



Wildwings

WILDWINGS BRAZILIAN JAGUAR TRIP: 2-18 JULY 2005

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INTRODUCTION

After the great success of the inaugural tour in 2004 it was difficult to believe that we could be as successful again. In the event despite unusually cold conditions, particularly in the Pantanal, it was another highly successful trip headlined by two superb Jaguars with a supporting cast of 3 Ocelot, Oncilla, 5 Brazilian Tapir, numerous Giant Anteaters, at least 4 Maned Wolves and another 26 mammal species.

2ND JULY

After the great success of Wildwings' inaugural Jaguar trip in 2004 a highly expectant group of ten (plus Mark who thought he was simply there to observe, how wrong he was!) arrived at Heathrow with great expectations of the fortnight ahead. They were not to be disappointed.

3RD JULY

Having left Heathrow late (unfortunately not uncommon on Varig) we arrived in Sao Paulo over an hour late only to be delayed further by the long queues to check in for our internal flight. It was so much easier when Varig and TAM code-shared. Having eventually checked in and changed the necessary currency we were soon on our way again heading for Cuiaba, the gateway to the Pantanal.

Meeting our ground agents in Cuiaba we quickly transferred to our air-conditioned coach for the journey to Pixaim seeing our first Greater Rheas before we reached Pocone where we stopped for the first of many excellent Brazilian meals.

After lunch the tarmac quickly turned to dirt as we joined the Transpantaneira to continue our way south. New birds started to come thick and fast with the roadside marshes covered in storks, ibis, spoonbills,

herons and egrets including the impressive Jabiru and numerous Rufescent Tiger Herons. The first of the Pantanal mammals, Capybara and Marsh Deer, also put in several appearances, and Julia found a group of co-operative Black-striped Capuchins in roadside trees. The ubiquitous Pantanal Caiman increased in abundance the further south we travelled.

Arriving at the Hotel Beiro Rio shortly before dark provided only temporary respite as after checking into our rooms and having dinner we transferred to the open-backed truck that was to be our carriage for the next 6 days. We were soon back out in the field for the first spotlighting session of the trip. The drive north was uneventful, but for a single Common Potoo, and a Crab-eating Fox which quickly became the subject of controversy as it metamorphosised (according to some observers) into a tabby cat. The two-mammal theory eventually won the day.

The drive back was however far more interesting with Boat-billed Heron, Crab-eating Raccoon, Marsh Deer, Red Brocket Deer and a superb Brazilian Tapir all being seen and a large bat with striking white wing flashes provided further entertainment back at the hotel. After a tiring 24 hours everyone finally retired to bed well satisfied with the first day in the field.

4TH JULY

An early 6 am start saw everyone cruising upstream from the Hotel Beiro Rio to await the emergence of a family of Giant Otters from their holt. We did not have to wait long and were soon watching a family group of 6-7 otters at close range. We watched them on and off for an hour as they headed upstream and had excellent views as they approached to within inches of our boat. As an added bonus a Southern Tamandua, a lifer for Richard and the first of four that we were to see on the trip, put in a brief appearance in a riverside tree, and we also had excellent views of Common Iguana.

Returning to the hotel we enjoyed our first Brazilian breakfast before setting out on the long drive south to Porto Jofre. We didn't get far before three Pantanal Marmosets put in a welcome appearance, the first of three sightings this year. Continuing south we soon ground to a halt again. This time the stop was less welcome as the driver had detected a problem with the vehicle and it took some time for the driver, and Mark (putting his experience in West Africa to good effect) to get us going again. Every cloud has a silver lining however and while we waited for the vehicle to be repaired, our second Southern Tamandua of the day crossed the road behind the truck. Having got the truck back on the road, in no small part as a result of the efforts of Mark, we were soon heading south again seeing our first Southern Screamer, a fantastic Caiman Lizard and an amazingly bright Green Lizard sp, before stopping at Pousada Jaguar for lunch. Our first Hyacinth Macaws, possibly the world's most impressive parrots, performed well behind the pousada as we waited for lunch.

After lunch we continued south seeing more Marsh Deer, and Capybara, and truly impressive numbers of waterbirds as the woodland gave way to more extensive marshland. Particularly impressive was a large roost of Cattle Egrets in a tree overhanging the Transpantaneira itself. As we travelled further south the quality of the bridges became highly variable but it was pleasing to see that the worst bridges in 2004 had been completely replaced.

We arrived at Porto Jofre late in the afternoon and were quickly greeted by more Hyacinth Macaws, Bare-faced Curassow and Chestnut-eared Aracaris among others. The evening night drive was uneventful with a few nightjars, most notably two superb male Scissor-tailed Nightjars, being the only species of note.

5TH JULY

An eventful day to say the least. We set out at 7 am for our first boat trip to look for Jaguars and were soon scouring one of the small tributaries of the Rio Cuiaba where we had encountered the species on the recces. No luck this time however, although we did encounter another Common Iguana and at least two groups of Black and Gold Howler, and we were soon back out on the Rio Cuiaba heading for the Rio

Piquiri where we had had such good luck last year. Before reaching the Piquiri our luck changed as we unintentionally disturbed two Brazilian Tapirs trying to cross the river. Retreating to a sensible distance we had great views of both animals, a female and presumably a large calf from the previous year, both in the water, and on the bank. Both animals eventually crossed the river.

Well pleased with the tapirs we stopped nearby for a comfort stop and struck gold as the occupants of a passing fishing boat told us that they had seen a Jaguar a few minutes before. Following them back up the Rio Piquiri they took us back to the exact spot where to order, a female Jaguar sat watching us from a wooded bank. Unfortunately she quickly disappeared but after we retreated to the opposite river bank she re-appeared and we were able to watch her from a distance for some time. Eventually once we felt that she was accustomed to our presence we drifted back slowly towards her. We were able to make several close passes by simply travelling upstream of her and then drifting back with the engine turned off. Close inspection revealed that she appeared to be pregnant, and most people obtained good photos. Unfortunately as we watched her, the weather changed and it started raining. After watching her for 20 minutes or so we set off back for Porto Jofre in falling temperatures and increasingly wet conditions, not really what everyone expected in the Pantanal.

Having dried out back in our rooms we headed for lunch during which the heavens opened once again. After a short discussion, it became apparent that most people did not particularly want to go out on the boats that afternoon, so we quickly re-let the boat to another group. Richard and Regina felt that there were good chances to see cats on the road if the surrounding vegetation remained wet so we decided to drive north along the Transpantaneira in order to spotlight back along the road once it became dark. Little were we to know what lay ahead.

As we drove north in the late afternoon certain stretches of the road were clearly wetter and stickier than we had anticipated. It later transpired that we had only caught the edge of the rain at Porto Jofre and that it had rained harder further north. After about 10 kms the track became increasingly slippery and the drivers decided to put chains on the rear tyres to stop us slipping around. As we waited for the chains to be fitted we watched large numbers of Nacunda Nighthawk feeding over the marshes.

Continuing north the next stretch proved even more slippery and we decided to turn around and head back to Porto Jofre once the driver found a sufficiently firm section to turn the vehicle. Having turned the truck around we headed back south. Two bridges later we found ourselves well and truly stuck as the front wheel slipped off the main structure and became wedged in a deep hole in the side of the bridge. Although the truck appeared firmly wedged in the bridge we evacuated the truck as quickly as possible and guided everyone off the bridge in the dark as Mark and the two drivers examined the damage. It was clear that it was going to take a considerable amount of ingenuity to get the truck back on the road but eventually, thanks largely to Mark's experience of similar problems in West Africa, the truck was jacked up using a number of old planks from the bridge. Even then we needed the assistance of another truck (and more importantly its jack) that appeared after about 45 minutes to lift the truck out of the hole and off the bridge.

Relieved to be back on the road we were quickly stuck again as the back wheels spun off the road into soft mud as we stopped to look at something in the spotlight. This time we were back on the road in minutes and decided to head straight back to Porto Jofre arriving just in time for a late dinner at the hotel.

What had started as a day of high expectation had well and truly delivered although most people could have done with a little less 'excitement' during the evening.

6th JULY

After the events of the previous evening a more laid back morning was the order of the day and we headed back out on the boat to explore the Rio Piquiri again. It remained unusually cool, as it did for the remainder of our time in the Pantanal, but we still managed to obtain good views of two groups of three Giant Otters, one group along the Rio Piquiri and another along the Rio Cuiaba. We also had yet another

brief view of a Southern Tamandua. Bird wise we saw our first Pied Plovers and an unexpected Black and White Hawk Eagle as we returned to Porto Jofre.

After lunch we were back on the boat in improving weather conditions and soon after re-entering the Rio Piquiri found a male Jaguar sunning itself on a sandy beach. As with the female the male quickly disappeared into riverside vegetation but quickly reappeared, seemingly attracted (and aroused), by our boatman's vocal impression of a female Jaguar. He remained on view for over 30 minutes and gave fantastic views and photographic opportunities before we decided to leave him in peace and head further upstream. He had disappeared when we returned an hour or so later.

Heading back to the hotel we were treated by a fine display from large numbers of Band-tailed Nighthawks and a few Lesser Fishing Bats. After dinner at the hotel most of us headed back out on to the Transpantaneira which had by now dried out again but wildlife wise the drive was as uneventful as the previous two nights with only a handful of nightjars being of any interest.

7TH JULY

Driving back north along the Transpantaneira produced little of note in the decidedly cool temperatures but on arrival at Santa Isabel Road a few hardy souls took a short walk along a nearby trail where a Scaly-headed Parrot and Fawn-breasted Wren gave us good views. More interesting still was a camera trap which Steve and Mark both managed to trip. On our subsequent arrival at Pousada Jaguar we discovered that a Puma had been photographed there a few days before. This is particularly significant as this species is rarely encountered on night drives along the Transpantaneira and in the past has been thought to be absent from areas with a large population of Jaguars.

Joining the others who had already retired to Pousada Jaguar we were quickly enjoying an excellent lunch including the pousada's legendary passion fruit mousse. After several very long days there was time for a couple of hours' rest before we headed out on to the nearby Santa Isabel Road. While one group walked the road and obtained excellent views of Black-striped Capuchin and Black and Gold Howlers, the others visited the nearby roost of Hyacinth Macaws. Both groups saw a number of Azara's Agouti.

As darkness fell the spotlights came out and after encountering a couple of semi-aggressive feral buffalo, and two distant Red Brocket Deer, we were rewarded with excellent views of an Ocelot, initially in long grass alongside the vehicle, and then on the track behind the vehicle. We spotlighted back to the pousada and although we saw numerous nightjars of at least four different species, we saw no additional mammals.

After an excellent dinner we were back on the road again and another spotlighting session along Santa Isabel Road produced brief views of another Brazilian Tapir, nice views of a Boat-billed Heron, and for the second year running a superb Paca on our way back to the pousada. After a slow morning the evening had certainly brightened up the day.

8TH JULY

An early start for five intrepid souls with a pre-dawn spotlighting session from 0530. The early start was well rewarded with nice views of an Oncilla, the rarest of the small cats in the Pantanal, in the grounds of the IBAMA Research Station at the start of Santa Isabel Road. Another mammal seen briefly a few hundred metres from Pousada Jaguar may have been a Tayra.

Walking back along the Santa Isabel Road also proved rewarding with a good selection of birds being seen including Undulated Tinamou, Golden-collared Macaws, Pale-crested Woodpecker and Turquoise-fronted Parrot. The later risers joined Regina and were similarly rewarded with a good selection of birds at the start of the Santa Isabel Road.

After breakfast we headed north to Araras Ecolodge but soon found ourselves in a traffic jam waiting for a bridge to be repaired. Having started a sweepstake on when we would be able to cross the bridge we were all taken by surprise as we crossed more than 40 minutes earlier than any of us had expected. Having said that only the main beams had been repaired and all the vehicles crossed the bridge without the benefit of cross planks. Consequently most of the party decided to walk across the bridge apart from Gay who had injured her ankle a few days earlier and Richard who stayed on the truck to keep her company.

Having negotiated this hurdle we continued on our way to Araras Ecolodge and had good albeit brief views of Neotropical River Otter and more prolonged views of another Pantanal Marmoset as we headed north. Our first trogons, two Blue-crowned also put in a brief appearance.

After an excellent lunch at the lodge most people rested before heading out on the nearby boardwalk for the afternoon. The boardwalk proved exceptional with a superb Southern Tamandua being seen curled up in a tree just feet away. Several Azara's Agouti and Black-striped Capuchin were seen well and on our arrival at the Tower Hide we were greeted by large numbers of Black and Gold Howler at touching distance. Stanley spotted a distant Giant Anteater from the tower and most of the party obtained their first views of this incredible animal. Frank and Maureen saw two South American Coati and a Crab-eating Fox was seen close to the boardwalk on our way back to the lodge.

We were on a roll and the post-dinner spotlighting session continued in this vein. Regina was clearly 'in the zone' seemingly picking up everything that moved and we racked up an impressive list. Highlights included Great and Common Potoo, our only Grey Brocket Deer of the trip, at least 8 Crab-eating Foxes, 4 Crab-eating Raccoon including a group of three, and a singleton foot-paddling for prey, a Brazilian Tapir, and best of all an Ocelot briefly seen as it was chased by a Crab-eating Fox. Richard and Mark also tried to add peccaries to the list before they suddenly changed shape and became young feral buffalo.

9th JULY

Our final morning in the Pantanal started bright and early, with a drive on a private trail opposite the lodge. Although mammals, other than a large herd of feral buffalo, and a single Azara's Agouti, were thin on the ground the birding was excellent and we saw a number of new species for the trip including Great Rufous Woodcreeper, Golden-Green Woodpecker and a superb Aplomado Falcon.

Returning to the lodge most people made a return visit to the boardwalk and Tower Hide and some were rewarded with a nice group of 8-10 South American Coati with another being seen from the Tower Hide itself. Two Giant Otters were seen from the Tower Hide and a nice variety of birds included at least three species of antbird.

After lunch at the lodge we were back on the road again forsaking our trusty truck for the greater comfort of our air-conditioned coach as we headed back towards the airport at Cuiaba for our flight to Sao Paulo. TAM were pretty much on time and after collecting our luggage we headed for a nearby hotel. Unfortunately the coach provided by the ground agents was rather on the large size and it took several attempts before our driver was able to negotiate the gates into the hotel grounds. Even tougher was overcoming the overly officious hotel check-in process and it took well over an hour before everyone was checked in to the satisfaction of the hotel staff.

10th JULY

A slightly later start than normal as we headed back to the airport for our flight to Belo Horizonte. Fortunately our ground agent helped us bypass the long queue of Brazilian holiday-makers at check-in and we were soon on our way to Minas Gerais and the second leg of the trip.

The rest of the day was spent driving west towards Sao Roque de Minas, and we eventually arrived at our hotel, Pousada Barcelos, shortly after dark. Dinner was taken at the oldest restaurant in town, the Zagaia, but unfortunately a large sound system blasting out music from a nearby car somewhat spoilt the ambience.

11TH JULY

The cool temperatures of the Pantanal seemed to have stayed with us, and the hotel garden, normally alive with activity from first light, was rather quiet to say the least, and a pre-breakfast dip in the pool was out of the question.

After breakfast we slowly made our way towards the national park with several stops for roadside birds (including Red-legged Seriema, Toco Toucan and Curl-crested Jay) on route. Once in the park we paid a short visit to the visitor centre before heading out across the grassland in search of anteaters and Maned Wolves.

As is often the case in Canastra the morning was slow going but at 1159, almost on cue as Richard had predicted that we'd see more anteaters in the afternoon than we would in the morning, our first Giant Anteater of the day was spotted c.150 metres from the road. Fortunately the wind was blowing towards us and we were able to walk slowly towards the anteater eventually approaching to within 15 metres giving everyone (or those who had grabbed their cameras when they left the coach) ample opportunity to get good photographs. Having satisfied our initial craving we continued on to the top of the falls at Casca D'Anta for lunch where we had a pleasant picnic lunch.

Our hunger and thirst satisfied we headed out in the field again in our quest for Maned Wolf and Pampas Deer but despite considerable effort drew a blank, in part because of the closure of one of the park's roads. We did however find at least 5, if not 7, more anteaters including one particularly large male c.75 metres from the road, and another male within feet of the road.

Unfortunately the latter detected us as soon as we opened the coach door and 'scarpered' at considerable speed. However noting the wind direction and heading for a higher vantage point several of the party managed to obtain close views from the top of a nearby stone corral. It was not all plain sailing however and one of the party slipped in attempting to ascend the corral creating a domino effect with three of the party eventually ending up on their backsides with interestingly sound effects thrown in for good measure.

Having patched up the 'wounded' we were soon back on the road and a Burrowing Owl provided a nice finale as we headed back to Sao Roque de Minas and dinner in a new restaurant close to the hotel.

12TH JULY

Satisfied with the views of Giant Anteater from the day before, and confident that we would see Maned Wolf at Caraca, part of the group joined Mark, and Bruno from Pousada Barcelos, for a Brazilian Merganser twitch. They were rewarded with excellent views of a male at the same site where we had been successful in 2004.

The remainder of the group spent the day back in the grasslands of Canastra and were soon watching another large anteater (spotted by our driver) at close range, this one having failed to read the script being up and about well before midday. Having had great views we were just heading back to the coach when Richard spotted a distant Maned Wolf. Unfortunately only Helen and Trevor managed to see it before it disappeared over a ridge never to be seen again.

The rest of the day was spent scouring the grassland for wolves and deer but yet again we drew a blank although we did see another five Giant Anteaters and found fresh armadillo diggings. Bird highlights included two stunning Sharp-tailed Tyrants, and a Sickie-winged Nightjar on the track as we returned to Sao Roque.

The merganser group did much better finding a superb group of Black-tufted Marmosets at Casca D'Anta. The marmosets performed at close range for over two hours as they kept going in and out of a hole in a tree and Mark and Kai also managed to see Masked Titi Monkey. They also saw a distant Giant Anteater on route to Casca D'Anta, and a good variety of birds, including c.500 Biscutate Swift around the falls at Casca D'Anta and seven species of hummingbird at feeders in a garden in nearby Vargem Bonita..

13TH JULY

Largely a day on the road as we made the long drive from Sao Roque to Caraca our progress being delayed by road works and broken down vehicles in Belo Horizonte. Leaving Sao Roque at 0815 we made a number of short stops on route to Piumhii and were rewarded with excellent views of the stunning western form of Sun Parakeet, Red-legged Seriema and Chestnut-capped Blackbird among others.

Back on the tarmac we headed towards Belo and stopped at the Varanda Verde Churrascaria e Pizzeria in Itauna for lunch. The food was terrific and the service absolutely superb a whole table-full of food appearing in minutes. Despite our best efforts the amount of meat served up beat us all so we quickly acquired a doggy, or should it be wolfy, bag to take the leftovers with us as to Caraca.

Given the delays in Belo we arrived at Caraca later than planned and made our way from the entrance gate to the monastery in the dark. Once again our luck was in and on the way to the monastery most people had brief views of our third Ocelot of the trip in the headlights. This was followed by brief views of our first Brazilian Rabbit of the trip, and finally a large Maned Wolf ambling up the road in front of the coach. The Brazilian Big 5 were finally under the belt for everyone.

After checking into our rooms we quickly headed for the dining room keen to have dinner and return to the terrace to look for more Maned Wolves. As it was the evening was slightly disappointing with the first wolf, a very nervous immature, not appearing until 2130 and quickly disappearing without taking any of the meat provided by us or the monks. By 1115 it had not returned and most of the party retired to bed, but by first light the following morning at least half of the meat had been taken. Fortunately the following night was more successful, mirroring our experiences in 2004.

14TH JULY

The early risers headed out before breakfast for an attempt to see Hyacinth Visorbearer one of Brazil's most spectacular hummingbirds. Most were successful although the two birds seen, a male and a female, rarely sat around long enough for anyone to obtain prolonged views.

After returning for breakfast we headed out again this time in search of primates along the Tankwe Grande track. It turned out to be a terrific morning the track being very birdy with a large number of new species including several species of gaudy tanager, both Pin-tailed and Swallow-tailed Manakins, and Swallow-tailed Cotinga being seen.

While some of the group led by Regina headed off of the main track in search of Titi Monkeys, the others (coincidentally those who had not seen the Black-tufted Marmosets at Casca D'Anta), remained patiently on the main track. We were soon rewarded when a group of 8-10 Black-tufted Marmosets came in to watch us at close range and we were able to watch them watching us for some time.

In the meantime the advanced party had tracked down a group of Masked Titi Monkeys and we were soon on their trail eventually getting prolonged views of them at close range. Amazingly at least two, if not

three, more groups of Titi Monkey were seen along the main track later in the morning and again in the afternoon.

While walking the trails in search of the Titi Monkeys we had seen several traps set by researchers to catch small mammals. Although they were all empty Maureen and Trevor were lucky enough to see three, presumed Mouse Opossums, trapped by the researchers, when they returned to the monastery for lunch.

After the success of the morning most of the party chose to wander around on their own after lunch. Frank and Gay added Guianan Squirrel to the mammal list and Steve and Julia unexpectedly found a nice group of Brazilian Cavy (Guinea Pigs) which most people saw. Two more groups of Black-tufted Marmoset were seen and the birding in the vicinity of the monastery was excellent. Later in the afternoon while some of the group returned to the Tankwe Grande trail for further views of Titi Monkeys others continued to wander trails on their own.

After dinner we headed to the terrace again and unlike the night before were well rewarded. The nervous immature appeared by 0815 before the monks had even put the food out and consequently quickly disappeared again. Fortunately an older male made several short visits between 2100 and 2315 and gave everyone excellent views. Finally a large male came in and spent over 30 minutes devouring the meat although unfortunately, given that it was by now the early hours of the morning, only Mark was there to witness it.

15TH JULY

Most people had a lie in this morning or wandered around in the vicinity of the monastery where a number of new species including Golden-chevrons Tanager and Blackish Rail were added to the bird list. Meanwhile four keen individuals made a further visit to the Hyacinth Visorbearer site before we headed off on our long drive to Ipanema.

After a terrific lunch where most people were introduced to the concept of the cost of the meal being based on the weight of the food consumed, we were again able to visit Sitio Graciema near Manhuacu. As in 2004 we were rewarded with exceptionally close views of Geoffroy's Marmosets although it did take slightly longer to find them this year. In addition two Blue-winged Macaws gave us a nice view as they perched nearby. After being plied with coffee and cakes by the owner of Sitio Graciema we were on the road again and eventually reached Ipanema.

After checking in we headed off towards the Hotel Vasconcelos for dinner and true to form the trusty Great Potoo was sitting on its favourite post in the plaza. As an added bonus it even gave us several nice flight views as it hawked for insects.

For most dinner was the finale to a long day but not for everyone. Having polished off Richard, Mark & Trevor on the pool table, Jean (our coach driver) and Mark turned their attention to the locals and held court on the table until in desperation the locals called on the local hustler to reclaim the table. Having succeeded in reclaiming the table he made a hasty retreat when challenged by Jean to a game of singles, having clearly identified Mark as the weaker link in the Wildwings combo.

16TH JULY

On some days everything just seems to slot into place and this was certainly one of those days although it started slightly shakily when the van to take us to the reserve at Caratinga arrived. Clearly not big enough for the group and their optics a swift change of plans was necessary and we transferred back into the coach for the first 40 minutes before switching back into the minibus for the last stretch into the reserve itself.

Planning to reach the reserve centre by 0830 we eventually arrived over an hour and a half late having stopped on no fewer than four occasions on our way into the reserve. The first stop for Brown Howler was expected but the Neotropical River Otter, which performed well as we crossed the river, was totally unexpected.

Better still as we entered the reserve our driver heard a group of marmosets and we were soon enjoying excellent scope views of at least three Buffy-headed Marmosets, an often elusive species which is by no means guaranteed. Quite how Julia spotted the first one with binoculars is still beyond me given that most people struggled to even see it through the scope initially.

Eventually the marmosets moved on and we headed into the reserve, only to come to a rapid halt a kilometre further on, when we came across the researchers watching a large group of Northern Muriquis (or Woolly Spider Monkeys), with a handful of Brown Howler thrown in for good measure.

Having had to walk some way to find the Muriquis last year this was a real bonus and we proceeded to have great views of several individuals right above us. After 30 minutes they moved off and we continued towards the visitor centre on foot. Much to our delight the Muriquis re-appeared ahead of us and started to feed on the nuts of a palm right by the track giving everyone absolutely fantastic views. Astonishingly two smaller groups of Muriqui were also encountered close to the main track during the afternoon.

Having finally reached the visitor centre we continued along the main track to look for Black Capuchin and before long Regina and Antonio (the reserve manager) found a small group along one of the side trails. Within minutes everyone was enjoying good views and we had our final primate of the day under the belt before lunch. It had been a truly amazing morning.

While most of the group returned to the coach to visit a nearby 'village' for a superb lunch Kai and Richard stayed in the reserve and enjoyed further views of Brown Howler, Black Capuchin and Northern Muriqui before the lunch party returned. The howlers and capuchins continued to provide great photographic opportunities throughout the afternoon.

The birding also proved to be excellent with a host of good species including Blue-winged Macaw, two Ferruginous Pygmy Owls, Black-necked Aracari, Channel-billed Toucan, Yellow-fronted & Yellow-eared Woodpecker, White-bearded Manakin, Eastern Slaty Antshrike and Flame-crowned Tanager among others.

All-in-all it had been an excellent final full day in the field and we returned to Ipanema well satisfied.

17TH JULY

Essentially a day of travel with a late start and a long drive from Ipanema to Belo Horizonte to connect with our flights to Sao Paulo and London. A Streamer-tailed Tyrant seen by Mark and Stanley from the coach was the only addition to the trip list.

On arrival in Belo we checked in for the TAM flight to Sao Paulo, and completed the pre-check-in for the international flight with Varig. The latter proved to be a very fortuitous move. We bid farewell to our driver Jean, and Regina (what would we do without her) and had a browse around the less than exciting 'international' airport before proceeding to the departure lounge.

When we had booked the flights originally TAM & Varig had been code-sharing and we had anticipated checking our luggage straight through to London. However with the breakdown of the codeshare arrangements we now needed to check in again at Sao Paulo. With two and a half hours to spare it should have been plain sailing, but with the TAM flight having been delayed by over an hour, it became quite a rush at Sao Paulo. After saying a quick goodbye to Stanley and Pauline (who were staying on in Brazil) we reached the check in desk to find that the international flight had already closed. Fortunately

the pre-check-in that we had completed in Belo saved the day and we made it to the departure lounge with 40 minutes to spare.

18TH JULY

After yet another delayed departure we eventually arrived back in London in the early afternoon (only a few minutes late) and after a relatively short delay we were reunited with our luggage which was quite a relief for some given our late check-in.

Although perhaps slightly more eventful than the leaders would have liked at times the trip had been great success and we can only hope that we can continue to repeat this success on future trips.

MAMMAL CHECKLIST

Nomenclature follows Duff & Lawson (2004) **Mammals of the World A Checklist** .

Opossum sp	Three seen by Trevor and Maureen at Caraca had been trapped by researchers but at the time of writing it is unclear which species was involved
Giant Anteater <i>Myrmecophaga tridactyla</i>	Araras Ecolodge – one seen distantly from the Tower Hide One dead on the road between Pocone and Cuiaba Canastra – 6-8 seen on day 1, two down to a few metres, and at least six on day 2 with one down to a few metres.
Southern Tamandua <i>Tamandua tetradactyla</i>	A total of four in the Pantanal. One on the river trip at Pixaim, a second crossing the road just S of Pixaim, another from the second boat trip on the Rio Piquiri, and prolonged views of another at close range from the boardwalk at Araras Ecolodge.
Forest (Brazilian) Rabbit <i>Sylvilagus brasiliensis</i>	At least four seen at Caraca
Guianan Squirrel <i>Sciurus aestuans</i>	A minimum of three at Caraca
Paca <i>Agouti paca</i>	One seen on a night drive just south of Jaguar Ecological Reserve
Azara's Agouti <i>Dasyprocta azarai</i>	One Porto Jofre, 4+ Santa Isabel Road, and at least three on both days at Araras Ecolodge
Brazilian Guinea-Pig (Cavy) <i>Cavia aperea</i>	5+ Caraca
Capybara <i>Hydrochaeris hydrochaeris</i>	Up to 200 daily along the Transpantaneira
Jaguarundi <i>Felis yagouarondi</i>	One seen by Mark at Caratinga
Ocelot <i>Felis pardalis</i>	One seen well while spotlighting along Santa Isabel Road, another seen briefly (being chased by a Crab-eating Fox) while spotlighting south of Araras Ecolodge, another seen briefly on the road to the monastery at Caraca
Oncilla (Little Spotted Cat) <i>Felis tigrina</i>	One seen well (on a pre-dawn drive) in the grounds of the IBAMA research station at the start of Santa Isabel Road

Jaguar <i>Panthera onca</i>	Cracking views of two along the Rio Piquiri, a pregnant female watched for over twenty minutes at close range sitting on a wooded river bank and a superb male watched on a sandy beach for over 30 minutes. The latter showed considerable interest in the boatman's attempts at imitating a female.
Maned Wolf <i>Chrysocyon brachyurus</i>	Canastra – one seen briefly by Richard, Helen & Trevor, before it disappeared over a distant ridge. Caraca – one seen on the approach road to the monastery, and another nervous immature coming to meat at the monastery on the first night. Three individuals visited on the second night, the previous night's nervous immature, and two adult males. The second adult which came in late at 0130 hours (only Mark was still up) stayed for over 30 minutes shattering bones just centimetres from Mark.
Crab-eating Fox <i>Cerdocyon thous</i>	One seen while spotlighting north of Pixaim, singles seen near the boardwalk at Araras Ecolodge on both days and at least 8 seen on the night drive south of Araras Ecolodge
Neotropical River Otter <i>Lutra longicaudis</i>	Singles from one of the many bridges along the Transpantaneira, and from the bridge on route from Ipanema to Caratinga
Giant Otter <i>Pteronura brasiliensis</i>	6-7 on the boat trip at Pixaim, two groups of three and another single on the Rip Piquiri and Rio Cuiaba near Porto Jofre, and two from the Tower Hide at Araras Ecolodge.
South American Coati <i>Nasua nasua</i>	Araras Ecolodge – two seen by Frank & Maureen on day 1, and 8+ seen by Frank, Stanley & Richard on day 2.
Crab-eating Raccoon <i>Procyon cancrivorous</i>	One on the night drive north of Pixaim and a group of three and another singleton on the night drive south of Araras Ecolodge. Prolonged views of the latter foot paddling for prey.
Lesser Fishing (Bulldog) Bat <i>Noctilio albiventris</i>	Small numbers seen while spotlighting north of Porto Jofre but no sign of the large numbers seen along the Rio Cuiaba on previous trips.
Bat sp	Seen at many sites with one particularly large striking (still to be identified) bat with white wing flashes seen at the Hotel Beiro Rio at Pixaim.
"Pantanal" Marmoset	2-3 along the Transpantaneira south of Pixaim, 2+ along Santa Isabel Road, and 3+ south of Araras Ecolodge. A good number after the lack of sightings in 2004.
Buffy-headed Marmoset <i>Callithrix flaviceps</i>	Three seen well at Caratinga
Geoffroy's Marmoset <i>Callithrix geoffroyi</i>	15+ seen at close range near Manhuacu
Black-tufted Marmoset <i>Callithrix penicillata</i>	10+ seen by Mark, Kai, Steve & Julia at Casca D'Anta on a trip to look for Brazilian Merganser. Watched for over 2 hours. Groups of 8+, 3+ & 4+ seen on different trails on Caraca. A good showing after the singleton in 2004.
Black-striped Capuchin <i>Cebus libidinosus</i>	c.10 north of Pixaim, two along the Rio Piquiri, 6+ Santa Isabel Road, and 5+ along the boardwalk at Araras Ecolodge
Black Capuchin <i>Cebus nigritus</i>	At least three groups totalling a minimum of 20 individuals at Caratinga

Masked Titi (Monkey) <i>Callicebus personatus</i>	1+ Casca D'Anta and at least 3 groups totalling a minimum of 14 individuals along the Tankwe Grande trail at Caraca
Northern Muriqui <i>Brachyteles hypoxanthus</i>	Seen as soon as we arrived at Caratinga. Superb views of at least 20 individuals with several feeding on coconuts at close range. Sightings of two smaller groups of up to 5 individuals later in the day.
Black (and Gold) Howler Monkey <i>Alouatta caraya</i>	Three north of Jaguar Ecological Reserve, 7+ from boat trips out of Porto Jofre, 4, Santa Isabel Road and 10+ at touching distance from the Tower Hide at Araras Ecolodge
Brown Howler Monkey <i>Aloatta guariba</i>	Five groups totalling at least 20 individuals at Caratinga and on route from Ipanema to Caratinga
Red Brocket <i>Mazama americana</i>	Singles seen while spotlighting north of Pixaim, at Porto Jofre, and along Santa Isabel Road. One briefly during the day south of Pixaim.
Gray Brocket <i>Mazama gouazoubira</i>	One seen while spotlighting south of Araras Ecolodge
Marsh Deer <i>Blastocerus dichotomous</i>	Seen on 4 days along the Transpantaneira. A total of 13 individuals with 11 of these being seen north of Jaguar Ecological Reserve
Brazilian Tapir <i>Tapirus terrestris</i>	A very good trip with singles seen while spotlighting north of Pixaim, along Santa Isabel Road and south of Araras Ecolodge, and prolonged views of an adult female and a yearling crossing the Rio Cuiaba

RICHARD WEBB
JULY 2005