



Green-headed Tanager – © Sergio Castedo

Best of Argentine Atlantic Forest & Iguazu Falls

7 days/6 nights tour (with optional night extension)

Experience the subtropical forest at its best...

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Atlantic forest and Iguazu River – © Adrián Heredia

INTRODUCTION

The Atlantic forest (subtropical forest of Amazonian domain) is one of the most bio-diverse ecosystems in South America, with about 60 percent of its vertebrate fauna being endemic. Several different forest assemblages are found within it, each one of them having its different bird repertoire, which makes it one of the world's top birding destinations.

Once covering most of south-east Brazil, east Paraguay and the north-east tip of Argentina, nowadays less than 10 % of the original territory still remains as a forest. The Argentine province of Misiones has one of the world's largest continuous area of Atlantic Forest, and most of it is formally protected as national and provincial parks (such as Iguazu National Park and Urugua-í and Cruce Caballero Provincial Parks).

Most of its original fauna is still well preserved, with over 500 species of birds (including toucans, puffbirds, antbirds, manakins, tanagers and more) and many of South America's iconic neotropic mammals, such as jaguars, tapirs, peccaries, anteaters, monkeys, agoutis and many others.

This is a tour that comprises some of the best birding areas and most beautiful landscapes within the Argentine Atlantic forest and it's ecotone with the Campos grassland, in an ideal amount of time that includes a visit to the spectacular Iguazu Falls.



Blue Manakin - © Jorge La Grotteria

TOUR DESCRIPTION

Arriving in Posadas airport, we will travel northwards and make an early birding stop in Candelaria, where we will focus in Campos grassland species such as the stunning **Streamer-tailed Tyrant**, several species of **seedeaters** and the rare **Sharp-tailed Tyrant**. After that stop we will continue northwards to the town of San Pedro.

San Pedro is conveniently located near two provincial parks that protect a very endangered type of forest within the Atlantic forest: the monkey-puzzle (Araucaria) forest. This ecosystem gives refuge to endangered and very local bird species such as the **Vinaceous-breasted Parrot**, **Canebrake Groundcreeper** and **Araucaria Tit-spinetail**.

The first park that we will visit is La Araucaria provincial park, and is located right next to San Pedro, being one of the best places to see the three species mentioned above. An afternoon visit to this park will give us good chances to find those and more species. We will spend the night in cabins near San Pedro, where there is a breeding territory of **Stygian Owl**, which we will try to find in the evening.

The following morning we will have an early start to visit Cruce Caballero provincial park, which protects one of the most spectacular patches of primary forest still left in South America, with huge elder monkey-puzzle trees and a dense tree-fern forest under them.



Vinaceous-breasted Parrot – © Andrés Terán

Bird specialties in this park include the rare **White-bearded Antshrike**, **Helmeted Woodpecker**, **Black-billed Scythebill** and **Planalto Tyrannulet**. Good chances of seeing the spectacular **Long-trained Nightjar** before sunrise are the main reasons for the early start.

After spending the morning in Cruce Caballero, we will continue our way northwards to get to one of the main destinations of the tour: Karadya Birding Lodge. This outstanding private reserve with accommodations is located in a hilly area with a type of forest that is different to the one found in Iguazu National Park, therefore having a different bird assemblage. At Karadya we will be looking for Atlantic Forest specialties such as the **Red-breasted Toucan**, **Blue Manakin**, **Black-throated Grosbeak**, **Bay-ringed Tyrannulet** and the more skulking **Planalto Tapaculo** and **Spotted Bamboowren**, among many others. Antbirds are especially diverse here (although yet hard to spot) with remarkable species such as the **White-shouldered Fire-Eye**, **Bertoni's Antbird**, **Dusky-tailed Antbird**, **Streak-capped Antwren**, **Tufted Antshrike** and even **Giant Antshrike**, although this last one is not found all the time in the area. The reserve is located in a green corridor which connects Urugua-i provincial park with Foerster provincial park, being a real hotspot for birdwatching. It is also a good place to look for soaring raptors such as **King Vulture**, **Black-and-white Hawk-Eagle** (particularly often seen in the area) and the much scarcer **Ornate Hawk-Eagle**. At night this reserve offers great chances of finding some Atlantic Forest endemics such as the **Tawny-browed Owl** and **Rusty-barred Owl**.



Spot-billed Toucanet - © Andrés Terán

Our next destination will be also one of the most exciting birding spots in our tour: Surucua Reserva & Ecolodge. Accommodating in this comfortable birding lodge we will be experiencing a different type of Atlantic Forest at its best, more similar to the forest found around the falls, but without the crowds of people that usually visit that park every day. The place is surrounded by rainforest, bordering Iguazu national park in the Argentine side (west of the reserve) and Do Iguazu national park to the north (right across Iguazu River) in the Brazilian shore. On the way between Karadya and Surucua reserves we will make a short but important birding stop at Urugua-i provincial park to look for the endangered **Black-fronted Piping-Guan**.

Surucua lodge has a good network of trails, including part of the coast of Iguazu River with an amazing view of the forest landscape. Here we will be looking for species such as **White-bearded Manakin**, **Band-tailed Manakin**, **Surucua Trogon**, **Black-throated Trogon**, **Blond-crested Woodpecker**, **Robust Woodpecker**, **Ochre-collared Piculet**, **Spot-backed Antshrike**, **Buff-bellied Puffbird** and **Spot-billed Toucanet**, among many others. **Rufous-capped Motmots** start their activity before dusk calling loudly from their hidden spots in the forest, and in the evening **Common Potoos**, **Pauraques**, **Semicollared Nighthawks**, **Black-capped Screech Owls** and **Mottled Owls** are commonly heard (depending on the season) just around the lodge's rooms.



Black-fronted Piping-Guan - © Jorge La Grotteria

After birding in Surucua lodge and before visiting the falls we will make the last birding stop at Jardin de los Picaflores (Hummingbird's Garden), a place where it is possible to spot from a very close distance lots of hummers of different species that are very hard to find in the forest. **Planalto Hermit, Black Jacobin, Violet-capped Woodnymph, Versicolored Emerald** and the astonishing **Swallow-tailed Hummingbird** are some of the species that visit the garden, as well as other colorful birds such as different kinds of **euphonias** and the **Green-headed Tanager**.

Finally, as a “grand finale” we will visit the famous Iguazu Falls, one of the world's most outstanding waterfalls and the perfect end for the most complete tour to the best of the Argentine Atlantic Forest.

ITINERARY*

DAY 1: AM arrival at Posadas airport. Transfer to San Pedro with birding stop at Candelaria for grassland specialties. PM birding in La Araucaria Provincial Park. Night in San Pedro.

DAY 2: Early transfer to Cruce Caballero Provincial Park (AM birding there). Transfer to Karadya Birding Lodge. Evening birding and night in Karadya.



Black-and-white Hawk-Eagle – © Adrián Heredia

DAY 3: Full day birding in Karadya Birding Lodge. Night in Karadya.

DAY 4: Full day birding in Karadya Birding Lodge. Night in Karadya.

DAY 5: AM transfer to Surucua Reserve & Ecolodge with birding stop in Urugua-i Provincial Park. PM birding in Surucua Reserve & Ecolodge. Night in Surucua.

DAY 6: Full day birding in Surucua Reserva & Ecolodge. Night in Surucua.

DAY 7: Early transfer to Puerto Iguazu across Iguazu National Park (with birding stops). AM visit to Hummingbird's Garden. PM visit to Iguazu Falls at Iguazu National Park. End of tour at Puerto Iguazu Airport.

IGUAZU FALLS EXTENDED VISIT:

DAY 7 would be fully spent at the falls. An extra night would be spent in Puerto Iguazu, and Hummingbird's Garden would be visited on AM of **DAY 8**, before departing from Puerto Iguazu airport.

** The itinerary may change due to force majeure*



Black Jacobin - © Jorge La Grotteria

TOUR DETAILS

Price

Please contact us to find out about our prices for the current and/or following seasons.

Our prices **include** all accommodations, three meals a day (breakfast, lunch and dinner), all land transfers in private vehicle, local guide/driver and tour leader with quality spotting scope, and snacks and drinks (bottled water) during the birding outings. Our prices **do not include** flight tickets (unless asked on request), personal insurance, drinks in Karadya Birding Lodge and Surucua Reserva & Ecolodge, entrance tickets to Hummingbirds Garden and Iguazu National Park, guide at Iguazu National Park, tips nor anything not mentioned on previous sentence.

Group size

We run this tour on request for groups with a minimum size of 2 and a maximum of 4 passengers. Please contact us for information about larger groups and options for single travelers.

Physical difficulty

Easy to moderate.



Clymena Eighty-eight - © Jorge La Grotteria

Accommodations

Great jungle lodges at Surucua Reserva & Ecolodge and Karadya Birding Lodge (and in Iguazu area, if 8th day extension is booked). Comfortable rustic cabins in San Pedro.

Weather in Misiones

Misiones province has subtropical humid and warm weather, with summer temperatures between 20 and 35° C, although winter may have cold temperatures (around 10° C) at times in the mornings, especially in the higher areas. There are rains throughout the year, although focused mainly in the winter.

Packing for the trip

Bring light clothing (long-sleeves shirts and long pants to avoid insect bites) and a light coat. It's also essential to bring closed shoes (2 pairs if possible), a rain coat ("ponchos" are very useful) and a good hat. Along with that you should bring sun glasses, sun screen and insect repellent (this last one mainly for the rainforest). If you are coming in winter you should add more warm clothing.



Sharp-tailed Tyrant – © Jorge La Grotteria

Best time of the year

This is a tour that can be made at any time of the year, although we recommend early spring time (August-September) or autumn (April-June) for better weather conditions and bird activity.

Best combined with

Northwest Argentina in Jujuy Birding Route 10 to 16 days tour

Ibera Marshes 4 days/3 nights tour (or check our “Northeast Argentina: Ibera Marshes & Atlantic forest of Iguazu Falls” 14 days/13 nights itinerary)

Mbaracayu Reserve Specialties (Paraguay) 4 days/3 nights tour

Southern Entre Ríos 3 days/2 nights tour

South Patagonia Birding Tour (El Calafate & Ushuaia) 7 days/6 nights tour

Costanera Sur reserve (Buenos Aires) Half Day tour



Higher circuit at Iguazu falls

Important (READ): our tours are designed for small groups, with low impact, personalized attention and hiring local guides whenever possible, in order to increase their quality. We keep the use of play back down to a minimum possible so to avoid stressing the birds or affecting their natural behavior, thus actively contributing to the conservation of the same and promotion of responsible birding and ecotourism practices.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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