



THE BEST OF BRAZIL – CERRADO, PANTANAL AND ATLANTIC FOREST

5 – 21 October 2019



Agami Heron will be one of our targets on this tour.

Our new The Best of Brazil itinerary will allow you to explore three of the major classic ecosystems of this huge and highly diverse country.

You will visit the Cerrado. This highly-threatened mosaic of dry woodland, gallery forest, and grassland is home to its own unique set of special birds, including **White-eared Puffbird**, **Collared Crescentchest**, and **White-rumped Tanager**. We explore this fascinating biome via the scenic Chapada dos Guimarães National Park, a landscape studded with beautiful rock formations and adorned with cascading waterfalls.

Next we will embark on a journey to the Pantanal, a vast, seasonally flooded wetland renowned for its incredible concentrations of birds at the end of the dry season. We schedule this tour during this time, when the fish trapped in the shrinking pools of water attract hordes of herons, egrets, storks, and other wetland species. The star of such huge concentrations is the massive **Jabiru**, towering over a diverse collection of South American waterbirds, such as **Sunbittern**, **Plumbeous Ibis**, and **Southern Screamer**. Raptors like **Savanna Hawk**, **Snail Kite**, and **Black-collared Hawk**, and up to five species of kingfishers also join the bonanza in one of the world's great birding spectacles.

The Pantanal also hosts a mosaic of forest islands and riverside forests, which are home to an interesting assemblage of regional endemics, such as **Mato Grosso Antbird**, **White-lored Spinetail**, and **Pale-crested Woodpecker**. And, of course, there is no better place in the world to see the enormous **Hyacinth Macaw**, the largest species of parrot and one of Brazil's great conservation success stories, and the mythical **Jaguar**, the third-largest species of feline in the world, as well as a large concentration of other mammals such as **River Otter**, **Lowland Tapir**, and **Capybara**.

Finally we will fly to the Atlantic Forest in south-eastern Brazil, where we will enjoy a large diversity of endemic birds such as **Saffron Toucanet**, **Red-breasted Toucan**, **Black-and-gold Cotinga**, **Green-crowned Plovercrest**, **Blond-crested Woodpecker**, **Bare-throated Bellbird**, **Green-headed Tanager**, **Red-necked Tanager**, **Diademed Tanager**, **Black Jacobin**, **Spotted Bamboowren**, **Robust Woodpecker**, **Large-tailed Antshrike**, **Rusty-barred Owl**, and **Long-trained Nightjar**.

This tour can be combined with our 6-day pre-tour **Birding Tour Brazil: The Amazon**.

Itinerary (17 days/16 nights)

Day 1. Arrival at Cuiabá and transfer to the hotel

After your arrival at Cuiabá you will be transferred to your hotel.
Overnight Hotel Taína, Cuiabá

Day 2. Birding Chapada dos Guimarães and Pousada do Parque

After breakfast we will leave Cuiabá and start our trip to the Chapada dos Guimarães National Park. En route we will look for **Blue-winged Macaw**, **Red-and-green Macaw**, **White-eyed Parakeet**, **Rusty-margined Flycatcher**, **Toco Toucan**, **Peach-fronted Parakeet**, **Chopi**

Blackbird, Cliff Flycatcher, the endemic **Chapada Flycatcher**, **Coal-crested Finch**, **Red Pileated Finch**, **Campo Flicker**, and others. We will have lunch in Chapada dos Guimarães town, and afterwards we will transfer to our rustic but nice lodge within the Chapada dos Guimarães National Park. After a midday break we will do some birding around the property, looking for **Brown Jacamar**, **Planalto Hermit**, **Spotted Rail**, **Least Grebe**, **Pale-crested Woodpecker**, and **Green-barred Woodpecker**. At dawn we will search for **Tropical Screech Owl**, **Common Potoo**, **Pauraque**, **Little Nightjar**, and **Scissor-tailed Nightjar**.

Overnight: Pousada do Parque, Chapada dos Guimarães

Day 3. Birding the Agua Fria Road and Vale da Benção

We will have a predawn start to explore the arid and dusty Agua Fria Road, which is one of the still-accessible places outside the park with remnants of Cerrado habitat and where we can still find species like the most-wanted **Collared Crescentchest**, **Rufous-winged Antshrike**, **White-rumped Tanager**, **White-banded Tanager**, **Plumbeous Seedeater**, **White-eared Puffbird**, **Black-faced Tanager**, and **Chapada and Suiriri Flycatchers**. As soon as it gets hot we will go to a forested area call Vale da Benção, where we have good chances to see species like **Amazonian Motmot**, **Saffron-billed Sparrow**, **Yellow-tufted Woodpecker**, **Brown Jacamar**, **Rufous-tailed Jacamar**, **Golden-crowned Warbler**, **Red-shouldered Macaw**, and hopefully the seldom-seen **Pheasant Cuckoo** and **Sharp-tailed Streamcreeper**. After a midday rest we will have a long drive to look for the rare and localized **Yellow-faced Parrot**. We will have dinner in Chapada dos Guimarães town and then drive back to our accommodation.

Overnight: Pousada do Parque, Chapada dos Guimarães

Day 4. Geladeira Road and Pousada do Parque

We will have another early start to explore the Geladeira Road, where we will look for **Spot-backed Puffbird** (Caatinga Puffbird), **Wedge-tailed Grass Finch**, **Sayaca Tanager**, **Red-legged Honeycreeper**, **Burnished-buff Tanager**, **White-tailed Hawk**, **Barred Antshrike**, **Planalto Slaty Antshrike**, **Greater Rhea**, **Burrowing Owl**, **Chopi Blackbird**, **Swallow-tailed Hummingbird**, **Blue Dacnis**, **Small-billed Elaenia**, and **Southern Scrub Flycatcher**. After lunch we will go to our stakeout for the endemic **Crested Black Tyrant**, after which we will come back to the lodge. The seldom-seen **Maned Wolf** has been seen at Pousada do Parque in the past during some of our tours, but chances are very low, and you should consider yourself very lucky if you encounter one at the right time and in the right place.

Overnight: Pousada do Parque, Chapada dos Guimarães

Day 5. Vale da Benção and transfer to Pousada Piuval in the Pantanal

We might try to explore the forest of Vale da Benção early in the morning once more, in case we are still missing any species, and take advantage of shade and the early-morning activity. After a few hours of birding there we will travel back to Cuiabá and from there to Poconé, the entrance to the Pantanal. We will arrive at Pousada Piuval in the Pantanal with enough time to start our birding here, looking for species like **Yellow-chevroned Parakeet**, **Cattle Tyrant**, **Plumbeous Ibis**, **Buff-necked Ibis**, **Bare-faced Ibis**, **Red-legged Seriema**, **Rufous Hornero**, **Jabiru**, **Toco Toucan**, and hopefully the first pair of **Hyacinth Macaws** flying above the Pantanal. After dinner we will have a night drive, looking for animals that might include **Crab-eating Fox**, **Brown and Red Brocket Deer**, and perhaps even the elusive **Giant Anteater**, which, however, is one of the hardest animals to see in the Pantanal.

Overnight: Pousada Piuval

Day 6. Pousada Piuval and transfer to Pouso Alegre

We'll have another early start to explore the woodland and deciduous forest behind Pousada Piuval, where we will look for **Planalto Slaty Antshrike**, **Pale-crested Woodpecker**, **Lineated Woodpecker**, **Green-barred Woodpecker**, **White-wedged Piculet**, **Red-billed Scythebill**, and **Great Rufous Woodcreeper**. We will also encounter a large number of water-associated species such as **Cocoi Heron**, **Snowy Egret**, **Great Egret**, **Roseate Spoonbill**, **Wood Stork**, **Large-billed Tern**, **Black-necked Stilt**, **Limpkin**, and **Sunbittern**. We also hope to see **Grey-cowled Wood Rail** and will try for the secretive **Yellow-breasted Crake** and **Grey-breasted Crake**. **Red-legged Seriema** and **Greater Rhea** should also be seen in the area. This area is always good to spot **Hooded Capuchin** monkeys too. We will leave Pousada Piuval and transfer to Pouso Alegre Lodge. This lodge is basic and small, but what it lacks in comfort is well compensated for by an incredible woodland, where we could see **Hyacinth Macaw**, **Great Rufous Woodcreeper**, **Chaco Chachalaca**, **Chestnut-bellied Guan**, and **Bare-faced Curassow**. But perhaps more amazing is the selection of mammals that can be found at night, including **Crab-eating Raccoon**, **Southern Tamandua**, and **Lowland Tapir**, and even the elusive **Ocelot** has been recorded here during night walks.

Overnight: Pouso Alegre Lodge

Day 7. Pouso Alegre Lodge and transfer to Pantanal Mato Grosso Hotel

We will have a predawn start, looking for wildlife and the endemic **Black-bellied Antwren**. Other birds include **Yellow-billed Cardinal**, **Purplish Jay**, **Red-crested Cardinal**, and **Masked Gnatcatcher**. After a few hours of birding the surroundings we will leave Pouso Alegre and head to the Pantanal Mato Grosso Hotel. En route we will stop to look for **Blue-crowned Parakeet** and **Nanday Parakeet**. We will arrive at the hotel at lunchtime. After a midday break we will have a boat trip along the Pixaim oxbow lake. Here we have chances to see **Agami Heron**, **Black-collared Hawk**, all five **Kingfishers** (**Ringed**, **Amazon**, **Green**, **American Pygmy**, and **Green-and-rufous**), **Sungrebe**, **Anhinga**, **Jabiru**, **Blue-throated Piping Guan**, and if we are lucky **Zigzag Heron**. We might also find our first **River Otters** and there is a small chance for **Jaguar**, which has been seen on previous Birding Ecotours trips in this area.

Overnight: Pantanal Mato Grosso Hotel

Day 8. Birding the Pantanal Mato Grosso Hotel area

Today we will have a full day birding the Pantanal Mato Grosso Hotel area, looking for many beautiful birds like **Chotoy Spinetail**, **Greater Thornbird**, **Rufous-fronted Thornbird**, **Blue-black Grassquit**, **Rusty-collared Seedeater**, **Picui Ground Dove**, **Scaled Dove**, **Picazuro Pigeon**, **Blue-throated Piping Guan**, **Savanna Hawk**, **Long-tailed Ground Dove**, **Rusty-backed Spinetail**, **Mato Grosso Antbird**, **Stripe-necked Tody-Tyrant**, **Buff-throated Woodcreeper**, **Undulated Tinamou**, **Helmeted Manakin**, **Ashy-headed Greenlet**, **Blue-crowned Trogon**, **Amazonian Motmot**, **Ferruginous Pygmy Owl**, and **Great Potoo**.

Overnight: Pantanal Mato Grosso Hotel

Day 9. Transfer to Porto Jofre and Jaguar boat ride

We will have an early start again, leaving the Pantanal Mato Grosso Hotel and driving along the Transpantaneira towards Porto Jofre, where you hopefully will see species such as **Scarlet-headed**

Blackbird, White-banded Mockingbird, Maguari Stork, Southern Screamer, Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Scaly-headed Parrot, and with some luck Golden-collared Macaw.

We will arrive at Porto Jofre for lunch, and in the afternoon we will have our first **Jaguar** search along the Cuiabá River, which is one of the most reliable places in the world to see this animal. We will also look for **River Otters**, which are often seen along the Cuiabá River. Birds we might see include **Collared Plover, Pied Plover, Black Skimmer**, and **Large and Yellow-billed Terns**. At dusk we will be looking for **Band-tailed Nighthawk**.

Overnight: Hotel Pantanal Norte – Porto Jofre

Day 10. Jaguar search

We will have another excursion along the Cuiabá River in order to hopefully have more **Jaguar** and **River Otter** sightings. In the afternoon we will look for **Spotted Rail** and **Grey-breasted Crake** and with luck **Least Bittern**.

Overnight: Hotel Pantanal Norte – Porto Jofre

Day 11. Birding the Transpantaneira and transfer to Cuiabá

With an early start we will leave Porto Jofre and drive back to Cuiabá, making select birding stops along the Transpantaneira road en route.

Overnight: Hotel Taina, Cuiabá

Day 12. Flight to São Paulo and transfer to Ubatuba

We will have an early flight to São Paulo, and from there we will drive for about three hours to Ubatuba in the heart of the Atlantic Forest. We will have an incredible afternoon while looking for multiple species of hummingbirds, such as **Black Jacobin, Saw-billed Hermit, Festive Coquette, Sombre Hummingbird, White-chinned Sapphire**, and **Versicolored Emerald**. The tanagers feeders attract stunning birds such as **Red-necked Tanager, Brazilian Tanager, Green-headed Tanager, Blue Dacnis, Chestnut-bellied Euphonia**, and **Violaceous Euphonia**.

Overnight Ubatuba Sitio Jacu

Day 13. Birding the Ubatuba forest trails

We will spend the morning birding the splendid trails at Ubatuba, where we will look for **Blond-crested Woodpecker, Bare-throated Bellbird, Yellow-throated Woodpecker, Crescent-chested Puffbird, Scaled Antbird, Ferruginous Antbird, Salvadori's Antwren, Black-cheeked Gnatcatcher, Slaty Bristlefront, Sao Paulo Tyrannulet, Buff-throated Purplethroat, Long-billed Wren, Pin-tailed Manakin, Blue Manakin, Spotted Bamboowren, Spot-breasted Antwren, and Channel-billed Toucan**. At night we will look for **Black-capped Screech Owl, Mottled Owl, and Striped Owl**.

Overnight Ubatuba Sitio Jacu

Day 14. Transfer to Itatiaia National Park

After breakfast we will transfer to Itatiaia National Park. Our lodge is located in the lowest parts of the park, where we have chances for **Saffron Toucanet, Red-breasted Toucan, Plovercrest, Gilt-edged Tanager, Brassy-breasted Tanager, Olive-green Tanager, Golden-chevroned Tanager, Rufous-headed Tanager, Frilled Coquette, White-bibbed Antbird, Violet-capped Woodnymph, White-throated Hummingbird, White-eyed Foliage-gleaner, Maroon-bellied**

Parakeet, Pileated Parrot, Velvety Black Tyrant, and Scaled Woodcreeper, and at night we could find **Tawny-browed Owl**.

Overnight: Hotel do Ypê, Itatiaia

Day 15. Itatiaia National Park

Today we will explore the upper parts of the park, looking for **Itatiaia Spinetail, Araucaria Tit-Spinetail, Diademed Tanager, Black-and-gold Cotinga, Large-tailed Antshrike, Rufous-backed Antwreio, Serra do Mar Tyrannulet, Rufous-tailed Antbird, Bay-chested Warbling Finch, Thick-billed Saltator, Robust Woodpecker, Blue-billed Black Tyrant, Shear-tailed Grey Tyrant, and Speckle-breasted Antpitta**. In the evening we will try for **Long-trained Nightjar** and **Rusty-barred Owl**.

Overnight: Hotel do Ypê, Itatiaia

Day 16. Itatiaia National Park

Some trails in the lower part of the park will be on our agenda for today, after which we will return to the lodge for lunch. We will search for species such as **Brown Tinamou, Spot-winged Wood Quail, Slaty-breasted Wood Rail, Black-billed Scythebill, Rufous-capped Motmot, Blue-winged Parrotlet, Maroon-bellied Parakeet, Red-ruffed Fruitcrow, Black-throated Trogon, Blue-naped Chlorophonia, Speckle-breasted Antpitta, Sharpbill, Large-headed Flatbill, and Rufous Gnateater**.

Overnight: Hotel do Ypê, Itatiaia

Day 17. Transfer to São Paulo, departure

Depending on the time of your departure flight we might have time for some last birding before leaving the lodge. We then will transfer to São Paulo's GRU Airport to connect with your international flight.

Please note that the itinerary cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually slightly) due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides, and other factors.

Duration: 17 days

Limit: 6 – 8

Date: 5 – 21 October 2019

Start: Cuiabá

End: São Paulo

Price: US\$7740 per person sharing

Single supplement: US\$800

Price includes:

Accommodation as described in the itinerary

Private land transportation

Private river transportation

Admission fees

Tour leader and local guides

All meals (except where indicated)

Airport transfers

Price excludes:

All flights

Any activity not described in the itinerary

Meals on day 1

Lunch and dinner on day 17

All drinks

Any personal expenses (e.g. laundry, phone calls, minibar expenses, internet access)

Gratuities