opt in and out of the daily excursions, this tour is designed for those of you that enjoy birdwatching, but do not want to be tied in to a rigidly fixed programme.

Itinerary

Please note that the itinerary below offers our planned programme of excursions. However, adverse weather & other local considerations can necessitate some re-ordering of the programme during the course of the tour, though this will always be done to maximise best use of the time and weather conditions available.

Day 1

Depart UK

We depart London Heathrow in the evening on an overnight, direct scheduled British Airways flight.

Day 2

Eco-lodge Itororó

Arriving into Rio we travel the 2.5 hour drive onto the eco-lodge. Andy Foster will be waiting to welcome you upon arrival at the lodge, where we will be shown to our rooms. Shortly after we will gather on the main veranda where we will begin to see our first Atlantic Rainforest Forest species on the many feeding stations that this comfortable lodge has to offer. The rest of the day will be spent within the lodge grounds and we will use the opportunity to familiarise ourselves with the many different species that frequent the feeders, enjoying the vibrant colours of the tanagers, marvelling at the extraordinary bills of the toucanets and trying to distinguish between the many hummingbirds that hover effortlessly metres in front of us, sipping syrup from the rows of feeders on offer. For those keen on photography the feeding stations provide the opportunity to photograph an enormous range of species at very close range.



Blond-Crested Woodpecker

Species we can expect to see today include Dusky-legged Guan, Maroon-bellied Parakeet, Scaly-headed Parrot, Scale-throated Hermit, Plovercrest, Violet-capped Woodnymph, White-throated Hummingbird, Brazilian Ruby, Surucua Trogon, Spot-billed Toucanet, Yellow-browed Woodpecker, Grey-bellied and Pallid Spinetails, White-browed Foliage Gleaner, White-collared Foliage Gleaner, Sharp-tailed Streamcreeper, White-throated Woodcreeper, Scaled Woodcreeper, Lesser Woodcreeper, Bertonis Antbird, Ochre-rumped Antbird, Brazilian Antthrush, Rufous Gnateater, Blue Manakin, Pin-tailed Manakin, Grey-hooded Flycatcher, Drab-breasted Bamboo-Tyrant, White-rimmed Warbler, Fawn-breasted Tanager, Azure-shouldered Tanager, Brassy-breasted Tanager, Uniform Finch and Green-winged Saltator.

Day 3

Pico de Caledonia, High Altitude Excursion

With 170+ species recorded in the lodge grounds alone, including 70+ Atlantic Rainforest Endemics, there are sure to be a few members of the group who would be happy to spend their entire time at the lodge and if you would like to do this, you are very welcome to. However, the plan for the holiday is to cover the whole altitudinal range of the Serra do Mar Mountains, therefore ensuring that we maximise our chances of seeing as greater variety of species as possible.

Refreshed from a good night's sleep, today we will start at the top of the altitudinal range available to us. Driving for approximately an hour up to an altitude of 1800m, we will begin a full day of birding the upper levels of the Serra do Mar Mountains. Walking slowly up to an altitude of 2300m, we will search for a variety of high altitude species including the endemic Itatiaia Thistletail.

As we gain altitude and continue our walk up a steep road we see a change in the habitat; small, stunted trees surrounded by bamboo and other low vegetation provide the first areas in which we hope to see Bay-chested Warbling Finch, Diademed Tanager, Blue-billed Black Tyrant and Rufous-tailed Antbird. As we walk further uphill we begin to enter the habitat where we stand a good chance of seeing the rare and endemic Grey-winged Cotinga, Serra do Mar Tyrannulet and the Black and Gold Cotinga. We will also search in this area for the Brazilian Antthrush and Mouse-coloured Tapaculo. Almost at the summit we hope to conclude our ascent with views of the rare and endemic Itatiaia Thistletail.

Whilst this small, wagtail-sized brown bird will certainly not be the most exotic looking species that we'll see during our stay, it was only discovered in the area a few years ago, and is highly desirable amongst keen birders.

Day 4

Three-toed Jacamar Extension



Three-toed Jacamar

After breakfast we will have an early departure for a day of open country birding. On this full day excursion we visit several sites where the endemic Three-toed Jacamar is regularly found. Along the way we pass through a variety of habitats and cover a fair distance (200 km) stopping regularly en route to look for other species.

The Three-toed Jacamar, is listed as vulnerable on the IUCN Red List, with an estimated population of less than a 1000 individuals. However, this is far from a single species quest and we are likely to encounter a wide array of species across the course of the day. Stretches of water are likely to hold Whistling and Capped Heron with Black-capped Donacobius in the marginal vegetation, whilst the open grassland and patchy secondary forest will no doubt attract the attention of an interesting mix of raptors including Plumbeous Kite,

Savanna Hawk, White-tailed Hawk, Aplomodo, Laughing and Bat Falcon. Passerines and near passerines of this habitat that we could see, include such delights as Blue-crested Jays, White Woodpecker, Blue-winged Parrotlet, Striped Cuckoo and Black-necked Aracari. It is not unusual for us to find nearly 100 species on this excursion, including an extensive list of Tanagers such as Hooded, Hepatic, Brazilian and Gilt-edged Tanager.

Day 5

Macaé de Cima

Today we will spend a full day birding at an altitude of between 1000m to 1450m. We will start with a 25 minute drive until we arrive at the beginning of the Macaé de Cima trail, a great trail that runs through a variety of habitats including primary forest, bamboo and secondary growth. All of these habitats combined provide perfect conditions for a great variety of birds.



Saffron Toucanet

This trail really is very special and we will slowly drive along the track stopping and birding at various points throughout the day with short walks in between. Birds we hope to see on this trail include Plumbeous Pigeon, Scale-throated Hermit, Plovercrest, White-throated Hummingbird, Brazilian Ruby, Yellow-browed Woodpecker, Rufous-capped Spinetail, Pallid Spinetail, Orange-eyed Thornbird, White-collared Foliage-Gleaner, Giant Antshrike, Tufted Antshrike, Bertonis Antbird, Ochre-rumped Antbird, Rufous Gnateater, Black and Gold Cotinga, Bare-throated Bellbird, Pin-tailed Manakin, Serra do Mar Tyrant-Manakin, Drab-breasted Bamboo-Tyrant, White-rimmed Warbler, Chestnut-headed Tanager, Azure-shouldered Tanager, Brassy-breasted Tanager and Green-winged Saltator.

Day 6

Eco-lodge Itororo Blue and White Trails

The Itororo Lodge grounds really warrant a full days birding, so we will spend the morning birding the Blue Trail returning to the comfort of the Lodge for lunch, followed by some birding on the White Trail during the afternoon. Today we hope to see some of the following species: Brown Tinamou, Dusky-legged Guan, Spot-winged Wood-Quail, Black Hawk-Eagle, Black and White Hawk-Eagle, Barred Forest-Falcon, Maroon-bellied Parakeet, Scaly-headed Parrot, Scale-throated Hermit, Plovercrest, Brazilian Ruby, Surucua and Black-throated Trogon, Saffron and Spot-billed Toucanet, Yellow-eared and Yellow-browed Woodpecker, Rufous-capped, Pallid, Grey-bellied and Chicli Spinetail, White-browed, White-collared, Buff-browed and Buff-fronted Foliage-Gleaner, White-throated, Lesser, Scaled and Olivaceous Woodcreeper, Black-billed Scythebill, Giant and Variable Antshrike, Star-throated Antwren, Bertonis and Ochre-rumped and Dusky-tailed Antbird,, Rufous-backed Antwreio, Rufous-tailed Anthrush, Rufous Gnateater, Gray-capped Tyrannulet, Gray-hooded Flycatcher, Drab-breasted Bamboo-Tyrant, Gray-hooded Attila, Bare-throated Bellbird, Greenish Schiffornis, Rufous-crowned Greenlet, Yellow-legged Thrush, White-rimmed

Warbler, Half-collared Sparrow, Chestnut-headed, Black-goggled, Ruby-crowned, Azure-shouldered, Golden-chevroned, Fawn-breasted, Brassy-breasted and Burnished-buff Tanager, Uniform Finch and Green-winged Saltator.

Day 7

Eco-lodge Itororo before transferring to Regua

This morning we will depart from Eco-lodge Itororo at around 07.30 and take a 45 minute drive to the Cedae Trail where we will bird for a couple of hours. This is a great trail located at 550m in altitude where we hope to see species such as Pale-browed Treehunter, Green-headed, Red-necked and Olive-green Tanagers, Black-cheeked Gnateater, Spot-backed Antshrike and Mantled Hawk. Late morning we will drive for a further 45 minutes and check into the comfortable Guapiassu Bird Lodge at the Reserva Ecologica de Guapi Acu. The lodge is situated overlooking an impressive wetland restoration project that was started several years ago and now comprises a fantastic mix of small lakes, marshland and replanted tabebuia trees, bordered by lowland humid evergreen forest. REGUA now owns and administrates an area of over 7,500 hectares. The reserve protects a total cross section of the Atlantic rainforest protecting many species of birds endemic to the Atlantic forests.

After lunch we will take a walk around the wetlands where we will start to see a whole range of new species including Whistling and Capped Heron, Brazilian Teal, White-faced and Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Grey-headed Kite, Savanna Hawk, Limpkin, Yellow-chinned Spinetail, White-headed Marsh Tyrant and Chestnut-capped Blackbird. Surrounding the wetland is lowland forest, a habitat very difficult to encounter as much of this habitat has been destroyed in the past. We venture into this forest in the hope of finding species such



REGUA Wetlands

as Reddish Hermit, White-chinned Sapphire, Rufous-capped Motmot, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Crescent-chested Puffbird, Yellow-throated Woodpecker, Chestnut-backed Antshrike, Sooretama Slaty Antshrike, White-flanked Antwren, Unicolored Antwren and Long-billed and Moustached Wren.

This evening we will go out in an open top vehicle for some night birding, species we hope to see include Tawny browed Owl, Mottled Owl, Black Banded Owl, Scissor-tailed Nightjar, Pauraque as well as Common Potoo and that extraordinary star of the wetlands, the Giant Snipe.

Day 8

The Green Trail at Regua

After an early breakfast we will be transferred to the start of the Green trail, this great trail leads through lowland forest and has already had over 100 species recorded along it! Our target birds for today include Saw-billed Hermit, Rufous-breasted Hermit, Reddish Hermit, Pale-browed Treehunter, Black-capped Foliage-Gleaner, White-eyed Foliage-gleaner, Star-throated Antwren, Unicolored Antwren, Silvery-flanked Antwren, Rufous-capped Antthrush, Pin-tailed Manakin, Southern Antpipit, Elegant Mourner, Rufous-capped Motmot, Blue Manakin, Plain-winged Woodcreeper, Lesser Woodcreeper and Buff-bellied Puffbird.



Rufous-tailed Jacamar

Day 9

Regua Wetlands, lowland forest and transfer to Rio

We will spend our last morning birding around the wetlands, the lowland forest and another short trail for a couple of great target birds, Frilled Coquette and Yellow-fronted Woodpecker. There will also be time for enjoying the stunning views from this great reserve. Lunch will be taken at the lodge before departing back to Rio de Janeiro airport, in time for our late afternoon flight back to London.

Day 10

London

The tour concludes in London, where we will land in the morning.

Focus & Tour grading

This tour is a standard birdwatching tour and is Graded A/B. Most walks on this tour are undemanding, however, the High Altitude excursion at Pico de Caledonia and the Green Trail at REGUA require a little experience in walking in montane and uneven terrain. All walks and excursions are optional.

Flights

Depending on airline schedules, we depart London Heathrow on an overnight British Airways flight, direct to Rio de Janeiro.

A Typical Day

Each day, breakfast is available from 0600am and at 0630am, we will leave the lodges to maximise this most productive time of day. We will visit both primary and secondary Atlantic Rainforest habitats, as well as open country, farmland and wetland areas. This will give us an excellent chance of finding a huge diversity of birds.

Lunch will be taken at the lodges on three days (at around 12:30pm) and on the other days packed lunches are taken out in the field. When returning to the lodge for lunch we will then head out again at around 14:30pm. Any down time can be spent exploring the grounds. Arriving back at the lodge, we will enjoy dinner together before a well-earned rest.

The longest walk is up Pico Caledonia, which is about 4km but is steep. We do hire a 4x4 for the journey up. At Regua, the longest walk is also about 4-5 km which is mostly flat and we will move slowly at a birding pace.

We will travel in a minibus, and the longest drive is around 1.5 hours to get back from the Three-toed jacamar site and also 1.5 hours down to Regua Lodge. The drive from Rio (GIG) Airport is 2.5 - 3 hours. Some day trips we are also in and out of the minibus throughout the day with many stops for birding.

Accommodation & Food

All accommodation and food is provided at Eco-lodge Itororó and REGUA lodge. Some of the lunches will be in picnic form. All rooms have en suite facilities. There is a natural swimming pool at Eco-lodge Itororó and a swimming pool at the REGUA lodge.



Extra Expenses

Drinks, laundry and other such items of personal expenditure.

Extensions

We can organize additional nights at REGUA, should you wish to stay a little longer after the main tour finished or we can arrange an extension in Rio or fly to Iguazu.



Copacabana Beach, Rio de Janeiro – a popular extension to this holiday

How to book your place

In order to book your place on this holiday, please give us a call on 01962 733051 with a credit or debit card, book online at www.naturetrek.co.uk, or alternatively complete and post the booking form at the back of our main Naturetrek brochure, together with a deposit of 20% of the holiday cost plus any room supplements if required. If you do not have a copy of the brochure, please call us on 01962 733051 or request one via our website. Please stipulate any special requirements, for example extension requests or connecting/regional flights, at the time of booking.

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