



# BRAZIL BIRDING

## EXPERTS

### PRE-TOUR NORTH OF MINAS GERAIS

4 DAYS



*Welcome to Northern Minas Gerais! An area of Brazil that has recently entered the world scenario for birdwatching due to the rediscovery of a species that was almost 80 years with no record!! The beautiful Blue-eyed Ground-Dove. In the areas we visit on this route, you will have the chance to visit good, preserved patches of caatinga habitat (Montes Claros and Peruaçu), where you will see many Brazilian endemic caatinga specialists and you will also visit some areas of Cerrado and Campo Rupestre in Botumirim, changing completely the set of birds you will encounter.*

*Good Birding!*

## PRE-TOUR NORTH OF MINAS GERAIS

Guide: Carlos Gussoni

### SUMMARIZED ITINERARY

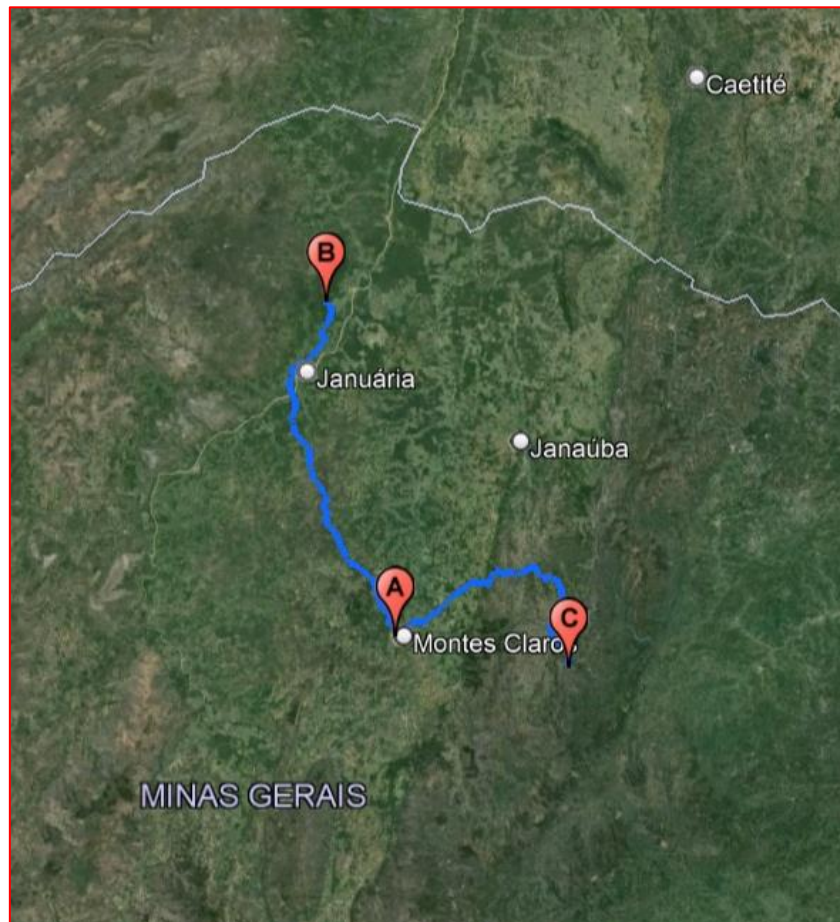
Day	Location	Comments
0 (Sep/13)	Montes Claros	Arrivals
1 (Sep/14)	Montes Claros – Peruaçu NP (220Km)	AM Birding. Transfer. PM Birding
2 (Sep/15)	Peruaçu NP – Botumirim (400Km)	AM Birding. Transfer. PM Birding
3 (Sep/16)	Botumirim	AM and PM Birding
4 (Sep/17)	Botumirim - Montes Claros (180Km) - Fortaleza	AM Birding. Transfer. Flight.

**Date: September 13 to 17, 2024.**



## OVERVIEW OF THE COMPLETE ITINERARY

Montes Claros (A), Cavernas do Peruaçu National Park (B), Botumirim (C).



## DETAILED ITINERARY

**Day 0:** Arrival in Montes Claros Airport. Welcome dinner.

**Day 1:** AM Birding in Montes Claros at **LAPA GRANDE STATE PARK.**

**Area description:** the Lapa Grande State Park comprises 15.320 hectares of Dry-Forest vegetation associated with limestone, which aims to protect and conserve the complex of caves and the main sources of water supply for the community of Montes Claros. Here we will stay in a hotel downtown, about thirty minutes away from the State Park.

**Targets:** We will look for some very interesting and rare dry-forest birds such as Reiser's Tyrannulet (*Phyllomyias reiseri*), Minas Gerais Tyrannulet (*Phylloscartes roquettei*), São Francisco Sparrow (*Arremon franciscanus*), Caatinga Black-Tyrant (*Knipolegus franciscanus*), Chestnut-capped Foliage-gleaner (*Clibanornis rectirostris*) and the Dry-forest Sabrewing (*Campylopterus calcirupicola*), just recently described (2017) to science as a new species. Other nice birds we might see are the nominal race of Scaled Woodcreeper (*Lepidocolaptes squamatus*), Rusty-breasted Nunlet (*Nonnulla rubecula*), Ochre-cheeked Spinetail (*Synallaxis scutata*) and Saffron-billed Sparrow (*Arremon flavirostris*).



São Francisco Sparrow



Dry-forest Sabrewing





Transfer to **CAVERNAS DO PERUAÇU NATIONAL PARK** (Itacarambi-MG) (+/-3½hrs [220Km]).  
PM Birding.

**Area description:** created in 1999, the Cavernas do Peruaçu National Park protects 56.400 hectares of mainly Dry Forest and Caatinga habitats. The region is full of caves with ancient rock (cave) paintings. The Janelão (big window) cave is the most famous. The park is near the famous São Francisco River, where we will visit on arrival day to try for one of our main targets, the Bahian Nighthawk. We will stay in a small pousada managed by a local family, near the entrance of the National Park.





Moustached Woodcreeper

**Targets:** one of our highlights here is the endemic and range-restricted Bahian Nighthawk (*Nyctiprogne vielliardi*), which is always more abundant when the river's water level is low (August-November). We will observe this species in the end of the day, in the last rays of light, flying over the São Francisco River. Inside the National Park, our main targets are the rare Moustached Woodcreeper (*Xiphocolaptes falcirostris*) and second chances for Caatinga Black-Tyrant (*Knipolegus franciscanus*). Other Dry Forest specialties include the Planalto (*Dendrocolaptes platyrostris intermedius*), Olivaceous [Reiser's] (*Sittasomus griseicapillus reiseri*) and Scaled [Wagler's] Woodcreepers (*Lepidocolaptes squamatus wagleri*), which are all dry forest races and potential splits. Other interesting birds to see are the nominal race of Surucua [Red-bellied] Trogon (*Trogon surrucura surrucura*), and Golden-capped Parakeet (*Aratinga auricapillus*). If we have time, we can start with the Caatinga targets such as Cactus Parakeet, Caatinga Antwren, Great Xenops and many others. However, do not be afraid to miss none of them because in the Northeast Tour we will have plenty of time to look for all of them.





Bahian Nighthawk

**Day 2:** AM Birding in Peruaçu if needed and transfer to **BOTUMIRIM** (+/-6hrs [400Km]). PM Birding.

**Area description:** how could we talk about Botumirim without talking about the rediscovery of the Blue-eyed Ground-Dove, one of the most exciting findings of the century! In 2015, a good friend of ours, Rafael Bessa, was on an environmental consultancy in the Botumirim area. As usual, when we do this type of work, we have designated coordinates to go for the bird surveys. To get to one of the coordinates, Rafael decided to take a shortcut and passed exactly in front of what is today the Blue-eyed Ground-Dove Nature Reserve. He told us he was astonished with that beautiful and somewhat different habitat that grasped his attention. Although curiosity had already aroused, he could not stop since he had to get to the coordinate to proceed with the surveys. As soon as the field campaign finished, Rafael decided to visit that interesting location early the next day. As soon as he jumped out of the car, he heard something quite different, that sounded a bit like a frog, but not quite: surely something he had never heard before, so he decided to record the vocalization and play it back to reel in the thing that was making that sound. As soon as he played it back, the Blue-eyed Ground-Dove instantly jumped right in front of him. Rumors say that he could hardly hold in his physiological needs... Today, this species is still only found in Botumirim and one of the main areas where the Ground-Doves live is a Nature Reserve managed by Brazilian NGO SAVE Brasil. The Reserve, together with the Botumirim State Park, protect an area of 35.000 hectares of preserved Cerrado and Campo Rupestre. Botumirim is a very interesting area of ecotones; here we can find Caatinga, Cerrado and Atlantic Forest specialties.



**Targets:** It is obvious that our main target here will be the Blue-eyed Ground-Dove (*Columbina cyanopsis*). The Ground-Dove is critically endangered and an extremely sensitive species, therefore it is prohibited to use playback. But with patience, as the territories are well-known, we have very good chances of seeing this beautiful bird. Since we will be in the Espinhaço Mountain Range, there will be a few species associated with this rocky environment that we will also target like the Hyacinth Visorbearer (*Augastes scutatus*), Cinereous Warbling-Finch (*Microspingus cinereus*) and, with a lot of luck, the Cipo Canastero (*Asthenes luizae*). There are a few other interesting species that we might see such as White-wedged Piculet (*Picumnus albosquamatus*), Copper Seedeater (*Sporophila bouvreuil*), Pin-tailed Manakin (*Ilicura militaris*), Pale-throated Pampa-Finch (*Embernagra longicauda*), Spot-tailed Nightjar (*Hydropsalis maculicaudus*), Narrow-billed Antwren (*Formicivora iheringi*), Greater Thornbird (*Phacellodomus ruber*), Chotoy Spinetail (*Schoeniophylax phryganophilus*), Greenish Schiffornis (*Schiffornis virescens*), Pale-bellied Tyrant-Manakin (*Neopelma pallescens*), Horned Sungem (*Heliactin bilophus*), second chances for Chesnut-capped Foliage-gleaner (*Clibanornis rectirostris*) and others.



Blue-eyed Ground-Dove



Horned Sungem







Hyacinth Visorbearer



**Day 3:** AM and PM Birding in Botumirim.

**Day 4:** AM Birding and transfer to Montes Claros (+/-3hrs [180Km]). Flight to Fortaleza.

Enjoy the Northeast Tour!

