

PARAGUAY

OCTOBER 24th 2025 – NOVEMBER 20th 2025
DANIEL BRANCH & MAX BAUMGARTEN

Evening at PRO COSARA *DJB*



South America has arguably some of the best birding in the world, with four of the top five countries ranked by avian diversity located on the continent. From the lush forests of the Amazon, the vast deserts of Patagonia and the high peaks of the Andes, South American birdlife has attracted birders from across the globe. However, one country less frequently referenced as a destination for international visitors is the landlocked country of Paraguay, due to its Biomes extending into neighbouring countries and the fact that there are no endemic species to search for. But it was this lack of interest that originally drew us to this fascinating country. Within the space of just less than a month we were able to explore Atlantic Forest, Cerrado, wetlands and especially the Chaco. Our aim was to record as many species as possible, as well as targeting several species which are now easier to find within this country. Much of Paraguay's once expansive wilderness has already been destroyed by agricultural expansion, and there is no indication that this expansion will slow down in the near future. Time is therefore of the essence for those who wish to experience this fantastic country. In total we recorded 417 species of bird, 28 species of mammals and a range of other wildlife.

About us

This is our fifth trip together. While DJB has been to South America on multiple occasions, this was the first time for MB which served as added motivation, as if it was needed, to target as many species as possible! Although we are both primarily birders, mammals also

play a large role in how we spend our time at sites, as we try to see as much as we can. If anyone has any questions about this trip, feel free to drop either of us an email or a message.

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Languages: German, English & French

Itinerary

We designed our trip to visit almost all of Paraguay's biomes, targeting as many species as we could realistically manage whilst allowing ourselves enough time to fully explore each of the sites we visited. Our itinerary went through several revisions as we tried to make the most of our time in the country. This was due to complications in a handful of sites we wanted to visit, with access only confirmed at one site 10 days prior to our arrival there. Although we omitted several sites we could have visited with more time, we were very pleased with our 28 day itinerary, and we ended with an excellent haul of species. Our final total of 417 species ranked us as the third highest Paraguayan eBirders in 2025, an excellent return for just less than a month birding the country!

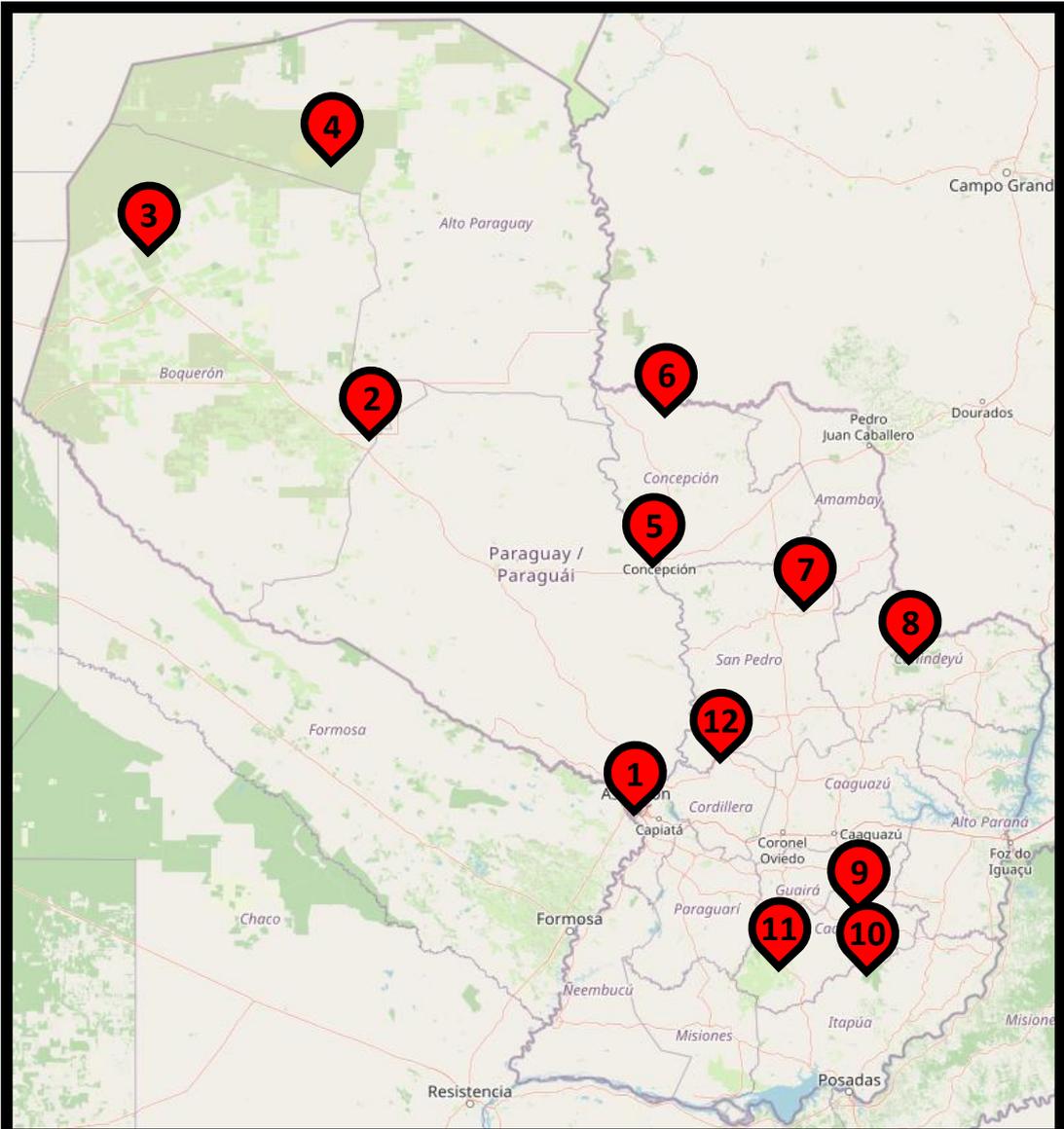
This being the tropics, breeding season can range from August until January and is highly dependent on the rains. During September and November the bulk of species will be breeding, so we timed our trip accordingly. Travelling at this time means travelling during the wet season, and this can come with risks, but although we regularly encountered wet weather it did not do too much damage to our

itinerary. One concern we had was the vegetation, especially in the Chaco, was very green and dense, making mammal watching from the car quite challenging. Although this would be less of a problem during the dry season, the cooler conditions during this time could then reduce activity.

Obviously no trip is perfect and we did miss a few target species. On the birding front Helmeted Woodpecker *Celeus galeatus* was our most serious omission, although the fact that the forest at Mbaracayú was being occupied by Guerrillas during our visit did not help. Cock-tailed Tyrant *Alectrurus tricolor* was another disappointing miss, and we only recorded a single Doradito *Pseudocolopteryx* sp. species. For mammals we did very well, but our brief Jaguar *Panthera onca* sighting was grossly insufficient, and we failed to record a single species of pig, Chacoan Peccary *Catagonus wagneri* being the most painful miss here. Only one brief encounter with Giant Anteater *Myrmecophaga tridactyla* and no living Southern Tamandua *Tamandua tetradactyla*, despite dozens of dead animals, was also a disappointing return. Despite this however, we can have few complaints about an overall very successful trip.

Many-colored Chaco Finch *Saltatricula multicolor* Fortin Toledo DJB





Asunción
 24.10.2025 – 25.10.2025 &
 19.11.2025



Filadelfia
 25.10.2025 – 29.10.2025 &
 03.11.2025 – 04.11.2025



**Parque Nacional Teniente
 Agripino Enciso**
 29.10.2025 – 31.10.2025



**Parque Nacional Defensores
 Del Chaco**
 31.10.2025 – 03.11.2025



Concepcion
 04.11.2025 – 06.11.2025



Estancia Arrecife
 06.11.2025 – 09.11.2025



Rancho Blanca
 09.11.2025



**Reserva Natural del Bosque
 Mbaracayú**
 10.11.2025 – 12.11.2025



Abaí
 12.11.2025



Reserva Nacional San Rafael
 13.11.2025 – 17.11.2025



Moises Bertoni
 17.11.2025

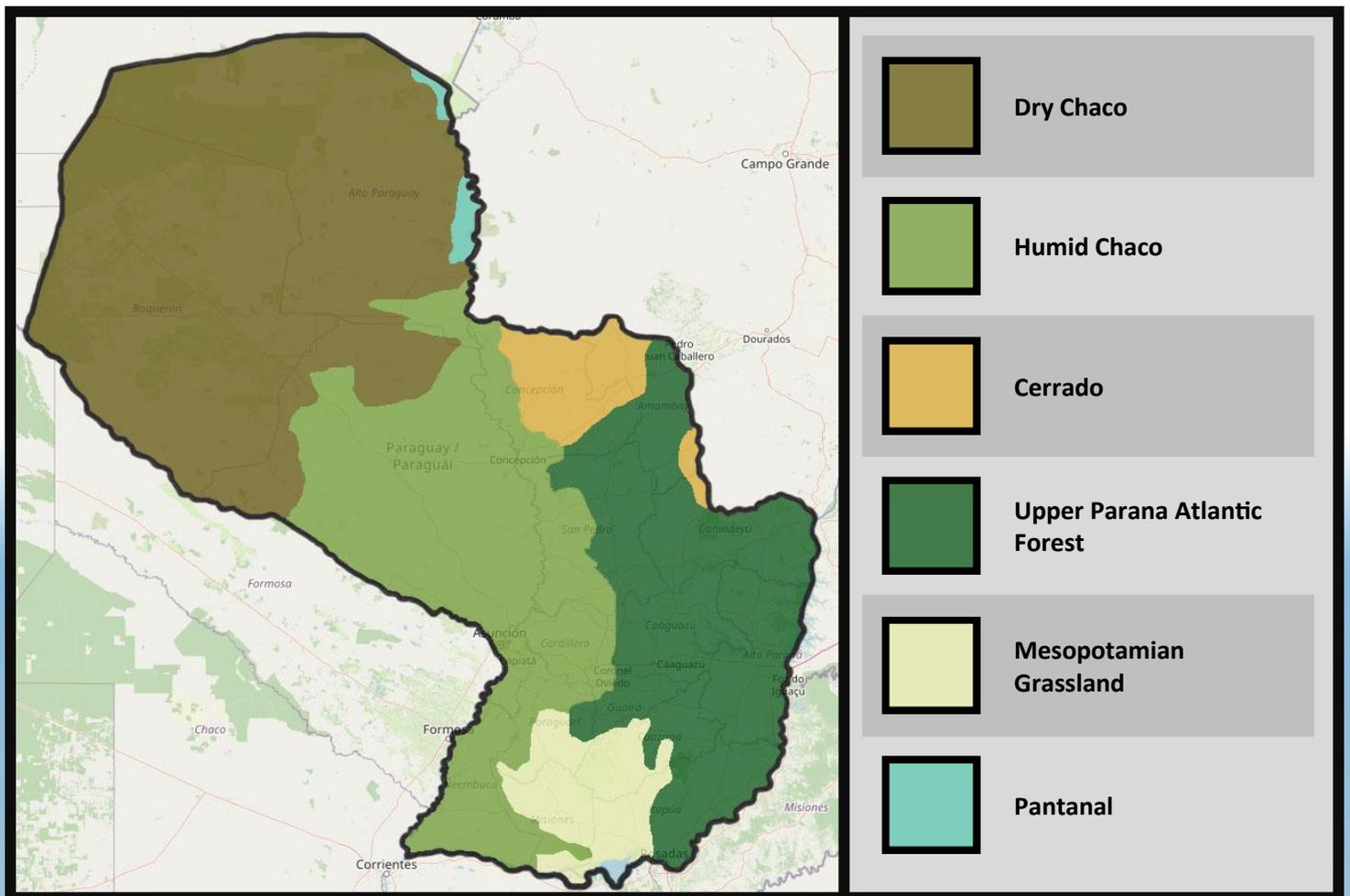


Arroyos y Esteros
 24.10.2025 & 18.11.2025



With additional time, there are several sites we would have considered visiting. To the south of Parque Nacional Teniente Agripino Enciso is the Cañada El Carmen reserve, a Chaco reserve with good chances for several species of mammal, but ultimately nothing new bird wise. In the north of the country sits the small town of Bahia Negra, with the nearby Tres Gigantes field station, although this site is quite remote and offers limited new species. Mato Grosso Antbird *Cercomacra melanaria* and the only Paraguayan site for Rufous-tailed Jacamar *Galbula ruficauda* were tempting prospects but perhaps of greater interest are the Giant Otters *Pteronura brasiliensis* that can be found here. There are several Atlantic Forest

fragments dotted throughout the east of the country that we could have visited. Parque Nacional Ybycuí three hours southeast of Asuncion has a wide range of Atlantic Forest species, including Southern Bristle Tyrant *Pogonotriccus eximius* and Pheasant Cuckoo *Dromococcyx phasianellus*. Another site is Parque Nacional Caazapa, just north of Reserva Nacional San Rafael, which has some species but notably has eBird records of the rare Canebrake Groundcreeper *Clibanornis dendrocolaptoides*. In the very south of the country is the Isla Yacyreta, which is a popular birding destination for Sickle-winged Nightjar *Eleothreptus anomalus* and gallery forest species.



Estancia Arrecife M/B



Day 1 24.10.2025	ARRIVAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DJB arrival to Asunción at 07:00, collect car at airport • Drive 90 minutes to Arroyos y Esteros, late morning birding Arroyos y Esteros, then return drive to Asunción • Afternoon birding Jardín Botánico de Asunción • MB arrival to Asuncion at 23:30
	ARROYOS Y ESTEROS	
	JARDÍN BOTÁNICO DE ASUNCIÓN	
Day 2 25.10.2025	HUMEDAL DE BENJAMIN ACEVAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning birding Humedal de Benjamin Aceval • Drive six hours along Ruta Nacional PY09 - Ruta TransChaco to Fortin Toledo • Afternoon birding Fortin Toledo
Day 3 26.02.2025	FORTIN TOLEDO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full day birding Fortin Toledo
Day 4 27.10.2025	LAGUNA CAPITÁN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning birding Fortin Toledo • Drive three hours from Fortin Toledo to Laguna Capitán via lunch in Filadelfia and birding on Línea Sur • Afternoon birding Laguna Capitán
Day 5 28.10.2025		CHACO LODGE
Day 6 29.10.2025	PARQUE NACIONAL TENIENTE AGRIPINO ENCISO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive three hours from Filadelfia to Parque Nacional Teniente Agripino Enciso • Full day birding Parque Nacional Teniente Agripino Enciso
Day 7 30.10.2025		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full day birding Parque Nacional Teniente Agripino Enciso
Day 8 31.10.2025	CERRO LEÓN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning birding Parque Nacional Teniente Agripino Enciso • Drive six hours to Parque Nacional Defensores Del Chaco • Afternoon birding Cerro León
Day 9 01.11.2025		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning birding Cerro León • Drive three hours to Agua Dulce • Afternoon birding Agua Dulce
Day 10 02.11.2025	AGUA DULCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full day birding Agua Dulce
Day 11 03.11.2025	FORTIN TOLEDO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning birding Agua Dulce • Drive five hours to Fortin Toledo • Afternoon birding Fortin Toledo
Day 12 04.11.2025		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning birding Fortin Toledo • Drive four-and-a-half hours to Concepcion • Afternoon birding Parque Nacional Estero Milagro
Day 13 05.11.2025	CONCEPCION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full day birding Paso Horqueta
Day 14 06.11.2025	ESTANCIA ARRECIFE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning birding Parque Nacional Estero Milagro • Drive three hours to Estancia Arrecife • Afternoon birding Estancia Arrecife

Day 15 07.11.2025		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full day birding Estancia Arrecife
Day 16 08.11.2025	ESTANCIA ARRECIFE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full day birding Estancia Arrecife
Day 17 09.11.2025	RANCHO BLANCA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning birding Estancia Arrecife • Drive five hours to Rancho Blanca • Afternoon & night birding Rancho Blanca • Drive 30 minutes to Santa Rosa del Aguaray
Day 18 10.11.2025		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive three hours from Santa Rosa del Aguaray to Reserva Natural del Bosque Mbaracayú • Full day birding Reserva Natural del Bosque Mbaracayú
Day 19 11.11.2025	RESERVA NATURAL DEL BOSQUE MBARACAYÚ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full day birding Reserva Natural del Bosque Mbaracayú
Day 20 12.11.2025	ABAÍ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning birding Reserva Natural del Bosque Mbaracayú • Drive six hours to Abaí via lunch in Caaguazú • Afternoon birding Abaí • Drive four hours to PRO COSARA
Day 21 13.11.2025	PRO COSARA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full day birding PRO COSARA
Day 22 14.11.2025		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning birding PRO COSARA • Drive two hours to Estación Biológica Kanguery • Afternoon birding Estación Biológica Kanguery
Day 23 15.11.2025	ESTACIÓN BIOLÓGICA KANGUERY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning birding Estación Biológica Kanguery • Drive two hours to PRO COSARA • Afternoon birding PRO COSARA
Day 24 16.11.2025	PRO COSARA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full day birding PRO COSARA
Day 25 17.11.2025	MOISÉS BERTONI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning birding PRO COSARA • Drive two-and-a-half hours to Moisés Bertoni • Late morning birding Moisés Bertoni • Drive three-and-a-half hours to Arroyos y Esteros
Day 26 18.11.2025	ARROYOS Y ESTEROS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning birding Arroyos y Esteros • Drive 90 minutes to Asunción
Day 27 19.11.2025	PLAYA – EX CALERA SAN ANTONIO ASUNCIÓN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning birding Playa - Ex Calera San Antonio • Afternoon exploring Asunción
Day 28 20.11.2025	DEPARTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DJB departure at 06:00 • MB departure at 11:00



Puma *Puma concolor* Agua Dulce DJB

Logistics

Visa

For UK passport holders, there is no need for a visa to visit Paraguay. As is standard in most South American countries, you will normally receive permission to stay for 90 days on arrival. The same is true for EU passport

holders. We were asked where we were staying that night, so consider having something booked for at least the first night of your visit to Paraguay.

Flights

We both flew with the airline AirEuropa, with the plan to fly from our respective cities and meet up at Madrid Adolfo Suarez Barajas (MAD) airport in Spain and then take the same long-haul flight to Asuncion Silvio Pettirossi International (ASU), the main of only two international airports in Paraguay. From France, DJB flew from Paris Orly (ORY) to Madrid and from Germany MB flew from Frankfurt (FRA). At the completion of this trip, we both set off for different destinations in South America, DJB to Buenos Aires Aeroparque Jorge Newbery (AEP) with

Paranair, and MB to Santiago Arturo Merino Benitez (SCL) with LATAM.

Unfortunately our trip experienced a setback from the start, when the flight of MB from Frankfurt to Madrid was cancelled on the first evening. Although the airline did provide compensation, it set us back 24 hours in our itinerary and left DJB to explore Paraguay by himself for the first day! Fortunately, our overall plans did not suffer any great setback and we were still able to complete all the sites we had planned.

Language

The language spoken throughout Paraguay is Spanish. Both of us speak a usable level of Spanish, and that got us by throughout the trip. We did encounter some English speakers, but they were not common, and at least a basic understanding of Spanish would be recommended. Surprisingly, we also

encountered a large number of German speakers as we travelled through the country, especially around the Filadelfia area, so it was helpful that one of our team members was in fact German, helping us navigate around communicating with our more limited Spanish!

Accommodation

In order to keep our itinerary as fluid as possible, we limited our prior reservations. However in some cases this was unavoidable with sites, such as Chaco Lodge, PRO COSARA and Reserva Natural del Bosque Mbaracayú requiring advanced bookings. In between these sites, we often opted to turn up at accommodation in small towns and see what options were available. We were not fussy about where we stayed, so long as it was cheap and practical. If we were staying in larger towns or cities, we would usually make a reservation through the website Booking.com, or alternatively try AirBnB.

We took camping equipment with us, as it was often the most practical and cheapest lodging option available to us. This was especially the case in the National Parks, and while there was usually some alternative lodging available, camping guaranteed us somewhere to stay if these were occupied. In the end we only camped on a couple of occasions; at Parque Nacional Teniente Agripino Enciso, Mbaracayú and the Estación Biológica Kanguery at Reserva Nacional San Rafael. Despite this, the option to camp was available at almost all the locations we visited.

Food

Our experience with Paraguayan cuisine was quite limited in the end. Restaurants we visited had a self-service style buffet and where the price is dictated by weight. This keeps things simple, meaning you can take as much of whatever you want, with options usually including rice, pastas, meats and vegetables. Alternatively, we also dabbled in fast food, with most towns having a pizza or fried chicken restaurant of some quality. At some locations we were catered for, notably PRO COSARA, Estancia Arrecife and Reserva Natural del Bosque Mbaracayú, and the food here was excellent.

However, because we ended up spending so much time in more remote areas, we often had to do our own cooking. All the campsites (with the exception of Chaco Lodge) had cooking facilities, but your own pots and pans will be required. In order to reduce the time spent cooking, we usually resorted to pasta with a simple sauce and canned vegetables, or instant noodles. Breakfast was usually cereal with powdered milk and water, and lunch was some variation of dry snacks.

One of our team was vegetarian, but we encountered no issues in Paraguay. The cuisine here is very much meat centred, but because of the self-service style of restaurant, it was always easy to avoid meat options. In the places where we were catered, we were provided with excellent vegetarian options, and where we cooked ourselves it was obviously simple to maintain this diet.





Black-legged Seriema *Chunga burmeisteri* PN Enciso DJB

Money

The currency of Paraguay is the Paraguayan Guarani, which is represented by the code PYG and the symbol ₲. At the time of writing ₲1.00 is worth \$0.00015. With the exception of fuel, we paid for everything in cash. It was not difficult for us to find ATMs in towns, although for more rural Chaco areas make sure that sufficient funds are withdrawn in Filadelfia. This was not an expensive trip, with accommodation and food not usually costing a great deal.

In addition we also took a few hundred US Dollars, represented by the symbol \$, and a few hundred Euros, represented by €. The Euros were used to pay our ground agents for our visit to Estancia Arrecife. As mentioned, some of our accommodation was reserved through the website Booking.com. Because of the discounts on offer, we used the app on the phone of DJB and because of this, all the prices we were quoted were in UK Pound Sterling, represented by the symbol £.

Transport

We hired a car with the rental company Alamo, reserved directly through the company website rather than an agency. To complete this itinerary we suspected that a 4x4 would be required and booking directly with the company ensured that we would have a car with this function. Hiring such a car for 26 days cost us €1,674.13 (\$1,902.65 at the time of purchase). We arranged to pick the car up at 08:00 on the 24th October at the airport at Asuncion, and arranged to return it at the same time on the 19th November. In the end, the car was returned on the evening of the 18th November, and we spent the 19th

birding at sites around Asuncion using taxis, which was easy enough as Uber is available in Asuncion.

Throughout our travels in Paraguay we encountered mercifully few tolls or police checkpoints on the main roads. The highways were generally in very good condition, but a large section of this trip required travelling along dirt roads of varying quality. A 4x4 is essential to safely complete this itinerary! As is standard in a few South American countries, regardless of the time of day, driving with the headlights on is a requirement.

Getting fuel in Paraguay was always straightforward, although we were mindful and always checked on Google what our options would be for filling up when heading into more remote areas. By far the most remote location was the small village of Agua Dulce, and so we bought two fuel canisters for this leg of the trip. They were essential! Without them the car would have run out of fuel during this section. We always paid for fuel on card, so that our cash reserves did not become depleted during our explorations away from urban areas. This was always possible.

For navigation, we primarily used Google Maps, although we also used Organic Maps to offer a second opinion on the routes that we took. To ensure navigation was possible regardless of our location we downloaded our trip area with both Google Maps offline, which allows the operation of Google Maps in a downloaded area as if it were using data, and the Paraguay package with Organic Maps. Google Maps allows the easy input of coordinates, so getting around is logistically much more straightforward.

The car we got for the trip was a Toyota Hilux, which we christened the Canyonero! It was the perfect car for our trip, able to deal with all the roads we drove on regardless of their condition. Obviously this model came with high clearance and 4x4 function that was a lifesaver at various points during our travels. The car was an automatic, so driving was extremely easy.



Inside it had plentiful space for just two people, and up to five people would have been manageable without too much issue. The covered cargo bed was ideal for us to store all our equipment and luggage. The only downside was the due to the often dusty conditions, anything in the cargo bed, despite the cover, would often end up extremely dusty.

The Canyonero ran on diesel, which was always easy to obtain at every station we used. It could manage 80 litres in the tank, and this was almost always sufficient for getting us between destinations without worry. The only exception was Agua Dulce, easily the most remote destination of our voyage with this car.

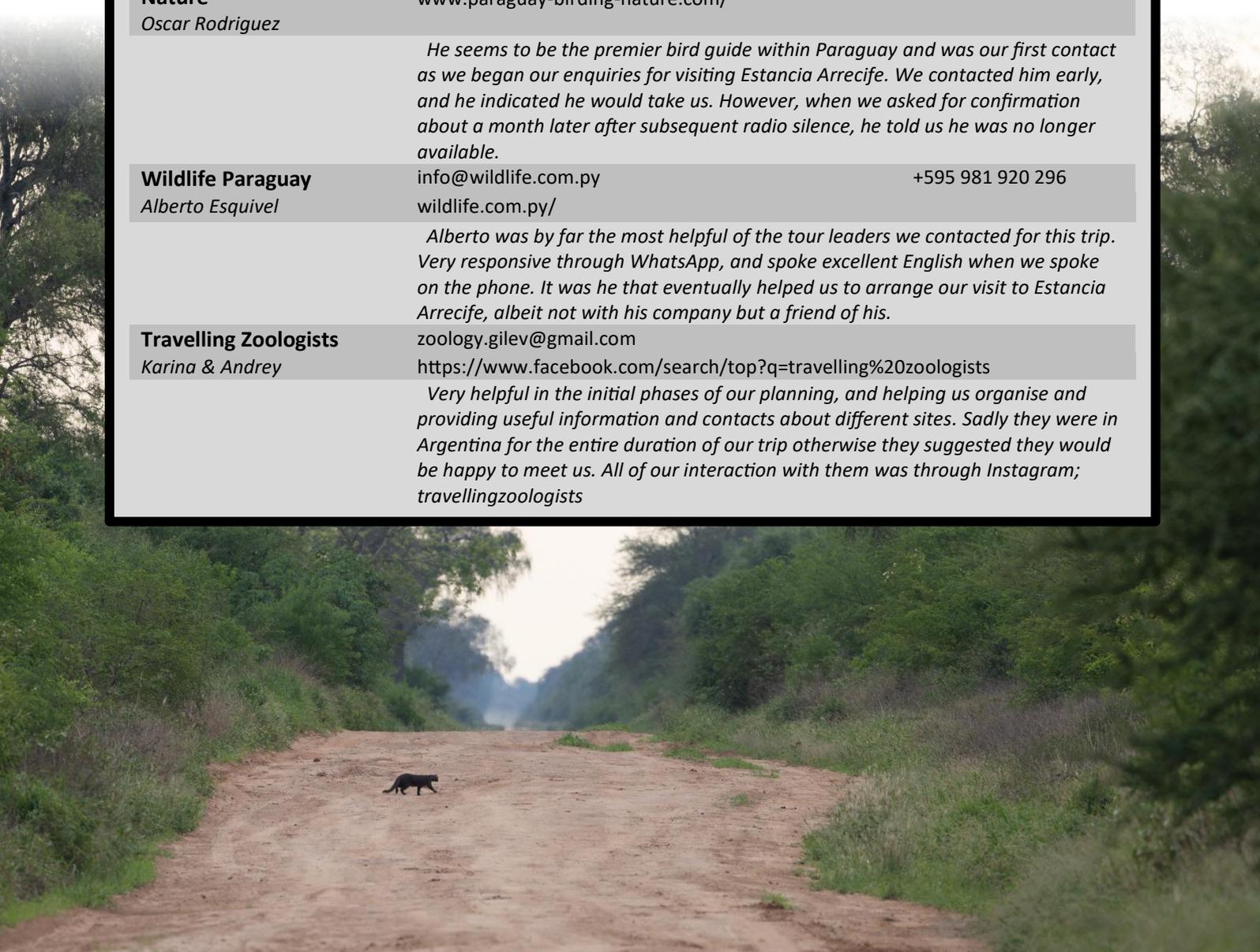


Guides

We always try to travel as independently as possible, and Paraguay was no exception. Almost all of the sites on this itinerary can be visited independently, and were easy enough to organise logistically. That said, there were a few exceptions, notably Estancia Arrecife, and for those we contacted a few different bird guides within Paraguay with mixed results, all displayed in the table below. In the end our visit to Estancia Arrecife was arranged

through Alberto Esquivel from Wildlife Paraguay. Another site where independent access is restricted is Rancho Blanca, which should only be accessed with a guide. We were unable to arrange a guide to take us, but we managed to work our way around this. Although there are areas for independent birding at Mbaracayú, we hired a local bird guide for a morning to try expand the area we could explore within the reserve.

	Email	WhatsApp
Fauna Paraguay <i>Paul Smith</i>	faunaparaguay@yahoo.com.ar www.faunaparaguay.com <i>Paul was very responsive to emails although he seemed quite cautious to provide too much detail about sites. We asked about arranging a tour to Estancia Arrecife and Rancho Blanca, but since these sites are both in the north and Paul is based in the town of Encarnacion, he said it was a bit far for such a short itinerary, which is understandable.</i>	
Paraguay Birding & Nature <i>Oscar Rodriguez</i>	oscar@paraguay-birding-nature.com www.paraguay-birding-nature.com/ <i>He seems to be the premier bird guide within Paraguay and was our first contact as we began our enquiries for visiting Estancia Arrecife. We contacted him early, and he indicated he would take us. However, when we asked for confirmation about a month later after subsequent radio silence, he told us he was no longer available.</i>	+595 981 607 006
Wildlife Paraguay <i>Alberto Esquivel</i>	info@wildlife.com.py wildlife.com.py/ <i>Alberto was by far the most helpful of the tour leaders we contacted for this trip. Very responsive through WhatsApp, and spoke excellent English when we spoke on the phone. It was he that eventually helped us to arrange our visit to Estancia Arrecife, albeit not with his company but a friend of his.</i>	+595 981 920 296
Travelling Zoologists <i>Karina & Andrey</i>	zoology.gilev@gmail.com https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=travelling%20zoologists <i>Very helpful in the initial phases of our planning, and helping us organise and providing useful information and contacts about different sites. Sadly they were in Argentina for the entire duration of our trip otherwise they suggested they would be happy to meet us. All of our interaction with them was through Instagram; travellingzoologists</i>	





Brushland Tinamou *Nothoprocta cinerascens* Fortin Toledo MB

Literature

There is no field guide for birding in Paraguay, so we made do with the recently published 2020 *Field Guide to the Birds of Argentina and the Southwest Atlantic* (ISBN: 9780713645798) by Mark Pearman and a team of authors and illustrators. This guide covers the majority of the species to be expected in Paraguay, The illustrations are excellent and clear, serving as an excellent tool in the field, as well as a reference before and after the trip. This is by far the best option for this trip. Another guide to consider is the 2020 *Mammals of the Southern Cone* (ISBN: 9788416728268) from Lynx Editions. Although the illustrations are quite small and limited, it does offer a good indication of what mammals to expect in different areas, and how to make basic differentiations between mammal species.

The majority of the trip reports we found involved clients on tours or with private guides, which were understandably limited in what information they could offer. Two excellent independent trip reports are the *Paraguay* (2022) by Rob Jansen & Romy Jansen-Houtzager, and *Paraguay* (2016) by Hervé & Noëlle Jacob. Both of these trip

reports both published on the website CloudBirders, with informative details about logistics for most of the sites we visited on our own itinerary. The Mammal Watchers website also has a range of trip reports for Paraguay but most are not independent. The trip report *Defensores del Chaco* (2019) by Sophie & Manuel Baumgartner was the most useful, although limited in content, as it provided more details about exploring around Defensores Del Chaco National Park.

The internet resource eBird is a very useful tool, specifically for checking updated distribution data which can help provide context to the field guides. For species that can be rare migrants, it can provide data on the most recent sightings, giving you a better chance of seeing them. The photo library on eBird is also very useful for comparing with the illustrations in the field guide to help confirm identifications. For non-avian identifications we used iNaturalist, which is another internet resource for all taxa. By uploading photos, experts in various fields can offer suggestions on identifications and the search function can provide good clues about what species to expect in specific areas.

Tapes

The Merlin Bird ID app; Paraguay pack was the source of most of the calls we needed on this trip. This free resource also has photos that are useful for in-field reference. The

species on the apps were cross-referenced with our target list and the tapes of any outstanding species we downloaded from the website Xeno Canto.

Equipment

For this trip a spotting scope is not essential, but can be a useful asset at some locations. We had one scope on our trip, but the only location it saw much use was around Filadelfia, where we used it to scan through flocks of waders and waterbirds. Both of us use the same camera setup, a Canon R5 with a Canon RF 100-500mm F4.5-7.1L IS USM lens, which is an excellent setup for general bird photography.

For mammal searching we had a thermal monocular, a Pulsar Axion 2 XG35 LRF.

Although it was not a cheap investment at first, it has certainly proved its worth and did again on this trip. We encountered no issues bringing the device into the country, although we kept it in our hand luggage to be sure. For spotlighting we both use Fenix TK35 torches. These are capable of producing incredible illumination, although their battery life can leave something to be desired. Fortunately all the camping locations we used had power, and we were always able to recharge them during the day.

Climate

The Chaco is a hot and dry habitat, so we expected temperatures to easily exceed 30°C every day. Our experience was very different! Every day the Chaco was cool and overcast, with occasional rainfall and temperatures

reaching as low as 12°C on one occasion. We were told by our hosts at Laguna Capitán that the three previous years had seen successive droughts, with temperatures regularly reaching 40°C during the daytime. Our experience was something of an anomaly, but packing warm clothes in case might be a good idea.

Away from the Chaco we did encounter warmer weather, and on occasions we saw temperatures reach 35°C, but we continued to see regular rainfall, with our last week frequently encountering tropical storms that were sometimes quite spectacular. One of our ground team at Estancia Arrecife explained to us that this was one of the strangest springs they had ever experienced in their 50 plus years living in Paraguay.

