Full Detailed Itinerary - Northeast Brazil

Day 1: Arrival in Fortaleza

The tour begins this evening in the northern city of Fortaleza. No birding is planned for today.

Day 2: Serra de Baturité

This morning we head south to an isolated mountain range known as the Serra de Baturité. The higher elevations are cooler and wetter than the surrounding dry caatinga and host a number of endemic species as well as subspecies that might be split in the future, such as Buff-breasted Tody-Tyrant, Ceara Gnateater, Ceara Woodcreeper, Ochraceous Piculet, Gray-headed Spinetail, Variable Antshrike, Red-necked Tanager, and Rufous-breasted Leaftosser. This area is also the best place in the world to see the highly endangered Gray-breasted Parakeet, and we hope to encounter this rare and beautiful bird during our visit. We spend one night in Guaramiranga.

Day 3: Serra de Baturité to Quixadá

After another morning birding in the the Serra de Baturité, we continue our journey south into the interior of the state of Ceará. As we near the town of Quixadá, dramatic rock formations start to dominate the horizon. We spend one night here in a hotel with great birding nearby, and will spend the rest of the day seeking out the special birds of the caatinga habitat like Cactus Parakeet, White-browed Guan, Caatinga Cacholote, Ochre-backed Woodpecker, and Black-bellied Antwren.

Day 4: Quixadá to Potengi

After some early morning birding around the hotel, we'll drive about five hours south to the Chapada do Araripe, a scenic escarpment in the southern part of Ceará. We spend one night in a small lodge near the edge of the escarpment, surrounded by excellent caatinga habitat. Here we will search for some often difficult species including Red-shouldered Spinetail, Caatinga Antwren, Scarlet-throated Tanager, Silvery-cheeked Antshrike, Great Xenops, and White-browed Antpitta. The lodge feeders may attract some other great birds like Campo Troupial, Red-cowled Cardinal, and more.

Day 5: Crato to Canudos

The stunning red, white, and black Araripe Manakin is THE target for the morning and will hopefully be one the highlights of the entire trip. This species was discovered only in 1996 and is restricted to a miniscule area along the base of the escarpment. Usually, the easiest place to find it is at a water park where locals go swimming, but the owners have created a separate area to protect this unforgettable bird, and it usually shows well. For much of the rest of the day, we will drive south, crossing the state of Pernambuco and eventually arriving in Canudos, in Bahia. Depending on when we arrive, there may be a chance for some late afternoon birding. We spend one night in Canudos.

Day 6: Canudos to Chapada Diamantina

The beautiful Indigo Macaw, also known as Lear’s Macaw is endemic to this part of Bahia, and this morning we will head out to look for them near the cliffs where they roost and nest or in the woodland nearby. Other species we may encounter this morning include Blue-crowned Parakeet, Spotted Piculet, Stripe-breasted Starthroat, Spot-backed Puffbird, and Greater Wagtail-Tyrant. Brazil is a vast country, and we’ll then have the longest drive of the tour (about 8 hours) as we continue south to Chapada Diamantina, an impressive mountain range with sheer sandstone cliffs. The nights of Day 7 and Day 8 will be spent in the pleasant town of Lençóis.

Days 7-8: Chapada Diamantina

This very scenic area has a variety of habitats including caatinga, grassy savanna, and humid forest. We will target several key endemics including Sincora Anwren, Hooded Visorbearer, and Diamantina Tapaculo but there plenty more to look for too. Gilt-edged Tanager, Buff-throated Pampa-Finch, Blue Finch, Rufous-winged Antshrike, Collared Crescentchest, Gray-backed Tachuri, White-banded Tanager, and the rare Rufous-sided Pygmy-Tyrant are just a few of the possibilities. The night of Day 9 will be spent in Mucugê in the southern part of the mountain range.

Day 9: Mucugê to Boa Nova

After some final birding in Chapada Diamantina, we have another long drive (about 6 hours) to the town of Boa Nova, where we’ll spend the next three nights.

Days 10-11: Boa Nova and Poções

This is a fascinating area with a mosaic of habitats that include humid Atlantic Forest, dry caatinga, and a unique type of vine forest in between. This vine forest is home to the very local Slender Antbird, and is also the best place on the tour to see Narrow-billed Antwren. Once we venture into the humid forest, the scenery changes dramatically, and we’ll find ourselves surrounded with new trip birds. Possibilities include Striated Softail, Rio de Janeiro Antbird, Crescent-chested Puffbird, Cinnamon-vented Piha, Spot-backed Antshrike, Bahia Spinetail, Pin-tailed Manakin, and many, many more. A few different birds are possible in a forest patch near Poções such as the rare Wied’s Tyrant-Manakin and White-bibbed Antbirds. We’ll also visit a hummingbird garden that attracts a variety of species; they can be quite seasonal but Swallow-tailed Hummingbird, Sapphire-spangled Emerald, Stripe-breasted Starthroat, Planalto Hermit, and Ruby-topaz Hummingbird are all possible.

Day 12: Boa Nova to Itacaré

After another morning in the Boa Nova area, we’ll head to the Atlantic coast and spend one night in the pleasant beach town of Itacaré. Depending on when we arrive, we may have time for some afternoon birding in the Serra do Conduru.

Day 13: Itacaré to Serra Bonita

Serra do Conduru State Park is home to superb lowland Atlantic Rainforest, and we'll spend the whole morning targeting some scarce and beautiful endemics. Chief among them is the rare and local Bahia Tapaculo, one of the most localized members of this unique Neotropical family. It's also the best place on the tour for the absolutely gorgeous Kinglet Manakin. Other species we hope to find include Scaled Antbird, Black-cheeked Gnateater, Cinereous-breasted Spinetail, Great-billed Hermit, White-bellied Tanager, White-fronted Nunbird, and others. In the afternoon, we’ll head farther south to Camacan, then switch to 4x4 vehicles for the short drive to the Serra Bonita Reserve. This reserve is part of a consortium of local

landowners who protect over 6000 acres of beautiful montane Atlantic Forest. We spend two nights in a lodge in the reserve.

Day 14: Serra Bonita Reserve

We'll spend the whole day birding in and around the Serra Bonita Reserve. Some of the key targets here are Pink-legged Graveteiro, Bahia Tyrannulet, Plumbeous Antvireo, and Salvadori's Antwren. Mixed flocks might hold the rare and as of yet undescribed "Bahia" Treehunter, and feeders at the reserve headquarters bring in a variety of tanagers, Maroon-bellied Parakeet, and sometimes Spot-billed Toucanet.

Day 15: Serra Bonita to Porto Seguro

As we leave the reserve, we'll spend the morning birding the lower elevations searching for Maroon-faced, Ochre-marked, and Golden-capped Parakeets, Black-necked Aracari, Yellow-fronted Woodpecker, and others. Occasionally the rare and beautiful Banded Cotinga can be seen as it comes in to feed on palm berries. In the middle of the day, we'll drive around three hours to Porto Seguro on the Atlantic Coast, where the final two nights of the tour will be spent. We should have time for afternoon birding near the town. Mangroves here might reveal the likes of Bicolored Conebill, Plain-bellied Emerald, Mangrove Rail, and there is even a small chance for Little Wood-Rail.

Day 16: Veracel Reserve

This reserve not far from town protects a superb patch of lowland rainforest loaded with rare and highly sought-after endemics like White-winged and Banded Cotingas, Black-headed Berryeater, Hook-billed Hermit, Red-browed Parrot, Bahia and Band-tailed Antwrens, and Ochre-marked Parakeet. There are also a number of subspecies that are likely going to be split including Opal-rumped Tanager, Golden-spangled Piculet, and Ringed Woodpecker. We may also have a chance to do some nightbirding here with Black-capped Screech-Owl. Tawny-browed Owl, and the very rare White-winged Potoo all possible.

Day 17: Porto Seguro and departure

After another morning birding at Veracel or other sites, we'll check out of the hotel and head to the airport. Flights are available to Sao Paulo, where you can connect with late evening international flights on many airlines.

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