

info@naturetravelbirding.com
www.naturetravelbirding.com



PANTANAL - BIRDS AND JAGUARS

9 DAY/ 8 NIGHT TOUR

OVERVIEW

The Pantanal is a natural region encompassing the world's largest tropical wetland area. 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. The name "Pantanal" comes from the Portuguese word *pântano*, meaning wetland, bog, swamp, quagmire or marsh.

The Pantanal offers any birder or wildlife enthusiast the perfect combination of great birding and mammal spotting opportunities! The habitat is "birder friendly" as it's relatively open which makes birding easier and more relaxing.

It is one of the best places in the world to see the endangered and stunning Hyacinth Macaw, hundreds of Jabirus, Maguari Storks, Wood Storks, Herons and Ibises and literally thousands of Caimans. This, together with excellent chances of seeing Jaguar, fantastic photographic opportunities and spectacular scenery makes a birding trip to the Pantanal a must!

We will spend seven days within the world's largest freshwater wetland that covers approximately 195000 km². During this time we shall travel all the way to the end of the famous Transpantaneira dirt road (145km), well known for its amazing birds and wildlife. Once at the end of the Transpantaneira road we will spend the last three days based at the Hotel Porto Jofre where we will take daily boat trips looking for various species of birds and our main mammal target, South Americas largest cat.... the mighty Jaguar!

We then move onto the 80 000 acre Chapada dos Guimaraes National Park for a further two nights; this Cerrado habitat (seasonally dry woodland and scrub) will provide us with a change of habitat, more stunning scenery and further opportunities for a whole host of new bird species.

DAILY SUMMARY

DAY 1	Arrival at Marechal Rondon International Airport in Cuiabá and travel to Serra das Araras
DAY 2	Transpantaneira Road and into the vast Pantanal floodplain.
DAY 3	Motorboat ride on Pixaim River and onto Porto Jofre
DAY 4	Exploring the Pantanal by boat
DAY 5	Exploring the Pantanal by boat
DAY 6	Transpantaneira road: further birding and photography
DAY 7	Chapada dos Guimaraes National Park
DAY 8	Birding at Bridal's Veil Waterfall area
Day 9	Morning's birding and back to Cuiabá for Departure

DETAILED DAILY ITINERARY

DAY 1: Arrival at Marechal Rondon International Airport in Cuiabá and travel to Serra das Araras

After arrival into the Marechal Rondon International Airport in Cuiabá we will meet our local guide and make our introductions.

Cuiabá is the capital city of the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso and forms the metropolitan area of the state along with the neighbouring town of Várzea Grande. It also serves as the Geographical Centre of South America. The city was founded in 1719 during the gold rush and is a trading centre for an extensive cattle-raising and agricultural area. The city is a rich mix of European, African and Native American influences and is also notable for its cuisine, dance, music and craftwork. Known as the "*Southern gate to the Amazon*", Cuiabá experiences a hot humid tropical climate.

After meeting each other we will then set off to our first destination of Serra das Araras, to the west of Cuiabá. The reserve, which has an area of 28,637 hectares (70,760 acres), was created in 1982. The endangered White-cheeked Spider Monkey and critically endangered Blue-eyed Ground-Dove are both protected in the reserve.

We will check into our accommodation and swiftly begin our birding adventure!

The habitat in this particular region is very interesting as it is the transition between the Cerrado habitat and the imposing Amazon rainforest. We will be on the lookout for Gray

Hawk, Yellow-tufted Woodpecker, Gray-cowled Wood-Rail, Dusky-headed Parakeet (an isolated population), Red-shouldered Macaw, Muscovy Duck, Picui Ground-Dove, Warbling Antbird, Magpie and Hooded Tanager, Variable Oriole, Brazilian Teal and Chestnut-eared Aracari amongst many others.

After sunset we will spend some time searching for Tawny-bellied Screech Owl, Ocellated Poorwill and Black-banded Owl.

We will return to the lodge for dinner and complete our first checklist of the trip!

DAY 2: Transpantaneira Road and into the vast Pantanal floodplain

After an early breakfast we will spend some more time searching for various other species.

We will then check out of our accommodation and begin our journey towards the famous Transpantaneira Road and into the vast Pantanal floodplain, with lunch en route. The Transpantaneira, also known as MT-060, is a road that crosses the Pantanal, in the state of Mato Grosso in Brazil. The road is a link between the city of Poconé and the place of Porto Jofre. It's 147 km long and crosses no less than 122 wooden bridges.

We will be moving at a slow pace and making several stops to watch many species together with the chance for some great photographic opportunities. We hope to see species such as the stunning Hyacinth Macaw, Jabiru, Roseate Spoonbill, American Wood Stork, Great Rufous, Straight-billed and Narrow-billed Woodcreeper, Undulated Tinamou, Glittering-throated Emerald, Roadside and Savanna Hawk, Black-fronted Nunbird, Guira Cuckoo, Bat Falcon, Black-bellied Antwren, Planalto Slaty Antshrike, Saffron-billed Sparrow, Blue-crowned Trogon and many more.

We will return to our accommodation for dinner and a good night's rest.

DAY 3: Motorboat ride on Pixaim River and onto Porto Jofre

We will start the day with an early breakfast and take a motor boat ride along the Pixaim River.

Target birds for today include White, Lineated, Crimson-crested and Green-barred Woodpecker, Crested Oropendola, Blue-fronted Parrot, Buff-necked, Bare-faced and Plumbeous Ibis, Scarlet-headed Blackbird, Rusty-collared Seedeater, Black-capped Donacobius, Golden-collared Macaw, Maguari Stork, Laughing Falcon, Whistling and Cocoli Heron, White-faced and Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Muscovy Duck, Bare-faced Curassow, Blue-throated Piping-Guan, Bay-winged and Giant Cowbird, Sungrebe and

Sunbittern. We also hope to see all five species of South American kingfishers: Ringed, Amazon, Green, Green-and-rufous and Pygmy.

After lunch we will check out of our accommodation and begin our drive towards Porto Jofre and the end of the Transpantaneira dirt road. Porto Jofre is within the diverse Pantanal ecosystem and region, and is adjacent to wetlands with marshland habitats rich in waterfowl, migratory birds, and other wildlife. It is a protected RAMSAR and World Heritage Site.

We will check in to our accommodation at the Porto Jofre Hotel for the next 3 nights. If time allows we will go spotlighting for nocturnal wildlife.

DAY 4 and 5: Exploring the Pantanal by boat

We will spend two full days exploring the Pantanal by boat.

The Pantanal ecosystem is home to 1000 bird species, 400 fish species, 300 mammalian species, 480 reptile species and over 9000 different subspecies of invertebrates.

After our breakfasts we will take boat rides both up and downstream searching for Jaguar and other mammals such as Giant River Otters, Capybaras and the rare Tapir.

The South American Jaguar (*Panthera onca*) is considered to be the biggest cat in the New World. Certain jaguars from the Pantanal region are the largest of the species, with lengths of about 2.7 m (8.9 ft), and average weights of 95 kg (209 lbs) for males and 78 kg (171 lbs) for females. The jaguar enjoys swimming and is largely a solitary, opportunistic, stalk-and-ambush predator at the top of the food chain. It is listed as Near Threatened on the IUCN Red List, and its numbers are declining.

Some of the target birds for this area include Black Skimmer, Yellow-billed and Large-billed Tern, Pied Plover, Collared Plover, Crested Oropendola, Yellow-rumped Cacique, Black-collared Hawk, White-wedged Piculet, Tropical Kingbird, Rufous Hornero, Great Black Hawk, Black-fronted Nunbird, Bare-faced Curassow, Rusty-backed Spinetail, Roseate Spoonbill, Southern Caracara, Anhinga, Snail Kite, Peach-fronted, Yellow-chevroned and Monk Parakeet, Limpkin, Picazuro Pigeon, Wattled Jacana, Silver-beaked Tanager, Chaco Chachalaca, Great and Lesser Kiskadee and many others.

At the end of the day we hope to see Band-tailed and Nacunda Nighthawk flying above the water, before making our way, each night, back to the hotel for relaxation, dinner and a good night's sleep.

DAY 6: Transpantaneira road: further birding and photography

After breakfast we will check out of our accommodation, transferring back along the Transpantaneira road with lunch en route together with many stops along the way for further birding and photography.

Target birds for today include Band-tailed Antbird, Pale-legged Hornero, Rusty-backed Spinetail, Lesser Kiskadee, Southern Beardless Tyrannulet, Green-backed Becard, Golden-green Woodpecker, Plain Antwreio, Rufous-browed Peppershrike, Ashy-headed Greenlet, Helmeted Manakin, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, White-lored Spinetail, Cinereous-breasted Spinetail, Red-billed Scythebill, Flavescent Warbler, Moustached and Buff-bellied Wren, Purplish Jay, Orange-backed Oriole (Troupial), Crested Oropendola, Solitary Black-Cacique, Blue-crowned Trogon, Black-fronted Nunbird, Silver-beaked Tanager, Rusty-collared Seedeater, White-bellied Seedeater and Chestnut-bellied Seed-Finch.

We will check into another lodge for dinner and our overnight stay.

DAY 7: Chapada dos Guimaraes National Park

We shall have some early morning birding around the lodge before our departure back to Cuiaba and then head in a north-easterly direction for a further 70 km and onto our next destination, the impressive Chapada dos Guimaraes National Park.

It is a national park of some 32,630 hectares (80,600 acres) in the state of Mato Grosso and was proclaimed in 1989. It is a region of rugged terrain with dramatic cliffs and waterfalls, and contains the geographical centre of the continent.

Upon arrival we will hopefully have time to look for Blue-winged and Red-and-green Macaw, Curl-crested and Purplish Jay, Gray Monjita, Orange-winged, Scaly-headed and Blue-headed Parrot, Sayaca, Swallow, Palm and White-lined Tanager, Blue Dacnis, Undulated Tinamou, Lettered Aracari, Common Pauraque, Flavescent Warbler, Large-billed Antwren, Russet-crowned Crake, Buff-throated Saltator, Fork-tailed Woodnymph, Brown Jacamar, Saffron and Red-crested Finch, Crested Black-Tyrant and Swallow Flycatcher amongst others.

Dinner and overnight will be at our hotel.

DAY 8: Birding at Bridal's Veil Waterfall area

After another early breakfast we shall watch the sunrise and start our days birding!

The main targets for the day will include Rufous-sided Pygmy-Tyrant, Small-billed Tinamou, White-eared Puffbird, Blue-crowned Trogon, Fiery-capped Manakin, Collared Crescentchest, Horned Sungem, Yellow-billed Blue Finch, Burrowing Owl, Rufous-winged Antshrike, Black-faced, White-rumped and White-banded Tanager, Red-legged Seriema, Coal-crested Finch, Plumbeous Seedeater and Black-throated Saltator.

We will have lunch and take a small break at our hotel before heading out again where we will be birding at the amazing Bridal's Veil Waterfall area. Formed by the waters of the Coxipozinho stream, the waterfall of 86 meters high is surrounded by sandstone walls in a horseshoe shape. It is a roost site for the Blue-winged Macaw, and we will also look out for Yellow-ridged Toucan, Bat Falcon, Chestnut-eared Aracari and White-collared and Biscutate Swifts.

We will return to our hotel at the end of the day, have dinner and a good night's sleep.

DAY 9: Morning's birding and back to Cuiabá for Departure

We will do some birding in the morning with our targets being Band-tailed and Fire-crowned Manakin and Southern Antpipit. We may also check a historical nesting site for the Ornate Hawk-Eagle.

We then return to our hotel, check out and head back to Marechal Rondon International Airport in Cuiabá.

INCLUSIONS:

- All accommodation
- Full board accommodation on a twin/double share basis
- All ground transportation (with mineral water and air conditioning)
- Bilingual guide full time
- 2 days boat ride at the Hotel Pantanal Norte
- 4 hours boat ride at the Hotel Pantanal Mato Grosso.

EXCLUSIONS:

- Items of a personal nature
- International or local flights
- Laundry
- Gifts
- Souvenirs
- Tips
- Alcoholic beverages and drinks

Thank you for choosing Nature Travel Birding.