

Argentina & Brazil 1st March to 18th March

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The trip was organized to try to catch up with a few mammal species that between us we had missed on previous ventures to South America. Cats were the priority and we were trying for Geoffroy's Cat, Pampas Cat, Puma, Jaguarundi and Ocelot. We managed to connect with all except Puma and we also saw Lesser Grison, Hoary Fox and Pampas Fox. So it was an exceptionally successful trip and very enjoyable to travel again with Steve, Karen and Regina. For future Brazil wildlife trips, Regina's email is: guiaregis@yahoo.com.br

El Palmar National Park, Argentina 2nd to 6th March



El Palmar is about 380km North of Buenos Aires and lies on the border with Uruguay, along the Uruguay River. It's a straightforward four and a half hour drive once you manage to get out of B.A. One thing to beware – the police stops, we were given a hefty spot fine by a surly Argentine cop for not having side lights on in the middle of a bright, sunny afternoon.

Five nights were spent at the very convenient La Aurora Del Palmar which is less than 10 minutes' drive from the park entrance. In the centre of the park the museum/visitor centre is a good source of information and we learnt that Lesser Grisons should be easy to see around April/May time in the campground where they've learned to raid for food leftovers.

The best spot for us in the park was around the small bridge at the end of the Arroyo Los Loros road. Late on the first afternoon a Geoffroy's Cat walked slowly across the road in front of us, just beyond this bridge. We parked up here on the second evening and waited a few hours, no cats but around seven pm and still in daylight a Lesser Grison suddenly appeared on the bridge, darting back and forth and was joined by three more.

Spotlighting that night got us a second Geoffroy's Cat, this time on the Ruins Road just past the junction to the camp ground. We had another good look at this individual within an hour when we got the eye shine again down one of the side tracks close by.

Early next morning back at the Loros bridge and we were amazed to see another Grison quickly go across the road, this time followed by five more. In the next two days we saw no more Geoffroy's Cats but had two more encounters with Grisons. The last one on the main road through the park when a group of ten crossed one after the other.



Grisons by Karen Baker

Another bonus of El Palmar is that plains Viscachas are easily seen from late afternoon and night around the camp ground.



Mammals seen in El Palmar

Capybara – *Hydrochaeris hydrochaeris*

Pampas Fox – *Dusicyon gymnocerus*

Crab-eating Fox – *Cerdocyon thous*

Geoffroy's Cat – *Felis geoffroyi*

Plains Viscacha – *Lagostomus maximus*

Brazilian Cavy – *Cavia aperea*

Lesser Grison – *Galictis cuja*

Crab-eating Raccoon – *Procyon cancrivorus*

Armadillo sp



Crab-eating Fox

Fazenda Bacury, Sao Paulo State, Brazil 7th to 9th March

Bacury lies about 4 hours drive North from Sao Paulo via Piracicaba. This is a beautiful place to stay with excellent food. It's a working farm with a large patch of preserved forest. The owner Leoncio and his wife are great hosts and very knowledgeable on the wildlife around.

The forest has one main track through the centre with a couple of side trails leading to hides set up with small feeding stations. These were good for photographing Azara's Agouti which are normally very skittish. On the first morning's drive down to the forest we were lucky to encounter three Hoary Foxes on the adjacent farm land.



Hoary Fox

The forest at Bacury also has a good population of Southern Muriqui which are reasonably easy to see.

On the second morning we were all up early as usual but heavy overnight rain showed no sign of letting up and we waited around in the guest house. Sometime around mid-morning I decided to put the waterproofs on and set off on foot down the 2km main road to the reserve. The rain was torrential and everyone thought I was mad to go out but half an hour later the rain started easing off and just as I was reaching the gate into the forest a Jaguarundi ran across the main road.

Mammals seen in Bacury

Brown Capuchin – *Cebus nigritus*

Brown Howler – *Alouatta guariba*

Southern Muriqui – *Brachyteles arachnoides*

Hoary Fox – *Pseudolopex vetulus*

Jaguarundi – *Felis jaguarundi*

Grey Brocket – *Mazama gouazoubira*

Azara's Agouti – *Dasyprocta azarai*

Common Long-tongued Bat – *Glossophaga soricina*

Common Vampire Bat – *Desmodus rotundus*



Common Long-tongued Bat



Common Vampire Bat

We then returned our hire car to Campinas and flew to Campo Grande.

Emas National Park 10th to 14th March

Then followed an eventful drive up to Emas National Park. We left Campo Grande around 4.30pm for what should have been an easy four and a half hour drive up to Emas. Past Camapua the road is now badly pot-holed, which caused problems once it got dark. Twice Tapirs suddenly appeared on the road in front of us which prompted us to slow up a bit. Around 9pm somewhere near Paraiso there was a small animal on the road ahead and as I pulled to a stop it slowly went off to the grass at the edge and we realised we'd just seen our first Pampas Cat. It was nearly midnight by the time we got to Emas and on the way we also encountered Yellow Armadillo, a Striped Hog-nosed Skunk, a third Tapir and a group of about 100 White-lipped Peccaries.

Over the next few days in and around the park we encountered Tapirs (day and night), a Giant Anteater, a single Hoary Fox, many White-lipped Peccaries and two more Lesser Grisons.

The highlight was on the third afternoon around 5.30pm. We'd just stopped on the main road and Steve stepped out to photograph a group of Macaws in a road side tree. He suddenly announced that there was an animal coming out

of the grass in front of our car. Two Pampas Cats then quickly ran across the road. Steve was in a great position to get a series of photos. Nearly one hour later and the cats crossed back towards the national park, but more distantly.



Pampas Cats by Steve Davis

The next afternoon we spent the few hours up until darkness at the same spot, but there was no repeat performance.

On our last night we drove into the town of Chapado Do Ceu to refuel and check out reports of a White-eared Opossum that we were told lived around the house of the park director. Regina quickly found the animal in the spotlight in a tree next to the house.



Mammals seen at Emas

Brazilian Tapir – *Tapirus terrestres*

White-lipped Peccary – *Tayassu peccary*

Pampas Deer – *Ozotocerus bezoarctis*

Marsh Deer – *Blastoceros dichotomous*

Brazilian Cavy – *Cavia aperea*

Giant Anteater – *Myrmecophaga tridactyla*

Yellow Armadillo – *Euphactus sexcintus*

Crab-eating Fox – *Cerdocyon thous*
Hoary Fox – *Pseudolopex vetulus*
Pampas Cat – *Felis brasiliensis*
Striped Hog-nosed Skunk – *Conepatus semistriatus*
Lesser Grison – *Galictis cuja*
White-eared Opossum – *Didelphis albiventris*

Fazenda, San Francisco 15th to 16th March

San Francisco Farm is a well-known hot-spot for Ocelots, which Steve and Karen had missed seeing on previous trips. It's also the subject of an Ocelot research project. We ended up with a couple of brief sightings over our two days here but it seemed a lot more difficult than on my previous visit here in 2012 when we had 9 sightings of Ocelots in two nights.

Mammals seen in San Francisco

Ocelot – *Felis pardalis*
Giant Otter – *Pteronura brasiliensis*
Marsh Deer – *Blastoceros dichotomus*
Capybara – *Hydrochaeris hydrochaeris*
Brazilian Cavy – *Cavia aperea*
Brazilian Rabbit – *Syrrhaptes brasiliensis*
Lesser Fishing Bat – *Noctilio albiventris*
Greater Fishing Bat – *Noctilio leporinus*
Greater Doglike Bat – *Peropteryx kappleri*
Crab-eating Fox – *Cerdocyon thous*
Black-striped capuchin *Cebus libidinosus*
Black and Gold Howler – *Alouatta caraya*



Ocelot, San Francisco

