

BEST OF BRAZIL: PANTANAL & ATLANTIC FOREST

AUGUST 10-23, 2008*

*Dates differ from those that appear in our 2008 Tour Directory

IGUAÇU FALLS EXTENSION

AUGUST 22-27, 2008

© 2007

This short tour offers an in-depth introduction to two of the best birding regions in South America: the fabled Brazilian Pantanal, and the lush Atlantic Forest of Itatiaia National Park. By restricting our itinerary to two distinctly different destinations, we can maximize our birding at each, while minimizing the necessity for moving around. In doing so, we'll experience an impressive cross-section of savanna and Atlantic forest birds.

Our first destination is the northern Pantanal, which we feel is far superior to the southern Pantanal in terms of avian diversity, overall quality of birding, and in opportunities for seeing special mammals (such as jaguar). We will be visiting during the dry season, when receding water levels result in spectacular concentrations of birds and other wildlife. Expect to see incomparable Hyacinth Macaws; Jabiru; Plumbeous Ibis; up to 12 species of herons and egrets (including good chances at Agami Heron); Bare-faced Curassow and Chestnut-bellied Guan (in fact, the numbers of curassows, guans and chachalacas in this region are truly staggering); great numbers and diversity of parrots, including such stunners as Golden-collared Macaw and Black-hooded Parakeet; a variety of raptors; and a dazzling array of smaller birds, ranging from bizarre White Woodpeckers to flashy Helmeted Manakins and Brazilian Cardinals. Mammal-viewing opportunities are excellent, with possibilities ranging from the abundant capybaras to marsh deer, Brazilian tapir, giant otter, ocelot and even jaguar. One of our two lodges in the Pantanal has had a good recent track record for producing jaguar sightings, so we'll be keeping our fingers crossed!

Our second destination is lovely Itatiaia National Park, located in the mountains on the border between the states of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Minas Gerais. We'll be based at a charming, family-run hotel featuring spacious chalets, excellent food, and wonderful birding on the grounds. Moreover, our lodge is located within the park itself, meaning that we'll never have to travel far to reach our birding sites. Hummingbirds, tanagers and toucanets are a near constant presence at the hotel feeders, making it difficult to tear ourselves away to hit the trails. Once we do, we'll be treated to fabulous birding that will include a large number of species endemic to the Atlantic Forest of southeast Brazil. Possibilities include such gems as Dusky-legged Guan, Tawny-browed Owl, Saffron Toucanet, Plovercrest, Itatiaia Spinetail, Giant and White-bearded antshrikes, Streamer-tailed Tyrant, Swallow-tailed Manakin, Black-and-gold Cotinga, Brassy-breasted Tanager and many more. With four full days here, we'll have plenty of time to enjoy what many of us consider some of the best birding on the continent.

An optional extension to spectacular Iguacu Falls National Park will allow those with additional time the opportunity of seeing the world's largest waterfalls, while enjoying a few days of excellent birding in subtropical Atlantic Forest. Although there will be some overlap in the birdlife with Itatiaia, there will remain a number of new bird possibilities, ranging from the spectacular Black-fronted Piping-Guan to Variable Screech-Owl, Rusty-breasted Nunlet, Short-tailed Antthrush, Southern Antpipit, São Paulo Tyrannulet, Southern Bristle-Tyrant, Russet-winged Spadebill, Plush-crested Jay and Creamy-bellied Gnatcatcher, among many others.

August 10-11, Days 1–2: Travel to Cuiabá via São Paulo. All participants will need to depart the USA this evening and arrive in São Paulo on August 11 in time to connect to the 9:00 a.m. departure of TAM Flight 3804 to Cuiabá (subject to change). After a sumptuous lunch at a local *churrascaria* (Brazilian barbecue), we'll begin the three-hour drive to Pixaím in the Pantanal, with frequent stops for birding en route as the opportunity arises.

Participants wanting to avoid the risk of misconnecting should consider arriving in São Paulo on August 10 and spending the night at an airport-area hotel. Upon request, VENT will be happy to assist with these arrangements.

Our time in the Pantanal will be split between two lodges: the intimate Fazenda Santa Tereza, nicely situated on the banks of the tiny Rio Pixaím, and the larger Hotel Porto Jofre, on the banks of the Rio Cuiabá to the south. Both lodges feature air conditioned rooms, private baths with hot showers, great food, and exceptional birding right on the grounds. These two properties give us access to somewhat different microhabitats, and therefore, different birding and mammal-viewing opportunities.

NIGHT: Hotel Fazenda Santa Tereza, Pixaím (August 11)

August 12-15, Days 3–6: Pantanal. Dawn will bring an astonishing flurry of bird activity as we begin our Pantanal adventure in full swing. The riverine woodlands and brushy pastures here are alive with birds, among them Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Black-fronted Nunbird, White-wedged Piculet, Pale-crested and Golden-green woodpeckers, Red-billed Scythebill, Narrow-billed Woodcreeper, Pale-legged and Rufous horneros, White-lored and Rusty-backed spinetails, Great Antshrike, Band-tailed Antbird, Helmeted Manakin, Stripe-necked Tody-Tyrant, Fuscous Flycatcher, Rufous Casiornis, Purplish Jay, Masked Gnatcatcher; Ashy-headed Greenlet, Green-backed Becard, Orange-backed Troupial, Epaulet Oriole, Red Pileated-Finch and many others. Such is the diversity of birdlife here that we could easily have seen more than 100 species before breaking for lunch! Our exact schedule over the next few days will remain flexible, allowing us to exploit changing water levels and birding conditions to full advantage.

On some afternoons we'll bird by boat, stopping repeatedly to drift close to the variety of kingfishers, herons, anhingas, and the like. One of our primary targets will be the spectacular giant otter, one of the most impressive mammals in South America. River trips are also excellent for encountering birds like Sunbittern, Gray-necked Wood-Rail, and Boat-billed Heron. The late afternoon is a perfect time to see parrots and macaws returning to roost, as well as cracids such as the Chestnut-bellied Guan, Blue-throated Piping-Guan, and Chaco Chachalaca perched up in the open. As dusk gathers around us, the bugling of Green Ibis rings up and down the river, and spectacular Nacunda Nighthawks join the many Band-tailed Nighthawks in their pursuit of flying insects.

On at least one day, we will make an extended morning boat trip, the focus of which will be upon finding a jaguar. These magnificent animals are elusive, and more often missed than seen, but this is a particularly good area for them and the dry season is the best time of year for seeing them. In the process, we'll be treated to a good show of riverine birds from the region, including (probably) Large-billed and Yellow-billed terns, Black Skimmer, Pied Lapwing and a variety of raptors and water birds. Our August 2007 Mato Grosso, Brazil group was treated to fabulous studies of an adult jaguar on one such boat trip, and fleeting views of another individual crossing the road the previous day.

As the dry season progresses, the once vast marshes of the Pantanal become shrinking pools that concentrate wading birds, capybara, and yellow caiman. Herons and egrets (including Capped Heron and Rufescent Tiger-Heron), Wood Storks, magnificent Jabirus, Roseate Spoonbills, and four species of ibis (including Plumbeous Ibis and Buff-necked Ibis) are all in abundance. Raptors are conspicuous as well, with Snail Kites and Black-collared Hawks being particularly abundant. Five species of kingfishers frequent the stream and river edges, where we'll also remain alert for Sungrebes, Sunbitterns, and Gray-necked Wood-Rails. As we enter the increasingly open marshlands, giant Southern Screamers are more in evidence, as are Southern Lapwings and Wattled Jacanas. Both Large-billed and Yellow-billed terns cruise over the larger bodies of water, and the skies are frequently filled with martins and swallows. Stately Maguari Storks frequent these more open areas, and depending on water levels, it's here that we could be treated to large numbers of waterfowl including Muscovy, Brazilian Teal, and one-to-three species of whistling-ducks. Parrots are also well represented in the Pantanal, among them fast-flying groups of Yellow-chevroned Parakeets, screeching colonies of Monk Parakeets, Turquoise-fronted Parrots, and colorful Golden-collared Macaws. However, one member of this family stands out above all others, the fabulous Hyacinth Macaw—biggest and most spectacular of its tribe and a near endemic of this region. These incredible blue-and-yellow birds will be one of the primary targets as we travel through the Pantanal. At one of our lodges, these amazing birds frequently roost and feed right on the grounds near our cabins.

Although better known for its extensive marshes, the Pantanal also offers excellent gallery forest and savanna woodlands birding. Groups of screeching parrots, parakeets, and macaws constantly divert our attention from scanning the larger trees, where our glasses are apt to find Blue-throated Piping-Guan, Chaco Chachalacas, spectacular Toco Toucans, Chestnut-eared Aracaris, or groups of monkeys. Smaller birds are everywhere. Among those we'll seek out are Blue-crowned Trogon, Buff-bellied Hermit, Gilded Sapphire, White-tailed Goldenthrout, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Black-fronted Nunbird, Pale-crested Woodpecker, Campo Flicker, Great Rufous Woodcreeper, White-wedged Piculet, Cinereous-breasted Spinetail, Gray-crested Cacholote, White-rumped Monjita, Rusty-fronted Tody-Flycatcher, Pearly-vented and Stripe-necked tody-tyrants, Thrush-like Wren, Purplish Jay, Black-capped Donacobius, Chestnut-vented Conebill, Guira and Hooded tanagers, Yellow-billed Cardinal, Red Pileated-Finch, the stunning Scarlet-headed Blackbird, and many others.

We'll likely make at least one extended night drive during our stay here, with large mammals (particularly jaguar, cougar, ocelot and Brazilian tapir) as our primary targets. These drives will also provide us with opportunities for seeing night birds such as Scissor-tailed, Little and Spot-tailed nightjars, Great or Common potoo, and Great Horned Owl.

After two nights at Fazenda Santa Tereza, we'll leave after breakfast on August 13, and bird our way south along the Transpantaneira to Porto Jofre, arriving at the Hotel Porto Jofre in time for lunch. We'll be based out of this lodge for the next three nights.

NIGHTS: Hotel Fazenda Santa Tereza, Pixaim (August 12)
Hotel Porto Jofre, Porto Jofre (August 13–15)

August 16, Day 7: Porto Jofre to Pixaim. Before working our way back to Pixaim, we'll spend the early morning birding the gallery forest near Porto Jofre. We will plan to arrive back at the Fazenda Santa Tereza in time for lunch, followed by some time off and a final afternoon boat trip along the Rio Pixaim.

NIGHT: Hotel Fazenda Santa Tereza, Pixaim

August 17, Day 8: Pixaim to Cuiabá, Flight to Rio de Janeiro via São Paulo, and Drive to Itatiaia National Park. We'll begin our long travel day by driving to Cuiabá in time to catch the 11:40 a.m. departure of TAM Flight 3897 to São Paulo. We'll eat lunch during our layover in São Paulo, after which we will board TAM Flight 8051, scheduled to arrive in Rio de Janeiro at 6:20 p.m. (all flights subject to change). From Rio, we'll have a 2–3 hour drive to Itatiaia National Park and the lovely Hotel do Ypé, our base for the next five days.

NIGHT: Hotel do Ypé, Itatiaia National Park

August 18–21, Days 9–12: Itatiaia National Park. It's no accident that we've chosen to end this tour at Itatiaia, for there is no more delightful place in southeast Brazil to bird. Four full days here allow us to thoroughly explore its avian riches and to savor the scenic beauty and pleasant climate. A combination of roads and trails will enable us to cover various elevational levels of the park, each with its own special birds. On one day we'll ascend to the high paramo-like grasslands in search of the Plovercrest (a spectacular little hummer with a punk-rocker crest) and the endemic Itatiaia Thistletail. Most of our time will be spent farther down in the lovely, bamboo-rich forest. The list of special birds here is long, and should begin with the spectacular Black-and-gold Cotinga. Other possibilities include Rufous-capped Motmot; Saffron Toucanet; Yellow-browed and Yellow-fronted woodpeckers; Buff-fronted and Buff-browed foliage-gleaners; Rufous-breasted Leaf-tosser; Large-tailed, Tufted, White-bearded and Giant antshrikes; Spot-breasted and Rufous-backed antvireos; Star-throated Antwren; Rufous-tailed and Ochre-rumped antbirds; White-shouldered Fire-eye; Cryptic Antthrush; Speckle-breasted Antpitta; Rufous Gnateater; Slaty Bristlefront; Mouse-colored Tapaculo; Black-capped Piprites; Serra do Mar Tyrannulet; Magpie, Brown, Olive-green, Diademed and Brassy-breasted tanagers; Thick-billed Saltator; Bay-chested Warbling-Finch; and many more.

One or more visits to the marshes, second-growth woodlands, and lowland forest below the park boundaries should repay us with a number of special birds, among them, possibly, Swallow-tailed Hummingbird, Sapphire-spangled Emerald, Planalto Hermit, Red-eyed Thornbird, Streamer-tailed Tyrant, White-rumped Monjita, Long-billed Wren, and Burnished-buff and Brazilian tanagers.

Even the grounds of our charming hotel are exceptionally productive for birds and the hummingbird feeders can produce a nearly non-stop show. Photographers will enjoy the opportunity to train their cameras at leisure on such jewels as Black Jacobin, Violet-capped Woodnymph, and Brazilian Ruby. A resident pair of Ferruginous Pygmy-Owls pay special attention to the feeders, in hopes of picking off some smaller bird. Mixed-species flocks of tanagers, foliage-gleaners and other birds routinely circulate through the trees on the grounds, and some of these (particularly Green-headed, Olive-green, Ruby-crowned and Golden-chevroned tanagers, along with Blue-naped Chlorophonia and Chestnut-bellied Euphonia) are frequent visitors to the fruit feeders put out by the hotel restaurant staff. Even the spectacular Saffron Toucanet can be seen frequenting the hotel feeders. And then there are the abundant Dusky-legged Guans, which scamper about the hotel grounds like so many domestic chickens! At night, the resident pair of Tawny-browed Owls can sometimes be seen right from the parking area in front of reception.

NIGHTS: Hotel do Ypé, Itatiaia

August 22-23, Days 13-14: Itatiaia to Rio for Connections Home or Begin Iguacu Falls Extension. After a final morning of birding in Itatiaia, we'll drive to Rio de Janeiro in time for those continuing on our Iguacu Falls Extension (August 22-27, 2008) to catch the 5:05 p.m. departure of TAM Flight 3187 to Iguacu Falls (arriving 7:10 p.m.; subject to change). Those not continuing on the Extension will be able to take an overnight flight to the USA, which will arrive on the morning on August 23 in time for homeward connections.

IGUAÇU FALLS EXTENSION

AUGUST 22-27, 2008

August 22, Day 1: Travel to Iguacu Falls. Although our evening arrival on August 22 will preclude any birding or sightseeing on this day, the location of our hotel ensures that we will be well positioned for enjoying Iguacu Falls on subsequent days. "Iguassu" is a Guarani word that means "big water," and it would seem that the Guarani had a penchant for understatement. Within a short walk from our hotel, the mighty Iguacu River plunges spectacularly some 90 meters, into a sheer chasm of its own creation known as the *Garganta do Diabolo* (Devil's Throat). Over the next few kilometers, more than 275 lesser falls combine with the Devil's Throat to create a spectacle of sight, sound, and the raw power of nature that must be experienced to be appreciated. Here, in addition to the awesome splendor of the world's largest waterfalls, we will be treated to the avian spectacle of thousands of Great Dusky Swifts as they swirl through the mists of the cataracts and cling precariously to the vertical slabs of basalt. Lush, subtropical forest lining the Brazilian and Argentine sides of the river provides a verdant counterpoint to the

impressive expanse of whitewater thundering out of the falls, and emergent trees provide favored early morning and late afternoon perches for spectacular Toco and Red-breasted toucans, as well as for the rare and endemic Black-fronted Piping-Guan.

NIGHT: Tropical Das Cataratas Hotel, Iguaçu Falls

August 23–25, Days 2-4: Foz do Iguaçu Area. Through special arrangements with the Brazilian Park Service, we'll visit some of the more remote, less accessible areas of the park where we will seek the many special birds of the area. We will also visit and bird the area surrounding the falls themselves. Among the more spectacular birds that we'll be searching for are the Red-ruffed Fruitcrow, Spot-billed Toucanet, Toco and Red-breasted toucans, Rufous-capped Motmot, Surucua Trogon, Blond-crested and Robust woodpeckers, and Plush-crested Jay. There is also potential for seeing the very rare Helmeted Woodpecker, which will nonetheless require much luck to find. Smaller birds will not be neglected, and indeed, much of our time will be spent searching for the roving mixed-species flocks which may yield numbers of birds such as White-throated and Olivaceous woodcreepers; Black-capped, Ochre-breasted, and White-eyed foliage-gleaners; Swainson's and Three-striped flycatchers; Gray Elaenia; Southern Bristle-Tyrant; São Paulo Tyrannulet; Creamy-bellied Gnatcatcher, Rufous-crowned Greenlet; Blue-naped Chlorophonia; and Green-headed, Black-goggled, and Guira tanagers. As is the case anywhere in tropical forests, there are a number of skulking birds of the forest interior that will require special effort to see, among them Rusty-breasted Nunlet, Short-tailed Antthrush, Russet-crowned Spadebill, Southern Antpipit, and Eastern Slaty-Thrush.

On two of our three days we'll likely begin with pre-dawn owling, to search for Variable and Tropical screech-owls, Mottled Owl, and Common Potoo. This will also place us in the forest at first light, the prime time for finding a Solitary Tinamou or Violaceous Quail-Dove along the jeep track, or for intercepting a Red-ruffed Fruitcrow commuting to its lek. With three full days and a fourth morning to enjoy the park, we'll enjoy a certain amount of flexibility regarding our exact itinerary. There will always be options for an afternoon return to the hotel for rest and relaxation or for more sightseeing near the falls.

NIGHTS: Tropical Das Cataratas Hotel, Iguaçu Falls

August 26-27, Days 5-6: Departure for Home. We'll have a last morning to visit the falls, or simply to sleep in, prior to catching TAM Flight 3558 to Garulhas International Airport at São Paulo at 1:30 p.m. (flight subject to change). This flight is scheduled to arrive in São Paulo at 3:00 p.m. allowing ample time for international connections to the United States, most of which depart São Paulo in the late evening. These flights will arrive in the various U.S. gateway cities on the morning of August 27 in time for homeward connections.

TOUR LEADERS: Kevin Zimmer and Andrew Whittaker

Kevin Zimmer has authored three books and numerous papers dealing with field identification and bird-finding in North America. His book, *Birding in the American West: A Handbook*, deals with finding and identifying birds in the western United States. Living in Alaska contributed to his affection for the Far North, where he has anchored VENT's tour program since 1986. For the past 17 years he has concentrated his attention on the Neotropics, particularly on Brazil, Costa Rica, Panama, Peru, and Venezuela. He has directed VENT's Brazil program since 1991. Kevin has a PhD in biology (research emphasis in Avian Evolutionary Ecology) from New Mexico State University, and is currently a field associate of Cornell's Laboratory of Ornithology and a Research Associate of the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History. He has authored numerous technical papers on the taxonomy, distribution, and behavior of Neotropical birds, particularly those of the Amazon basin. He recently completed (with co-author Mort Isler) the major chapter on the *Thamnophilidae* (antbirds) for the prestigious *Handbook of Birds of the World* series. He and Andrew Whittaker are currently at work on a comprehensive field guide to the birds of Brazil, to be published by Princeton University Press. Kevin lives in Atascadero, California with his wife Susan. Their daughter Marina is in graduate school at Dominican University in San Rafael, California.

Best of Brazil: Pantanal & Atlantic Forest, Page 6

Andrew Whittaker has been based in Brazil for the last 20 years. His passion for birding and natural history started at the early age of seven in the UK. For the past 25 years Andy has worked with birds, traveling around the world studying bird migration in Canada, Israel, Borneo, and the UK. Working in the Brazilian rainforest for the Smithsonian Institution has made Andy an authority on Amazonian birds and the region's natural history, and he has authored many technical publications on the region. He was a consultant for the prestigious *Life of Birds* series by David Attenborough. At present Andy is working with Kevin Zimmer on a comprehensive field guide to the birds of Brazil. Andy has extensive tour leading experience having led tours throughout South and Central American countries and the Antarctic for the past 18 years. He immensely enjoys sharing his fascination and knowledge of Neotropical birds, animals, and their conservation with others. Andy's special interest is bird vocalizations; his knowledge of Neotropical voices has enabled him to make several important ornithological discoveries and add 16 species to the Brazilian list. Andy lives in Manaus with his wife Nadime, their son Steven, and daughters, Luana and Suzana.

TOUR SIZE: Each section will be limited to 14 participants.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: The fee for Best of Brazil: Pantanal & Atlantic Forest is **\$5545** per person in double occupancy. This includes all food from lunch on Day 2 to lunch on Day 13, all lodging during the tour, ground transportation during the tour, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare from your home to Cuiabá and return from Rio de Janeiro, internal commercial flights from Cuiabá to Rio de Janeiro, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may be charged.

The single supplement for Best of Brazil: Pantanal & Atlantic Forest is **\$470**. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations or if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you.

The fee for Best of Brazil: Iguazu Falls Extension is **\$1695** per person in double occupancy. This includes all food from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 5, all lodging during the tour, ground transportation during the tour, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare to Iguazu Falls and return, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may be charged.

The single supplement for Best of Brazil: Iguazu Falls Extension is **\$380**. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations or if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you.

TOUR REGISTRATION: To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The deposit for this tour is **\$500** per person per tour. If you prefer to pay your deposit by check, your tour space will be held for 10 days to allow time for the VENT office to receive your deposit and completed registration form. If you prefer to pay your deposit using a credit card, your deposit must be made with MasterCard or Visa at the time of registration. The VENT registration form should then be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office. Full payment of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to the tour departure date.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Refunds are made according to the following schedule: if cancellation is made 120 days or more before the tour departure date, the deposit less \$125 per person is refundable. If cancellation is made fewer than 120 days before departure date, no refund is available. This policy and fee schedule also applies to pre-trip and post-trip extensions, as well as any transfers from one tour to another. ***We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance to protect yourself.***

If you cancel:

120 days or more before departure date

Fewer than 120 days before departure date

Your refund will be:

Your deposit minus \$125.

No refund available.

TRIP CANCELLATION INSURANCE: Application forms for optional coverage for baggage, illness, and trip cancellation can be obtained through the VENT office. We **strongly recommend** that you purchase trip cancellation insurance to protect yourself against losses due to accidents or illness. Check with your insurance agent regarding coverage you may presently have via other insurance policies that may cover illness during your trip. **Waiver for pre-existing conditions is available; however, stipulations apply, usually requiring the purchase of the insurance soon after registering. Contact the VENT office prior to registration for details.**

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of \$50,000. CST #2014998-50.

AIR INFORMATION: Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements.

Note that there are specific internal commercial Brazilian flights associated with this tour, the cost of which is not covered by the tour fee. Due to the complicated nature and limited availability of these flights, you are strongly encouraged to confirm reservations with Victor Emanuel Travel as early as possible.

CLOTHING AND CLIMATE: Weather in the Pantanal and at Iguaçu will be generally warm to hot (highs likely in the 80s–90s F). Light field clothing (drab colors such as olive or khaki preferred), including several pairs of pants and shorts and comfortable shirts, will be appropriate. Weather at Itatiaia is generally mild, but mornings and evenings can be cool. The elevation at the Hotel Ypé is about 3500', and on our day along the Agulhas Negras Road, we will ascend to more than 6,000'. Cold fronts, although unlikely, can hit anywhere in southern Brazil during this time of year, and you should be prepared with at least one set of warm clothing (warm sweater or medium-weight jacket or fleece, and gloves) suitable for temperatures that could drop into the 40–50°F range. A hat, sunglasses, and sunscreen are also recommended for protection. Be sure to have one pair of good hiking boots or comfortable walking shoes and a second pair to change into. Dress will be casual throughout. A swimsuit is also suggested (there are swimming pools at three of our four hotels), and raingear is recommended. Rain, although unlikely in the Pantanal, is always a possibility at Itatiaia and Iguaçu. A pocket umbrella is a good idea. Laundry can be done at each of our four hotels.

DIFFICULTY: One of the days in the Pantanal, and most of the days at Itatiaia and Iguaçu will involve walking trails/jeep roads for much or all of the morning. These are mostly level and easy walking, but do involve being on foot for several hours.

Our days in the Pantanal will mostly involve birding in and out of the bus along gravel roads, or from small boats on rivers, and will require generally little walking. On at least one morning, we will be on dry, level trails, away from the bus, for all or most of the morning.

On most mornings, we will try to be in the field at or near dawn. This is the time when tropical birds are most active and most vocal. Many of the more elusive species are unlikely to be seen unless we first hear them, and this requires early starts. On our day on the Agulhas Negras Road in Itatiaia National Park we must drive for some distance from our hotel to reach the birding areas. To arrive at this location near dawn will require a departure in the neighborhood of 4:30 a.m. At Iguaçu, we typically do our owling excursions pre-dawn, which will also involve departure times before 5:00 a.m. Other days will involve more civilized (although still early) starting times. Most non-travel days will involve a full morning of birding, followed by lunch and a mid-afternoon break of a couple of hours, during which participants may rest. These hours are quite often unproductive times for birding, and allow you to “recharge your batteries” prior to going out again in the latter part of the afternoon. On the long days at Iguaçu, afternoon birding is optional, and those that wish to return early to the hotel for rest or to spend more time at the falls, may do so. This is not an option on the Agulhas

Best of Brazil: Pantanal & Atlantic Forest, Page 8

Negras Road, where the distance from the hotel precludes an early return for less than the full group. It should be emphasized that our comfortable bus (outfitted with snacks and a variety of cold drinks) will be with us at all times on those days, and participants wishing to rest on the bus may do so at any time.

DOCUMENTS: A current U.S. passport and **VISA** are required to enter Brazil. Your visa must be obtained in the U.S. prior to departure and is issued by Brazilian consulates. For further information, you may wish to contact the Brazil consulate nearest you or Pinnacle Travel Document Systems (www.traveldocs.com on the web or 888-838-4867 by phone), a company which handles visa procurement. Currently, tourist visas to Brazil are valid for multiple entries up to five years from the initial entry. However, the first visit must be made within 90 days of obtaining the visa, or else the visa is invalidated.

CURRENCY: Brazilian Real. Master Card and Visa are more widely accepted than American Express, but all are useful, particularly in major centers. Travelers' checks are difficult to use in most areas of Brazil.

HEALTH PRECAUTIONS: Yellow fever vaccination is highly recommended, as well as polio and tetanus. Malaria has been confirmed in Brazil, including the chloroquine-resistant strain. There have been some recent changes in recommendations for malaria prophylaxis. Mefloquine (Lariam) is now the drug of choice in all areas where chloroquine-resistant malaria is present. A single dose should be taken one week before the start of the tour, continued during the tour, and for four weeks after its conclusion. Mefloquine is available by prescription only and may not be suitable for those using cardio-vascular medication; consult your physician. Cholera has been reported in Brazil, but no country requires cholera vaccination for direct travel from the USA and no vaccinations are required to return to the USA. Please consult your physician for any recommended preventative treatment. Your leader will have iodine tablets should they be needed for water purification. A good source of general health information for travelers is the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, which operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line (877) FYI-TRIP. You can check the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/travel. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/new_e.html (click on travel health). We suggest that participants consult their physician as well as the CDC for current recommendations before beginning a prophylaxis regimen.

If you are taking prescription medication or over-the-counter medicine, be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the tour safely. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medication.

As standard travel precautions, you should always be up to date with tetanus shots, and strongly consider inoculations against Hepatitis types A and B.

INSECT PROTECTION: The use of a repellent containing DEET is recommended. We suggest bringing two squeeze bottles of Cutter's or OFF.

BAGGAGE: Please limit baggage to one piece of luggage and one carry-on bag if possible, as some of the vehicles have very limited luggage space. As a precaution, we recommend packing a change of clothes, your binoculars, toiletries, travel documents, and walking shoes in your carry-on.

ITEMS TO BRING: Pack a flashlight or headlamp, water bottle or small canteen, alarm clock, and day pack. Your leader will have a spotting scope, but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Country Telephone Code: 55

Electric Current: 110 Volts in Rio, São Paulo, Brasilia, Belo Horizonte, Belém, Manaus, and 220 Volts elsewhere.

IMPORTANT NUMBERS AND WEBSITES TO KNOW:

Health-Centers for Disease and Control and Prevention (CDC)

877-FYI-TRIP or www.cdc.gov/travel

Weather

900-WEATHER or

www.weather.com

Travel Advisories

202/647-5225

SUGGESTED READING: Our website at www.ventbird.com offers an affiliated online store which carries a wide variety of items for birding and nature lovers including over 6,000 books. A portion of the sales from the store benefits the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. You might also want to visit such other online stores as www.amazon.com, and for those out-of-print and hard-to-find titles, www.abebooks.com.

Birds

Birds of South America-Non Passerines: Rheas to Woodpeckers. Princeton illustrated checklist.

*1300 species illustrated with excellent plates and good range maps. NEW 2006.

De la Pena, Martin R. and Maurice Romboli. *Birds of Southern South America* (Collins Illustrated Checklist).

HarperCollins, 1999.

Erize, Francisco, Jorge Rodriguez Mata, and Maurice Rumboll. *Birds of South America, Non-Passerines: Rheas to Woodpeckers*. 2007. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, USA. Generally good illustrations and useful written descriptions of the non-passerine birds of South America. A good complement to the two volumes by Ridgely and Tudor listed below.

Hilty, Steven L. *Birds of Tropical America*. Shelburne, VT: Chapters Publishing Ltd., 1994. Subtitle: "A watcher's introduction to behavior, breeding and diversity." (Paperback April 1996.)

Hilty, Steven L. and Rodolphe Meyer. *Guide to the Birds of Venezuela*. November 2002) Princeton University Press, 2002. A guide to the birds of De Schauensee, to be published in November 2002.

Meyer de Schauensee, R. and W.H. Phelps, Jr. *A Guide to the Birds of Venezuela*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978. By far the most useful guide to South America's avifauna prior to Steve Hilty's guide. (<http://birds.cornell.edu>; select "Audio Guides")

Meyer de Schauensee, R. *A Guide to the Birds of South America*. Livingston Publishing Company, 1970. (Reprinted 1982, paperback.) No pictures, but basic written descriptions of nearly all species. ABE Books (www.abebooks.com) has a large section on Meyer de Schauensee's many works.) (<http://birds.cornell.edu>; select "Audio Guides")

Narosky, T. and D. Yzurieta. *Birds of Argentina and Uruguay*. Zagier & Urruty, 1993. Although it is not a great field guide, it does illustrate many more of the birds of SE Brazil than does *Birds of Colombia*. (<http://birds.cornell.edu>; select "Audio Guides")

Pena, Martin and Martin Rodolfo de la Pena. *Birds of Southern South America and Antarctica*. London: HarperCollins, 1999. (<http://birds.cornell.edu>; select "Audio Guides")

Ridgely, Robert S., and Guy Tudor. *The Birds of South America, Volume I: The Oscine Passerines: Jays, Swallows, Wrens, Thrushes and Allies, Vireos, Wood-warblers, Tanagers, Icterids and Finches*. Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1989. Very useful reference, with range maps and illustrations of many species not previously illustrated. (<http://birds.cornell.edu>; select "Audio Guides")

Ridgely, Robert S., and Guy Tudor. *The Birds of South America Volume II: The Suboscine Passerines: Ovenbirds and Woodcreepers, Antbirds, Gnateaters, and Tapaculos, Tyrant Flycatchers, Manakins and Cotingas*. Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1994. Very useful reference, with range maps and illustrations of many species not previously illustrated. (<http://birds.cornell.edu>; select "Audio Guides")

Souza, Deodata. *Todas as Aves do Brazil: Guia De Campo Para Identificacao (All the Birds of Brazil: A Guide to Identification)*. Dall, 2002. Available from Buteo Books (1-800-722-2460 or www.buteobooks.com). Very basic illustrations and text, but is portable and does present some sort of illustration of most of the species that we will encounter.

Butterflies

D'Abrera, Bernard. *Butterflies of South America*. Australia: Hill House, 1984. Good pocket guide, covers many genera, nice pictures.

Mammals

Emmons, Louise H. *Neotropical Rainforest Mammals*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997. Good pictures and excellent text. (An audio field guide CD also available from this author: see below.)

General Nature

Caufield, C. *In the Rainforest*. Chicago: Random House, 1985.

Forsyth, Adrian, Ken Miyata et al. *Tropical Nature*. Scribner, 1987. (paperback)

Kricher, John. *A Neotropical Companion*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.

Pierson, David L., and Les Belesky. *The Ecotravellers' Wildlife Guide Brazil Amazon and Pantanal*. Academic Press, 2001.

Stap, Don. *Parrot without a Name: The Search for the Last Unknown Birds on Earth*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991. An account of field expeditions with Ted Parker and John O'Neill, among others.

Recording

English, Peter H. and Theodore A. Parker, III. *Birds of Eastern Ecuador* Cornell: Laboratory of Ornithology, 1992. (http://www.birds.cornell.edu/lab_cds.html)

Emmons, Louise H., Bret M. Whitney and David L. Ross. *Sounds of Neotropical Rainforest Mammals*. Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. (http://www.birds.cornell.edu/lab_cds.html)

TIPPING: Tipping (restaurants, porters, drivers, and local guides) is included on VENT tours. However, if you feel one or both of your VENT leaders or any local guides have given you exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are not expected and are entirely optional.

RESPONSIBILITY: Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc. (VENT) and/or its Agents act only as agents for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, or airplane and assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity which may be occasioned either by reason of defect in any vehicle or for any reason whatsoever, or through the acts or default of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT and its agents can accept 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. All such losses or expenses will have to be borne by the passenger, as tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. The right is reserved 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. 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 leaders on any tour. When this is necessary, notification will be given to tour members. No refund will be made for any unused portion of the tour unless arrangements are made in sufficient time to avoid penalties. The prices of the tours are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect on January 16, 2008 and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change therein. The right is reserved to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely. The airlines concerned and their agents and affiliates are not to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time passengers are not on board their aircraft. The passenger ticket in use by said airlines, when issued, shall constitute the sole contract between the airlines and the purchaser of these tickets and/or passenger. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for these tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airline Reporting Corporation.