

AMAZONAS, BRAZIL 30 JUNE 2025 - 11 JULY 2025

In 2017 and later in 2019, I had the pleasure of meeting Micah Riegner aboard two separate wildlife watching cruises in Brazil. Micah, who mainly specializes in birds, was also a keen mammal watcher and had been on both cruises to aid in guiding the trips as well as help with local details. Being fluent in Portuguese was an added bonus. I ended up on both trips striking up a friendship with him, especially when he told me about all the amazing primates he had seen in Brazil and I had not. Micah is a full time guide for Field Guides. I asked if he is ever in Brazil on tours and has some down time would be interested in going on a trip to look for primates only and any mammals we could stumble on. He ended up this year having some summer trips cancelled which opened up a window for us to travel around the greater Tefe region looking for primates.

I left the United States on June 29 to meet up with Micah in the airport in Manaus around 2:30 am the next morning. We decided to spend the first day in an around Manaus before the main part of the trip.

June 30 - After meeting Micah in the airport we went to the Tryp Hotel for me to catch up on some sleep. At mid day I met up with him again in the hotel lobby and we took an Uber to lunch then to the Bosque da Ciencia (also called INPA) to look at the Golden-Faced Saki Monkeys that I had seen in the past. We ended up walking to the back section of the park close to the grounds of the nearby University. Micah



found us a large troop Guianan Squirrel Monkeys foraging next to the trail. It did not take long for me to spot a saki monkey traveling with them, then six more. There were a few fruiting trees next to the trail and both species were taking advantage of this.

After watching both species for an extended period of time we decided to walk around the rest of the paved trails. We saw several Red-rumped Agoutis as well. In the front section of the park there are also several large tanks set up that were housing several young Amazon Manatees that were being rehabilitated for release. When we were there they had just been fed a large bounty of carrots. Another large troop of Squirrel Monkeys was present in the trees surrounding the tanks.



July 1 - Our next stop was the city of Tefe. We booked an early morning flight that day. In the past larger planes were used for this flight, but now most days the carrier Azul used smaller Cessnas. What should have been an hour flight ended up taking two. We were greeted in the Tefe airport by an employee of the Pousada Uacari, also know as the Uakari Floating Lodge. The lodge is a community run project in the Mamiraua Sustainable Development Reserve. We went during the flooded forest season (Varzea) which meant all the excursions we did were via canoes. One of the reasons the reserve was set up was to protect the White Bald Uakari. The flooded season I had read was the best time to see this species. While waiting in the airport we did meet a Brazilian who had worked with the lodge in the past and had worked out some of the “chances” guests had at seeing the wildlife there. He thought if someone was staying a week, you had about a 50 percent chance of seeing a uakari. Micah and I had booked three nights.

Micah and I were taken to the dock in Tefe to get a boat that would take us about 1.5 hours up the Rio Solimoes into the reserve then to the lodge itself. To get to the boat site we had to maneuver some very shoddy wooden panels to get to the boat and by the end both of our hiking boots were soaking wet.

I had read reviews in the past about the lodge about people saying no one spoke English, but that morning we were

partnered with a local English speaking guide named Loni who ended up being our fixer at the lodge. She worked out all the arrangements for our excursions each day and made sure everything was running smoothly at the lodge itself. She did join us on a few excursions, but once all the guides realized how well Micah spoke Portuguese, we ended up doing most of the excursions by ourself. Along the boat ride to the lodge we saw Grey dolphins, Jurua Howler Monkeys and a Brown-throated three toed sloth.

A few notes about the lodge itself. Like the name says, the lodge is floating and you can not walk on land around the lodge. The rooms are spacious and en suite and are connected by walkways to a dock area where you pick up boats for excursions, as well as a central building with a sitting area, restaurant, bar and small conference area upstairs. Being community run, the lodge rotates locals to work in the lodge (from the kitchen to the guides) from all the communities in the reserve. One of the nights we were there they did an introduction of sorts of where they were from and what they did. This ended up being one of my favorite community run projects that I have been to. It worked like a well oiled machine, and everyone there made sure things went well and genuinely acted like they cared that you have a good stay.

I could write an entire trip report about the food itself and all the countless non stop snacks we were given there.

But back to the trip. We had booked a private guide to take us around the reserve and when we got to the lodge we met Manuel Coelho Rodrigues who would be our local guide. We ended up finding out Manuel had worked for two years with

uakari researchers. He had also gone in two days before we got there to stake out spots close to the lodge where some of the uakaris might be hanging out. When I asked how many troops were in the reserve, I was told “many”, but was told that a few can be sometimes found in close proximity to the lodge itself.

After lunch we had our first boat excursion. When we got to the lodge Loni had showed me a board listing all the activities the lodge offered from community visits, fishing to sunset watching at a lake. I then told her I was just interested in canoe excursions to look for the uakari. We were joined by Loni and a Brazilian travel agent that was there for one night. With all the fruiting trees in the area it did not take us long to



start seeing wildlife. First off was a Brown-throated three toed sloth right next to the lodge.

Followed by my first troop of Vanzolini's (aka Black) Squirrel Monkeys. This species is only found in the 870 square kilometers of the Mamiraua Reserve and nowhere else, it was high on my list to see. They were also very shy, unlike other squirrel monkey species I have seen where at least a few troop members would stop to stare at you



Shyness was also a trait for the multiple troops of Jurua Howler Monkeys we saw. There were multiple troops on both sides of the waterway, but whenever we would stop the boat they would quickly leave.

While trying to follow some howlers, Micah spotted a Wattled Curassow in a tree. This is one of the key birds to see in the area. Hidden by some tree branches, the boat tried to get a better angle and hit up against some long grass. I must have disturbed the entire reserve population of chiggers along the side that made contact with the grass, and I ended up having



close to 75 bites all along the outside part of my leg and foot (even wearing long pants) that I would not discover until later. After watching the bird and going back onto the waterway we came across a very relaxed troop of Humboldt's Squirrel Monkeys. On the way back to the lodge we saw more sloths and howler monkeys as well as several troops of Brown Capuchins.

After dinner we did a night boat tour. Micah with his heat scope and top level spotting skills found us a species of Bamboo rat, a tail less rat in a tree (thanks Fiona Reid for saying that echimyid rats loose their tails easily) and a



Brown-eared Woolly Opossum. We also saw several Greater Fishing bats flying by.

July 2 - This morning Manuel decided to take the motorboat with a canoe attached to the area where he had seen in the uakari in the previous three days. Along the waterway we had better views of the Vanzolini Squirrel Monkeys, saw more sloths and more shy howler monkeys. We also saw a large troop of Brown Capuchins before entering the flooded forest on the canoe.

We searched inside the forest for a few hours and saw little in the forms of mammals besides a Southern Amazon Red Squirrel and multiple Proboscis Bats.





Besides Micah and myself there was a French family also staying at the lodge doing as many different trips outings as they could. I had joked with Micah about all the excursions Loni had shown me and how I would not be doing most of them, particularly pointing out the piranha fishing excursion. As we made it to the forest edge, the family was coming back from a piranha fishing excursion and had watched a large troop of relaxed uakari in a tree on the riverside. At this point Manuel did his best to canoe us to the tree, but by the time we got there the uakari were gone. At this point on I told Micah I would just be saying we were going piranha fishing to tempt the powers that be to let me see a uakari.



We got back to the lodge and we were eating lunch, Manuel was tipped off but a local that had come to the lodge that a

troop of uakari had been seen in a small river way right behind the lodge. So after eating fast, Maneul loaded Micah and myself back into the canoe and booked it to the waterway. It took him five minutes to find us a Uakari. The next 30 minutes were almost comical. We found two members of the troop. One that quickly ran off when it saw us, and one that literally played cat and mouse with us. It would see us, walk off then literally be stopped and looking back at us multiple times until we would catch up, then walk off again. Micah was able to get this quick photo of him.



In this waterway we saw more Vanzolini Squirrel Monkeys, Brown Capuchins, and another Southern Amazon Red Squirrel. After coming out of the waterway we were picked up by one of the motorboats and did a search along a larger waterway. We found more sloths, capuchins, Vanzolini squirrel monkeys and howler monkeys. By the end of this Micah and I could tell how exhausted Manuel was from all the rowing. That night we decided to let Manuel rest for we could be prepared for another day of rowing inside the flooded forest.

July 3 - this was our last full day at the lodge. Manuel had decided we would do a similar morning trip but go further up the waterway towards a lake. As we were in the motorboat dragging the canoe about 20 minutes from the lodge Micah called out "Uakari!". In a fruiting tree on the edge of the waterway a large troop of uakari were feeding. When we stopped the boat, about half of the troop went deeper into the forest. But the other half stayed out in the open and let us watch them for about 15 minutes.

After the last of the troop was no longer visible, Manuel got us into the canoe and paddled after them inside the forest. This ended up being one of my favorite primate watching sessions ever. The troop had split into many factions, some that did not care about us and some that did. We saw so many behaviors, from play behavior and multiple uakari hanging from the trees by their back feet, to mothers with small babies and to large males stopping to shake trees and vocalize at us. We watched one large tree that not only had uakari in it, but also a South American Coatimundi, Vanzolini

Squirrel Monkeys and another Currasow. When we went into the forest I started timing how long we would be able to watch them. Three hours and 45 minutes later when the monkeys were still in view we opted to head out and go back to the lodge. I did nervously ask Micah if he was ok watching the uakari for that length of time, and luckily he seemed just as happy as I was about it.





On the way back to the lodge for lunch we saw more howler monkeys and both species of squirrel monkeys.

After lunch we decided to take the motor boat to the lake we were headed to in the morning, do a lake tour, then spotlight on the way back.

We saw the usual suspects on the way to the lake. Once we got to the lake we saw several Boto, more Brown-throated three toed sloths, and the most relaxed troop of Vanzolini Squirrel Monkeys we had seen on the trip.



For the spot lighting on the way back we saw another tail less rat and an Amazonian Long Tailed Porcupine.

July 4 - in the morning Manuel took us to the small waterway close to the lodge where we had seen our first uakari. I had commented that to this point I did not have a photo of the Jurua howler monkeys as every time we stopped to look at them they would run off. We ended up seeing several troops of howlers, but again when they would see us they would quickly move off. I was able to get a quick back lit record shot of a juvenile that briefly stopped to look at us.



One last lunch at the lodge and then we were loaded into the transfer boat to take the hour long ride back to Tefe.

Micah had booked us rooms at the down town Hotel Ega. I decided to take a rest, then Micah went to the airport to get Justin Brown who joined me for the rest of the trip.

Our first target was the beautiful Red-capped tamarin. I had read about them being seen on the grounds of the University. Micah was able to get us access to the grounds and we looked around several of the forest fragments. We were told



that the tamarins only showed up about half of the days, and that day was not one of them.

July 5 - Micah had hired a taxi driver to drive us around some of the forest fragments around Tefe to look for tamarins. There was also the chance for the Avila Pire's Saddleback Tamarin and the Buffy Saki monkey. We ended up on a dirt track about 30 minutes from town and started our search at day break. It did not take long for Micah to find us a few members of a troop of Red Capped Tamarin. A few members stopped to look at us briefly, then ran off. Micah was able to get the picture below while Justin and I were both taking videos.



We walked further into a more open area and started hearing monkey alarm calls. A troop of Buffy Saki monkeys quickly

ran off when they saw us. Micah and Justin both had quick glances, but I sadly missed them.

We went back to Tete for lunch to then start the next leg of our trip. Micah had organized village stays with two villages in the FLONA (Floresta Nacional de Tefe), both of which he had seen the Buffy Saki in. He had also seen the Avila Pares Saddle-back tamarins and Mustached Tamarins in them. I had originally thought the Mustached tamarins were the *S. mystax* species which I had seen before. It was not until I got home that I realized it was the Kulina's Mustached tamarin (*S. kulina*) which (spoiler alert) would have been a lifer for me.

We were picked up by a transport boat and taken across the Tefe River to our first spot, the village of Arraia. We were met by our local guide Geneval Nunes Rodrigues. The village had been there for about 30 years and had about 200 people. One thing that I had read about the Tefe region is primate hunting still happened. Micah had learned that the Buffy Saki was not on the menu as it was thought to be poisonous. I had Micah interpret for me the question "You do not eat the saki monkeys right? You know they are poisonous right?" Which even without the interpretation I could tell by the look on Geneva's face that saki monkey had never been on his plate. I had originally planned to camp in the village, but Geneval had his brother let us stay in his house for the day and night and cook for us.



We were then taken to a flooded forest Igapo (black water) area behind the village where the saki monkey is often seen. Geneval loaded us into a metal canoe for the trip.



We passed by several villagers that were fishing. At one point a family of Giant Otters started alarm calling at us and quickly swam away. Almost immediately after that, Micah who was in the the back of the boat, called out "SAKI MONKEY!". We were able to back up quickly and three Buffy Saki Monkeys were sitting in a large tree. While the tolerated the boat's first pass, once we backed up they were off. It is also impossible to follow them once they reach trees above land as there are no trails and the forest is dense. On the way out of the waterway we saw a troop of seven Coppery Titi Monkeys. They are a very interesting coloration of the species with grey on the head, unlike members of the species I had seen in Western Brazil with the darker head colorings. I wonder if more research is done this will be a split species. When we were hiking back to the village we hears four other troops of titi monkeys.

After dinner Geneval took us to a trail in the forest next to the village. We ended up seeing two Eastern lowland Olingos close to each other as well as a juvenile Greater Doglike Bat roosting in a tree hollow.





July 6 - We went back to the Igapo in the morning for another boat ride.

The night before there had been a long down pour of rain so the water level was higher and everything was still drenched. We saw a fast moving family of titi monkeys as well as a quick view of a Southern Pygmy Marmoset scampering up a tree. But then we heard the classic saki monkey alarm call coming from in front of us. We were able to silently glide forward until we got decent views of a family of four Buffy Saki Monkeys. One very water drenched individual decided to stop briefly to watch us. Micah got the shot below.



After this we did a walk along the same trail we had the night before looking for tamarins. After failing at this we had lunch and were transferred to the village of Bauana which was about 30 minutes away by boat. While Arraia was quiet and relaxed with friendly people and amazing food, the village of Bauana was in the midst of a big football match and after match party with another village. When we got there it took us awhile to find someone to take us to the house where we

were staying and most of the people we met were in various stages of being intoxicated. Bauna had more houses and 250 people. There were also dirt roads around the village. We also were placed in a house to stay, but this time the entire family was staying at the house as well.



To split up work opportunities, we were set up with the local Ezil the first day to be our guide, and Adrison the second. This village definitely engages in primate hunting and when I had Micah ask them if they knew not to eat the Buffy saki monkey because it was poisonous I was looked at like I was crazy.

We ended up going into a large creek system off the Tefe River. We saw a lot and I mean a lot of Coppery Titi Monkeys,

saw Common (Ecuadorian) Squirrel Monkeys and a single Brown-throated three toed sloth.



We ended up staying in the creek system until dark. Justin picked up a Spix's Night Monkey in his heat scope and we saw several spiny rat (spp) on the way back to the village.

July 8 - the initial plan was to spend the whole day in Bauana. In the morning we met Adrison and he took us back into the creek system. We had told him that we wanted to see tamarins that day so he took us to several spots to try. One was a trail in a Manioc Plantation, one was on a dirt road

by some houses and the final one was a trail to a manioc processing area. We ended up seeing more Squirrel Monkeys and Coppery Titi monkeys. We went back to the village for lunch and at this point we decided to go back to Arraia for the afternoon. We met up with Geneval and another villager again and this time we went onto a creek system about 5 minutes from the village near some rubber trees where he had seen the tamarins many times. This forest was beautiful and more open. While looking for the tamarins again we heard Saki Monkey alarm calls. Geneval was able to get us onto a pair of Buffy Saki monkeys that would repeatedly sit out in the open staring and calling at us. Micah was able to get the following shot.



While we did not see the tamarins, it was defiantly worth going back to Arraia. If someone is interested in seeing this species, this is where I would spend my time. They also seemed very interested in having more tourists.

On the way back to Tefe we saw several Boto in the river. We stayed at the Hotel Ega again.

July 9 - In the morning before our flight back to Manaus, we went back to the dirt road we had before to look for tamarins. In the same patch of forest at day break we found the Red-capped tamarins again, and this time they were traveling with a few Avila Pires Saddle-back tamarins. Micah came through again with a quick shot.



We also saw a pair of Coppery Titi Monkeys and a single Southern Amazon Red Squirrel.

In the afternoon we flew back to Manaus and stayed at the Tryp Hotel by the airport.

July 10 - Another species that Micah and I had talked about was the Chestnut - Bellied Titi Monkey. He had seen them in the past along the road way leading towards the Tupuna Lodge located southwest of Manaus. The lodge had told him that the monkey can be easily seen there. When we initially planned the trip the lodge was fully booked so we were going to try the nearby Pousada Amazon Charms lodge. A last minute cancellation at Tupana made it possible for us to stay there. They do require a minimum two night stay. The lodge had arranged a pick up for us. We then proceeded to pick up multiple other guests on the way to the lodge. A quick river crossing with a stop at the meetings of the waters where the Rio Negro meets the Solimoes River, we then had about an 1.5 car ride along some very degraded/cut down forest. Our driver told Micah that there was a lot of hunting in the area. We then were picked up by lodge staff and taken on the Tupana River to the lodge. When we got to the lodge two Boto were next to a dock with people swimming with them. We met our local private guide Irva and after briefly talking to him and seeing the lodge itself we realized that it was definitely a lodge for people that just wanted a "jungle experience". When asking about doing a night walk we were told no by the owner because of the risk of jaguars..... The lodge was packed with a variety of age groups of families and a large gathering of Brazilian women there to do yoga. After going to my room, I watched a large troop of Guinean Squirrel Monkeys in the trees. I had a case of food

poisoning so skipped lunch and met up with Micah and Justin the afternoon. Irva had told us that the titis come to the lodge around 8-9 am and between 4-5 pm. Micah and I first went down to check out the Botos by the deck.



We then split up and walked around the lodge buildings and on to some of the raised walkways around the lodge. Soon after Micah found us a family of three Chesnut-bellied titi monkeys in trees in front of the restaurant. We stayed with them until close to dusk.



That night I decided to skip out on the spotlighting. Justin and Micah went on a boat ride and saw a mouse opossum spp, some rats and a sleeping Gray's Bald Faced Saki monkey.

July 11 - in the morning a troop of Brown Capuchin monkeys was hanging outside of my room. After breakfast we watched a large troop of Squirrel Monkeys in the trees behind the restaurant.

The day before Irva had told Micah that he has a fishing spot about an hour from the lodge where he had seen Amazon Manatees several times. With permission from the owner and an extra fee, that afternoon we took a boat ride about 1.5 hours from the lodge. Irva showed us the plants they like to eat and several spots where he had seen them. But despite sitting still in the lake we saw nothing. It also closer to the afternoon when sightings were supposed to be better, became very windy. With all the waves and ripples, seeing a manatee seemed futile. We went back to the lodge and had dinner, then did a brief boat ride at night and saw a few rat species.

July 12 - Justin had wanted to get a video of the Golden-faced Saki monkey, so we planned to get an early private transfer back to Manaus that morning. We stopped at the Tryp hotel to drop off our luggage then headed back to INPA. In the exact area where we had seen them days before, we found the saki monkeys again.



After spending some time with them, we went back to the hotel for dinner and a rest before our late night flights onward.

Trip list -

Golden-faced Saki Monkey - *Pithecia chrysocephala*

Guinean Squirrel Monkey - *Saimiri sciureus*

Red-rumped agouti - *Dasyprocta leporina*

Grey river dolphin (Tucuxi) - *Sotalia fluviatilis*

Jurua Howler monkey - *Alouatta juara*

Brown-throated three toed sloth - *Bradypus variegatus*

Vanzolini's (Black) Squirrel Monkey - *Saimiri vanzolinii*

Humbolt's Squirrel Monkey - *Saimiri cassiquiarensis*

Brown-eared Woolly Opossum - *Caluromys lanatus*

Greater Fishing Bat - *Noctilio leporinus*

White Bald Uakari - *Cacajao calvus*
Southern Amazon Red Squirrel - *Sciurus spadiceus*
Brown Capuchin - *Sapajus apella*
Proboscis Bat - *Rhynchonycteris naso*
Pink Amazon River Dolphin (Boto) - *Inia geoffrensis*
South American Coatimundi - *Nasua nasua*
Amazon Long-tailed Porcupine - *Coendou longicaudatus*
Red-capped Tamarin - *Saguinus pileatus*
Buffy Saki Monkey - *Pithecia albicans*
Coppery Titi Monkey - *Callicebus cupreus*
Southern Pygmy Marmoset - *Cebuella niveiventris*
Ecuadorian Squirrel Monkey - *Saimiri macrodon*
Spix's Night Monkey - *Aotus vociferans*
Avila Pires Saddle-back Tamarin - *Saguinus avilapiresi*
Chestnut Bellied Titi Monkey - *Callicebus caligatus*
Gray's Bald Faced Saki Monkey - *Pithecia irrorata*