

Brazil: 1 - 23 May 2026

55 species, 35 lifers !

The reason for this trip was primarily to see primates, along with a few other special targets. I sent my list of target species to [Regina Ribeiro](#), she and Marluce came up with a fantastic itinerary—intense, but fantastic! By the time I got home, I felt as though I needed a vacation from my vacation. I had excellent local guides everywhere I went, which was essential for finding what I was looking for.

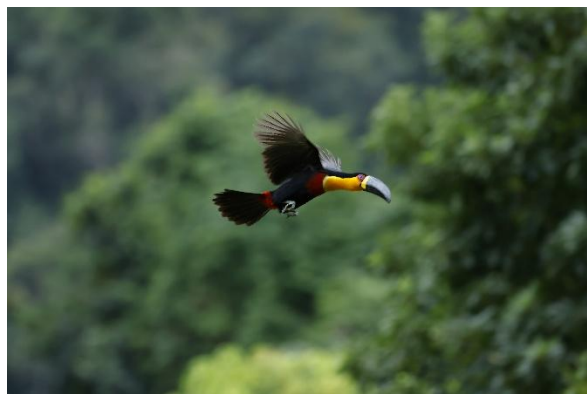
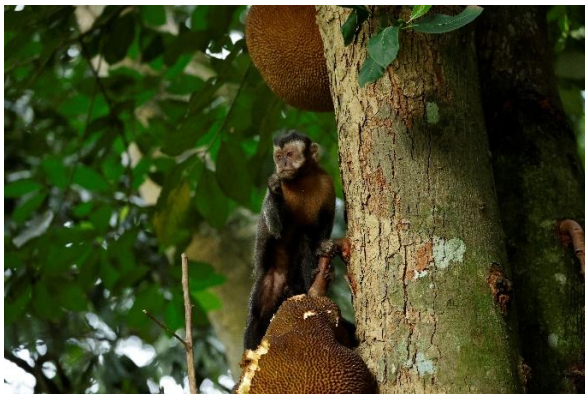
My journey took me through the lush Atlantic Rainforest in the southeast, to the unique Caatinga biome and Chapada Diamantina region of Bahia, and finally to the Amazon Rainforest, crossing the states of Pará and Amazonas.

Day 1 - 2: Rio de Janeiro

I landed in Rio early in the morning after a hectic transit in São Paulo. What a terrible airport when transiting from international to a domestic flight! After lunch, Eugênio—a great guide and an incredibly nice person—drove me to the Rio de Janeiro Botanical Garden, where we spent a couple of hours exploring.

The **Rio de Janeiro Botanical Garden** is one of the city's most beautiful and historic attractions. Founded in 1808, it is home to thousands of plant species from Brazil and around the world, as well as magnificent royal palms, tropical gardens, and peaceful walking paths. Located at the foot of the Tijuca Forest, the gardens offer visitors a unique opportunity to enjoy nature and explore its remarkable plant diversity.

My main reason for visiting, however, was to see the **Black Capuchin**, which proved easy to find. Just before leaving the park, a small group of introduced **White-tufted Marmosets** crossed our path. Among the non-mammals, the highlights were several Channel-billed Toucans.



The 2nd day we went to a place about 1.5h from Rio to look for the lovely **Golden Lion Tamarin**. To do so we had help from the GLT Association, which are responsible for coordinating all the efforts to protect the Lion tamarins and their habitat. It did not even take 30 minutes to find them and I had a great time trying to get some nice shots. Spotted also a small group of White-tufted Marmosets close to the Tamarins.



Day 3 - 5: Lençóis

An early morning flight took me to the lovely town of Lençóis. As it is a small place with only a few flight per week, I had to change planes in Salvador, so I did not arrive until late in the afternoon.

Lençóis is a charming town in the state of Bahia and the main gateway to the spectacular Chapada Diamantina National Park. The town itself consists of colourful historic buildings and has a lively atmosphere. It was always a pleasure to wander around in the evenings for food and drinks after a day in the field.





One of my main goals for the entire trip was the beautiful **Blond Titi**, an endemic species of the Caatinga biome that was only discovered in the 1990s. Fortunately, it did not take long to find one. At the airport, I was met by my lovely guide for my time there, Cristine Prates. During the roughly 30-minute drive into town, she asked if I was up for looking for some Blond Titis or if I wanted to go to my accommodation. Of course, I was in for some Titis! Not far from town, we drove into the bush, and before long we found a group. A family of **Black-tufted-ear Marmosets** was also seen in the distance.



Early the next morning, we set out in search of Blond Titis again and found several groups, as well as more distant marmosets. Happy with the morning's success, we continued to Chapada Diamantina National Park and then to Iraquara in search of another Caatinga endemic, the **Rock Cavy**. Cristine knew exactly where to find them, and within 30 minutes or so, we had seen around ten individuals or so close to us.



The typical buffet lunch at a local restaurant was excellent, but—as is often the case—far too rich, but I just can not stop myself from loading the plate. After the second day, I did not feel hunger again for a long time! Under a huge tree by the restaurant, we found more **Black-tufted-ear Marmosets**. This time close.



On the way back, we walked up to the viewpoint at Morro do Pai Inácio for some spectacular views. Rock Cavies can also be found there, although the viewing is nowhere near as good as at the location we had visited earlier. If you see them it will most likely be at a distance.



On the final day, after looking for a few more Blond Titis, we drove a couple of hours to join the Brazilian Three-banded Armadillo research team in search of—well, **Brazilian Three-banded Armadillos**. On the way, we stopped at a site to look for Spix's Yellow-toothed Cavy, but unfortunately we did not find any.



The local researchers head out onto the dry savannah from around 4 p.m., so we waited for them—and it did not take long. They soon found two armadillos. The researchers did their research thingy, I got a few photos, and everyone was happy.

On the way back, a **Tapeti** and a **European Hare** crossed the road.

Day 6: On the road (Lençóis to Vitoria)

I drove some 5h from Lençóis to Salvador, from where, I flew to São Paulo, where I changed planes for my final destination, Vitória.

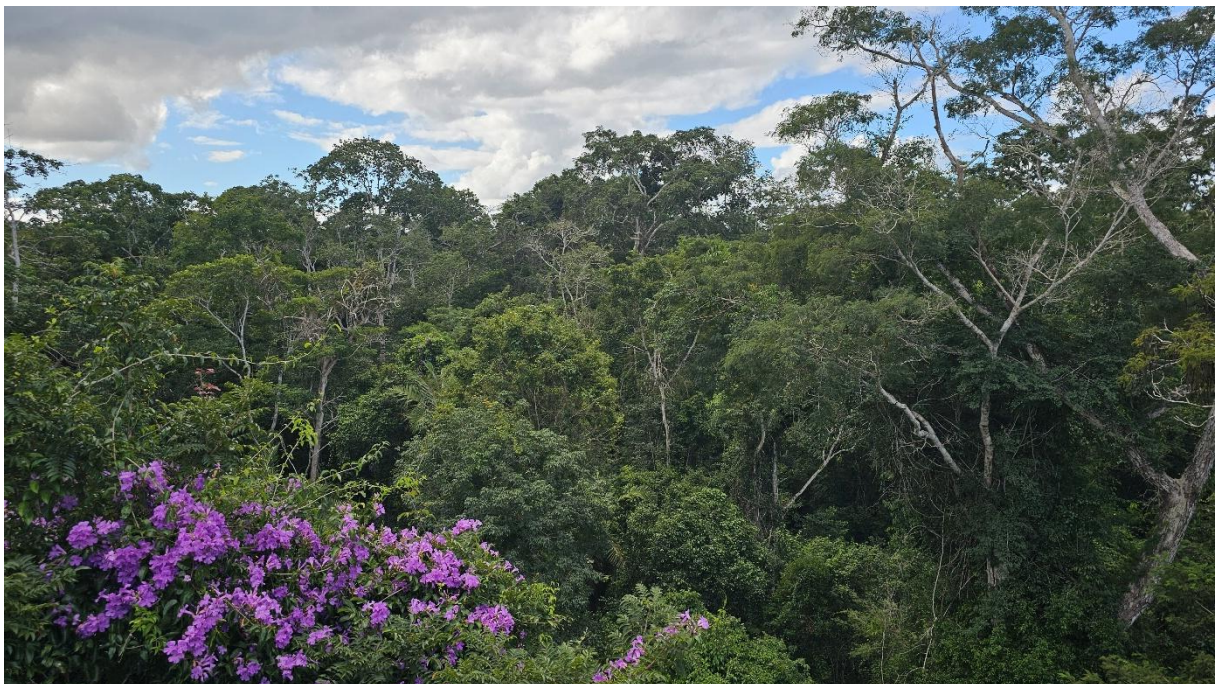
I landed after 11 p.m. and was very happy to see Eugênio again. I was looking forward to spending more time with him, getting some lovely critters—and having a break from flights for a while!

Day 7 - 8: Vale Natural Reserve

We did not get many hours of sleep, and after a very early breakfast, we drove the approximately three hours to the reserve. For some reason, I was not particularly excited about going there. I am not sure why, as the reserve had some rather nice animals on the list and fitted the itinerary perfectly. As it turned out, I absolutely loved it.

At the time of my visit, the closest safe place to stay was Linhares, some 30–40 minutes away. However, they were building tourist bungalows inside the reserve, along with a restaurant, and the whole development looked lovely. I would really like to return and stay inside the park.

Vale Natural Reserve is a private reserve protecting a large tract of Atlantic Rainforest. It is a fantastic place for mammal watching and is also important for research and conservation.



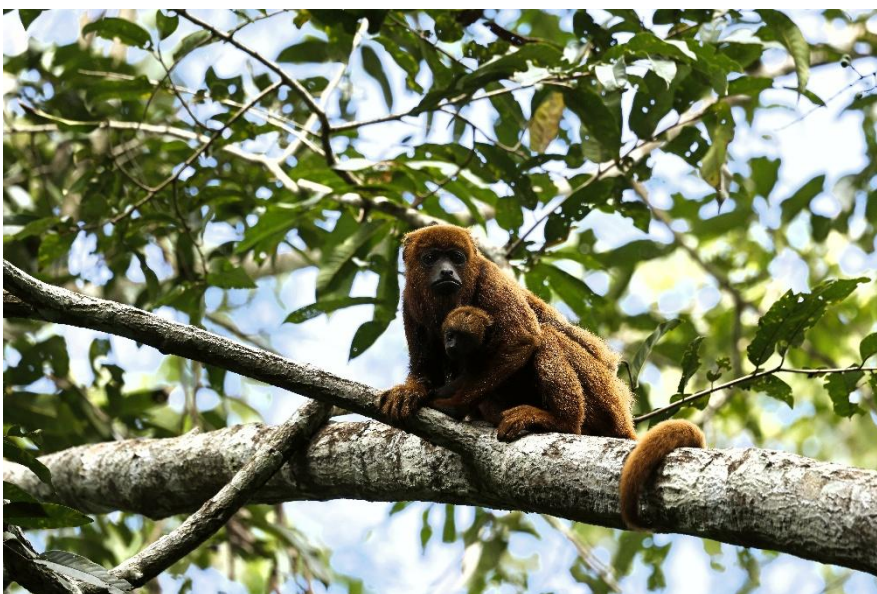
We arrived a little before our appointment with our next excellent local guide, Brenner. We took a short walk along one of the gravel roads and soon located a group of **Robust Capuchins**. They turned out to be quite common in the park, and we would see them several more times over the next couple of days.



The reserve is quite large, and to maximise our chances of finding as many species as possible, we spent much of our time driving through the forest. Near the newly constructed accommodation, a **Gray Brocket** was feeding on the lush green grass in the open, but disappeared into the forest as soon as we stopped the car.

My main target here was **Geoffroy's Marmoset**. Like many marmosets, they are small and skittish, making them difficult to approach and photograph well. But on a few occasions, I got lucky.

The bush is thick along the roads, and often the only time you see an animal is when it crosses the road. This was the case with **Red-rumped Agoutis**, **South American Coatis**, and one **Red Brocket**. At one point, we stopped to clear the path, and when we turned around, there was a female **Brown Howler** with a baby sitting not too high up in a tree behind us. We heard them often, but this was the only time I actually saw them here.



For the night drive, we headed to the nearby Reserva Biológica de Sooretama. The late-afternoon walk and drive did not produce anything mammalian, and Brener said he was surprised that we had not seen anything. Shortly afterwards, however, we saw the first of two **Ocelots** that evening.



The second one initially looked as though it might have been a Margay, which would have been fantastic. Sadly, it was not—but two Ocelots in one evening was still an excellent result. A brilliant day had come to an end.

Early the next morning, we repeated the previous day's routine, with more driving, some walking, and huge buffet lunches in Sooretama. We also added some great new species to the list. I finally managed to get a few close-up views of **Geoffroy's Marmosets**, but the **Masked Titi** was still missing.



Brener knew of a place where they came to sleep, and fortunately, they were there that evening too. On the way out in the darkness, we also spotted a **Spotted Paca** hiding in the bush.



Other excellent non-mammal sightings included Broad-snouted Caiman, Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl, White-eared Parakeet, and Banded Owl.



Day 9: Augusto Ruschi Biological Reserve

After an early breakfast, we left for the lovely highland town of Santa Teresa, a journey of about 2.5 hours. Unfortunately, the morning was largely washed out by rain. Good to get some time to wash clothes though

Sometimes, Masked Titis and Black-tufted Marmosets can be seen at the Prof. Melo Leitão Museum in the centre of town, but we were not lucky and did not see anything. Maybe as it was still drizzling

The Augusto Ruschi Biological Reserve proved to be more rewarding. From the buffet restaurant where we had lunch, we spotted our first **Southern Maned Sloth**, another of my key target species. It was far away, but a sighting is a sighting! After lunch, we went to the reserve and found another one much closer.



The best sighting, however, came late in the afternoon, when we found a group of lovely **Buffy-headed Marmosets**.



We stayed at the lovely Pousada Vita Verde, high up in the hills above the town.

Day 10 – 11: Afonso Cláudio

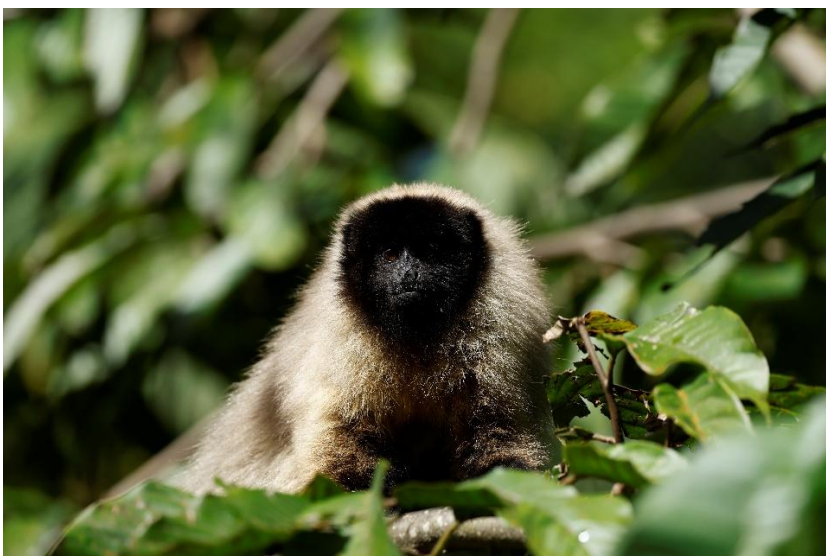
Afonso Cláudio is a remote, mountainous municipality in Espírito Santo, Brazil, surrounded by forested valleys, rugged hills, waterfalls, and quiet rural landscapes. It is about a three-hour drive

from Santa Teresa, mostly along winding mountain roads, which only adds to the feeling of being well off the beaten track. With its beautiful scenery, peaceful forests, and the chance of encountering some of Brazil's elusive mammals, Afonso Cláudio was a great place to visit.



The accommodation was simple but comfortable, with excellent home-cooked meals, cold beer, and a very friendly atmosphere.

My main targets were the **Masked Titi**, **Southern Big-eared Opossum**, and **Bahian Hairy Dwarf Porcupine**. Other goodies that can be found in the area include Brown Howler Monkeys, Southern Maned Sloths, and Brazilian Cavies, although unfortunately I did not see any of these.





We visited a local coffee farm, where all of these species can potentially be found. The Masked Titis were relatively easy to see, with a small family present on the property during both of my visits. The opossum and porcupine were less reliable, however, and I only managed to see them on my second evening there.

As an extra bonus, there was a cave just a 10-minute walk away, home to several bats, including **Pallas's Long-tongued Bat** and **Seba's Short-tailed Bat**. I believe a third species was also present in the cave, but unfortunately, I was unable to identify it.



As an extra bonus, the very friendly owners gave me a Coca-Cola bottle filled with their own coffee beans. The coffee was sensational!

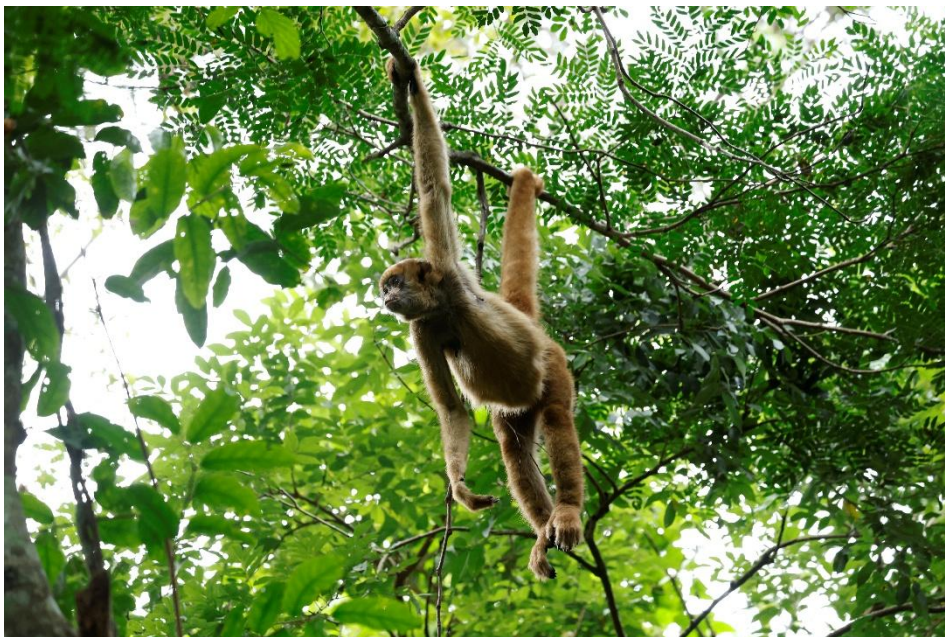
Day 12 – 13 : FMA Preserve (formerly the Caratinga Biological Reserve)

As I had seen everything I had come for in Afonso Cláudio, we did not linger. After breakfast, we set off on a drive of around five hours to my next target, the **Northern Muriqui**, another of my prime targets for the trip.

The **FMA Preserve** is internationally renowned for its primate conservation research and long-term studies of Brazil's native primates, particularly the Northern Muriqui.

As we arrived relatively early, we had a few hours in the afternoon to explore and search for the muriquis. Our guide seemed to know exactly where they were, and we did not have to walk far up the

hill before finding a large group of perhaps 30 animals. A few **Black Capuchins** were present as well. I saw both species on both days.



Apart from these two species, however, I did not see any other mammals, which was a little surprising given other the trip reports. We did see some unidentified bats in an abandoned building, and we spent a few hours driving at night, but without any further results.

The accommodation, Pousada Corredeiras do Primitivo, just outside the preserve, was excellent and one of my favourites of the entire trip. The beautiful setting, delicious food, and comfortable rooms.



Day 14: Rio Doce State Park

We decided not to linger at FMA, as I had seen my main target very well and skipped the morning drive as I had not encountered much else. Instead, we continued our journey to **Rio Doce State Park**, a drive of around four hours.

Already at the entrance, we were greeted by some **Black Capuchins**. They seemed to be quite common, and we spotted them several times during our short stay.

There is one main road that can be driven, along with a few trails for walking. I spent one afternoon and the following morning in the park and also saw two **Black-fronted Tits**, three **Brown Howlers**, and one **South-eastern Squirrel**.

If you have the opportunity, I would recommend staying inside the park rather than driving to the nearest town. Night drives may be rewarding, as they have been for other visitors.

Day 15: Caraça Seminary and Natural Reserve

It took us another five hours of driving to reach another of my main targets, the **Maned Wolf**. I thought this one would be a sure thing, but apparently, it is not quite as guaranteed as I had imagined.

Caraça Seminary, in the mountains of Minas Gerais, is a historic sanctuary and former seminary surrounded by spectacular Atlantic Forest and montane landscapes. Founded in the 19th century, it is now best known for its beautiful setting, historic buildings, and rich wildlife.



The site is particularly famous for its resident Maned Wolves, which regularly visit the grounds at night in search of food.

We arrived on a Friday, and it was clearly a very popular destination for local tourists—it was packed! The food was great, the setting beautiful, and the accommodation lovely. I was lucky enough to stay in the main house. Even more visitors arrived on Saturday, so if your itinerary allows it, I would recommend avoiding weekends.

Eugênio asked the caretakers whether the wolf had been seen recently, and the answer was no. It had not been around for five days, and apparently, it sometimes disappears for several weeks. He only told me this afterwards, presumably so as not to discourage me too much! Good decision!

When evening came, we went to the spot where food is put out for the wolves and settled down to wait. To make the waiting a little more enjoyable, I brought a glass of whisky.

I was certainly not alone. Maybe 40 other people were waiting there too, starting around 7 p.m. There are a few rules: visitors are asked not to talk and not to stand up or move around, as this can scare the wolf away. Unfortunately, people seemed completely unable to keep quiet and were constantly getting up to look for the wolf.

As they had eaten dinner only a short while earlier, they also kept walking back and forth to the restaurant, buying and munching on crisps. Luckily, most people had little patience, and one by one they left. By around 9:30 p.m., only three other people and I remained.

Shortly before 10 p.m., the most wanted guest finally arrived.



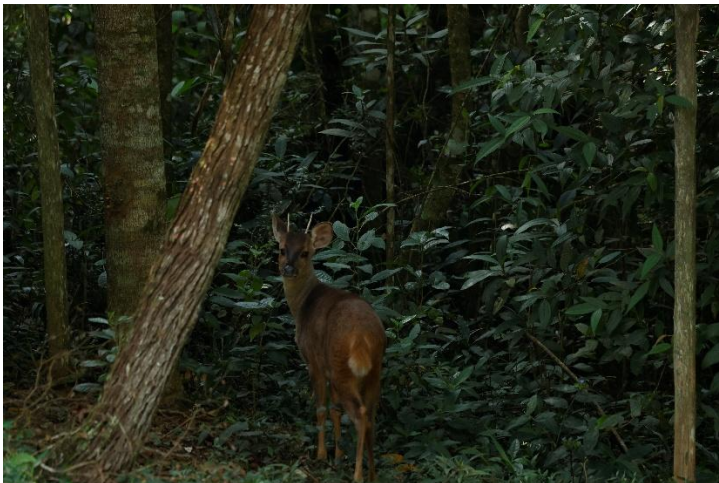
Day 16: Belo Horizonte

There are several other interesting mammals to look for in the area. I had been told not to expect any **Black-fronted Titis**, as their numbers had been severely reduced by a yellow fever outbreak some years earlier. But I was lucky.

Along the trail leading to the dam, we heard some titi calls and, after a while, managed to locate a few animals. There must have been three groups calling to each other. It was amazing how well they blended into the trees, making them extremely difficult to spot.



We also took a walk uphill from the monastery and were lucky enough to find a **Gray Brocket Deer** grazing close to the edge of the forest.



When we returned to the monastery, there were huge crowds of people—busloads of them. As I had already seen everything I had come for, and otherwise would have had to leave at around 3 a.m. to catch my flight the following day, I decided to spend the night in Belo Horizonte instead. Regina and her team happily arranged and paid for the extra night for me. Just great service!

Regina recommended a very nice bar close to my hotel in BH, where they served some killer caipirinhas.

Day 17 -18: Belem

I was very much looking forward to spending my last week in the Amazon, with some fantastic critters waiting to be discovered. Belém was my first stop. Sidnei Dantas, another of the excellent guides who would accompany me over the next two days, met me at the airport.

As it was too early to check in to my hotel, we went to the Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi, a small park in the city where **Red-rumped Agoutis** and Collins's Squirrel Monkeys can be found. They were, of course, very easy to see. I would encounter both species again later, this time in a more natural setting, in another park just outside Belém.



My main reason for visiting Belém was the recently split **Eastern Black-handed Tamarin**, and the following morning we set out in search of them. We first tried a location where Sidnei had seen them before, but after an hour of walking, there was no sign of them.



At our second stop, after a few hours of searching, we heard the familiar calls of marmosets. Eventually, we spotted a small group darting through the trees on both sides of the gravel road. They were incredibly fast-moving and difficult to photograph, but at least we found them!

In the afternoon, we headed to Utinga State Park, a very large park just outside Belém. My main target there was the **Black-rumped Agouti**, which I finally found late in the afternoon while walking back. We also saw several groups of **Collins's Squirrel Monkeys**, as well as **Greater Capybaras** near the entrance.



I also found my favourite parrot of the entire trip here, the Golden Parakeet. I really do not understand why this isn't the national bird of Brazil!



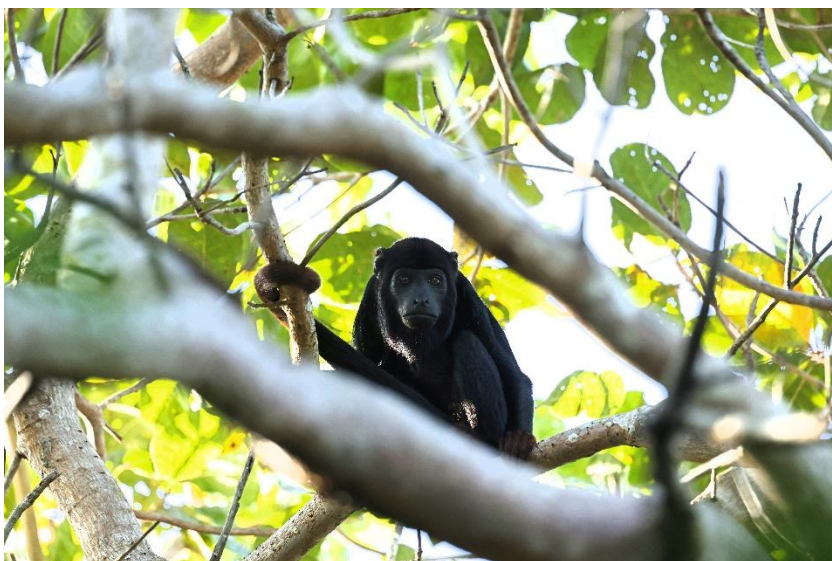
Day 19 - 21: Alter do Chão

My flight was around 1 p.m., so we spent a few hours that morning at the Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi again, as Utinga State Park was unfortunately closed due to cleaning. Red-rumped Agoutis and Collins's Squirrel Monkeys were easily seen.

At Alter do Chão, my next guide, Alex Almeida, was waiting for me. He then took me to what was perhaps my favourite place of the entire trip.

Alter do Chão is a beautiful village in the Brazilian Amazon, famous for its white-sand beaches along the Tapajós River. Apparently it is full in the low water season but in May almost no tourists. Surrounded by lush rainforest, it offers a wonderful combination of nature, local culture, peaceful riverside scenery, and great food. I had some of the best fish I have ever eaten there.

After lunch, we took a leisurely walk through the town itself, which produced some of my main targets, including the **Silvery Marmoset**, my primary target, and the **Tapajós Howler Monkey**. I would go on to see many Silvery Marmosets during my stay, but only a few Howlers.





A short night walk behind the excellent Pousada Recanto Alter do Chão produced a **Feline Night Monkey**, the only one I would see during the entire trip.



The next morning, before Alex came to pick me up, I took a walk just behind the lodge and found a group of **Golden-backed Squirrel Monkeys**. As the day before, we took a short walk near the lodge and found two **Orange Agoutis**.



We then took a taxi to a spot outside town and walked back for three to four hours, which produced plenty of Silvery Marmosets. Late in the afternoon, before heading out for a night walk, I took another walk by myself, just a few minutes from my accommodation, and found the only **Red-bellied Tit** of the entire trip.



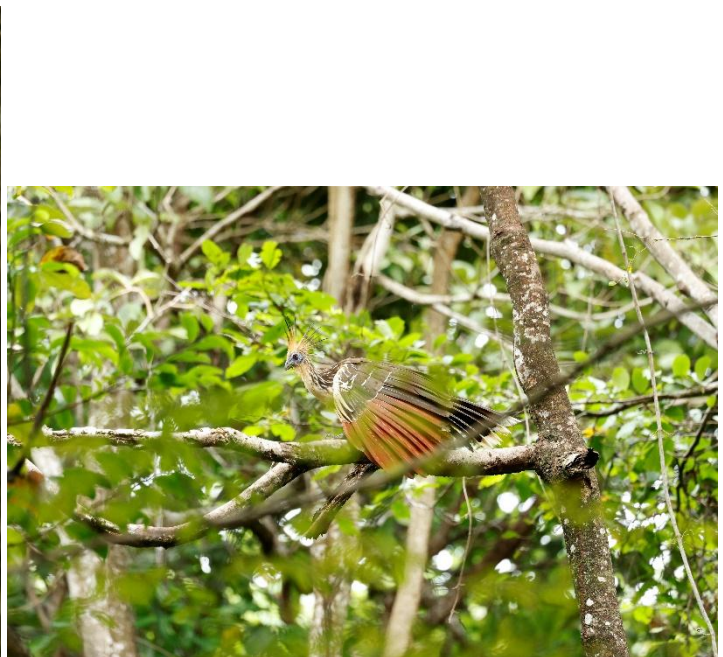
A few days earlier, Alex had found several Feline Night Monkeys at the spot where we went that evening, but unfortunately, they were nowhere to be seen this time. However, our two-hour walk did produce a **Northern Black-eared Opossum**.



On my last full day, we went to the Jari Channel, on the other side of the river, in search of sloths and other goodies. I never did find any sloths, but we had some other great sightings, including **Guyanana Squirrel Monkeys, Brown-three-toed Sloth** and **Pink River Dolphins**.



Other great wildlife I saw during my time here included Amazonian Motmot, Black-necked Aracari, Blue-headed Parrot, Brazilian Whiteknee Tarantula, Cobalt-rumped Parrotlet, Great Potoo, Green Iguana, and Hoatzin.





Day 22 - 23: Manaus

My last stop on this fantastic trip was Manaus, and I had high hopes of finding some spectacular primates. One of my main targets, the Uacari, almost eluded me and was seen only just before we headed back on my final day. Gabriel Leite was my guide and I can really recommend him too.

It was not a long flight to Manaus, but Brazilians seem to love flights that ruin your sleep and the following day! This one was scheduled for 1 a.m. and lasted less than an hour. I was in bed by around 3 a.m. and back up again at 5 for an early breakfast.

On the first day, we stayed in and around Manaus. Our first stop was a small patch of forest in an affluent residential area. The guards were not particularly happy about our presence and came over to ask what we were doing there.

Our main target was the rare **Pied Tamarin**. It was drizzling and darkish, so it took a while before we finally located them. On the other side of the road, high up in the trees, we found my second major target of the day, the spectacular-looking **Golden-faced Saki Monkey**.





We then headed to Bosque da Ciência, an ecological park inside Manaus. It rained heavily for the first few hours, but once the rain stopped, we found several more Golden-faced Saki Monkeys and a large troop of **Guianan Squirrel Monkeys**.

After my last huge Brazilian lunch, we went to the famous MUSA tower. We did not see much wildlife there, apart from one lonely **Guianan Howler Monkey**, but the views from the top of the tower were fantastic.



My final day started at 4 a.m. with a one-hour drive to the Ariaú River, followed by a boat trip onto the Rio Negro.



Things started badly. Both my cameras and my lens quickly fogged up, so I was unable to get a single photo of the **Southern Tamandua**, which was foraging just one metre above our heads.

Luckily, my guide had the same camera and lens as I did. Once I was able to use my camera again, he lent me his lens. The world was in order again!

We cruised up and down the Ariaú River first, where we spotted **Humboldt's Squirrel Monkeys** and **Colombian Red Howlers**. On the way back in the afternoon, we had a very inquisitive **White-fronted Capuchin** come to check us out. We also saw a single **Tucuxi**.



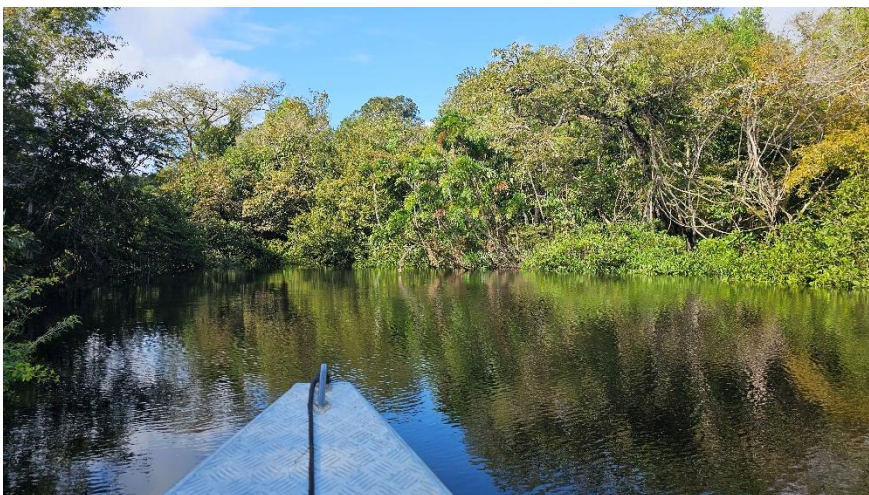
The Rio Negro is famous for opportunities to get close-up views of **Pink River Dolphins**, so we stopped at a place for lunch where the dolphins are accustomed to coming for a fish or two. I got a few too, and they were brilliant.





My main target, however, was the **Spix's Golden Brown Uakari**. We spent a long time cruising back and forth looking for them. Our boatman knew of a place where he had seen them before, and by now it was late afternoon, so this was going to be our final stop.

We left the Rio Negro and entered the mangroves. It did not take long before we heard them. It sounded like a large troop, but it took perhaps another 30 minutes before we finally caught a glimpse of them.



And glimpses were all we got. They were incredibly shy and constantly on the move. They staid around us and kept themselves just out of sight mostly, frustratingly hidden among the vegetation. But we got a few looks if of them at least

A **River Otter** also graced us with its presence in the mangroves, providing a nice final wildlife sighting to an incredible trip.

Tobi

List os species:

[illegible]