

Brazilian Hot Spots

Background

Our friends Li and Lisa Li told us about Brazilian Birding Experts and suggested we book a private tour with them. We decided to take their advice. The trip was longer than usual, about 30 days. As I look at the [Highlights album](#), we are struck by how many photographs show something other than birds. Even our standard “Big Tree” photo is different.



Tower ZF2, substitute Big Tree

We took an amazing number of photos of bugs, mostly with our phones, which were easier to use for these subjects. We also have many mammal and reptile/amphibian photos. So, instead of a chronological description, we have arranged things by taxonomic Classes.

See more photos in the album [Brazil Highlights](#).

Our guide, Andre DeLuca, was terrific. He has great hearing and sight, and an encyclopedic knowledge of birds, just what we wanted. He was also interested in “everything,” not just avifauna, which we appreciated.

We used Manaus as a hub, both for day trips and for longer visits to other locations in Amazonia. We got to know the hotel in Manaus well, a four-star establishment with good food. Some of the other places we stayed were rather rustic.

We left San Francisco around midnight, stopped in Panama City for 10 hours, and took a red eye to Manaus, arriving at 2:41 in the morning. We were very happy to meet Andre at the airport.

Everyone told us that it was hotter than usual, which for the region means “very hot.” Highs were typically 40C (104F), even reaching 44C on one day. This put a damper on both the wildlife activity and our own. We started early, broke when it was too hot, then typically went out in the afternoon. The fact that we were on a private tour meant that we

could adjust the itinerary somewhat if part of the trip involved difficult conditions. Despite all this, we saw almost 500 species of birds, including more than 100 lifers.

What this shows, however, is that Climate Change is real.

Birds

A selection of Jim's Favorites from the trip. If you click on any photo, you'll see a larger format.



Male Wire-tailed Manakins



White Hawk

We have seen Wire-tailed Manakins before, but never like these two. You can even see the wire tail feathers.

This beautiful White Hawk was briefly Linda's New Favorite Bird™.



Fiery Topaz



Paradise Tanager

This stunning Fiery Topaz Hummingbird was one of two competing for the branch.

The lovely Paradise Tanager was photographed from the ZF2 Tower

These three birds were seen from a temporary blind set up by a local guide, Gilberto.

The [female Black Bellied Gnateater](#) looks different from this male.



Amazonian Antpitta



Black Bellied Gnateater



Alta Floresta Antpitta

The Alta Floresta Antpitta is another bird lured out by Gilberto. Note the pink skin on his throat. He puffs this patch when he sings to impress a female.

A couple more bird photos we couldn't resist including in this report:



Golden Parakeet with an itch



Male Guinan Cock-of-the-Rock

This Golden Parakeet, a beautiful bird, seemed to have a serious problem that needed extra preening.

The Male Guinan Cock of the Rock posed on this branch. No female showed up despite his amazing plumage. Extra credit if you can see the beak.

The Green-tailed Jacamar made [Jim's album of favorites](#). Jacamars are almost always stunning, especially, as in this photo, where his feathers shine.



Green-tailed Jacamar



Black-headed Antbird

We've included Hellmayr's Antbird, which is also known as Black-headed Antbird. We spent quite a long time trying to get a good look at this notorious skulker.

Bugs

As we said, we took lots of bug pictures. Jim insisted that we start with a few spiders.



Spider of Genus Syntrechalea



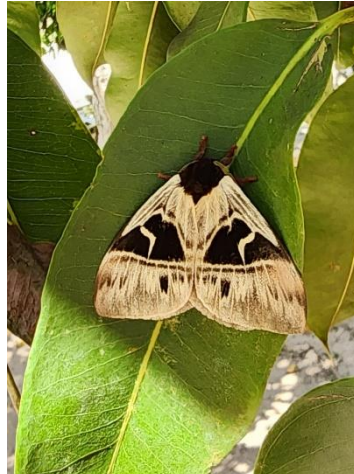
Macrathene kirbyi

This lovely specimen was photographed on a tree during a boat ride in the *varzea*, a flooded forest. Someone on [iNaturalist](#) gave us the Genus. Spider identification is much harder than birds. Some species can only be identified by microscopic examination of the female genitalia. Sometimes, though, the spider is so unique that it can be identified from a photograph, such as this *Macrathene kirbyi*. This photo is larger than life size. [Another one](#) shows Jim's hand for size comparison.

Now, how about some butterflies and moths.



Small Yellow and Black Butterfly



Interesting but Unidentified Moth

The small yellow and black butterfly was on the wall of a restroom. Linda found it and photographed it with her phone. The moth has very interesting pattern on the wings, but it also remains unidentified.

Of course, we also saw some larvae that were lovely, such as this one, which we didn't touch.

The Blue-Morpho Butterfly is usually pictured in flight, with the bright blue wings showing. The photo below shows what they look like when perched.



Gorgeous caterpillar



Blue Morpho Butterfly

Now, how about some Beetles? They are the most numerous kind of bugs, after all.



Colorful Beetle



Coconut Weevil

This amazing beetle reflected the sunlight to show its iridescent body. Too bad we didn't have an entomologist along on the trip.

The Coconut Weevil drills into the coconut and lays eggs inside it. These tend to devour the coconut while growing, so this insect is regarded as a pest. We liked the fact that we were able to get an ID for it.

Here are a couple of interesting grasshoppers. The first one showed up during our boat ride, when we ventured onto a small island.



Colorful Grasshopper



Strange Grasshopper

The second was seen along a path in the woods. The Antennae, if that is what they are, are unbelievable.

Even stranger are the two Peanut-headed Lantern Flies seen on a trail in the forest.

We finish with a couple of nice dragonflies and a tiny Mantid.



Orange Winged Dragonfly



Tiny Mantid on Linda's Finger



Dragonfly with Interesting Wings



Mammals

Dolphins

Special treat: A short video of Linda with a pink Dolphin. Several years ago, an 8-year-old girl started offering food to the Pink Dolphins. Now, they are ready to come whenever they are invited, namely when tourist show up. Click on the link for a look.

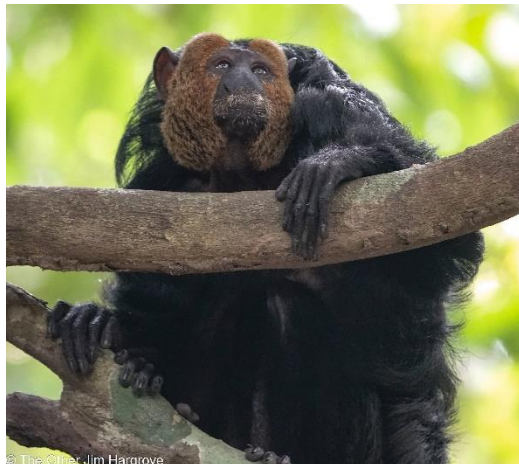
We also saw the smaller, gray river dolphin, Tucuxi, but didn't get a video.

Monkeys We added three new monkey species:

1. Santarem Marmoset, aka Black and white tassel-ear marmoset, (*Mico saterei*), endemic to Brazil.
2. Golden-faced Saki (*Saki pithecia chrysocephala*) at IPGA in Manaus, a research facility cum public park in the center of Manaus. Animals there are unrestrained but have nowhere to go. The monkeys are fed regularly.
3. Squirrel Monkey in IPGA in Manaus.



*Santarem Marmoset, aka
Black and white tassel-ear marmoset*



Golden-faced Saki (Saki pithecia chrysocephala)



Squirrel Monkey

Other Mammals:

We saw six of these bats hanging on the side of a building a short distance from the "Lost Road" in Verua NP near Caracarai. We think this one is a male because of the decorative ruff. For more, see the [Wikipedia Article](#).



*Proboscis Bat, aka Brazilian Long-nosed
Bat, Rhynchonycteris naso*

Reptiles and Amphibians



Two Lizards facing off.



Red-footed Turtle



Colubrid Snake



Tiny Frog on Linda's Shirt



Iguana in MUSA park in Manaus

These two lizards were near the place on the Rio Bravo where we ate lunch after a boat ride thru the swamp. Not sure if they are arguing over the territory, or if one — the one with the blue and green — is a male and the other a female.

[Our first photo of this turtle](#) did not show why it was named Red-footed. Andre, our guide, obligingly picked it up to show us the feet.

Andre again, holding a small snake of the family *Colubridae* he found in the leaf litter.

Next, we have a tiny frog, one of many seen on the trip. To get an idea of the size, note that this is the sleeve of Linda's shirt. Compare the size of the frog to the weave in the shirt.

We end with an Iguana seen in MUSA park, where we went twice to observe birds from the top of a large tower.