

# NORTHEAST BRAZIL POPULAR TOUR

18 DAYS



On this fascinating trip through Northeast Brazil, we will travel approximately 4.000km in 18 days, through the states of Ceará and Bahia. Although there is more than enough driving, the fantastic birds we see every single day will keep us motivated throughout the entire trip. We go from the endangered Gray-breasted Parakeet in Guaramiranga, passing by the gorgeous Araripe Manakin, Lear's Macaw, Hooded Visorbearer (and many many more) until we finish in Porto Seguro with the magnificent White-winged Cotinga, crossing a wide variety of biomes (Atlantic Forest, Caatinga and Cerrado), habitats and hundreds of special birds along the way.

## NORTHEAST BRAZIL POPULAR TOUR

(Ceará, Bahia)

Guide: Carlos Gussoni

### SUMMARIZED ITINERARY

Day	Location	Comments
1	Fortaleza – Icapuí (210km)	Early transfer. AM and PM Birding
2	Icapuí – Guaramiranga (240km)	AM Birding. Transfer. PM Birding
3	Guaramiranga – Quixadá (110km)	AM Birding. Transfer. PM Birding
4	Quixadá – Potengi (350km)	AM Birding. Transfer. PM Birding
5	Potengi	AM and PM Birding
6	Potengi – Barbalha – Canudos (420km)	AM Birding. Transfer. PM Birding
7	Canudos – Chapada Diamantina (540km)	AM Birding. Transfer. PM Birding
8	Chapada Diamantina (Lençóis)	AM and PM Birding
9	Chapada Diamantina (Lençóis – Mucugê)	AM and PM Birding
10	Chapada Diamantina – Boa Nova (450km)	AM Birding. Transfer
11	Boa Nova	AM and PM Birding
12	Boa Nova (Poções)	AM and PM Birding
13	Boa Nova – Itacaré (200km)	Transfer. PM Birding
14	Itacaré – Camacan (Serra Bonita) (200km)	AM Birding. Transfer. PM Birding
15	Serra Bonita Reserve	AM and PM Birding
16	Serra Bonita Reserve – Porto Seguro (200km)	AM Birding. Transfer. PM Birding
17	Porto Seguro	AM and PM Birding
18	Porto Seguro	DEPARTURES or EXTENSION

Date: October 01<sup>st</sup> to October 18<sup>th</sup> of 2024.

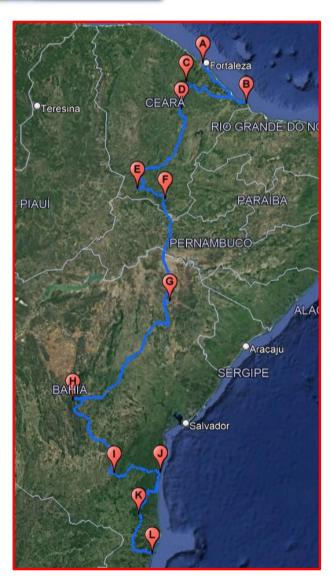


## OVERVIEW OF THE COMPLETE ITINERARY

Fortaleza (A), Icapuí (B), Guaramiranga (C), Quixadá (D), Potengi (E), Barbalha (F), Canudos (G), Chapada Diamantina (H), Boa Nova (I), Itacaré (J), Camacan (K), Porto Seguro (L).







#### **DETAILED ITINERARY**

Day 1: Early transfer to ICAPUÍ (+/-3hrs [210km]). AM and PM Birding.

**Area description:** city further east of Ceará, almost bordering the state of Rio Grande do Norte. Known for its fishing activities, especially lobster, which is one of the main sources of income for the local community. This reality has been changing due to overfishing of large vessels/companies that are depleting local natural resources. City with a very comfortable weather, especially in the evening, favored by pleasant winds.

**Targets:** Our main target here is the Little Wood-Rail (*Aramides mangle*). Being located in an area where there is the presence of mangroves, you can also find species associated with this environment such as the Bicolored Conebill (*Conirostrum bicolor*) and the Mangrove Rail (*Rallus longirostris*). For those who have not seen the Tropical Mockingbird (*Mimus gilvus*), we have plenty of those as well.







**Day 2:** AM Birding in Icapuí if needed and transfer to **GUARAMIRANGA** (+/-4hrs [240Km]) to bird the rest of the day.

Area description: located 100km from Fortaleza, Maciço de Baturité has a remarkable humid Forest ranging from 600-1100 meters altitude. This Forest is a kind of island in the middle of the Caatinga (dry) vegetation, that is predominant in the lower elevations (below 600 meters). Because of its unique habitat, this is the main refuge for several humid forest species in the state of Ceará. We will be birding nearby town in private properties with good trails and/or roads.

Targets: One of the highlights here is the Grey-breasted Parakeet (*Pyrrhura griseipectus*), one of the world's most threatened parrots. Other species of great interest are Buff-breasted Tody-Tyrant (*Hemitriccus mirandae*), Ceara Gnateater (*Conopophaga cearae*), Ceara Woodcreeper (*Xiphorhynchus atlanticus*), Ochraceous Piculet (*Picumnus limae*), Guianan Tyrannulet (*Zimmerius acer*), Band-tailed Manakin (*Pipra fasciicauda*), Gould's Toucanet (*Selenidera gouldii*), Gray-headed Spinetail (*Cranioleuca semicinerea*) among others. We will also pay special attention to some subspecies that could possibly be elevated to species in the future such as Variable Antshrike (*Thamnophilus caerulescens cearensis*), Red-necked Tanager (*Tangara cyanocephala cearensis*) and Rufous-breasted [Ceara] Leaftosser (*Sclerurus scansor cearensis*).





Day 3: AM Birding in Guaramiranga and transfer to QUIXADÁ (+/-2hrs [110Km]). PM Birding.



**Area description:** Quixadá is a municipality in the state of Ceará located three hours from the capital. One of its most striking features is the rock formations, the monoliths, in various formats that "break" the apparent monotony of the countryside landscape. The hotel we stay in is away from town and birding will be around the hotel grounds.



Targets: here we start to explore Caatinga habitat. A few birds worth highlighting are: Whitenaped Jay (Cyanocorax cyanopogon), Cactus Parakeet (Eupsittula cactorum), Pygmy Nightjar (Hydropsalis hirundinacea), Black-bellied Antwren (Formicivora melanogaster), Pale Baywing (Agelaioides fringillarius), the Caatinga race of Long-billed Wren (Cantorchilus longirostris bahiae), Caatinga Cacholote (Pseudoseisura cristata), Ochre-backed Woodpecker (Celeus ochraceus) and, if we are lucky, we might even see the rare and endemic White-browed Guan (Penelope jacucaca). During the dry season, a flock usually comes to drink in a reservoir in the hotel area.





**Day 4:** AM Birding before breakfast and transfer to **POTENGI** (+/-5hrs [350Km]). Lunch and PM Birding in the Sítio Pau Preto area.

Area description: Potengi is a small town in the south region of Ceará, part of the Chapada do Araripe area. Only recently has Potengi entered the world birding scenario because of a passionate birdwatcher and biologist that transformed his family property into a refuge for Caatinga birds, the "Sítio Pau Preto". We will stay in a family-owned small lodge where we can feel right at home hosted by him and his kind family. We will bird around to search for some of the most special birds in this unique habitat. For those who enjoy taking photos, there are also feeders.



Targets: here we keep searching for Caatinga specialties, such as White-browed Antpitta (Hylopezus ochroleucos), Caatinga Antwren (Herpsilochmus sellowi), White-throated Seedeater (Sporophila albogularis), Scarlet-throated Tanager (Compsothraupis loricata), Great Xenops (Megaxenops parnaguae), Red-shouldered Spinetail (Synallaxis hellmayri), the local races of Lesser [Bahia] Wagtail-Tyrant (Stigmatura napensis bahiae), Greater [Caatinga] Wagtail-Tyrant (Stigmatura budytoides gracilis) and Stripe-backed Antbird (Myrmorchilus



strigilatus strigilatus), among others. Do not forget the feeders, where we could see Campo Troupial (Icterus jamacaii), Red-cowled Cardinal (Paroaria dominicana), White-naped Jay (Cyanocorax cyanopogon), Pileated Finch (Coryphospingus pileatus) and more. In the end of the day, we have chances of seeing Least Nighthawks (Chordeiles pusillus) flying over the lodge.







Day 5: AM and PM Birding in Potengi.

Day 6: After breakfast in Potengi, we will head to the foothills of the Chapada do Araripe plateau (+/-1½hrs [80 km]), a place you cannot miss out on! It is the ONLY area in the WORLD



for the superb Araripe Manakin (Antilophia bokermanni). Chapada do Araripe rises in the middle of the dry lowlands, forming a natural boundary between the states of Pernambuco, Piauí and Ceará. The northeastern portion of the Chapada, faces the state of Ceará and concentrates hundreds of springs, forming a true oasis in the Caatinga. The Araripe Manakin was described to science only in 1998 and to this day it stands out as one of the greatest "recent" discoveries in Ornithology. The species has an estimated distribution of 30km²; exclusive to the humid forests along the Ceará side of the Chapada slope; it is therefore classified as Critically Endangered. It is the target of conservation projects led by the Ceará NGO AQUASIS, which, in partnership with government agencies, and national and international NGOs, has been working to prevent the extinction of this beautiful bird.



After enjoying the Araripe Manakin, we will transfer to **CANUDOS**, in the state of Bahia, stopping for lunch on route (+/-6hrs [370 km]). If we get there on time, we could try to see the Blue-winged Macaws (*Primolius maracana*) coming to their roosting site or we could explore the Caatinga areas near town, searching for any birds we might have missed on the previous days.



**Area description:** situated in the northern portion of the state of Bahia, near the borders with Pernambuco, Sergipe, and Alagoas, Canudos has some of the most extraordinary scenarios



of this trip; the experience of hearing the macaws calling and seeing the red sand cliffs contrasting with the indigo blue of the macaws is simply unforgettable.



**Targets:** one of the most exciting moments of the trip, is the encounter with Lear's Macaw (Anodorhynchus leari)! This amazing species only occurs in this region, the northern portion of Bahia. Besides our main target, we'll name a few other species that we could keep an eye out for: the endemic race of Blue-crowned Parakeet (*Thectocercus acuticaudatus haemorrhous*), King Vulture (*Sarcoramphus papa*), Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle (*Geranoaetus melanoleucus*), and more.



**Day 7:** AM Birding and transfer to **CHAPADA DIAMANTINA** where we will stay in the cozy town of Lençóis (+/-8hrs [540Km]).



**Days 8:** On this day in the **CHAPADA DIAMANTINA** area, we will concentrate our efforts in the locations closer to Lençóis. AM Birding in a Campo Rupestre trail about half an hour from the hotel and PM Birding in a Humid Forest (Cerradão with Atlantic Forest influence) in the surroundings of the town.

Area description: certainly, one of the most impressive places in Brazil, the landscapes are astonishing. Chapada Diamantina is part of a long series of highlands linked to the Espinhaço mountain range, which extends from north of Minas Gerais through Bahia. There is a high diversity of habitats such as Caatinga, Cerrado, Campo Rupestre (arid mountain shrubs), Humid and Gallery Forests, and a high diversity of birds (almost 400 species). Most of these beautiful landscapes and pristine habitats are part of the Chapada Diamatina National Park which protects, by law, 152.000 hectares. Because of the scenic views, preserved habitat, and waterfalls, this is one of the most visited places in the state of Bahia by tourists willing to connect with nature.



Targets: Our main targets in the Chapada Diamantina area are the Hooded Visorbearer (Augastes lumachella), Sincora Antwren (Formicivora grantsaui) and Diamantina Tapaculo (Scytalopus diamantinensis), the last two described to science just in 2007. We have a long list of birds to look for besides the three mentioned above: Collared Crescentchest (Melanopareia torquata), Helmeted Manakin (Antilophia galeata), Pale-bellied Tyrant-Manakin (Neopelma pallescens), Surucua [Orange-bellied] Trogon (Trogon surrucura aurantius), Black-throated Saltator (Saltatricula atricollis), Rufous Nightjar (Antrostomus rufus), Broad-tipped Hermit (Anopetia gounellei), São Francisco Sparrow (Arremon franciscanus), Rufous-sided Pygmy-Tyrant (Euscarthmus rufomarginatus), White-banded Tanager (Neothraupis fasciata), Rufous-winged Antshrike (Thamnophilus torquatus), East Brazilian Chachalaca (Ortalis araucuan), Copper Seedeater (Sporophila bouvreuil), Greenwinged Saltator (Saltator similis), Gilt-edged Tanager (Tangara cyanoventris), Horned Sungem (Heliactin bilophus), Grey-backed Tachuri (Polystictus superciliaris), Buff-throated Pampafinch (Embernagra longicauda) and more. In case we have missed any Caatinga birds, we could also look for them here.







**Day 9:** AM Birding and transfer to Mucugê on a dirt road (+/-4hrs [130Km]). PM Birding and night in Mucugê (Chapada Diamantina).

**Day 10:** After breakfast, we will leave the hotel towards Boa Nova (+/-6hrs [420Km]) with stops for birding along the morning in Caatinga and Cerrado areas of Chapada Diamantina if needed.

Day 11: AM and PM Birding in the BOA NOVA area.

**Area description:** located in the Southwestern part of Bahia, Boa Nova is famous among birders due to its highly diverse bird community (+430 species), with typical elements of montane Atlantic Forest, Caatinga, and a unique transitional area between the Atlantic Forest



and Caatinga known as "mata-de-cipó" (Vine Forest). This variety of habitats provides a rich avifauna, with many globally threatened species that motivated the Brazilian Government to create a mosaic of Protected Areas in the region; the National Park and Wildlife Refuge of Boa Nova, with 13.000 and 15.000 hectares, respectively. There is a place nearby the hotel (20min), with a natural hummingbird garden full of ground cacti (*Melocactus bahiensis*) that blossom every afternoon attracting many nice hummingbirds. Fortunately, this pristine and unique area is now owned and protected by a Brazilian couple of birders who are constantly improving facilities (hides and birdfeeders), especially for bird photographers. Although there are no species that only occur in this area, you will have excellent photo opportunities of hummers, caatinga birds, and more. So, if you are a keen bird photographer or like to enjoy a special scenario you will love the famous "Lajedo dos beija-flores".

In the neighboring municipality (Poções), there is a young birder (Mateus) who found some rarities. It is important to mention that some areas in Poções are not reached by van in case of rain.

**Targets:** one of the main highlights is the Slender Antbird (Rhopornis ardesiacus), confined to the "mata-de-cipó" vegetation where we could also find the Narrow-billed Antwren (Formicivora iheringi) and Hangnest Tody-Tyrant (Hemitriccus nidipendulus). In the Montane Atlantic Forest we search for species such as the Striated Softtail (Thripophaga macroura), Bahia Spinetail (Synallaxis cinerea), Rio de Janeiro Antbird (Cercomacra brasiliana), Fork-tailed Tody-Tyrant (Hemitriccus furcatus), Crescent-chested Puffbird (Malacoptila striata), Rufousheaded Tanager (Hemithraupis ruficapilla), Black-billed Scythebill (Campylorhamphus Pallid Spinetail (Cranioleuca pallida), Least Pygmy-Owl (Glaucidium minutissimum), White-eyed Foliage-gleaner (Automolus leucophthalmus), Pin-tailed Manakin (Ilicura militaris), Scale-throated Hermit (Phaethornis eurynome), Spot-breasted Antvireo (Dysithamnus stictothorax), Ferruginous Antbird (Drymophila ferruginea), Gray-hooded Attila (Attila rufus), Gilt-edged Tanager (Tangara cyanoventris) and many others. Here, we will also have chances of seeing the fantastic Giant Snipe (Gallinago undulata). In the hummingbird garden (Lajedo dos beija-flores), we could see Sapphire-spangled Emerald (Amazilia lactea), Swallow-tailed Hummingbird (Eupetomena macroura), Planalto Hermit (Phaethornis pretrei), Starthroat (Heliomaster squamosus), Ruby-Topaz Hummingbird Stripe-breasted (Chrysolampis mosquitus), depending on season, among others. The highlights in Poções include the rare Wied's Tyrant-Manakin (Neopelma aurifrons), White-bibbed Antbird (Myrmoderus Ioricatus), Greenish Schiffornis (Schiffornis virescens), Scaled Woodcreeper (Lepidocolaptes squamatus), Swallow-tailed Manakin (Chiroxiphia caudata) and others.













Day 12: AM Birding in Poções area and PM Birding in the Boa Nova area.

Day 13: Transfer to ITACARÉ (+/-4hrs [200Km]). PM Birding.

**Area description:** 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 Serra do Conduru State Park. Here we will be based in Itacaré, a famous touristic destination with marvelous forest, beaches, and waterfalls. From there we will do excursions to Maraú (north of Itacaré) to try to see the rare and endemic Bahia Tapaculo (*Eleoscytalopus psychopompus*). We will also explore the Serra do Conduru State Park, south of Itacaré. This State Park protects more than 9,000 hectares of Atlantic Forest and it 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.

Targets: Our main target will be a very rare bird: the Endangered Bahia Tapaculo (Eleoscytalopus psychopompus). Other targets of this lowland Atlantic Forest will be Kinglet Manakin (Machaeropterus regulus), White-crowned Manakin (Dixiphia pipra), Blue-backed Manakin (Chiroxiphia pareola), Scaled Antbird (Drymophila squamata), Black-cheeked Gnateater (Conopophaga melanops), Band-tailed Antwren (Myrmotherula urosticta), Cinereous-breasted Spinetail (Synallaxis hypospodia), Great-billed [Margaretta's] Hermit (Phaethornis malaris margarettae), Turquoise [White-bellied] Tanager (Tangara mexicana brasiliensis), Opal-rumped [Silvery-breasted] Tanager (Tangara velia cyanomelas), the nominal race of White-fronted Nunbird (Monasa morphoeus morphoeus) and many others.







**Day 14:** AM Birding in Itacaré and transfer to Camacan (**SERRA BONITA RESERVE**) (+/-3hrs [200Km]) for PM Birding.

Area description: The Serra Bonita Reserve is a pioneering, innovative private conservation enterprise, protecting the sub-montane forest in Southern Bahia. This initiative started thanks to Vitor Becker and Clemira, who after retirement decided to dedicate their lives to the protection of this important and unique fragment of forest. It aims to protect the Atlantic Forest of the region through a consortium of several rural property owners, whose properties contain RPPNs (private reserves). Altogether, they protect over 2,500 hectares. The RPPNs are managed by Instituto Uiraçu, through agreements with the owners. In addition to managing these private reserves and its own, purchased through donations, the Institute aims to extend the protection of the entire Serra Bonita Mountain Range, one of the last remnants of sub-montane forest in the region, which covers an area of about 7,500 hectares, ranging from 200 to 1000 meters of altitude, in the municipalities of Camacan and Pau Brasil, Bahia. We will sleep in the highlands of the reserve, in the good hands of Vitor and



Clemira, where we will enjoy the famous Serra Bonita Caipirinhas. Near the headquarters, they also have feeders for hummers and tanagers.

On trips by van, as we reach the town of Camacan, we switch to 4x4 vehicles provided by the reserve to access the highlands, where we stay the next two nights.



Targets: the main targets in the highlands are the unique Pink-legged Graveteiro (Acrobatornis fonsecai), Bahia Tyrannulet (Phylloscartes beckeri), Plumbeus Antvireo (Dysithamnus plumbeus), Salvadori's Antwren (Myrmotherula minor), Sharpbill (Oxyruncus cristatus), Lemon-chested [Rio de Janeiro/Bahia] Greenlet (Hylophilus thoracicus thoracicus), [Greater] Crescent-chested Puffbird (Malacoptila striata striata), the rare Atlantic race (to be split) of Rufous-brown Solitaire (Cichlopsis leucogenys leucogenys), Swallow-tailed Manakin (Chiroxiphia caudata), Spot-backed Antshrike (Hypoedaleus guttatus), Spot-billed Toucanet (Selenidera maculirostris), Sombre Hummingbird (Aphanthocroa cirrochloris) and many more. If we are lucky enough to find a big mixed flock, we have chances of seeing the rare Bahia Treehunter (Heliobletus sp. nov.), which is still waiting for a formal description. Some birds we could see by the feeders include Maroon-bellied Parakeet (Pyrrhura frontalis), Rednecked (Tangara cyanocephala), Green-headed (Tangara seledon), Golden-chevroned (Thraupis ornata), Azure-shouldered (Thraupis cyanoptera) Tanagers and sometimes even the Spot-billed Toucanet. On the day we leave the reserve, we will spend some time birding in the lowlands where we will search for Kinglet Manakin (Machaeropterus regulus), Maroonfaced (Pyrrhura leucotis), Ochre-marked (Pyrrhura cruentata) and Golden-capped Parakeets (Aratinga auricapillus), Black-necked Aracari (Pteroglossus aracari), atlantic race of Thrush-like Wren (Campylorhynchus turdinus turdinus), Yellow-rumped (Cacicus cela) and Red-rumped (Cacicus haemorrhous) Caciques, Chestnut-backed Antshrike (Thamnophilus palliatus), Yellow-fronted Woodpecker (Melanerpes flavifrons) and many more. In recent years, we sometimes see the beautiful and ultra-rare Banded Cotinga (Cotinga maculata) coming to feed on Acai Palm (ripe berries) near the headquarters of one of the properties in the lowlands. Let's cross our fingers to be in the right place at the right time.



Day 15: AM and PM Birding in Serra Bonita Reserve.









**Day 16:** AM Birding in the lowlands of Serra Bonita Reserve and transfer to **PORTO SEGURO** (+/-3hrs [200Km]). PM Birding.

Area description: one of the most famous beaches on the southern coast of Bahia, Porto Seguro is one of the biggest tourist destinations in Brazil, so do not panic if there seem to be a lot of people on the streets. However, we will hardly be affected by the possible crowds in town since we will be birding in Veracel Reserve, only 30km from our hotel. This private area protects nearly 7.000 hectares of a unique type of Lowland Atlantic Forest known as "Mata de Tabuleiro", which shares many elements (Fauna and Flora) with the Amazon Forest. In some sites of the forest, the calls of Screaming Pihas and huge trees will bring us back memories of birding in the Amazon.



Targets: the main targets here will be White-winged Cotinga (Xipholena atropurpurea), Hooked-billed Hermit (Glaucis dohrnii), Red-browed Parrot (Amazona rhodocorytha), Bahia Antwren (Herpsilochmus pileatus), Band-tailed Antwren (Myrmotherula urosticta), Blackheaded Berryeater (Carpornis melanocephala), Ochre-marked Parakeet (Pyrrhura cruentata), Sooretama Slaty-Antshrike (Thamnophilus ambiguus), extra chances for Banded Cotinga



(Cotinga maculata) and many more. There are also quite a few species that are already recognized as valid species in the Brazilian List and might/should be split soon by the international lists. They are: Opal-rumped [Silvery-breasted] Tanager (Tangara velia cyanomelas), Turquoise [White-bellied] Tanager (Tangara mexicana brasiliensis), Blue-headed [Reichenow's] Parrot (Pionus menstruus reichenowi), Ringed [Atlantic Black-breasted] Woodpecker (Celeus torquatus tinnunculus), Golden-spangled [Bahia] Piculet (Picumnus exilis exilis), Wedge-billed [cuneatus group] Woodcreeper (Glyphorynchus spirurus cuneatus), the nominal race of Brown-winged Schiffornis (Schiffornis turdina turdina) among others. There will be some night birding as well, where we will look for Black-capped Screech-Owl (Megascops atricapilla), Tawny-browed Owl (Pulsatrix koeniswaldiana) and, with a lot of luck, the White-winged Potoo (Nyctibius leucopterus), which is very rare in the Atlantic Forest.

Day 17: AM and PM Birding in Porto Seguro (Veracel Reserve).







Day 18: AM Birding if we have time. Departure.

