Brazil

Southeast Mega Birding Tour



Brazilian Ruby by Adam Riley

When most people think of southeast Brazil they think of Rio, Carnivale, Sugarloaf Mountain and endless beaches. When birders think of southeast Brazil, they think – ENDEMICS. Amongst other claims to fame, Brazil hosts a spectacular array of endemic flora and fauna, including more than a reasonable share of stunning endemics. The southeast is a critical endemic zone, one that we will cover in a single Mega style tour.

From Rio de Janeiro, we'll head north to the lowlands of REGUA for Rufous-capped Motmot and Crescent-chested Puffbird before ascending the mountains around Nova Friburgo in search of such delights as Grey-winged Cotinga, Three-toed Jacamar, Brassy-breasted Tanager and Green-crowned Plovercrest. Moving westwards, we'll take in the famous sites of Itatiaia National Park, Paraty and Ubatuba for a plethora of new targets such as Itatiaia Spinetail, Serra do Mar Tyrannulet, Black-and-gold Cotinga, Black-hooded Antwren, Brazilian Ruby, Buff-throated Purpletuft and Sao Paulo Tyrannulet.

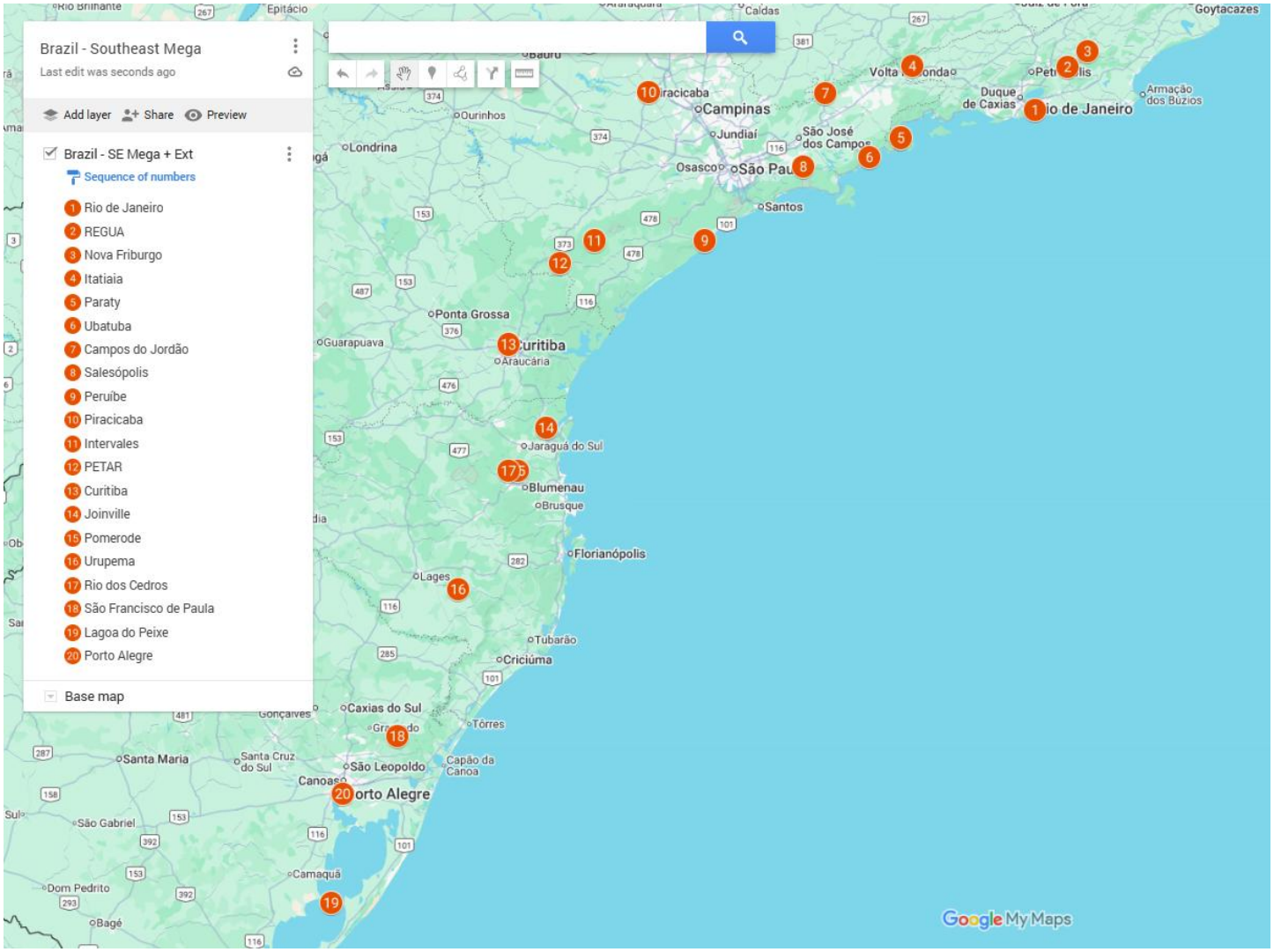
As we begin moving southwards, we'll visit Salesópolis to find the recently described Sao Paulo Antwren, Peruíbe for roosting Red-tailed Amazons and the wetlands of Piracicaba for the skulking Spotted Rail both Yellow-breasted and Rufous-sided Crakes. We'll spend a few days at Intervales State Park, one of the most exciting places to bird in the southeast. A never-ending list of great birds may include Giant Antshrike, Purple-crowned Plovercrest, Spotted Bamboowren or Long-trained Nightjar. The neighbouring Atlantic Forest of PETAR hosts several tricky species such as Such's Antthrush, Yellow-legged Tinamou, Variegated Antpitta, Swallow-tailed Cotinga and Black-headed Berryeater.

The final stretch of the tours takes us to the southernmost Brazilian states of Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul. Superb birding in a lovely region infrequently visited by birders. The southernmost tip of the Atlantic Rainforest of the Serra do Mar reaches the north eastern corner of the state with scenic canyons and upland plateaus typically characterised by Araucaria moist forests.

Southwards, the habitat changes into Pampa plains and grasslands with very few trees. The habitat along the coastline consists of distinctive Restinga scrub with nutrient-poor coastal dunes, sandy peninsulas, shallow saltwater lagoons and extensive mudflats that are home to numerous resident and migrant bird species. We will bird a variety of different and exciting habitats searching for specialities such as Marsh (Parana) Antwren, Kaempfer's Tody-Tyrant, Scaled Chachalaca, Restinga Tyrannulet, Russet-winged Spadebill, Striolated Tit-Spinetail, Long-tailed Cinclodes, Freckle-breasted Thornbird, Grey-throated Warbling Finch, Straight-billed Reedhaunter and Saffron-cowled Blackbird.

Itinerary & Map

Day 1	**Arrival in Rio de Janeiro**
Day 2	**Rio de Janeiro to REGUA**
Day 3	**REGUA to Nova Friburgo**
Day 4	**Nova Friburgo area**
Day 5	**Nova Friburgo to Itatiaia National Park via Sumidouro**
Day 6	**Itatiaia National Park**
Day 7	**Itatiaia National Park to Paraty**
Day 8	**Paraty to Ubatuba**
Day 9	**Ubatuba**
Day 10	**Ubatuba to Campos do Jordão**
Day 11	**Campos do Jordão to Salesópolis**
Day 12	**Salesópolis to Peruíbe**
Day 13	**Peruíbe to Piracicaba**
Day 14	**Piracicaba to Intervales State Park**
Days 15 & 16	**Intervales State Park**
Day 17	**Intervales State Park to PETAR**
Day 18	**PETAR to Curitiba**
Day 19	**Curitiba to Joinville**
Day 20	**Joinville to Pomerode**
Day 21	**Pomerode to Urupema via Rio dos Cedros**
Day 22	**Urupema**
Day 23	**Urupema to São Francisco de Paula**
Day 24	**São Francisco de Paula to Lagoa do Peixe**
Day 25	**Lagoa do Peixe**
Day 26	**Lagoa do Peixe to Porto Alegre & final departure**


Brazil - Southeast Mega
Last edit was seconds ago
Add layer
Share
Preview
Brazil - SE Mega + Ext
Sequence of numbers
1 Rio de Janeiro
2 REGUA
3 Nova Friburgo
4 Itatiaia
5 Paraty
6 Ubatuba
7 Campos do Jordão
8 Salesópolis
9 Peruíbe
10 Piracicaba
11 Intervales
12 PETAR
13 Curitiba
14 Joinville
15 Pomerode
16 Urupema
17 Rio dos Cedros
18 São Francisco de Paula
19 Lagoa do Peixe
20 Porto Alegre
Base map
Campinas
Santos
Ponta Grossa
Curitiba
Jaraguá do Sul
Blumenau
Florianópolis
Lages
Tubarão
Criciúma
Caxias do Sul
Santa Maria
São Leopoldo
Porto Alegre
Google My Maps

Birding sites in detail



Brassy-breasted Tanager by Forrest Rowland

REGUA. We will spend time birding the lowlands of REGUA, searching for Rufous-capped Motmot (often giving itself away with a distinctive call), Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Long-billed Wren, hummingbirds such as Reddish Hermit and White-chinned Sapphire, Yellow-throated Woodpecker and Chestnut-backed Antshrike. Antwrens are often in good attendance, including White-flanked, Unicolored and Rufous-winged, although it might take more searching to find Crescent-chested Puffbird or the scarce Brazilian Laniisoma (Shrike-like Cotinga).

Nova Friburgo area. Located in the mountainous region of Rio de Janeiro State, the main birding location for us here will be the Pico da Caledônia, in Serra dos Órgãos at an altitude of 2 255 meters above sea level. It is one of the highest mountains in Rio de Janeiro. We will drive as far up the mountain as possible, before hiking the road between the altitudes of 1 800 and 2 000m, prime habitat for Grey-winged Cotinga. Other targets include Brassy-breasted and Diademed Tanagers, Large-tailed Antshrike, Rufous-tailed Antbird, Serra do Mar Tyrannulet, Rufous-backed Antvireo, Bay-chested Warbling Finch, Green-crowned Plovercrest, White-browed Woodpecker and many others.

Sumidouro. We'll visit this site for one of the most sought-after birds of south-east Brazil, the endemic Three-toed Jacamar. Birding en route can turn up several raptors such as Plumbeous Kite, Bat and Laughing Falcons and Yellow-headed Caracara, plus the low flying Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture. Blue-winged Macaw and White-eyed Parakeet can be observed perched on the treetops, while Striped Cuckoo are often heard before they are seen. Other specialities include the boldly patterned White-eared Puffbird, Black-necked Aracari, noisy bands of Curl-crested Jay, and Firewood-gatherer (which builds massive stick nests).

Itatiaia National Park. Itatiaia National Park covers an area of over 300km² and is one of the best-known birding sites in southeast Brazil, with pristine Atlantic Forest ranging from 700m up to 2800m in elevation. Within the park, close to 400 species of birds have been recorded including over 50 Atlantic Forest endemics. We'll be looking for mixed species-flocks and specialties which may include Saffron Toucanet, Green-billed Toucan, Surucua Trogon, Maroon-bellied Parakeet, Dusky-legged Guan, Yellow-legged Thrush, Green-headed, Brazilian and Golden-chevroned Tanagers, Rufous-capped Motmot and Blue Manakin.



Three-toed Jacamar by Forrest Rowland



Large-tailed Antshrike by Dušan Brinkhuizen

We also spend time at higher elevations of Itatiaia, birding the well-known Agulhas Negras road at roughly 2 400m in elevation. Target species that we will seek include Black-capped Piprites, Rufous-backed Antvireo, Thick-billed Saltator, Red-rumped and Bay-chested Warbling Finch, Diademed and Brassy-breasted Tanagers, Olivaceous Elaenia, Golden-winged Cacique, White-rimmed Warbler, Serra do Mar Tyrannulet and the scarce Sharp-billed Treehunter. Black-and-gold Cotinga is a rare and localized endemic that we will try to find by listening for its characteristic high-pitched whistle. We may encounter a handful of attractive tyrant flycatchers such as Shear-tailed Tyrant, Blue-billed and Velvety Black Tyrants. Large-tailed Antshrike, Rufous-tailed Antthrush and Rufous-tailed Antbird are some of the tougher understory skulkers we hope to find. In the more open grasslands and scrubby habitat we will seek out endemics such as the localized Itatiaia Spinetail and Green-crowned Plovercrest.

Paraty. The morning will be dedicated to finding Black-hooded Antwren. The distinct (and attractive!) antwren has a very localized distribution along the coast and it might take us some effort to find it. The birding in the area is exciting and other species that we could encounter in these humid forests include Fork-tailed Pygmy-Tyrant, Yellow-throated Woodpecker, Scaled Antbird, Chestnut-backed Antshrike, Orange-eyed Thornbird, Tufted Antshrike, Riverbank Warbler and Green-headed Tanager to name a few.

Ubatuba. Most of the forest around Ubatuba is protected by the Serra do Mar State Park, which comprises almost the entire São Paulo State Coast covering 332 000 hectares. A combination of easy access and the rich avifauna makes Ubatuba one of the prime birding destinations in the Brazilian Atlantic Forest.

The owners of Sitio Folha Seca have been feeding hummingbirds and tanagers near his home for many years. There are well over 20 species of hummers that have already been recorded here! We may see Saw-billed Hermit, Black-throated Mango, Brazilian Ruby, Sombre Hummingbird, Glittering-throated Emerald, Versicolored Emerald, Black Jacobin, Scale-throated Hermit, Festive Coquette, White-chinned Sapphire, Amethyst Woodstar and more.

Other targets that we will be searching for in the surrounds include Buff-throated Purpletuft, Fork-tailed Pygmy Tyrant, Sao Paulo Tyrannulet, Ochre-breasted Foliage-gleaner, Black-cheeked Gnateater, Chestnut-bellied Euphonia, Red-necked Tanager, Green Honeycreeper, Slaty Bristlefront, Rufous-capped Antthrush.



Sao Paulo Antwren by Dušan Brinkhuizen



Variegated Antpitta by Dušan Brinkhuizen

Campos do Jordão. This state park is located in the Serra da Mantiqueira, another important remnant of interior Atlantic Forest with large tracts of Araucaria Forest. It is one of the best-known sites for the Vinaceous-breasted Amazon, our key target here.

Finding this Endangered parrot can be tricky so we might have to wait until the late afternoon for roosting birds to fly in. Araucaria Tit-Spinetail is another speciality of these forests, but it should be easier to find. The fancy Black-capped Piprites is generally rare, but Campos do Jordão is a really good site for it. The same holds for the neat Sharp-billed Treehunter. Other highland specialties that we might get include Serra do Mar Tyrannulet, Bay-chested and Buff-throated Warbling-finch, Green-crowned Plovercrest, Rufous-backed Antvireo, Large-tailed Antshrike, Black Hawk-Eagle, Diademed Tanager and the rare Black-and-gold Cotinga.

Salesópolis. Salesópolis is one of the very few places in the world you can see the critically endangered Sao Paulo Antwren, only described to science in 2014. The species is restricted to preserved marshes surrounded by Atlantic Forest. Besides the critically endangered and range-restricted Sao Paulo Antwren, there are a few other target species such as Bertoni's Antbird, Orange-breasted Thornbird and Drab-breasted Pygmy Tyrant. Whilst birding the open swamp, we'll keep an eye out for Pileated Parrots flying overhead as well as having a chance of seeing Blackish-blue Seedeater.

Peruíbe. Peruíbe is characterised by *restinga*, sandy and nutrient-impoverished soils that are frequently associated with a low-elevation plains, beach ridges and lagoon systems. We'll spend time birding in nearby Itanhaém, primarily hoping to see Red-tailed Amazon as they fly into their roosting site. Other highlights of our afternoon may include Azure Jay, Black-backed Tanager, Channel-billed Toucan, Buff-bellied Puffbird, Blond-crested Woodpecker, Black-capped Screech Owl, Grey-hooded Attila, (Atlantic) Long-billed Wren, Squamate Antbird, Robust Woodpecker, Bicolored Conebill and Unicolored Antwren.



Vinaceous-breasted Amazon by Clayton Burne

Piracicaba. The Tanqua wetlands in the Paricicaba / Tiete River basin is a superb site for various rallids and other water birds. We'll bird in comfort from boats, looking for Spotted Rail and two tricky crakes, Yellow-breasted and Rufous-sided. Another likely showstopper to



Hooded Berryeater by Dušan Brinkhuizen

keep our eyes open for is Crested Doradito. All the above-mentioned species were seen on our formative tour, allowing for not just great views, but excellent photographic opportunities.

Intervales State Park. Intervales is one of the most exciting places to bird in the southeast, home to over 400 bird species! With many roads and trails to explore inside the park, Intervales is rather famous for the many species which are more easily seen here than anywhere else in the world.

Intervales has a never-ending list of great birds, many of which we hope to see. Highlights include Giant Antshrike, Long-tufted Screech Owl, Dusky-throated Hermit, Purple-crowned Plovercrest, Oustalet's Tyrannulet, White-bearded Antshrike, Black-fronted Piping Guan, the cryptic Spotted Bamboowren, Slaty Bristlefront, Atlantic Royal Flycatcher, Red-ruffed Fruitcrow, Red-and-white Crake, Spot-winged Wood Quail, Solitary Tinamou, Pileated Parrot, White-browed Foliage-gleaner, Wing-barred Piprites, Hooded Berryeater, Brown Tanager, White-breasted Tapaculo, Bertoni's Antbird, Long-trained Nightjar and many, many others. Two very rare species to be found here are Russet-winged Spadebill and Helmeted Woodpecker, but we would have to be exceptionally lucky to see either.

PETAR. Located in the south of the state, PETAR (Touristic State Park of Alto Ribeira) has one of the highest concentration of caves (more than 350) in the world. There are also dozens of waterfalls, both traditional and Quilombola communities, trails and archaeological/paleontological sites. A true paradise hidden between valleys and mountains located within the largest preserved Atlantic Forest patch in Brazil (250 000 hectares).

In order to improve our chances of finding a number of the crucial species, we will have a local guide from one of the traditional communities join us for the day. Despite this, if we see even half of the following targets, we could consider ourselves very luck; Such's Antthrush, Yellow-legged Tinamou, Solitary Tinamou, Variegated Antpitta, Black-headed Berryeater, Bay-ringed Tyrannulet, Fasciated Tiger Heron, Pavonine Cuckoo, Bare-throated Bellbird and Blue-bellied Parrot.

Our local guide constantly monitors rare raptor nests, and we may have the opportunity of seeing Ornate Hawk-Eagle or Grey-bellied Hawk. Depending on the time of year, we also have chances of seeing Atlantic Royal Flycatcher and Swallow-tailed Cotinga, which are also monitored during the breeding season.



Sao Paulo Tyrannulet by Dušan Brinkhuizen



Swallow-tailed Cotinga by Adam Riley

Curitiba. Our exploration of the Araucaria-dominated forests near Curitiba will give us an opportunity for Chestnut-headed and Diademed Tanagers and the typically tricky Canebrake Groundcreeper.

Time permitting, we'll spend some time searching for Marsh Tapaculo. A skulker of note, it was discovered in humid marshy areas with dense tall grasses and sedges as recently as 1998. We are also likely to find Long-tailed Reed Finch, Lesser Grass Finch and Yellow-rumped Marshbird.

Volta Velha Private Reserve. This morning we will Volta Velha Private Reserve, which protects 875 hectares of lowland Atlantic Forest and was one of first places where Kaempfer's Tody-Tyrant was found after its rediscovery in the late 1990's.

The primary reason for our visit is a small number of special South Brazil endemics: Kaempfer's Tody-Tyrant, Marsh (Parana) Antwren, Scaled Chachalaca and Restinga Tyrannulet. We will have further chances for several birds we may have missed over the previous days of the main tour such as Russet-winged Spadebill, Three-striped Flycatcher, Wing-barred Piprites, Black-backed Tanager and many others. After a successful morning, we will search the nearby mangroves for Scarlet Ibis, Mangrove Rail and Yellow-crowned Night Heron.



Purple-crowned Plovercrest by Adam Riley

Rio dos Cedros. Rio dos Cedros is a patch of Atlantic Forest mixed with Araucaria Forest. Here we have good chances of finding several extraordinary species such as Creamy-bellied Gnatcatcher, Green-



Pinnated Bittern by Clayton Burne

chinned Euphonia, Brown-breasted Pygmy Tyrant, Giant Antshrike, Brown Tanager, Green-backed Becard, Plush-crested Jay, Helmeted Woodpecker and Crested Black Tyrant.

Urupema. Urupema is in the state of Santa Catarina, situated some 1 450 meters above sea level, in a valley surrounded by the Morro das Torres. It is considered the coldest town in Brazil, with temperatures reaching -9ºC during the winter! The landscape here is unique; a mix of rocky outcrops *campo rupestre* and Araucaria Forest, a subtype of Atlantic Rainforest where the Brazilian Pine Tree (*Araucaria angustifolia*) is the dominant tree species.

Our primary targets here include Striolated Tit-Spinetail and Long-tailed Cinclodes. We will also look for Freckle-breasted Thornbird, Grey-throated Warbling Finch, Planalto Tapaculo, Mottled Piculet, Hellmayr's Pipit, Chestnut-backed Tanager, Black-and-White Monjita, Chimango Caracara, Long-tufted Screech Owl and Blue-and-Yellow Tanager.

São Francisco de Paula. The municipality of São Francisco de Paula is situated at 900 meters above sea level in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, the Southernmost state of Brazil. Here we will look for several montane bird species in the Araucaria forests located within the São Francisco de Paula National Forest. On our way to the reserve, we will also look for some natural field and marsh birds.

Our main targets in the region are Straight-billed Reedhaunter and Saffron-cowled Blackbird. Other highlights include Rufous-tailed Attila, Lesser Grass Finch, Black-and-rufous Warbling Finch, Olive Spinetail, Brown-breasted Pygmy Tyrant, more chances for Blue-bellied Parrot and other montane forest birds such as Purple-crowned Plovercrest and Swallow-tailed Cotinga. If we are lucky, we could even see Chaco Eagle.



Rufous-sided Warbling Finch by Keith Valentine

Lagoa do Peixe. Lagoa do Peixe is quite different from the other National Parks and reserves visited on our tour. It is located between Lagoa dos Patos 'duck's lake' and the Atlantic Ocean, on and between parallel lines of dunes right on the coast. The area consists of a mosaic of

different habitats including freshwater lakes, saltwater lagoons, marshes, grasslands, coastal plains, restinga scrub, sand dunes and mudflats. The National Park was created in 1986 to protect an important wintering zone for migratory birds, especially shorebirds from both the Arctic and Antarctic.

We will spend the whole day birding in this exciting area where we will scan for larger birds such as Chilean Flamingo, Black-necked and Coscoroba Swans, Greater Rhea and Plumbeous Ibis. The wetlands and marshes in the area are home to many species of ducks, coots, crakes and grebes including Pinnated Bittern, Ringed, Silver and Speckled Teals, Rosy-billed Pochard, Red-gartered and White-winged Coot, Dot-winged Crake, Red-and-white Crake, White-tufted and Great Grebe and Giant Wood Rail. Other specialties that are found in the area include Hudson's Canastero, Common Miner, Curve-billed Reedhaunter, Sulphur-breasted Spinetail, Bay-capped Wren-Spinetail, Correndera Pipit, Austral Negrito, Crested Doradito, Wren-like Rushbird and Many-colored Rush Tyrant.



Chilean Flamingo by Glen Valentine

Tour Grading & Key

Overall Ease		Difficult. This a Mega style tour designed for the dedicated lister and serious birder. Not suitable for dedicated photographers; inexperienced birders; or anyone with mobility or health challenges.
Birding Ease		Quite demanding. Many rare 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. Atlantic forest trails are hilly.
Vehicles / Roads		Several long drives. Mostly sealed roads between towns, changing to dirt in remoter areas. Some sites may be unreachable if roads have been washed out. 4x4 vehicles necessary at some locations.
Photography		Worthwhile, but limited time due to nature of tour.
Annoyances		Temperatures can vary from cool to very hot depending on location and elevation. Long travel days with limited down time.

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 dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 26;
- 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.**

- Our Mega tours are very fast-paced birding adventures designed for the dedicated lister and serious birder. The focus of the tour is to see as many of the endemics and area specials as possible in our given time. To cover the necessary route to maximise the species list, we stay for only a single night at many sites.
- This tour is not suitable for novice birders or dedicated photographers.
- 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. It is generally hot and very humid in the lowlands and foothills. 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 DOES require a high level of fitness, and participants should be in good general health as much of the birding will be done on foot and may require walking for several hours at a time.
- 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.
- Accommodation is mostly of good to medium standard.

Arrival and Departure Details

The tour will depart from Rio de Janeiro International Airport (IATA: GIG) on day 1. As this is an arrival day, you are free to arrive at any time. The tour will conclude at Porto Alegre Airport (IATA: POA) on the morning of day 26.

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.

Galeão – Antonio Carlos Jobim International Airport, Rio de Janeiro (IATA: GIG) is the primary port of entry this tour and is well serviced by several airlines. Salgado Filho International Airport, Porto Alegre (IATA: POA) is the primary port of departure for this tour and is well connected to the large international hubs of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.

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.