



BRAZIL PANTANAL & CERRADO WITH IGUAÇU FALLS EXTENSION

FOR THE EVANSTON NORTH SHORE BIRD CLUB

Pantanal & Cerrado
2-12 October 2019

Main tour: \$4940 per person based on double occupancy
\$450 single supplement
(\$200/person discount for a group size of 10 or more)

Extension: Iguassu Falls
12-15 October 2019

Extension: \$1600 per person based on double occupancy
\$250 single supplement
(\$100/person discount for a group size of 8 or more)

Maximum 12 participants

Guides: Josh Engel with local guides

CONTACT US WITH QUESTIONS: info@redhillbirding.com
TO REGISTER, GO TO: www.redhillbirding.com/bookingform
CHECK OUT THE PHOTO GALLERY: www.redhillbirding.com/pantanalgallery

INTRODUCTION

The largest wetland in the world, the Pantanal is one of the last major untouched nature reserves on the face of the earth and is a land of superlatives. The wildlife is amazingly abundant here, and its seasonally flooded plains attract immense quantities of birds and caimans, in addition to being one of the most mammal-rich areas of South America. The Transpantaneira Road conveniently transects the northern portion of the Pantanal and offers the visitor access to the great wetlands. Here we hope for close encounters with Jabiru storks, Roseate Spoonbills,

Southern Screamers, at least four species of ibis, several species of birds of prey, egrets, herons, and many other animals that come to the ditches along the road in search of water and food, making every drive a great safari. Key bird species include Red-legged Seriema, Agami and Zigzag herons, Chestnut-bellied Guan, Sungrebe and Sunbittern, Hyacinth Macaw, Long-tailed Ground Dove, Black-banded Owl, White-fronted and Pale-crested Woodpeckers, White-lored and Cinereous-breasted Spinetails, Mato Grosso Antbird, Planalto Slaty Antshrike, Subtropical Doradito, Helmeted Manakin, Red-billed Scythebill, Flavescent Warbler, Moustached & Fawn-breasted Wrens, Purplish Jay, Orange-backed Troupial, and many others. Among the mammals possible on this trip are Capybara, Crab-eating Raccoon, South-American Coati, Southern Tamandua, Giant Anteater, Black Howler monkey, Black-striped Tufted Capuchin, Crab-eating Fox, Ocelot, Marsh Deer, Giant Otter, Brazilian Tapir, and Jaguar.

While the Pantanal lies in a low-altitude sedimentary plain, Chapada dos Guimarães National Park sits atop the Brazilian Central Plateau, a stunningly scenic area comprising cerrado scrubland bordered by huge sandstone cliffs and lush gallery forest. This land is home for many of the Cerrado's specialties, such as Greater Rhea and Red-legged Seriema, Horned Sungem, Collared Crescentchest, Rufous-winged Antshrike, the recently described Chapada Flycatcher and some rarities such as the Rufous-sided Pygmy-Tyrant and the Yellow-billed Blue Finch. The red sandstone cliffs are also home to Red-and-green and Blue-winged Macaws, Biscutate Swifts, and some big raptors too, including Ornate and Black-and-white Hawk-Eagles, Crowned Eagle and Black-chested Buzzard Eagle.

During this 11-day, 10-night trip, we will be based in four different lodges, which give us the best chance to see the full spectrum of wildlife and birds of the region. Our days will have early starts with full mornings exploring mostly easy terrain, followed by a siesta after lunch. Some nights will include optional excursions in search of mammals and nocturnal birds.

For those who are keen for more, we will fly from Cuiabá to Iguassu Falls (spelled Iguaçu in Portuguese), one of the world's greatest waterfalls, for a three-night stay, all in one hotel. The forest surrounding the falls is outstanding for birding and the falls themselves are breathtaking. We will spend one full day on the Brazil side of the falls and one full day on the Argentina side. It's the perfect way to end the trip.

DAILY ITINERARY: PANTANAL & CERRADO (10 NIGHTS)

Day 1, Wed, Oct 2: Arrival to Cuiabá

Today we will arrive after a long day of traveling and spend the night in Cuiabá, ready to depart in the morning for our birding adventure. Night: Cuiabá.

Day 2, Thu, Oct 3: From Cuiabá to the Pantanal

In the early morning, we will meet the local guide and drive to the Pantanal. After driving about one and a half hour on paved road, we hit the Transpantaneira Highway, a dirt road that transects the northern portion of the Pantanal. The water ditches along the road attract all sorts of birds and mammals and make wildlife sightings easy, turning every drive into a great safari. On the way to our lodge we may already see birds like Jabiru, Roseate Spoonbill, Rufescent Tiger Heron, several species of egrets, Plumbeous and Buff-necked Ibises, Southern Screamer, Savanna and Roadside Hawks, Scarlet-headed Blackbird, and many others. Other creatures might include Capybara, Marsh Deer, and Caymans. Our first two nights are along the Rio Pixaim, a narrow river full of wildlife along its banks. Night: Hotel along Pixaim River.

Day 3, Fri, Oct 4: The Pixaim River

Here we have a full day to explore the forest and the savannas along the Pixaim River. This river is one of the most renowned in the northern Pantanal among birders and photographers, and we will see why. The Pixaim is a narrow river surrounded by gallery forest and, simply put, is a birder's paradise. On the boat drives along its quiet waters we will be looking for (and photographing) Great and Snowy Egrets, Cocoi, Striated, and Agami Herons, the strange Sungrebe and even stranger Sunbittern, and all five species of South American kingfishers. On the feeders, we might see Red-crested and Yellow-billed Cardinals, Shiny and Giant Cowbirds, Saffron Finch, Gray-crested Cachalote, Red-necked Aracari, and the gorgeous Orange-backed Troupial. Other birds that we could find on the trails include Long-tailed Ground-dove, Stripe-necked Tody-tyrant, Helmeted Manakin, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Barred and Great Antshrikes, Mato Grosso Antbird, Rusty-backed Antwren, and many more. Night: Hotel along Pixaim River.

Day 4, Sat, Oct 5: Pixaim to Porto Jofre

This morning we will explore the many photo opportunities this place offers, on foot and by car. We have good chances of seeing Peach-fronted Parakeet, Orange-backed Troupial, Plumbeous Ibis, and many more. After lunch we check out of the hotel and drive deeper into the Pantanal. There should be plenty of wildlife along the road and we will stop as time allows, especially as the weather cools and sun lowers towards the late afternoon. We end the day at the end of the Transpantaneira road in the small town of Porto Jofre, Night: Hotel in Porto Jofre.

Day 5, Sun, Oct 6: Searching for Jaguars

We will have a full day devoted to the boat trips in the Cuiaba river and its tributaries in order to maximize our chances of seeing and photographing Jaguars. Although Jaguar sightings are not guaranteed, this region offers the best chances ever to find these spectacular animals, which are among the most powerful and elusive of the world's large cats. Our outings will always be during the day, when we move along the rivers in search of cats that come to the river banks in search of food, water, or just a cool breeze. These rivers are also home to a few groups of Giant Otters, along with many Capybaras and Caymans. Pied Lapwing, Black Skimmer, Large-billed and Yellow-billed Terns can also be seen along the sand margins. Night: Hotel in Porto Jofre.

Day 6, Monday, Oct 7: Porto Jofre to Northern Pantanal

Today we have a long drive back on the Transpantaneira road to our next lodge, but we might still spend the morning on the river, depending on the group's wishes. This evening we will be at the northern edge of the Pantanal, where we will spend the next two nights. This property is a working cattle ranch with more than 15,000 acres of forest, swamps, savannas and natural pasture, and stands as one of the best places for birds and mammals in the northern Pantanal. Night: Fazenda Ipiranga.

Day 7, Tue, Oct 8: Fazenda Ipiranga

This fabulous area gives us a chance to find other birds and animals that we might not have seen yet. Most of our time here will be spent driving or walking the many trails in the property. We will explore on foot, by horse, boat, or aboard our safari vehicle. We will explore the wetlands, fields and forests in search of birds and mammals. Mammals might include Black Howler and Capuchin Monkeys, Black-tailed Marmoset, Crab-eating Fox, Tapir, and many others. We should also see birds such as Blue-fronted Parrot, Yellow-chevroned and Peach-fronted Parakeets, Chestnut-bellied Guan, the beautiful Red-throated Piping-guan, and the terrestrial and primitive-looking Red-legged Seriema and Greater Rhea. Night: Fazenda Ipiranga.

Day 8, Wed, Oct 9: from the Lowlands to the Plateaus

We will spend the last morning in the Pantanal looking for birds that we may not see on the next part of the trip, which is in dramatically different habitat. After lunch we will transfer to Chapada dos Guimaraes National Park. After the Pantanal, this is the region's leading attraction, reminiscent of the American Southwest. Its rocky plateau overlooking the flat plain of the Paraguay River and the Pantanal, at 2,600 feet above sea level, offers superb views, monolithic rock formations, caves, stunning waterfalls, and of course many special birds. These uplands provide some of the important water sources for the Pantanal marshlands below. Here we will stay at a small and cozy lodge right at the border of the National Park. Night: Park Lodge.

Days 9-10, Thu-Fri, Oct 10-11: Forests and Savannas of Chapada dos Guimarães

We will have two full days birding the savannah-like cerrado (pronounced say-HA-doe) and chapada habitats. The cerrado ecosystem, with its rugged terrain, small and contorted trees, and lovely tablelands offers a rich biodiversity with a scenery, flora, and fauna so rich and unique that the Brazilian government created this 33,000 hectare (81,500 acre) national park. As we hike the canyons, valleys, and savannahs of this magnificent area, we may expect chances of seeing the Blue-crowned Motmot, Southern Antpipit, Band-tailed Manakin, Planalto Slaty Antshrike, White-eared Puffbird, Guira, White-rumped & White-banded Tanagers, Coal-crested Finch, Plumbeous Seedeater, Black-throated Saltator and the recently described Chapada Flycatcher among others. When the heat builds up, we might have a chance to have a refreshing swim at some of the many waterfalls in the area. We will also spend some time birding at Veu-da-Noiva Waterfall with chances to spot Yellow-ridged Toucan, Lettered Aracari, White-collared and Biscutate Swifts,

Blue-winged and Red-and-Green Macaw, Curl-crested Jay, Gray Monjita, Crested Black-Tyrant, Collared Crescentchest, and Blue Finch. Night: Park Lodge.

Day 11, Sat, Oct 12: Morning activities and transfer to Cuiabá airport

Today's activities will depend on the flight schedule of the group, but we might still have time to explore a bit more of the property and search of birds that we may not have seen yet. Clients will be taken to Cuiabá airport, a little over an hour from the park, at their convenience.

For those continuing on to Iguassu, we will catch a morning flight to Foz do Iguaçu, arriving in the evening (the cost of this flight is not included in the tour price).

IGUASSU FALLS EXTENSION (3 NIGHTS)

Upon seeing Iguassu, the United States First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt reportedly exclaimed "Poor Niagara!" The name Iguassu comes from the Tupi and Guarani languages, and means "Big Water". And big it is! In the rainy season, there will be more than 300 falls along the basaltic edge of the Paraná plateau. Although the falls are divided between Brazil and Argentina, most of it is in the Argentinean side. And, because of that, the best view of the falls is from Brazil! But the Argentinean side is definitely worth a visit, especially if you intend to have a close-up view of the "Devil's Throat", the most powerful and impressive of the falls. A few kilometers downstream from the falls, the Iguassu River flows in to the Paraná River, marking the triple border between Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay. The area around the falls is protected by two national parks, both recognized as Unesco World Heritage Sites, on either side of the border, and holds a great variety of wildlife. The birds include many endemics of the Atlantic Forest, including tanagers, toucans, woodpeckers and antbirds. Mammals are diverse here, too, including Jaguar, Puma, and Tapir, though we are more likely to spot monkeys and squirrels.

Day 12, Sun, Oct 13: Brazil side of Iguassu Falls

Here we have a full day to explore the Brazilian side of the falls, with fantastic views of this magnificent spectacle. We will be birding while walking here with chances to find birds such as Yellow-fronted Woodpecker, Scaly-headed Parrot, Toco Toucan, Chestnut-eared Aracari, Plush-crested Jay, Green-headed Tanager, and a few more. Lunch will be at a nice restaurant inside the park. In the afternoon we will have an optional visit to the Bird Park, which has a nice collection of native and exotic birds, and may offer good photo opportunities of some of the most beautiful Brazilian birds. Clients also have the option to do a helicopter ride over the falls (not included), an astounding and unforgettable experience!

Day 13, Mon, Oct 14: Argentina side of Iguassu Falls

This morning we will leave the hotel at 7:00am to visit the Argentinean side of the falls, which will complete our experience here. We may spend a couple of hours birding a forest area before entering the park. In the park we will visit the higher part of the falls and go all the way (by train and foot) to the Devil's Throat, the most impressive of the falls. On the way we may find the Magpie Tanager, Saffron-billed Sparrow, and a few others. At the falls, great numbers of Great-dusky Swifts are often seen. We will then return and walk to the lower part of the falls, with the option of taking a Zodiac for a fun and adventurous boat ride (not included) to the bottom of the falls! After leaving the park we will stop by the Hummingbirds Garden, a private garden in the Argentinean town of Iguazú with a few bird feeders that attract a good number of species such as Black-throated Mango, Glittering-bellied Emerald, Swallow-tailed Hummingbird, Versicolored Emerald, Ruby-crowned Tanager, Blue Dacnis, Violaceous Euphonia, and many more. Return to the hotel by the end of the day.

Day 14, Tue, Oct 15: Departure from Foz do Iguaçu

Today will be a relaxing morning, perhaps birding in the hotel garden in the morning, before heading to the airport for our departing flights.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Contact information

The Red Hill Birding **tour manager** for this trip is Amanda Zeigler. To sign up, each participant should complete the [booking form](#) (www.redhillbirding.com/bookingform). Once we receive the form, we will send you information about paying the trip deposit. If you have any questions before registering, please contact Josh or Amanda at info@redhillbirding.com.

Timing

The trip will **begin in Cuiabá, Brazil, on Wednesday, October 2, 2019**. This is an arrival day, with no activities planned, though if the group arrives early enough we may do a bit of birding in town. The main trip will **end in Cuiaba, Brazil, on Saturday, October 12, 2019**. It is a 10-night, 11-day trip. The Iguaçu Falls extension **ends in Foz do Iguaçu, on Tuesday, October 15, 2019**. For those joining the extension, we will fly from Cuiabá to Foz do Iguaçu on October 12. Because of the changing nature of the cost of airline tickets, this ticket is not included in the tour price. We will purchase the tickets for the group and add the cost to the final invoice.

We cannot book international flights for you; however, we are happy to give advice on routes and timing. Generally, the best routing from the United States to Cuiabá is through São Paolo, Brasilia, or Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Passport and visa information

It is **always best** to check on the **latest visa and passport information** before you travel, as requirements can change. Please contact us if you have any concerns. As of this writing, **Americans do need to arrange a tourist visa ahead of time to visit Brazil. This can be done online**, for a fee of about \$45. It can also be done in person at the local consulate for a fee of about \$160. You must have two blank consecutive facing pages available in your passport and can only apply for the visa after you have purchased your plane tickets.

If you are joining the Iguassu Falls extension, we will be spending a full day in Argentina. A visa is not required for United States passport holders to visit Argentina.

Physical difficulty

This trip is **physically easy**. Most of our walking will be on flat trails or on roads, and while we may be on our feet for extensive periods, we will be walking at a “birding pace.” Some of the trails could be muddy or uneven. Much of our birding will be done along roads, driving and stopping frequently. The roads in this part of Brazil are mostly of good quality. We will stop at real bathrooms as frequently as possible, but at times only bushes will be available.

Pace

The pace of the trip is **moderate**. A typical day will have us up early to catch the peak early morning bird activity. Some days will have us returning for breakfast at the lodge where we are staying; some breakfasts will be in the field or before heading out. Lunches will sometimes be picnics and sometimes will be in restaurants or at our lodge. Most days will have the opportunity for an afternoon siesta before returning for more birding in the evening. There are many nocturnal birds and animals and there will be opportunities for nighttime excursions to look for owls, nightjars, and nocturnal animals.

After the arrival night in Cuiabá, all hotel stays are at least two nights. There are several long drives (3-6+ hours) on this trip, which we will break up with birding stops. The vehicle will have air conditioning. We will compile our daily bird and animal checklist, which your guide will provide at the beginning of the tour, around dinner time.

Price

The price of the trip is \$4940 and the single supplement is \$450. This price may change slightly at the time of the final payment due to exchange rate fluctuations. This price **includes** all meals (including soft drinks and bottled water), from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 11; all transportation and accommodation during that period; a Red Hill Birding guide; local guides; boat trips as mentioned in the itinerary; tips at meals, tips for local guides, and tips for hotel porters; and all entrance fees. It **does not include** alcoholic beverages; any flights; optional activities such as extra boat trips; snacks, laundry, tips (apart from meals, local guides, and hotel porters), or other items of a personal nature.

The price of the extension is \$1600 and the single supplement is \$250. The price for the **extension includes** all meals from lunch on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 4; it **does not include** airfare from Cuiaba to Foz do Iguaçu (approximate cost is \$300); otherwise the inclusions and exclusions are as in the main tour.

There is a group size discount. The price for the main tour (Pantana & Cerrado) will be discounted by \$200 if ten or more participants sign up. The price for the extension (Iguassu Falls) will be discounted by \$100 if eight or more participants sign up.

A deposit of \$900 will secure your place on the trip. The deposit for the extension is \$400. Final payment is due by June 2, 2019. We will send a reminder about two weeks before the final payment is due. We accept payment by check, bank transfer, or the apps Venmo and Zelle. Our prices include a cash discount; we accept credit cards with a 3.1% service fee. Your spot on the trip will be confirmed upon our receipt of the [booking form](#) and the deposit.

Hotels

The hotels we use in Brazil are **generally very good**. All have en suite bathrooms, hot showers, electrical outlets for charging electronics, good service, and air conditioning. Most hotels have wireless internet, though it is often only available in common areas and access can be slow and unreliable. Electrical outlets are “Type N”, so an adapter is necessary (see photo below). Most modern electronics do not need a voltage converter.



Photography

The **photographic opportunities** on this tour are **excellent**. That said, this is primarily a birdwatching tour, so while there will be ample opportunities for photography along the way, we will not be making special considerations for photographers. If you are a photographer, you are sure to go home with many great photos.

Weather

This trip is scheduled to coincide with the region's **dry season**. The weather will generally be **mild and comfortable** in the mornings and hot in the afternoon. Early morning temperatures could be as low as the 50°F if a cold front has come through and the high temperature could be as high as 100°F in the early afternoon. Typical early morning temperatures will be in the 50s-60s and typical daytime highs will be in the 80s-90s. Rain is unlikely but possible, so an umbrella or light raincoat is a good thing to bring. The temperatures will be a bit cooler at Iguaçu Falls for the extension.

Food

The food is generally of a **high standard** on this tour. The food is distinctly Brazilian, with an emphasis on rice, beans, and meat. Vegetarian and other dietary restrictions are easily accommodated; please let us know of any when you complete the booking form. Many of the hotels and lodges will have buffet meals. There will be a few opportunities to buy snacks along the way or to take them from the hotel, but if there's a particular birding snack you like at home, feel free to bring some along.

Packing considerations

You will generally want to wear **comfortable clothing** that you don't mind getting a little dirty. The dress for the tour is entirely casual. **Lightweight clothing, with layers**, and long pants and long-sleeved shirts are recommended for protection from the sun and to be prepared for various weather conditions. Comfortable walking shoes are a must, but rubber boots are not necessary. There may be some uneven terrain, so hiking boots could be useful if you think you may need the ankle support. It's nice to have sandals and/or crocs for when we're around the lodge and on our boat rides. A mid-weight jacket or sweater for cold mornings is also important. The lodges having swimming pools, so a bathing suit is recommended if you think you might take advantage. There will be opportunities to do laundry along the way.

In terms of gear, apart from the usual binoculars, hat, field guide, etc., it is important to bring a flashlight or (preferably) a head lamp. Most people appreciate having a camera along. A trekking pole can be helpful for our walks, especially if the trail is uneven. Sunscreen is very useful and bug repellent is good to bring, even though biting insects are rarely a problem on this dry season tour.

Health considerations

Please consult a doctor before making any decisions regarding vaccines, anti-malarial prophylaxis, or other health decisions regarding traveling.

Malaria is very rare in the areas we will be traveling. Malaria is a potentially dangerous disease carried by mosquitoes. Prophylaxis should not be necessary, but we recommend you take precautions to avoid mosquito bites such as wearing long sleeves and applying insect repellent.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that visitors to Brazil have vaccines against Typhoid and Hepatitis A in addition to “routine vaccines.” Yellow Fever vaccine is also recommended. Note that there is a shortage of yellow fever vaccines in the United States, so be sure to plan your vaccination a few months before the trip if you decide to get one.

Please visit their website for more information:

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/brazil>

Resources

There are several good field guides and wildlife resources for the Pantanal.

Guia Fotográfico Aves do Pantanal by Giuliano Bernardon, Edson Endrigo, and Tietta Pivatto.

Birds of Brazil: The Pantanal and Cerrado of Central Brazil by John Gwynne, Robert Ridgely, Guy Tudor, and Martha Argel.

Pantanal Wildlife: a visitor’s guide to Brazil’s Great Wetland by James Lowen.

For Iguaçu, the best field guide is *Wildlife Conservation Society Birds of Brazil – The Atlantic Forest of Southeast Brazil*, by Robert Ridgely and co-authors.

Money

The Brazilian currency is the real (plural is reals or *reais*, pronounced something like hay-ICE). You can easily change money upon arrival at the airport Brazil. Alternatively, ATMs are available in towns and accept most American debit cards. Credit cards, especially Mastercard and Visa, are widely accepted. Be sure to let your bank know that you are traveling so that there is no trouble using your credit and debit cards.

Tipping

We aim to provide **exceptional service**, using guides that are knowledgeable, interesting, personable, and experienced. While tipping is never expected, if you feel that your guides went above and beyond, you are welcome to leave them a gratuity. Tips at restaurants, for porters, and for all local guides and drivers is included in the tour price.

Travel insurance

We do not require travel insurance for trips to Brazil. However, we highly recommend buying it as it is relatively inexpensive and can protect you from unforeseen costs associated with missed, delayed, or canceled flights, sudden illness, medical evacuation, damaged equipment, or other unexpected issues. Red Hill Birding is not responsible for such costs, as laid out in our Terms & Conditions. Note that in some circumstances, such as if you have preexisting medical conditions, travel insurance must be purchased within 1-2 weeks of paying the trip deposit.