

# NEOTROPICAL<sup>®</sup>

NATURE & BIRDING TRIPS



**BRAZIL'S PANTANAL & ATLANTIC FOREST  
BIRDS, MAMMALS AND MORE...**

A vibrant green and blue bird, possibly a Tanager, is perched on a branch of a cherry blossom tree. The bird has a bright green body with a blue head and a black collar around its neck. The background is a soft, warm yellow. The text 'ITINERARY' is written vertically on the left side of the image.

**ITINERARY**

**JULY 19th - 31st 2020**

## PANTANAL & ATLANTIC FOREST: BIRDS & MAMMALS AND MORE...

# PANTANAL

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, Giant Anteater, Giant Otter, and yes, Jaguar (we saw many on our past trips!), are five of many incredible mammals we seek, while Greater Rhea, Hyacinth Macaw, Toco Toucan, Red Legged Seriema, 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 hundreds. For many, it is the sheer number and variety of species that leaves the most lasting impression.

Charming Lodges (and working) cattle ranches serve as our accommodations, each with its own impressive and distinctive wildlife community.





## MATA ATLÂNTICA

Brazil's Atlantic Forest is truly a jewel of the Continent. Designated as a World Biosphere Reserve, it is a complex region of tropical and subtropical rainforest, tropical dry forest, tropical savanna, semi deciduous and mangrove forests. It extends along the Atlantic coast of Brazil from sea level up into montane forest at Serra do Mar. The Atlantic Forest currently spans over 4000 km<sup>2</sup> along the coast of Brazil and is characterized by an enormous biodiversity. Long isolated from other major rainforest zones in South America, the Atlantic Forest has an extremely diverse and unique mix of vegetation and forest types inducing high specialization levels which make it a unique endemic hotspot.

This short tour can be either an easy add-on to our Pantanal tour, or a superb week-long getaway for people who can only travel for short periods of time. The tour concentrates on two distinct regions. First, the mountains, that host a unique set of birds. You'll stay at a lodge located close to Itatiaia National Park, with feeders and great birding on the grounds, and use it as a base to explore both the lower and upper elevations of this stunning National Park. Following, you'll move lower to the Brazilian coast to the picturesque lowland rainforests around Ubatuba, which arguably has the easiest and finest lowland birding in all of Southeast Brazil along with some of the best hummingbird feeders at Sitio do Jonas, in Folhas Secas.

# TOUR SUMMARY

**13 Day / 12 Nights Wildlife & Birding Safari.**

**International Arrival and Departure Airport is Guarulhos International (GRU).**

**Itinerary July 19th - 31st 2020**

## **July 19th : Arrival to São Paulo, Brazil**

Arrive in São Paulo, Brazil, at Guarulhos International Airport (GRU). No activities are planned for this day so you can rest up from your travels. The transfer to your hotel is included; your hotel is about twenty minutes away and we can organize an early check-in as an option for those that need it (Usually rooms can be available by noon; getting into a room earlier than that requires additional charges. Remember, you have at least 1.5 hours to get luggage and clear immigration and customs; there is a restaurant and public areas at the airport where you can relax if you don't want to pay an early room fee.).

This evening you'll enjoy a welcome dinner the chance to meet your guide and traveling companions, and learn more about our coming adventure. 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 Hotel Matiz Guarulhos (D,B)



## July 20th: Early flight São Paulo to Cuiaba | Northern Transpantaneira Pousada Pixaim

After an early domestic flight to Cuiabá you begin your Pantanal adventure!

From here, you travel the famous Transpantaneira Road, perhaps only rivaled by Tanzania's Serengeti road in wildlife spotting. We'll keep our eyes open 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 you can take advantage of the congregation of wildlife due to the presence of huge food supply; Green Kingfisher, Great Egret, Cocoi Heron, both Bare-faced and Green Ibises, and White-lored Spinetail are just a few species you may see.

You 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. July water conditions concentrate the fish for foraging waders like Jabiru and Maguari Stork.

Your destination today is Pousada Pixaim.

Accommodations at the Mato Grosso Hotel, Pixaim River (B,L,D)



# PANTANAL & ATLANTIC FOREST: BIRDS & MAMMALS AND MORE...

## July 21st : Pixaim River Area Wildlife & Birding

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

In the afternoon you can enjoy the landscapes and more birds from an observation tower and walk through a trail in a stunning Gallery Forest looking for special birds like Helmeted Manakin, Mato Grosso Antbird, Band-tailed Antbird, Black-hooded Tanager, Blue-crowned Trogon, Rufous-tailed Jacamar and more.

Accommodations at the Mato Grosso Hotel, Pixium River (B,L,D)

## July 22nd: Drive to Porto Jofre | Jaguar experience

After some morning wildlife viewing at Pixaim and breakfast, you'll depart down the Transpantaneira,

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



# PANTANAL & ATLANTIC FOREST: BIRDS & MAMMALS AND MORE...

## July 23rd: Full Day Looking for Jaguar, Jabiru & More

Awake on the river to a host of sounds and the sight of macaws and more flying overhead. We'll 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 for encountering at least one individual, male or female or perhaps even together!

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

By late afternoon you'll return to the welcoming houseboat to celebrate your sightings with caipirinhas before dinner!

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

## July 24th: Wildlife & Birding on the Lower Transpantaneira - Posada Piuval

After two days immersed in the wildest part of the Pantanal, you return north, retracing your route. There is no hurry to get there though, so you can cover some of the areas you previously traveled in more detail.

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

At this point in your journey you'll have seen numerous mammals and birds, so you can focus our efforts on finding anything missing from your list that you hope to see.

Pousada Piuval 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-ran ranch. After check in, you can stretch your legs in a short walk. There is a lovely pool if anyone wants to cool off with a swim. Accommodations at Pousada Piuval (B,L,D)

## July 25th: Piuval | Return Drive to Cuiabá - Flight São Paulo

After an early birding activity and breakfast, today you'll make our way back to Cuiabá. The paved road is perhaps a welcome sight as you bid adieu to the marvelous but often dusty Pantanal. Driving back to Cuiabá, the landscapes are iconic and make for great pictures. You'll also look for Black-capped Donacobious, Green-and-rufous Kingfisher, Little Blue Heron, and other species along the way. The plan is to arrive in Cuiabá in time for connections to São Paulo.

Accommodations at Hotel Matiz Guarulhos (B,L,D)



# PANTANAL & ATLANTIC FOREST: BIRDS & MAMMALS AND MORE...

## July 26th: Itatiaia National Park.

After breakfast we'll drive to Itatiaia (around three and a half hours drive time). Itatiaia is mountainous and rocky with altitudes ranging from 540 to 2,791 metres (1,772 to 9,157 ft). The highest point is the Black Needles peak (Pico das Agulhas Negras).

Today we'll visit part of the oldest National Park of Brazil. The lodge that will serve as our accommodation for the following 3 nights is surrounded by forest and a great place for some easy afternoon birding, where we hope to find Fritilled Coquettes feeding on flowers in the garden. Nectar feeders should attract a few different hummers such as Scale-throated Hermit and White-throated Hummingbird, Brazilian Ruby; fruit feeders often bring in colorful species like the unmatched Green-headed Tanager, Chestnut-bellied Euphonia and Blue-naped Chlorophonia along with many other species, but the most wanted will be the unique Saffron Toucanet, we hope for at least one sighting during our stay. You'll certainly love the activity around the lodge, Red-rumped Caciques, Maroon-bellied Parakeets make their presence very obvious.

Accommodation at Hotel do Ypé (B, L,D)

## July 27th: Itatiaia National Park Lower Zone

After breakfast, you'll enjoy the activity around the hotel which is located inside the National Park, just around the lodge grounds we may find Dusky-legged Guans and Slaty-breasted Wood-Rails, or we might see Blue-winged Macaws departing from their roosting cavities. We'll then spend the rest of the day birding roads and trails not far from your hotel. Today we'll try to get good views of some remarkable antbirds like Ochre-rumped and White-bibbed Antbirds, and we'll be on the lookout for the scarce White-bearded and Giant Antshrikes. Bamboo patches hold Black-billed Scythebill, Black-capped Foliage-gleaner, Rufous-capped Spinetail, Fork-tailed Pygmy-Tyrant, and others We'll try our luck with some tough birds like Such's and Rufous-tailed Antthrushes. The elegant Swallow-tailed Cotinga is unpredictable this time of year, but with luck we may encounter one. Tawny-browed Owl often remains hidden in the forest near the hotel, and it's not unusual to be woken up by its otherworldly calls.

Hotel do Ype (B,L,D)



## July 28th: Algulhas Negras Itatiaia National Park

After an early breakfast, we'll drive about 1 hour to a back road that accesses the higher zones of the National Park. The stunted forest and scrub here host a very different set of birds, and the unmistakable calls of Black-and-gold Cotingas ring out through the mist. Hearing them is easy! Seeing them often takes a lot of persistence and patience. We'll target several species along the lower parts of the road like Rufous-tailed Antbird, Large-tailed Antshrike, Serra do Mar Tyrannulet, and Black-capped Piprites. Forest patches can be quiet until a mixed species flock comes whirling through, and then we can be inundated with birds like Diademed and Brassy-breasted Tanagers, Buff-throated and Bay-chested Warbling-Finches, Pallid Spinetail, Rufous-backed Antwren, Sharp-billed Treehunter, and White-browed Woodpecker. We'll check a regular lekking site for Green-crowned Plovercrest, where several males of this superb-looking hummingbird usually perch and chirp incessantly. Further up, the forest becomes shorter, and we'll try various spots for the endemic Itatiaia Spinetail, and for sure we'll try to look for Araucaria Tit-Spinetail. After a picnic lunch, we'll bird a side road lower down the valley that passes through pastures and light woodland. The birding here is easy and offers very different birds like Toco Toucans, screeching Curl-crested Jays, handsome White-eared Puffbirds, dancing Streamer-tailed Tyrants, among others.

Hotel do Ype (B,L,D)

## July 29th: Itatiaia to Ubatuba

Today you'll have a scenic drive from Itatiaia to Ubatuba (4 and a half hours drivetime), where the forest-covered mountains that come down to the sea make this part of the Atlantic coast truly beautiful. Various private reserves and quiet side roads at the base of the mountains offer easy birding with some of the best species the Atlantic Forest has to offer. Numerous antbirds are possible, many of which are truly handsome and often surprisingly easy to see compared to other parts of the Neotropics – a few in particular that we will be looking for are Scaled and Ferruginous Antbirds, Spot-breasted Antwren, Tufted and Spot-backed Antshrike, and Star-throated Antwren, the strikingly patterned Spotted Bamboowren and the perky Slaty Bristlefront with its unforgettable song. Bare-throated Bellbird with its unique distinctive call will be one of our target species as well.

We'll stop at Folha Seca Reserve which has hummingbird and fruit feeders. Swarms of hummers are always present with the startling Festive Coquette often being the favorite. Others that visit include Saw-billed Hermit, Violet-capped Woodnymph, Brazilian Ruby, Sombre Hummingbird, Versicolored Emerald, and White-chinned Sapphire. The fruit feeders attracts amazing visitors such as Green-headed, Ruby-crowned, Brazilian and Red-necked Tanagers. We'll then head to a suburb of the beach town of Ubatuba where we will spend the next 2 nights at Hotel Porto do Eixo or similar (B,L,D)



# PANTANAL & ATLANTIC FOREST: BIRDS & MAMMALS AND MORE...

## July 30th: Ubatuba - Fazenda Angelim

After breakfast we'll drive to Fazenda Angelim (50 min drive time).

There's a fair amount of remaining lowland forest there with an impressive amount of Atlantic Forest endemics, like Rufous-headed and Gilt-edge Tanagers.

If weather allows this is one of the most reliable locations for Buff-Bellied Puffbird and Buff-Throated Purple-tuft. Mantled Hawk sometimes can be seen perched in the trees right along the clearings waiting to ambush their prey.

Here we'll try to find the unique Spotted Bamboowren that sometimes call softly from the overgrown clearing along the entrance road.

Hotel Port do Eixo or similar (B,L,D)

## July 31st Ubatuba - Guarulhos (GRU)

Our last morning in Ubatuba. We'll have time to enjoy and relax on the beautiful beach of Ubatuba or take a short visit to Sitio do Folha Seca to try to get anything we've missed in the previous days.

After lunch we'll drive back to Guarulhos (3 hour drive).

We'll arrive in the international airport by 6:00pm, in time for evening departures on several airlines, or if you require an overnight stay, we can arrange an additional night in an airport hotel. (B,L)

**PRICE PER PERSON: \$ USD 5950 per person**

**Internal flights included: São Paulo (GRU) - Cuiabá (CGB) - São Paulo (GRU)**

**Prices listed in double or triple occupation room.**

**Single supplement \$720 USD**



# TRIP CONSIDERATIONS

## PLEASE NOTE:

This is a sample itinerary subject to change due to weather conditions, safety, and particular interests of guests. Changes and additions are made in order to maximize your experience and wilderness enjoyment.

## OVERVIEW:

**Max group size: 8 + Tour leader**

**Length: 13 days**

**Starting city: São Paulo**

**Ending city: São Paulo**

**Pace: Moderate**

**Physical difficulty: Moderate**

**Focus: Natural history, birding and photography**

## INCLUDED:

- Private service of a specialized birding & naturalist bilingual guide
- Private transportation
- Accommodation in double or triple occupation. Single room adds a fee
- All meals listed in the itinerary with soft drink or purified water
- Transfers In-Out
- All excursions and activities listed in itinerary
- Entrance fees to all the reserves and activities
- All accommodations listed in the itinerary
- Internal flights São Paulo - Cuiabá - São Paulo
- Fluvial transportation

## NOT INCLUDED:

- International airfare
- Alcoholic Beverages
- Additional drinks
- Tips
- Any other item not specified

## Contact information:

**info@neotropicaecuador.com**



[www.neotropicaecuador.com](http://www.neotropicaecuador.com)

**CLIMATE:** This tour takes place during the dry season. Temperatures fluctuate between 60° to 90°F (16° to 32°C), and it is usually very sunny. However, cold fronts are not unusual in the Pantanal this time of year, and the temperature can sometimes drop to around 45°F (7°C) in the early morning. Since part of the time in the Pantanal is spent on fast boats, it is very important to bring cold weather gear. There might be a bit of rain, but it is usually very little, and sometimes none at all.

In the Atlantic Forest is usually pleasant to warm in the lower elevations, and cool to occasionally cold in the mountains. Sometimes cold fronts bring cooler temperatures into the region. Some rain can be expected.

**TIME ZONE:** UTC/GMT -3 hours

**VISA:** Starting on June 17, 2019, tourists from the US, Canada, Australia, and Japan will no longer need visas to visit Brazil. (Citizens of the UK, EU, South Africa, New Zealand, and various other countries were already exempt from tourist visa requirements.)

## CUSTOMIZED TOUR

We can easily set up a custom tour to virtually anywhere you can imagine. With a custom tour, you can travel with friends and family on dates that are convenient for your schedule, and the tour will be ran at the pace and difficulty you desire.

