

**Manu Expeditions Wildlife
and Birding Tours**



IN ASSOCIATION WITH

**Serra dos Tucanos
Birding Tours**



BIRDING THE ATLANTIC RAIN FOREST

FRIDAY 13TH – FRIDAY 20TH MAY 2016

TRIP PARTICIPANTS:

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DAILY ACCOUNT

Friday 13th May

The group arrived into Rio International Airport with United Airlines, landing on time at 09.30. Our driver Serginho was waiting for them and quickly whisked them out of Rio de Janeiro. Species seen from the minibus on the journey to the Lodge included Black-crowned Night-Heron, Western Cattle Egret, Magnificent Frigatebird, both Turkey and Black Vulture, Savanna Hawk, Roadside Hawk, Southern crested Caracara, Yellow-headed Caracara, Laughing Falcon and American Kestrel. By 13.20 the group arrived safely at the Lodge.

Upon arrival rooms were allocated and we watched the feeders for 10 minutes or so before lunch was due to be served. We had our first views of Violet-capped Woodnymph, White-throated Hummingbird, Scale-throated Hermit, Golden-chevroned Tanager, Ruby-crowned Tanager, Maroon-bellied Parakeets and both Rufous-bellied and Pale-breasted Thrushes. We were just about to have lunch when out of nowhere a mixed flock appeared around the feeders and in the surrounding trees. First up we had great views of a Yellow-browed Woodpecker, this was followed by Scaled Woodcreeper, Variable Antshrike, Brassy-breasted and Gilt-edged Tanagers and Sayaca Tanager. What a lovely start before we had even sat down for lunch!

Lunch was served at 14.00, a typical Brazilian dish called feijoada that consists of rice, black beans, smoked sausage, kale and manioc flour. After lunch we remained seated for a quick introduction to the lodge and a briefing for the week ahead. We had a short break and met up again at 14.45 to walk the Feeder Trail for the remainder of the afternoon.

We got off to a good start with good views of a nice male Pin-tailed Manakin, this was followed by an Ochre-rumped Antbird, Yellow-legged Thrush, Scaly-headed Parrot, Orange-eyed Thornbird, Squirrel Cuckoo and then a nice flock of Brassy-breasted tanagers in a fruiting tree together with a Chestnut-crowned Becard. We continued along the trail but by now the weather was slowly closing in and we were beginning to lose the light as cloud slowly began to fill the surrounding valley. We heard a distant Black-billed Scythebill calling, so used playback and in it came, although slightly difficult we did eventually get ok views. Next up was a nice male Blue Manakin and a Cryptic Antthrush was heard and frustratingly would not show well enough as it was in a deep thicket of foliage! We tried for Sharp-tailed Streamcreeper which responded well and perched almost next to me, but the light was

so poor that I couldn't get the group onto it, thankfully it relocated itself and landed right in the middle of the path giving good views!



Scale-throated hermit feeding by the Lodge © Andy Foster

It was already 17.20 and almost dark so we set off back to the Lodge as it started to slowly rain. Arriving back at the Lodge by 17.30 we went back to our rooms and met again for the daily checklist at 18.10, this was followed by complimentary Caiparinhas (the famous Brazilian cocktail made from rum, sugar and lime juice) and then dinner of a delicious chicken stroganoff followed by homemade passion fruit mousse! All exhausted we retired early to bed to re-charge ready for the next days birding!

Saturday 14th May

We awoke to a mixed bag of weather this morning, a little blue sky but with some heavy cloud in the distance that looked like rain could be on the way! The plan today was to head up to Caledonia for some high altitude birding. Serginho arrived at 06.20 and by 06.30 we were on our way. After 15 minutes we got to a point where we could see if the top of Pico da Caledonia was clear, and thankfully it was! We arrived at our parking spot half way up the mountain by 07.20, got our gear together and started the long walk up that would take us to an altitude of 2300m. The days birding started well with good views of Diademed Tanager, White-throated and Scaled Woodcreeper, Bay-chested Warbling Finch, Rufous-tailed Antbird, a sub adult male Black and Gold Cotinga, Serra do Mar Tyrant-Manakin and Rufous Gnateater. As we climbed higher the cloud started to roll in and for the rest of the day we were shrouded in cloud with some light drizzle thrown in for good measure!

Thankfully this didn't affect the birding! My main concern was how we were going to scan for Grey-winged Cotinga with so much cloud! I played the Cotinga on and off as we continued our way up the mountain, but no response at all! We got up to one of the best spots so I played a recording I had taken a few months ago, and within a split second a Grey-winged Cotinga responded very close by! Still surrounded in thick cloud we started to scan, and Shane thankfully spotted the bird close by, we all managed to get onto it and as it continued to feed and move around we got some great views, this was one of the most important birds for the week, so we were all delighted that we had seen it so well! We carried on up, our main target now was the Itatiaia Thistletail that inhabits the area above 1900m. During the rest of our ascent we managed to pick up great views of a male Plovercrest feeding low to the ground and finally arrived at the security guard hut, signed in and continued up towards the 620 steps that we would climb in search of the Thistletail. After trying in several areas Karen spotted the Thistletail, and as it moved around we all managed to get good views, another great bird!

We decided to head down as it was pointless going any higher as there wouldn't even be a view today due to the thick cloud. We arrived at a spot where Karen and Allan had earlier seen a female Thick-billed Saltator and decided to have lunch there in case the Saltator reappeared, unfortunately it didn't! We carried on down trying in several places for Mouse-coloured Tapaculo and Large-tailed Antshrike. We came across a small flock of Brassy-breasted Tanagers and whilst trying to photograph these Karen suddenly said that there was a wren like bird on the road, we all looked and to our great surprise it was a Mouse-coloured Tapaculo right there, in the middle of the road giving us all great views! It must have stayed there for about 5 seconds before flying back into the undergrowth! During this time, a Large-tailed Antshrike called close by, so we moved back up the hill a little, used playback and also managed to get some good views of this beautiful endemic Antshrike! The day had gone from good to great! We arrived back at the minibus at 14.00 and took a short drive to our next stop where we hoped to see Red-legged Seriema. We pulled up, got out of the minibus and within 3 minutes a Seriema walked towards us followed by another 2! They put on a great display calling and showed really well!



As we had pretty much cleared up on all of our target birds we headed back to the Lodge arriving by 15.40, had a quick tea and coffee break and headed back out on one of the lodge trails. It was fairly quiet but we managed to pick up White-shouldered Fire-eye, both Planalto and the endemic Grey-capped Tyrannulet. We had a very close Giant Antshrike calling and a little later a Rufous-capped Motmot but unfortunately it was a little too late in the day and neither of these birds showed up.

Having had a great days birding we walked slowly back to the Lodge and sat down for the daily checklist at 18.00, this was followed by dinner as usual at 18.30 of meatballs, rice and aubergine salad followed by homemade crème caramel..... yummy!

Sunday 15th May

We awoke to a cloudy day, and being Sunday with little traffic we were to head off and do the Three-toed Jacamar Excursion to Duas Barras and Sumidouro. We set off from the Lodge at 06.30 and drove through the big sprawling town of Nova Friburgo and then onto Bom Jardim and reached our first stop at 07.30. This turned out to be one of the most productive stops of the day where we saw no less than 31 species! Highlights from this first stop included Blue-winged Macaw, Streamer-tailed Tyrant, Blackish Rail, Lined Seedeater, Band-tailed Hornero, Black-capped Donacobius, Pale-vented Pigeon, Swallow-tailed Hummingbird, Scaled Woodcreeper, White-bellied Seedeater and Yellow-browed Tyrant. We drove another 10 minutes to our next stop at some fragmented forest where we picked up the all important Serra Antwren and Tropical Pewee. We had several other stops during the morning picking up new birds at every stop. Other highlights throughout the morning included Aplomado Falcon, Red-legged Seriema, Slaty-breasted Wood-Rail, Planalto Hermit, Glittering-bellied Emerald, White-eared Puffbird, Yellow-eared Woodpecker, Campo Flicker, Firewood Gatherer, Rufous-capped Antshrike, Gray-hooded Flycatcher, Hangnest Tody-Tyrant, Yellow-lored Tody-Flycatcher, Green-backed Becard, Tawny-headed Swallow, Yellow-rumped Marshbird, Cinnamon Tanager, Magpie Tanager, Grassland Yellow Finch and Chestnut-bellied Seedfinch.

After a quick stop for lunch we drove directly towards a small town called Sumidouro and just shortly after the town we stopped at the entrance to a small track and took a short walk to the Three-toed Jacamar site. Upon arrival there were no Jacamars to be

seen! We waited for a while and then used some playback, within a few minutes we had great views of two Three-toed Jacamars. Also in this area we picked up several Blue-winged Parrotlets, Purple-throated Euphonia and just as we were about to leave a rather nice Black-necked Aracari! Feeling very pleased with ourselves we set off back towards Nova Friburgo with a few stops en-route where we also managed to pick up White Woodpecker, Curl-crested Jay, White-barred Piculet, Rufous-capped Spinetail, Tufted Antshrike, Dusky-tailed Antbird, Drab-breasted Bamboo-Tyrant, and our bird on the road for the day was Brown Tinamou! A total of 112 species today!

We arrived back at the Lodge at 17.30, met for the list at 18.00, this was followed by dinner of cottage pie! After dinner we went through some of Michael's photos from the day and also flicked through some photos of the Lodge's camera trap with images including Brown Tinamou, Rufous-capped Motmot, Brazilian Antthrush, Tayra, Oncilla, Nine-banded Armadillo, Paca and Common Opossum!

Monday 16th May

Today was a nice clear morning with a lovely sunrise! It was clear that the weather would be good to us today. We met up as usual at 06.00 for breakfast and spent half an hour after breakfast just birding around the Lodge waiting for the sun to come up higher before setting off around the Blue Trail in the Lodge grounds. The morning started well with Azure-shouldered Tanager and Dusky-legged Guans at the feeders followed by a Pallid Spinetail close by and then topped off nicely with a Lineated Woodpecker!

We set off just after 07.00 on the Blue Trail that runs through some good primary forest out the back of the Lodge. It was fairly quiet for the first 20 minutes and then the sun came up over the top of the distance ridge and then the birding got busy! We saw some great birds this morning including Blue Manakin (lekking), Planalto Woodcreeper, Rufous Gnateater, Brassy-breasted Tanager, White-throated Woodcreeper, Drab-breasted Bamboo-Tyrant, Yellow-browed Woodpecker, Bertonis Antbird, Grey-bellied Spinetail, both Black-throated and Surucua Trogon, great views of 2 female Spot-billed Toucanets, Sharp-billed Treehunter, White-collared Foliage-Gleaner, Scaled Woodcreeper, Rufous-backed Antwren, White-shouldered Fire-eye, Rough-legged Tyrannulet, Blue-billed Black-Tyrant, Rufous-crowned Greenlet and Rufous-headed Tanager..... not a bad morning at all!!!

We went back to the Lodge for lunch and picked up Versicolored Emerald, White-throated Hummingbird, Brazilian Ruby, Violet-capped Woodnymph, Maroon-bellied Parakeets, Burnished-buff Tanager and shortly after lunch a couple of Plain Parakeets also appeared at the feeders.

We had lunch that consisted of stuffed pancakes with mincemeat and a homemade tomato sauce with rice and chuchu, a type of vegetable. We had a short break after lunch and headed out on the feeder trail at 14.30. There were not many birds around but we did manage to pick up a Lesser Woodcreeper, White-rimmed Warbler and after a LOT of effort we finally managed to pull in a Cryptic Antthrush, which in the beginning was rather hard to see until it popped right up onto the path and showed very well for at least 5 seconds! This is usually a really hard bird to see so we were incredibly lucky to have got such good views! This was now turning into a daily occurrence, we struggle to see a certain bird, only to have it pop out on the pathway in full view! On Friday we had this happen with the Sharp-tailed Streamcreeper,

Saturday was the Mouse-coloured Tapaculo at Caledonia and Sunday was the Brown Tinamou... what will it be tomorrow?!!

We returned to the Lodge just as it was getting dark at 17.30, met up again at 18.00 for the daily checklist and then feasted on roasted chicken with ochra, potatoes and salad followed by a dessert of Tapioca.

After dinner we headed off on the feeder trail again in search of owls, its not good owling at this time of year but we decided we should give it a go anyway! Unfortunately as expected we didn't get any response to any of the playback! We returned to the Lodge and retired for the evening!

Tuesday 17th May

We met up at 06.00 for breakfast and departed at 06.30 for the 40 minute drive to the Cedae Trail. This trail runs through good quality primary forest at an altitude of 600m. Today we were hoping for a complete new suite of birds as this was the first time birding at this altitude, the trail did not disappoint!

The weather was quite mixed with sun and blue sky to begin with but by about 11.00 the weather had closed in and we were surrounded by low cloud. The birding was fun with many new species. As soon as we left the minibus we heard Olive-green Tanagers calling close by, so after some playback we had around 15 of them in a tree above us, quite distant but good views. We continued down the track and managed to call in a Black-throated Grosbeak, unfortunately it only hung around long enough for Shane to see it. Next up were four Channel-billed Toucans followed by great views of a male Black-cheeked Gnateater, a couple of Streak-capped Antwrens, Black-capped Foliage Gleaner, White-browed Foliage Gleaner and Red-crowned Ant-Tanager, not a bad start! As we continued down the track we picked up several other good species including White-eyed Foliage Gleaner, Pale-browed Treehunter, Oustalets Tyrannulet, Yellow-backed Tanager, Spot-billed Toucanet, Planalto and White-throated Woodcreepers, Lesser Woodcreeper, Spot-breasted Antvireo and great views of 2 Star-throated Antwrens. We got to the usual spot where Rufous-capped Antthrush can be seen so we used playback, within less than a minute we had great views of the Antthrush in a small hollow down below us...fantastic! We also managed to get Eared Pygmy Tyrant and Karen picked up both Orange-bellied and Chestnut-bellied Euphonias.

We returned back to the minibus by 12.30 and drove back up the mountain to the Theodoro Trail that's at an altitude of 1080m. Unfortunately the whole area was covered in cloud and we couldn't see a thing! I decided we should drive on a little further as the cloud usually clears as we drop down into the next valley. We drove on for a further 10 minutes by which time it was clear again! We decided to bird the Macae de Cima trail, and although a little slow we still picked up some good species including 8 Pileated Parrots flying over, 4 White-eyed Parakeets, a female Surucua Trogon that posed rather nicely for photos, Rufous-capped Spinetail, Green-backed, White-winged and Chestnut-crowned Becard, Streaked Xenops and a Dusky-tailed Antbird! We birded until 16.30, nothing was responding to playback and there were no birds around so we headed back to the Lodge, arriving by 17.15. The usual daily checklist was completed at 18.00 followed by dinner of beef stroganoff, yams, rice, potato chips, salad and a chocolate dessert!

After another long day in the field everyone retired early to recharge for the next days birding adventure!

Wednesday 18th May

We met as usual at 06.00 for breakfast in low cloud cover! It had rained on and off during the night and there was still some drizzle in the air. Serginho arrived on time (as usual!) and we headed off for a full days birding to the Regua wetlands. We had a slow journey down the mountain and arrived just after 08.00 having had good views of 2 Whistling Herons, Guira Cuckoo and Yellow-headed Caracara on the journey. Thankfully the weather was ok and actually quite cool, which was nice and made for good birding conditions. We set off around the wetlands and started picking up new trip birds, most of which were lifers for some of the group. We picked up Greater Ani, Chestnut-backed Antshrike, Glittering-throated Emerald and bird of the trip for Michael...a rather nice Blond-crested Woodpecker! We continued through a small patch of forest and had good views of 2 Yellow-billed Cuckoos, a bird we see rarely, so that was good to see! This was followed by good views of both Silvery-flanked and Unicolored Antwren. We then headed on around the wetlands and picked up a female Masked Duck which was a real bonus followed by Brazilian Teal, Muscovy Duck, White-faced Whistling Duck, Rufescent Tiger-Heron, Lemon-chested Greenlet and both Ringed and Amazon Kingfisher. Continuing around the wetlands we arrived at the spot where we usually use playback and try to see Rufous-sided Crake, I was just getting the iPod out ready and then spotted one right out in the open, Michael and Shane who were close to me managed to see it but unfortunately both Allan and Karen were slightly further back and missed it! After 10 minutes of trying in various spots we managed to pull another one out so thankfully everybody saw it...great little bird! We continued into the forest and picked up other species including Brazilian Tanager, Buff-throated Saltator, Flame-crested Tanager, Greyish Mourner, Sooretama Slaty-Antshrike, Scaled Antbird (after much effort!), Southern Antpipit, Eye-ringed Tody Tyrant (bird of the day for Shane!) and Long-billed Wren. We also had views of an upside down Brown-throated three-toed Sloth! Coming back out at the wetlands we quickly picked up a couple of Capped Herons and from the hide we had good scope views of a Limpkin and several Black-crowned Night-Herons, almost back at the minibus we managed to get views of 2 Black-legged Dacnis, a difficult to see bird so a real added bonus!

We arrived back at the minibus at around 14.30 and met up with Cirilo (one of the Regua guides), Cirilo had previously worked with us as a guide but suffered a bad accident almost a year ago and had just returned back to work, it was great to have a quick catch up with him and to see him back at work!

We took an hours drive back up to the Cedae Trail and unfortunately it was raining a little more, well, maybe heavy drizzle rather than rain! We headed on down the trail, it was very quiet and visibility was poor, we did however manage to pick up a Rufous-capped Motmot and a Whiskered Myiobius. With continuing heavy drizzle we headed back to the minibus and arrived back at the Lodge at 17.15. We met at 18.00 for the daily checklist followed by dinner of a bruschetta starter, grilled chicken, pumpkin soufflé, potatoes and cucumber salad followed by dessert of ice cream! We sat up chatting about the days birding and then retired for the evening!

Thursday 19th May

The last full day of the tour was upon us! The week seemed to have flown by and we had today to try and clean up on some of the missing species. It was a cloudy day with

rain on and off with a little bit of sun thrown in for good measure, but we certainly made the most of it!

Having looked at the checklist the night before we had decided to stop at the Cedae Trail again, followed by a quick visit to the Theodoro Trail and then onto the Lodge grounds, it would be quite a hectic day with hopefully some more good species!

Upon arrival at the Cedae Trail it was thick cloud but within minutes we had already picked up Red-necked Tanager, Green-headed Tanager and Ochre-breasted Foliage Gleaner, 3 good Atlantic forest endemics! We started off down the trail and were soon onto a pair of Plain-winged Woodcreepers and a male Spot-billed Toucanet. After another 10 minutes or so the sun started to break through the cloud and we came into a clearing.... I couldn't believe my eyes, there sat in a tree not so far away was a Mantled Hawk, incredible! I quickly called everyone down and we all had great views and took photos for at least 30 seconds before it took a long look at us and flew off, vanishing into the forest within a split second! We looked up into the sky as the cloud cleared and picked up a few Sick's Swifts and Blue and White Swallows. The cloud started to close in again so we made our way back up the trail and encountered a White-throated Spadebill acting very strangely, flying backwards and forwards calling and showing its coronal stripe, I had never seen this before and just about managed a photo through the vegetation! We continued on back to the minibus and finally picked up a couple of Black-throated Grosbeaks for everyone!

We drove for 10 minutes back up the mountains and arrived at the beginning of the Theodoro Trail. The cloud was thick and we had quite a bit of drizzle that soon turned to rain, but we did manage to see a Greenish Schiffornis, Rufous-backed Antvireo, Rough-legged Tyrannulet (the first ever record for the Theodoro Trail), so not so bad!

We arrived back at the Lodge at 13.00 and said thank you and goodbye to our faithful driver Serginho, he had driven very safely all week and had also been good company! Rainer and Bettina were at the Lodge and said that the feeders had been busy all morning, we soon picked up our first Blue-naped Chlorophonias of the trip followed by a super close male Blond-crested Woodpecker that appeared out of nowhere onto the feeders, so great views for everyone! This was followed by 2 Plain Parakeets, 4 Magpie Tanagers and a new "feeder" bird for the Lodge, a Green-winged Saltator! The feeders were heaving with birds so we sat outside and had our packed lunch in between taking lots of great photos! We also got some good shots of the usual hummingbirds at the feeders including Brazilian Ruby, Violet-capped Woodnymph, White-throated Hummingbird and Scale-throated Hermit.

After frantic activity at the feeders we set off towards the Feeder Trail where we had a nice mixed Tanager flock but with no new trip species, but we did get better views of a male Rufous-headed Tanager., Yellow-browed Woodpecker and shortly after a nice male Plovercrest. We went and tried to see Spotted Bamboowren, and although it responded to playback it was obviously just too wet for it to come all the way in. We started heading slowly back to the Lodge and picked up our last new bird of the trip, a White-necked Thrush.

We arrived back at the Lodge shortly after 17.00. Met up again at 18.00 for the daily checklist followed by dinner of Lasgane and salad and dessert of passion fruit mousse.

Friday 20th May

We all met up for breakfast as usual at 06.00 and our friend Ricardo arrived to take the group for a tour of Rio de Janeiro before their evening flight back home. The usual birds were on the feeders with good numbers of Maroon-bellied Parakeets, 5 Dusky-legged Guans, Burnished-buff Tanager, Golden-chevroned Tanager, Blue-naped Chlorophonia and Ruby-crowned Tanager. Ricardo and the group departed to Rio at 07.00.

TRIP TOTALS

We had a fabulous week of birding! The weather had been surprisingly good considering that the forecast had been for rain all week! We saw a combined group total of 263 species, of which 85 were Atlantic forest endemics with a further 15 species that were heard only.

The group were asked to nominate their favourite birds. A total of 8 species were voted for, the results were as follows:

1st place – Mantled Hawk

2nd place – Blond-crested Woodpecker

A further 9 species were voted for, these were:

Velvety Black-Tyrant

Black and Gold Cotinga

Masked Duck

Three-toed Jacamar

Curl-crested Jay

Rufous-sided Crake

Magpie Tanager

Blue Manakin

Spot-billed Toucanet