



*Field Guides Tour Report*

**Safari Brazil: The Pantanal & More 2013: Brazilian Merganser Extension**

Oct 25, 2013 to Oct 29, 2013

Marcelo Padua

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



*The stars of the tour: Brazilian Mergansers! Not flashy, but super-rare and it was a real treat to see them well several times. (Photo by guide Marcelo Padua)*

This was the first time we offered this extension in many years, and we decided to run it even with just a very small part of the main tour group continuing on. The reason is simple: the Brazilian Merganser is a big deal!

Although we run more than ten fixed departures in Brazil each year, there isn't a main tour on which we otherwise see this bird. With an estimated population of only about 250 individuals left in the world, the Brazilian Merganser is the rarest of the mergansers and one of the rarest birds in the world, so it's a great bird to include in our offerings. But Canastra isn't just the best place in the world to see this species; it is also home to a number of rare species that occur on the main tour route but are easily missed due to their rarity. So this extension offered us a second chance to see some really rare birds not seen on the main tour, such as Stripe-breasted Starthroat, Gray-backed Tachuri, and Cinereous Warbling-Finch, as well as some that simply aren't present on our main route, like Planalto Tapaculo and Ochre-breasted Pipit.

If all of the above were not good enough reasons to visit this place, It would have been worth the trip just for the scenery, as this is one of Brazil's most beautiful national parks. So we did it: three guys, one car, and a lot of fun birding for three days in a gorgeous place. Thanks for joining me on this adventure!

--Marcelo

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**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

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**BIRDS**

Rheidae (Rheas)

**GREATER RHEA** (*Rhea americana*)

Tinamidae (Tinamous)

**UNDULATED TINAMOU** (*Crypturellus undulatus*) [\*]

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

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

**MUSCOVY DUCK** (*Cairina moschata*)

**BRAZILIAN MERGANSER** (*Mergus octosetaceus*) – We had a total of three sightings during the time we spent at Canastra totaling 7 individuals.

Cracidae (Guans, Chachalacas, and Curassows)

**DUSKY-LEGGED GUAN** (*Penelope obscura*)

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

**NEOTROPIC CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) – Seen on the road to Canastra.

Anhingidae (Anhingas)

**ANHINGA** (*Anhinga anhinga*)

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

**GREAT EGRET** (*Ardea alba*)

**SNOWY EGRET** (*Egretta thula*)

**STRIATED HERON** (*Butorides striata*)

**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*)

**KING VULTURE** (*Sarcoramphus papa*) – Some adults seen soaring over the cliffs at Canastra and one juvenile perched among some Black Vultures.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

**WHITE-TAILED KITE** (*Elanus leucurus*)

**PLUMBEOUS KITE** (*Ictinia plumbea*)

**SAVANNA HAWK** (*Buteogallus meridionalis*)

**ROADSIDE HAWK** (*Rupornis magnirostris*)

**WHITE-TAILED HAWK** (*Geranoaetus albicaudatus*) – Great looks en route to Canastra.

**BLACK-CHESTED BUZZARD-EAGLE** (*Geranoaetus melanoleucus*) – The same individual has been nesting on the same sight where we saw it for several years. Hopefully it will be there again next year.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

**OCELLATED CRAKE** (*Micropygia schomburgkii*) [\*]

**SLATY-BREASTED WOOD-RAIL** (*Aramides saracura*)

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

**SOUTHERN LAPWING** (*Vanellus chilensis*)

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

**ROCK PIGEON** (*Columba livia*)

**PALE-VENTED PIGEON** (*Patagioenas cayennensis*)

**PICAZURO PIGEON** (*Patagioenas picazuro*)

**EARED DOVE** (*Zenaida auriculata*)

**RUDDY GROUND-DOVE** (*Columbina talpacoti*)

**SCALED DOVE** (*Columbina squammata*)

**PICUI GROUND-DOVE** (*Columbina picui*)

**WHITE-TIPPED DOVE** (*Leptotila verreauxi*)

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

**SQUIRREL CUCKOO** (*Piaya cayana*)

**GUIRA CUCKOO** (*Guira guira*)

**SMOOTH-BILLED ANI** (*Crotophaga ani*)

Strigidae (Owls)

**BURROWING OWL** (*Athene cunicularia*)

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

**SHORT-TAILED NIGHTHAWK (NATTERERI)** (*Lurocalis semitorquatus nattereri*)

**COMMON PAURAUQUE** (*Nyctidromus albicollis*)

Apodidae (Swifts)

**SOOTY SWIFT** (*Cypseloides fumigatus*)

**GREAT DUSKY SWIFT** (*Cypseloides senex*) – We had some really fabulous looks at these swifts as they flew right by us at eye level on the high plateau of the national park.

**WHITE-COLLARED SWIFT** (*Streptoprocne zonaris*)

**BISCUTATE SWIFT** (*Streptoprocne biscutata*)

**SICK'S SWIFT** (*Chaetura meridionalis*)

**FORK-TAILED PALM-SWIFT** (*Tachornis squamata*)

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

**PLANALTO HERMIT** (*Phaethornis pretrei*) – Seen extremely well at the Hummer feeders.

**WHITE-VENTED VIOLETEAR** (*Colibri serrirostris*)

**BLACK-THROATED MANGO** (*Anthracothorax nigricollis*)

**STRIPE-BREADED STARTRHROAT** (*Heliomaster squamosus*) – Canastra is certainly the best place in the world to see this species and we saw both the male and female attending to the feeder. What a treat!

**GLITTERING-BELLIED EMERALD** (*Chlorostilbon lucidus*)

**SWALLOW-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Eupetomena macroura*)

**FORK-TAILED WOODNYMPH** (*Thalurania furcata*)

**VIOLET-CAPPED WOODNYMPH** (*Thalurania glaucopis*)

**VERSICOLORED EMERALD** (*Amazilia versicolor*)

**SAPPHIRE-SPANGLED EMERALD** (*Amazilia lactea*) – Another special hummer that we saw at the feeders near Canastra.

*Trogonidae (Trogons)*

**SURUCUA TROGON** (*Trogon surrucura*)

*Momotidae (Motmots)*

**RUFOUS-CAPPED MOTMOT** (*Baryphthengus ruficapillus*) – Seen right behind our rooms at one of the lodges.

*Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)*

**RINGED KINGFISHER** (*Megaceryle torquata*)

**AMAZON KINGFISHER** (*Chloroceryle amazona*)

**GREEN KINGFISHER** (*Chloroceryle americana*)

*Bucconidae (Puffbirds)*

**WHITE-EARED PUFFBIRD** (*Nystalus chacuru*)

*Ramphastidae (Toucans)*

**TOCO TOUCAN** (*Ramphastos toco*)

**RED-BREADED TOUCAN** (*Ramphastos dicolorus*) – We had missed this one on the main tour, but ended up having some fabulous looks at it at one of our lodges.

*Picidae (Woodpeckers)*

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

**CAMPO FLICKER** (*Colaptes campestris*)

**BLOND-CRESTED WOODPECKER** (*Ceelus flavescens*) – A bird flew in and landed right next to us when we were scanning the river for Mergansers.

*Cariamidae (Seriemas)*

**RED-LEGGED SERIEMA** (*Cariama cristata*) – Seen more than once during our extension, but the one that was walking in some flowering grass right next to our vehicle in the morning light was truly memorable.

*Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)*

**SOUTHERN CARACARA** (*Caracara plancus*)

**YELLOW-HEADED CARACARA** (*Milvago chimachima*)

**AMERICAN KESTREL** (*Falco sparverius*)

*Psittacidae (Parrots)*

**MAROON-BELLIED PARAKEET** (*Pyrrhura frontalis*) – Seen in flight several times, but we just could not get one of them perched.

**WHITE-EYED PARAKEET** (*Aratinga leucophthalma*)

**GOLDEN-CAPPED PARAKEET** (*Aratinga auricapillus*) – Seen a few times from the road as we looked for the Mergansers.

**PEACH-FRONTED PARAKEET** (*Aratinga aurea*)

**SCALY-HEADED PARROT** (*Pionus maximiliani*)

*Thamnophilidae (Typical Antbirds)*

**RUFOUS-WINGED ANTSHRIKE** (*Thamnophilus torquatus*)

**VARIABLE ANTSHRIKE** (*Thamnophilus caerulescens*)

*Rhinocryptidae (Tapaculos)*

**BRASILIA TAPACULO** (*Scytalopus novacapitalis*) – What a cooperative little bird. I guess nobody told it that Tapaculos are not supposed to behave like that.

*Furnariidae (Ovenbirds and Woodcreepers)*

**CAMPO MINER** (*Geositta poeciloptera*)

**OLIVACEOUS WOODCREEPER** (*Sittasomus griseicapillus*)

**PLANALTO WOODCREEPER** (*Dendrocolaptes platyrostris*)

**NARROW-BILLED WOODCREEPER** (*Lepidocolaptes angustirostris*)

**RUFOUS HORNERO** (*Furnarius rufus*)

**BUFF-FRONTED FOLIAGE-GLEANER** (*Philydor rufum*)

**FIREWOOD-GATHERER** (*Anumbius anumbi*) – A bird sitting on its nest was a real treat.

*Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)*

**SOUTHERN BEARDLESS-TYRANULET** (*Camptostoma obsoletum*)

**YELLOW TYRANNULET** (*Capsiempis flaveola*)  
**GRAY-BACKED TACHURI** (*Polystictus superciliaris*) – Some great looks at this rare grassland specialist.  
**FOREST ELAENIA** (*Myiopagis gaimardii*)  
**YELLOW-BELLIED ELAENIA** (*Elaenia flavogaster*)  
**OLIVACEOUS ELAENIA** (*Elaenia mesoleuca*)  
**PLAIN-CRESTED ELAENIA** (*Elaenia cristata*)  
**SOOTY TYRANNULET** (*Serpophaga nigricans*) – Seen several times during our quest in search of the Merganser.  
**SEPIA-CAPPED FLYCATCHER** (*Leptopogon amaurocephalus*)  
**PLANALTO TYRANNULET** (*Phyllomyias fasciatus*)  
**SHARP-TAILED TYRANT** (*Culicivora caudacuta*)  
**GRAY-HEADED TODY-FLYCATCHER** (*Todirostrum poliocephalum*) – A bird nesting right at the parking lot of one of our lodges was really fun to watch.  
**YELLOW-OLIVE FLYCATCHER** (*Tolmomyias sulphurescens*)  
**CLIFF FLYCATCHER** (*Hirundinea ferruginea bellicosa*)  
**CRESTED BLACK-TYRANT** (*Knipolegus lophotes*)  
**GRAY MONJITA** (*Xolmis cinereus*)  
**WHITE-RUMPED MONJITA** (*Xolmis velatus*)  
**MASKED WATER-TYRANT** (*Fluvicola nengeta*) – A pair of birds displaying right in town as we watched the hummingbird feeders.  
**COCK-TAILED TYRANT** (*Alectrurus tricolor*) – I know we had seen these guys on the main tour, but the views we got on the extension were absolutely dynamite.  
**CATTLE TYRANT** (*Machetornis rixosa*)  
**SWAINSON'S FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus swainsoni*)  
**SHORT-CRESTED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus ferox*)  
**GREAT KISKADEE** (*Pitangus sulphuratus*)  
**BOAT-BILLED FLYCATCHER** (*Megarynchus pitangua*)  
**SOCIAL FLYCATCHER** (*Myiozetetes similis*)  
**STREAKED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiodynastes maculatus*)  
**VARIEGATED FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonomus varius*)  
**WHITE-THROATED KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus albogularis*) – Another bird that we ended up seeing right in town as we watched the hummingbird feeders.  
**TROPICAL KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus melancholicus*)  
**FORK-TAILED FLYCATCHER** (*Tyrannus savana*)

*Cotingidae (Cotingas)*  
**RED-RUFFED FRUITCROW** (*Pyroderus scutatus*)

*Pipridae (Manakins)*  
**PIN-TAILED MANAKIN** (*Ilicura militaris*)  
**WHITE-BEARDED MANAKIN** (*Manacus manacus*)  
**HELMETED MANAKIN** (*Antilophia galeata*) – If Elvis was a bird, this is exactly what he would look like.

*Tityridae (Tityras and Allies)*  
**BLACK-TAILED TITYRA** (*Tityra cayana*)  
**GREENISH SCHIFFORNIS** (*Schiffornis virescens*)

*Vireonidae (Vireos)*  
**RED-EYED VIREO** (*Vireo olivaceus*)  
**RUFOUS-BROWED PEPPERSHRIKE** (*Cyclarhis gujanensis*)

*Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)*  
**CURL-CRESTED JAY** (*Cyanocorax cristatellus*)  
**PLUSH-CRESTED JAY** (*Cyanocorax chrysops*)

*Hirundinidae (Swallows)*  
**BLUE-AND-WHITE SWALLOW** (*Pygochelidon cyanoleuca*)  
**SOUTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW** (*Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*)  
**GRAY-BREASTED MARTIN** (*Progne chalybea*)  
**BROWN-CHESTED MARTIN** (*Progne tapera*)  
**WHITE-WINGED SWALLOW** (*Tachycineta albiventer*)

*Troglodytidae (Wrens)*  
**HOUSE WREN** (*Troglodytes aedon*)  
**SEDGE WREN** (*Cistothorus platensis*) [\*]

*Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)*

**PALE-BREASTED THRUSH** (*Turdus leucomelas*)

**RUFOUS-BELLIED THRUSH** (*Turdus rufiventris*)

*Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)*

**CHALK-BROWED MOCKINGBIRD** (*Mimus saturninus*)

*Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)*

**OCHRE-BREASTED PIPIT** (*Anthus nattereri*) – This rare Pipit can be really hard to find, but we ended up having some really good looks at it in the high plateau of the park.

*Parulidae (New World Warblers)*

**TROPICAL PARULA** (*Setophaga pitiayumi*)

**GOLDEN-CROWNED WARBLER (WHITE-BELLIED)** (*Basileuterus culicivorus hypoleucus*)

*Thraupidae (Tanagers and Allies)*

**CINNAMON TANAGER** (*Schistochlamys ruficapillus*) – A pair of birds sunning them selves just a few feet from the window of the car. It does not get any better than that.

**MAGPIE TANAGER** (*Cissopis leverianus*)

**WHITE-BANDED TANAGER** (*Neothraupis fasciata*)

**WHITE-RUMPED TANAGER** (*Cypsnagra hirundinacea*)

**RUBY-CROWNED TANAGER** (*Tachyphonus coronatus*)

**SAYACA TANAGER** (*Thraupis sayaca*)

**PALM TANAGER** (*Thraupis palmarum*)

**BURNISHED-BUFF TANAGER** (*Tangara cayana*)

**GILT-EDGED TANAGER** (*Tangara cyanoventris*)

**SWALLOW TANAGER** (*Tersina viridis*) – Excellent looks at a adult male.

**BLUE DACNIS** (*Dacnis cayana*)

**GUIRA TANAGER** (*Hemithraupis guira*)

**CINEREOUS WARBLING-FINCH** (*Poospiza cinerea*) – This poorly known bird is in fact a very localized species in central Brazil. Seeing it is always rewarding.

**STRIPE-TAILED YELLOW-FINCH** (*Sicalis citrina*)

**SAFFRON FINCH** (*Sicalis flaveola*)

**WEDGE-TAILED GRASS-FINCH** (*Emberizoides herbicola*)

**PLUMBEOUS SEEDEATER** (*Sporophila plumbea*) – A flock of hundreds of Plumbeous Seedeaters migrating through the park one day, giving us a sense of what the great Seedeater migrations must have been like when there was a lot more habitat intact.

**YELLOW-BELLIED SEEDEATER** (*Sporophila nigricollis*)

**DOUBLE-COLLARED SEEDEATER** (*Sporophila caeruleascens*)

**BANANAQUIT** (*Coereba flaveola*)

**BLACK-THROATED SALTATOR** (*Saltator atricollis*)

**GREEN-WINGED SALTATOR** (*Saltator similis*)

*Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)*

**GRASSLAND SPARROW** (*Ammodramus humeralis*)

**RUFOUS-COLLARED SPARROW** (*Zonotrichia capensis*)

*Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)*

**HEPATIC TANAGER (LOWLAND)** (*Piranga flava flava*) – A male and female right around the entrance to the park were a welcome bonus.

*Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)*

**WHITE-BROWED BLACKBIRD** (*Sturnella superciliaris*)

**CHESTNUT-CAPPED BLACKBIRD** (*Chrysomus ruficapillus*)

**SHINY COWBIRD** (*Molothrus bonariensis*)

**GIANT COWBIRD** (*Molothrus oryzivorus*)

**RED-RUMPED CACIQUE** (*Cacicus haemorrhous*)

**GOLDEN-WINGED CACIQUE** (*Cacicus chrysopterus*)

**CRESTED OROPENDOLA** (*Psarocolius decumanus*)

*Fringillidae (Siskins, Crossbills, and Allies)*

**PURPLE-THROATED EUPHONIA** (*Euphonia chlorotica*)

*Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)*

**HOUSE SPARROW** (*Passer domesticus*)

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## MAMMALS

**TUFTED-EAR MARMOSET** (*Callithrix jacchus*) – We were trying hard to see these guys up on a tree when the owner of the lodge spotted us and smiled. " you guys don't have to look so hard" he said as he pulled out a banana and put it on a feeder. Next thing we knew they were right in our faces.

**MASKED TITI MONKEY** (*Callicebus personatus*) [**\***]

**BRAZILIAN RABBIT** (*Sylvilagus brasiliensis*) – Another one of these magical moments that just happen when you are in the field. A park worker was taking us to the spot where she had seen the Mergansers the previous day when she asked if we would like to see a Brazilian Rabbit, just before pointing it out right on a fork of a tree trunk and told us "Everyone walks right by it, but nobody ever sees it". I have to admit I had never seen one in daylight.

**PAMPAS DEER** (*Ozotoceros bezoarticus*)

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## **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

Other notable sightings:

We encountered a *Bothrops alternatus* in the park; this is a species of pit-viper that belongs to a group often referred to as Fer-de-Lance.

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**Totals for the tour: 172 bird taxa and 4 mammal taxa**