

Brazil's Pantanal: South August 11-13, 2024

By Dave Griswold

The Pantanal seasonal wetlands in Brazil are so large (like the Everglades expanded to the size of Texas) that it has different regions that are only reasonably assessable from the south and north. Like the Everglades, this wetland has a wet and dry season, and we were here in the dry, when it is most easily accessible. The southern portion is the drier, and we were going to this section first.

The Pantanal portion of this trip from Naturalist Journeys (absolutely an excellent wildlife/birding company) started with an August 11th flight from São Paulo to Campo Grande in Mato Grosso do Sul. A morning drive put us in the Pantanal by lunchtime.

Shortly after starting up the dirt road to our lodge we started seeing wildlife, and most impressively **Giant Anteaters**. We saw seven along the way, walking calmly near the termite mounds that erupted from the cattle rangeland on either side of the road, with one even crossing the road ahead of us. One of my childhood dreams was to encounter this species in the wild (I even remember having a toy Giant Anteater from a British zoo model collection) making that day a dream came true.





While waiting for our rooms at Pousada Aguapé we sat in an open sided dining room and enjoyed some of the wildlife that took the stage at the feeding station. The birds were fantastic but another member of Xenarthra stole the show in my book, the **Six-banded Armadillo**. Like wind-up toys they trundled around the grounds, and during our meals they scuttled around our feet like living Rombas, their claws clicking on the floor.





A late afternoon drive found many Capybaras sprawled out near ponds on the ranch, some Pampas Deer, and a pair of Crab-eating Foxes as night fell.







The next morning we were off in the safari truck as soon as breakfast was finished. Besides hordes of birds we saw more **Capybaras**, **Feral hogs**, numerous **Pampas Deer**, and a **Six-banded Armadillo** on its burrow.











After lunch we climbed on a boat for some wildlife viewing down the Rio Aquidauana. In the riverside trees were **Black-and-gold Howler Monkeys** and **Azara's Capuchins**.



Black-and-gold Howler Monkeys



Azara's Capuchin

On a night ride we got lucky and spotted a Southern Tamandua.



The next morning we went on our final safari ride before heading out to the next part of our Pantanal trip. Both **Pampas Deer** and **Gray Brocket** were spotted.



Pampas Deer



Gray Brocket

Stay tuned for part II in the Northern Pantanal.

Mato Grosso do Sul mammal list

Giant Anteater (*Myrmecophaga tridactyla*)

Six-banded Armadillo (*Euphractus sexcinctus*)

Capybara (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*)

Pampas Deer (*Ozotoceros bezoarticus*)

Crab-eating Fox (*Cerdocyon thous*)

Feral Hog (*Sus scrofa*)

Black-and-gold Howler Monkey (*Alouatta caraya*)

Azara's Capuchin (*Sapajus cay*)

Southern Tamandua (*Tamandua tetradactyla*)

Gray Brocket (*Subulo gouazoubira*)