

# Brazil

## Hyacinth Macaws & Jaguars

**Saturday 09 September – Wednesday 20 September 2017**

Leaders: Nigel Jones and local guides

2017 Cost **£4,899** single room supplement **£450**



**W**e will begin our journey in the spectacular tablelands of Chapada dos Guimaraes where Cerrado birds take centre stage. Red-legged Seriema, Horned Sungem, White-rumped Tanager, Collared Crescentchest and White-eared Puffbird are just a few of the birds typical of this rarely visited habitat and we will make a special effort to see these during our stay here as well as experiencing the marvellous scenery this spectacular part of Brazil has to offer. Then it is to Serra das Araras which has become famous as having one of the most accessible Harpy Eagle's nest in South America. We are hoping that in 2017 the nest will be active and both parents will be in attendance.

The Mato Grosso has so much to offer birders as it is blessed with vast wetlands and large tracts of Amazonian rainforest – in the wetlands of the Pantanal we can watch Jabirus, Sunbitterns, Hyacinth Macaws (right outside one of our lodges) and large gatherings of herons, egrets and storks right next to our hotels in this birding paradise. We've been visiting the Pantanal for more than 10 years now and in recent years we have encountered Jaguars during our birding excursions along the Transpantaneira and from boats on the banks of rivers as we watched Bare-faced Curassows, Chestnut-bellied Guans and Nanday Parakeets with Band-tailed Nighthawks gathering to feed over the river as dusk fell! We may be lucky again this year but the chances of other mammals like Giant Otters, Giant Anteaters or Tapirs are good too - a couple of years ago we even saw a Puma. But it's not all wetland birding in the Pantanal as we will also spend some time in gallery forest in search of Helmeted Manakin, Rufous Casiornis and Pale-crested Woodpeckers.

This tour can be taken in conjunction with our other Brazilian itinerary to REGUA in September – please ask us for a costing.

### ITINERARY

#### Days 1 to 4

We leave London on a scheduled flight to Sao Paulo arriving the following day. We then catch a flight to Cuiaba and meet our transport and local guide. As we make the drive to the tablelands of Chapada dos Guimaraes, the scenery becomes more and more spectacular. Our hotel sits at the periphery of the plateau with a breathtaking view across the Cerrado and we stay here for three nights. We may get time for some Cerrado birding before heading for the viewpoint to watch the pre-roost gathering of Blue-winged and Red-and-green Macaws, as well as Great Dusky and Biscutate Swifts.

We have two full days to explore the Cerrado and woodlands near Chapada. In the transition between the Cerrado and the Amazon rainforest, the Guimaraes plateau acts as the dividing line between the Paraguay and Amazon River basins. It forms an ecosystem of great ecological interest and fascinating geological formations. The

Cerrado is one of the South American lowland endemic centres for birds and we shall spend the first day mostly in this habitat. Some Cerrado specialties here at Chapada include White-eared Puffbird, Curl-crested Jay, Grey Monjita, Rufous-winged Antshrike, White-rumped and White-banded Tanagers, Black-throated Saltator, Coal-crested and Blue Finches. The monotonous song of the Collared Crescentchest will attract us to this charming relative of the tapaculos and we will cover the area in search of the tiny, long-tailed Horned Sungem. Recently we have found Rufous-sided Pygmy-Tyrant here but these seem to be sporadic in their occurrence at Chapada. Lunchtimes will be relaxing but there are often Swallow-tailed Kites over town and it's quite possible we will see White Hawk, King Vulture or Bat Falcons near the hotel too. More "raptor action" may come in the form of the brutish Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle but it's more likely we will see that over the Cerrado. The Amazonian influence is evident with our records of Pavonine and Pheasant Cuckoos, White-backed Fire-eye, Point-tailed Palmcreeper, Swallow-wing and Red-

bellied Macaw but understandably these birds are scarce here at the southern edge of their range. We visit a lek of the gaudy Band-tailed Manakin and hopefully find the Fiery-capped Manakin too. Raptors are more of a challenge to find in these forested environments but we have had some luck with Ornate Hawk-Eagle in the past. Birding in the semi-deciduous and gallery forest we may be rewarded with Cinnamon-throated Hermit, Yellow-ridged Toucan, Lettered Aracari, Blue-crowned Motmot, Ochre-cheeked Spinetail, Plain Antvireo, Southern Antpipit, Sirystes, Fiery-capped Manakin, Planalto Tyrannulet, White-lined, Guira and Grey-headed Tanagers, Saffron-billed Sparrow and Sharp-tailed Streamcreeper.

#### Day 5

This morning we make the drive to Serra das Araras and what could be the highlight of the tour as we hope there will be an active Harpy Eagle nest close to the lodge. We can spend the afternoon in the area watching for these enormous eagles around this nesting area.



Hyacinth Macaw



Jaguar



White-eared Puffbird

**Outline Itinerary**

<b>Day 1</b>	Depart London
<b>Days 2-4</b>	Chapada dos Guimaraes
<b>Day 5</b>	Serra das Araras
<b>Days 6-8</b>	Rio Pixaim
<b>Days 9-10</b>	Pouso Alegre
<b>Day 11</b>	Depart Sao Paulo
<b>Day 12</b>	Arrive London

**Party Size**

Maximum of nine clients.

**Accommodation**

Comfortable accommodation in twin/double and single rooms with private facilities.

**Transport**

By minibus.

**Includes**

All flights, meals, accommodation, transport, entry fees, services of the leaders, airport taxes and tips.

**Gradings**

	Good
	300
	Mainly Hot
	Low
	Special
	Moderate
	Good
	Moderate
	Scheduled



Amazon Kingfisher

**Days 6 to 8**

We can spend the morning exploring the local area and return to the eagles' nest if we weren't lucky yesterday. Later we make the transfer to our next lodge along the Rio Pixaim, where we stay for three nights. As we travel Large-billed Terns fish nearby, while Whistling Herons, Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Snowy and Great Egrets and the giant Jabirus are present on roadside pools and we will hopefully locate Southern Screamer, Maguari Stork and Sunbittern during our journey as well. Amazon and Ringed Kingfishers perch on the cables as we keep a close eye on the road ahead for the rare Chestnut-bellied Guan that often ventures out as the afternoon turns to evening. As dusk approaches the huge Nacunda Nighthawk can be seen hunting over the savannahs.

Using our comfortable lodge as a base we will explore gallery forest on foot and take a boat ride along the Rio Pixaim. Black-collared Hawk, Sungrebe, Rusty-backed Spinetail, Mato Grosso Antbird, Rusty-fronted Tody-Flycatcher and the incredible Helmeted Manakin are among our targets today. A diligent search may reveal Red-billed Scythebill, Large-billed Antwren, Fawn-breasted Wren, Band-tailed Antbird or maybe an American Pygmy-Kingfisher. Toco Toucan, Golden-collared Macaw and the scarce Nanday Parakeet can be seen in the more open areas and as we cruise along in our boats we may see Common Piping-Guans (both the red and blue-wattled varieties), Green-and-Rufous Kingfisher, whilst Giant Otters are also a distinct possibility here. As we make our way back to the dock Band-tailed Nighthawks can often be seen hunting over the water at dusk. Recent night excursions here have produced Great Horned Owl, Tropical Screech-Owl, Common Potoo, Scissor-tailed Nightjar and Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl. Capybaras are plentiful here and Crab-eating Foxes are often unbelievably tame. We will also visit Porto Jofre and hope to find a Jaguar.

**Days 9 & 10**

We leave the Rio Pixaim and now head for Pouso Alegre, where we stay for two nights. Birds are seemingly everywhere in the Pantanal with Snail Kites on fence posts and White Woodpeckers and Campo Flickers prolific in the borders of the fields. We shall be alert for the raucous calls of the magnificent Hyacinth Macaw as we near our lodge as they are quite common in this area. Small birds will not go unnoticed though as the roadside ponds are good places to find Chotoy and Yellow-chinned Spinetails. Scanning across the tall vegetation may reveal the presence of the superb Scarlet-headed Blackbird. We can take a walk across the ranch into an area of dry woodland and check any pools for birds coming to drink in the dry conditions. We may get time to look for Tropical Screech-Owl or Common Pauraque in the evening.

Hyacinth Macaws call noisily as we stir this morning and after early morning coffee we will take a pre-breakfast stroll around the Pantanal ranch. The yard of the ranch is a good spot to see the impressive Great Rufous Woodcreeper as well as Grey-crested Cachalote. Greater Rheas strut across the open grasslands and flocks of whistling-ducks and Brazilian Teal fly around in the distance. Naturally the focus will be on waterbirds here in the Pantanal, however the arid forests are worthy of attention with Green-backed Becard, Blue-crowned Trogon, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, the bizarre Pale-crested Woodpecker, Planalto Woodcreeper, Rufous Casiornis, Planalto Slaty-Antshrike and Chestnut-vented Conebill all possible not too far from the lodge.

**Days 11 & 12**

This morning we will take the short journey back to Cuiaba for our flights to Sao Paulo to connect with our homebound international departure. We arrive back in London the following day.