

Brazil - Just Jaguars!

Naturetrek Tour Report

12 – 23 August 2015



Jaguar hunting



Jaguar resting



Bare-faced Curassows



Hyacinth Macaw in flight

Report & images compiled by John & Jenny Willsher



Naturetrek

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

Tour Participants: Paulo Ribeiro (leader) with 13 Naturetrek clients

Summary

This was another exciting excursion into the wildlife -packed gem that is the Pantanal which one guidebook describes as an aquatic Serengeti equivalent! To continue the comparison we saw the big six – Jaguar, Giant Anteater, Giant Otter, Capybara, Caiman and Tapir plus much more – monkeys, foxes, Agouti, Coati, deer and an Anaconda – though that was fighting for its life before succumbing to a Jaguar! Travelling the Transpantaneira Highway in our own mobile viewing platform or riding the river in search of our own Jaguar was a unique experience. The abundance of water birds was amazing – masses of egrets, herons and storks plus bitterns, jacanas and Anhingas were seen in the wetland areas. Along the river edge families of Capybara and collections of Caiman of many sizes lazed on the sandbanks, and the ever present possibility of a Jaguar sighting kept us enthralled. We had many sightings of five individual Jaguars in the days we spent on the river, plus many sightings of Crab-eating Foxes, Marsh Deer, Red and Brown Brocket Deer and various bats. The woodland birds included a varied selection of colourful individuals including the wonderful Hyacinth Macaws, amazing Toco Toucans and Chestnut-eared Aricaris, the noisy Chacalacas, woodpeckers, hawks, vultures and, on our way back to the airport, a bevy of haughty Greater Rheas.

Day 1

Wednesday 12th August

The group had an overnight flight from Heathrow to Sao Paulo

Day 2

Thursday 13th August

We arrived early at Sao Paulo and easily transferred to Terminal 4 for our internal flight to Cuiaba. As we waited for information about our flight, the dawn arrived and a few of us ventured outside where, despite the motor and human traffic around the airport, there were birds to see. Two Blue-fronted Parrots perched obligingly in a nearby tree, a flock of doves disappeared among the billboards before being identified, Black Vultures floated overhead, and a noisy group of Southern Lapwing displayed their white wing patches as they were chased by a dog. We had a smooth flight to Cuiaba where the temperature was noticeably hotter! We were greeted enthusiastically by Paulo and were ushered into a coach which took us the short distance to our lunch stop. There was a tempting array of hot and cold dishes to choose from and our plates were weighed (to work out the price) before we could tuck in!

Duly refreshed, and despite the long and fairly sleepless flight, we were keen to get out of town and were soon out of the bustling commercial and industrial sprawl of Cuiaba and on the long straight Rue de Pantanal, heading south-west. There were tempting glimpses of wet areas dotted with egrets, and Turkey Vultures wobbling overhead, but Paulo was determined to get us to where we could stop for better views.

When the tarmac road ran out, we were then on a red laterite road where our progress slowed but it allowed us to stop to catch up with the increasingly prolific wildlife. Wet areas were teeming with Snowy, Great and Cattle Egrets, Bare-faced and Buff-necked Ibis, Wood Storks and various kingfishers. When Paulo pointed out a Rufescent Tiger Heron, it took a few seconds to locate as it seemed to be pretending to be an extension to a fence post! We slowed down to scrutinise an area of termite mounds, searching for Giant Anteater but with no

luck. We reached the official gate to the Pantanal and transferred to our naturally air-conditioned vehicle which gave us an elevated viewing platform and a real feel of being close to the wildlife.

Once our luggage had been stowed and we were eagerly ensconced in our mobile viewing platform, to our surprise we started heading back the way we had come. Paulo kept his cards close to his chest but it soon transpired that an earlier conversation had revealed the whereabouts of a Giant Anteater. We soon met up with an American group of naturalists who were stalking this strange animal as it foraged unconcernedly amongst the roadside vegetation. Once they had moved off, we stayed and had quite intimate views of this bizarre creature with its strange physical adaptations of the long snout, which houses its extendible sticky tongue, and its method of walking on its knuckles to protect its strong claws which are essential for ripping open termite mounds.

When we had had our fill, we moved off and Paulo humoured us as we pointed out many amazing bird-sightings – Snail Kite, Roadside Hawk, Monk Parakeets nesting under the huge stork nests and Guiara Cuckoo. As the sun started to sink and the light changed to shades of pink and orange we stopped at a good viewpoint where Paulo suggested a sundowner! He produced soft drinks and beers and we forgot our jet-lag and enjoyed the atmosphere and the view.

We then continued in the dusk with Paulo scanning the habitat with a searchlight, picking out some nocturnal wildlife – Crab-eating Foxes and Marsh Deer. Eventually we reached Pouso Alegre Lodge but Paulo was keen to maximise our experience so, after dinner, we were back in the vehicle and had a short excursion to look for tapir but only managed to see more foxes and nighthawks.

Day 3

Friday 14th August

Some of us had been worried about waking up in time but the Pantanal had its own wake-up call -the explosive chatter of pairs of Chacalacas! The early bird-watchers saw Hyacinth Macaws who have their own noisy conversation - “Will you marry me? Not today” - apparently!! Toco Toucan and Bare-faced Curassow were also seen, together with Agoutis and Racoons – all these in close proximity to the lodge.

After breakfast, we set off for a walk from the lodge into the nearby woodland and scrub. Paulo soon located a group of Tufted or Black-capped Capuchins. As we were about to retrace our steps, Carol sighted a family of Black-tailed Marmosets (also known as Pantanal Marmosets, they are part of the Silvery Marmoset group). One female had two babies clinging to her. On our return to the lodge we saw a single Hyacinth Macaw and more Toco Toucans. Their huge bright bills look so heavy and cumbersome but, at the lodge, a collection of skeletons included a toucan skull and bill and it was surprisingly light, and we had seen them demonstrate delicate eating skills when plucking small fruits from the trees.

An excursion to another area of woodland failed to produce Howler monkeys which Paulo was hoping for but we had good views of Rufous-tailed Jacamar. During the heat of midday, we had lunch, did the bird list and some caught up with a bit of sleep.

At 3.30 we set off for another local walk. Birds included Red-crested Cardinals, Buff-necked Seedeater, Barred and Great Antshrike, and Snail Kite with its hooked bill. There was much evidence of its prey under our feet – the huge shells of Aquatic Apple Snails (*Pomacea gyanensis*) – also a favourite food for Agoutis and Limpkins.

Among the rushes, bright red and black dragonflies flitted (*Diastatops pullata*). At a small lake, we had good views of a Sunbittern – a shy very un-bittern-like bird which, in display mode, has a stunning pattern on its wings which this bird showed us briefly.

We then set off in the bus, heading for a waterhole to look for Tapir. In the large pink-blossomed Tabebu trees around the lodge, we had good views of a pair of White Woodpeckers and Orange-backed Troupial. We parked near the waterhole and, in the growing dusk, Paulo produced the sundowners and we waited. Our patience was rewarded by the appearance of two Tapir moving through the reeds at the edge of the water. They seemed unfazed by the vehicle lights and searchlight. On our return to the lodge, we saw another Tapir and more Crab-eating Foxes. Paulo was really pleased with the three Tapirs and we were certainly not complaining!

Day 4

Saturday 15th August

We had an early start – having breakfast at 5.30am - and said farewell to the lodge staff. Once on the road, we made occasional stops for the teeming birdlife along the way. The wet areas exploded with white egrets, handsome Black-capped Herons and Wood Storks, Little Blue and Striated Herons, and flashes of lime green as the Jacanas took flight. Some egrets froze as we passed, as if by staying still we would not notice their pure white plumage against the lush green rafts of Water Hyacinth! In deeper pools, the water bubbled as the Caiman submerged.

We made a comfort stop at a riverside lodge where we were distracted by a feeding station near the hotel reception. Four Chestnut-eared Aricari were feeding on melon, Orange-backed Troupial were feeding on slices of orange, and Orange-billed Cardinals were feeding on seeds. Ice-blue Sayaca Tanagers and olive-brown Palm Tanagers looked incongruous amongst all that colour! We then continued our journey to Port Jofre where we were relieved to get out of the bus and stretch our legs. Our luggage was loaded onto a boat and disappeared down river. We said goodbye to Antonio who had been driving us so carefully, and climbed into our boat – which would be our sole means of transport over the next few days. It was a very pleasant 30-minute ride to the flotel but, as we approached, the boat did an elegant U-turn and headed for the bank where we enjoyed a few minutes watching our first Giant Otters. They cavorted and squealed amongst the tree roots and cameras clicked.

After an introductory talk about the hotel and meeting Paul Donahue, the resident naturalist, we enjoyed a comprehensive buffet lunch and then had some time to unpack and settle into our luxurious spacious rooms. Before our agreed meeting time, there was much running about on the deck and small boats departing and Paulo was soon knocking on our doors! Were we OK to leave early as there had been a Jaguar sighting? Did we need to be asked?? We were soon in the boat and heading off in high anticipation! Within a few minutes we had caught up with other boats and Manuel, our sharp-eyed boatman pointed out our first Jaguar! It was nonchalantly perambulating along the river bank, occasionally disappearing into the undergrowth. After we all had good views of this handsome and powerful cat, which represented integrity to the Mayan Indians, Paulo decided we would head further up river for the rest of the afternoon. We enjoyed a lovely couple of hours with plentiful sightings of Caiman, Capybara and many birds. At the point of return, Paulo got out the sundowners and we drifted quietly towards the sunset listening to many bird calls, surrounded by flitting Banded Nighthawks and Fishing Bats. Manuel spotted a small group of Howler Monkeys draped languidly in the branches of a huge tree.

After a delicious dinner we enjoyed a talk by Paul Donahue about the Jaguars of the Pantanal. Jaguars are the largest cat in the Americas and the third largest in the world. Pantanal Jaguars are the largest and heaviest of their species and males can be 30-50% heavier than the females. Their individual face markings allow them to be identified and there are 170 named cats in the Pantanal. The one we had seen earlier was Ruth/Iris, named in 2008 and mother to Jorge and Patricia – one of the most habituated animals. Caiman and Capybara are favoured prey.

Day 5

Sunday 16th August

We breakfasted at 6am and were in the boat by 7. We made short stops to look at loafing Capybara families with cute babies – aaah!! - and also the many-sized polished-leather-backed Caiman, and a Capped Heron eating a fish. We were heading for an area where a Jaguar had been recently sighted but was known to be on the move. Then the radio crackled and Manuel put the boat into Jaguar-speed gear and we set off for an exhilarating ride with our hats held down and our hopes held high! We soon reached the spot! A handsome male Jaguar was sitting on the riverbank in the shade. We settled down to wait – the anchor was down and we hung in the flow of the river. Any movement from the Jaguar was accompanied by many camera clicks, especially when he actually got up. He moved more into the open and we were happy to sit longer, and gradually moved closer. Overhead, Black Vultures wheeled, a Black-collared Hawk showed its rufous wings, and a Greater Ani was seen with its iridescent blue-back plumage. Paulo suggested it was time to move on and Manuel put the boat into 'return for lunch' speed. We were very pleased with our morning's sighting, but we hadn't got far when Manuel noticed two boats in a side creek. He skilfully turned the boat around and we were soon watching Mick Jaguar! He was easily recognised by his right eye where the nictitating membrane that all cats have was covering part of his eye. On returning to the flotel for lunch Paul informed us that the first Jaguar was Maxim.

After our midday siesta, we were back in the boat. The plan was to revisit Mick and then head off in hopes of finding 'our own' Jaguar! But we were soon joining a few boats watching a female hunting along the riverside. She was stalking Caiman in the rafts of Water Hyacinth at the river's edge. She couldn't have been too hungry as she soon lay down on the bank. We set off again further up the river. We briefly watched a Crane Hawk searching among tree roots with its long red double-jointed legs which allow it to reach into holes. We then caught up with Maxim again – very chilled on the edge of the bank. He occasionally graced us with a stare but for the most part was relaxed, with the odd twitch of the tail. There was news of another sighting further down river but we decided to enjoy Maxim in the company of only a few others. Paulo suggested a sundowner, of course! We stayed almost till dusk and then headed back to base enjoying the deepening sunset and the accompanying bats and Bar-tailed Nighthawks.

The evening's talk was on the Yacare or Paraguayan Caiman. The Caiman first appeared 8.3 million years ago and has changed little since. It dominates the rivers edge where its common prey is catfish, piranha, apple snails, snakes, baby Capybara and Snowy Egrets. Its main predator is the Jaguar and occasionally otters. They have a very acute sense of touch, as sensitive as human fingertips, which helps them feed at night and in murky water. They can shift their lungs within their bodies to aid better buoyancy and diving. The Pantanal has the greatest concentration of this reptile that was once headed for extinction due to the trade in its hide. The current threat is from water pollution from gold-mining and soybean production.

Day 6

Monday 17th August

We left at 7am for our morning Jaguar patrol. A pleasant breeze ruffled the surface of the water as we headed off in high anticipation. Within 15 minutes, Manuel had spotted one. Our own Jaguar! A female that was a bit camera-shy so, unfortunately, she did not stay long! So we moved on to explore Mick's creek. As the creek narrowed, a Black Hawk settled on the bank hoping to catch a fish and a Jacana delicately picked its way between the Caiman. We made our way back to the main channel and were cruising comfortably, scanning the bankside for that gorgeous spotty pelt, when the radio crackled and the boat lurched into Jaguar speed and we were off! Delicate rainbows arced through the spray as the boat cornered and we leant into the bends like professionals! We caught up with the other boats but, after half an hour with no sighting, we moved on again. After another false alarm, we headed back for lunch a bit dispirited. But then we came across 3-4 boats watching the bank where we had found 'our' Jaguar earlier! This animal worked its way methodically along the bank, stopping occasionally to scrutinise the Water Hyacinth. The boats shifted position, each trying for the best views and all of us willing her to leap for a Caiman. Then she briefly disappeared, emerging again in some scrub where something had caught her attention. We were all transfixed as she pounced and leapt back before we realised she was struggling with an Anaconda! At one point we saw the snake wrapped around her nose, and after more confusing views of the action, she disappeared dragging her prey with her. We happily left her to her lunch, Manuel put the boat into 'we're late for lunch' speed and we headed back to base. The chips had gone a bit soggy but we agreed it was a small price to pay for the privilege!

Our afternoon sadly proved to be Jaguar free despite responding to a couple of calls. But we enjoyed the many other wildlife sightings on offer – many Capybara, masses of Caiman, Great Black Hawk, Bare-faced Curassow, Pied Plover and Black Skimmers. At sundowner time, we drifted with the current - Yellow-billed Cardinals fed in the tree roots, Tropical Kingbirds and Great Kiskadees called, and Black and Turkey Vultures wheeled overhead. As dusk fell, nighthawks and bats hawked ever closer to the boat.

Our after dinner talk was about Capybara (*Hydrochaeris hydrochaeris*) – the scientific name being the Greek for water hog. It has 190 local names and is the largest living rodent. It is adapted for its aquatic life by having ears, eyes and nose high in its head and having slightly webbed feet. It can hold its breath under water for several minutes – useful when a Jaguar is patrolling the bank! It is often used as a lookout post by small birds, particularly the Cattle Tyrant, who ride along as the Capybara puts up insects in the grass. They can eat 3kg of grass a day and live to 10 years old.

Day 7

Tuesday 18th August

After our usual delicious breakfast, we set off and had been scouting for about one hour when the boat kicked into Jaguar speed and we doubled back to where one had been located. A chunky male was sitting nonchalantly on the bank. He then took a walk, made his way down the bank and swam across a small channel to a sandbar where an adult Capybara sat. We held our breath as the Capybara seemed oblivious, but it then barked and leapt into the water. The Jaguar paused and then resignedly continued along the sandbank giving us great views of this powerful predator. Paul was in a nearby boat and told us he thought this animal was Adriano. We moved on again and explored new creeks and channels, but it seemed we were out of luck with Jaguars. We saw a Water Buffalo trundling along the bank, then later a dead one surrounded by vultures. Many water-side birds included Roseate Spoonbills, Capped Herons, Screamers, Squirrel Cuckoo, Skimmers, and Wood and Jabiru Storks. We

reluctantly headed back for lunch but were diverted by a sighting of Mick, who entertained us by swimming and hunting amongst the Water Hyacinth before padding across a small beach with birds alarming around him. We were late for lunch again but no soggy chips this time!

After lunch, we headed off to the edges of the reserve where a mating pair had been sighted but, despite our lengthy foray on a lovely afternoon, it proved Jaguar-less. As we headed back, we got a call of a sighting but were just too late to witness Ruth catch a Caiman. So disappointing! It was now sundowner time and we drifted down river as the sun sank behind the trees, bruising the sky with streaks of peach and dark blue, and a new moon smiled down on us. The emergence of mosquitoes hurried us along and we left them to the bats and hawks.

Tonight's talk was on Giant Otters. These entertaining, highly vocal and sociable creatures are the largest otter species, though Sea Otters are heavier. They are at their highest density in the Pantanal but are more threatened than the Jaguar, due to habitat destruction. They were persecuted mercilessly for their fur but their numbers have recovered from a low point in the 60's to a current population of an approx. 3000. Their creamy throat patch allows for individual identification. Their acute sense of smell and very sensitive whiskers (vibrissa) that cover their heads help them hunt for prey in the muddy river. Their family groupings help protect them from predators and they will have multiple den sites which will include a latrine site.

Day 8

Wednesday 19th August

We set off early for a pre-departure excursion, and were out on the river by 6.30am. Our first encounter was with an otter family and we enjoyed watching them hunt for fish for 45 minutes, being close enough to hear them crunching their prey. A Caiman approached one otter as if to snatch its catch but the otter dived just in time. Other Caiman played 'chicken' with our boat, submerging at the very last minute as we passed by. The creeks were full of fish and some even jumped in the boat! Barbara coolly picked one up to throw it back. It was now 8am and we were feeling a bit resigned to a no-show on the Jaguar front, but at 8.05 the boat slowed and Manuel had spotted one! At 8.10 we had the anchor down and, for a few special moments, had this beast to ourselves. We thought it was Mick from the look of his right eye. He looked very relaxed lying half in the shade of the forest. We shifted around in the boat to get the best views and willed him to move for us. By 8.10 other boats had arrived. Shutters clicked, small boats spluttered, conversations were exchanged and theories abounded. A guide on another boat related how Mick could sleep for hours like this or move at any minute! At 8.30 Mick still slept on, with the occasional twitch of tail or paw. Any movement attracted a salvo of camera clicks but Mick was not performing! It was 9am before he got up, turned tail and disappeared into the undergrowth. We moved on and enjoyed another hour in the cool of the morning, watching kingfishers and herons on the river bank, hawks and vultures in the sky and Kiskadee, some darting amongst the tree roots and others amongst the yellow flowers of the Cambara trees.

When we got back to the flotel we had a quick freshen up before being whisked back to Port Jofre. We said a big thank you to our keen-eyed and skilful boat-handler Manuel and boarded another open-sided bus for the next leg of the trip. We headed back along the Transpantaneiro, stopping occasionally for birds such as Sungrebe, Jabiru and Maguari Stork. We arrived at Southwild Lodge for late lunch and a siesta. For those who wanted to take every opportunity, there was plenty of wildlife in the vicinity. At a feeding station just outside the dining room, Toco Toucans warily fed and the ground underneath was teeming with birds such as Scaled and Ruddy Ground Doves, Scaled Pigeon, Yellow-billed Cardinals, Saffron Finches, Palm and Sayaca Tanagers and, shyly, a pair of

Bare-faced Curassow. Various groups of Capybara were ambling or lounging around the grounds. At 3pm we boarded the bus and trundled up the track. We met a group of riders who had seen a Tapir but our short walk in the scrub was not productive. We came across a mass of vultures and caracaras feeding on a pungent fruit dump. As the light faded Paulo got out the spotlight and we saw Marsh and Brown Brocket Deer and, fleetingly a Great Horned Owl.

Day 9

Thursday 20th August

An early start had us out on the river at 5.15am to see the sunrise and early morning birds on the water. We had good views of Boat-billed, Striated, Cocoli, Night, Tiger and Capped Heron. Paulo got us to listen to the cow-sounding call of the Tiger Heron. An insignificant little bird swimming amongst the roots was a Sungrebe. We hoped it might get out onto the bank so that we could see its stripy toes but it was a bit shy. We returned to the hotel for our delicious and colourful breakfast which consisted of many fresh fruits, fruit juices, fruity yoghurts, bread, ham, cheese and eggs. Our 5-a-day in one hit! We could do some dove/pigeon revision while we ate, as the ground under the feeders was again crowded with birds.

We then returned to the boats and retraced our steps looking for Pygmy Kingfisher. We saw a Grey-necked Wood Rail as it picked its way through the tree roots. There was rumour of a Jaguar being heard in the night so we were very alert. The boats nudged into the bank and we disembarked for a short walk through dry forest to look for Great Potoo. These nightjar-related birds roost during the day on tree trunks, mimicking a stump with their camouflaged plumage. Paulo found one but it took us all a few frustrating moments to pick it out. As one guidebook says: 'never has an immobile bird been so interesting!!! Once located, it seemed quite obvious of course! It is supposed to utter a melancholic wail on moonlit nights! We saw three individuals all with that 'if I don't move you can't possibly see me' expression! On returning to the boats we had brief glimpses of marmosets but they quickly disappeared. Back in the boats, we explored further up river (though this stretch of water is not strictly a river this time of the year) in hopes of finding otters. A boatman said that he had not seen them in this area recently but, as we turned to head back, we saw two Giant Otters that approached our boats, giving excellent views. Our next excursion was to walk into the "Beware Jaguar" zone! Initially we walked alongside the river through woodland, encountering a group of capuchins. The boldest ones plunged for some fruit and then ensued some squabbling as others tried to snatch it. Some of us braved the climb up the viewing tower. Birds seen included a Solitary Cacique, and Black-fronted Nunbirds. As we returned we came across a rugby ball-sized tortoise.

It was still quite hot when got back to the hotel and some took a dip in the small swimming pool before dinner.

Day 10

Friday 21st August

We were out early again and walked a short distance from the lodge to an impressive group of huge Ficus trees. In the top of one was a preening Great Horned Owl. We admired its wonderfully marked plumage through the scope. Its mate was hunkered down in the nest in a nearby tree. After breakfast, we took another woodland walk but it was a quiet morning. We had brief glimpses of Squirrel Cuckoo, Matto Grosso Antbird, Vermilion Flycatcher and others. Just as we were approaching the edge of the forest a capuchin approached and we enjoyed seeing a small group.

It was very hot back at the hotel so some of the group took another dip in the pool. After lunch, and some free time, we set out again. A Black-collared Hawk and a Ringed Kingfisher gave close views. We also saw Sungrebe, Sunbittern, Little Blue Heron and many egrets. We then returned to where we had previously seen the otters. We had a brief sighting of a Neotropical River Otter – a shy solitary animal. Then we met up with the Giant Otters. There were teenage otters under the bank who squealed loudly as the adults took fish. We enjoyed the company of these vociferous, sociable and very appealing creatures for some time. We then experienced another beautiful Pantanal sunset as we returned to the lodge for our last evening in this very special place. The egrets were heading into roost but herons were still fishing. The sunset was wonderful as we reluctantly headed back to our rooms.

Day 11

Saturday 22nd August

We were a relatively subdued group at breakfast on this, our last morning in this beautiful place. For those who took a last walk around the lodge, there was four toucans and two aricari in the fig tree, a Spotted Sandpiper on the edge of the pond, and a Yellow-chinned Spinetail and a Fork-tailed Flycatcher in a nearby tree. Paulo carefully organised our luggage, and Lucy, the lodge manager, helped us load the bus. We said our farewells and reluctantly boarded the bus for our return journey to Cuiaba, Sao Paulo and home. But our wildlife viewing was not over yet. We made various stops before reaching the tarmac road. A Greater Rhea was spotted and subsequently another eight! This is America's equivalent to the Ostrich in Africa and is South America's largest bird. Despite its size, its grey-brown plumage can make it surprisingly difficult to spot. Their eggs are proportionately huge, one being equivalent to 12 chicken eggs. Other sightings included a handsome male Marsh Deer, a Laughing Falcon with its striking black and white head, a Caiman Lizard, a snake, three Hyacinth Macaws and many usual roadside birds such as Caracaras, vultures, hawks, egrets and parrots. We made good time to Cuiaba and had time for lunch in the 'pay by weight of your plate' restaurant. Then sadly we were at the airport. Paulo made sure all was well with our flight and that we were checked in, before saying farewell to us all. He had been great company and looked after us well. We then resigned ourselves to the long journey home.

Day 12

Sunday 23rd August

We arrived at Heathrow in good time to be greeted by a dull showery day – welcome back to Britain! We were home! Some of the group had more travels before they reached home, but we all carried many memories – and photos – of an amazing experience.

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.

Species Lists

Mammals (✓ = recorded but not counted)

	Common name	Scientific name	August											
			13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22		
1	Giant Anteater	<i>Myrmecophaga tridactyla</i>	2											
2	Greater Fishing Bat	<i>Nocilio leporinus</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓						
3	Brazilian Tapir	<i>Tapirus terrestris</i>	2	3										
4	Giant River Otter	<i>Pteronura brasiliensis</i>			3	✓		✓	✓	3	✓			
5	Southern River Otter	<i>Lutra longicaudis</i>										1		
6	South American Coati	<i>Nasua nasua</i>			1									
7	Crab-eating Raccoon	<i>Procyon cancrivorous</i>	1											
8	Crab-eating Fox	<i>Cerdocyon thous</i>	✓	✓	✓									
9	Silvery (Pantanal) Marmoset	<i>Callithrix argentata</i>		✓							✓			
10	Black Howler Monkey	<i>Alouatta caraya</i>			3	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			
11	Black-capped Capuchin Monkey	<i>Cebus apella</i>		✓						✓	✓			
12	Azara's Agouti	<i>Dasyprocta azarae</i>		✓	✓									
13	Capybara	<i>Hydrochaeris hydrochaeris</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
14	Marsh Deer	<i>Blastocerus dichotomous</i>		✓	✓				✓					
15	Red Brocket Deer	<i>Mazama americana</i>	✓		✓									
16	Brown Brocket Deer	<i>Mazama gouazoubira</i>	✓		✓				✓					
17	Jaguar	<i>Panthera onca</i>			1	3	✓	2	✓					
18	Lesser Fishing Bat	<i>Noctilio albiventris</i>							✓					
19	River Bat	<i>Rhynchonycteris naso</i>									✓	✓		

Reptiles & Amphibians

1	Yacare Caiman	<i>Caiman crocodilus jacare</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Land Tortoise spp.											1		
3	Neck-side River Turtle sp	<i>Podocnemis sp.</i>												
4	Common (Green) Iguana	<i>Iguana iguana</i>			✓		✓	✓		✓				
5	Common Tegu lizard	<i>Tupinambis teguixin</i>		✓						✓				
6	Lizard spp	<i>Teiidae spp.</i>			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
7	Yellow Anaconda	<i>Eunectes notatus</i>						✓						

	Common name	Scientific name	August										
			13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	
8	Tree Frogs	<i>Hyla spp.</i>										✓	
9	Amazon racerunner	<i>Ameiva ameiva</i>		✓									

Birds (H = heard only)

1	Greater Rhea	<i>Rhea americana</i>											9
2	Neotropic Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax olivaceus</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
3	Anhinga	<i>Anhinga anhinga</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
4	Whistling Heron	<i>Syrigma sibilatrix</i>			✓							✓	
5	Little Blue Heron	<i>Egretta caerulea</i>	✓		✓		✓				✓	✓	
6	Snowy Egret	<i>Egretta thula</i>	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		
7	White-necked (Cocoi) Heron	<i>Ardea cocoi</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
8	Great Egret	<i>Egretta alba</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
10	Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striatus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
11	Black-crowned Night-Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
12	Boat-billed Heron	<i>Cochlearius cochlearia</i>	✓							✓	✓		
13	Rufescent Tiger Heron	<i>Tigrisoma lineatum</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
14	Bare-faced Ibis (Whispering Ibis)	<i>Phimosus infuscatus</i>	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓		
15	White-faced Ibis	<i>Plegadis chihi</i>			✓								
16	Plumbeous Ibis	<i>Harpiprion caeruleus</i>	✓	✓	✓							✓	
17	Buff-necked Ibis	<i>Theristicus caudatus</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	Muscovy Duck	<i>Cairina moschata</i>	✓		✓								
24	Black Vulture	<i>Coragyps atratus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
25	Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
26	Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture	<i>Cathartes burrovianus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
27	Snail Kite	<i>Rostrhamus sociabilis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
28	Great Black Hawk	<i>Buteogallus urubitinga</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		

	Common name	Scientific name	August									
			13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
29	Savanna Hawk	<i>Buteogallus meridionalis</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	
30	Black-collared Hawk	<i>Busarellus nigricollis</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
31	Roadside Hawk	<i>Buteo magnirostris</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
32	Crested Caracara	<i>Polyborus plancus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
33	American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>	✓									
34	Chaco Chachalaca	<i>Ortalis canicollis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
35	Chestnut-bellied Guan	<i>Penelope ochrogaster</i>			✓							
36	Blue-throated Piping-Guan	<i>Pipile cumanensis</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
37	Red-throated Piping-Guan	<i>Pipile cujubi</i>		✓								
38	Sungrebe	<i>Heliornis fulica</i>							✓	✓	✓	
39	Limpkin	<i>Aramus guarauna</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓			
40	Sunbittern	<i>Eurypyga helias</i>		✓	✓					H	1	
41	Pied Lapwing	<i>Vanellus cayanus</i>					✓	✓	✓			
42	Southern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus chilensis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
43	White-backed Stilt	<i>Himantopus melanurus</i>	✓						✓	✓		
44	Wattled Jacana	<i>Jacana jacana</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
45	South American Snipe	<i>Gallinago(gall.)paraguaiiae</i>				✓						
46	Black Skimmer	<i>Rynchops niger</i>			✓		✓	✓	✓			
47	Yellow-billed Tern	<i>Sterna superciliaris</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
48	Large-billed Tern	<i>Phaetusa simplex</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
49	Scaled Pigeon	<i>Columba speciosa</i>		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	
50	Picazuro Pigeon	<i>Columba picazuro</i>		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	
51	Pale-vented Pigeon	<i>Columba cayennensis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
52	Eared Dove	<i>Zenaida auriculata</i>								✓	✓	
53	Scaled Dove	<i>Columbina squamatta</i>		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	
54	Ruddy Ground-Dove	<i>Columbina talpacoti</i>		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	
55	Long-tailed Ground-Dove	<i>Uropelia campestris</i>		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	
56	White-tipped Dove	<i>Leptotila verreauxi</i>		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	
57	Hyacinth Macaw	<i>Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus</i>	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
58	Peach-fronted Parakeet	<i>Aratinga aurea</i>							✓			
59	Monk Parakeet	<i>Myiopsitta monachus</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			
60	Yellow-chevroned Parakeet	<i>Brotogeris chiriri</i>		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

	Common name	Scientific name	August									
			13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
61	Scaly-headed Parrot	<i>Pionus maximiliani</i>										
62	Blue-fronted Parrot	<i>Amazona aestiva</i>		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	
63	Squirrel Cuckoo	<i>Piaya cayana</i>						✓			✓	
64	Greater Ani	<i>Crotophaga major</i>				✓		✓		✓	✓	
65	Smooth-billed Ani	<i>Crotophaga ani</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
66	Guira Cuckoo	<i>Guira guira</i>	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	
67	Striped Cuckoo	<i>Tapera naevia</i>		H		✓						
68	Great Horned Owl	<i>Bubo virginianus</i>	✓						✓		2	
69	Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl	<i>Glaucidium brasilianum</i>		H								
70	Great Potoo	<i>Nyctibius grandis</i>								✓		
71	Band-tailed Nighthawk	<i>Nyctiprogne leucopyga</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
72	Pauraque	<i>Nyctidromus albicollis</i>	✓	✓	H				✓			
73	Blue-crowned Trogon	<i>Trogon curucui</i>					✓				✓	
74	Ringed Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle torquata</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
75	Amazon Kingfisher	<i>Chloroceryle amazona</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
76	Green Kingfisher	<i>Chloroceryle americana</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
77	Rufous-tailed Jacamar	<i>Galbula ruficauda</i>		2	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	
78	Black-fronted Nunbird	<i>Monasa nigrifrons</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
79	Chestnut-eared Araçari	<i>Pteroglossus castanotis</i>	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓		
80	Toco Toucan	<i>Ramphastos toco</i>	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	
81	White Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes candidus</i>		✓								
82	Little Woodpecker	<i>Veniliornis passerinus</i>									2	
83	Campo Flicker	<i>Colaptes campestris</i>		✓								
84	Straight-billed Woodcreeper	<i>Xiphorhynchus picus</i>		✓	✓							
85	Narrow-billed Woodcreeper	<i>Lepidocolaptes angustirostris</i>			✓					✓	✓	
86	Yellow-chinned Spinetail	<i>Certhiaxis cinnamomea</i>										✓
87	Pale-legged Hornero	<i>Furnarius leucopus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
88	Rufous Hornero	<i>Furnarius rufus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
89	Rufous-fronted Thornbird	<i>Phacellodomus rufifrons</i>									1	
90	Greater Thornbird	<i>Phacellodomus ruber</i>		✓								
91	Grey-crested Cachalote	<i>Pseudoseisura unirufa</i>									✓	
92	Great Antshrike	<i>Taraba major</i>		✓		H						

	Common name	Scientific name	August										
			13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	
93	Barred Antshrike	<i>Thamnophilus doliatus</i>		✓								✓	
94	Mato Grosso Antbird	<i>Cercomacra melanaria</i>		✓								1	
95	Southern Beardless Tyrannulet	<i>Camptostoma obsoletum</i>										✓	
96	Large Elaenia	<i>Elaenia spectabilis</i>								✓			
97	Vermilion Flycatcher	<i>Pyrocephalus rubinus</i>		2	✓					✓	✓		
98	Black-backed Water-Tyrant	<i>Fluvicola albiventer</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
99	White-headed Marsh-Tyrant	<i>Arundinicola leucocephala</i>								✓			
100	Cattle Tyrant	<i>Machetornis rixosus</i>	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
101	Tropical Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus melancholicus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
102	Fork-tailed Flycatcher	<i>Tyrannus savana</i>							✓				✓
103	Rusty-margined Flycatcher	<i>Myiozetetes cayanensis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
104	Lesser Kiskadee	<i>Pitangus lictor</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
105	Great Kiskadee	<i>Pitangus sulphuratus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
106	White-winged Swallow	<i>Tachycineta albiventer</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
107	Brown-chested Martin	<i>Phaeoprogne tapera</i>			✓	✓							
108	Grey-breasted Martin	<i>Progne chalybea</i>			✓						✓	✓	✓
109	Southern Rough-winged Swallow	<i>Stelgidopteryx ruficollis</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
110	Purplish Jay	<i>Cyanocorax cyanomelas</i>			✓					✓		✓	
111	Black-capped Donacobius	<i>Donacobius atricapillus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
112	Thrush-like Wren	<i>Campylorhynchus turdinus</i>		✓								✓	
113	Moustached Wren	<i>Thryothorus genibarbis</i>	✓										
114	Masked Gnatcatcher	<i>Polioptila dumicola</i>						✓					
115	Rufous-bellied Thrush	<i>Turdus rufiventris</i>		✓							✓	✓	
116	Creamy-bellied Thrush	<i>Turdus amaurochalinus</i>											✓
117	Chalk-browed Mockingbird	<i>Mimus saturninus</i>		✓									
118	Rufous-browed Peppershrike	<i>Cyclarhis gujanensis</i>										✓	
119	Bananaquit	<i>Coereba flaveola</i>										✓	
120	Silver-beaked Tanager	<i>Ramphocelus carbo</i>		✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓
121	Sayaca Tanager	<i>Thraupis sayaca</i>		✓	✓						✓	✓	
122	Palm Tanager	<i>Thraupis palmarum</i>		✓	✓						✓	✓	
123	Greyish Saltator	<i>Saltator coerulescens</i>			✓						✓	✓	
124	Red-crested Cardinal	<i>Paroaria coronata</i>		✓							✓	✓	

	Common name	Scientific name	August									
			13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
125	Yellow-billed Cardinal	<i>Paroaria capitata</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
126	Saffron Finch	<i>Sicalis flaveola</i>		✓						✓	✓	✓
127	Rusty-collared Seedeater	<i>Sporophila collaris</i>		✓								
128	Double-collared Seedeater	<i>Sporophila caeruleascens</i>		✓	✓					✓	✓	✓
129	Bay-winged Cowbird	<i>Molothrus badius</i>		✓	✓					✓	✓	✓
130	Giant Cowbird	<i>Scaphidura oryzivora</i>		✓	✓					✓	✓	
131	Shiny Cowbird	<i>Molothrus bonariensis</i>			✓					✓	✓	✓
132	Crested Oropendola	<i>Psarocolius decumanus</i>		✓	✓						✓	
133	Yellow-rumped Cacique	<i>Cacicus cela</i>		✓				✓	✓	✓		✓
134	Solitary Cacique	<i>Cacicus solitarius</i>			✓			✓	✓		✓	✓
135	Orange-backed Troupial	<i>Icterus croconotus</i>		✓	✓			✓			✓	✓
136	Unicolored Blackbird	<i>Agelaius cyanopus</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
137	Chopi Blackbird	<i>Gnorimopsar chopi</i>		✓						✓	✓	✓
138	Green barred Woodpecker	<i>Chrysoptilus melanochloros</i>		✓	✓							
139	Capped Heron	<i>Pilherodius pileatus</i>		✓							✓	
140	White-rumped Swallow	<i>Tachycineta leucorrhoa</i>				✓				✓		
141	Cream-colored Woodpecker	<i>Celeus flavus</i>								✓		
142	Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularius</i>									✓	✓
143	Bare-faced Curassow	<i>Crax fasciolata</i>		✓	✓						✓	
144	Helmeted Manakin	<i>Antilophia galeata</i>										✓
145	Creamy-bellied Thrush	<i>Turdus amaurochalinus</i>										✓
146	Laughing Falcon	<i>Herpetotheres cachinnans</i>										✓
147	House Sparrow (Introduced)	<i>Passer domesticus</i>										✓

Naturetrek Facebook

We are delighted to launch the Naturetrek Facebook page so that participants of Naturetrek tours can remain in touch after the holiday and share photos, comments and future travel plans.

Setting up a personal profile at www.facebook.com is quick, free and easy. The [Naturetrek Facebook page](#) is now live; do please pay us a visit!