

Bird & Mammal Trip Report
Brazil – Pantanal & Emas NP (June 2022)



Rob Jansen
photography

Introduction

About us

We are two enthusiastic nature lovers who travel the world together to search for stunning birds, fascinating mammals and incredible nature. Our world travel started in October 2021 in Chile, where we bought a car to drive through South-America in search of birds and mammals for about 2 years.

Rob Jansen is biologist and wildlife photographer, and thus has a lot of knowledge about species and ecology. He is enthusiastic about all that's in nature, but mainly photographs birds and mammals.

Romy Jansen-Houtzager is a marketing professional. The marketing behind our social media accounts, the look and feel of this report and the website are her work. In the field, she is an excellent spotter and very patient (give me some of her patience ...and hurry!).



Rob & Pavonine Cuckoo at Jamacá das Araras

Romy & Toco Toucans at Pouso Alegre

Information and how to use this trip report

This trip report covers the southwestern region of Brazil, mainly the northern Pantanal & Emas NP. We travelled this part in about 3 weeks from the 1st – 19th of June 2022. For all the photos of our Brazil trip, comments, compliments, any specific questions, visit and/or contact us via our website. We would love to hear from you!

 www.robjansenphotography.com/brazil

 www.instagram.com/robjansenphotography

Species are highlighted in this trip report: **blue for birds**, **red for mammals** and **green for herpetofauna**. Target species which we missed at a specific spot are written in *italic*. This gives you an idea which species to pay extra attention to. All observations made by us in this part of Brazil can be found on Observation.org. We observed a total of about 214 bird species and 33 mammal species in the southwest of Brazil. Click here for the: [total bird list](#), [total mammal list](#) or [the total species list](#).

For more trip reports see our website: www.robjansenphotography.com/trip-reports

Map and specific locations

After bird- & mammalwatching the Atlantic Forest & Central Cerrado of Brazil (see previous trip report) we decided to go to the southwest of Brazil before our visa would expire. We included Chapada dos Guimarães as this has some great mixed habitat and is a great addition to the schedule! After this we went to the famous northern Pantanal and the well-known Emas National Park.

We made a [map in Google My Maps](#) with pointers of interesting trails and places and specific bird and mammal locations. You can view this map, download the points and add them to your own map (click on the three dots above the legend and download the KML file and drag this to your own map), or add them in the app 'Maps.me'. Maps.me has most walking trails on it and is usable offline. Route navigation by car doesn't always work great and it's better to use Google Maps for that purpose.



Weather and timing

We visited the Southwest region Brazil as part of our world travel from the 1st – 19th of June 2022. The weather was generally quite cold during the night and in the morning, but temperatures still rose quickly during the day (but less so than in summer). This made for nice birding weather, as the bird activity lasted longer in general. However, sometimes it was too cold, and birds wouldn't sing or didn't respond at all. It seemed that mammal activity was way lower than in months like September or October. We had to drive a huge amount of time and kilometres to see some mammals.

Surprisingly we had quite a few days with rain, which is unusual for the region this time of year. There were fewer tourists than in July & August, which was nice for us, as our way of travelling requires that we reserve guides, trips and lodges last minute. But this wasn't a problem during this time of the year, despite this being one of the top tourist destinations in Brazil. We would advise to visit this region between the end of August and end of October, and if you have the luxury to choose, beginning of October. Then you are further in the dry season and mammals gather more around the few remaining water holes. It is supposed to be way easier to see good numbers of mammals in this period. As the rains start in November, you have some weeks in between just in case the rain starts early that year. As there are less flowers in that period it might also be easier to see bird species like Buff-bellied Hermit in the Pantanal.

Transportation

Our transportation in this trip report was of course our Toyota 4Runner SR5 4.0 2010 (2x4) called 'Forrest'. We bought this car in Santiago (Chile) and got it converted so that we could sleep in it as well. There are lots of gravel roads which we took with ease. The Transpantaneira road in the northern Pantanal is not very good, especially after the rain. We managed, but got stuck a few times (but even 4x4's slipped off the road after the rain). Normally all roads should be dry and dusty this time of year, and driving even with a normal sedan shouldn't be a problem.



Our loyal friend Forrest at Emas NP

At Chapada dos Guimarães

Literature

- Birds of Brazil: The Pantanal & Cerrado of Central Brazil by Ridgely *et al.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010. *Really nice field guide with good drawings. There is an English and Portuguese version, and the English version has the local names next to the drawing of a species. Recent and possible splits are mentioned, but unfortunately they don't include species maps for these birds (which could have been easily added by the use of a different colour...).*
- Merlin app for the birds sound. *Just amazing that this app is free. We missed a few sounds (like Dwarf Tinamou), but overall really complete app.*
- BirdNet app for recording the bird sounds. If you don't know all the bird sounds, BirdNet can help you record the sound and give a possible ID. It helped us a few times when we were frustratingly

searching for a bird we heard deep inside the shrubs and couldn't find. A sure ID of a more common bird from BirdNet saved us some time here and there ;)

- iOverlander app for camping places. This app gives nice information on where to camp or buy stuff.

Equipment

Photography: Sony A9 II + 200-600mm + 1.4x converter + Sony 24-105mm, GoPro Hero 9

Binoculars and telescope: Swarovski EL 8x32 WB, Edén 8x32 XP, Swarovski 65HD + 25-50mm

Heat scope/Thermal imager: Lahoux Spotter Elite 35V (lahouxbirding.com). A great heat scope from a company in The Netherlands. I owned other brands, but we are super happy with the sharpness, modes and light weight of this heat scope! More here: robjansenphotography.com/lahouxbirding

Spotlighting: Fenix HT18 Long Distance Flashlight (powerful, very focussed and my preferred choice for open areas), Fenix TK35 2018-edition (less powerful and focussed than the HT18, but still very strong and nice for spotlighting!), Fenix FD41 Focus Flashlight (comparable to the LedLenser), LedLenser P7R (can be focussed, but gives some weird lines with photo/video 😊)

Use of cell phones in Brazil

There are three bigger telecom providers in Brazil; Vivo, Tim & Claro. All require foreigners to register their SIM-card, which can be done in the store. We bought two Vivo SIM cards because they have the best coverage in Brazil. Claro has better speed, but we found Vivo to be excellent most of the time. Activation in the store was a bit troublesome as we didn't have a Brazilian ID (duh..), but a local was fine to give his for the registration. It took a few hours before it was activated. It will most likely go easier on airports where they speak English!

Paying in Brazil

Paying in Brazil is mostly done by card and both debit and credit cards are widely accepted. You can still negotiate a small discount in the Pantanal with cash, or pay local guides in cash. Get cash from ATM's inside a bank, as skimming occurs regularly in Brazil we've been told. Bradesco Bank was the only bank not charging us a fee for a withdrawal. They do a proposal for a conversion (which is bad), so be sure to press decline. You get your card back, and afterwards your money. The conversion rate of your own bank will be way better and saved us about 20-25€ per 2500 Reais we took out!

Water-to-Go

To reduce plastic usage on our travels we bought Water-to-Go water bottles. Read about our experience with Water-to-Go on our website: www.robjansenphotography.com/water-to-go. The bottle and filters are not too expensive, and you will have your investment back within one holiday. If you order with the voucher **RJANSEN15** you will get **15% discount** as well! Check the website here: www.watertogousa.com (United States of America, Canada), www.watertogo.eu (United Kingdom) or www.watertogo.shop (most countries in the EU)

Visited sites

Chapada dos Guimarães

[-15.46399, -55.71329](#)

Visited dates: 1-4 June 2022

Chapada dos Guimarães is only an hour away from Cuiabá, the city where most people start their journey to the Northern Pantanal. But within an hour from Cuiabá one can reach both interesting Cerrado habitat and Amazon Rainforest. This gives a whole range of bird and mammal species that cannot be seen in the Pantanal. You can also visit the Geodesic Centre of South-America, which is a few kilometres east of Chapada dos Guimarães ([-15.47954, -55.68782](#)). *Blue Finch* had been observed there.

Jamacá das Araras

[-15.46399, -55.71329](#)

General information: You can reserve with Mario and Jeanne via their [Facebook page](#), or via email (mariofriedlander@gmail.com).

We only planned to bird the forest road leading up to the hotel Jamacá das Araras for an afternoon and a morning. We ended up staying for 3 nights when Mario invited us in and enthusiastically started talking about all the nature around their place. Mario speaks English well, both are super enthusiastic about the nature around them and both are photographer and guide. Jeanne her cooking is fabulous! We had cold weather and quite some fog, which made for lower bird and mammal activity, but this is a great place to include in a vacation!



Band-tailed Manakin

Pheasant Cuckoo

The main road towards the hotel has many hotels and lodges next to them, and can be birded without a reservation or a guide. Good birds found along the main road are the stunning **Band-tailed Manakin**, **Fiery-capped Manakin** (HO, as it was moulting its feathers this time of the year according to Mario), **Western Fire-eye** and the amazingly large **Pheasant Cuckoo** (around [-15.4676, -55.7158](#)).

The hotel has some walking trails, but enough can already be seen around the garden. In the garden we found an **Indigo Snake** (*Drymarchon corais*) and **Common Green Iguana** (*Iguana iguana*). The first night we had both **Tataupa Tinamou** and, even better, **Undulated Tinamou** walking on the open grass. **Azara's Agoutis** and **Hooded Capuchins** visited every day as well. Mario has planted many (native) flowering plants around the garden, with the main aim to attract more hummingbirds. The plants were still a bit young, but already the **Cinnamon-throated Hermit** is seen here regularly, although we only saw **Planalto Hermit**. **Ferruginous Pygmy-owls** were hunting in the garden every day and **Pavonine Cuckoos** (yes both Pheasant and Pavonine are found here!!) were calling early morning. The last ones were pretty responsive and even flew within a few metres from us.

**Ferruginous Pygmy-owl****Undulated Tinamou**

At night **Spectacled Owls** called, which breed near the hotel. Mario & Jeanne have multiple places where they put out fruit, and also have a tree hollow which they fill with water which attracts birds and mammals to drink. Mario told us they had **Southern Tamandua** drinking from it and **Brazilian Porcupine** should be a regular visitor. They had recorded 5 species of Opossum, but we only found multiple **Kinkajous** and heard **Collared Peccaries** while spotlighting during the cold evenings.

**Kinkajou****Azara's Agouti**

They built a small observation tower near the two water holes in the trees, and there we saw **Lettered Aracari** and **Chestnut-eared Aracari**. Different parrots and macaws, like **Red-shouldered Macaw** and **Red-and-green Macaw**, are regular visitors as well!

Cerrado habitat

[-15.41453, -55.78153](#)

Most people outside Brazil know the Rainforest (the Amazon and maybe the Atlantic Rainforest), some know the Pantanal, but few people know Cerrado. Cerrado is tropical savannah, the South-American equivalent of the African savannahs. It covers about 20% of Brazil and is the 2nd biggest habitat type in Brazil after the Amazon. As most of the cerrado land is flat, most of it is destroyed for agriculture. Soy and corn, mainly as feed for cattle and cattle itself make it an endangered habitat and precious little is left. There are many endemic birds and mammals living in these grasslands, so it might be worth visiting the cerrado habitat on the west and north side of Chapada dos Guimarães (here [-15.41453, -55.78153](#) or here [-15.43911, -55.72678](#)).

As we had travelled to many places in Central Brazil with cerrado habitat (see previous trip report), we had no targets left in this habitat and decided to spend more of our remaining time in the Pantanal. But amazing bird species are seen here, like *Chapada Flycatcher*, *Horned Sunge*m, *Coal-crested Finch*, *White-rumped Tanager* and much more.

Cuiabá - P. Mãe Bonifácia

[-15.57827, -56.09978](#)

Visited date: 4 June 2022

We quickly visited this park on a Saturday to be absolutely sure that we would see our primate target of the southwest: the **Black-tailed Marmoset**. We only walked around the northern main part of the park, close to the parking lot and saw two groups of Marmosets (3 and 10 individuals). There are some drinking places behind the toilet blocks, from which the Marmosets drank ([-15.5786, -56.10159](#)). This park looks like a reliable back-up place for the Marmoset if you miss it in the Pantanal. We felt perfectly safe, as many parents were walking here with their children in the weekend. This might be different during the week or early or late during the day, so use common sense when going here.



Black-tailed Marmoset



Black-tailed Marmoset

Northern Pantanal

[-16.40682, -56.66991](#)

Visited dates: 4-11 June 2022

Pouso Alegre Lodge

[-16.50309, -56.74546](#)

We stayed at the well-known Pouso Alegre Lodge, located about 30km south of Poconé, the last village before the Northern Pantanal. The owner Luiz is a great man and is, besides very knowledgeable, also great company to talk with. He knows most of the birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians around, so be sure to ask him for ID when you don't know a certain species. The lodge itself is a bit rustic compared to some other lodges in the Pantanal, but it felt way more authentic to us. The staff is enthusiastic as well and attended us multiple times on some nice species that appeared around the lodge.

The entrance road towards the lodge goes through some forest and later open wetland. At the first bridge we found **Sunbittern** early in the morning. In the forest we had **Great Rufous Woodcreeper**, and **Band-tailed Manakin** should be possible here. **Long-tailed Ground-dove** was seen multiple times in the transitional zone from the forest to the open wetland. The open wetlands where you cross two bridges are good for many water birds like **Boat-billed Heron** and much more.



Long-tailed Ground-dove

Sunbittern

Just south of the lodge is a bird feeder ([-16.50332, -56.74563](#)), which attracted many birds like **Chestnut-eared Aracari**, **Toco Toucan** (quite shy), **Giant Cowbird**, **Bare-faced Curassow** and many more common birds. Two to three **Hyacinth Macaws** visited around the lodge every day, and slept in a palm in the open field southwest of the lodge. We observed 4 species of Woodcreeper from the dining area, **Narrow-billed Woodcreeper**, **Buff-throated Woodcreeper** (likely split as **Lafresnaye's Woodcreeper**), **Great Rufous Woodcreeper** and **Red-billed Scythebill**.



Chestnut-eared Aracari

Toco Toucan

The staff attended us on a 2m long, 5 year old, male **Yellow Anaconda** (*Eunectes notaeus*) and later brought a very small **Yellow-bellied Liophis** (*Erythrolamprus poecilogyrus*). At night a **Leopard Keelback** (*Helicops leopardinus*) was warming up on the pavement at the lodge. **Brown Brocket Deer** and **Red Brocket Deer** both visited the lodge while we were there, and even **Brazilian Tapir** visits every now and then (but we were sleeping while it did!). **South American Coatis** visited in large groups and also **Hooded Capuchins/Azara's Capuchins** sometimes came to the feeders and surrounding fruiting trees. We observed a female **Marsh Deer** far away in the field in front of the lodge. Both **Chaco Chachalaca** and **Chestnut-bellied Guan** are common around the lodge.



Chestnut-bellied Guan

Great Rufous Woodcreeper

An old shed near the lodge is good for different species of bats ([-16.50266, -56.74489](#)). Especially the north side of the shed is good for multiple species. After a researcher has been here for some Covid-related research, the bats don't tend to hang still as much anymore, so we didn't get pictures of every species. When you open the door there should be a **Common Vampire Bat** in the right top corner, which quickly crawls away according to Luiz. We didn't see it, but did observe 2 **Velvety Free-tailed Bats/Pallas's Mastiff Bats**, a **Fringe-lipped Bat** and multiple **Seba's Short-tailed Bats**. Just outside this bat shed we had an **Argentine Black-and-white Tegu** (*Salvator merianae*).

There is a relatively small forest east of the lodge (enter from here: [-16.50112, -56.74226](#)). This is where we found **Paraguayan Howler** and **Black-tailed Marmosets**. We had two sightings of **Rufous**

Casiornis in this forest. We also found some bats (most likely **Pygmy Round-eared Bat**) in a termite mound at a height of ± 2 m along on of the trails ([-16.5024, -56.7403](#)).



Black-and-gold Howler (male)

Black-tailed Marmoset

We staked out a waterhole in the afternoon (from 15.00 till sunset), which should be a good place for mammals in the dry season ([-16.5271, -56.75625](#)). As it was cold and not very dry yet, we didn't see anything. This waterhole should be better later in the dry season (September/October). We did find digging holes of **Giant Armadillo** in the forest behind it, but a stake-out till well after dark didn't yield anything. Luiz has seen this beast while searching for frogs and we heard multiple people who have seen it crossing the main road towards the lodge while spotlighting. In this forest we found **Dull-capped Attila** and **Red-throated Piping Guan**.

On the open field near the waterhole we had a **Red-footed Tortoise** (*Chelonoidis carbonaria*). While spotlighting we also saw 100's of **Veined Tree Frogs** (*Trachycephalus typhonius*) in a *Pseudobombax longiflorum* tree. Their eyes lit up the tree like a Christmas tree, and multiple bats were circling around the tree (not sure if they were eating the frogs or visiting for the beautiful flowers).



Veined Tree Frogs (*Trachycephalus typhonius*)

Red-footed Tortoise (*Chelonoidis carbonaria*)

There is a second waterhole ([-16.54714, -56.75241](#)), reached by driving further past the first waterhole (but it's a sandy road), or driving from the main road (but this track is not in very good condition). The surroundings of this waterhole are a bit higher and dryer, and in theory this

waterhole should be attracting wildlife earlier in the dry season. We staked it out for an afternoon, but didn't observe anything of interest.

Dinner (which was great!) is served at 19.30, so we had about 1,5 hours of spotlighting between sunset and dinner. We drove the main road and the road to the first waterhole on three nights. After dinner we again went for about 1,5-2 hours of spotlighting, in which we also included parts of the Transpantaneira. The first morning we also went for 2 hours. We walked on the 4th night as the roads were in terrible state after the rain. In total we spotlighted for about 15 hours and saw the following:

- **Crab-eating Fox** (10x). Quite common both along the Transpantaneira and on the road towards the lodge.
- **Common Tapeti** (9x). Quite common in the forest part on the road towards the lodge.
- **Brazilian Tapir** (2x). Both at the beginning of the turn-off from the main road towards the waterhole ([-16.5168, -56.74915](#)) on two consecutive nights.
- **Crab-eating Raccoon** (2x). In the fields along the Transpantaneira between the entrance of the lodge towards the Transpantaneira-sign.
- **Red Brocket Deer** (1x). In the grass near the lodge.
- **Greater Bulldog Bats** & **Lesser Bulldog Bats**. Very common on bigger water pools along the Transpantaneira, easily seen from the bridges.
- **Great Horned Owl** (1x). On the main road a few 100m before the lodge.
- **Great Potoo** (1x). One along the road towards the second waterhole.
- **Common Potoo** (many). Various sightings, many along the road towards the first waterhole.
- **Scissor-tailed Nightjar** (multiple). Beautiful males with long tails!

This sounds like a lot, but it's very little considering the amount of time and effort put in there and compared to what people see during good nights in the right season (September/October). Others had **Ocelot** crossing the road while we were there. In the right season the mammals seem more abundant or more easily seen, with multiple Tapirs at day and night not being uncommon. Both **Southern Tamandua** and **Giant Anteater** are seen more often during that time of the year as well.



Great Horned Owl



Scissor-tailed Nightjar

Transpantaneira stops

[-16.40682, -56.66991](#)

The Transpantaneira is the 150km long road from Poconé towards Porto Jofre. After the compulsory photo stop at the Transpantaneira sign we drove slowly to observe the first of many birds. Soon after the sign we observed a **Marsh Deer** in the fields, and this species was observed 3 more times along the road.

Just in front of the entrance road to Aymara Lodge is where we observed **Golden-collared Macaws** eating the greenish flowers from the plants along the road. **Blue-crowned Parakeet** can be seen eating these flowers as well, but we didn't find any during our time in the Pantanal.

We stopped at BarAra (-16.51492, -56.71098) for a 'prato feito' lunch and a cold drink. The forest east of this Bar is good for the **White-lored Spinetail** ([-16.51612, -56.71075](#)). A small trail going through two pedestrian gates towards the Araras Pantanal Eco Lodge can be walked in. Right after the second gate (about 80m into the trail) is a good stake-out for **Mato Grosso Antbird** ([-16.51474, -56.71102](#)). If you walk further along this trail you get to Araras Pantanal Eco Lodge. We didn't encounter anybody, so we walked the 800m long boardwalk towards the observation tower. The boardwalk is in quite a bad state and is probably made by the same company which made the many terrible bridges along the Transpantaneira. We observed multiple **Azara's Capuchins/Hooded Capuchins** along the trail, and the view from the observation tower is quite nice. The flowers in the garden of the lodge should be good for **Buff-bellied Hermit** in the dry season!

We made another stop at Pousada Rio Claro ([-16.62067, -56.73514](#)) as the trees around the lodge are good for **Nanday Parakeet**. Both **Zigzag Heron** and **Agami Heron** are sometimes observed in the little 'harbour' of the lodge and more often on one of the (expensive) 2 hour boat rides that can be done here. As the driver of the boat didn't seem very knowledgeable about precise locations, we decided to skip the boat drive.



Snail Kite



Nanday Parakeet

The next stop was at Hotel Pantanal Mato Grosso ([-16.74765, -56.8569](#)). On the south end you can quite easily climb under the bridge (on the side of the lodge). This is where we observed 36 **White-lined Broad-nosed Bats**, thanks to the report of Alex Meyer (2021). Alex also found many of these bats under the roofs of the lodge itself, but we couldn't find them there and according to the receptionist they aren't there during this time of year.

We made a last stop further towards Porto Jofre, where the landscape becomes more open and wet ([-17.26139, -56.9049](#)). This is where **Cinereous-breasted Spinetail** was found. We only entered the first part of the abandoned building searching for bats and didn't find any. We didn't search it thoroughly though, as it was invested with bees (and Rob already got stung searching a big Fig Tree at Hotel Pantanal Mato Grosso).

A few kilometres before we arrived to Porto Jofre we had a **Neotropical Otter** crossing the Transpantaneira! A quick sighting, but a cool species.

Porto Jofre

[-17.36473, -56.77381](#)

In Porto Jofre we explored all the roads to see which ones would be good for spotlighting. After that we went to Hotel do Jamil, the largest hotel in Porto Jofre located next to the small airstrip ([-17.36473, -56.77381](#)). On the grounds of the hotel is a palm tree in which **Hyacinth Macaws** nest and they allowed us to enter the property grounds to photograph them. Two **Jabirus** are always present on the grounds according to the guard, and these habituated animals allowed for a close encounter. A **Greater Capybara** was present near the water as well.



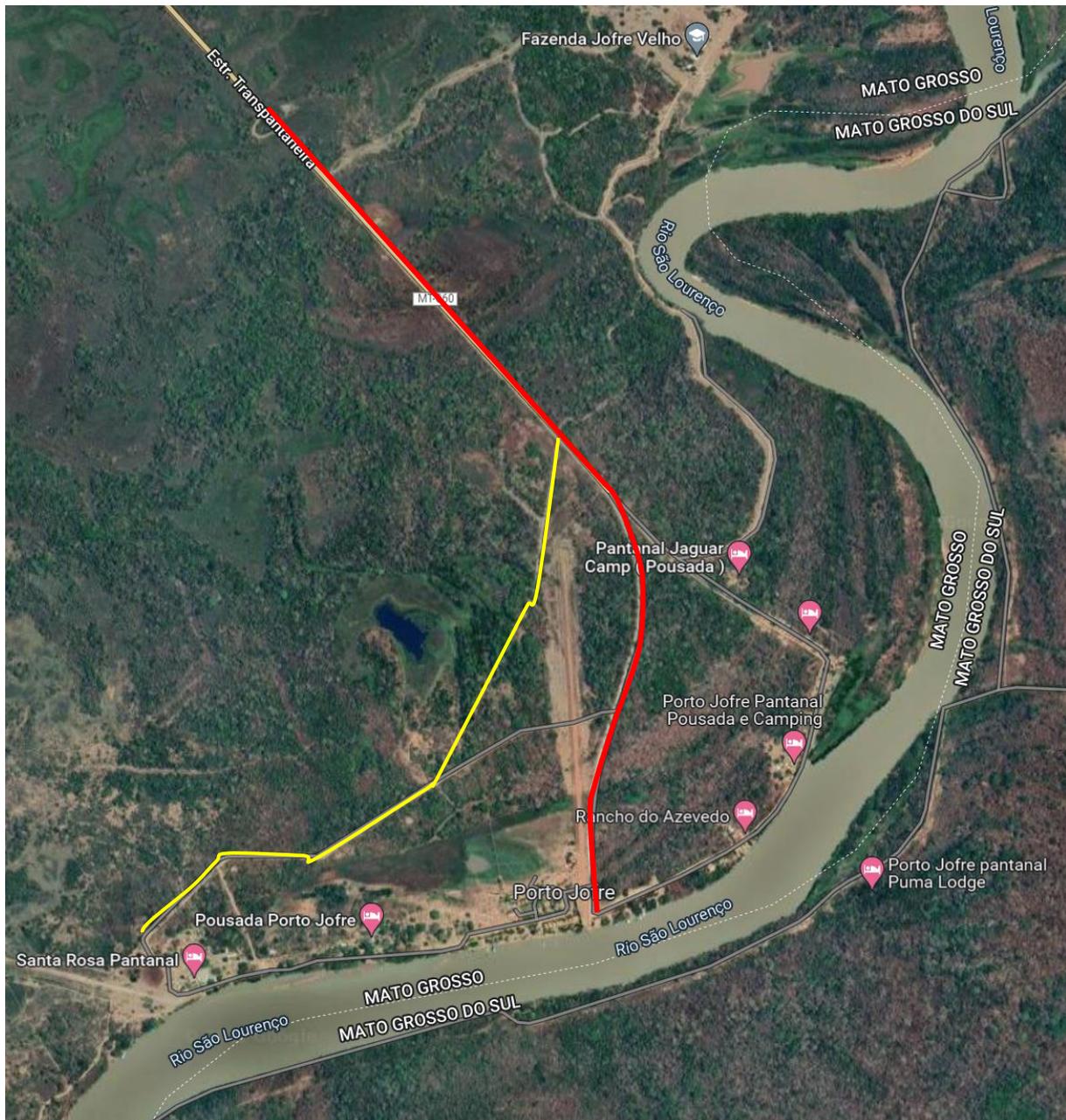
Jabiru



Hyacinth Macaw

On the road next to the small airstrip we had multiple **Brazilian Guinea Pigs** before dusk. For spotlighting we mainly focussed on the road north of the airstrip, leading towards hotel Santa Rosa Pantanal (yellow line in figure underneath). Along this road we found relatively fresh Jaguar tracks during the day. Quickly we found 2 **Brazilian Tapirs** walking in the bushes, and an hour later we had a **Red Brocket Deer** towards the end. Nothing else unfortunately, as we hoped for the **Jaguar**, **Ocelot** or **Puma** here. The last 2 were seen by others around the time we were in Porto Jofre on the

Transpantaneira by people who came to Porto Jofre. We also spotlighted part of the Transpantaneira and the road along the airstrip (red line in figure), but found nothing there. We camped in the wild in our roof top tent next to this road and heard **Jaguars** roaring far away!



The next day we went on a boat trip with Pantanal Jaguar Camp, which we cannot recommend unfortunately ([-17.35447, -56.76853](#)). Prices are quite steep everywhere, with prices ranging from 1200 Reais (small fisherman/jaguar boat trip company along the river at [-17.36457, -56.77165](#)) to 3000 Reais (Aymara Lodge). Most tours asked around 1350-1700 Reais for a full day private boat tour. As we knew two Brazilians who also wanted to do the tour we agreed on a full day 4-person boat for 2000 Reais (400USD) total. Unlike other tour companies they didn't include lunch, no guide (just a Portuguese speaking boat driver) or camping in our motorhome. For everything they asked more

money, and even camping in our own motorhome was 140 Reais (almost 30USD) for using a very dirty bathrooms and the WiFi. Long story short: lots of other things didn't go well, up to the point that he even threatened to cancel our trip. He apologized later that day when we came back from the tour, but as you can imagine we still don't recommend this company.

Right when we arrived at the boat it started to rain. This was strange as it normally doesn't rain at all until November, and even in the rainy season it mostly rains for just a couple of hours. Not this day. It rained the whole day! The boat itself was quite comfortable, quiet and fast, but being soaking wet, cold and still surprised about how Pantanal Jaguar Camp treated clients we couldn't enjoy it very much. As the main prey of the Jaguars, **Yacare Caimans** (*Caiman yacare*), were all in the water instead of on the river banks, and most mammals don't like rain too much, our chances of seeing a Jaguar were close to zero. Other people that went the days before us saw as many as 3 – 8 Jaguars in one day! Some of them saw mothers with cubs and others a hunt, and the day before we already fantasized about how many Jaguars we would see. After it already rained for the whole morning and we only saw some common birds and **Greater Capybaras**, most boats went back to Porto Jofre. This decreased our chances of seeing a cat even more, as most boats communicate via walkie-talkie if they see one. As the weather forecast for the coming days was even worse, we decided to push on and accept the rain and low chances. Around midday this was rewarded when we saw two boats side by side, watching the river bank. There it was, a huge male **Jaguar**!!! We observed it licking its claws for a few minutes before it disappeared into the bushes again. Luckily there was enough light to still get some decent shots, despite the boat driver keeping the motor on and moving the boat from side to side doing what almost seemed to be fitness exercises.. Considering the circumstances you can imagine how happy we were with this one short sighting! Amazing!:D



Jaguar



Giant Otter

We waited for a while to see if it would come back and after half an hour it actually stopped raining! Then 5 **Giant Otters** swam past our boat as they hunted for fish (which they caught regularly, amazing hunters!). We were able to follow them for quite some time, after which it started pouring down again. Good birds we saw during this time were **Blue-throated Piping Guan** (which seems more common along the river than in the rest of the Northern Pantanal) and **Little Cuckoo**.

As one of our Brazilian companions was 80 years old, we decided to go back to Porto Jofre as it was freezing cold with everything being soaking wet. Luckily we did, because this is how we were still able to drive most of the Transpantaneira back to Pouso Alegre with some daylight, which took us 4,5 hours for 90 kilometres. The roads were in a bad state, and we regularly slipped to the side of the road, almost even slipping into the water before some bridges. We had to use our snow chains after getting stuck a few times, and even saw 4x4's pirouetting almost full circles a couple of times. The days after it rained even more, and the road would have been impassable for our 2x4 car. However, no need to rent a 4x4 during this time of year per se, as this rain should be a rare event between (May) June – October.

Emas NP

[-18.26397, -52.89223](#)

Visited date: 12-18 June 2022

Emas NP lies in Goiás State, right on the border of the state Mato Grosso and Mato Grosso do Sul. Be aware of the 1 hour time difference when crossing over to Goiás State. On our way from the Pantanal we had a **Southern Tamandua** right next to the highway eating termites! Emas NP preserves 130.000 hectares of cerrado habitat, and is unique in harbouring many bird and mammal specialties of this kind of habitat. There are two different entrances to the park.

North Entrance

[-17.92186, -53.00613](#)

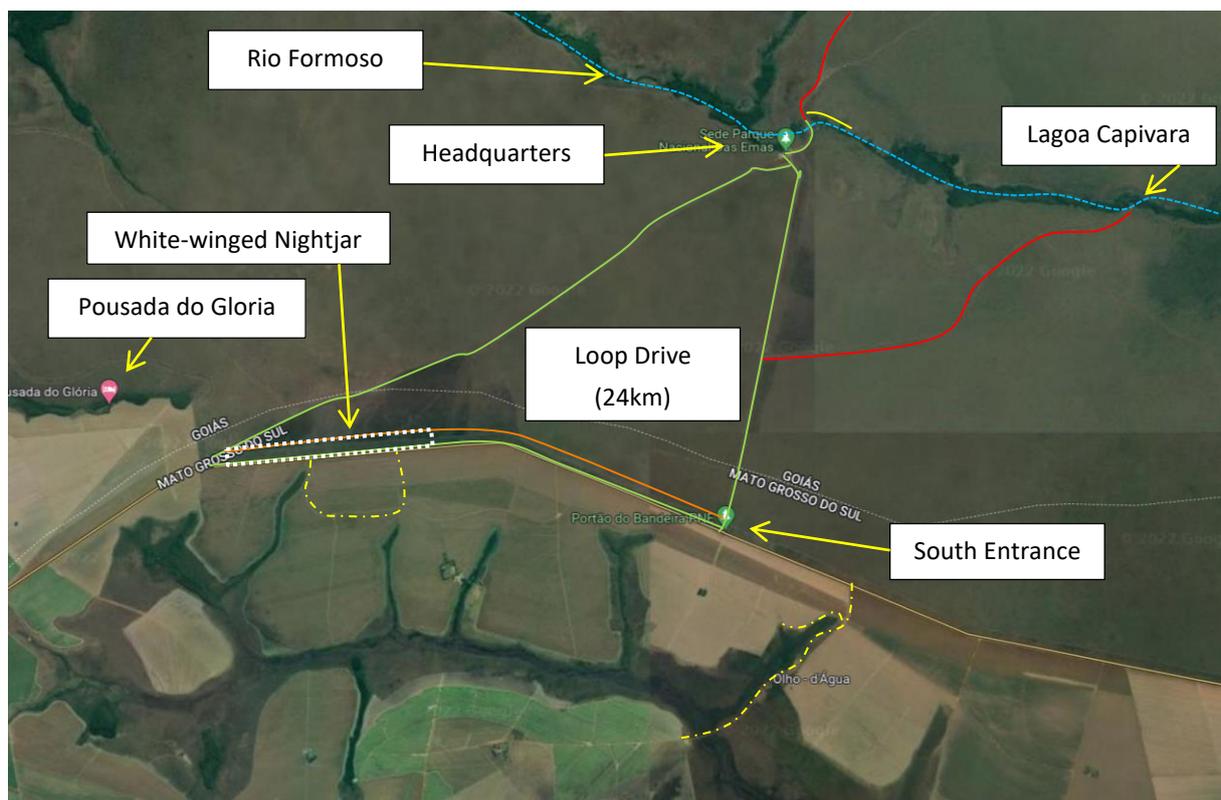
We first visited the north entrance of the park, mainly because we wanted to explore a part that we hadn't read about in other trip reports. In the north part of the park we did the 14km (public) loop drive, which is the only road accessible without a guide between 07.00 and 17.00. It was an uneventful drive, and we only found fresh **Brazilian Tapir** tracks, but no sign of the owner. The big wooden round structure with the map of Emas NP houses 2 **Tropical Screech Owls**. We weren't allowed to spotlight the loop drive, and thus went to spotlight along the main road for about 2 hours. Driving north we quickly encountered a group of 16 **White-lipped Peccaries** in a mud pool besides the road. Driving south parallel to the park we only encountered a **Barn Owl** and **Crab-eating Foxes**. There is a dirt road right next to the fence of the park, which can be driven as well and might yield better results. As it had rained the day before we arrived, the road was quite muddy and we didn't want to risk getting stuck with our 2x4.

South Entrance

[-18.31544, -52.90045](#)

We decided to focus on the south, as there was more information available from other bird- and mammal watchers for this part of the park. We camped at the South Entrance, as the camping at the Headquarters was not ready yet. The only good lodging option if you don't want to camp is Pousada do Gloria. We mainly focussed on night drives as Pampas Cat and White-winged Nightjar were our

biggest targets, besides Cone-billed Tanager. We spotlighted a total of 25 hours, divided over 5 evenings. We were allowed to drive the loop drive in the park (24km, green in figure below) also at night. This is the only road you are officially allowed to drive yourself in the south of the park. As parts of this loop was recently burned, but partly still had good grassland, we focussed our first nights on this loop. On a second night we went with a guide to Lagoa Capivara (where *Yapok/Water Opossum* is sometimes seen), other roads more to the east and drove a part of the road above Rio Formoso. The third night we also drove the main road outside the park, together with two loops going through corn fields and along some wetlands where Pampas Cat had been seen (yellow dotted lines in figure). We also drove the loop drive in the park again after this. On the fourth night we focussed again on the loop drive, and the road inside the park, parallel to the fence going east from the entrance (which should be good for Pampas Cat according to the ranger). On the fifth night we drove the road north of Rio Formoso, went to Lagoa Capivara (both without a guide this time) and drove all the roads outside the park again. In total we spotlighted for about 25 hours at night, and drove about the same amount of hours in the early morning and late afternoon besides the spotlighting at night.



Mammal-wise we observed the following:

- **Pampas Deer** (24). Seen mainly on the diagonal part of the loop drive as there was fresh grass sprouting after a fire went through a few weeks before.
- **Crab-eating Fox** (18). Relatively common, mainly on the loop drive and around the headquarters.

- **Hoary Fox** (5). Three lone ones on the road parallel to the fence (orange road in figure), which every time looked like a brownish Pampas Cat at first as it was quite small. Two on the road to Lagoa Capivara.
- **Lowland Tapir** (6, incl. 1 mother and young). Three individuals were seen on the road north of Rio Formoso, 1 habituated individual at the Headquarters and 2 at the southeastern wetland (outside the park).
- **Maned Wolf** (1). Only seen once in the morning just before reaching Lagoa Capivara.
- **White-lipped Peccary** (± 75). Only 1 during the day in the park in a mudpool towards Lagoa Capivara, and two groups of 18 and about 50+ at the South Entrance at night.
- **Molina's Hog-nosed Skunk** (6). 1 on the main road to the Rio Formoso in the park, 5 on the last night at the southeastern wetland (outside the park).
- **Six-banded Armadillo** (3). Only seen at daytime, on both roads through the cornfields outside the park.
- **Capybara** (1). At the stream that runs through the southeastern wetland (outside the park).

We missed out on cat species that are relatively regularly observed in the park: *Pampas Cat*, *Ocelot* and *Puma*. We also didn't observe *Giant Armadillo*, but saw many fresh burrows.



Lowland Tapir



Lowland Tapir



Maned Wolf



Crab-eating Fox

The open grassland with just a few trees in the southwest of the loop drive was the only part of the park in all those night where we observed 12 **White-winged Nightjars** (white dotted rectangle in figure). The road inside the park, parallel to the fence or the road a little north to this one (orange in figure) are the roads to drive in order to see this species. Their eyeshine should even be visible from outside the park shining in from the fence, if for some reason you are not allowed to go in at night. The bottom 0,5m of the fence are without wire, so if you spot one you can walk up and get a better observation. We heard **Giant Snipe** at night in the southeastern wetlands outside the park in response to playback. Besides more common nightjar and owl species we also observed a **Short-eared Owl** resting on one of the termite mounts.



Short-eared Owl

White-winged Nightjar

We missed out on **Cone-billed Tanager**. We tried three times along the Rio Formoso near the headquarters. There is a small trail south, and a bigger trail north of the river. We tried two times at Pousada do Glorio and two times at Lagoa Capivara. Especially the last two places have the most sightings of this very rare species. The riverine forests (especially the trail north of the river next to the main road) are good for more special birds like **White-striped Warbler**, **Helmeted Manakin** and **Russet-mantled/Planalto Foliage-gleaner**.

The road inside the park, parallel to the fence, just west of the South Entrance is good for **Rufous-sided Pygmy-tyrant**.



Curl-crested Jay

Rufous-sided Pygmy-tyrant

The grasslands are good for cerrado species like **Black-throated Saltator**, **Collared Crescentchest**, **White-rumped Tanager**, **Shrike-like Tanager**, **Rufous-winged Antshrike** and **Cock-tailed Tyrant**. We didn't put a lot of effort in finding more cerrado species, as we had seen all of those targets in the rest of Brazil. A lot more is possible!

Parrot-wise the park is good for **Blue-and-yellow Macaw**, **Yellow-faced Parrot**, **Turquoise-fronted Parrot** and more common species of parakeet.



Yellow-faced Parrot

Blue-and-yellow Macaw

You made it! Thank you for reading 😊

For all photos of our Brazil trip, comments, compliments, any specific questions, visit and/or contact us via our website:

🌐 www.robjansenphotography.com/brazil 📷 www.instagram.com/robjansenphotography

All observations made by us in this part of Brazil can be found on Observation.org. We observed a total of about 214 bird species and 33 mammal species in the Southwest of Brazil. Click here for the: [total bird list](#), [total mammal list](#) or [the total species list](#).

For more trip reports see our website: www.robjansenphotography.com/trip-reports

Our Top 5	Birds	Mammals
1	Hyacinth Macaw	Jaguar
2	Nanday Parakeet	Brazilian Tapir
3	Band-tailed Manakin	Maned Wolf
4	Lettered Aracari	Giant Otter
5	White-winged Nightjar	Southern Tamandua

Purchasing Photos

If you like my pictures, you are in luck: they are for sale! For publication, presswork or just as artwork in your office or at home. A great memory of those great species you've seen during that trip! We donate 10% of our profits to WWF. My photos can be used for free for conservation or educational purposes after consultation. Have a look on my website and/or contact us via the website for the possibilities if you are interested: www.robjansenphotography.com/shop



Yacare Caiman - Caiman yacare in the Pantanal **White-striped Warbler** at Emas NP



Six-banded Armadillo at Emas NP

Southern Tamandua along the highway



Maned Wolf at Emas NP

Pygmy Round-eared Bat (?) at Pouso Alegre