

Brazil – Just Jaguars

Naturetrek Tour Report

15 - 26 June 2013



Giant River Otter



Jaguar

Report compiled by Dan Free
Images courtesy of Dani Free and Andrew Griffin



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Day 1

Saturday 15th June

Our flight left London Heathrow on time and after the evening meal we settled down and tried to get some sleep.

Day 2

Sunday 16th June

The flight was a largely smooth one, with most people managing to get some sleep and we actually arrived in Sao Paulo approximately 20 minutes early. After collecting our luggage we checked in for the flight to Cuiaba and with a few hours to kill, set about sourcing some much needed caffeine.

We arrived in Cuiaba in the early afternoon and after passing through security were immediately greeted by the smiling face of our guide Marcos Felix. An excellent Brazilian buffet lunch soon followed at a nearby restaurant, before beginning the 90km drive to Pocone. The infamous 140km long Transpantaneira begins a few kilometres after Pocone and after covering the first few kilometers in the minibus we then transferred to our Safari truck for the remaining 40 or so kilometres to our first lodge Pouso Alegre. The drive proved the perfect introduction to the Pantanal as Marcos explained the dynamics of the Pantanal ecological system and pointed out some of its famed avian inhabitants with Hyacinth Macaw, Greater Rhea and Toco Toucans, all standing out from an impressive crowd.



Greater Rhea



Crab-eating Fox

Arriving at the entrance to Pouso Alegre's 7 kilometer long driveway just as dusk was falling we spotlighted the remaining distance, enjoying excellent views of Brazilian Rabbit, a pair of Crab-eating Foxes, a solitary South American Coati and even a Brazilian Tapir. This remarkable animal, weighing in at over 300 kilos, is the largest land mammal in South America and looks a bit like a cross between a horse and a pig, with a short prehensile trunk. Despite its large size, it is a shy and elusive creature and moved swiftly off into the dense forest. Continuing along the driveway it wasn't long before we hit a Pantanal road block, in the form of a 20 strong herd of Capybara sleeping on the narrow track before us. Edging forward a matter of inches at a time, they begrudgingly gave ground and allowed us past, and we finally arrived at Pouso Alegre around 7pm to find dinner waiting for us. After an excellent but very sleepy meal, we retired to our rooms for a well-earned rest.

Day 3

Monday 17th June

As dawn broke the group gathered to explore the lodge grounds. Roosting Hyacinth Macaws slowly woke from their slumber and gathered voice, whilst Toco Toucans raided the fruiting trees adjacent to our rooms. Azara's Agoutis, a small guinea pig like rodent scurried amongst the undergrowth, feeding on the fallen fruit.

After breakfast, we headed out for a morning drive, but within minutes found ourselves piling out of the vehicle to admire the spectacle of hundreds of Yacare Caiman and a huge array of different waterbirds, feeding in the freshwater pools and surrounding wetland. Wood Storks, Great & Snowy Egret, Limpkins, Roseate Spoonbills, Striated, Capped and Coqui Herons all jostled for position while Black-crowned Night Herons roosted in neighbouring bushes and an incubating Jabiru Stork watched on from its enormous nest. Snail Kites called noisily from their water side perches, while beautiful



Hyacinth Macaws

Black Skimmers put on a magnificent aerial show literally a few feet from our standing. Continuing along the track, a herd of Capybara posed very obligingly for the photographers in the group before we returned to the vehicle and continued on our way. With the sun increasing in strength, mammalian sightings were restricted to a single Red Brocket Deer seen grazing approximately 10 metres away.



Black-tailed Marmoset

After an excellent lunch and a couple of hours of free time we reconvened around 3pm and headed out for a short forest walk in search of the Black-tailed Marmosets that are known to reside in the forested area at the back of the lodge. It took a while but we eventually found them and we were treated to views of a family of 6 moving through the lower canopy, including a male carrying a small baby. Returning to the lodge we then headed out for an evening drive. The going had been pretty tough, with our only sighting of significance a pair Grey Brocket Deer prior to

dusk, however, as we worked our way along the driveway it wasn't long before we struck gold as Dan sighted a Giant Anteater disappearing into the vegetation immediately adjacent to the track. Bringing the truck swiftly to a halt, we all stood up to gain a better view and to our relief were able to see the Giant Anteater in a small clearing behind the roadside vegetation. Unperturbed by the spotlight it continued on its course through the grass before disappearing from view and moving into the thicket.

A Crab-eating Fox was seen as we approached the end of the driveway, where we then turned around and retraced our steps back towards the lodge. Within a matter of minutes of turning around, we were in again and this time we had fabulous views of a Southern Tamandua crossing the track in front of us before inspecting the base of some small trees. We were able to watch it under spotlight at close range for a good five minutes before it moved off into the thicket. A period of 15 or so minutes then passed without too much excitement and then we were in again, this time a Brazilian Tapir crossing in front of us, before making its way through a partially dried out waterbody. Returning back to the lodge for 7.30pm, dinner was again waiting for us and we sat down feeling rather pleased with ourselves after what had been a very successful night drive.



Southern Tamandua

Day 4

Tuesday 18th June



Water birds & Caimans

Breakfast was taken at 5.30am and by 6.15am we were packed up and ready to embark on the 120km drive south to Porto Jofre. Whilst yesterday's view from the driveway was impressive, today the scene before us was staggering. Literally all of the waterbirds that were seen yesterday in the surrounding fields and marshes were gathered in and around the small trackside waterbodies, creating the most incredible feeding frenzy alongside dozens of snapping Caiman. With the sun having risen over the distant horizon, an orange glow was cast over the feasting waterbirds and we were all left lost for words.

With the need to cover as much ground as possible before lunch, we were forced to leave this unique spectacle behind and continue on our way. The driveway, so productive the night before, was relatively quiet with the exception of a chance encounter with a family of Black-tailed Marmosets that were seen just before we reached the Transpantaneira. Heading south along the Transpantaneira we passed through a mosaic of habitats, ranging from dense forest to termite mound studded fields and flooded grasslands. A large expanse of marsh somewhat unsurprisingly yielded our first Marsh



Marsh Deer

Deer of the trip and we counted a total of five individuals including 2 large stags. The birdlife was prolific throughout the drive with a wide range of species seen including several raptors such as Savannah Hawk, Black-Collared Hawk, Laughing Falcon, Crane Hawk and Great Black Hawk. Negotiating our way over another rickety old wooden bridge in the beautiful area of Campo Jofre, we paused to view a nesting Southern Screamer, only for our view to be cut short by the cries of ‘Otter’ from Bob. Looking to the other side of the bridge a Southern Neotropical Otter could be seen a few feet below us in the water looking straight up at us. It didn’t hang around very long, surfacing only a couple times, but some of the quicker members of the group still managed to get some nice photos.



Our first Jaguar!

We arrived in Porto Jofre to find our boat waiting and after transferring our bags to a couple of smaller boats, we began to make our way up the Cuiaba River to the Flotel. Marcos had literally only just finished telling us to keep our eyes peeled, when Ginho our boatman, suddenly called out ‘JAGUAR!’ As he brought the boat round and we began our approach to the side of the river, a few of us managed to catch a glimpse of a Jaguar sitting in a small clearing amongst the tree-lined bank. Unfortunately after only a few moments it retreated from view, but no sooner had this

happened then Marcos informed us that he and Ginho could hear the calls of a mating pair from the opposite side of the river, only a couple of hundred yards away. Reaching the opposite side of the bank, we could all hear the low rumbles of the cats but a thick raft of water hyacinths lined this side of the river and restricted our ability to manoeuvre into a better position and we were left unable to see the cats. With the bank covered in dense vegetation on this side, there was little chance of the cats emerging and the decision was made to continue on our way to the Flotel and 25 minutes later we’d arrived. The Flotel certainly wouldn’t win any prizes for its aesthetic qualities and as you approach you cannot help but think what on earth am I doing?! However, it is reputedly in the best area for Jaguars and Giant River Otters and operates a Jaguar safari service that is second to none. Would it live up to expectation? After the first five minutes on the river and Jaguar sighting already in the bag, the signs were good but ultimately only time would tell...



Black Skimmers

On arrival we went straight to the dining area and enjoyed an excellent lunch with a range of BBQ meats available, alongside salad, vegetables and of course re-fried beans! Lunch over, we checked in to our small but perfectly adequate cabins, before Marcos gave us a presentation on the geography of the surrounding area, pulling up territorial maps of the Jaguars in the area and explaining the science behind the 'Jaguar Zone'. With fabulous shots of Jaguars from last year's season running through all our minds, we headed out at 2.30pm full of expectation.

Exploring the Three Brothers and Black Water Rivers we worked our way along the thick forest edges, branching off down tight water channels and through flooded areas of swamp. The scenery is stunning in this area of the Pantanal and with barely another boat on the water at this time, you felt privileged to be in such an environment. Ringed, Amazon and Green Kingfishers seemed to be sighted every few hundred yards, whilst the sandy spits projecting from the shoreline held colonies of roosting Large-billed and Yellow-billed Terns as well as small numbers of Black Skimmer. Mid-way through the afternoon a call came through from one of the spotters reporting that a Jaguar had been seen on the Cuiaba River, not far from the area where we had encountered the Jaguar on the way to the Flotel. Despite being some distance from the area, we decided to go for it and within seconds we were flying along at high speed, twisting and turning with the course of the river. Unfortunately we arrived at the scene a little too late and were informed that the Jaguar had moved off into the forest. Disappointed to have missed out, we at least took comfort from the fact that during the short time that we had been on the river, there had been some good Jaguar activity, even if not all of us had actually seen a Jaguar.



Green Kingfisher

With the sun beginning to dip behind the horizon we stopped for sundowners on a sandy stretch of beach before returning back to the Flotel as dusk fell.

An excellent dinner was taken in the outdoor dining area, before we returned inside to complete the checklist, catching up for the last couple of days when we had all been too tired to work through it.

Day 5

Wednesday 19th June

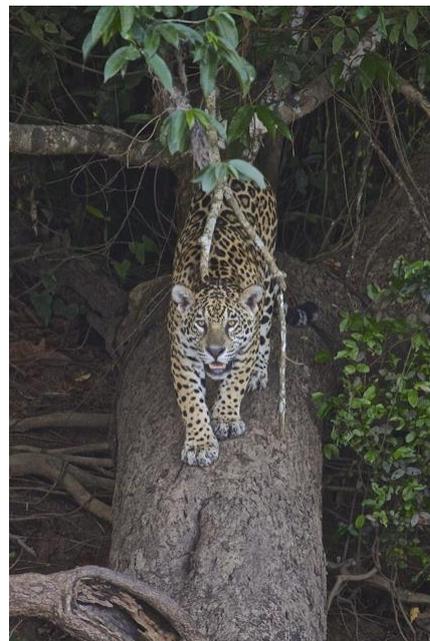
With the rooms only separated by very thin partitions you basically wake up when the earliest alarm on the Flotel goes off. In this instance it was 5.30am and after a leisurely breakfast we headed off in our safari boat at 7am. The plan was to explore the same areas as yesterday and see what we bumped into, whilst keeping one ear on the radio, just in case any of the spotter boats located a Jaguar. The usual array of waterbird species were found in good numbers, alongside plenty of Caiman and small groups of Capybara. A troop of Black Howler Monkeys, a new mammal for the tour, were seen in the tops of the canopy but weren't particularly active or obliging. Midway through the morning the radio crackled in to life as one of the scout boats made its report... no Jaguars but Giant



Giant River Otter

River Otters. Needless to say the engine kicked into gear and we swiftly made our way to the scene. Drawing into the river bank with only the scout boat present, we found a small family of Giant River Otters noisily fishing amongst the roots of the marginal river vegetation. One had caught a fish and set about devouring it whilst resting on a submerged branch before the entire family climbed out on to the bank and set about scent marking and play fighting with each other, literally 3 or 4 metres in front of us. We were able to watch this for some time before they returned to the water and made their way off up river.

After another excellent lunch we were back on the water again at 2pm and had only travelled a short distance when we received a call informing us that a Jaguar had been sighted further downstream. This time we arrived in time and nearly all of us had our first clear views of Jaguar on the tour as it sat in a small clearing on the edge of the bank. Despite being some distance away, this was clearly a nervous animal and within a matter of only a couple minutes it was already beginning to slink away into the undergrowth. Left to contemplate whether to hang around and wait for it to come back out or to try our luck elsewhere, we were in bit of a quandary before the radio intervened... a family of 3 Jaguars had been sighted up the Picquari River, only a few minutes from our location. Arriving at the scene with only the scout boat present, we found two of the animals playing around at the top of a fallen tree trunk lying in the water. To our absolute delight and astonishment, one of the Jaguars began to walk down the trunk towards us, providing excellent photographic opportunities.



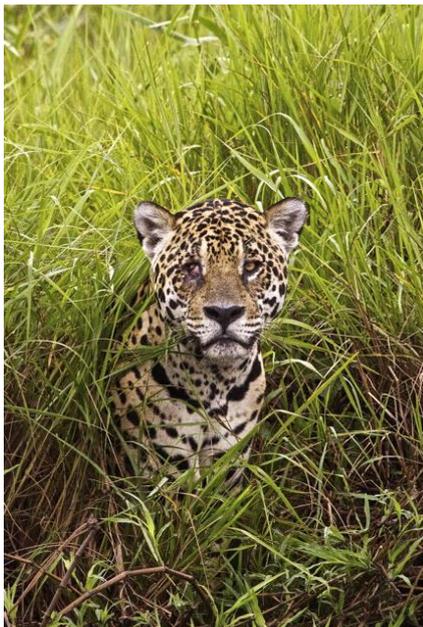
Jaguar

Over the course of the next hour or so we followed the movements of the family of three as they made their way along the river bank, passing in and out of view and stopping to rest from time to time. After a day or so of fleeting glimpses and near misses, this really was a special moment and we were all completely overwhelmed by the experience. Having ventured several hundred metres down river, by close of play the animals had actually returned to the spot where we'd first seen them, and again posed on the fallen tree in the now dimming light. Whilst all of this unfolded before us, there was actually a Giant River Otter posing with a fish in perfect light on the opposite site of the bank, but just as we were about to go for it the Jaguars kicked in to life and we were drawn away.

Day 6

Thursday 20th June

Dawn broke to reveal a thick bed of cloud overhead and fine drizzle in the air. A dreaded cold front had moved in overnight and looked set to hang around for the day. Undeterred we headed out and within minutes of leaving the Flotel, we encountered a family of Giant River Otters hunting along the edge of the river and we remained with them for over an hour, watching them devour several catches before going ashore and indulging in a family



Mick Jaguar

grooming session. The strong family bonds that hold the packs together were only too apparent as they crammed tightly together and set about tending to each other's coats and ears, inducing looks of delight in the recipients that can only be compared to that which you might see in a dog when it's master scratches a hard to reach itch. Grooming over, they gradually climbed the bank and disappeared into a holt that was concealed below some overhanging tree roots, but not before clearing out a little extra soil from the entrance each time. With all 5 of the Otters safely tucked up, we continued on our way and soon received news that a large male Jaguar had been sighted further up river. Setting off at speed, we soon located the scout boat and whilst there was no sign of the Jaguar we were given details of his general direction and set about trying to relocate him. Moments like this are when the knowledge and experience of the boatmen come into their own and within minutes we had found our target, a massive one eyed male Jaguar known to the researchers as 'Mick Jaguar'. Mick was out patrolling his territory, working his way along the river banks and marking his territory at specific sites and we were able to observe him for the remainder of the morning before returning to the flotel for lunch.

That afternoon we went looking for the big guy that we'd seen in the morning, but having already experienced some excellent sightings, we decided to take things a little slower and spend some time enjoying the Pantanal's amazing avifauna, including a particularly obliging Black-collared Hawk that posed beautifully for photos. With the afternoon passing us by and no sign of 'Mick' we decided to return to the area where we'd seen the family of three the previous evening. Our luck was in again and we found two of the cubs half submerged beside the river bank, playing in the shallows. With the outside temperature having dropped considerably in the last 24 hours, the water temperature in the river felt almost bath like and it was clear that the cubs were enjoying it. Patrolling up and down the river bank, as they had the previous evening, we were again afforded tantalising views of all 3 as they passed in and out of view. With the light beginning to fail it was time to move off and return to the Flotel, however, unbeknown to us at the time, the day had once last treat installed for us in the form of a large male Ocelot that was picked up with the spotlight swimming across the river. With the river in full flow and at least a good couple hundred yards wide, it was remarkable to think that it would attempt such a feat. We manoeuvred the boat into a better position and were able to watch it successfully complete its crossing.



Female Jaguar with cub

Day 7

Friday 21st June

Great Black Hawk & Crested Caracara

Having focussed on the area around the Three Brothers and the Piquari River the previous few days, today we decided to try something a little different and set off for a lodge located several hours up the Piquari River. Before long, we encountered two very focal families of Giant River Otters that appeared to be locked in a territorial dispute from opposite sides of the river and as we drifted down river observing their antics, we happened upon two Great Black Hawks feeding on a Limpkin kill. As we pulled up on the bank for a comfort break, one of the hawks moved off and was swiftly replaced

by a Crested Caracara that set about trying to steal the kill. This proved fascinating watching as the clearly very intelligent caracara tried to outwit the superior bulk and power of the hawk. Over the next 20 minutes, a game of cat and mouse was played out before us, with the Crested Caracara gradually edging closer and then skipping away when the hawk lunged for it, before eventually drawing the hawk far enough away to nip back and steal the kill, much to the hawks evident disgust.

Passing the area where we had seen the Jaguars the previously evening we scanned the shoreline intently hoping for some sign of their presence. Unfortunately they appeared to have moved off, however, we were lucky enough to catch a fleeting view of a Tayra as it moved off through the undergrowth. Continuing up river, we encountered another family of Giant River Otters finishing off a large catfish, before climbing the bank and having a family dirt bathing session and disappearing off into their holt. We seemed to be on a bit of roll with Giant River Otters and over the course of the morning we saw 16 different individuals, a new record for the tour. Passing through pristine riverine forest with not another boat to be seen, we were fortunate enough to enjoy great views of a fishing Osprey and a good variety of birds that included a small flock of Chestnut-eared Aracari feeding in a riverside fruiting tree.



Giant River Otters



Six-banded Armadillo

Arriving at the lodge in the late morning, we had an opportunity to explore the grounds and were treated to good views of Azara's Agouti, Brown Capuchin and Hyacinth Macaws. However, the stars of the show were undoubtedly a pair of Six-banded Armadillos that were found foraging around the vegetable garden at the back of the lodge. These bizarre, almost prehistoric looking creatures are some of the most charming that you are ever likely to encounter and kept us all thoroughly entertained.

With the rain gradually becoming heavier, we motored back to the Flotel in good time and were able to dry off and enjoy a good lunch, before venturing out for the afternoon safari.



Hunting Jaguar

That afternoon we headed up to the Three Brothers, taking it nice and slow and enjoying the extensive birdlife as well as visiting a site where we found a dozen roosting Proboscis Bats. It had been a nice afternoon, but we still wanted more Jaguars. Bringing the boat to a halt, we stopped to consider our options and work out a suitable plan of action. Drifting back with the current, the decision was taken out of our hands as Bob suddenly called out 'Jaguar!' Amongst the riverside vegetation, not 10 metres from our boat stood an enormous male Jaguar! After politely posing for photos for several minutes he then

disappeared from view. Anticipating his next move, we ventured up river slightly in the direction that he had moved off and very soon came across a small group of Capybaras sat on the bank. Although the likelihood was slim, there was a chance that he may try for the Capybaras and we sat and waited eagerly. The first ten or so minutes passed without incident and then the birds in the vegetation behind began to alarm call. With this, 3 of the 4 Capybaras dived into the water alarm calling as they did so. A few moments later the Jaguar emerged from the cover of the vegetation and began stalking the one remaining Capybara. With a distance of approximately 20 metres to cover, it proved too great and despite a last minute lunge forward, the Capybara escaped into the water quite comfortably. With a look of utter disgust, the Jaguar watched as the Capybara swam to safety, before continuing along the river bank. As we tracked him along the river, the channel narrowed and on some stretches we could only have been 5 metres from him. He was a truly remarkable looking cat and seemed completely at ease with us. Eventually his path took him away from us and we were unable to follow his movements further. Travelling a short distance up river in the hope that he may appear we again came across another small family of Capybara and sat and waited for him to appear. After a wait of 20 minutes without any sign, we accepted defeat and began to make our way back to the Flotel. As dusk began to fall, dozens of Band-tailed Nighthawks descended on the river and we took the opportunity to spotlight a little on the way back. Only a few minutes in, Marcos suddenly called out "Jaguar!" Pulling the boat back round, the spotlight fell on an area behind a tree and there sat our 7th Jaguar of the tour! We watched it for a few minutes before continuing our journey back to the Flotel, enjoying views of both Greater and Lesser Fishing Bats along the way.



Jaguar

Day 8

Saturday 22nd June

Unfortunately after 4 nights on the Flotel it was time for us to leave and after breakfast we loaded up the boats and made our way down river. Passing the entrance to the Piquari River we ventured up river for a few kilometres on the off chance that we may catch up with the trio of Jaguars that we'd seen on the previous days. Unfortunately there wasn't any sign of them; however we did find a family of 5 Giant River Otters.



Crane Hawk

We arrived back at Porto Jofre to find the safari ruck waiting, but with the sun having returned after a few days absence, opted for a short walk along the river to stretch our legs before heading off on the 60km drive to SouthWild Pantanal Lodge. Whilst only a stroll of a few hundred metres we were rewarded with nice views of Yellow Chevroned Parakeet, Vermillion Flycatcher and Yellow-Rumped Cacique.

The drive back along the Transpantaneira was very relaxing and gave us an opportunity to enjoy the stunning scenery of the Pantanal. Stopping at the Great Horned Owl roost site again, we had much better views of the bird this time, however the star of the show was undoubtedly a Crane Hawk that was clinging to the edge of a palm tree and was using its very long legs to probe down into the crevices, looking for what appeared to be cicadas. As it worked its way around the tree it got itself in the most ridiculous positions and on several occasions actually looked as if it was stuck!

Continuing on our way, other highlights of the drive included a Great Black Hawk with what looked to be a Limpkin kill, a solitary South American Coati up a very high tree (great spot Marcos) and finally a family of 3 Giant River Otters crossing the Transpantaneira approximately 80 yards in front of us. Whilst these magnificent creatures optimize the very definition of sleek & elegance in the water, on land they are at best clumsy and awkward and with their webbed feet they lumbered across the track in an almost seal like fashion.

Arriving at our final destination, the SouthWild Pantanal Lodge for a 3 night stay, after unloading our bags we enjoyed an excellent buffet lunch with a variety of dishes on offer, before having an hour off to unwind and explore the lodge grounds. The lodge is located on the edge of the Pixaim River and in addition to the usual Capybaras, caimans and waterbirds of the Pantanal, the surrounding dry savannah fields and river gallery forests, hold a rich array of life.

A short afternoon walk along the riverbank produced nice views of Jabiru Storks, White-rumped Monita, Southern Lapwing, Sunbittern, Aplomado Falcon hunting and eating dragon flies on the wing, a family of four Campo Flickers and another Great Horned Owl on the nest. Returning back to the lodge we then headed out on a late afternoon / evening drive in the safari truck, taking a route north over the Pixaim River and up the Transpantaneira, to an area that has proved productive for Giant Anteater in the past. The drive out was relatively quiet, and as dusk approached, we pulled over to enjoy our sundowners, watching the largest moon of the year rise in the evening sky and illuminating the landscape before us. Despite the full moon, spotlighting on the return journey proved very worthwhile, with Marcos on good form and treating us to prolonged views of Lesser Anteater, Grey Brocket Deer, Scissor Tailed Nightjar and a pair of Crab-eating Foxes.



Sunbittern

Day 9

Saturday 23rd June

Black Howler Monkey

We all gathered at 6.30am to watch the Toco Toucans and seedeaters arrive for their morning feed outside the lodge, before boarding several small boats and taking a leisurely boat ride down the Pixaim River. The river was very picturesque and peaceful and we all enjoyed the leisurely cruise, stopping to view roosting Great Potoo, Boat Billed Heron and finishing with a troop of Howler Monkeys. Away from Porto Jofre, SouthWild Pantanal Lodge offers one of the best chances of seeing Jaguar in the north Pantanal with individuals regularly sighted along the river and in the lodge

grounds. Whilst we didn't see a Jaguar on that morning, we did see plenty of signs that they were in the area and we set up the camera trap in the hope of capturing some footage.

Returning late morning, many of the group opted to catch up on sleep or read a book and do the things that you normal people do on holiday, whilst the more hard-core amongst us wondered the lodge grounds photographing the wide array of wildlife on display. Highlights included a family of 4 Campo Flickers at very close range and a Crane Hawk searching for nest sites in an old mango tree.

The afternoon's activities began with a walk along the river bank towards Pixaim, with a variety of nice birds on display including new species such as Epaulet Oriole, Greyish Saltator, Silver Beaked and Sayaca Tanagers. Progressing further into the forest, we came across a very obliging Rufus-tailed Jacamar before eventually becoming overwhelmed by mozzies and being forced to retreat back to the lodge, but not before Rosie had spotted a Ferruginous Pygmy Owl roosting in a mature piuva tree.



Campo Flicker

Having enjoyed a successful night drive the evening before, we opted for the same plan of action for this evening and headed back north up the Transpantaneira for several kilometres, enjoying nice views of Marsh Deer before stopping for sundowners and watching a beautiful sunset give way to an enormous orange moon that appeared



Ocelot

from behind the horizon. Spotlighting along the Transpantaneira yielded the enormous eyes of several Great Potoos at distance, in addition to the usual common Paraques and then all of a sudden an Ocelot crossed the road approximately 50metres in front of us, disappearing down a track to the right. As we reached the crossing point, we managed to catch it in the spotlight and were able to watch it at close range as it passed through the vegetation. Sightings of the fabulous looking Scissor-tailed Nightjar followed, before a

Brazilian Rabbit ran across the track before us. It then all went quiet for a bit before we bumped into another Ocelot crossing the track leading up to the lodge. This individual

appeared a lot more skittish and jumped across the track in front of us, bounding off into the grass before any of us were able to get a decent view.

Day 10

Sunday 24th June

Opting to mix things up a little, we headed out on an early morning drive today, leaving the lodge at 4.30am after coffee & biscuits. With the landscape caped in mist, the range of the spotlights was much reduced and the drive was a little slow going at times. However, after an initial Red Brocket Deer on the lodge driveway, about half an hour later we struck gold along the Transpantaneira as Marcos picked up an Ocelot about 20 yards from of us. Pulling up alongside it, and aided by some vocal assistance from Marcos, the cat posed beautifully for us for a few moments before slowly moving off into the bushes. As dawn approached we pulled up at the edge of the Transpantaneira in an open area to scan for Giant Anteater & Tapir, stretching our legs and watching the sunrise. With the mist gradually clearing, it was a breath taking start to the day and many of the group took the opportunity to photograph the beautiful scene before us. The drive back was a relatively quiet affair with only a couple of Marsh Deer sighted, however after enjoying an excellent breakfast, we were again treated to fantastic views of the Toco Toucans from under the shelter of the veranda.



Sunrise

Later that morning we headed out on the river to retrieve the camera trap from the previous night. Despite yesterday's optimism, the trap hadn't been triggered and we all felt a little deflated, this feeling was only short lived as the walk along the forest trail allowed fabulous views of roosting Great Potoo and also several butterfly species, including Eighty-eights and Blue Morpho.



Brown Capuchin

That afternoon, after a couple of hours siesta we headed east up the Pixaim River, stopping to visit a river side canopy tower which provided fantastic panoramic views of the surrounding landscape. We also had good views of a small family of Howler Monkeys and a much closer encounter with a very active and vocal troop of Brown Capuchins. With the late afternoon sun slowly sinking towards the horizon, we were treated to very nice views of hundreds of egrets and cormorants all flying in to roost and vying for position in the riverside trees. After a stop for sundowners on the edge of the river, we slowly began to retrace our tracks back towards the lodge, scanning the river banks with the spotlight as we travelled. Terrestrial mammals proved relatively scarce, however we did enjoy fantastic close up views of both Lesser and Greater fishing Bats as they descended on the river, swooping low to snatch prey from the water's surface.

Day 11

Monday 25th June

Unfortunately, after 9 nights in the Pantanal, it was time to hit the road and begin our journey back to Cuiaba and on to the UK. After breakfast we gathered briefly to watch the Toco Toucans one last time, before loading up the minibus and beginning the 3 hour drive back to Cuiaba. The journey was not without incident and we stopped several times on route to enjoy views of a troop of South American Coatis, Black Howler Monkeys and some stunning congregations of waterbirds. The traffic entering Cuiaba was a little worse than we had anticipated and at one stage we were a little concerned whether we would make it on time, however it all worked out fine and we arrived at the airport with ample time to grab a quick lunch, before boarding our flight back to Sao Paulo.



Toco Toucans

Day 12

Tuesday 26th June

We arrived back in the UK on time and after bidding our farewells, all went our separate ways.

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Species List (✓ = commonly recorded but not counted)

Mammals

	Common name	Scientific name	Trip	Date: June										
				16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
1	Giant Anteater	<i>Myrmecophaga tridactyla</i>	✓		1									
2	Lesser Anteater	<i>Tamandua tetradactyla</i>	✓		1						1			
3	Six banded Armadillo	<i>Euphractes sexcinctus</i>	✓							2				
4	Lesser Fishing Bat	<i>Noctilionidae albiventris</i>	✓							✓		✓	✓	
5	Greater Fishing Bat	<i>Nocilio leporinus</i>	✓					1	1				✓	
6	Proboscis Bat	<i>Rhynchonycteris Naso</i>	✓							12				
7	Brazilian Tapir	<i>Tapirus terrestris</i>	✓	1	1									
8	Giant River Otter	<i>Pteronura brasiliensis</i>	✓				5	5	20	8				
9	Southern River Otter	<i>Lutra longicaudis</i>	✓			1								
10	South American Coati	<i>Nasua nasua</i>	✓								2			12
11	Crab-eating Fox	<i>Cerdocyon thous</i>	✓	1							2			
12	Tayra	<i>Eira barbara</i>	✓							1				
13	Black-tailed Marmoset	<i>Callithrix argentata</i>	✓		5	3								
14	Black Howler Monkey	<i>Alouatta caraya</i>	✓				7	3		4	6	H	6	
15	Brown Capuchin Monkey	<i>Cebus apella</i>	✓				6	6	3				12	
16	Azara's Agouti	<i>Dasyprocta azarae</i>	✓	2	1					2				
17	Capybara	<i>Hydrochaeris hydrochaeris</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
18	Brazilian Cavy	<i>Cavia aperea</i>	✓		1									
19	Brazilian Rabbit	<i>Sylvilagus brasiliensis</i>	✓	1	1							1	1	
20	Marsh Deer	<i>Blastocerus dichotomous</i>	✓			5	1	1		3	3	2		
21	Red Brocket Deer	<i>Mazama americana</i>	✓		1								1	
22	Grey Brocket Deer	<i>Mazama gouazoubira</i>	✓		1					1				
23	Jaguar	<i>Panthera onca</i>	✓		1	4	4	2						
24	Ocelot	<i>Felis pardalis</i>	✓				1				2	1		

Species List (✓ = commonly recorded but not counted)

Reptiles & Amphibians

	Common name	Scientific name	Trip	Date: June										
				16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
1	Yacare Caiman	<i>Myrmecophaga tridactyla</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Green Iguana	<i>Iguana Iguana</i>	✓			1	4	2					3	
3	Common Tegu Lizard	<i>Tupinambis teguixin</i>	✓		1									
4	House Gecko	<i>Hemidactylus mabouia</i>										1		
5	Tree Frogs	<i>Hyla spp</i>	✓								✓	✓	✓	

Species List (✓ = recorded but not counted)

Birds

	Common name	Scientific name	Trip	Date: June										
				16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
1	Greater Rhea	<i>Rhea americana</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓								✓
2	Neotropic Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax olivaceus</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Anhinga	<i>Anhinga anhinga</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
4	Little Blue Heron	<i>Egretta caerulea</i>	✓		✓									
5	Snowy Egret	<i>Egretta thula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	White-necked (Cocoi) Heron	<i>Ardea cocoi</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7	Great Egret	<i>Egretta alba</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	✓		✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓
9	Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striatus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	Black-crowned Night-Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
11	Boat-billed Heron	<i>Cochlearius cochlearia</i>	✓									✓		
12	Rufescent Tiger Heron	<i>Tigrisoma lineatum</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
13	Capped Heron	<i>Pilherodius pileatus</i>	✓		✓	✓								
14	Bare-faced Ibis	<i>Phimosus infuscatus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓			
15	Plumbeous Ibis	<i>Harpiprion caerulescens</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓			
16	Buff-necked Ibis	<i>Theristicus caudatus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓		✓	

17	Green Ibis	<i>Mesembrinibis cayennensis</i>	✓								✓	✓	
18	Roseate Spoonbill	<i>Ajaia ajaja</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
19	Wood Stork	<i>Mycteria americana</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
20	Maguari Stork	<i>Ciconia maguari</i>	✓	✓	✓								✓
21	Jabiru	<i>Jabiru mycteria</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
22	Southern Screamer	<i>Anhima torquata</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
23	Black-bellied Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna autummalis</i>	✓		✓	✓				✓		✓	
24	Muscovy Duck	<i>Cairina moschata</i>	✓			✓						✓	
25	Brazilian Duck	<i>Amazonetta brasiliensis</i>											
26	Black Vulture	<i>Coragyps atratus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
27	Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>	✓	✓		✓					✓	✓	✓
28	Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture	<i>Cathartes burrovianus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
29	Snail Kite	<i>Rostrhamus sociabilis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
30	Grey-headed Kite	<i>Leptodon cayanensis</i>	✓				✓						
31	Great Black Hawk	<i>Buteogallus urubitinga</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
32	Savanna Hawk	<i>Buteogallus meridionalis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
33	Black-collared Hawk	<i>Busarellus nigricollis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
34	Roadside Hawk	<i>Buteo magnirostris</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
35	Crested Caracara	<i>Polyborus plancus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
36	Aplomado Falcon	<i>Falco femoralis</i>	✓	✓						✓			
37	Laughing Falcon	<i>Herpetotheres cachinnans</i>	✓			✓							
38	Yellow-headed Caracara	<i>Milvago chimachima</i>	✓						✓				
39	Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	✓						✓				
40	Chaco Chachalaca	<i>Ortalis canicollis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
41	Chestnut-bellied Guan	<i>Penelope ochrogaster</i>	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓		
42	Blue-throated Piping-Guan	<i>Pipile cumanensis</i>	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
43	Red-throated Piping-Guan	<i>Pipile cujubi</i>	✓				✓			✓	✓		
44	Limpkin	<i>Aramus guarauna</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
45	Red-legged Seriema	<i>Cariama cristata</i>	✓	✓									
46	Sunbittern	<i>Eurypyga helias</i>	✓			✓				✓		✓	
47	Pied Lapwing	<i>Vanellus cayanus</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓				
48	Collared Plover	<i>Charadrius collaris</i>	✓						✓				

49	Southern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus chilensis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
50	White-backed Stilt	<i>Himantopus melanurus</i>	✓		✓	✓							
51	Wattled Jacana	<i>Jacana jacana</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
52	Black Skimmer	<i>Rynchops niger</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
53	Yellow-billed Tern	<i>Sterna superciliaris</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
54	Large-billed Tern	<i>Phaetusa simplex</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
55	Picazuro Pigeon	<i>Columba picazuro</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
56	Pale-vented Pigeon	<i>Columba cayennensis</i>	✓				✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
57	Eared Dove	<i>Zenaida auriculata</i>	✓		✓						✓	✓	
58	Scaled Dove	<i>Columbina squamatta</i>	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓		
59	Ruddy Ground-Dove	<i>Columbina talpacoti</i>	✓		✓					✓	✓		
60	Picui Ground-Dove	<i>Columbina picui</i>	✓		✓								
61	Long-tailed Ground-Dove	<i>Uropelia campestris</i>	✓		✓								
62	White-tipped Dove	<i>Leptotila verreauxi</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
63	Hyacinth Macaw	<i>Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
64	Blue-and-Gold Macaw	<i>Ara ararauna</i>	✓					✓					
65	Yellow-collared Macaw	<i>Ara auricollis</i>	✓					✓					
66	Peach-fronted Parakeet	<i>Aratinga aurea</i>	✓									✓	✓
67	Monk Parakeet	<i>Myiopsitta monachus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
68	Yellow-chevroned Parakeet	<i>Brotogeris chiriri</i>	✓		✓					✓	✓	✓	
69	Scaly-headed Parrot	<i>Pionus maximiliani</i>	✓								✓		
70	Blue-fronted Parrot	<i>Amazona aestiva</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
71	Orange-winged Parrot	<i>Amazona amazonica</i>	✓									✓	
72	Squirrel Cuckoo	<i>Piaya cayana</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓			✓		
73	Greater Ani	<i>Crotophaga major</i>	✓								✓	✓	
74	Smooth-billed Ani	<i>Crotophaga ani</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
75	Guira Cuckoo	<i>Guira guira</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
76	Striped Cuckoo	<i>Tapera naevia</i>					H						
77	Great Horned Owl	<i>Bubo virginianus</i>	✓	✓		✓					✓	✓	✓
78	Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl	<i>Glaucidium brasilianum</i>									✓		
79	Great Potoo	<i>Nyctibius grandis</i>	✓								✓	✓	
80	Band-tailed Nighthawk	<i>Nyctiprogne leucopyga</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
81	Nacunda Nighthawk	<i>Podager nacunda</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓			
82	Pauraque	<i>Nyctidromus albicollis</i>	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	

83	Little Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus parvulus</i>					✓							
84	Scissor-tailed Nightjar	<i>Hydropsalis brasiliانا</i>	✓							✓	✓	✓		
85	Glittering-bellied Emerald	<i>Chlorostilbon aureoventris</i>	✓		✓									
86	Fork-tailed Woodnymph	<i>Thalurania furcata</i>	✓					✓						
87	Blue-crowned Trogon	<i>Trogon curucui</i>	✓			✓	✓							
88	Ringed Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle torquata</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
89	Amazon Kingfisher	<i>Chloroceryle amazona</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
90	Green Kingfisher	<i>Chloroceryle americana</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
91	American Pygmy Kingfisher	<i>Chloroceryle aenea</i>	✓						✓					
92	Rufous-tailed Jacamar	<i>Galbula ruficauda</i>	✓				✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
93	Black-fronted Nunbird	<i>Monasa morphoeus</i>	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
94	Chestnut-eared Araçari	<i>Pteroglossus castanotis</i>	✓				✓		✓	✓				
95	Toco Toucan	<i>Ramphastos toco</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
96	White Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes candidus</i>	✓		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓		
97	Little Woodpecker	<i>Veniliornis passerinus</i>	✓		✓			✓			✓			
98	White-spotted Woodpecker	<i>Veniliornis spilogaster</i>												
99	Campo Flicker	<i>Colaptes campestris</i>	✓							✓	✓	✓		
100	Crimson-crested Woodpecker	<i>Campephilus melanoleucos</i>	✓		✓					✓				
101	Great Rufous Woodcreeper	<i>Xiphocolaptes major</i>	✓		✓									
102	Buff-throated Woodcreeper	<i>Xiphorhynchus guttatus</i>	✓								✓			
103	Narrow-billed Woodcreeper	<i>Lepidocolaptes angustirostris</i>	✓		✓									
104	Red-billed Scythebill	<i>Camphlorhamphus trochilirostris</i>	✓		H				✓					
105	Pale-legged Hornero	<i>Furnarius leucopus</i>	✓								✓	✓		
106	Rufous Hornero	<i>Furnarius rufus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓			
107	Chotoy Spinetail	<i>Schoeniophylax phryganophila</i>	✓							✓				
108	Greater Thornbird	<i>Phacellodomus ruber</i>	✓				✓	✓		✓		✓		
109	Grey-crested Cachalote	<i>Pseudoseisura unirufa</i>	✓				✓	✓						
110	Great Antshrike	<i>Taraba major</i>	✓		✓									
111	Common Tody-Flycatcher	<i>Todirostrum cinereum</i>	✓				✓	✓						
112	Vermilion Flycatcher	<i>Pyrocephalus rubinus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
113	Black-backed Water-Tyrant	<i>Fluvicola albiventer</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓					
114	Cattle Tyrant	<i>Machetornis rixosus</i>	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓			

115	Tropical Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus melancholicus</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
116	Boat-billed Flycatcher	<i>Megarhynchus pitangua</i>	✓								✓		
117	Rusty-margined Flycatcher	<i>Myiozetetes cayanensis</i>	✓		✓								
118	Social Flycatcher	<i>Myiozetetes similis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓						✓	
119	Lesser Kiskadee	<i>Pitangus lictor</i>	✓				✓	✓				✓	
120	Great Kiskadee	<i>Pitangus sulphuratus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
121	White-winged Swallow	<i>Tachycineta albiventer</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
122	Brown-chested Martin	<i>Phaeoprogne tapera</i>	✓					✓					
123	Purple Martin	<i>Progne subis</i>											
124	Grey-breasted Martin	<i>Progne chalybea</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓					
125	Southern Rough-winged Swallow	<i>Stelgidopteryx ruficollis</i>	✓			✓		✓	✓				
126	Purplish Jay	<i>Cyanocorax cyanomelas</i>	✓		✓					✓	✓	✓	
127	Black-capped Donacobius	<i>Donacobius atricapillus</i>	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
128	Thrush-like Wren	<i>Campylorhynchus turdinus</i>	✓				H	H	H		✓	✓	✓
129	Moustached Wren	<i>Thryothorus genibarbis</i>						H					
130	Masked Gnatcatcher	<i>Poliopitila dumicola</i>	✓		✓								
131	Rufous-browed Peppershrike	<i>Cyclarhis gujanensis</i>							H				
132	Silver-beaked Tanager	<i>Ramphocelus carbo</i>	✓								✓		
133	Sayaca Tanager	<i>Thraupis sayaca</i>	✓								✓		
134	Greyish Saltator	<i>Saltator coerulescens</i>	✓							✓	✓		
135	Red-crested Cardinal	<i>Paroaria coronata</i>	✓		✓					✓			
136	Yellow-billed Cardinal	<i>Paroaria capitata</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
137	Saffron Finch	<i>Sicalis flaveola</i>	✓							✓	✓	✓	
138	Giant Cowbird	<i>Scaphidura oryzivora</i>	✓			✓				✓	✓	✓	
139	Shiny Cowbird	<i>Molothrus bonariensis</i>	✓			✓							
140	Crested Oropendola	<i>Psarocolius decumanus</i>	✓				✓	✓	✓				
141	Yellow-rumped Cacique	<i>Cacicus cela</i>	✓						✓	✓	✓	✓	
142	Solitary Cacique	<i>Cacicus solitarius</i>	✓							✓	✓		
143	Epaulet Oriole	<i>Icterus cayanensis</i>	✓								✓		
144	Orange-backed Troupial	<i>Icterus croconotus</i>	✓		✓	✓						✓	
145	Scarlet-headed Blackbird	<i>Amblyramphus holosericeus</i>	✓		✓						H		
146	Chopi Blackbird	<i>Gnorimopsar chopi</i>	✓		✓							✓	
147	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	✓			✓							