

An independent trip through northern Pantanal, Emas and co.

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We travelled on our own on this trip once again. For us it was easy to organise, we always felt safe and everything went the way we planed it. I guess it's good to book some popular Pousada in advance because it's high season from august-october but it was also very exciting for us to have the freedom to be able to spontaneously discover new places like the municipal park of Alcinòpolis. We are certain that there is a lot more to discover than the already known places! Also, from what we understood, we saved a lot of money travelling that way, even though we rented good cars and stayed in very good hotels from time to time.

We didn't meet many people talking English (three in total) so we guess it's probably good to either know some words of Spanish or Portuguese or to buy a SIM Card to Google Translate. It's also probably good to take a lot of cash while you can. It was at that time impossible to get any cash nearby the Northern Pantanal (all of the banks of Poconé wouldn't give us cash), the next possibility is Cuiaba. Drive with Gasoline instead of Ethanol, maybe buy a tank full of it and that's it!

This trip in South America was a very big success to us and we had numerous exciting mammal watching moments and experiences! Once more we experienced that finding nice mammals on our own is much more rewarding and we were happy to enjoy nice mammal watching moments on our own. Therefore we want to give as much information as we can in our reports to maybe help the mammal watchers who want to try to travel independently, also for mammal watcher who don't have enough money for a tour and would benefit from this approach.



Car rental: We rented a Renault Duster with Localiza Hertz and payed 250\$ per week. Very few employees seem to speak English but the rental still went very well and we were happy with their service. There was just less talking than usual which was fine for us. The Renault Duster is a 2x4 but did well in the Pantanal, we didn't have any problem with it. With Ethanol we would have had to drive around with spare tanks but we realized that we can also drive with Gasoline and we went much further with it.

Accommodations: We spent the first three nights in a hotel in Poconé (*Churrascaria Pantaneira*) and payed 15\$ per night for 2 pax, breakfast included. The room was basic but good with own toilet, shower, fridge and aircon. The employees didn't speak English but we used Google Translate to communicate and everything went well. They were very friendly, helpful and the food was good. The only disadvantage was that they don't serve diner, but we were on the Transpantaneira at that time anyway.

We spent the next 7 nights in *Pouso Alegre* which seems to be well known by mammal watchers. It was great for us and we were able to go and look for mammals whenever and wherever we wanted. One activity per day is included in the price and we could therefore walk around with Luiz or someone of his staff, do a night drive or go to the Rio Clariniho for example. We payed 100\$ per night per pax, all meals and one activity per day included.

We stayed at the *do Neco* place in Porto Jofre. They are bad at answering e-mails and our reservation was not registered when we arrived. Thankfully they don't have many tourists as most of the people travel with tour operators and they we were able to get a room and the boat

drives spontaneously. I can imagine that it's better to contact them via WhatsApp, Silvia was much quicker answering there in any case (+55 65 9981-2599). Anyway, the staff doesn't speak English again and was neither friendly nor helpful or keen to use google translate. But we did get a spacious and good room with own shower, toilet and aircon. The boat drives were good as well: The driver didn't speak English but we had a boat for ourselves and it didn't seem to us that we had any disadvantage comparing with others. We payed around 150\$ per night for 2 pax with all meals included and around 130\$ again for 2 pax per half-day boat drive. I think it's the cheapest option in Porto Jofre.



Mammals:

We had one quick sighting of a **Brown four-eyed Opossum** on the Transpantaneira spotlighting on a tree in between Pouso Alegre and Araras Lodge.

We saw three **Giant Anteater** in total. One was habituated and came to visit during diner time in Pouso Alegre. The other two were spotted on the same night on the Transpantaneira: One on one field in between Pouso Alegre and Araras Lodge and the other in a field close to Pouso Alegre in direction to Hotel Pantanal. Four **Southern Tamaduas** were spotted in total with one beautiful sighting in the afternoon on the area of Pouso Alegre. The other three individual were all spotted while spotlighting on the Transpantaneira.

We checked the small wooden house behind the Pouso Alegre Lodge and were able to identify





at least 3 bat species. Luiz said that a Vampire Bat was also a regular visitor but we didn't see it. There were two **Fringe-lipped**

Bats and two species of Short-tailed Bats. When we came back late by boat in Porto Jofre we were able to observe a many Greater Bulldog Bats hunting over the river.

All three monkey species can be found behind the Pouso Alegre Lodge in the forest. We found a group of **Black-tailed Marmoset** in one morning and also **Azara's Capuchin** but no Howler Monkey. We did spot a lot of **Black-and-gold Howler Monkey** looking at the trees during the day on the river in Porto Jofre. We also spotted both the Marmosets and the Capuchins next to the Transpantaneira and at Rio Clarinho. We spotted a sleeping **Azara's Night Monkey** on a tree from the river in Porto Jofre.

Crab-eating Foxes were seen everyday both on the day and at night in all places we went. We would see **South American Coati** every day on the area of Pouso Alegre during the day. We also spotted some next to the Transpantaneira mainly in the area nearby Pouso Alegre. We saw **Crab-eating Raccoons** every night while spotlighting, both next to the Transpantaneira and on the area of Pouso Alegre. We had one quick sighting of a **Tayra** running in front of our car at about 8.30pm on the area of Pouso Alegre.

We spotted **Giant Otters** both on Rio Clarinho and on the Porto Jofre river. We had one very lucky sighting of one **Neotropical Otter** running across the Transpantaneira close to Porto Jofre in the morning.

We spotted **Ocelots** every night. The big variation in size caused a lot of confusion again. We saw two small cats on the field in between Pouso Alegre and Araras Lodge on our first night and looking at their faces and size we were certain that we saw two Margays. Our sighting got interrupted by a Giant Anteater walking pass our binoculars. Anyway. Margays were indeed captured close to this fields by camera traps a guide told us but having not seen the tail we can't say for sure that this were Margays and not young Ocelots. We spotted Ocelots mainly next to the Transpantaneira at night but also very close to the Pouso Alegre Lodge for example or close to the Pousada Porto Jofre.

We had one beautiful surprise with a **Southern Oncilla** sighting walking towards us on the Transpantaneira at about 1am in between Pouso Alegre and Hotel Pantanal. The cat disappeared into the bushes and we waited with the red light next to the place to see if it would come out again. He looked at us for a while and then playfully came out again and walked very close past our car and disappeared again and for good just behind our car. It would have been a perfect moment for a picture but we were completely stunned by this sighting and unable to think anymore we guess. Our first animal in the Pantanal was, no joke, a **Jaguar** in a field next to the Transpantaneira at about 7pm close to the 'Transpantaneira' sign. He was roaring and something was moving behind us on the other side of the road. It's possible that he was calling a female. We





saw another five Jaguars next to the river of Porto Jofre.

Lowland Tapirs were also daily companions of ours, day and night. Mainly again in the areas close to Pouso Alegre, either in the area of the lodge day and night or next to the Transpantaneira at night. We also spotted one Tapir while spotlighting close to Pousada Porto Jofre and had a beautiful sighting of a mother and striped cub between the Transpantaneira and the Pouso Alegre Lodge. We had one quick sighting of a group of White-lipped Peccaries on the way from the Transpantaneira to the Pouso Alegre Lodge and saw Collared Peccaries

almost every day in the areas close to the Pouso Alegre Lodge. We had a beautiful sighting of a group next to the Transpantaneira sign on one afternoon.

Gray Brocket Deers were seen every day and night and were common also on the Pouso Alegre area. **Marsh Deer** were also common and also seen every day mainly next to the Transpantaneira. **Red Brocket Deers** were rarer than the Gray Brocket also seen next to the Transpantaneira.

We spotted one **South Amazon Red Squirrel** walking in a forest on the Pouso Alegre area. We also left a camera trap next to a pond there and the squirrel was a regular visitor. When you leave the lodge and take the first road to the right and then drive straight you would reach this place which is rarely visited by anyone.

Luiz told us that he had seen the Azara's night monkey there as well. We would spot **Azara's Agouti** and **Brazilian Guinea Pig** during the day next to the Transpantaneira about 3-4 times. **Capybaras** were seen everywhere and are common. We saw **Tapeti** only on two night drives and all of them nearby Pouso Alegre in direction to Hotel Pantanal next to the Transpantaneira. We also photographed it on our camera trap on the Pouso Alegre area.

		Poconé -	Transpantaneira	Pouso Alegre –	Pouso Alegre /	Hotel Pantanal –	Porto Jofre
		Transpantaneira	– Pouso Alegre	Hotel Pantanal	Rio Clarinho	Porto Jofre	
Brown four-eyed Opossum	Metachirus nudicaudatus		Х				
Giant Anteater	Myrmecophaga tridactyla		Х	Х	Х		
Southern Tamandua	Tamandua tetradactyla	Х		X	Х		
Short-tailed Bat	Carollia				Х		
Fringe-lipped Bat	Trachops cirrhosus				Х		
Greater Bulldog Bat	Nocitilio leporinus						Х
Black-tailed Marmoset	Mico melanurus				Х	X	
Azara's Capuchin	Sapajus cay		Х	Х	Х		
Azara's Night Monkey	Aotus azarae						Х
Black-and-gold Howler	Alouatta caraya						Х
Monkey							
Crab-eating Fox	Cerdocyon thous	Х	Х	Х	Х		
South American Coati	Nasua nasua		Х	Х	Х	X	
Crab-eating Raccoon	Procyon cancrivorus	Х	Х	Х	Х	X	
Tayra	Eira barbara				Х		
Neotropical Otter	Lontra longicaudis					X	
Giant Otter	Pteronura brasiliensis				Х		Х
Ocelot	Leopardus pardalis	Х	Х	Х	Х	X	Х
Southern Oncilla	Leopardus guttulus			Х			
Jaguar	Panthera once		Х				Х
Lowland Tapir	Tapirus terrestris		Х	Х	Х		Х
White-lipped Peccary	Tayassu pecari				Х		
Collared Peccary	Tayassu tajacu	Х		Х	Х		
Marsh Deer	Blastocerus dichotomous		Х	Х			

Red Brocket Deer	Mazama americana		Х	Х	Х	Х	
Gray Brocket Deer	Mazama gouazoubira		Х	Х	Х		
South Amazon Red Squirrel	Urosciurus spadiceus				Х		
Azara's Agouti	Dasyprocta azarae			Х	Х	Х	
Brazilian Guinea Pig	Cavia aperea	Х				Х	
Capybara	Hydrochaeris	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х
	hydrochaeris						
Tapeti	Sylvilagus brasiliensis			Х	(X)		
Total	30	7	14	16	20	9	8

(X): Captured by our camera traps





After the Pantanal we stayed in the *Pousada do Parque* next to the Chapada dos Guimarães National Park. For us it was the perfect place to relax a bit: Pool, Sauna, comfortable rooms and excellent food. Sadly, the National Park was closed because of fires when we were there. When we arrived, we asked about the Maned Wolf and found out that it hadn't been seen around the lodge for a few weeks. In general, the sightings seem to be much rarer than we expected after reading past reports but it still seems to be a good place to look for Maned Wolfs.

Mammals:

We did two night drives and on one night drive we spotted a **Giant Anteater** and it was also the only animal we spotted that night. We spotlighted on the way in direction to Chapada dos Guimarães and turned left just before the town in direction to the lakes and back after a while. We found two **Short-tailed Bats** in the living room of the lodge above the small wooden figures. **Azara's Capuchins** were spotted next to the main road that crosses the park. We saw **Crabeating Foxes** on two occasions on the field next to the restaurant coming to drink water in the afternoon. On the second of the two night drives we spotted an **Ocelot** on a side-road going to some kind of military base in direction to Chapada on the right before the town. **Brazilian Guinea Pigs** were constantly there around the pool and in front of the restaurant. Finally, we spotted a **Tapeti** on a night drive in direction to the main road.





Car rental: We rented our car with Localiza Hertz again and wanted to try a 4x4 in the same category. We got a Ford Strom which seemed as high as the Renault Duster. The 4x4 is supposed to come automatically when needed but we had to realize that it didn't. The rainy season starts in october again and it can be tricky to drive around the park just after a big strom because it can become a bit muddy and flooded. The roads are really good in Emas in general and we would have had no problem with the Renault Duster. Also, the tyres seemed to be less robust and we had a flat tyre on the second last day. Finally, the spare tyre was defect. But with some help we still managed.

Accommodations: We stayed at *Pousada do Gloria* and had a great time there. The lodge is run by Ana and Marcos with is the director of the park. Needless to say that they are great contacts for any help and information when visiting Emas. We felt very welcome and comfortable in the Pousada which offers great food, comfortable rooms with everything but aircon and even a pool. We paid 140 \$ a night for 2 pax all meals included. If you would want to go into the park with a guide it would cost 60 \$ a day and the rental of the safari car 120 \$ a day. We never rented the safari car and went only once into the park with Ana.

Inside the park: We focused mainly on the self-drive loop (red on the map) which is, in our experience, also the best part for mammals watching. You can drive this loop whenever you want on your own and we didn't find any locked gate on our way.

Outside the park: We mainly drove on the main road in direction to Chapadão do Céu. A while after the main entrance to the park bushes block the view to the fields and we usually didn't go further as they continue until the end of the park. We also did a very good loop which is the first road to the right when you leave the Pousada in direction to Chapadão on the main road (blue on the map). It's going next to a river and is a place where many animals go to drink at night. Finally, we also drove on a way to a Fazenda called 'Sutal' (blue on the map). It's

the first road to the right after the main entrance (violet dot on the map) in direction to Chapadão. They have a big reserve called 'Reserva Tamandua' and we think it's also a very good road to do at night.

In general, we spotted much more animals outside than inside the park but not more species.



Mammals:

Our camera trap photographed a Nine-banded Armadillo on the red trail in the forest right behind the lodge. There was a fresh hole next to the trail. We saw the **Six-banded Armadillo** on two occasions: One was a very brief sighting running across the road on the way to Chapadão around midday and the second in the park in the road after the river crossing around 6pm. We heard that the Armadillos generally come out after the rain when the temperatures are cooler.

The **Hoary Fox** was spotted on every night we drove on the diagonal road of the 'self-drive' loop. **Crab-eating Foxes** were seen both in and outside the park, both during the day and the night on every day. We spotted our first **Maned Wolf** on our fifth day in the park. The Wolf hasn't been seen by anyone on the first couple of days and then suddenly on two days by several people around the same area which was between the main entrance (violet dot on the



map) in direction to the HQ (orange dot on the map). We spotted a big male wolf around 7.30pm and were lucky enough to find him again taking a sideroad, it was a beautiful prolonged sighting!

We saw **Striped Hog-nosed Skunks** every night. Mostly on the fields next to the main road to Chapadão but also on the diagonal road on the 'self-drive loop'. We think that the chances are higher outside the park as we once spotted six skunks in one night.



On the fifth day, the day that Ana accompanied us, she told us that we should look for the **Pampas Cat** on the main road right after leaving the lodge. Also, she told us that we should try the loop that is blue on the map which goes close by a river. That's what we did the next day and that's where we found the Pampas Cat at about 8.30pm. We had a long sighting of the cat and when it walked towards the river a Barn Owl started flying above the cat and screaming as if it was trying to scare the cat off. The **Ocelot** was a big surprise to us as Ana only told us that they captured it on camera trap. We saw one individual coming from the field and going into the forest right next to the lodge at about 8pm. Our **Puma** sighting was a huge surprise as well. After having seen the Maned Wolf we drove back for diner and that's when the Puma crossed the road on the way back to the lodge. We quickly drove further and into the lodge where we had a good second sighting of the cat disappearing into the forest right in front of the garage of

the lodge. It was only the fourth sighting Ana had of a Puma next to the lodge in 10 years and the best view she had so far.

As for **Lowland Tapirs** we saw at least one every night. Mainly on the fields outside the park but also inside the park. One habituated Tapir called 'preciosa' can be easily found at the headquarter (orange on the map).

When there is no Puma around, there are **White-lipped Peccaries** behind the lodge in the morning eating the food rests. We also spotted and smelled them from outside the park at night a couple of times mainly on the fields and once at the main entrance.

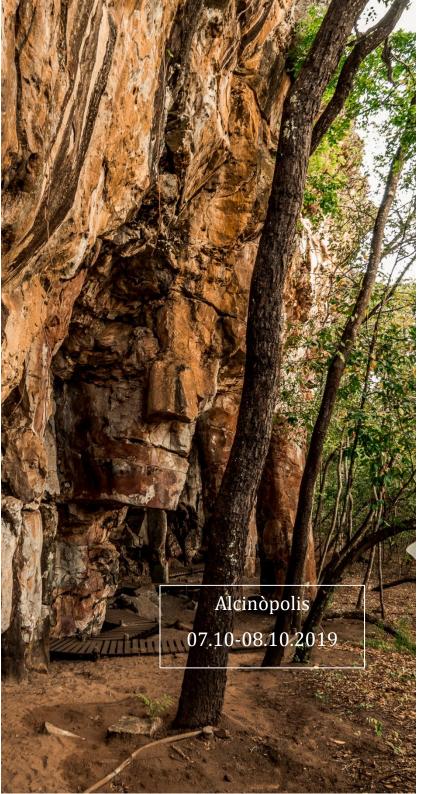
We saw **Pampas Deers** daily. Either anywhere in the park during day and night but mainly outside the park on the field also day and night. The same goes for the **Marsh Deer** although they were rarer to see and we spotted them only at night.

An **Azara's Agouti** family is also visiting the food rest place behind the lodge daily during the day. Our camera trap in this forest behind the lodge was stunningly productive.



		Inside the park	Outside the park	Pousada do Gloria
White-eared Opossum	Chironectes minimus			(X)
Nine-banded Armadillo	Dasypus novemcinctus			(X)
Six-banded Armadillo	Euphractus sexcintus	Х	X	
Hoary Fox	Lycalopex vetulus	Х		
Crab-eating Fox	Cerdocyon thous	X	X	(X)
Maned Wolf	Chrysocyon brachyurus	Х		
Striped Hog-nosed Skunk	Conepatus semistriatus	Х	Х	
Pampas Cat	Leopardus colocolo		Х	
Ocelot	Leopardus pardalis			Х
Puma	Puma concolor			Х
Lowland Tapir	Tapirus terrestris	Х	X	
White-lipped Peccary	Tayassu pecari	Х	Х	Х
Marsh Deer	Blastocerus dichotomous	Х	Х	
Pampas Deer	Ozotoceros bezoarticus	Х	Х	
Azara's Agouti	Dasyprocta azarae			Х
Lowland Paca	Cuniculus paca			(X)
Total	13	9	8	4

(X): Captured by our camera traps



After 7 nights at Emas we had (sadly only) still one day left to plan and spontaneously asked Ana if she knew a good place to visit in between Emas and Cuiaba. When you drive from Cuiaba to Emas you mainly see agriculture and maybe the small 25% natural patches that landowners have to leave at it was. We thought there was not much to see on the way but then realized that there are a couple of municipal and state parks absolutely worth visiting and supporting.

We visited the *Parque Natural Municipal Templo dos Pilares* which is a municipal park belonging to the town of Alcinòpolis. It was a great place to visit for us and we would have loved to stay a couple of days.

Organisation: To visit the park and to be able to stay in the park you need to be accompanied by a guide. It can either be an own guide or you can contact the team and they can provide you with a guide. We were accompanied by Bruna, an English-speaking Biologist and her co-worker Furquim, who has a 10 years experience. Both are very enthusiastic and motivated and continuously educating on plants and animals. You can contact Bruna via WhatsApp to organise your trip there: +55 67 8484-9672. They also know another English-speaking guide but he lives in another town and it's therefore good to plan with them a bit in advance. A guide a day costs around 30 \$ per day.

Accommodation: We stayed in *Hotel Nunes* in town and payed around 35 \$ for 2 pax for one night, breakfast included. The hotel was good with equipped aircon, shower and toilet. There is a possibility to stay in the park in a house build by the park. The house has 12 beds in two rooms plus two beds more in the living room. There is also a kitchen, fridge, bathroom and WiFi. We would have loved to stay there a couple of nights but there is a guide needed for that as well as it is in the park. It's also the house where 'beterraba' the Maned Wolf visits nearly every day to drink water from the bucket by the way.

Mammals:

When we asked Bruna how many visitors they have and why they came we were very surprised to hear her say among other reasons "to see the Maned Wolf". And when we asked how long they would stay she would answer "one day is almost always enough". We couldn't believe our ears. 'Beterraba' the **Maned Wolf**, has been coming to the car park almost every day for 5 years to drink water from the bucket. They suspect that the workers may have fed the wolf 5 years ago, when they renovated the house but they said that they have never fed 'beterrava' themselves. In any case the two of them make a lot of noise first of all on arrival and



often the Maned Wolf would already come after 30 minutes. Sometimes it would take longer and rarely she wouldn't come at all. Apparently, she likes Furquim quite well and even follows him from time to time. With us it was actually the case that she came after 30 minutes. We couldn't believe our eyes. We can't even describe what it was like to observe a Maned Wolf in its natural habitat 3 meters away from us.

There are cave paintings in the Parque Municipal and therefore also many caves and many bats. Tourists can visit five caves and we visited only one. We identified **Seba's Short-tailed Bats**, **Big-eared Woolly Bats** and **Greater Spear-nosed Bats**. They don't know yet what mammals they have in the

Parque but are still discovering and will for example, start camera trapping soon. Anyway, they know that they have Flat-faced Fruit-eating Bats, Pallas Long-tongued Bats, Little Big-eared Bats, Pale Spear-nosed Bats and White-lined Broad-nosed Bat but there are probably more bats to be discovered. When leaving the cave, we spotted a **Six-banded Armadillo** which they apparently commonly see. There are also Southern Naked-tailed Armadillos, Nine-banded Armadillos and Giant Armadillos in the park. Spotlighting on the way back we spotted **Crab-eating Foxes**, **Pampas Deers** and a **Lowland Tapir**.



Mammal list:

		Pantanal	Chapada dos Guimaraes	Emas National Park	Alcinòpolis
		12 nights	2 nights	7 nights	1 night
White-eared Opossum	Chironectes minimus			(X)	
Brown four-eyed Opossum	Metachirus nudicaudatus	Х			
Giant Anteater	Myrmecophaga tridactyla	Х	Х		
Southern Tamandua	Tamandua tetradactyla	Х			
Nine-banded Armadillo	Dasypus novemcinctus			(X)	
Six-banded Armadillo	Euphractus sexcintus			Х	Х
Short-tailed Bat	Carollia	Х	Х		
Seba's Short-tailed Bat	Carollia perspicillata				Х
Big-eared Woolly Bat	Chrotopterus auritus				Х
Greater Spear-nosed Bat	Phyllostomus hastatus				X
Fringe-lipped Bat	Trachops cirrhosis	Х			
Greater Bulldog Bat	Nocitilio leporinus	Х			
Black-tailed Marmoset	Mico melanurus	Х			
Azara's Capuchin	Sapajus cay	Х	Х		
Azara's Night Monkey	Aotus azarae	Х			
Black-and-gold Howler Monkey	Alouatta caraya	Х			
Hoary Fox	Lycalopex vetulus			Х	
Crab-eating Fox	Cerdocyon thous	Х	Х	Х	Х
Maned Wolf	Chrysocyon brachyurus			Х	Х
South American Coati	Nasua nasua	Х			
Striped Hog-nosed Skunk	Conepatus semistriatus			Х	
Crab-eating Raccoon	Procyon cancrivorus	Х			
Tayra	Eira Barbara	Х			
Neotropical Otter	Lontra longicaudis	Х			
Giant Otter	Pteronura brasiliensis	Х			
Pampas Cat	Leopardus colocolo			Х	
Ocelot	Leopardus pardalis	Х	Х	X	
Southern Oncilla	Leopardus guttulus	Х			

Jaguar	Panthera once	Х			
Puma	Puma concolor			Х	
Lowland Tapir	Tapirus terrestris	Х		Х	Х
White-lipped Peccary	Tayassu pecari	Х		Х	
Collared Peccary	Tayassu tajacu	Х			
Marsh Deer	Blastocerus dichotomous	Х		Х	
Red Brocket Deer	Mazama americana	Х			
Gray Brocket Deer	Mazama gouazoubira	Х			
Pampas Deer	Ozotoceros bezoarticus			Х	Х
Southern Amazon Red Squirrel	Urosciurus spadiceus	Х			
Azara's Agouti	Dasyprocta azarae	Х		Х	
Lowland Paca	Cuniculus paca			(X)	
Brazilian Guinea Pig	Cavia aperea	Х	Х		
Capybara	Hydrochaeris hydrochaeris	Х			
Tapeti	Sylvilagus brasiliensis	Х	Х		
Total	40	30	7	13	8

(X): Captured by our camera traps