

PARAGUAY and BRAZIL 2019

PARAGUAY

Between the 22nd of August and the 1st of September I visited the Chaco. I drove from Asuncion to Alto Paraguay arriving in Cerro Leon (Northern Chaco) just before night. I decided to camp after having seen a new fresh den of **Giant Armadillo**. Unfortunately a bus arrived full of locals arrived to do the same. It means it didn't look for the Armadillo at this place. In the evening I drove east of Cerro Leon seeing only 1 **Ocelot**. Early morning I heard **Pale Titi Monkeys**.

After the night I saw what were doing these people. They were indigenous from **Lomo Plata** (several hundred of kilometers away) allowed by the government to catch tortoises (**GEOCHELONE CARBONARIA**) in the park. One person caught 18 in one morning. When they left the park 3 days after there were many bags full of tortoises on the roof of the bus. I don't want to imagine how many had been collected and how many years these animals need to reach their full size-40 to 50cm).

The second day I reached **Madrejon** where I spent one night. There was a now a resident **Capybara** at the pond next to the camp. During a night drive I saw only **Crab Eating Foxes**. The northern Chaco is extremely dry at this time of the year what explains the rarity of animals. But the following morning I had a bad sighting of a Puma. In the afternoon I reached **Agua Dulces**, 75km north of **Madrejon**. Next to the camp, at dusk I saw 4 **Azara's Night Monkeys** and by night 3 **Ocelots**, 3 **Brazilian Tapirs** and 2 **Crab Eating Foxes**, plus 1 **Azara's Agouti** in the camp. The fourth day early morning I saw another **Ocelot** and 2 **Collared Peccaries**. Due to the presence of different ponds with water I saw evidence of a lot of animals and decided to stay another night. Unfortunately heavy rains in the afternoon transformed the road in mud and it was impossible to drive: all trucks and cars were stuck. In the evening I saw again 1 **Azara's Night Monkey** and a **Chacoan Mara**, but no **Black Tailed Marmoset** in the camp now unfortunately disturbed by the presence of resident people (the toilets being just below the trees where they used to spend the night and where I saw them last year with the information of Sylvino, Guadaparque in Madrejon). The fifth morning I walked alongside the roads and saw 2 **Pale Titi Monkeys**. After lunch the road being dry I returned to **Madrejon**, seeing 1 Grey Brocket Deer and a dead Lesser Grison. By night close to **Madrejon** I saw a **Jaguar** and several **Crab Eating Foxes**.

On the sixth morning I left to **Teniente Enciso**. East of **Cerro Leon** I saw a distant **Chacoan Peccary** rushing in the forest. Then south west of **Teniente Pico** 2 **Collared Peccaries**, 3 **Chacoan Maras** and a **Grey Brocket Deer**.

I stayed 2 nights in **Teniente Enciso**. By day I saw 2 **Chacoan Maras** and 1 **Pampa's Fox**. Like everywhere in the Chaco there were many footprints of **Tapirs** and **Grey Brocket Deers**, but I didn't see any. The den where **Plains Viscacha** was used to be seen is now unoccupied. By

night I drove the road bordering the south eastern part of the park. If the first night I didn't see anything, the second night I saw a **Puma** hunting, ready to jump on a prey on the side of the road. Unfortunately a car arrived and disturbed it. Disappointed I drove back to the park, but then decided to drive again this road and saw this time perfectly the **Puma**. As I had stopped the car it walked to me, stopping close to the car and laying on the ground. I even walked outside of the car and it didn't move. Finally I flushed it as I was driving back to the camp, seeing a **Three Banded Armadillo**.

The final place where I went is **Fortin Toledo**, east of **Filadelfia**. It is the place of the **Proyecto Tagua**, where they breed the 3 species of Peccaries, and specially the **Chacoan Peccary** (called **Tagua** in Paraguay). They have now 70 of them. This place is already in the central Chaco, and there is more water in this area. It means there are far more animals than in the dry Chaco. By day I saw 3 **Grey Brocket Deers** and in 2 nights 1 **Tapir**, 3 **Grey Brocket Deers**, 2 or 3 **Geoffroy's Cats** (even 1 seen climbing a tall tree), many **Three Banded Armadillos**, 3 **Southern Raccoons**, 2 **Capybaras**, 3 **Molina's Hog Nosed Skunks**, 4 **Pampas's Foxes**, 6 **Crab Eating Foxes** and a **Southern Tamandua**. I saw also footprints of **Puma**, but I was told that there is no **Jaguar** in this area.

Then it was time to return to **Asuncion**, and just south of **Filadelfia** I saw a **Jaguarundi** crossing the road.

Finally I must mention the many dead animals on the TransChaco, specially between **Filadelfia** and **Asuncion**: **Southern Tamanduas**, **Giant Anteaters**, **Southern Raccoons**, **Crab Eating** and **Pampa's Foxes**.

BRAZIL

From **Asuncion**, I flew to **Sao Paulo** and then to **Campo Grande** in **Brazil**. Due to flights cancelled I missed 3 nights in Brazil. I intended to stay 7 nights in **Emas National Park** and finally had only 4 nights.

Emas National Park has a very good list of mammals (and birds too like **White Winged Nightjars** that I saw), but I was specially unlucky. The park was burnt or burning in what they call preventive fires. But these fires I am pretty sure kill a lot of small animals and I don't think the **Giant Anteaters** will recolonise the park after the disastrous fire of the past. For example there was nearly no vegetation to cover the ground where **Pampa Cat** had been seen a month ago by **Andreas Jonsson** along the **Trilah La Gloria**. By night except a handful of **Pampas Deers** I saw only a group of **White lipped Peccaries** and several **Crab Eating Foxes** closed to the road bordering the park (and never any fox deep in the park). Early mornings, at dawn, I saw a group of **White Lipped Peccaries** (surely the same as the sighting by night), 2 **Tapirs** and 3 **Molina's Hog Nosed Skunks** (some people claim they are **Striped Hog Nosed Skunks**). With **Bruna** and **Ana**, as guides I did 2 very long night drives very disappointing.

On my last afternoon and night I went outside of the parks in the fields where I saw more interesting mammals: 1 **Marsh Deer**, 1 **Maned Wolf** (“called” and coming very close of me) and 1 **Six Banded Armadillo**. Concerning the Armadillos 2 Brazilian Tourists showed me a photo of a Long Nosed Armadillo they caught in the park when I was there. It seemed to be a **Seven Banded Armadillo**. I also saw many dens of **Giant Armadillos** in the park.

In retrospect due to the fires I think it would have been better to investigate more the fields outside of the park.

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