

ORGANIZATION FOR BAT CONSERVATION

Amazon River Adventure

February 21 to March 4, 2014

Among the scenes, which are deeply impressed on my mind, none exceed in sublimity the primeval forests un-defaced by the hand of man.

The Voyage of the Beagle, by Charles Darwin

Join OBC Executive Director Rob Mies and artist/naturalist/bat biologist Fiona Reid and local guides on a Batwatch and nature expedition on the Amazon. We will spend 10 days cruising the Amazon, Solimoes, and Madeira rivers and their tributaries aboard our private chartered ship, the L.V. Dorinha.

Each day, we will explore river tributaries, oxbow lakes, and other channels in small, motorized canoes. Highly skilled boatmen take us out early in the morning for wildlife viewing. In the early afternoon we may fish for Piranha or visit local villages, and in the late afternoon we will go on land to set nets for bats, staying up after dark to catch a good variety of species. Or we may choose to explore with spotlights from the canoes in search of fishing bats, caiman, owls, and nocturnal mammals. The bat show-and-tell will be on board our ship so that those who prefer not to spend long hours in the forest can still see and enjoy the bats we encounter.

Although we have a full schedule, this is a fairly relaxing trip as we can settle in to our rooms, unpack just once, and allow the boat to move us every night to a new locale. The seven-person crew is extremely hardworking and very friendly, and will do everything they can to make this trip the best it can be for all on board. We enjoy a huge array of fresh foods, local produce and freshly caught fish, all prepared in a tiny kitchen. We can eat in a comfortable dining room furnished with local hardwoods, or enjoy the breezes of the open-air upper deck. Fiona will always be available to provide us with insights into the flora and fauna that we'll be encountering along the river. Our captain and the local guides are expert at locating wildlife, especially reptiles and amphibians, and can tell us about the local culture and life along these great rivers. We will also be joined by Brazilian bat biologist Marcelo Marcos who can provide further information on the bats we encounter.

Our legendary English-speaking captain, Moacir Fortes Junior, has lived on the river all his life. He will entertain us with amazing stories and will help us find the best that the Amazon has to offer.

Daily Itinerary (subject to change at any time)

Feb 21 – Day 1.

We'll meet in Miami airport in the late afternoon for our TAM flight to Manaus. Our Manaus flight arrives at 11.30 p.m. and we will transfer (about a 10 minute drive) directly to our boat, parked on the dock outside the Hotel Tropical.

Note: flight cost is not included in your tour cost. Please do not book flights until the trip is confirmed and we can supply you with details of the group flight. Early arrivals may stay at the Hotel Tropical and join the group on board.

Feb 22 – Day 2.

We will wake up in a small tributary south of the Amazon River, grab a coffee, and go onto the upper deck to view the sunrise across the water, seeing parrots flying overhead and hearing the sounds of the forest all around us. We can look for waders, sloths and other birds as the group gradually emerge from their comfortable cabins and take in their new surroundings. After a sumptuous buffet breakfast we will board our three motorised canoes and take off in search of wildlife, traveling along narrow forested streams and through more open marshy areas, rich with raptors. We may see Squirrel Monkeys and we should hear the roar of Red Howlers. After lunch we may have a siesta or a swim in an area of clear water. We will move on a little and find a good spot, perhaps behind an isolated farm with forested trails, where we can set up our bat nets tonight. Some of the group may opt to go out after dark, spotlighting for wildlife from the comfort of the canoes. Later we will all reunite on board for a late dinner and a bat show-and-tell on the upper deck.

Feb 23 to March 02 – Day 3 to Day 10.

Each day on the Amazon brings a new adventure and new insight into this wonderful area. We will make our way downriver paralleling the Amazon via a series of “shortcuts” – our captain’s favorite means of travel! What we will do is take the canoes and cut a new path through flooded forest from one river system to another, while our boat takes a longer route around and joins us. In this manner, we will encounter a variety of forest-dwelling mammals, bird, frogs and reptiles, all from the canoes. There will be time to visit the Caboclos (resident peoples along the river), and we will be stopping at some communities, including Parintins, the home of the biggest festival in the north of Brazil. The Boi Bumba Festival is held here in June and is based on a legend involving a young woman, her husband and a bull (it has a happy ending!). We plan to travel as far as Santarem, a town with beautiful beaches and a rich array of monkeys in the surrounding forests. This is about 500 miles from our starting point in Manaus. On our way back we will visit the historical town of Óbidos, founded in 1697 and located in the narrowest part of the Amazon.

Our days usually start with an early expedition in search of wildlife. We will have a coffee and light snack then board the canoes to look for birds and monkeys. Some days the boatmen paddle us and do not use the motors, so we can appreciate the sounds of the forest waking at dawn. Drifting through a maze of channels and small lakes we may see

Brown Capuchins and we will be on the lookout for some of the local marmosets that only occur in this region, as well as kingfishers, nunbirds, and many other bird species. We will of course also search for roosting bats such as Proboscis and White-lined bats that often use trees overhanging the water for their roosts. We will also be looking out for large Boas in the trees. As the day warms up, we head back to the ship for a hearty breakfast.

When on board we will be on the lookout for Pink and Gray River Dolphins, and birds such as Hoatzins and Toco Toucans in the trees on the bank, perhaps a Vulturine Parrot as well as Green Iguanas. We may take a hike in the forest later in the morning or in the afternoon, searching for bat roosts in “tents” or hollow trees, and looking for the local species of marmosets that can only be found in this region, some of which were newly described to science less than 20 years ago. These include the Gold-and White Tassel-eared Marmoset, *Mico chrysoleucas*, and Maues Marmoset, *Mico mauesi*. We will also visit stands of Giant Water Lilies, *Victoria amazonica*, and other natural wonders.

We will visit areas of *Terra Preta* (literally: black earth), a soil type thought to have been manufactured in pre-Columbian times by native Brazilian farmers. This soil allows growth of trees and plants that are otherwise not found in this region; these trees are important for many of the animals. For example, the rare and local marmosets feed on fruits and exudates of several species of tree that only grow on Terra Preta soils.

Later in the day we may choose to fish for piranha or we may travel to an area of clear water (without piranha!) and enjoy a refreshing swim. Others may prefer to take a siesta in a hammock on the upper deck. Later, a team will go out to set bat nets, others may stay on board and venture out later. After dark they will take a night canoe trip to look for sloths, tarantulas, tree frogs, and night herons. Many birds can be very closely approached at night for photography, and our guides will no doubt bring a caiman or two on board for close inspection! We also have a good chance of seeing tree boas, fishing bats, and possibly large bamboo rats, tree porcupines, and owls. We will meet back on board for a late dinner and bat show-and-tell, releasing the bats near to their capture site before our ship continues to motor on while we sleep.

The return trip will be a little slower as we are travelling upriver, so we may spend some time motoring close to the bank, watching for sloths, monkeys and iguanas from the upper deck. In the late afternoon and evening as we sip our caipiriñas, we can watch bats emerge from hollow tree roosts and wheel around our ship, as we tune into their calls with a bat detector. We expect to see 30- 40 or more bat species, based on previous trips.

March 03, Day 11.

Today we head back to Manaus, stopping in the later afternoon at the famous Wedding of the Waters, where the café-au-lait water of the Amazon meets the black water of the Rio Negro. The two colors remain separate for several kilometers, owing to differences in temperature and flow speed of each river. We will get into our canoes so we can actually

feel this temperature difference for ourselves. We may see river dolphins, terns and other birds foraging here as the upwelling provides a rich area for fish. We will have a sumptuous farewell dinner on board then relax for a short time before we disembark at the Tropical Hotel and make our way direct to the Manaus Airport for our early-morning flight home. We check in at 10 p.m.

March 04, Day 12.

The TAM flight leaves at about 1:00 a.m., arriving into Miami at 6:00 a.m. From here we say goodbye to our fellow travelers and connect to our homeward flights.

AMAZON ADVENTURE

Cost.....US \$ 3,750 from Manaus

Flights are not included in the cost of the tour.

A deposit of US \$1,000 per person is required to reserve a space on this tour. Please request a reservation form and send with your deposit.

Organization for Bat Conservation
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Bloomfield Hills, MI 48303

Single Supplement

If you wish guaranteed single accommodation, the single supplement for this trip is an additional US \$2,000. If you are a single traveller and are willing to share, we will try to find you a suitable roommate, if we are unable, the single supplement will apply.

TOUR COST INCLUDES:

- Accommodation based on double occupancy
- Ground transportation / group airport transfers
 - Meals from Feb 22 to March 03
 - Park entrance fees
 - Activities listed in the itinerary
- Services of Tour Leaders Fiona Reid and Rob Mies
- Services of Brazilian biologist and local guides

TOUR COST DOES NOT INCLUDE:

- Return airfare from your home to Manaus
- Internal flights within Brazil (if required)
 - Airport departure taxes / Brazilian Visa
- Alcoholic beverages, bottled water, and other bar drinks
 - Phone calls and items of a personal nature
 - Optional activities / travel insurance
- Airport transfers if not travelling with group

- Additional transportation required due to any emergency situation

THIS TOUR IS LIMITED TO 18 PARTICIPANTS
THE TOUR WILL OPERATE WITH A MINIMUM OF 14 PASSENGERS
FOR SMALLER GROUPS A SMALL PARTY SUPPLEMENT WILL APPLY, AND
PASSENGERS CAN CHOOSE TO WITHDRAW WITH FULL REFUND

Cancellation Policy

In the event of a cancellation, you must notify OBC immediately and in writing. The tour price is quoted as a package. No partial refunds or credits will be given for services not used.

Cancellation fees will be charged per person as follows:

<u><i>Prior to Departure</i></u>	<u><i>Amount</i></u>
More than 120 days	\$100 administration fee
90 – 120 days	100% of deposit (\$500.00)
Less than 90 days	Full tour cost, unless we can resell your space

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Level of Difficulty – Moderate

On board you will need to climb one or two short flights of stairs. Boarding the flat-bottomed canoes is easy and the boatmen will be on hand to assist you, but some degree of balance is helpful. All land trips are optional and most of the wildlife can be viewed from the boat or canoes. On land we will be walking at a leisurely pace, with frequent stops, on ground that is sometimes rough or uneven. Some trails may be wet and will have to be traversed carefully but are accessible to anyone who has normal walking ability and stamina. At night we will be netting bats and there may be mosquitoes and other pests. Biting spiders and dangerous snakes are found in the area.

Travel Insurance

We strongly recommend that you purchase insurance to cover both trip cancellation and medical emergencies. It is important to get coverage for flight cancellation on medical grounds. We can suggest a suitable insurance company upon registration. If you have your own coverage, please be sure it includes a provision for emergency evacuation.

Flight Information for your Trip to Brazil

International and domestic flights are not included in the tour cost.

Please do not book your tickets until the trip has been confirmed as operating. At that time we will provide you with our itinerary so that you can join Fiona and Rob in Miami.

Travel Documents

You will require a passport for your trip to Brazil. Please make sure that it is valid for six months after the date of your tour. It is advisable to take a photocopy of the information page of your passport and your air tickets, keep them in a separate part of your luggage and leave a copy with your contact person at home. In case of loss, this will make them easier to replace.

A visa is required for U.S. and Canadian citizens entering Brazil. When you sign up for this tour we will send you the pre-departure information detailing how to apply for and obtain your visa. Please be advised that visas cannot be processed earlier than three months prior to date of entry. The visa is attached directly to your passport so it will be necessary to send your valid passport to the Brazilian Consulate.

Meals

Food in Brazil is very good, with plenty of fresh fruit, salads, and vegetables, excellent barbecued meats and interesting cheeses and desserts. Water is generally of a good standard but we suggest you use bottled water if you are off the boat or at a hotel en route. On board the boat please use the purified water for drinking (large bottles are provided at all times), do not drink from the tap water in your bathroom.

The food on board ship is delicious, featuring local and international cuisine, fresh fish, meats, fruits and vegetables, amazing cakes and desserts, all prepared in a tiny kitchen by our dedicated staff.

Accommodations on the Tour

L/V Dorinha

Our ship is comfortable, safe, and well appointed. It is beautifully finished on the interior with local hardwoods. The top deck is open, and provides panoramic views of passing river life as we cruise down the Amazon. Each essentially-identical two-person cabin has two bunk beds and is well equipped with storage closets, hooks and shelves, plus a private bathroom. Each cabin is air conditioned, though this is only turned on at night for sleeping. The private bathrooms have a sink, toilet and cool-water shower (the water is not heated but it is lukewarm and refreshing). Electricity is provided (110V in most cabins, some also have 220V) via a generator, which runs most of the night and on request during the day. Power outlets are two-holed or 3-holed, and accept both American style square pins and European rounded pins. Batteries can be charged at night while the boat generator is on. Laundry service is provided free of charge.

Currency and Currency Exchange

Since all tour costs are included in the tour fee, you will only need money for personal expenses such as bottled water, bar drinks (sodas and alcoholic beverages), postcards and souvenirs.

The currency in Brazil is the Reais (BRL). At the time of writing, \$1.00 US = 2.0 BRL. You should be able to convert some US\$ at the airport or with our captain at the beginning of the tour.

At the end of the trip you may want to have a small amount of money for shopping at the Manaus Airport. You can generally use small denominations of US currency here.

Airport Departure Tax

When leaving Manaus 115BRL departure tax is currently levied on all tourists at the international airport. This fee is often included in the cost of your plane ticket. Within Brazil, domestic departure tax is usually included in the ticket cost, but can be separate and ranges from US\$4 to \$9 depending on the airport. These taxes are subject to change at any time.

Health Requirements

We cannot prescribe specific medical precautions to be taken. The decision on which precautions to take must be made according to your judgement and on the advice of your physician. However, we do recommend that your tetanus, yellow fever, and hepatitis inoculations be up to date. It is generally recommended that, for this region, malaria prophylactics should also be taken. There will be some mosquitoes, and we sometimes encounter large emergences of non-biting insects.

Tipping

On this trip we spend most of the tour with the same crew and most of our passengers choose to provide a group tip in appreciation for all the help they have received on board.

Smoking

Tour participants are not permitted to smoke in close quarters with the rest of the group. Smoking is also not permitted on small boat excursions or on the trails. If we have placed two participants together in a room, and one is a non-smoker, then the room is designated as non-smoking.

Electricity

There is electricity (2-prong outlets that accept both North American plugs and rounded European plugs) at all our hotels. Power in Brazil can be 110-volt or 220-volt service, so you should check at each facility before using, and you may need a power adapter.

Climate

The climate will be warm to very warm by day and slightly cooler at night. According to our captain, there are two seasons in the Amazon, the wet season and the very wet season. It is important to be prepared for showers or heavy rain at all times.

Please Note:

1. The itinerary described in these notes is intended as an example only. In the event of weather changes, changes in airline schedules, logistical arrangements, or other problems, our leaders may make changes in the published itinerary.
2. The tour cost does not include extra expenses incurred because of weather and logistical delays, or delayed departures of chartered or scheduled aircraft.
3. This tour requires a minimum of 14 paying passengers. If the trip has less than 14 passengers we may apply a small-group fee of up to 20% of the trip cost. Anyone not wishing to pay an extra fee can withdraw from the tour at no cost.
4. Since most of our International tours travel into remote areas, we strongly urge you to purchase travel insurance that will cover you for any emergency medical evacuation.