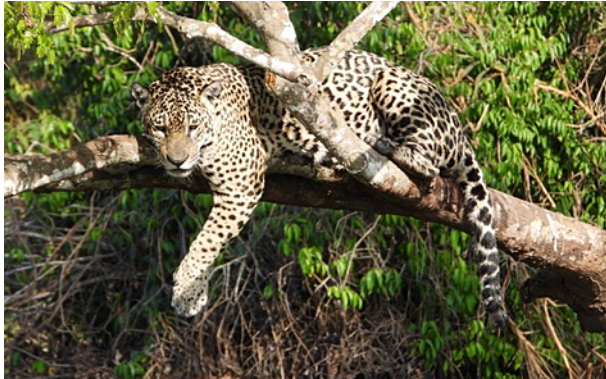


# Brazil - Just Jaguars!

Naturetrek Tour Report

10th – 24th August 2025

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Jaguar



Giant Anteaters



Maned Wolf



Ocelot

Tour report kindly written by client Mr Andrew Burke  
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## Summary

The highlight for many, was of course Jaguars: they were spotted on each of the four days at the Flotel, with a further one seen by some and heard by others at the Southwild Lodge. The drama of the second Ocelot sighting and the surprise of the Lowland Tapir sightings would certainly come close. Four Giant Otters, three Giant Anteaters and a Maned Wolf completed the South American “Big Five”; and that’s not to mention two Ocelots and a Southern Tamandua. In total, 23 species of mammal and six species of reptile / amphibian were seen on the Just Jaguars! tour, with 240 species of birds seen on the Just Jaguars trip and the Atlantic rainforest extension combined.

For those who worship at the house of the feathered god, the sheer riot of colour that comprises the tanagers is hard to beat, though the magnificence of the likes of Jabiru, Maguari Stork and others is surely worthy of consideration. Meanwhile, for the dedicated lister, there were endemics such as Black-legged Dacnis and Mato Grosso Antbird.

While there are early starts, the pace of the trip was generally quite moderate, so as to avoid the heat of the midday sun. The standard of accommodation at the Flotel was excellent, and very reasonable at the two lodges.

Finally, thanks must certainly go to our guides: Raul in the Pantanal, and Felipe in the rainforest. As Isaac Newton observed, “if I have seen further than others, it is because I stood upon the shoulders of giants”.

## Pre-tour extension: the Atlantic rainforest

### Day 1

**Saturday 9th August**

Clients departed London, bound for São Paulo.

### Day 2

**Sunday 10th August**

Those opting for the Atlantic Rainforest extension met up at the Pullman Airport hotel at 6.30am; the three others arrived straight off the flight, while I had had the benefit of a night’s sleep in the hotel. Our guide, Felipe, did the driving duties, and we headed south, driving for around two hours to Sitio Espinheiro Negro, our home for the next few days.

On our arrival, we were shown our rooms, handed our keys and had a restorative coffee (the famous “pink drink” was yet to make its first appearance), with the idea being to unpack and regroup in a few hours. But, it never works out quite like that: the departing group, whose rooms we were taking, handed the baton on with hushed cries of “Robust Woodpecker” and off we went to see it ... and some tanagers ... and some Hhmmingbirds ... toucans ... thrushes. ... euphonias. Felipe was finally able to control the excited masses (all five of us, including himself) and get us to unpack, gather for breakfast and head out for a walk around the site.

The sheer array and colour of the birds was a wonder to behold and, with Felipe’s guidance as we strolled round the site, we were all able to get some spectacular views and shots. We were also able to get our first views of the

Red-breasted Toucan and the beautiful Blond-crested Woodpecker (instantly nicknamed Debbie - as in Harry - by a group which clearly had a certain taste in music, more of which later).

After a breathtaking start, we gathered in the reception area / restaurant, when there was a sudden change of plan. Our slot at the Trilha dos Tucanos Lodge was unexpectedly being brought forward to, well, right now! Jumping back into the car we headed off on a just over two-hour journey to the lodge. While the plan was to have lunch before swinging into action, the temptation to bag some new species was simply too much, with Blue (formerly Swallow-tailed) Manakin being added swiftly to the list. Lunch itself was a delight, so with food and a glass of wine we were able to observe Buff-fronted Foliage-gleaner, Black-goggled Tanager and more without even trying: the very quintessence of civilisation!

An after-lunch stroll took us a short distance to the site's feeders and a wonderful view of the surrounding vista, allowing us to pick up Saffron Toucanet, Yellow-fronted Woodpecker, Cliff Flycatcher, Magpie Tanager, Sombre Hummingbird, Mantled Hawk and many more. It was also somewhat amusing to be checked out ourselves by Brazilian Ruby hummingbirds flying within centimetres of us to see who we were. One client's "cloak of many colours" made him the source of particular fascination to our new-found avian friends.

It was time to head back to Sitio Espinheiro Negro through the hills and rainforests, though we were somewhat delayed, picking up Long-tailed Tyrant, Spot-backed Antshrike and White-collared Foliage-gleaner before we even left the site. Upon return, it was time for an evening meal, with a (sort of obligatory) glass of wine, and then we were off to bed.

## Day 3

## Monday 11th August

We made an early start to head down to the on-site hide, with the plaintive but distant call of the Solitary Tinamou echoing around; the bird would remain elusive and enigmatic. As the light began to improve, so the birds were tempted out with dishes of maize and maggots (you've probably had worse), with Red-crowned Ant Tanager and Ruddy Quail Dove emerging from the forest before the star attraction, the Spot-winged Wood Quail. Their social interaction was quite fascinating to watch, with one acting as lookout while the others fed, and their cryptic posturing and raising of crests when a rival gang appeared: West Side Story, with birds!

As the light rose, the birds drifted away and we strolled back for breakfast, where the "pink drink", a sort of strawberry yoghurt milkshake, was first observed, approved of and consumed with such vigour that a second flagon was brought out. Combined with unlimited coffee, the group was ready to go again, walking the site trails.

With altogether warmer conditions, bird activity had jumped, and brought us the likes of Roadside Hawk, Crescent-chested Puffbird, Olivaceous Woodcreeper and all sorts of warblers, flycatchers, piculets and tyrants, which Felipe did incredibly well to pick out, identify and show to us. As we headed back for lunch, we were also able to pick up Rufous-headed Tanager, which only one of us had seen on the first day.

While taking in our lunch, with hummingbirds, tanagers and a local speciality (Black-legged Dacnis) in attendance, and, of course, pink drink and wine – not in the same glass, word on the grapevine, got through to Felipe. So it was that we snuck out after lunch for another local speciality, Pavonine Cuckoo, which only displays for a few

short days in the breeding season. Happily, with the tip off, and the X-ray eyes bestowed on one of our number, we were able to find the bird and get great views, along with Red-fronted Fruitcrow and Golden-crowned Warbler.

There was a brief period of downtime on returning to the lodge to allow us to recuperate, before we headed out round the Sitio Espinheiro Negro site in the evening light, with the splendidly colourful Brazilian Tanager added to the list. As evening turned to dusk, appropriately, a group of Dusky-legged Guans announced their presence, crashing through the tree tops. Finally, as dusk turned to night, a Mottled Owl announced its presence and, with some stealthy tracking and a bit of luck, we were able to get great views. So, it was back to the restaurant for a filling meal, with accompanying wine of course, and to bed.

## Day 4

## Tuesday 12th August

It was a rather cold and early start today, as Felipe led two of us out. It was cold enough for us to see our breath as we headed to the hide, with the eerie and melancholy call of the Solitary Tinamou making itself heard. In the hide, the day began as the previous day had, with the Red-crowned Ant Tanager the first on show, and Felipe noting that its territorial nature would tend to deter tinamous from appearing.

However, the two gangs of Wood Quails again appeared for a face-off, and you could well imagine flick-knives or straight razors being drawn to the drawl of Jimmy Cagney; “yer broke the unwritten rule Cresty, yer ratted on your friends and now yer gonna pay the price”. Violence, however, was clearly in the air with two, seemingly dainty, Festive Coquettes having a tear-up as we walked back for breakfast to meet the others for eggs, coffee and, you guessed it, pink drink.

It was then time to explore the site again, bringing us the (highly-desired but elusive) call of the Pin-tailed Manakin. While we were able to pick up the diminutive White-throated Spadebill, Yellow-olive Flatbill and a distant Black Hawk-Eagle, the manakin remained in that most dreaded of all categories: heard only.

We had a slight change of scenery and species after lunch, walking the roads of the local area, and, as so often, different scenery brought with it different birds, including our first Rufous Hornero, which would be a daily companion in the Pantanal. We were also able to find Lineated Woodpecker, Green ibis, Fawn-breasted Tanager, and our first wildfowl in the form of Brazilian Teal. After a rest and recharge at the lodge, we headed out owling and, while we heard Mottled Owl again, this did not bring us the results we had hoped for. Nonetheless, our last evening meal and wine (Brazilian Pinot Noir, since you ask) was very much enjoyed.

## Day 5

## Wednesday 13th August

Once more unto the hide my friends! And so it was, with the distant call of the Solitary Tinamou in the air, we pressed again on an early start. The day began as before, with Red-crested Ant Tanager, Wood Quail gangs and Ruddy Quail Dove, but then something changed. With slightly brighter weather, the Ant-tanagers cleared off and, creeping into the clearing from the right, we had a tinamou! But not the Solitary one we were expecting: instead, this was a Brown Tinamou briefly gracing us with its careful, secretive and suspicious presence.

With a spring in our step, we returned to the restaurant for breakfast and, of course, pink drink, before a final day on the trails brought us Eared Pygmy Tyrant and Red-rumped Cacique. Meeting up with the Italian ornithologists

who had arrived to replace us, and mindful of the parting gift the preceding group left us, in the form of Robust Woodpecker, we redoubled our efforts and were able to finally find and see the Pin-tailed Manakin: we were just about able to prevent ourselves launching into “Libiamo ne’lieti calici”.

So, we left Sitio Espinheiro Negro, battle-hardened and 99 species to the good, heading back through the now much busier roads of São Paulo to the airport. Here, we said farewell to Felipe and greeted our new comrades, who had arrived the day before and had had a relaxing night in the Pullman. The gang of four had become six.

The flight to Cuiabá was uneventful, with the real highlight being one client, having set Google translate to translate announcements from English to Portuguese, rather than vice versa, getting the memorable message “tell the person next to you that the woman has died” as a boarding announcement. A very nice dinner was had on the top floor of the Amazon Aeroporto Hotel to close the day.

## Main tour

### Day 1

**Wednesday 13th August**

Today was departure day from the UK for some of the group, flying to Cuiabá via São Paulo.

### Day 2

**Thursday 14th August**

The group began to gather in the foyer of the Amazon Aeroporto Hotel in Cuiabá, with those of us who had done the Atlantic rainforest pre-extension joined by two further clients. After a little bit of hunting around, Raul, our guide, was able to collect another two clients from the airport, get us all together and take us for an early lunch, driven by Mr Viera a Flamengo fan and, to use Raul’s catchphrase “the greatest driver in the entire Pantanal”.

With a bit of bonding over lunch, always helped by the optional wine, we climbed into the bus and headed south towards Poconé, taking in a stop for a bathroom break and some very enjoyable ice creams, before collecting our final two group members at Piuval Lodge. They had opted for the Giant Anteater extension, and had had some great, close-up views of these impressive creatures. In no time at all, and with help from Raul, we picked up Red-legged Sereima, Southern Screamer and Wattled Jacana before the coach got rolling again, stopping at the gates of the Pantanal, where we switched seamlessly to an open-sided vehicle, allowing great views of the surrounding countryside and all it contained.

The group was very appreciative of the stop offs en route to Pouso Alegre Lodge; we saw our first Yacare Caimans and Capybaras before a roadside round of drinks as the sun went down. We then pushed on, turning off the main road, and had great views of Southern Tamandua, also known as Collared or Lesser Anteater and, as we arrived at the lodge itself, a Lowland Tapir and calf were waiting to greet us! We enjoyed a very pleasant evening meal and then went off to bed, looking forward to the adventures ahead of us.

## Day 3

## Friday 15th August

The day began with a riotous chorus of birds in the pre-dawn twilight; before the hotel staff set up the feeders, the Chaco Chachalacas were there, determined to let everyone know that they were demanding to be fed. They were joined by huge groups of many and varied species: Toco Toucan, Bare-faced Curassow, Chestnut-bellied Guan, Thrush-like Wren, cardinals, cowbirds, finches, kiskadees, pigeons, doves, oropendolas and on and on, to the delight of the assembled birdwatchers.

Breakfast was then served, and a rather tame Crab eating Fox turned up for its breakfast, after which we had a guided group walk, with Raul providing a background on the geology of the Pantanal and its ecology. We were then given time to wander the grounds, some of us picking up an Aplomado Falcon, before lunch and a siesta during the heat of the day, to recharge before heading out again late in the afternoon.

The group jumped back into the open-sided truck to head out to the local watering holes. The first gave splendid sightings of Limpkin, Whistling Heron ("the David Bowie bird"), Scarlet Flycatcher (now spilt from Vermilion Flycatcher), Sunbittern, Hyacinth Macaw and more, but it was at the second watering hole where the action really cranked up. It began with the enigmatic calling of a pair of groups of Undulated Tinamous, before an Azari's Agouti wandered down to drink. Then, a clearly much larger animal made its presence felt in the bushes on the opposite side of the watering hole: a Giant Anteater, with a youngster clamped to its back, emerged, wandered down for a drink, and slowly retreated back into the treeline. What an amazing sight; but we were not done yet, far from it indeed. As the sun fell and darkness set in Toco Toucans, Parauques, guans, caracaras and nightjars appeared before a Great Potoo flew right at us: a spectacular signal to send us back. And I didn't even mention the in-truck cold drinks!

Even then, there was more to come. On the way back we saw peccaries, Capybaras, Marsh Deer and the pièce de resistance: an Ocelot hunting right outside the lodge! And so we went to dinner, but we weren't even done yet. As we were eating, a Giant Anteater turned up, right outside the restaurant, allowing the diners to leg it outside and walk alongside, all under the lights of the Southern Cross.

## Day 4

## Saturday 16th August

After another incredible pre-breakfast serving of birds, including Guira Cuckoo, we headed towards Porto Jofre, stopping off to pick up (figuratively I assure you) Maguari Stork, thus completing the stork trinity (Wood and Jabiru being the other two). On arrival at Porto Jofre, our luggage was swiftly transferred to boats, while we took a bathroom break and added a pair of Hyacinth Macaws. We headed upriver to the famous Jaguar Flotel (picking up Black Skimmer and both Large-billed and Yellow-billed terns on the thirty-minute boat ride).

We were greeted by Bruno, the Flotel manager, and our bags were unloaded, while we were briefed on life on the boat. We unpacked our bags in the comfort of our very impressive rooms, and went for lunch.

Now, of course, this tour has a certain name, that of a certain animal, and despite the "Order of Ornithology" pressing for our feathered favourites, there was giddy enthusiasm as we boarded the boat again. Fingers (and probably, arms, legs and toes) were crossed as we rocketed up the river to a potential sighting. Eyes scanned the waterline: what was that movement in the weed? A Wattled Jacana: the ornithologists celebrated, but everyone else



glared. But what had disturbed said Jacana? Something, something, in the water, in the reeds... a head...but so elusive. And then, all of a sudden, in full magnificence, he appeared: Ernest, a splendid male Jaguar, cruising the river with that classic cat disdain for all else.

Before the other boats (all 27 of them!) closed in, we were able to get some wonderful views of Ernest going about his business, occasionally even deigning to exit the water and wander along the bankside, to the joy of us all. With a sense of delight and fulfilment, we returned to the Flotel, picking up Orange backed Troupial en route, for an evening meal, with celebratory wine and / or cocktails and a lecture by Bruno, with the Yacare Caiman being tonight's focus.

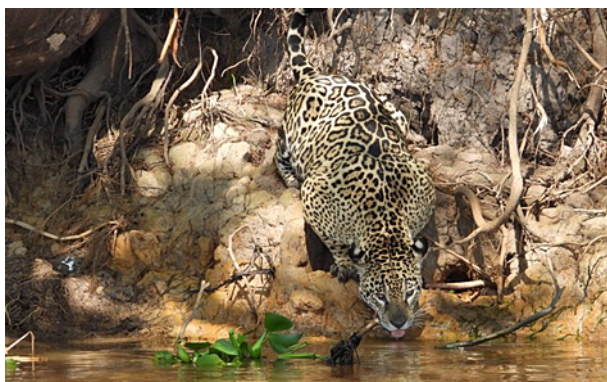
## Day 5

## Sunday 17th August

We made an early start so we could be out on the river before some of the boats from more distant locations turned up. We were out for barely thirty minutes before the first Jaguar appeared: Stella, of whom we were able to get some wonderful views before there was a chance to find yet another, the mighty Vulcan.

While most jaguars hunt at night, each specialises with its own hunting technique, and Vulcan is a killer of the Jacques Cousteau kind. Following him at a respectful distance (and you would too, given the size of his gnashers), we saw him languidly submerge on one side of the river only to reappear on the other side, having bagged a Caiman while under water. Vulcan proceeded to drag his conquest up the bank, with little difficulty, to head into the undergrowth and chow down.

So, it was 7.30am, and we had seen two Jaguars in ninety minutes! What's better than that, I hear you say? Well, of course, three Jaguars in three hours: we found Amber, lazing in her favourite spot, sprawled out on a branch extending across the river. We later learned that this is not just somewhere Amber lazes, but also a spot from which she hunts. While Vulcan is a subaquatic specialist, Amber is a mistress of the air, and will leap from this branch down on to any caiman unfortunate enough to be unaware of her aerial speciality. She is the Red Baron to Vulcan's Yellow Submarine.



Jaguar



Jabiru

We bumped into Stella again just before 10.00am, and around the stroke of midday came across Amber once again. We had had five sightings of three Jaguars in an action-packed morning. As the sun and temperature reached their zenith, and mindful of the eight-hour daily limit for boats, we followed the Jaguars' lead and retreated to the Flotel.

The group gathered and headed out again in the comparative cool of the late afternoon, and met up with Stella once again, who was in the shade of some bankside bushes. With all this focus on Jaguars, it would be remiss not to mention the great numbers of Capybaras and caimans that we were able to spot, as well as the likes of American Pygmy Kingfisher, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Cocoli Heron (in the process of downing an Armoured Catfish) and Fork-tailed Flycatcher.

Bruno's evening lecture focused on Capybara, and the caipirinhas flowed in celebration of a wonderful day.

## Day 6

## Monday 18th August

Another day, another Jaguar! Less than half an hour in and, with the morning still quiet, we came across the legendary Patricia, *la grande dame* of the Pantanal's jaguars, and partner of the legendary "Mick Jaguar" (yes, really). With Mick now guarding the great river in the sky, Patricia is the elder stateswoman in the area, and was bearing the scars of a recent conflict, though she appeared thoroughly comfortable, curling up on the bank. Gently cruising round the river, to see what might be about, brought us great views of Southern Screamer, Jabiru and Azara's (formerly White-faced) Capuchin. We returned to the Flotel for lunch after a most enjoyable morning.

The afternoon's excursion began with what had become the customary Jaguar, before we began looking for wildlife of a different kind. Reports at the Flotel suggested that the Giant Otters had young and were gathered at an inland, and so inaccessible, body of water. However, a tip-off led to us locating a single male Giant Otter, swimming along the bankside which, as we later learned, was looking for a group to join. We followed the otter for a while, getting some great views, before our focus changed again and, following another tip-off, we managed to locate a very well-hidden Yellow Anaconda. Promises that such a sighting would be celebrated with a performance of the Nicki Minaj hit of the same name by certain group members sadly (or possibly thankfully) did not come to pass.

As we wended our way back, we were able to take in nesting Black Skimmers, Pied Plovers, Large-billed and Yellow-billed Terns making clear their displeasure at a Capybara family turning up near their nest sites. We took in the sunset and were able to spot Greater Bulldog bats and Common Nighthawks hunting over the river as the skies darkened. Our evening lecture, perhaps appropriately, focused on Giant Otters.

## Day 7

## Tuesday 19th August

First up this morning was a very active and highly amusing triumvirate of Giant Otters, hunting on the river and seemingly having great fun messing about. Their shrieks and squawks seemed indicative of creatures that very much enjoyed the company of their brethren, and the group (ours, not the otters) was able to get great views and photographs, before parting ways. It was now, of course, time for "Jaguar of the day", which turned out to be Amber, on her favourite branch, before an earlier than normal return to the Flotel to prepare for the afternoon's activities.

The afternoon began with a boat ride of an hour or so, picking up the usual bankside birds: Large-billed and Yellow-billed Terns, Black Skimmer, Tropical Kingbird, Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture, Black-capped Donacobius and more, before we alighted at a more remote motel, and sometime research station. The customary welcome was soon followed by a pair of Hyacinth Macaws, who seemed very curious as to who we were and what business we had at their gaff.



While some of the group chilled out with tea and coffee, the ornithologists were up and at 'em, finding Guira Cuckoo, tanagers, swallows, thrushes and an Undulated Tinamou strolling across the grass landing strip, before the main event and reason for our visit. Wandering languorously out of the woods and up the runway came a Maned Wolf, the missing jigsaw piece in our South American “big five”, after Jaguar, Giant Anteater, Giant Otter and Lowland Tapir. It is a most curious creature, perhaps somewhat akin to a Red Fox on stilts, if one can imagine that, and afforded the group some close and extremely enjoyable viewing as dusk fell.

We rocketed back down the river with the Southern Cross and Alpha Centauri (our closest star after the sun) rising in the night sky, with Little Nightjars, Common Nighthawks and Greater Bulldog Bats hunting around and over the river. Given that this was our last night at the Flotel, it seemed appropriate that Jaguars were the topic of the presentation, and Bruno's detailed knowledge, great pictures and warm and friendly manner were toasted with caipirinhas before we headed off to our last night in the wonderful Flotel cabins and beds. As someone put it, I almost felt I had to communicate with my bedfellow in semaphore, such was the size of the beds.

## Day 8

## Wednesday 20th August

Sadly, it was time to say a fond farewell to all at the Flotel; we awoke at the usual time and had our bags outside the rooms for collection, before heading out to see if we could get better views of the Yellow Anaconda (without luck), before heading to Porto Jofre. Our bags were unloaded and transferred back to the Mr Viera's coach, while some of us settled our Flotel bills at the Southwild office. Meanwhile, one client found another cat for our expedition, a very charming and well-fed, but apparently nameless, ginger tabby, who was subsequently given her name.

After great views of Buff-necked Ibis, we headed north for about three hours to the Southwild Lodge, where we were greeted with a pleasant welcome drink and handed our room keys. After unpacking, we had spare time to rest and relax, and several of the group climbed the tower to get great views of the Jabiru nest. While it is fine to wander close to the lodge on the roadside, there is a stark warning not to go alone into the forest: you could become that rare 0.1% on a Jaguar diet pie chart!



Tamandua



Undulated Tinamou

The group gathered at 4.00pm for a gentle group ramble around the surrounding area, with birds very much back on the menu. Grey-crested (formerly Rufous) Cacholote, Giant Antshrike, thornbirds, kiskadees, cowbirds, cardinals and a Little Woodpecker were all added before we arrived at the “Ocelot Arena”. This is a small, banked

stand with rows for about fifteen people in each of the three or four rows. Newly-arrived groups sit at the front, moving towards the back on their second or later days as other groups arrive.

So, we sat and waited as the sun went down and dusk set in; still as statues, even with the distraction of the mosquitoes. Distant music came and went, and still the night darkened, corvids calling on their way to roost, the odd tody flycatcher racing through the clearing, and darkness setting in. All along the watchtower, the nightjars (and owls) came and went (barefoot servants too?) but there was no sign of the Ocelot. We sat there determined, but on this occasion our luck was out, and we returned back for an evening meal and to administer to our bites.

## Day 9

## Thursday 21st August

A morning stroll took us in search of Black Howler Monkeys, which remained elusive, but the canopy tower did allow us to get great views of Azara's (Whit-faced) Capuchins which seized, the opportunity (quite literally) to grab some food in the absence of their larger cousins. With things otherwise quiet, we found Gilded Sapphire hummingbird, Mato Grosso Antbird (a regional endemic) and Fuscous Flycatcher, among other species.

After a relatively quiet morning, we headed out in boats in the afternoon, finding Little Blue Heron, Green Ibis and White-headed Marsh Tyrant, though Sungrebe and Agami Heron remained frustratingly elusive.

The real drama would come on our return: with a speedy turnaround of just fifteen minutes and battle-hardened by the previous night, we were back to the "Ocelot Arena". Due to our lack of success the previous day, and our early arrival, we were given the front row once again, and settled in as dusk fell, with Purplish Jay giving way to flycatchers and, in turn, to pauraques and owls: but nothing feline emerged. As the iron of disappointment was starting to enter our souls, ears pricked up, backs stiffened, and fingers clasped cameras as the Ocelot entered the arena and climbed the branches to gather the food set out for it, presenting some great views before heading off into the night. However, it had only been gone a few minutes before returning, to the appreciation of the gathered masses, and still for a third time.

On ascending the branch, however, it suddenly stiffened, and those at the far right (who had suffered the worst of the mosquito bites) were lucky enough to see the cause: a Jaguar, seemingly stalking its feline cousin. The Ocelot legged it like the proverbial cat on a hot tin branch and, after waiting a little while for the Jaguar either to show itself or to move away, we made our way back, for a celebratory meal and drinks.

## Day 10

## Friday 22nd August

We had a relatively relaxed day as we started to head towards the end of our trip, commencing with a trip up the river, where we found a lazing Green Iguana dangling from some riverside branches, and a group of Greater Bulldog bats gathered under a bridge. There were, of course, birds to be had, with Plumbeous and Green Ibises, Greater Thornbird and Guira Cuckoo among those on offer on a relative quiet morning.

Several clients took the opportunity to visit the Jabiru nest tower in the middle of the day, where Bare-faced Ibis and Turquoise-fronted Amazon were also on show. The group assembled in the sideless safari truck in the late afternoon and headed up the Transpantanal road to see what we could find: Pampas and Marsh Deer, great views of Orange-backed Troupial and our first Masked Gnatcatchers. Sundowners along with pieces of cheese and meat

served as a really nice touch on our final evening together, allowing the group to begin to reflect on a very enjoyable trip as we drove back under the light of the Southern Cross.

## Day 11

## Saturday 23rd August

Our final day together commenced with a stroll to the canopy tower. However, before we began, we found a Lowland Tapir had wandered right into the main lodge area and was within just five metres of the restaurant windows, affording some great views before it ran off at surprisingly high speed for a creature of its size and bulk. The group then strolled to the tower, picking up some great views of a pair of resting Ferruginous Pygmy Owls en route, as well as the elusive Band-tailed Nighthawk at very close range. At the tower, we were able to find the Black Howler Monkeys that we had missed out on two days before, and we picked up the last tick of the trip, a Golden-green Woodpecker, on the way back.

Bags were then packed, and we boarded the coach to head towards Cuiabá, stopping off a number of times to see Roseate Spoonbill, Greater Rhea, and Black-bellied and White-faced Whistling Ducks before we reached Piuval Lodge. Sadly, it was time to say goodbye to the first of the group, who were staying on to look for Giant Anteaters and more. This was a particularly sad moment, given I had been with them since the pre-tour extension, but nonetheless we wished them well on their extension and bade them farewell.

Heading north again, we left the Pantanal, having our packed lunches at the entrance lodge, before an ice cream and toilet stop at the same place as before. The remainder of the journey was uneventful, save for trying to pick up the football scores for the day. Raul and Mr Viera were generous enough to unload our bags. Hands were shaken and tips were offered before we said goodbye to Mr Viera, while Raul ensured we were safely checked in before saying his own goodbyes.

The Cuiabá to São Paulo flight was uneventful, and the group broke up at São Paulo airport. Some headed on to the Iguazu extension, others for a day shopping in São Paulo, and the rest of us went on to our connecting flights home, replete with memories of a great trip, great animals, birds and most of all friends. All of us were looking forward to the next Naturetrek trip, wherever that may be.

## Day 11

## Saturday 24th August

We arrived safely home in the UK.

### Tips for the future traveller

All of the below are my own notes, recommendations and views and should not be considered the views and / or recommendations of Naturetrek

- I would heartily recommend flying out a day or so before the trip commences, so as to be rested and relaxed when it begins. I used the Pullman, São Paulo Airport, which is just a ten-minute, \$6-8 Uber ride from the airport, and I would happily recommend it.

- It can get surprisingly cold in the mornings on the Atlantic rainforest extension (cold enough to be able to see your breath) and there is no heating in the rooms at the Sítio Espinheiro Negro. Ensure you have warm clothing with you and be prepared for your rooms to be quite cold at times.
- On arrival in Cuiabá, don't bother with a taxi to the Amazon Aeroporto Hotel; exit the terminal and walk 150 metres straight ahead. and you're there.
- On internal flights in Brazil, certainly for Latam, those aged over 60 can board ahead of general boarding; go for it, you pensioners!
- After leaving Cuiabá and before entering the Pantanal, you may stop off at a very nice roadside restaurant and store (excellent ice creams) for a toilet stop. They sell a very good "spotters guide to the Pantanal" type book, which was bought by several group members, who found it very useful.
- At Pouso Alegre, the rooms to the left of the reception, as you look towards it, are closest to the bird feeding area. Chaco Chacalaca's (hell's alarm clock) gather there early; if birds are not your thing, be prepared
- In the Pantanal, the full heat of day is avoided and humidity is generally very low, making it less oppressive than you might think. Wearing lifejackets on the boats at the Flotel can and does make you hot, but the speedy movement of the boats does take the edge off it.
- Card payments are not available at Pouso Alegre or the Jaguar Flotel. though you can settle your bill at Porto Jofre for the latter. The exchange rate for \$US used in most places is not great, and I would recommend either withdrawing Brazilian Rials on arrival in Brazil or, as now seems to be possible, getting them in the UK and combining this with, for example, Revolut.
- The beds, and especially single beds, in the Southwild Lodge are rather narrow!
- In the "Ocelot Arena" in the Southwild Lodge, there are lights at either side, which attract plenty of insects; if you sit at either end you may wish to wear a second, light layer of clothing to protect against mosquitoes. Also be aware that in the front row, you can be inadvertently kicked at mid-back height by those sitting behind you, and vice versa!
- While the Transpantanal road can be a little dusty (and may well get worse later in the season), we did not find it to be problematic.

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## Species lists

### Pre-tour extension

#### Birds

| Common name                    | Scientific name                  |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Solitary Tinamou               | <i>Tinamus solitarius</i>        |
| Brown Tinamou                  | <i>Crypturellus obsoletus</i>    |
| Brazilian Teal                 | <i>Amazonetta brasiliensis</i>   |
| Dusky-legged Guan              | <i>Penelope obscura</i>          |
| Spot-winged Wood Quail         | <i>Odontophorus capueira</i>     |
| Scale-throated Hermit          | <i>Phaethornis eurynome</i>      |
| Festive Coquette               | <i>Lophornis chalybeus</i>       |
| Brazilian Ruby                 | <i>Heliodoxa rubricauda</i>      |
| Violet-capped Woodnymph        | <i>Thalurania glaucopis</i>      |
| Swallow-tailed Hummingbird     | <i>Eupetomena macroura</i>       |
| Sombre Hummingbird             | <i>Eupetomena cirrochloris</i>   |
| Versicolored Emerald           | <i>Chrysuronia versicolor</i>    |
| Smooth-billed Ani              | <i>Crotophaga ani</i>            |
| Pavonine Cuckoo                | <i>Dromococcyx pavoninus</i>     |
| Picazuro Pigeon                | <i>Patagioenas picazuro</i>      |
| Plumbeous Pigeon               | <i>Patagioenas plumbea</i>       |
| Ruddy Ground Dove              | <i>Columbina talpacoti</i>       |
| Slaty-breasted Wood Rail       | <i>Aramides saracura</i>         |
| Common Gallinule               | <i>Gallinula galeata</i>         |
| Southern Lapwing               | <i>Vanellus chilensis</i>        |
| Green Ibis                     | <i>Mesembrinibis cayennensis</i> |
| Bare-faced Ibis                | <i>Phimosus infuscatus</i>       |
| Black Vulture                  | <i>Coragyps atratus</i>          |
| Black Hawk-Eagle               | <i>Spizaetus tyrannus</i>        |
| Roadside Hawk                  | <i>Rupornis magnirostris</i>     |
| Mantled Hawk                   | <i>Pseudastur polionotus</i>     |
| Surucua Trogon                 | <i>Trogon surrucura</i>          |
| White-eared Puffbird           | <i>Nystalus chacuru</i>          |
| Crescent-chested Puffbird      | <i>Malacoptila striata</i>       |
| Red-breasted Toucan            | <i>Ramphastos dicolorus</i>      |
| Saffron Toucanet               | <i>Pteroglossus bailloni</i>     |
| Ochre-collared Piculet         | <i>Picumnus temminckii</i>       |
| Yellow-fronted Woodpecker      | <i>Melanerpes flavifrons</i>     |
| White-spotted Woodpecker       | <i>Veniliornis spilogaster</i>   |
| Green-barred Woodpecker        | <i>Colaptes melanochloros</i>    |
| Blond-crested Woodpecker       | <i>Celeus flavescens</i>         |
| Lineated Woodpecker            | <i>Dryocopus lineatus</i>        |
| Robust Woodpecker              | <i>Campephilus robustus</i>      |
| Plain Parakeet                 | <i>Brotogeris tirica</i>         |
| Pileated Parrot                | <i>Pionopsitta pileata</i>       |
| Scaly-headed Parrot            | <i>Pionus maximiliani</i>        |
| Maroon-bellied Parakeet        | <i>Pyrrhura frontalis</i>        |
| Olivaceous Woodcreeper         | <i>Sittasomus griseicapillus</i> |
| Lesser Woodcreeper             | <i>Xiphorhynchus fuscus</i>      |
| Rufous Hornero                 | <i>Furnarius rufus</i>           |
| White-collared Foliage-gleaner | <i>Anabazenops fuscus</i>        |
| Buff-fronted Foliage-gleaner   | <i>Dendroma rufa</i>             |
| Rufous-capped Spinetail        | <i>Synallaxis ruficapilla</i>    |
| Streak-capped Antwren          | <i>Terenura maculata</i>         |



| Common name                  | Scientific name                     |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Rufous-margined Antwren      | <i>Herpsilochmus rufimarginatus</i> |
| Spot-backed Antshrike        | <i>Hypodaleus guttatus</i>          |
| White-shouldered Fire-eye    | <i>Pyriglena leucoptera</i>         |
| Variegated Antpitta          | <i>Grallaria varia</i>              |
| Rufous Gnateater             | <i>Conopophaga lineata</i>          |
| Mottle-cheeked Tyrannulet    | <i>Phylloscartes ventralis</i>      |
| Sepia-capped Flycatcher      | <i>Leptopogon amaurocephalus</i>    |
| Eared Pygmy Tyrant           | <i>Myiornis auricularis</i>         |
| Ochre-faced Tody-Flycatcher  | <i>Poecilatriccus plumbeiceps</i>   |
| Yellow-lored Tody-Flycatcher | <i>Todirostrum poliocephalum</i>    |
| Yellow-olive Flatbill        | <i>Tolmomyias sulphurescens</i>     |
| White-throated Spadebill     | <i>Platyrinchus mystaceus</i>       |
| Cliff Flycatcher             | <i>Hirundinea ferruginea</i>        |
| Masked Water Tyrant          | <i>Fluvicola nengeta</i>            |
| Long-tailed Tyrant           | <i>Colonia colonus</i>              |
| Great Kiskadee               | <i>Pitangus sulphuratus</i>         |
| Grey-hooded Attila           | <i>Attila rufus</i>                 |
| Red-ruffed Fruitcrow         | <i>Pyroderus scutatus</i>           |
| Blue Manakin                 | <i>Chiroxiphia caudata</i>          |
| Pin-tailed Manakin           | <i>Illicura militaris</i>           |
| Greenish Schiffornis         | <i>Schiffornis virescens</i>        |
| Chestnut-crowned Becard      | <i>Pachyramphus castaneus</i>       |
| Blue-and-white Swallow       | <i>Pygochelidon cyanoleuca</i>      |
| White-necked Thrush          | <i>Turdus albicollis</i>            |
| Rufous-bellied Thrush        | <i>Turdus rufiventris</i>           |
| Violaceous Euphonia          | <i>Euphonia violacea</i>            |
| Chestnut-bellied Euphonia    | <i>Euphonia pectoralis</i>          |
| Rufous-collared Sparrow      | <i>Zonotrichia capensis</i>         |
| Red-rumped Cacique           | <i>Cacicus haemorrhous</i>          |
| Tropical Parula              | <i>Setophaga pitaiayumi</i>         |
| White-rimmed Warbler         | <i>Myiothlypis leucoblephara</i>    |
| Golden-crowned Warbler       | <i>Basileuterus culicivorus</i>     |
| Olive-green Tanager          | <i>Orthogonys chloricterus</i>      |
| Red-crowned Ant Tanager      | <i>Habia rubica</i>                 |
| Rufous-headed Tanager        | <i>Hemithraupis ruficapilla</i>     |
| Blue Dacnis                  | <i>Dacnis cayana</i>                |
| Black-legged Dacnis          | <i>Dacnis nigripes</i>              |
| Bananaquit                   | <i>Coereba flaveola</i>             |
| Black-goggled Tanager        | <i>Trichothraupis melanops</i>      |
| Ruby-crowned Tanager         | <i>Tachyphonus coronatus</i>        |
| Brazilian Tanager            | <i>Ramphocelus bresilia</i>         |
| Saffron Finch                | <i>Sicalis flaveola</i>             |
| Fawn-breasted Tanager        | <i>Pipraeidea melanonota</i>        |
| Magpie Tanager               | <i>Cissopis leverianus</i>          |
| Sayaca Tanager               | <i>Thraupis sayaca</i>              |
| Azure-shouldered Tanager     | <i>Thraupis cyanoptera</i>          |
| Golden-chevroned Tanager     | <i>Thraupis ornata</i>              |
| Palm Tanager                 | <i>Thraupis palmarum</i>            |
| Green-headed Tanager         | <i>Tangara seledon</i>              |
| Red-necked Tanager           | <i>Tangara cyanocephala</i>         |

## Main tour

## Birds

| Common name                  | Scientific name                  |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Greater Rhea                 | <i>Rhea americana</i>            |
| Undulated Tinamou            | <i>Crypturellus undulatus</i>    |
| Southern Screamer            | <i>Chauna torquata</i>           |
| White-faced Whistling Duck   | <i>Dendrocygna viduata</i>       |
| Black-bellied Whistling Duck | <i>Dendrocygna autumnalis</i>    |
| Brazilian Teal               | <i>Amazonetta brasiliensis</i>   |
| Chaco Chachalaca             | <i>Ortalis canicollis</i>        |
| Chestnut-bellied Guan        | <i>Penelope ochrogaster</i>      |
| White-throated Piping Guan   | <i>Pipile grayi</i>              |
| Bare-faced Curassow          | <i>Crax fasciolata</i>           |
| Nacunda Nighthawk            | <i>Chordeiles nacunda</i>        |
| Band-tailed Nighthawk        | <i>Nyctiprogne leucopyga</i>     |
| Pauraque                     | <i>Nyctidromus albicollis</i>    |
| Little Nightjar              | <i>Setopagis parvula</i>         |
| Rufous Nightjar              | <i>Antrostomus rufus</i>         |
| Gilded Sapphire              | <i>Hylocharis chrysura</i>       |
| Guira Cuckoo                 | <i>Guira guira</i>               |
| Greater Ani                  | <i>Crotophaga major</i>          |
| Smooth-billed Ani            | <i>Crotophaga ani</i>            |
| Striped Cuckoo               | <i>Tapera naevia</i>             |
| Squirrel Cuckoo              | <i>Piaya cayana</i>              |
| Feral Pigeon - I             | <i>Columba livia</i>             |
| Picazuro Pigeon              | <i>Patagioenas picazuro</i>      |
| Pale-vented Pigeon           | <i>Patagioenas cayennensis</i>   |
| Scaled Dove                  | <i>Columbina squammata</i>       |
| Plain-breasted Ground Dove   | <i>Columbina minuta</i>          |
| Ruddy Ground Dove            | <i>Columbina talpacoti</i>       |
| White-tipped Dove            | <i>Leptotila verreauxi</i>       |
| Grey-cowled Wood Rail        | <i>Aramides cajaneus</i>         |
| Purple Gallinule             | <i>Porphyrio martinica</i>       |
| Pied Plover                  | <i>Hoploxypterus cayanus</i>     |
| Southern Lapwing             | <i>Vanellus chilensis</i>        |
| Wattled Jacana               | <i>Jacana jacana</i>             |
| Black Skimmer                | <i>Rynchops niger</i>            |
| Yellow-billed Tern           | <i>Sternula supercilialis</i>    |
| Large-billed Tern            | <i>Phaetusa simplex</i>          |
| Wood Stork                   | <i>Mycteria americana</i>        |
| Jabiru                       | <i>Jabiru mycteria</i>           |
| Anhinga                      | <i>Anhinga anhinga</i>           |
| Neotropic Cormorant          | <i>Nannopterum brasilianum</i>   |
| Plumbeous Ibis               | <i>Theristicus caerulescens</i>  |
| Green Ibis                   | <i>Mesembrinibis cayennensis</i> |
| Bare-faced Ibis              | <i>Phimosus infuscatus</i>       |
| Roseate Spoonbill            | <i>Platalea ajaja</i>            |
| Rufescent Tiger Heron        | <i>Tigrisoma lineatum</i>        |
| Boat-billed Heron            | <i>Cochlearius cochlearius</i>   |
| Black-crowned Night Heron    | <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>     |
| Little Blue Heron            | <i>Egretta caerulea</i>          |
| Snowy Egret                  | <i>Egretta thula</i>             |
| Striated Heron               | <i>Butorides striata</i>         |
| Great Egret                  | <i>Ardea alba</i>                |

| Common name                  | Scientific name                       |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Cocoi Heron                  | <i>Ardea cocoi</i>                    |
| Black Vulture                | <i>Coragyps atratus</i>               |
| Turkey Vulture               | <i>Cathartes aura</i>                 |
| Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture | <i>Cathartes burrovianus</i>          |
| Black-collared Hawk          | <i>Busarellus nigricollis</i>         |
| Snail Kite                   | <i>Rostrhamus sociabilis</i>          |
| Savanna Hawk                 | <i>Buteogallus meridionalis</i>       |
| Great Black Hawk             | <i>Buteogallus urubitinga</i>         |
| Roadside Hawk                | <i>Rupornis magnirostris</i>          |
| Ferruginous Pygmy Owl        | <i>Glaucidium brasilianum</i>         |
| Amazon Kingfisher            | <i>Chloroceryle amazona</i>           |
| Green Kingfisher             | <i>Chloroceryle americana</i>         |
| Ringed Kingfisher            | <i>Megaceryle torquata</i>            |
| Rufous-tailed Jacamar        | <i>Galbula ruficauda</i>              |
| Black-fronted Nunbird        | <i>Monasa nigrifrons</i>              |
| Toco Toucan                  | <i>Ramphastos toco</i>                |
| Little Woodpecker            | <i>Veniliornis passerinus</i>         |
| Golden-green Woodpecker      | <i>Piculus chrysochloros</i>          |
| Pale-crested Woodpecker      | <i>Celeus lugubris</i>                |
| Crested Caracara             | <i>Caracara plancus</i>               |
| Aplomado Falcon              | <i>Falco femoralis</i>                |
| Monk Parakeet                | <i>Myiopsitta monachus</i>            |
| Yellow-chevroned Parakeet    | <i>Brotogeris chiriri</i>             |
| Turquoise-fronted Amazon     | <i>Amazona aestiva</i>                |
| Orange-winged Amazon         | <i>Amazona amazonica</i>              |
| Hyacinth Macaw               | <i>Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus</i>     |
| Peach-fronted Parakeet       | <i>Eupsittula aurea</i>               |
| Pale-legged Hornero          | <i>Furnarius leucopus</i>             |
| Rufous Hornero               | <i>Furnarius rufus</i>                |
| Rufous-fronted Thornbird     | <i>Phacellodomus rufifrons</i>        |
| Greater Thornbird            | <i>Phacellodomus ruber</i>            |
| Rusty-backed Spinetail       | <i>Cranioleuca vulpina</i>            |
| Grey-crested Cacholote       | <i>Pseudoseisura unirufa</i>          |
| Yellow-chinned Spinetail     | <i>Certhiaxis cinnamomeus</i>         |
| Chotoy Spinetail             | <i>Schoeniophylax phryganophilus</i>  |
| Great Antshrike              | <i>Taraba major</i>                   |
| Mato Grosso Antbird          | <i>Cercomacra melanaria</i>           |
| Forest Elaenia               | <i>Myiopagis gaimardii</i>            |
| Large Elaenia                | <i>Elaenia spectabilis</i>            |
| Bran-colored Flycatcher      | <i>Myiophobus fasciatus</i>           |
| Pearly-vented Tody-Tyrant    | <i>Hemitriccus margaritaceiventer</i> |
| Fuscou Flycatcher            | <i>Cnemotriccus fuscatus</i>          |
| Scarlet Flycatcher           | <i>Pyrocephalus rubinus</i>           |
| Black-backed Water Tyrant    | <i>Fluvicola albiventer</i>           |
| White-headed Marsh Tyrant    | <i>Arundinicola leucocephala</i>      |
| Cattle Tyrant                | <i>Machetornis rixosa</i>             |
| Great Kiskadee               | <i>Pitangus sulphuratus</i>           |
| Lesser Kiskadee              | <i>Philohydor lictor</i>              |
| Streaked Flycatcher          | <i>Myiodynastes maculatus</i>         |
| Tropical Kingbird            | <i>Tyrannus melancholicus</i>         |
| Fork-tailed Flycatcher       | <i>Tyrannus savana</i>                |
| Short-crested Flycatcher     | <i>Myiarchus ferox</i>                |
| Purplish Jay                 | <i>Cyanocorax cyanomelas</i>          |
| White-rumped Swallow         | <i>Tachycineta leucorrhoa</i>         |
| White-winged Swallow         | <i>Tachycineta albiventer</i>         |

| Common name                   | Scientific name                  |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Brown-chested Martin          | <i>Progne tapera</i>             |
| Grey-breasted Martin          | <i>Progne chalybea</i>           |
| Southern Rough-winged Swallow | <i>Stelgidopteryx ruficollis</i> |
| Black-capped Donacobius       | <i>Donacobius atricapilla</i>    |
| Thrush-like Wren              | <i>Campylorhynchus turdinus</i>  |
| Masked Gnatcatcher            | <i>Poliophtila dumicola</i>      |
| Chalk-browed Mockingbird      | <i>Mimus saturninus</i>          |
| Rufous-bellied Thrush         | <i>Turdus rufiventris</i>        |
| Yellow-rumped Cacique         | <i>Cacicus cela</i>              |
| Orange-backed Troupial        | <i>Icterus croconotus</i>        |
| Giant Cowbird                 | <i>Molothrus oryzivorus</i>      |
| Shiny Cowbird                 | <i>Molothrus bonariensis</i>     |
| Chopi Blackbird               | <i>Gnorimopsar chopi</i>         |
| Greyish Baywing               | <i>Agelaioides badius</i>        |
| Bluish-grey Saltator          | <i>Saltator coerulescens</i>     |
| Silver-beaked Tanager         | <i>Ramphocelus carbo</i>         |
| Silver-beaked Tanager         | <i>Ramphocelus carbo</i>         |
| Saffron Finch                 | <i>Sicalis flaveola</i>          |
| Saffron Finch                 | <i>Sicalis flaveola</i>          |
| Red-crested Cardinal          | <i>Paroaria coronata</i>         |
| Yellow-billed Cardinal        | <i>Paroaria capitata</i>         |
| Palm Tanager                  | <i>Thraupis palmarum</i>         |

## Mammals

| Common name           | Scientific name                  |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Giant Anteater        | <i>Myrmecophaga tridactyla</i>   |
| Southern Tamandua     | <i>Tamandua tetradactyla</i>     |
| Nine-banded Armadillo | <i>Dasybus novemcinctus</i>      |
| Ocelot                | <i>Leopardus pardalis</i>        |
| Jaguar                | <i>Panthera onca</i>             |
| Crab-eating Fox       | <i>Cerdocyon thous</i>           |
| Maned Wolf            | <i>Chrysocyon brachyurus</i>     |
| South American Coati  | <i>Nasua nasua</i>               |
| Giant Otter           | <i>Pteronura brasiliensis</i>    |
| Lowland Tapir         | <i>Tapirus terrestris</i>        |
| White-lipped Peccary  | <i>Tayassu pecari</i>            |
| Marsh Deer            | <i>Blastocerus dichotomus</i>    |
| Red Brocket           | <i>Mazama americana</i>          |
| Gray Brocket          | <i>Mazama gouazoubira</i>        |
| Pampas Deer           | <i>Ozotoceros bezoarticus</i>    |
| Greater Bulldog Bat   | <i>Noctilio leporinus</i>        |
| Lesser Bulldog Bat    | <i>Noctilio albiventris</i>      |
| Proboscis Bat         | <i>Rhynchonycteris naso</i>      |
| Azara's Capuchin      | <i>Sapajus cay</i>               |
| Black Howler Monkey   | <i>Alouatta caraya</i>           |
| Azara's Agouti        | <i>Dasyprocta azarae</i>         |
| Capybara              | <i>Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris</i> |
| Brazilian Rabbit      | <i>Sylvilagus brasiliensis</i>   |

## Amphibians &amp; reptiles

| Common name     | Scientific name             |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| Chaco Tree Frog | <i>Boana raniceps</i>       |
| Yacare Caiman   | <i>Caiman yacare</i>        |
| Green Iguana    | <i>Iguana iguana</i>        |
| Lava Lizard     | <i>Tropidurus torquatus</i> |
| Giant Ameiva    | <i>Ameiva ameiva</i>        |
| Yellow Anaconda | <i>Eunectes notatus</i>     |