
GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON

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**BIRDING AND WILDLIFE IN BRAZIL AND ARGENTINA:
IGUAZÚ FALLS, PANTANAL AND CHAPADA DOS GUIMARÃES
20 SEPTEMBER – 5 OCTOBER 2024**



Iguazu Waterfalls (photo Anne Koke) one of the wonders of South America

Our 16-day Iguazú Falls, Pantanal and Chapada dos Guimarães tour is designed to provide our guests with the most incredible birding and wildlife watching experience in this fabulous part of the planet. Iguazú Falls not only provides spectacular scenery, but excellent Atlantic Forest birding. The world's largest wetland, the Pantanal, provides the best opportunity on the planet for **Jaguar** as well as other charismatic mammals, and of course hosts a great many mouth-watering birds.



Jaguar (photo Eric Schroeder) is one of our targets on this trip

We will start our tour at Iguazú Falls. Surrounded by Atlantic Forest bordering Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay, Iguazú Falls is one of the great natural wonders of the world. The Iguazu River, where it tumbles over the edge of the Parana Plateau, is often considered the world's most spectacular waterfall. Since the Spaniards discovered these falls in the 16th century, they have not ceased to impress travellers, A visit to Iguazú is one of the highlights of a trip to South America.

The falls span over 1.6 miles and are comprised of 275 distinct falls, forming a breathtaking sight. Perhaps the most impressive is the U-shaped Devil's Throat which is 250 feet high, 450 feet wide and 2100 feet long; this is the iconic waterfall of the park, immortalized in the 1986 movie *The Mission*.

Even though the waterfalls are shared by Brazil and Argentina, we will spend the bulk of the time on the Argentinian side since the birding is better on the Argentinian side.

During our days at Iguazú Falls, we'll have time to admire the waterfalls as well as to look for the special birds. Target species include the impressive **Great Dusky Swift**, which roost on the waterfall cliffs. Other birds we will look for include **Red-rumped Cacique**, **Toco Toucan**, **Chestnut-eared Araçari**, **Blonde-crested Woodpecker**, **Yellow-fronted Woodpecker**, **Ochre-collared Piculet**, **Swallow-tailed Manakin**, **Southern Antpipit**, **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 elusive **Black-fronted Piping-Guan**.

After enjoying our time around the Falls, we will take a domestic flight to the city of Cuiabá from where we will head to the famous Chapada dos Guimarães National Park, spending the whole morning looking for birds—**Red-and-green Macaw**, **Blue-winged Macaw**, **Chapada Flycatcher**, **Coal-crested Finch**, **Guira Cuckoo**, **Toco Toucan**, and **Peach-fronted Parakeet**.

After lunch in town, we will drive to our accommodation, Pousada do Parque Lodge, a charming place and the only lodge within the park itself. The lodge itself hosts some thrilling species, such as **Planalto Hermit**, **Swallow-tailed Hummingbird**, **Red Pileated Finch**, **Chopi Blackbird**, **Pale-crested Woodpecker**, **Flavescent Warbler**, and some great night birds such as **Nacunda Nighthawk**, **Common Potoo**, **Rufous Nightjar**, **Scissor-tailed Nightjar**, **Little Nightjar**, **Pauraque**, and **Tropical Screech Owl**. The park is a habitat of the seldom-seen **Maned Wolf**, but sightings are rare, and we will be very lucky if we manage to encounter one of these exciting creatures.



Black-fronted Piping Guan (photo by Eduardo Ormaeche) one of the targets of Iguazu



Green-headed Tanager (*photo by Ricardo Boschetti*) is one of the best birds at Iguazu



A branch-like Common Potoo

The birding outside the park includes good targets such as **White-rumped Tanager**, **White-banded Tanager**, **Collared Crescentchest**, **Pavonine Cuckoo**, **Amazonian Motmot**, **Sharptailed Streamcreeper**, **Brown Jacamar**, **White-eared Puffbird**, and **Spot-backed Puffbird**. We might also have a chance to see the endemic **Crested Black Tyrant**, and we'll admire the famous Cachoeira Véu de Noiva (Bridal Veil Waterfall). We will spend four days here in this amazing landscape. The lodge is a great place to relax during the heat of the day.



Bridal Veil Waterfall, Chapada dos Guimarães

After three nights at Pousada do Parque in the Chapada dos Guimarães National Park, we will drive to Poconé at the entrance to the largest wetland in the world, the Pantanal. During our stay in the Pantanal, we will visit and stay at different lodges, which are carefully chosen to provide the best birding and wildlife opportunities.

After an early last breakfast at Guimarães, we'll head to the rustic Pouso Alegre Lodge (stopping for lunch in Cuiabá). The woodlands around Pouso Alegre are good for birds such as **Red-billed Scythebill**, **Bare-faced Curassow**, and **Great Rufous Woodcreeper**. While at Pouso Alegre, we'll do a night drive in the hopes of seeing **Marsh Deer**, and **Lowland Tapir**—some guests have even seen **Ocelot** and **Puma** on the property.

Later we will transfer to the Pantanal Mato Grosso Hotel, which is strategically located next to the Pixaim Oxbow Lake. During our stay at the Pantanal Mato Grosso Hotel, we will do boat trips searching for aquatic species such as **Amazon**, **Ringed**, **Green**, **Green-and-rufous** and **American Pygmy Kingfisher**, **Agami Heron**, **Jabiru** and **Cocoi Heron**. Here we also might see **Blue-throated Piping Guan**, **Golden-collared Macaw**, **Black-collared Hawk**, **Sungrebe**, and **Giant Otter**.



Hyacinth Macaw (photo Eric Schroeder)

Before dusk, we'll try for the elusive **Zigzag Heron**. The gallery forest behind the hotel is good for **Blue-crowned Trogon**, **Buff-throated Woodcreeper**, **Stripe-necked Tody-Tyrant**, **White-lored Spinetail**, **Rusty-backed Spinetail**, **Mato Grosso Antbird**, **Black-backed Water Tyrant**, and **Helmeted Manakin**. The grassland around the hotel is good also for **Chotoy Spinetail**, **Long-tailed Ground-Dove**, **Picui Ground-Dove**, **Scaled Dove**, **Red-crested Cardinal**, **Yellow-billed Cardinal**, **Chaco Chachalaca**, and, with luck, **Great Potoo** roosting at daytime.

After two nights at the Pantanal Mato Grosso Hotel, we will drive all the way along the Transpantaneira, which is the only road that passes through the northern Pantanal and ends on the Cuiabá River. Here we will stay for two nights at the comfortable Hotel Pantanal Norte—Porto Jofre, which will be our base as we seek the majestic **Jaguar** along the Cuiabá River. The chances to see this legendary animal are very high in the Pantanal, and we should be rewarded with more than one sighting.

Our final lodge in the Pantanal is Pousada Piuval. Here, we will have chances to see our first splendid **Hyacinth Macaw**, **Greater Rhea**, **Red-legged Seriema**, **Greater Thornbird**, **White-fronted Woodpecker**, **Black-capped Antwren**, **Blue-crowned Parakeet**, **Cattle Tyrant**, **Buff-necked Ibis**, **Plumbeous Ibis**, **Southern Screamer**, and **Sunbittern**.

At night, we'll drive around the property, exploring the Brazilian savanna and looking for the elusive **Giant Anteater**. Other mammals that can be seen around Piuval include **Crab-eating Fox**, **Capybara**, **South American Coati**, **Azara's Capuchin**, and **Black Howler** monkey.

After enjoying Pousada Piuval, we will return to Cuiabá, from where you can connect with your domestic flights back to São Paulo and home from there.



Giant Anteater (photo Ricardo Boschetti) is one possible to find at Piuval Lodge

Detailed Itinerary (16 days/15 nights)

Day 1. Arrival to Foz do Iguacu and transfer to the Argentinean side

We'll arrive at Foz de Iguacu airport in the Brazilian state of Parana and immediately transfer to Puerto Iguazu 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 9 miles (15 km). We shall check in at our comfortable hotel, located in the well-known 6000 hectares birding reserve. We'll spend the afternoon birding around the accommodation's grounds, and visit the hummingbird garden, *Jardin de Picaflores*, where we hope to see hummers such as **Black Jacobin**, **Black-throated Mango**, **Glittering-bellied Emerald**, **Scale-throated Hermit**, **Planalto Hermit**, **White-throated Hummingbird**, **Swallow-tailed Hummingbird**, **Violet-capped Woodnymph**, **Versicolored Emerald**, and **Gilded Hummingbird**. Other birds we might see today include **Ochre-bellied Piculet**, **Chestnut-bellied Euphonia**, **Violaceous Euphonia**, **Green-headed Tanager**, **Ruby-crowned Tanager**, **Sayaca Tanager**, **Black-goggled Tanager**, **Guira Tanager**, **Chestnut-eared Aracari**, and **Plush-crested Jay**.

Overnight: Hotel Selva Del Laurel in Argentina

Day 2 Iguazu falls and Devil's Throat

Today we will have an early start to get inside Iguazu Park and visit the famous Devil's Throat, probably the most spectacular point of all the waterfalls. We'll have time to do the lower and upper trail circuits inside the Argentinean side of the park, allowing us to see the waterfalls from

different angles, with abundant photo 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. Wildlife abounds in the park and large troops of **South American Coatis** and **Tufted Capuchins** are usually seen each day along the park trails.

Overnight: Hotel Selva Del Laurel



Great Dusky Swift by Anne Koke

Day 3 Exploring the Brazilian side of the Falls

Today we will cross the border again to visit the Brazilian side of the Falls. Our targets will include **Red-rumped Cacique**, in addition to **Toco Toucan**, **Green-headed Tanager**, **Red-capped Cardinal**, **Blonde-crested Woodpecker** and, if we are lucky, our first chance for the most wanted **Black-fronted Piping-Guan**. We shall return to the Argentina side to spend another night at our hotel. After dinner, we can look for **Black-capped Screech Owl**.

Overnight Selva de Laurel

Day 4 Visit Urugua-í Provincial Park

We shall spend a full day birding the Urugua-í Park, located 63 miles (100km) from our hotel; here we'll have another chance to look for the Endangered **Black-fronted Piping-Guan**. This bird can be tricky to find in other Atlantic forest areas but in southern Misiones state of Argentina, it is still reliable. Other birds we hope to see include **Black-throated Trogon**,

Rufous-capped Motmot, Green-billed Toucan, and Yellow-fronted, Blond-crested, and Lineated Woodpeckers. We'll also look for **Black-billed Scythebill, Tufted Antshrike, Rufous-winged Antwren, Short-tailed Antthrush,** several woodcreepers such as **White-throated, Olivaceous, Plain-winged and Planalto Woodcreepers** and the secretive **Sharp-tailed Streamcreeper.**

Other local birds include 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 species that we will be on the lookout for include **Swallow Tanager, Boat-billed Flycatcher, Social Flycatcher, Three-striped Flycatcher, White-winged Swallow, and Pale-breasted Thrush.** In addition **White-necked Thrush, Riverbank Warbler, Chestnut-vented Conebill, Magpie Tanager, Chestnut-headed Tanager, White-lined Tanager, and Blue-naped Chlorophonia.**

During our drive back to Puerto Misiones we shall look for the localized **Araucaria Tit-Spinetail,** completing a full day of birding with lots of wonderful target birds.

Overnight: Hotel Selva de Laurel

Day 5. Transfer to Foz de Iguazu to connect flight to Cuiaba

Today we shall be leaving Argentina to return to Foz de Iguazu airport in Brazil and connect with our flight to Cuiaba with connection in Sao Paulo. It will be a long day, but once we arrive in Cuiaba we will transfer to our hotel near the airport and enjoy a tasty dinner at the famous Aeroporto Grill restaurant

Overnight: Hotel Slaviero Slim Cuiabá

Day 6. Chapada dos Guimarães National Park

This morning we head to the Chapada dos Guimarães National Park. We'll look for the **Red-and green Macaw, Blue-winged Macaw, Swallow Tanager, Cliff Flycatcher, Burnished-buff Tanager, Crested Black-Tyrant, White-lined Tanager, Chalk-browed Mockingbird, Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl and White-tailed Hawk.** After lunch, we'll transfer to our lodge. At the lodge we'll bird around the grounds looking for species such as **Red Pileated Finch, Chopi Blackbird, Planalto Hermit, Lettered Aracari, Amazonian Motmot, Little Woodpecker, Lineated Woodpecker, Yellow-chevroned Parakeet and Black-faced Tanager.**

Overnight: Pousada do Parque

Day 7. Chapada dos Guimarães National Park

Today we will explore the Agua Fria road looking for the **Shrike-like Tanager, White-rumped Tanager,** and, with luck, **Cinnamon Tanager.** We shall look for the scarce **Collared Crescentchest, Black-throated Saltator, Plumbeous Seedeater, Rusty-backed Antwren, Chapada Flycatcher,** and, with luck, **Small-billed Tinamou.** Later we will explore the Vale de

Bencaos where we'll try for the shy **Pheasant Cuckoo**, and the **Saffron-billed Sparrow**, **Yellow-tufted Woodpecker**, **Band-tailed Manakin**, **Rufous-tailed Jacamar**, **Brown Jacamar**, **Black-fronted Nunbird**, **Red-shouldered Macaw**, **Large-billed Antwren**, **Golden-crowned Warbler**, and **Crested Oropendola**. After lunch we'll return to the lodge and have a free afternoon to enjoy the lodge grounds. At night, we'll try for some night birds, including **Tropical Screech Owl**, **Scissor-tailed Nightjar**, **Little Nightjar**, **Rufous Nightjar** and **Nacunda Nighthawk**.

Overnight: Pousada do Parque

Day 8. Chapada dos Guimarães National Park

Our last day to explore the Chapada dos Guimarães National Park will take us to some Cerrado roads looking for the scarce and most wanted **Blue Finch**, then **Red-winged Tinamou**, **White-eared Puffbird**, **Chaco Puffbird**, **Greater Rhea**, **Red-legged Seriema**, **Burrowing Owl**, **Flavescent Warbler**, **Helmeted Manakin**, **Scaled and Picazuro Pigeons**, **White-eyed Parakeet**, **Blue-and-yellow Macaw** and **Swallow-tailed Kite**. After lunch we'll return to the lodge for leisure time.

Overnight: Pousada do Parque

Day 9. Transfer to the Pantanal

After a last morning of birding in the park, we leave Chapada dos Guimarães and head to our first lodge in the Pantanal, the rustic Pouso Alegre Lodge, which offers good chances to see nocturnal wildlife around the property. With a bit of luck, we could find elusive species such as **Lowland Tapir**, **Crab-eating Fox**, and **Giant Anteater**.

Overnight: Pouso Alegre

Day 10. Transfer to hotel Mato Grosso

We'll start the day birding around Pouso Alegre and enjoy the birdfeeders, which attract **Bare-faced Curassow**. The dry woodlands are excellent habitat for **Great Rufous Woodcreeper**, **Narrow-billed Woodcreeper**, **Red-billed Scythebill** and **Planalto Slaty Antshrike**. By mid-morning, we'll move on to Hotel Mato Grosso. In the afternoon, we'll take a boat ride to look for aquatic birds, including the elusive **Sungrebe**, **Agami Heron**, and **American Pygmy Kingfisher**. We'll also keep an eye out for the **Blue-throated Piping Guan**, and with luck we'll have our first encounter with **Giant River Otters**. At dusk we shall try for the difficult **Zigzag Heron**.

Overnight: Pantanal Mato Grosso Hotel

Day 11. Hotel Mato Grosso grounds

We'll have a full day birding in the grassland of the old airfield and gallery forest of the Pantanal Mato Grosso Hotel, looking for species such as **Helmeted Manakin**, **Rusty-backed Spinetail**, **Blue-crowned Trogon**, **Yellow-chinned** and **Chotoy Spinetails**, **Greater Thornbird**, **Grey-**

crested Cachalote, and **Mato Grosso Antbird**. In the afternoon, we'll take another boat drive around the peaceful waters of the Pixaim Lake to enjoy the water birds again.

Overnight: Pantanal Mato Grosso Hotel

Day 12. Transfer to Porto Joffre and Jaguar safari

After a final morning birding around the Mato Grosso Hotel, we will transfer to Porto Joffre making select stops on the way looking for birds such as **Scarlet-headed Blackbird** and **Ashy-headed Greenlet**. In the afternoon, we'll have our first boat trip to look for **Jaguar** along the Cuiabá River.

Overnight: Hotel Pantanal Norte – Porto Joffre

Day 13. A full day in Porto Joffre

We will have another boat excursion to look for **Jaguars** in the morning. In the afternoon we plan to go birding around the property, where habituated **Hyacinth Macaws** are good for photo opportunities (but encounters with this sought after species are possible along the whole Pantanal). We shall also explore the Campos de Joffre along the Transpantainera Road looking for two secretive targets, **Grey-breasted Crake** and **Least Bittern**.

Overnight: Hotel Pantanal Norte-Porto Joffre

Day 14. Pousada Piuval

Today we shall bird along the Transpantainera looking for species we might miss on previous days. We shall get to Piuval Lodge early in the afternoon, where we'll look for mammals such as **Lowland Tapir**, and **Crab-eating Fox**. Pousada Piuval also gives us our best chance to see the **Giant Anteater**. One of the most wanted bird targets here is the great looking **Red-legged Seriema**, which can be found on the grounds of the hotel.

Overnight: Pousada Piuval

Day 15. Birding Piuval Lodge before heading to Cuiabá

We'll focus the morning looking for the beautiful **Pale-crested Woodpecker**, **Lineated Woodpecker**, **Little Woodpecker**, **Rufous Casiornis**, **Narrow-billed Woodcreeper**, **White-lored Spinetail** and the **Red-legged Seriema**. One of the greatest attractions of Piuval Lodge is the opportunity to see gorgeous **Hyacinth Macaw** flying above the lodge and nesting in the vicinity area. After lunch we will head back to Cuiabá making a last stop along the road to look for **Blue-and-yellow Macaws**.

Overnight: Hotel Slaviero Slim, Cuiabá

Day 16. Departure

You will be transferred to Cuiabá airport to connect with your domestic flight to Sao Paulo where you will connect with your international flights.

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 international guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling.

Duration: 16 days

Limit: 6 - 8 (there will be a surcharge for a smaller group)

Dates: 20 September – 5 October 2024

Start: Foz de Iguacu, Brazil

End: Cuiabá, Brazil

Price: US\$9223 per person sharing including domestic flights worth \$500

Single Supplement: US\$840

Price includes

Domestic flights IGU-GRU, GRU-CGB and CGB-GRU

Airport-hotel transfers (one per location)

Accommodation as described in the itinerary

Private land transportation

Admission fees to Iguazu Park and other reserves mentioned in the itinerary

Tour leader and local guides

All meals (except where otherwise indicated) from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 16

Water

Price excludes

International flights

Extra airport transfers and any meals or hotel rooms outside of the tour dates

Any activity not described in the itinerary

Additional meals not described above

All drinks

Any personal expenses (e.g. laundry, phone calls, minibar expenses, internet access)

Gratuities (please see our [tipping guidelines blog](#))