

ITINERARY

**SAFARI BRAZIL: THE PANTANAL & MORE**

*September 21-October 6, 2019*

**Brazilian Merganser Extension**

*October 5-10, 2019*



*The Pin-tailed Manakin is an endemic found in the Atlantic forests of eastern Brazil. We've been able to get good views these gorgeous birds on our recent tours. Photograph by participant Brian Stech.*

*We include here information for those interested in the 2019 Field Guides Safari Brazil tour:*

- a general introduction to the tour
- a description of the birding areas to be visited on the tour
- an abbreviated daily itinerary with some indication of the nature of each day's birding outings

*Those who register for the tour will be sent this additional material:*

- an annotated list of the birds recorded on a previous year's Field Guides trip to the area, with comments by guide(s) on notable species or sightings (may be downloaded from our website)
- a detailed information bulletin with important logistical information and answers to questions regarding accommodations, air arrangements, clothing, currency, customs and immigration, documents, health precautions, and personal items
- a reference list
- a Field Guides checklist for preparing for and keeping track of the birds we see on the tour
- after the conclusion of the tour, a list of birds seen on the tour

**If** you have been contemplating a first birding trip to Brazil, this is perhaps the best one to take. Why? Because the habitats are especially "birder-friendly" and relatively open, allowing birds to be seen easily and repeatedly. This helps you enjoy and assimilate one part of the complex and incredible birdlife gigantic Brazil has to offer. And what if you have already been to Brazil a time or two (we offer a dozen or so different tours annually)? Safari Brazil is sure to complement your experience with a rich variety of birds restricted to the southwest or the Central Plateau, while showing you another beautiful part of the South American continent. Birders who have already birded all around the margins of our tour route

usually see around 40 life birds. Traveling around in this region of Brazil is fun—it’s sort of like the “Brazilian Outback.” People are super-friendly, the food is fabulous, and getting thirsty because you were so busy seeing lifers that you forgot to drink any water (we’ll remind you) makes those ice-cold beers, lemonades, and *caipirinhas* (beware, but again we’ll warn you) slide down deliciously at the end of the day. Furthermore, we stay at some delightful accommodations right in the midst of good birding. Our visit is timed to coincide with the normal end of the long dry season—hopefully, just after some of the first rains have moistened the parched cerrado and Pantanal, catalyzing a veritable explosion of wildflowers, insects, and birds.

Central Brazil is a melting pot of habitats and avifaunas—with some unique spectacles unsurpassed elsewhere. It’s hard to equal the sheer excitement of watching a flock of deep-blue Hyacinth Macaws, the world’s largest parrot, circling over the wilds of Mato Grosso... or the impressive numbers of big birds—waterbirds, raptors, cracids, parrots, Guira Cuckoos—in the Pantanal, the world’s largest freshwater wetland. And what of the immense stretches of hip-high grassland dotted with the world’s highest density of terrestrial termitaria—and hence of Giant Anteaters? At Emas National Park on the Central Plateau, these huge anteaters with the funnel-shaped snouts wander among foraging Greater Rheas and herds of Pampas Deer, while male Cock-tailed Tyrants, the most sprightly of all flycatchers, hover in courtship over the grass like toy helicopters, their tails cocked vertically over their backs. Each of our groups has enjoyed stunning encounters with the elegant and endangered Maned Wolf, a large rufous wolf with black stilt-like legs, a black mane, and white chin and tail; it stalks tinamous and other prey in the tall-grass savannas and even slips quietly up the rock stairway of the ancient monastery at Caraca for food scraps supplied by the monks. We see around twenty species of mammals on the tour, often including Brazilian Tapir, and photographic opportunities abound. In fact, the abundance and conspicuousness of large birds and mammals in Central Brazil have been likened to those of East Africa and are unequaled elsewhere in the Neotropics.

Our tour is designed to sample the avian highlights of Brazil’s Central Plateau (Planalto Central) and of the vast Pantanal, the low-lying drainage of the upper Paraguay River. We also visit the magnificent Serra do Cipo and Serra do Caraca, isolated ranges in central Minas Gerais state, supporting several restricted endemics as well as a more widespread avifauna characteristic of the humid Atlantic-coast forests which here spill over westward toward the plateau. The itinerary includes several parks rarely visited by other organized birding tours and harboring such rarities and specialties as Lesser Nothura, Bare-faced Curassow, White-winged Nightjar, Horned Sungem, Hyacinth Visorbearer, the recently described Cipo Canastero, Large-tailed Antshrike, Serra Antwren, the recently described Rock Tapaculo, Gray-backed Tachuri, Swallow-tailed Cotinga, Helmeted Manakin, Gray-eyed Greenlet, White-striped Warbler, Yellow-billed Blue Finch, Pale-throated Pampa-Finch, Cinereous Warbling-Finch, and a host of rare and brightly colored seedeaters.



*The wonderful Maned Wolf is a distinctive canid found in grassland habitats of central South America. We’ll likely see these beautiful animals near Caraca. Photograph by participant Sylvia Hanson.*

**About the Physical Requirements & Pace:** Throughout most of our safari we will be amply repaid for being out in the field as early as it's light enough to see birds. Not only does bird activity peak early in the warmer climes, but in the Pantanal on a sunny morn it can be hot by 8:00 a.m.! Most days will see us up before dawn to have breakfast before heading out. Fortunately, since our accommodations are generally at or near our birding destinations, we won't have far to go. As possible, especially in the warmer areas, we'll be back to the *pousada* for lunch and a siesta (or a swim) before late afternoon birding. On travel days and in the cooler climes, e.g., at Caraca (where activity may well continue all day with good weather), we'll want to be out most of the day. We also plan some (optional) nighttime forays for owls, nightjars, and nocturnal mammals in the Pantanal, and at Emas and Caraca.

Almost all birding will be along roads or on level ground. Walking in the Pantanal and in the Emas area is rather limited, and we'll spend most of our time in the back of open-air trucks for viewing the birds and other wildlife. The few trails that we'll walk in these two areas are rather short and vary from very flat and easy in the Pantanal to narrow and uneven at Emas. The last few days at Caraca and Cipo will involve hillier terrain, and we will be birding on foot at Caraca, primarily along well-maintained trails. **Here and at Cipo we may have to hike for several kilometers to see some of the specialties of these areas. None of this hiking is especially strenuous, and all of it is through beautiful terrain, but some trails are steep in spots and quite narrow.** On a normal tour, the most strenuous part of any hike at Caraca is the steep cobblestone path that leads to the Cascatona trail behind the monastery. At Cipo, we may have to hike over moderately steep and rocky terrain in order to see the local Cipo Canastero.

If you are uncertain about whether this tour is a good match for your abilities, please don't hesitate to contact our office; if they cannot directly answer your queries, they will put you in touch with your guide.

## About the Birding Areas



**Cerrado**—Bounded to the northwest by Amazonian forests, to the northeast by the semidesert Caatinga, to the southwest by the wetlands of the Pantanal, and to the southeast by the humid coastal forests, the Planalto Central is a high, gently rolling plain dissected by an intricate system of rivers and streams that drain the abundant moisture of the rainy season. It probably averages around 3000 feet in elevation. Ecologically, the region constitutes the Cerrado, which supports a variety of habitat types. Where the reddish soil tends toward clay, there is grassland or *campo*, with the ever-present ringing whistles of the Red-winged Tinamou. Extensive grasslands support such specialties as Spotted and Lesser (rare) nothuras, Scissor-tailed and White-winged nightjars, Campo Miner (recent burns), Collared Crescent-chest, Cock-tailed, Sharp-tailed, and Streamer-tailed tyrants, Stripe-

tailed Yellow-Finch, Yellow-billed Blue Finch, and Black-masked Finch. Low-lying, flat sections of such grassland support seasonal marshes where Ash-throated Crakes, Yellow-rumped Marshbirds, and a dazzling array of erratic seedeaters (including Plumbeous, Capped, Marsh, Chestnut, Tawny-bellied, Gray-and-chestnut, and, for the first time in 2001, the critically endangered Naroskys) are sometimes found.

Where the soil tends toward sand, there is *campo sujo* or cerrado woodland characterized by low, twisted, well-spaced trees and scrubby undergrowth—nesting habitat for snake-eating Red-legged Seriemas and stunning Curl-crested Jays. Other cerrado inhabitants include Picazuro Pigeon, Peach-fronted Parakeet, Yellow-faced Parrot, Horned Sungem, White-vented Violet-ear, Swallow-tailed Hummingbird, White-eared and Spot-backed puffbirds, Campo Flicker, Green-barred and Checkered woodpeckers, Firewood-gatherer, Rufous-winged Antshrike, Suiriri Flycatcher, Rufous Casiornis, Gray and White-rumped monjitas, Chalk-browed Mockingbird, White-rumped, White-banded, and Cinnamon tanagers, Black-throated Saltator, Cinereous Warbling-Finch, and Coal-crested Finch.

The riverbanks are lined with gallery forest while ribbons of *Mauritia* palms border the lesser streams. These riverine woodlands teem with birds, sheltering such specialties as the huge Toco Toucan, White-wedged Piculet, Pale-crested Woodpecker, Russet-mantled Foliage-gleaner, Large-billed Antwren, an undescribed tapaculo taxon closely related to

Mouse-colored Tapaculo, Planalto Tyrannulet, White-bellied and White-striped (scarce) warblers, Pale-bellied Tyrant-Manakin, and the crispy red-and-black Helmeted Manakin.

Birding areas on the tour that contain a range of Cerrado habitats are: the Campo Grande area right to the Pantanal, Emas National Park, and Cipo National Park (at the eastern rim of the plateau).



*We'll see Southern Screamers and many other water birds in the Pantanal. Photograph by guide Marcelo Padua.*

**The Pantanal**—The ecological region designated as the Pantanal is the low-elevation region of Mato Grosso and Mato Grosso do Sul in the basin of the Rio Paraguai, a south-flowing river of little gradient which crosses Paraguay, joins the Parana, and empties eastward at Buenos Aires. Its climate is that of the Cerrado, with a pronounced dry season from April to October. However, much of the region is seasonally inundated or otherwise saturated during the rainy season due to poor drainage. The Pantanal supports a range of habitat types varying from semi-deciduous and evergreen forests on well-drained, fertile soils to cerrado/savanna on infertile soils; from tree-palm woodlands on moist soil to permanent marsh and true pantanal, i.e., flat, seasonally flooded grassland with scattered clumps of cerrado scrub on slightly elevated soil platforms whose surfaces do not become inundated.

With appropriate (though ever-changing) water levels, water-associated species can be found in abundance, from Yacare Caiman and Capybara to Great Black-Hawk, Black-collared Hawk, Southern Screamer, whistling-ducks, Limpkin, Neotropical Cormorant, Wattled Jacana, and herons, egrets, spoonbills, storks (sometimes three species), ibises (four to five species including Plumbeous), and kingfishers. Add to these the fabulous Hyacinth Macaws and an array of interesting land birds (such as Undulated and Small-billed tinamous, Chaco Chachalaca, Blue-throated Piping-Guan, Bare-faced Curassow, Long-tailed Ground-Dove, Golden-collared Macaws, Monk, Nanday, and Blaze-winged parakeets, Blue-fronted Parrot, Great Potoo, Nacunda Nighthawk, White-wedged Piculet, White and Pale-crested woodpeckers, Chotoy, White-lored, and Rusty-backed spinetails, Narrow-billed, Planalto, and Great Rufous woodcreepers, Red-billed Scythebill, Gray-crested Cacholote, Rusty-backed Antwren, Mato Grosso Antbird, White and White-rumped monjitas, Fawn-breasted Wren, Plush-crested Jay, Red-crested and Yellow-billed cardinals, White-bellied, Rusty-collared, and Dark-throated seedeaters, Unicolored and Scarlet-headed blackbirds, Orange-backed Troupial, and Golden-winged Cacique), and the hot, humid Pantanal may well constitute the highlight of the trip. On this trip we'll be birding the southeastern corner of the Pantanal with Pousada Aguape and Fazenda San Francisco as our bases.

**Upper Reaches of the Serras**—Toward the southeastern corner of the Brazilian Plateau are some discrete mountain ranges (*serras*, pronounced *sáy-haws*) uplifted above the level of the Planalto Central. Their upper reaches are comprised of rocky outcrops full of strange xeric plants and surrounded by grass fields. In addition to a number of unique plant species (which are responsible for the designation of Cipo as a national park), these rocky grass fields support a handful of endemic birds as well: Hyacinth Visorbearer, Cipo Canastero (*Asthenes luizae*, discovered in 1985 at Cipo, 1400 kilometers from its geographically nearest congener!), Gray-backed Tachuri, and Pale-throated Pampa-Finch. We'll seek these specialties in the upper reaches of Serra do Cipo and Serra do Caraca parks.

**Atlantic Forest**—Most of the Serra do Caraca, at the southeasternmost corner of the Plateau, is covered with forest characteristic of the Brazilian Atlantic Forests Biome. Because much of the cloud-held moisture from the Atlantic spills onto the southeastern slope of the range, the northwestern slope (which we visit) is somewhat drier. This transitional forest seems to be prime habitat for a few additional specialties, including the little-known Long-trained Nightjar, Gray-bellied Spinetail, Dusky-tailed and Ochre-rumped antbirds, and Gray-eyed Greenlet (a split from Rufous-crowned Greenlet). The stunted woodland at the margins of small grasslands is prime habitat for the endemic Serra Antwren, a split from Black-bellied Antwren, and for Hangnest Tody-Tyrant. We'll target these specialties during our visit to Caraca. But we'll also encounter a wonderful sampling of forest species typical of the humid forest habitats covered on our SOUTHEASTERN BRAZIL tour—from Dusky-legged Guan, Red-breasted Toucan, and Surucua Trogon to Large-tailed Antshrike, Rufous Gnateater, and an array of dazzling tanagers (most notably Gilt-edged and Brassy-breasted) that sometimes move right through the gardens. The gardens teem with hummingbirds, from Planalto Hermit, White-throated Hummingbird, and Glittering-bellied Emerald to Brazilian Ruby, Black Jacobin, and Violet-capped Woodnymph. We've seen Robust Woodpecker, Tufted Antshrike, nest-building Yellow-lored Tody-Flycatchers, and South American Coatis right from the corner of the garden wall. A small marshy pond at the edge of the parking lot supports Slaty-breasted Wood-Rails and Blackish Rails, and we've seen the fabulous Swallow-tailed Cotinga nest building just below the monastery. Nearby forest supports Crescent-chested Puffbird, Blue and Pin-tailed manakins, Cinnamon-vented Piha, and Red-ruffed Fruitcrow, among many other impressive representatives of southeastern Brazil's Atlantic Forest. Caraca can also be a prime site for nightbirding, given clear, calm weather (which can be rare here). Besides the rare Long-trained Nightjar, possibilities include Band-winged and Scissor-tailed nightjars, Ocellated Poorwill, Tropical Screech-Owl, and the spectacular big Rusty-barred and Tawny-browed owls. Caraca is a great place for an introduction to Atlantic Forest birding.



*A Field Guides group searches for Cipo Canastero in Parque Nacional Serra do Cipo.  
Photograph by participant Marshall Dahl.*

## About Some of the Parks

**Parque Nacional das Emas** (National Park of the Rheas)—In a remote section of the Planalto Central, Emas is a large island (300,000 acres) of wilderness grassland, campos, and gallery woodland surrounded by ranches and farmland. The landscape and the wildlife are incredible. Touted by some as South America's Serengeti, Emas is indeed a refuge for large birds and big, rare mammals, including Greater Rheas, Red-legged Seriemas, Blue-and-yellow Macaws, Giant Anteaters, Brazilian Tapirs, Pampas Deer, and Maned Wolf. Locally important among the Cerrado specialties are the rare Dwarf Tinamou, Lesser Nothura, and White-winged Nightjar, all of which we've seen here over the years.

Another unpredictable highlight at Emas are the erratic flocks of seedeaters, here at least as austral migrants or winterers. Depending on weather and seed conditions, mixed species flocks of seedeaters can number in the hundreds,

with as many as seven or eight species represented. Double-collared can be common; Plumbeous, Capped, Marsh, and Chestnut are usually around in small numbers, and there can be a few Tawny-bellied's or Gray-and-chestnut's as well. In October 2001, one of our tours found what seems to be the first record for Brazil of the rare Narosky's Seedeater, which breeds primarily in Entre Rios, Argentina, its wintering grounds heretofore undocumented.

The vast rolling campos of Emas support termites of three mound-building species, in greater concentration here than elsewhere in the world. It is here where we've witnessed the ephemeral and spectacular phenomenon of termitaria lit up at night like Christmas trees, with strings of green-white lights, as far as the eye can see. As Emas research biologist Kent Redford discovered, the first rains after the long dry season stimulate the partial emergence of bioluminescent beetle larvae (living in the termite mounds) to attract and capture their sole food, the millions of flying ants whose emergence is also stimulated by the first few rains. It's a phenomenon to behold; we'll keep our fingers crossed.



*Pale-throated Pampa-Finch is an endemic found in Serra do Cipo National Park. Photograph by participants Bob Sprague and Amy Levensgood.*

**Serra do Caraca Natural Park**, which has been a religious sanctuary (and school) for 200 years, is available to the public through the operations of the Catholic order of the Mission Congregation. Our rooms are in a renovated section of the original monastery, which sits atop a forested hill overlooking a lovely garden and the fabulous montane forest of the Serra do Caraca. The ancient spires of the monastery set against the rocky serras provide an almost otherworldly sight (as well as nesting habitat for Cliff Flycatchers). Well-maintained trails provide access to serra specialties and to Atlantic Forest habitat of about 4000-foot elevation. And a ten-kilometer entrance road offers potentially fabulous nightbirding. After dinner, the brothers place food scraps out to attract Maned Wolves from the surrounding wilds; Caraca is proudly distinguished as the only place where wild Maned Wolves are regularly seen by tourists. No matter how skeptical you may be about baiting wild mammals, watching a Maned Wolf silently emerge from the darkness, ascend the monastery stairs, and stand at close range—its stilt-like legs completely exposed—is a truly amazing experience.

**Parque Nacional Serra do Cipo** includes 83,000 acres of designated parklands being acquired to preserve the highly endemic plant and animal life of this serra system. Principal among the specialties at Cipo are the very local Cipo Canastero, the undescribed tapaculo, Horned Sungem, Hyacinth Visorbearer, Gray-backed Tachuri, Sharp-tailed Tyrant, Yellow-billed Blue Finch, Stripe-tailed Yellow-Finch, and Cinereous Warbling-Finch.

**Canastra National Park (Extension)**—Encompassing some 70,000 hectares (150,000 acres; soon to be expanded to 200,000 hectares!) of pristine and lightly disturbed *cerrado* habitats as well as semi-humid forests around the base of the Serra da Canastra in remote southwestern Minas Gerais, Canastra National Park ranks as one of the most biologically important and beautiful parks in all of Brazil. The plateau country of the serras in this region is capped with a mixture of both of the main plant associations of the *cerrado*: *campo limpo* (“clean fields,” referring to the abundance of grasses with few or no trees and shrubs) and *campo rupestre* (“rocky fields,” which are also grassy but which support a variety of woody, fire-resistant plants). We will have seen many of the characteristic species of birds of these *cerrados* on the main tour, but Canastra will give us another chance to catch up on any that may have eluded us, and there are a few that we have a better chance of finding here or that we can find only in this region, such as Least Nighthawk, Great Dusky Swift, Stripe-breasted Starthroat, Campo Miner, Red-ruffed Fruitcrow, the rare Ochre-breasted Pipit, and Stripe-tailed Yellow-Finch. Canastra is also a stronghold for Giant Anteater and Maned Wolf.

*The greatest river in eastern Brazil, the Rio Sao Francisco, has its headwaters in Canastra, where a beautiful, sparkling spring surges out of the campos. It rapidly builds in volume and where it roars off the rim of the serra we'll find magnificent waterfalls cascading hundreds of feet into gallery forests harboring an avifauna quite different from that of the*

cerrados just a few hundred yards above. With persistent searching and a good dose of luck, we may also find one of the rarest and most prized birds in eastern Brazil: the elusive Brazilian Merganser. About eight scattered pairs of these highly endangered ducks are known to be resident in the Canastra area. There are several places where a couple of the pairs have been seen with some regularity in recent years. Over the course of our three full days of birding, we will search carefully for the merganser at some of its favored haunts, and enjoy seeing a fine variety of other birds in the process. The gallery forests along the Sao Francisco have an interesting bird life that reveals geographic intermediacy between the seasonally dry forests of central-western Brazil and the humid Atlantic Forest that lies to the east. For instance, one can see Helmeted, Blue, and Pin-tailed manakins along one section of trail, and such species as Red-ruffed Fruitcrow and Russet-mantled Foliage-gleaner occur side-by-side! We'll stay in a couple of comfortable new hotels at the edge of the park, very well located for birders.

## Itinerary for Safari Brazil: The Pantanal & More

### Days 1-2, Sat-Sun, 21-22 Sep. Departure for Brazil; flight to Campo Grande and drive to the Pantanal.

International overnight flights depart the US on the evening of Day 1 and arrive in Brazil early on the morning of Day 2. Due to arrival times into Brazil, it may be necessary for some to depart the US a day early in order to make it to Campo Grande by 11:00 a.m. on Day 2 (September 22). *(If you would like to go a day or two early to recover from the flight and/or to tour some in Rio or Sao Paulo, please contact our office and we can help you make those arrangements. There is a very nice hotel ten minutes from the Sao Paulo airport.)*

Upon arrival in Campo Grande, you will be met by your guide. Once we have all assembled, we'll have a quick lunch and set out in our air-conditioned van for Pousada Aguape, a charming family run lodge at the southeastern corner of the famous Pantanal. It's about three hours without stops, and we plan to be there for dinner. We'll turn off the paved highway a little way before the town of Aquidauana and continue on a long dirt road, where we will make a couple of brief birding stops. We should reach Pousada Aguape, our base for two nights, with plenty of time for some exciting late afternoon birding right around the lodge.

**Day 3, Mon, 23 Sep. The Pantanal.** Today we will explore the vast network of roads that cut through the farm, birding from a safari vehicle as we look for everything from Scarlet-headed blackbirds to Giant Otters. We'll also explore some rivers by boat and look for five species of kingfishers including the shy Green-and-rufous and the minute Pygmy. Night drives here are also a must, and although they might be long (up to three hours) there are good chances of encountering rare mammals, with Ocelots and Jaguars being realistic targets, and owls such as the handsome Striped Owl that leave the reserve at night to feed in the rice fields. Night at Pousada Aguape.

**Days 4-5, Tue-Wed, 24-25 Sep. Pousada Aguape to Fazenda San Francisco.** We'll spend one final morning birding around the lodge, returning to the lodge to pack up and have lunch, and then—taking advantage of the hottest part of the day to travel—head towards the town of Miranda on our journey to Fazenda San Francisco, a large property with a complex network of roads that cut through rice fields and give us access to the property's reserve. The

combination of rice fields and pristine habitat makes for some excellent wildlife viewing, with a particular abundance of waterfowl such as Jabirus and the handsome Maguari Stork. We will hit the ground running with a night drive that may yield great looks at Ocelots, Maned Wolf, and with some luck, even a Jaguar. Our next day will be divided between the roads at San Francisco and a boat trip crowned by another productive night drive. Nights at Fazenda San Francisco.

**Day 6, Thu, 26 Sep. To Campo Grande.** After a final morning of birding near Fazenda San Francisco, we'll return to Campo Grande, arriving in time for dinner at our comfortable hotel in town. Night in Campo Grande.



*We'll watch for the striking Scarlet-headed Blackbird in the Pantanal.  
Photograph by guide Chris Benesh.*

**Day 7, Fri, 27 Sep. Campo Grande to Chapadao de Ceu.** After a 6:00 a.m. buffet breakfast at our hotel, we'll head north along the main highway to Cuiaba, turning right toward Chapadao de Ceu and Emas National Park. We'll cross the border from Mato Grosso do Sul into Goias (where we set our watches an hour ahead), and we should reach our destination in time for some afternoon birding nearby. Accommodations are in a simple but comfortable hotel about a thirty-minute drive from the park entrance. There is a nice little restaurant with delicious meals just a short walk from our hotel. Night at Chapadao de Ceu.

**Days 8-9, Sat-Sun, 28-29 Sep. Parque Nacional das Emas.** Our birding at Emas will vary from leisurely walks along the river into woodland and through expanses of open grassland, to drives in a safari vehicle (with much stopping and starting) on dirt roads through the park. We will also do some night driving for nightjars and mammals. Nights in Chapadao de Ceu.



*The White-winged Nightjar is known from only a few sites; we'll look for this little-known nightbird and others when we visit Emas National Park. Photograph by participant Sylvia Hanson.*

**Day 10, Mon, 30 Sep. Emas to Campo Grande; flight to Belo Horizonte.** After early birding nearby, we'll return to Campo Grande for our late-afternoon flight to Belo Horizonte, capital of Minas Gerais; we'll load into our bus for the one-and-a-half-hour drive to Cipo National Park. Our charming hotel here is set in a lovely, rocky wooded area along the Rio Cipo at the base of the Serra do Cipo. Night at Cipo.

**Day 11, Tue, 1 Oct. Parque Nacional Serra do Cipo.** We'll have the entire day to search for the serra specialties mentioned above, including the very local Cipo Canastero. You'll want your hiking boots for today. The scenery is lovely, and if the rains have been good this spring, the flowering plants (many endemics) could be spectacular. Night at Cipo.

**Day 12, Wed, 2 Oct. Cipo to Serra do Caraca Natural Park.** After a morning birding, we will drive for about four hours through the plateau woodland and savanna to beautiful Caraca. We should arrive in time to explore the gardens, which are often teeming with birds. We may want to search for nightjars at dusk and return for dinner and a Maned Wolf. You'll want supportive footwear (and possibly your raingear) for excursions here. Night at Caraca.

**Days 13-14, Thu-Fri, 3-4 Oct. Serra do Caraca.** We'll spend most of our time at lovely Caraca birding along roads and well-maintained hiking trails that climb moderately steeply in places (no killer hikes). The climate usually promises cool nights and pleasantly warm days. The forest birding here will be a real contrast to anything we've done on the trip, and the taste of Atlantic Forest specialties is sure to make us want more. Nights at Caraca.

**Day 15, Sat, 5 Oct. Caraca; to Belo Horizonte; continuing on extension or flights home.** After a brief morning birding outing, we will pack up and make our way to the historic town of Ouro Preto, a Unesco Heritage site, where we will visit a couple of the town's most significant buildings and have lunch, before heading to Belo Horizonte's Airport. It is possible to depart after 6:00 p.m. on flights that stop in Sao Paulo, Rio, or Brasilia before continuing on to the US. Those taking the extension will spend the night in Belo Horizonte.

**Day 16, Sun, 6 Oct. Arrival in the US and connections home.**



*The Brasilia Tapaculo can be locally common, but over-all, this species is considered endangered because it is found in only a small region of Brazil. We've seen this range-restricted specialty in Canastra on recent Field Guides tours.  
Photograph by participant Sylvia Hanson.*

## Itinerary for the Brazilian Merganser Extension

**Day 1, Sat, 5 Oct. Belo Horizonte.** After saying goodbye to those heading homeward, we of the extension will spend this night at a nice hotel in Belo Horizonte.

**Day 2, Sun, 6 Oct. Belo Horizonte to Canastra National Park.** The drive from the capital to remote Canastra National Park is about six hours and there isn't much of interest along the way, so we'll probably make stops only when nature calls, meaning needs for restrooms and ice cream. The nature of the national park will take over late this afternoon and for the next two-and-a-half days. If weather is good (a likely bet this time of year), we will have our first crack at the merganser this afternoon as we walk a stretch of the Rio Sao Francisco. Night at Pousada Recanto da Canastra.

**Days 3-4, Mon-Tue, 7-8 Oct. Canastra National Park.** We'll have two full days to scour the river for Brazilian Mergansers, and the woodlands and *cerrados* for everything else, ranging from Black-chested Buzzard-Eagles and Red-ruffed Fruitcrows, to Brasilia Tapaculos and Ochre-breasted Pipits. On Day 3, we will search the lower section of the river for mergansers and other woodland/forest birds, then transfer to the upper part of the park, where we'll stay two nights while birding the more open grasslands of this wonderful wilderness park. Nights at Pousada Chapadao da Canastra.

**Days 5-6, Wed-Thu, 9-10 Oct. Canastra National Park to Belo Horizonte; flight to the US.** After a final early morning of birding, we'll pack up and settle in for the drive to the airport in Belo Horizonte, where we'll be able to connect comfortably to our evening international flights, arriving in the US on October 10. ***Que tenham uma ótima viagem!***

## About Your Guides

**Marcelo Padua** was born in Belem at the mouth of the Amazon River. Growing up, he spent his free time at his uncle's farm in an Amazon rainforest reserve observing everything from insects to mammals and birds. Marcelo began studying English at an early age and attended high school in Middletown, Pennsylvania in a student-exchange program. He is remarkably fluent and even taught English for a couple of years back home in Brazil.

Following university in Rio de Janeiro, Marcelo transferred to law school in Cuiaba, but working as an English-speaking naturalist guide during school holidays soon made it clear to him that birding was much more than a hobby! With just a year to go for his bar exam, he turned his back on the law to hang out his shingle as a birding guide. He met Bret Whitney in 2005 and embarked on a full-time guiding career with Field Guides in 2009. With his great sense of humor, impeccable organizational skills, and love of seeing birds, Marcelo has quickly become a reference for birding in Brazil, spending over 200 days each year in the field. A warning: Watch out if he sees displaying manakins of any kind! Marcelo makes his nest at the crossroads of the Pantanal and the Amazon in Cuiaba with his wife, Ana.

*"Marcelo has a remarkable birding ear. I am a good birder and a field ornithologist by trade, and I was amazed at the birds he was hearing way, way out there. The fact that he is a Brazilian, and appears to know almost everyone on the tour route, was a major plus." R.D., Safari Brazil*

**Dan Lane** was barely out of diapers when his love for birds manifested itself. He was an active birder in his home state of New Jersey until he moved to Louisiana to pursue a master's studying Neotropical birds at Louisiana State University. By 1999, he'd received his degree and participated in three LSU expeditions to Peru and Ecuador, discovering a new species of bird (Scarlet-banded Barbet) along the way. His increasing experience with the Peruvian avifauna, coupled with having the luck of being "in the right place at the right time," landed Dan coauthorship on the recently published *Birds of Peru*—alongside his childhood heroes Ted Parker and John O'Neill. Meanwhile, his continuing fieldwork has resulted in uncovering additional new species to science (although writing these up, sadly, takes far more time than finding the birds, and Dan's way behind schedule).

*"Dan Lane is superior in all aspects as a guide—excellent recognition of bird sounds, patient in drawing birds in for views, able to relate to group members with relaxed courtesy and helpfulness." J.N. & E. S., Amazonian Ecuador: Sacha Lodge*

Dan's interests in birds also include illustration, bird vocalizations, and bird biogeography and evolution. He's pleased to share his knowledge with participants on tours and loves birding with folks who are really enthusiastic about seeing BIRDS! Working with Field Guides is a blast and Dan thoroughly enjoys the friendship and fun the Field Guides family provides. His favorite areas are largely in tropical Latin America, but on occasion he has led tours to other corners of the globe and of course (somewhat) regularly birds near his home in Louisiana.

You may visit <https://fieldguides.com/guides> for the guides' complete tour schedules; just click on a photo.

## Financial Information

**FEE: \$5975 from Campo Grande (includes flights within Brazil)**

**Extension Fee: \$1350 from Belo Horizonte**

**DEPOSIT: \$600 per person**

**FINAL PAYMENT DUE: May 24, 2019**

**SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$565 for the main tour, and \$235 for the extension.**

**LIMIT: 12**

## Other Things You Need to Know

**TOUR MANAGER:** The manager for this tour is Nicole Cannon. Nicole will be happy to assist you in preparing for the tour. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call her!

**ACCOMMODATIONS:** Accommodations during the tour are all very good to excellent, each with private baths.

**DOCUMENTS:** A current passport is necessary for US citizens to enter Brazil. In addition, you will need a visa to enter Brazil. Our office will forward visa application instructions.

If you are not a US citizen, please check with the Brazilian consulate nearest you for entry requirements. Information about consulates and entry requirements is generally available online or you can contact us and we will be happy to look this up for you. Passports should have an adequate number of blank pages for the entire journey. Some countries require a blank page for their stamp and as a precaution it is best to have one blank page per country you will visit or transit.

**VACCINATIONS:** Yellow Fever is widespread in many parts of Brazil, and we recommend all travelers to Brazil be vaccinated against the disease. Please check <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/contentYellowFeverBrazil.aspx> for the current CDC information and consult with your physician about whether the vaccine is appropriate for you (there are contraindications for some individuals).

**AIR ARRANGEMENTS:** Please note that the tour begins in Campo Grande and ends in Belo Horizonte; you should plan to arrive in Campo Grande (CGR) by 11:00 a.m. on Day 2 (September 22). You may depart Belo Horizonte (CNF) after 6:00 p.m. on either Day 15 of the main tour (October 5), or Day 5 of the extension (October 9). Field Guides is a full service travel agency and your tour manager will be happy to assist you with flights to join this tour. Field Guides does not charge a service fee for these services to clients booking a tour. However, we understand that tech-savvy clients often prefer to shop online or that you may wish to use mileage to purchase tickets. Regardless of which method you choose, your tour manager will be happy to provide assistance regarding ticket prices and schedules, along with rental cars and extra hotel nights as needed.

Please be sure to check with your tour manager prior to purchasing your ticket to make sure the flights you have chosen will work well with the tour itinerary and that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. Once purchased, most airline tickets are non-refundable and carry a penalty to change. Field Guides cannot be responsible for these fees.

**Also, it is imperative that we receive a copy of your comprehensive flight itinerary—including any and all flights not covered in the tour fee—so that we may track you in the event of missed connections, delays, or other mishaps.**

**LUGGAGE:** Please be aware that many airlines have recently modified their luggage policies and are charging additional fees for checked bags. Updates could easily occur before your departure, so you may wish to contact your airline to verify the policy. Additional charges for bags on any flights, whether these are covered by the tour fee or not, will be the client's responsibility.

**TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS:** The **tour fee** is \$5975 for one person in double occupancy from Campo Grande. It includes all lodging from Day 2 through Day 14, all meals from lunch on Day 2 through lunch on Day 15, all ground transportation (with the exception of a transfer/taxi to the hotel in Campo Grande for anyone arriving early), **flight between Campo Grande and Belo Horizonte**, entrance fees, and the guide services of the tour leader(s). Tipping at group meals and for drivers, porters, and local guides is included in your tour fee and will be handled for the group by your Field Guides leader(s). However, if you would like to recognize your Field Guides leader(s) or any local guide(s) for exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are optional and not expected.

The above fee does **not** include your airfare to and from Brazil, airport taxes, visa fees, any checked or carry-on baggage charges imposed by the airlines, any alcoholic beverages, optional tips to local drivers, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

The **extension fee** is \$1350 for one person in double occupancy from Belo Horizonte. It includes all lodging from Day 1 of the extension through Day 4 of the extension, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through lunch on Day 5, all ground transportation, entrance fees, tips for baggage handling and meal service, and the guide services of the tour leader(s).

The above fee does **not** include your airfare to and from Brazil, airport taxes, visa fees, any checked or carry-on baggage charges imposed by the airlines, any alcoholic beverages, optional tips to local drivers, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

The **single supplement** for the tour is \$565 and for the extension is \$235. If you do not have a roommate but wish to share, we will try to pair you with a roommate from the tour; but if none is available, you will be billed for the single supplement. Our tour fees are based on double occupancy; one-half the cost of a double room is priced into the tour fee. The single supplement is calculated by taking the actual cost of a single room and subtracting one-half the cost of a double room (plus any applicable taxes).

**TOUR REGISTRATION:** To register for this tour, complete the Registration/Release and Indemnity form and return it with a **deposit of \$600** per person. If registering by phone, a deposit must be received within fourteen days, or the space will be released. **Full payment** of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to departure, or **by May 24, 2019**. **We will bill you for the final payment at either 120 days or when the tour has reached sufficient subscription to operate, whichever date comes later.** Since the cost of your trip insurance and airline tickets is generally non-refundable, please do not finalize these purchases until you have received final billing for the tour or have been advised that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate by your tour manager.

**TOUR LIMITS:** Our limits are firm and we don't exceed the limit by one to accommodate a couple when only one space remains open. However, on occasion, we will send along a guide in training on a tour. In these cases one seat in the van or bus will be taken by the guide in training. Our guides will have a rotation system within the vehicle so that clients share the inconvenience equally. We hope this minor inconvenience will be more than offset by the advantages of having another guide along.

**SMOKING:** Almost all of our clients prefer a smoke-free environment. If you smoke, please be sensitive to the group and refrain from smoking at meals, in vehicles, and in proximity to the group on trails and elsewhere.

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** Refund of deposit and payment, less \$100 handling fee, will be made if cancellation is received up to 120 days before departure. If cancellation occurs between 119 and 70 days before the departure date, 50% of the tour fee is refundable. Thereafter, all deposits and payments are not refundable.

This policy only applies to payments made to Field Guides for tour fees (and any services included in those fees). Airline tickets not included in the tour fee and purchased separately often carry penalties for cancellation or change, or are sometimes totally non-refundable. Additionally, if you take out trip insurance the cost of the insurance is not refundable so it is best to purchase the policy just prior to making full payment for the tour or at the time you purchase airline tickets, depending upon the airlines restrictions.

The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. The right is reserved to substitute in case of emergency another guide for the original one.

**TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EMERGENCY INSURANCE:** We strongly recommend you consider purchasing trip cancellation (including medical emergency) insurance to cover your investment in case of injury or illness to you or your family prior to or during a trip. Because we must remit early (and substantial) tour deposits to our suppliers, we cannot offer any refund when cancellation occurs within 70 days of departure, and only a partial refund from 70 to 119 days prior to departure (see CANCELLATION POLICY). In addition, the Department of State strongly urges Americans to consult with their medical insurance company prior to traveling abroad to confirm whether their policy applies overseas and if it will cover emergency expenses such as a medical evacuation. US medical insurance plans seldom cover health costs incurred outside the United States unless supplemental coverage is purchased. Furthermore, US Medicare and Medicaid programs do not provide payment for medical services outside the United States.

When making a decision regarding health insurance, Americans should consider that many foreign doctors and hospitals require payment in cash prior to providing service and that a medical evacuation to the United States may cost well in excess of \$50,000. Uninsured travelers who require medical care overseas often face extreme difficulties. When consulting with your insurer prior to your trip, please ascertain whether payment will be made to the overseas healthcare provider or whether you will be reimbursed later for expenses that you incur.

US citizens will receive from us a brochure regarding optional tour cancellation/emergency medical insurance. Our agent, CSA, will insure for trip cancellation and interruption, medical coverage, travel delay, baggage loss and delay, and emergency medical transportation. Currently we are unable to offer CSA insurance policies to residents of New York and Hawaii. We have had clients provide positive feedback after acquiring insurance with InsureMyTrip ([www.insuremytrip.com](http://www.insuremytrip.com)) in the past, and would suggest that company as an alternative. Please let us know if you have any questions about this. If you purchase the insurance within 24 hours of making final payment for the tour, and cover all non-refundable parts of the trip (including any non-refundable flights), pre-existing conditions are covered. The CSA brochure includes a contact number; you may also purchase your CSA policy on-line by visiting our website at <https://fieldguides.com/travelinsurance.html> and clicking the link to CSA. Please note, once the insurance is purchased it is non-refundable, so please check with your tour manager prior to making the purchase to assure the tour will operate as scheduled. Citizens of other countries are urged to consult their insurance broker.

**RESPONSIBILITY:** For and in consideration of the opportunity to participate in the tour, each tour participant and each parent or legal guardian of a tour participant who is under 18 agrees to release, indemnify, and hold harmless Field Guides Incorporated, its agents, servants, employees, shareholders, officers, directors, attorneys, and contractors as more fully set forth in the Release and Indemnity Agreement on the reverse side of the registration form. Field Guides Incorporated acts only as an agent for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, or other means, and assumes no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity caused by defect in such vehicles or for any reason whatsoever, including the acts, defaults, or bankruptcies of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. Field Guides Incorporated accepts no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. The tour participant shall bear all such losses and expenses. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely.

Participants should be in good health and should consult a physician before undertaking a tour. If you have questions about the physical requirements of a tour, please contact our office for further information. Participants should prepare for the tour by reading the detailed itinerary, the information bulletin, and other pertinent matter provided by Field Guides. Each participant is responsible for bringing appropriate clothing and equipment as recommended in our bulletins.

THE RECEIPT OF YOUR TOUR DEPOSIT SHALL BE DEEMED TO BE CONSENT TO THE ABOVE CONDITIONS. EACH TOUR PARTICIPANT AND EACH PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN OF A TOUR PARTICIPANT WHO IS UNDER 18 SHALL SIGN AND DELIVER THE RELEASE AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION.  
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