

ITINERARY

Parrots & Cotingas: The Mouth of the Mighty Amazon

August 2 – 15, 2019



*We will seek specialties such as the Purple-breasted Cotinga near Belem, and in the forests of Carajas. One of several species of cotingas we'll seek, these brilliant birds are generally uncommon, but we've found them on past tours.
Photograph by guide Bret Whitney.*

We include here information for those interested in the 2019 Field Guides Mouth of the Amazon 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
- 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

The mouth of the Amazon River is one of the most geographically complicated regions of the entire basin. It is, of course, a vast area as well, encompassing dozens of islands and enormous tracts of seasonally flooded forests bounded all around by *terra firme* forest that is, unfortunately, being steadily reduced under increasing human pressure. We will see all of this during our two-week birding swing through four select stops designed to give us a chance at finding almost all of the (many!) species of birds endemic to this region of Amazonia.

We'll start our tour at the city of Belem, capital of Para state, with some world class birding in areas close to the city to get us acclimated to the weather of the Amazon. We hope to find a few specialties such as the Hooded Gnateater,

Vulturine Parrot, Dusky Parrot, Opal-crowned Manakin, and Crimson Hooded Manakin, just to whet our appetite for some of the many range-restricted birds we are likely to find on this tour. We will explore some river Islands around the city of Belem, and then a chartered flight will take us to Mexiana Island, affording fantastic views (with reasonably clear weather, of course!) of the intricate network of riverways and islands that comprise the Delta Amazonas region; Mexiana is set right at the confluence with the Atlantic Ocean and the equator line runs right through the Island. We'll spend a full day exploring the island as we search for specialties such as Blackish-Gray Antshrike, Crimson-hooded Manakin, Scaled Spinetail, White-bellied Seedeater (endemic subspecies *mexiana*) and Ruddy-breasted Seedeater which has a fairly small distribution in Brazil.



Then we'll swing well south to the remote Carajas National Forest, an uplifted region where one of the largest iron-ore mines in the world is surrounded by unbroken forest. In this area, the open habitats of northeastern Brazil give way to the rainforests of lower Amazonia, with a corresponding mixture of elements in the avifauna. Impressive forested ridges surge upward from the lowland plain making for some spectacular scenery as well. This area is particularly well endowed with parrots and cotingas—among the species we could see are six species of macaws (including Hyacinth, here in rainforest habitat), the beautiful Jandaya Parakeet, the very local Pearly Parakeet, and the stunning Red-fan Parrot, two species of Bellbirds, the beautiful Purple-breasted Cotinga and the range restricted White-winged Cotinga. A few of the other exciting bird possibilities are Brazilian Tinamou, White-crested and Rusty-margined guans, Bare-faced Curassow, Russet-crowned Crake, Rufous-necked Puffbird, Red-necked Aracari, Dusky-billed and “Carajas” woodcreepers, Curve-billed Scythebill, lots of ovenbirds and antbirds including the rarely seen Black-bellied Gnatcatcher (a gorgeous bird); the ultra-rare Black-chested Tyrant; Black-and-white Tody-Tyrant, the spectacular, endemic White-tailed Cotinga, White Bellbird (represented by the subspecies *wallacei*, known only from Carajas), and the little-known Guianan (Para) Gnatcatcher.

Not to overdo it, but it is worth mentioning that Harpy Eagle is a realistic hope in the Carajas area; if the nest is active, we may have incredible views of this bird! We should also see a variety of exciting mammals in these forests. Our forest birding will be complemented with a couple of final days in estuarine habitats east of the delta of the Amazon. Exploring this geomorphologically dynamic coastline, characterized by mangrove peninsulas crossed by tidal channels, with smaller areas of flooded saline campos and coastal *restinga* forest, we will search for Little Woodrail, Mangrove Cuckoo, Plain-bellied Emerald, among many other birds, and hope to see impressive flocks of Scarlet Ibis.

About the Physical Requirements & Pace: We'll be up early for breakfast every morning, then spend most mornings driving to specific sites where we'll spend time birding along roads through forest, as well as in open, *cerrado*-like habitat. The walking, whether on roads or trails, is generally easy going. Most days will see us back to the hotel for lunch, but on a few days we'll probably take a box lunch for more time in the field and less time driving to and from birding sites. We'll have plenty of water and other drinks with us on the bus. Afternoon birding is always much slower than morning hours, and we will offer a nocturnal outing or two to forests close to the hotel. Although the days will be long, our accommodations will be very comfortable throughout the tour.



The Festive Parrot is scarce, but we've been able to get good views of these birds on our tour. They are found along the Amazon River and its tributaries, and seem to be tied to riparian habitats. Photograph by guide Dave Stejskal.

Itinerary for Mouth of the Amazon and Lower Rio Xingu

Days 1-2, Fri-Sat, 2-3 Aug. Arrival in Belem. Most flights depart the USA on the evening of Day 1 and arrive in Belem on Day 2. We should all make it to our hotel by around 2:00 p.m., and have a nice get-together dinner at the hotel. You may have to spend the night in Miami or choose a different overnight flight coming through Brasilia, Sao Paulo or Rio. Your tour manager will be happy to help with any overnight arrangements. Night in Belem.

Day 3, Sun, 4 Aug. Belem. The city of Belem is 400 years old and the human occupation has taken its toll on the forest, but a mosaic of protected areas with more than 6000 square kilometers of native habitat still stands around the city. Today we will be up early to make our way to an area on the outskirts of the city, where we will spend the morning birding; our main targets will be Opal-crowned Manakin, Hooded Gnateater, and the nominate subspecies of Willis's Antbird, a species with three disjunct populations. We will also keep an eye out for fruiting trees that act as magnets for Cotingas (Purple-breasted and White-winged are realistic targets) and a myriad of parrots and tanagers. The birding is sure to be productive, and there will be no shortage of great birds to set the mood for the following days. We'll have lunch and return to the hotel for a siesta, using the rest of the afternoon to visit a reserve in town, and do our checklist at a restaurant near the river to enjoy our first view of the Amazon near its delta. Night in Belem.

Day 4, Mon, 5 Aug. Belem. Our day today will be dedicated to exploring the intricate system of islands around Belem as well as some terra firme forest. We will board a boat first thing in the morning to an island where many Orange-winged Parrots roost every day, and watch as they take off to feed in the city. We will then continue to a small riverine community, where we will look for the gorgeous and range restricted Crimson-hooded Manakin, as well as Buff-browed Chachalaca. All of this while keeping an eye open for mixed species flocks that could produce a myriad of antbirds and furnariids. We will have lunch at a restaurant on an island, and look for up to five species of kingfishers as well as Point-tailed Palmcreepers that specialize in Mauritia Palm Trees. We will return to our hotel for a siesta, and head out in the afternoon to a city park. In this park, a successful project is under way to reintroduce Golden Parakeets after an 80 year absence from Belem. Several individuals are now breeding freely in the park. Night in Belem.

Day 5, Tue, 6 Aug. Belem. Once again, we will head out from Belem into a reserve outside of the city, but today we will focus on a different area. We will search for the rare Vulturine Parrot as well as the scarce Dusky Parrot. In the process we are likely to encounter a number of mixed species flocks that may result in views of Plain-winged and Gray Antwrens, Cinereous Antshrike, Plain-winged Woodcreeper and many more. We will head back to town for lunch, and explore some terra firme forest in Belem in the afternoon. Night in Belem.

Day 6, Wed, 7 Aug. Belem to Mexiana Island. The delta of the Amazon is the one place where one can fully comprehend how mighty the Amazon truly is. The river reaches its delta below the Xingu, with many islands formed by alluvial deposit and submergence of the land. Around the largest of these, Marajo, the river splits into two large streams. The northern stream is the principal outlet and threads its way around many islands, the largest of which is Mexiana. A chartered flight will take us there, providing privileged views of the intricate mosaic of islands that compose the archipelago formed at the mouth of the Amazon, and the immense silt-laden discharge of the river stretching far out to sea. As soon as we get our boots on the ground, we will go out either by safari vehicle or boat to explore the surrounding forests, as we search for specialties such as Scaled Spinetail, Short-tailed Parrot, Blackish-gray Antshrike and the charming Crimson-hooded Manakin. We will return to our lodge for a brief siesta, and go back out to explore the forest close to the lodge on foot. Night at Mexiana Island. *(Please note that chartered planes have stringent luggage limitations and we will ask all clients to bring a small bag that can be used for the one night we will spend on the island. Our main luggage will remain in storage at our hotel in Belem and we will pick it up on our way to the airport the next day.)*



We'll look for the Scaled Spinetail on Mexiana Island. This species is endemic to the flooded forests of the lower Amazon region. Photograph by guide Marcelo Padua.

Day 7, Thu, 8 Aug. Return to Belem, and Carajas. After a few hours birding around Mexiana Island in the morning to pick up any species we may have missed the previous day, we will fly back to Belem, affording us another opportunity to view the Amazon delta. We will then swing by our hotel and collect the bulk of our luggage and catch a flight to Carajas where we'll start birding the Carajas National Forest. With a good dose of luck, we may even find a Black-bellied Gnatcatcher or a Wing-banded Antbird before we reach our hotel. Night in Carajas.

Days 8-11, Fri-Mon, 9-12 Aug. Carajas. We will have four full days to search for the many species of birds endemic to lower Amazonia inhabiting the forests around Carajas. We will be out early every morning to be in place as the forest awakens with the dawn chorus. This area, between the Xingu and Tocantins rivers, is near the eastern edge of the vast rainforests that stretch to the base of the Andes far to the west. It is also on the fringe of the drier forests of far eastern Brazil. The avifauna is understandably complex and relatively poorly known.

A partial listing of the specialties we may see includes Russet-crowned Crake, Gray-bellied Goshawk (quite rare, as usual), Harpy Eagle, the beautiful White-crested Guan, Bare-faced Curassow, Dark-winged Trumpeter, Hyacinth Macaw, Jandaya and Pearly parakeets, Red-fan parrots, Pavonine Cuckoo, Amazonian Pygmy-Owl, Scissor-tailed Nightjar, Blue-cheeked Jacamar (formerly considered the subspecies *cyanicollis* of Yellow-billed Jacamar), Rufous-necked Puffbird, Red-necked Aracari, Amazonian Barred Woodcreeper, Curve-billed Scythebill, Glossy Antshrike, Long-winged Antwren

(distinctive subspecies *paraensis*), Black-bellied and Chestnut-belted gnatcatchers (secretive but likely to be seen well), White-tailed Cotinga, White Bellbird (isolated, endemic subspecies *wallacei*), Opal-crowned Manakin, Black-and-white Tody-Tyrant, Black-chested Tyrant (very rare, but let's get it anyway), Sneathly's Tody-Tyrant, Guianan Gnatcatcher (likely to be split as Para Gnatcatcher), and Yellow-shouldered Grosbeak. Of course, we will see and/or hear some 250 other birds which we certainly will not neglect as we seek out the less common species! Nights in Carajas.

Day 12, Tue, 13 Aug. Carajas to Belem and on to Salinopolis. Our flight to Belem leaves around lunch time, giving us the best part of the day to bird in Carajas before packing up and heading back to the airport. From there we will drive to the coastal town of Salinopolis where we will settle down for our final couple of days. Night in Salinopolis.

Day 13, Wed, 14 Aug. Birding the Salgado Paraense. The coastal region of the state known as "Salgado Paraense" lies east of the delta of the Amazon and has been neglected by ornithologists and birders for years, yet some recent visits to the area by researcher Alex Lees have produced some interesting records of Pinnated Bittern, Black Rail, Blue-winged

Teal, Little Woodrail, and Mangrove Cuckoo, not to mention a relative abundance of Scarlet Ibis which we will be sure to encounter on a boat outing or two. This will be a productive and fun day of birding to wrap up our tour and we'll enjoy great food and birding in the resort town of Salinópolis. Night in Salinópolis.

Day 14, Thu, 15 Aug. Departure. After a relaxed breakfast we will pack up and head straight to Belem's international airport where participants will be able to connect with afternoon flights departing to the US. Boa Viagem!

About Your Guide

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

Visit <https://fieldguides.com/guides> for Marcelo's complete tour schedule; just click on his photo.

Financial Information

FEE: \$5850 from Belem

DEPOSIT: \$600 per person

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: April 4, 2019

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$450

LIMIT: 8

Other Things You Need to Know

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

ACCOMMODATIONS: We will be staying in comfortable hotels or lodges on all nights.

DOCUMENTS: A current passport valid for 6 months is necessary for US citizens to enter Brazil. In addition, you will need a visa to enter Brazil. Our office will forward you 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: 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 \$5850 for one person in double occupancy from Belem. It includes all lodging from Day 2 through Day 13, all meals from dinner on Day 2 through dinner on Day 13 (breakfast is included on Day 14, if your flight departure time allows for it), all ground transportation, all internal flights (chartered and scheduled), entrance fees, tips for baggage handling and meal service, and the guide services of the tour leader(s).

The above fees do not include your airfare to and from Belem, 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. 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 **single supplement** for the tour is \$450. 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 enclosed 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 April 4, 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 another guide for the original one. Where this is necessary, notification will be given to tour members, and they will have the right to cancel their participation and receive a full refund.

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) 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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