

Brazil

The Atlantic Rainforest

2022 Friday 1st - Sunday 10th July (10 days)

Small group tour with David Walsh & local guides



The gorgeous Green-crowned Plovercrest is endemic to the Atlantic Rainforests of southeastern Brazil © tour participant Jo Latham

Limosa's birdwatching tour to the Brazilian Atlantic Rainforest is a single-centre holiday based at the excellent Reserva Ecológica de Guapiaçu (REGUA) in the coastal mountains north of Rio de Janeiro. This area is outstanding for birds and there is a long list of Brazilian endemics and regional specialities to look for on this superb birding tour. Species we hope to find include the seldom seen Giant Snipe, near threatened Three-toed Jacamar and the stunning Green-crowned Plovercrest and Black-and-gold Cotinga. Other equally impressive possibilities include Hooded Berryeater, Pin-tailed Manakin and Azure-shouldered, Brassy-breasted and Brazilian Tanagers, along with a host of other birds.

Highlights

- Just 7% of Brazil's extraordinary Atlantic rainforest remains
- North of Rio, the REGUA reserve provides a vital refuge for some of its rarest birds
- Rufous-sided Crake, Giant Snipe, Tawny-browed Owl, Bare-throated Bellbird
- Green-crowned Plovercrest, Black-and-gold Cotinga, Brassy-breasted and Brazilian Tanagers
- Excursions to look for the rare Three-toed Jacamar, Grey-winged Cotinga and Restinga Antwren
- Small group tour with a maximum of 8 participants
- Expertly led by Limosa's David Walsh and REGUA's own resident, English-speaking Brazilian bird guides

What's Included?

- Limosa Tour Leader
- Expert English-speaking Brazilian bird guides
- 8 nights accommodation in Brazil, staying at the comfortable Guapiaçu Bird Lodge (REGUA)
- All main meals with drinking water provided plus a *Caipirinha* or two on the veranda!
- Minibus transport and 4WD where necessary
- All excursions, local guides, entry fees and permits
- All tour-based tips (lodge staff, local guides, drivers) and taxes



We hope to find the 'Near Threatened' and localised Three-toed Jacamar during our time at REGUA © David Walsh

Outline Itinerary

Day 1

Fly to Rio de Janeiro from where it is only a 90 minute transfer to REGUA, our base throughout the tour. Night at Guapiaçu Bird Lodge

Days 2-8

Birdwatching at REGUA, plus three or four excursions to the dry forest near Carmo, the Serra dos Orgãos mountains and the Atlantic coast at Cabo Frio. Seven further nights at Guapiaçu Bird Lodge

Day 9

We enjoy some final birding at REGUA before returning to Rio de Janeiro airport for our overnight flight back to the UK

Day 10

Afternoon arrival in UK

Tour Overview

Brazil is a vast and truly fantastic country to explore for birds. One of the most important areas outside of Amazonia are the coastal forests of the Southeast Highlands, north and east of Rio de Janeiro.

This region has been extensively deforested and just 7% of this extraordinary rainforest now remains but timely intervention has enabled protection of some of the best remaining refuges for birds. One of the finest of these is the Reserva Ecológica de Guapiaçu (or REGUA for short), which lies just 50 miles north of Rio.

Established in 2001, REGUA owns and administers an area of more than 18,000 acres, with a stated objective 'to provide protection from hunting and

exploitation of forest products'. This non-profit organisation is actively engaged in tropical forest restoration, including the planting of over 140,000 trees.

The Guapiaçu Bird Lodge offers comfortable accommodation run by welcoming and well-informed staff, with a superb selection of habitats right on the doorstep. As a single-centre tour, there can be few better places to observe Atlantic rainforest bird species with a remarkable 460 species recorded in the region! In the lowland rainforest and wetlands, we will look for specialities such as Giant Snipe, Brazilian Tanager and the tiny Yellow-lored Tody-Flycatcher as well as visiting the Serra dos Orgãos mountains, whose peaks are more than 2000m above sea level. These are the sole refuge for many of the birds that are endemic to southeast Brazil, including Green-crowned Plovercrest and Black-and-gold Cotinga.

Walking the forest trails, birds can come thick and fast as restless feeding flocks pass through the trees, bringing with them a good number of the Atlantic Forest endemics including the dazzling Brassy-breasted Tanager. There should also be a fabulous array of hummingbirds with Rufous-breasted Hermit and the endemic Brazilian Ruby amongst the possibilities as they buzz and dart around like insects.

The species make-up of the feeding flocks can vary according to altitude and even small pockets of forest can produce new and quite different species, so our stay will include trips a little further afield to ensure we encounter as wide a cross-section of birds as possible.

Crescent-chested Puffbird, Slaty Bristlefront, Sharp-tailed Streamcreeper, Rufous-capped Motmot, Pin-tailed Manakin and Spot-billed Toucanet are among many specialities we could find.



Giant Snipe is a speciality of REGUA © tour participant Jo Latham

At the end of each exciting day in the field, we will return to our lovely lodge for a fine meal and the chance to relax with a refreshing lime *Caipirinha*, the traditional Brazilian cocktail.

Now extended to 10 days, our tour also allows time to visit the Atlantic coast near Cabo Frio, where Magnificent Frigatebirds patrol the beaches and Brown Boobies glide by offshore. There should also be terns and waders and we will explore the threatened *restinga*, a unique beach-scrub habitat that is home to the endangered Restinga Antwren, a localised form of the endemic Serra Antwren found only in Rio de Janeiro State.

July is an excellent time for birding at REGUA, with a similar number of species expected compared with a visit in September or October. Being in the middle of the southern winter, July is usually cooler and drier than later in the year, and some species such as the rare Brazilian Laniisoma and Black-legged Dacnis are easier to see.

Limosa has been operating bird tours to Brazil since 1998 and our July 2022 tour will be our 25th visit to this amazing destination. Guide **David Walsh** will be making his third visit to REGUA and his fourth trip to Brazil.

Daily Itinerary

Day 1

FLY TO RIO DE JANEIRO, TRANSFER TO REGUA

Our birdwatching tour to Brazil's Atlantic Rainforest begins with an afternoon departure to Rio de Janeiro, where we arrive later the same evening. Our driver will be waiting to welcome us and we head directly to the comfortable Guapiaçu Bird Lodge at the REGUA reserve, which will be our base throughout the holiday. The journey is relatively short taking approximately 90 minutes. *Night Guapiaçu Bird Lodge in the REGUA reserve*

Days 2 – 8

BIRDING THE ATLANTIC RAINFOREST PLUS 3 OR 4 PLANNED EXCURSIONS TO THE DRY FOREST, MOUNTAINS AND COAST

We awake to an unfamiliar dawn chorus and our first Brazilian birds! The Reserva Ecológica de Guapiaçu (home of the Guapiaçu Bird Lodge) boasts a fantastic variety of habitats and species and our first walk will be a gentle introduction to the local birds. Adjacent to the lodge are several hummingbird feeders and Swallow-tailed Hummingbird, Glittering-bellied Emerald, Violet-capped Woodnymph and Rufous-breasted Hermit should all be present, with the trees around the lodge often holding Burnished-buff Tanager and the near-endemic Brazilian Tanager amongst many others.

We will take a short walk from the lodge down to where Caiman and Capibaras live in a recently created wetland. White-faced Whistling Duck,

Masked Duck, Snail Kite, Aplomado Falcon, Limpkin and a trio of kingfishers (Ringed, Amazon and Green) are among many exciting birds to look for here. Capped, Cocoli and Striated Herons stalk through the shallows and we may be lucky to spot a Rufous-sided Crake or Blackish Rail, although the latter is a notoriously tough species to see well!

We will keep our eyes and ears open for the unusual looking White Woodpecker and large Orange-winged Parrot, along with Blue-winged Parrotlet, White-collared Swift, Common Thornbird, Chestnut-backed Antshrike, Yellow Tyrannulet, Black-capped Donacobius, Yellowish Pipit, White-bellied Seedeater, Chestnut-capped Blackbird and Banded-tailed Hornero. We should also find more Atlantic Forest endemics, such as Yellow-lored Tody-Flycatcher and Long-billed Wren.

One of the real joys of this single-centre tour is that we can keep our programme flexible to allow for any vagaries of weather but our stay will always include birding in the nearby forest and wetlands, as well as some excursions further afield by minibus.



Black-capped Donacobius © David Walsh, Limosa

We will devote plenty of time to exploring REGUA's quiet forest trails and on one day will explore the Waterfall Trail, passing through lowland rainforest that has grown up over the past sixty years to cover the scars of previous clearance.

Feeding stations along the trail should produce Violet-capped Woodnymph and the endemic Saw-billed Hermit and we could also encounter the gorgeous Blue Manakin or perhaps a Rufous-breasted Leaf-tosser. Stands of bamboo conceal the skulking Slaty Bristlefront, as well as furtive antshrikes and antwrens. The secretive Rufous-capped Motmot watches from steep-sided slopes and where the path passes through small clearings, we will pause to check for Spot-billed Toucanets and listen to the loud, clanging song of Bare-throated Bellbirds echoing through the canopy.

As we continue to explore the Atlantic Forest, new specialities should begin to appear with Star-throated Antwrens scolding from the undergrowth and the distinctive song of the localised Sooretama Slaty Antshrike will give the bird away as it moves through the vine tangles above us. Feeding flocks could bring us the beautiful but unobtrusive Pin-tailed Manakin (another Atlantic Forest endemic), Surucua Trogon, Spot-breasted Antwren, Streak-capped Antwren, Olivaceous Woodcreeper, as well as the stunning Green-headed, Brassy-breasted and Red-necked Tanagers.

The Brazilian Laniisoma (aka Elegant Mourner or Shrike-like Cotinga) is something of a REGUA speciality and we will make a special effort to find this tricky bird while also seeking Crescent-chested Puffbird, Scaled Antbird, White-shouldered Fire-eye, Southern Antpiper, Sharp-

tailed Streamcreeper, Grey-hooded Attila and the striking Black-cheeked Gnateater.

On one day, we will make an excursion to the Pico da Caledonia, one of the highest peaks in the Serra dos Orgãos Mountains. This rugged area soars to 2,219m (7,278ft) and on a clear day, the views are spectacular. As the road climbs, we will listen for the whistles of Black-and-gold Cotinga, another Atlantic Forest endemic, and pause to scan for the wonderful Swallow-tailed Cotinga. These montane forests are also one of only two known sites for the extremely rare and elusive Grey-winged Cotinga and on some occasions, our groups have enjoyed fantastic views.

If we are lucky, we may find the amazing Green-crowned Plovercrest performing at its lek and other 'hummers' to look for include White-throated Hummingbird and the endemic Brazilian Ruby.



An astonishing portrait of the rare Grey-winged Cotinga, taken at Pico da Caledonia © tour participant Peter Tapsell

With patience, we may find some of the Serra's more secretive forest dwellers such as Mouse-coloured Tapaculo, Large-tailed Antshrike, Rufous-backed Antwreos and both Rufous-tailed and Dusky-tailed Antbirds which inhabit the densest undergrowth and are much easier to hear than to see! Other species to look for in the mountains include Rufous Gnateater, Blue-billed and Velvety Black Tyrants, Shear-tailed Grey Tyrant, Serra do Mar Tyrant-manakin, the recently split Grey-eyed Greenlet, the violet-blue Diademed Tanager, Bay-chested Warbling Finch and Thick-billed Saltator.

We also plan to make an early morning excursion to Macaé de Cima, an area of montane forest reaching an elevation of around 1400m, where we will investigate several different altitudes. Most of our time, however, will be spent at a private orchid reserve at the top of the mountain which has some of the easiest access to high altitude Atlantic Forest specialities. Our birding is generally along a dirt road and we will make regular stops to check for feeding flocks of tanagers and other species.



If we are fortunate, we should see the Green-crowned Plovercrest on some hummingbird feeders © David Walsh, Limosa

A number of hummingbird feeders provide excellent photographic opportunities, as well as first class views of such gems as Scale-throated Hermit, Green-crowned Plovercrest, White-throated Hummingbird, Brazilian Ruby and Amethyst Woodstar.

Along the trail, we may find Black Hawk-Eagle and Barred Forest Falcon, perhaps a smart Yellow-browed Woodpecker or the amazing Giant Antshrike. Rufous-backed Antwreos may be found alongside a number of 'humbug-like' antbirds such as Bertoni's, Ochre-rumped and Dusky-tailed or perhaps we will be lucky and find Rufous-tailed Antthrush, Rufous-capped and Pallid Spinetails, Pale-browed Treehunter, Orange-eyed Thornbird, White-browed Foliage-gleaner or even a Cinnamon Tanager or two. Birds can come thick and fast in this rich habitat!

One of the few remaining remnant patches of Atlantic dry forest exists beyond the Serra dos Órgãos and although degraded, this habitat is a stronghold of the near threatened Three-toed Jacamar. We have an excellent chance of seeing this plus many other species on a trip that will take in a variety of 'new' habitats including remnant patches of dry forest, open grassy plains and wetlands.

Most of our birding on this occasion will be done by roadside stops and we will look for the superbly named Firewood-gatherer and Streamer-tailed Tyrant plus various raptors including Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture, White-tailed and Bicoloured Hawks, American Kestrel and Bat Falcon.

As ever, a good selection of parrots should be seen with Blue-winged Macaw, White-eyed Parakeet, Blue-winged Parrotlet and Scaly-headed Parrot all possible. Yet more 'new' hummingbirds could include Sapphire-spangled Emerald and Planalto Hermit.

The key bird, however, is the Three-toed Jacamar, and as we search for this near threatened species, other birds we could find include Red-legged Seriema, Black-necked Aracari, White-eared Puffbird, Serra Antwren, Red-eyed Thornbird and the tiny, bright-olive Hangnest Tody-Tyrant!

Our Brazil itinerary now includes an extra day, enabling us to visit somewhere 'completely different' and following another early breakfast, we plan to drive to the coast near the town of Cabo Frio. Only found in this corner of Brazil, little now remains of the special *restinga* habitat which grows here as this is severely threatened by clearance for beachfront development.

This is, however, home to the unique Restinga Antwren, a localised and officially 'Endangered' subspecies of Serra Antwren and we will hope to find this small bird as we explore the coastal sand, scrub and cacti of the unique *restinga*. Other possibilities here include Sooretama Slaty Antshrike, Hangnest Tody-Tyrant, Short-crested Flycatcher, Lemon-chested Greenlet and Blue-black Grassquit.

Southern Lapwing may be nesting nearby and on small islands, Royal and Cabot's Terns allow good comparison. Brown Boobies plunge like Gannets for fish offshore and Kelp and Grey-hooded Gulls are often present. Another highlight are the huge and 'Pterodactyl-like' Magnificent Frigatebirds that cruise menacingly overhead.

Small roadside pools and saltmarsh can hold good numbers of Black-necked Stilt, White-cheeked Pintail, Little Blue Heron and the oddly 'ugly' Roseate Spoonbill, a bird which looks much more beautiful in flight than when seen up close!

Guira Cuckoos and Burrowing Owls are usually present in good numbers and another star species is the aptly named Long-winged Harrier.

Given the timing of our tour, most migrant shorebirds will, of course, still be much further north, but careful scanning might produce a Hudsonian Godwit or perhaps a Semipalmated Plover.

All in all, your stay with Limosa and the friendly staff at REGUA offers an unrivalled opportunity to enjoy a wide cross-section of the birds of Brazil's unique but severely threatened Atlantic Rainforest habitat. We have minimal driving on the days we explore our local area, although there is inevitably a fair bit of travelling to explore the wonderfully varied areas further afield.

Anyone with the slightest ambition with a camera should find plenty of chances to take some great photos!

Seven nights at the Guapiaçu Bird Lodge, in the REGUA reserve



Surucua Trogon sits quietly © tour participant Jo Latham

Day 9

REGUA AND RIO DE JANEIRO, FLY TO UK

Our flight home is likely to depart Rio late this evening so we should be able to enjoy another full morning of birding at REGUA, followed by lunch. After a relaxed afternoon, we may have time for one last look around the wonderful grounds of the lodge before bidding a reluctant farewell to our hosts. We then drive back to Rio in good time to check-in for our overnight flight back to the UK.

Day 10

ARRIVAL IN UK

Afternoon arrival in the UK where our Brazil birdwatching tour concludes.

Trip Information

Group Size 8 participants and 1 UK leader plus local guides

What to Expect After more than 20 visits, we have found Brazil to be a delightful and rich birding destination and we are confident you will agree! We will make early starts each day to make the most of the mornings when birds are likely to be at their most active.

Lunch may be taken back at the lodge or as a picnic in the field, depending on our plans for that particular day.

We often take a short break after lunch, before going out again for the remainder of the afternoon.

We return to the lodge each evening for *caipirinhas*, dinner and overnight.

Birds 250-330 species.

Accommodation 8 nights accommodation at the Guapiaçu Bird Lodge (REGUA) which offers comfortable, guest rooms with private facilities and great birding right on site!

The lodge is equipped to a high standard with a spacious and comfortable lounge, a large dining area, an excellent library, a small swimming pool and hot water heated by solar power.

A laundry service is available for a small fee. Please note, however, that clothes are dried on a line so drying times are entirely weather dependent!

The lodge is small, with a relaxed and informal atmosphere, and is set against a fabulous backdrop of forested mountains. It has beautifully maintained gardens which provide superb birding and photographic opportunities from the veranda.

Fruit feeders attract noisy groups of euphonias, chlorophonias and a whole range of 'rainbow coloured' tanagers including Hooded, Ruby-crowned, Brazilian, Sayaca, Palm, Yellow-backed, Green-headed and Burnished-buff.

On the hummingbird feeders, Swallow-tailed Hummingbirds fight off Rufous-breasted Hermits, Violet-capped Woodnymphs and Glittering-throated Emeralds.

Around the gardens, Orange-winged Parrot, Guira Cuckoo, Ferruginous Pygmy Owl, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Crescent-chested Puffbird, Channel-billed Toucan, White and Blond-crested Woodpeckers, Chestnut-backed Antshrike and Long-billed Wren are among the birds which are often present, while at night Tropical Screech-Owl, Tawny-browed Owl, Short-tailed Nighthawk and Pauraque may be seen while sipping a cool lime *Caipirinha*, the traditional Brazilian cocktail.

Meals All main meals are included in the tour price commencing with light refreshments on arrival at the lodge late on the evening of Day 1 and concluding with lunch on Day 9.

Home-cooking, with local freshly prepared dishes by the lodge's own cooks (vegetarian needs can also be catered for).

Breakfasts and dinners will be at the lodge, whilst some lunches will be picnics. Soft and alcoholic drinks are available for purchase at the lodge.

Walking Easy to moderate, chiefly along forest trails. There are some steeper, uphill stretches in the mountains, but all are taken at a very gentle pace with regular stops for birds. Wherever possible, we will drive to the top and walk down. Sturdy waterproof walking shoes or lightweight boots with good grip are recommended.

Maximum elevation on this tour: 2200m/7200ft (for a couple of hours only).

Weather Tropical climate, mainly warm and sunny with rainfall always possible. It can be hot and humid and this sometimes gives rise to thundery downpours.

July is one of the driest months of the year. In Rio, maximum temperatures are fairly constant throughout the year, ranging from 21-27C (70-81F) in July, although it can significantly cooler than this in the mountains, especially high up and also early and late in the day.

Flights Due to the pandemic, it is proving extremely difficult to predict future flight prices and schedules, especially when a trip is scheduled for beyond the period when flights can be booked. As a result, we have taken the decision to price our holidays as excluding all international flights.

To keep the process as simple as possible for our clients, however, we are now working closely with an agent from Travel Counsellors who will be able to advise you on which flights we are recommending for each holiday and he will be able to book these for you.

Ground Transport By minibus, switching to 4WD vehicle/s when occasion demands.

Insects We may encounter mosquitoes on some trails but there is no malaria risk on this tour.

Photos Good to excellent photographic opportunities in more open habitats, including wetlands, at bird feeders and around the lodge.

Photographing birds in the forest, however, can be more challenging as light levels are often lower.



We are likely to find Red-legged Seriema in more open areas on our holiday © tour participant Jo Latham

Tour Cost

2022 (10-day tour):

Land only cost: £2995

Deposit: £500

Single Supp: £495

Cost includes

- Limosa Tour Leader
- Expert English-speaking Brazilian bird guide
- 8 nights accommodation in Brazil
- All main meals, with drinking water provided plus a freshly made *Caipirinha* or two!
- Travel by minibuss and 4WD vehicle
- All excursions, local guides, permits/entry fees
- All tour-based tips (lodge, driver, local guides) and taxes
- Limosa checklist of birds

Cost excludes

International flights, insurance, drinks, airport meals/snacks and other items of a personal nature.

About Your Guide

David Walsh David lives in Suffolk, where he has recently retired from full-time teaching, although he continues with part-time maths tutoring and enjoys singing in local choirs. He has been a keen birdwatcher since his primary school days and still has his notebooks from the early 1970s to prove it! At home in Suffolk, he puts his love of bird songs and calls to good use, running surveys to monitor breeding birds in the spring and searching out migrants in the autumn.

He has been leading tours since 1986 and in the last 12 years has focused especially on Europe, North Africa, Asia and South America, developing his interest in butterflies and dragonflies as well as birds.

David's boundless energy and enthusiasm, coupled with a determination to ensure that everyone in the group sees the birds, made him very popular with clients on the tours he led for Ornitholidays between 2007 and 2018 and we were very pleased when he became part of the Limosa team in 2019!

Our July 2022 tour to Brazil will be his third visit to REGUA and his fourth tour to Brazil.

What You Say...

"Our first time to Brazil and a good introduction to SE American birding. We could not have wished for a better group of people to travel with and Brian, the guide, was excellent. We saw some great birds and had great fun along the way - what more can you ask for on a birding holiday!"

L&GP, Brazil | REGUA tour

"Giant Snipe excursion very rewarding. Nicholas's ambition, vision and enthusiasm for his conservation work cannot fail to engender support for the [REGUA] project."

SC, Brazil | REGUA tour

"Especially remembered the fantastic views of the Plovercrest. It was really great to see all three cotingas on one trip, to see the very rare Grey-winged, superb and the Swallow-tailed in exactly the same tree as 5 years ago!!"

LM, Brazil | REGUA tour



Trail birding © tour participant Jo Latham

How to Enquire

Due to the considerable uncertainty created by the pandemic, Limosa Holidays are not currently accepting bookings for any trips, however, you are welcome to contact us either by email or phone to register your interest in any of our holidays.

Whilst some tour companies may be willing to take a deposit from you and say a trip is a "confirmed departure", our approach is going to be to wait a little longer as we consider this both honest and realistic.

Once we are confident that the trip can run, we will be in touch to confirm your place and ask for a deposit.

We do encourage you to register your interest as we are expecting considerable demand, once the consensus is that it is safe to travel again.

Any Questions

Please do not hesitate to contact us by email or phone. Our office is generally open from 09:30-17:30 but you are welcome to contact us outside these times too. We are happy to take calls in the evening and at weekends but if no one is available the call will go to our answerphone.

Thank you for your interest in our tours. We do hope that you will be able to join us once the pandemic is over and we look forward to hearing from you.

