



Main tour: 12 days, October 18-29, 2009 \$4,950 from Cuiabá (single supplement \$565).  
With extension: 14 days, October 18-31, 2009 \$5,650 from Cuiabá (single supplement \$635).

Group size limited to 9 participants

Leaders: Aaron Lang and a local guide from Birding Brazil Tours

#### ITINERARY:

##### 10/17, day 0: Travel to São Paulo, Brazil.

You'll need to arrange your travel from home to arrive in São Paulo, Brazil today in order to catch a morning flight tomorrow to Cuiabá. Tonight's lodging is not included in the cost of the trip. We can, however, recommend the Best Western Panamby as a convenient and reasonably priced option. The hotel has an airport courtesy van and a restaurant. Your tour leader, Aaron Lang, will be staying here. Because participants will be arriving at various times today there will be no formal events scheduled. If your travel schedule allows there will be a "meet and greet" in the lobby of the Best Western at 8pm. Nothing else planned today besides a good night's sleep.

Airfare to São Paulo and hotel and meals in São Paulo are not included in trip cost.\*

##### 10/18, day 1: Fly from São Paulo to Cuiabá and on to the Pantanal. Overnight at Fazenda Santa Teresa on the Pixiam River.



Hyacinth Macaws

Aaron Lang

We'll have breakfast at the hotel in São Paulo. Aaron and the group will fly from São Paulo to Cuiabá on TAM flight JJ3804, departing São Paulo at 9am. Upon our arrival in Cuiabá at 11:15am we'll be met by our local guide and driver. We'll then head to the best Churrascaria (Brazilian barbecue) in town for lunch. The wonderful food and friendly Brazilian atmosphere offer a perfect start to our trip. After lunch we'll drive to Poconé and begin our trip down the famous Transpantaneira, the dirt road that delves into the heart of the Pantanal.

At roughly half the size of France, the Pantanal is the largest freshwater wetland in the world, and therefore, a birder's paradise. Our visit to this seasonally flooded wetland occurs at the end of the dry season, when the few remaining pools and waterways concentrate birds and wildlife in numbers that must be seen to be believed. For the next four days we'll explore by road, trail, and boat in search of the Pantanal's birds, wildlife, and serenity. The Pantanal is home to the largest and one of the most spectacular members of the parrot family, the endangered Hyacinth Macaw. This one-meter long, brilliant blue parrot is one of our most sought after targets.

Birding en route to our accommodations will introduce us to this world class waterbird stronghold. Today's highlights will include the massive 747 of the bird world, the Jabiru Stork. Shrinking pools teem with life, including: Wood and Maguari Storks; White-necked, Whistling and Capped Herons; Roseate Spoonbill; Plumbeous, Bare-faced, Green and Buff-necked Ibis; Southern Screamer; and Gray-necked Woodrail. The striking Snail Kite, endangered in Florida, is perhaps the most common raptor we'll see, feeding on apple snails and fresh water

crabs. Other common raptors include Great Black, Crane, Black-collared and Savannah Hawks. During this season river banks are crowded with staggering numbers of yellow caiman and herds of capybara. We also hope to find one of the world's largest snakes, the spectacular yellow anaconda which is often observed crossing or sunning itself on the road. We'll arrive around dusk at our lovely family run lodge nestled alongside the picturesque Pixaim River.

Lunch in Cuiabá and dinner and lodging at Fazenda Santa Teresa included. Breakfast at the hotel in São Paulo and the flight to Cuiabá are not included.

### 10/19-10/20, day 2 and 3: Exploring the Pantanal, nights at the Fazenda Santa Teresa.



Black-collared Hawk *Aaron Lang*

A tremendous dawn chorus will greet us at the Fazenda Santa Teresa as a cacophony of Limpkin, Chaco Chachalaca, Plumbeous Ibis, Paraque and flocks of noisy Turquoise-fronted Parrots herald the dawn. We won't have to travel far to find birds; around the lodge itself Toco Toucan, Great Rhea, Whistling Heron, Yellow-billed and Red-crested Cardinal, Saffron Finch, Bay-winged Cowbird and Purplish Jay abound. This morning we'll explore the area on foot and by van, birding along the Transpantaneira. The nearby river and gallery forest teem with life and here it is possible to encounter 150-180 different bird species in a single day! The forest holds such gems as Helmeted Manakin, Pale-crested Woodpecker, Rusty-backed Spinetail, Band-tailed and Mato Grosso Antbird, Large-billed Antwren, Flavescent Warbler, Masked Gnatcatcher, Buff-bellied Hermit, Stripe-necked Tody-Tyrant, Ashy-headed Greenlet, Plain Tyrannulet, Fawn-breasted Wren, Orange-backed Oriole and Gray-crested Cachalote.

After a good lunch at the lodge you can take a siesta or a refreshing dip in the pool. Later in the afternoon as the temperature starts to drop we'll take a boat trip along the Pixaim River. Here all five kingfisher species are possible as well as Rufescent Tiger Heron, Sungrebe, Sunbittern and the bizarre, frog-eating Boat-billed Heron. We'll also search for the endangered Chestnut-bellied Guan and the rare Agami Heron. Should you

tire of birds, mammal encounters are frequent here, including the opportunity for a close encounter with giant river otters. Both black howler and black-capped capuchin monkey are also regularly seen along the forested riverbanks. As night sets in Band-tailed and Nacunda Nighthawks grace the air as they leave their daytime roosts to hunt.

Full room and board included at the Fazenda Santa Teresa.

### 10/21, day 4: Bird the Pantanal, overnight at the Pousada Pouso Alegre.

After a hearty breakfast we'll pack up and bird our way back along the Transpantaneira searching for the Pantanal's most famous prize, the Hyacinth Macaw. En route we may encounter Bare-faced Curassow, Southern Lapwing, Wattled Jacana, Large-billed Tern, Brazilian Teal, Campo Flicker, Golden-green and Little Woodpecker, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Yellow-chevroned and Peach-fronted Parakeet, Narrow-billed Woodcreeper, Great Antshrike, Long-tailed Ground Dove, Thrush-like Wren and the exotic Chotoy Spinetail to name a few. It's not all about birding, however, as mammal possibilities today include silvery marmosets, collared anteater and the endangered marsh deer.

We'll arrive in time for lunch at the Pousada Pouso Alegre, our home for the night, where the owners are proud to protect a healthy wild population of Hyacinth Macaws. This will allow a unique opportunity to enjoy, study and photograph these magnificent creatures close at hand. This afternoon we may push deeper into the Pantanal to investigate some interesting large grasslands and marshes, or we may decide to enjoy ourselves birding and exploring the area around the lodge.



Black howler monkeys *Aaron Lang*

We'll have dinner and spend the night at the simple but clean, well-run family lodge. Here a night excursion with spotlighting will be our best chance to look for the rarely seen king of the South American cats, the elusive jaguar. Other possibilities include ocelot, crab-eating raccoon, crab-eating fox and Brazilian tapir. With a little luck we may also be treated to night birds, including: Gray or Common Potoo; Paraque; and Little, Spot-tailed and Scissor-tailed Nightjar.

Full room and board included at the Pousada Pouso Alegre.

**10/22, day 5: Return to Cuiabá for our flight to Alta Floresta, then travel on to the Cristalino Jungle Lodge.**

We'll have breakfast at the Pousada Pouso Alegre. The rest of the morning we'll spend our time birding our way back to Cuiabá for our 11:55am flight to Alta Floresta. Lunch will either be in Cuiabá or after our arrival in Alta Floresta.

As our plane approaches Alta Floresta we'll suddenly notice the abrupt change in vegetation as we transition from the cerrado scrub to lush tall green Amazonian rainforest. Upon arrival we'll make our way to the lovely Cristalino Jungle Lodge on the banks of the Rio Cristalino. This involves about a 90 minute drive by van and a 30 minute boat trip across the Rio Teles Pires and up the Rio Cristalino. Boating up the untouched and beautiful Cristalino River is a delightful experience. This area is one of the richest areas of the Brazilian Amazonian and we'll have pristine rainforest at our doorstep; macaws, parrots and toucans chatter constantly around the chalets. No hunting here allows wonderful chances to see large game birds and many primates including: white-bellied spider monkey, white-nosed bearded saki monkey (with red noses!) and brown capuchin monkey.

Accessible only by boat and completely surrounded by the lush jungle, you might be surprised to find such comfortable accommodations and wonderful service, but this remote lodge provides just that. It offers fully screened, private rooms with private bathrooms, ceiling fans and the food served here is incredibly good.

Breakfast at Pousada Pouso Alegre, lunch in Cuiabá or Alta Floresta, and dinner and lodging at Cristalino Jungle Lodge included.

**10/23-10/27, day 6-10: The Cristalino Jungle Lodge.**

There is no other better way to experience the Amazon rainforest than here at one of the Amazon's premier eco-lodges. The Cristalino Jungle Lodge is nestled in a private forest reserve in the Southern Brazilian Amazon. It borders the Cristalino State Park forming of a continuous protected area that extends northward into the adjacent state of Pará. This unique region contains many species found only here. An area loaded with local endemics, it is one of the richest known sites for Brazil and all of Amazonia. Leaving the outside world behind, we'll have the next six days to immerse ourselves in the sights, smells and sounds of the Amazon. During our stay we'll carefully explore this fecund area, searching for its staggering 520+ bird species.

The Cristalino Jungle Lodge has it all: miles of clean, well-marked forest trails through pristine rainforest, abundant bamboo stands, and a 45 meter canopy tower which allows us to experience some rarely seen canopy birds. Afternoon boat trips offer relaxing birding with great opportunities for mammal observations. A natural salt lick and elevated blind near the lodge provides the opportunity to quietly wait for the rare Brazilian tapir or possibly a group of white-lipped or collared peccaries which are attracted to the natural salts. Combine all this with pleasant surroundings and comfortable accommodations and you've got one of the world's top birding destinations.



From the canopy tower dawn breaks of the Amazon.

*Robin Lohse*

Our early morning trips to the canopy tower will certainly be a highlight of the entire tour. As dawn breaks in the canopy, parrots start to stir and noisily screech past, including the recently described and poorly-known Kawall's Parrot. White-bellied, Red-fan, Mealy and Yellow-crowned Parrots are also possibilities. White-throated and Yellow-ridged Toucan call as Gould's Toucanets perform their "see-saw" antics, singing from the tops of dead snags. All this will tempt to distract you from the brilliantly colored canopy flocks moving by at eye level. These flocks include colorful honeycreepers, Paradise Jacamar, Paradise, Opal-rumped, Yellow-backed and Red-billed Pied-Tanagers and the rarely seen Yellow-shouldered Grosbeak and Tooth-billed Wren. High

above this vivid green carpet is a great spot to watch for the big raptors—both Harpy and Crested Eagle are possible. A late afternoon return visit to watch the forest go to sleep and observe a spectacular Amazonian sunset is an experience you won't want to miss.

During our stay we'll walk several wonderful trails that leave right from the lodge. We'll also use boats to also access more remote trails upriver. The expansive trail system allows us to experience the best of Amazonian birding: huge roaming mixed species bird flocks; massive ant swarms with the specialized birds that follow them; and avian bamboo



White-bellied Parrot

Aaron Lang

specialists including Manu Antbird, Striated Antbird, Amazonian Antshrike, Rufous-capped Nunlet, Large-headed and Dusky-tailed Flatbill and Dusky-cheeked Foliage Gleaner. While walking the well maintained trails we'll search for such birds as Slaty-backed, Barred, and the newly described Cryptic Forest Falcon, Rufous-necked and Collared Puffbird, Bare-eyed Antbird, Black-spotted Bare-eye, Chestnut-belted Gnateater, Black-girdled Barbet, Snow-capped, Fiery-capped, Red-headed and Blue-backed Manakin, Great Jacamar and Royal Flycatcher. Because hunting is not allowed at the reserve, several large game birds are relatively easy to approach, including Razor-billed Curassow, Red-throated Piping Guan, and Dark-winged Trumpeter.

In the afternoons we'll relax with a boat trips on the Cristalino and Teles Pires rivers. These forays may produce Red-necked and Curl-crested Aracari, Amazonian Umbrellabird, Bare-necked Fruitcrow, Spangled, Purple-throated and Pompadour Cotinga, Brown-banded Puffbird, Brown Jacamar, Cream-colored Woodpecker, Hoatzin or even the elusive Zig-zag Heron.

Relaxing in camp will be equally inviting, especially with bar service on the floating dock where you can sip the Brazilian national drink, a refreshing Caiparinha, with binoculars at the ready. We'll take all of our meals at the lodge.

Full room and board at Cristalino Jungle Lodge included.

**10/28, day 11: Return to Alta Floresta, with a night at the Floresta Amazônica Hotel.**

We'll have one final morning at the beautiful Cristalino. After lunch we'll bird our way back to Alta Floresta. A couple of stops along the way could yield special birds like Point-tailed Palmcreeper, Fork-tailed Palm Swift, Red-bellied Macaw and Glossy Antshrike.

We'll spend the night at the very pleasant Hotel Floresta Amazônica in Alta Floresta.

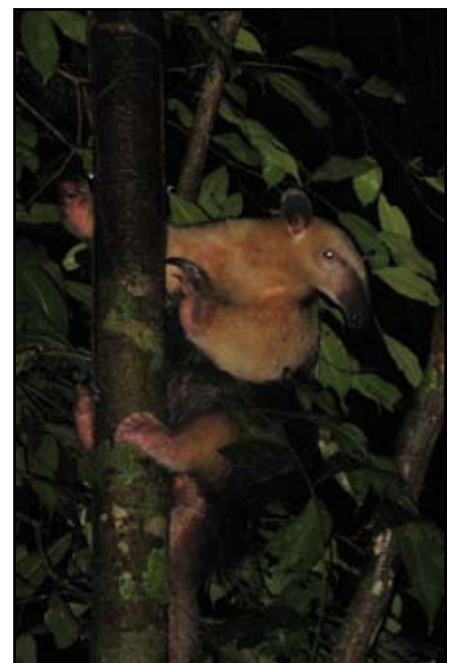
Breakfast and lunch at Cristalino and dinner and lodging at the Hotel Floresta Amazônica included.

**10/29, day 12: A morning of birding on the grounds of the Hotel Floresta Amazônica. Flight to Cuiabá in the afternoon. The main trip ends in Cuiabá where the Chapada extension begins.**

This morning we'll explore the rich forested grounds of our hotel looking especially for Crimson-bellied Parakeet, which is rare at Cristalino but often regular on the grounds of the Floresta Amazônica. After an early lunch at the hotel we'll catch our 2:20pm flight back to Cuiabá, arriving at 4:25pm. The main tour ends in Cuiabá. Those not continuing on to Chapada will spend the night in Cuiabá at a hotel near the airport and make connecting flights to São Paulo the next day.

For those continuing on the trip extension, in Cuiabá we'll be met by our local guide and driver and we'll drive 65 km of paved road to Chapada dos Guimarães National Park. The canyon lands of the Chapada dos Guimarães form part of the Brazilian Planalto Central. This high plateau is the divide between South America's two largest watersheds—the Pantanal and the Amazon Basin — and serves as the perfect finale to our adventure. The Chapada dos Guimarães National Park protects a specialized cerrado vegetation along with its unique fauna. As we ascend the plateau we'll wind through strange rock formations and patches of cerrado and gallery forest and we'll encounter magnificent red sandstone formations that are reminiscent of the north-eastern Arizona landscape. A spectacular view greets us as we arrive at the Pousada Penhasco, our home for two nights.

At the lodge each room has a private bathroom and air-conditioning as well as a breathtaking balcony view. After checking in we'll drive a short distance to



Southern Tamandua, a member of the anteater family.

Robin Lohse

a marvelous sandstone canyon where a magnificent 80 meter waterfall plunges into a lovely forest below. Here we expect a great spectacle as roosting parrots arrive, including the endangered Blue-winged Macaw. On occasions great spiralling flocks of Biscutate and Great Dusky Swifts whirl into roost behind the waterfall.

Breakfast and lunch at Hotel Floresta Amazônica included for all. For those on the Chapada extension, lodging and dinner at Pousada Penhasco included.

For those leaving the tour, lodging at the Hotel Diplomata in Cuiabá is included. Dinner tonight and your travel back to São Paulo and home are not included.

### 10/30, day 13: Exploring Chapada dos Guimarães National Park.

Awakening to the cooler climate of the plateau we'll explore the cerrado and its abundant and unique avifauna. The haunting calls of Red-legged Seriema and Red-winged Tinamou fill the fresh morning air. Specialities here include: Aplomado Falcon, Burrowing Owl, White-rumped and White-banded Tanager, Curl-crested Jay, Chapada Flycatcher, Horned Sungem, White-vented Violetear, Checkered Woodpecker, Collared Crescentchest, Blue and Coal-crested Finch, Rufous-winged Antshrike, Black-throated Saltator, Plumbeous Seedeater and with luck, the rare Rufous-side Pygmy Tyrant. Later in the day as temperatures rise we'll head to the forests to look for Rusty-margined Guan, Dot-eared Coquette, Streamcreeper, Planalto Slaty Antshrike, White-bellied Warbler, Planalto and Cinnamon-throated Hermits, Pheasant Cuckoo, Saffron-billed Sparrow and Band-tailed Manakin. An afternoon visit to the geodesic centre of South America may produce a good raptor as both Harpy and Crowned Eagle are possible.



Guira Cuckoo

Aaron Lang

Full room and board at Pousada Penhasco included.

### 10/31, day 14: Bird Chapada dos Guimarães National Park in the morning. Return to Cuiabá in the afternoon for a flight to São Paulo.

After another morning in this magical area we'll have lunch and return to Cuiabá to catch our 4:50pm flight to São Paulo, (TAM flight JJ3805) arriving at 9:20pm. Those folks not catching a red-eye flight home will overnight in São Paulo.

Breakfast at the Pousada Penhasco and lunch in Cuiabá included. Flight to São Paulo and dinner and lodging in São Paulo not included.

### 11/1, Day 15: Travel day.

Travel back home from São Paulo. Flight home and meals today not included.

### OTHER INFORMATION:

**Trip focus and pace:** While this is a birding-focused trip, all our leaders are skilled naturalists with diverse backgrounds and interests who enjoy sharing their appreciation of the natural world. One cannot travel to the tropics without being overwhelmed by the fecundity and diversity of life. As we search for birds we'll make every effort to study and appreciate the myriad of other fascinating flora and fauna that we encounter.

On this trip, as with most birding trips, we'll attempt to coordinate our schedule with that of the birds. Most mornings we'll be up before dawn for breakfast and in the field when birds and other animals are most active. Because mid-day is often the quietest time for birds, this is when we too shall take a rest before venturing out in the afternoon and early evening. All of our accommodations boast great birding and you can always choose to bird rather than rest if you like. Most days, especially at Cristalino Jungle Lodge, we'll spend much of the morning walking as this is the best time to hike forest trails. These trails are generally flat, well maintained and easy to walk. There is one hike we'll do that includes some moderate uphill portions, but it is not especially long. In the Pantanal and Chapada we'll take some hikes, but we'll also spend a lot of time birding along roads, using our air-conditioned van for transport. Expect warm to hot mid-day conditions and coolish nights, especially in Chapada. At this season rain is possible, but it usually occurs as showers in the late afternoon and evenings.

Once you've signed up for the trip you'll receive a detailed packet with information on the documents required for travel to Brazil, immunizations and health concerns, recommended equipment list, and a recommended reading list and field guide list.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED/NOT INCLUDED IN THE TRIP COST:

The tour price includes: lodging during the tour as indicated in itinerary; meals during the tour as indicated in the itinerary; flights between Cuiabá and Alta Floresta; all ground transportation during the tour and extension; entrance fees; wildlife conservation fee at Cristalino Jungle Lodge; boat travel in the Pantanal and at Cristalino Jungle Lodge; WBA guide during the tour and extension; local guide in the Pantanal and Chapada; gratuities for local guides, drivers, and hotel, restaurant and support staff.

The tour price does not include: your flights or other travel between home and Cuiabá\*; departure or other airport taxes; visa fees; trip insurance; meals, lodging or incidental ground transportation in São Paulo\* before or after the tour and extension; alcoholic beverages, optional beverages at the Cristalino Jungle Lodge, or other elective snack/meal purchases; personal expenditures such as laundry, telephone calls, shopping, etc.

We recommend that you consider travel and/or trip insurance. You may shop for it at [www.insuremytrip.com](http://www.insuremytrip.com).

\*Hotel accommodations in São Paulo and airfare between Cuiabá and São Paulo are not included in the trip cost to offer participants more travel options and to help keep the overall cost of the trip affordable. Exchange rates and airline and hotel prices vary. Rather than billing you a price that includes the “last-minute” price of booking a hotel and flight in the trip cost we allow you to select the best possible rate at the time you book the trip.



The Pantanal brims with life both large and small. Top: a passion flower blooms along the Transpantaneira. Above: a Jabiru. *Aaron Lang*

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*Toucan Toucanet Aaron Lang*