

Brazil – Jaguars of the Pantanal

1 – 8 August 2026

Report by Paul McDougall

Tour participants Paul McDougall (photographic Guide) with 2 Touch the Wild clients

Summary

The Brazilian Pantanal is the largest and most well-known portion of the Pantanal wetland, occupying much of the states of Mato Grosso and Mato Grosso do Sul in central-western Brazil. While the Pantanal extends into Bolivia and Paraguay, approximately 80% of this vast ecosystem lies within Brazilian territory. The region is shaped by the annual flooding of the Paraguay River and its tributaries, which create a dynamic landscape of flooded grasslands, forests, marshes, and lagoons. These seasonal changes sustain an extraordinary abundance of plant and animal life, making the Brazilian Pantanal one of the world's most important natural areas.

The Brazilian Pantanal is renowned for its exceptional wildlife-viewing opportunities. Unlike the dense Amazon rainforest, the Pantanal's open landscapes make animals much easier to observe. Visitors can frequently encounter giant anteaters, tapirs, giant river otters, capybaras, caimans, and hundreds of bird species, including hyacinth macaws, jabiru storks, and toucans. This remarkable visibility has made the region one of South America's premier ecotourism destinations, attracting photographers, researchers, and nature lovers from around the globe.

One of the most famous areas within the Brazilian Pantanal is the Encontro das Águas State Park and the surrounding river systems near Porto Jofre. This region is often considered the best place in the world to see wild jaguars. Jaguars here have adapted to a wetland environment and frequently hunt along riverbanks, feeding on prey such as capybaras and caimans. Boat safaris along the Cuiabá and Three Brothers rivers regularly provide visitors with unforgettable opportunities to observe these elusive cats in their natural habitat.

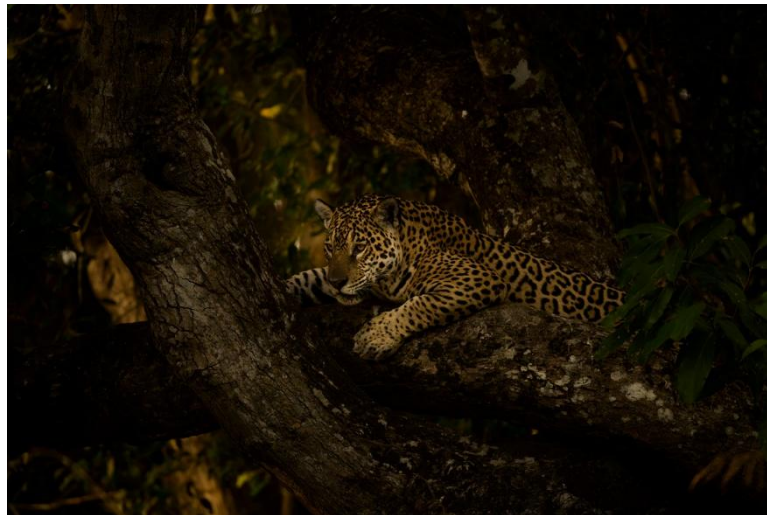
The jaguar has become a symbol of conservation in the Brazilian Pantanal. As the ecosystem's top predator, it plays a crucial role in maintaining ecological balance. Conservation organizations, local landowners, and tourism operators have increasingly worked together to protect jaguar habitats and reduce conflicts between wildlife and cattle ranching, which has long been an important economic activity in the region. Successful ecotourism initiatives have demonstrated that living jaguars can generate significant economic benefits for local communities, helping to encourage their protection.

Despite its ecological importance, the Brazilian Pantanal faces significant challenges. Prolonged droughts, severe wildfires, land-use changes, and climate-related impacts have threatened both wildlife and local livelihoods in recent years. Protecting the Pantanal requires safeguarding its natural flood cycles and preserving the habitats that support its rich

biodiversity. The future of the jaguar and countless other species depends on maintaining the health of this unique Brazilian wetland, one of the planet's greatest natural treasures.

This was my first trip to the Pantanal and to Brazil. It was a location that I had wanted to add to my tour offering for a while and also somewhere that I had always wanted to visit from a young age.

My 2 clients on this trip were regular clients and it was a real pleasure to share the experience with them and also understand their thoughts on the trip and the location itself.

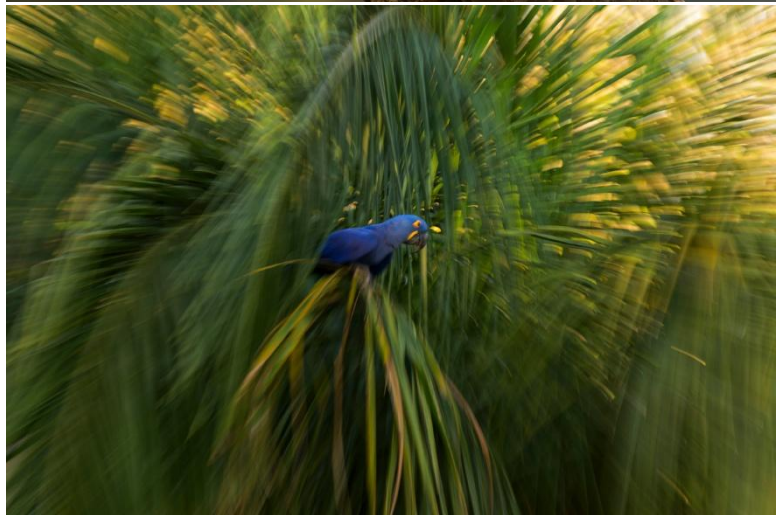
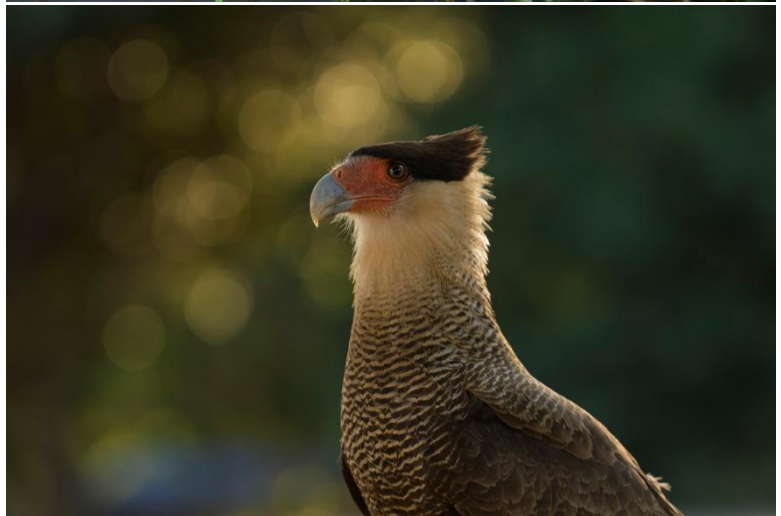


Day 1 Saturday 1st August

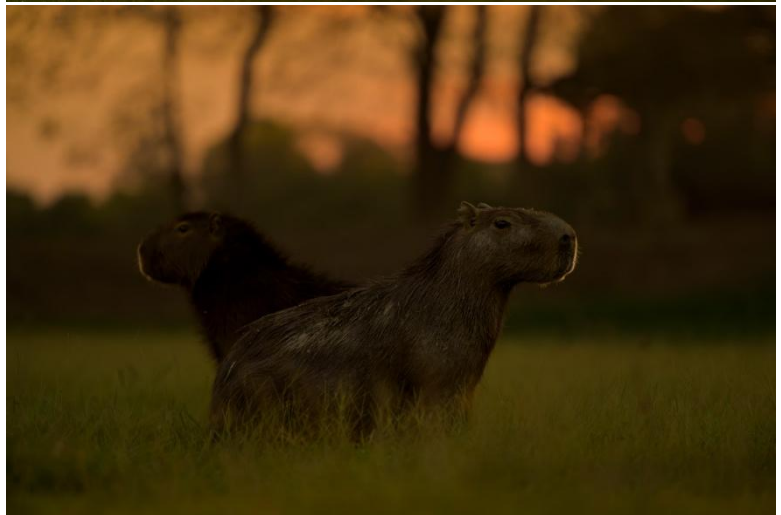
My clients arrived the day before and I had already been in Brazil for a week checking out another location for Maned Wolf which I will now offer as an add on for future tours to Brazil. So we were all ready to go and start our Pantanal adventure. After a good night's rest and a lovely breakfast at the Hotel Amazon Cuiabá Aeroporto we left at 8am. We travelled to the town of Poconé. Often referred to as the gateway to the Brazilian Pantanal, the town of Poconé marks the beginning of one of South America's most spectacular wildlife regions. From here, travellers enter the wetlands via the famous Transpantaneira Road, a rugged route that stretches deep into the heart of the Pantanal. As visitors leave the town behind, the landscape gradually transforms into a vast mosaic of rivers, lagoons, grasslands, and forests. Along the way, it is common to see capybaras, caimans, monkeys, and an astonishing variety of birds even before reaching the more remote areas of the wetland. The journey into the Pantanal is often considered part of the experience itself, offering a dramatic introduction to one of the world's richest and most biodiverse ecosystems. When we asked how long it would take to get to our hotel our guide Samuel said "well if we drive straight around 4.5 hours but it could take much longer depending on how often we stop". We started driving and immediately the variety of bird life was evident we stopped at one of the 122 wooden bridges that we cross on our way to Porte Jofre and photographed some of the birds on both sides of the road, we had Great Egret, Jabiru Stork, Striated Heron and Buff Necked Ibis. We also photographed some Caiman. As we drove along the road we saw several Roadside Hawks, Savannah Hawks and Southern Crested Caracara. We stopped for lunch and in the car park was a Caracara posing nicely in good light. We then also saw a Purplish Jay. After lunch we continued our drive and found a group of Rhea that were very close to the road, we stopped and got some close images of these impressive birds and then continued. We made 2 more stops, one for a group of Roseate Spoonbills which unfortunately flew away before we could get out of the vehicle and one for a Red Brocket Deer.

We arrived at Hotel Pantanal Norte our lodge at around 3pm. We checked in and then decided to use the time to photograph some of the species in the lodge grounds which included Capybara. Hyacinth Macaw, Black Vulture and Caracara. As the sun started to set we were able to get some images of the Capybara in some lovely evening light. A great start to our experience in the Pantanal. We had a lovely meal and then went to our rooms to sleep early ready for an early start the next morning.











Day 2 Sunday 2nd August

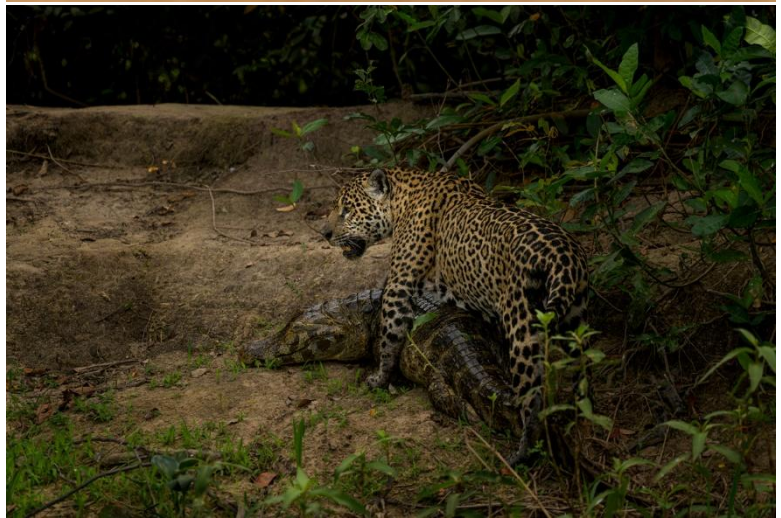
We woke early and went for Breakfast at 5am. We had a full and hearty breakfast and then made our sandwiches and packed lunch. We were waiting at the jetty at 6am full of anticipation ready to board our speedboat for our first river safari. Everyone was so excited including me and we were really looking forward to the day ahead. We set off at quite a fast speed. It takes around 40 minutes to reach the main Jaguar areas in the Pantanal and we wanted to get there as soon as we could to maximise the day. On the way we saw a few boats at the side of the river and so we went to see what they were looking at. As we got closer we could see the gold colouring of a Jaguar illuminated by the sun. It was laying sleeping under a tree. WOW less than 15 minutes on our first day and we had already seen a Jaguar. It was such a great experience watching this big cat resting under the tree. As the Jaguar looked very peaceful sleeping we decided to continue on the river but we were all really happy as we had seen our first Jaguar.

We took one of the side channels and due to the congregation of boats it was obvious that another jaguar had been sighted. But this time there was not only one Jaguar but 3 – a mother and her 2 older cubs. We found a place where we could see them and then followed them at a distance as they walked along the side of the river. We managed to get a few images of them walking in the open in between the trees and bushes. Our guide and driver then said that they thought they would be heading to one of their favourite trees so we moved away from the Jaguars and positioned ourselves by the tree. We waited and waited and then the mother

appeared climbing up the tree and laying on a thick branch, the light was amazing coming through the tree and everything was perfect. The cubs then followed with both climbing higher up in the tree, the mother then moved along the branch in the shade more. We watched them for ages as at times one or both cubs would come down and sit next to mum. It was an incredible sighting. WOW. After a while they all came down the tree and walked away. We didn't follow them and let them continue on their way. After this we spent some time photographing the birds including, Tiger Heron, Boat-Billed Heron, Neotropic Cormorant, Bare Faced Curassow and Amazon Kingfisher. We then heard on the radio that the mother Jaguar had crossed the river and was hunting Caiman, we made our way back to the river and again the guide and boat driver suggested that we wait by a tree which was one of her favourite trees to hunt from. The tree was a beautiful Yellow Ipe Tree. Before the Jaguar arrived there was a black vulture sat amongst the yellow flowers which made for a few lovely images including some zoom bursts. After a short wait the Jaguar appeared. She made her way out on to the branch and sat there for a period of time and then began to edge towards the end of the branch, she was now completely obstructed by branches. I thought that she was getting in to position to drop off the branch on to an unsuspecting caiman below, but what happened next shocked me. With no warning she leapt from the branch so far out in to the river and hit the water with a splash, everyone missed the jump. I got the tail as she disappeared in to the water, but WOW that was incredible to see. She had caught a Caiman so we moved position and watched her haul the caiman out of the water, she started to drag it up the river bank stopping momentarily for a break. The strength of these cats is incredible and amazing to watch.

I knew the Pantanal would be good and although you can never guarantee wildlife I knew we would see a Jaguar, but what we had seen in one morning had completely exceeded everyone's expectations. It really was an amazing morning. We stopped to eat our packed lunch in the boat at the side of the river and then went to look for some more different birds. We found a sandy beach which had Black Skimmer, Large billed terns and yellow billed terns on it. We then found a heron with a large fish. The birdlife in the Pantanal is amazing and you could spend the whole day just concentrating on birds. After the birds we headed further up river and saw a congregation of boats, we knew it must be another Jaguar. As we approached we realised that there were 2 Jaguar swimming in the water, these were 2 males – unrelated but they formed a coalition and are regularly seen together. This was incredible. 5 Jaguars on our first day and photographically so many amazing opportunities. We spent a good amount of time with the 2 males and were able to get a lot of different images.

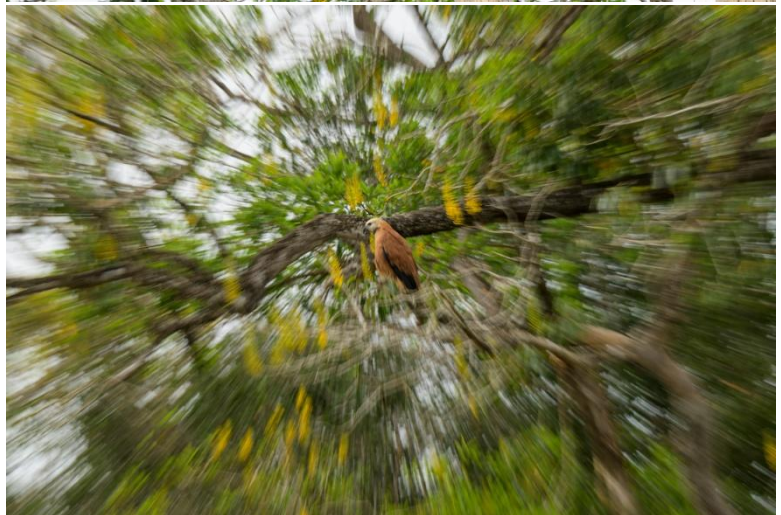
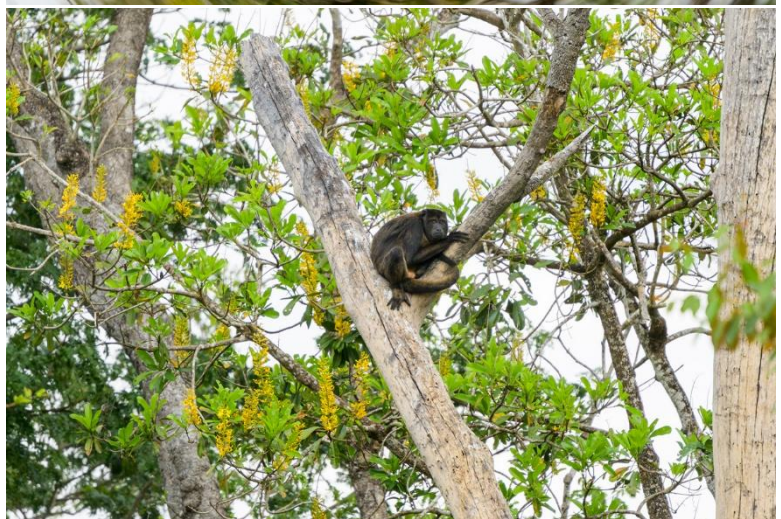
After this sighting we went to another beach area where there were even more skimmers and terns, we spent some time photographing these and were desperate to capture images of the Skimmers skimming the water which everyone managed and I tried a few panning shots of them. There were also some Caiman resting on the sand so we were able to get some nice close up images of these. We then continued exploring up river. Our boat driver spotted a Green Iguana and we then saw some bats roosting in the split of a tree. It was then some more birds on the way back to the lodge. On the way back our guide stopped as he had seen a porcupine. I was scanning the river banks looking for a porcupine as that would be the likely place in Africa, but no this porcupine was in the top of a tree. Wow what an incredible end to the day, we were able to get some nice images of the porcupine in the tree as it curled up asleep in the high branches. We were all so happy with the amazing first day and the sightings that we had. We had a delicious meal and then slept early ready for the next days full day.



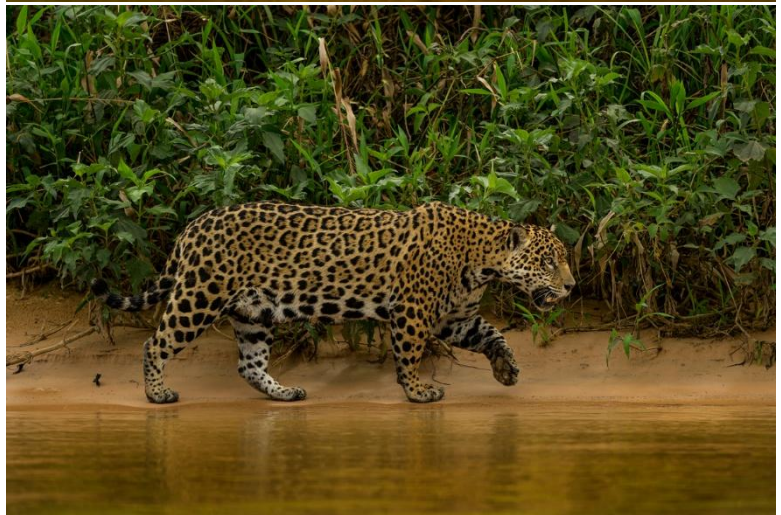
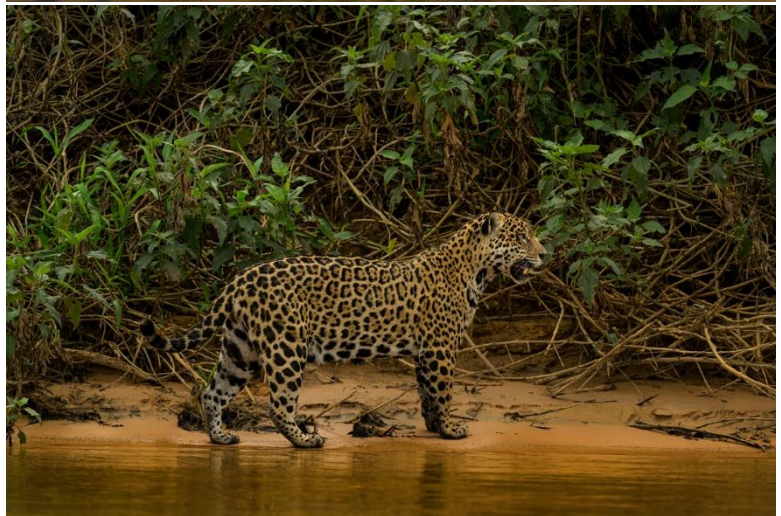


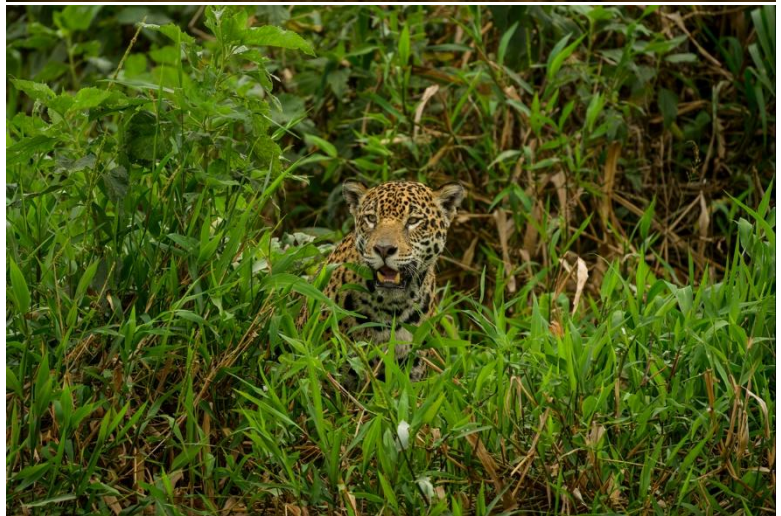




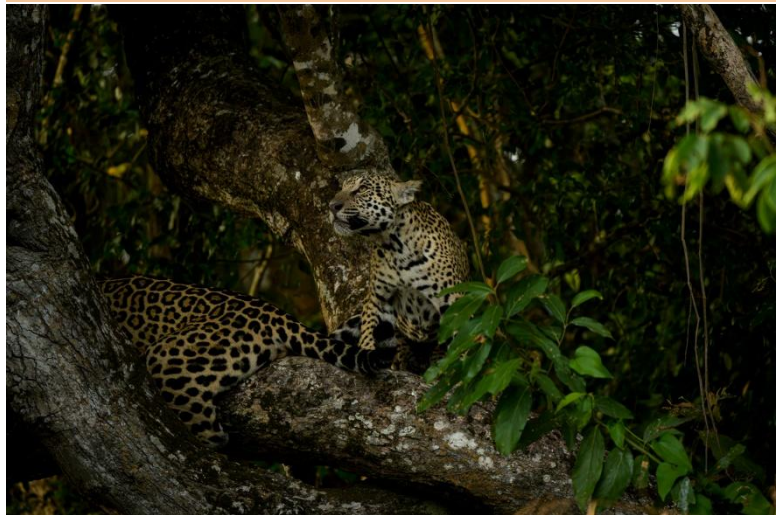


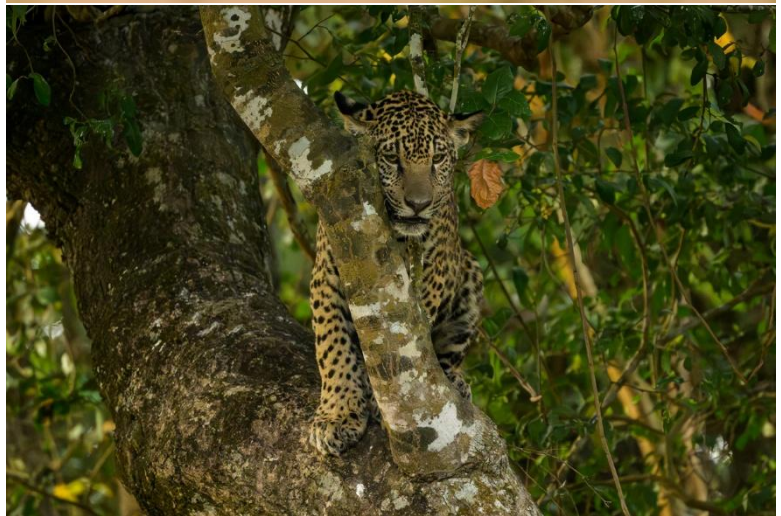


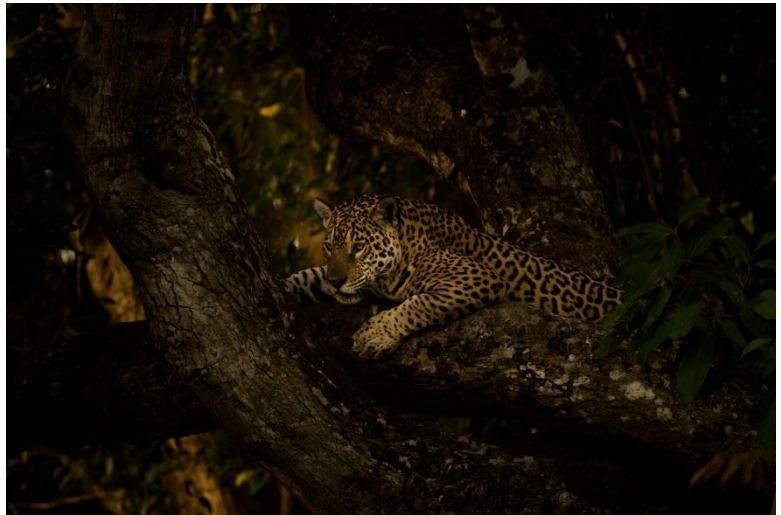
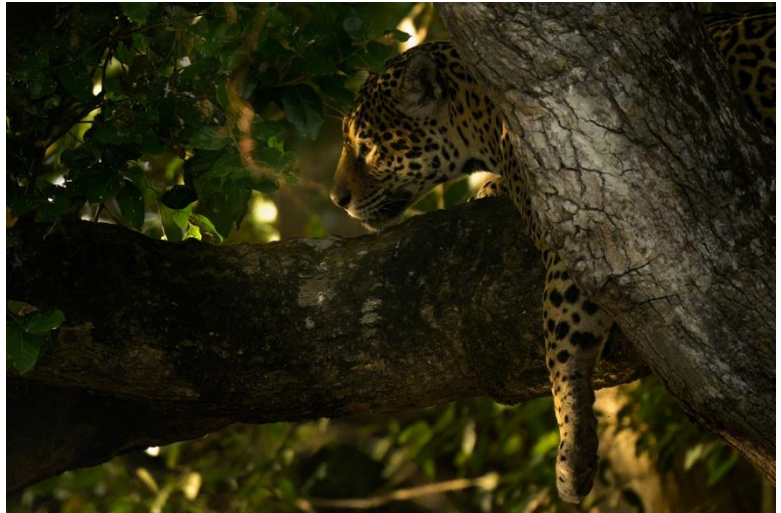














Day 3 Monday 3rd August

We again had a lovely early breakfast made our sandwiches and then set off on our boat. We stopped in ana rea that was good for Anaconda. We found one but it was very well hidden so we weren't really able to take any images of it, but it was still brilliant to see this amazing snake.

We again headed straight towards the main Jaguar areas and again we didn't have to wait long until we saw a Jaguar. It was a different female Jaguar. It stopped on the top of the riverbank and

posed briefly. We were able to capture a few images of her before she disappeared in to the bushes. We then photographed a cormorant with a large fish. After this we went to explore and saw a few more birds. We then saw another gathering of boats in the main river and there again were the 2 male Jaguars from the previous day. They were more active than the previous day and the light was better so we spent a long time with them and were able to capture some lovely swimming images and the brief moments of interaction between them. We then continued down river and soon came across another Jaguar, this was the same female from this morning so we spent a little time with her and watched as she walked along the riverbank. She eventually climbed a tree to rest and we were able to capture some different images of her laying in the tree.

We then had our lunch in the boat at the side of the river. Another incredible morning!!

After lunch we decided to go to some different areas to get away from the crowds, but on the way we saw a gathering of boats again. It was the 2 males again. We decided to spend some time with them again, getting 2 Jaguars together can give you so many opportunities for images so we decided to concentrate our efforts here for a bit longer. We were rewarded with some lovely interaction shots and some great opportunities for images. I probably took some of my best images on the whole trip at this sighting. The 2 males made their way away from the river so we left them and decided to head towards the beach with the skimmers again as everyone wanted to take some more images of these amazing birds. On the way our boat driver spotted another Jaguar, this one was resting under a tree, we were able to take a few images here and were able to experiment with some ICM techniques and try some zoom bursts to make something different from a resting Jaguar. We left this one and continued to the beach. There were lots of Skimmers and Terns. We watched the terns doing a courtship ritual where the male tried to tempt the female with a fish, if she accepted the fish he got to mate with her. It was fascinating watching this behaviour and this kept us occupied for a while. We then took some more images of the skimmers and tried some panning images and some slow shutter speeds of them having a bath.

We left the skimmers and started our journey back to the lodge. Another great day but it was just about to get better. We passed the Jaguar that was still sleeping under the tree and as we rounded a bend in the river we saw a group of otters bouncing around in the water. WOW Giant River Otters. I was so happy to see them, It was incredible watching them interact and move around. Unlike the European Otters that I spend so much time with in Scotland these otters travel in groups and they are very social. It was a brilliant sighting to end the day with and everyone was so happy to see them. As the light was fading we had to leave the otters to get back to the lodge. So we continued our journey. Another great end to a great day.

Again we had a lovely meal and slept early.



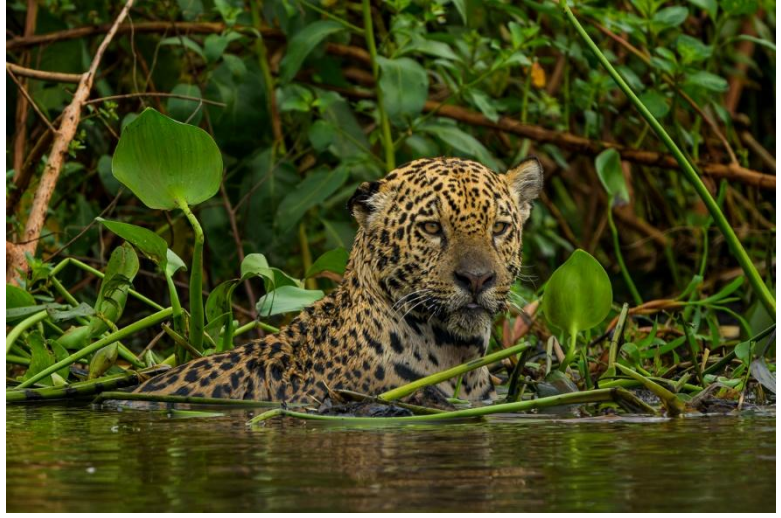
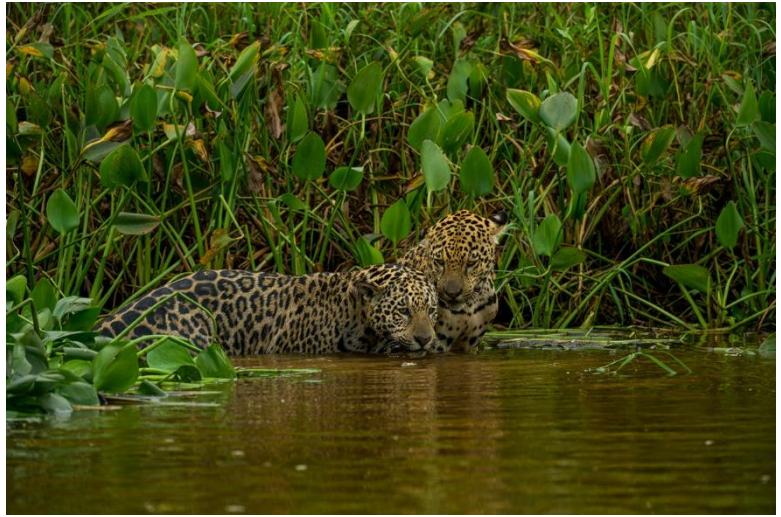


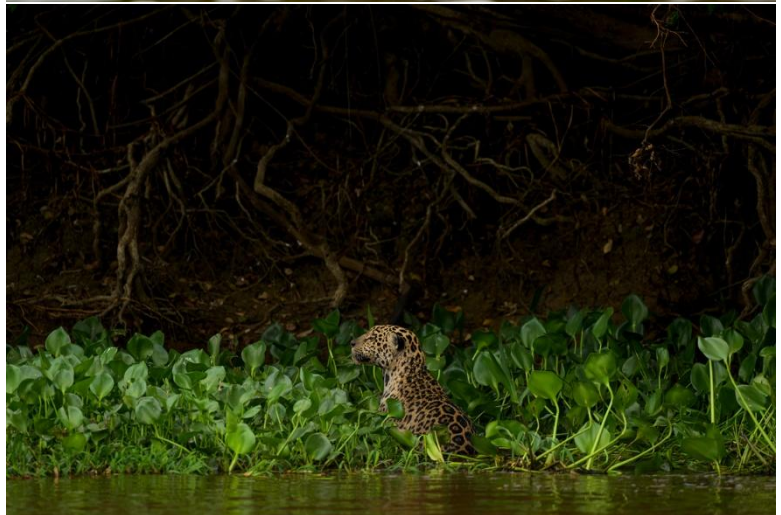




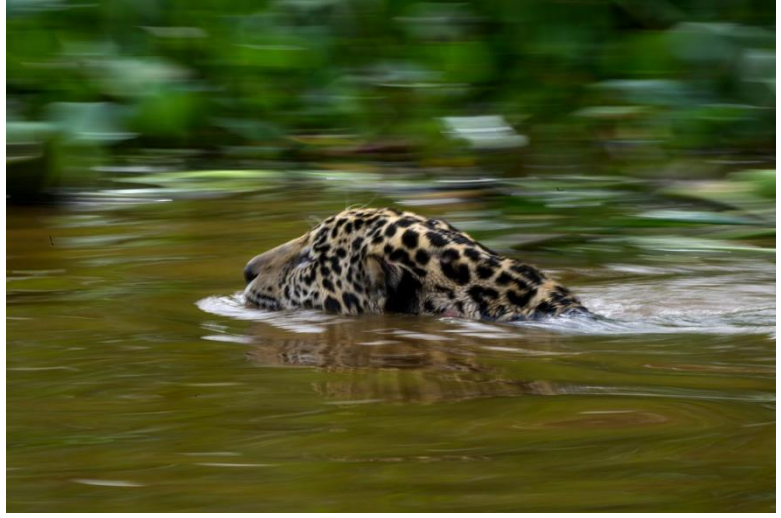


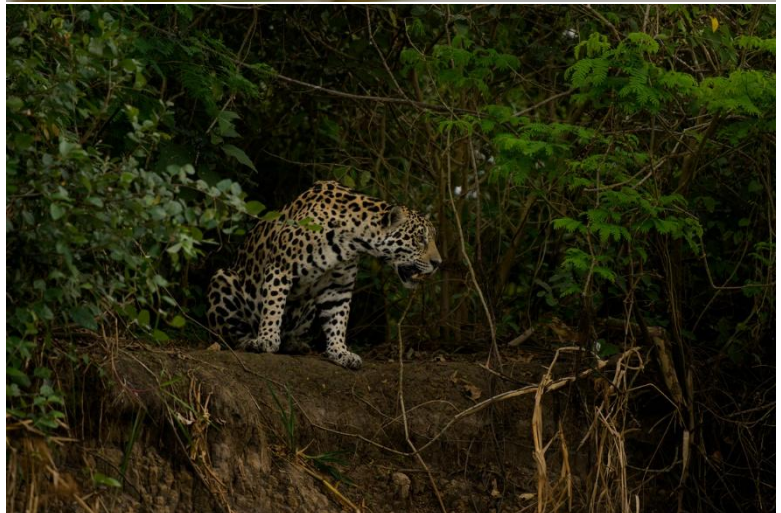
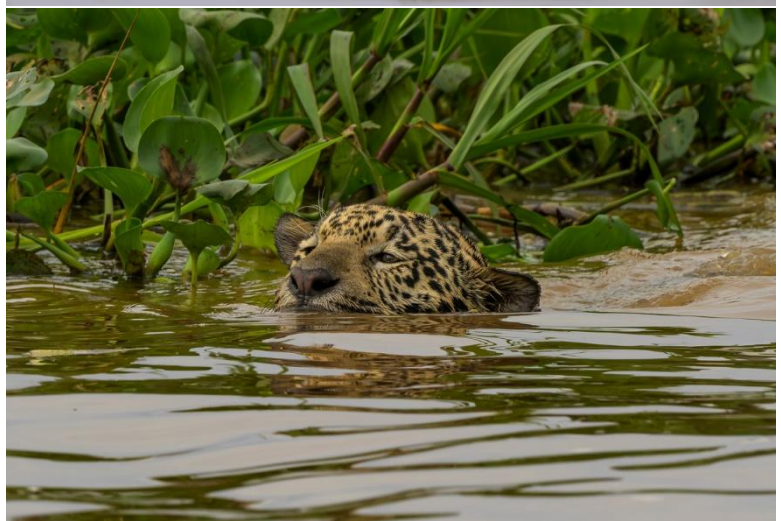














Day 4 Tuesday 4th August

We again had a lovely early breakfast made our sandwiches and then set off on our boat. Today we had a different plan. Our guide and boat driver wanted us to go to the Piquiri River so we could look at a different location and have a day without too many boats. To be honest having been to many destinations in the world and experienced tiger sightings with lots of vehicles and the madness of Masai Mara in High Season, I didn't find the Jaguar sightings too bad. Most of the boat drivers have respect for the Jaguars and for each other with everything well organised and

done in the right way. The most boats we had around a sighting was around 25 and that was on one of the wider stretches of river and everyone kept a good distance from the Jaguars and nobody drove in front of each other so it was well organised. But it would be nice to get away from people and go somewhere different. Our focus this morning was to look for more Giant River Otters and the King Vulture. We were told that Jaguar sightings would be less if indeed we saw any but that we would see birds and monkeys. We were fine with this after 2 brilliant days. As we set off the light was stunning and we stopped to photograph an Anhinga resting on a tree with its wings out.

We then found another group of Giant River Otters. The light was stunning for these and I was able to do some black background images and low-key photography as the sun was lighting them beautifully in the shadows. Everyone created some lovely images here and made the most of the light.

After the otters we continued to look for different birds and photographed Chaco Chachalaca, Bare Faced Curassow, Osprey, Bare Faced Ibis and Pied Lapwing.

We then photographed Black-Collared Hawk, Ringed Kingfisher and Great Kisadee.

We also photographed some Capybara and then we stopped at a sandy beach area. When it is hot this is where the vultures come down to drink. As we watched there were quite a few black vultures that had landed on the beach and were drinking. Then our boat driver spotted a speck in the Sky it was a King Vulture. We watched and waited and hoped that it would land on the beach, after circling for a while it dropped out of the sky and landed on the shoreline. The King Vulture is much larger than the black vultures and is a beautiful – it is largely black and white but has a very colourful head. They are very shy and easily disturbed so we kept a distance from the shoreline but were able to get a few images of this amazing bird.

It then flew off and perched in a near tree before once again taking to the sky. We then found a group of Howler Monkeys. This was another species we had hoped to see this morning and we were able to get a few relatively close images of them. We then decided to head back to the main river and look for a Jaguar before returning to the lodge. On the way back our guide spotted a bird that we had all wanted to see – It was a Sun Bittern. Wow another amazing sighting. We watched from a distance as it chased butterflies and insects on the shoreline. It was another great sighting.

On the way back we had a nice sighting of a Capped Heron and a Cooi Heron with a fish.

Then back at the main channel we saw our first Jaguar. It was one of the 2 males. It was sat on the shoreline in the grass. We took a few images of this and then the other one joined with a large fish in its mouth. We then saw another unrelated female and the background on this Jaguar was amazing so we got a few more different images. We then decided to go and look at the skimmers again so left the Jaguars. On the way we saw a Jabiru Stork. We had seen them before but these were in much better light and were collecting water to take back to the young in the nest. It was fascinating to watch and was another really nice encounter.

The Skimmers were amazing again with some really lovely light. We were able to try panning again and capture some images of them skimming along the top of the water.

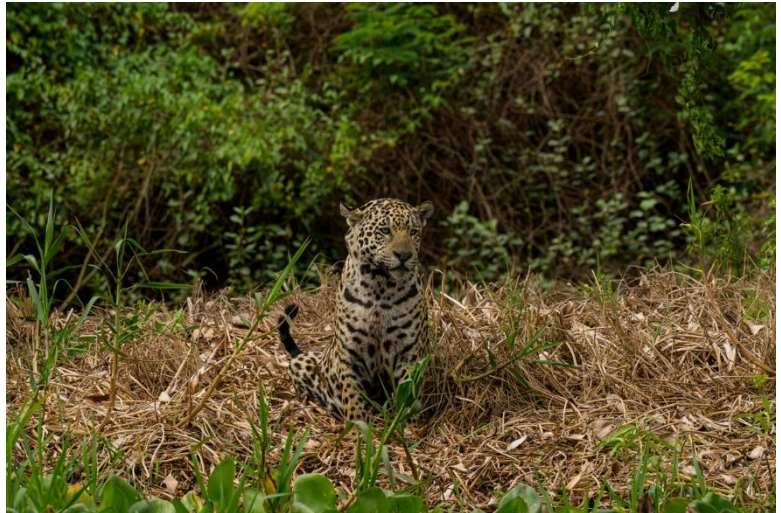
We then found another Jaguar this one was just resting near a tree but we were able to get relatively close to it so were able to capture some nice portrait shots and closer up head shots. It was also another opportunity to try something different with motion blur and ICM type images.

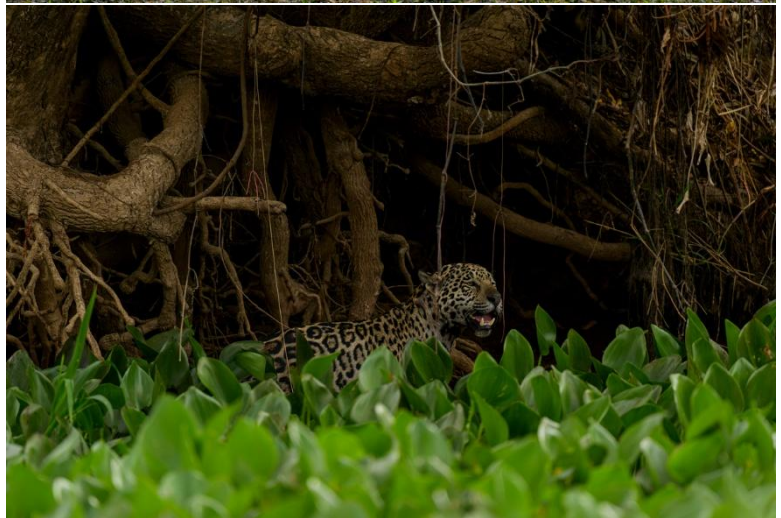
We left this Jaguar after it disappeared in to the trees and as we were travelling back we found some more Giant River Otters. Wow – amazing. This was a bigger group and this was the best sighting that we had for interaction images. It was great to watch them playing and mutually grooming each other. Another fantastic sighting.

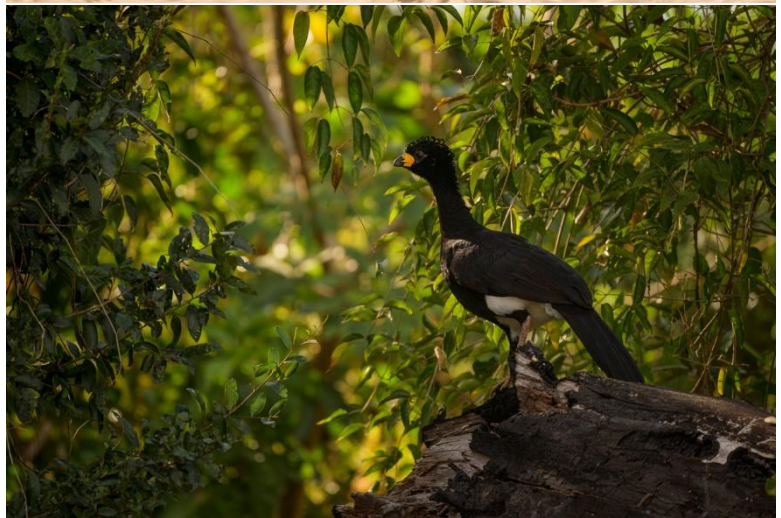
We then left the main area again and travelled back to our lodge.

As we had dinner that evening, we discussed the trip so far and everyone was so shocked at the sheer volume of great wildlife sightings we had over 3 days. Not just the jaguars but the birds, the monkeys and the otters. We discussed the plan for the next day and decided as it was our last day here and we were unlikely to see Jaguar after that day we would focus on Jaguars.







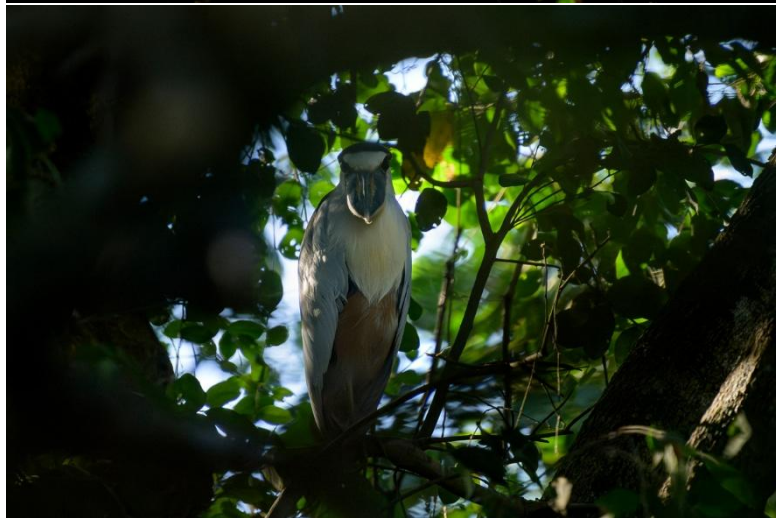
















Day 4 Wednesday 5th August.

We again had a lovely breakfast and made our packed lunches. We then set off for our last day on the river at this location. We didn't have long to wait until we found our first Jaguar. It was the female from the first day resting in a tree. We were able to capture a few images here and it was nice to be able to play around with the light and shadows and shoot underexposed to try and create some different portraits. This Jaguar stayed for a while and then went back in to the bushes. We then found the 2 males again. They were again swimming and moving around. We stayed with them again for quite some time. As they went in to a side channel I decided that we should leave them, so we did a few boats followed them but most left them to go on their way. They did not show any sign of stress but It just felt like the right thing to do to let them have some space away from the boats.

We continued down river and saw a small group of boats. They had seen a mother Jaguar and a younger cub. We waited to see if we could catch a glimpse of them walking along. We had a few brief views and then for a matter of seconds the cub appeared and walked in to the sunlight next to a large old tree. I shot a few images, luckily I shot on the fastest frame rate as the moment was over so quickly but I got one image in this sequence which is one of my favourite images of the whole trip.

We followed them for a while and they paused at times to sit on the river bank but often the cub stayed hidden. It was lovely to see and as I did get a few images from this encounter that I really liked.

They both then moved away from the river, and we decided to focus on photographing some of the Caiman for a while. The light was perfect for this and really brought out the texture and detail on the Caiman skin. We were able to take a few images of these amazing reptiles. We then continued upriver and found another Jaguar resting under a tree, the light was lovely shining through the trees and casting some lovely, dappled light on the Jaguar. It was another different type of image because of the light.

As we continued along this stretch of river we found the mother and cub that had come back to the river and were sitting together on the river bank. They then laid down and went to sleep. We moved in to the shade across the river from them and had our lunch. We hoped they would wake up and greet each other. As we were eating lunch one of my clients looked behind our boat and said quietly there is a jaguar behind us. As we looked there was a huge male Jaguar in the water.

This Jaguar had a collar on it. This Jaguar was Ousado.

Ousado, whose name means “bold” or “daring” in Portuguese, was a young male jaguar living in the Pantanal when devastating wildfires swept through the region in 2020. He suffered severe burns, especially to his paws, and was found in critical condition, having lost a great deal of weight. Wildlife veterinarians rescued him and treated him using innovative techniques, including fish-skin grafts to help heal his burned paws. After months of care, he recovered and was released back into the wild.

Researchers fitted Ousado with a radio collar so they could monitor his movements and survival after release. According to reports about him, the collar eventually stopped functioning, but wildlife experts decided not to remove it because Ousado was thriving and removing it would require sedating him again, which carries risks in the wetland environment.

What makes Ousado especially famous is his unusual hunting behavior. Observers have documented him using the Pantanal's rivers to stalk prey, sometimes swimming underwater and attempting to surface beneath unsuspecting animals such as capybaras. This technique reflects the jaguar's extraordinary adaptation to the flooded landscapes of the Pantanal.

Today, Ousado has become a symbol of both the resilience of wildlife and the conservation efforts underway in the Pantanal. His survival after catastrophic burns and successful return to life as a wild predator have inspired conservationists and wildlife enthusiasts around the world.

A lot of people don't like photographing collared animals and to a certain extent I am one of them, however Ousado is a symbol of the Pantanal and one of the most famous and iconic Jaguars alive and his story is worth telling and photographing. He was one of the Jaguars I had hoped to see and here he was. We didn't find him, he found us.

We moved the boat away to give him space and then watched as he swam along the shoreline and dived a few times looking for Caiman. He really is huge and is such an incredible Jaguar. After a while Ousado went in to the bushes so we went back to the mother and cub.

They were still sleeping so we decided to go and look for Ousado again. On the way the other Jaguar was still sleeping under the tree, we had a different position and the light was different so

we took a few more different images here. We then found Ousado resting on top of the river bank. It was nice to take a few portraits of him here. He then got back in to the river and continued moving along the river bank.

We left Ousado and one of my clients wanted to look for more Caiman and hopefully some with butterflies on them.

The butterflies are usually there for salt and other nutrients, not because they have a special relationship with the caiman.

Many butterflies in the Pantanal engage in a behaviour called lacryphagy, which means "tear-feeding." They land on caimans and drink moisture from around the eyes because the tears contain salts and minerals that are often hard for butterflies to obtain from nectar alone.

Butterflies are known to seek nutrients from unusual sources such as mud, animal dung, and other mineral-rich liquids. Caiman tears are another convenient source of those nutrients.

This is why wildlife photographers in the Pantanal sometimes capture striking images of orange Julia butterflies sitting on a yacare caiman's snout, head, or near its eyes.

The caiman usually tolerates the butterflies, although it may blink or move its head. The butterflies benefit from the nutrients, while the caiman appears to be neither significantly helped nor harmed.

It's one of those wonderful Pantanal scenes that looks almost mythical: a fearsome reptile resting in the sun while delicate butterflies use it as a floating mineral bar.

It is an image that we had looked for but hadn't been able to get, but as we pulled in to one of the side channels there were lots of Caiman and most of them had butterflies on them!! We were able to spend a while capturing images of the butterflies in various different places on the caiman. This was brilliant and was a welcome change from the Jaguars.

After the butterflies disappeared and the Caiman had gone under the water, we went back to the main channel. We found another Jagua which was the mother from the first day in a beautiful location on a tree. We were able to play around with zoom bursts and ICM here and also to shoot high key and low key depending on where we positioned the boat. It was possible to shoot 5 or 6 completely different images from this one sighting and it was brilliant. Whilst watching the Jaguar I looked behind the boat and saw another Jaguar moving through the water towards the tree. I took one of my favourite images as it flicked its tail with the water droplets splashing off of the tail in a perfect circle. This was one of the cubs from the first day and we watched as it climbed the tree and greeted its mother. It stayed for a while before going back in to the bushes.

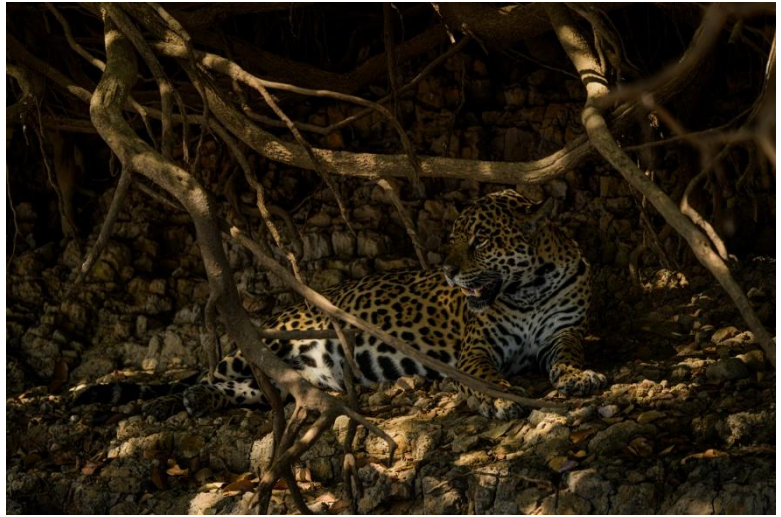
We watched the mother Jaguar for a little longer before returning to the lodge. In one day we had seen 8 different Jaguars. It was quite incredible and was a great end to our time with the Jaguars. Tomorrow we would be going to a different location with opportunities for different Pantanal Wildlife.

Overall in our 4 days on the river we saw 18 different Jaguars and had over 25 sightings. It sounds impressive, but it wasn't just the number of sightings that was impressive it was the quality and variety of sightings. It was an experience that will stay with me and my clients for a very long time.

We had dinner and an early night ready to move on to our next adventure.

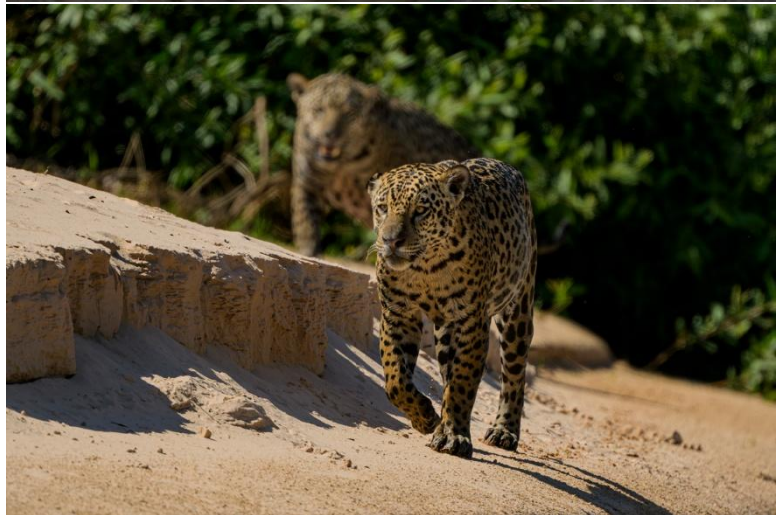
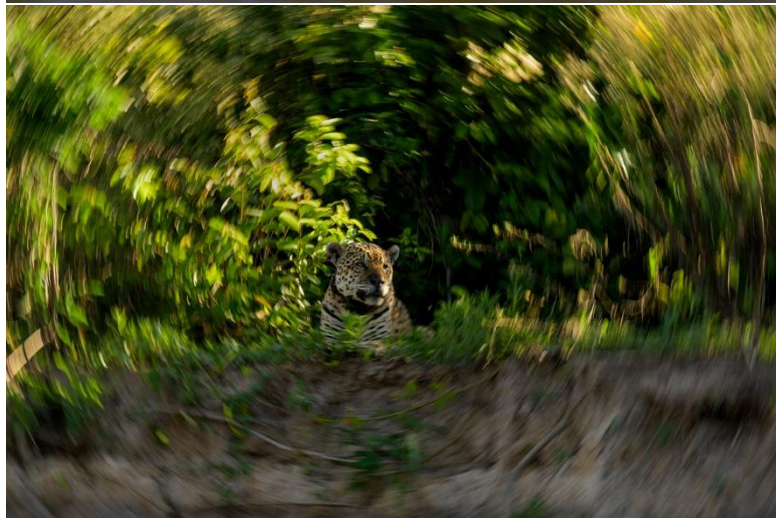






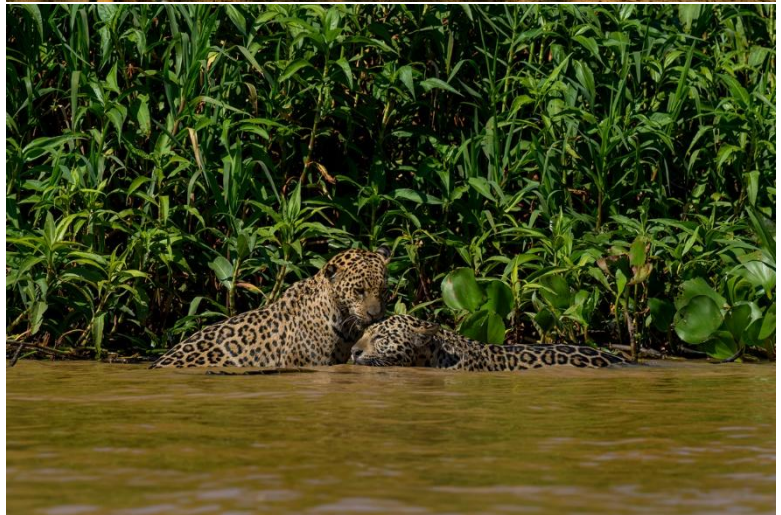


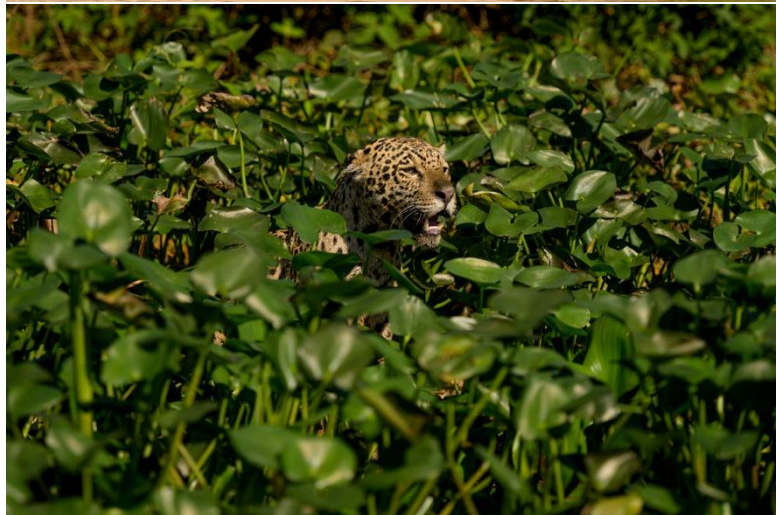


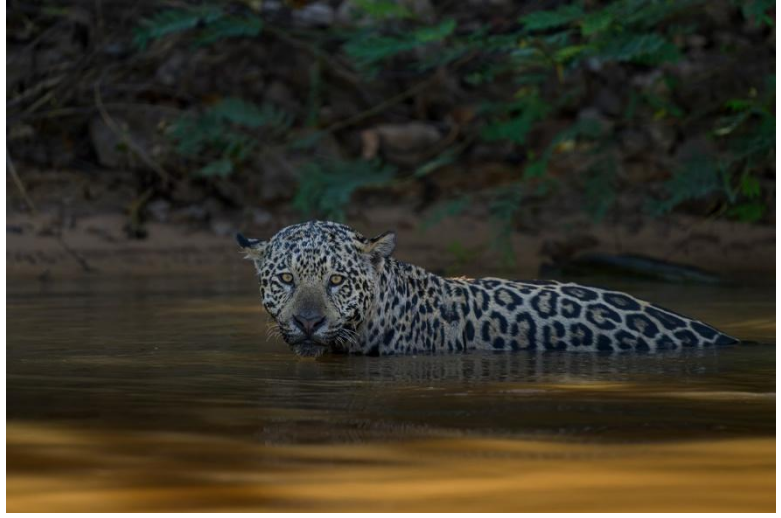




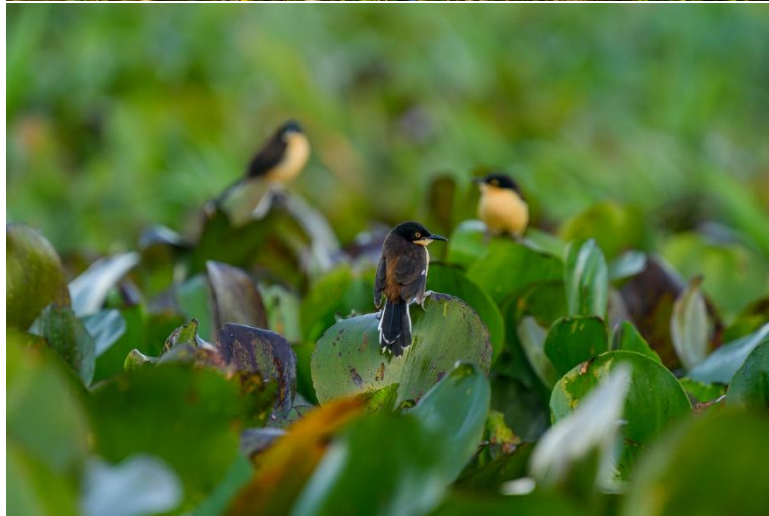












Day 5 Thursday 6th August.

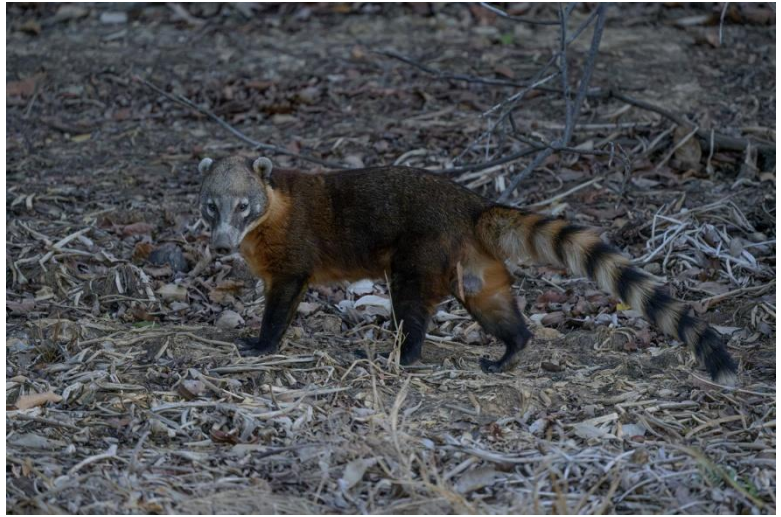
We had a slightly later breakfast at 6am and packed and left around 7am. Our journey today took us back along the Transpantaneira Road. We were again prepared to stop if we saw anything of interest and allowed enough time to do this in the itinerary. But we actually arrived at our next location Pousada Rio Claro. This lodge is set on the banks of the Rio Clara River and is a brilliant location for birds and Giant River Otters. As we were too early to check in in to our lodge we were immediately drawn to the bird feeders where there were so many different birds. Whilst

we were waiting to check in we photographed Yellow-chevrons parakeets, Nanday Parakeets, Shiny Cowbird, Giant Cowbird, Grey Crested Cacholete, Southern Crested Caracara, Chestnut Bellied Guan, Yellow Billed Cardinal and Saffron Finch. There were so many different birds and it kept us occupied for some time. We then had lunch and after lunch we photographed the Capachin Monkeys. At 2pm our rooms were ready, so we checked in and charged batteries etc then at 3:30pm we left for an afternoon boat trip on the river. This is a boat trip where the boat driver throws a fish in to the water for the Black Collared Hawk so you were able to capture some incredible images of these impressive birds coming to fish right next to the boat. We set off down river and soon found our first hawk. We were all able to capture some images of the hawk flying straight at us to pluck a fish from the surface of the water. We continued down river and found a tapir relaxing in the cool water away from the heat of the sun. This made for some nice portrait shots and was the first Tapir Sighting for my clients. We then continued and stopped for some Jacana in the thick water vegetation and soon we heard the Giant River Otters, we didn't stay long with them as the light was very harsh and we had already had some wonderful moments with these animals. Our Guide then pointed out a group of creatures on the shoreline, they were strange looking animals and from a distance side on almost looked like dinosaurs, as we got closer to them we could see the red fur and the stripey tail. They were South American Coatis. Wow another animal that I had hoped to see on this trip. They stayed by the shore for a while and then one climbed up on to a fallen dead tree. It posed for a while whilst we took a few images and then they all moved away into the forest. Next we saw a beautiful Sun Grebe which had climbed on to a tree.

We then started to head back up stream, we stopped briefly to throw another fish in for a different Collared Hawk. This time the Collared Hawk missed the Fish and a Great Black Hawk came in to steal its catch. We then left the river and travelled the short distance back to the lodge. Just as we arrived we saw another Tapir so we jumped out to photograph this as the light was starting to fade and then as we were walking across the parking area we saw a Jabiru Stork sat on a tree next to its nest. This was a great opportunity to shoot a silhouette of the stork against the orange sky.

We then went back to our rooms and met for dinner at 7:30pm. We had a lovely meal and an early night.













Day 6 Friday 7th August.

We had breakfast at 6:30am and then left for a second boat trip. As we set off in the boat we saw a Toco Toucan. The one bird everyone really wanted to see.

Despite trying to get a little closer to it the Toucan flew off to another distant tree across the river. So we decided to go up river a little way to find some Black Collared Hawks. The light this morning was stunning and we soon found some hawks. The Boat Driver through a fish in and the

hawk came down and took the fish, then a 2nd black collared hawk appeared so another fish went in the water, this time the hawk wasn't quick enough, and a Great Black Hawk came in and took the fish from the water. A brilliant start with 2 different hawks coming to take fish with stunning light.

We then turned around and went back down the river, hoping to find more hawks and other birds. We soon found another hawk, a heron and a kingfisher all came to take fish off of the water that the boatman through in.

We then saw a group of Capybara in beautiful golden light close to the water, as we approached, we could see birds perching on the Capybara. The birds were shiny Cowbird and Purplish Jay, this made a good photographic sighting even more interesting, and everyone got a few images of this behaviour. We continued down river and photographed a few more birds and then our guide said that he could here some marmosets. We then saw some movement in the nearby trees. The marmosets were getting closer to us and decided to come and investigate what we were doing. They eventually all sat on a branch and were grooming and playing with each other for quite some time. Another different mammal sighting. Another amazing photo opportunity.

It had been another action packed morning with some amazing sightings but it was time to leave and make our way back to the lodge. We were due to have lunch at 12pm and then leave at 1pm for our next location. We had a relaxing few hours at the lodge before lunch and it was nice to have a little bit of down time as this trip had been so fast paced.

After lunch we packed the vehicle and left for our final destination the Pouso Alegre Lodge. Our main targets here were birds especially the Toco Toucan and the Chestnut-Eared Aracari. We also hoped that we would see more tapir and possibly even a Giant Anteater. It only took us half an hour to drive to the lodge and we checked in and had the afternoon to relax. We were due to go on a vehicle based drive at 3pm to search the grasslands to see what we could see. We were ready to leave and there was an issue with the vehicle so we changed plans and jumped in to our mini bus and drove down to one of the waterholes and sat there whilst they fixed or replaced the vehicle. In the time we were at the waterhole we saw some amazing birds including Toco Toucan, Crested Oropendola, Bare-Faced Curassow, Yellow Headed Vulture and Black Vulture.

As well as the variety of birds we had Capuchin Monkeys come down to drink a Red Brocket Deer and then to our surprise a mother tapir and her young calf. The tapirs went in to the water and spent time swimming, drinking and at times they would swap and share a tender moment together. It was an amazing sighting as the sun started to drop.

Our original vehicle came to pick us up as it had now been fixed and we returned to the lodge. When we got back we were told that at 6pm they put a small quantity of food out for an Ocelot and so we were keen to try and photograph this as well, we all got in to position and sat and watched the tree where the food was. We saw a movement on the ground, It was a Crab Eating Fox. We had seen a few of them but not very well and it was nice to see this illuminated by the spotlight. A while later they spotlighted the tree again and there was the Ocelot sat at the bottom of the tree. I had been fortunate enough to photograph the Ocelot on my trip I did before this started but it was still amazing to see and for my clients was one of the highlights. We watched the Ocelot for around 15 minutes before it disappeared off into the forest. Another really nice sighting of a very elusive cat. We then had dinner and after dinner went on a night drive. On the drive we saw more Crab-Eating Foxes. Tapir, Caiman, a group of 3 Hoary Foxes,

deer and a Common Potoo bird. The night drive wasn't spectacular for photography, but it was nice to add some more species and to be out after dark. We returned to the lodge and slept.













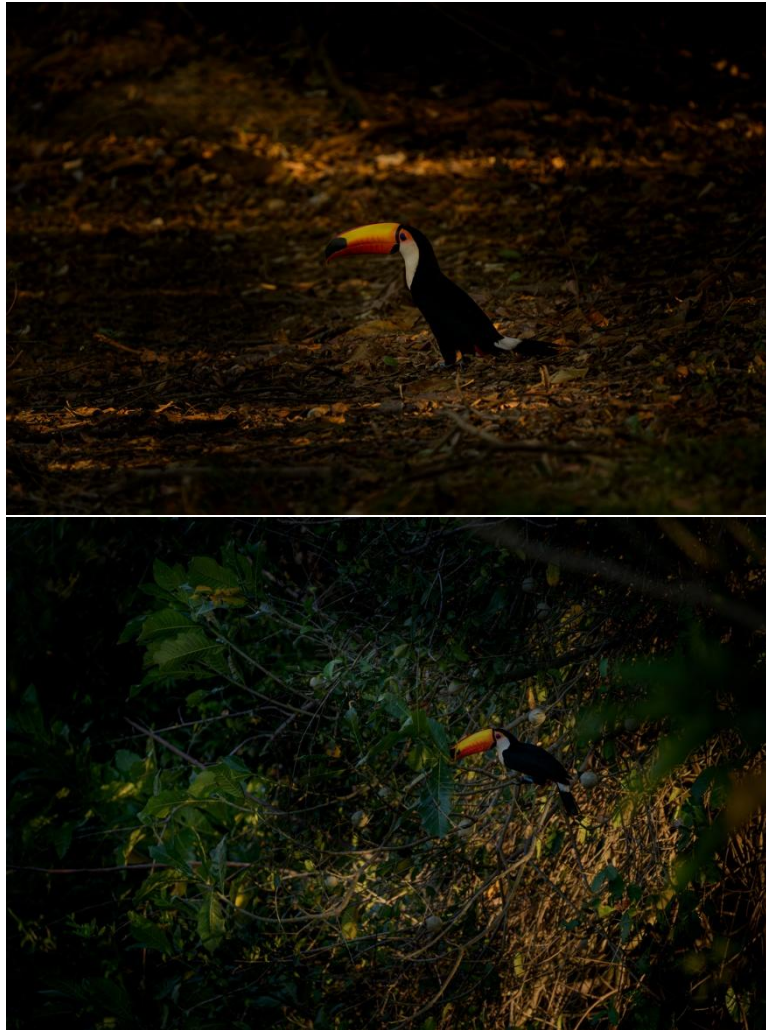












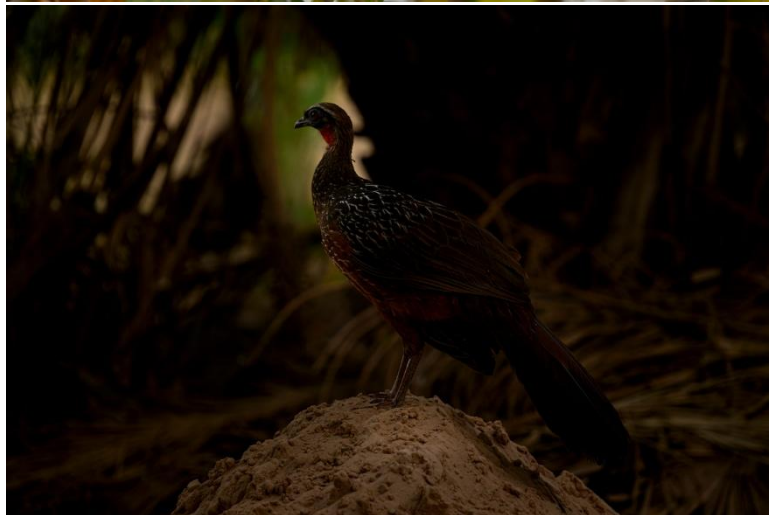
Day 7 Saturday 8th August.

We woke early and wanted to be at the bird feeders at 6am. The lodge puts out fruit and seed for the birds at 6:30 and we really hoped that we would get some close up views of Toucan and other birds. We sat and waited and there were already lots of birds around but none of the birds that we really hoped to see. As it got closer to 6:30am we heard the distinctive calls of the Toucan and the Chestnut-Eared Aracari. These were the 2 that we hoped to get. The Toucans perched in a tall tree and stayed a distance away, close enough to photograph (just) but not close enough to get the type of images we hoped to get, but the Aracarís were amazing. They came down to the feeders and were very close, so we were able to get some lovely images of these amazingly colourful birds. As it got later, we had monkeys come down to the feeders and a Coati. Then just as we were leaving for breakfast, we had a visit from a Black and White Tegu Lizard. It was huge and sat in the sun for a while. After breakfast we had the opportunity to go for a walk around the lodge grounds but everyone decided to just relax and look at images in the cool air-conditioned rooms. We had lunch at around 12:30 and left after lunch. We travelled back to Cuiaba and arrived at the airport hotel at around 3:30pm. The rest of the afternoon we repacked as we were all flying to Argentina the next day and I caught up on a lot of outstanding admin.









All in all the trip was a huge success and we had some incredible sightings. I feel so lucky that I got to spend this time in Brazil. The Pantanal is every bit as good as the reports, reviews and images suggest. I really cannot wait to go back again next year.

Next year I will be offering the same trip and a longer trip where instead of flying home on day 8 you will then transfer to the other location that I did for maned wolf, hummingbirds, ocelot, Amazon based birds and hummingbirds. That itinerary will be up on the website alongside this one so you can choose what you would like to do.

