



Wildwings

WILDWINGS BRAZILIAN JAGUAR TRIP: 30 JULY – 15 AUGUST 2005

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30TH JULY

After another great trip in July expectations were high as we met for Wildwings' third Jaguar tour. Despite the recent security threats check-in was remarkably smooth & even though our Varig flight was again delayed, this time by 90 minutes, we were soon on our way.

31ST JULY

Having arrived in Sao Paulo over an hour late it was pleasing to find a remarkably short queue for the check-in for our internal flight & we were soon on our way to Cuiaba where we met up with Roger & Gay who had flown out a day earlier. Keen to get out in the field we quickly transferred to our air-conditioned coach & were soon on our way to the Transpantaneira. As we drove towards Pocone & the first of many excellent Brazilian meals we were soon out of the vehicle watching a distant Red-legged Seriema & shortly afterwards four Greater Rheas.

After a superb lunch we were on the road again & quickly left the tarmac for the dust of the Transpantaneira. It was quickly apparent that the Pantanal was much drier than it had been a month earlier & the concentrations of birds & caimans around the roadside pools & river crossings were truly spectacular. New birds started to come thick & fast with large numbers of storks, ibis, spoonbills, herons & egrets including the impressive Jabiru & numerous Rufescent Tiger Herons. Raptors were well represented with Great Black Hawk, Southern (Crested) & Yellow-headed Caracara, Black-collared & Savanna Hawk, & Black, Turkey & Lesser Yellow-headed Vultures all being seen. A small group of Bare-faced Curassow were seen just before we reached the gate to the national park where we also saw our first Great Antshrike & White-backed Stilt & continuing south our first Hyacinth Macaws put in a brief appearance.

Mammals were initially thin on the ground with the exception of our first Capybara & a female feral 'Wild Boar' with six young but the pace quickened after a short stop at a roadside bar adjacent to Araras Ecologue. Our first Azara's Agouti appeared briefly on the road while we watched two Turquoise-fronted

Parrots in trees above the bar. Shortly afterwards a stop for our first Black-striped Capuchin proved highly productive with two capuchins, two Crab-eating Foxes, brief views of South American Coati & our first of many Blue-throated Piping Guans.

Continuing south we saw another two Crab-eating Foxes before finally arriving at the Hotel Beiro Rio at Pixaim where we checked into our rooms & had dinner. After dinner we transferred to our open-backed truck for our first spotlighting session along the nearby Santa Theresa Road where we saw our first Crab-eating Raccoon, at least six Red Brocket Deer, another two Crab-eating Foxes & Pauraque.

Although tired after a long day we retired for the night highly satisfied with our first day in the Pantanal.

1ST AUGUST

Dawn saw us up bright & early for a cruise along the Rio Pixaim & we were soon watching up to nine Giant River Otters including at least two small young, the adults coming close enough for us to smell their fishy breaths. The photographers had a great time before the otters eventually disappeared (they apparently swam past the hotel shortly afterwards) & we stayed on the river seeing our first Common Iguana & a good variety of riverside birds including five species of kingfisher.

After returning to the hotel for breakfast we quickly checked out & were soon back on the Transpantaneira heading south towards Pousada Jaguar. This section of the Transpantaneira is drier than the section to the north of Pixaim yet we still saw a good variety of waterbirds including three stunning Capped Herons & several Southern Screamers. A pair of Jabiru mating on their nest provided great opportunities for photos. Mammals were thin on the ground but we still managed to see another Red Brocket Deer & our first Marsh Deer. A comfort stop at one of the many bridges along the Transpantaneira proved fortuitous as a group of about 20 bats flew out from under the bridge. Closer investigation revealed a number of Long-nosed Bats roosting under the bridge.

Our lunch stop at Pousada Jaguar proved almost as enjoyable as the wildlife with the exquisite passion fruit mousse becoming one of John's highlights of the trip.

Suitably refreshed we had a short walk to the first bridge south of the pousada before climbing back on the truck for the drive south to Porto Jofre. Much to our surprise the drive produced our first cat of the trip with a large male Ocelot being seen walking along the road some distance ahead of the truck. Although brief most people managed to obtain scope views before it disappeared into roadside vegetation. Ocelots are rarely seen during the day in the Pantanal so this was a real bonus.

By comparison the rest of the drive was relatively quiet but we still managed to see another Marsh Deer & large numbers of Capybara as the road entered the extensive area of marshes at the southern end of the Transpantaneira. A Great Horned Owl nest complete with an adult & a well-grown juvenile proved popular as did the large numbers of Nacunda Nighthawk seen nearby. Further south the roadside trees were full of roosting Cattle Egrets & our first Band-tailed Nighthawk appeared.

We eventually arrived at Hotel Porto Jofre & settled into our rooms ahead of dinner. As seems to increasingly be the case the night drive at the southern end of the Transpantaneira was relatively quiet but great views of a superb Neuwied's Lancehead was a good indication of how much warmer it was than on the July tour & several Scissor-tailed Nightjars also gave good views.

2ND AUGUST

After an early breakfast we were soon out on the river heading for the Rio Piquiri where we had had so much success on the previous tours. The main river proved productive with the sandbanks covered with Black Skimmers along with smaller numbers of Large-billed Terns, Collared Plovers & Pied Lapwings (with young).

However the lure of the Piquiri was strong & we were soon on our way again seeing a group of three Giant River Otters along the main river. As we entered the Piquiri we became increasingly focussed on scanning the banks & found two more groups of three Giant River Otters which performed superbly. Our first Black & Gold Howlers & at least two Black-striped Capuchin were also seen. Birds were thin on the ground but a comfort stop produced nice views of Sunbittern & Blue-crowned Trogon.

As we returned down river the tension mounted & as we approached a sandbank where we had seen a Jaguar on the previous trip we were somewhat disappointed to find it occupied by a pair of Capybara with a young one instead. As we approached the Capybara & watched a King Vulture overhead Regina said that the Capybara probably indicated that weren't any Jaguars nearby. However we need not have worried as she quickly proved herself wrong spotting a male Jaguar emerging from the river nearby. The male, which subsequently proved to be the same male that we had seen on the July tour & amazingly the young male that we had seen in 2004, climbed out on to the bank & stopped to look at us before disappearing over the top of the bank. We maneuvered the boat away from the bank & it quickly reappeared & started walking along the bank giving excellent views. It eventually walked out on to a sandy beach where it sat down in the shade to the delight of everyone. Showing little concern other than flicking its tail to swat insects it stayed there until we eventually left it after nearly an hour. Needless to say the cameras took a pounding. Elated we returned to the hotel where we discovered that friends of Pete & Richard had also seen a Jaguar along the Transpantaneira that morning.

After lunch & a well-deserved rest mid-afternoon saw us back on the river & we were soon cruising the Piquiri again where much to our delight the Jaguar was still sitting where we had left it over three hours before. However as we approached it again it clearly decided that it had posed for us enough & walked off into riverside vegetation. The remainder of the afternoon was somewhat anti-climatic but we saw our first Gray Brocket Deer & added Band-tailed Antbird & White-lored Spinetail to our rapidly increasing list. The journey back to the hotel proved rewarding with large numbers of Band-tailed Nighthawk, & Greater & Lesser Fishing Bat hawking over the river.

After several poor nights spotlighting at the southern end of the Transpantaneira on the previous two tours we were tempted to give spotlighting a miss after dinner. However being gluttons for punishment we decided to do a short drive & walk & were rewarded with good but brief views of another Ocelot along the road.

3RD AUGUST

Returning to the river, we headed upstream for a different tributary where we had seen Jaguars on the two recesses, but although the birding proved good cats proved elusive, & we quickly headed back to the Piquiri where we were soon watching a superb group of seven Giant River Otters at close range.

Continuing upstream we carefully scanned the tops of the riverbank for Jaguars. Cruising close to the right hand bank we were suddenly surprised by a loud splash behind us & those at the back of the boat turned to see a large male Jaguar dragging a caiman out of the river. As we drifted back towards it, it unfortunately dragged the caiman over the top of the bank & disappeared before everyone at the front of the boat had seen it.

We retired to the opposite bank in the hope it would reappear but after 20 minutes it had still not done so & Matheus our trusty boatman decided to go ashore to see if he could see it. He quickly re-found it & Richard joined him to see if it was possible for the group to obtain further views. Unfortunately although Richard was able to see it standing no more than 20 metres away it quickly disappeared before anyone else could go ashore. Although delighted at yet another Jaguar sighting it was disappointing that some of the group had not seen it actually dragging the caiman out of the water.

After lunch at the hotel Pete returned to the river in the hope of further Jaguar sightings but to no avail. The rest of the group headed north on the truck arriving at Santa Isabel Road an hour or so before dusk. Walking along the road we quickly found groups of Black-striped Capuchin & Black & Gold Howler & a selection of birds including Golden-collared Macaw, Scaly-naped Parrot & Crimson-crested Woodpecker.

As dusk approached we returned to the truck for a pre-dinner spotlighting session along the Santa Isabel Road & were rewarded with excellent views of our first Brazilian Tapir in the open area beyond the forest. We also added Brazilian Rabbit to the list & saw at least two Gray Brocket Deer. Turning back on to the Transpantaneira we came to a rapid halt to admire a superb Yellow Anaconda, the first that we have seen on the tour, crossing the road near Pousada Jaguar. Well satisfied we pushed on to Pousada Jaguar for another superb meal including more of the legendary passion fruit mousse.

Suitably refreshed we drove south again but with the exception of a single Gray Brocket the drive back to Porto Jofre was disappointing.

4TH AUGUST

An early start saw us heading north again on the Transpantaneira for the long drive north to Araras Ecologe. The morning was relatively quiet with Black & Gold Howler, Black-striped Capuchin, Gray Brocket & Marsh Deer being the only mammals of note. Stopping for lunch at Hotel Beiro Rio we took another boat trip on the Rio Pixaim but despite our best efforts Sungrebe & Neotropical River Otter continued to elude us although a Caiman Lizard was seen briefly.

The afternoon drive north to Araras was however far more productive with no fewer than seven Marsh Deer scattered along the Transpantaneira. Nearing Araras the pace hotted up with a group of superb Black-hooded Parakeets with their astonishingly bright orange/red legs & a band of 12 South American Coati exploding from a roadside tree. Shortly afterwards a Crane Hawk gave us fabulous close range views & as we returned to the vehicle a group of Pantanal Marmosets were heard & then seen well on the opposite side of the road.

Eventually arriving at Araras shortly before dusk four or five of us made a quick sortie out on to the boardwalk but with little reward. The post dinner spotlighting session was however more rewarding with a drive along the private track opposite the lodge producing superb prolonged views of Southern Tamandua feeding close to the track. No less than 12 Crab-eating Raccoons were also seen along with two Crab-eating Foxes, three Gray Brocket & nice views of Great Potoo both perched & in flight. A quick walk along the boardwalk failed to produce the hoped for Grey Potoo seen along the boardwalk in July but despite this all in all it had been a highly satisfying end to the day.

5TH AUGUST

After an early breakfast & an unexpected Crab-eating Raccoon near the lodge we spent much of the morning along the private trail where we saw Black & Gold Howler, large numbers of Feral Buffalo & a good variety of birds. Highlights included Laughing Falcon, Golden-collared Macaw, Crimson-crested & Golden Green Woodpeckers, Rusty-fronted Tody Flycatcher, Rufous Cachalote & Chotoy Spinetail feeding its tailless offspring. A tame (but unfortunately not wild) Collared Peccary also proved popular. Returning to the lodge we were entertained further, first by another band of South American Coatis (including juveniles & some very dark adults) crossing the track & then by a superb Tegu Lizard near the road. White Woodpeckers, Blue-crowned Parakeet & numerous Amazonian Racerunners (Green Anieva) at the lodge completed an excellent morning.

After lunch, shared with a large number of cardinals, at the lodge, we made our way back out to the boardwalk but had not even reached the start of the boardwalk when another fantastic Yellow Anaconda crossed the path. It lingered at the edge of the path for us all to obtain terrific views & photos before heading off towards the nearby marshes. Worried that it may fall prey to the large numbers of caiman lurking nearby, one of the local guides decided to catch it, & we were able to admire it further in the hand. Eventually John decided to have a go at handling it himself, allegedly being 'experienced' in handling such beasts. All seemed to be going well as it posed for further photos but it suddenly decided that enough was enough & took a bite out of John's finger drawing blood in the process. John seemed remarkably unconcerned, his pride probably taking a greater battering than anything else, but eventually he passed the anaconda back to the guide for release nearby.

Continuing onwards we finally reached the boardwalk where Straight-billed Woodcreeper, several Azara's Agouti & two Undulated Tinamou gave us fabulous close range views. Reaching the Tower Hide we were greeted by several Black & Gold Howlers & the two Marsh Deer in the marsh below. Unfortunately three distant pigs eventually proved to be feral Wild Boar rather than the hoped for White-lipped Peccary.

Returning to the lodge we found Regina having a relaxing foot massage (she deserved a break) before heading out in the truck to visit the new river trail stopping to look at our first Campo Flicker & Olivaceous Woodcreeper on route. On reaching the river we were quickly rewarded with excellent views of another group of Pantanal Marmosets & at the end of the trail Lineated Woodpecker. The drive back to the lodge produced two Crab-eating Foxes & nice views of another Great Potoo as a nice appetiser for the night drive ahead.

With time to kill after dinner we spent some time watching bats returning to their roost in a tree near the lodge. Although unidentified at the time of writing Pete obtained excellent photos which will hopefully help us to identify them in due course.

Eventually we were back on the truck for our final spotlighting session, & what a session it proved to be. Starting on the private track again we had barely started spotlighting when a superb Giant Anteater appeared within 25 metres of the vehicle remaining on view for nearly 10 minutes. Several Crab-eating Raccoons & Great Potoos quickly followed before we re-found the Southern Tamandua from the night before. Once again it performed at close range for a prolonged period.

Continuing onwards we saw several more Great Potoo & three more Raccoons before going off track for an interesting although generally unrewarding drive through the bush. Returning to the track proved more rewarding with a nice Marsh Deer & more Gray Brockets & Crab-eating Raccoons being seen on our way back to the road. Reaching the Transpantaneira Richard suggested carrying on spotlighting along the road but offered to drop anyone who wanted to sleep off at the lodge. There were however no takers everyone preferring to stay on board & what a good decision that proved to be when a superb male Ocelot was found close to the road & sat in the spotlight for several minutes before stalking off into nearby bushes. Continuing south more Gray Brockets, Crab-eating Foxes & Raccoons appeared & another Southern Tamandua performed superbly for us. Eventually we turned back north but not before we had found another great Brazilian Tapir much to Pete's delight as he had not been with us for the previous one.

Even then we had not finished & the drive back produced yet another Southern Tamandua, South American Coati, numerous foxes & best of all another Ocelot hunting along the edge of the road. Very different from the previous individual it appeared to be a young one & quickly disappeared into long grass.

We finally arrived back at the lodge shortly after midnight after a truly superb night drive with at least 35 mammals of 11 species being seen.

6TH AUGUST

After the exertions of the previous evening today was by comparison a day of rest with the morning being spent at leisure around the lodge. In reality most people spent the morning along the boardwalk where more Pantanal Marmosets, Black & Gold Howler & Azara's Agouti were seen. Birding also proved excellent with highlights including White-edged Piculet, Great & Barred Antshrikes, White-lored Spinetail, Mato Grosso Antbird & Rusty-fronted Tody-Flycatcher.

After our final meal in the Pantanal we transferred back to the air-conditioned coach for the journey back to Cuiaba but even then we managed to add to our list. After a brief Common Iguana, two Tegu Lizards & two iridescent Green Ibis, a superb Caiman Lizard was found close to the road & posed for the photographers. A fine finale to a fantastic week in the Pantanal.

Our flight back to Sao Paulo was uneventful but on arrival it quickly became apparent that three of our bags were not on the baggage carousel. Fortunately the ground staff quickly re-located them & they were returned to us from whichever flight they had about to be sent off on. We quickly transferred to our hotel where most of the group quickly retired for the night.

7TH AUGUST

Early morning found us back at the airport for our flight to Belo Horizonte, although not before Pied-billed Grebe had been seen on the lake outside the hotel. Much to our horror the queue for check-in seemed to go on forever but thanks to the efforts of Claudio we managed to bypass the queue & quickly checked in. As we waited for our flight the tension mounted as we waited to hear if England had managed to finish off the Aussies in the second test. Eventually, much to everyone's (well Richard, Pete, John, Fran & Mark's) relief, the news came through that we had won, although the two run margin was far too tight for most people's liking.

Arriving in Belo on schedule we were met by Fred, from our ground agent Brasil Aventura, & after re-confirming our flights quickly transferred to our coach for the long drive to Sao Roque de Minas stopping for lunch on route.

Reaching Piumhi shortly before 5 we were confident that we would have time for some birding on the final stretch of the drive but our hopes were dashed as we discovered that we had a puncture. Fortunately we were at a garage at the time so the tyre was quickly changed while we consumed ice creams & watched nearby White-eyed Parakeets. However we had lost an hour & it had been dark for some time when we finally checked in to our hotel in Sao Roque, Pousada Barcelos. Amazingly we discovered that we had yet another puncture but fortunately being in Brazil rather than the UK the puncture was quickly fixed while we had dinner in the nearby Restaurant Zagaia despite it being 8 pm on a Sunday night!

8TH AUGUST

After birding around the hotel garden at dawn with Swallow-tailed Hummingbird the highlight, we headed out for Serra da Canastra & our first attempt at Maned Wolf. A nice Black-chested Buzzard Eagle flew low overhead as we waited at the entrance to the park.

We did not have to wait long for our first wolf when after walking out to the source of the Sao Francisco River Richard spotted a wolf on a distant hillside. Keen to get closer we started walking out towards the wolf aided by a useful track across the grassland. Stopping at a rocky ridge some decided that they had gone far enough but 10 intrepid souls continued on to try for even closer views. The advance guard led by Fred showed poor navigational skills & managed to walk right past it without seeing it, before disappearing over a distant ridge. The others, led by Chris displaying clearly superior navigational skills, managed to walk straight to the wolf, & had excellent views down to 150 yards. It was particularly pleasing to discover that the wolf was not collared & was not one of the 17 radio-collared wolves being studied by Pro-Carnivora. Eventually the wolf disappeared over the ridge where it was also seen by the group returning from their Trans-Brasil hike. Eventually we returned to the coach where the coach driver was still watching the wolf in the scope.

We carried on in the coach, our next target being approachable Giant Anteaters, although the drive was regularly punctuated with stops for birds including Cock-tailed & Sharp-tailed Tyrants, Great Pampafinch & Ochre-breasted Pipit.

As is often the case shortly after midday the first Giant Anteater appeared a couple of hundred metres from the road. Although the wind direction was less than ideal we decided to try to get close but it quickly disappeared into a vegetated gully. It eventually reappeared but despite Pete & John's best efforts it refused to play ball & kept a healthy distance ahead of its pursuers.

We moved quickly on & eventually reached Casca D'Anta where we stopped for lunch at the top of the falls. Several new birds were added to the list including Sooty Tyrannulet & Yellow-bellied Elaenia. After lunch we continued looking for anteaters but despite finding a relatively distant one fairly quickly it disappeared over a nearby ridge equally quickly & it looked like we would have to settle for distant views.

However fortunately just as the light was starting to fade we spotted one close to the road & alighted to try to get close. We quickly encountered an obstacle in the form of a ditch to cross & while some of the group managed to find relatively straight-forward spots to cross the, one of the party ended up in the ditch up to their knees in water. (I blame John myself for letting go of her & to think he didn't even drop the anaconda when it bit him). Fortunately however we all managed to get close views of the anteater & everyone left the park well satisfied.

After an abortive attempt to try a new restaurant recommended by Regina (it was either closed or we went down the wrong road) we returned to the Zagaia for another excellent dinner.

9TH AUGUST

With our alternative vehicle being unavailable & some people wanting to look for Brazilian Mergansers & others wanting to look for anteaters & wolves we managed to split the day into two.

While Roger & Gay took the opportunity to have a well-deserved lie-in & a wander around Sao Roque de Minas the others headed out for a morning looking for mergansers on the river below the escarpment. Unfortunately we were unsuccessful but still had an excellent morning with two Black-tufted Marmosets being seen at the campsite near Casca D'Anta & another group being seen along the road near Vargem Bonita. As is often the case birding was excellent along the road & a host of new species were seen including Blackish Rail, White-eared Puffbird, Streamer-tailed Tyrant, Grey Elaenia, Cliff Flycatcher, Rufous Casiornis, Curl-crested Jay, Purple-throated Euphonia & Hooded & Gilt-edged Tanagers. Returning to Sao Roque around midday produced good views of Red-legged Seriemas close to the road & after meeting back up with Roger & Gay for lunch at the hotel more were seen on our drive back out to the park.

The afternoon in the park could not have been more contrasting than the previous afternoon with no fewer than 15 Giant Anteaters being seen although most were on distant hillsides. Fortunately one however was close to the road & we got excellent close range views before it disappeared surprisingly quickly into the distance. Better still while looking for a tinamou flushed by the coach we found another more distant anteater that allowed us to approach it while it continued to feed unconcerned as we stood photographing it from a few feet.

Well satisfied with the anteater sightings we decided to look for a radio-collared wolf known to have a territory nearby. Our luck was in again as we had brief but good views of two Pampas Deer, the only ones seen this year, & then saw the radio-collared wolf cross the road in front of the coach. Fortunately we were able to get quite close as it hunted in a nearby gully.

It had been a terrific afternoon & once again we returned to the hotel well satisfied. We had dinner at a nearby restaurant, where we were further entertained by the owner performing a series of card tricks.

10TH AUGUST

After two days in the field much of the day was spent on the road but a short stop on route to Piumhi produced Blackish Rail, Swallow-tailed Hummingbird & Chestnut-capped Blackbird. After an excellent lunch on route to Belo we changed the damaged tyre in Belo & eventually arrived at Caraca in the dark to find that a Maned Wolf had already put in an early appearance.

After a quick dinner we were back out on the terrace & had excellent views of a Maned Wolf, which emptied the tray of meat in one visit. The tray was refilled & the wolf or another returned shortly

afterwards. Later in the evening after most of the group had retired for the night two wolves, apparently a female with a young male, visited the terrace together

11TH AUGUST

The day started early with most of the group visiting the Piscina area to look for Hyacinth Visorbearer. Unfortunately not everyone obtained good views but Shear-tailed Gray-Tyrant & Buff-throated Pampafinch provided compensation for some.

Meanwhile Richard checked the researchers' traps but unfortunately they were not set & he returned to the monastery where Brazilian Cavy, up to eight Guianan Squirrels & Slaty-breasted Wood Rail were all seen. All were seen by most of the group during the remainder of the day.

After breakfast at the monastery we headed out towards the Tankwe Grande trail & were surprised to find a Robust Woodpecker around the car park. The rest of the morning was spent around the Tankwe Grande trail looking for primates but despite considerable effort we drew a blank. Birding however was rewarding with highlights including Crescent-chested Puffbird (a lifer for Richard), male & female Pin-tailed Manakin, Serra Antwren, Ochre-rumped Antbird, Variable Antshrike & Olivaceous & Highland Elaenia.

After lunch at the monastery some rested while the others went birding around the monastery where Fran found a nice Ferruginous Pygmy Owl while looking for cavies.

Mid-afternoon found us back on the Tankwe Grande trail where primates continued to evade us but a Swallow-tailed Cotinga showed well in the canopy. Deciding to try another trail we headed back towards the road & were just getting to grips with an elusive White-rimmed Warbler when Regina nonchalantly said that she'd found monkeys. Somewhat relieved we were treated to great views of four Masked Titi Monkeys with a tiny juvenile.

We returned to the monastery for dinner before spending the evening on the terrace again. At least three wolves appeared during the evening & at one stage shortly after midnight while one wolf fed on the meat, two others had a spat in the nearby car park. Another great end to the day.

12TH AUGUST

While part of the group headed back to the Tankwe Grande trail & were rewarded with two more groups of Masked Titi Monkey, some of the others visited another trail where two Swallow-tailed Cotingas gave great views & a group of Black-tufted Marmosets gave fantastic views as they stripped the bark to feed on the sap.

After breakfast back at the monastery we headed out for the long drive to Ipanema stopping on route at Sitio Graciema where the habituated group of Geoffroy's Marmoset performed superbly & provided a nice comparison with the Black-tufted Marmosets seen earlier in the day. John also saw two Blond-crested Woodpeckers.

We eventually arrived at Ipanema by early evening & after checking in headed out for dinner at the nearby Hotel Vasconcelos accompanied by Dana, a researcher from the Northern Muriqui project in Espirito Santo. On route true to form the reliable Great Potoo was seen in the plaza. After an excellent meal we returned to the hotel where Richard found that he'd been thoroughly stitched up as he was herded in to the reception where a birthday cake awaited him. The cake was delicious however.

Unfortunately the noise outside the hotel was less enjoyable for some but in hindsight it was merely an appetiser for the following day.

13TH AUGUST

Our final day in the field started well with a nice Lined Antshrike from the bridge on the way to the reserve & our first group of Brown Howler on our way into the reserve. Arriving at the reserve centre we headed out on the main track where we found another group of Brown Howlers before Antonio the reserve manager came back to tell us about a group of Muriquis further up the track. Over the next hour or so we had fantastic views of a large group of Northern Muriquis with smaller numbers of Black Capuchin over the track. They performed superbly & we considered ourselves very lucky to have again seen them so easily without having to hike out into the forest.

We continued along the main track to a pool at the edge of the forest where we saw a nice Gray-headed Tody-Flycatcher while the walk back to the visitor centre for lunch produced Eastern Slaty Antshrike & White-bearded Manakin among others.

After lunch we headed back to the coach to drive out to look for Buffy-headed Marmosets that had been heard along the river earlier in the day. After stopping for another group of Brown Howler, & a six-inch long dragonfly, we were duly rewarded with terrific views of three marmosets, our tenth primate of the trip. Although they didn't linger for long they all gave great views as they crossed the road. Having lost them in the forest we left the road to walk a side trail in the hope that we could relocate them & although we were unsuccessful we found a nice bird party containing several new species including Sepia-capped Flycatcher & Green-backed Becard. Better still was a tiny Eared Pygmy Tyrant building a nest literally inches from us.

With time running out part of the group returned to the reserve for further views of Brown Howler & Black Capuchin, while the others decided to walk the road back in to the reserve. This proved highly productive with two Vinaceous-breasted Parrots, a distant Blue-winged Macaw (initially identified as a jacamar, a classic example of size illusion!), Southern Bristle Tyrant & an exquisite Sharp-tailed Streamcreeper found by Pete. All in all a great end to the trip.

We returned to Ipanema for dinner & although the noise from the 'portable disco' outside the hotel made sleeping a real challenge for some overall it had been a fitting finale to the trip.

14TH AUGUST

A day of travel although Swallow-tailed Hummingbird was a pleasant distraction from the live Premiership coverage at our roadside lunch stop.

We arrived in Belo in ample time for our flight & said farewell to Regina & Fred, & also to Roger & Gay who were staying on in Brazil for an extra couple of weeks.

Our flight arrived in Sao Paulo on time & we were delighted to find short queues at the Varig check-in making check-in a formality.

15TH AUGUST

We arrived back at Heathrow on schedule after another excellent trip & some of the group even managed to get home in time to see England's abortive attempt to beat the Aussies again. Oh well, you can't have everything.

MAMMAL CHECKLIST

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

Giant Anteater <i>Myrmecophaga tridactyla</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superb views of one on the second night drive at Araras Ecolodge. • Surprisingly elusive on the first day in Canastra with only three being seen and only the last of these (in fading light) being at all approachable. • Better luck the following afternoon with at least 15 being seen and while a few of these were quite distant two allowed us to approach to within a few feet.
Southern Tamandua <i>Tamandua tetradactyla</i>	Another good trip for this previously difficult species. Prolonged views of one individual on both night drives at Araras Ecolodge and another two along the Transpantaneira on the second night drive at Araras Ecolodge.
Forest (Brazilian) Rabbit <i>Sylvilagus brasiliensis</i>	Two on the spotlighting session along Santa Isabel Road and another at Caraca.
Guianan Squirrel <i>Sciurus aestuans</i>	Up to 8 seen at close range each day in Caraca
Azara's Agouti <i>Dasyprocta azarai</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to seven on both days at Araras Ecolodge • Another on a trail off of the Rio Piquiri
Brazilian Guinea-Pig (Cavy) <i>Cavia aperea</i>	Up to 6 seen on both days at Caraca
Capybara <i>Hydrochaeris hydrochaeris</i>	Up to 200 daily in the Pantanal
Ocelot <i>Felis pardalis</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An extremely unexpected daytime sighting with one seen well but distantly during the early afternoon as we drove south from Pousada Jaguar towards Porto Jofre. • Another seen about 5 kilometres north of Porto Jofre on our second night drive there. • Two seen along the Transpantaneira on the second night drive at Araras Ecolodge. A superb male which sat in the spotlight for several minutes before stalking off into nearby bushes and a young one initially seen walking along the side of the road before disappearing into long grass.
Jaguar <i>Panthera onca</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great views of the same male seen on the previous tour along the Rio Piquiri. First seen by Regina as it came out of the river it walked along the bank for about 500 metres before sitting down on a sandy beach to the delight of the photographers. We left it in peace after an hour and it was still sitting in the same spot when we returned over 3 hours later! • Exciting but frustrating views of another male along the Rio Piquiri the following day. Alerted to its presence by a loud splash those at the back of the boat turned to see it dragging a caiman out of the water. Unfortunately the views of those at the front of the boat were largely obscured and the Jaguar quickly dragged the caiman over the bank and out of view. After waiting patiently on the opposite bank to see if it would re-appear we landed slightly upstream of where it has disappeared and our intrepid boatman Matteus went ashore to see if he could see it. He quickly found it and Richard went ashore and was able to see it standing a mere 15 metres away. Unfortunately it quickly moved off before anyone else had further opportunities to see it.

Maned Wolf <i>Chrysocyon brachyurus</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close range views on both days in Canastra. A superb (uncollared) male on day one & a radio-collared male on day two. • Caraca – at least three individuals seen by 1030 on the first night with a female and a well-grown juvenile photographed together at one point. The first individual completely cleared the meat on the tray in one visit! • At least three on the second night with a male feeding on the meat and another two fighting nearby just after midnight.
Crab-eating Fox <i>Cerdocyon thous</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four on route from Araras Ecolodge to Pixaim on the first evening and another two on the night drive later that evening. • Two on the first night drive at Araras Ecolodge with at least 10 the following night!
Giant Otter <i>Pteronura brasiliensis</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nine including at least two small young on the boat trip at Pixaim. • Three groups of three on the Rio Cuiaba & Rio Piquiri on the first boat trip out of Porto Jofre. • A group of seven along the Rio Piquiri on the second day at Porto Jofre.
South American Coati <i>Nasua nasua</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One south of Araras Ecolodge on the first evening. • Twelve along the Transpantaneira south of Araras Ecolodge on the drive north from Pixaim. • Nine along the private trail east of Araras Ecolodge. • One on the second night-drive at Araras Ecolodge.
Crab-eating Raccoon <i>Procyon cancrivorous</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One on the night-drive south of Pixaim along the road to Fazenda Santa Theresa • Twelve on the first night-drive at Araras Ecolodge and nine the following night. • One early morning sighting at Araras Ecolodge.
Lesser Fishing (Bulldog) Bat <i>Noctilio albiventris</i>	Seen every evening on the Rio Cuiaba at Porto Jofre
Greater Fishing (Bulldog) Bat <i>Noctilio leporinus</i>	Seen every evening on the Rio Cuiaba at Porto Jofre
Long-nosed Bat <i>Rhynchonycteris naso</i>	20+ disturbed from a roost under a bridge on route from Pixaim to Pousada Jaguar
Bat sp	Excellent views of several individuals of a as yet unidentified species at Araras Ecolodge. Photographed so may yet be identified
“Pantanal” Marmoset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10+ along the Transpantaneira south of Araras Ecolodge • Superb views of 8+ along the river trail at Araras. • Five along the boardwalk at Araras.
Buffy-headed Marmoset <i>Callithrix flaviceps</i>	Excellent views of three along the river near Caratinga.
Geoffroy's Marmoset <i>Callithrix geoffroyi</i>	c.15 at Sitio Graciema including several small young.
Black-tufted Marmoset <i>Callithrix penicillata</i>	Distant views of two at the campsite near Casca D'Anta. 6+ along the road between Vargem Bonita & Casca D'Anta Superb views of four at close range at Caraca as they made holes in the bark to drink the sap.
Black-striped Capuchin <i>Cebus libidinosus</i>	Up to 8 seen on 5 days in the Pantanal. Seen along the Transpantaneira, along Santa Isabel Road and along the Rio Piquiri.
Black Capuchin <i>Cebus nigrinus</i>	At least 3 groups totalling 15+ individuals at Caratinga
Masked Titi (Monkey) <i>Callicebus personatus</i>	Four plus a tiny young one along the Tankwe Grande trail on the first afternoon at Caraca. Groups of 6 and 2 along the same trail the following morning.
Northern Muriqui <i>Brachyteles hypoxanthus</i>	Superb close range views of 30+ at Caratinga

Black (and Gold) Howler Monkey <i>Alouatta caraya</i>	Seen along the Rio Piquiri (3), the Transpantaneira south of Pixaim (2), around the Tower Hide at Araras Ecolodge (up to 10 per day) and along one of the private trails at Araras Ecolodge
Brown Howler Monkey <i>Aloatta guariba</i>	Several groups totalling 20+ individuals at Caratinga
Pampas Deer <i>Ozotoceros bezoarticus</i>	Two seen briefly on the second afternoon at Canastra
Red Brocket <i>Mazama americana</i>	Six on the Pixaim night drive and another the following morning on the drive south to Pousada Jaguar
Gray Brocket <i>Mazama gouazoubira</i>	One seen from the boat along the Rio Piquiri Two seen on the night drive along Santa Isabel Road & another just south of Santa Isabel Road One seen on the drive north to Pousada Jaguar. Three & six on the two night drives at Araras Ecolodge.
Marsh Deer <i>Blastocerus dichotomous</i>	A total of 16 seen on four days along the Transpantaneira including seven on the drive from Pixaim to Araras Ecolodge
Brazilian Tapir <i>Tapirus terrestris</i>	Prolonged views of one on the night drive along Santa Isabel Road and another seen well along the Transpantaneira on the second night drive at Araras Ecolodge.

Ferals

Wild Boar <i>Sus scrofa</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sow with six young north of Araras Ecolodge • Three from the Tower Hide at Araras Ecolodge.
Feral Buffalo <i>Synceus caffer</i>	Widespread in the Pantanal.

RICHARD WEBB
AUGUST 2005