Brazil

Birds & Wildlife of the Pantanal & Cerrado



Toco Toucan by Adam Riley

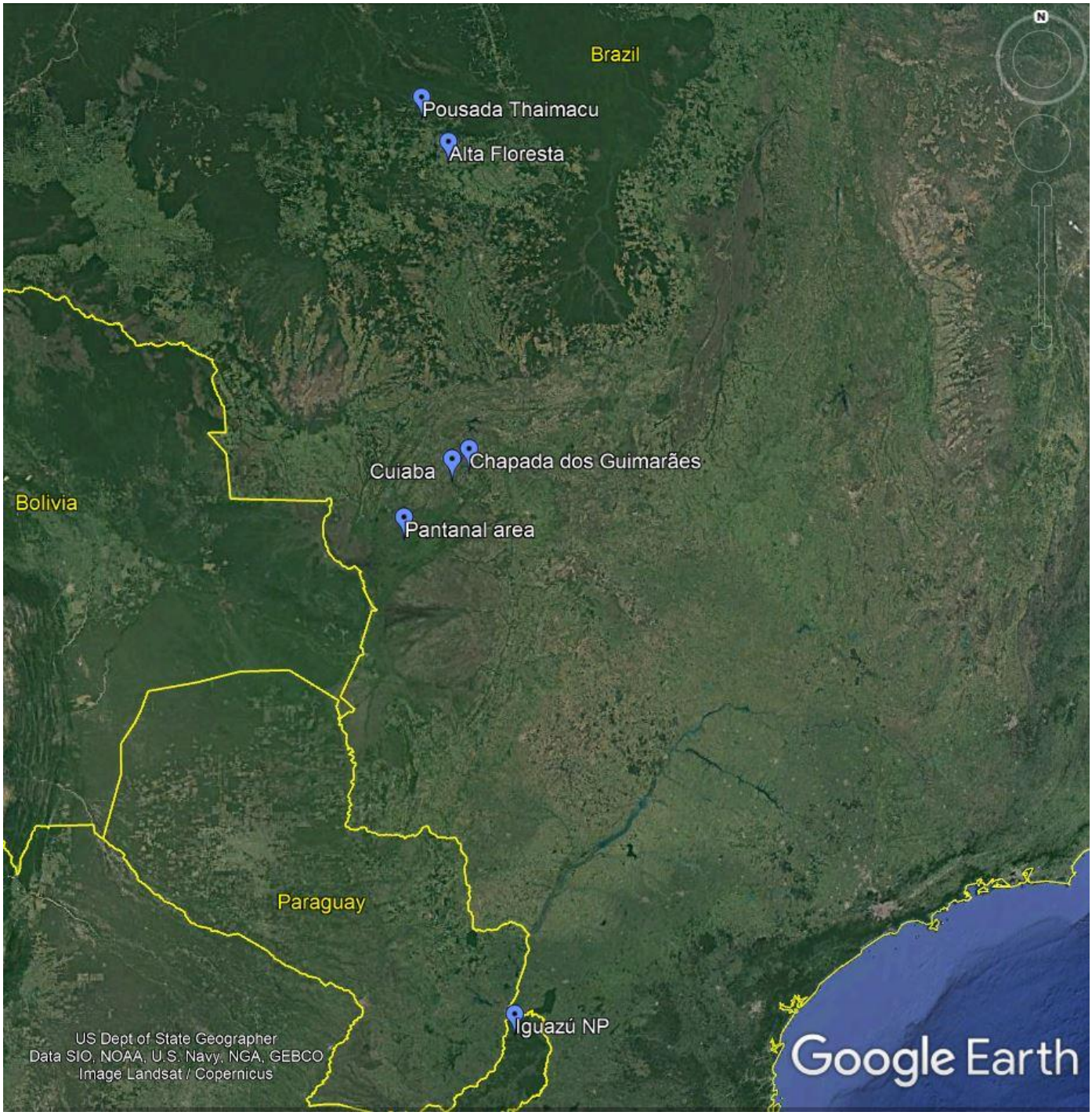
Brazil, one of the most biodiverse countries on the planet, is a dream destination for general naturalists, photographers, and birders alike. Home to swathes of Amazon Rainforest, the vast majority of the continent's savannah and endemic-rich Atlantic Rainforest, and the highly celebrated Pantanal, few destinations can offer such great variety and abundance in such a short space of time.

Combining a visit to two of these great regions - the Pantanal, weighing in as the world's largest freshwater wetland, and the Cerrado, a true icon of Brazil's fascinating habitats - our main tour packs in an incomparable mix of productive birding, great wildlife-viewing and superb photography opportunities. Indeed, sampling a fantastic cross-section of the Pantanal's 250 000km² (96 500mi²) of woodland, swathing rivers and shallow wetlands, on top of the bird rich Cerrado in the Chapada dos Guimarães area, our 10 day itinerary is simply unbeatable.

Itinerary & Map

Birds & Wildlife of the Pantanal & Cerrado

Day 1	**Arrival in Cuiaba, transfer to the Pantanal**
Days 2 to 6	**Pantanal area**
Day 7	**Pantanal area to Chapada dos Guimaraes**
Days 8 & 9	**Chapada dos Guimaraes area**
Day 10	**Chapada dos Guimaraes to Cuiaba & final departure**



Birding sites in detail

The Pantanal. The Pantanal, a huge, gently sloping basin that seasonally inundates with water runoff from the surrounding highlands, is by no means a monotonous expanse of water. Instead, it is a mosaic of woodland, slow-moving waterways, and thousands of drying water pools in the dry season. En route through its northern end, we'll make stops to admire our views of this fascinating landscape and all the birds and animals that gather in sight of the road.



Giant Otter by Rob Williams

We should see our first stately Jabiru (often offering excellent photographic opportunities), Ringed and Amazon Kingfishers, the attractive Scarlet-headed Blackbird, Rufescent Tiger Heron, Savanna Hawk, Wood Stork, Snail Kite, Greater Rhea, Grey-necked Wood Rails and Guira Cuckoos, among an impressive assortment of other waterfowl and bank-loads of Yacare Caiman. We will be on the lookout for Red-legged Seriema, Sunbittern and several of the area's less common species, including Maguari Stork, Least Bittern and Chotoy Spinetail.

Combining several boat rides, easy walks along forested trails and a return trip along the entire length of the Transpantaneira, we will sample the full suite of avian gems that call the Pantanal home, not to mention give ourselves the best chance of seeing some of its greatest mammal attractions.

Along the Claro and Cuiba Rivers, for example, we have a decent chance of connecting with both Agami and Zigzag Herons, all five Brazilian kingfishers, the often-inconspicuous Sungrebe and the spectacular Sunbittern, on top of regular sightings of Great Black Hawk, several parrot species, Nacunda and Band-tailed Nighthawks and Pale-legged Hornero.



Jaguars by Rob Williams

Naturally, our best chances of seeing Giant River Otter and even the biggest prize of them all, the Jaguar, will be from boats along these rivers, particularly the Cuiaba. Indeed, we will dedicate several boat trips in the Porto Jofre area to finding these

magnificent beasts, drawn to the river shores by a seasonal abundance of prey - mostly Yacare Caiman and Capybara!



Red-legged Seriema by Clayton Burne

We will thoroughly cover the other extensive habitats of the Pantanal by accessing them from three separate lodges along the Transpantaneira. One of our lodges is located along a narrow river full of wildlife, currently considered one of the best spots for birding and nature photography in the entire Pantanal. Among the regular visitors to the lodge grounds are Grey-necked Wood Rail, Bare-faced Curassow, Chestnut-bellied Guan, Chestnut-eared Aracari, Toco Toucan, Turquoise-fronted Amazon, White-eyed and Yellow-chevroned Parakeets, Golden-collared and Hyacinth Macaws which even nest near the rooms, Crimson-crested and Pale-crested Woodpeckers, Great Rufous Woodcreeper, Red-billed Scythebill, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Saffron Finch, Silver-beaked Tanager and many more! Mammals commonly seen here include Azara's (Hooded) Capuchin, Black-and-gold Howler Monkey, South American Coati, Azara's Agouti and Paca.

A quiet canoe trip along the river may herald Cocoi and Agami Herons, Sungrebe, Sunbittern, Black-collared Hawk, all five species of South American Kingfisher, Black-capped Donacobius, Yellow-billed Cardinal, as well as Yacare Cayman and Giant Otters.

Time spent on the trails may produce Blue-throated Piping Guan, Buff-bellied Hermit, Blue-crowned Trogon, White-wedged Piculet, Planalto Slaty Antshrike, Large-billed Antwren, Mato Grosso Antbird, White-lored Spinetail, Southern Antpipit, Stripe-necked and Pearly-vented Tody-Tyrants, White-eyed Attila, White-naped Xenopsaris, Helmeted and Band-tailed Manakins, Green-backed Becard, Hooded and Grey-headed Tanagers, Flavescent Warbler, Rusty-collared Seedeater, Orange-backed Troupial, and Scarlet-headed Blackbird, just to name a few!



Giant Anteater by Rob Williams

Wooded areas will be searched for Plain Inezia, Rusty-fronted Tody-Flycatcher, Forest Elaenia, Moustached Wren, Golden-green Woodpecker and Narrow-billed Woodcreeper, whilst some of the birding is made much easier by the abundance of feeders, which offer up point-blank views of Nanday Parakeet, Saffron Finch and even Chestnut-bellied Guan, which can often be seen feeding in impressive numbers. The haunting calls of

Undulated Tinamou will no doubt greet us daily, though laying eyes on one shall present a rather greater challenge.

Along the Transpantaneira Road itself we will search for the fantastic Hyacinth Macaw, perhaps the grandest and most striking of all the world's parrots, whilst the rest of our time along the dirt track and its over one hundred narrow bridges where we will keep our eyes out for the migrant Maguari Stork, King Vulture, Cinereous-breasted Spinetail, Southern Screamer, Boat-billed Heron, White-wedged Piculet and White-tailed Goldenthroat. The waterbird spectacle is truly something to behold, and we will also dedicate more time to observing the nesting and feedings sites of a variety of herons, spoonbills and storks, all providing for unparalleled photography to boot.



Collared Crescentchest by Lev Frid

Mammals, aside from the aforementioned Jaguar and Giant Otters, are also a prominent feature of the Transpantaneira, where many are easier to see than any other place in South America. We stand an excellent chance of seeing the world's largest rodent, the massive Capybara, South American Tapir, localised Marsh Deer, Black-and-gold Howler Monkey, Giant Anteater and even its smaller cousin, the Southern Tamandua. Night excursions will, of course, increase our chances of seeing several of these beasts but may also yield Scissor-tailed Nightjar and two species of potoo.

Chapada dos Guimarães. The region around the small town of Chapada dos Guimarães is most famous, and justifiably so, for its spectacular escarpments and waterfalls. Of greater interest to birders, however, are the great stretches of Cerrado, end even a few well-forested valleys. The Cerrado, a unique savanna confined mostly to Brazil, not only contains a set of fantastic endemic birds, but also a good deal of threatened species of many plant and animal groups - owed mostly to its clearance for swathes of agriculture. Our time will be dedicated mostly to birding this habitat, but also the forested valleys and even some of the well-known tourist attractions.



Green-and-rufous Kingfisher by Lev Frid

In the Cerrado itself, Chapada Flycatcher, Collared Crescentchest, Rufous-winged Antshrike, Shrike-like and White-rumped Tanagers, Small-billed Tinamou, Sooty-fronted Spinetail, the delightful Coal-crested and Red Pileated Finches, Black-throated Saltator and perhaps even the sleek Horned Sungem will be the object of our desires, while forested areas will hopefully provide us with sightings of colourful Band-tailed and Fiery-capped Manakins, the endearing Southern Antpipit, Tataupa Tinamou, Sharp-tailed Streamcreeper (which we may locate by its striking calls), Pavonine Cuckoo, Brown Jacamar and the eye-catching Pectoral Sparrow.



Hyacinth Macaw by Forrest Rowland

The raucous calls of Blue-winged and Red-and Green Macaws, on the other hand, are more likely to welcome us at the scenic Bridal Veil Waterfall or the Geodesic Centre viewpoint, where the scarce Blue Finch and Bat Falcon also occur. Nocturnal birding in the area may also produce several nightjars, including Little and Scissor-tailed Nightjars.

Tour Grading & Key

Overall Ease		Moderate. Suitable for all birding / wildlife interest levels and mobility capabilities.
Birding Ease		Moderate. Most species provide good visuals in open conditions.
Accommodation		Comfortable to very comfortable.
Walking / Trails		Mostly short walks on flat terrain.
Vehicles / Roads		Good quality sealed & unsealed roads. Most drives are short. Boat rides last +-4-6 hours per outing.
Photography		Good to excellent. Lots of feeders & opportunities by boat.
Annoyances		Climate can vary from cold in the morning to very hot during the middle of the day.

Financial Arrangements and Important Notes

Tour dates, prices, single supplement, approximate flight costs and tour spaces are displayed on our website.

Tour inclusions:

- All meals from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 10 on the main Pantanal tour;
- All lodgings;
- All ground transportation during the tour;
- Boat transportation as noted in the itinerary;
- All reserve entrance fees;
- All guiding services;
- Tips for local guides, drivers and services.

Tour exclusions:

- Visa fees;
- ANY flights;
- Any beverages (including mini-bar charges at hotels);
- Optional excursions;
- Special gratuities;
- Telephone calls, laundry and other items of a personal nature.

Single Supplement: The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBL cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

Tipping: As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, restaurants etc.) are included on this tour. However, this does NOT include your Rockjumper leader/s. If you feel that they have given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip them at your discretion.

- **Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing. The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates.**
- **Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registrations, a small group supplement will be offered to confirm the tour.**
- **Tour prices are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.**
- **The designated tour leader/s may be changed at short due to unforeseen circumstances.**
- **The itinerary is indicative only. Changes may need to be made to the order in which the tour is conducted, or some of the venues we visit closer to departure. We will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.**

- In some areas it can be hot to very hot depending upon local weather conditions. On most mornings, we will be up and out early to take advantage of the cooler temperatures and wildlife activity before the day warms up.
- This Brazil tour does not require a high level of fitness but participants should be in good general health as some of the forest birding will be done on foot and may require walking for several hours at a time.
- Should you have any physical limitations or medical conditions please notify us in advance of departure.
- There will be a few lengthy drives.
- The vehicles we use are comfortable, although we should expect some bumpy roads depending upon local road conditions.
- Accommodation is generally comfortable throughout the tour although air conditioning is not available in some areas.

Arrival and Departure Details

- Brazil - Pantanal Tour will start and end at Cuiaba International Airport (IATA: CGB).

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your Tour Confirmation package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

Foz do Iguacu International Airport (IATA: IGU) and Cuiaba International Airport (IATA: CGB) are located within Brazil. They are well serviced by a multitude of flights from major cities within Brazil such as Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Brasilia.

Visa requirements differ by country, nationality of the traveller and duration and purpose of your intended stay. It may be necessary to obtain a visa or an electronic travel authorization in advance of your travel. It is therefore vitally important that you check with your travel agent/consulate/embassy for exact visa requirements.

DO NOT book any flights until the Rockjumper Team have officially confirmed the tour.