

BIRD TREKS

Mato Grosso, Brazil

The Pantanal, Cristalino Jungle Lodge & Chapada Dos Guimaraes

Dates Sunday, 22 July - Tuesday, 7 August 2012: 17 days & 16 nights

These dates include two days of flying, one day to Brazil and one day returning to the US.

With its largely undisturbed tropical forests, abundance of rivers and wetlands, tremendous diversity of flora and fauna, and outstanding birding and wildlife viewing, **Mato Grosso**, Brazil, is a unique natural destination. We'll enjoy one of nature's greatest spectacles as we explore a 500-mile long, north-south transect, and travel through some of the richest habitats on Earth, where 200+ species of mammals and almost 750 species of birds make their homes.

Our journey begins in the **Pantanal**, the world's largest freshwater wetland. In addition to avian treats such as Hyacinth Macaw, Toco Toucan, Mato Grosso Antbird, and Plumbeous and Buff-necked Ibis, we'll have excellent opportunities to see Helmeted Manakin, Rusty-fronted Tody-flycatcher, Chestnut-bellied Guan, Yellow-chinned Spinetail, Green-backed Becard, and hundreds of other bird species. We will also encounter some incredible mammals, with definite possibility for Giant River Otter, Capybara, Marsh Deer, Crab-eating Fox, South American Coati, several primates, and hopefully a **Jaguar**.

From the Pantanal, we'll travel to the southern Amazon and one of the greatest biological shows on Earth. More than 570 species of birds have been recorded near the **Cristalino Jungle Lodge**. We'll look for Curl-crested Aracari, Spangled Cotinga, Harpy Eagle, White-browed Hawk, Blue-cheeked and Brown Jacamars, Rufous-necked Puffbird, Manu Antbird, Natterer's Slaty Antshrike, range restricted species such as Bare-eyed Antbird and Kawall's Parrot, and countless others. Mammals at Cristalino include White-whiskered Spider Monkey, White-nosed Bearded Saki Monkey, Brazilian Tapir, Neotropical River Otter, Azara's Agouti, and Southern Tamandua. While at Cristalino we'll travel the river, enjoy a great variety of trails and microhabitats, and marvel at the tropical world from atop the **canopy tower**.



Harpy Eagle - - Franck Ishoj

Finally we'll arrive at **Chapada dos Guimaraes**, a national park known for its dramatic sandstone escarpments, waterfalls, and unique cerrado habitat. Here we'll look for Blue-winged and Red-shouldered Macaws, Collared Crescent-chest, Blue Finch, Rufous-winged Antshrike, Cliff Flycatcher, Curl-crested Jay, White-eared Puffbird, Rufous-sided Pygmy-tyrant, White-rumped Tanager, Chapada Flycatcher, and many others, while enjoying great scenery and habitat diversity.

Throughout the trip, we'll enjoy the comforts of some of Brazil's best nature lodges - Hotel Fazenda Santa Tereza, Pousada Piuval, Pousada Penhasco, and the incomparable Cristalino Jungle Lodge.

In the past few years, Mark has had the good fortune to spend seven months in Mato Grosso exploring its diverse habitats, learning about its amazing biodiversity, and guiding dozens of nature enthusiasts. He can't wait to return to this spectacular location and share its wonders with you.

This tour will be led by naturalist and bird guide **Mark Pretti**. The exact cost is to be announced, but should be \$5300 to \$5400 per person, double occupancy. The tour fee includes all lodging, meals & guides, and ground and air transportation from Cuiaba, Mato Grosso. Limited to eight participants. For more information, contact **Bob Schutsky** at **BIRD TREKS**, telephone **717-548-3303**, or e-mail info@birdtreks.com.

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BIRDING and NATURAL HISTORY in MATO GROSSO, BRAZIL

22 July - 7 August 2012



Savanna Hawk - - *Karen Blumenthal*

Day 1, 22 Jul - [Depart the US](#)

Day 2, 23 Jul - [Cuiaba, Mato Grosso](#)

Depending upon your travel plans, you'll need to begin your travel from the US by 22 July so that you'll arrive at the Cuiaba airport on 23 July. Most flights from Sao Paulo or Rio arrive in Cuiaba between noon and 5 PM. From the Cuiaba Airport, you can either walk or take a taxi to the nearby Diplomata Hotel that is about ¼-mile away on the same street, and where we'll spend the night (www.diplomatahotel.com.br). If you have birding fever when you arrive, the airport parking area can have **Rufous-bellied Robin**, **Rufous Hornero**, **Tropical and White-throated Kingbirds**, **Crowned-slaty** and **Variegated Flycatchers**, **Black-throated Mango**,

Sayaca Tanager, and other exciting birds. We'll meet in the hotel lobby at 5:30 PM for an orientation before going to dinner at the Churrascaria Gaucho. In addition to the big salad bar and buffet, you'll get a Brazilian cuisine experience with the many available cuts of meat.

Day 3-6, 24-27 Jul - **The Pantanal - Hotel Fazenda Santa Tereza**

What will be a terrific wildlife adventure begins in earnest after our 6 AM breakfast at the hotel. We'll be on the road by 7 AM and off to the Pantanal and the Hotel Fazenda Santa Tereza (www.santatereza.hpg.ig.com.br) where we'll spend three nights. We'll take the paved road to Pocone and continue south along the Transpantaneira Highway, a raised dirt road that, fortunately for us, crosses part of the largest freshwater wetland on Earth. The biggest challenge of the day will be the many avian distractions as we attempt to arrive at Santa Tereza by noon. **Jabiru and Maguari Storks**, four species of **ibis**, **Savanna Hawk**, **Campo Flicker**, **White-headed Marsh-tyrant**, **Troupial**, **Monk Parakeet**, **Greater Rhea**, **Gray-crested Cachalote**, and many others can be found along this superb road that we'll explore today and again on following days.



An incredible Jaguar!

- - *Jonathan Morris*

At Santa Tereza, we'll explore the adjacent Pixiam River by boat, walk the lodge trails, drive further down the Transpantaneira, and enjoy the amazing wildlife right outside our front doors. With the lodge situated amidst great birding sites, we'll be able to optimize our time in the field and have optional breaks for swimming, reading, or relaxing. We'll have the opportunity to see at least several hundred species of birds while in the Pantanal. Among them are some that are fairly common and conspicuous, some less common, and some rare and hard to find. A few of the many possibilities are **Hyacinth Macaw**, **Chaco Chachalaca**, **Nacunda Nighthawk**, **Chestnut-bellied Guan**, **White-lored Spinetail**, **Mato Grosso Antbird**, **Helmeted Manakin**, **Saffron Finch**, **Purplish Jay**, **Masked Gnatcatcher**, **Narrow-billed Woodcreeper**, and **Yellow-billed Cardinal**. The area is rich in mammals as well. We'll be in the right place, and hopefully be there at the right times, to see **Giant Otter**, **Neotropical River Otter**, **Capybara**, **Giant Anteater**, **Marsh Deer**, **Azara's Agouti**, **Black Howler Monkey**, and with luck, one of the six species of **CATS** found in the area.

Santa Tereza is a comfortable lodge with good staff, great food, and a relaxing atmosphere that is ideal for seeing, enjoying, and learning about the birds and natural history of the area.

Day 6-7, 27-28 Jul - **Pousada Piuval to Alta Floresta**

After a final morning walk and breakfast at Santa Tereza, we'll head north for about two hours on the Transpantaneira to Pousada Piuval. After lunch, we'll explore some of the area's trails and a nearby lagoon. The habitat here is very different from that at Santa Tereza and, in addition to nesting **Hyacinth Macaws**, the Piuval area is great for **Yellow-collared Macaw**, **White Woodpecker**, **Saffron-billed Sparrow**, **Scarlet-headed**

Blackbird, Dull-capped Attila, Greater Rhea, and other great birds. We'll also do a night drive with a spotlight, looking for nocturnal birds and mammals such as **Crab-eating Fox**. After a morning outing and breakfast, we'll travel two hours back to the Cuiaba Airport where we'll take the two-hour flight to Alta Floresta. Here we'll spend the night at the Hotel Floresta Amazonica.

Day 7-8, 28-29 Jul - [Alta Floresta to Cristalino](#)

Less than 30 years ago, the Alta Floresta area had contiguous forest stretching north for almost 400 miles to the Amazon River. Unfortunately it is now quite fragmented with a patchwork of cattle pastures and small tracts of forest. Fortunately the hotel has a reasonably productive fragment in which a **HARPY EAGLE NEST** was discovered in 2005! There are many birds around the hotel, with good chances to see **Thrushlike Wren, Red-bellied Macaw, Amazonian Pygmy-Owl, Cinnamon-throated Woodcreeper, Black-tailed Trogon, Black-fronted Nunbird,** and others. **Brown Capuchin Monkeys** (aka Harpy Eagle food) and **Azara's Agoutis** are also common. After breakfast we'll take the one-hour drive plus 30-minute boat ride to one of my favorite places on Earth, the Cristalino Jungle Lodge (www.cristalinolodge.com.br), where we'll spend five nights. En route we'll look for roadside birds such as **Wattled Jacana, Brazilian Teal, Pearl Kite, Southern Lapwing, Burrowing Owl,** and others. At a small grove of Mauritia palms, we'll search for the sometimes-elusive palm specialties that include **Fork-tailed Palm Swift, Sulphury Flycatcher, Point-tailed Palmcreeper,** and **Red-bellied Macaw.**



Blue-cheeked Jacamar

- - *Misty Vaughn*

Day 8-13, 29 Jul - 3 Aug - [Cristalino Jungle Lodge](#)

While at Cristalino, we'll have plenty of time to explore most of the trails (with some time to return to favorites), spend a few early mornings and late afternoons atop the canopy tower, and take numerous boat trips along the Cristalino River. The trails are constructed such that they pass through all of the microhabitats of the area. These include igapo (flooded) forest, bamboo thickets, outcrops of weathered granite and deciduous forest, low-lying seasonally wet areas, a natural clay lick, and loads of glorious high-canopy rainforest. Though we will have begun to experience the concept of microhabitat preferences and specializations by various birds, plants, and other creatures in the Pantanal, these ecological features will be at their most dramatic at Cristalino. Of the more than 570 species of birds recorded in the

vicinity of the lodge, we should see about 200 species during our stay. Possibilities include about 20 species of parrots (including five macaws, Red-fan, Orange-cheeked, White-bellied, and Kawall's Parrots, and Golden-winged and Crimson-bellied Parakeets), Razor-billed Curassow, Red-throated Piping Guan, Blue-cheeked and Brown Jacamars, Turquoise and Swallow Tanagers, dozens of antbirds (Bare-eyed, Silvered, and Striated Antbirds, Cinereous and Glossy Antshrikes, White-backed Fire-eye, Black-spotted Bare-eye, and many antwrens), eight species of toucans, woodpeckers (Scale-breasted, Red-necked, Crimson-crested, Yellow-throated), trogons (White-tailed, Black-tailed, Black-throated), Black-girdled Barbet, woodcreepers (Long-billed, Spix's, Straight-billed), cotingas, manakins, puffbirds, raptors, Hoatzin, Screaming Piha, and too many others to continue listing.

We'll have excellent chances of seeing mammals such as Brazilian Tapir, Southern Tamandua, Giant and Neotropical River Otters, Coatis, two species of peccary, and up to nine species of monkeys (White-whiskered Spider, Night, Dusky Titi, Red-handed Howler, Brown Capuchin, and Silvery Marmoset). Butterflies are at their annual peak with truly overwhelming numbers and diversity. An additional highlight will be night skies filled with more stars than I've seen anywhere on the planet - it has to be seen to be believed.

While at Cristalino, we'll also have time for relaxing or swimming in the beautiful river and we will enjoy their excellent meals.

Day 13, 3 Aug - [Alta Floresta to Cuiaba](#)

After breakfast on our final morning at the lodge, we'll make one more trip down the Cristalino as we return to Alta Floresta for lunch and then the 2:20 PM flight back to Cuiabá. We'll be picked up at the airport and have an hour and a half drive to Chapada and the Pousada Penhasco.

Day 13-16, 3-6 Aug - [Chapada dos Guimarães National Park - Pousada do Parque](#)

We'll spend three nights at Pousada Penhasco (www.penhasco.com.br), a very comfortable resort perched on a spectacular sandstone escarpment in the midst of the unique 'cerrado' habitat. The Chapada area has a wonderful mix of broadleaf evergreen forest, open grassland, thick streamside forest, and a low stature tropical dry forest called the cerrado. The Guimarães plateau is at the western edge of the Mato Grosso Planalto and geographically situated such that it is part of the dividing line between two great drainages in South America, the Parana and Paraguay Rivers to the south and the Amazon River to the north. These features, combined with striking geological formations and a natural disturbance regime involving seasonal fires create a fascinating and rich environment.

While at the Pousada Penhasco, we'll explore the grounds and spend time in the National Park. In the cerrado, we'll look for White-eared Puffbird, Curl-crested Jay, Gray Monjita, Rufous-winged Antshrike, White-rumped and White-banded Tanagers, Coal-crested Finch, Black-throated Saltator, and many more. At the sandstone cliffs we'll look for Red-and-green, Red-shouldered, and Blue-winged Macaws returning to their cliff-side night roosts, plus Cliff Flycatcher and Biscutate Swift. In the semi-deciduous and gallery forests we may find Channel-billed Toucan, Lettered Aracari, Blue-crowned Motmot, Sirystes,

Helmeted, Fiery-capped, and Band-tailed Manakins, Guira and Gray-headed Tanagers, Saffron-billed Sparrow, and many others. In the grasslands we'll look for hard-to-find specialties such as Blue Finch, Wedge-tailed Grass-finch, and Collared Crescent-chest. I have a special spot that has been remarkably reliable for all three of these grassland specialties.

Day 16, 6 Aug - Trip ends in Cuiaba

We'll leave Chapada after lunch on 6 August and return to Cuiaba where the trip will officially end at about 3 PM. We will arrive in time for the 5 PM flight on TAM to Sao Paulo for those of you departing for the US that night. If you choose to or need to leave on the noon TAM flight the next day, please let me know so that I can make reservations for you at the Diplomata Hotel for the night of the 6th.

Day 17, 7 Aug - Arrive home, still savoring your incredible experience in Brazil.

The style of this trip is designed to provide a high quality experience of seeing, enjoying, and learning about the birds, wildlife, and general natural history of **Mato Grosso, Brazil**.

Although we'll be doing plenty of **birding** and probably see about **400 species**, we'll also spend time enjoying and learning about tropical ecology, plants, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and insects. We'll make optional time to relax and just enjoy the beauty and tropical ambiance. We'll be staying at some of Mato Grosso's finest lodges, and will be treated to wonderful hospitality, food, amenities, and of course, its wildlife.

Extra Services We offer the services of our exclusive BIRD TREKS travel agent, **Lori Heathcote**, in arranging your air travel and other extras. Lori has 26 years of experience in the travel industry and is a veteran birder. Contact her at Bailey Travel at **1-800-224-5399**, or e-mail Lori at lori@baileytravel.com. By dealing with Lori you have the security of a 24-hour toll-free telephone number in case of any travel emergency. She can also assist you with all pre- and post-tour travel plans. There may be a fee for these services.



Southern Tamandua

- - Karen Blumenthal

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