

Brazil

22 August–1 September 2009

Participants

Godfrey Blunt

Robert and Gillian Boreham

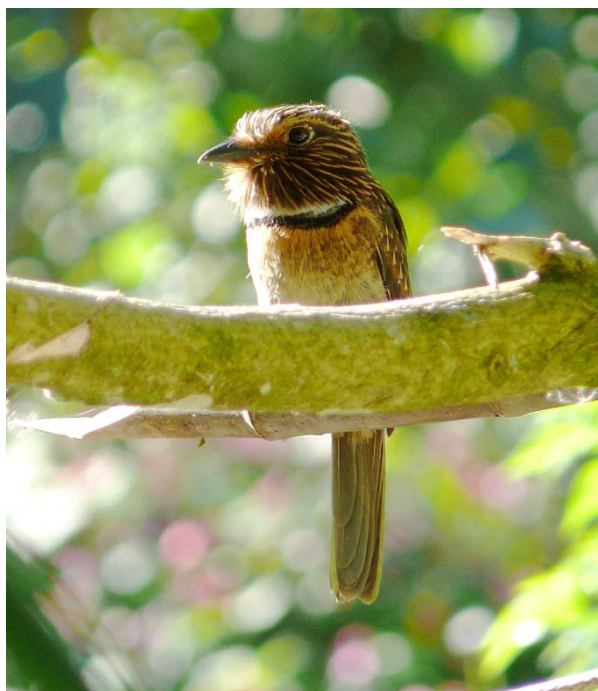
Michael and Linda Hunt

David Ireland

Dave Lord

Malcolm and Isobelle Quirie

Martin Tribe



Crescent-chested Puffbird

Leader Pete Forrest

A personal report by Martin Tribe.

Day One: Overnight flight from London Heathrow to São Paulo.

Day Two: At São Paulo airport the group gathered together for the transfer to Rio de Janeiro. Many were in plain clothes, trying not to look like birders and the first id challenge of the trip was spotting our colleagues. We reached Rio and were met by Pete Forrest and our driver for the week, Aldo. As we loaded the van all eyes were on the sky where we could see a few swallows, mostly Blue-and-white, and one or two distant Magnificent Frigatebirds. We were all under the impression that this distant view was our only chance for the frigatebird but as we drove over the bridges out of Rio we saw many of these graceful birds, sometimes gliding alongside the van. The plan was to get to Serra dos Tucanos as soon as possible so we ignored the common roadside birds, recording only Roadside Hawk, Yellow-headed Caracara and Southern Lapwing. After a couple of hours drive we reached the lodge and walked straight through the building to look at the garden and the feeders. Although we had all had a long journey and were very tired, our tiredness disappeared in an instant: the garden was full of birds, most lifers for all of us. Fortunately we had Pete and Andy on hand to help identify them. In the first few minutes we saw Violaceous and Chestnut-bellied Euphonias, Blue-naped Chlorophonia, Green-headed, Yellow-olive, Ruby-crowned, Palm and Sayaca Tanagers and Rufous-bellied Thrush. The garden has nine hummingbird feeders and around our heads flew Saw-billed Hermit, Swallow-tailed Hummingbird, Sombre Hummingbird, Violet-crowned Woodnymph and Versicoloured Emerald. The smiles on everyone's faces were huge!

We were dragged away from the birds to be allocated our rooms but were soon back on the veranda to see what else the garden held for us. We soon added Masked Water-tyrant, House Wren, Plain Parakeet, Bananaquit, Blue Dacnis, Green Honeycreeper, the startlingly-red Brazilian Tanager, Golden-chevroned and Azure-winged Tanagers and another hummer, Brazilian Ruby.

Pete soon arrived and took us for a walk along some of the lodge trails, which are on a hill side well covered in forest. There are various trails, all named, for example, White, Yellow and Water. We started on the Water Trail and soon we had a flock moving through the lower vegetation. Yellow-lored Tody-flycatcher, White-browed Piculet, Spot-breasted and Plain Antvireos, White-throated Spadebill, Orange-bellied Euphonia, Streak-capped

Antwren and Rufous-browed Peppershrike were all soon on our speedily growing list. A Rufous-capped Becard was found overhead and an Olivaceous Woodcreeper put in an appearance, soon followed by White-collared Swifts flying over.

A short walk took us to a location along the Yellow Trail where Pete had a site for another good bird. A spot of tape luring brought in a Rufous-capped Antthrush, which showed beautifully to the whole group. Pete had expected no reaction from the bird!

Carrying on up the hillside we added Black-throated Trogon to the list, then Channel-billed Toucan in some distant canopy, and lured in a pair of Black-cheeked Gnateaters. We also had good views of Scaled Antbird and found a Thrush-like Woodcreeper. Then it was back to the lodge for dinner and time to let all these new birds settle in to our minds. After dinner some of us sat in the garden drinking local rum and listening to the many frogs calling. Over the week we estimated we heard around 20 different frog species.

Day Three: Some of us were up before the sun and waiting on the bridge over the river for a bird we knew was there. In fact a pair was nesting only a few metres from the bridge. We soon found both Sharp-tailed Streamcreepers and also saw three Red-necked Tanagers, although high in a tree and in poor light. The garden held 'the usual birds' plus our first Maroon-bellied Parakeets.

Soon we were on our way to Portão Azul where, on arrival, a Crested Oropendola flew overhead and a Yellow-olive Flycatcher flitted in some nearby trees. Only a few metres along the path we stopped and Pete got out his bird song playing equipment. Before he could start we found three White-eyed Parakeets in a nearby tree. Then it was time to try for our first antbird of the day. It responded well to the mp3 and we all admired a superb Ferruginous Antbird, truly a fantastic looking bird.

Pete's hearing, and knowledge of what he is hearing, is truly excellent and absolutely invaluable. Soon after the Ferruginous we were watching a Dusky-tailed Antbird and then a Rufous-capped Spinetail. An Euler's Flycatcher was found, prompting a discussion over the pronunciation of Euler: Oiler or Youler? A nice female Brazilian Ruby put a stop to the discussion and as we admired her Pete heard another good bird. We gathered around knowing this next one was a really tough bird to get. Pete played the tape and the bird came in, but, as expected, was very hard to see. However, with perseverance the whole group managed to get good views of White-breasted Tapaculo. For me this was currently bird of the trip.

A little further up the path Pete heard another target species and again warned us this was a tough bird to see. However, the group's luck stayed with us and we all saw Tufted Antshrike, including tufted head.

New birds just kept on coming. So far we had walked only about 50 metres and stopped again after another few. A female Pin-tailed Manakin was soon found plus some Dusky-legged Guans, a Planalto Tyrannulet, Tropical Pewee, White-browed Piculet, White-bearded Manakin and the orange-eyed form of Red-eyed Thornbird, a likely future split.

After this wooded area the land opened up a bit where a stream ran down a valley and through a farm. A fairly-leafless tree held male and female Lowland Hepatic Tanagers and a couple of Rufous-collared Sparrows, and we saw a distant Shiny Cowbird. Flycatching from small trees by the streamside we found a Bran-coloured Flycatcher and admired a Spix's (Chicli) Spinetail that frequented the streamside thick vegetations.

The stream is fed by a lake, a lake that in Pete's experience has only Least Grebes on it. We checked and got only Least Grebes, although a Southern Rough-winged Swallow did fly over the water. Near the lake a Blue-billed Black-tyrant showed well perched on a fence post and we stopped for a snack break. As we snacked two Brown Howler Monkeys were seen in a nearby tree.

We then carried on up the path getting a male Variable Antshrike on the way. We stopped for some birds seen moving in trees up ahead. Green-winged Saltator was quickly seen but the Half-collared Sparrow proved troublesome for some, including me, but with patience we all got good views of this lovely little endemic.

Continuing on up the hillside we heard Brown Tinamous calling, had Southern Caracara fly over and found a lone Fawn-breasted Tanager high in a tree.

We stopped at a short but steeper bit of the path so we could look over some trees. A worthwhile stop as we immediately found a pair of Green-barred Woodpeckers nest building. Pete soon called in an Ochre-faced Tody-tyrant, which we admired until a small flock appeared behind us. The flock comprised a couple of Brassy-breasted Tanagers and some Black-goggled. It also contained a Chestnut-headed Tanager although only I saw it as I happened to be looking through my 'scope at the time and its appearance was very brief. Sepia-capped Flycatcher and Mottle-cheeked Tyrannulet were next to join the list and David, as opposed to Dave, was the only one of us to see a Hang-nest Tody-tyrant as he took a short stroll up the path. Only a few metres on we stopped again because Pete heard a Greenish Schiffornis. Another tough-to-get forest bird, but it showed for us.

Squirrel Cuckoo was our next new bird for the trip as we continued gaining altitude. Pete next found us a pair of Ochre-rumped Antbirds, another smart-looking antbird, and then pointed out a small green bird sitting quietly almost next to the path, a Serra do Mar Tyrant-manakin. A little further along Pete then called in a fine male Bertoni's Antbird.

We soon came across another flock containing many Brassy-breasted Tanagers plus Black-goggled and Gilt-edged Tanagers, White-collared and Buff-fronted Foliage-gleaners, Streaked Xenops and Golden-crowned Warbler. A male Pin-tailed Manakin was found nearby as was a Lesser Woodcreeper.

We stopped for lunch, saw numerous Black Vultures and a Southern Caracara or two then headed back to the van. On the way back we added the aptly-named Drab-breasted Bamboo-tyrant to the ever-growing list.

Next we visited Macae de Cima, an area where one can overlook the canopy of the forest across a valley. Plovercrest is possible here but we didn't see any. We did have a run-across-the-road Slaty-breasted Wood-rail and a nice male Blue Manakin but we only heard Black-and-gold Cotinga and Variegated Antpitta.

Day Four: We started with the usual check of the garden where, in addition to the usual species, we added Great Kiskadee, Social Flycatcher and Pale-bellied Thrush. Three male Ruby-crowned Tanagers were flashing their ruby crowns at each other.

Today we were heading for Serra dos Orgãos National Park. The weather was overcast and drizzly. En route to our first stop in the park we had Tropical Kingbird, Savannah Hawk, Guira Cuckoo, Chalk-browed Mockingbird and Picazuro Pigeon.

We were to visit two locations in the park. The first we birded from a steep tarmac road within the park. We heard, but never did see, Rufous-crowned Motmot. However, we did see White-collared Foliage-gleaner and a Yellow-eared Woodpecker. A flock of birds appeared over our heads and settled in a roadside tree. These turned out to be about 25 Red-necked Tanagers and were the start of about fifteen minutes of frantic birding: Grey-headed Flycatcher, Short-crested Flycatcher, Grey-hooded Attila, Red-eyed (Chivi) Vireo and Flame-crested and Yellow-backed Tanagers were soon admired by all. Heading back up the road, and after seeing another Streak-capped Antwren, Pete called in a Thrush-like Woodcreeper, which then sat right in front of us, in the open, calling and showing superbly.

Next we drove through fog to another park of the park. When we left the bus the rain was really coming down. We were to walk up a forest trail, quite steep in place and very uneven. It was single file all the way. We started well though with 12 Yellow-legged Thrushes as a flock of them moved through the canopy. We stopped for lunch and Pete heard another new bird calling. Lunch stopped as we tried to lure in a Serra do Mar (Mouse-coloured) Tapaculo. It came close but none of us saw it. None except Godfrey, a little further up the path, who had it walk in front of him. Lunch recommenced and a while later the tapaculo starting calling again so the hunt began again. The bird was close but, as ever with tapaculos, elusive. Most of us managed some views of the bird, I saw the bird singing loudly as I bent at a strange and painful angle to get a view of the forest floor.

Working our way further up the trail we found a male Black-throated Trogon. We heard Brazilian Antthrush and one responded to the tape lure by walking around us unseen. It even crossed the path without any of us noticing. Eventually we got good views of a bird much larger than I expected and when it crossed the path again, albeit at a run, most of the group saw it. Also in the undergrowth was a female Rufous Gnateater, which showed only briefly.

Working our way back down the trail we came across another flock that contained some good birds, although the mist made it hard to make out what species they were. In the brief moments of clear air, well, clearer than very misty, we found Brown Tanagers, a Sharp-billed Treehunter, Golden-crowned Warbler and Black-goggled Tanager. I saw a bird with a very distinctive bill that I thought was a Sharpbill but the mist came in and the bird was lost to view. Further down the trail we came across what seemed to be the same flock and in a moment of no mist and some sunshine a Sharpbill showed for the group before disappearing off into the forest.

Continuing down we added Star-throated Antwren, which showed very well plus two Rufous-backed Antwrens. Hooded Berryeaters could be heard but didn't show and a few of us managed very brief views of a pair of Spot-billed Toucanets that appeared briefly in the top of a tall tree but didn't hang around.

Day Five: Today we spent that morning doing the Cedae Trail. Our first bird was a fine male Blue Manakin, a bird we kept running into and seeing well. Starting down the wide trail we came across our first Uniform Finch, a bird that's in short supply this year due to their nomadic tendencies. Two White-necked Thrushes were found high in a tree and Pete heard a Tawny-throated Leaf-tosser. He played back the call of the bird and it flew past us a couple of times but didn't stay still.

The path slopes down to the left and we were scanning the trees for a Yellow-olive Flycatcher when I found a tiny bird. It disappeared but was relocated soon after and turned out to be an Eared Pygmy-tyrant. We continued walking down the path finding a Versicoloured Emerald and then a female Surucua Trogon. A bird atop another tree turned out to be a Cliff Flycatcher and then Pete located a calling Black-throated Grosbeak. This bird, and another, was soon tracked down and the mighty red bill admired.

It was now time to walk back up the trail and as we did a distant but nicely scorable Channel-billed Toucan was found. As we watched this bird five more came in. Even at a distance this is a superb looking bird. Short-tailed Antthrush was heard and did come in but was seen by only one of the group. We walked round a wide curve in the path and over a stream and above us found a large flock of birds moving quickly through the trees. It was very hard to get on all birds and identify them. The highlight was Rufous-headed Tanager and there were also Flame-crested Tanagers and Buff-fronted Foliage-gleaners and a Black-capped Foliage-gleaner.

As we approached the top of the trail David spotted a soaring raptor. With the improving weather this was probably the first time the bird had been hunting for a couple of days. It was a Black Hawk-eagle and showed well circling almost above us.

The afternoon was time to be spent in the lodge grounds. As we returned and walked onto the veranda Andy asked if we wanted to see Black-and-white Hawk-eagle. Our replies were enthusiastic! The bird was nesting in a tree visible from the lodge and although distant could easily be made out. For some a second bird came in the visit the nest as the first sat there.

The first part of the afternoon was spent on comfy chairs scoping gloriously coloured tanagers coming to the feeding tables. No new species were seen during this time but scope views of birds like Brazilian and Green-headed Tanagers and Blue-naped Chlorophonia are hard to beat. At one point a lone Red-necked Tanager came to a table, a bird that normally does not visit the feeders but is readily seen in the garden.

Dave, David and I went for a walk up one of the trails but things were quiet. A few Red-necked Tanagers and a Gilt-edged Tanager that had a spotted breast – most peculiar. We did find Plain Antwren and a pair of Ferruginous Antbirds. Unfortunately, on our return we heard that a pair of Crescent-chested Puffbirds had been seen in the garden. We rushed to their previous location but the birds had gone. This was to prove a bit of a bogey bird for me.

Day Six: A good start to the day. As everyone was getting ready to go out for the day Dave was watching the feeders. I just happened along at the right moment to see a Blond-crested Woodpecker coming in. I went to find the others but couldn't find anyone. The bird decided not to stay and soon flew back into the forest. We were loading the van when a feeder out front was found to hold a male Spot-billed Toucanet. Best views were obtained from Malcolm and Issy's room, which they kindly allowed us to invade. The male toucanet flew off and a female appeared so all the group had good views of much-wanted species.

A cheerful group boarded the bus and was taken to the high altitude trail. The weather was good making going higher up possible. We had walked barely five metres when Pete stopped us because he was hearing birds. First was Rufous-tailed Antbird, successfully called in, then Serra do Mar Tyrannulet soon joined by a Mottled-cheeked Tyrannulet. A little further up a male Plovercrest, with a tiny crest, was found, although it was quite active and didn't hang around. Another Uniform Finch was found, this time an immature, and we spent a long time searching for Serra do Mar Tapaulco as not all the group had seen it before. We located a bird and it sang close by and incessantly but was never seen. A little further up we came across a flock containing lots of Brassy-breasted Tanagers plus Rufous-capped Greenlet, Bay-breasted Warbling-finch, Golden-crowned Warbler and Ruby-crowned Tanagers. Aldo found an eleania, which turned out to be Highland Eleania. Further up the path we came across what was probably the same flock but this time we managed to locate Diademed Tanager amongst the other species.

We then moved to a lower area that was hilly grassland and mostly quite open. We all found it a relief from enclosed forest birding and trying to spot birds in trees, and worse, explain where they were in those trees.

At this lower altitude Saffron Finches were common, the males looking very nice in the sun. A couple of Pallid Spinetails moved around in the canopy of some conifers (spinetails in canopy – very strange) and we located a Velvety Black-tyrant sowing well on a nearby fence post. As we admired this bird I noticed something big behind it and shouted 'seriema'. The grassy hillside held two Red-legged Seriemas, quite close by and unbothered by our presence. These really are very impressive birds and were very much enjoyed by the whole group, and by Pete now that the pressure was off to locate them.

The path was pleasingly wide and we picked up repeats of species we had already seen plus, new for the list, White-crested Tyrannulet. A hummer was found and turned out to be a female Glittering-bellied Emerald then Aldo found a Jararaca, a poisonous viper, curled up on the side of the path. Many photos were taken but we kept our distance. There is a local rum also named Jararaca (the viper image is on the label), which has a bite that is just as lethal as the snake itself.

Further up a flycatcher was seen higher up the hill, appearing and disappearing as it hunted. Pete identified it as Shear-tailed Grey-tyrant and we were soon admiring this smart grey and black bird through the 'scopes.

Continuing up we were soon in even more open country with low scrubby bushes up the hill and open grassland down the hill, plus a great view over the nearby hills. By the side of the path we found a White-throated Hummingbird and, a little later in low ferns, we found a pair of Glittering-bellied Emeralds: all showed very well.

Overlooking some trees across a small grassy valley we located two Boat-billed Flycatchers and heard Campo Flickers. Pete spotted two Cinnamon Tanagers in the canopy and then heard a Rufous-capped Antshrike. Playing the call lured in the bird a bit and we soon all admired yet another smart-looking species. With the Black Vultures overhead we found two White-tailed Hawks and a Southern Lapwing stood on the grass nearby. A grassy/sandy bank added Burrowing Owl and adult and immature Yellow-headed Caracaras on fence posts. A couple of local dogs appeared and received a lot of fuss from the group. I wandered off to look for the Campo Flickers and instead found a distant Yellow-browed Woodpecker. My shouts brought the group running and we had a challenging time picking up the bird, and later another, as they were well hidden behind leaves in quite distant trees.

Walking back down the path, avoiding the Jararaca, David spotted a perched Black Hawk-eagle about 40 or so metres away, duly admired in 'scopes and then we found a Cattle Tyrant on the path that quickly flew up into the seriemas field, where the seriemas still resided.

Back at the bus, we located five Campo Flickers and another Cinnamon Tanager, and as we drove down the road a Grey-fronted Dove flew up. Finally, a rail was spotted and we all admired two Slaty-breasted Wood-rails in a nearby damp field, both showed well, one exceptionally so.

Day Seven: Another great start when, during breakfast, I came out of the dining room to find a Black Jacobin on one of the hummingbird feeders. A shout to the others soon brought everyone out. This bird is a summer visitor and this lone early migrant was the only one we saw.

Today was our trip down the mountain to Regua wetland reserve. We stopped on the way for a Black-crowned Night-heron, also picking up Wattled Jacana and once more for a singing Grassland Sparrow close to the roadside. Guira Cuckoo was seen on the way in as were Smooth-billed Anis.

At the reserve, metres from the van, we admired a pair of Tropical Screech-owls, roosting on a low branch of a tree then headed into reserve proper. A male Glittering-throated Emerald showed its glittering throat and a Slaty-breasted Wood-rail was seen. We carefully crossed, one at a time, a bridge over a stream and as I waited for the other a tinamou crossed the path ahead of us. We soon tried calling in the birds, Tataupa Tinamous, which we could hear calling, but although we heard them quite close by they didn't deign to show themselves.

The path leads through some small trees one side and marshy grassland the other. The small tree side, with some help from mp3s, gave us Chestnut-backed Antshrike and Sooretama Slaty Antshrike. All the antbirds so far proving to be very smart looking birds. Overhead about 50 Biscutate Swifts flew. We had some woodland to contend with, which proved worth the effort as we found first a male then a female White-bearded Manakin, brief views of a Plain Xenops, an Eye-ringed Tody-tyrant and Yellow-breasted Flycatcher. Next Pete called in two White-flanked Antwrens before we reached an open area overlooking a valley and distant hills. Here we scanned for raptors but Black Vulture and Roadside Hawk what all that appeared. Dave spotted a bird that kept dropping down from trees to the path and back up again. We got ready for the next visit of the bird and all admired a Rufous-tailed Jacamar, which sometimes sat for a few seconds in the sun so we could all see the beautiful colours of this bird.

A stop to call in Long-billed Wren meant we saw both the wren and another Chestnut-backed Antshrike, and a little further on we found another Long-billed Wren unusually on the ground rather than in the canopy.

Leaving the forested area we walked up a small hill to a more scrubby area where we found two Paraques, although we had only brief flight views. One hummer appeared and settled, but deep in cover; it was a Rufous-breasted Hermit.

Then we reached the first lake of the wetland reserve and birds came thick and fast. First was a Rufescent Tiger-heron, sadly flying away, and a nearby tree held a colony of Red-rumped Caciques. The lake itself, with a few small islands, some reedy areas and some floating vegetation gave us Purple Gallinule, Brazilian Teal, Masked Duck, Common Moorhen, Wattled Jacana and Least Grebe. The reedy areas added Masked Water-tyrant and White-headed Marsh-tyrant. Having found all the birds of the first lake we moved to the second, larger, lake. Here there were more Brazilian Teal and Masked Ducks, and a couple of Pied-billed Grebes. Pete called in a Yellow-chinned Spinetail, which after some speedy fly-pasts stopped to show well. Two Campo Flickers flew in, making a lot of noise, and vultures were checked and we soon found a Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture that gave us a close fly-by.

Walking further around the lake we came across a Capped Heron and another Black-crowned Night-heron. Pete then called in a Common Tody-flycatcher and we picked up Hooded Tanager. Ruddy Ground-doves were quite common in this area and we came across a party of Guira Cuckoos feeding by the side of the path plus a Tail-banded Hornero by the lakeside.

As we drove down the dirt track from the reserve we saw a lone Blue-black Grassquit and a couple of Yellow-headed Vultures. David spotted a woodpecker and we shouted for the van to stop. Worth it because we admired a party of five White Woodpeckers, a much wanted bird. As we admired these birds, two White-rumped Swallows few past.

The afternoon was spent at Serra dos Tucanos where we again enjoyed the usual garden birds. In my continued effort to relocate the Crescent-chested Puffbird I was back at the last known site and found a White-throated Woodcreeper. The others were hastily summoned to see this endemic.

Day Eight: Today was the day we did the Jacamar Trail. It's quite a long drive, but stops at numerous habitats, before culminating at the Three-toed Jacamar site. It seems that the number of species seen (not heard only) during the day is always recorded. Two weeks before our visit the record stood at 109 species. The week before us another Birdfinders group was present and set a new record of 110. Clearly we had something to aim for.

Our first stop was overlooking a marshy area of grassland. Streamer-tailed Tyrant was our first bird after we got out of the van, quickly followed by Crested Black-tyrant. Brown-chested Martins and Tawny-headed Swallows flew over the grassland and a group of Chestnut-headed Blackbirds were found in a nearby tree. A Yellow-bellied Elaenia flew in but we only heard Blackish Rail.

Our next stop gave us a superb perching Bat Falcon on a tree on a ridge. We then walked to a scrubby area and found lots of birds, including Hangnest Tody-tyrant, White-shouldered Fire-eye, Half-collared Sparrow and Serra Antwren. The marshy land across the road held a very yellow-looking Yellow-browed Tyrant. Ashy-tailed Swifts flew overhead and as I went back for my 'scope I noticed a white dot on the tree-lined ridge. I got the 'scope on it and called the others back. We then all admired a perched Grey-headed Kite.

Next stop was a mostly dry pool that held a pair of Southern Lapwings and their chicks. Pete played the Blackish Rail call and one, then two, birds appeared from the reeds. Then we were off again to a parking area that overlooked a large area of rolling grassland. This is the back-up spot for Red-legged Seriema, although a view, if indeed any are found, would be distant indeed. Burrowing Owl was seen as was Grey Monjita, another Crested Black-tyrant and a group of Chopi Blackbirds.

We then drove in to a lovely little town and stopped for coffee. Whilst drinking an Amazon Kingfisher flew down a nearby river. We went to investigate and flushed another. Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture was seen here too.

Onward again to another marshy, grassy area. Streamer-tailed Tyrants flew about and Pete had a go at luring in an Ashy-throated Crake. The bird certainly responded but stayed hidden. Pete moved along a bit and said he was going to try to call it out his side. A couple of us moved that way and saw the bird peek its head out. Sadly it didn't stay out and disappeared never to come out again, for us at least. Across the road a pair of Black-capped Donacobius were located and admired and two White-tailed Hawks were spotted over the nearby hills.

The route took us higher up but still in grassland. At the next stop we could see trees with nests of both Common Thornbird and Firewood-gatherer. However, the trees held only Chalk-browed Mockingbird. Izzy spotted a distant bird on the ground that I managed to 'scope. It soon flew off but was identified as a Wedge-tailed Grass-finch. We heard Southern (Masked) Yellowthroat but it didn't respond to our luring efforts. However, we did get the thornbird and Firewood-gatherer. As we watched the Firewood-gatherer sat in a nearby treetop Pete heard a Striped Cuckoo, played the song and there it was, showing well. The nests of horneros were common along this drive and we saw Rufous Hornero at this site.

The next stop was brief but gave us White-eared Puffbird. Soon after we were all stunned by the display flight of a Fork-tailed Flycatcher, bird of the day if not the trip for some. Another Yellow-chinned Spinetail was also found here.

Our lunch stop was at a road side, some woodland nearby and some farmland. A Planalto Hermit was seen feeding from some crimson flowers and Saffron Finches were common. In the nearby woods there were birds

aplenty: Yellow Tyrannulet, Boat-billed Flycatcher, Burnished-buff, Black-goggled and Gilt-edged Tanagers, Streaked Xenops, Pallid Spinetail, Yellow-lored Tody and Buff-fronted Foliage-gleaner amongst others. A Chestnut-vented Conebill was found soon followed by a Southern Yellowthroat. A seedeater by the roadside was Double-collared Seedeater and some nearby tall trees held Scaled Woodcreeper, Grey-hooded Attila and three Blue-winged Parrotlets.

Carrying on we had a brief stop for two colourful Whistling Herons before reaching the jacamar site. A lot of bamboo had recently been cut down and the birds were not evident. Out came the mp3 player and almost immediately we had three Three-toed Jacamars showing beautifully. A quick stop around the corner added a roosting Barn Owl and two Brown Howler Monkeys.

We broke the long drive back by stopping again at Portão Azul. Walking up the path we quickly found a couple of birds on the highest point of a tree. These were two Long-tailed Tyrants, new for the day and the trip. Continuing up we saw Dusky-legged Guan, Spix's Spinetail and Blue-billed Black-tyrant. By the lake, with its usual Least Grebes, we found a small tyrannid that turned out to be our first (and only) Southern Beardless Tyrannulet of the trip.

Back at the lodge we did the log. The final total was announced by Pete. It was preceded by the words 'I don't believe it', the total was 112 species, and this later became 113 because we had all forgotten Scaly-headed Parrot see during the day. The group was very pleased with now being the official record holders.

Day Nine: Today we did the narrow Theodora Trail, a short way up the mountain. On arrival we immediately found a flowering bush with White-throated Hummingbird and Violet-crowned Woodnymph in attendance. An elaenia was then spotted close by that Pete identified as Olivaceous Elaenia. A Squirrel Cuckoo then put in an appearance, allowing people who hadn't seen it well before to do so. A little further up Pete heard a Giant Antshrike. He attempted to call it in and we soon had great views of both a male and a female calling to each other. Standing in the shade it was jolly cold but this was offset by what is truly a giant antshrike.

We moved into the forest itself and soon had a Pale-breasted Woodhunter. This was followed by an amazing experience: Pete heard and called in a Slaty Bristlefront. David heard Geoffrey whisper 'it's behind you' and slowly turned round. The bird was less than a metre away. It then proceeded to walk in front of the whole group before disappearing into the forest, now convinced there were no rivals in the vicinity.

Every so often we'd heard the ringing sound of a Bare-throated Bellbird, usually distant. Whenever we could see the near hillsides across the valleys we checked for that distant white spot that could mean a bellbird. Then we heard the resounding sound of the bird right above us. Of course that means in the canopy and we were on a narrow track deep in the forest. However, after about half an hour's worth of hunting, and occasionally seeing a white flash go overhead, we managed to locate a singing Bare-throated Bellbird in the open and only about 20 metres up. An exceptional sighting of this bird when most people have to be satisfied with a distant 'scoped view.

Walking back up the trail we came across a nice head-height Black-capped Foliage-gleaner and yet another male Blue Manakin. A couple of us had a brief fly past of Scale-throated Hermit but they weren't where they often are. A stop in an open spot meant we saw two birds fly overhead. Fortunately we got the bins on these as they turned out to be Swallow-tailed Cotingas.

Finally, as we checked the flowering bush for hummers we all admired a full-crested male Plovercrest. An excellent end to an excellent walk.

The afternoon was spent at the lodge. As well as the usual superb birds, including 11 Olive-green Tanagers, a couple of us saw four Grey-rumped Swifts.

The next day was our last. We were to leave in the afternoon. Most people finally caught up with Blond-crested Woodpecker. A walk along the road to the entrance of the lodge added another White-throated Woodcreeper and a bird that Malcolm said looked like a puffbird. I quickly got to the area into which it had flown and

carefully moved towards where the bird looked like it had gone. Then, there it was, a Crescent-chested Puffbird, the bird I had been after all week, and, as can be seen from the photo at the beginning of this report, showing well. Interestingly, later, as we watched from the veranda, it or another suddenly appeared in a nearby tree for a few seconds. Burnished-buff Tanager put in another appearance and most of the group (not me or David who were birding the trails) finally saw Saffron Toucanet as two, or three, came in to feed on the tables.

Finally, as we drove back towards Rio we again had hundreds of Magnificent Frigatebirds, many just floating gracefully above or alongside the road bridges. And then we had to fly home. It was an excellent trip. The lodge is perfect for birders; Andy, Christina and the staff are all great as is the food and accommodation. Pete was superb and our bird list would be considerably lower without him. I would recommend this trip to anyone. If you never been to Brazil before prepare to be amazed by the colours of the birds. If you've been before there's always more to see. We didn't get everything but no-one ever does. What we did get was superb and very memorable.