



2026

EcoTravel

Overnight Natural History Tours and Day Trips

Brazil's Atlantic Forest October 17 – 28, 2026



© Renato Augusto Martins

Brazil

October 2026

12 Days

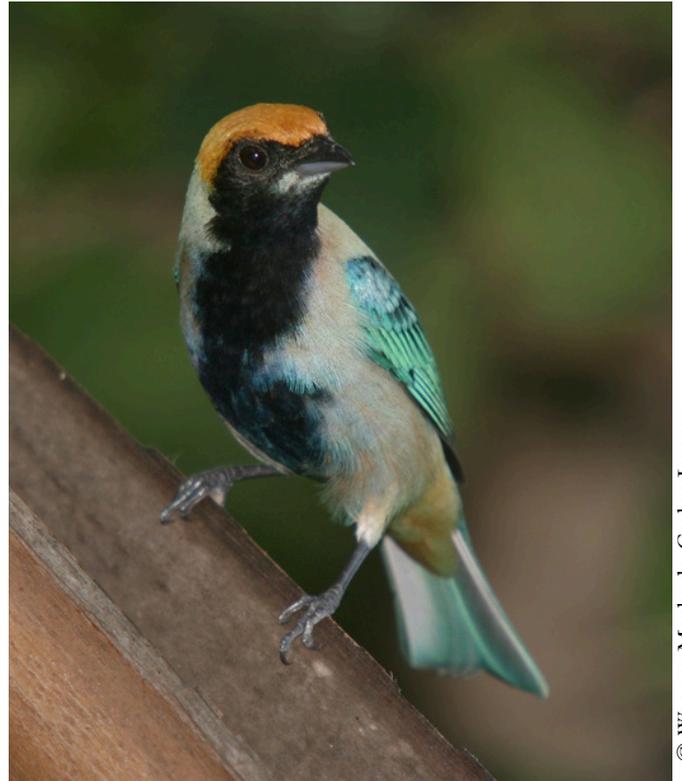
Overview

From the mountains of Itatiaia National Park to the lowland forests of Regua, this tour offers colorful birds, endemic rarities, and breathtaking landscapes in a major biodiversity hotspot.

Located in the heart of a vast mountain range, Itatiaia National Park is the first Brazilian national park and one of the most famous birding spots in the Brazilian Atlantic Rainforest. Here we have an altitudinal gradient of over 1,000 meters, which provides a great variety of bird species. Some of the highlights are the colorful tanagers, such as Green-headed, Gilt-edged, and Burnished-buff tanagers. The park is also home for Spot-winged Wood-Quail, Red-breasted Toucan, and Giant Antshrike, as well as myriads of antbirds, woodcreepers, foliage-gleaners, flycatchers and tyrannulets, just to name a few groups.

Only two hours north of Rio de Janeiro, Reserva Ecologica Guapiaçu is one of the most successful forest restoration initiatives in Latin America. The reserve protects more than 9,000 hectares of natural habitats including lowland forest, highland forest, wetlands, and farmland, with an altitudinal range that varies from 35 to over 2,000 meters. Here the profits from the lodge are used to buy more land and restore more forest! On the top of the list of the many special birds to find here are White-bellied Tanager and the mega rarity Gray-winged Cotinga. On our way to Rio, we will visit a reserve with the highest population of the Golden Lion Tamarin, one of the rarest and most beautiful primates in the world. We have good chances of spotting them here, while we learn about the conservation efforts that take place to save these special creatures. Birds possible in the reserve include Sooretama Slaty-Antshrike, White-crowned and Kinglet manakins, Crescent-chested Puffbird, Lemmon-crested Greenlet, and many more.

Despite being the second largest city in Brazil, Rio has a nice and relaxed atmosphere, which is perhaps the reason it is famous as the Wonderful City. There are many things that make Rio so different. First is the sunny coast and its many beaches such as Copacabana and Ipanema, where the locals spend a lot of time. Secondly, the lush forest and mountains of Tijuca National Park, the largest urban forest in the world. And there is the rich musical culture of the city, Samba and Bossa Nova being the most well-known of the local rhythms.



© Wagner Machado Carlos Lemes



© Gabriel Vallim

Itinerary

Day 1 – Overnight Flights

Day 2 – Rio de Janeiro to Itatiaia LD

We meet at Rio de Janeiro International Airport (GAL) and drive about 3 hours to Itatiaia National Park, the first National Park in Brazil. Once we arrive at the park, we'll start birding, and could already find such prizes as Green-headed Tanagers and many more. We'll check in to our hotel in the late afternoon. At night, we will be looking for one of the most famous residents of this lodge: the Tawny-browed Owl.

Night: Hotel do Ype.

Day 3 – Itatiaia National Park BLD

After an early breakfast, we start birding the many trails in the park. Among our targets today are Spot-winged Wood-Quail; Slaty-breasted Wood-Rail; Brown Tanager; Pin-tailed, Blue, and Greenish manakin; Saffron and Spot-billed toucanets; Plumbeous Pigeon; Atlantic Black-throated Trogon; White-eared Puffbird; Rufous-capped Motmot; Bare-throated Bellbird; Bertoni's Antbird; Ochre-rumped Antbird; White-bearded Antshrike; Hangnest Tody-Tyrant; Such's Antthrush; Rufous Gnateater; Red-ruffed Fruitcrow; Rough-legged Tyrannulet; Large-headed Flatbill; Gilt-edged Tanager; and Buffy-fronted and Temminck's seedeater. At noon, we'll stop for lunch and have a short break at our hotel, then continuing birding in the afternoon.

Night: Hotel do Ype.

Day 4 – Itatiaia National Park BLD

This morning, we'll start very early and drive to the upper part of the Itatiaia National Park (altitudes above 2.000 meters) where we'll bird the Agulhas Negras Road looking for specialties of the highlands. Here, we have good chances of finding Giant and Large-tailed antshrikes, Rufous-backed Antvireo, Speckle-breasted Antpitta, Brown-breasted Bamboo-Tyrant, Fawn-breasted and Brassy-breasted tanagers, Black-and-Gold Cotinga, Itatiaia Spinetail, Brazilian Antthrush, Rufous-tailed Antbird, Black-breasted Plover-Crest, Great Pampa-Finch, Thick-billed Saltator, Golden-winged Cacique, Oustalet's and White-crested tyrannulets, Velvety Black-Tyrant, Diademed Tanager, and many more. We return to the hotel for lunch, and in the afternoon may bird the road again or opt for birding a trail near the hotel.

Night: Hotel do Ype.

Day 5 – Drive to REGUA BLD

This morning, we can bird a bit near the hotel and then check-out and drive to Reserva Ecologica Guapiaçu (REGUA), an ambitious conservation project that is restoring habitat and protecting wetlands. In the afternoon, we'll walk around the property looking for Rufous-sided Crane, White-barred Piculet, and Blond-crested Woodpecker, among many others

Night: REGUA.



© Arthur Goulart



© Joao Quental

Day 6 – REGUA's Lake and Trails

BLD

This morning we'll bird the trail that circles the wetlands, where over 220 bird species have been recorded, with great chances of finding the scarce Masked Duck, Boat-billed Heron, Pinnated Bittern, Capped Heron, and several species of rails. The wetland is also an excellent place to watch for soaring raptors during the late morning, including Rufous-thighed Kite, Crane Hawk, and Black-and-white Hawk-Eagle.

In the afternoon we'll bird the Brown Trail, which crosses mostly second-growth forest in a relatively flat terrain. The habitat here favors species such as Ruddy Quail-Dove, Maroon-bellied Parakeet, Rufous-capped Motmot, Blue Ground-Dove, Sooretama Slaty-Antshrike, and the near-threatened Black-legged Dacnis, along many other species.

Hotel: REGUA.

Day 7 – REGUA Trails

BLD

Today we will explore the Brown Trail, inside the property. In 2004, REGUA began replanting much of the land near the lodge with native trees. This trail passes through these areas, which are being colonized by a wealth of wildlife. As the trees mature and the young forest becomes more established, the open country bird species such as Grassland Sparrow and Yellowish Pipit have been replaced by forest dwelling species including Ruddy Quail-Dove, Maroon-bellied Parakeet, and Rufous-capped Motmot, as well as species associated with scrub and open forest such as Blue Ground Dove and Sooretama Slaty-Antshrike. The near-threatened Black-legged Dacnis is now regularly found along this trail during the austral winter, and even the rare Shrike-like Cotinga is starting to show up here. This trail is also a reliable spot to find lekking male White-bearded Manakins.

Night: REGUA.

Day 8 – Pico da Caledonia

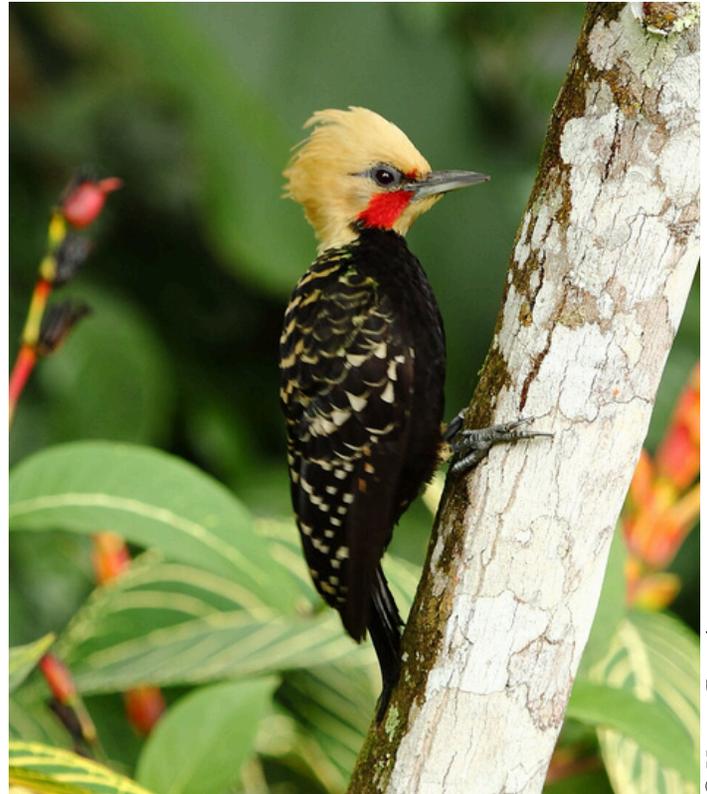
BLD

After an early breakfast we'll drive for about two hours to Pico da Caledônia, one of the highest peaks in the Serra dos Órgãos Mountains, reaching 2,219 meters. On a clear day the views from the top are truly spectacular. The montane forest here is one of only two known sites (and by far the most accessible and reliable) where the extremely rare and elusive Grey-winged Cotinga may be found. We start the day birding the elfin forest near the summit searching for the rare Gray-winged Cotinga, Itatiaia Thistletail, and other high-altitude specialties including Plovercrest, Large-tailed Antshrike, Diademed Tanager, Bay-chested Warbling-Finch, and many more. In the late morning, we drive part way back down the mountain for lunch, before spending the early afternoon birding another trail at lower altitude while enjoying the fantastic scenery. Birds here include Dusky-tailed Antbird, Swallow-tailed Cotinga, Black-and-gold Cotinga, and Mouse-colored Tapaculo.

Night: REGUA.



© Sandrowikipedia



© Hector Bottai



Day 9 – Golden Lion Tamarin

BL

Today, we'll leave after breakfast and drive for about two and a half hours to Reserva Biológica de Poço das Antas, where we'll be looking for the rare Golden Lion Tamarin, a threatened species of primate only found here. We'll learn about the conservation initiatives and watch birds while we walk the forest in search of these enigmatic creatures. In the afternoon, we'll drive to the city of Rio de Janeiro, where we'll stay in a hotel near Copacabana Beach.

Night: Hotel Windsor Copacabana.

Day 10 – Rio Sightseeing

BL

Founded in 1565, the city of Rio de Janeiro has a huge importance in Brazil's history. It was the seat of the Portuguese Royal Court in the 19th century and Brazil's capital until the late 60's, when it then moved to Brasilia. Rio was the world's first city to be listed as Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO and offers visitors a great variety of attractions beyond the beaches and the Samba. Today, we'll explore the city guided by a local insider, including the Botanical Garden and Corcovado Mountain and its famous Christ the Redeemer statue. Enjoy the beautiful architecture, the nice ocean views, and a lot more that only someone that lives locally could unveil. Lunch will be at a Churrascaria, the famous Brazilian steak house, and we return to the hotel in the middle of the afternoon.

Night: Hotel Windsor Copacabana.

Day 11 – Departures

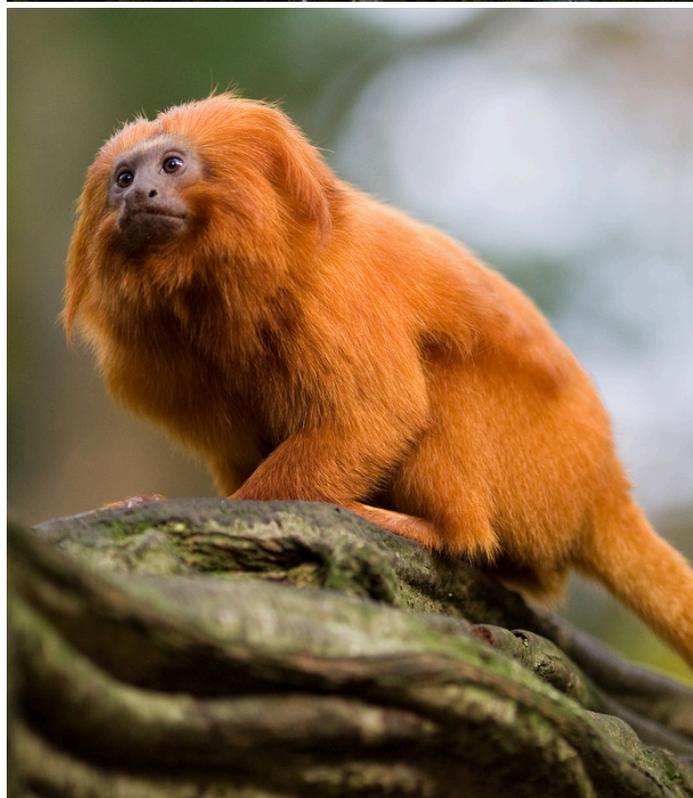
B

Today we don't have any activities scheduled apart from getting to the airport in time for our flights back home from Rio.

Day 12 – Arrive Back Home



© Donatas Dabravolskas



© Jeroen Kransen



© Pedroivan

General Information

Tour Cost: \$6,998.
Members: \$6,398.

The above cost is based upon a minimum number of eight paying participants traveling together. If there are fewer participants, there will be a small group supplement. Per person Tour Cost is based on two people sharing a room.

Single Room Supplement: \$390.

All rates are calculated at the time of publication and are subject to change due to conditions out of our control (i.e. hotel rates). All passengers will be notified if changes in pricing occur.

Tour Includes:

Accommodations are based on double occupancy, one or two beds. Meals are included as outlined in the itinerary section (B=Breakfast/L=Lunch/D=Dinner). Additional charges for meals may apply if needs are out of the standard offerings. Entrance fees to national parks and sightseeing as specified in the itinerary.

Not Included:

Taxes; costs of obtaining passports and visas; airfare; baggage fees; personal expenses such as room service, beverages, laundry, gratuities for the local guide and housekeeping; personal communications; airport taxes; tax increases or new taxes charged for services that were not taxed at the time the booking was made; excess mileage carried out at the request of the passenger; sightseeing or meals not specified in the itinerary; personal insurance coverage (strongly recommended); and transfers to and from your home airport.



© Alessatsu

Tour Leaders

Andrew Griswold, Director of EcoTravel for Connecticut Audubon Society, graduated as an honor student in biology from Hartwick College, where he worked at their biological research station in the Bahamas studying avian ecology. He's



the original concept creator and scientific consultant for a cable television series on bird watching called *All Bird TV* that aired on Discovery's Animal Planet. Andy's the original concept creator of the award-winning Connecticut River Eagle Festival (at the time the largest birding festival in the Americas). He leads trips to Canada, Texas, South Florida, Nova Scotia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, and many other unique destinations. Andy is a former licensed USCG 100-Ton Master boat captain and lives in Essex, Connecticut, with his wife and son. He's known for his attentiveness to travelers' needs, fine birding skills, and infectious sense of humor.

Johny DeCarli is a relatively new and young bird guide. He is smart, calm, and a considerate person whose passion for nature started at an early age with a set of VHS tapes narrated by David Attenborough and with time spent exploring the little forest patch near his home. When he was 10, he'd already decided to be a biologist. At the age of 17, he started studying biology at a university, and after trying different specializations, found his passion for ornithology taking part in lab studies and field research, including several expeditions for species assessment and bird banding. Johny has lead our groups in the past in Brazil's Pantanal and we are looking forward to joining him again for another adventure. Johny lives in southern Brazil with his wife and their young son.



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General Terms & Conditions

Reservations

Early reservations with deposit are essential to guarantee your booking. A **\$1,500 deposit**, per person, applicable to final payment, is required to reserve space on this trip. Reservations made within 120 days of departure require full payment along with the formal Registration Forms. Final payment for programs is due 120 days prior to departure. Payments can be made by personal check, money order, certified check, or a cashier's check.

Rates and Fares

Prices are accurate as available at the time of publication. Prices do not include airfare unless otherwise stated. The Connecticut Audubon Society (CAS) reserves the right to alter quoted prices to reflect changes in airline fares, land service, or currency exchange rates. In the event that the number of participants is below the minimum required for the quoted price, a small group surcharge may be added.

Cancellation and Insurance

At the time the EcoTravel Office receives written notice that you must cancel your trip, the following cancellation fees will apply: Prior to 120 days from departure, your payments will be refunded minus **\$500 per person**. At 120 days and less, no refund is granted. NOTE: In addition to cancellation fees, airline tickets and deposits required to guarantee hotel rooms may be nonrefundable. The purchase of a general travel insurance plan covering baggage, accident/life, and trip cancellation is highly recommended. Give us a call and we can put you in touch with those providers. CAS reserve the right, if registration is insufficient or other reasons out of our control, to cancel, postpone, or offer the trip with a small group supplement. In the event that CAS cancels or postpones, those with reservations will be notified as soon as possible and a credit of payments will be held on file. The Connecticut Audubon Society is not responsible for the refund or credit of additional expenses incurred in preparation for a trip. Any "delay" or "postponing" of departure by tour participants is considered a cancellation and cancellation parameters will be apply relative to the 120-day window. There are no exceptions.

Responsibility

Payment of deposit represents and acceptance of the following terms and conditions by the purchaser: The Connecticut Audubon Society, its affiliates, and all cooperating airlines and agencies act only in the capacity of agents in all matters of transportation and tour operations, and their liability is limited to the terms of the airline tickets and land accommodation contracts. They are not responsible for any delays, inconveniences, accidents, expense, or mishap of any kind whatsoever resulting entirely or in part from the negligence of others or from causes beyond their control. They can accept no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, riot, war, pandemic, quarantine, or other causes. All such losses or expenses must be borne by the passengers, as the tour rate provides for arrangements only as describe in the tour brochure. The right is reserved to change tour leaders, substitute hotels, of similar category, and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by unforeseen circumstances. Baggage is at the owner's risk entirely. No refund can be made for unused hotel rooms, meals, and sightseeing tours unless arrangements are made at time of booking. The right is reserved to decline any person as a tour member for any reason which affects the operation of the tour or the rights, welfare, or enjoyment of the other tour members. Any refund of the recoverable land tour services in the limit of The Connecticut Audubon Society and its affiliates' liability.

To make a Reservation:

Send the above stated deposit to hold your reservation. Nonmembers, please add \$45 (single) or \$58 (family) for your annual membership and to take advantage of the member discount.

Send your name(s), address, phone number, email address, name of the trip, your deposit, and membership fee (if applicable) to:

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