

Brazil, 12th July – 8th August 2019

Having thought about going to Brazil for a while, when dad had the opportunity to go for work we decided to take advantage and turn it into a full blown family (minus my brother) holiday. So in July 2019 my mum, dad and I went on a tour of Brazil. It was an utterly fantastic trip, and the mammalwatching certainly didn't disappoint. Plus, the food was pretty ace, and the people extraordinarily friendly. A full itinerary is given at the end of the report, but in summary we travelled in and out of Rio, with the best part of a week spent in each of the Amazon and Pantanal, before exploring the Cerrado (Emas, Serra de Canastra, Santuario do Caraça) and finally a little bit of the Atlantic Forest (Caratinga, Rio).



Brazil is expensive, but you can save a lot by self-organising rather than going with a company. We did this, and although it was harder work than most other trips we have done, it was certainly doable. A word of warning though: internal flights can be hard to book, and we only had one (of six!) Gol flights arrive on time – causing us to sprint across Brasilia (which was fine) and miss a flight out of São Paulo (not so fine). More generally, Brazilians have a very relaxed approach to confirmation (although we would discover the necessary arrangements had always been made). Driving in Brazil was easy enough, although the cities had quite hair-raising driving practices, and we tried hard to ensure we didn't have to drive too much at night. For directions, we used Google maps and the coverage is pretty impressive. All of our rental cars were booked through **Rentalcars.com**, and we used **Hertz Localiza** and **Movida**. We'd recommend both, but **Hertz** tended to be more efficient.

Rio, 12th-13th July

Having flown in from London relatively late, we took a stopover in Rio before heading on. We stayed in the **Hotel Sol Ipanema**, and I would highly recommend it. We didn't stray far from the hotel before our flight the next morning to Manaus. We **never drove** in Rio either, just getting Ubers, which are efficient, friendly and good value. I think driving there would have been difficult.

Manaus, 13th-14th & 16th-18th July

We used Manaus as our base to explore the Amazon from – do look out for the **meeting of the waters** as you fly into/out of the city – and we stayed at the **Tropical Executive Hotel** (next door to the Hotel Tropical which has gone bust). We arrived in time to spotlight around the gardens, finding a **southern two-toed sloth** in the forest just before the road bridge which takes you to an open grassy area. Walking along its edge we found a path on the left which leads quickly to a rope bridge, on the far side of which we saw one **common opossum**, plus another opossum that was quite a lot smaller, but could easily have been another common opossum. We saw the same species when we spotlighted again on the 16th, plus a **spectacled owl**. I also saw a small fawn-coloured animal that was probably a climbing mouse of some description, but it didn't show for long enough and was moving fast and high up in the canopy.

We organised a number of activities around Manaus through **Moacir Fortes Junior** (aka Junior, most responsive via **WhatsApp** on **+55 92 9114-3266**; he's often on his boat and therefore out of signal). He was fantastically efficient and very kind, plus a great naturalist. So, on the morning of the 17th we headed out early with **Jenny** (Junior's wife) to the **Ducke reserve** where

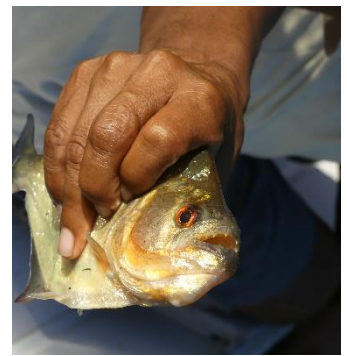


we saw **Guyanana red howler monkeys** warming up in the morning sun. There are also **bearded saki monkeys** there, but we didn't see any. Jenny then took us to **Alphaville** (a bizarre gated community for retired people on the edge of Manaus), which is a good place for **golden-faced saki** and **pied tamarins**. We didn't see either, but did see a **pale-throated three-toed sloth**. This part of the trip was really good value. When we got to back to the hotel, dad and I explored the gardens again, stumbling on a **red-rumped agouti** close to the shore – after crossing the rope bridge and heading left, the road loops back under the road bridge and just before it does there is a path on the right which leads to the river.

Having heard that we didn't see the **golden-faced saki** or the **pied tamarin**, Junior insisted that we met up with him before getting our flight on the 18th. Late that morning we caught up with the sakis at Alphaville, as well as another **pale-throated three-toed sloth** and **red-rumped agouti**. The tamarins, however, proved elusive, despite us also searching the **Tropical Executive Hotel gardens** again (they like the area by the road bridge and round the back of the **zoo** – following the path to the right of the road as you look at the Tropical Executive). This extra excursion was totally free.

Mamirauá 14th-16th July

We took an early flight to **Tefe** and then transferred to **Casa de Caboclo** by boat. We'd highly recommend this homestay, which can be emailed via Glauco on casa.caboclo@gmail.com. It is basic but comfortable, the food is good and the staff are extremely friendly.



Tito was one the very best guides we went out with in Brazil – great eyes and astonishing knowledge of his patch - and **Ed** (who was seemingly in training) good too, spotting things on the rare occasion Tito missed them. Plus at \$250/night for all three of us (including boat transfers, all guiding, and all meals) it was also a lot cheaper than the alternative of staying in the Uakari Floating Lodge. To top it off, the homestay is part of small village which is built entirely on stilts, and seeing the way of life there during the high-water season was fascinating. For part of our stay we were also looked after by **Lukas** who is a local tour guide and acted as our translator (this was again included in the price).



On the boat from **Tefe** to the homestay we saw several groups of **tucuxi** and one **boto**. We had lunch and a brief tour around the village by canoe, and then spent the early afternoon birding from the balcony. **Black-headed squirrel monkey** and **large-headed capuchins** both passed through the forest at the back. In the late afternoon we were taken out on a motor boat trip. While we were looking at a **brown-throated three-toed sloth**, a **northern Amazon red squirrel** decided to move about and then spectacularly fall from the tree. We then spent the remainder of the trip sitting in amongst the **botos**, who were extremely curious. Hearing them come up to breathe all around, and play in the wake of the boat was pretty extraordinary, and one of the best wildlife experiences I've ever had. We also saw **hoatzin** and Tito got the **black caiman** calling back at him. That evening, there were lots of **greater fishing bats** flying over the river.



The next morning we took the motor boat towing the canoes to explore further into the forest. In under an hour Tito had found a large group (~30 individuals) of **white uacari** and we got fantastic views. Within two minutes of leaving those, Tito had us watching a group of **Venezuelan red howlers**. That afternoon, having seen all of the mammals we thought we might, Tito took us fishing (we caught both **black** and **red-bellied piranha**), and showed us the **giant waterlilies** too. That night we asked to go out looking for caiman, and so Tito and Ed took us to the far side of the river, and we pottered along scanning the edge for eye-shine. We quickly found a **western woolly opossum** halfway up a tree. Soon enough we also saw two **spectacled** and one **black caiman**.

The final morning we got to see a different area of forest, which flooded much less. We saw more squirrel monkeys and capuchins, and a second group of **white uacari**. Tito also spotted an **electric eel** but we failed to see it. We then transferred back to Tefe for a flight on to Manaus.

Novo Airao, 17th-18th July

After returning to Manaus and taking our morning primate trip with Jenny, we left Manaus around midday on 17th July. Through Junior we'd organised to go on a boat trip from **Ponto do Airao** to look for the **golden-backed uacari**. We'd thought that at \$250 for the three of us (with us taking our hire car to get there) the trip was quite expensive, but it would turn out to be very reasonably priced. The boat journey is quite long, and on top of that, Junior lent us **Izaque** (one of his "boat crew") for 24 hours, to ensure we didn't get lost. He would turn out to have great eyes and knowledge.

Izaque was certainly useful – I have no idea how we would have found the boat departure point without him! We met the skipper and the guide at about 2pm (Junior had explained that the uacari come out to the river's edge about 4.30pm), and pootled out along the river towards the area where the uacari had been the day before. We quickly saw a group of **Humboldt's squirrel monkey** and when we got close they clambered all over the boat. We also saw **brown-throated three-toed sloth** and a **large-headed capuchin** in that stretch of the river, plus some **tucuxi** in the general area.



By 3.30pm we were in the right area for the uacari, so the skipper cut the engines and we began to scan the banks, while keeping as quiet as possible. By 4.30pm it started to get a bit cooler and the guide, skipper and Izaque began to get excited as they heard the uacari approaching (they make contact calls between each other). However, at that moment a floatplane appeared and proceeded to land nearby and then perform ear-splitting doughnuts on the water. At this stage we thought the game was up. Ten minutes later though, the plane had taken off and we could once again hear the monkeys. Not long after, and we were getting fantastic prolonged views of a large group of **golden-backed uacari**. Rather sweetly, when they eat a fruit they wag their tail in a dog-like fashion. As the uacari moved out of sight, a **giant river otter** decided to pop up, quickly looking us over before heading on.

We arrived back at the bridge, and our car, at just after 6pm. The four of us then headed on to Junior's hotel in Novo Airao, the **Amazonia Park and Suites**. I'd highly recommend it, and at \$70 for a triple room, it was a bargain. The drive from Ponto do Airao is on a good road, but it was a long time (2h15) to be driving in the dark for the first time, and so we were once again grateful to have Izaque with us. The next morning we explored the hotel grounds, with one of the staff keen to show us the group of **Spix's night monkey** that roost in a tree there. (We were actually quite lucky with the night monkey, as the roost tree had fallen down in a recent storm, so their small hole was now more of large crater, and therefore less ideal as a shelter. Probably worth asking Junior if they're about before heading to Novo Airao.) We saw several **greater white-lined bat** and a huddle of **Seba's short tailed bats** in the building near where the night monkeys roost (close to the water). There was also an unidentified free-tailed bat roosting under the eaves of one of the apartment buildings.

From there, we headed back to Manaus for our (fruitful) saki search, and a flight to Cuiaba. On the way back, Izaque very excitedly got us to stop, and so I awoke from my nap to us scrambling out of the car to look at a young **harpy eagle** perched next to the side of the road – a pretty great way to wake up!



Cuiabá, 18th-19th July

After a very tight connection in Brasília – the first Gol flight was characteristically late – and the necessary sprint across the airport (note to self: don't wear flip flops to travel), we were relieved to find ourselves spending the night in Cuiabá. We stayed at the **Hotel Portal da Amazonia** and would recommend it as a fine place for a stop-over.

Less of a relief was to find no message there from the guide we had booked for the Pantanal, who had been silent since May. Based on a trip report recommendation we had booked **Jardes Gomes of Cuiabá Pantanal Tours** for a six day (five night) trip. This turned out to be a very poor choice. He eventually arrived at 8am the following morning, and announced that things were running late as we were waiting for another group. This was news to us given that we had paid a premium price for a private tour in a 4WD vehicle. We then met the other family (who were luckily delightful, and interested in creatures) on board the dark-tinted and unopenable-windowed minibus that would serve as our vehicle. It turned out the other family, who were joining us for three nights, had also

been told they had an exclusive booking, As you can imagine, none of us were best pleased at being lied to; and the lack of visibility out of the bus was a tad frustrating too. Annoyed but still excited, we eventually set off for the Pantanal.

Piuval Lodge, 19th-20th July

Our first stop out of Cuiabá was to buy water for the trip. On a \$3600 trip you might expect that to be included; it wasn't! We arrived at **Piuval Lodge** just after midday, in plenty of time for a good lunch, and to take advantage of the swimming pool. A herd of **capybara** appeared around 2.30pm in the open area outside the lodge, and made for a pleasant back drop to our swim.

At around 3pm we headed off by bus to one of the patches of palm forest on the property. Once walking, we quickly found **black-striped tufted capuchins**, which were very photogenic. A little later we spotted some **Azara's agoutis** trying to catch the sunlight that reached the forest floor. We returned home after watching the sunset from a tower.



That night we went for the only night drive that we would go on with Jades (by email he had promised to go out any night we wanted, for as long as we liked). It was very quiet to start, just driving back and forth along the entrance road to the lodge, though we did see **crab-eating fox**, **crab-eating raccoon** and **grey brocket deer** (which Jades misidentified as pampas deer). We then headed to the palm forest (where the lodge staff had told me **Azara's night monkey** were sometimes seen), so I started scanning the trees and soon enough found three sat together in the centre of a palm tree crown. It would turn out this was actually pretty lucky, with a good guide telling us later she'd seen them once in 30 trips to Piuval. In the forest we also found **red brocket deer** and several **Brazilian rabbits**.

The next morning, we went out on an early drive and walk looking for **giant anteater** but failed to spot any. That said, we were lucky enough to see two **Brazilian tapir** slowly amble across about 100m in front of us. Despite being in the front of the bus Jades didn't spot these – dad did. As well as missing or mis-identifying many creatures, our guide was also impressively rude: when dad asked which might be the better of the complimentary morning options that the lodge offered – a boat trip or a horse ride - Jades snapped that he was being impatient and should just decide.

We opted for the boat, and en route I saw another tour parked taking photographs into the canopy, and in due course found them looking at a lovely group of **Pantanal marmosets**. On the boat itself, we saw **black howler monkeys** as well as a very large and very dead anaconda floating near the pontoon. We also had a brief stop-off mid boat trip, where



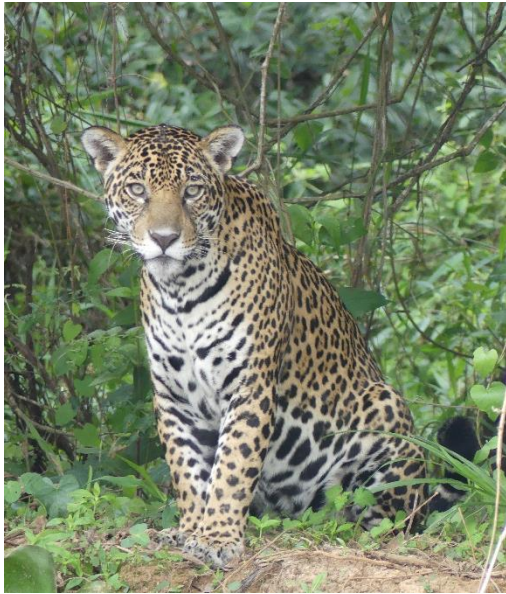
we saw more howler monkeys and, an iguana, and smelt (but failed to see) bats in a toilet block. We returned to the lodge and headed down the **Transpantaneira** to **Porte Jofre**, stopping en route at **Pixaim River Bridge** where I spotted a **giant otter** the far side of the bridge from the lodge. Further along, about 5-10 kms south of **Jaguar Ecological Reserve**, we saw several groups of **Brazilian guinea pigs** on the roadside, and at the far end of the road there were **feral Cape buffalo** and a **feral pig**



Porte Jofre Camping, 20th-22nd July

We stayed at **Porte Jofre Pantanal Camping** (aka **Nico's Camping**) and would recommend that you avoid it if at all possible. When we turned up there was no booking for us, nor (more surprisingly) for others that had booked through reliable tour guides. After two hours of waiting we were finally given a house which when we arrived had been host to a fishermen's piss-up. The accommodation was as you might expect: showers with exposed wires and the exciting ability to cut off the electricity, mosquito screens with vast holes in them, and an A/C unit held onto the wall by polystyrene and gaffer tape. It is just conceivable that our guide had booked the cheapest accommodation in town, but the stuff used by normal tourists also seemed pretty shoddy. With that in mind, Jardes said we could leave after one night if we saw jaguar the next day.

Early the following morning we were pleased when our boat turned up, and even more so when our skipper turned out to be very knowledgeable, with good eyes, and very considerate piloting. Within 15 minutes of setting off we sat watching a young female **jaguar** on the river bank. More boats arrived, and the jaguar walked along the bank, with us following at a polite distance. After 20 minutes of ambling, mixed with resting, she disappeared for an extended time, as did the other boats, but our skipper saw three **capybara** on the bank and thought it might be worth waiting. We did, but, luckily for the capybara, the jaguar did not re-emerge.



The rest of the cruise was equally great. We sat for half an hour with a family of **giant otters** and then sped up after a call came in for another **jaguar** sighting. When we arrived at the boat-jam the jaguar was swimming along the bank, apparently hunting for small caiman. He continued to do so for about 25 minutes, often interspersed with climbing over flotillas of water hyacinth. It was a truly fantastic sighting.

Over lunch, we asked about relocating to another lodge only to be told that had never been the plan (despite all eight of us knowing it had). In the process, Jardes lost his temper with mum, calling her a trouble-maker. We quickly made plans to cut our losses and head back to Cuiabá the next day with the other family.



Pleased to know we were going to be free of our guide, the afternoon cruise was a light relief, with good birding although few mammals. Dad asked the skipper if he could look for an anaconda. He did, and quickly spotted a **yellowtail cribo** – a really rather stunning snake. Then a call came in about an anaconda and we raced there, passing up what looked like a jaguar-jam, although the cat wasn't visible. We got to the **yellow anaconda** as it was disappearing, but the skipper's eyes and patience ensured that we were all able to see it, and in the end get a pretty good look at its head. Later we had two more **giant otters** hunting along the edge of a patch of waterlilies. We returned at dusk, and saw lots of **nacunda nighthawks** (Jardes identified them as bats; I was in stitches in the back). We pottered down to the river after dinner and saw both **greater** and **lesser fishing bats** flying low over the water, and even hunting very close by. We also got in touch with my brother back home to fix us up a car from Cuiabá the next day, and via another couple contacted **Alex at Southwild's Pousada Santa Teresa** to book a triple room for two more nights (you can **WhatsApp** him on +58 414-8928827).



In the morning, we drove back to Cuiabá with the other family. En route, and still early in the morning, the mum of the other family spotted a **tayra** cross the road, but it was too fast for any of the rest of us. Later, but still only ~15kms out of Porte Jofre, dad spotted the first of several **marsh deer**, which were a real treat to see as we'd missed them on the way out (they may well be more active in the morning). We also saw one more group of **guinea pigs** in roughly the same area as before, but they were conspicuously less common than in the afternoon. Further along we saw two **South American coati** disappear into the vegetation at the side of the road. Unfortunately we weren't quick enough out of the bus to find them amongst the tall grass and bushes.

Pousada Santa Teresa, 22nd-24th July

We arrived in Cuiabá at ~2pm, quickly picked up the **Jeep Renegade** that my star brother had sorted from **Localiza Hertz**— a straightforward company, and a great car for mammalwatching – and headed back south to Pocone, and on to **Southwild's Pousada Santa Teresa**. I cannot recommend them highly enough. A triple room was \$275 a night for three, for full board, a boat trip each morning, the option to go to either the **ocelot** or **tapir observatory** each night, and the use of a lovely pool. We paid extra for a night drive (\$100) and for a guided walk (\$40). You can contact the company [here](#) or communicate directly with **Alex** (who runs the lodge) on **WhatsApp: +58 414-8928827**. We'd met a Southwild guide earlier in our trip, and he'd said that if possible we should ask for **Maciel** (aka "the water cowboy") to be our guide as he was a fantastic naturalist. Alex made sure we knew he didn't speak English before letting us book him, but we were not disappointed – Maciel was one of the very best naturalists we went out with – and we could easily understand each other despite our near-non-existent Portuguese through mutual conversational Spanish and his ok English.

We arrived relatively late in the afternoon, despite only stopping once for a female **yacare caiman** with young crossing the road, so just settled in before heading to dinner. That said, we did see a group of **capybara** eyeing up the pool. After dinner, we headed straight to the **ocelot** hide and almost as soon as the bait hit the floor an **ocelot** came in to feed. The cat gave fantastic and prolonged views, but be warned there are A LOT of wildlife photographers, so it is also accompanied by the machine gun-like clattering of a gazillion SLRs. We'd go to the **tapir** hide the next evening, and watching a **tapir** eat a mango whole before somehow spitting out an intact stone was pretty special. Plus, not being a cat, you don't have anywhere near as many camera shutters going off, or chats along the lines of whether you're using your 4.275 lens with a 0.241 zoom.

The first night we also took a night drive, but didn't see much other than **crab-eating foxes**, although Maciel also showed us **jaguar** prints which crossed the drive into the lodge, so fresh that they were *on top* of the tyre prints of the previous car! We cancelled our night drive for the next day, and instead went out by ourselves, but again only spotted **crab-eating fox**.



On our first morning, we went on a boat trip with **Maciel**, which was fantastic. Almost straight after leaving the lodge we saw a **neotropical river otter** which unfortunately disappeared as soon as it saw us. We also had great birds, with **Maciel** finding us **sungrebe**, **sunbittern**, **boat-billed heron** and **pygmy kingfisher**. We also saw a family of **black howler monkeys**, before turning around and heading back past the lodge towards the **Pixaim River Bridge**. En route, we spent time with a less shy but still very cautious **neotropical river otter**. Once at the bridge it was clear why we'd come so far – **proboscis bats** roosting on the underside of the bridge. That afternoon we went for a walk, and had both **great-horned** and **ferruginous pygmy owls**, but it was quiet on the mammal front.

Our final morning in the Pantanal, and we headed out for an early (~5am) drive north along the **Transpantaneira**, which turned out to be pretty fantastic. We quickly had a **tayra** cross the road, **crab-eating foxes** were common and a pair of **crab-eating raccoons** were pretty obliging - plus we saw another **tapir** amble across the road. We got back in time for another cruise along the river. Although this was less productive for birds and mammals, the **proboscis bats** were still under the bridge. We then headed back to Cuiabá, on the way seeing another, really quite large **yellow anaconda** on the road, before catching an early evening flight to Campo Grande (rather ridiculously re-routed via São Paulo), .

Emas National Park, 25th-28th July

We left the Pantanal feeling like we had got lucky with wildlife, and our time with SouthWild felt like a real highlight of the trip. Our flight to Campo Grande, however, was not so great: delayed leaving Cuiabá we missed the connecting flight in São Paulo, and so had to stay there. Of the 7 Gol flights we had, only one was on time. To Gol's credit, the São Paulo stay was as pleasant as it could have been – they had sorted us a hotel before we'd even touched down, and put us in a taxi to get there.

Waking up for our rescheduled flight , we were keen to make sure we got to **Emas** in time for our pre-booked night drive in the park, aware that it was a 5h drive from Campo Grande. On landing we raced through security, quickly picked up the car, and hit the tarmac fast. We were therefore delighted to get to **Pousada Gloria** (aka **Ana's**) at dusk... or we would have been, had we known we were there. Instead, having arrived exactly when we said we would, no-one was about to say hello, and there were no signs to suggest we'd reached a pousada - just what looked like a large car port. We therefore went back to the park HQ (spotting lots of **pampas deer** en route) to be greeted by a very affectionate **white-lipped peccary** (Tijuca; hand-reared), and an equally welcoming guard. We then headed back to **Ana's**, a bit frustrated by the lack of instructions and signage. On arrival, I found an **Azara's agouti** by our room.

The night drive, led by Ana's husband, was driven so fast that seeing animals might best be described as challenging. That said, what we did see was excellent. **Striped hog-nosed skunk** would have been the highlight if it weren't for a **hoary fox** (a creature we'd have had a much better view of had we succeeded in getting the driver to stop). There were also yet more **crab-eating foxes**, and a **tapir** too.

The next morning we went out with the guide and quickly saw some nice birds but no mammals of note other than Tijuca. We returned to Ana's to pick up our stuff and move on to **Pousada Vista do Ceu**. On the main road outside the park HQ we had a close and prolonged sighting of a



yellow armadillo. Changing bases had always been the plan, given that Pousada do Gloria was quite pricey – but the difference in hospitality was striking (within seconds of arrival we'd been offered drinks and cake). In hindsight, I would simply base myself at Vista do Ceu, despite it being 40 minutes or so from Emas itself. A late afternoon drive in the park and then the tracks amongst the fields on the opposite (south) side of the main road yielded a **tapir**, **crab-eating foxes** and several **pampas deer**. There were also several **bats** (probably a species of *Artibeus*) flying around the fruiting trees in the pousada's garden.

We spent early next morning driving around patches of native vegetation near to **Chapadao do Ceu** - recommended by Richard Webb as a possible site for **puma**. Unfortunately the only thing of note we found was a man with a large shotgun and several hunting dogs. We got back mid-morning and arranged for a guide to take us to some of the areas of the park that you couldn't get to without a guide (at least not officially), with the specific aim of looking for **white-lipped peccary**. The other guests at the pousada had seen 50 or so the previous day, with a guide called **Nena (WhatsApp: +55 64 9611-6789)**. We would go on to bump into her in the park, and it was clear that she was very knowledgeable, and that had we been able to go out with her we'd have had a seriously good shot at the **peccaries**. Unfortunately, we didn't see any; the other entrance which our guide took us to was for **collared peccary** (the distinction got lost in translation), and sure enough there was a small family group when we got there. More excitingly we also stumbled upon a **maned wolf** in the north-west corner of the park. We tried again for the **white-lipped peccary**, which cross the main road from the park to the fields on the south side at about 7pm each evening... but it is quite a long road.

Having failed to see the peccaries, we headed back to **Chapado do Ceu** and came across the saddest (and one of the most exciting) mammals of the trip: lying in the middle of the road was a very recently hit **pampas cat**. It was still breathing but with a bloodied nose and didn't look in a good way. However, amazingly it managed to limp away when we moved it to the side of the road, and by the next morning there was no sign. We were also told by the car behind that we'd missed a herd of **white-lipped peccary** by about two minutes. Our last morning in **Emas** we tried in vain track down the **white-lipped peccaries** (they're more reliable in the afternoon) but did see more **pampas deer**. With that, we left **Emas** and headed off to Campo Grande for a few hours' sleep at the Aeroporto Plaza Hotel. The highlights of the drive were two more **yellow armadillos** playing chicken on the highway and a **crowned eagle**.

Serra de Canastra 19th July-1st August

We took a very early flight from Campo Grande to Belo Horizonte, and arrived early enough to pick up a car and get to **Serra de Canastra** in time for an afternoon drive. We based ourselves at **Hotel Chapadão da Canastra** - nice, with very friendly owners and good birding in the garden. **Black-tufted marmosets** are supposed to frequent the garden regularly, although we didn't see any during our stay.

On our first afternoon we had a very successful drive, with several **giant anteaters** easily viewable when scanning from the road on the plateau, all within the first 8kms after the park entrance, as well as more **pampas deer**. Be aware that the road condition was the worst that we came across in Brazil, and we were very grateful to have an SUV for the ground clearance – a normal 2WD would have struggled.



The next morning we explored the lower section of the park, around the base of the Casca d'Anta waterfall, in search of monkeys, but unfortunately with no luck. That said, we had a splendid encounter with a pair of **tayra**. At the second camping area we saw a **Brazilian rabbit** dart out of the undergrowth, and then very soon after a tayra followed, and then a second. Thankfully we proved no distraction to the tayra in their pursuit of breakfast, although the rabbit got away anyway. We spent the rest of the morning on a search for elusive monkeys... the closest we got was learning of a different hotel in which some (not clear if it was marmosets or titis) had been seen earlier on that day. The Pousada Recanto da Canastra clearly had great habitat and the owner was very knowledgeable. In hindsight I think we'd have split our time between there and where we stayed. We spent the afternoon and the following morning relaxing at our own hotel, and looking for the marmosets in that area, but to no avail.

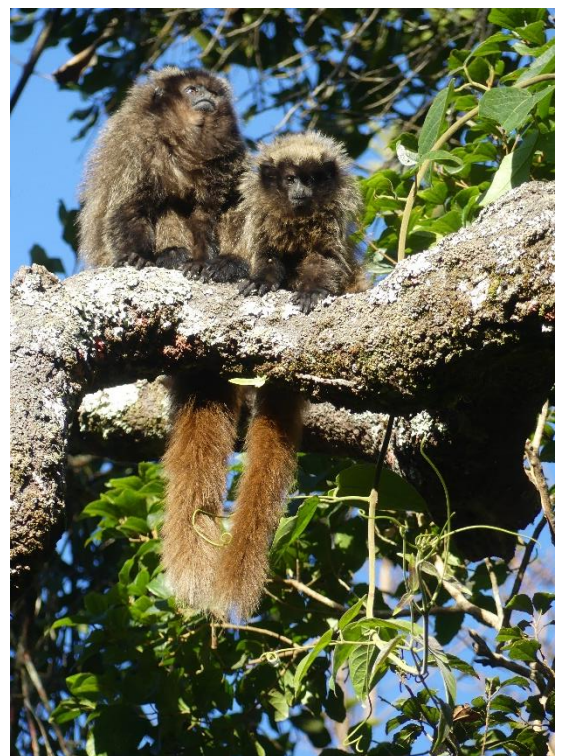
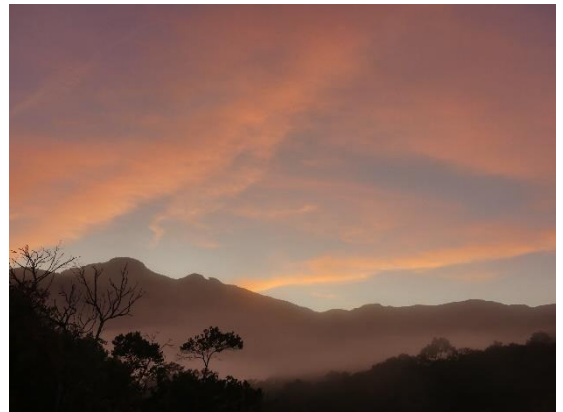
Next morning we headed on to Santuario do Caraca, taking a night in Ouro Preto en route. Ouro Preto is a nice city with lots of old buildings and some interesting cultural features. While it is clearly geared to tourists, it was still very pleasant.

Santuario do Caraca, 1st-2nd August

We went to the sanctuary knowing that it was a great place for **maned wolf**. As well as getting ridiculous views of that bonkers species as it came for dinner on the patio we saw more **crab-eating foxes** scavenge at the leftover chicken. But for me the highlight was the **black-fronted titi** monkeys we saw waking-up and sun-bathing on the **Tanque Grande trail** at ~6.30am. To get to the lake you take a right and quickly enter forest. Not long after this the path takes a tight left bend and there's a metal sign. The family were in that area, about half way up to the canopy. They gave prolonged views as they slowly warmed up. Unfortunately we dipped again on the **black-tufted marmosets** and also on **Guianan squirrel**.

Caratinga Biological Station, 2nd-3rd August

We had planned two nights at the Sanctuary, but decided that having seen the **titis** and had the best views of **maned wolf** we were likely to get, we raced off to **Caratinga**. We organised en route to meet up with guide **Roberto** (he doesn't speak much English, so we communicated via Google translate and **WhatsApp: +55 33 9994-2031**). Roberto was utterly fantastic – great knowledge, eyes, and enthusiasm. The reserve isn't cheap – R\$240 for a day's guiding plus R\$120 each for each day's entry – but well worth it. We saw a **Guianan squirrel** around the reception area, and then had several views of **northern muriqui**. The first was just 5 minutes after walking into the reserve, with a group that Roberto estimated to be ~50 individuals surrounding us. One adult female with young treated us to



acrobatics as she slowly built enough momentum at the end of the branch to jump over the road.

We stayed overnight at the straightforward **Vind's Plaza Hotel** in **Caratinga** and the following morning dad and I headed back out to the reserve, and had some ace birding plus more sightings of the **northern muriqui**. Rather sadly, and worryingly, all the monkey populations have declined as a result of the 2017 yellow fever outbreak. The worst hit, **buffy-headed marmosets**, are at just 10% of their previous population. As such, I think I was lucky just to hear them, even if we were disappointed to dip on a sighting. Likewise, we missed out on **black capuchins** and **brown howlers**, but they are there too.

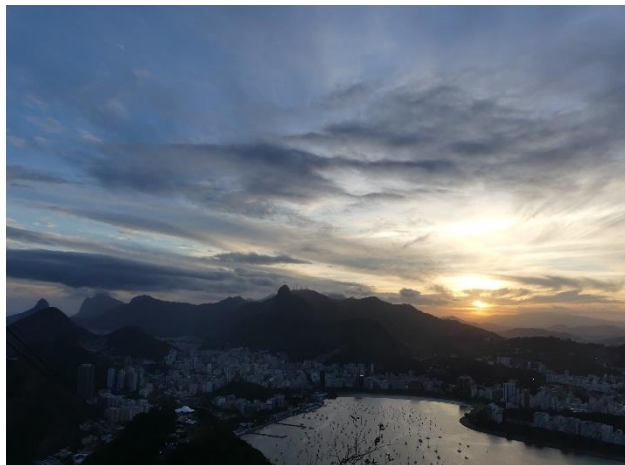


Rio de Janeiro, 3rd-7th August

Although we were in Rio for quite a while, most of it was spent enjoying the culture and the beach (while dad worked!). Plus eating at [this](#) great restaurant. We did manage to get out a bit though, and **common (white-tufted-ear) marmosets** were indeed common around **Sugar Loaf Mountain**. Likewise, **black capuchins** were easily seen at **Christ The Redeemer** and in the neighbourhood around the **Botanical Gardens**. The highlight though was going out to see the **golden lion tamarins** with the [Mico Leão Dourado](#) project. It isn't cheap at ~R\$200 each, but it was a fantastic experience. Do be aware that the site is two hours from the city and **you must take your yellow fever certificate** (almost certainly for the animals' safety and not your own!).



Rio was our last stop and brought to an end an excellent adventure. The wildlife was even more spectacular than we dreamed to imagine, the people extremely friendly, and the food ace. Plus driving ourselves was a lot easier than we expected. We didn't ever feel unsafe, and although expensive, (one obvious guide aside) we never felt ripped off. Brazil was truly great.



Mammals (57 + 4 species)

| | |
|--|--|
| Common opossum | <i>Manaus (Tropical Exec. Hotel)</i> |
| Western woolly opossum | <i>Mamirauá</i> |
| Yellow (= six-banded) armadillo | <i>Emas NP</i> |
| Southern two-toed sloth | <i>Manaus (Tropical Exec. Hotel)</i> |
| Pale-throated three-toed sloth | <i>Manaus (Alphaville)</i> |
| Brown-throated three-toed sloth | <i>Mamirauá, Ponto do Airau</i> |
| Giant anteater | <i>Serra da Canastra</i> |
| Greater fishing bat | <i>Mamirauá, Pantanal (Porto Jofre, SouthWild)</i> |
| Lesser fishing bat | <i>Pantanal (Porto Jofre, SouthWild)</i> |
| Proboscis bat | <i>Pantanal (Pixaim R bridge)</i> |
| Greater white-lined bat | <i>Novo Airão</i> |
| Seba's short-tailed bat | <i>Novo Airão</i> |
| White-tufted-ear marmoset | <i>Rio, Poço das Antas</i> |
| (Buffy-headed marmoset – heard [by Ben] only | <i>Caratinga)</i> |
| Pantanal (= black-tailed) marmoset | <i>Pantanal (Pousada Piuval)</i> |
| Golden lion tamarin | <i>Poço das Antas</i> |
| Spix's night monkey | <i>Novo Airão</i> |
| Azara's night monkey | <i>Pantanal (Pousada Piuval)</i> |
| Black-fronted titi | <i>Santuário do Caraça</i> |
| Humboldt's squirrel monkey | <i>Ponto do Airau</i> |
| Black-headed squirrel monkey | <i>Mamirauá</i> |
| Black capuchin | <i>Rio</i> |
| Large-headed capuchin | <i>Mamirauá, Ponto do Airau</i> |
| Black-striped capuchin | <i>Pantanal</i> |
| Golden-faced saki | <i>Manaus (Alphaville)</i> |
| White-uakari | <i>Mamirauá</i> |
| Golden-backed uakari | <i>Ponto do Airau</i> |
| Venezuelan red howler | <i>Mamirauá</i> |
| Guyanese red howler | <i>Manaus (Ducke Reserve)</i> |
| Black howler | <i>Pantanal</i> |
| Northern muriqui | <i>Caratinga</i> |
| Crab-eating raccoon | <i>Pantanal (Pousada Piuval)</i> |
| South American coati | <i>Pantanal</i> |
| Crab-eating fox | <i>Pantanal, Emas NP, Santuário do Caraça</i> |
| Hoary fox | <i>Emas NP</i> |
| Maned wolf | <i>Emas NP, Santuário do Caraça</i> |
| Striped hog-nosed skunk | <i>Emas NP</i> |
| Tayra | <i>Pantanal, Serra da Canastra</i> |
| Giant otter | <i>Ponto do Airau , Pantanal (Porto Jofre, Pixaim R)</i> |
| Neotropical river otter | <i>Pantanal (SouthWild)</i> |
| Jaguar | <i>Pantanal (Porto Jofre)</i> |
| Ocelot | <i>Pantanal (SouthWild)</i> |
| Pampas cat | <i>Emas NP</i> |
| Tucuxi | <i>Mamirauá</i> |

Boto
 Brazilian tapir
 Collared peccary
 (White-lipped peccary – hand-reared
 (feral pig
 (feral African buffalo
 Marsh deer
 Pampas deer
 Grey brocket
 Red brocket
 Red-rumped agouti
 Azara's agouti
 Brazilian cavy
 Capybara
 Northern Amazonian red squirrel
 Guianan squirrel
 Brazilian rabbit

Mamirauá
Pantanal, Emas NP
Emas NP
Emas NP)
Pantanal)
Pantanal)
Pantanal
Emas NP
Pantanal (Pousada Piuval)
Pantanal (Pousada Piuval)
Manaus (Tropical Exec. Hotel, Alphaville)
Pantanal (Pousada Piuval), Emas NP
Pantanal (near Jaguar Eco Lodge)
Pantanal
Mamirauá
Caratinga
Pantanal, Serra da Canastra

Birds (287 + 4 species)

brown booby
 magnificent frigatebird
 anhinga
 neotropic frigatebird
 green ibis
 buff-necked ibis
 plumbeous ibis
 bare-faced ibis
 black-crowned night-heron
 boat-billed heron
 striated heron
 rufescent tiger-heron
 whistling heron
 little blue heron
 snowy egret
 great egret
 cattle egret
 capped heron
 white-necked heron
 wood stork
 jabiru
 roseate spoonbill
 horned screamer
 southern screamer
 black-bellied whistling duck
 Muscovy duck
 Brazilian teal

black vulture
 turkey vulture
 great yellow-headed vulture
 lesser yellow-headed vulture
 king vulture
 crane hawk
 black-collared hawk
 great black hawk
 roadside hawk
 slate-coloured hawk
 black-faced hawk
 savanna hawk
 plumbeous kite
 grey-headed kite
 snail kite
 white-tailed hawk
 long-winged harrier
 harpy eagle
 crowned eagle
 black-chested buzzard-eagle
 southern caracara
 yellow-headed caracara
 Aplomado falcon
 American kestrel
 laughing falcon
 bat falcon
 greater rhea

red-winged tinamou
spotted nothura
small-billed tinamou
limpkin
hoatzin
dusky-legged guan
rusty-margined guan
chestnut-bellied guan
Marail guan
Chaco chacalaca
bare-faced curassow
blue-throated piping-guan
red-legged seriema
wattled jacana
purple gallinule
common gallinule
grey-necked wood-rail
slaty-breasted wood-rail
sunbittern
sungrebe
black-necked stilt
pied lapwing
southern lapwing
black skimmer
large-billed tern
yellow-billed tern
plain-breasted ground-dove
picui ground-dove
scaled dove
eared dove
ruddy pigeon
feral pigeon
pale-vented pigeon
picazuro pigeon
grey-fronted dove
ruddy quail-dove
red-shouldered macaw
scarlet macaw
chestnut-fronted macaw
hyacinth macaw
blue-and-yellow macaw
yellow-collared macaw
blue-winged macaw
yellow-chevroned parakeet
golden-capped parakeet
white-eyed parakeet
canary-winged parakeet
monk parakeet
tui parakeet
peach-fronted parakeet
red-fan parrot

blue-winged parrotlet
blue-fronted parrot
festive parrot
blue-headed parrot
short-tailed parrot
scaly-headed parrot
yellow-faced parrot
vinaceous parrot
greater ani
smooth-billed ani
guira cuckoo
squirrel cuckoo
tropical screech-owl
ferruginous pygmy-owl
burrowing owl
great horned owl
spectacled owl
common potoo
great potoo
band-tailed nighthawk
least nighthawk
nacunda nighthawk
common pauraque
scissor-tailed nightjar
grey-rumped swift
great dusky swift
fork-tailed palm swift
glittering-throated emerald
glittering-bellied emerald
planalto hermit
frilled coquette
black Jacobin
white-vented violetear
Brazilian ruby
swallow-tailed hummingbird
(blue-crowned trogon – heard only)
(white-tailed trogon – heard only)
surucua trogon
black-tailed trogon
ringed kingfisher
Amazon kingfisher
green kingfisher
American pygmy kingfisher
(green-and-rufous kingfisher – heard only)
rufous-tailed jacamar
swallow-winged puffbird
spotted puffbird
white-eared puffbird
crescent-chested puffbird
black-fronted nunbird
lettered aracari

chestnut-eared aracari
black-necked aracari
white-throated toucan
channel-billed toucan
toco toucan
yellow-tufted woodpecker
chestnut woodpecker
lineated woodpecker
crimson-crested woodpecker
spot-breasted woodpecker
cream-coloured woodpecker
pale-crested woodpecker
little woodpecker
green-barred woodpecker
campo flicker
long-billed woodcreeper
olivaceous woodcreeper
Zimmer's woodcreeper
narrow-billed woodcreeper
buff-throated woodcreeper
long-billed woodcreeper
rufous hornero
pale-legged hornero
grey-bellied spinetail
rusty-backed spinetail
yellow-chinned spinetail
rufous cacholote
streaked Xenops
variable antshrike
plumbeous antbird
rufous gnateater
bare-necked fruitcrow
purple-throated fruitcrow
helmeted manakin
white-bearded manakin
masked tityra
sepia-capped flycatcher
eared pygmy-tyrant
common tody-flycatcher
cliff flycatcher
vermilion flycatcher
crested black-tyrant
grey monjita
white-rumped monjita
streamer-tailed tyrant
black-backed water-tyrant
masked water-tyrant
white-headed marsh-tyrant
long-tailed tyrant
cock-atiled tyrant
cattle tyrant

rusty-margined flycatcher
social flycatcher
lesser kiskadee
great kiskadee
boat-billed flycatcher
variegated flycatcher
tropical kingbird
fork-tailed flycatcher
sirystes
rufous casiornis
(bright-rumped attila – heard only)
dull-capped attila
white-bellied warbler
white-striped warbler
masked yellowthroat
white-rumped swallow
white-winged swallow
southern roughwing
brown-chested martin
grey-breasted martin
blue-and-white swallow
black-capped donacobius
thrush-like wren
(moustached wren – heard only)
southern house wren
black-billed thrush
(yellow-legged thrush – Ben only)
rufous-bellied thrush
pale-breasted thrush
eastern slaty-thrush
chalk-browed mockingbird
crested oropendola
solitary black cacique
red-rumped cacique
golden-winged cacique
yellow-rumped cacique
screaming cowbird
shiny cowbird
giant cowbird
bay-winged cowbird
yellow-hooded blackbird
scarlet-headed blackbird
epaulette oriole
orange-backed troupial
yellow-rumped marshbird
magpie tanager
swallow tanager
blue-grey tanager
hooded tanager
masked crimson tanager
flame-crested tanager

silver-beaked tanager
palm tanager
buff-burnished tanager
sayaca tanager
rufous-headed tanager
gilt-edged tanager
red-capped cardinal
red-crested cardinal
yellow-billed cardinal
bananaquit
greyish saltator
black-throated saltator
green-winged saltator
house sparrow
blue dacnis
purple-throated euphonia
chestnut-vented conebill
masked gnatcatcher
orange-fronted yellow-finch
saffron finch
purplish jay
curl-crested jay
double-collared seedeater
chestnut-bellied seedeater
lined seedeater
plumbeous seedeater
blue-black grassquit

wedge-tailed grassfinch
rufous-collared sparrow
yellow-browed sparrow
saffron-billed sparrow

| | Date | Day | do/travel | stay |
|--------|------|-----|--|----------------------------------|
| July | 12 | Fr | 0620 LHR - 0940 Madrid; 1210 Madrid - 1745 Rio | Hotel Sol Ipanema, Rio |
| | 13 | Sa | 1155 Rio - 1505 Manaus | Tropical Executive Hotel, Manaus |
| | 14 | Su | 0800 Manuas - 0910 Tefe; transfer to Mamiraua | Casa de Caboclo, Mamiraua |
| | 15 | Mo | Mamiraua | Casa de Caboclo, Mamiraua |
| | 16 | Tu | 1530 Tefe - 1647 Manaus | Tropical Executive Hotel, Manaus |
| | 17 | We | Novo Airao | Novo Airao |
| | 18 | Th | 1605 Manaus - 2155 Cuiaba | Cuiaba |
| | 19 | Fr | Pantanal | Piuval Lodge, Pantanal |
| | 20 | Sa | Pantanal | Porte Jofre Camping, Pantanal |
| | 21 | Su | Pantanal | Porte Jofre Camping, Pantanal |
| | 22 | Mo | Pantanal | Pousada Santa Teresa, Pantanal |
| | 23 | Tu | Pantanal | Pousada Santa Teresa, Pantanal |
| | 24 | We | Pantanal; 1840 Cuiaba - São Paulo 2200; 2250 São Paulo - 2340 C Grande | Campo Grande |
| | 25 | Th | drive to Emas (5h); Emas | Pousada do Gloria |
| | 26 | Fr | Emas | Pousada Vista do Ceu |
| | 27 | Sa | Emas | Pousada Vista do Ceu |
| | 28 | Su | Emas; drive to C Grande (3h); 1720 C Grande - 2200 B Horizonte | C Grande |
| | 29 | Mo | 0230 C Grande - 0520 B Horizonte); drive to Sierra da Canastra (5h) | São Roque de Minas |
| | 30 | Tu | S da Canastra | São Roque de Minas |
| | 31 | We | S da Canastra; drive to Ouro Preto | Alquimia house |
| August | 1 | Th | drive Ouro Preto - Caraca | Santuário do Caraca |
| | 2 | Fr | Santuário do Caraca-Caratinga | Vind's Plaza Hotel, Caratinga |
| | 3 | Sa | drive Caratinga - B Horizonte (5h); 1925 B Horizonte -2025 Rio | Hotel Sol Ipanema, Rio |
| | 4 | Su | Rio | Hotel Sol Ipanema, Rio |
| | 5 | Mo | Rio | Hotel Sol Ipanema, Rio |
| | 6 | Tu | Rio | Hotel Sol Ipanema, Rio |
| | 7 | We | Rio; 2150 Rio - | Flight |
| | 8 | Th | ... 1310 LHR | |