

Brazil - Just Jaguars!

Naturetrek Tour Report

6th – 18th June 2026



Jaguar



Successful caiman hunt



Lowland Tapir



Maned Wolf

Tour report kindly supplied by client Kathy Trout
Photos by Ray Short



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Tour participants: Lucila Rosales (leader) with six Naturetrek clients

Day 1

Saturday 6th June

Some clients were in transit from the UK to Brazil, while others arrived slightly earlier. To recover from the long journey prior to the tour, early arrivers stayed overnight at the excellent Amazon Hotel Aeroporto, within walking distance of Cuiabá Airport, and next door to a shopping mall, where I changed currency, and an excellent supermarket with lovely fruit. I took an Uber to the Natural History Museum, which had a couple of dinosaur skeletons erected in the grounds! I walked to river: there were not many birds, as it was middle of the day, but there were a lot of colourful butterflies.

Day 2

Sunday 7th June

Pouso Alegre Lodge

Having met at the airport, we drove in an air-conditioned bus until lunch, then transferred to an open-sided bus for the drive along the Transpataneira highway, stopping to look at birds on the way. An excellent sighting of a roadside Lowland Tapir brought much excitement. After being shown to our rooms, we were welcomed by a pair of Hyacinth Macaws in a palm tree.

Day 3

Monday 8th June

Pouso Alegre Lodge

A bird feeding station with seating gave great early morning photo opportunities. Playful groups of South American Coatis and Capuchin Monkeys made everyone laugh, and there were many birds of numerous species around the lodge.

The afternoon drive passed a lake with around thirty Capybaras, and a waterhole was visited by five Tapirs including two swimming. Torches and spotlights reflected red in the eyes of Spectacled Caimans, and picked out Crab-eating Foxes. There were fireflies in abundance.

Day 4

Tuesday 9th June

SouthWild Flotel

On leaving Pouso Alegre we were thrilled to see a Roseate Spoonbill, Marsh and Pampas Deer and a Tamandua. We had a flat tyre, but got it fixed at a lodge, and were treated to a complimentary drink and saw a Great Horned Owl flying between some trees. Repair complete, we continued until we reached the river, then made a twenty-minute boat trip to the SouthWild Flotel. Our first boat safari was in the rain, but we quickly spotted two Jaguars (Amber and Browser) lying among the riverside trees! We also had excellent sightings of Jabiru and Wood Storks.

Each evening on the Flotel, there was an extremely interesting lecture on one of the local star species, given by the resident biologist, Chloe Grant.

Day 5**Wednesday 10th June****SouthWild Flotel**

This was a good day for Jaguars. Patricia was seen first; she is blind in one eye due to an accident. Her matriarchal line indulges in hunting from trees, jumping into the water to catch and kill Caimans and Capybara. We also saw Browser, Hera and Dorada, and then Ginger with her two as yet unnamed cubs. As we were the first to photograph and report these cubs to SouthWild, we were permitted to name them: we chose the names Biscuit and Cookie.

Travelling along a backwater, we saw had a rare sighting of Proboscis Bats roosting in a vertical groove in a tree, and saw the "oven nest" of the Rufous Hornero attached to a dead tree.

Day 6**Thursday 11th June****SouthWild Flotel**

At the start of this morning river trip, two pairs of Hyacinths Macaws flew cross the river. It was a really fabulous Jaguar day. We saw one swim across a wide section of the river, and a large male made a spectacular hunt and kill of a large Caiman, captured as the Jaguar swam along the river's edge. We also saw the only remaining Jaguar with a collar, Nells. Limited capture and collar fitting was undertaken when a few Jaguars were burned in wildfires during 2020-21. The mechanism to dislodge this collar had failed, and as Nells is surviving without harm, it is considered too risky to trap and sedate her and remove it. During the fruitless search for Giant Otters along quiet backwaters, we did see a Green Iguana.

Day 7**Friday 12th June****SouthWild Flotel – research station**

We made a short morning boat safari, and saw two Jaguars: Amber and Stella. On the two-hour afternoon journey to the research station, we saw two Ospreys along the way. One had just caught a fish, and was flying along holding it in one foot. Four Giant Otters swam along a shoreline together, noisily feeding and chattering under the roots of a tree. Two went up on the bank, scratching a latrine in the dry sand.

At dusk, four Hyacinth Macaws settled in the tree tops near our seats, then screeched excitedly. After a few hours wait, well into the evening, two Maned Wolves appeared, fed by a man from the research station. We enjoyed a picnic dinner, and returned safely to the Flotel in the dark, thanks to the considerable skills of the boatman.

Days 8 to 11**Saturday 13th – Tuesday 16th June****SouthWild Lodge**

As we left the boat at Porto Jofre to join the bus, a loud chattering by the river alerted us to six Giant Otters playing and feeding, while an Azara's Agouti lurked under the trees.

The first evening visit to the Southwild hide enabled us to enjoy a half hour viewing of an Ocelot named Andretta, collecting food left by the staff.

The SouthWild river and forest walks took us past a Great Potoo and Great Horned Owls, to five Giant Otters feeding at the river's edge. We walked on to a tower hide, where staff had left food for Howler and Capuchin Monkeys, and we watched them feeding and squabbling. There were several babies clinging to their mums or playing; they were particularly amusing.



Ocelot



Capybaras and Wattled Jacana



Biscuit and Cookie – newly-named Jaguars



Capped Heron

The Ocelot hide visits each evening gave us great photo opportunities, but unfortunately Andretta never brought her cub while we were there, as she has done previously. Tiny frogs inhabited the garden bromeliads, notably the so-called "glass frog", which is almost see-through, with some internal organs showing.

A boat ride on a small, shallow local river gave us excellent views of kingfishers, Rufescent Tiger and Striated Herons, and a number of hawk species. Several walks around the lodge and along the roadside revealed a number of species of brightly-coloured parakeets, cardinals and tanagers, frogs, toads and a non-venomous water snake.

Day 12

Wednesday 17th June

South Wild Lodge – Cuiabá

Today was our final day. At 5.45am, we climbed the tower overlooking the nest of a pair of habituated Jabirus, and watched the sun rise. One last visit to the monkey hide made a marvellous finale, and we boarded the bus. Despite it having been a brilliant holiday in every way, and having ticked off almost all of our target species, there was an air of despondency as we travelled to the airport: we had all really wanted to see the elusive Giant Anteater.

So you can imagine the cheer from the bus as the driver made a sudden stop on the main highway. There, near the roadside, in a field next to a waterhole was a Giant Anteater! We rushed to take photos, before continuing, highly exuberantly, to the airport.

A thoroughly enjoyable time was had by all, and this holiday is highly recommended.

Day 13

Thursday 18th June

After a seamless transfer from Cuiabá to São Paulo, we caught our onward flight to London.

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