

Brazil

7–17 October 2015

Participants

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Red-necked Tanager © Andy Foster

Leader Andy Foster

Day 1 Departure from the UK and Germany.

Day 2 Arrival and transfer to Lodge The group all arrived on time flying Air France and Lufthansa into Rio de Janeiro. The transfer up to the lodge took just 2.5 hours and we were at the lodge by 09.45. The expected species were recorded on the way up to the lodge, these included Magnificent Frigatebird, Neotropic Cormorant, Cattle Egret, Snowy Egret and Great Egret. Upon arrival at the lodge rooms were allocated and we all reassembled on the decking area again at 10.30. We quickly started to identify lots of the commoner species around the lodge and at the feeders until we had lunch at 12.00. After a short rest we headed off onto the start of the Orchid Garden Trail at 15.30 until 18.30, we walked back via the Long-trained Nightjar site, and of course, as always they performed very well! There were many other highlights today, some of which included Swallow-tailed Kites (a first for the lodge grounds), Black Hawk-eagle, Black Jacobin, Scale-throated Hermit, White-throated Hummingbird, Brazilian Ruby, Rufous-capped Motmot, Spot-billed Toucanet, Sharp-billed Treehunter, White-collared Foliage-gleaner, Orange-eyed Thornbird, Rufous-breasted Leaf-tosser, Planalto Woodcreeper, Rufous Gnatcatcher, stunning close up views of White-breasted Tapaculo (recently discovered in the lodge grounds), Bare-throated Bellbird, Blue and Pin-tailed Manakins, Ochre-faced Tody-flycatcher, Shear-tailed Grey-tyrant, Green-backed Becard and Brassy-breasted, Chestnut-headed, Fawn-breasted, Golden-chevroned and Burnished-buff Tanagers. All of the above species were seen within a 20-minute walk of the Lodge!!

Day 3 Pico de Caladonia – High Altitude Excursion We awoke to a beautiful clear sunny morning so decided to spend the day on the High Altitude Excursion, always good to get this full day trip done early in the week as if the weather changes it makes it particularly hard to bird this area. We departed from the Lodge at 06.30 and drove up to an altitude of approximately 1700m where we left the minibus for the walk up towards the peak at 2230m. As usual we took a nice slow birding pace up the mountain with many stops

for various species. The birding today is more about quality rather than quantity as there are many high altitude endemics in this area. Highlights from today included Black-and-white Hawk-eagle, Green-crowned Plovercrest, Amethyst Woodstar, Yellow-browed Woodpecker, Pallid Spinetail, Itatiaia Thistletail, Rufous-capped Antshrike, Rufous-tailed Antbird, Mouse-coloured Tapaculo (crazy close up views!) and Black-and-gold Cotinga. Grey-winged Cotinga was unfortunately just a heard only, it was located once, but didn't stay long enough for the group to get onto it. Other birds included Olivaceous Elaenia, Serra do Mar Tyrannulet, Blue-billed and Velvety Black-tyrants, Diademed Tanager, Bay-chested Warbling-finch and both Green-winged and Thick-billed Saltators. We arrived back at the minibus at around 16.00 and took a short drive to another site named Sao Bernardo. Just as we were arriving at the gate we spotted one of our target birds, Red-legged Seriema! We all hopped out of the minibus and had great views! After a short drive we quickly located our next target bird, nesting Swallow-tailed Cotingas! We arrived back at the lodge all quite tired, but what a great days birding!

Day 4 Three-toed Jacamar Excursion to Duas Barras and Sumidouro. Another great clear day with blue sky, so we decided to make the best of the weather and head towards Sumidouro in search of the Three-toed Jacamar! This is a circular route of around 150km, with many stops en-route at various bird-rich sites. Today we saw a total of 108 species, not bad considering the record stands at 124 for this day! Highlights included Plumbeous Kite, Short-tailed Hawk, Blackish Rail, Blue-winged Macaw, Blue-winged Parrotlet, Guira Cuckoo, Swallow-tailed Hummingbird, Glittering-bellied Emerald, Three-toed Jacamar (which performed well and gave the group great views), Crescent-chested and White-eared Puffbirds, Green-barred and White Woodpeckers, Tail-banded Hornero, Lesser Woodcreeper, Chestnut-backed Antshrike, Serra Antwren, Yellow-lored Tody-flycatcher, White-rumped Monjita, Crested Black-tyrant, Streamer-tailed and Yellow-browed Tyrants, Tawny-headed and White-rumped Swallows, Gilt-edged and Magpie Tanagers and Half-collared Sparrow.

Day 5 Regua Wetlands full day Our luck was really in, awaking to yet another clear and cloudless day! After an early breakfast we headed off for a 1.5 hour drive to the Regua wetlands. We took the trail around the edge of the wetlands and then headed up into the forest for the remainder of the day to an altitude of approximately 150m. Many great birds today including Capped Heron, Rufescent Tiger-heron, both White-faced and Black-bellied Whistling-ducks, Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture, Limpkin, Rufous-sided Crake, White-chinned Sapphire, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Plain-winged Woodcreeper, Sooretama Slaty-antshrike, Unicoloured Antwren, White-flanked Antwren, Rufous-winged Antwren, Scaled Antbird (after a lot of hard work!), White-bibbed Antbird, Black-cheeked Gnateater, Eye-ringed Tody-tyrant, Southern Antpipit, great views of Long-billed Wren, Brazilian, Flame-crested and Yellow-backed Tanagers, White-bellied Seedeater and Yellow-green Grosbeak. Steve had a nighthawk species over the Lodge this evening, probably Short-tailed, but yet to be confirmed.

Day 6 Blue Trail at the Lodge and free afternoon This morning we set off at 06.30 to do the Blue Trail within the Lodge grounds. Again, a beautiful sunny day and our first time birding the Lodge grounds properly. The Lodge is located at an altitude of 1200m; therefore it generally remains quite cool compared to the lowlands and Sumidouro area. The habitat within the Lodge grounds is a mixture of primary forest, secondary forest, scrub and some good forest edge areas that can prove really quite productive with the early morning sun. Highlights from this morning's birding included White-tailed Hawk, Green-crowned Plovercrest, Yellow-eared Woodpecker, Chikli Spinetail, Sharp-billed Treehunter, Planalto, Scaled and White-throated Woodcreepers, Giant Antshrike, Bertoni's, Dusky-tailed and Ochre-rumped Antbirds, Rufous Gnateater, Serra do Mar Tyrant-manakin, Blue-billed Black-tyrant, Shear-tailed Grey-tyrant, Rufous-headed Tanager and Uniform Finch. We arrived back at the Lodge in time for lunch, in the afternoon there was some free time for relaxation or birding the trails. We all met up again at 18.00 to do the list and sat on the decking outside. As predicted, at exactly 18.05 it appeared again, it was a new record for the Lodge grounds, a Short-tailed Nighthawk!

Day 7 Cedae and Theodoro Trail full day After breakfast we departed the Lodge at 06.30 and took a 40-minute drive down to the Cedae Trail, this trail runs through some primary and secondary forest at an altitude of 550m, dropping down to about 400m in altitude. There was a whole suite of new birds for us this morning! Having had lunch on the Cedae Trail we got back to the minibus at 13.30 and drove just 15 minutes up to the Theodoro Trail at an altitude of 1079m (to be precise)! Highlights from today's birding included Rufous-thighed Kite, Saw-billed Hermit, Versicoloured Emerald, Surucua Trogon, Channel-billed Toucan, Pale-browed Treehunter, Ochre-breasted Foliage-gleaner, Plain-winged Woodcreeper, Black-billed Scythebill, Spot-backed Antshrike, Spot-breasted Antwreio, Star-throated and Streak-capped Antwrens, White-shouldered Fire-eye, stunning views of Rufous-capped Antthrush, Slaty Bristlefront, Shrike-like Cotinga (responded well to playback and gave good views), Greenish Schiffornis, Eared Pygmy-tyrant, Grey-hooded Attila, great views of Sharpbill, Chestnut-bellied Euphonia, Green-headed, Olive-green, Red-necked Tanager and Rufous-headed Tanagers and Black-throated Grosbeak!

Day 8 Theodoro Trail and Macae de Cima Trail This morning we decided to head back to the Theodoro Trail to try for a few species and then go onto Macae de Cima. It was another clear sunny day but for some reason the birds were not responding as planned! However, we did well and got the following important species; Plain Parakeet, Saffron Toucanet (for some), Grey-capped Tyrannulet, White-throated Spadebill, White-rimmed Warbler and Blue-naped Chlorophonia. We arrived back at the Lodge at around 14.00 and the group spent the afternoon birding by themselves on various trails around the Lodge.

Day 9 Full day around the Lodge grounds Now nearing the end of the trip we had to decide where we could go birding that would give us the maximum amount of new species. It was decided that we should bird the Lodge grounds for a full day, starting with the Blue Trail and then going onto the Orchid garden Trail. At this stage of the trip it's quite hard to find new species, but we set ourselves a target of 10 for the day and the following morning. We started well hitting some of the targets including Saffron Toucanet, Rufous-backed Antwreio, Rough-legged Tyrannulet and in the afternoon we moved onto the Orchid Garden Trail and some had Spotted Bamboowren and Drab-breasted Bamboo-tyrant. We then moved onto the Feeder Trail and had great views of the rarely-seen Such's Antthrush! On the way back to the Lodge Ian had a Hepatic Tanager and in the evening after dinner we went for a walk and had great views of Tropical Screech-owl.

Day 10 Last walk around the Feeder Trail. So here we are at the last day, time went very fast indeed and with some great birds under our belts we thought we would have one last quick walk around the Feeder Trail before departure back to Rio at 09.30. We set off at 06.00 and went in search of Brazilian Antthrush first. We had one calling very close but unfortunately it didn't want to come that extra distance to show itself. Then suddenly having heard Brown Tinamou all week, one started calling quite close to us, so we used playback and it came in closer, but wouldn't show! Just as we were giving up it waddled (!) out onto the path right in front of the whole group, giving brilliant views for all! All very happy with ourselves we decided to head down into now what's known as Paradise Valley (named by Steve!) for a last scan around this area. We picked up Long-tailed Tyrant and good views of a male Chestnut-headed Tanager, after this we decided to head back to the Lodge in time for breakfast at 08.00. Just as we were approaching the Lodge a Blond-crested Woodpecker called distantly. This is a bird that we had been hearing in the Lodge grounds over the past month, but it would never respond to playback! John had previously seen one the day before briefly before any of the rest of the group could get onto it! So, we tried some playback and the woodpecker responded, we played some more and slowly but surely it came closer... and then... it landed within view and after a short while we had seen both male and female Blond-crested Woodpeckers! We had great views of the male in the scope..... talk about leaving it until the last minute... we were all VERY happy! We returned to the Lodge for breakfast and the group departed at 09.30 back to the airport in Rio de Janeiro for the overnight flick back to the UK.

During the trip we saw a combined group total of 273 species, of which 89 were regional or Brazilian endemics and we a further 10 species heard only.

Each participant on the trip was asked to list their top 5 favourite birds, the results were as follows:

Joint first place

Long-trained Nightjar
Brown Tinamou
Such's Antthrush

Second place

Red-legged Seriema

Joint third place

Giant Antshrike
Blond-crested Woodpecker
Black-cheeked Gnateater
Sharpbill
Red-necked Tanager

Other species voted for:

Black-and-white Hawk-eagle
Brazilian Antthrush
Mouse-coloured Tapaculo
Black Jacobin
Rufous-sided Crake
Black-billed Scythebill
Rufous-capped Antthrush
Rufous-tailed Antbird
Bertoni's Antbird
Serra Antwren
Half-collared Sparrow
Shrike-like Cotinga
Sharpbill
Slaty Bristlefront
Saffron Toucanet
Gilt-edged Tanager
Blue-naped Chlorophonia
Brassy-breasted Tanager

There is another Birdfinders trip scheduled to Itororo Lodge in the Atlantic forest between the 15–25 January 2016.

Please contact us here at the Lodge or Birdfinders for further details!