

# BRAZIL



June 26th to July 11th 2010

The Atlantic Rainforest, Pantanal & Chapada Dos Guimarães

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The following trip report relates to a week in The Atlantic Rainforest for me (Pete), George and Jen based at REGUA, then a week where we joined Bryce for a custom tour of the Pantanal and the Chapada Dos Guimarães led by Bradley Davis from Birding Mato Grosso Tours. We saw 419 species of birds including 40 Brazilian endemics, and at least 17 species of mammals.



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REGUA: [www.regua.co.uk](http://www.regua.co.uk)  
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*June 27th - Rio to REGUA*

I arrived late to meet George and Jen in Rio thanks to a mix-up over transfers at Sao Paolo, but we set off to REGUA full of hope and excitement. It was my first neo-tropical trip and for all of us it was our first time in Brazil, so a huge proportion of the birds we were hoping to see were lifers.

Before even reaching our destination **Magnificent Frigatebirds** cruised and kettles of vultures spiralled above the Rio skyline. We got incredibly close fly-by views of **Biscutate Swifts** as we hit the countryside. We also added **Savannah Hawk, Lesser-Yellow-headed**

**Vulture, Smooth-billed Ani**, and a band of **Guira Cuckoos**.

The Lodge was way more luxurious than we had dared hope for – and the welcome from our host Nicholas Locke was warm and friendly. With our delicious lunch duly devoured, we set about adding new birds to our lists; starting in the Lodge garden where **Swallow-tailed Hummingbirds** battled with a **Brazilian Ruby** for ownership of the feeders, while a **Burnished-buff Tanager, Violaceous Euphonias**, and a **White Woodpecker** vied for the fruit tables. We were introduced to our guide for the week –



*Violaceous Euphonia*



*Tropical Screech Owls Roosting at REGUA*

Adilei - who immediately set about getting us new birds; an **Aplomado Falcon** and a **Glittering-throated Emerald**.

Much has been said about Adilei in other trip reports, and he had been recommended to me by a friend – needless to say, none of it was hyperbole, but more of that later.

We trooped off to try our luck on the Wetland Trail, but first stopped to admire a roosting trio of **Tropical Screech Owls** right beside the road in a low-hanging branch!

On the Wetland Trail itself, we quickly racked up the species – **Wing-banded Hornero, Masked Water Tyrant, Brazilian Teal, Least Grebe,**

**White-winged Becard, Yellow-olive Flycatcher,** and **Blue Dacnis**, amongst others. Much of this activity was prompted by Adilei's Ferruginous Pygmy Owl (FPO) impersonation, which would become a feature of the week. Joining all these great birds was a real endemic gem – **Yellow-ored Tody Flycatcher**.

The Wetland is beautiful and stuffed with birds. Highlights included **Masked Duck, Brazilian Tanager, White-bearded Manakin, Rufous-capped Antshrike**, and the aptly named **Long-billed Wren**. Returning to the lodge, Caipirinhas, a celebratory beer, a fabulous dinner and an early night were had by all.

*June 28th - REGUA Waterfall Trail*

**U**p early and the first new birds were in the garden after breakfast – **Rufous-breasted Hermit, Orange-bellied Parrot, Maroon-bellied Parakeet, and Yellow-backed Tanager.**

We decanted from the truck and got **Violet-capped Woodnymph** and **Saw-billed Hermit.** Once on the trail itself, we hit tanager paydirt. **Green-headed, Fawn-breasted, Golden-chevroned, Brazilian** and **White-bellied Tanagers** were joined by **Chestnut-bellied** and **Orange-bellied Euphonias** - colour way off the scale! Augmenting this chromatic excess - a pair of **Spot-billed Toucanets** – hardly dowdy themselves.

Adilei really is an exceptional guide. The visual acuity of a hawk is combined with the hearing of a bat and he is an amazing mimic. The slightest movement or sound is seized upon and resolved. But there is more – politeness, patience, and good humour. As the trail wound its way through the forest, the highlights were many. The pair of male **Blue Manakins** calling back and forth; the **Surucua Trogon** catching insects; the showy male **Pin-tailed Manakin; Red-necked** and **Brassy-breasted Tanagers** sharing a fruiting tree; the skulking **Rufous-capped Ant-thrush;** the **Black-goggled Tanagers** feasting on ants; four species of **woodcreeper;** and the rainbow-coloured **Blue-naped Chlorophonia.**



*Blue Manakin*

At the waterfall itself, we had our packed lunch and enjoyed the glorious, forested, seclusion in the company of **White-thighed Swallows**, a pair of **Sharp-tailed Streamcreepers**, a **Salvadori's Antwren**, an **Ochre-breasted Foliage Gleaner**, as well as **Sepia-capped** and **Grey-hooded Flycatchers**. It was a beautiful spot, and well worth the effort to reach it.

As we set off back downhill, a flurry of activity in one small forest patch included **Eye-ringed Tody Tyrant**, **Plain and Streaked Xenops**, several **foliage gleaners**, **Yellow-eared** and **Yellow-throated Woodpeckers**, **Scaled Antbird**, the comical groaning and bobbing display of a male **Spot-billed Toucanet**, and a **White-throated**

**Spadebill**. Leaving the trees briefly, we got a cracking pair of **Spix's Spinetails**, before Adilei pulled another 'rabbit' out of the hat - calling in a pair of **Crescent-chested Puffbirds** to within a few yards of us. As we approached the car, we got great views of **Unicoloured** and **White-flanked Antwrens** together.

A quick round of emails via the office internet and we returned to watch the sun go down with a couple of beers. As we did so, the hummingbird activity was intense. Battles and buzzing and high-speed chases abounded until hummingbird bedtime. Human bedtime beckoned not long after another great meal, Caipirinhas, and bird list updates.



*Waterfall Trail, REGUA*

*June 29th - Sumidouro Road*

**W**e were up and away by 06.00 – with quite a few miles to be covered. The first new bird - a pair of **Whistling Herons** on posts just outside the reserve.

After some time on the road, Adilei suddenly asked Jossue to stop. He leapt out and came back to tell us there were a pair of **Curl-crested Jays** in roadside bushes. We also saw a **Crested Oropendola** as well as a flock of **Chopi Blackbirds**. We had barely set off when we stopped again – this time for a soaring **White-tailed Hawk**. Standing at a bus stop on the main road did not stop us getting a few nice new birds - **Brown-crested Flycatcher** (a particular hit with Jen), a **Southern Beardless Tyrannulet** and a **Purple-throated Euphonia**.

We finally reached the area renowned for the Jacamars, and after a couple of **White-eyed Parakeets** buzzed over, there they were – three **Three-toed Jacamars**. We added a few more new birds as we walked – **Bananaquit**, **Sapphire-spangled Emerald** and **White-rumped Monjita**. Then, as the houses thinned out, the air filled with loud calls – **Red-legged Seriemas**. In a field sweeping up and away from us a Seriema was joined by a second bird. Superb! Walking on, we

entered a stretch of forested road, and found a real **Ferruginous Pygmy Owl**. The scourge of small birds, and at the same time, a magnet for them. Soon, we were not the only ones that had noticed it.

An **Eared Pygmy Tyrant**, a **Euler's Flycatcher**, a **Glittering-bellied Emerald**, a couple of **Golden-crowned Warblers**, and a **Rufous-browed Peppershrike** were all great, but the star moth drawn to the owl's flame, was a **Pileated Finch**



*Ferruginous Pygmy Owl*

waving its extraordinary red flag of a crest. Slightly further on, we encountered a pair of FPO's, which engaged in some bizarre behaviour – grappling beak to beak.



*Barn Owl*

As we ate lunch, we had a brief trilling **Bran-coloured Flycatcher**, and then scope views of a flock of **Gilded Tanagers** in the tree tops. Our last birds on the road were four **Barn Owls**, roosting among tree roots in a roadside overhang. Next up was a trail near Carmo. We hopped out of the car

and in nearby bushes was a **Common Thornbird**. Then a female **Serra Antwren** showed to me and George, but as Jen missed it, and Adilei helped her get on it, a handsome male also appeared.

Walking along the dusty track, miles inland, we were amazed to see a pair of **Magnificent Frigatebirds** sail overhead in the clear blue sky! Very odd. The next species was less marine in its habits however – a fantastic **Long-tailed Tyrant**.

A few small birds responded to the FPO call including a **Hang-nest Tody Tyrant**. We then got great views of a very smart **Scaled Woodcreeper**. We continued on and as Adilei alerted us to a small troop of marmosets, he became very excited by two very close **Blue-winged Macaws** - a local rarity apparently.

With time pressing, we drove back along roads upon which many Brazilians seemed intent on ending their lives prematurely. Leaving the highway, near the reserve, we rounded off more serenely with a **Burrowing Owl** and a **Pauraque**.

The rest of the evening consisted of food, drink, talking nonsense, and bed.

*June 30th - REGUA Waldenoor and VeludoTrail*

**A**fter breakfast I had an **Azure-shouldered Tanager**, but the others missed it. Adilei joined us and we all added **Yellow-breasted Flycatcher**.

On the way to this new trail, Adilei suggested we get out and look for a **White-eared Puffbird**.

We stepped out and in the tree right beside the car were two of them! Once on the trail, Adilei's FPO routine immediately attracted a crowd – among them a **Black Jacobin** and an endemic **Grey-capped Tyrannulet**. Against a perfect blue sky we also noted a flock of **Grey-rumped Swifts** and a **Scaly-headed Parrot**. Still

climbing, another flock came in to investigate the owl call. This one truly frenetic, and including a **Star-throated Antwren**, a **Red-crowned Ant-Tanager**, a **Tropical Parula**, **Buff-fronted** and **Black-capped Foliage Gleaners**, and an **Olivaceous Woodcreeper**. We barely had time to draw breath before we got our next endemics – a couple of **Plain Parakeets** and a **Green-backed Becard**.

The trail rose steeply now, and George and Adilei flushed a **Slaty-breasted Woodrail**. Jen and I missed out. However, we did not mope for long as a single **Saffron Toucanet** on the hillside became four together once we scoped it. The lure of the FPO created another frenzy of activity featuring a



*White-eared Puffbird*

**Spot-breasted Antwireo**, a superb **Spot-backed Antshrike**, and a **Streak-capped Antwren**. The gradient increased, and breaking cover, we had great views of a **Yellow-fronted Woodpecker**. This was followed by one of the birds of the whole trip – a **Frilled Coquette**.

Moving back into the forest, the viewing got trickier. We all got on a **Sharpbill**, but despite all hearing it, only George managed to see the **Pale-browed Treehunter**, and a **Rufous-capped Motmot** only showed briefly. Descending, we stopped for lunch and new birds began to appear again. A **Plain Antwireo**, a brief **Sooty Grassquit**, and a **Black-throated Trogon**. A smart **Variable Antshrike** was outshone by its cousin the **Chestnut-backed Antshrike**. A bit further round the trail Adilei lured a **Spotted Bamboo-Wren**



*Frilled Coquette*

into view, soon followed by an **Ochre-faced Tody Flycatcher**. We drove back slowly and got a **Cliff Flycatcher**, and added **Grey-breasted Martin** near the lodge. We finished with our highest day total so far of 125.



*Chestnut-backed Antshrike*

## *July 1st - Macae de Cima Excursion*

**W**e were off to Macae De Cima today - an elevated habitat with many species we would not see within REGUA. On the way, we stopped at a roadside banana sellers' stand that was positively dripping with tanagers, euphonias and chlorophonias! Better still, in the yard behind it; we got close views of a **Sombre Hummingbird**. This was far from the last top species at this unlikely venue though. A **Grey-headed Kite** flew from the roadside and then, to make up for missing it, Jen picked up on a **Grey-hooded Attila** - another endemic.

We drove up into the mountains, where a pair of **Rufous-collared Sparrows** were at the roadside, alongside the tiny but flamboyant **Plovercrest**, before we got out and walked. A **Bare-throated Bellbird** across the valley gave distant but satisfactory views. Next was a **Mottle-cheeked Tyrannulet** before an all too brief **Barred Forest Falcon**. The **White-shouldered Fire-eyes** that George and Jen got inexplicably eluded me.

We made the turn off for David Miller's property, jumped out to start walking again, and the birds flowed. A **Yellow-browed Woodpecker** was quickly followed by a fantastic pair of **Bertoni's Antbirds**. A **Blue-billed Black Tyrant** was

followed by a richly coloured **Rufous-backed Antvireo**. As we walked, **Black-and-gold Cotingas** called - sounding like a child constantly swinging back and forth on a rusty-hinged gate. As we tried to tune out, a pair of **Green-winged Saltators** appeared, and nearing the property we banged in a lovely trio of **Rufous-capped Greenlet**, **White-rimmed Warbler** and **Rufous-capped Spinetail**. Once almost at the house, we got brief views of a singing **Hooded Berryeater**.

As we lunched we got one of the gate-swinging Cotingas and three new hummers - **Scale-throated Hermit**, **White-throated Hummingbird** and the tiny **Amethyst Woodstar**. They were not the only new birds though. We also added **Planalto Woodcreeper**, **Pallid Spinetail**, and me and Jen got **Pale-browed Treehunter**. The finale here was George's discovery of a very handsome **Bay-chested Warbling-finch** picking insects from the window frames.



*Amethyst Woodstar*

On the way home, Adilei was gutted to discover that his driving test had been scheduled for the next morning – he was supposed to be guiding us, and it was Brazil vs. Holland in the World Cup! We re-assured him that we would be ok, and fine to make our own way in the morning. As we waited in a car park for Jossue to buy a few provisions we noticed a small mixed flock that featured the endemic **Red-cowled Cardinal!**

A **Ringed Kingfisher** on roadside wires as we drove back to the lodge and a **Limpkin** were the last new birds of the day, and we finished on over 100 for the day again.

*July 2nd - 4x4, Nursery and Wetland Trails at REGUA*

**A**s Adilei was indisposed, we were taken out onto the 4x4 trail by Nicholas. The first good bird of the day was a **Bat Falcon**, perched



*White-throated Hummingbird*

on top of a dead tree.

On the trail there were a host of **thrushes** – most of them **Yellow-legged**, but also **Rufous-bellied**, **Pale-breasted** and **White-necked** – and a lovely female **Scaled Antbird** showed very well. Bellbirds called incessantly, but refused to show. However, as Nicholas scanned the trees hoping to pick one up, he latched onto a perched **Black-and-white Hawk Eagle**. This magnificent raptor gave excellent scope views before soaring off.

After lunch a dispirited Adilei returned from failing his driving test and watching Brazil lose! To cheer him up we hit the Wetland trail and he immediately nailed a pair of **Hooded Tanagers** and then a pair of **Blue-winged Parrotlets**.

From there we branched off onto the Nursery Trail and the quality birds continued to appear. A stunning pair of **Sooretama Slaty Antshrikes**

were joined by a nicely understated **Ochre-breasted Flycatcher**, and after a short wait, we had excellent views of the cracking little **Shrike-like Cotinga**. We finished with a superb pair of **White-bellied Seedeaters** and a **Green Kingfisher**, and as the sun faded, we saw some amazing Fishing Bats. The traditional end to the day ensued with dinner, Caipirinhas, lists and bed.

### *July 3rd - Night Birding and 4x4Trail*

**W**hen somebody suggests getting up at 03.30 you would normally tell them where they could stick their proposal. However, when it might mean seeing owls, nightjars and Great Snipe, you would perhaps be a little more receptive!

Our first stop was for owls and within a few minutes, we got great views of the rare **Black-banded Owl**, which sat and eyeballed us before flying off again. We heard a Tawny-browed Owl and a Long-tailed Potoo, but unfortunately, neither approached close enough to see. We moved on to a field where Great Snipe were regularly seen, but again, luck was not with us. It had been a low species tally but a great experience.

As this was our last day at REGUA, and we had



*White-chinned Sapphire*

to leave around 13.30 for the airport, we tried to squeeze as much out of it as we could.

We successfully staked out a garden bush for a **White-chinned Sapphire**. We then returned to the 4x4 trail, but this time we walked in from further out. I managed to dip a flyover pair of **Swallow Tanagers** but we all got on a couple of **Yellowish Pipits**.

A **Channel-billed Toucan** sat high on the hillside, and at the same time, the bat ears of Adilei detected a **Rusty-margined Flycatcher** above it and with some mimicry, he coaxed it close enough for us to see its eponymous margins. We then entered a small patch of scrub, and finally got great views of the previously elusive **Southern Ant-pipit**.

The next thing to happen was one of the most exciting sequences of activity we had experienced on the trip so far. It started well, with a **Versicoloured Emerald** feeding low on some flowers. Then the FPO call began to work its magic and before we knew it the bushes and trees were garlanded with tanagers – these included a first record for that area of **Gilt-edged Tanager**, which Adilei and Nicholas were very excited about.



*Gilt-edged Tanager*

In among these colourful gems we added a **Crested Becard**. In the space of about ten minutes we saw about eighteen species (many in multiples) – a truly amazing moment in a truly amazing week! As we climbed the hill and got onto the trail proper, we finally connected with

**Rufous-winged Antwren**, and although Adilei tried valiantly to add a few more lifers for us, the birds did not cooperate. We returned to the lodge weary and hungry, ready for the usual top notch grub.

After sating our hunger and getting one last fix of garden birds, we said our sad farewells. REGUA had been incredible – the facilities, the birds (255 of them), Adilei, and the habitat combining to make the whole week a magical and unforgettable one. On top of all that, we had the satisfaction of knowing our money was helping fund a fantastic conservation project that is protecting and restoring this outstanding biome. If you are thinking of the Atlantic Rainforest – then get yourself to REGUA! So, we set off for Cuiabá in buoyant mood, looking forward to whatever it might bring.



*Adilei, George, Jen, Pete & Nicholas*

## *July 4th - Cuiabá to Pantanal*

**A**fter a noisy night in Cuiabá we waited on Bryce to arrive from New Jersey, checking emails and buying bottles of water. Around ten thirty our guide for the week Bradley Davis arrived with our transport and driver Paolo. Bradley was a great find as a guide. We had looked into a number of better known tour providers, but ended up going with Bradley because we could do a custom tour with him for less than a fixed departure tour in a larger group with the other companies. And Bradley turned out to be a world-class guide: great skills in the field, willing to adapt the tour to our interests, and very personable.

Bryce had a decent attempt at emulating my mishap by almost missing one of his connections, but all ended well and he landed safely around eleven thirty. Outside the airport Bryce got flyover views of a **Short-tailed Hawk**, but none of the rest of us got on it. After a quick bite of lunch, we got into the very comfortable minibus and hit the road for the Pantanal. It was not long before the new birds started to turn up. A couple of **Greater Rheas** close to the road were quickly followed by the first **Snail Kite**. Just outside the frontier town of Poconé, the main road changed from tarmac to compacted red dirt and rocks, signalling we were

on the Transpantaneira Highway and entering the Pantanal proper.

Our first stop got us **Bay-winged Cowbird**, **Unicoloured Blackbird**, **Peach-fronted Parakeet** and **Narrow-billed Woodcreeper**. A few kilometres further on, we stopped again and Bradley instantly got us onto a pair of **Hyacinth Macaws**. These giant parrots are truly a sight to behold, even at distance, and we would see more of them later too. Incredibly, on checking my lists back home, it transpired that the world's biggest parrot was also my 1000th lifer – it could hardly have been a more iconic or appropriate species with which to make that milestone. Keeping us much closer company were a **Greyish Saltator**, a **Red-crested Finch** and a **Black-faced Tanager**. A flock of doves buzzed over our heads and included a **Scaled Dove** amongst their number.

The intermittent 'drive a few k's and then stop' tactic continued and at our next halt we flushed some **Chaco Chachalacas** and a **Green Ibis**. After adding a few more new birds, including **Wood Stork**, **Bare-faced Ibis** and **Cocoi Heron**, I happened to turn around and saw a **Red-billed Scythebill**, which used its extraordinary beak to extract a surprisingly large beetle from the depths of a trunk. The next stop was prompted by a promising looking flowering tree near to



*Red-legged Seriema*

the road. It turned out to be much more than promising. Starting with a pair of **Orange-backed Troupials**, and a couple of **Epaulet Orioles**, we quickly added **Blue-tufted Starthroat** and **White-tailed Goldenthrout** hummers. Then, with Bradley emulating Adilei's FPO call from the previous week to great effect, we were treated to a frantic gathering of birds consisting of nineteen species or more and including a fantastic pair of **Barred Antshrikes**, both **Yellow-chinned** and **Chotoy Spinetails**, a **Pearly-vented Tody Tyrant**, and a cracking pair of **Red-crested Cardinals**. We eventually turned into the entrance track to Pousada Piuval where we would stay for the next two nights and immediately got

close views of a pair of **Red-legged Seriemas**. If we thought that was good, we followed them with a **Jabiru** eating a snake! We got out the bus and walked the last few hundred yards to the Pousada. The sky was filled with flocks of superb **Nacunda Nighthawks** as the sun began to set. Exhausted after a long day travelling, and a bad previous night's sleep, we headed for dinner and bed.

*July 5th - Pousada Piuval and  
Transpantaneira*

**S**tarting our days' birding around the grounds of the Pousada, we quickly got new species in the form of **Black-collared Hawk**, a quartet of



*Plumbeous Ibis*

**Chestnut-eared Araçaris** in trees behind the main lodge, and a **Giant Cowbird** on the radio mast. A nice **Thrush-like Wren** was also frequenting a palm in the garden. After breakfast, we headed out into the Piuval grounds to look at the small forest patches that formed islands in the grassland. On the way a handsome **Plumbeous Ibis** perched atop a tree. At a small pond crossed by a bridge, we came across three **Sunbitterns**. These amazing birds were fairly obliging and one even flew a short distance at one point revealing its incredible wing-spots. The supporting cast here included a couple of **White-winged Swallows** and a **Lesser Kiskadee**.

We got out and approached the forest patch adjacent to this pond. We were treated to a pair of **Little Woodpeckers** – one of which actually flew to a nest hole. We also added **Straight-billed Woodcreeper** here and a nice **Black-fronted Nunbird**. After much skulking and playing hard to get we also got a **Mato Grosso Antbird** and a **White-lored Spinetail**. Altogether this was a thoroughly good start to the day so far!

As we walked on a little way, a fabulous **Crane Hawk** flew over and perched briefly before flying off. Then, as we stopped to look at a couple of **Purplish Jays**, a **Great Rufous Woodcreeper** appeared and Bryce got us onto a **Rufous**

**Casiornis**. After an initial dilemma over id, and frustratingly inconclusive views, we got a **Gilded Sapphire** and then I picked up a **Blue Ground Dove** as we were all watching a **Buff-throated Woodcreeper**. A female **Helmeted Manakin** made an all too brief appearance and we made our way down the track to rendezvous with the boat that would take us on the first of three memorable river trips.

The boatman was a bit late but as we waited we kept ourselves busy. An incredibly tame, partially leucistic, **Rufous-tailed Jacamar** was a nice path-side distraction, as was the vivid **Scarlet-headed Blackbird**. This was followed by

a singing **Striped Cuckoo**, and at the boardwalk we had **Black-backed Water Tyrant** and a **Greater Thornbird**, but I was the only one to get satisfactory views of a skulking and calling **Grey-breasted Crake**. To round off this hiatus we had a couple of **Southern Screamers** fly in and land on a bush. Once on the river, a couple of **Large-billed Terns** flew over our heads. The boat pulled in and we alighted to traverse a boardwalk through the marsh that led to a tower viewing platform. The marsh was full of **Jabirus**, **egrets**, **Roseate Spoonbills**, **Wood Storks**, **Snail Kites**, **herons** and **Caiman** – a real taste of the Pantanal. The tower afforded fantastic views across the marsh, revealing some **Black Skimmers** at rest.



*Jabiru & Paraguayan Caiman*

Returning across the boardwalk, the boatman pointed out a couple of Yellow Anacondas; coiled and partially submerged in the water and vegetation.



*Snail Kite*

Back on the trail we started from, we got great views of a very handsome **Blue-crowned Trogon**, and then it was back to the Pousada for lunch. After lunch we stopped to admire and photograph a very obliging **Snail Kite**, when we realised there was a **Great Black Hawk** hunting in the pond alongside it. Further along the road a

pair of **Aplomado Falcons** was a nice addition to the days' raptor count and Bryce's wish list alike.

A few k's later; Bradley began his FPO impersonation, only for a real one to respond. This had the desired effect on the local small birds, and it was mobbed by, amongst others, a **Common Tody Flycatcher**, **Solitary Cacique**, **Masked Gnatcatcher**, **Planalto Hermit** and a **Plain Tyrannulet**. We re-boarded the bus and a little further on a handsome pair of **Bare-faced Curassows** strutted at the roadside, swiftly followed by a **Great Horned Owl** sitting in a tree.



*Great Black Hawk*

Unfortunately, the road back was very busy and the best we had to show for our lamping efforts were a **Pauraque** and a **Boat-billed Heron**.

A long but very rewarding day saw us notch up the highest day total so far of 134.



*George, Jen, Pete, Bryce & Bradley*

### *July 6th - Pousada Piuval and Rio Claro*

Another 05.30 start saw us head out into the Piuval grounds to try our luck in the forest patches. First birding stop was to visit a Jabiru nest which as well as having a **Jabiru** in situ with a chick crouched low in the huge stick structure, also had three tenants in the form of three **Hyacinth Macaws**! Incredibly, the base of this same nest was also host to a colony of **Monk Parakeets**.

Our first new birds were a group of **Chestnut-bellied Guans**, swiftly followed by a **Blue-faced Piping Guan**, and a **Cream-coloured Woodpecker**. Next up was a **Forest Elaenia**.

Then a superb male **Great Antshrike** posed close to us. Entering a clearing, an exceptionally showy **Rusty-backed Antwren** popped up. The antwren theme continued with a male **Large-billed Antwren**; quivering its tail as it sang high in the canopy.

After lunch, we headed for our next accommodation at the Pantanal Wildlife Centre (PWC), adding all the usual suspects on the way. We made a stop at a Fazenda on the Rio Claro to look for Nanday Parakeet. However, Bradley ascertained that there had been no sightings for a couple of weeks, and on a hunch, decided to hire a boat and go up the river in search of otters.



*Hyacinth Macaw*

We all enjoyed the breeze as we zipped along. The first good bird was a **Crane Hawk** but it was soon outdone by a **Sungrebe** – swimming across the river in a very atypical fashion. Then a **Giant River Otter** shoved its head out of the water, eyeballed us and dived. With engine cut we got another couple of glimpses, but it was shy. So, just to fill the time, we admired a **Pale-legged Hornero** on the bank and then Brad told us that the boatman had trained a **Black-collared Hawk** to take fish from him. The boatman tossed a fish into the water and the hawk swooped down and grabbed it no more than ten feet from the boat. It was an incredible sight! Looking for more otters, an **American Pygmy Kingfisher** shot past us and

perched on an overhanging tree. Engines were cut again and we ended up no more than six feet from it! We got a few more glimpses of an otter, but it was not very cooperative so we ticked off **Rusty-backed Spinetail** and turned for home. The evening light was beautiful as the sun set, and a couple of bat-like **Band-tailed Nighthawks** flitted above us. It had been an impromptu journey to remember.

Back in the bus we made for the PWC, lamping as we went. As we turned into the entrance track we encountered a female **Brazilian Tapir** and its calf. They stood momentarily then slowly moved off into the darkness - a great way to end the day.

*July 7th - Pantanal Wildlife Centre*

**W**e got off to a great start with a small group of **Nanday Parakeets** in the top of some trees, and barely a few yards onto the trail we encountered a pair of **Golden-green Woodpeckers**. Next up was a **Rusty-fronted Tody Flycatcher** and a lovely **Ashy-headed Greenlet**, a fantastic pair of **Pale-crested Woodpeckers** and then a **Grey-headed Tanager** that perched fairly close to the path. A female **Fork-tailed Woodnymph** was trumped by of a trio of **Undulated Tinamous** as they strolled through the forest. A smart pair of **Moustached Wrens** were joined by a **Stripe-necked Tody Tyrant**, before a very showy pair of **Band-tailed Antbirds** appeared. This burst of activity finished with close views of a **Mouse-coloured Tyrannulet**.

After lunch, we drove up the entrance track and then walked a short distance in the baking sun. These efforts were rewarded with a smart **Chestnut-bellied Seed Finch**, a **Marsh Deer**, a **White-naped Xenopsaris**, and an obliging **Cinereous-breasted Spinetail**. We returned to the lodge and set out on what would turn out to be the boat trip of a lifetime on the Rio Pixaim.

After a fly-by **American Pygmy Kingfisher**,

a short trip ashore brought us to a fantastic roosting **Great Potoo**. A real bonus for Bryce here was a **Purple-throated Euphonia**, nicely called-in by Brad.



*Great Potoo*

Back on the boat, Brad used the iPod to try and attract a **Green-and-rufous Kingfisher**. Before we knew it, there were at least four of these stunning kingfishers buzzing around us, calling and perching in full view. A few **Boat-billed Herons** were roused from roost as we passed and beached **Caiman** adorned the shore, when

suddenly, we came upon a family of seven otters - they swam right up to and around the boat before heading off. Incredibly, there was better to come!

We drifted quietly down the river until Brad stood up and said he had heard an **Agami Heron**!!

This was the bird I had wanted to see more than any other, but I was realistic about the chances.

However, as George and Jen got very excited, Bryce and I panicked as we could not see it! Brad calmly told us the boat would back up, and as it did, BANG! There was the most exquisite bird I have ever seen - sitting on the bank, in full view, looking like a giant kingfisher. It was an amazing bit of guiding from Brad.



*Agami Heron*

On the return journey we came upon the otter family again. This time they frolicked and played around the boat, occasionally taking fish from

the boatman. As flocks of **egrets** and **Snail Kites** came in to roost and **Band-tailed Nighthawks** flitted over us, it was a wildlife experience in a million.



*Giant River Otter*

After dinner we went out night birding. It was quiet, but we did get incredibly close to a **Little Nightjar**. The day of the trip so far.

*July 8th - Pantanal Wildlife Centre and transfer to Chapada Dos Guimarães*

A slightly later start today and we headed for the gallery forest trail with energy levels lower, and the temperature distinctly cooler than it had been.

The first charge to our batteries came when a **Blue-crowned Trogon** was upstaged by a male **Helmeted Manakin**, and then after a few minutes of coaxing we got two splendidly yellow **Flavescent Warblers**. The trail was fairly quiet in a bird sense with mainly the same cast of characters as the previous day. However, we noticed that something else had been on the path before us. There, in the sand, were the paw prints



*Jaguar Pawprint*

of a **Jaguar**! A few more of the PWC regulars came along before we had lunch, packed up and shipped out for the Chapada. The highlight of this last drive on the Transpantaneira was a fantastic **Sunbittern** right beside the road. However, the drive to Chapada was long and all of us (apart



*Sunbittern*

from George) spent at least some of it snoozing. After stopping in Cuiabá for gas, we detoured out to Coxopoi do Ouro to look for Coal-crested Finch. Unfortunately, we did not get onto one, but we did get a **Chapada Flycatcher**, and a trio of **Curl-crested Jays**.

The Pousada Do Parque was lovely and after a very nice meal, we totted up the day score and then all had an early night.

### *July 9th - Chapada Dos Guimarães*

**W**ith it being our last full day, we had breakfast at 05.20 – trying to make the most of our time. The first stop was at the Agua Fria Road. It might not have looked too much like prime birding habitat, but it was deceptive.

As soon as we got off the bus we had **Black-throated Saltator** and **Plumbeous Seedeater**, then a very smart **White-banded Tanager**, and a pair of **White-rumped Tanagers**. A cracking female **Rufous-winged Antshrike** popped to the top of a bush to check us out and as the rest of us walked right past it, Jen picked up a **White-eared Puffbird**. Then after a **Lesser Elaenia**, a **Pale-breasted Spinetail** dodged all of us but George, and with little joy on enticing any of the rarer specialities out to play, Brad decided to make for

a gallery forest area instead.

This was a short but very productive walk. We kicked off with a **White-vented Violet-ear**, a **Long-billed Starthroat**, and a **White-bellied Warbler**. As we walked, Brad alerted us to a **Pheasant Cuckoo** calling behind us. We re-traced our steps a little and it suddenly took flight across the road right in front of us giving incredibly close views. A pair of **White-lined Tanagers** were the next new species, but they were eclipsed by a splendid **Yellow-tufted Woodpecker**. Next up were a duo of manakins – **Band-tailed** and **Fiery-capped**. Both beautifully colourful and both showing very well.

Further down the path we added **Crested Becard** and a cracking male **Thick-billed Euphonia**, then a pair of **Masked Tityras** and a very handsome **Saffron-billed Sparrow**. The path crossed a stream and we had a brilliant pair of **Swallow Tanagers**.

Lunch was at a restaurant that plays host to Brown Jacamars in its grounds, but they refused to show. We did get two **Red-shouldered Macaws** though. Then, on the way back to the Pousada, Bradley flushed a **Grassland Sparrow**. We rested for a bit and a smart pair of **Crested Black Tyrants** flitted around the Pousada.



*Blue-crowned Motmot*

Suitably refreshed we headed out again. The first bird was one of the best of the whole trip. Brad picked up a **Blue-crowned Motmot**. How he did it was beyond belief as it was too obscured and far back in the foliage for him to have got it, with the naked eye, while on the move – but he did! Luckily, it flew out and posed in full view, tail pumping away.

As the trees thinned alongside the road we got a view across a valley, and on top of the trees on the ridge opposite us, Brad found some **Blue-headed Parrots**. At almost the same instant a pair of **Lineated Woodpeckers** flew high across

the valley. Bryce did not know where to look first! Then we got onto a couple of **Channel-billed Toucans** (a different race from REGUA), and a **Scaled Pigeon** flew past.

Our next destination was a stake out for **Magpie Tanager**. We had no sooner stepped out the bus when we got one. We also finally got one of our Pantanal nemesis here – **Tawny-crowned Pygmy Tyrant**. As we drove back out along the track we found another pair of **Lineated Woodpeckers** at their nest hole.

After dinner, we did some night birding along the Pousada entrance track. It was quiet but it barely



*Lineated Woodpecker*

mattered when the first bird of the night was a male **Scissor-tailed Nightjar**! We managed to approach to within ten feet, but just as George was about to photograph it, it flew off – revealing its fabulous tail streamers in all their glory. Wow! A male **Pauraque** tolerated us approaching to almost touching distance, and we rounded off the night chasing a **Tropical Screech Owl** - our patience and stamina rewarded when it came

and sat a few feet from us, regarding us scornfully with those fierce little eyes.

Another day of incredible birds came to an end, and it had been a very long day at that. We crashed into bed and prepared for the reality that tomorrow was our last day!



*Tropical Screech Owl*

*July 10th - Parque Nacional Chapada  
Dos Guimarães*

So this was it - the last day. The past two weeks had flown by in a whirlwind of birds, laughs and excitement. We were ready for one last push and maybe one last special bird?

After breakfast, we took a trail that led directly from the Pousada. As we climbed the hill Brad called in a beautiful pair of **Planalto Slaty Antshrikes**. We also had a Laughing Falcon call - directly above us it seemed - but out of view. Still climbing, and with the trusty FPO call again doing its thing, we attracted a mixed flock including a pair of **Black-crowned Tityras**, and then a pair of **Lettered Araçarís** flew in giving us a toucan full

house. The previously elusive **Laughing Falcon** then perched on a dead tree, and a **Southern Scrub Flycatcher** joined our flock.

Back at the Pousada we jumped in the bus and headed for Hell's Gate - a view-point across a spectacular gorge. We quickly started to add birds that were all lifers or trip birds for Bryce. A smart **Cliff Flycatcher** flew sorties from the cliff, err, catching flies, and was joined by a **Brown-chested Martin**. Up top, we saw **Burnished-buff Tanager**, **Rusty-collared Sparrow** and a **Buff-throated Saltator**.

Next up was a visit to a local tourist attraction - The Bridal Veil Falls. It was a very picturesque



*Red and Green Macaws*

setting, and was soon augmented by a few **Cliff Flycatchers** and **Blue-and-white Swallows**.

Then that last special bird appeared- a magnificent **Red-and-green Macaw**, which circled in front of the falls, before landing on a vine dangling down from the cliff edge. After hanging about for a bit, it took off - only to be joined by its mate. They flew in tandem down the valley leading George a merry dance before turning and heading back to afford him the chance to take a couple of amazing photos.

We left to get ready to fly home – elated, thrilled and thoroughly satisfied by what had been the most incredible birding experience any of us

had ever had. Brad had done a great job in the second week, matching and even exceeding the thrills and spills of REGUA at times. He was good company, as well as a great guide, and we would thoroughly recommend his services to anyone thinking of visiting Brazil.

Bryce and I were dropped off at Cuiabá airport to make our way home via Sao Paulo, while George and Jen were leaving the next day and spending the night in the city. We said our fond farewells, and joked that we would be back in 2012...



*Pete, Jen, George & Bryce - Pousada do Parque*

# Bird List

Greater Rhea	Roseate Spoonbill	Southern Lapwing
Undulated Tinamou	Jabiru	Black-necked (White-backed) Stilt
Southern Screamer	Wood Stork	Wattled Jaçana
White-faced Whistling-Duck	Black Vulture	Large-billed Tern
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck	Turkey Vulture	Black Skimmer
Muscovy Duck	Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture	Rock Pigeon
Brazilian Teal	Gray-headed Kite	Pale-vented Pigeon
Masked Duck	Pearl Kite	Scaled Pigeon
Chaco Chachalaca	Snail Kite	Picazuro Pigeon
Chestnut-bellied Guan (e)	Black-collared Hawk	Ruddy Ground-Dove
Blue-throated Piping-Guan	Crane Hawk	Scaled Dove
Red-throated Piping-Guan	Great Black-Hawk	Picui Ground-Dove
Bare-faced Curassow	Savanna Hawk	Blue Ground-Dove
Least Grebe	Roadside Hawk	Long-tailed Ground-Dove
Neotropic Cormorant	Short-tailed Hawk	White-tipped Dove
Anhinga	White-tailed Hawk	Nanday Parakeet
Magnificent Frigatebird	Black and White Hawk Eagle	Maroon-bellied Parakeet
Rufescent Tiger-Heron	Barred Forest-Falcon	Monk Parakeet
Cocoi Heron	Southern Caracara	Blue-crowned Parakeet
Great Egret	Yellow-headed Caracara	White-eyed Parakeet
Snowy Egret	Laughing Falcon	Peach-fronted Parakeet
Little Blue Heron	American Kestrel	Hyacinth Macaw
Cattle Egret	Applomado Falcon	Red-and-green Macaw
Striated Heron	Bat Falcon	Blue-winged Macaw
Agami Heron	Gray-breasted Crake	Red-shouldered Macaw
Whistling Heron	Gray-necked Wood-Rail	Blue-winged Parrotlet
Capped Heron	Slaty-breasted Wood-Rail	Plain Parakeet (e)
Black-crowned Night-Heron	Purple Gallinule	Yellow-chevroned Parakeet
Boat-billed Heron	Common Moorhen	Blue-headed Parrot
Green Ibis	Sungrebe	Scaly-headed Parrot
Bare-faced Ibis	Sunbittern	Blue-fronted Parrot
Plumbeous Ibis	Limpkin	Orange-winged Parrot
Buff-necked Ibis	Red-legged Seriema	Squirrel Cuckoo

Guira Cuckoo	Gilded Hummingbird	Yellow-tufted Woodpecker
Striped Cuckoo	White-throated Hummingbird	Yellow-fronted Woodpecker
Pheasant Cuckoo	White-tailed Goldenthrout	Little Woodpecker
Greater Ani	Versicolored Emerald	Yellow-eared Woodpecker (e)
Smooth-billed Ani	Glittering-throated Emerald	Yellow-throated Woodpecker
Barn Owl	Sapphire-spangled Emerald	Golden-green Woodpecker
Tropical Screech-Owl	Brazilian Ruby (e)	White-browed Woodpecker
Great Horned Owl	Long-billed Starthroat	Campo Flicker
Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl	Blue-tufted Starthroat	Pale-crested Woodpecker
Burrowing Owl	Amethyst Woodstar	Cream-colored Woodpecker
Black-banded Owl	Blue-crowned Trogon	Lineated Woodpecker
Band-tailed Nighthawk	Surucua Trogon	Wing-banded Hornero (e)
Nacunda Nighthawk	Black-throated Trogon	Pale-legged Hornero
Common Pauraque	"Amazonian" Blue-crowned Motmot	Rufous Hornero
Little Nightjar	Rufous-capped Motmot	Chotoy Spinetail
Scissor-tailed Nightjar	Ringed Kingfisher	Rufous-capped Spinetail
Great Potoo	Amazon Kingfisher	Pale-breasted Spinetail
White-collared Swift	Green Kingfisher	Spix's Spinetail
Biscutate Swift	Green-and-rufous Kingfisher	Cinereous-breasted Spinetail
Gray-rumped Swift	American Pygmy Kingfisher	White-lored Spinetail
Saw-billed Hermit (e)	White-eared Puffbird	Rusty-backed Spinetail
Rufous-breasted Hermit	Crescent-chested Puffbird (e)	Pallid Spinetail (e)
Planalto Hermit	Black-fronted Nunbird	Yellow-chinned Spinetail
Scale-throated Hermit	Three-toed Jacamar (e)	Rufous-fronted Thornbird
Swallow-tailed Hummingbird	Rufous-tailed Jacamar	Greater Thornbird
Sombre Hummingbird (e)	Saffron Toucanet	Rufous Cacholote
Black Jacobin	Lettered Aracari	White-browed Foliage-gleaner
White-vented Violet-ear	Chestnut-eared Araçari	Buff-browed Foliage-gleaner
Plovercrest	Spot-billed Toucanet	Ochre-breasted Foliage-gleaner
Frilled Coquette (e)	Toco Toucan	Black-capped Foliage-gleaner
Glittering-bellied Emerald	Channel-billed Toucan	Buff-fronted Foliage-gleaner
Fork-tailed Woodnymph	White-barred Piculet	Pale-browed Treehunter (e)
Violet-capped Woodnymph	White-wedged Piculet	Sharp-tailed Streamcreeper
White-chinned Sapphire	White Woodpecker	Sharp-billed Treehunter

Plain Xenops	Scaled Antbird (e)	Yellow-olive Flycatcher
Streaked Xenops	Streak-capped Antwren	Yellow-breasted Flycatcher
Plain-brown Woodcreeper	Mato Grosso Antbird	White-throated Spadebill
Olivaceous Woodcreeper	White-shouldered Fire-eye	Cliff Flycatcher
White-throated Woodcreeper	Band-tailed Antbird	Whiskered Flycatcher (e)
Great Rufous Woodcreeper	Rufous-capped Antthrush	Bran-coloured Flycatcher
Planalto Woodcreeper	Black-cheeked Gnateater (e)	Euler's Flycatcher
Straight-billed Woodcreeper	Spotted Bamboowren	Tropical Pewee
Lesser Woodcreeper	Southern Beardless-Tyrannulet	Fuscous Flycatcher
Buff-throated Woodcreeper	Suiriri Flycatcher	Vermilion Flycatcher
Narrow-billed Woodcreeper	Chapada Flycatcher	Blue-billed Black-Tyrant
Scaled Woodcreeper (e)	Mouse-colored Tyrannulet	Crested Black-Tyrant
Red-billed Scythebill	Forest Elaenia	Yellow-browed Tyrant
Spot-backed Antshrike	Yellow-bellied Elaenia	White-rumped Monjita
Great Antshrike	Lesser Elaenia	Black-backed Water-Tyrant
Barred Antshrike	Ochre-bellied Flycatcher	Masked Water-Tyrant
Rufous-capped Antshrike	Gray-hooded Flycatcher	White-headed Marsh-Tyrant
Rufous-winged Antshrike	Sepia-capped Flycatcher	Long-tailed Tyrant
Chestnut-backed Antshrike	Mottle-cheeked Tyrannulet	Cattle Tyrant
Planalto Slaty-Antshrike (e)	Planalto Tyrannulet	Gray-hooded Attila (e)
Sooretama Slaty Antshrike (e)	Gray-capped Tyrannulet (e)	Rufous Casiornis
Variable Antshrike	Southern Scrub-Flycatcher	Grayish Mourner
Spot-breasted Antvireo	Plain Tyrannulet	Short-crested Flycatcher
Plain Antvireo	Southern Antpipit	Brown-crested Flycatcher
Rufous-backed Antvireo (e)	Tawny-crowned Pygmy-Tyrant	Lesser Kiskadee
Star-throated Antwren (e)	Eared Pygmy-Tyrant	Great Kiskadee
White-flanked Antwren	Eye-ringed Tody-Tyrant (e)	Boat-billed Flycatcher
Salvadori's Antwren (e)	Stripe-necked Tody-Tyrant	Rusty-margined Flycatcher
Unicoloured Antwren (e)	Hangnest Tody-Tyrant (e)	Social Flycatcher
Large-billed Antwren	Pearly-vented Tody-Tyrant	Tropical Kingbird
Rufous-winged Antwren	Ochre-faced Tody-Flycatcher	Sharpbill
Serra Antwren	Rusty-fronted Tody-Flycatcher	Hooded Berryeater (e)
Rusty-backed Antwren	Gray-headed Tody-Flycatcher (e)	Black-and-gold Cotinga (e)
Bertoni's Antbird	Common Tody-Flycatcher	Bare-throated Bellbird

Pin-tailed Manakin (e)	Pale-breasted Thrush	Red-necked Tanager
Fiery-capped Manakin	Rufous-bellied Thrush	Brassy-breasted Tanager (e)
White-bearded Manakin	Creamy-bellied Thrush	Gilt-edged Tanager (e)
Helmeted Manakin	White-necked Thrush	Burnished-buff Tanager
Swallow-tailed Manakin	Chalk-browed Mockingbird	Blue Dacnis
Band-tailed Manakin	Yellowish Pipit	Swallow-Tanager
Black-crowned Tityra	Tropical Parula	Black-throated Saltator
Masked Tityra	Golden-crowned Warbler	Grayish Saltator
Shrike-like Cotinga	White-bellied Warbler	Green-winged Saltator
White-naped Xenopsaris	Flavescent Warbler	Buff-throated Saltator
Green-backed Becard	White-browed Warbler	Bay-chested Warbling-finch (e)
Chestnut-crowned Becard	Bananaquit	Blue-black Grassquit
White-winged Becard	Black-faced Tanager	Plumbeous Seedeater
Black-capped Becard	Magpie Tanager	Rusty-collared Seedeater
Crested Becard	White-banded Tanager	Yellow-bellied Seedeater
Red-eyed Vireo	Hooded Tanager	Double-collared Seedeater
Rufous-crowned Greenlet	White-rumped Tanager	White-bellied Seedeater
Ashy-headed Greenlet	Black-goggled Tanager	Chestnut-bellied Seed-Finch
Rufous-browed Peppershrike	Chestnut-vented Conebill	Sooty Grassquit
Purplish Jay	Rufous-headed Tanager (e)	Saffron Finch
Curl-crested Jay	Yellow-backed Tanager	Red-crested Cardinal
Blue-and-white Swallow	Gray-headed Tanager	Red-cowled Cardinal (e)
White-thighed Swallow	Flame-crested Tanager	Yellow-billed Cardinal
Southern Rough-winged Swallow	Ruby-crowned Tanager	Pileated Finch
Gray-breasted Martin	White-lined Tanager	Red-crested Finch
Brown-chested Martin	Silver-beaked Tanager	Saffron-billed Sparrow
White-winged Swallow	Brazilian Tanager (e)	Grassland Sparrow
Thrush-like Wren	Sayaca Tanager	Rufous-collared Sparrow
Moustached Wren	Azure-shouldered Tanager (e)	Red-crowned Ant-Tanager
Long-billed Wren (e)	Golden-chevroned Tanager (e)	Chopi Blackbird
Southern House Wren	Palm Tanager	Scarlet-headed Blackbird
Masked Gnatcatcher	Fawn-breasted Tanager	Unicolored Blackbird
Black-capped Donacobius	"White-bellied" Turquoise Tanager (e)	Bay-winged Cowbird
Yellow-legged Thrush	Green-headed Tanager	Shiny Cowbird

Giant Cowbird  
Epaulet Oriole  
Orange-backed Troupial  
Solitary Black Cacique  
Red-rumped Cacique  
Yellow-rumped Cacique  
Crested Oropendola  
Purple-throated Euphonia  
Violaceous Euphonia  
Thick-billed Euphonia  
Orange-bellied Euphonia  
Chestnut-bellied Euphonia  
Blue-naped Chlorophonia  
House Sparrow