



Field Guides Tour Report

Safari Brazil: The Pantanal & More 2019: Brazilian Merganser Extension

Oct 5, 2019 to Oct 9, 2019

Marcelo Padua

For our tour description, itinerary, past triplists, dates, fees, and more, please [VISIT OUR TOUR PAGE](#).



Cock-tailed Tyrants are restricted to native grasslands and although we enjoyed good looks at them on the main tour, it was on the extension that we were able to really spend time appreciating their uniqueness. Photo by guide Marcelo Padua.

It definitely rained on our parade this year. Some heavy rains just before our extension and a little more while we were at Canastra actually made for some terrible conditions for Mergansers, as they tend to move into smaller streams under these circumstances and become hard to find. So my worst fear came true and we could not find a single Merganser to put on our list (first time ever!), but we did not make the long trip to Canastra in vain, as our time spent here had some spectacular scenery, fabulous food, amazing wildflowers and some incredible birds to keep us entertained while we were there.

We arrived at the small town of Sao Roque de Minas with a bang, for we saw a pair of Chaco Eagles perched right by the road and enjoyed great looks at them before they flew off and were chased by the bravest Kestrel I have ever seen. Our first lodge had the rare Stripe-breasted Starthroat in the garden, and the upper reaches of the park provided views of goodies such as Ochre-breasted Pipit, Cock-tailed Tyrants right outside the window of the car, and the scarce Tawny-headed Swallows going in and out of their nest. There was also a Brasilia Tapaculo that paraded in the open in front of a perplexed bunch of birders. Our visit to the lower area of the Canastra region was spent mostly scanning the river, but we had great looks at a number of birds while doing it, including Helmeted and Pin-tailed Manakins, among others. Our second lodge provided a taste of some of the best home cooked meals in Brazil, but also produced range restricted goodies such as Rufous-capped Motmot and Golden-Capped Parakeet.

Missing the Merganser was a hard hit for me, but I think every one of us can agree that it was all worth it, and given the chance we would do it all again.

All the best,

-Marcelo Padua

KEYS FOR THIS LIST

One of the following keys may be shown in brackets for individual species as appropriate: * = heard only, I = introduced, E = endemic, N = nesting, a = austral migrant, b = boreal migrant

BIRDS

Rheidae (Rheas)

GREATER RHEA (*Rhea americana*) – Walking along the grass fields of the upper reaches of Canastra.

Tinamidae (Tinamous)

RED-WINGED TINAMOU (*Rhynchotus rufescens*) [*]

SPOTTED NOTHURA (*Nothura maculosa*) – We saw a few individuals along the road while exploring the upper reaches of Canastra.

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

MUSCOVY DUCK (*Cairina moschata*) – Seen often along the Sao Francisco River.

Cracidae (Guans, Chachalacas, and Curassows)

DUSKY-LEGGED GUAN (*Penelope obscura*) – Right around our lodge at Canastra.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*)

PALE-VENTED PIGEON (*Patagioenas cayennensis*)

PICAZURO PIGEON (*Patagioenas picazuro*) – A large stocky pigeon that is readily recognized by the white crescents on the wing.

RUDDY GROUND DOVE (*Columbina talpacoti*)

SCALED DOVE (*Columbina squammata*)

EARED DOVE (*Zenaida auriculata*)

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

GUIRA CUCKOO (*Guira guira*) – Even though this is a very common species, they are always fun to watch, with their pre-historic looks.

SMOOTH-BILLED ANI (*Crotophaga ani*)

SQUIRREL CUCKOO (*Piaya cayana*)

Apodidae (Swifts)

SOOTY SWIFT (*Cypseloides fumigatus*)

WHITE-COLLARED SWIFT (*Streptoprocne zonaris*) – It was a lot of fun to watch these masters of flight cruising at eye level at Canastra.

SICK'S SWIFT (*Chaetura meridionalis*)

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

PLANALTO HERMIT (*Phaethornis pretrei*) – Great looks at this large Hermit at the garden of our lodge at Canastra.

WHITE-VENTED VIOLETEAR (*Colibri serrirostris*)

STRIPE-BREASTED STARTHROAT (*Heliomaster squamosus*) – A Brazilian endemic that was visiting the feeders at our lodge.

GLITTERING-BELLIED EMERALD (*Chlorostilbon lucidus*)

SWALLOW-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD (*Eupetomena macroura*)

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

GRAY-COWLED WOOD-RAIL (*Aramides cajaneus*) – Formerly known as Gray-necked Wood-Rail.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

SOUTHERN LAPWING (*Vanellus chilensis*)

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

RUFESCENT TIGER-HERON (*Tigrisoma lineatum*)

CATTLE EGRET (*Bubulcus ibis*)

WHISTLING HERON (*Syrigma sibilatrix*)

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

BUFF-NECKED IBIS (*Theristicus caudatus*)

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

BLACK VULTURE (*Coragyps atratus*)

TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*)

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

GRAY-HEADED KITE (*Leptodon cayanensis*) – This is one species that I have only seen perched a couple of times, and we had great looks at an individual perched right by the road while it ate a prey item that looked like a toad.

SAVANNA HAWK (*Buteogallus meridionalis*)

CHACO EAGLE (*Buteogallus coronatus*) – Finding two of these magnificent birds perched by the side of the road was the absolute highlight of the extension. This species is quite scarce and is often seen from a great distance (like we saw on the main tour). So having them sit there for close scope views was a major bonus.

WHITE-TAILED HAWK (*Geranoaetus albicaudatus*)

Strigidae (Owls)

BURROWING OWL (*Athene cunicularia*) – Common at Canastra.

Momotidae (Motmots)

RUFOUS-CAPPED MOTMOT (*Baryphengus ruficapillus*) – This Atlantic forest endemic was right behind our rooms at Canastra but they gave us a real hard time. Fortunately Ken spotted one for us and we were able to get a look at it.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

RINGED KINGFISHER (*Megaceryle torquata*)

AMAZON KINGFISHER (*Chloroceryle amazona*)

Bucconidae (Puffbirds)

WHITE-EARED PUFFBIRD (*Nystalus chacuru*)

Galbulidae (Jacamars)

RUFOUS-TAILED JACAMAR (*Galbula ruficauda*)

Ramphastidae (Toucans)

TOCO TOUCAN (*Ramphastos toco*) – Common but none of us could resist looking at these extravagant birds each time one of them flew by.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

WHITE-BARRED PICULET (WHITE-BARRED) (*Picumnus cirratus cirratus*)

LINEATED WOODPECKER (*Dryocopus lineatus*)

CAMPO FLICKER (*Colaptes campestris*)

Cariamidae (Seriemas)

RED-LEGGED SERIEMA (*Cariama cristata*)

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

SOUTHERN CARACARA (*Caracara plancus*)

YELLOW-HEADED CARACARA (*Milvago chimachima*)

AMERICAN KESTREL (*Falco sparverius*) – Watching these tiny falcons attack a Chaco Eagle was almost as good as seeing the eagle itself.

Psittacidae (New World and African Parrots)

SCALY-HEADED PARROT (*Pionus maximiliani*)

MAROON-BELLIED PARAKEET (*Pyrrhura frontalis*)

PEACH-FRONTED PARAKEET (*Eupsittula aurea*)

GOLDEN-CAPPED PARAKEET (*Aratinga auricapillus*) – Another Brazilian endemic that we saw around our lodge.

WHITE-EYED PARAKEET (*Psittacara leucophthalmus*) – Nesting in the roof of our lodge at Canastra.

Thamnophilidae (Typical Antbirds)

PLAIN ANTVIREO (*Dysithamnus mentalis*) – While we looked for the Rufous-capped Motmot, we spotted a Plain Antvireo foraging.

Rhinocryptidae (Tapaculos)

BRASILIA TAPACULO (*Scytalopus novacapitalis*) – Well, that is one Tapaculo that skipped the classes on how a Tapaculo is supposed to behave.
What great looks!

Furnariidae (Ovenbirds and Woodcreepers)

CAMPO MINER (*Geositta poeclioptera*) – Great looks at one individual performing its display flight.

STREAKED XENOPS (*Xenops rutilans*)

RUFOUS HORNERO (*Furnarius rufus*)

SHARP-TAILED STREAMCREEPER (*Lochmias nematura*)

FIREWOOD-GATHERER (*Anumbius annumbi*) – Great looks at the nests for which this bird is named, and the rightful owners.

Pipridae (Manakins)

HELMETED MANAKIN (*Antilophia galeata*)

PIN-TAILED MANAKIN (*Ilicura militaris*) – This Atlantic forest endemic is one of the great gems we saw during our brief stay at the lower reaches of the Canastra area.

Tityridae (Tityras and Allies)

WHITE-WINGED BECARD (*Pachyramphus polychopterus*)

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

SEPIA-CAPPED FLYCATCHER (*Leptopogon amaurocephalus*) [*]

GRAY-HEADED TODY-FLYCATCHER (*Todirostrum poliocephalum*)

COMMON TODY-FLYCATCHER (*Todirostrum cinereum*)

SOUTHERN BEARDLESS-TYRANULET (*Camptostoma obsoletum*)

YELLOW TYRANULET (*Capsiempis flaveola*) – A bamboo specialist that we saw well on our first day at Canastra.

HIGHLAND ELAENIA (*Elaenia obscura*)

YELLOW-BELLIED ELAENIA (*Elaenia flavogaster*)

SOOTY TYRANULET (*Serpophaga nigricans*) – Common along the Sao Francisco River.

BRAN-COLORED FLYCATCHER (*Myiophobus fasciatus*)

CRESTED BLACK-TYRANT (*Knipolegus lophotes*)

YELLOW-BROWED TYRANT (*Satrapa icterophrys*) – This species can be hard to see as they are not abundant and they do not vocalize, so it was a treat seeing one right from our breakfast area at our lodge.

GRAY MONJITA (*Xolmis cinereus*)

WHITE-RUMPED MONJITA (*Xolmis velatus*)
STREAMER-TAILED TYRANT (*Gubernetes yetapa*)
MASKED WATER-TYRANT (*Fluvicola nengeta*)
COCK-TAILED TYRANT (*Alectrurus tricolor*) – We had seen these charismatic flycatchers on the main tour, but we had much better views during the time we spent in the grasslands of the upper reaches of the Canastra National Park.
SIBILANT SIRYSTES (*Sirystes sibilator*)
SHORT-CRESTED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus ferox*)
GREAT KISKADEE (*Pitangus sulphuratus*)
SOCIAL FLYCATCHER (*Myiozetetes similis*)
TROPICAL KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus melancholicus*)
FORK-TAILED FLYCATCHER (*Tyrannus savana*) – An austral migrant.

Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis).

GRAY-EYED GREENLET (*Hylophilus amaurocephalus*)

Hirundinidae (Swallows).

BLUE-AND-WHITE SWALLOW (*Pygochelidon cyanoleuca*)
TAWNY-HEADED SWALLOW (*Alopochelidon fucata*) – Several individuals nesting on the banks of the road at Canastra.
SOUTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW (*Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*)
GRAY-BREASTED MARTIN (*Progne chalybea*)
WHITE-RUMPED SWALLOW (*Tachycineta leucorrhoa*)
CLIFF SWALLOW (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*)

Poliophtidae (Gnatcatchers).

MASKED GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila dumicola*)

Troglodytidae (Wrens).

HOUSE WREN (*Troglodytes aedon*) – Common around the garden of our lodge.
SEDGE WREN (*Cistothorus platensis*) – A recent paper suggests splitting these into 11 different species, and although it probably will not get split into this many species, there are certainly several species involved and you should keep track of the ones you have seen in order to make sense of all this when the change comes. The bird we saw belongs to the *polyglottus* subspecies.

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers).

CHALK-BROWED MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus saturninus*)

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies).

PALE-BREASTED THRUSH (*Turdus leucomelas*)
RUFOUS-BELLIED THRUSH (*Turdus rufiventris*)

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows).

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*)

Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits).

OCHRE-BREASTED PIPIT (*Anthus nattereri*) – We really had to work hard on this one, as they really blend in with the landscape, but our efforts were repaid with fantastic looks at this scarce Pipit.

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies).

PURPLE-THROATED EUPHONIA (*Euphonia chlorotica*)
HOODED SISKIN (*Spinus magellanicus*)

Passerellidae (New World Sparrows).

GRASSLAND SPARROW (*Ammodramus humeralis*)
RUFOUS-COLLARED SPARROW (*Zonotrichia capensis*)

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies).

CRESTED OROPENDOLA (*Psarocolius decumanus*) – Great looks at birds performing their acrobatic displays by the nests.
VARIABLE ORIOLE (*Icterus pyrrhopterus*)
SHINY COWBIRD (*Molothrus bonariensis*)
GIANT COWBIRD (*Molothrus oryzivorus*)
CHOPI BLACKBIRD (*Gnorimopsar chopi*)
YELLOW-RUMPED MARSHBIRD (*Pseudoleistes guirahuro*)

Parulidae (New World Warblers).

TROPICAL PARULA (*Setophaga pitiayumi*)
GOLDEN-CROWNED WARBLER (WHITE-BELLIED) (*Basileuterus culicivorus hypoleucus*)

Thraupidae (Tanagers and Allies).

RUBY-CROWNED TANAGER (*Tachyphonus coronatus*)
SAYACA TANAGER (*Thraupis sayaca*)
BURNISHED-BUFF TANAGER (*Stilpnia cayana*)
SWALLOW TANAGER (*Tersina viridis*)

BLUE DACNIS (*Dacnis cayana*)

SAFFRON FINCH (*Sicalis flaveola*)

WEDGE-TAILED GRASS-FINCH (*Emberizoides herbicola*) – Common in the grass fields of the upper reaches of Canastra.

BLUE-BLACK GRASSQUIT (*Volatinia jacarina*)

DUBOIS'S SEEDEATER (*Sporophila ardesiaca*)

DOUBLE-COLLARED SEEDEATER (*Sporophila caerulescens*) – Abundant at the feeders of our lodge.

PLUMBEOUS SEEDEATER (*Sporophila plumbea*)

BLACK-MASKED FINCH (*Coryphaspiza melanotis*) [*]

BANANAQUIT (*Coereba flaveola*)

MAMMALS

BROWN CAPUCHIN (*Cebus apella*)

GIANT ANTEATER (*Myrmecophaga tridactyla*)

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 125 bird taxa and 2 mammal taxa