



TOUR INFORMATION FOR SOUTHEASTERN BRAZIL

These notes are designed to help you prepare fully for the tour. Please read carefully.

ENTERING BRAZIL: United Kingdom citizens will need a passport valid for at least six months beyond the date of entry into Brazil. A visa is not required when entering Brazil as a tourist. Citizens of other countries should consult their nearest Brazilian consulate for entry requirements. Please remember that any tourist card you receive on your flight to Brazil must be kept in your passport at all times, and has to be surrendered upon departure.

It is always a good idea to take a photocopy of your passport and air ticket with you when travelling abroad. They can prove invaluable in helping you get replacements if your originals are lost or stolen. Obviously you should keep the photocopies in a separate bag to the originals.

ARRIVAL DATE: This tour begins in the afternoon of Day 1 at first night's lodge, the exact time depending on everyone's international flights. A driver from the lodge will meet arriving participants as they emerge from the customs checkpoint and transfer them to the lodge, about a 2½ hour drive. If your flight is scheduled to arrive any later than 09.00 you should plan to arrive a day before the tour's start date.

Note: International flights should arrive in Rio de Janeiro at the beginning of the tour and depart from Sao Paulo at the end of the tour.

INTRODUCTORY MEETING: There will be an introductory meeting in the mid-afternoon at our first night's lodge. This informal meeting gives the leader the opportunity to introduce everyone to each other and to let you know generally what to expect on the trip - pace of the tour, daily routine, etc.

TIME DIFFERENCE: This tour starts about the same time as the change from Brasilia Standard Time (GMT -3) to Brasilia Summer Time (GMT -2).

CURRENCY: The local currency is the Brazilian real. As the tour price includes all travel, hotel and main meal costs, you need only bring enough money to cover items of a personal nature such as laundry, drinks, postcards, souvenirs, etc. ATMs are available at the São Paulo airport if you wish to obtain some reals, but we suggest you bring some US dollars in cash as well. For any major items of expenditure, such as books or souvenirs, payment by credit card is recommended. Visa, Mastercard and American Express are all widely accepted.

LANGUAGE: Portuguese is spoken throughout Brazil. Some of the larger hotels have one or more employees who speak some English. Our leader will speak Portuguese so there will be no need for you to speak or understand the language. However understanding a few basic words may add interest to your trip, so you might wish to consider bringing a small English-Portuguese dictionary or phrasebook with you.

CLIMATE: We'll be in the Southeast during their spring. Strong cold fronts are unlikely, and it will probably be quite tropical on most days, especially near the coast, so be prepared for warm and humid weather with daily highs usually in the lower 80's to lower 90's° F. But weather is fickle here: we could experience rain on several days or none at all; and since we will be at a variety of elevations, a jacket for cool days is also necessary.

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Since we will continue to bird in light rain or may be out during unexpected showers, a travel umbrella in your daypack is essential. Trails may be muddy in places, but not enough to warrant rubber boots; good quality hiking boots (waterproof is best) will suffice. As we'll be at lower elevations during much of the tour, it will be hot in the sun and a hat is recommended.

ALTITUDE: Locations visited during this tour range from sea level to as high as 8,000 feet (2450 m) on one day; most days are below 3000 feet.

PACE OF TOUR: We'll be making early starts most days (05:00 - 06:00) so as to be out in the field for the first few hours of the day when birds are most active. We will normally have early breakfasts at our lodging before birding, rather than come back for a later breakfast. There will be occasional optional owling excursions in the early morning or evening, and these will of course be longer days. Such days could start as early as 04:30, allowing us to have a later breakfast; we'll also end earlier on such days. Other days might have us owling until 22:00, after which we won't have an extra-early morning.

Participants should be able to be on their feet for five to six hours at a time (on the longest mornings) with frequent long stops (the longest walks are only about 2-3 km), and a small travel stool is handy for those who find standing for long periods especially tiring. Be aware that you may not always be able to return to the lodge or vehicle on your own if you become tired. On non-travel days we will return to our hotel for lunch and a siesta, venturing out into the field again in mid/late-afternoon. We always have at least an hour off before dinner each day and typically most days end by 20.00 (having eaten and completed the day's bird list).

Most of our birding will be on wide, little-travelled or disused roads; one road we walk on one morning is very steep, but we take it slowly. Some birding will be on narrower forest trails near a couple of our lodges; these can be steep and muddy in places so you must be in relatively good physical condition.

If there are walks you do not feel you are able to do, there is excellent birding around the grounds of all of our hotels and lodges.

HEALTH: **It is essential that you contact your own doctor to obtain the latest information on the region you are visiting.** Please contact your doctor well in advance of your tour's departure as some medication must be initiated weeks before the period of possible exposure.

It is recommended that all travelers should be up to date on routine vaccinations. These include measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis vaccine, varicella (chickenpox) vaccine, polio vaccine, and your yearly flu shot. It is further recommended that most travelers have protection against Hepatitis A and Typhoid.

The areas we will visit free of Malaria. Yellow Fever vaccination is recommended but is not required to enter Brazil.

Many potential health problems can be prevented by adequate protection against insects. Even when mosquitoes may be sparse, biting gnats and chiggers can still be a nuisance. To be protected, bring plenty of spray repellent and wear long sleeves and trousers when in the field. We recommend using insect repellents with a concentration of DEET.

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Anyone who is unusually sensitive to insect bites and stings (ants, wasps) should consider bringing an antihistamine such as Benadryl; ask your doctor for more information. Although pharmacies in Brazil are excellent and well-supplied they will be difficult to visit during this tour's schedule, so bring enough medication to last the whole trip. A first-aid kit will be available at all times.

We do not often encounter snakes and take time to observe them whenever possible; most are not venomous, and venomous ones are not aggressive; we'll always be within driving distance of medical assistance in the case of an emergency. In any event, a small torch or headlamp is a necessity for navigating the paths between your room and dining areas at each lodge in the evenings.

One can never completely escape the risk of parasites or fungal infections. We avoid tap water but filtered and bottled water are readily available. Gastrointestinal problems are always a possibility while traveling; you may want to bring Imodium or some other reliable anti-diarrhea medication. Finally, you may wish to bring a broad-spectrum antibiotic in case of stubborn bacterial infections.

For further information on health advice refer to the Medical Advisory Services for Travellers Abroad website www.masta-travel-health.com

ACCOMMODATION: We'll be staying in good quality hotels or lodges throughout. All rooms will have a private shower and toilet, including hot water. As is typical in the tropics, occasionally, small lizards, amphibians or unusual insects may visit a hotel room, especially in the lower elevations.

LAUNDRY SERVICE: Laundry services are available at all our hotels and lodges, though not practical anywhere we stay for less than two nights.

ELECTRICITY: Electricity varies in different parts of Brazil, some being 110 volt and some 220 volt, but most of our hotels use 110, with most outlets accepting parallel flat or round prongs (but without ground). Some places have the older two round prong outlet accepting only a plug with a plastic housing with angled sides. You may find the following website helpful: <http://www.power-plugs-sockets.com>.

FOOD: The food is varied and scrumptious throughout, typically served buffet style. A green salad (often with locally grown greens), rice, and beans are standard fare, and the main dishes, sides, and desserts vary continually.

Sunbird tours are all-inclusive and no refunds can be issued for any tour meals participants choose to miss. While we will try to do all we can to accommodate the requirements of all participants, please note that we cannot guarantee all causes of food allergies can be avoided at every destination.

Many restaurants offer set menus and are unable to accommodate all special requests within a group. Thus, participants with significant food allergies or special dietary needs should bring appropriate foods with them for those times when their needs can, regretfully, not be accommodated.

Our tours are carefully scheduled to insure the best possible birding experience and although the leaders will do all they can to make sure the group eats at a reasonable time, sometimes early or late lunches and/or evening meals cannot be avoided. Any participants who need to eat at specific times may need to bring supplemental food with them.

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DRINKS: Bottled water, a soft drink or a beer (or wine if appropriate) are provided at meals, as is coffee or tea. In addition we keep a supply of bottled water on the tour vehicles. Bottled or filtered water may also be provided in some of the rooms where we stay. As it can get hot and dry, we recommend you bring a large, good quality water bottle and keep this topped up.

INTERNET AND MOBILE PHONE ACCESS: WiFi will be available at all our hotels, some from throughout, some only from the dining hall or communal areas.

FIELD CLOTHING: Dress will be informal throughout the tour. Comfortable field clothes and shoes are essential.

Sun hat	Shorts (for around the lodges)
Lightweight wool or wool-blend field socks	Sturdy footwear (lightweight, waterproof hiking shoes)
Long-sleeved cotton or fast-drying microfiber shirts	Light-weight shoes (for around the lodges and easy trails)
T-shirts	Lightweight gloves
Lightweight sweater / fleece	Rain clothes (waterproof trousers and a rain jacket and/or a poncho)
Long trousers for the field, preferably light cotton or a breathable, quick-drying fabric	

Note: We recommend not wearing clothing in the field that reflects ultraviolet light, including bright white and fluorescent (or "neon") colours. Birds can see near-UV light, and since shy birds are sensitive to our movements, such bright colours will accentuate them, possibly meaning the difference between seeing a reclusive antpitta or tinamou and having it slink away unobserved. Normal reds, yellows, oranges, blues, and greens are fine.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS: You should bring the following:

Alarm clock	Rubber flipflops for showers
Torch or Head torch plus spare batteries	Notebook and pencil
Compact umbrella	Wrist watch
Insect repellent	Wash cloth (not provided by some hotels)
Sunscreen	Cool-water laundry soap
Water bottle	Plastic bags (rain protection for optical equipment)
Small day pack/rucksack	Travel clothesline
Ear plugs (if you are a light sleeper)	Small, collapsible travel stool
Pocket knife	

Optional: Telescope & tripod (recommended if you have them), camera, film or memory cards, spare binoculars and spare spectacles (in case of loss or damage), field guide, swimwear. A telescope and tripod would be an advantage where we do a lot of open habitat birding. Elsewhere we spend much of our time in forest so unless you are particularly fond of using a telescope, one would be less useful here.

Note: The most effective insect repellents are those containing at least 35% of the active ingredient diethyltoluamide (DEET). The higher the percentage, the greater the effectiveness. However, care must be taken to avoid getting the repellent on to optical equipment as it dissolves rubber and plastic and can damage coated lenses. A reasonably effective alternative, which isn't corrosive, is Mosi-guard, produced by MASTA, and we recommend this. It is available in most high street chemist (including those at the airport). Camping supply stores sell a product containing permethrin 0.5%, which must be applied directly to clothing in advance of wearing and allowed to dry. This non-staining, odourless chemical is non-toxic to humans and protective on clothing through several launderings.

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Please make sure you never to spray insect repellent inside the vehicle or when you are standing close to other participants – it may drift on to their optical equipment.

LEADER'S EQUIPMENT: The leader will have a telescope, a spotlight, a first aid kit, maps, the more important field guides and references, electronic playback equipment, and a laser pointer.

LUGGAGE: Our Final Information document, which will be sent to you approximately three weeks before departure, will give details about baggage weight and size restrictions imposed by the airline used for this tour.

If possible, please bring your luggage in soft-sided bags or cases (rather than large hard 'Samsonite'-type suitcases) as these pack more easily into our vehicles during the tour. Please note that on many tours there are no porters to carry your luggage so please ensure that **no bag is so heavy that you are unable to lift and carry it yourself**. As a general rule, in addition to using your luggage labels, it is a good idea to fix identification to the *inside* of each piece of luggage.

PHOTOGRAPHY: Opportunities for scenery and memory shots will be plentiful, but birds are difficult to photograph. Although there will be occasions when bird photography is possible, a birdwatching tour is not normally the best means of pursuing this aim. If you are a serious photographer, please contact us for further information about photographic possibilities. Butterflies are much more approachable, and there will be ample opportunities to document those we see with cameras or video recorders. Several rules of etiquette will be advised (and enforced if necessary) to avoid conflict among photographers and observers. It may be difficult to recharge batteries with limited electricity so be sure to bring enough to last all week and remember to bring as many memory cards as you think you may need. Camera equipment should be packed in moisture- and dust-proof bags, as a precaution.

There will be plenty of opportunities to take photos of birds, mammals and scenery and the leaders will do all they can to accommodate anyone wishing to take photographs. However if you are a serious photographer please bear in mind that this is first and foremost a birdwatching tour. Please do not allow your photographic desires to conflict with other participants' birdwatching activities.

TRANSPORT: During most of the tour we will have a minibus and driver. Some roads may be quite bumpy and/or winding; anyone susceptible to motion sickness should bring an appropriate remedy. Participants should be able to sit in any seat in our vehicles.

SMOKING: Smoking is not allowed in the vehicles or when the group is gathered for meals, checklists etc. If you are sharing a room with a non-smoker, please do not smoke in the room. If you smoke in the field, we ask that you do so well away and downwind from the group if possible.

TRAVEL INSURANCE: Travel insurance is essential and we insist that you take out suitable cover as soon as your tour is booked. If you are bringing expensive optical equipment or other valuable items, please make sure they are also adequately insured on your home contents policy, as most travel insurance policies do not cover very expensive individual items. You may wish to consult your insurance broker regarding coverage. Please also ensure that your policy covers you in the event of a medical emergency, cancellation of a trip or severe delays. Medical costs abroad can often be extremely expensive. Please note that Sunbird is not liable for any medical or repatriation costs resulting from injury or illness during a tour or for covering any costs resulting from a flight delay such as extra hotel accommodation.

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If you wish, insurance can be arranged by Helen Fisher, Bullerwell Independent Insurance Brokers, 13 Goldington Road, Bedford, MK40 3JY. Tel: 01234-866964. Please contact Helen for a quote and she will send the schedule directly to you.

TIPPING: All tour-based tips are included in the tour price. These include tips to local guides, drivers, hotel porters, and waiters and waitresses when we have group meals together in restaurants. You only need to pay tips for personal services such as room service or drinks from the bar.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Birds:

Erize, Francisco, Jorge R. Rodriguez Mata, and Maurice Rumboll. 2006. *Birds of South America: Non-Passerines: Rheas to Woodpeckers*. Princeton. Very helpful with excellent illustrations, and a superbly compact size but uses confusing, antiquated nomenclature and taxonomy. If used together with the book below by Ridgely and Tudor, this would be another option to having just the van Perlo.

Ridgely, R. S., Gwynne, J. A., Tudor, G. and M. Argel. 2016. *Birds of Brazil, the Atlantic Forest of Southeast Brazil*. Wildlife Conservation Society. Excellent plates and updated range maps. **The currently recommended field guide for the trip, despite its often idiosyncratic use of names which don't match our bird checklist.**

Ridgely, Robert S. and Guy Tudor. 2009. *Field Guide to the Songbirds of South America: The Passerines*. University of Texas Press. If used together with the book above by Erize, et al., this would be another option to having just the van Perlo.

van Perlo, Ber. 2009. *A Field Guide to the Birds of Brazil*. Oxford University Press. This is also available as a smartphone app. **Recommended.**

General Interest:

Forsyth, Adrian and Ken Miyata. 1984. *Tropical Nature: Life and Death in the Rainforests of Central and South America*. Simon & Schuster, NY. A very good and worthwhile read if you never been to the Neotropics, but beware that the chapter on oropendola-nesting is no longer valid.

Hilty, Steven. 1994. *Birds of Tropical America*. Chapters Publishing, Ltd., Shelburne, CT. Excellent treatment of natural history of Neotropical birds.

Kricher, John C. 1999. *A Neotropical Companion*. Second edition. Princeton University Press. An introduction to the animals, plants and ecosystems of the Neotropics.

OBTAINING BOOKS: Most of the field guides and the major ornithological references in print are available by mail order from booksellers specialising in natural history titles.

Natural History Book Service Ltd
Tel: 01803 865913
www.nhbs.co.uk

WildSounds
Tel: 01263 741100
www.wildsounds.co.uk

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MAPS: Maps of the region may be available from:

The Map Shop
Tel: 01684 593146
www.themapshop.co.uk

Stanfords
Tel: 020 7836 1321
www.stanfords.co.uk

NEOTROPICAL BIRD CLUB: Please support this charity which aims to raise money to support conservation projects, encourages an interest in the conservation of birds, and liaises with and promotes the work of existing societies within the region. You will find their contact details and further information about the Club at www.neotropicalbirdclub.org

FINAL INFORMATION: Final information with instructions for meeting the group, hotel addresses etc. and your air tickets will be sent to you about three weeks before the start of the tour. Other news will be communicated as necessary. If you have any questions, please contact us.