

LAND OF THE CHERRY-THROATED TANAGER



Cherry-throated Tanager (*Nemosia rourei*) © Gustavo Magnago

TOUR OVERVIEW

The Cherry-throated Tanager (*Nemosia rourei*), a spectacular endemic of montane Atlantic rainforests in eastern Brazil, is one of the rarest and most endangered birds in the world. There are perhaps fewer than 20 individuals in existence today at just two locations, where they persist on forested hilltops in the heavily fragmented Atlantic forests of south-central Espírito Santo state. However, both known populations are now being monitored, and reserves are being created to protect the birds that remain. Our tour begins with a visit to an important watershed reserve outside the capital city of Vitória where we hope to find rarities such as Buff-throated Purpletuft, Kinglet Manakin and Russet-winged Spadebill. We then head north up the coast to spend three nights in the lowland *tabuleiro* forests of Linhares, where we search for a host of rare and endangered endemics including such iconic species as the Red-bellied Curassow, Red-browed Amazon, Blue-throated Parakeet and the Atlantic forest race of White-winged Potoo. We stay a night at a lovely little pousada in the hills around the town of Santa Teresa which boasts some of the best hummingbird feeders in eastern Brazil. The remnant forests around the town hold specialties such as Wied's Tyrant-Manakin and Rufous-brown Solitaire. From Santa Teresa we proceed to the Pedra Azul State Park, visiting a site for the endemic Serra Antwren en

route. We save the best for last, with two full days to bird the Caetés forest and neighbouring reserves to look for the Cherry-throated Tanager. Our trip covers the best birding sites in Espírito Santo and it has a bit of everything: wonderful scenery, great food, friendly people, and of course, world-class birding.

ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival.

Arrival in Vitória, the capital of the state of Espírito Santo. Depending on arrival schedules, there may be time to bird mangroves at a local university to try for **Mangrove Rail**, or to visit a nearby site to look for day-roosting **Pygmy Nightjars**.

Night in Vitória.

Day 2: Duas Bocas Reserve and travel to Linhares.

In the morning we bird in the Duas Bocas Biological Reserve, a site located about an hour from Vitória. The lowland and lower montane Atlantic rainforest here is home to a number of rarities including **Russet-winged Spadebill**, **Salvadori's Antwren**, **Buff-throated Purpleuft**, **Yellow-eared Woodpecker**, **Golden-tailed Parrotlet**, and **Kinglet Manakin**, along with more common Atlantic Forest endemics such as **Spot-backed Antshrike**, **Streak-capped Antwren**, **Black-capped Foliage-gleaner** and **Green-headed Tanager**. After lunch we head north along the coast to Aracruz, where we stop to visit the Augusti Ruschi Marine Biology Station, where hummingbird feeders attract **Minute Hermit** and number of other species. From Aracruz we drive another couple of hours to a private reserve administered by the Brazilian mining conglomerate Vale, where we should arrive in the late afternoon.

Night at Vale Linhares Reserve.

Day 3 & 4: Linhares.

Together with the neighbouring Sooretama reserve, Linhares comprises part of the largest block of lowland *tabuleiro* forest in the state of Espírito Santo in addition to being one of the most important forest reserves of the Rio Doce sub-centre of endemism between the south of Bahia and northern Rio de Janeiro. Linhares is chock full of lowland Atlantic Forest endemics, and we'll have two full days to bird the many sandy tracks looking for the key birds. Foremost amongst these is the endangered **Red-billed Curassow**, which is nowadays seen only here and at one or two more sites. Driving slowly along the park roads early in the mornings and in late afternoon is the best way to see this species; such drives occasionally turn up other big surprises, such as a **Solitary Tinamou**, **Brazilian Tapir**, or even **Jaguar**! Other key species at Linhares include **Red-browed Amazon**, **White-eared Parakeet**, **Blue-throated Parakeet**, **Least Pygmy-Owl**, **Black-headed Berryeater**, **Plumbeous Antvireo**, **Black-cheeked Gnateater**, **Plumbeous Antvireo**, and **Band-tailed Antwren**. Linhares also holds mega-rarities like **Harpy Eagle**, the endemic *dulcis* race of **Rufous-vented Ground Cuckoo**, and even the previously unknown-in-life Atlantic Forest form of **Cryptic Forest-Falcon** was seen here in 2012. Night birding could produce **Tawny-browed Owl**, **Black-capped Screech-Owl**, Ocellated Poorwill, and with some luck perhaps also the Atlantic form of **White-winged Potoo**.

Nights at Vale Linhares Reserve.

Day 5: Linhares to Santa Teresa.

We drive from Linhares up into the Espírito Santo uplands to the small town of Santa Teresa. En route we can stop at a scenic park where the endemic **Serra Antwren** and **Velvety Black-Tyrant** occur. **King Vulture** is

often seen flying over the cliffs here, and there is even an outside chance for **Orange-breasted Falcon**. Sites around Santa Teresa hold **East Brazilian Chachalaca**, **Wied's Tyrant-Manakin** and **Rufous-brown Solitaire**, while the hummingbird feeders at our hotel on the outskirts of town are amongst the best in all of Brazil.
Night at Pousada Vita Verde in Santa Teresa.

Day 6: Santa Teresa area.

This morning we can have a leisurely breakfast and spend time enjoying the activity at the hummingbird feeders at the hotel, where more than 15 species of hummer have been recorded -- the star of the show here is the fabulous **Frilled Coquette**, while the supporting cast includes many **White-throated Hummingbirds**, **Brazilian Ruby**, **Black Jacobin**, **Violet-capped Woodnymph** and **Sombre Hummingbird**. We depart in mid-morning, driving for a couple of hours before we stop for lunch at a private reserve below an imposing rock dome. It's worth checking the feeders at the restaurant for **East Brazilian Chachalaca** amongst the more common thrushes and tanagers. **Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle** nests in this area annually, so we'll want to scan the rocky slopes for perched birds and watch the sky for soaring birds. If we haven't already seen **Serra Antwren**, we can pick it up here. In the late afternoon we arrive at our hotel near the Pedra Azul State Park. We can try here for **Giant Snipe** in the early evening.

Night at Pousada Vale da Mata at Pedra Azul.

Day 7 & 8: Mata dos Caetés.

We have two full days to look for the enigmatic and Critically Endangered **Cherry-throated Tanager**. The tanager hangs on to existence by a thread, with only two known locations for the species and a global population of fewer than 20 individuals. We will visit a recently created reserve administered by the Instituto Marcos Daniel, a local conservation organization. Researchers from the institute monitor the resident population of the tanagers, and we will accompany them in the field to search for the tanagers. In 2020 and 2021, the research team even discovered the first known nests of the species! The montane forests here are rich in endemics and specialties, and our long list of targets in the area include **White-necked Hawk**, **Saffron Toucanet**, **Spot-billed Toucanet**, **Tufted Antshrike**, **Spot-breasted Antvireo**, **Ochre-rumped Antbird**, **Ferruginous Antbird**, **White-bibbed Antbird**, **Rio de Janeiro Antbird**, **Variegated Antpitta**, **Spotted Bamboowren**, **White-breasted Tapaculo**, **Such's Antthrush**, **Black-billed Scythebill**, **Pale-browed Treehunter**, **Hooded Berryeater**, **Swallow-tailed Cotinga**, **Cinnamon-vented Piha**, **Shrike-like Cotinga**, **Sharpbill**, **Oustalet's Tyrannulet**, **Half-collared Sparrow**, **Brown Tanager**, **Brassy-breasted Tanager** and **Gilt-edged Tanager**.

Night at Pousada Vale da Mata at Pedra Azul.

Day 9: Return to Vitória.

End of tour.

Possible Combinations and Extensions

Treasures of Minas Gerais

Our Espírito Santo itinerary is a great complement to our [Treasures of Minas Gerais tour](#). Combining the two itineraries one covers the Atlantic Forest and the Cerrado, seeing a terrific range of the specialties of both ecosystems. Please [contact us](#) for a customized itinerary.

Rio's Serra dos Orgãos

A short tour based at either the fabulous REGUA reserve at Guapi-Açu in the lowlands of Rio de Janeiro, or higher up in the mountains near the town of Novo Friburgo. From either of these two bases, we have a mix of on-site birding and day trips to nearby areas to cover a range of elevations and habitats, tracking down rare endemics including **Green-crowned Plovercrest**, **Gray-winged Cotinga**, **Black-and-gold Cotinga**, **Three-toed Jacamar** and **Restinga Antwren**. Optional day trip to a lowland reserve for the Endangered endemic **Golden Lion Tamarin**. [Contact us for further details](#).