

Birding Ecotours

BRAZIL AND ARGENTINA: THE PANTANAL AND IGUAZU FALLS

12-24 OCTOBER 2025

17-29 OCTOBER 2025

12-24 OCTOBER 2026



Jaguar is a top target of this fantastic tour (photo Ricardo Boschetti).

This tour will surely rank as one of your neotropical wildlife highlights of your lifetime! Our Brazil and Argentina itinerary will allow you to explore two iconic, fascinating and highly diverse neotropical ecosystems: the Pantanal and the Atlantic Forest, while also including the truly impressive Iguazu Falls. While in the Pantanal we will enjoy an exciting full morning and afternoon boat safari along the Cuiabá River, concentrating on finding the world's third-largest feline, the elusive and charismatic **Jaguar**!

We will begin our birding and mammal adventure by exploring the Pantanal, a vast, seasonally flooded wetland, renowned for its incredible concentrations of birds at the end of the dry season. We schedule this tour during this particular season, when fish trapped in shrinking pools of water attract hordes of herons, egrets, storks, and other wetland species. The star of these huge concentrations is the massive **Jabiru**, towering over a diverse collection of smaller South American waterbirds, such as **Sunbittern**, **Plumbeous**, **Bare-faced**, **Green**, and **Buff-necked Ibises**, **Grey-cowled Wood Rail** and **Southern Screamer**. There is normally a large diversity of raptors around too, with **Snail Kite**, **Black-collared**, **Savanna** and **Crane Hawks** regularly encountered. Our river trips provide the opportunity to look for species such as **Capped Heron**, **Sungrebe**, the striking **Agami Heron**, **Anhinga** and a plethora of kingfishers including **Green**, **Amazon**, **Ringed**, **American Pygmy** and **Green-and-rufous Kingfishers**. Other target species include **Band-tailed Antbird** and, with some luck, the seldom-seen **Zigzag Heron**. These boat trips also provide the best chances to see Endangered (IUCN) **Giant (River) Otters**, the largest otter in the world, and one of the 'Big Five' of South American mammals. This is also the best place on the planet for seeing **Jaguar** — during the dry season sightings are almost guaranteed. This humongous cat shines brightly as the star of the show on this tour.



Hyacinth Macaws are always a fan-favorite in the Pantanal (photo Ricardo Boschetti).

The Pantanal is not only rich in water-associated avifauna; we will also bird its large grasslands, gallery forests, marshes, and plains for species such as **Chotoy**, **Rusty-backed**, and **White-lored Spinetails**, **Scarlet-headed Blackbird**, **Greater Thornbird**, **Masked Gnatcatcher**, **Flavescent Warbler**, the incredible **Helmeted Manakin**, **White** and **Pale-crested Woodpeckers** and **Mato Grosso Antbird**.

This region is simply a paradise for parrot-lovers, with standout species including the iconic and threatened **Hyacinth Macaw**, the largest species of flying parrot in the world, and one of Brazil's great conservation success stories. Other parrot species likely to be seen in the Pantanal include the likes of **Golden-collared Macaw**, **Blue-crowned**, **Peach-fronted**, **White-eyed**, **Nanday**, and **Yellow-chevroned Parakeets**, **Orange-winged** and **Turquoise-fronted Amazons** and **Scaly-headed Parrot**.

In addition to birds, many mammal species call the Pantanal home. It is perhaps South America's greatest wildlife refuge, and we should enjoy daily sightings of **Capybara** (the largest rodent in the world), primates such as **Black-tailed Marmoset**, **Bearded Capuchin** and **Black-and-gold Howler Monkeys**. With luck, we might encounter **Marsh Deer**, **Crab-eating Raccoon**, **South American Coati**, **Yellow Armadillo**, **Lowland (Brazilian) Tapir** and **Giant Anteater**.



*Piuval Lodge is a great place to see **Giant Anteater** (photo Ricardo Boschetti).*

We finish the tour with a few days birding the magnificent Iguazú Falls. Surrounded by Atlantic Forest and bordering Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay, Iguazú Falls is one of the great natural wonders of the world as the Iguazú River tumbles over the edge of the Parana Plateau. It is often considered the world's most spectacular waterfall. Ever since the Spaniards discovered these falls in the 16th century, they have not ceased to impress travelers from all over the world, and a visit

here can be considered a once-in-a-lifetime trip — certainly one of the wonders of South America. The falls span over 1.6 miles (2.6 kilometers) and are comprised of over 275 distinct falls, forming a breathtaking sight. Perhaps the most impressive is the U-shaped Devil’s Throat which is 250 feet (82 meters) high, 450 feet (150 meters) wide and 2,100 feet (700 meters) long; this is the truly iconic waterfall of the park, immortalized in the iconic 1986 movie *The Mission*. Even though the waterfalls are shared by Brazil and Argentina, we spend the bulk of the time on the Argentinian side (using a super easy border crossing), which has better birding with better trail facilities.

During this part of the tour, we will have adequate time to admire the waterfalls and look for the area’s special birds. Target species include the impressive **Great Dusky Swift**, which roost on the waterfall cliffs, **Red-rumped Cacique**, **Toco Toucan**, **Chestnut-eared Aracari**, **Blond-crested** and **Yellow-fronted Woodpeckers**, **Ochre-collared Piculet**, **Blue** (Swallow-tailed) **Manakin**, **Southern Antpiper**, **Eared Pygmy Tyrant**, **Chestnut-bellied Euphonia**, **Green-headed Tanager**, **Streak-capped Antwren**, **Surucua Trogon**, **Rufous-capped Motmot**, **Greenish Schiffornis**, **Rufous Gnateater**, **Dusky-tailed Antbird**, and the most-wanted **Black-fronted Piping Guan**.



A feast for the eyes in the Pantanal (photo Ricardo Boschetti).

Itinerary (13 days/12 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Cuiabá and transfer to the hotel

After your arrival at Marechal Rondón International Airport (CGB) in Várzea Grande Cuiabá, you will be met by our staff and transferred to your comfortable hotel near to the airport.

Overnight: [Hotel Amazon Aeroporto](#), Cuiabá

Day 2. Transfer to the Pantanal

We will leave the hotel after breakfast to head towards Poconé, the gateway to the Brazilian Pantanal. Along the drive it is possible to find species such as **Greater Rhea**, **Red-legged Seriema**, **Crested Caracara**, **Toco Toucan**, **Cattle Tyrant**, and **White-tailed Hawk**.

We will arrive at Pouzo Alegre Lodge where we will be greeted by our first Pantanal species such as **Southern Screamer**, **Plumbeous** and **Buff-necked Ibises**, **Black-bellied Whistling Duck**, **Whistling Heron**, **Guira Cuckoo**, **Limpkin**, **Jabiru**, **Cocoi Heron**, **Roseate Spoonbill**, **Crane Hawk**, and **Brown-chested Martin**, among many others. In the evening we will switch to 4x4 vehicles to do our first night safari drive looking for some of the Pantanal's exciting nocturnal mammals. We will have our first chances for **Lowland Tapir** (the largest South American mammal), **Crab-eating Fox** and with luck, **Giant Anteater**.

Our lodge is more of a *rancho hacienda* style but is still comfortable and is located away from the road, deep in the woodlands, with night drives offering good chances for mammals. **Lowland Tapirs** are commonly seen here and with a lot of luck we may see **Southern Tamandua**, **Six-banded Armadillo**, **Ocelot** and even the rare **Puma**, which is very scarce in the Pantanal and our expectations should be set low. The lodge is great for birding with bird feeders for us to enjoy and some nearby old dry deciduous forest which offers birds such as **Planalto Slaty Antshrike** and **Black-bellied Antwren**.

Overnight: [Pouzo Alegre Lodge](#)



Greater Rhea may be seen along the road to Poconé.

Day 3. Transfer to Hotel Mato Grosso and birding the Transpantainera Road

We will leave the lodge and head to the famous Transpantainera Road where we will likely find species such as **Black-collared Hawk**, **White-headed Marsh Tyrant**, **Scarlet-headed Blackbird**, **Yellow-billed Cardinal**, **Golden-collared Macaw**, **Monk Parakeet**, **Amazon, Ringed and Green Kingfishers**, and **Yellow-chinned Spinetail**.

Mato Grosso Hotel is strategically located along the shores of the Sararé River (Pixaim) where we will have our first boat trip hoping to find several species of birds including some classic aquatic species, but our main target is the **Zigzag Heron**, one of the rarest and poorly-known birds in the neotropics. This area offers you some of the best chances to see this elusive heron. We also have opportunities for **Agami Heron**, **American Pygmy Kingfisher**, **Anhinga**, **Band-tailed and Rusty-backed Antbirds**, **Buff-throated Woodcreeper**, and **Red-crested Cardinal**. We will also have our first chances for **Giant (River) Otters**. At night we may find **Crab-eating Raccoons** around the lodge.

Overnight: [Hotel Mato Grosso](#)



*The elusive **Agami Heron** may be seen in the Pantanal (photo Ricardo Boschetti).*

Day 4. Birding Mato Grosso Hotel and transfer to Porto Joffre

Today we will have an early start to explore the nearby grasslands and gallery forest looking for species such as **Chestnut-vented Conebill**, **Great Rufous Woodcreeper**, **Grey-crested Cachalote**, **Long-tailed Ground Dove**, **White-headed Marsh Tyrant**, **Black-backed Water Tyrant**, **Mato Grosso Antbird**, **Purplish Jay**, **Variable Oriole**, **Wattled Jacana**, **Snail Kite**, and **Marsh Deer**. After this, we will leave the lodge and drive along a road passing through several ponds which will likely be full of birds as well **Yacare Caimans** and **Capybaras**.

We will arrive at Hotel Pantanal Norte in Porto Joffre and will spend the afternoon birding along the Transpantainera where we will search for species such as **Least Bittern**, **Spotted Rail**, **Cinereous-breasted Spinetail**, **Nanday Parakeet**, **Bare-faced Ibis**, **Maguari Stork**, and with some luck, **Undulated Tinamou**.

Overnight: [Hotel Pantanal Norte](#)

Day 5. Jaguar Safari

Today we will explore the Cuiabá River in the morning looking for **Jaguars**. This is the best place in the world to see Jaguars and we should have very good chances of seeing this mighty animal. On our boat trip we will explore different sectors of the river in search of **Jaguars**. We also have our best chances of finding **Giant (River) Otters** on this day. We will return to the lodge for lunch and after a short break, will head back down to the river for our second boat safari, again focusing our efforts on finding **Jaguars**. During our boat trip it is possible to see **Collared** and **Pied Plovers**, **Large-billed**, **Common** and **Yellow-billed Terns**, **Black-bellied Whistling Duck** and **Paraguayan Howler Monkeys**.

Overnight [Hotel Pantanal Norte](#)



Giant (River) Otter along the Cuiaba River (photo Ricardo Boschetti).

Day 6. Transfer to Piuval Lodge

We will again bird the Transpantainera and spend two nights at Piuval Lodge where we may have time to start looking for some of the targets listed below.

Overnight: [Piuval Lodge](#)

Day 7. Piuval Lodge birding

We will spend the full day exploring Pousada Piuval. Our first activity will be a predawn search for **Giant Anteater**, if we haven't yet seen it. Later we will explore the expansive areas of this huge property to look for **Pale-crested Woodpecker**, **Greater Thornbird**, **Chaco Chachalaca**, **White-throated Piping Guan**, **Bare-faced Curassow**, **Picui Ground Dove**, **Grey-cowled Wood Rail**, **Sunbittern**, **Savanna Hawk**, **Turquoise-fronted Amazon**, **Red-billed Scythebill**, **White-lored Spinetail**, **Orange-backed Troupial**, and **Greyish Baywing**.



Sunbittern is high on the list of the neotropic's most wanted birds (photo Ricardo Boschetti)

The star of the day is likely to be the **Hyacinth Macaw**, an icon of the Pantanal and one of the last remaining strongholds for this species. Furthermore, the lodge area offers good chances for **Black-fronted Capuchin** and **Silvery Marmoset**.

We will have a break after lunch and spend the rest of the afternoon birding around the lodge. In the evening we will have a second 4x4 safari night drive hoping to encounter more fascinating wildlife.

Overnight: [Piuval Lodge](#)

Day 8. Transfer to Cuiabá Airport and flight to Sao Paulo

We will have our last morning birding around the lodge and along Transpantainera before finally heading back to Cuiabá Airport to connect with our flight to Sao Paulo. Upon arrival, we will transfer to our hotel for the evening.

Overnight: Hampton Inn, Sao Paulo

Day 9. Arrival at Foz do Iguazú Airport and transfer to the Argentinean side

This morning we will head back to Sao Paulo Airport and catch a flight to Foz de Iguazú Airport, in the Brazilian state of Parana. From here we will immediately transfer to Puerto Iguazú on the Argentinean side, in the state of Misiones. Crossing the border is relatively easy, usually taking half an hour by car; the two cities are separated by nine miles (15 km).



The awe-inspiring Iguazu Falls (photo Anne Koke).

We will check in to our comfortable hotel, spend the afternoon birding around the accommodation's grounds, and visit the hummingbird garden, *Jardin de Picaflores*. Here we hope to see hummers such as **Black Jacobin**, **Black-throated Mango**, **Glittering-bellied** and **Versicolored Emeralds**, **Scale-throated** and **Planalto Hermits**, **White-throated** and **Swallow-tailed Hummingbirds**, **Violet-capped Woodnymph**, and **Gilded Sapphire**. Other birds we might see today include **Ochre-collared Piculet**, **Chestnut-bellied** and **Violaceous Euphonia**, **Green-headed**, **Ruby-crowned**, **Sayaca**, **Black-goggled** and **Guira Tanagers**, **Chestnut-eared Aracari**, and **Plush-crested Jay**.

Overnight: Selva del Laurel Lodge

Day 10. Iguazú Falls and Devil's Throat

Today we will have an early start to get into Iguazú Park and visit the famous Devil's Throat, probably the most spectacular point of all the waterfalls. We will have time to walk the lower and upper trail circuits within the Argentinean side of the park, allowing you to see the waterfalls from different angles, with abundant photographic opportunities throughout. One of the main bird highlights of the day will be the impressive **Great Dusky Swifts** flying around and perching on the vertical cliff faces of the waterfalls.

Overnight: Selva Del Laurel Lodge



*The stunning **Green-headed Tanager** can be found around Iguazu (photo Ricardo Boschetti).*

Days 11-12. Exploring Iguazú Park surroundings and Urugua-í Provincial Park

We will spend two full days birding different sectors close by to the Iguazú waterfalls. One site we'll visit is the Urugua-í Provincial Park, located 63 miles (100 km) from our hotel; here we will look for the Endangered **Black-fronted Piping Guan**. This bird can be tricky to find in other Atlantic Forest areas but in the southern Misiones state of Argentina, it can be reliably found. Other birds we hope to see include **Black-throated Trogon**, **Rufous-capped Motmot**, **Green-billed Toucan**, and **Yellow-fronted**, **Blond-crested**, **Lineated** and **Robust Woodpeckers**. Furthermore, we will also look for **Black-billed Scythebill**, **Tufted Antshrike**, **Rufous-winged Antwren**, **Short-tailed Anthrush**, and several woodcreepers such as **White-throated**, **Olivaceous**, **Plain-winged** and **Planalto Woodcreepers**.

The list of targets during these two days is long and includes a few skulkers such as **White-eyed**, **Ochre-breasted** and **Buff-fronted Foliage-gleaners**, **White-throated Spadebill**, **Red-crowned**

Ant Tanager, Eared Pygmy Tyrant, Southern Antpipit, and Plain Antvireo. Other more obvious (and as usual, beautiful) species that we will be on the lookout for include **Swallow Tanager, Boat-billed, Social and Three-striped Flycatchers, White-winged Swallow, Pale-breasted and White-necked Thrushes, Riverbank Warbler, Chestnut-vented Conebill, Magpie, Chestnut-headed and White-lined Tanagers, and Blue-naped Chlorophonia.**

Overnight: Selva del Laurel Lodge



Blue Manakin is another highlight from the Atlantic Forest (photo Ricardo Boschetti).

Day 13. Transfer to the Brazilian side, visiting the waterfalls and flight to Sao Paulo

Today we will cross the Brazilian border again and (if time permits) have a short visit to the Brazilian side of the waterfalls, where we can view the falls from different angles and perhaps find some birds we might have missed on previous days. You will then be transferred to the Foz de Iguazu Airport to catch a flight back to Sao Paulo where you will connect with your international flight home.

Please note that the itinerary cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually slightly) due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides, and other factors. In addition, we sometimes have to use a different guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling or other factors.

Duration:	13 days
Limit:	6 - 8
Dates:	12-24 October 2025 17-29 October 2025 12-24 October 2026
Start:	Cuiabá
End:	Sao Paulo
Prices (includes some domestic flights):	US\$7,990 per person sharing (2025) US\$8,870 per person sharing (2026)
Single supplements:	US\$850 (2025) US\$940 (2026)

Price includes:

Meals
Accommodation
Transport
Guiding fees
Domestic flights within the tour

Price excludes:

Flights to the start and end point of the tour
Personal insurance
Alcoholic beverages
Gratuities
Laundry service
Gratuities (please see our [tipping guidelines blog](#))