



# BRAZIL BIRDING

E X P E R T S

## ESPÍRITO SANTO/MINAS GERAIS TOUR

14 DAYS



*On this trip we will begin concentrating on a few rarities of Southeastern Atlantic Coastal Lowland Forest (in Linhares) before going after other rarities of the Espirito Santo Atlantic Forest such as the ultra-rare Cherry-throated Tanager. After crossing beautiful landscapes and habitat in search of Cerrado and Campo Rupestre specialties, we end our trip in the beautiful cerrado of Serra da Canastra, enjoying the grassland birds.*

*Let's cross our fingers and hope for the best of luck...*

*Safe travels and have fun!*

## ESPÍRITO SANTO/MINAS GERAIS TOUR

Guide: To be defined

### SUMMARIZED ITINERARY

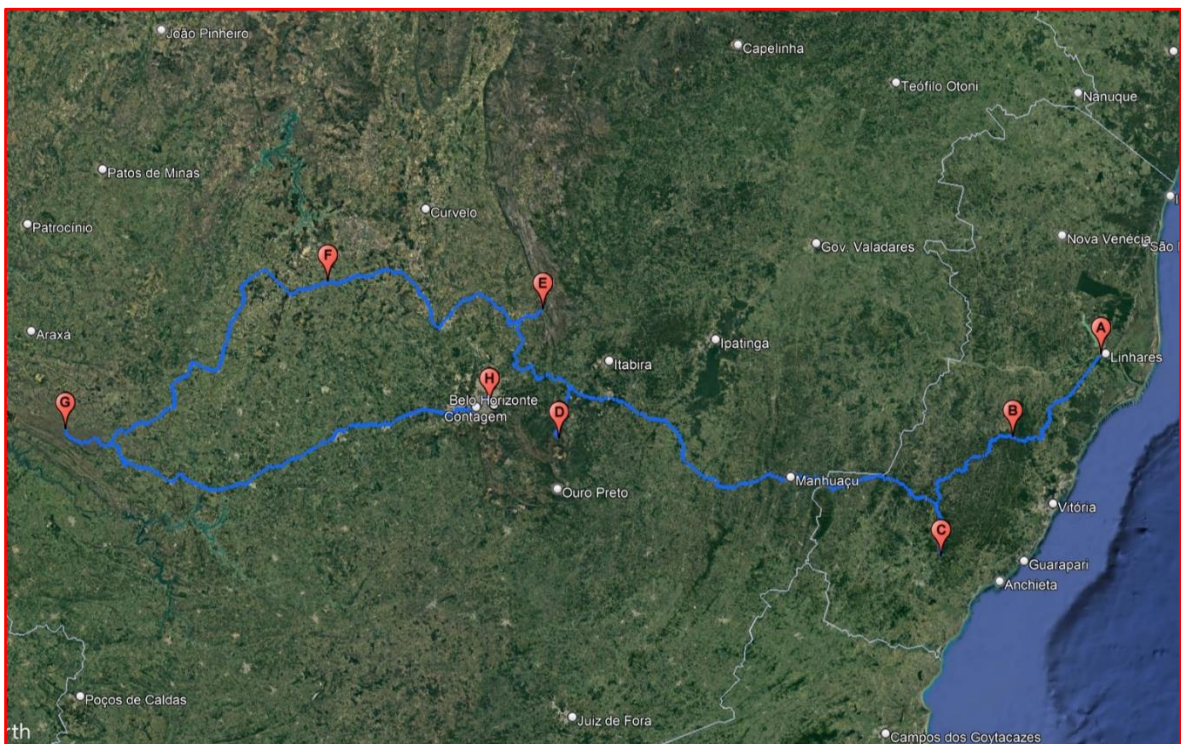
Day	Location	Comments
1	Porto Seguro or Vitória - Linhares (460Km or 130km )	AM Birding in Porto. Transfer
2	Linhares	AM and PM Birding
3	Linhares – Santa Teresa (110Km)	AM Birding. Transfer. PM Birding
4	Santa Teresa – Vargem Alta (150Km)	AM Birding. Transfer. PM Birding
5	Vargem Alta	AM and PM Birding
6	Vargem Alta – Caraça Sanctuary (470Km)	AM Birding. Transfer
7	Caraça Sanctuary	AM and PM Birding
8	Caraça Sanctuary – Serra do Cipó (170Km)	Transfer. PM Birding
9	Serra do Cipó	AM and PM Birding
10	Serra do Cipó – Pompéu (210Km)	Transfer. PM Birding
11	Pompéu - Serra da Canastra (310Km)	AM Birding. Transfer
12	Serra da Canastra	AM and PM Birding
13	Serra da Canastra	AM and PM Birding
14	Serra da Canastra – Belo Horizonte (370Km)	Transfer. Departures

**Date: October 18 to 31, 2024.**



## OVERVIEW OF THE COMPLETE ITINERARY

Linhares (A), Santa Teresa (B), Vargem Alta (C), Caraça Sanctuary (D), Serra do Cipó (E), Pompéu (F), Serra da Canastra (G), Belo Horizonte (H).



## DETAILED ITINERARY

**Day 0:** Transfers from Porto Seguro (+/-7½hrs [460Km]) or Vitória (+/-2½hrs [130Km]) to reach Linhares for early birding the next day.

**Day 1:** AM and PM Birding in **Linhares (Vale Private Reserve)**.

**Area description:** The VALE Private Reserve and the adjacent state-owned Sooretama Biological Reserve protect the largest remnant of Brazil's southeastern Atlantic coastal lowland rainforest. This area is one of the only sites where one of the world's rarest cracids, the Red-billed Curassow (*Crax blumenbachii*), can still be found and holds the species largest population. Our birding will be mainly along the roads that cut through the reserve.



Red-billed Curassow

**Targets:** Our main target here will be, without a doubt, the rare and range-restricted Red-billed Curassow (*Crax blumenbachii*). Other interesting species we could find here are Ochre-marked (*Pyrrhura cruentata*) and White-eared (*Pyrrhura leucotis*) Parakeets, Red-browed Amazon (*Amazona rhodocorytha*), Black-headed Berryeater (*Carpornis melanocephala*), Least Pygmy-Owl (*Glaucidium minutissimum*), Minute Hermit (*Phaethornis idaliae*), Black-necked Aracari (*Pteroglossus aracari*), Ringed (*Celeus torquatus tinnunculus*) and Red-stained (*Veniliornis affinis*) Woodpeckers, Sooretama Slaty Antshrike (*Thamnophilus ambiguus*), Screaming Piha (*Lipaugus vociferans*), Red-headed (*Ceratopipra rubrocapilla*) and White-crowned (*Dixiphia pipra*) Manakins, Thrush-like Schiffornis (*Schiffornis turdina*), Grayish Mourner (*Rhytipterna simplex*), Orange-bellied Euphonia (*Euphonia xanthogaster*), Yellow-backed Tanager (*Hemithraupis flavicollis*), Blue-headed [Reichenow's] Parrot (*Pionus menstruus reichenowi*), Yellow-green [Brazilian] Grosbeak (*Caryothraustes canadensis brasiliensis*) and others. In case of any active nests, we will have good chances of seeing the majestic Harpy Eagle (*Harpia harpyja*).





Ochre-marked Parakeet

**Day 2:** AM Birding in Linhares and transfer to **SANTA TERESA** (+/-2hrs [110Km]) for PM Birding.

**Area description:** Santa Teresa is also called "Beija-flor do Espírito Santo" (hummingbird of Espírito Santo), thanks to the abundance of these birds in the region and, mainly, for being the land where the scientist Augusto Ruschi was born and lived – a pioneer in research with hummingbirds and founder of the Museum of Biology Professor Mello Leitão, located in the city. It is a cozy little town in the mountainous region of Espírito Santo with an exuberant biodiversity (about 40% of its territory composed of Atlantic Forest). It is recognized as the first city founded by Italian immigrants in Brazil. We will stay in a nice pousada where the owners have been putting out hummingbird feeders for over 30 years. There is always some activity around the feeders, but from June to December the activity is quite overwhelming.

**Targets:** Our main target here will be the range-restricted Wied's Tyrant-Manakin (*Neopelma aurifrons*). Other targets include Yellow-eared Woodpecker (*Dryobates maculifrons*), Yellow-browed Woodpecker (*Piculus aurulentus*), Black-billed Sythebill (*Campylorhamphus falcularius*), Streak-capped Antwren (*Terenura maculata*), Salvadori's Antwren (*Myrmotherula minor*), Pin-tailed Manakin (*Ilicura militaris*), Rufous-brown Solitaire (*Cichlopsis leucogenys leucogenys*), Green-winged Saltator (*Saltator similis*) and more. A bird people usually ask about is the Russet-winged Spadebill (*Platyrinchus leucoryphus*). Although possible, only 20-30% of the groups are lucky enough to see it. Fingers crossed. The hummingbirds that are usually seen in the feeders of our pousada are Black Jacobin (*Florisuga fusca*), Rufous-breasted Hermit (*Glaucis hirsutus*), Scale-throated Hermit (*Phaethornis eurynome*), White-vented Violetear (*Colibri serrirostris*), Frilled Coquette (*Lophornis magnificus*), Brazilian Ruby (*Heliodoxa rubricauda*), Amethyst Woodstar (*Calliphlox amethystina*), Violet-capped Woodnymph (*Thalurania glaucopis*) and more.





Wied's Tyrant-Manakin



Frisilled Coquette

**Day 3:** AM Birding in Santa Teresa and transfer to **VARGEM ALTA** (+/-2hrs [120Km]) for PM Birding

**Area description:** A small village in the Mountains of Espírito Santo. Most properties in this village are based on agriculture, even so there are still significant remnants of Atlantic Forest in this region. The special location is a private area (Mata de Caetés) with a marvelous Atlantic Forest patch in a good stage of conservation, full of bromeliads, orchids and tall trees. The star here and our main target is the Cherry-throated Tanager (*Nemosia rourei*), an incredible tanager that eats mainly insects and lives in the canopy. Until February of 1998, this species was known only by one specimen deposited in a museum in Berlin, when it was finally rediscovered at Conceição do Castelo (Espírito Santo). After the rediscovery, this species was found at Mata dos Caetés in 2003. The expected population of this species is less than 20 individuals, and most of them are at Mata dos Caetés. Most of the recent records for the species have also been in Mata dos Caetés. The probabilities of finding the species are not high because of the few existing individuals with a probably huge territory. Let us cross our fingers and hope for the best. Encountering this rare species is a privilege for few. Beyond the Cherry-throated Tanager, there are over 270 other Atlantic Forest bird species in this area. The elevation in the area is around 1000 meters.



**Targets:** Among the highlights for this area are Spot-billed Toucanet (*Selenidera maculirostris*), Black Hawk-Eagle (*Spizaetus tyrannus*), White-bibbed Antbird (*Myrmoderus loricatus*), Yellow-eared Woodpecker (*Veniliornis maculifrons*), Robust Woodpecker (*Campephilus robustus*) and Cinnamon-vented Piha (*Lipaugus lanioides*) and many other Atlantic Forest specialties.



**Day 4:** AM and PM Birding in Vargem Alta.

**Day 5:** AM Birding in Vargem Alta and transfer to **CARAÇA SANCTUARY** (+/-7hrs [400Km]).

**Area description:** The “Santuário do Caraça” complex comprises about 11.000 hectares and it is property of the catholic church. It is a private reserve where the vegetation is characterized by its transition between Atlantic Forest and Cerrado, with outcrops of campo rupestre in higher altitudes. Due to these aspects, there is a rich biodiversity, including many mammals such as Maned Wolf (*Chrysocyon brachyurus*), Giant Anteater (*Myrmecophaga tridactyla*) and maybe some species of monkeys, like the Black-fronted Titi Monkey (*Callicebus nigrifrons*). This place is famous for its great architecture, cozy breakfast facility and, of course, the Maned Wolf that sometimes comes to feed close to the facilities in the evening. Here, we generally bird in altitudes ranging from 1200 to 1300 meters. The facilities where we sleep are practically inside the forest and the trails will be nearby.



**Targets:** Our main target here is the Serra Antwren (*Formicivora serrana*) and we will have chances to see many other birds such as the Gray-backed Tachuri (*Polystictus superciliaris*), Cinnamon Tanager (*Schistochlamys ruficapillus*), Gilt-edged Tanager (*Tangara cyanoventris*), Brassy-breasted Tanager (*Tangara desmaresti*), Pale-throated Pampa-Finch (*Embernagra longicauda*), Hepatic Tanager (*Piranga flava*), Orange-eyed Thornbird (*Phacellodomus erythrophthalmus*), Blackish Rail (*Pardirallus nigricans*), White-shouldered Fire-eye (*Pyriglena leucoptera*), Scaled Woodcreeper (*Lepidocolaptes squamatus*), Hyacinth Visorbearer (*Augastes scutatus*), Rock Tapaculo (*Scytalopus petrophilus*), Pin-tailed Manakin (*Ilicura militaris*), Velvety Black-Tyrant (*Knipolegus nigerrimus*) and many others.



**Day 6:** AM and PM Birding in Caraça Sanctuary.

**Day 7:** AM Birding before breakfast and transfer to **SERRA DO CIPÓ** (+/-3hrs [170Km]) for PM Birding.

**Area Description:** The Cipó National Park includes 33,800 hectares of designated parklands being acquired to preserve the highly endemic plant and animal life of this “serra system”. A remarkable place with fantastic and very local birds. A place you could not miss on a visit to the state of Minas Gerais.







**Targets:** There are 2 local endemics in this region that are worth highlighting, the Cipo Canastero (*Asthenes luizae*) and the Cipo Cinclodes (*Cinclodes espinhacensis*). We will have to give these 2 targets a special effort since they are not at all easy targets to find. Other specialties include, Rock Tapaculo (*Scytalopus petrophilus*), Hyacinth Visorbearer (*Augastes scutatus*), Horned Sungem (*Heliactin bilophus*), Checkered Woodpecker (*Dryobates mixtus*), Lesser Grass-Finch (*Emberizoides ypiranganus*), Pale-throated Pampa-Finch (*Embernagra longicauda*), Blue Finch (*Porphyrospiza caerulescens*), Streamer-tailed Tyrant (*Gubernetes yetapa*), Stripe-tailed Yellow-Finch (*Sicalis citrina*), Long-tailed Reed-Finch (*Donacospiza albifrons*) and Cinereous Warbling-Finch (*Poospiza cinerea*). There is another very interesting target; the range-restricted and recently described [2017] Diamantina Sabrewing (*Campylopterus diamantinensis*). However, only 20-30% of the groups are lucky enough to see it. We will of course also try the Marsh Tapaculo (*Scytalopus iraiensis*), another ghost. Let us consider ourselves lucky if we even hear this bird.

Cipo Canastero



**Day 8:** AM and PM Birding in Serra do Cipó.

**Day 9:** Transfer to **POMPÉU** (+/-3hrs [210Km]) for PM Birding.

**Area description:** This place is considered a crane paradise in Brazil. Two brothers, the “Pompeu Twins”, have been taming quite a few species of cranes. As of today, we have good opportunities of seeing some “true ghosts” such as: Ocellated Crane (*Micropygia schomburgkii*), Russet-crowned Crane (*Laterallus viridis*), Gray-breasted Crane (*Laterallus exilis*) and more. Unlike “Serra da Canastra” or “Serra do Cipó”, the habitat here is not protected. We will cover long distances of degraded habitat from our hotel, based inside town, to go from patch to patch of good preserved cerrado looking for the specific targets we need.

**Targets:** besides the ghostly cranes mentioned above, here are a few other species we will look for: Coal-crested Finch (*Charitospiza eucosma*), Chapada Flycatcher (*Suiriri affinis*), Chestnut-capped Foliage-gleaner (*Clibanornis rectirostris*), Checkered Woodpecker (*Dryobates mixtus*), Black-faced Tanager (*Schistochlamys melanopis*), Least Nighthawk (*Chordeiles pusillus*), Caatinga Puffbird (*Nystalus maculatus*) and more.



Ocellated Crane



Chapada Flycatcher



**Day 10:** AM Birding in Pompéu and transfer to **SERRA DA CANASTRA** (+/-5hrs [320Km]).

**Area description:** The Serra da Canastra National Park, in southwest of Minas Gerais, has some of the most breathtaking and undiscovered landscapes in Brazil. It has almost 200.000 hectares and covers 6 municipalities: São Roque de Minas, Vargem Bonita, Sacramento, Delfinópolis, São João Batista do Glória and Capitólio. We will be based in São Roque de Minas. The region is the cradle of many rivers that help form the São Francisco and Paraná basins. The landscape alternates between rocky fields (campo rupestre) full of delicate flowers, typical cerrado (open grasslands, wooded savanna, typical savanna) and gallery forests with lush Atlantic vegetation. It is in these environments that endangered animals, such as the Giant Anteater (*Myrmecophaga tridactyla*), Maned Wolf (*Chrysocyon brachyurus*), Giant Armadillo (*Priodontes maximus*) and the Brazilian Merganser (*Mergus octosetaceus*) are protected. Our main target here is, of course, the Brazilian Merganser and our first day will be solely dedicated to finding it. Depending on local up-to-date information, the guide will decide if the group will begin the search in the lowlands or highlands. Due to its rarity and sensibility, it is forbidden to use playback for the merganser. The strategy here is to choose one of its many territories/visiting/feeding areas and wait. Patience is key in this situation. Besides the merganser, there are several cerrado birds that we will have to look for in the highlands (plateau). To access this area of the park we will have to drive 8km in a treacherous dirt road until we reach the plateau. Entering the park, we will be birding on the main road looking for cerrado specialties.



Brazilian Merganser



**Targets:** In addition to having good chances of seeing the rare Brazilian Merganser (*Mergus octosetaceus*), there are several other species that live in this habitat of high altitude cerrado, such as the Campo Miner (*Geositta poeciloptera*), Grass Wren (*Cistothorus platensis*), Cock-tailed Tyrant (*Alectrurus tricolor*), Sharp-tailed Tyrant (*Culicivora caudacuta*), Black-masked Finch (*Coryphaspiza melanotis*), among others. We have great chances of finding the Brasilia Tapaculo (*Scytalopus novacapitalis*) in the streams that are in the high part of the mountain range. There are also some areas of gallery forest, where we can find the beautiful Helmeted Manakin (*Antilophia galeata*). Other species include: Yellow-rumped Marshbird (*Pseudoleistes guirahuro*), White-striped Warbler (*Myiothlypis leucophrys*), Ochre-breasted Pipit (*Anthus nattereri*), Golden-capped Parakeet (*Aratinga auricapillus*), Greater Rhea (*Rhea americana*), White-banded Tanager (*Neothraupis fasciata*), Cinereous Warbling-Finch (*Microspingus cinereus*), Great Pampa Finch (*Embernagra platensis*), Red-legged Seriema (*Cariama cristata*), Toco Toucan (*Ramphastos toco*), White-rumped Tanager (*Cypsnagra hirundinacea*), White-wedged Piculet (*Picumnus albosquamatus*), Large-billed Antwren (*Herpsilochmus longirostris*), Collared Crescentchest (*Melanopareia torquata*), Firewood Gatherer (*Anumbius annumbi*) and many more.



Cock-tailed Tyrant



Sharp-tailed Tyrant

**Days 11 and 12:** AM and PM Birding in Serra da Canastra.

**Day 13:** Transfer to Belo Horizonte for DEPARTURES (+/-5½hrs [360Km]).

