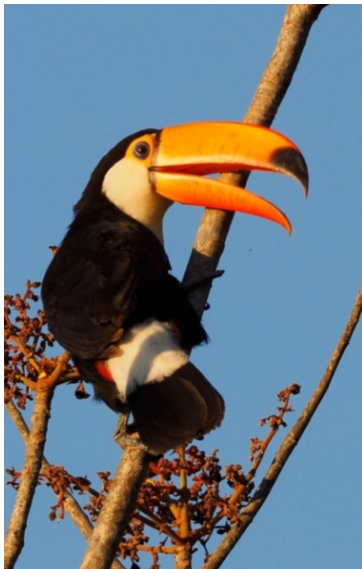


Brazil's Pantanal: Jaguars! & More...

With Naturalist Journeys & Caligo Ventures



September 12 – 22, 2022

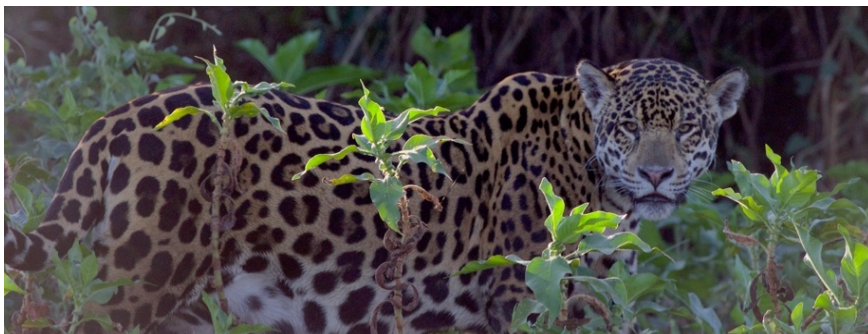
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Tour Summary

10-Night / 11-Day Wildlife & Birding Safari

\$5945 from São Paulo

Arrival Airport is Guarulhos International (GRU),

Departure Airport is Marechal Rondon International Airport (CGB) in Cuiabá



Tour Highlights

- Try for South America's "Big Five" Brazilian Tapir, Maned Wolf, Giant Anteater, Giant Otter, and Jaguar
- Witness the "Big Five" of birds: Jabiru, Greater Rhea, Hyacinth Macaw, Toco Toucan, and Helmeted Manakin. Add Southern Screamer, Sunbittern, Scarlet-headed Blackbird, and so many more!
- Explore both sides of the Transpantaneira wilderness—by boat and road on safari-like excursions
- Find five species of kingfisher
- Enjoy local cuisine and hospitality at fazendas (working cattle ranches) at several stages along the road
- Boat the Cuiabá River for an excellent chance at a Jaguar sighting
- See water birds in mass congregation—like those of the Everglades, but magnified!
- Find at least four species of monkeys and several hundred species of birds
- Scan for night birds under intense southern sky constellations; spotlight for mammals, too!
- Enjoy optional fishing at two locations (additional cost for local boat and guide)

Brazil's Pantanal: A place of superlatives. Home to the world's largest fresh-water wetlands, the Pantanal is ten-times the size of the Everglades, draining into a single channel: the Paraguay River. We venture deep into this world-class wildlife hotspot on a long road that bisects the Transpantaneira wilderness, in search of an adventure that can't be missed.

In this famed region, we discover wildlife thriving in a mix of savanna, forest, and wetland habitats. Even a relaxed day can yield more than 100 species of birds and dozens of mammals — Capybara are everywhere!

Brazilian Tapir, Maned Wolf, Giant Anteater, Giant Otter, and yes, Jaguar (we saw seven on our 2017 trip!), are five of many incredible mammals we seek, while Greater Rhea, Hyacinth Macaw, Toco Toucan, and Helmeted Manakin top the list of impressive bird sightings. Rare Green Anaconda, the world's largest snake, may be a lucky find, while the small crocodilian Yacaré can be seen by the thousands. For many, it is the sheer number and variety of species that leaves the most lasting impression.

Charming (and working) cattle ranches serve as our accommodations, each with its own impressive and

distinctive wildlife community. Lazy afternoons invite photographers to wander between shade circles of the ranch trees for rare time with Hyacinth Macaw and other species.



Day-to-Day Itinerary

Mon., Sept. 12 Arrival to São Paulo, Brazil

Arrive today in São Paulo, Brazil, at Guarulhos International Airport (GRU). No activities are planned for today so you can rest up from your travels. Please take the free shuttle to our convenient and comfortable airport hotel. Remember, you have at least 1.5 hours to get luggage and clear immigration and customs; there are comfortable public areas in the hotel where you can relax if you don't want to pay an early room fee.

This evening we enjoy a welcome dinner—a chance to meet your guides and traveling companions, and learn more about our coming adventure. Enjoy your first taste of Brazilian cuisine while we discuss plans for the morning. We invite you to sample Brazil's national cocktail, the caipirinha, made with cachaça (sugarcane liquor), sugar, and lime. We predict this may be the first of many.

Accommodations at a convenient airport hotel (L,D)

**Note: Most flights from the USA originate September 11 to meet this arrival date.*

Tues., Sept. 13

Early Flight to Campo Grande Airport | Explore the South Side of the Pantanal

We should arrive to Campo Grande about 9:00 AM and are met by our local guides. We drive by van or mini-bus to our lodge (around four hours drivetime) with stops for mammals and birding on the way there. We are motivated to get there, since this is where we have lunch!

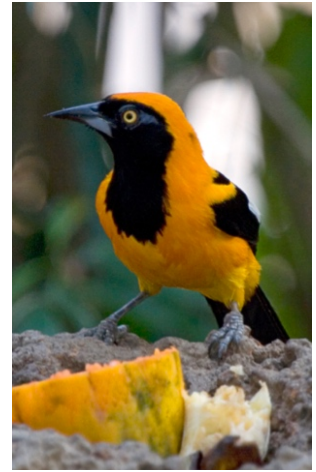
After checking into our rooms, we spend time birding around the lodge until the end of the day, looking for birds like the Chaco Chachalaca, Hyacinth Macaw, Blue-fronted Parrot, Nanday Parakeet, Toco Toucan, Lineated and White Woodpeckers, Narrow-Billed Woodcreeper, Greater Thornbird, Giant Cowbird, Crested Oropendola, Purplish and Plush-crested Jays, Red-crested Cardinal, and many others.

We then gather with friends for dinner and for those that wish, the daily checklist.

Accommodations at Aguapé Lodge or similar (B,L,D)

Wed., Sept. 14 & Thurs., Sept. 15 Pantanal Safari from the Lodge

Our lodge hosts an excellent environment for birdwatching, a place where over 300 bird species have been recorded. The lodge is located 195 kilometers from Campo Grande city, which has an international airport, and



60 kilometers from Aquidauana city, which is known as the gateway to the Pantanal. We have two full days to explore from the lodge, plus our pathway coming and going. Optional fishing with local guides and boats can be arranged while you are at this lodge.

Interesting bird species are Southern Screamer, Blaze-winged Parakeet, Gilded Hummingbird, Toco Toucan, Pale-crested and White-fronted Woodpecker, Red-billed Scythebill, Helmeted Manakin, and the Scarlet-headed Blackbird.

This morning after an early breakfast, we embark on a safari drive with good chances to see the Undulated Tinamou, Capped Heron, Jabiru, Savanna Hawk, Rufescent Tiger Heron, Buff-necked and Plumbeous Ibis, Roseate Spoonbill, Hyacinth and Yellow-collared Macaw, Red-billed Scythebill, Orange-backed Troupial, and many others.

After lunch we are back at the lodge and make time to enjoy a siesta in the hot part of the day, and then we make another safari drive until the end of the day, returning in the dark with chances to see mammals like the Crab-eating Fox, South American Coati, Capybara, Marsh Deer, Southern Tamandua, Crab-eating Raccoon, River Otter, and night birds such as Common and Great Potoo, Spectacled and Striped Owl, Pauraque and Scissor-tailed Nightjar.

We find this area to be the best place to spot Giant Anteater in the whole region and we make the effort to find them, so keep your fingers crossed!

We have dinner upon return, and for those that wish again, the checklist.

Accommodations at Aguapé Lodge or similar (B,L,D)

Fri., Sept. 16 Birding to Campo Grande

After an early breakfast we take a bird walk for excellent chances to see Great Rufous Woodcreeper, Blaze-winged Parakeet, Black-crowned Tityra, Chestnut-eared Aracari, and Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl, and many more.

This morning we also enjoy a motorboat excursion at Aquidauana River. This river is full of life with good chances to see a family of Giant River Otter and special birds like Black-collared Hawk, five species of kingfisher, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Blue-throated Piping Guan, and many others.

After an early lunch at the lodge we drive back to Campo Grande, check in to the hotel, and then enjoy a short visit to the “nesterar,” a place where a nice concentration of macaws and herons nest near the city.

Accommodations at Hotel Mohave or similar (B,L,D)



Sat., Sept. 17 Early Flight: Campo Grande to Cuiaba | Northern Transpantaneira Adventure Begins

After an early domestic flight to Cuiabá we begin the second (northern) half of our Pantanal adventure!

Driving south, we reach the famed Pantanal via a paved road to Poconé. En route we have lunch in a typical churrasqueria, and enjoy simple Brazilian-style cuisine.

From here, we travel the dirt Transpantaneira Road, perhaps only rivaled by Tanzania's Serengeti road for spotting wildlife.

Our destination tonight is a small local pousada. Along the way, we might see Ringed Kingfisher, Red-crested Cardinal, Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture, Toco Toucan, Jabiru, Limpkin, our Capybaras (of course!), Yacaré Caiman, and more.

Our lodge is located just 10km from Poconé. This is the first lodge on the Transpantaneira. It is small, about twenty rooms, and part of a large (7,000ha), family-run ranch. After check in, we can stretch our legs on a short walk. There is a lovely pool if anyone wants to cool off with a swim.

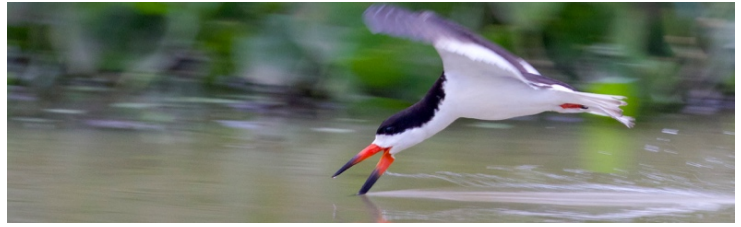
Accommodations at Pousada Piuval or similar (B,L,D)

Sun., Sept. 18 Birding & Wildlife Spotting on the Transpantaneira | Drive to Porto Jofre | Jaguar Boat Excursion

After some morning wildlife viewing at the ranch, we depart down the Transpantaneira, keeping an eye out for Red Brocket Deer, Marsh Deer, Crab-eating Fox, Greater Rhea, Chestnut-bellied Guan, Bare-faced Curassow, and a mix of wading birds. Bridges are hotspots from which we can view the presence of a huge food supply; Green Kingfisher, Great Egret, Cocoi Heron, both Bare-faced and Green Ibises, and White-lored Spinetail are just a few species we may see.

We pass through scattered palm woodlands, cerrado scrub, and seasonally-flooded grasslands reminiscent of the Everglades. Roadside ponds and canals are filled with waders: Roseate Spoonbill, Plumbeous Ibis, Limpkin, cormorants, herons, kingfishers, and their predator, Yacaré Caiman. August water conditions concentrate the fish for foraging waders like Jabiru and Maguari Stork.

At Porto Jofre, the "end of the road," palms attract several resident pairs of Hyacinth Macaw. From this little town on the Cuiabá River, we board a small boat to reach our lodgings—two days on a lovely houseboat. Rooms are air-conditioned, with private bath. This "floating hotel" allows us to stay close to where the wildlife has been spotted; we explore from the houseboat each day on smaller boats.



We check into our boat cabins, have dinner, then have a briefing on safety and wildlife we hope to see. If skies are clear, star viewing is impressive—you can see the Southern Cross!

Optional fishing is available while you are on the houseboat portion of the tour.

Accommodations in private cabins on a floating houseboat hotel! (B,L,D)

Mon., Sept. 19

Full Day Looking for Jaguar, Jabiru & More | Jaguar Boat Excursion

Awake on the river to a host of sounds and the sight of macaws and more flying overhead. We use smaller speedboats to spend the day searching for the iconic Jaguar, known for their affinity to water. They are good swimmers, and often lay down along the shore after a swim. Chances are good that we see at least one individual, male or female—perhaps even together!

We lunch on board, take a short siesta (yes, love that AC ...) and try for Jaguar again in the afternoon. Wildlife is plentiful in this remote part of the Pantanal, so once we accomplish the main task (a Jaguar, of course) we have time to admire other species like Giant Otter, Black Skimmer, Pied Plover, Southern Screamer, and Yacaré Caiman. We also visit little streams for skulkers like Pygmy Kingfisher and Sungrebe.

By late afternoon we return to our welcoming houseboat. We celebrate our sightings with caipirinhas before dinner!

Accommodations in private cabins on a floating houseboat hotel! (B,L,D)

Tues., Sept. 20 Wildlife & Birding on the Lower Transpantaneira

After two days immersed in the wildest part of the Pantanal, we return north, retracing our route. We are not in a hurry though, and work some of the areas we previously traveled in more detail.



Perhaps we find a troop of Black-and-Gold Howler Monkey, Chestnut-eared Aracari, Snail Kite, Rusty-backed Antwren, Common Tody Flycatcher, White-browed Blackbird, and others species as we drive to our next lodge. We watch for Cream-colored Woodpecker, Ashy-headed Greenlet, Short-crested Flycatcher, Mato Grosso Antbird, Great Antshrike, and Purple-throated Euphonia. Near water we find Whistling and Capped Herons, Pygmy and Ringed Kingfishers, Sunbittern, Black-collared and Great Black Hawks, and Rusty-backed Spinetail.

Once we arrive at the hotel on the Rio Pixium, we settle in and check the feeders for brilliant-colored troupials, Palm, Silver, and Sayaca Tanagers, and Red-crested Cardinal. At this point in our journey we have seen numerous mammals and birds, and we can base our efforts on finding anything missing from our list that we hope to see.

Accommodations at Mato Grosso or similar (B,L,D)

Wed., Sept. 21 Pixaim River Area Wildlife & Birding

It's another morning for gazing at the sunrise while sipping good Brazilian coffee. This morning, pending what we still need to see, we can do a safari drive, or we can take a small boat ride on the Pixaim River to spot secretive species like Agami and Zig-Zag Herons. This is a good spot for Giant Otter and, with luck, a Tapir.

Driving back to Cuiabá, the landscapes are iconic and make for great pictures. We look for Black-capped Donacobious, Green-and-rufous Kingfisher, Little Blue Heron, and other species like some very impressive iguanas. We can break up our drive with a walk in Gallery Forest habitat looking for special birds like Helmeted Manakin, Mato Grosso Antbird, Band-tailed Antbird, Black-hooded Tanager, Blue-crowned Trogon, and more.

Dinner finds us sampling authentic Grosso cuisine, including legendary piranha and local beef.

Accommodations at the Mato Grosso or similar (B,L,D)

Thurs., Sept. 22 Wildlife Viewing | Return Drive to Cuiabá | Departures

Today, we make our way back to Cuiabá; the paved road is perhaps a welcome sight as we bid adieu to the marvelous but often dusty Pantanal. Our plan is to arrive in Cuiabá in time for connections to São Paulo for evening flights out. Plan on flights after 4:00 PM. For those not finding a good flight match up, you can return to GRU and overnight, or simply overnight in Cuiabá at the Odara Hotel, close to the city's botanic gardens, and start fresh the following day. If you plan to overnight in Cuiabá and would like to add an outing at the botanic gardens, we are happy to offer that (added charge). (B,L)

Cost of the Journey

Plan Ahead!

Protect yourself with Allianz Travel Insurance. Naturalist Journeys pays 100% of your flight carbon offset.

Travel Information

Arrival airport is Guarulhos International (GRU). For the main tour, plan to arrive at leisure on October 11. *Note: Most flights arrive in the morning, and your room may not be available until noon – 2:00 PM.* Plan departures on October 21 from Cuiabá's Marechal Rondon International Airport (CGB), with a flight 4:00 PM or after, timed to connect with your own international flight out of São Paulo; most flights leave São Paulo around midnight. If yours is a day flight, you will need to overnight in Cuiabá or São Paulo to go out the next day. We end in Cuiabá as some may continue to other parts of Brazil and can fly direct to those locations. Examples are Iguazu, Belo Horizontes, and Rio Cristalino.

Cost of the Journey

The cost of the 11-day main tour is \$5945 DBL / \$6345 SGL. Tour price includes 10 nights' accommodations, all meals as noted in the itinerary, airport transfers, land and boat transportation during the journey, professional guide services, park and other entrance fees, and miscellaneous program expenses. It includes two flight segments within country. The tour cost does not include airfare to São Paulo and from Cuiabá, personal expenses such as laundry, telephone, drinks from the bar, and gratuities.

Photo Credits: Toco Toucan, Don Cooper; Monk Parakeet, NJS; Bare-faced Curassow, Greg Smith (GS); Capybara Family, Peg Abbott (PA); Jaguar, GS; Giant River Otter, PA; Hyacinth Macaws, Mark Wetzel; Giant Anteater, PA; Pantanal Sign, PA; Pantanal by Horseback, NJS; Red-crested Cardinal, NJS; Pousada Puival, NJS; Orange-backed Troupial, NJS; Jaguar, PA; Brocket Deer, PA; Black Skimmer, GS; Tamandua, GS; Jabiru, PA; White Woodpecker, NJS; Capped Heron, Snail Kite, Horses, PA.

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