



Brazil: Atlantic Rainforest Trip Report 2024

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Eagle-Eye's new Southeast Brazil birding trip began in earnest, in early October starting in São Paulo in the heart of the fabled Mata Atlantica, or Atlantic forest! The tour leaders on this journey were Steve Ogle and Felipe Arantes along with five participants. To our fortune, Eagle-Eye's Cam Gillies also joined for half of the trip to document some of the exciting moments in video. The previous iteration of this tour was nearly a decade earlier so we were pioneers of a sort, but Felipe's expert eyes and ears were at home in these forests teeming with life. Of particular note were the large numbers of Atlantic rainforest endemics we encountered along the way.

Days 1-4: Itatiaia National Park

The tour began at the airport hotel in São Paulo where the group converged, including two participants joining from the Amazon and Pantanal tour. The next morning saw us departing at 7am for the three-hour drive to Itatiaia, Brazil's first national park. Halfway along the route we stopped at a wetland to stretch our legs. Within the first two minutes after stepping out of the van at Brejo do Dique, a thunderstorm stopped us in our tracks! Luckily, it soon passed and we began our birding experience with close-up views of the endemic Band-winged Hornero, flocks of Chestnut-capped and Unicolored Blackbirds, and—with much patience—point blank views of a pair of Streamer-tailed Tyrants. Their squabbling performance did not disappoint! We arrived in Itatiaia with enough time to unpack into our hillside cabins and enjoy the feeders and a short walk to a cascade. The last bird of the day was Black-goggled Tanager, which left an impression for our first night surrounded by jungle.



Streamer-tailed Tyrant © Steve Ogle



Hotel do Ypê, Itatiaia © Steve Ogle

The next two full days in Itatiaia involved a mid-elevation segment and a highland segment. Both were rewarding with the first day centering around the Hotel do Ypê, with well-stocked feeders attended by a myriad of species such as Brazilian Ruby, Green-headed Tanager, Dusky-legged Guan and Blue Dacnis. During the day we had looks at several tyrannulet species (Gray-capped, Planalto, Rough-legged, and Southern Beardless), and hiked the Tres Picos trail searching for Greenish

Schiffornis, White-bibbed Antbird, Bertoni's Antbird, Such's Antthrush, Swallow-tailed Manakin and White-shouldered Fire-eye—success on all fronts! We soon began to realize that our bird lists were filling up with mostly Atlantic forest endemics. We found the nest of a Blue-naped Chlorophonia in a mossy boulder and had smashing looks at Slaty Bristlefront, a tapaculo that is normally difficult to see. We also spotted a Tayra, an arboreal weasel, scampering down a tree beside the road. That evening Felipe heard, then found a Tawny-browed Owl in the hotel grounds.



Frilled Coquette © Steve Ogle



Itatiaia National Park © Steve Ogle

Our next day started early with a commute up to the higher part of the national park, through the clouds into a clear and cool mountain paradise. The day had almost too many birds to count but we did our best! Some of our tally included these Atlantic rainforest endemics: Green-crowned Plovercrest, Black-and-gold Cotinga, Rufous-tailed Antbird, Rufous-backed Antwreio, Greenish Tyrannulet, Serra do Mar Bristle-tyrant, White-browed Woodpecker, Araucaria Tit-Spintail, Black-capped Piprites and Itatiaia Spintail. Other sought-after birds we found were: Gray-backed Tachuri, Swallow-tailed Cotinga and Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture. We stopped at a farm to look for a species with a peculiar name: Firewood-gatherer.



Firewood Gatherer Spot © Steve Ogle

A clean-up morning before leaving Itatiaia allowed us to casually hunt for more endemics, which included Black-billed Scythebill, Surucua Trogon and Robust Woodpecker. At no point were we wandering for more than a couple of minutes without lifting our binoculars for one bird or another. The birding was steady! In late morning we drove to Ubatuba having a pleasant lunch stop en route.

Days 5-6: Ubatuba

This segment was the lowland portion of the itinerary, near the holiday city of Ubatuba where we would search for birds and other wildlife found at coastal elevations. The likes of Rufous-capped Antthrush, Pale-browed Foliage-gleaner and Flame-crested Tanager live here. We spent some time at a few interesting birding hotspots: Fazenda Angelim with its extensive bamboo, Fohla Seca and its array of feeders, and Poco Verde, an out-and-back road with birds up high and down low. Some of the range-restricted species we found included: Festive Coquette, Salvadori's Antwren, Saw-billed Hermit, Saffron Toucanet, White-backed Hawk, Long-billed Wren, Sombre Hummingbird, Buff-throated Purpletuft, and Black-cheeked Gnateater. Spotted Bamboowren gave us a run for our money and we walked away grateful we actually saw it moving amid the vines and foliage. Other cool sightings included a Black-and-white Hawk-Eagle and Amazonian Whipsnake. On a beach walk after lunch we spotted a Hudsonian Godwit—one of the few Nearctic migrants that reaches these latitudes and evidently a rare bird in these parts.



Festive Coquette © Steve Ogle



Tanager Frenzy © Steve Ogle



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Swallow-tailed Manakin © Steve Ogle



Ubatuba hike © Steve Ogle

Days 7-8: Macuquinho Lodge

This was a stopover on the way from Ubatuba to our final destination and proved to be an extravaganza for photographers. Macuquinho is the home of Elvis, who has fashioned artistic bird feeder set-ups, hides and other viewing sites for elusive species like White-breasted Tapaculo, Giant

Antshrike, Brown Tinamou and Red-and-white Crake. His “infinity pool” feeders speak for themselves! We enjoyed most of what was on offer, including breakfast and lunch, although we had to stay elsewhere due to the limited capacity on site. The feeders were excellent, with the highlight species likely the tanagers such as Brassy-breasted, Ruby-crowned and Brazilian. A nearby marsh produced another assortment of birds, most notably the ultra range-restricted Marsh Antwren. Rounding out the list were Diademed Tanager, Dusky-tailed Antbird, Red-ruffed Fruitcrow and Red-breasted Toucan.



Brazilian Tanager © Steve Ogle



Brassy Breasted Tanager © Steve Ogle



Giant Antshrike © Steve Ogle



Diademed Tanager © Steve Ogle



Macuquinho hide © Steve Ogle

Days 8-12: Intervalles State Park

This final stop on our itinerary was worth the wait: Intervalles State Park, home to over 500 species of birds. However, a glitch in our hotel booking had us staying at a new place with a sinuous access road that challenged our van. Once we settled in and the road dried up somewhat for the next four days, we grew to appreciate a touch of luxury in our day (although spare time on a birding tour is scant!). The grounds were spectacular with many rainforest birds such as Gray-headed Tody-Flycatcher, Slaty-breasted Wood-Rail, Gray-hooded Attila, Short-tailed Antthrush, Yellow-legged Thrush, and more typical feeder birds. Bare-throated Bellbirds and Hooded Berryeaters serenaded us from the surrounding canopy.



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Chestnut-backed Tanager © Steve Ogle



Paraiso Ecohotel © Steve Ogle

Inside the park we explored Carmo road for two mornings. It was here we encountered our largest mixed-species flock of the trip, which made for an exciting half an hour during which time some 40 species flitted through the forest. Along here we saw a few coveted birds: Spot-billed Toucanet, Squamate Antbird, Rufous-breasted Leaf-tosser, and at least a couple of Sharpbills, an elusive species to say the least! An afternoon visit to a feeding station for Spot-winged Wood-Quail and

another to a Purple-crowned Plovercrest lek were rewarding for the photographers in the group.



Purple-crowned Plovercrest © Steve Ogle



Spot-winged Wood Quail © Steve Ogle

On another morning we arrived to the park entrance area with the opportunity to see many tanagers and hummingbirds attending ornamental Buttonbrush trees. Two notable species here were Chestnut-backed Tanager and Glittering-bellied Emerald. A quick trip to the same quail feeding

station produced close-up views of (ironically) two Solitary Tinamou. We spent some time probing thick bamboo patches looking for elusive anthruses that just would not materialize, but we did find a migrant Rufous-tailed Attila. When dusk settled that evening we had an incredible encounter with a Long-trained Nightjar that flew over our heads twice, one time chasing a Common Potoo. We did some owling and had yet another flyover, this time of a wary yet vocal Long-tufted Screech-owl.



Wall of bamboo © Steve Ogle

Our final morning we packed up and left the hotel but had some time to view some more plovercrests and a somewhat cooperative Sharp-tailed Streamcreeper, which was our last “new” bird of the trip. Most of the group was ready for a break but it was bittersweet to put the binoculars away. Thus, we drove for most of the afternoon to the airport where everyone said goodbye and parted ways. The tour wrapped up with 356 species sighted or heard by at least one trip participant. Six species were recorded every day of the tour: Black Jacobin, Black Vulture, Great Kiskadee, Blue-and-white Swallow, Blue Dacnis, and Sayaca Tanager. Some of the rarest species we saw quite well, while others left us wanting more, which is a good feeling. A special thanks to all of the participants on this excursion- you all made it a wonderful time!



Brazil Atlantic Rainforest group 2024

[Brazil Atlantic Rainforest 2024 bird list](#)