



An independent trip

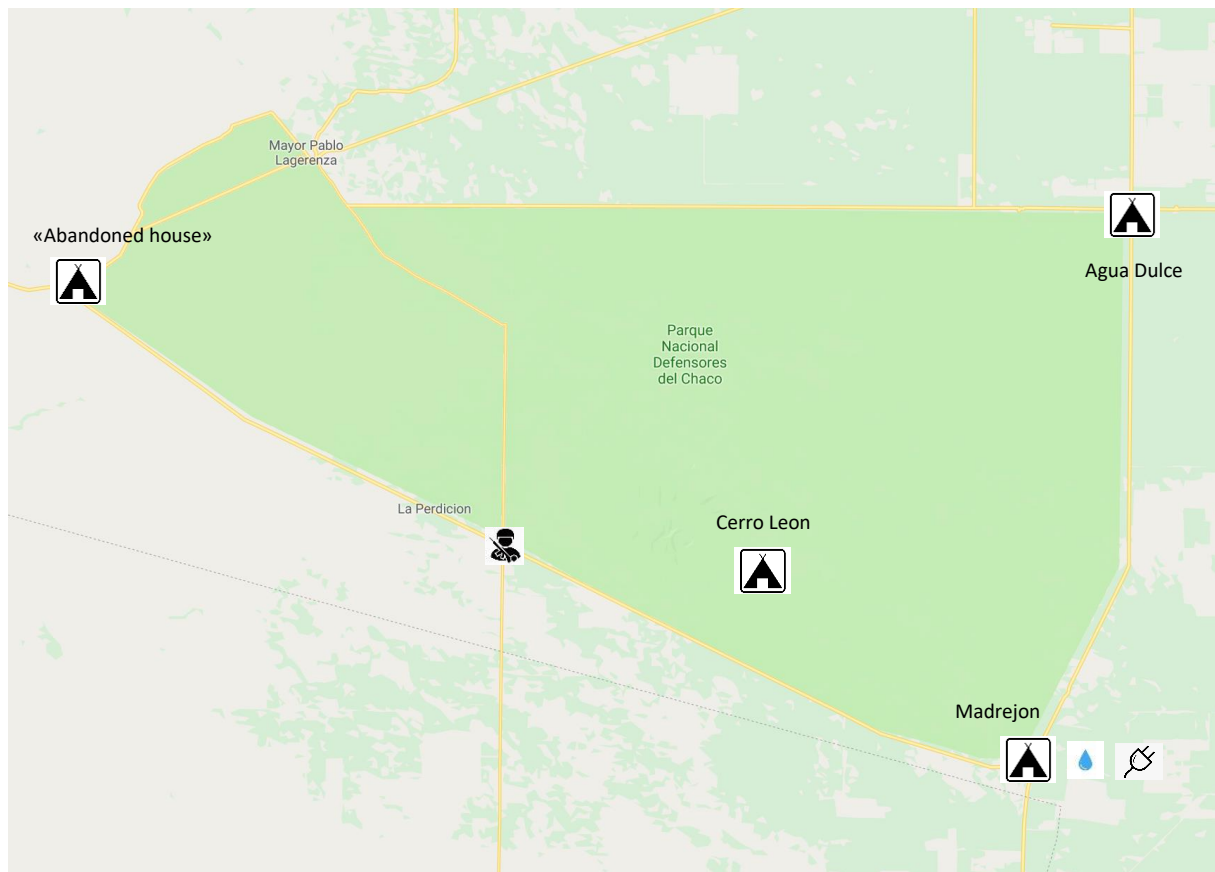
Car: We rented a Toyota Hilux with Alamo in Asuncion. The rental was relatively expensive but we were very grateful to have a 4x4. We had some difficulties with the rental, probably again because the employees didn't speak English and our Spanish is very limited. They had told us that neither a second driver nor an unlimited mileage was included, which was not true. Maybe it makes sense to book directly through them and not through rentalcars.com.

From Asuncion we drove directly to Filadelfia. On the way and especially between Pozo Colorado and Filadelfia we saw 30 road kills in total. We didn't stop at any dead animal, but we saw four dead Giant Anteater and two dead Southern Tamadua. We think the biggest mammal surprise so far was a **Maned Wolf** that crossed the road and stopped at the edge to look at us. We didn't even know that it occurred in this area!

In Filadelfia we spent the night in Campestre Iparoma. The rooms are basic but large and the owners also offer night trips where they regularly see Brazilian Tapirs and Capybaras. We were too tired for once to do another night drive but saw a cat that had the characteristics of a Geoffrey's Cat, we can't tell if it was a hybrid or not though. One night stay costs 250'000 Guarani for 2 pax, diner around 100'000 Guarani.

The next day we went shopping for a week. Filadelfia has everything you need: Many gas stations, very big shops and a couple of banks where you can get enough Guarani. Then we drove to Madrejon which took about 3h30. The roads had some holes but were good altogether. We would have driven through also with a 2x4, but we were grateful to have our Hilux and could drive quite quickly this way.

A small overview over the national park: There is a gas station and a restaurant about 40min away from Madrejon direction Filadelfia. We saw a group of **White-lipped Peccaries** on the way to the gas station.



Accommodation: We stayed 3 nights in Madrejon. You can stay there for free, but the accommodation looks more like an abandoned house. It had beds, toilet and shower and plenty of room to cook inside, but everything is dirty and partly wet because the toilet is not tight. It's probably not something for everyone but you can still put up the tent inside. There is water, which is not drinkable and electricity from 6 to midnight. We also stayed in Cerro Leon, but the campsite was dirty and the road is in a bad condition. In the time when we were there 3 of 4 cars got stuck (including our car). Since the way to the inside is only 5km long, we would recommend to walk. There is a hiking trail which is overgrown and there is also a viewpoint. According to the ranger, there are many animals near the lagoon. Other than that the roads are in a pretty good condition with occasional holes.

Last night we stayed in another abandoned house of the national park. It has groundwater, but the bucket to fetch water is full of holes.

Finally there is the option to stay overnight in Agua Dulce, but we didn't go there.

There is a military post in La Perdicion but they just registered us and we were able to drive around and spotlight without any problem, which is great.

On the way back to Asuncion we stayed at the Rosaleda Resort. They have very comfortable rooms with good food. A good place to rest after the Chaco adventure before going back to Asuncion with some good mammals around. One night stay costs 250'000 Guarani for 2 pax and diner costs around 70'000 Guarani. Students told us that they spot **Tuco-tucos** around the school every day but we were unlucky with this one.

Mammal watching:



Mammal watching in the Chaco was pretty difficult to us in general. We saw relatively few individuals and had to drive sometimes for hours without any sighting but nightjars. Also, the animals we did spot usually disappeared very quickly so that an identification had to be made very quickly. Once again, the very big variation in size of ocelots caused big discussions between us. We finally concluded that we would not identify a cat without a good

view of the tail. So it was more difficult than usual in general and required more patience but it was definitely worth it: We have discovered few individuals but a lot of different great species and experienced an absolute freedom!

One very lucky sighting was a **Screaming Hairy Armadillo** crossing the main road between Mariscal and Rosaleda. We spotted a total of four **Southern Three-banded Armadillos** between Madrejon and Cerro Leon. One seems to be living next to the airstrip next to Madrejon. We spotted a lot of them around Rosaleda.

We spotted one **Southern Tamandua** in Rosaleda.



We found only one group of three **White-coated Titis** on a tree next to the road between the military post and the “abandoned house”.



Only two **Chacoan Maras** were spotted close to Madrejon on the day of our arrival but then many of them roam around Rosaleda. There is one **Capybara** living near the pond next to Madrejon. We spotted a total of three **Paraguay-Punaré** on trees next to the road at night. Two were in between Madrejon and Cerro Leon together and one between the “abandoned house” and the military post.



We spotted only two **Tapeti**, one in between Madrejon and Cerro Leon and one on the way from Cerro Leon to the military post.

We found a **Silver-tipped Myotis** in a hammock of the Rosaleda Resort.

On our last night drive in the park we had a quick but good sighting of a **Geoffroy's Cat** running in front of our car. We had two **Ocelots** sightings between Madrejon and Cerro Leon. On our last night drive in the park we saw a total of three individual between the "abandoned house" and the military post. One sighting was very special: A very thin and probably old cat came closer and closer to our car, stopped literally in front of the car and stared at us. When it finally disappeared into the bushes next to us we discovered a second much stronger ocelot which chased the first one! We had a

very quick and unsatisfying sighting of a **Puma**, but it was long enough to enable us an identification before it disappeared into the forest. We had more luck with the **Jaguar** with a prolonged sighting right next to the road near Madrejon on the first evening: Amazing! Another very quick sighting was a **Pampas Fox** on the road between Madrejon and Cerro Leon: It was really far away and quickly disappeared on the side. We saw a couple of **Crab-eating Foxes** on every night on the other hand. **Molina's Hog-nosed Skunk** seem to be hard to see in the park but were pretty easy to find near



Rosaleda: We saw two individuals on one night drive on the main road from Mariscal to Rosaleda.

We spotted two **Brazilian Tapirs** together on two occasions in the park: Once between Cerro Leon and the military post and once between the "abandoned house" and the military post. We also had a quick sighting of one in Rosaleda. We spotted a total of five **Gray Brocket** between Madrejon and Cerro Leon. One Gray Brocket was actually our only mammal sighting of Cerro Leon right before we got stuck. Other than that it was also the only mammal we spotted taking the road in the national park going north from the military post but we didn't drive far, only about 10km.

Mammal list:

		Madrejon – Cerro Leon	Cerro Leon – Military Post	Abandoned house – Military post	Rosaleda
		3 nights	1 night	1 night	2 nights
Screaming hairy Armadillo	<i>Chaetophractus vellerosus</i>				X
Southern three- banded Armadillo	<i>Tolypeutes matacus</i>	X			X
Southern Tamandua	<i>Tamandua tetradactyla</i>				X
White-coated Titi	<i>Plecturocebus pallescens</i>			X	
Chacoan Mara	<i>Dolichotis salinicola</i>	X			X
Capybara	<i>Hydrochoerus hydrochoerus</i>	X			
Paraguay-Punaré	<i>Thrichomys pachyurus</i>	X		X	
Tapeti	<i>Sylvilagus brasiliensis</i>	X	X		
Silver-tipped Myotis	<i>Myotis albescens</i>				X
Geoffroy's Cat	<i>Leopardus geoffroyi</i>			X	
Ocelot	<i>Leopardus pardalis</i>	X		X	
Puma	<i>Puma concolor</i>	X			
Jaguar	<i>Panthera onca</i>	X			
Pampas Fox	<i>Lycalopex gymnocerus</i>	X			
Crab-eating Fox	<i>Cerdocyon thous</i>	X	X	X	X
Maned Wolf	<i>Chrysocyon brachyurus</i>				
Molina's hog- nosed Skunk	<i>Conepatus chinga</i>				X
Brazilian Tapir	<i>Tapirus terrestris</i>		X	X	X
White-lipped Peccary	<i>Tayassu pecari</i>				
Gray Brocket	<i>Mazama gouazoubira</i>	X	X		
Total:	19	11	4	6	8