

I've wanted to visit Brazil for several years, especially to see other large cats beyond the ones I've seen several times in Africa. Most specifically, I wanted to see jaguars, pumas and ocelots.

After reading several books and visiting several websites on the net, I found MammalWatching where I could get massive amount and reliable information on where would be the best places to see those large cats. It quickly appeared that Brazil was not the best area for pumas but for sure, Pantanal would be good to see both jaguars and ocelots. Being also avid birder, Pantanal was the perfect location to maximize our chances to see both jaguars and other mammals in addition to a large variety of great birds like hyacinth macaws, rheas or toucans. A friend of mine also told me that maned wolves could be seen in Minas Gerais without too much difficulty, which was confirmed reading Jon Hall's reports, so my wife and I finally decided that Brazil would be our next destination for wildlife watching.

Thanks to various excellent reports like those written by Chris Townend, Richard Webb or Steve Firth in the Brazilian section of MammalWatching and with Jon's recommendation, I contacted Regina Ribeiro who seemed to be an excellent guide to organize this trip. Unfortunately, she was not available at the dates when we could leave for Brazil in August 2016, so we had to find another option. After contacting several agencies, we finally booked our trip with Wildlife Trails: a British agency working with some local guides in Brazil. Due to not enough days of vacation, we couldn't visit all the places we initially thought and we then focused on Iguacu (I absolutely wanted to see these large falls after having the chance to already see the Niagara and Zambezi Falls), followed by Pantanal (Transpantaneira between Pocone down to Porto Joffre) and Minas Gerais (Canastra and Caraça national parks). We agreed on the following itinerary:

- Aug 11 Arrive late Iguacu / sleep Hotel Saint Martin
- Aug 12 Iguacu Brazil / sleep Hotel Saint Martin
- Aug 13 Iguacu Argentina / sleep Sheraton
- Aug 14 Transfer to Cuiaba / Pantanal / sleep Pousada Alegre
- Aug 15 Pantanal / Pousada Alegre
- Aug 16 Pantanal / Pousada Alegre
- Aug 17 Pantanal / Pousada Alegre
- Aug 18 Transfer to Porte Joffre / sleep Jaguar Ecological Reserve (JER)
- Aug 19 Boat Safaris on Cuiaba river / JER
- Aug 20 Boat Safaris on Cuiaba river / JER
- Aug 21 Boat Safaris on Cuiaba river / JER
- Aug 22 Transfer to Belo Horizonte / sleep Comfort Confins
- Aug 23 Transfer to Canastra NP / sleep Chapada do Canastra
- Aug 24 Canastra NP / Chapada do Canastra
- Aug 25 Canastra NP / Chapada do Canastra
- Aug 26 Transfer to Caraça NP / sleep Caraça Monastery
- Aug 27 Caraça NP / Caraça Monastery
- Aug 28 Transfer back to Sao Paulo / sleep Pullman

The trip organization by Wildlife Trails was done well and we had 3 different guides for each area.

The guide in Iguacu was nice and a good companion but to be honest, not very good for wildlife watching: clearly not his main expertise. I loved the Iguacu Falls; I found them to be the most beautiful ones compared to Niagara and Zambezi falls. Too bad there are so many people ☺ A visit to both the Brazilian and Argentinian sides is highly recommended to fully enjoy such nature wonder.

In Patanal, we had Eduardo (the owner of JER) and one of his guides to visit both the Pousada Alegre area and the Cuiaba river banks for Jaguars. Eduardo was very good to spot jaguars and other mammals. I was impressed by the concentration of wildlife there, both mammals and above all birds: they were everywhere and in large numbers! I really enjoyed the Pousada Alegre ranch, rich in wildlife and the small road to drive from the Transpantaneira to the lodge was especially good during night drives. Apparently this is common reading some reports where even a puma was seen there but we didn't have that luck... On the other hand, I was a bit disappointed by the area around JER because unlike written in several reports, we didn't see a lot there: not a single ocelot nor any other cat. Having said that, we saw tapirs almost every night at both Pousada Alegre and JER! As described, the river around Porto Joffre was excellent for jaguars: we saw 8 different individuals in very, very good conditions...but we were not alone ☺.

In Minas Gerais, we had another guide: José Augusto. He was excellent and very knowledgeable for bird watching: a real bird enthusiast capable to recognize most birds just by hearing them and brilliant to spot even the tiny ones while driving! On the other hand, mammals were not his area of predilection but I don't complain since he found our main targets in Canastra and Caraça National Parks. Minas Gerais is very different from Pantanal: the concentration of wildlife is clearly not the same but the landscape is sumptuous with mountains, cascades and forests. Another plus for me in that area was the Caraça Monastery: an amazing place situated in a wonderful piece of land with excellent accommodation and food. I really enjoyed this monastery. The priest in charge is a great man to discuss with. If you can, go there. If you also can, go there during the week days ☺ !

One last word about the weather: we were not prepared and surprised by how cold it was during the vast majority of our trip, even in Pantanal. We knew it was winter time but still, we were not expecting such low temperatures and we were light in clothing... The good thing with such a cold weather is that we did not see a single mosquito during the entire

trip. No risk to catch Zika but because of this, which was good for us but bad for the local people, many tourists cancelled their trips and we were often alone in some areas we visited in Pantanal or Minas Gerais.

To conclude, after spending 16 days in Brazil, we saw all the Big 5 (Jaguar, Maned Wolf, Giant anteater, Giant otter and Tapir), which was my primary target + several other nice mammals except ocelots, which was my main disappointment. Beside mammals, we saw hundreds of birds including some very nice raptors, colorful macaws, toucans or trogons, hummingbirds and many others but we missed the rare Brazilian Merganser in Canastra NP.

We saw 22 mammal species in total, which I find not so good considering that we did night drives every night in Pantanal. However, this was a great trip globally speaking and now, the problem is that we need to go back there to visit the other places we could not do due to lack of time: the Amazonian forest, the Atlantic forest near Rio de Janeiro and South Pantanal for ocelot ☺.

Below is the list of mammals we saw:

Mammals with photos or well seen				
Species	Espèces	Latin Name	Where seen	Pic
South American coati	Coati à queue annelée	Nasua nasua	Common in Iguacu, a few seen in Pousada Alegre	X
Azara's Agouti	Agouti azara	Dasyprocta azarai	A few in Pousada Alegre	X
Southern Tamandua	Tamandua tétradactyle	Tamandua tetradactyla	1 at night in Pousada Alegre	X
Brazilian Porcupine	Coendou du Brésil	Coendou prehensilis	A sleeping animal in a tree at Porto Jofre	X
Jaguar	Jaguar	Panthera onca	8 different individuals in Cuiaba River	X
Giant Otter	Loutre géante	Pteronura brasiliensis	Several in Cuiaba River	X
Giant Anteater	Grand fourmilier	Myrmecophaga tridactyla	Great views with baby at night in Pousada Alegre + 3 others in Canastra NP	X
Brazilian Tapir	Tapir terrestre	Tapirus terrestris	Seen almost every night at Pousada Alegre, JER and Caraça Monastery	X
Maned Wolf	Loup à crinière	Chrysocyon brachyurus	Very close views of 2 wolves in Caraça Monastery	X
Crab-eating Fox	Renard crabbier	Cerdocyon thous	3 seen in Pousada Alegre	X
Marsh Deer	Cerf des marais	Blastocerus dichotomus	Only 1 seen along the Transpantaneira	X
Grey Brouket deer	Mazame / daguet gris	Mazama gouazoubira	3 seen in Pousada Alegre	X
Red Brouket deer	Mazame / daguet rouge	Mazama Americana	2 seen in Pousada Alegre	X
Pampas Deer	Cerf des pampas	Ozotoceros bezoarticus	Several in Canastra NP	X
Capybara	Capybara	Hydrochaeris hydrochaeris	Common in Pantanal	X
Geoffroy's Marmoset	Ouistiti de Geoffroy	Callithrix geoffroyi	3 in Caraça NP	X
Black-tufted Marmoset	Ouistiti à pinceau noir	Callithrix penicillata	Several seen in Caraça NP	X
Black-tailed (Pantanal) marmoset	Ouistiti mélanure	Callithrix melanura	Several seen in Pousada Alegre	X
Black-striped Tufted Capuchin	Sapajou à barbe	Cebus libidinosus	Several seen in Pantanal	X
Brown Capuchin	Sapajou apelle	Sapajus apella	Several in Iguacu	X
Black and Gold Howler	Hurleur noir	Allouatta caraya	5 (with baby) seen in Pantanal	X
Black-fronted Titi	Titi à masque	Callicebus personatus	Several seen in Caraça NP	X
		Total Species Recorded = 22		

I'm adding to this report a few pictures of some of the iconic species we observed during that trip or that were new to me.



Iguacu Falls



Iguacu Brazil



Iguacu Argentina



Crab-eating Fox



Capybara



Southern Tamandua



Giant Otter



Black and Gold Howler



Marsh Deer



Pampas Deer



Red brocket Deer



Brazilian Tapir



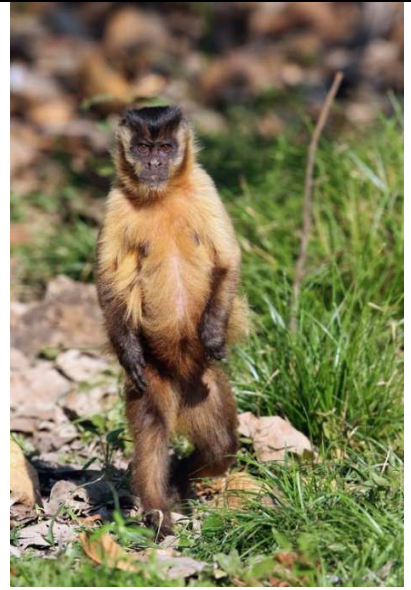
Maned Wolf



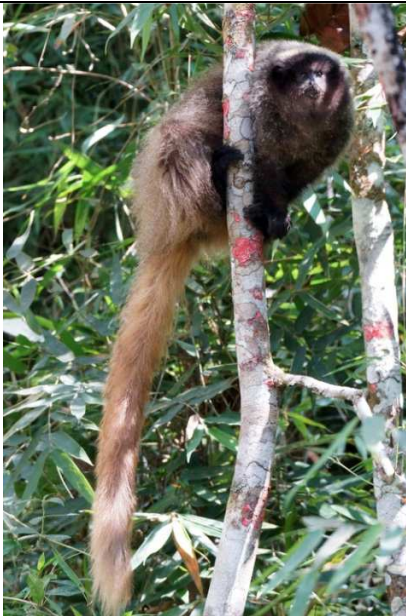
Azara's Agouti



South American Coati



Black-striped Tufted Capuchin



Black-Fronted Titi



Black-tailed (Pantanal) marmoset



Black-tufted Marmoset



Giant anteater