

WILDLIFE TRAVEL



14th to 30th September 2019 (17 days)

THE PANTANAL

Jaguars, macaws and wetland wildlife

"fascinating environment, brilliant to see the animals the area is famous for, really enjoyed the houseboat under the stars"

Pantanal 2015

The Pantanal is a place of superlatives: the world's largest fresh-water wetlands, ten times the size of the Everglades, covering about 200,000 square kilometers.

"Pantanal" is derived from a Portuguese word meaning "swamp". It is a gently sloping basin with meandering rivers which slowly releases water to a single drainage channel, the Paraguay River. During the dry season, the great wetland shrinks to more manageable pools and channels, and the animals are drawn to these water holes.

The Pantanal is particularly famous as the best place in the world to see South America's big cat, the **Jaguar**, and rightly so. We have a good chance of our own encounter with this beautiful predator along the banks of the Cuiaba River near Porto Jofre, where we will be staying on a very pleasant floating hotel. We have a very good chance of finding other notable 'megafauna' of the Pantanal including Giant Otter, **Giant Anteater**, Ocelot and South America's heaviest animal, the Lowland Tapir, along with various monkeys, deer and foxes, abundant Capybara, Yacaré Caiman and Yellow Anaconda, the world's largest snake.

We will, of course, be paying plenty of attention to the rich birdlife of the area. Even relaxed birding can yield more than a 100 species a day, and particular highlights will include **Hyacinth Macaw**, Toco Toucan, Greater Rhea and Red-legged Seriema, alongside plenty of tyrant flycatchers, tanagers, parrots and hummingbirds.

This holiday should appeal to anyone with a general interest in wildlife, but we will be paying particular attention to mammals, and the abundant birdlife of this amazing wetland.



Price
£6595

Single Room Supplement
£395

Full board

- Day 1** departure from UK
- Day 2** Sao Paulo
- Day 3-6** southern Pantanal
- Day 7** transfer to Cuiaba
- Day 8-11** northern Pantanal
- Day 12-13** Cerrado
- Day 14-15** P.N. do Caraca
- Day 16** return to Sao Paulo
- Day 17** arrive UK

Leaders

Mike Russell
with Xavier Munoz

Jaguar, Lowland Tapir
and Giant Anteater

easy birding

Wildlife and culture holidays



Our profits are donated to **The Wildlife Trusts**



ITINERARY

Please note that the exact itinerary will depend upon local conditions, in particular the state of the flood waters and roads, the weather and at the discretion of the leader or local guides.

Day 1 Saturday 14th September Our evening flight takes us from London, arriving in Sao Paulo early on **Day 2 Sunday 15th**, where we will transfer to our internal flight heading 1000km inland to the state of Mato Grosso and the city of Campo Grande. After leaving our luggage at our hotel, we will head out to explore the countryside surrounding the city and our first taste of Brazilian bird life, with Curl-crested Jay, Yellow-faced Parrot and Aplomado Falcon all likely. After a gentle afternoon, we will return to the hotel and catch up on some sleep... night **Hotel Mohave**

Day 3 Monday 16th This morning we will set off to travel westwards into the southern Pantanal. After an hour of travelling on the tarmac, we will strike off across the *campo*, making frequent stops along the way to look for Greater Rhea, Red-legged Seriema and other animals of the plains. This area is a particularly good one for **Giant Anteater** and we hope to have some close-up encounters with this bizarre animal during our time here.

Arriving at our lodge, we will check in and relax over lunch, during which time we will no doubt encounter two of the iconic birds of the Pantanal: the wonderful Toco Toucan, and South America's largest parrot, the **Hyacinth Macaw** which are a common sight in the lodge grounds. In the afternoon we will head out for our first 'safari' excursion to discover more of the rich wildlife of these dry grasslands. night **Pousada Aguape**

Day 4 Tuesday 17th Our morning will be spent on the river, where from the boat we will hope for encounters with Black-and-Gold Howler Monkey and Hooded Capuchin, Yacare Caiman and Green Iguana. Four species of kingfisher make their home on these waterways, along with a variety of herons, while at least 8 species of parrot make their home in the area and will provide noisy entertainment for us.

An **afternoon truck safari** will give us the opportunity to see some of the mammals of the area, perhaps including Yellow Armadillo, Pampas Deer and South American Coati, with bird highlights likely to include the enormous Jabiru and engaging Burrowing Owls. A night drive after dinner will give us the chance to look for some of the shy inhabitants of the *campo*, including Crab-eating Fox and Collared Peccary. Both Puma and Jaguar are present in the area, although we would have to be very lucky to catch sight of either of these two big cats. night **Pousada Aguape**

Mammals of the Pantanal (l to r): Crab-eating Fox, Giant Anteater, South American Coati



Day 5 Wednesday 18th Another full day here will give us more opportunities to enjoy the wildlife of the southern Pantanal, as well as to spend some time relaxing around the lodge. night **Pousada Aguape**

Day 6 Thursday 19th Our morning walking tour will take us out into the gallery forest of the Rio Aquidauana, where we hope to encounter Campo Chachalaca, Bare-faced Currawong and White-fronted Woodpecker, as well as more monkeys.

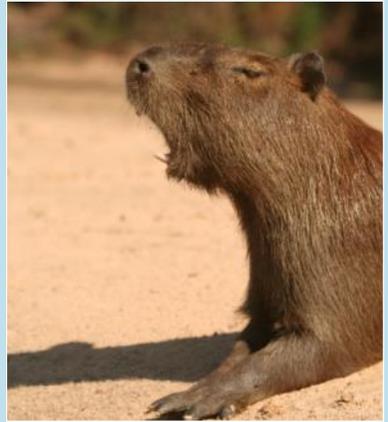
From here we bid farewell to Aguape and head off on a two hour drive across the **southern Pantanal** to our next lodge, the Fazenda San Francisco, set in a 15,000 hectare ranch where cattle and rice production sits alongside wildlife. Blue-and-Yellow Macaws and Turquoise-fronted Amazon feed around the lodge, with the giant Jabiru nesting nearby.

After a hearty lunch, and settling into our rooms, we will head out for a boat ride on the Sao Domingo arm of the Miranda River, in the company of Black-collared Hawk, kingfishers and herons, monkeys and caiman. night **Fazenda San Francisco**

Day 7 Friday 20th We will spend today exploring the rice fields, wetlands and gallery forest of the ranch. Waterbirds gather here in large numbers, with the elegant Marsh Deer grazing out on the grasslands.

Fazenda San Francisco is famous as supporting a high density of **Ocelot**, and after dinner we will head out on a night drive to search for this elegant spotty cat, along with other nocturnal inhabitants including Scissor-tailed Nightjar and Brazilian Guinea Pig. night **Fazenda San Francisco**

Day 8 Saturday 21st After one last morning birding around the ranch, we will set off for the long drive back to Campo Grande. night **Hotel Mohave**



Mammals of the Pantanal (from top):
Giant Otter, Capybara, Lowland Tapir.
(left): Azara's Agouti and Marsh Deer

Day 9 Sunday 22nd September A morning flight will take us north from Campo Grande to the bigger city of Cuiaba, from where we headed south to Pocone, the gateway to the northern Pantanal.

After a tasty lunch at a local *churrasceria* we will set off on the famous 'Transpantaneira', a 150km long unsurfaced road that takes us deep into the Pantanal, complete with a photo opportunity gateway. Today we are heading just 30km south to our home for the next two nights, the Pouso Alegre. Here, after settling into our rooms, we head out to investigate the surroundings. The surrounding ranch has several lagoons and water holes, and we will head to one of these as the day comes to an end. As the heat of the day fades away, the animals come out to drink, and we will be keeping our fingers crossed that one animal in particular, the **Lowland Tapir** pays us a visit. night **Pouso Alegre**

Day 10 Monday 23rd A second day getting acquainted with the wildlife of the northern Pantanal. Trails leading out from the lodge into the surroundings offer the chance to see Black-tailed Marmoset, Southern Tamandua and Giant Anteater, and tonight we will have a second chance to (hopefully) see tapir, which come to feed in the gardens around the rooms under cover of darkness. night **Pouso Alegre**

Day 11 Tuesday 24th We will do some more morning birding around Pouso Alegre before heading deeper into the Pantanal, striking out along the Transpantaneira. While we will be stopping along the way to enjoy the huge numbers of wetland birds and whatever mammals we may come across, we will no doubt all be eager to arrive at our destination, Porto Jofre. night at **Jaguar do Pantanal Flotel**

Days 12 and 13th Wednesday 25th/Thursday 26th We will spend our two days on the Cuiaba River focussing on the South American 'king of the jungle', the mighty **Jaguar**. The Pantanal is home to one of the densest populations Jaguar in all of the Americas, and the banks of the Cuiaba River and its many side streams have become famous as the best place in the world to see this apex predator. The animals here feed on Capybara and Yacare Caiman, both of which will be a common sight during our boat trips.

We will spend our days exploring the quiet side channels, scanning the river banks and sand bars where the cats hunt, rest and socialise, with our fingers firmly crossed. The same waterways are home to several families of **Giant Otters**, and we can expect to be distracted from our big cat hunt by these equally-impressive animals, along with plenty of other birds and animals.

At night, large Fishing Bats skim the water beside our 'flotel' while the calls of night birds echo from the forested riverbanks. night **Jaguar do Pantanal Flotel**

Birds of the Pantanal (l to r): Blue-and-Yellow Macaw, Red-legged Seriema, Toco Toucan



Day 14 Friday 27th Depending on our successes over the past couple of days, we may have one last early morning boat trip out onto the 'three brothers' rivers, before it is time to bid farewell to the river and to Porto Jofre.

Back on dry land, we have a long drive ahead of us as we travel back up the **Transpantaneira**, stopping at the roadside where ever we find concentrations of birds and hoping to find Yellow Anaconda, the world's largest snake somewhere along the way.

Our last night on the Pantanal will be spent at the Pousa da Piuval, where noisy flocks of Yellow-chevroned and White-eyed Parakeets feed in the mango trees growing by the dining room. After checking in to our rooms, if we have time, we will visit a nearby oxbow lake in the late afternoon, where large numbers of Yacare Caiman gather. night **Pousa da Piuval**

Day 15 Saturday 28th After one last morning birding excursion, during which we may also find Black-and-Gold Howler Monkeys or Bearded Capuchins, we will head back to the city of Cuibaba and our flights to Sao Paulo. night **Hotel Matiz**

Day 16 Sunday 29th For our last morning in Brazil, we will visit the largest chunk of green space in the sprawling city of Sao Paulo, Ibiropuera Park, for some last minute additions to our bird list. Alongside the now-familiar Rufous-bellied Thrush, Sayaca Tanager and Bananaquit we will be hoping for a couple of local specialities in the form of Blonde-crested Woodpecker and Swallow-tailed Hummingbird.

After lunch we will head back to the hotel to freshen up, before making our to the airport for our flights home, arriving **Day 17 Monday 30th September**



Birds of the Pantanal (from top): Nanday Parakeet, Capped Heron, Bare-faced Curassow, Red-crested Cardinal, Wattled Jacana
Left: Turquoise-fronted Amazon and Hyacinth Macaw

Focus of interest

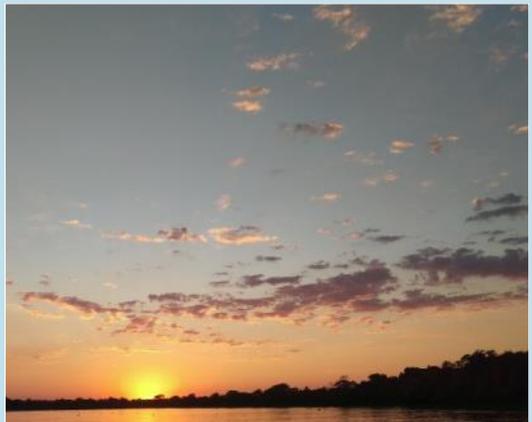
The holiday will appeal to birders and general naturalists alike. A major focus will be the mammals of the area, and we will put as much time as we can into ensuring good views. There is a lot to see in Brazil, and we will try to give as many opportunities as possible to spend time in the field, while making sure the pace isn't too hectic. We can start some of our days with (optional) early morning birding, before breakfast, and end some days with a (again optional) night drive or night walk. There will be the opportunity to rest during the heat of the day.

This is one of our 'Easy birding and wildlife' trips which means that the itinerary is based mainly on birds and/or other animals (rather than plants or general wildlife) and this also reflects the knowledge of the leaders and guides. However, as with all of our trips, the pace is comfortable with time to enjoy other aspects of the natural history, rather than rushing from one place to another for specific species.



Fitness and health

- No strenuous walking is involved but you need to have a **reasonable level of general fitness** to be able to participate in the holiday. The tour visits several locations and travelling in the tropics can be tiring if you are not used to it. However, the trip is designed to be relatively comfortable so please discuss any concerns with us.
- Although most of the walks are not long, we will sometimes be walking on **rough or wet ground**. Good walking shoes (lightweight ok) are essential for most areas. There are a few occasions when we walk uphill but this is not excessive.
- As we are in the tropics, the sun is very strong, even when it appears overcast. Sun protection (hat, sunglasses and suncream) is essential. We avoid walking far in the hottest part of the day.
- We will be visiting areas where **malaria** is present. **Yellow fever** vaccinations are not required for entry to Brazil, but **are recommended** for those visiting the Pantanal as there is a local risk. Dengue fever and Zika Virus are both widespread in Brazil. General inoculations for overseas travel are recommended. You should consult your GP for advice on travel health at least 8 weeks before the trip. You must drink only purified drinking water at all times.
- At times, we will travel in small boats on the canals and rivers. Safety regulations will be adhered to when travelling in this way. Safety guidelines must also be followed when travelling by open-top vehicles, taking night walks and regarding other natural risks. Safety advice given by the leader and guides must be heeded at all times.



It is essential that, PRIOR TO BOOKING, you ring us to discuss any potential fitness or health problems that may affect you 01954 713575.

Passports and Visas

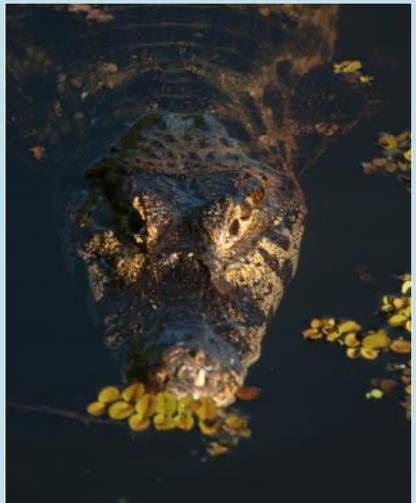
UK passport holders do not require a visa to visit Brazil: your passport should be valid for at least 6 months after the trip. For holders of other passports it is essential that you check with your embassy or consulate and obtain the necessary documents prior to travel.

Weather and seasons

We will be travelling during the dry season, when the animals are more concentrated around the wetlands and when we have the best chances of seeing the mammals, particularly Jaguar: the days will be warm (but hopefully not too hot) and dry (although, as with everywhere, there is always the chance of some unseasonal rain). Evenings will be cooler.

Leaders

Our leader for this trip will be **Mike Russell**, a Director of Wildlife Travel who has led many birdwatching and wildlife holidays for us since 2001 to destinations including Costa Rica, the Galápagos, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago. Mike led our first visit to Brazil back in 2008. Never far from his binoculars, Mike will help you to enjoy all aspects of the wildlife we encounter, particularly the rich birdlife of the Pantanal. We will be accompanied by **Xavier Munoz** from our partners at Neblina Forest along with local guides. Xavier has been guiding tours of the Pantanal for several years, and knows the areas we will be visiting very well. Between them, our leaders will ensure that you have a relaxing and enjoyable holiday, and enjoy the spectacular wildlife of this beautiful part of the world.



Wildlife of the Pantanal (from top): Green Kingfisher, Giant Anteater, Capybara, Yacare Caiman. (left): Jabiru and Greater Rhea
All photos taken by Philip Precey on our 2015 visit to the Pantanal

Accommodation, meals and transport

All of the lodges and hotels are of a good standard, some with very attractive settings. In Porto Jofre we will be staying in a floating hotel. All the rooms have private bathrooms with hot water and are either air-conditioned or have ceiling fans where needed. Some lodges may have a swimming pool available. Single rooms are available in all locations. The exact lodge or hotel used may be changed if local conditions change or if we feel a different choice would suit our needs better.

All meals are included - some lunches will be in local restaurants, and we will take a picnic on some days. We will be travelling by small coach or minibus for our transfers. We will do our best to ensure that our travelling is as comfortable as possible. Some excursions will be by 4X4 vehicles or open top truck: we will also be taking several boat trips, notably during our time on the Rio Cuiaba, when we will be looking for Jaguars. All excursions are optional.

Insurance

Personal travel insurance providing good medical cover is essential for this trip.

Flights

Group flights are with LATAM from London Heathrow, as follows:

14th September	depart London Heathrow 21.10, arrive Sao Paulo 05.55 (15th)
15th September	depart Sao Paulo 08.30, arrive Campo Grande 09.20
29th September	depart Sao Paulo 23.50, arrive London Heathrow 15.15 (30th Sept)

Internal flights are scheduled flights with LATAM or AZUL.

The Pantanal is 3 hours behind UK time: Sao Paulo is 2 hours behind.

TO BOOK

Contact us to check availability and reserve a place. Complete the Booking Form and send to Sunvil Holidays (CAA-ATOL Licence 808, ABTA V6218), our tour operator, with your deposit. All details about booking are given in the Booking Pack.

**DEPOSIT PER PERSON £1500,
SECOND INSTALLMENT ON CONFIRMATION OF HOLIDAY £1500.
BALANCE DUE BY 15/6/2019**

INCLUDED: Return flights from the UK. Local transport as specified in itinerary, including two internal flights. All park entry fees. 14 night's accommodation, full board basis. Services of leaders and local guides.

NOT INCLUDED: Drinks with meals and refreshments. Gratuities. Travel insurance.

WILDLIFE TRAVEL

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