

ITINERARY

**Brazil: Roraima Adventure**

October 23 – November 3, 2019



*Klages's Antwren is found along the Rio Branco in Roraima and along major rivers in the adjoining states of Amazonas and Para. Photograph by guide Micah Riegner.*

We include here information for those interested in the 2019 Field Guides Roraima Scouting Special tour:

- a general introduction to the tour
- a description of the birding areas to be visited on the tour
- an abbreviated daily itinerary with some indication of the nature of each day's birding outings

Those who register for the tour will be sent this additional material:

- an annotated list of the birds recorded on a previous year's Field Guides trip to the area, with comments by guide(s) on notable species or sightings (may be downloaded from our web site)
- a detailed information bulletin with important logistical information and answers to questions regarding accommodations, air arrangements, clothing, currency, customs and immigration, documents, health precautions, and personal items
- a reference list
- a Field Guides checklist for preparing for and keeping track of the birds we see on the tour
- after the conclusion of the tour, a list of birds seen on the tour

Roraima is the northernmost state in Brazil, nestled between Venezuela, Guyana, and the huge Brazilian state of Amazonas. From steamy Amazonian lowlands to cloudforest-cloaked Tepuis, and from Mauritia Palm swamps, savannas, and gallery forests to vast marshlands and isolated campinas, the state boasts a fabulous diversity of habitats that ultimately translates to a staggering number of birds. In fact, some authors suggest that Roraima comprises one of the most biogeographically heterogeneous regions in the Neotropics! Despite remarkable landscape diversity and a phenomenal bird list with many range-restricted species (Crestless Curassow, Hoary-throated Spinetail, and Rio Branco and Yapacana antbirds, to name a few!) the state remains severely underbirded. So, join Tom and Micah as we explore high ridgelines, deep forests, and trackless savannas in search of some remarkable avifauna of Northern South America.

Roraima has three main biogeographic realms or "areas of endemism": the Guianan, Imeri (west of the Rio Branco), and Pantepui. These regions have distinctive avifaunas, and we'll get a taste of all three in our ten days of birding. We'll

bird the outskirts of Boa Vista where we'll look for Bicolored Wren, Pale-tipped Tyrannulet, Gray Seedeater and much, much more. We'll then shoot north to Serra do Tepequem, stopping along the way to look for Bearded Tachuri in the pristine grasslands. We'll spend a couple days exploring the submontane forests of Serra do Tepequem amidst Sooty-capped Hermits and Tepui swifts before heading down to the town of Caracarai; gateway to Virua National Park. The final days of the tour we'll spend within and around Virua, exploring tall terra firme forest and open sandy campinas—white sand forests with a specialized avifauna. Oh, and we'll also spend a night on a river boat to bird some of the riverine forests of the mighty Rio Branco.

The birds we hope to find see on this itinerary are numerous, and spectacular. We'll have chances to see the critically endangered Hoary-throated Spinetail a bird restricted to riverine belts in Roraima and adjacent Guyana. Other birds we should encounter include Crested Bobwhite, Double-striped Thick-knee, Brown-throated Parakeet, White-tailed Nightjar, Least Nighthawk, White-bellied Piculet, Tepui Swift, Sooty-capped Hermit, Green-bellied Hummingbird, Tufted Coquette, Yapacana, Rio Branco and White-bellied antbirds, White Bellbird, Bicolored Wren, the little-known White-naped Seedeater, Black-striped Sparrow, and Plumbeous Euphonia. We'll of course try to see other wonderful species like Guianan Cock-of-the-rock, Black-headed and Caica parrots, several tinamous, barbets, woodcreepers and tyrannulets. While this isn't a mammal-focused tour, we'll have a chance to see Giant Anteater, Guianan Bearded Saki, the range-restricted White-collared Titi, Linnaeus's Mouse-opossum and Crab-eating Fox. Oh, and we should mention too that the scenery in Roraima is breathtaking—rugged cliffs, wide pristine grasslands (without a cow in sight!).



*Our tour route will find us birding along roads and trails in potentially steamy environments, and may involve negotiating some rough spots. Photograph by guide Bret Whitney.*

**About the Physical Requirements & Pace:** We expect tour participants to be in physically good condition, and able to handle a variety of terrain and temperature conditions. Roraima is one of the more mountainous regions in Brazil, therefore, expect some steep ups and downs and uneven surfaces. Most of the birding will be along roadsides and dirt roads, but we'll also explore narrow forest trails, some of which will require stepping over fallen logs, branches and buttresses. Roraima sits just above the equator, so expect hot, sunny days in the lowlands (in the upper 80s) and brisk, sweatshirt weather up in the mountains. October is generally the "dry season," but it would be wise to come prepared for the unexpected rainstorm.

It is important that we make maximum use of the cool mornings, so prepare for 5 am breakfasts. We will also do a few night outings, in search of owls, nightjars and other night critters, which may keep us in the field until after 10 pm (optional of course!). Some of the days will require 4+ hours of van time; we will break that up with birding, bathroom and lunch breaks. We have scheduled a night on a live-aboard river boat on the Rio Branco. This is a rare opportunity to explore this poorly-known river system, however we will have to make do with bunk beds and tight cabin space just for that night.

If you are uncertain about whether this tour is a good match for your abilities, please don't hesitate to contact our office; if they cannot directly answer your queries, they will put you in touch with one of the guides for the tour.

## About the Birding Areas



**Boa Vista**, the capital of Roraima, is quite birdy as far as cities go. We'll bird the outskirts of the city in some gallery woodland the first day of the tour. The BR-174 is the main road leading north out of Boa Vista. It goes through some fabulous grasslands where we might encounter Bearded Tachuri and Crested Doradito, two scarce inhabitants of Northern South America.

**Serra do Tepequem** is one of the southernmost tepuis (flat-topped mountains, remnants of a widespread sandstone uplift) jutting majestically out of the savannas of northern Roraima. Located only 220 km north of Boa Vista, it is one of the most convenient access points for some of the tepui avifauna. Its highest point is 1100 meters, and its foothills are cloaked in submontane forests with goodies such as Guianan Cock-of-the-rock, Green-bellied Hummingbird, and Tufted Coquette. And the views from atop the plateau are just spectacular!

The **Rio Branco** is a fascinating river biogeographically. It is the only "whitewater" river that does not originate in the Andes, and harbors disjunct populations of several whitewater birds such as Lesser Wagtail-Tyrant and White-bellied Spinetail that are mostly associated with the main channel of the Amazon. The Branco is also an incredibly important barrier separating sister-species of terra firme (never-flooded forest) birds, such as Dwarf and Tiny Tyrant-Manakins, Guianan and Tawny-tufted Toucanets, and Black-spotted and Gilded Barbets. It even limits (or, has limited) Titi Monkeys (genus *Callicebus*) from colonizing the Guianas. We'll have a live-aboard boat to explore some of the islands and side channels of this poorly-known river system.

The **Rio Uraricoera** is a tributary of the Branco. It's a great place to see the Hoary-throated Spinetail, Slate-headed Tody-tyrant and other riverine species. We'll stop here on our way up to Tepequem.

**Virua National Park** is a 227,000-hectare reserve encompassing a massive swath of southern Roraima. The park is a heterogeneous mixture of campina (open shrubby vegetation on nutrient-poor white sand), campinarana (stunted forests on white sand that usually ring campinas), tall terra firme forest, and seasonally flooded varzea in the floodplain of the Rio Branco. There are several good trails at the park headquarters, and some roadways, that we will bird over the course of our stay. The "Estrada Perdida" ("Lost Road") was the original path of the BR-174 that was constructed to connect Boa Vista to Manaus. After 50 km of the road were constructed, the project was abandoned because equipment was lost in impenetrable swampy campinas! How nice is that?! The elevated causeway is now a fabulous, elevated birding road that runs through campina and campinarana vegetation types.

## Itinerary for Brazil: *Roraima Adventure*

**Day 1, Wed, 23 Oct. Arrival in Manaus, Brazil.** The generally most convenient flights from the US (and most other places) to Manaus are on American Airlines from Miami. Whenever you plan to arrive in Manaus (if we don't book your flights, be sure to let us know), our driver will meet you outside customs and take you to the hotel. Night in Manaus.

**Day 2, Thu, 24 Oct. Fly from Manaus to Boa Vista.** We'll take the 11:45 am flight from Manaus (Azul Airlines), arriving in Boa Vista at 1:10 pm (flight schedule subject to change). We'll drop our luggage at our hotel, and, having duly emptied our bladders, let the birding begin! We'll bird the outskirts of Boa Vista and have our first shots at seeing Bicolored Wren, Yellow Oriole, Lesser Hornero and Pale-tipped Tyrannulet. Night in Boa Vista.



*Hoary-throated Spinetail is said to be fairly common within its limited range, and we got very good views on last year's tour. Photograph by guide Bret Whitney.*

**Day 3, Fri, 25 Oct. Boa Vista to Serra do Tepequem.**

We'll get up early and drive north to the Serra do Tepequem on the BR-174, a drive that takes 3 hours non-stop, but we'll take our time to bird some savannas and wetlands along the way. We'll pull over to bird the open savannas in search of Bearded Tachuri and Crested Doradito, and gallery forests along the Rio Uraricoeira where we'll search for the Hoary-throated Spinetail. Lunch will be at a Brazilian "por kilo" restaurant on the way to Tepequem. We'll arrive at our lodging in time for some late-afternoon birding and maybe some owling after dinner. Night at Serra do Tepequem.

**Day 4, Sat, 26 Oct. Birding around Tepequem.** We'll spend the day birding trails around Serra do Tepequem, visiting some fabulous viewpoints where we can see Tepui Swifts circling overhead and several kinds of Macaws flying below. We'll also check out a lek of Guianan Cock-of-the-rock along one of the side trails. Night at Serra do Tepequem.

**Day 5, Sun, 27 Oct. Birding around Tepequem.** We'll have a second day to bird around Tepequem. Night at Serra do Tepequem.

**Day 6, Mon, 28 Oct. Tepequem to Caracarai.** We will leave Tepequem in the early morning and drive to Caracarai, stopping along the way to... bird! We'll brake for Giant Anteaters too. Last year we had 7 along this very drive. We'll check into our hotel in Caracarai, and drive some of the roads outside of town at dusk in hopes of seeing Least Nighthawk flying through campinas. Night in Caracarai.

**Day 7, Tue, 29 Oct. Virua National Park: "Estrada Perdida."** We'll spend the day birding along the "Estrada Perdida," which goes through some nice, stunted white sand forest, in search of the little-known Yapacana Antbird (might be the only chance to see this bird on any Field Guides tour!), Black Manakin, White-naped Seedeater and other white sand forest birds. Night in Caracarai.

**Day 8, Wed, 30 Oct. Boat trip on the Branco!** We will bird around Caracarai in the early morning before boarding our live-aboard boat (similar to those used on the Manaus Tour) to head downstream on the Rio Branco, stopping to bird river islands along the way. There are a number of "white water" birds we'll look for including Lesser Wagtail-Tyrant, White-bellied Spinetail and White-bellied Piculet. We will spend the afternoon/evening birding a remote side creek that feed into the Branco in search of curassows and large mammals (this is a spot where our local guide, Paulo, sees jaguars on occasion!). This will be the first time we do this on the tour, so who knows what we'll see! Depending on weather, we may do some night birding in search of potoos, owls and other night things. Night on the boat.

**Day 9, Thu, 31 Oct. Boat trip on the Rio Branco.** We'll have the full day to explore (truly explore!) the Rio Branco and its tributaries before heading back to Caracarai. Night in Caracarai.

**Day 10, Fri, 1 Nov. Virua: terra firme trails.** We'll bird the trails around the park headquarters in tall, terra firme forest where we could stumble upon any number of good birds such as Black Curassow, Gray-winged Trumpeter, and Black-headed Parrot. In the evening we may return to the park for some night birding. The Estrada Perdida is particularly good for nightjars. Night in Caracarai.

**Day 11, Sat, 2 Nov. Caracarai to Boa Vista to Manaus.** We'll have one more morning of birding around Caracarai (there's a spot we'll check for Capuchinbird), before we drive back to Boa Vista for the afternoon flight back to Manaus, and, after dinner, the evening flight to Miami. We will have a day room in Manaus for folks to shower and repack for the flight home.

**Day 12, Sun, 3 Nov. Arrival in Miami.**

## About Your Guides

**Micah Riegner** grew up exploring the Central Arizona Highlands and was fortunate to have parents who took him along on college field courses ranging from the coast of Mexico to the mountains of Costa Rica, where encounters with tinamous, barbets and jacamars started him birding at a young age. Since graduating high school, he made annual pilgrimages to Amazonia where he worked as a bird guide and participated in expeditions, mostly in Brazil, and he served as a field assistant following mixed-species flocks in Peru. He studied ecology and scientific illustration (some of his bird art has been published in ornithological journals) at Prescott College and is currently working toward a master's degree on the foraging ecology of Amazonian woodcreepers. He is a strong proponent of natural history and regularly sketches birds in the field. His Field Guides training has taken him to various corners of Amazonian Brazil, Bolivia and throughout the US. He designed this tour along with Bret Whitney last year and is eager to return and learn more about this part of Brazil.

*Micah finds birds so fast and is patient, thoughtful and personable. Great guide!" R.F. Roraima Adventure.*

**Tom Johnson** grew up watching birds in central Pennsylvania. Interested in science and the outdoors, he became involved in a variety of field projects, including banding migrant landbirds and conducting point counts for the 2nd Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas. He was fortunate to pursue undergraduate studies in biology at Cornell University, where he learned about systematics and migration while surrounded by the amazing ornithologists and birders of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. After college, Tom spent much of his time studying seabirds off the East Coast, conducting line transect surveys from NOAA ships between Nova Scotia and the Bahamas. He is a regional editor for North American Birds, a regular contributor to Birding, and a member of the ABA Checklist Committee. Now living in Cape May, New Jersey, Tom devotes time to watching bird migration, photography, and searching for vagrants and hybrid birds. He loves helping others pursue their passion for birding and the outdoors and is pleased to be able to do this while guiding for Field Guides.

*Tom Johnson was a delight every day. Cheerful, supportive and as accomplished at spotting and putting folks on the birds as one could hope for." B.W.; SE Brazil: North of the Tropic*

## Financial Information

**FEE:** \$4475 from Manaus

**DEPOSIT:** \$450 per person

**FINAL PAYMENT DUE:** June 25, 2019

**SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional):** \$395 (Depending on group composition, singles may not be available for our night on the boat (Day 8).)

**LIMIT:** 10

## Other Things You Need to Know

**TOUR MANAGER:** The manager for this tour is Christine Boilard. Christine will be happy to assist you in preparing for the tour. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call her!

**DOCUMENTS:** A current passport is necessary for US citizens to enter Brazil. We recommend that your passport be valid for at least 6 months beyond the dates of your visit, as regulations vary from country to country, and are subject to change. In addition, you will need a visa to enter Brazil. Our office will forward you visa application instructions. If you are not a US citizen, please check with the Brazilian consulate nearest you for entry requirements. Information about consulates and entry requirements is generally available online or you can contact us and we will be happy to look this up for you. Passports should have an adequate number of blank pages for the entire journey. Some countries require a blank page for their stamp and as a precaution it is best to have one blank page per country you will visit or transit.

**VACCINATIONS:** It is quite possible (albeit unlikely) to contract malaria in the area that this tour will visit. Please consult <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbook/2018/infectious-diseases-related-to-travel/yellow-fever-malaria-information-by->

[country/brazil#seldyfm879](#) and other sources of information, and consult with your physician about the most appropriate prophylaxis for you, should you opt to take one. Likewise, Yellow Fever is widespread in many parts of Brazil, including the Amazon basin, and we recommend all travelers to Brazil be vaccinated against the disease. Please check <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/alert/yellow-fever-brazil> for the current CDC information and consult with your physician about whether the vaccine is appropriate for you (there are contraindications for some individuals).

**AIR ARRANGEMENTS:** Field Guides is a full-service travel agency and your tour manager will be happy to assist you with flights to join this tour. Field Guides does not charge a service fee for these services to clients booking a tour. However, we understand that tech-savvy clients often prefer to shop online or that you may wish to use mileage to purchase tickets. Regardless of which method you choose, your tour manager will be happy to provide assistance regarding ticket prices and schedules, along with rental cars and extra hotel nights as needed.

Please be sure to check with your tour manager prior to purchasing your ticket to make sure the flights you have chosen will work well with the tour itinerary and that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. Once purchased, most airline tickets are non-refundable and carry a penalty to change. Field Guides cannot be responsible for these fees.

**Also, it is imperative that we receive a copy of your comprehensive flight itinerary—including any and all flights not covered in the tour fee—so that we may track you in the event of missed connections, delays, or other mishaps.**

**LUGGAGE:** Please be aware that many airlines have recently modified their luggage policies and are charging additional fees for checked bags. Updates could easily occur before your departure, so you may wish to contact your airline to verify the policy. Additional charges for bags on any flights, whether these are covered by the tour fee or not, will be the client's responsibility.

**TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS:** The **tour fee** is \$4475 for one person in double occupancy from Manaus. It includes all lodging from Day 1 through Day 10, all meals from breakfast on Day 2 through dinner on Day 11, all ground transportation, entrance fees, tips for baggage handling and meal service, and the guide services of the tour leader(s). Tipping at group meals and for drivers, porters, and local guides is included in your tour fee and will be handled for the group by your Field Guides leader(s). However, if you would like to recognize your Field Guides leader(s) or any local guide(s) for exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are optional and not expected.

The above fee does not include your airfare to and from Manaus, airport taxes, visa fees, any checked or carry-on baggage charges imposed by the airlines, any alcoholic beverages, optional tips to local drivers, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

The **single supplement** for the tour is \$395 (*singles may not be available for our night on the boat*). If you do not have a roommate but wish to share, we will try to pair you with a roommate from the tour; but if none is available, you will be billed for the single supplement. Our tour fees are based on double occupancy; one-half the cost of a double room is priced into the tour fee. The single supplement is calculated by taking the actual cost of a single room and subtracting one-half the cost of a double room (plus any applicable taxes).

**TOUR LIMITS:** Our limits are firm and we don't exceed the limit by one to accommodate a couple when only one space remains open. However, on occasion, we will send along a guide in training on a tour. In these cases, the guide in training will be taking a seat in the van or bus. Our guides will have a rotation system within the vehicle so that clients share the inconvenience equally. We hope this minor inconvenience will be more than offset by the advantages of having another guide along.

**TOUR REGISTRATION:** To register for this tour, complete the Registration/Release and Indemnity form and return it with a **deposit of \$450** per person. If registering by phone, a deposit must be received within fourteen days, or the space will be released. **Full payment** of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to departure, or **by June 25, 2019**. **We will bill you for the final payment at either 120 days or when the tour has reached sufficient subscription to operate, whichever date comes later.** Since the cost of your trip insurance and airline tickets is generally non-refundable, please do not finalize these purchases until you have received final billing for the tour or have been advised that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate by your tour manager.

**SMOKING:** Almost all of our clients prefer a smoke-free environment. If you smoke, please be sensitive to the group and refrain from smoking at meals, in vehicles, and in proximity to the group on trails and elsewhere.

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** Refund of deposit and payment, less \$100 handling fee, will be made if cancellation is received up to 120 days before departure. If cancellation occurs between 119 and 70 days before the departure date, 50% of the tour fee is refundable. Thereafter, all deposits and payments are not refundable.

This policy only applies to payments made to Field Guides for tour fees (and any services included in those fees). Airline tickets not included in the tour fee and purchased separately often carry penalties for cancellation or change, or are sometimes totally non-refundable. Additionally, if you take out trip insurance the cost of the insurance is not refundable so it is best to purchase the policy just prior to making full payment for the tour or at the time you purchase airline tickets, depending upon the airlines restrictions.

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 another guide for the original one. Where this is necessary, notification will be given to tour members, and they will have the right to cancel their participation and receive a full refund.

**TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EMERGENCY INSURANCE:** We strongly recommend you consider purchasing trip cancellation (including medical emergency) insurance to cover your investment in case of injury or illness to you or your family prior to or during a trip. Because we must remit early (and substantial) tour deposits to our suppliers, we cannot offer any refund when cancellation occurs within 70 days of departure, and only a partial refund from 70 to 119 days prior to departure (see CANCELLATION POLICY). In addition, the Department of State strongly urges Americans to consult with their medical insurance company prior to traveling abroad to confirm whether their policy applies overseas and if it will cover emergency expenses such as a medical evacuation. US medical insurance plans seldom cover health costs incurred outside the United States unless supplemental coverage is purchased. Furthermore, US Medicare and Medicaid programs do not provide payment for medical services outside the United States.

When making a decision regarding health insurance, Americans should consider that many foreign doctors and hospitals require payment in cash prior to providing service and that a medical evacuation to the United States may cost well in excess of \$50,000. Uninsured travelers who require medical care overseas often face extreme difficulties. When consulting with your insurer prior to your trip, please ascertain whether payment will be made to the overseas healthcare provider or whether you will be reimbursed later for expenses that you incur.

US citizens will receive from us a brochure regarding optional tour cancellation/emergency medical insurance. Our agent, CSA, will insure for trip cancellation and interruption, medical coverage, travel delay, baggage loss and delay, 24-hour accident protection, and emergency medical transportation. If you purchase the insurance when making final payment for the tour, and cover all non-refundable parts of the trip (including any non-refundable flights), pre-existing conditions are covered. The CSA brochure includes a contact number; you may also purchase your CSA policy on-line by visiting our website at <https://fieldguides.com/travelinsurance.html> and clicking the link to CSA. **Currently we are unable to offer CSA insurance policies to residents of New York and Hawaii.** We have had clients provide positive feedback after acquiring insurance with InsureMyTrip ([www.insuremytrip.com](http://www.insuremytrip.com)) in the past, and would suggest that company as an alternative. Please let us know if you have any questions about this. Please note, once the insurance is purchased it is non-refundable, so please check with your tour manager prior to making the purchase to assure the tour will operate as scheduled. Citizens of other countries are urged to consult their insurance broker.

**RESPONSIBILITY:** For and in consideration of the opportunity to participate in the tour, each tour participant and each parent or legal guardian of a tour participant who is under 18 agrees to release, indemnify, and hold harmless Field Guides Incorporated, its agents, servants, employees, shareholders, officers, directors, attorneys, and contractors as more fully set forth in the Release and Indemnity Agreement on the reverse side of the registration form. Field Guides Incorporated acts only as an agent for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, or other means, and assumes no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity caused by defect in such vehicles or for any reason whatsoever, including the acts, defaults, or bankruptcies of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. Field Guides Incorporated accepts 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. The tour participant shall bear all such losses and expenses. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right 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. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely.

**Participants should be in good health and should consult a physician before undertaking a tour.** If you have questions about the physical requirements of a tour, please contact our office for further information. Participants should prepare for the tour by reading the detailed itinerary, the information bulletin, and other pertinent matter provided by Field Guides. Each participant is responsible for bringing appropriate clothing and equipment as recommended in our bulletins.

THE RECEIPT OF YOUR TOUR DEPOSIT SHALL BE DEEMED TO BE CONSENT TO THE ABOVE CONDITIONS. EACH TOUR PARTICIPANT AND EACH PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN OF A TOUR PARTICIPANT WHO IS UNDER 18 SHALL SIGN AND DELIVER THE RELEASE AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION.

MAR 10/18, CB 2/19