

Harpy Eagle & Southern Amazon Extension

Naturetrek Itinerary



Harpy Eagle (*Harpia harpyja*) – Tom Ambrose

Outline Itinerary

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| Day 1 | Land Alta Floresta and transfer to Nova Bandeirantes |
| Day 2 | Visit to the Harpy Eagle viewing tower. |
| Day 3 - 4 | Activities from Fazenda São Nicolau |
| Day 5 | Transfer to Alta Floresta, fly UK. |

Summary

The Amazon Basin is the size of the 48 contiguous states of the USA or around twice the size of India. Fortunately, the vast majority of it (77%) is in standing forest, and 54% of that standing forest is in protected areas that are in fact truly protected on the ground. Recently, Harpy Eagle biologist Everton Miranda learned that a huge chunk (around half the size of the UK) of the southern Amazon is blessed with

an extensive network of 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, and extremely habituated animals that include such photographer's holy grails as Harpy Eagles, Brazilian Tapirs, Scarlet, Blue-and-gold, and Red-and-green Macaws, and four particularly beautiful and elusive primates: Woolly Monkeys, Black-faced Spider Monkeys, Red Howler Monkeys and the endangered White-nosed Saki.

The area of 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 currently at the park headquarters.

This is an exciting new destination where studies are ongoing with active research and recording of the species found here. There is now an observation tower near to a fruiting tree – the tower is moved depending on where the fruiting trees, a magnet for wildlife, currently are. The lodge in particular provides an excellent opportunity to observe rare primates and these species listed above should be a focus. A superb range of birds are possible while outings on the Juruena River are excellent and have revealed Jaguar recently and a whole host of exciting species.

This extension combines a visit to a Harpy Eagle nest and the opportunity to enjoy other varied outings to experience the Southern Amazon and some of its special inhabitants.



Red-and-green Macaw (*Ara chloropterus*)

Itinerary

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 maximise best use of the time and weather conditions available. The plan for the Harpy Eagle extension may change with the best nest to visit often changing at short notice. You will have ample opportunity to see Harpy Eagles at a nest site whether this be from Nova Bandeirantes or from Fazenda Sao Nicolau.

Day 1 Fly Alta Floresta and transfer to town of Nova Bandeirantes

Today you will fly from Cuiaba to Alta Floresta. Here you will be met in the arrivals hall by your guide and then travel for around 2 hours to the town of Monte Verde. Here a comfort break and leg stretch will also provide the opportunity to watch and photograph the wonderful Blue and Yellow Macaws which nest in a

palm in the city. Following this we continue for around 45 minutes to 1 hour to the small town of Nova Bandeirantes where we shall enjoy dinner, relax and overnight at the comfortable Hotel Bandeirantes ready for the real excitement of the coming days.

Just five minutes from Hotel Bandeirantes is a cacophonous kaleidoscope of activity as several Macaw species reside here, some even nesting here in the *Mauritia* palms. This is a world-class site to observe the natural behavior of these magnificent birds. Species seen include Blue-and-yellow, Red-bellied, Scarlet and Chestnut-fronted Macaws

Day 2 Harpy Eagle Tower and transfer to Fazenda São Nicolau

Today will be an early start. The latest we should leave by is 6.30am for travel for around 90 minutes directly



Harpy Eagle (*Harpia harpyja*) juvenile by participant Helen Mayfield

on paved and then dirt roads to the Harpy Eagle nest tower. Guests will now have as long as they wish to view the nest site and surrounding trees from the specially designed 25 meter tower. A packed lunch will be taken and you are able to leave the top of the tower as you wish and climb back up when you like if required.

The length of stay required to observe a fully grown Harpy Eagle, be that a fully grown juvenile or adult bird, will vary

depending on the stage of the nest cycle. With the nests that have been found by the researchers it is very likely that with one 4-5 hour session a fully grown juvenile or adult Harpy Eagle will be observed with a fully grown juvenile the most likely with a very high chance. The Harpy Eagle juveniles can be very inquisitive and may come to investigate you, as pictured!

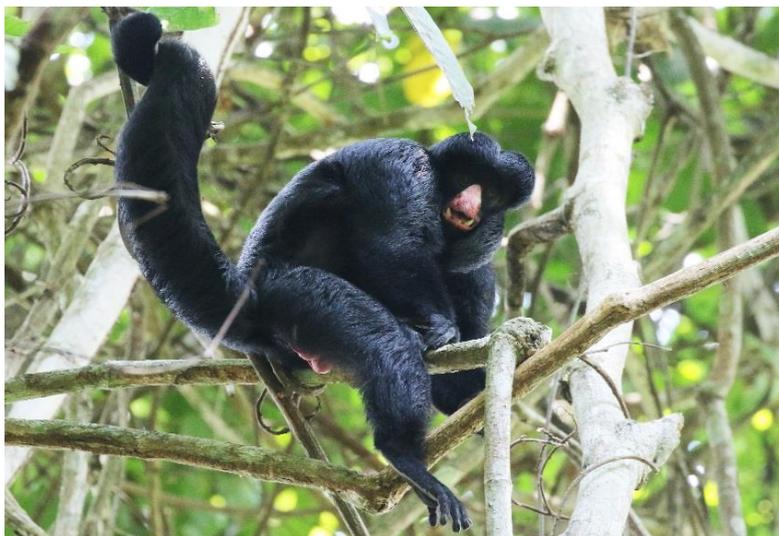
To reach Fazenda São Nicolau we will then need to leave by 2pm at the latest to comfortably reach the ferry in time for the last crossing of the Juruena River. The ferry crossing takes around 30 minutes and a short transfer then leads to the lodge where dinner will be enjoyed. The total journey lasting around 3 hours.

Day 3 and 4 Fazenda São Nicolau

You now have two full days to explore the area with morning and afternoon excursions with your guide.

Activities may include:

Finding the special primates in the area and photographing them. A tower next to a fruiting tree is producing some excellent results. Gray Woolly Monkey and in particular the White-nosed Saki are two of the star species with Black-tailed Marmoset also visiting. Birds visiting are numerous with Chestnut-eared Aracari, Red-bellied Macaw and numerous tanagers and flycatchers. There is a Harpy Eagle nest in the area here too so there is always a chance as we can get to the nest



White-nosed Saki (*Chiropotes albinasus*)

area but no tower is available at this lodge itself. Boat trips on the Juruena River are beautiful and offer some excellent wildlife viewing opportunities. Neotropical and Giant Otter may be seen, peccaries often cross the channels and Jaguar was seen very well recently. Birds may include raptors such as Great Black Hawk, Bat Falcon and Plumbeous Harrier with riverside trees holding Band-tailed Antbird, Umbrellabird and Magpie Tanager to name just a few along with the iconic and bizarre Hoatzin.

Walks in the forest and surrounding trails may yield close views of Blue and Yellow and Red-and Green Macaws as they have little fear of humans while Dark-winged Trumpeter move in small flocks on the forest floor, being a very good sign of a healthy, little visited forest. Both Collared and White-lipped Peccary can also be seen in the forest when walking quietly.

Around the lodge there is a colony of Caciques and Oropendulas. At dusk they often gather to roost with Yellow-rumped Cacique, Red-rumped Cacique, Crested Oropendula and a few Green Oropendula present.

Recently a large male Ocelot has been seen regularly coming close to the river bank at a very reliable time. A chance to view this animal will be possible from the river and there is also a good chance of seeing Brazilian tapir. There is in fact a Tapir salt lick with a viewing platform near it which is visited very regularly.

After dark a night drive around the forest tracks may reveal a range of species. Tapir are seen regularly, Tayra are in the area with Night Monkey also a possibility.

The guides there will offer different activities depending on your wishes and fill you in on latest sightings and best options. It is sure to be an exciting stay.

Day 5

Transfer to Alta Floresta airport

After breakfast you will return to Alta Floresta for your flight to Cuiaba. Lunch at Cambalacho Restaurant near Alta Floresta airport is also included before your flight. On arrival at Cuiaba onward flights to Sao Paulo and Heathrow can be taken the same day.

Cost and what is included

- 1 person - £3695.
- 2 people - £2295 per person.
- 3 people - £1895 per person.
- 4 people - £1695 per person.

Single room supplement of £280pp.

The following will be included whether this extension is carried out at the start or end of the main holiday.



Ocelot (*Leopardus pardalis*)

Accommodation: 1 night near Cuiaba airport on a B&B basis at the start or the end of the extension with 1 night in Nova Bandeirantes and 3 nights at Fazenda São Nicolau with all meals here.

Internal flights.

Private transfers.

Private guiding for your time at the Harpy Tower and Fazenda São Nicolau on all activities.

Unlimited mineral water from large coolers (please bring your own refillable water bottles).

This is an example of an itinerary which includes a visit to the Harpy Eagle tower and to visit the Fazenda São Nicolau. Of course more time can be spent either at the Harpy Tower or at the lodge and of course you can visit just one or the other should you wish. A specific quote on an adapted itinerary can be provided on enquiry.

Accommodation

Cuiaba Airport – Slaviero Slim

A comfortable airport hotel with a restaurant and all the expected facilities. This hotel is often used for those adding this extension following a visit to the Pantanal. The airport is directly opposite the hotel just a couple of minutes away.

Fazenda São Nicolau

This relatively new lodge is little known and you will not be seeing large numbers of other tourists here. The few rooms are well appointed, clean and comfortable with air conditioning and en-suite bathrooms.

The dining area is rustic with good wholesome food produced. The rooms are very well appointed and the surrounding area offers a wonderful opportunity to observe and photograph some very rare and interesting species and it provides a superb way to experience the Southern Amazon with excellent intact forest to explore and a wonderful river.



Equipment

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

Two of the 30m towers can be accessed by a comfortable climbing harness attached to a single, 200-metre-long rope of Blue Water II static rope, which through a block and tackle pulley system you can be very easily and safely elevated to the top, from within the tower, in 4 minutes.

At the top of the tower your larger safety harness is replaced with a simpler and lighter safety harness that is attached to the tower, for maximum safety.

Additionally, at any time there will be numerous nests available which give great views from ground level.