

Brazil – Birds & Mammals of the Amazon & Pantanal

Naturetrek Tour Itinerary

Outline itinerary

Day 1	Depart London
Day 2	Arrive São Paulo, fly Alta Floresta to stay.
Day 3/5	SouthWild Amazon Lodge
Day 6	Leave Amazon, Stay Alta Floresta
7/8	Pouso Alegre
9/11	Jaguar Flotel or Flotel Naturezas
Day 12/13	SouthWild Pantanal Lodge or Pantanal Mato Grosso Hotel
Day 14	Transfer Cuiaba for inbound flight
Day 15	Land London

Departs

May-October

Dates and Prices

See website (tour code BRA08) or brochure

Grading

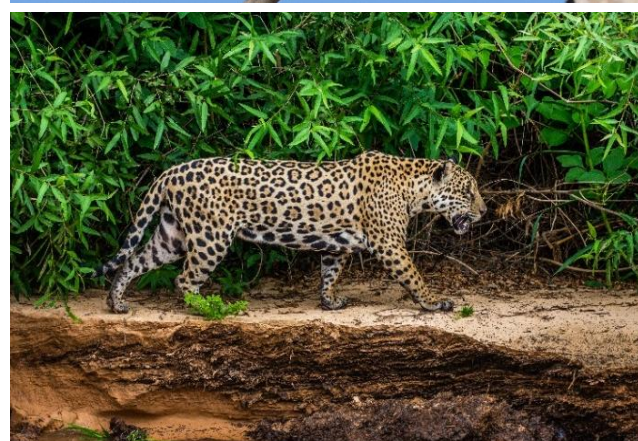
A/B - Gentle walks and boat safaris

Focus

Birds and mammals

Highlights

- Visit an active Harpy Eagle nest
- Over 500 species of birds recorded at SouthWild Amazon Lodge and rare primates.
- Explore the incredible Pantanal and unrivalled Jaguar and Giant Otter views.
- Other mammals may include Ocelot, Tapir, Giant Anteater and many more.



Harpy Eagle, Toco Toucan, Jaguar



Naturetrek Mingledown Barn Wolf's Lane Chawton Alton Hampshire GU34 3HJ UK

T: +44 (0)1962 733051

E: info@naturetrek.co.uk

W: www.naturetrek.co.uk

Introduction

Combining two of Brazil's most famous wildlife regions, the vast rainforest of the Amazon Basin and the open wetlands of the Pantanal, this unique 15-day bird and mammal watching tour offers the keen naturalist the chance to sample two very different ecosystems and encounter an enormous variety of species.

The Amazon Basin is a huge area, around twice the size of India, and still to this day the majority of it (around 75%) is in standing forest, with around half of that standing forest in protected areas.

As recently as January 2017 Harpy Eagle biologist Everton Miranda learned that a large chunk (around half the size of the UK) of the southern Amazon is blessed with an extensive network of trails, created by forest workers who criss-cross the forest but do not hunt at all. These non-hunting informants have shown us previously unknown concentrations of large, charismatic, animals that include such wonders as Harpy Eagles, Brazilian Tapirs, Scarlet, Blue-and-Gold, and Red-and-Green Macaws, and four particularly beautiful and elusive primates: Gray Woolly Monkeys, Black-faced Spider Monkeys, Red Howler Monkeys and the endangered White-nosed Saki.



Amazon Rainforest at Fazenda São Nicolau

The area of SouthWild Amazon Lodge, formerly known as 'Fazenda São Nicolau', is around 10,300 hectares, making it one of the largest properties in the entire county. Owned by the French government, this area is protected for eco-tourists. A ferry along the Juruena River provides access and accommodation is in the park headquarters in comfortable, en-suite, air-conditioned rooms.

The seasonally flooded plains of the Pantanal, the largest wetland in the world, attract an incredible number of birds and offer some of the finest birdwatching anywhere on the planet. Vast numbers of herons, storks, ibises and Limpkins throng the marshy areas, whilst raptors such as Great Black, Black-collared and Savanna Hawk watch on with intent. The gallery forests and scrub hold an array of tropical birds including antbirds, woodcreepers, toucans, tyrant flycatchers and colourful parrots, with the magnificent Hyacinth Macaw a welcome and frequent sight throughout the Pantanal. On this tour we will spend time in the 'Jaguar Zone' where mammals of the Pantanal include the icons; Jaguars, Giant River Otter, Capybara, Tapir and with luck Giant Anteater.

Please note that the itinerary below offers our planned programme of excursions. However, adverse weather & other local considerations can necessitate some re-ordering of the programme during the course of the tour, though this will always be done to maximize best use of the time and weather conditions available.

Itinerary

Day 1

Depart London

We leave London Heathrow on a scheduled, overnight flight to São Paulo in Brazil.

Day 2

SouthWild Amazon Lodge

Following an early morning arrival in São Paulo, we will then transfer to Sao Paulo VCP airport around 1.5 hours away, before flying on to Alta Floresta. On our way to Sao Paulo VCP airport, we will make a short stop at some Atlantic Forest habitat along the way to stretch our legs and hope to see a few birds not possible on the rest of the tour. Blue Dacnis, Violet-capped Woodnymph, Tropical Parula and even Red-breasted Toucan may be possible. We won't have long but we will aim to make this stop a productive one. Upon arrival in Alta Floresta, time permitting, we will have the chance to explore some forest here which is a short walk from the hotel before enjoying our first dinner together.

Day 3/5

SouthWild Amazon Lodge

After a night in Alta Floresta, we will begin our journey to SouthWild Amazon Lodge after breakfast for a 3-night stay. The journey takes around 4 hours, and we will stop to stretch our legs and see some birds, before we reach the banks of the beautiful Juruena River. From here we journey by ferry boat for around 30 minutes to the lodge where we will arrive for a late lunch. The itinerary will then be kept flexible to enable us to secure the best sightings of the special wildlife of the area. With two full days and two half days to explore the environs of the lodge, we will cover a variety of habitats, including primary and secondary tropical forest, mixed savanna with granite outcrops, wetland and seasonally flooded forest, utilizing over 13 miles of trails and cruising the network of river channels by boat on the Juruena.

Harpy Eagles

The presence of the utterly magnificent Harpy Eagle gives an indicator of the biodiversity rich forest we will be in, and we will of course be targeting great sightings of this legendary species using the latest information from local expert guides. To date an amazing 33 nests have been located throughout the state of Mato Grosso and we shall visit a nest site, giving us the very best chance to observe these amazing birds. A tower will be positioned to allow us to be at eye level of a nest site to achieve simply breath-taking views. We will have an extremely high chance to obtain wonderful views of a mature, young Harpy Eagle and depending on the stage of the nest within the nesting cycle, we can also hope to see an adult bird. Young Harpy Eagles stay around the nest for up to 12 months after fledging, with parent birds still bringing in prey items such as sloths and primates for their young, hence why the young bird stays around its nest tree. Of course, an adult bird bringing prey happens more infrequently as the young bird gets older, but there is a still a chance of seeing an adult and a young, fully grown Harpy Eagle is certainly a spectacular bird! You can find more information about the towers and Harpy Eagle at the end of the itinerary. It will depend on the location of the nest in relation to the lodge as to how many times we shall visit it but during our time here we shall visit an active nest on at least one occasion.

Birding from SouthWild Amazon Lodge

SouthWild Amazon Lodge is located in a reserve of around 10,300 hectares and is a real mix of habitats, with some wonderful primary forest, long standing secondary forest, areas which have been replanted with the ongoing conservation work, open grassland areas, lagoons and lakes. This means there is an incredible diversity of life here with ongoing studies revealing new species for the reserve with great frequency. Over 500 bird species have been recorded to date and we will take



Blue-and-Yellow Macaws

walks and drives in these different habitats to enjoy a special range of species. Blue-and-Yellow and Red-and-Green Macaws can be seen very well here and often provide excellent photographic opportunities with Red-bellied Macaw also found in good numbers and Scarlet frequently seen. On almost all outings we have a great opportunity to view various macaw species as they have little fear of humans here. On the forest floor, Dark-winged Trumpeters may be seen moving in small flocks, being a very good sign of a healthy, little visited forest, while the unmistakable call of the Screaming Piha will be with us as we work the forest trails. Some of the species we may find will include Black-tailed Trogon, Helmeted Manakin and a range of tanagers including White-winged Shrike-Tanager, Swallow, Flame-crested and Magpie Tanager with Blue Dacnis relatively common and the chance also of Jacamars with Rufous-tailed, Bronzy and Paradise all targets. A range of woodpeckers may include Yellow-tufted and Crimson-crested with raptors including Black Vultures, Black Caracara, and the incredibly smart Pearl Kite while large numbers of Snail Kite are sometimes seen. Both Collared and White-lipped Peccary frequent the forest, and we will of course be on the lookout for any mammals as we walk quietly along the trails.

Around any pools and lagoons we may find Capped, Rufescent Tiger, and Striated Heron, Snowy Egret, Green Ibis and often Swallow-winged Puffbirds, Blue-black Grassquit and Smooth-billed Ani in the surrounding vegetation. Flocks of Red-bellied Macaws also roost at these lagoons and there is always the chance of mammals visiting to drink and bathe with Tapir being seen regularly. Between the lagoons and the river we may find all five of South America's Kingfisher species being Amazon, Green, Green and Rufous, American Pygmy and Ringed.

Around the lodge headquarters and nearby more open areas we may see a whole host of species including Masked Tityra, Rufous-browed Peppershrike, Bare-necked Fruitcrow the stunning Spangled Cotinga and a range of flycatchers, tyrannulets, antbirds and tanagers along with hummingbirds including Grey-breasted Sabrewing, Fork-tailed Woodnymph and Black-throated Mango. Tropical Screech Owls often roost in the tress around the lodge and our local guides may well know of a current roost site for the amazing Common Potoo while Ferruginous Pygmy Owl is also often seen.

Boat Excursions on the Juruena River

Boat trips on the Juruena River are beautiful and offer some excellent wildlife viewing opportunities.

In the riverside vegetation we may discover Red-throated Piping Guan, Swallow-winged Puffbirds or the unique Hoatzin, and as we head into the narrower channels, we hope to find Sunbittern, White-throated Toucan or even a troupe of Black-capped Capuchin.

Neotropical and Giant Otter may be seen, peccaries often cross the channels and Jaguar is possible although rare here. The birdlife may include raptors such as Great Black Hawk, Bat Falcon and Plumbeous Harrier with riverside trees holding Band-tailed Antbird, the unique Umbrellabird and Striped Cuckoo to name just a few along with the iconic and bizarre Hoatzin which will be a specific target.

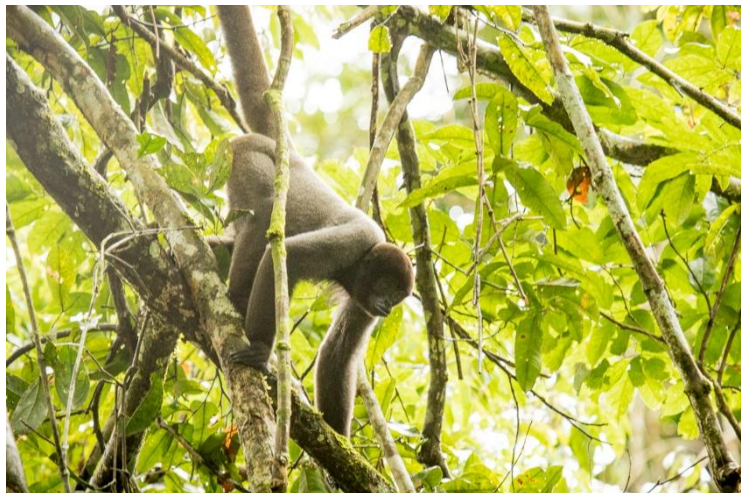


Hoatzin

The undergrowth here may host some small stunning species such as Spotted Tody-flycatcher or Rufous-tailed Jacamar. The river brings such tranquillity and unique species that it is sure to be a highlight of our time in the Southern Amazon.

Primates and other mammals

With the flexible itinerary we will attempt to find the special and endangered primates in the area and try to photograph them. Gray Woolly Monkey (*Lagothrix cana*) and the White-nosed Saki (*Chiropotes albinasus*) are two of the star species here. These two species, both sadly listed as endangered by the IUCN, are endemic to the central-southern Amazon. Thankfully their population is healthy here and the guides keep up to date with where they are, what



Gray Woolly Monkey

they are feeding on are how their populations are faring in the reserve. They can often be seen together and visiting favoured feeding trees can produce very good views. Black-faced Black Spider Monkey (*Ateles chamek*), also known as Peruvian Spider Monkey, is another endangered primate here. If we're lucky, we can see this most agile of species swinging through the canopy. Other primates recorded here are Black-tailed Marmoset (*Mico melanurus*), Parus Red Howler Monkey (*Alouatta puruensis*), Brown Capuchin Monkey (*Sapajus apella*), Common Squirrel Monkey (*Saimiri sciureus*) and Dusky Titi Monkey (*Callicebus moloch*). Azara's Night Monkey (*Aotus azarae*) are

found here but are difficult to find. Recently a large male Ocelot has been seen regularly coming close to the riverbank and night drives around the forest tracks may reveal a range of species with Tapir seen with great regularity a short walk from the lodge. It is sure to be an exciting stay.

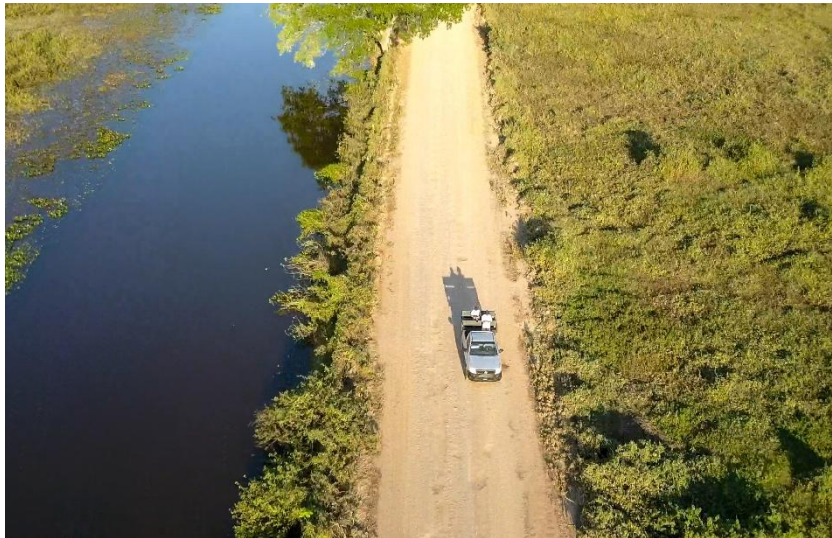
Day 6 Morning at SouthWild Amazon Lodge and depart

After a morning of activities and lunch, our wonderful stay in the Southern Amazon will be complete and we will travel this afternoon back to Alta Floresta to spend the night. We will be maximising our time as always to stop where we can for sightings.

Day 7 - 8 Pouso Alegre

Today we will drive to Sinop for our short flight to Cuiaba and the Pantanal awaits. Depending on flight times to Cuiaba we will aim to reach Sinop in time to have a short explore of the city park where the endangered White-cheeked Spider Monkey may be found. Reaching Cuiaba we will drive approximately 2.5 hours to our first Pantanal lodge at Pouso Alegre, where we stay for two nights. Getting from the Amazon to the Pantanal makes the day a fairly long travel day but we will of course be making stops along the way for wildlife as often as we can. The drive from Cuiabá will introduce some of the inhabitants of the Pantanal region, with the last 7 km of the drive being the private, wildlife-rich driveway of our lodge, Pouso Alegre. As we drive, we will see a transitional forest grading from dry "Cerrado" to more wet woodland typical of southern Mato Grosso region, and the birdlife is both colourful and plentiful with representatives from some of the Neotropical families, such as toucans, tanagers and hummingbirds, that we will be seeing throughout the tour.

The drive from Cuiabá airport starts with driving 100km southwest on asphalt (for 70-75 minutes) to the town of Poconé. This stretch of road runs through different types of tropical dry forest that go by the name of "cerrado" and "cerradão". As we leave the south end of Poconé on our way into the Pantanal, we see the dry forests and fields drop slightly into the large flat floodplain of the Pantanal proper, and the 122



Transpantaneira Road

bridges begin. After 17km we will encounter the first wooden bridges, often seeing the first assemblage of herons, caimans, and Capybara. Pouso Alegre's entrance gate is located 12km further south along the well-known 145-km-long "Transpantaneira" raised dirt and gravel road. The lodge is famous for its excellent mammal viewing and birding, much of which one does along the lodge's private 7-km-long, raised driveway. Slow drives on this long entrance road often yield good views of species such as Red Brocket Deer, Bare-faced Curassows, Chestnut-bellied Guans, Brazilian Tapir, and even Giant Anteaters! On the first 29 km of the Transpantaneira, and on the last 500m before reaching the Pouso Alegre Lodge, you will also enjoy your first good views of hundreds of Jacaré Caiman as well as dozens of Capybaras. Other wildlife species often seen at Pouso Alegre include Azara's Agouti, Black-tailed Marmoset and Tamandua.

While based at Pouso Alegre, we may drive short distances in the evening on the Transpantaneira to gain access to other marshes and bridges in search of fauna. We use our open-sided, safari lorry for these drives on the long driveway, and we include a one-hour-long night spotlighting drive on each of the two nights at Pouso Alegre.

Day 9 - 11

Jaguar Flotel or Flotel Naturezas

Leaving Pouso Alegre we will travel to the end of the Transpantaneira and at Porto Jofre travel by boat to reach our floating accommodation, either at the Jaguar Flotel or Flotel Naturezas. Both are positioned in perfect locations, with wildlife all around at all times and in the prime location for finding Jaguars. We will spend three nights here, following a routine of morning and afternoon boat safaris exploring the most Jaguar-rich sections of the Cuiabá, Piquirí, and Three Brothers Rivers, returning to base in the middle of the day for lunch and some downtime. On each of the boat safaris, we will likely cover a significant amount of ground, systematically checking the sandy banks, patches of dense gallery forest on the riverbank, and rush-beds along the water's edge in search of the biggest predator in the Pantanal. These excursions will always be subject to possible changes following suggestions by local guides and depending on the appearances of other mammals in the area that may also include the arboreal Brazilian Porcupine, the Brazilian Tapir and of course, families of Giant River Otters. Searching for these wary creatures may demand real patience, with long periods spent in our smaller spotting boat. The boat we shall use has six rows of two seats, so each member of the group (12 maximum) has a side for optimal viewing. If we do find a Jaguar, viewing time may be brief, but the effort entailed does ensure a tremendous elation and sense of privilege at finally sharing a few moments in the life of this wonderful animal. More recently our groups have often enjoyed some prolonged views, even including animals hunting along the raised riverbanks and swimming across the channels. Our chances are superb for encountering Jaguar and our position within the 'Jaguar Zone' provides us with the perfect base from which to explore.

Whilst searching for Jaguar, and during our short periods ashore, we will doubtless meet with a varied selection of other mammals, birds and reptiles; Capybara and Caiman, important prey species for Jaguars are frequently encountered along the rivers, whilst Crab-eating Fox, Azara's Agouti and possibly Tapir may also feature. Birds are likely to include Black Skimmers, both Large-billed and Yellow-billed Terns, Wood and Jabiru Storks and the delightful Pied and Collared Plover on open sand banks as well as many more. Blue-crowned Amazon, Lesser and Greater Kiskadee, Crane Hawk and Pale-legged Hornero are often seen in the riverside gallery forest, and we will go on to enjoy a great variety of the areas incredible birdlife as we aim for the star mammals.

Our accommodation is a floating hotel or "flotel" that also operates as a Jaguar research and tourism base. Photo dossier research on Jaguar faces continues apace, as guests become, in effect, guest researchers here. With more than 85 different Jaguars having been seen and photographed in the surrounding area since 2005, the research provides a fascinating insight into the lives of these otherwise mysterious subjects. If a guest provides our team with a good face photo of a previously-unphotographed Jaguar, then he or she is granted the honour of naming rights. At both locations we can learn about the wildlife with evening lectures and access the information about the Jaguars of the area.

These floating hotels are two of the very few permanent accommodations in the centre of the "Jaguar Zone", which could also be called "the Giant Otter Zone", as these 100-km of river channels are by far the best place in the world to see either of these otherwise shy and elusive top predators. Here we have a distinct advantage over more distantly located lodges or camps, which start 15km upriver and require a lengthy journey each way. With instant access to the most productive area for our target species, should we receive word of a sighting we can react very quickly, and it also enables us to have a greater chance of having private sightings, before other boats arrive.



Bare-faced Curassow

Both vessels offer very comfortable accommodation, and a very similar experience will be enjoyed on each of them, visiting the same areas. More information is below with photos of the accommodation.

Maned Wolf Opportunity

An opportunity became possible late in the 2024 season to try to see the spectacular Maned Wolf on an outing from the Flotel. On one afternoon from the Flotel, we will attempt to see this iconic creature, the largest canid in the Americas and tallest canid in the world! We will leave the Flotel at around 2pm and travel by motorboat for around 2-hours, wildlife spotting as we go, to a remote lodge. This lodge, which is often used as a research station and where tourists cannot stay, is on the banks of the Piquiri River and beyond the lodge are areas of Cerrado (vast tropical savanna) which the Maned Wolf particularly enjoys and relies on. Each evening between around 5pm and 8pm one to three different Maned Wolf have been visiting the grounds of the lodge where a small offering of food is left for them. Maned Wolf are omnivorous, feeding on small rodents, fruits and seeds. After a short time around the lodge grounds they will continue on their way. The lodge staff can monitor the small population here and provide them with a helpful small offering of food. Water is also available to them in the lodge grounds. Maned Wolf are under great threat across their range, chiefly due to degradation of the habitat they need, and it is hopeful that the population here will continue to thrive. Not only will this outing provide us with a unique and privileged opportunity to see Maned Wolf, we will also have the chance to see other wildlife as we travel to and from the site. Jaguar, Tapir, Neotropical Otter, Agami Heron, Sungrebe - there is a lot we may see as we travel. At the lodge itself, while we wait for the appearance of the Maned Wolf, we can scan the area for wildlife. White-lipped Peccaries may be seen around the grounds and Hyacinth Macaws are a frequent sight here. Photography of the Maned Wolf is very much possible. An animal may appear before dark or if they appear after dark, there is some lighting in the grounds which

allows excellent views and the chance for photos using this light rather than flash. There are toilets, air conditioning, cold water, hot drinks and snacks available at the lodge while we wait. Depending on the time the animal(s) visit, we will either journey back to the Flotel for dinner or have dinner at the lodge. This is sure to be an exciting outing and another highlight of our visit here.

N.B: Should the Maned Wolf stop visiting the grounds of the lodge or the opportunity to see them becomes very small, we will continue with the usual outing to try and see Jaguar and other species.



Maned Wolf taken at the site by leaders Marcos Felix and Tom Mabbett

Day 12 - 13 SouthWild Pantanal lodge or Pantanal Mato Grosso Hotel

After a wonderful time in the Jaguar Zone, the time will come to retrace our steps along the wildlife-rich Transpantaneira Road to stay at a land-based lodge for our final two nights of the holiday. We will either stay at SouthWild Pantanal Lodge or Pantanal Mato Grosso Hotel. These lodges are just a 5-minute drive from each other, and both are located on the banks of the Pixaim River. The same activities will be carried from either lodge with time exploring the grounds and activities at SouthWild Pantanal Lodge on all tours as described below.

Travelling back along the Transpantaneira we will stop and start looking for wildlife with Roseate Spoonbill, Black-bellied and White-faced Whistling Ducks and the localised Scarlet-headed



Orange-backed Troupial

Blackbird just some of the many species we can hope for on the journey. Stopping for a break may reveal Hyacinth Macaws and we can expect excellent views of this magnificent bird throughout the tour. We will spend the next two full days undertaking a mix of safari drives, walks and boat rides with a superb range of species again possible. We will enjoy two wildlife observation towers: one in the riverine forest and the other next to a nest of thoroughly habituated Jabiru Storks, allowing fantastic photographic opportunities. The riverine forest also holds several troops of very confiding

Brown Capuchins and Black Howler Monkeys, with the unmistakable call of the areas resident troop of howlers likely to become a familiar sound as dawn breaks.

Bird feeders are regularly visited by the world's largest toucan, the emblematic Toco Toucan, as well as a number of very colourful passerines, most notably the Orange-backed Troupial. The marked trails in the gallery forest present a unique opportunity to see some of the more elusive forest birds and mammals, but you must walk slowly and silently to have the best results. Gallery or riverine forest is the most species-rich habitat type but represents only 2% of the entire Pantanal.

Boat safaris on The Pixaim River are likely to yield excellent views of Black-crowned Night Herons, Boat-billed Herons and with luck, the jewel of the Pantanal, the stunning Agami Heron, as well as all five of South America's Kingfishers, and many egrets and ibises.

While Jaguars are not seen here with anything like the frequency of the Jaguar Zone, there have been many excellent sightings of Jaguars along the Pixaim River. With only a small number of boats operating on this stretch of the river, if we are lucky enough to see a Jaguar, it is likely to be a very exclusive sighting, but it should be noted such a sighting would be a fantastic bonus and should not be expected.

Very photogenic here are Ringed and Amazon Kingfishers and several hawks, notably Black-collared and Great Black Hawk – they are happy to take fresh fish off the surface of the water, making for spectacular photo opportunities.



Ocelot

Finally, we may enjoy a 1-hour spotlighting drive in our open sided safari truck which has the potential to reveal yet more wonders of the Pantanal, with the lodge grounds and roadside habitat along the Transpantaneira providing excellent habitat for Ocelot, Brazilian Tapir and both Anteater species. With aid of the spotlight, we are also likely to pick up the incredible eye shine of the Great Potoo, alongside the eloquent Scissor-tailed Nightjar and the impressive Great Horned Owl.

What will be hopefully yet another special highlight of this holiday will be to watch at close quarters the beautiful Ocelot. Ocelot has always been seen frequently and in good numbers on night drives in this area, and now with the hide it means the chances of enjoying close views of this normally secretive species are high. Small pieces of chicken are left out and an animal will hopefully visit for around 20-minutes in the early evening before melting away into the forest.

Day 14

Inbound UK

Subject to flight times, we may have time for a short morning activity before we leave the lodge. We will then drive three hours to Cuiabá airport to catch our flight back to São Paulo, and our onward flight to UK in the evening.

Day 15

London

We are scheduled to arrive back in London in the mid-afternoon (timing subject to later confirmation).

Tour Focus and Grading

This tour will be focussing in particular on the birdlife and mammals of these two incredibly diverse areas, the Southern Amazon and the Pantanal. There is some lengthy travel involved particularly on day one joining the tour and getting between the Amazon and Pantanal on day 6. There will be more of a bird focus on this holiday than there is on our "Just Jaguars" tour for instance and every day we can expect to spend a significant amount of time finding and enjoying birds. We will however also be seeking the fantastic mammals of these areas and as the title of the holiday suggests it will be a joint focus. In the Amazon there will be a greater range of birds with mammals more difficult to find and observe, but we shall still target rare primates, such as Tapir, and we have great success in finding them. In the Pantanal, mammals become more obvious and there will then be a slight shift in focus towards finding the special mammals here including of course the Jaguar, Giant River Otters and more. We will though be enjoying all the birds too and while finding birds, mammals are always being searched for! In short, you must expect a significant amount of time on this holiday to be spent birdwatching, but you will also see a great range of mammals and great effort will be made to find them too.

Particularly in the Southern Amazon, you will need to appreciate that the neotropical mammals are largely shy and retiring, present in low densities and often crepuscular or nocturnal in nature. Although this tour spends time and effort in looking for exciting and iconic mammals including a range of rare and endangered primates, potential participants should be aware that mammals will be on view for only a small percentage of our time in the field. Anybody wishing for and expecting a safari-type experience full of animals should consider carefully whether this is the holiday for them. Time between mammal encounters will be spent largely birdwatching (alert to mammals at all times of course), as birds are the most conspicuous members of the local fauna. In the Pantanal, mammals do become more obvious, but even there, effort is required and when searching for mammals we will be enjoying the special birdlife here too.

This is a conventional wildlife holiday with a focus on birds, mammals and general natural history. No trekking or great hardship is involved (although conditions will be humid and hot with some forest walks on potentially slippery ground), and the holiday is generally suitable for those of all ages and degrees of fitness.

This tour is graded A/B, consisting of mostly gentle walks and boat safaris, though some walks may be slippery, with high heat and humidity. We would not likely cover more than 2-3 miles at a time and be out walking for a maximum of 2-3 hours.

In short, this tour focuses on birds and mammals. If you are interested in birds AND mammals, you are likely to enjoy it. If you are interested in birds but not mammals, or mammals but not birds, you are unlikely to enjoy this tour and it is not for you. Please speak to the operations manager if you would like to talk more about the focus to make sure it is the right tour for you.

Transport in the Pantanal

The Safari Truck will be used around the lodge grounds. When on the main Transpantaneira Road we will be using an enclosed minibus. There may be some occasions where we use the open sided safari truck on the main Transpantaneira Road but with the increasing traffic on this road and likely very dusty, hot conditions, it is better to use an enclosed, air-conditioned minibus. The leaders will make the best judgment call. We will still stop and get out to view wildlife and sightings have been prolific in recent seasons. In a minibus it also gives us longer to walk in lodge grounds to break up the longer journeys. In recent years the general increase in temperatures and the increased flow of traffic on the Transpantaneira means that even if one car passes, it can leave a long trail of dust. We recommend taking a face covering with you just in case.

Weather

Generally hot (or very hot) and sunny with temperatures in the daily range 25-35°C, but much cooler conditions can prevail at times and sweaters, winter coats, raincoats, etc., could be required, particularly during river trips.

Food & accommodation

Accommodation is based on twin-bedded rooms with private facilities, but single rooms are available on request and with a supplement.

At SouthWild Amazon Lodge the rooms are well appointed, clean and comfortable with air conditioning and en-suite bathrooms.

The lodges in the Pantanal offer clean and comfortable rooms, all with air conditioning and en-suite bathrooms.

The rooms at Pouso Alegre are the more basic of our lodgings on this tour. The rooms are clean and comfortable and air conditioned but basic in nature. The lodge is surrounded by wildlife and is of course the reason we are here.

The Jaguar Flotel and Flotel Naturezas offer very comfortable accommodation and both vessels are located a short distance from each other within the Jaguar Zone.

On the Jaguar Flotel we will use the standard flotel rooms rather than the suites on this tour. They are not as large as the suites but still have private facilities and air conditioning. If you wanted to upgrade to the suites, this may be possible on request. There is top deck for viewing the surrounding habitat and wildlife and a spacious dining area.

Flotel Naturezas is an 85-foot, purpose-built vessel with 7 rooms for our group. Each room is well equipped and air conditioned. As with the Jaguar Flotel there is an observation deck for viewing the surroundings and a spacious dining area.

SouthWild Pantanal Lodge and Pantanal Mato Grosso Hotel both offer very comfortable air-conditioned rooms and are located very close to each other. Both have a swimming pool, and both overlook the Pixaim River and have habitat and wildlife surrounding them.

All food is included on the holiday, and it is possible to cater for a vegetarian diet at all locations.



Pouso Alegre Lodge



Room at SouthWild Amazon Lodge



SouthWild Pantanal Lodge Room



Jaguar Flotel



Flotel Naturezas



Harpy tower

The 30m towers have easy to climb steps and a roomy platform at the top to view the nest. Harpy Eagles nest at height of 27m+ and therefore the viewing tower give an unrivalled view at eye level from the top of the tower.

Guiding

The holiday will be led by expert local naturalists.

Flights from London

As standard we will be using scheduled service flights operating out of London Heathrow direct to São Paulo overnight with LATAM Airlines. LATAM provide a good service and a schedule that fits our itinerary.

If you would prefer, it is possible to fly with British Airways and Virgin. Doing so will require staying an extra night on the final day and flying home a day later due to the flight timings. We can of course book this extra night for you as explained below.

Pre-holiday

It is worth mentioning here that should you want a more relaxed way to begin your holiday you can of course fly out early and we can book a hotel for you. This will mean you will get a good night's sleep before the main tour begins. This tour starts with an overnight flight to Sao Paulo, then a flight on to Cuiaba and then connecting straight on to the flight to Alta Floresta. You could fly a day early to reach Cuiaba, overnight there and then be fresher before the onward flight the next day to the Amazon. Please let us know if you wish to do this.

Extensions

Should you wish to spend longer in Brazil, you may choose to add an extension either to the beginning or end of your main group tour. There are various options including the spectacular Iguazu Falls and Rio de Janeiro, which include a short extra flight. Or you may wish to add on more time in the Pantanal for an extra chance for Giant Anteater. This option includes no extra driving as we drive past the lodge entrance at the end of the tour. Or you may wish to visit the Atlantic Rainforest, a 2-hour drive from Sao Paulo. On the main tour webpage under "tour downloads" there is more information on some of these popular extensions and should you wish to discuss these options we will be more than happy to help. Please email tom@naturetrek.co.uk or call 01962 733051.

How to book your place

In order to book your place on this holiday, please give us a call on 01962 733051 with a credit or debit card, book online at www.naturetrek.co.uk, or alternatively complete and post the booking form at the back of our main Naturetrek brochure, together with a deposit of 20% of the holiday cost plus any room supplements if required. If you do not have a copy of the brochure, please call us on 01962 733051 or request one via our website. Please stipulate any special requirements, for example extension requests or connecting/regional flights, at the time of booking.

Receive our e-newsletter

Join the Naturetrek e-mailing list and be the first to hear about new tours, additional departures and new dates, tour reports and special offers. Visit www.naturetrek.co.uk to sign up.

Many thanks to Naturetrek participant Allan Hopkins for the Harpy Eagle photo on the cover page.