

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

June 24 – July 8, 2026 | Trip Report By Rick Weiman



With Naturalist Journeys guide Rick Weiman, local guide Marco Silva, and our 11 adventurous clients Beth, Brett, Debbie, Pam, Kay, Reba, Leslie, Walter, Lori S., Brian, and Lori M



Brazil's Pantanal region is the world's largest tropical wetland area, and the world's largest flooded grasslands. It is located mostly within the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso do Sul, but it extends into Mato Grosso and portions of Bolivia and Paraguay. Its area encompasses approximately 75,000 square miles and up to 12 subregional ecosystems have been identified within its boundaries. Our Naturalist Journeys tour visited in late June, at the start of the dry season and the Brazilian winter. It was good timing for us because roughly 80% of the Pantanal floodplains are submerged during the rainy season.

Our journey here with 11 adventurous clients was filled with amazing wildlife encounters. We had great views of iconic big mammal species: 6 Jaguar (!) and two families of Giant Otter in the northern Pantanal, 21 Giant Anteater (possibly a Naturalist Journeys tour record) during our time in the southern Pantanal, 2 South American Tapir on our Amazon extension, and Capybara (the world's largest rodent) were encountered every day we were in Brazil. Speckled Caiman were also seen almost daily, including one in the jaws of a Jaguar. In addition, we saw dozens of the largest parrot in the world, Hyacinth Macaw, and a host of other large and easy to spot birds such

as Greater Rhea, Southern Screamer, Red-legged Seriema, Bare-faced Curassow, Jabiru, Crested Caracara, and Black-collared Hawk.

For the 3-day Amazon extension, we went to the edge of the Amazon for a new series of birds, including the critically endangered Cone-billed Tanager (a population of only 500 estimated birds), Orange-cheeked Parrot, Black-faced Dacnis, 5 species of Kingfisher, and many others.

Wed., Jun. 24 Campo Grande Arrival

Campo Grande is the capital of Mato Grosso do Sul and the city of choice to enter the southern portion of the Pantanal. The majority of our group arrived the day before, including our local guide, Marco Silva. After our buffet breakfast at the Hotel Deville, we walked to the local city park, Parque das Nações Indígenas, for some pre-tour bonus birding. Before even getting to the park, we had Blue-and-yellow-Macaw, Chestnut-eared Aracari, and Toco Toucan on our list as they were feeding in the palm trees along the street. It was a bird-filled walk as we came across a pair of Bare-faced Curassow, several Whistling Heron, a Red-legged Seriema who ended up serenading us with its loud call, our first of many Southern Lapwing, Buff-necked Ibis, and Rufous Hornero with their cave-like nests built on tree branches. In our time there we had over 40 species of birds and also saw our first Capybara and Speckled Caiman, which would be a daily occurrence of the tour.

For lunch, we dined at a local churrascaria restaurant, where the waiters presented our tables with freshly cooked cuts of meat that they sliced off for us until we were quite full. The large salad bar also fed our vegetarians (and the rest of us) very well. After lunch we walked down the street to a local vendor selling Brazil soccer (excuse me, futebol) jerseys and a few of us bought them since the World Cup was underway. We then met up with Kay, Reba, and Pam who had arrived that morning and went to BioParque Pantanal, one of the largest freshwater aquariums in the world. It provided a great overview of the Pantanal and some of the fish we'd be enjoying at future meals and was a good orientation for the days to come.



The full group and Marco met officially at dinner at our Hotel Deville. We enjoyed our first caipirinhas (the Brazilian national drink) and watched Brazil play Scotland in their 3rd World Cup match, as the hotel restaurant held a lively watch party. We enjoyed our complimentary welcome drinks from Rick and several of us wore our new futebol shirts to dinner to support team Brazil (they won 3-0!).

Thurs. Jun. 25 Exploring the South Side of the Pantanal

After a filling buffet breakfast at the hotel, we checked out and were off in our spacious van to drive to the Pousada (Lodge) Aguapé. Along the way we stopped a few times for breaks and did a little birding. Our first excursion was a scrubby field that gave us a pair of beautiful Streamer-tailed Tyrant interacting, one of Rick's favorite birds of the tour, along with a vibrant red male Vermilion Flycatcher. Along the drive we saw our first 2 Giant Anteater and several Greater Rhea, along with several Roadside and Savannah Hawks and family groups of Guira Cuckoo and Purplish Jay. A Crab-eating Fox and a Pampa Deer were also spotted along the road as we drove.

When we arrived at the pousada just before lunch we were greeted by several Hyacinth and Blue-and-yellow Macaws that nest on the property. Nanday and Peach-fronted Parakeets, Crested Caracara, and Chaco Chachalaca were also plentiful. After unpacking our bags, we enjoyed a buffet lunch and a short rest before our first safari drive on the 1000 hectare+ working cattle ranch and ecolodge property. The safari drive was quite amazing, and filled with close encounters with Giant Rhea, Red-legged Seriema, four species of Ibis (Buff-necked, Bare-faced, Plumbeous, and Green), several Guira Cuckoo family groups, Jabiru, Wood Stork, a graceful Capped Heron, and multiple resting Nacunda Nighthawk that the vehicle flushed. And oh yeah, a dozen Giant Anteater! We finished the day with a delicious buffet dinner and our first species checklist review of the tour.





Fri., Jun. 26

Full Day Southern Pantanal Safari

After breakfast we had a morning safari drive on the property, seeing many of the large birds and mammals seen previously. We took a short hike along the river in a forested area that proved to be incredibly productive. Marco and the local lodge guides helped us get excellent looks at 2 Red-billed Scythebill, Little, Lineated and White-fronted Woodpeckers, a Great Antshrike, Scaly-headed Parrot, and Rufous-fronted Thornbird with their impressive large stick nests. In addition to more Giant Anteaters, on the way back to the lodge we saw its less common little cousin, the arboreal Southern Tamandua.

After a short break we took a bird walk towards the river joined by a herd of lamb and goats. We had a mixed flock of tanagers including, Silver-beaked, Palm, and Sayaca, along with a Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Campo Flicker, Red-crested Finch, and a pair of Masked Gnatcatcher. One of the most stunningly beautiful birds of the tour were the Plush-crested Jay that were seen frequently on the pousada grounds near our cabins along with multiple Six-banded Armadillo that scurried around daily. After lunch and a mid-afternoon break, we had our second safari ride of the day on a different part of the expansive property. While dodging herds of feeding cows and horses, we added another Southern Tamandua, more Giant Anteater including a mother with a large youngster on her back, several Limpkin and Cocoi Heron, Roseate Spoonbill, a White-lipped Peccary, and a pair of Black-backed Water-Tyrant. Our buffet dinner was again delicious and full of local dishes, and after our meal we completed our checklist and headed off to our cabins for a much-deserved good night's sleep.

Sat., Jun. 27

Aquidauana River Boat Tour | Back to Campo Grande

After breakfast, we headed out for our first boat ride on the Aquidauana River, a tributary of the Paraguay River, and were introduced to the avian diversity of the Pantanal rivers. Our guide Marco indicated the river was several feet higher than his tour from last week due to recent rains. We spotted our first monkeys of the tour, a troop of Black-and-gold Howler Monkey, with several brown females and all black males. Some birds we got

looks at were White-throated Piping Guan feeding high in the canopy, Pale-legged Hornero, Ringed Kingfisher, a Chestnut-capped Foliage-gleaner, and a Squirrel Cuckoo for Reba, one of her favorite birds. We parked the boat and took a short walk into the forest where there was a Band-tailed Manakin lek. After several minutes a red and yellow male showed up and displayed on a vine for the dull-olive colored female, and thankfully us as well. Before lunch back at the pousada we enjoyed a presentation by a couple of the researchers who were reintroducing orphaned Giant Anteater to the pousada grounds and also studying the local armadillo population.

After lunch, we packed up and departed for our ride back to Campo Grande for one night at the Hotel Deville. Before we hopped into the van Rick spotted a small brown bird fly into a vine-laden gazebo near the dining area. It turned out to be a Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl. We all came over to admire it and as the cell phones were snapping pictures it started to call! A very nice way to end our stay there.

During our drive we added 2 more Giant Anteater giving us a total of 21, possibly setting a new Naturalist Journeys tour record. After checking in we reconvened for dinner and updated our species checklist before heading to bed as we had an early flight tomorrow.



Sun., Jun. 28

Flights to Ciubia | Piuvial Pousada

In the morning, we boarded our LATAM Airlines flight to Brasilia then caught a connection to Cuiaba, the capital city of Mato Grosso. The flights were on time and relatively short and our excitement was building to visit the northern Pantanal in Mato Grosso. We met our new driver Jose and then stopped for lunch at another Brazilian churrasqueria restaurant in route to our next destination in Pocone. After lunch we were soon on the 90-mile dirt Transpantaneira Road, passing at least a dozen Greater Rhea, several Jabiru, and many Wood Stork along the

way. We arrived mid-afternoon at Piuval Ranch and after a short wait, we checked into our rooms and freshened up before our first scheduled afternoon safari tour.

The afternoon safari ride gave us some new birds including our first Chestnut-bellied Guan, a pair of Pale-crested Woodpecker, a perched Bat Falcon, a Great Black Hawk, and close to twenty Bare-faced Curassow. We also spotted another new mammal for the tour, an Azara's Agouti. One of the highlights of the drive was when we stopped at a small pond and watched a pair of Sunbittern hunting at the pond's edge. The male (we think) caught a frog and after some begging by the female gave it to her and then he opened his amazingly sunburst patterned yellow, red, and black wings and displayed for her. While this was going on, Brett spotted about a dozen Silver-beaked Tanager in some bushes next to the pond, perhaps enjoying the display themselves, as their feathers shined brightly in the fading sunlight. Driving back in the darkness with the near full moon rising, eyeshine in the headlights revealed a Common Pauraque. On the way to dinner, Greater Bulldog Bat caught insects around the bright lights of the lodge.



Mon., Jun. 29

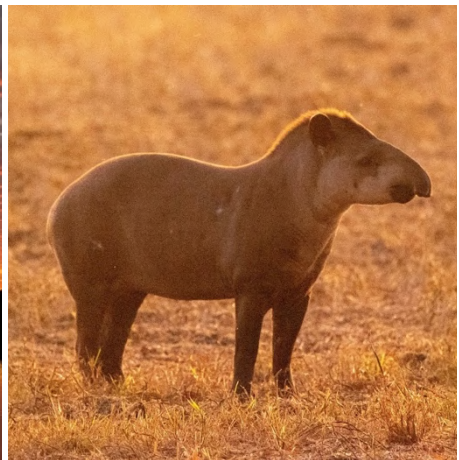
Piuvial Pousada Safari Tours

We had a very early 5:30 AM safari ride planned today so after our breakfast buffet off we went to another area of the pousada. Several flocks of Black-bellied Whistling Duck flew over to greet the day as we drove. Our first two raptors were nice surprises, as we had both a Laughing Falcon and then a bit later an Aplomado Falcon perched on a fence giving us the opportunity for some close pictures. We came across an impressive Great Rufous Woodcreeper foraging on the ground, some Campo Flicker on a fence post, and a perched singing Striped Cuckoo. A Blue-crowned Trogon, Golden-green Woodpecker, and a Rufous Casiornis were some of the other new birds we encountered.

We had time for a morning break and then were back on the safari truck at 9:30 to explore another part of the property. We came across a large family group of Capybara with a Yellow-headed Caracara hopping from one back to the next, perhaps in search of ticks or other insect treats. Crested Oropendola were spotted along with our first Gray-breasted Martin, and a diminutive Barred Piculet also made an appearance. At least one Jabiru seemed to be at every small pond we passed, and we watched one carefully swallow a good size catfish. We ended the morning ride with a pair of displaying Barred Antshrike and enjoyed watching the black-and-white male's tail vibrate as it sang.

After another filling buffet lunch Rick spotted what seemed like hundreds of birds flying low over the savannah that turned out to be Nacunda Nighthawk. They migrate here and sleep on the ground during the day and we speculated that perhaps a Black-collared Hawk had flushed and upset them, as there were several hanging around the ponds. There were also about twenty Greater Rhea gathered together resting in the shade of a large tree while this was all happening. We then had a short break and some of us enjoyed the inviting pool while others rested or birded on their own. A pond next to our rooms had resting Capybara and basking Caiman around it, great for photos and not something you see every day, and an occasional Black Skimmer using it as well.

Around 3:30 we headed out for our final safari drive here. Our first stop was a good one as the local guide showed us a well camouflaged sleeping Great Potoo trying its best to look like a branch in a tree. As we drove and inadvertently flushed nighthawks, Rick spotted a large Black-and-white Tegu lizard that was too fast for most people to get eyes on. We saw more Black Skimmer resting near a pond, the usual herons, storks, and ibis, and a Pale-breasted Thrush taking a bath. As we headed back towards the lodge in the dark a beautiful full strawberry moon was rising above the trees.



Tues., Jun. 30

Transpantaneira Road to Porto Joffe

After breakfast at the ranch, we loaded up the vans and began our drive along the 90-mile long Transpantaneira Road into the heart of the northern Pantanal. We crossed over many wooden bridges and stopped several times for some birding in the morning. Our first stop just a few miles from the ranch gave us a pair of Burrowing Owl, perching nicely on a post and a dirt mound near their nest hole. Other stops gave us more Guira Cuckoo family flocks, one with at least twenty birds, and Jabiru, Rufescent Tiger-Heron, Black-collared Hawk, several Ringed and

Amazon Kingfishers, and multiple Snail Kite. During one stop we counted twenty-one South American Coati crossing the road in a line, one after the other. Marco spotted an exciting new bird for us, a Maguari Stork that we got the scope on, and a Grayish Saltator was spotted by Leslie. Everyone was contributing to our bird list as at another stop Brett got us our first White-headed Marsh Tyrant and we added Little Blue Heron and a better view of the beautiful Capped Heron to our list. Our first Red Brocket and Marsh Deer was also spotted during one of our stops.

We had a relaxing lunch at the Mato Grasso hotel, and before long were at the end of the road in Porto Joffe. Our group all boarded one boat, with the luggage placed in another, and after a short ride on the calm Paraguay River we landed at our houseboat hotel The Panoramico, where we would spend the next few days. After settling into our rooms, we had cocktails and dinner in the dining room while we completed our growing species checklist.



Wed., Jul. 1 River Boat Cruise in Search of Jaguars

After an early buffet breakfast, we headed out on the river as the sun was rising. The Paraguay River connects to the Cuiaba River and its several channels in the heart of the northern Pantanal, which is where most of our river cruising would occur. Marco told us our boat captain Chinho was the best in the Pantanal and we could understand why because in the first two hours on the river he spotted two Jaguar that most people would have passed right by. The first one was crouched on a thick tree branch hidden by leaves, awaiting an unsuspecting caiman to float by. We watched it patiently sit there for about half an hour and left as more and more boats stopped by to view it. It's obvious Jaguar are the main attraction here and ecotourism has flourished because of their increased numbers. The next Jaguar he spotted was along the bank in deep water and at first, we could only see its head. What was that in its jaws? A caiman! It had just captured it, and we watched as it deftly scaled the bank dragging a caiman as long as its body length into the dense foliage. Wow!

There was a multitude of easy to see birds on the river, several of them new to us like Black-capped Donacobius, Crimson-crested Woodpecker, Yellow-rumped and Solitary Black Caciues, Green, Amazon, and Ringed Kingfishers, and at least thirty Black-crowned Night Heron. Around every bend in the river there was something new to see including a family group of Giant River Otter fishing alongside the boat, with one catching and eating a fish while we watched. We headed back to the houseboat for lunch and had some downtime afterwards. Rick and Brett went piranha fishing with our driver Jose off the back of the houseboat. Raw chicken chunks were the

bait of choice and before long we had each caught at least one. Jose soon had the cooler full and the crew enjoyed them for dinner that night.

At 2:30 we took our afternoon boat tour, seeing many of the same birds as the morning trip and adding a White-lored Spinetail. We witnessed a Black Vulture performing a balancing act on a floating dead caiman, another family of Giant River Otter catching and eating fish, several Pygmy Kingfisher, and had a close encounter all to ourselves with a large male Jaguar known as Ousada. He was rescued during the 2020 fires that scorched the Pantanal and was fitted with a radio collar. He is now thought to be ten years old, quite old for a Jaguar. The radio collar no longer works but is still around his neck making the identification easy. We watched him walk along the bank and enter the water in the direction of our boat. Eventually he headed back to land and disappeared into the surrounding jungle. What an amazing encounter!

We returned to the houseboat for our final dinner there and had a few caipirinhas to celebrate our exciting Jaguar and Giant Otter filled day.



Thurs., Jul. 2

Pantanal Transpantaneira: From Porto Jofre to SouthWild

After our breakfast buffet we boarded the boat for our final river tour. We witnessed one of the most beautiful sunrises this author has ever seen, with cotton-candy clouds fringed in glowing pink and then another burst of glowing red and orange, simply amazing. We had looks at three more Jaguar, including a pair we watched walk along the riverbank before disappearing. There were at least a dozen Rufescent Tiger-Heron today, and just as many Black-collared Hawk. We added several secretive Boat-billed Heron to our list as well as Yellow-billed and Large-billed Terns. Probably the smallest bird we got a glimpse of was the one Marco was the most excited about, a Buff-bellied Hermit. He said it was only the third time he'd seen one. Chinho positioned the boat near some water lilies and Walter bonded with a family of Wattled Jacana, including their young which were foraging right next to the boat.

Soon it was time to head back to the houseboat, have lunch and say goodbye to the birds, mammals, and Caiman of the Cuiaba River and its tributaries. After a 20-minute boat ride we were back at our van with our luggage and Jose our driver, and soon traveling back on the Transpantaneira Road. It turned out to be a good ride

for herps as we saw two racer-type snakes that were too fast to identify and another Tegu. We then helped a Big-headed Pantanal Swamp Turtle cross the road, and Jose spotted our only Yellow Anaconda of the trip on the side of the road which we all got out to take a look at. Deb and Rick tried to count the many wooden bridges we crossed (Marco said there were over 100) but we soon gave up as a short nap overtook us both.

We arrived at our next lodge, SouthWild Pantanal around 3:30 and were met by the manager Claudia with a refreshing local amazon fruit juice drink. We quickly unpacked before heading to their mammal-feeding station. They had seed feeders at this lodge so we enjoyed watching Scaled, White-tipped, and Picui Ground Doves mixed in with large Picazuro Pigeon and Grayish Baywing, along with Chaco Chachalaca, Chestnut-bellied Guan, and a pair of White Woodpecker.



Before dinner we took a short hike to the mammal feeding station. There are chairs and lights set up around a clearing with a fallen tree and some branches. The lodge guides put raw chicken out in the hopes that a Crab-eating Fox or an Ocelot would visit. Luck was with us because within fifteen minutes of us arriving, an Ocelot appeared and climbed the tree trunk and branches where the hidden chicken morsels were. Without a station like this, the odds of seeing a wild Ocelot are very low as they are nocturnal and very wary. We then had an amazing buffet dinner and celebrated Pam's birthday with a lovely cake that the kitchen staff made for her.

Fri., Jul. 3

SouthWild Pantanal

We started the morning by walking around near the lodge studying the doves and pigeons by the feeders mixed in with Saffron Finch, more Grayish Baywing, and Giant and Shiny Cowbirds. One of the lodge's employees walked with us and pointed out a Great Horned Owl adult sleeping in a large tree next to its nest with two sizeable chicks in it. We found another sleeping Great Potoo and a Mato Grosso Antbird among many other species we'd seen already including both Crimson-crested and Pale-crested Woodpeckers.

The afternoon safari produced our now-usual assortment of tall wading birds, Savannah Hawk and Crested Caracara, and a flock of White-eyed Parakeet. When we returned to the lodge we watched a Glittering-throated Emerald hummingbird zig and zag from the feeder to some flowers. After another wonderful dinner we did our checklist and as it was the last night of the main tour it would be the last evening we'd spend with Brett, Debbie, and Beth, as they were heading home tomorrow. We decided to go around the room and Rick asked what everyone's favorite birds and moments of the tour were and got some interesting answers. The favorite bird winner was the Hyacinth Macaw with Rick, Beth, Debbie, and Lori M. all casting a vote. Most people's favorite lodge was the amazing Pousada Aguapé in the southern Pantanal where we saw 21 Giant Anteaters during our time there, with the houseboat a close second. Of course, seeing all the Jaguar and Giant Otter close up from the boat were the favorite moment winners, with the Sunbittern-frog exchange and the Yellow Anaconda sighting mentioned by Pam as her favorites. The show put on by the Red-legged Seriema on our first day in Brazil, where

it loudly called and displayed right in front of us, left a lasting impression on all of us who witnessed it but especially on Brett, Leslie, Lori S., and Walter. Brian's favorite bird was the Rufous-tailed Jacamar as he mentioned it was the one bird whose name he could easily remember.



Sat., Jul. 4 SouthWild through Cuiaba to Jardim da Amazonia

Today was a travel day, so after breakfast it was back on the Transpantaneira, with several birding stops along the roadside. We added a Rusty-backed Antwren as a pair came to check out Rick's pishing and saw more Monk Parakeet when an entire flock perched in a nearby bush for us. We passed several coatí's and foxes as we drove as well. We made a stop at the statue of St. Francis and Brett spotted a distant Roseate Spoonbill, and there were several Smooth-billed Ani in the field by the parking lot. Another Maguari Stork was spotted, and this one was so close no scope was needed. Lunch was at a churrasco restaurant near the Cuiaba airport, and we then dropped Beth, Brett, and Debbie off for their flights home and said our farewells.

The remaining ten of us continued on in the van towards the 3-day extension part of the tour in the southern Amazon. We learned that the Amazon region is divided into seven ecotones separated by rivers. The southern Amazon region is where the cerrado meets the forest. Bird diversity is much higher here, but birds are more challenging to see than the Pantanal, where you can more easily see the same birds in high abundance every day.

We had a long drive to get there but it was mostly highway with little traffic. Time passed quickly as we had several rest stops built into our schedule, and at one of them Rick bought the group ice cream. During the drive it was obvious how the cerrado and dry forest habitat had been lost to large scale agricultural as we drove for miles past corn, soybean, and cotton fields. It reminded us of Iowa or Nebraska but with no development or houses, just corporate farming on a massive scale.

We drove through a beautiful pink sunset and when we were about ten minutes from the lodge both Marco and our driver Jose excitedly yelled "tapirs!" Sure enough, in a field by the side of the road were a pair of South American Tapir standing about 100 feet from us. We scrambled out of the van for looks and pictures in the fading light with high fives all around. Later, Lori M. shared with the group an excellent quality video of them she had captured.

We arrived at our Jardim da Amazonia lodge soon after and checked-in after enjoying our freshly made lemonade welcome drinks. We then completed our species checklist and enjoyed a delicious buffet style dinner before retiring for the night.



Sun., Jul. 5

Jardim da Amazonia | Rio Claro River

As mentioned, our lodge is in the in a transition zone between the Amazon and the Cerrado, which formerly was savannah. Therefore, many of the new birds we hoped to see have Amazonian connections justifying the name of our lodge, Jardim da Amazonia, or Garden of the Amazon. After an early buffet breakfast, we headed out on the 130 km long Rio Claro River in two small boats. Our main target was to hopefully see the rarest bird on the tour, the critically endangered Cone-billed Tanager. The tanager had first been described in 1938 but was not observed again until 2003. Our lodge guide Jonathan told us only 500 are estimated to still exist.

Our captains maneuvered the boats from the river through a small channel into what they called Cone-bill Lake. The water here was crystal clear which makes sense given the river's name: Rio Claro. After a few moments of callback recordings by our guides, we had a male tanager in view and singing from a tree branch close to the boat. Lori M. snapped a few pictures to help document the moment for us. As we were leaving the small lake a Green-and-rufous Kingfisher flashed by us, our only sighting of the tour. Other birds we saw from the boats were Bare-necked Fruitcrow, a flock of Red-bellied Macaw, Scaled and Ruddy Pigeons, a Ringed Woodpecker, and Red-throated Piping Guan. Reba's keen eyes spotted small flock of distant Short-tailed Swift and as we traversed the river, we also heard the unmistakable calls of Screaming Piha. Other new birds we came across were a Lettered Aracari, some beautifully colored Santarem Parakeet, a Greyish Mourner, and a circling Greater Yellow-headed Vulture. On the way back to the dock we passed an overhanging tree with some tiny roosting Proboscis Bat and upon arrival we were greeted by a pair of Brown Jacamar.

After lunch we had time to relax and visit the natural pool or walk the nearby boardwalk trail around a small wetland where we were told was the best spot to locate the local population of Mittermeier's Saki Monkey. Leslie and some others headed over there but had no luck with the monkeys. Around 3:00 Marco and Jonathan led us on a trail walk around the property. We found tapir tracks and a large hole in the side of the road that we found out was the home of the nocturnal Giant Armadillo. A few lucky people had a quick look at a Coral Snake before it disappeared into the leaf litter before a positive identification could be made (there are several different species in Brazil). We passed a Blue-headed Parrot nest cavity with one of the pair on guard outside the

nest hole. As we walked a forest trail some of us got quick views of the smallest passerine in Brazil, the Short-tailed Pygmy-Tyrant. Passing by some fishponds on the property we added a Green Kingfisher, Long-billed Starthroat, a colorful Black-faced Dacnis, and several Swallow Tanager. When we returned in the late afternoon a few of us along with some of the staff watched Brazil lose to Norway 2-1 in the World Cup semifinals, thus ending their impressive tournament run. Dinner and our species checklist followed along with a good night's sleep after our long first full day in the Amazon.



Mon., Jul. 6 Jardim da Amazonia

After breakfast we headed over to an area near the dining hall where there was a wild cashew tree that Orange-cheeked Parrot visit to feed. Before long we had several in Rick's scope, truly a stunningly beautiful bird. We then took a long morning bird walk to a different area of the property with Marco and another lodge guide named Marcelo. We found more tapir tracks and possibly the tracks of a Margay, a small, mostly nocturnal jungle cat. Reba noticed a small lizard on the trail that we almost walked by that turned out to be a Cope's Mabuya, a type of skink. We added Black-throated Antwren, a pair of Short-tailed Hawk perched together, and Brian spotted a perched Swallow-tailed Kite. We tried hard but had poor looks at a Chestnut-tailed Antbird but did have better luck with a Green-backed Trogon. A mixed flock of birds gave us some Red-legged Honeycreeper high in the canopy, and Leslie spotted a Black-tailed Marmoset cross the path on a vine in front of us and quietly disappear before most of us caught up to it. Another nice find was a pair of Pied Puffbird Kay spotted that had made a nest inside a termite mound within a tree. Pam was the only one in the group who got eyes on the stunning Gould's Toucanet we had been hearing, and we all heard Black-faced Spider Monkey calling in the distance as well as a Ruddy Spinetail.

After lunch we took a short boat ride back on the river. It was quiet bird-wise but a peaceful way to spend the hot afternoon. We identified White-banded Swallow flying over the river and finally saw a Screaming Piha as one flew over us calling loudly. Other special sightings were a pair of Black-tailed Trogon and several Point-tailed Palmcreeper, where else but on top of a tall palm tree. Later in the afternoon we were driven to a nearby lake to watch Blue-and-yellow Macaw fly into their evening nest holes to roost. There were also several Red-bellied Macaw pairs, White-headed Marsh Tyrant, and Yellow-tufted Woodpecker using the dead palm trees and small shrub islands in and around the lake. A few of us saw a small flock of White-browed Meadowlark go by. Marco

and the lodge staff then surprised us by breaking out a bottle of champagne and some fancy glasses and we all had a nice toast to the end of our wonderful tour of Brazil.

Tues., Jul. 7

Jardim da Amazonia | Back to Cuiaba

After breakfast we took our final bird walk on some new trails that led to a nice freshwater lagoon. We had a nice mixed flock of Black-faced Dacnis, Swallow Tanager, several hummingbirds, and a Purple-throated Euphonia, plus a perched Swallow-tailed Puffbird. Marco played the call of Speckled Chachalaca and got a response but no sighting as they are very secretive when compared to the Chacho Chachalaca at other lodges. We had better looks at Bare-necked Fruitcrow, a Red-necked Aracari, and Leslie spotted a Masked Tityra. We then headed back to the lodge for final packing and lunch. Before we left the manager Bell alerted the group that the Mittermeier's Saki Monkey had been spotted in the trees by the boardwalk and most of us ended up getting good looks at them. Then it was time to depart and relax in the van while Jose drove us through the agricultural fields on the way back to Cuiaba.

After hotel check-in we enjoyed a last caipirinha, completed our species checklist, and had a nice final dinner. Many new friends were made on this wonderful trip of a lifetime, and it was hard to say goodbye. Hopefully we will all travel together again in the future on another Naturalist Journeys tour.



Wed., Jul. 8

Flights Home

We all had different schedules for flights home but most of us still met up for hugs and a final breakfast in the hotel. Thank you to Brazil, Marco, and Jose, for an amazing two weeks in the world's largest wetland and at the edge of the world's largest rainforest. Many memories, life birds, and wildlife sightings were experienced that none of us will soon forget.

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