Brazil

Northeast Classic

Endangered Endemics Extension



Ruby-topaz Hummingbird by Lev Frid

Northeast Brazil is a region of striking contrasts, where gleaming white-sand beaches give way to arid, cactus-studded landscapes and cool, forested highlands. This diversity of habitats supports one of South America's most rewarding birding regions, renowned for its exceptional concentration of range-restricted and endemic species. From dry Caatinga to lush Atlantic Forest, this tour samples the finest birding sites across Ceará and Bahia, delivering an outstanding species list in a compact itinerary.

Our journey begins in Sobral before heading inland to the forested slopes of Serra de Baturite, where highlights include Grey-breasted Parakeet, Hooded and Ceará Gnateaters, and Buff-breasted Tody-Tyrant. We then continue to the dramatic granite inselbergs of Quixadá, searching for specialties such as Pygmy Nightjar and White-browed Guan. Moving south, we bird the Chapada do Araripe region via Santana do Cariri and Barbalha, positioning ourselves for one of Brazil's most iconic endemics, the dazzling Araripe Manakin, alongside White-browed Antpitta and Great Xenops. The dry Caatinga around Canudos provides a stark contrast and delivers a major highlight of the tour, the Critically Endangered Lear's (Indigo) Macaw.

We then transition to the spectacular landscapes of Chapada Diamantina, widely regarded as one of Brazil's premier birding destinations. This breathtaking plateau hosts several localized endemics including Hooded

Visorbearer, Grey-backed Tachuri, Diamantina Tapaculo, and the recently described Sincorá Antwren. From the interior highlands we descend toward the Atlantic Forest foothills at Boa Nova, a biodiversity hotspot where forest and Caatinga meet. With over 430 recorded bird species, the area offers superb birding and chances for Slender Antbird, Narrow-billed Antwren, Bahia Spinetail, and Pin-tailed Manakin. We then spend time in the outstanding Serra Bonita Reserve, home to Pink-legged Graveteiro, Plumbeous Antvireo, Bahia Tyrannulet, and Crescent-chested Puffbird.

The tour concludes along Bahia's coast, birding the forests and mangroves around Itacaré and Praia do Forte, before finishing in Salvador. This clssic itinerary delivers an exceptional cross-section of Northeast Brazil's most important habitats and endemics in just 18 days.

For those wishing to focus on Brazil's rarest and most threatened birds, the optional Endangered Endemics Extension targets key Atlantic Forest strongholds in Pernambuco and Alagoas. Beginning in Salvador and flying north to Recife, we explore lowland and foothill forests around Abreu e Lima, Tamandaré, and the famed Serra do Urubu. This extension maximizes chances for some of Brazil's most elusive species, including White-collared Kite, Seven-colored Tanager, Orange-bellied Antwren, Scalloped Antbird, Pinto's Spinetail, Forbes' Blackbird, and Yellow-faced Siskin. Serra do Urubu remains one of the last refuges for several critically endangered Pernambuco endemics.

Combined, the Classic Tour and Endangered Endemics Extension form one of the most comprehensive birding experiences in Northeast Brazil, offering remarkable habitat diversity, scenery, and over 100 endemic bird species.

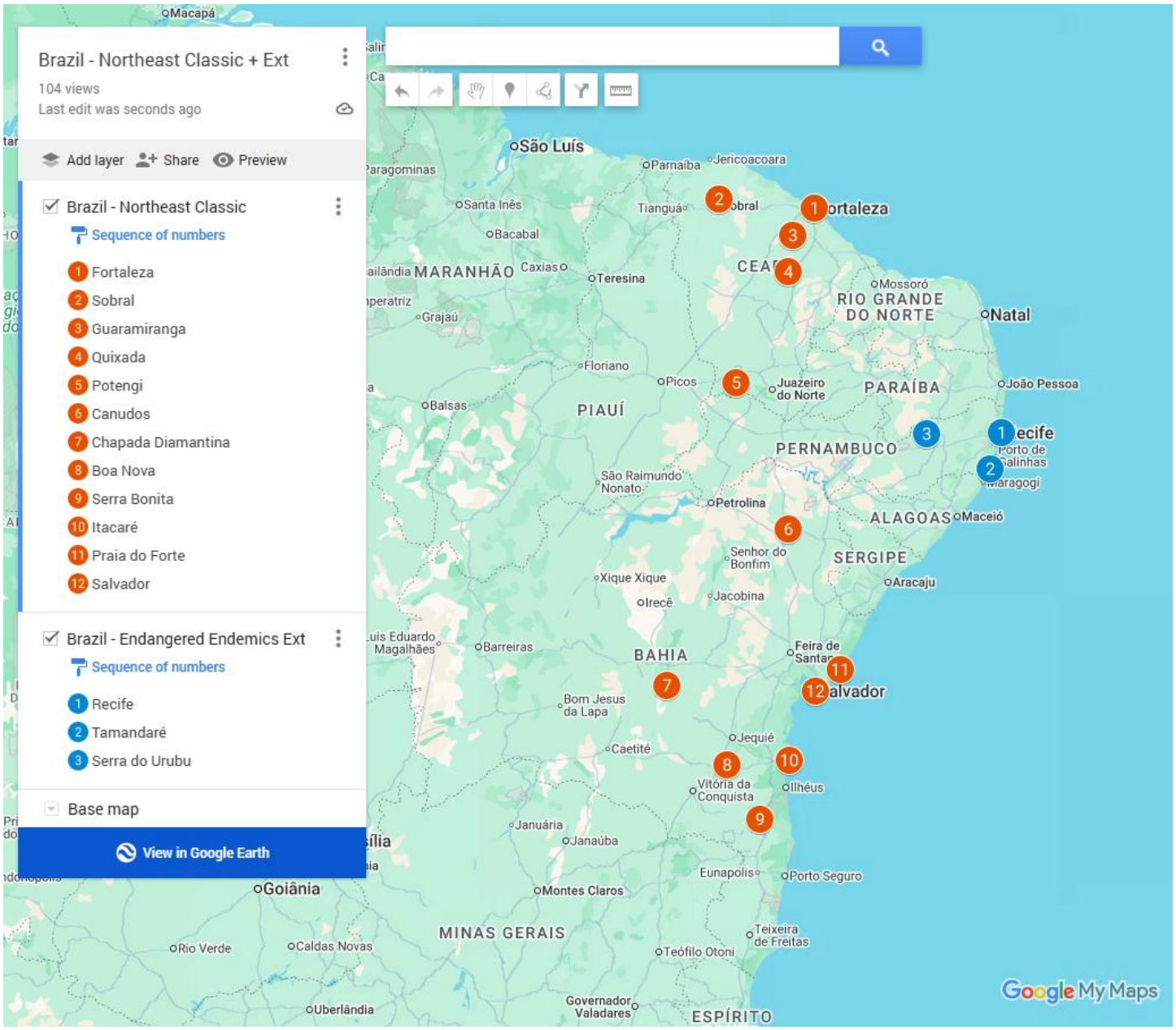
Itinerary & Map

Northeast Classic

Day 1	**Arrival in Fortaleza, transfer to Sobral**
Day 2	**Sobral to Guaramiranga (Serra de Baturite)**
Day 3	**Guaramiranga (Serra de Baturite) to Quixada**
Day 4	**Quixada to Potengi via Santana do Cariri**
Day 5	**Potengi area to Canudos (Chapada do Araripe) via Barbalha**
Day 6	**Canudos to Chapada Diamantina**
Days 7 & 8	**Chapada Diamantina area**
Day 9	**Chapada Diamantina to Boa Nova**
Days 10 & 11	**Boa Nova**
Day 12	**Boa Nova to Serra Bonita**
Day 13	**Serra Bonita**
Day 14	**Serra Bonita to Itacaré**
Days 15 & 16	**Itacaré**
Day 17	**Itacaré to Praia do Forte**
Day 18	**Praia do Forte to Salvador & final departure**

Endangered Endemics Extension

Day 1	**Arrival in Salvador, flights to Recife**
Day 2	**Recife to Tamandaré via Abreu e Lima**
Day 3	**Tamandaré to Serra do Urubu**
Day 4	**Serra do Urubu**
Day 5	**Serra do Urubu to Recife & final departure**



Birding sites in detail

Sobral area. Sobral provides access to the Serra da Meruoca, an isolated area of humid forest rising above the surrounding dry Caatinga. Our primary target here is the localised Hooded Gnateater, for which Meruoca is an important and reliable site in Ceará. Other possibilities here include Ceará Woodcreeper, Grey-headed Spinetail and Planalto Slaty Antshrike. We may also encounter Planalto Hermit, Ochre-cheeked Spinetail and Black-capped Antwren.



Grey-headed Spinetail by Stephan Lorenz

The surrounding woodland supports a good selection of more widespread northeastern Brazilian species. These may include Caatinga Parakeet, Caatinga Puffbird, Ochraceous Piculet and White-naped Jay.

Guaramiranga (Serra de Baturité). The Baturité Mountain Range is host to several habitats, from humid forested slopes, deciduous forest and xeric caatinga in the lower-lying areas. The semi-humid, evergreen woodland is laden with birds, so we can expect to get cracking right from the get-go. Of prime importance is the incredibly scarce Buff-breasted Tody-Tyrant, reported from only a small number of scattered nearby hilltops, the Critically Endangered Grey-breasted Parakeet and recently elevated, endemic Ceara Gnateater.

The cool misty mountains will bring some relief from the heat of the lowlands and an early start will see us birding along an excellent, wide cobblestone pathway. While we shall be being paying special attention to finding the Buff-breasted Tody-Tyrant, Grey-breasted Parakeet or Ceara Gnateater, we can expect to be inundated with many other species of interest including Ochraceous Piculet, Guianan and Planalto Tyrannulets, Lesser Woodcreeper, Ruby-topaz Hummingbird, Planalto Hermit, Swallow-tailed Hummingbird, Grey-headed and Ochre-cheeked Spinetails, Southern White-fringed Antwren, Pectoral Sparrow and Short-tailed Antthrush. Also worth noting is that many of the birds we will see here are isolated, sub-specific forms that are likely to attain full-species status in the near future. These include Rufous-breasted Leaftosser, Gould's Toucanet, the stunning Band-tailed Manakin, Buff-throated Woodcreeper, Red-necked Tanager and the rare Spot-winged Wood Quail.



Campo Troupial by Lev Frid

Quixada. This area is characterized by granite inselbergs or monolitos. Typically very hot and dry, it hosts the sought-after Pygmy Nightjar, which roosts and breeds

among the rocks, cacti and terrestrial bromeliads.

We will use the cool, early morning hours to bird around Quixada for our first Caatinga endemics such as Caatinga Cachalote, White-naped Jay, Ochre-backed Woodpecker, Barred Antshrike (often split as Caatinga Barred Antshrike) and Caatinga Puffbird. Other more widespread species that we may find include Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle and Blue-winged Parrotlot. We will also keep our eyes open for the rare White-browed Guan in this area.



Lear's Macaws by Lev Frid

Potengi. The famous Potengi area is located in the heart of the Caatinga zone and we provide us a serious selection of the region's specials. Some of the more sought-after species for this portion of our expedition include the magnificent Great Xenops, localised endemic White-browed Antpitta, Grey-eyed Greenlet, Rusty-margined Guan, Rufous and Scissor-tailed Nightjars, Least Nighthawk, Burrowing Owl, scarce endemic Broad-tipped Hermit, Spotted Piculet, smart Silvery-cheeked and Planalto Slaty Antshrikes, Stripe-backed Antbird, Caatinga and Black-bellied Antwrens, Sooty-fronted and unique Red-shouldered Spinetails, Ash-throated Casiornis, nomadic Scarlet-throated Tanager, Grey Elaenia, Greater and Lesser Wagtail-Tyrants, Southern Scrub Flycatcher and Ultramarine Grosbeak – to name just some of the more special species!

We should have some time to enjoy the feeders that attract a wide variety of visitors including Campo Troupial, Solitary Black Cacique, Grey Pileated Finch and White-throated Seedeater amongst many others.

Chapada do Araripe area. The famous Chapada do Araripe is located on a plateau in the south of the state of Ceará. Roadside wetland birding en route is usually productive, and in the past has held Masked Duck, Brazilian Teal, White-cheeked Pintail, Snail Kite, Savanna Hawk, Limpkin, Yellowish Pipit and both Chestnut-capped and White-browed Blackbirds.



Pygmy Nightjar by Rob Williams

However, our primary effort will be centred on one, legendary bird, the Araripe Manakin! This stunning species was described to science as recently as 1996 and with luck we'll hopefully see several individuals of this truly magnificent creature! There are several springs in the foothills, and the associated moist forest is the specific habitat for our primary target while other species we will look out for

include endemic Tawny Piculet, Planalto and Reddish Hermits, Flavescent Warbler and Moustached Wren.

Lear's Macaw Reserve (Canudos). The Lear's Macaw Reserve is to be found near to the town of Canudos. We'll spend time birding the Caatinga near the reserve for Red-shouldered Spinetail, the local sub-species of Lesser and Greater Wagtail-Tyrants, Least Nighthawk, Blue-crowned Parakeet, Spotted Piculet, Narrow-billed Woodcreeper, Black-bellied Antwren, Stripe-backed Antbird, Ash-throated Casiornis, White-throated Seedeater and Red-cowled Cardinal.



Araripe Manakin by Rob Williams

To really appreciate Lear's Macaw, the second legendary bird of the tour, we shall head out whilst it is still dark. Soon after the break of dawn, we can expect to be treated to the morning flight of several Lear's Macaw, departing their roosts, as they set off to their preferred foraging sites. Little else can compare to viewing one of the world's rarest (numbers were as low as just 42 individuals in the 80's) and most spectacular macaws flocking to the trees around us! We will also easily understand the adopted name of Indigo Macaw, as we view these beautiful birds at our leisure. After absorbing as much as we can of this fine species, which few of us will ever see in the wild again – we shall return to our lodge for a delicious breakfast.

Chapada Diamantina. Amidst a stark, beautiful landscape, we will encounter more amazing species including the gorgeous Hooded Visorbearer, chances for Horned Sungem and the recently described Sincora Antwren. Other highlights of the area include the feisty Grey-backed Tachuri, unforgettable Great Xenops, shy Sao Francisco Sparrow, White-eared Puffbird, Stripe-tailed Yellow-Finch, rarely seen Broad-tipped Hermit, Collared Crescentchest Rufous-sided Pygmy Tyrant, Velvety Black Tyrant, Blue and Serra Finches as well as a host of *Tyrannids*, such as Plain-crested, Lesser and Yellow-bellied Elaenias.



Horned Sungem by Stephan Lorenz

Birding the caatinga and cerrado habitats nearby should turn up Cactus Parakeet, Scaly-headed Parrot, Scissor-tailed, Little and Rufous Nightjars, uncommon and nomadic Stripe-breasted Starthroat, Blue-crowned and Surucua Trogons, Spotted Piculet, Red-billed Scythebill, Spix's, Caatinga Cacholote, Caatinga and Rufous-winged Antshrikes, Planalto Slaty Antshrike, Stripe-backed Antbird, Black-capped, Caatinga, Black-bellied, and Rusty-backed Antwrens, White-shouldered Fire-eye, Pale-bellied Tyrant-Manakin, Ochre-faced Tody-Flycatcher, Ash-throated Casiornis and many tanagers including Cinnamon, Shrike-like and the vibrant Scarlet-throated Tanager.

Boa Nova. Located in the southwest of Bahia state, it is here that the montane Atlantic Forests meet the

Caatinga. The region is home to over 430 species of bird including the restricted Slender Antbird and Narrow-billed Antwren, both confined to a small area of eastern Brazil.



Bahia Spinetail by Stephan Lorenz

Boa Nova has long been regarded as one of the best birding areas in this vast country. Being situated on the cusp of both and the drier interior forest, this area not only allows easy access to numerous habitat types but hosts an avifauna particular to this mountain range. We will spend time scouring the accessible forests and prime habitats spared from human disturbance. The forests are prime locations for finding localised endemics such as Bahia Tyrannulet, Striated Softtail and Bahia Spinetail.

This is however Antbird heaven, and we have plenty members of the family to search for here including Silvery-cheeked, Rufous-winged, Cinereous and Tufted Antshrikes, Narrow-billed Antwren, rarely recorded Rio de Janeiro, Slender, Ferruginous, Ochre-rumped and Scaled Antbirds.

We also hope to encounter Blue-winged Macaw, Scale-throated Hermit, Frilled Coquette, Yellow-eared Woodpecker, Pallid Spinetail, Crescent-chested Puffbird, Black-billed Scythebill, White-collared and White-eyed Foliage-gleaners, Scaled Woodcreeper, Fork-tailed and Hangnest Tody-Tyrants, Sharp-tailed Streamcreeper, Pin-tailed & Blue Manakins, Gilt-edged and Rufous-headed Tanagers, Cinnamon-vented Piha, Sharpbill and, with a lot of luck, Swallow-tailed Cotinga!

Serra Bonita. This montane paradise is one of the few, easily accessible, cloud forests in the region. After arriving in Serra Bonita, we will transfer to 4x4 vehicles for the ride (roughly one hour) up to our jungle lodge. We don't need to move all that much, as the hummingbird and fruit feeders will keep us royally entertained with Sombre Hummingbird, Black Jacobin, Scale-throated Hermit and sometimes even the scarce Brazilian Ruby making an appearance. Other species that we should also see include Maroon-bellied Parakeet, Orange-bellied Euphonia and Red-necked, Green-headed, Brazilian, Golden-chevroned and Azure-shouldered Tanagers squabbling at the fruit feeders.



Kinglet Manakin by Lev Frid

With a bird list including fantastic and rare species such as Pink-legged Gravateiro, Star-throated and Salvadori's Antwrens, Spot-breasted and Plumbeous Antvireos, Bahia Tyrannulet and the stunning Blue Manakin, we will seamlessly pass a day birding this beautiful preserve.

Forays around the lodge and deeper into the surrounding forests are liable to turn up many of the aforementioned attractions, while we may also find the rare Atlantic race of Rufous-brown Solitaire (soon to be split), stunning Kinglet Manakin, Spot-backed Antshrike, Spot-billed Toucanet, the still undescribed 'Serra do Lontras' Treehunter, Crescent-chested Puffbird, Yellow-lored Tody-Flycatcher, Rufous-headed Tanager, Grey-headed Attila, East Brazilian Pygmy Owl, Pallid Spinetail and Scaled Woodcreeper. The region is also home to some rarely seen species such as Variegated Antpitta and Cryptic Antthrush. Overhead, several raptors may make an appearance, with the likes of Black and Black-and-white Hawk-Eagles, Mantled Hawk and King Vulture all being distinct possibilities.



Frilled Coquette by Lev Frid

The Serra Bonita lowlands offer good birding opportunities as well, and we'll take some time to look for the highly localised and threatened White-eared Parakeet while also keeping our eyes open for species such as Channel-billed Toucan, Scaled Antbird, Bright-rumped Attila, Sibilent Syristes, Bare-throated Bellbird and a unique sub-species of Thrush-like Wren.



Red-necked Tanager by Lev Frid

Itacaré. This region of south coast Bahia is rich in endemism and special birds. With a vast area of remnants of lowland forest, some of them in private areas and other protected by the Serra do Conduru State Park. We will base ourselves in Itacaré, a famous touristic destination with marvellous forest, beaches and waterfalls. From here we will visit Maraú (north of Itacaré) to try to find the rare and endemic Bahia Tapaculo and other special birds. We will also explore the Serra do Conduru State Park to the south of Itacaré. This State Park protects more than 9 000 hectares of Atlantic Forest and is one of the most biodiverse areas of this biome, with 458 different tree species per hectare with a high index of endemism. This reflects on the avifauna; a paradise to see manakins and many other interesting birds.

Our main targets of the lowland Atlantic Forest will be Kinglet Manakin, White-crowned Manakin, Blue-backed Manakin, Scaled Antbird, Black-cheeked Gnateater, Band-tailed Antwren, Cinereous-breasted Spinetail, Great-billed (Margaretta's) Hermit, Turquoise (White-bellied) Tanager, Opal-rumped (Silvery-breasted) Tanager, the nominal race of White-fronted Nunbird and many others.



Jandaya Parakeets by Lev Frid

Tamandaré. The Tamandare area offers some excellent birding and gives us another good chance of finding the critically endangered, White-collared Kite, should we have yet to see this rarity. On the outskirts of Tamandare we have excellent chances of finding the localised Forbes' Blackbird while also keeping our eyes open for the uncommon and nomadic, Yellow-faced Siskin, Plain-bellied Emerald and Jandaya Parakeet. We'll also visit another lowland forest site, in amongst the sea of sugarcane for additional chances for Pinto's Spinetail, Smoky-fronted Tody-Flycatcher, White-shouldered Antshrike, Blue-chinned Sapphire, White-bearded Manakin, Red-shouldered Macaw, Black-necked Aracari, Biscutate Swift and Black-capped Donacobius.

Serra do Urubu (São Benedito do Sul area). We will devote a day to birding this splendid rainforest patch in the São Benedito do Sul area. Given the remote nature of these mountains, and the humid influence of onshore winds at the coast, this site hosts an incredible number of endemic and range-restricted species. Time will be dedicated to the regions local specialities, including the endemic Alagoas Tyrannulet and Orange-bellied Antwren, whilst also appreciating the many other rare inhabitants of this bird-rich area, most of which are also endemic, including White-collared Kite, flashy Jandaya Parakeet, Pinto's Spinetail, Seven-colored Tanager, difficult Golden-tailed Parrotlet, increasingly rare Pernambuco Foliage-gleaner, Black-headed Berryeater, White-shouldered Antshrike, unique endemic *pernambucensis* sub-species of White-backed Fire-eye, Scalloped Antbird, dapper Black-cheeked Gnateater, unique endemic sub-species *taunayi* of Plain-winged Woodcreeper, Silvery-flanked Antwren, scarce Buff-throated Purpletuft, Sharpbill, stunning but uncommon White-winged Cotinga, Blue-backed and Red-headed Manakins, Flame-crested Tanager and Yellow-green Grosbeak.



Seven-colored Tanager by Dušan Brinkhuizen

Tour Grading & Key

Overall Ease		Moderate. Endemic and target focussed trip. Not suitable for dedicated photographers; inexperienced birders; or anyone with mobility or health challenges.
Birding Ease		Moderate to demanding. Forest species visuals aren't always of great quality. Forest edge & caatinga birding is more rewarding. Several low density or difficult target species.
Accommodation		Mostly comfortable, some lodges are simple, not all lodges have enough rooms for Single rooming.
Walking / Trails		Average walking, mostly on flat ground with variable substrate.
Vehicles / Roads		Comfortable vehicles. Several drives, some are long. Mostly sealed roads between towns, changing to dirt in remoter areas.
Photography		Reasonable to good. Internal forest photography is challenging, several fruit & hummingbird feeders.
Annoyances		Temperatures comfortable in the highlands (can be cool to cold) generally hot & humid in the lowlands. Long travel days.

Financial Arrangements and Important Notes

Tour dates, prices, single supplement, approximate flight costs and tour spaces are displayed on our website.

Tour inclusions:

- All meals from lunch on day 1 to breakfast on day 18 of the Northeast Classic;
- All meals from lunch on day 1 to lunch on day 5 of the Endangered Endemics Extension;
- Bottled drinking water;
- All lodgings;
- All ground transportation during the tour;
- All reserve entrance fees;
- All guiding services ;
- Tips for local guides, drivers and services.

Tour exclusions:

- Visa fees;
- ANY flights;
- Any beverages (including mini-bar charges at hotels);
- Optional excursions;
- Special gratuities;
- Telephone calls, laundry and other items of a personal nature.

Single Supplement: The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBL cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

Tipping: As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, restaurants etc.) are included on this tour. However, this does NOT include your Rockjumper leader/s. If you feel that they have given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip them at your discretion.

- **Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing. The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates.**
- **Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registrations, a small group supplement will be offered to confirm the tour.**
- **Tour prices are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.**
- **The designated tour leader/s may be changed at short due to unforeseen circumstances.**
- **The itinerary is indicative only. Changes may need to be made to the order in which the tour is conducted, or some of the venues we visit closer to departure. We will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.**

- We have timed our visit to coincide with the dry season, and we can expect the weather conditions to be favourable, mostly dry, and sunny. However, it is generally warm to hot in the interior and can get a little humid in the lowlands although typically nothing like the Amazon. At higher altitudes, daytime temperatures are pleasant, but it can get quite cold at night or when it rains. On most mornings, we will be up and out early to take advantage of the cooler temperatures and wildlife activity.
- This Brazil tour requires a good level of fitness and participants should be in good general health as some of the forest birding will be done on foot and may require walking for several hours at a time.
- It is important to note that we are covering some long distances on this tour, with several one-night stays and limited down time between locations.
- The vehicles we use are comfortable. Most roads are of a good standard, although we should expect some bumpy conditions when leaving the paved road. Where necessary we use 4x4 vehicles, but some unpaved roads could still be impassable if they have been damaged by heavy rains.
- Accommodation is mostly of a good, comfortable standard but not all lodgings have enough rooms for everyone to always have single accommodations. There will more than likely be a few nights (Potengi and Canudos) where you will have to share with someone else and the single supplement has been calculated accordingly.

Arrival and Departure Details

The Northeast Classic tour will depart from Fortaleza on the morning of day 1 with a transfer to Sobral. Please do arrive the day before the tour begins. The tour will conclude in Salvador on the morning of day 18.

The Endangered Endemics Extension will depart from Salvador on the morning of day 1 with a flight to Recife and conclude in Recife late in the afternoon of day 5.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your Tour Confirmation package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

Aeroporto Internacional Pinto Martins, Fortaleza (IATA: FOR) and Salvador–Deputado Luís Eduardo Magalhães International Airport (IATA: SSA) are the primary ports of arrival and departure on the main tour. Aeroporto Internacional do Recife/Guararapes–Gilberto Freyre (IATA: REC) is the point of departure for the extension.

Visa requirements differ by country, nationality of the traveller and duration and purpose of your intended stay. It may be necessary to obtain a visa or an electronic travel authorization in advance of your travel. It is therefore vitally important that you check with your travel agent/consulate/embassy for exact visa requirements.

DO NOT book any flights until the Rockjumper Team have officially confirmed the tour.