

VICTOR EMANUEL NATURE TOURS

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NORTHEASTERN BRAZIL

CAATINGA & ATLANTIC RAIN FOREST

JANUARY 7 – 24, 2006

ALAGOAS EXTENSION

JANUARY 23-27, 2006

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Northeastern Brazil is a land of stark contrasts. Its immense, arid interior is dominated by a unique habitat known as caatinga, an association of thorn-scrub, columnar cacti, and huge terrestrial bromeliads, reminiscent of Baja or southeastern Arizona. Red rim-rock formations and towering mesas bathed in the glow of blazing sunsets further the impressions of southwestern landscapes, but it is here that the similarities end. The caatinga teems with birdlife, in a manner similar to the bush country of eastern Africa. Dawn choruses are spectacular: the hauntingly beautiful songs of Red-legged Seriemas, Small-billed Tinamous, Striped Cuckoos, and Campo Troupials; the raucous duets of cacholotes and horneros; and the bickering of wagtail-tyrants and Masked Water-Tyrants. Birds are everywhere—from flocks of Comb Ducks flying in formation to a distant marsh at dawn, to immaculate White Monjitas perched atop bare acacias, to Least Nighthawks quartering over the desert at dusk. Just as importantly, they are easy to see! At every stop one is captivated by the sheer "birdiness" of the caatinga and by the ease of viewing conditions in this land of deciduous, stunted woodland and desert. But these are not just any birds. The region harbors a highly endemic avifauna that includes some of the least-known and most endangered species of birds on the South American continent. Foremost among them is the spectacular Lear's (or Indigo) Macaw, rediscovered in 1978, and numbering fewer than 250 birds remaining in the wild. Other specialties include White-browed Guan; Caatinga Parakeet; Pygmy Nightjar; Stripe-breasted Starthroat; Broad-tipped Hermit; Spot-backed Puffbird; Spotted and Ochraceous piculets; Ochre-cheeked and Gray-headed spinetails; Silvery-cheeked Antshrike; Pectoral Antwren; Black-bellied Antwren; Stripe-backed Antbird; White-browed Antpitta; Pale-bellied Tyrant-Manakin; Ash-throated Casiornis; Hangnest Tody-Tyrant; Greater and Lesser wagtail-tyrants; the elegant White-naped Jay; Long-billed Wren; Gray-eyed Greenlet; Red-cowled Cardinal; Capped and White-throated seedeaters; and four spectacular endemics: the Great Xenops, Red-shouldered Spinetail, Slender Antbird, and Scarlet-throated Tanager, each of which represents a monotypic genus. A spectacular recent addition to the known avifauna of the region is the stunning Araripe Manakin (described in 1998), which has been seen on each of our tours since its discovery.

Although the chance to bird the caatinga would alone be worth the trip, it is only half the attraction of Northeastern Brazil. Chapada de Diamantina embraces landscapes of spectacularly eroded mesas, sheer cliffs and plunging waterfalls, and, in its upper elevations, a beautiful and highly endemic plant community that harbors such specialties as the stunning Hooded Visorbearer, Gray-backed Tachuri,

Blue Finch, and Pale-throated Serra-Finch. In the mountains of eastern Ceará, southern Bahia and the coastal foothills of Alagoas, there also exists remnants of humid Atlantic Forest, one of the most biologically unique and at the same time, one of the most severely threatened biomes in the world. These lush forests harbor an amazing number of endemics and near-endemics, among them some of the rarest and most spectacular birds of Brazil. The scant attention paid historically to this region by ornithologists is evidenced by the fact that four species of birds new to science have been described from a single forest patch in Alagoas since 1979! The Serra da Ouricana of Bahia is even less well known, and recent surveys there have yielded two species new to science in the past decade! Not all discoveries have come from the mountains: the bizarre Pink-legged Graveteiro, a bird so unique that it was placed in its own genus, inhabits lowland humid forest in southern Bahia, and was just described to science in 1996.

An optional extension to Alagoas will focus on finding Jandaya Parakeet; Golden-tailed Parrotlet; Long-tailed Woodnymph; Racket-tailed Coquette; Pinto's Spinetail; Alagoas Foliage-gleaner; Orange-bellied Antwren; Alagoas Antwren; Scalloped Antbird; Black-cheeked Gnateater; Black-headed Berryeater; Buff-throated Purple-tuft; White-winged Cotinga; Blue-backed Manakin; Alagoas Tyrannulet; Smoky-fronted Tody-Flycatcher; Yellow-faced Siskin; and the spectacular Seven-colored Tanager.

Good accommodations, easy birding (easy walking and good viewing conditions), a warm, dry climate, a variety of habitats, an abundance of endemic birds, and some of the best birding anywhere make Northeastern Brazil a compelling destination.

January 7-8, Days 1-2: Travel to Baturité via São Paulo and Fortaleza. All participants will need to depart the USA this evening and arrive in São Paulo on January 8 in time to connect to the 10:25 a.m. departure of Varig Flight 2374 to Fortaleza (subject to change) which is scheduled to arrive at 12:35 p.m. Upon arrival, we will be met and transferred to our hotel, which is nestled in the Serra de Baturité.

Participants wanting to avoid the risk of misconnecting should consider arriving in São Paulo or Fortaleza on January 7 and spending the night in an airport-area hotel. Upon request, VENT will be happy to assist with these arrangements.

NIGHT: Hotel Remanso, Mulungu (January 8)

January 9, Day 3: Serra de Baturité. The Serra de Baturité is one of a number of isolated mountains or mountain ranges that rise like islands out of the surrounding sea of *caatinga*. The lower slopes of these mountains are cloaked in highly deciduous thorn-scrub and woodland; while higher up, the forest is more evergreen. This habitat gradient supports an interesting mix of birds, many of which are geographically isolated incipient species. Among the many species which we will search for are White-browed Guan, Caatinga Parakeet, Blue-winged Parrotlet, Swallow-tailed Hummingbird, Glittering-bellied Emerald, Blue-crowned Trogon, Blond-crested and Little woodpeckers, Ochre-cheeked and Sooty-fronted sApinetails, Barred Antshrike (the distinctive reddish-brown-eyed race *capistratus*), Planalto Slaty-Antshrike, White-fringed Antwren, Black-capped Antwren, Bran-colored Flycatcher, Planalto Tyrannulet, White-naped Jay, and Purple-throated Euphonia.

We will concentrate much of our attention on the grounds of our hotel, which supports a nice remnant of some of the little remaining evergreen forest in these mountains. Here, we will be particularly alert for Spot-winged Wood-Quail, Gould's Toucanet, Ochraceous Piculet, White-eared Parakeet (endemic subspecies *griseipectus*, likely to be split), Rufous-breasted Leaf-tosser, Variable Antshrike, Short-tailed Antthrush, "Ceara Gnateater" (a likely split from Rufous Gnateater), and the highly localized Buff-breasted Tody-Tyrant.

NIGHT: Hotel Remanso, Mulungu

January 10, Day 4: Baturité to Juazeiro do Norte. Today, we will travel overland to Juazeiro do Norte. Although the drive is a long one, we will break it up with frequent birding stops, both in the *caatinga*, and at roadside ponds and marshes, where Masked Duck and Spotted Rail are among the possibilities. We will arrive at Juazeiro do Norte in the late afternoon.

NIGHT: Hotel Panorama, Juazeiro do Norte

January 11, Day 5: Chapada do Araripe. We will have the full day to bird the Chapada do Araripe. Although there will be much to see, two species in particular will be the focus of our search: the Araripe Manakin and the Great Xenops. The Great Xenops is a bizarre rufous bird with a cleaver-like upturned bill, and is a little-known endemic of eastern Brazil. It is placed in the monotypic genus *Megaxenops*, and its closest taxonomic affinities remain unknown.

We will also attempt to find the recently discovered Araripe Manakin. This relative of the Helmeted Manakin was discovered in 1998 and was formally described to science the following year. Males are a spectacular study in red, black, and white. Our 1999 group succeeded in finding one of these gems before it even had an English name, and each of our subsequent groups have been successful in locating at least one of these feathered gems.

Although some searching may be required to find the Araripe Manakin and the Great Xenops, other birds will be conspicuous. Noisy groups of impressive White-naped Jays are frequently encountered. The bizarre calls of Pale-bellied Tyrant-Manakins and the lively songs of Flavescent Warblers seem to issue forth from every thicket. Early morning is the time to catch the endemic White-browed Guan feeding at the forest edge, and with luck we could spot a calling Bearded Bellbird atop a song perch. A loud squeak from the forest floor signals the presence of a Rufous-breasted Leaf-tosser, while a soft trill from the canopy can be traced to the endemic Caatinga Antwren. Roving mixed-species flocks contain Tawny Piculet, Tropical Gnatcatchers, Gray-eyed Greenlets, Burnished-buff and Cinnamon tanagers, and Purple-throated Euphonias. Other species of interest include Blue-crowned Trogon, the spectacular Blond-crested Woodpecker (represented here by the endemic subspecies *C. f. ochraceus*), Ochre-cheeked and Sooty-fronted spinetails, Planalto Slaty-Antshrike, Black-capped Antwren, White-browed Antpitta, Planalto Tyrannulet, Masked Water-Tyrant, White-throated Spadebill, Green-backed Becard, Moustached Wren, Rufous-bellied Thrush, and Pectoral Sparrow. A visit to nearby *cerrado* habitats should produce a number of species typical of the more open brushlands of central Brazil, including Rufous-winged Antshrike, Chalk-browed Mockingbird, and Gray Pileated-Finch.

NIGHT: Hotel Panorama, Juazeiro do Norte

January 12, Day 6: Juazeiro do Norte to Petrolina. The early morning will be spent birding the Chapada for anything we may have missed, after which will begin the long drive to Petrolina. The edge of the escarpment supports a somewhat different forest type, with a more varied canopy profile and abundant vines. Time spent in this habitat could produce Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Spotted Piculet, Red-billed Scythebill, Gray-headed Spinetail, Orange-headed Tanager, Ultramarine Grosbeak, and others. As we descend from the Chapada into the lowlands, the landscape and vegetation become increasing xeric. Although it is a long drive, we will break it up with stops at roadside marshes, where we hope to find such species as Least Grebe, Brazilian Teal, White-faced Whistling-Duck, Wattled Jacana, Guira Cuckoo, Yellow-chinned Spinetail, White-headed Marsh-Tyrant, Black-backed Water-Tyrant, Xenopsaris, Greater Wagtail-Tyrant, Pale Baywing, Chestnut-capped Blackbird, Red-cowled Cardinal, and White-throated and Capped seedeaters. We'll want to watch the roadsides carefully for the elusive White-bellied Nothura, an open-country tinamou with bright yellow legs.

NIGHT: Petrolina Palace, Petrolina

January 13, Day 7: Petrolina Area. Situated on the north bank of the Rio São Francisco, Petrolina will be our base for exploring the arid lowlands of southwestern Pernambuco. The *caatinga* here is characterized by lower, scrubbiest growth, punctuated by tall columnar cacti and large, nearly impenetrable patches of reddish terrestrial bromeliads, the blades of which may reach two meters in length! This is home to some very special birds, among them the poorly-known Red-shouldered Spinetail. Until recently, this bird was known mainly from a few old specimens. Only one nest has ever been reported, and the taxonomic affinities of the bird are still uncertain. We have located places where the spinetail is reasonably common, so our chances for seeing one should be excellent.

The *caatinga* here is amazingly birdy, and the first few hours of the day can be fast and furious. As dawn breaks, the Least Nighthawks and Pygmy Nightjars yield to the penetrating songs of the Small-billed Tinamou and the incessant calls of Striped Cuckoos, Picui Ground-Doves, and Tawny-crowned Pygmy-Tyrants. Flocks of Comb Ducks leave their roosting sites en route to distant marshes where they will spend the day feeding. Pairs of Spot-backed Puffbirds call back and forth to one another, while a noisy cacophony from a pair of Band-tailed Horneros may set off an equally raucous chorus from a group of bizarre Caatinga Cacholotes perched atop their giant stick nests. Chattering flocks of diminutive Blue-winged Parrotlets are everywhere, as are screeching groups of Cactus Parakeets. The piercing whistles of Stripe-backed Antbirds emanate from all around, and the songs of Campo Troupials provide a constant musical backdrop. Other birds of interest include the magnificent Swallow-tailed Hummingbird, Broad-tipped Hermit, Glittering-bellied Emerald, Sooty-fronted Spinetail, the bizarrely beautiful Silvery-cheeked Antshrike with its punk-rocker crest (the female of which remained unknown to science until the last 20 years!), Black-bellied Antwren, Mouse-colored Tyrannulet, Brown-crested and Short-crested flycatchers, Green-backed Becard, immaculate White Monjitas, Lesser and Greater wagtail-tyrants, Gray-eyed Greenlet, Long-billed Wren, the giant Scarlet-throated Tanager (in many respects more like an icterid than a tanager), Gray Pileated-Finch, Ultramarine Grosbeak, and White-throated Seedeater.

If time permits, we may take a walk along the Rio São Francisco. The riparian thickets along the river are magnets for birds, and are fully capable of producing surprises. Some of the possibilities include Dark-billed Cuckoo, Greater Thornbird, Rusty-backed Spinetail (the endemic race *C. v. reiseri*), Southern Scrub-Flycatcher, White Monjita, and Orange-headed Tanager.

NIGHT: Petrolina Palace, Petrolina

January 14, Day 8: Petrolina to Jeremoabo. Today will be spent birding our way across the badlands country of northern Bahia to Jeremoabo. The scenery will be alluring, as we transect red-rock escarpments rising out of the cactus-studded *caatinga*. We should see many of the same birds from the previous day. Additionally, we will be alert for Red-legged Seriema, Harris' Hawk, Savanna Hawk, Aplomado Falcon, Burrowing Owl, Broad-tipped Hermit, Narrow-billed Woodcreeper, and many others.

Our primary goal will be to reach the Raso da Catarina with time to search for the magnificent Lear's Macaw. This blue macaw is found nowhere else in the world, and its population numbers around 200 birds. The Lear's (or Indigo) Macaw was described more than 120 years ago, but remained unknown except for specimens and occasional birds which appeared for sale (origin unknown) as part of the commercial pet trade. Finally, in 1978, Brazilian ornithologists mounted a search expedition to the rugged Raso da Catarina, at that time a plateau still inaccessible by roads. There they found the nearly mythical macaws nesting in crevices in the rugged canyon walls. Since that time, the world population of these magnificent birds has declined to as low as 60 individuals, although there have been slight increases in numbers over the past few years. The current population is estimated at fewer than 250 birds. Needless to say, seeing such spectacular birds of such exceptional rarity and mystery will be a major objective, and we have built in time for a return trip to the Raso if needed.

NIGHT: Hotel Senhor do Bonfim, Jeremoabo

January 15, Day 9: Jeremoabo to Aracaju. We will spend the morning birding riparian woodland and semi-deciduous forests west of Jeremoabo, returning if necessary, to search again for the Lear's Macaws. There will be

many other birds to keep us occupied, foremost among them the poorly known and highly threatened Pectoral Antwren. Other species of interest include Glittering-throated Emerald, Stripe-breasted Starthroat, Swallow-tailed Hummingbird, Picui Ground-Dove, Picazuro Pigeon, Red-billed Scythebill, Olivaceous Woodcreeper, Barred Antshrike, Pale-legged Hornero, Ash-throated Casiornis, Pearly-vented Tody-Tyrant, Yellow-breasted Flycatcher, Streaked Flycatcher, White-winged Becard, Long-billed Wren, Gray-eyed Greenlet, Epaulet Oriole, Scarlet-throated Tanager, Burnished-buff Tanager, and Red-cowled Cardinal.

After lunch we head toward Aracaju, on the coast of the tiny state of Sergipé. The drive will take about four hours.

NIGHT: Pousada do Padre, Aracaju

January 16, Day 10: Crasto Area. We will spend the entire morning birding humid forest reserves near Crasto. These lowland forests represent some of the last strongholds for many of the endangered Atlantic Forest endemics. The Crasto area is poorly known and undoubtedly will yield many surprises. Primary among our targets is the highly endangered Fringe-backed Fire-eye, a bird known from only a handful of locations. The Crasto area has recently been found to harbor a small population of these special birds, and we will do our best to find them. Other specialties of note include the dazzling White-winged Cotinga and the diminutive Golden-tailed Parrotlet, both considered globally threatened. We will no doubt see a number of more common Atlantic Forest specialties, many more commonly associated with southeast Brazil. Among the possibilities are Turquoise-fronted Parrot, Golden-capped Parakeet, Planalto Woodcreeper, Sooretama Slaty-Antshrike, White-flanked Antwren, White-eyed Foliage-gleaner, Stripe-necked Tody-Tyrant, Sulphur-rumped Flycatcher, Gray Elaenia, Blue-backed Manakin, Flame-crested Tanager, Brazilian Tanager, and many more. We will also check nearby mangroves for the poorly known Plain-bellied Emerald.

We will return to Aracaju for lunch. Afterwards, we will catch an afternoon TAM Airlines connection from Aracaju to Ilheus, and then make the short drive to Itabuna.

NIGHT: Tarik Fontes Plaza, Itabuna

January 17, Day 11: Itabuna to Jequié. Itabuna will be the starting point in our search for the Pink-legged Graveteiro, an acrobatic little *Furnariid* just described to science in 1996! This bird is so unique that it was placed in its own monotypic genus by its discoverers. Although it is not certain that we will see the graveteiro, previous tours have had excellent luck in finding it. We will have all morning to search for this prize bird, and in the process should find a number of other birds as well, including, perhaps, Golden-capped Parakeet, Golden-spangled Piculet, Gray Elaenia, Tropical Parula, Red-legged Honeycreeper, Red-necked Tanager, and Green-headed Tanager. Should we score early in our quest for the graveteiro, we may get an early start toward Jequié, allowing us to get in some quality afternoon birding there. Jequié is situated in the heart of the *caatinga* region of Bahia's arid interior, and, along with the nearby Boa Nova area, offers exceptional birding. Most of the surrounding region is *caatinga*, but on the ridges of the Serra da Ouricana are several remnant patches of Atlantic humid forest, a westward extension of that endangered habitat only recently discovered by ornithologists. As with most ecotones, this transitional area between arid, deciduous scrub and humid, evergreen forest is extremely rich in birds. Indeed, these forests have yielded two new species to science in the last few years, along with a number of significant range extensions! Our days here will provide some of the best birding of the trip.

NIGHT: Hotel Itajuba, Jequié

January 18–20, Days 12–14: Jequié and Boa Nova. We will combine visits to two unique and highly endangered habitats, each with its own special birds. The *mata-de-cipó* is a dry, semi-deciduous woodland characterized by numerous lianas and patches of large, terrestrial bromeliads. It is perhaps best-known to ornithologists as the haunt of the striking and severely threatened Slender Antbird, a species known from only three old specimens before it was rediscovered in 1974 near Boa Nova. The Slender Antbird will be our most important target from the *mata-de-cipó*, but there are many other species of interest here. Among them are Cactus Parakeet, Stripe-breasted Starthroat,

Spot-backed Puffbird, Spotted Piculet, Narrow-billed Woodcreeper, Band-tailed Hornero, Rufous-fronted Thornbird, Silvery-cheeked Antshrike, Planalto Slaty-Antshrike, Caatinga Antwren, Black-capped Antwren, the threatened Narrow-billed Antwren, Black-bellied Antwren, Stripe-backed Antbird, Tawny-crowned Pygmy-Tyrant, Mouse-colored Tyrannulet, Variegated Flycatcher, Streaked Flycatcher, Planalto Tyrannulet, Greenish Elaenia, Tropical Gnatcatcher, Long-billed Wren, Gray-eyed Greenlet, and Gray Pileated-Finch.

Remnants of humid forest will be even more productive, combining species widespread in the Atlantic forests of southeastern Brazil with more localized rarities. Of particular interest are two recently described species known only from the humid forest near Boa Nova: the Bahia Tyrannulet and the Bahia Spinetail! Other species of primary interest include Blue-winged Macaw, Maroon-bellied Parakeet, Brazilian Pygmy-Owl, Scale-throated Hermit, Violet-capped Woodnymph, Sapphire-spangled Emerald, Frilled Coquette, Black-billed Scythebill, Striated Softtail, Spix's Spinetail, Pallid Spinetail, Tufted Antshrike, the little-known Rio de Janeiro Antbird, Spot-breasted Antvireo, Ferruginous Antbird, White-shouldered Fire-eye, Cryptic Antthrush, White-breasted Tapaculo, Rufous Gnatcatcher, Pin-tailed and White-bearded manakins, Fork-tailed Tody-Tyrant, Hangnest Tody-Tyrant, Drab-breasted Bamboo-Tyrant, Cinnamon-vented Piha, Cinnamon Tanager, Black-goggled Tanager, Brazilian Tanager, Chestnut-bellied Euphonia, Gilt-edged Tanager, Green-headed Tanager, White-bellied Seedeater, Black-throated Grosbeak, and Green-winged Saltator.

On Day 14, we will enjoy additional morning birding near Jequié before driving to Lencois. This charming little town will be our base for exploring the Chapada de Diamantina.

NIGHTS: Hotel Itajuba, Jequié (January 18 and 19) and Pousada de Lencois, Lencois (January 20)

January 21, Day 15: Chapada de Diamantina. Spectacular landscapes may compete with birds for our attention today, as we search for a number of special birds of the high plateau grasslands. Most notable of these is a rare and little-known hummingbird, the stunning (and endemic) Hooded Visorbearer, which inhabits the specialized plant communities of the rocky *campo* formations. Other specialties of particular note include the White-eared Puffbird, Collared Crescent-chest, Gray-backed Tachuri, Rufous-sided Pygmy-Tyrant (rare), Pale-throated Serra-Finch, and the Stripe-tailed Yellow-Finch. Among the other species we will be seeking are Red-winged Tinamou, Aplomado Falcon, Caatinga Parakeet, Picazuro Pigeon, White-vented Violet-ear, Swallow-tailed Hummingbird, the dazzling Ruby Topaz, Dark-billed Cuckoo, Pale-breasted Spinetail, Rufous-winged Antshrike, a soon-to-be-described species of *Formicivora* antwren, Plain-crested Elaenia, Cliff Flycatcher, Black-throated Saltator, Lined Seedeater, Grassland Yellow-Finch and Grassland Sparrow.

NIGHT: Pousada de Lencois, Lencois

January 22, Day 16: Lencois to Salvador. After some final early morning birding near Lencois, we will begin the long drive to Salvador. We will break up the drive with numerous short birding stops. Small marshes and stock tanks along the way are favored spots for shorebirds and waterfowl, including White-cheeked Pintail, White-faced Whistling-Duck, Brazilian Duck and others. With some luck we could even find Southern Pochard or Comb Duck. Small remnant woodlands en route also offer the potential for Stripe-breasted Starthroat, Pectoral Antwren and Ash-throated Casiornis.

NIGHT: Hotel Sofitel, Salvador

January 23-24, Days 17-18: Departure for Home or Begin Northeastern Brazil: Alagoas Extension. Depending on our actual flight departure times, we may have time this morning for some birding close to Salvador. Our primary targets would be the locally distributed Bahia Antwren and the Striped Manakin (nominat race).

Participants not continuing on Northeastern Brazil: Alagoas Extension (January 23-27, 2006) will be transferred to the airport in time for the 11:30 a.m. departure of Varig Flight 2307 to São Paulo which is scheduled to arrive

at 2:45 p.m. (subject to change), which will connect to late flights to the USA (arriving in the morning on January 24, allowing time for homeward connections).

NORTHEASTERN BRAZIL: ALAGOAS EXTENSION JANUARY 23-27, 2006

This extension will focus on specialties of the humid, ridge-top forests of Alagoas, which harbor one of the most severely endangered avifaunas on the planet. Four species new to science were described from a single forest isolate at Murici in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and until very recently, two of these were still known only from this single spot. Rampant agricultural development (sugarcane is the primary culprit) has reduced the once plentiful native forest in this region to tiny remnants, which remain the primary refuge for several rare and localized endemic birds. Our primary objectives will be Jandaya Parakeet, Golden-tailed Parrotlet, Long-tailed Woodnymph, Racket-tailed Coquette, Pinto's Spinetail, Alagoas Foliage-gleaner, Orange-bellied Antwren, Alagoas Antwren, Scalloped Antbird, Black-cheeked Gnateater, Black-headed Berryeater, Buff-throated Purpletuft, White-winged Cotinga, Alagoas Tyrannulet, Smoky-fronted Tody-Flycatcher, Yellow-faced Siskin, and the spectacular Seven-colored Tanager, but we will not ignore the many other species that inhabit these remnant forests.

January 23, Day 1: Travel to Murici via Maceio. Participants continuing from Northeastern Brazil: Caatinga and Atlantic Rain Forest will be transferred to the Salvador airport in time for the 12:45 p.m. departure of TAM Flight 3216 which is scheduled to arrive in Maceio at 1:45 p.m. (subject to change). Upon arrival, we will drive about two hours to Murici.

NIGHT: Quilombo Park Hotel, Alagoas

January 24–25, Days 2–3: Murici Reserve. Once covered by Atlantic humid forest, the state of Alagoas has suffered incredible habitat destruction. The primary culprit is sugarcane, vast expanses of which now blanket the countryside. Fortunately, a few forested ridges near Murici have been preserved in their natural condition. These reserves constitute some of the most important sites for threatened birds in all of South America, containing no less than 12 species on the official ICBP "threatened list," four of which were described as new to science only since 1979!

These two days will be devoted to birding the humid Atlantic forest at Murici. Although birding in the lush forest will prove slightly more challenging than in the *caatinga* habitats of the past ten days, it will be no less productive. Our targets will include some of the rarest and most colorful birds of the continent. Specialties that we hope to find include: Jandaya Parakeet (a split from Sun Parakeet), Plain Parakeet, Golden-tailed Parrotlet, Long-tailed Woodnymph, Racket-tailed Coquette, Frilled Coquette, Tawny Piculet, Golden-spangled Piculet, Yellow-throated Woodpecker, Pinto's (Plain) Spinetail, Gray-headed Spinetail, Alagoas (Novaes') Foliage-gleaner (first described in 1983, and although extremely rare, it has been seen well by our last three groups), Alagoas Antwren (known only from this locality and first described in 1979), Orange-bellied Antwren (first described in 1983), Scalloped Antbird, White-backed Fire-eye, Black-cheeked Gnateater, White-bearded and Blue-backed manakins, Long-tailed (Alagoas) Tyrannulet (rare, first described in 1987), Smoky-fronted Tody-Flycatcher, White-eyed Tody-Tyrant, Black-headed Berryeater, Buff-throated Purpletuft, Sharpbill, Seven-colored Tanager, Red-necked Tanager, Rufous-headed Tanager, Chestnut-bellied Euphonia, Black-throated Grosbeak, and Yellow-faced Siskin.

NIGHTS: Quilombo Park Hotel, Alagoas

January 26-27, Days 4-5: Departure for Home. We will be transferred to the Maceio airport in time for the 12:55 p.m. departure of Varig Flight 2396 to São Paulo which is scheduled to arrive at 5:00 p.m. (subject to change), which will connect to late flights to the USA (arriving in the morning on January 27, allowing time for homeward connections).

TOUR LEADER: Andrew Whittaker

Andrew Whittaker grew up in England where he started birding at the early age of seven, thanks to his father. Andy's great passion for tropical rainforests began in Borneo, which led him to move to the Amazonian rainforests of Brazil where he has spent the last 19 years. Working in the rainforest for the World Wildlife Federation and Smithsonian Institution has made Andy an authority on Amazonian birds and the region's natural history. He was a consultant for the prestigious *Life of Birds* series by David Attenborough, and has authored many technical publications on Neotropical birds. Andy speaks fluent Portuguese and is an experienced tour leader and excellent tour organizer, having led tours throughout South and Central America and the Antarctic for the past 17 years. His enthusiasm for showing and sharing with others his fascination for Neotropical birds and animals is contagious. Andy's special interest is Neotropical bird vocalizations; his great knowledge of their voices has enabled him to make several important ornithological discoveries and add 16 species to the Brazilian list. Andy lives in Manaus with his wife Nadime, their son Steven, and daughters, Luana and Suzana.

TOUR SIZE: Each section will be limited to 8 participants.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: The fee for Northeastern Brazil: Caatinga & Atlantic Rain Forest is **\$4495** per person in double occupancy from Fortaleza (tour ends in Salvador). The price includes all food from lunch on Day 2 to breakfast on Day 17, all lodging during the tour, ground transportation during the tour, and guide services provided by the tour leader. It does not include airfare from your home to Fortaleza and return from Salvador, the commercial flights between Aracaju and Ilheus on Day 10 (See **AIR INFORMATION** below), airport departure taxes, extra beverages, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may be charged.

The single supplement for Northeastern Brazil: Caatinga & Atlantic Rain Forest is **\$260**. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations, or if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you.

The fee for Northeastern Brazil: Alagoas Extension is **\$995** per person in double occupancy from Maceio. The price includes all food from lunch on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 4, all lodging during the tour, ground transportation during the tour, and guide services provided by the tour leader. It does not include airfare from your home to Maceio and return, the commercial flight between Salvador and Maceio on Day 1 (See **AIR INFORMATION** below), airport departure taxes, extra beverages, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may be charged.

The single supplement for Northeastern Brazil: Alagoas Extension is **\$70**. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations, or if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you.

TOUR REGISTRATION: To register for this tour, complete the VENT registration form and return it with a deposit of \$500 per person per tour part (check or money order in US dollars.) If registering by phone, the deposit must be received within 10 days or the space will be released. Full payment of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to the tour departure date.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Refunds are made according to the following schedule: If cancellation is made 120 days or more before departure date, the deposit less \$75 per person is refundable. If cancellation is made fewer than 120 days before departure date, no refund is available. This policy and fee schedule also applies to pre-trip and post-trip extensions, as well as any transfers from one tour to another. ***We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance to protect yourself.***

If you cancel:

120 days or more before departure date
Fewer than 120 days before departure date

Your refund will be:

Your deposit minus \$75.
No refund available.

TRIP CANCELLATION INSURANCE: Application forms for optional coverage for baggage, illness, and trip cancellation can be obtained through the VENT office. We **strongly recommend** that you purchase trip cancellation insurance to protect yourself against losses due to accidents or illness. Check with your insurance agent regarding coverage you may presently have via other insurance policies that may cover illness during your trip. **Waiver for pre-existing conditions is available, as are other coverages such as terrorism protection; however, stipulations apply, usually requiring the purchase of the insurance soon after registering. Contact the VENT office prior to registration for details.**

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of \$50,000. CST #2014998-50.

AIR INFORMATION: Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return as well as your internal Brazilian flights. Please call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements.

Note that there are specific internal commercial flights associated with these tours, the cost of which is not covered by the tour fee. With January and February being high season for Brazilian travel, many of these flights will be full with limited low fare opportunities. We suggest that you ask Victor Emanuel Travel to confirm your air reservations as early as possible to get the lowest available fares. VENT reserves the right to alter the itinerary based on air schedule changes and flight availability.

CLOTHING: Weather will be generally warm. Light field clothing (drab colors such as olive or khaki preferred) will be appropriate, including several pair of pants and shorts and comfortable shirts; but you should also pack a sweater or light jacket. A hat, sunglasses, and sunscreen are also recommended for protection. Be sure to have a pair of good hiking boots or comfortable walking shoes and a second pair to change into. A swimming suit is also suggested, and raingear is recommended. Dress will be casual throughout. Also, a pocket umbrella is a good idea.

DOCUMENTS: A current U.S. passport and **VISA** are required to enter Brazil. They must be obtained in the U.S. prior to departure and are issued by Brazilian consulates. Information on obtaining a Brazilian visa will be enclosed in your registration packet.

HEALTH PRECAUTIONS: Yellow fever vaccination is highly recommended, as well as polio and tetanus. Malaria has been confirmed in Brazil, including the chloroquine-resistant strain, but is highly unlikely on the Northeastern Brazil tour. We suggest that participants consult their physician as well as the Centers for Disease Control for current recommendations before beginning a prophylaxis regimen.

There have been some recent changes in recommendations for malaria prophylaxis. Mefloquine (Lariam) is now the drug of choice in all areas where chloroquine-resistant malaria is present. A single dose should be taken one week before the start of the tour, continued during the tour, and for four weeks after its conclusion. Mefloquine is available by prescription only and may not be suitable for those using cardio-vascular medication; consult your physician. Cholera has been reported in Brazil, but no country requires cholera vaccination for direct travel from the USA and no vaccinations are required to return to the USA. Please consult your physician for any recommended preventative treatment.

INSECT PROTECTION: The use of a repellent containing DEET is recommended. We suggest a couple of squeeze bottles, roll-ons, or sticks. Aerosol cans are not permitted on airplanes.

BAGGAGE: Please limit baggage to one suitcase and one carry-on bag, if possible, as some of the vehicles have very limited luggage space. As a precaution, we recommend packing a change of clothes, your binoculars, toiletries, travel documents and walking shoes in your carry-on.

ITEMS TO BRING: Pack a flashlight, water bottle or small canteen, alarm clock and day pack. Your leader will have a spotting scope; but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Departure Tax: Brazilian airport departure taxes (both domestic and international) are currently built into the price of your airline tickets, and no longer have to be paid separately. Be aware, however, that conditions could change without notice.

Country Telephone Code: 55

Currency: Real

Electric Current: 110 Volts in Rio, Sao Paulo, Brasilia, Belo Horizonte, Belém, and Manaus; and 220 elsewhere. This varies throughout the country.

IMPORTANT NUMBERS AND WEBSITES TO KNOW:

Health: Centers for Disease Control 404/332-4559 or www.cdc.gov

Weather: 900-WEATHER (a toll call) or www.weather.com

Travel Advisories: 202/647-5225

SUGGESTED READING:

Our website at www.ventbird.com offers an online store that carries a wide variety of items for birding and nature lovers, including over 6,000 books. A portion of the sales from our store benefits the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. You might also want to visit such other online stores as www.amazon.com, and for those out-of-print and hard-to-find titles, www.abebooks.com, or www.buteobooks.com, which specializes in ornithology books.

Birds

De la Pena, Martin R. and Maurice Romboli. *Birds of Southern South America* (Collins Illustrated Checklist). HarperCollins, 1999.

Hilty, Steven L. *Birds of Tropical America*. Shelburne, VT: Chapters Publishing Ltd., 1994. Subtitle: "A watcher's introduction to behavior, breeding and diversity." (Paperback April 1996.)

Hilty, Steven L. and Rodolphe Meyer. *Guide to the Birds of Venezuela*. November 2002) Princeton University Press, 2002. A guide to the birds of De Schauensee, to be published in November 2002.

Meyer de Schauensee, R. and W.H. Phelps, Jr. *A Guide to the Birds of Venezuela*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978. By far the most useful guide to South America's avifauna prior to Steve Hilty's guide. (<http://birds.cornell.edu>; select "Audio Guides")

Meyer de Schauensee, R. *A Guide to the Birds of South America*. Livingston Publishing Company, 1970. (Reprinted 1982, paperback.) No pictures, but basic written descriptions of nearly all species. ABE Books (www.abebooks.com) has a large section on Meyer de Schauensee's many works.) (<http://birds.cornell.edu>; select "Audio Guides")

Narosky, T. and D. Yzurieta. *Birds of Argentina and Uruguay*. Zagier & Urruty, 1993. Although it is not a great field guide, it does illustrate many more of the birds of SE Brazil than does *Birds of Colombia*. (<http://birds.cornell.edu>; select "Audio Guides")

Pena, Martin and Martin Rodolfo de la Pena. *Birds of Southern South America and Antarctica*. London: HarperCollins, 1999. (<http://birds.cornell.edu>; select "Audio Guides")

Ridgely, Robert S., and Guy Tudor. *The Birds of South America, Volume I: The Oscine Passerines: Jays, Swallows, Wrens, Thrushes and Allies, Vireos, Wood-warblers, Tanagers, Icterids and Finches*. Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1989. Very useful reference, with range maps and illustrations of many species not previously illustrated. (<http://birds.cornell.edu>; select "Audio Guides")

Ridgely, Robert S., and Guy Tudor. *The Birds of South America Volume II: The Suboscine Passerines:*

Ovenbirds and Woodcreepers, Antbirds, Gnateaters, and Tapaculos, Tyrant Flycatchers, Manakins and Cotingas. Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1994. Very useful reference, with range maps and illustrations of many species not previously illustrated. (<http://birds.cornell.edu>; select "Audio Guides")

Souza, Deodata. *Todas as Aves do Brazil: Guia De Campu Para Identificacao (All the Birds of Brazil: A Guide to Identification)*. Dall, 1998. Available from Buteo Books (1-800-722-2460 or www.buteobooks.com). Written in Portuguese.

Butterflies

D'Abrera, Bernard. *Butterflies of South America*. Australia: Hill House, 1984. Good pocket guide, covers many genera, nice pictures.

Mammals

Emmons, Louise H. *Neotropical Rainforest Mammals*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997. Good pictures and excellent text. (An audio field guide CD also available from this author: see below.)

General Nature

Caufield, C. *In the Rainforest*. Chicago: Random House, 1985.

Forsyth, Adrian, Ken Miyata et al. *Tropical Nature*. Scribner, 1987. (paperback)

Kricher, John. *A Neotropical Companion*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.

Stap, Don. *Parrot without a Name: The Search for the Last Unknown Birds on Earth*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991. An account of field expeditions with Ted Parker and John O'Neill, among others.

Recording

English, Peter H. and Theodore A. Parker, III. *Birds of Eastern Ecuador* Cornell: Laboratory of Ornithology, 1992. (http://www.birds.cornell.edu/lab_cds.html)

Emmons, Louise H., Bret M. Whitney and David L. Ross. *Sounds of Neotropical Rainforest Mammals*. Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. (http://www.birds.cornell.edu/lab_cds.html)

TIPPING: As noted in our itineraries, tipping (restaurants, porters, drivers, and local guides) is included on VENT tours. However, if you feel one or both of your VENT leaders or any local guides have given you exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. *We emphasize that such tips are not expected and are entirely optional.*

RESPONSIBILITY: Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc. (VENT) and/or its Agents act only as agents for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, or airplane and assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity which may be occasioned either by reason of defect in any vehicle or for any reason whatsoever, or through the acts or default of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT and its Agents can accept no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. All such losses or expenses will have to be borne by the passenger, as tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. The right is reserved to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. The right is reserved to substitute leaders on any tour. When this is necessary, notification will be given to tour members. No refund will be made for any unused portion of the tour unless arrangements are made in sufficient time to avoid penalties. The prices of the tours are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect on June 2, 2005 and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change therein. The right is reserved to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely. The airlines concerned and their agents and affiliates are not to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time passengers are not on board their aircraft. The passenger ticket in use by said airlines, when issued, shall constitute the sole contract between the airlines and the purchaser of these tickets and/or passenger. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for these tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airline Reporting Corporation.