

Punta del Este & Coastal Lagoons Birding Experience

This full-day tour explores one of Uruguay's most dynamic coastal birding regions, where a remarkable diversity of habitats converges within a small area. Marshes, coastal lagoons, rivers, grasslands, and both native and exotic woodlands create ideal conditions for a rich and varied avifauna. On a good day, it is possible to record over 90 species.



Bird watching from a hide in the Wetlands of the Maldonado River.

We visit a series of carefully selected sites including the wetlands of the Maldonado River and José Ignacio, Garzón and Rocha coastal lagoons. These habitats are particularly productive for shorebirds, gulls, and terns, with highlights such as **Snowy-crowned Tern** and, during the austral winter, the range-restricted **Olrog's Gull**. The area is especially notable for concentrations of migratory terns along the Maldonado River and coastal lagoons. Rocha

Lagoon is also one of the few locations in Uruguay where **Chilean Flamingo** can be observed.

Across this mosaic of environments, grasslands provide opportunities to observe species such as **Greater Rhea** and **Nacunda Nighthawk**. In marshes and wetlands, the diversity of waterfowl is remarkable, including species such as **Silver Teal**, **Chiloe Wigeon**, **Black-headed Duck**, and **Rosy-billed Pochard**. These wetland systems also hold iconic species such as **Southern Screamer**, with chances to encounter more elusive birds like **Pinnated Bittern**. The region is also notable for supporting range-restricted species such as **Black-and-white Monjita** and **Saffron-cowled Blackbird**.

Shrublands and wooded areas further increase species diversity, often producing a variety of striking passerines. These include colorful tanagers such as **Diademed Tanager** and **Blue-and-yellow Tanager**, as well as a range of woodpeckers and tyrant flycatchers, including the distinctive **Blue-billed Black-Tyrant**.



Many-colored Rush Tyrant. By Bill Pohley.



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Montevideo, Uruguay.

Full-Day Option

Maximum duration: 12 hours

Pick-up is arranged directly from the guest's accommodation in Punta del Este and nearby areas, or from Montevideo (approximately a two-hour drive).

For cruise passengers arriving at the Port of Punta del Este, pick-up takes place at the pier. Transfer time to the first birding location is typically between 10 and 20 minutes, depending on the itinerary's starting point.

The order of sites visited may vary according to weather conditions, recent sightings, and the guide's recommendations, ensuring optimal bird activity and the best possible observation opportunities throughout the day.

Half-Day Option

Maximum duration: 6 hours

A shorter version is specially designed for cruise passengers arriving at the Port of Punta del Este or visitors with limited time. Based on guests' priorities, interests, and bird wish lists, a selection of the most suitable sites from the full-day itinerary is chosen to maximize birding opportunities within the available time. Despite its shorter duration, this option offers rewarding experience with excellent chances to observe a representative diversity of the region's birdlife.



Spotted Sandpiper. By Bill Pohley.

Logistics & Comfort

- **Minimal travel time between sites** — generally no more than 30 minutes by vehicle, maximizing time in the field.
- **Low to moderate level of physical activity.** Most birding takes place on firm ground, including paved roads and compact gravel tracks. Short walks are occasionally required — typically only a few dozen meters — como a lo largo de las orillas de las lagunas, where sections of soft sand are minimal and most walking occurs on firm sand. Several observations are also made from comfortable stationary viewpoints on flat terrain, allowing guests to enjoy excellent birding opportunities without physical effort.
- **Clean restroom facilities** — scheduled stops at modern and well-maintained service station provide access to restrooms. También se cuenta con baños en el sitio de picnic.
- **Picnic lunch** — midday, we enjoy a relaxed lunch under the shade of native trees in a park located at the wetlands of the Maldonado River reserve, seated at tables.



Black Skimmer. By Bill Pohley.

Extended Bird List for Punta del Este & Coastal Lagoons Birding Experience

Greater Rhea • Southern Screamer • Neotropic Cormorant • White-tufted Grebe • Great Grebe • Pied-billed Grebe • Black-necked Swan • Coscoroba Swan • White-faced Whistling • Duck Fulvous Whistling-Duck • Brazilian Teal • Yellow-billed Teal • Silver Teal • Chiloe Wigeon • Rosy-billed Pochard • Black-headed Duck • Lake Duck • Yellow-billed Pintail • Cocoli Heron • Great Egret • Snowy Egret • Cattle Egret • Whistling Heron •



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Striated Heron • Black-crowned Night-Heron • Bare-faced Ibis • White-faced Ibis • Plumbeous Ibis • Limpkin • Giant Wood-Rail • Plumbeous Rail • Rufous-sided Crake • Spot-flanked Gallinule • Common Gallinule • Red-gartered Coot • Red-fronted Coot • White-winged Coot • Wattled Jacana • Black-necked Stilt • American Oystercatcher • Southern Lapwing • Rufous-chested Dotterel (W) • Semipalmated Plover (S) • Collared Plover • Two-banded Plover (W) • American Golden-Plover (S) • Greater Yellowlegs • Lesser Yellowlegs • Spotted Sandpiper (S) • Solitary Sandpiper (S) • Buff-breasted Sandpiper (S) • Hudsonian Godwit (S) • White-rumped Sandpiper (S) • Pectoral Sandpiper (S) • South American Snipe • Kelp Gull • Olog's Gull (W) • Brown-hooded Gull • Yellow-billed Tern • Common Tern • Snowy-crowned Tern • Royal Tern • Sandwich Tern • Black Skimmer • Ringed Kingfisher • Amazon Kingfisher • Green Kingfisher • Glittering-bellied Emerald • White-throated Hummingbird • Gilded Hummingbird • Picazuro Pigeon • Eared Dove • Picui Gorund Dove • White-tipped Dove • Turkey Vulture • White-tailed Kite • Long-winged Harrier • Snail Kite (S) • Roadside Hawk • Harris's Hawk • Crested Caracara • Chimango Caracara • American Kestrel • Aplomado Falcon • Burrowing Owl • Short-eared Owl • Monk Parakeet • Dark-billed Cuckoo • Guira Cuckoo • Mottled Piculet • White Woodpecker • White-spotted Woodpecker • Green-barred Woodpecker • Campo Flicker • Narrow-billed Woodcreeper • Rufous Hornero • Wren-like Rushbird • Buff-winged Cinclodes (W) • Freckle-breasted Thornbird • Firewood-gatherer • Sulphur-bearded Reedhaunter • Stripe-crowned Spinetail • Chotoy Spinetail • Spix's Spinetail • Rufous-capped Antshrike • Variable Antshrike • White-winged Becard • Many-colored Rush-Tyrant • Southern-beardless Tyrannulet • Warbling Doradito • Small-billed Elaenia (S) • Sooty Tyrannulet • White-crested Tyrannulet • Swainson's Flycatcher • Bran-colored Flycatcher (S) • Vermilion Flycatcher (S) • Spectacled Tyrant • Austral Negrito (W) • Gray Monjita • White Monjita • Black-and-white Monjita • Great Kiskadee • Streaked Flycatcher (S) • Cattle Tyrant • Tropical Kingbird (S) • Fork-tailed Flycatcher (S) • Rufous-browed Peppershrike • Red-eyed Vireo (S) • Gray-breasted Martin • Brown-chested Martin • Blue-and-white Swallow • White-rumped Swallow • Southern Rough-winged Swallow • Barn Swallow • Cliff Swallow • Masked Gnatcatcher • Chalk-browed Mockingbird • White-banded Mockingbird (W) • House Wren • Creamy-bellied Thrush • Rufous-bellied Thrush • Tropical Parula • Southern Yellowthroat (S) • Golden-crowned Warbler • White-browed Warbler • Hepatic Tanager • Diademed Tanager • Sayaca Tanager • Blue-and-yellow Tanager • Glaucous-blue Grosbeak • Long-tailed Reed-Finch • Grassland Yellow-Finch • Great Pampa-Finch • Black-and-rufous Warbling-Finch • Gray-throated Warbling-Finch • Black-capped Warbling-Finch • Double-collared Seedeater • Rusty-collared Seedeater • Scarlet-headed Blackbird • Yellow-winged Blackbird • Saffron-cowled Blackbird • Brown-and-Yellow Marshbird • Variable Oriole • Grayish Baywing • Screaming Cowbird • Shiny Cowbird • Red-crested Cardinal • Saffron Finch • Rufous-collared Sparrow • Hooded Siskin

*(W): Austral Winter, (S): Austral Summer.

Bird lists are based on previous records; it is not guaranteed to see them all during the tour.

**Punta del Esta & Coastal Lagoons
Birding Experience**