

Bolivia: Kaa Iya trip report

October 19 to 22, 2015

*With Nicholas Mcphee
from Nick's Adventures Bolivia
www.nicksadventuresbolivia.com*



Jaguar (*Panthera Onca*)

Introduction

My fiancée and I planned a trip in Bolivia and she read about Nick's Adventures and the surprisingly frequent jaguar sightings they had in Kaa Iya. This made Kaa Iya our prime destination and our main focus for this trip.

During those 4 days/nights in Kaa Iya with Nick, we saw the following:

- 2 Jaguars
- 1 juvenile Puma
- A few Crab-eating Foxes
- 2 Gray Brocket Deer
- 1 American Horned Owl
- 1 Yellow-Collared Macaw
- 1 Nightjar
- 1 Argentine Black And White Tegu
- 1 Yellow-Footed Tortoise



Detailed daily accounts

- First day -

While planning this trip, we contacted Nick and everything was arranged easily: 4 days and nights to look for the Jaguar, mainly, and any other animal species in the vicinity.

After our first night at the hotel, he picked us up around 7:00 AM in Santa Cruz, accompanied by a driver and a cook. The long drive to Kaa Iya was spent discussing the fauna and ecosystem with Nick, while consulting his many books. We also stopped to pick up a very discrete ranger that would accompany us during the tour. As we arrived in the park, we had a good omen: Jaguar scat. Father along, we saw prints!



Jaguar scat



Prints

We started by setting our headquarters in a comfortable house built for rangers, which was surprisingly clean considering we were in the middle of the jungle. Our first interesting sighting was an Argentine Black And White Tegu right next to our HQ.



Argentine Black And White Tegu

Then, we set out on our first drive, which gave us our first Bolivian jungle sunset. Seeing Nick crawl under a bridge in the dark to try and spot wildlife instantly convinced us of his dedication, which would not waver even for an instant during our stay.

After an exquisite supper, we went for a night walk and saw a small **Nightjar**. We then came back for a well-deserved shower and went to sleep at 11:30, after watching Nick's very promising camera traps results.



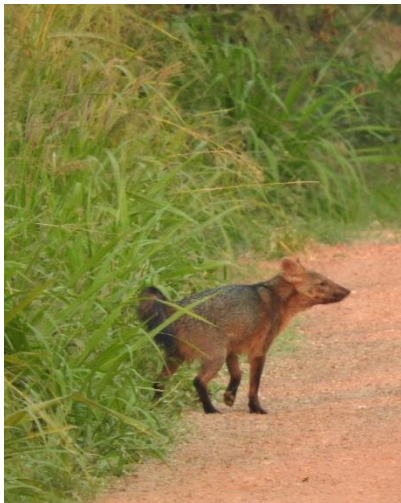
Nightjar



Yellow-Collared Macaw

- Second day -

We left for a drive at 5:00 AM and saw **Crab-Eating Foxes**, a **Yellow-Footed Tortoise**, a **Yellow-Collared Macaw** and many beautiful birds in a pond. We came back for another superb meal at 10:00 AM, then went to sleep, as it became warmer and warmer. At 4:00 PM, we set out again until 9:00 PM.



Crab-Eating Fox



Yellow-Footed Tortoise

- Third day -

At 2:00 AM, we started a drive towards the small plane landing zone, where Nick found signs of Jaguar very recently.

We spot a small running animal on the still dark road and Nick said a magic word: “**Puma**”! It was a youngling, but we saw no sign of its mother.

On the way, we also saw a hole that was probably dug by a Giant Armadillo, and a rest area used by a Jaguar very recently, with remains of an Armadillo, whose skull was almost intact. Further along the road, we saw another Fox, then a **Gray Brocket Deer**.



Gray Brocket Deer

We sat close to a tunnel used as cover by a Jaguar and 2 cubs, according to Nick’s camera traps and waited for a few hours, but still no luck. Nick found an Armadillo skull right next to the tunnel’s entrance.

We rested for a while in a ranger’s cabin, after looking at more camera traps results, which included the Jaguar and its cubs, a Capibara and a Giant Armadillo. We returned to continue our stakeout and Nick taught us how to set camera traps.

Later, we saw another **Gray Brocket Deer** on the road and an **American Horned Owl**.

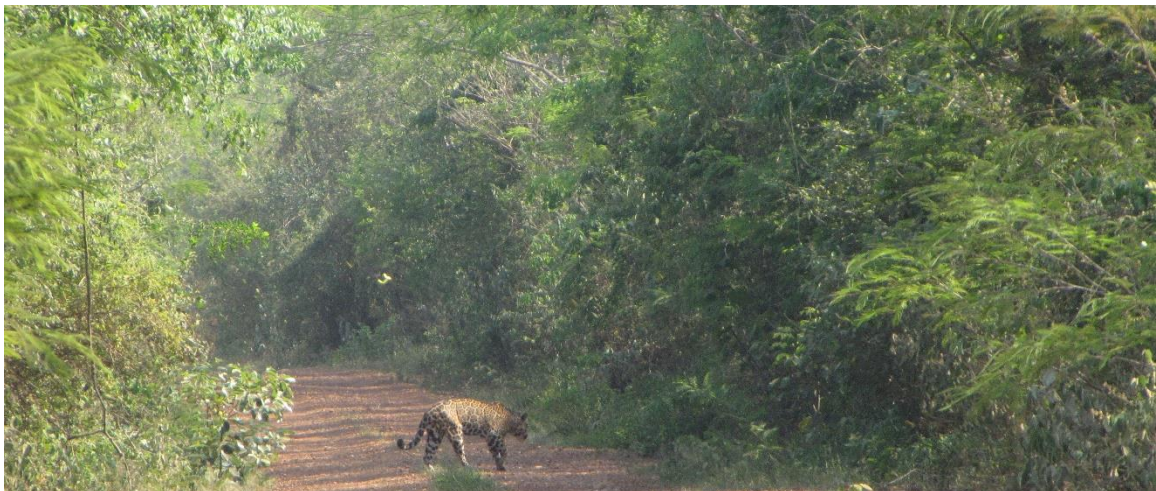
- Fourth Day -

We set out around 6:00 AM on this very last morning; our last chance to spot the Jaguar. Nick told us to stay alert, as he thought many Jaguars might be outside of the park's limits. With a heavy heart, we arrived at the gate of the park and continued on our way. Just as we thought we were done, we hear: "JAGUAR!"

It was a sight to behold! Two **Jaguars** on the road, a very clear sighting at about 100m from us, with an army of butterflies around them. The male Jaguar quickly disappeared in the foliage, but the female stayed on the road for a good 10 minutes, before also vanishing in the jungle. We got back in the car, exhilarated, and drove up to the location where she disappeared. Just then, she came out again and crossed the road only 10m behind us. It was an epic conclusion to our trip.



Two Jaguars





Jaguar and a swarm of butterflies



Report by: Laurent Morin

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