

Lear's Macaw (*Anodorhynchus leari*). Photo: João Andriola

BRAZIL BIRDING
EXPERTS

TOUR POLICIES: HOW WE BIRD

TOUR POLICIES

What to Expect on a BBE Tour

The standards behind every BBE tour: how our guides work, how participants collaborate, and the ethics and conservation principles we hold ourselves to in the field.

IN THE FIELD, HOW WE BIRD

- **Trail rotation.** Everyone takes turns at the front of the line, so no one is stuck at the back. On technical stretches, the guide sets the order.
- **Seat rotation in vehicles.** Seats rotate day to day, and there is no saving seats. If you need a specific seat for a physical reason, just tell your guide and we will arrange it.
- **Observation before the list.** We bird at an observation-first pace, with ecological context, never a race for ticks.
- **Follow the guide on pace and silence.** Knowing when to move, when to wait and when to stay quiet is what gets the whole group onto the bird.

HEALTH, SAFETY AND LOGISTICS

- **Safety before any species or schedule.** Guides may adjust or stand down a plan whenever conditions call for it.
- **Punctuality.** Dawn waits for no one, and respecting the group's time is respecting the birds.
- **If you feel unwell, tell your guide early.** The sooner we know, the sooner you get the right care. Masks are not required as a rule, but when someone has respiratory symptoms, the guide may ask them to wear one around the group. See our Health Protocols.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM US

- **Biologist guides.** You bird with someone who studies these birds and reads the forest, not someone who learned them along the way.
- **A shared effort.** A great tour is collaboration, and these small courtesies are what make a group a pleasure to travel with.

ETHICAL BIRDING AND WILDLIFE

- **Responsible playback.** Our guides are trained biologists who know the behavior of each species well enough to read its response and stop in time. Silence is also a response.
- **The bird's welfare comes first.** We never flush a bird for a better shot or a clearer look.
- **Never disturb nests or young.** A photograph or a tick is never worth a cost to the animal.
- **Every tour feeds science.** Our field observations go to eBird and GBIF.

WITH EACH OTHER AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES

- **Respect for everyone.** Courtesy and respect go to guests, guides, drivers, hosts and partners alike.
- **Zero tolerance** for discrimination or harassment of any kind, including sarcasm and prejudice.
- **Local people are partners, not scenery.** We value and fairly pay local guides, drivers and hosts.
- **Photos of the group.** Please ask before posting an identifiable photo of anyone else on the tour.



Bare-faced Curassow (*Crax fasciolata*).
Photo: Felipe Arantes



Araripe Manakin (*Antilophia bokermanni*). Photo: Felipe Arantes

Our Philosophy

At Brazil Birding Experts, birding is not a race for species. It is an observation-first practice led by biologists, where field craft, quiet teamwork and respect for habitat shape every day in the field.

We are also flexible, and we adapt the pace to each group. On our tailor-made tours, we set the pace with you, whether you want to push hard for specific targets or slow down and take in the biome. Our set departures follow their own rhythm. Our guests range from twitchers to relaxed birders, photographers and naturalists, and our guides have a wide variety of birding and nature profiles. Many of them are comfortable with all of these styles in the field.

Whatever the pace, a tour with us is an immersion in the place, with ecological context. When a mixed flock moves through the canopy, we want you to know why it forms, which species lead it and what the forest around you is doing. A long checklist is a natural result of birding this way, but the experience comes first.

That is the difference between counting a bird and understanding it. Respect for nature is the first of our values, and it is also the better way to see birds.



A BBE group in the field. Photo: Felipe Arantes

How Our Guides Work

Every BBE lead guide is a trained biologist, not a tour leader who learned the birds along the way. This is the core of how we work, and it shapes every decision in the field.

We keep groups small, always within each site's carrying capacity, because crowding a trail harms both the habitat and the experience, and because a smaller group simply sees more.

Our guides bird the way they would survey: systematically, and with the data to back it up. Every tour feeds eBird, and through eBird the global GBIF database, adding to the record for places some of our guides have birded for more than 20 years.

BBE was founded in 2018, but the experience behind it runs much deeper. In the field, this means reading the forest rather than chasing ticks: anticipating what a habitat should hold, recognizing calls before the bird appears, and knowing when to wait.

Many of our guides have published scientific papers and books on the birds and regions you are visiting.

A NETWORK BEHIND EVERY GUIDE

When a guide leads in a region they know less well, it is because they know its species, and they can count on a close network of cooperation among our guides, with recent tips on the best spots and a plan A, B and C for each day.



Black-hooded Antwren (*Formicivora erythronotos*). Photo: Caio Brito

Responsible Playback

Playback is a field tool that needs to be managed with care and responsibility.

Our guides know the behavior of each species: how to use playback with it, how to read its response, when to stop, and when it is better to move on and try another individual.

In practice, this means short, low-volume sequences aimed at a specific target, with the guide watching how the bird responds and stopping as soon as the question is answered, or as soon as the bird shows it has had enough. Silence is also a response.

This is field craft applied with the rigor of biologists. We do not lecture other birders about it; we simply hold ourselves to a standard.

Observation Ethics

The welfare of the bird always comes before the observation, and that principle settles almost every decision in the field. We keep a respectful distance, using optics rather than proximity to get the view, and we read the animal's behavior as the sign that we are too close.

We never disturb a nest or a brood, and we never flush a bird for a better shot or a clearer look. We leave no trace, taking out everything we bring in, so the next group, and the birds that live there, find each site as we found it.



Sincora Antwren (*Formicivora grantsaui*). Photo: Ciro Albano

How Participants Collaborate

A great tour is a shared effort, and a few simple courtesies keep it working for everyone.

The first is respect for the group's pace and quiet. Birding rewards patience, and a raised voice or a rushed step can cost the whole group a bird that was seconds from showing. Following your guide on when to move, when to wait and when to stay silent is the most valuable thing any participant can do.

The second is respect for habitat. We stay on trails, keep our distance from birds and other wildlife, and never disturb nests or young.

The third is respect for local communities: the people who host us, guide locally and share their knowledge are partners, and we treat them that way. Throughout the tour, we ask for ethical photography, with the same care with a camera that we apply to playback. That care extends to each other: please ask before posting an identifiable photo of another participant. And if anything on the tour is bothering you, tell your guide early. Small things are easiest to fix while they are still small.



Stripe-breasted Starthroat (*Heliomaster squamosus*). Photo: Felipe Arantes

Conservation in Practice

Every BBE tour feeds eBird, and through eBird the open GBIF biodiversity database, so each trip adds to the global record of where birds occur. We keep groups small, within each site's carrying capacity, so the birding itself stays low-impact. Every year we visit 84 protected areas across our routes.

We work alongside conservation partners including Aquasis, Avistar Brasil and Instituto Fauna Brasil, and we keep tourism revenue in the communities we visit, working with more than 60 local guides each year. Many of our guests have also become part of conservation in Brazil: some have supported Brazilian conservation projects, and some have helped buy land to protect important habitats. Our Public Policy on Sustainability is aligned with UN Sustainable Development Goals 8 (decent work and economic growth), 12 (responsible consumption and production) and 15 (life on land).

Safety and Wellbeing

The physical and mental safety of our guests and our team comes before any species and any schedule. No bird is worth an injury or an unsafe situation, and our guides have full authority to adjust, delay or stop a plan whenever conditions call for it. We do not push into terrain, weather or wildlife encounters that put people or animals at risk.

BBE provides safe drinking water throughout the tour, plans each day with heat, humidity and altitude in mind, and includes the rest that long days in the field require. If you feel unwell at any point, tell your guide right away, so you can get the right care early and recover sooner. Masks are not required as a rule, but when someone has respiratory symptoms, the guide may ask them to wear one around the group. Our Health Protocols, including recommended vaccinations for Brazil, are available on our website.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

BBE is committed to a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for everyone: guests, guides, partners and staff. We have zero tolerance for discrimination or harassment of any kind, in the office, in the field and in every interaction. Everyone on a BBE tour should feel they belong there.

Our recruitment is merit-based and non-discriminatory, and we see people from different regional, cultural and social backgrounds as a strength of our team. We are committed to gender equity. Women already lead across our operations and regional coordination, and field guiding in our industry remains mostly male. Bringing more women into guiding is a goal we are working toward, through mentoring and professional opportunities in the field.

OUR COMMITMENTS IN WRITING

Our Public Policy on Sustainability and our Code of Ethics and Conduct are available on our website, together with our Health Protocols and Terms and Conditions.