

# **BRAZILIAN SPECIALTIES: THE WONDERS OF MINAS GERAIS & INTERVALLES**

**NOVEMBER 2 – 20, 2008**

© 2008

*Few places on earth can match the diversity of natural history experiences available in Brazil, South America's largest country. Brazil boasts 1700 species of birds and a wide range of habitats spread over an area larger than the contiguous 48 United States. It's easy to see why Brazil requires multiple visits to fully appreciate. Even those that have been many times find themselves returning again and again to this land of friendly people, great food, and abundant natural beauty. This tour is designed both for the first-time visitor to Brazil and for seasoned veterans of previous trips. We have selected a unique mix of sites and habitats, each of them teeming with birds and each conducive to seeing birds with relative ease. Habitats visited will include bamboo-rich Atlantic Forest, campo grasslands, cerrado brushlands, gallery woodlands, and rocky serras (isolated mountains). The general "birdiness" of each site, combined with the variety of habitats visited, makes this an excellent introduction to the biotic diversity of Brazil. For the many folks who have done all of our other Brazil trips and who have been clamoring for more, this is the ideal chance to experience a number of special places and exotic birds not previously offered. As a side note, opportunities for seeing some special mammals should be excellent throughout.*

*Our tour includes a visit to Intervalles State Park, recently designated as a World Heritage Site, which protects an impressive expanse of Atlantic Forest some 200 km southwest of São Paulo. Based out of a lovely lodge, and with access to an exceptional trail system, we will seek out a multitude of Atlantic Forest specialties including, perhaps, Black-fronted Piping-Guan, Helmeted Woodpecker, Long-trained Nightjar, Plovercrest, Blue-bellied Parrot, Giant and White-bearded Antshrikes, White-breasted Tapaculo, Slaty Bristlefront, Atlantic Royal Flycatcher, Buffy-fronted and Temminck's seed-eaters, Half-collared Sparrow and many more. The rarely seen Buff-fronted Owl is a distinct possibility, and our chances of seeing the threatened and spectacular Woolly Spider Monkey (or Muriqui) are good.*

*Serra da Canastra National Park encompasses a wonderful realm of plateau grassy campos and chaparral-like cerrado, dissected by forested streams and plunging waterfalls. Greater Rheas, Red-legged Seriemas, Giant Anteaters, and Maned Wolves roam the open habitats of the park. The streams below are home to the endangered and highly sought-after Brazilian Merganser. We'll search the grasslands here for Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, Campo Miner, Sharp-tailed Grass-Tyrant, Stripe-tailed Yellow-Finch, and the incredibly endearing Cock-tailed Tyrant. These forests are home to the localized White-striped Warbler, as well as the seldom-seen Brasilia Tapaculo. Serra do Cipó National Park also offers spectacular canyonlands and waterfalls, along with a nice mixture of campo and cerrado habitats. The higher portions of the park are also home to a handful of highly localized birds, including two spectacular hummingbirds, the Hyacinth Visorbearer and Horned Sungem, as well as*

*Brazilian Specialties: The Wonders of Minas Gerais & Intervalles, Page 2*

*the Cipó Canastero (first discovered in 1985 and still known only from this region), Gray-backed Tachuri, Cinereous Warbling-Finch, and Pale-throated Serra-Finch.*

*Beautiful Serra do Caraça combines montane Atlantic Forest habitats and birds with those of the rocky serras and cerrados, all as a backdrop for a 200-year-old monastery. The possibilities here range from Large-tailed Antshrike and Swallow-tailed Cotinga to Red-eyed Thornbird, Serra Antwren and Red-ruffed Fruitcrow. For all of the abundant bird possibilities, this park is best known for the Maned Wolves that put in nearly nightly appearances. On our return to Belo Horizonte, we will make a special stop to search for Three-toed Jacamar.*

**November 2-3, Days 1–2: Travel to São Paulo; Drive to Itanhaém.** There are direct overnight flights from Washington-Dulles, Dallas/Ft. Worth, Miami, and other airports which will arrive in São Paulo Guarulhos International Airport (GRU) in the early morning on November 3. Upon arrival and clearing customs, please meet the leaders and your fellow participants at 10:00 a.m. in the international arrival area for an early lunch and tour orientation.

Participants wanting to avoid the risk of misconnecting with the group should consider arriving in São Paulo on November 2 and spending the night at an airport-area hotel. Upon request, VENT will be happy to assist with these arrangements.

After assembling in the airport, we will set out for a nearby site where we will hope to locate a recently discovered antwren of the genus *Formicivora* (still lacking a formal description or name). This marsh-dwelling antwren is closely related to the Marsh Antwren of Paraná and Santa Catarina, and is currently known from only a couple of marshes in São Paulo state. This is also a good spot for Red-eyed Thornbird. After trying for the antwren and thornbird, we will head south of São Paulo to Itanhaém, our spot for seeing the endangered Red-tailed Parrot. Here, we will bird scrubby *restinga* forest near the coast, concentrating on an area where numbers of these spectacular parrots roost. We'll plan to arrive in time for the late afternoon flight of parrots returning to the roost.

NIGHT (November 3): Pousada Feliz, Itanhaém

**November 4, Day 3: Itanhaém to Fazenda Intervalles.** Dawn will find us once again in the coastal *restinga*, where we should enjoy repeat encounters with Red-tailed Parrots. This area is quite birdy, and among the many species that we might hope to see are Plain Parakeet, Buff-bellied Puffbird, White-chinned Sapphire, Swallow-tailed Hummingbird, Blond-crested Woodpecker, White-barred Piculet, Lesser Woodcreeper, Unicolored Antwren, Squamate Antbird, White-breasted Tapaculo, White-bearded Manakin, Yellow-lored Tody-Flycatcher, Neotropical River Warbler, Azure Jay, Chestnut-bellied Euphonia, Green-headed Tanager, and Brazilian Tanager. When bird activity dies down in late morning, we will start our long drive heading for Fazenda Intervalles, with a stop for lunch en route.

NIGHT: Fazenda Intervalles

**November 5–9, Days 4–8: Fazenda Intervalles.** Located about 200 km southwest of São Paulo, in the Serra de Paranapiacaba, Intervalles State Park, along with three other adjacent reserves, has recently been designated as a World Heritage Site. The combined reserves protect more than 1,200 square kilometers of endangered Atlantic Forest, including both lowland and montane forests. We will be quartered at a lovely lodge within the park, where a network of trails winds through bamboo-dominated understory and trees festooned with epiphytes. We will have five full days to seek out a multitude of Atlantic Forest endemics and specialties, many of more limited distribution, including Black-fronted Piping-Guan, Red-and-White Crake, Blue-bellied Parrot, Buff-fronted Owl, the spectacular Long-trained Nightjar, the rare endangered Helmeted Woodpecker, Red-eyed Thornbird, White-bearded Antshrike, Swallow-tailed Cotinga, Atlantic Royal-Flycatcher, Black-legged Dacnis, Half-collared Sparrow, and Buffy-fronted and Temminck's seedeaters. Other specialties of somewhat wider distribution include Solitary and Brown Tinamou; Mantled Hawk; Barred Forest-Falcon; Spot-winged Wood-Quail; Red-capped Parrot; Maroon-bellied Parakeet; Saffron Toucanet; Rusty-barred and Mottled Owl; Gray Potoo;

Silky-tailed Nightjar; Chestnut-banded Nighthawk; Plovercrest; Saw-billed and Dusky-throated hermit; Pavonine Cuckoo; Rufous-capped Motmot; Crescent-chested Puffbird; Red-breasted Toucan; Ochre-collared Piculet; Robust, Yellow-fronted, and Yellow-browed Woodpeckers; Pale-browed Treehunter; Gray-bellied and Rufous-capped spinetail; Giant, Tufted and Spot-backed antshrikes; Spot-breasted Antwreio; Star-throated Antwren; Squamate Antbird; White-breasted Tapaculo; Slaty Bristlefront; Spotted Bamboowren; Hooded Berryeater; Bare-throated Bellbird; Red-ruffed Fruitcrow; São Paulo, Oustalet's and Bay-ringed tyrannulet; Rufous-tailed Attila; Three-striped Flycatcher; Chestnut-backed, Brown, and Golden-rumped euphonia; Diademed and Rufous-headed tanager; and Uniform Finch among many others. We also have a good chance at seeing the spectacular and endangered Muriqui, or Woolly Spider Monkey, the largest of South America's many primates.

NIGHTS: Fazenda Intervaes

**November 10, Day 9: Intervaes to São Paulo; Fly to Belo Horizonte; Drive to Serra do Cipó.** After a three hour drive to São Paulo, we will arrive at Guarulhos International Airport (GRU) in time for the 12:10 p.m. departure of TAM Flight 3338 which is scheduled to arrive at Belo Horizonte's Confins Airport (CNF) at 1:13 p.m. (subject to change). Upon arrival, we will drive about one and a half hours to Serra do Cipó. The attractive grounds of our hotel are home to a delightful group of tiny Black-ear Tufted Marmosets that regularly come into feeders.

NIGHT: Hotel Monjolo, Serra do Cipó

**November 11, Day 10: Serra do Cipó National Park.** We will devote the day to birding this ruggedly beautiful park that is situated at the southern end of the Serra do Espinhaço, a mountain chain that extends from Minas Gerais north into the state of Bahia. The higher portions of the park support a paramo-like grassland (*campo rupestre*) that is floristically unique, and an important center of endemism for many plant species. Bird diversity in these high grasslands is low, but this region is home to several special birds with highly restricted ranges. Our highest priority will be the Cipó Canastero, a long-tailed ovenbird that creeps in and out of the craggy rock outcroppings. Restricted in range to the Serra do Espinhaço, the Canastero remained unknown to science until 1985. Of nearly equal interest is the magnificent Hyacinth Visorbearer, a large hummingbird with a golden-green gorget, creamy-white pectoral band, bluish-purple neck-ruff, and violet-blue belly. Other species of particular interest include White-vented Violet-ear, Campo Flicker, Rufous-winged Antshrike, Collard Crescent-chest, Pearly-vented Tody-Tyrant, Gray-backed Tachuri, Cinnamon Tanager, Stripe-tailed Yellow-Finch, Cinereous Warbling-Finch and Pale-throated Serra-Finch. Lower portions of the park support *cerrado* plant communities, where we might find such prizes as Peach-fronted Parakeet, Horned Sungem, Green-barred and Checkered woodpeckers, Campo Suiriri, Plain-crested Elaenia, Chalk-browed Mockingbird, White-banded and White-rumped tanagers, Yellow-billed Blue Finch, and Black-throated Saltator, among others.

NIGHT: Hotel Monjolo, Serra do Cipó

**November 12, Day 11: Serra do Cipó to São Roque de Minas.** After some early morning birding in the park, we'll settle in for the long (approximately six hours) drive to São Roque de Minas, a picturesque little town nestled at the base of Serra da Canastra. Along the way, we'll make a special stop to search for the highly localized Three-toed Jacamar and Henna-capped Foliage-gleaner. We also will stop at a rich marsh on route and try for the newly described endemic Wetland Tapaculo and Yellow-rumped Marshbird, and Yellow-browed and Streamer-tailed tyrants.

NIGHT: Chapadao do Canastra, São Roque de Minas

**November 13-15, Days 12-14: Serra da Canastra National Park.** Our three-and-a-half days at Serra da Canastra promises to be one of the real highlights of the entire tour. Situated in the southwest corner of Minas Gerais and occupying over 700 square kilometers, this park preserves a splendid cross-section of *cerrado* brushlands, *campo* grasslands, and gallery forest habitats within its boundaries. It also encompasses the headwaters of the mighty Rio São Francisco, which flows northward some 2,500 km and is one of the major biogeographic barriers in northeastern Brazil. Most of the park sits atop a huge plateau, dissected by numerous crystal-clear streams that spill over the steep walls of the escarpments in majestic, plunging waterfalls. The top of the plateau

## ***Brazilian Specialties: The Wonders of Minas Gerais & Intervals, Page 4***

supports mostly *campo* grasslands, with varying amounts of woody vegetation and pockets of gallery forest along the many streams. The rocky sides of the escarpments are cloaked in *cerrado* or *campo rupestre* vegetation or in gallery forest, depending on their exposure. Taller gallery forest is found along the many streams below the plateau.

Our highest priority bird in this region is the Brazilian Merganser, one of the rarest, most localized, and most endangered waterfowl in the world. The world population has been estimated at less than 250 birds. These mergansers occupy fast-flowing, shallow streams, behaving somewhat like Harlequin Ducks of North America. Finding them will require some luck, because their territories are long and linear, and the mergansers themselves are few and far between. However, we have had good success in seeing them at this time of year, and with ample time to search, we remain optimistic.

We'll devote considerable time and attention to the various grassland micro-habitats, which are home to a number of special birds and mammals. Keeping constant watch along the edges of the park roads, we'll look for Red-winged Tinamou, Spotted Nothura, and the rare Lesser Nothura. Huge Greater Rheas and bizarre Red-legged Seriemas stride across the grasslands, as do Giant Anteaters (we've seen as many as eight in one day, sometimes carrying their young on their backs!) and Pampas Deer. This park is also an excellent place for seeing the spectacular Maned Wolf, a large, slender wolf with the coloring of a Red Fox and long, stilt-like, black legs. Watching one of these magnificent predators stalking tinamous in the grass must rank as one of the great spectacles of the South American grasslands. Crowned Eagles are rare, but regular in these same grasslands, dwarfing even the more common White-tailed Hawks in size. Sprightly Cock-tailed Tyrants display by silently hovering like toy helicopters just above the tops of the grass; whereas the Sharp-tailed Grass-Tyrants, Wedge-tailed Grass-Finches, and Grass Wrens proclaim their songs from atop the tallest grass stems. White-rumped and Gray monjitas occupy higher perches above the many tall termite mounds or the scattered tall shrubs, and the rare Ochre-breasted Pipit delivers its song on the wing or from atop a clump of grass. Recently burned areas may host numbers of Campo Miners, chunky little *furnariids* that sing interminably long, bubbly songs while hovering high above the ground. We'll also search some of the brushier *campo* habitats for the shy and attractive Black-masked Finch. Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, Aplomado Falcon, White-eared Puffbird, Firewood-gatherer, Streamer-tailed Tyrant, Tawny-headed and White-rumped swallows, Cinnamon Tanager, Stripe-tailed Yellow-Finch and such rare seedeaters as Black-bellied are just a few of the many other special birds to be found in the more open parts of the park.

*Cerrado* communities along the edge of the escarpment are good places to search for White-eared Puffbird, Narrow-billed Woodcreeper, Crested Black-Tyrant, Gray-backed Tachuri, Curl-crested Jay, White-rumped Tanager, Yellow-billed Blue Finch, and Black-throated Saltator, among others. We'll also spend time exploring the pockets of gallery forest in and around the park, looking for such prizes as Golden-capped Parakeet, Toco Toucan, White-barred Piculet, White Woodpecker, Planalto Foliage-gleaner, Sharp-tailed Streamcreeper, Brasilia Tapaculo, Helmeted and Pin-tailed manakins, Curl-crested Jay, White-striped Warbler, Gilt-edged Tanager, and others. Evening drives often produce different species of nightjars on the roads, including Scissor-tailed, Band-winged, and the poorly known Sickie-winged nightjars.

There will be more than enough birds, mammals, and spectacular scenery to keep us busy during our time here.

NIGHTS: Chapadao do Canastra, São Roque de Minas

**November 16, Day 15: Serra da Canastra to Serra do Caraça Natural Park.** We'll have the early morning hours to once again enjoy the riches of Serra da Canastra, after which we'll pack up and begin the drive to Caraça. Late in the day we will arrive at Serra do Caraça Natural Park, a religious sanctuary and school that dates back more than 200 years. The sanctuary is open to the public courtesy of the Catholic order and has become a well-known tourist destination for Brazilians. Our rooms are in a renovated section of the original monastery, whose towering spires are framed by a backdrop of craggy *serras*. The vegetation here, at nearly 4,000 ft. elevation, is an interesting mix of tall, humid forest characteristic of the Atlantic Forests of southeastern Brazil and a drier, more stunted woodland characteristic of the poor, rocky soils of the central *serras*. For years, the

Roman Catholic fathers have placed scraps of food on the monastery steps to attract Maned Wolves. The wolves, which are being studied by local biologists, make nearly nightly appearances for food, materializing out of the darkness like ghosts, ascending the stone steps of the ancient monastery, and feeding warily upon the offerings, as astonished guests stand in hushed silence just a few feet away. It is truly an amazing experience.

NIGHT: Monasterio do Caraça, Serra do Caraça Natural Park

**November 17-18, Days 16-17. Serra do Caraça Natural Park.** We'll have two full days to enjoy the lovely surroundings and abundant birdlife of Caraça. The list of birds to be seen here is long. Among the many prizes are the localized and very attractive Serra Antwren, along with a recently discovered species of tapaculo that still hasn't been formally described. This is an excellent spot for seeing the strangely beautiful Swallow-tailed Cotinga. We'll also be searching for Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle; Spot-winged Wood-Quail; Blackish Rail; Biscutate Swift; Yellow-eared Woodpecker; Scaled Woodcreeper; Pallid, Gray-bellied, and Rufous-capped spinetails; Band-tailed Hornero; Large-tailed and Tufted antshrikes; Dusky-tailed, Ochre-rumped, and White-bibbed antbirds; Rufous Gnatcatcher; White-breasted Tapaculo; Cinnamon-vented Piha; Crescent-chested Puffbird; Pin-tailed Manakin; Shear-tailed Gray-Tyrant; Velvety Black-Tyrant; Shear-tailed Gray Tyrant; Southern Bristle-Tyrant; Hangnest Tody-Tyrant; Drab-breasted Bamboo-Tyrant; Gray-eyed Greenlet; Gilt-edged and Brassy-breasted tanagers; Blue-naped Chlorophonia; and many more. On at least one evening, we'll search for Tawny-browed Owl and nightjars, including Band-winged, Scissor-tailed, and Ocellated Porwill.

NIGHTS: Monasterio do Caraça, Serra do Caraça Natural Park

**November 19-20, Days 18-19: Caraça to Belo Horizonte; Departure for Home.** We will depart this morning in order to arrive at Belo Horizonte's Confins Airport (CNF) in time for the 4:10 p.m. departure of TAM Flight 3345 which is scheduled to arrive at São Paulo Guarulhos International Airport (GRU) at 5:25 p.m. and connect with overnight flights back to the United States, which will arrive on November 20 (flight information subject to change).

**TOUR SIZE:** This tour will be limited to 14 participants.

**TOUR LEADERS:** Andrew Whittaker & Steve Hilty

**Andrew Whittaker** has been based in Amazonian Brazil for the last 21 years. Andy's passion for birding and natural history started at the early age of seven in the UK. For the past 26 years Andy has worked with birds, traveling around the world studying bird migration in Canada, Israel, Borneo, and the UK. Working in the Brazilian rainforest for the Smithsonian Institution has made Andy an authority on Amazonian birds and the region's natural history, and he has authored many technical publications on the region. He was a consultant for the prestigious *Life of Birds* series by David Attenborough, and is a research associate of the Museum Goeldi, in Belém. At present Andy is working with Kevin Zimmer on a comprehensive field guide to the birds of Brazil. Andy has extensive tour leading experience, having led tours throughout South and Central American countries, the UK, and the Antarctic. He immensely enjoys sharing his fascination and knowledge of Neotropical birds, animals, and their conservation with others. Andy's special interest is bird vocalizations; his knowledge of Neotropical voices has enabled him to make several important ornithological discoveries and add 18 species to the Brazilian list. Andy is a member of the Brazilian Ornithological Committee, and lives in Manaus with his wife Nadime, their son Steven, and daughters, Luana and Suzana.

**Steve Hilty** is the senior author of *A Guide to the Birds of Colombia*, and the recently published *Birds of Venezuela*, both by Princeton University Press. Other credits include *Birds of Tropical America, A watcher's introduction to behavior, breeding and diversity*, which has just been republished by the University of Texas Press. He has also written a number of scientific papers on birds and plants, and is presently preparing the text and species accounts for the tanagers for a forthcoming volume of the acclaimed *Handbook of Birds of the World*, published by Lynx Press in Barcelona. Steve holds a Ph.D. in zoology from the University of Arizona and has worked at the Arid Lands Department at the University of Arizona, as a consultant to The Nature Conservancy,

***Brazilian Specialties: The Wonders of Minas Gerais & Intervalas, Page 6***

and as a stockbroker. He is currently a research associate at the University of Kansas Museum of Natural History. Since 1975, he has led tours throughout North and South America, and co-led trips to India, the Orient, and Australasian regions. With three decades of experience in South America and a wide range of natural history interests, he brings a unique breadth of expertise to his Neotropical tours. At night he often turns his binoculars towards the skies for stargazing. Steve lives in Kansas City with his wife, Beverly. They have two college age daughters.

**FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:** The fee for this tour is **\$4895** per person in double occupancy from São Paulo (tour ends in Belo Horizonte). This includes all meals from lunch on Day 2 to breakfast on Day 18, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include roundtrip airfare between your home and São Paulo, the commercial flight between São Paulo and Belo Horizonte (see “AIR INFORMATION” below), airport departure taxes, 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 have to be charged.

The single supplement for this tour is **\$330**. 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. This fee does not cover nor guarantee single accommodations at Fazenda Intervalas (Days 3-8) where you may be asked to share. However, if available, single accommodations will be provided at no additional cost.

**FUEL SURCHARGES:** In the uncertain, often volatile oil market of late, it is difficult – if not impossible – to predict fuel costs over the long term, and more specifically, at the time of operation of a tour or cruise departure. Prices are based upon the prevailing fuel rates at the time of itinerary publication. While VENT will do everything possible to maintain the original price of the cruise or tour, if fuel rates increase significantly, it may be necessary to implement a fuel surcharge. If a surcharge is necessary, every effort will be made to minimize the amount. In most cases, these additional fuel costs are being passed to VENT by its vendors and suppliers who reserve the right, in their agreements to provide services for VENT, to raise their prices due to significant changes in fuel costs.

**EXCHANGE RATE SURCHARGES:** Again, in the uncertain, often volatile global financial markets of today, it is difficult to predict foreign currency exchange rates over the long term or at the time of operation of a tour or cruise departure. Tour prices are based upon the rate of exchange at the time of itinerary publication. If exchange rates change drastically, it may be necessary to implement a surcharge. If a surcharge is necessary, every effort will be made to minimize the amount. In many cases, these additional foreign exchange rate surcharges are being passed to VENT by its vendors and suppliers.

**TOUR REGISTRATION:** To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The deposit for this tour is **\$500**. If you prefer to pay your deposit by check, your tour space will be held for 10 days to allow time for the VENT office to receive your deposit and completed registration form. If you prefer to pay your deposit using a credit card, your deposit must be made with MasterCard or Visa at the time of registration. The VENT registration form should then be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office. 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 **\$125** 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 **\$125**.  
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; 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. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements.

Note that there are specific internal Brazilian flights associated with this tour whose cost is not covered by the tour fee. Due to the complicated nature and limited availability of these flights, you are strongly encouraged to confirm reservations with Victor Emanuel Travel as early as possible.

**BAGGAGE:** We request that participants limit their baggage to one medium-sized suitcase and one carry-on, if possible, as space in the vehicle will be limited.

**CLIMATE AND CLOTHING:** Weather will be mostly warm throughout the tour, but early mornings at Caraça and Cipó could be chilly. Light field clothing (drab colors such as olive or khaki preferred), including several pairs of pants and shorts and comfortable shirts, along with a light jacket or sweatshirt for the early mornings, will be appropriate. Be sure to have one pair of good hiking boots or comfortable walking shoes and a second pair to change into. A rain jacket and/or pocket umbrella is recommended. Dress will be casual throughout.

**DOCUMENTS:** A current U.S. passport and **VISA** are required to enter Brazil. Your visa must be obtained in the U.S. prior to departure and is issued by Brazilian consulates. For further information, you may wish to contact the Brazil consulate nearest you or Pinnacle Travel Document Systems ([www.traveldocs.com](http://www.traveldocs.com) on the web or 888-838-4867 by phone), a company which handles visa procurement. Currently, tourist visas to Brazil are valid for multiple entries up to five years from the initial entry. However, the first visit must be made within 90 days of obtaining the visa, or else the visa is invalidated.

**EQUIPMENT:** You should pack a pair of binoculars that are in good repair, along with a belt pack or day pack (for carrying books, sunscreen, extra film, etc.). As a precaution, it is a good idea to pack your binoculars, a change of clothing, toiletry items, medications, and travel documents in your airline carry-on bag. Your leaders will have a spotting scope, but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so.

**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 Brazilian Specialties tour. We suggest that participants consult their physician as well as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 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

## ***Brazilian Specialties: The Wonders of Minas Gerais & Intervales, Page 8***

from the USA and no vaccinations are required to return to the USA. Please consult your physician for any recommended preventative treatment.

If you are taking prescription medication or over-the-counter medicine, be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the tour safely. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medication.

As standard travel precautions, you should always be up to date with tetanus shots, and strongly consider inoculations against Hepatitis types A and B.

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, which operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line (877) FYI-TRIP. You can check the CDC website at [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel). Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: [www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/new\\_e.html](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/new_e.html) (click on travel health).

### **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.

**SUGGESTED READING:** Our website at [www.ventbird.com](http://www.ventbird.com) offers an affiliated online store which carries a wide variety of items for birding and nature lovers including over 6,000 books. A portion of the sales from the store benefits the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. You might also want to visit such other online stores as [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), and for those out-of-print and hard-to-find titles, [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com).

### ***Birds***

*Birds of South America-Non Passerines: Rheas to Woodpeckers.* Princeton illustrated checklist.

\*1300 species illustrated with excellent plates and good range maps. NEW 2006.

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](http://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: Harper-Collins, 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. *All the Birds of Brasil: A Guide to Identification*. Dall, 2002. Available from Buteo Books (1-800-722-2460 or [www.buteobooks.com](http://www.buteobooks.com)).

### ***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](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](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

***Brazilian Specialties: The Wonders of Minas Gerais & Intervalles, Page 10***

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 March 18, 2008 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.