

**FIELD REPORT**

**BRAZIL: HARPY EAGLE  
& SOUTHERN AMAZON EXTENSION  
SEPTEMBER 17–24, 2023**



Harpy Eagle, *Harpia harpyja*. Photo: D. Ascanio ©

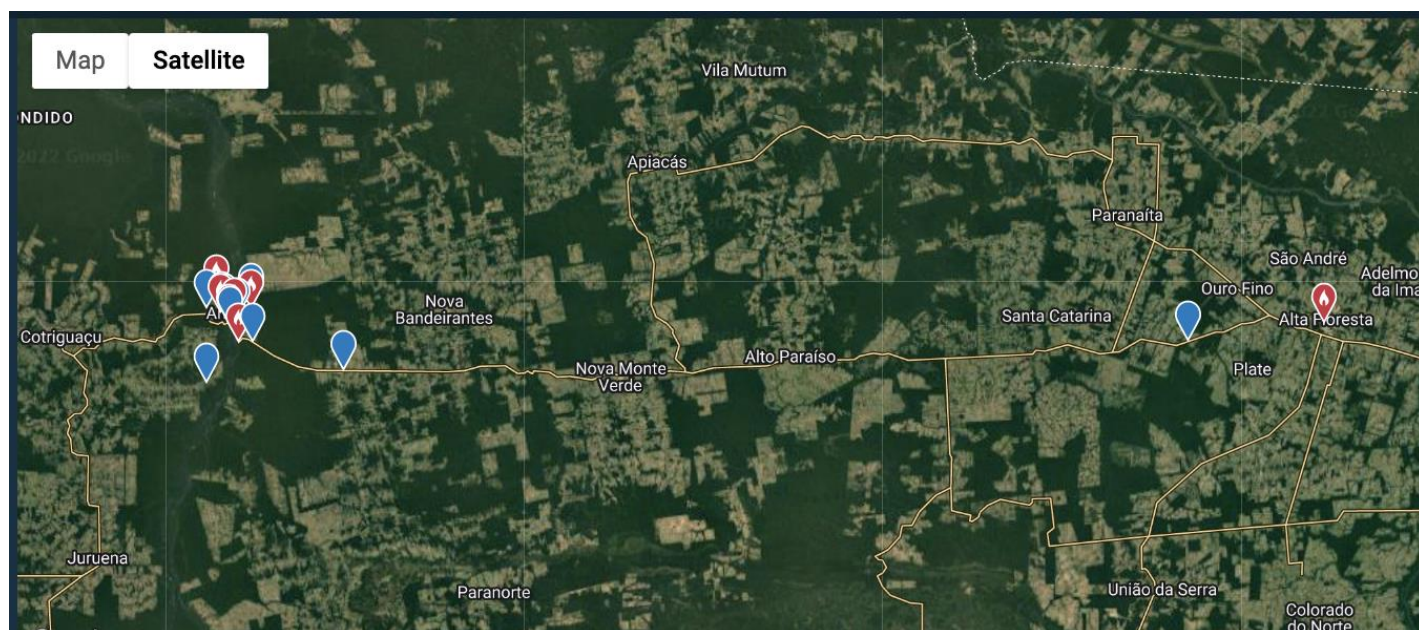
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# BRAZIL: HARPY EAGLE & SOUTHERN AMAZON EXTENSION

## SEPTEMBER 17–24, 2023

### MAP OF LOCATIONS



Map source: eBird Trip Report

### ITINERARY:

- 17 Sept 2023. Flight to Alta Floresta. Drive to Nova Bandeirantes.
- 18 Sept 2023. Morning Sitio de Deus. Afternoon drive to Fazenda Sao Niocolau.
- 19 - 21 Sept 2023. Fazenda Sao Niocolau.
- 22 Sept 2023. Drive to Alta Floresta. Flight to Cuiaba. Night Cuiaba.
- 23 - 24 Sept 2023. Departure. Return to home.



# **BRAZIL: HARPY EAGLE & SOUTHERN AMAZON EXTENSION**

## **SEPTEMBER 17–24, 2023**

**Compiled by David Ascanio**

**Photo album:**

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/davidascanio/albums/72177720311973301/with/53262390487>

**eBird Trip Report:**

<https://ebird.org/tripreport/165326>

There are places in the world for which a single word can bring back memories, some from reading books and articles, some from personal experience, or even through photography and lectures. One such amazing biome is the Amazon.



Yellow-browed Tody-Tyrant, *Todiostrostrum chrysocrotaphum*. Photo: D. Ascanio ©

The very word Amazon brings to mind an endless number of images of rich forests and wildlife. Such images include primates, fishes, unimaginable insects, and beyond to outstanding birds. The key word to an understanding and appreciation of this extensive region is “speciation.” This means that specialized creatures aren’t found everywhere, but mostly in specific locations, in a composition of vegetation that is part of its “micro-habitat.” For this reason, a trip to the kingdom of the Amazon has a much more complex meaning than a visit to other regions, first because of its immense size and second for its extremely large wildlife richness. And furthermore, because of her majesty, the Harpy Eagle. Seeing this eagle can be challenging unless you know of a nest, and that was precisely what we knew.

A flight to the small city of Alta Floresta was our starting point for a drive towards the Juruena National Park. Given the chosen nest for the year, it was decided that we should spend the night in Nova Bandeirantes, a small community resembling that of the old times when the gold rush pushed all kinds of people to settle in the middle of nowhere. Fortunately, there was a pizza house, and they had beer!



Black-fronted Nunbird, *Momnasa nigrifrons*. Photo: D. Ascanio ©

The following day found us leaving very early to drive across vast deforested areas once covered by tropical humid Amazonian forest. The bare land was a strong reminder of the international news a few years ago, when uncontrolled forest fires wiped out a large part of the Amazonian rainforest. But thanks to the efforts of our friends at SouthWild, we visited a small farm where the owners have agreed to protect an important patch of forest where there was a Harpy Eagle



nest. After a delicious breakfast we proceeded to a wonderful tower placed next to the enormous Brazil nut tree where the nest was located. We climbed to almost 100 feet and found ourselves at eye level view with the nest and the about 4–6 months old chick calling incessantly.

Seeing this incredible bird was a dream come true, but equally beautiful was observing other birds living here in the canopy. We learned about the concept of micro-habitat, understanding that some species will be found only (and we mean “exclusively”) in the upper strata of emergent trees. That avifauna included the diminutive Yellow-browed Tody-Flycatcher and the noisy Red-throated Caracara. After a full morning in the tower, we descended for lunch, followed by a wonderful siesta in the farmhouse (we learned how to use hammocks to take a power nap!). Later, we drove to the Juruena River, where a boat was waiting for us to cross this impressive tributary of the Tapajos River, a 520+ miles river that eventually flows into the magnificent Amazon.



Blue-and-yellow Macaw, *Ara ararauna*. Photo: D. Ascanio ©

Three full days awaited us in the unparalleled São Nicolau Ranch, a property managing an extensive plot of forest and wetlands. The mix of towers next to emergent trees, Moriche palm stands, wetlands, scrubby vegetation, and primary tropical humid forest (Amazon rainforest) has put this ranch in the scope of international research and birdwatching. Given its richness, the quality of birds was equal to the number of primates and other vertebrates, as well as invertebrates. Every day offered highlights that seemed unmatched, and then the day after offered something even more impressive, more beautiful, and with a heart-pounding moment.

Beauty was everywhere, from bright sunrises to orange and fiery sunsets. There were troops of primates chasing us away from their territories, peccaries, toucans, puffbirds, jacamars, curassows, nunbirds, and barbets, as well as river otters, macaws, and endless butterflies.



Pied Puffbird, *Notharchus tectus*. Photo: D. Ascanio ©

Besides beauty, we also experienced drama in a way I have never seen before. One morning, we drove to one of the most pristine patches of forest. Upon stopping the safari truck, we noticed something weird: a group of White-lipped Peccaries were crossing the road, quietly and in a single line. For those of us who are used to this species, we know that they can be aggressive and usually move in a disorganized way. But having seen them moving away gave us a chance to explore (well, that's what we thought). Once inside the trail, just around a corner, we noticed the presence of a Jaguar—and it was stalking the peccaries! Upon our presence, the Jaguar moved away, becoming visible to the peccaries that were still there, and proceeded to hunt one. A stampede followed, and they came in our direction. Jesus, our local guide, and I knew exactly what to do: we stood everyone behind a tree for protection, and, grabbing branches from the

ground, started shouting. The idea was to seem gigantic to them, and it worked out well. We were able to deviate the stampede led by the males, while hearing grunting and perceiving anger and fear from the peccaries. We waited patiently until they had moved some distance away and then we returned to our safari truck—it made no sense to keep birding there. This was truly a "once-in-a-lifetime experience"!

These three days offered everything a nature lover could ever hope for: expectation, jaw-dropping sunsets, unbelievable wildlife, and lots of fun (including fresh coffee on top of the towers 😊). Life in the canopy was enjoyed at eye level, while the river trips were filled with macaws, parrots, and an Amazonian Umbrellabird. Roosts of egrets in the middle of the Jurueña River were simply too magical, as well as seeing the bizarre Hoatzin while being serenaded (during the whole day) by the Undulated Tinamou.



Red-throated Piping-Guan, *Pipile cufubi*. Photo: D. Ascanio ©

There is so much to remember that I could continue to write paragraph after paragraph, but I think we all agree that what made this tour unforgettable was the mix of experiences, from birding to walking up amazing towers, to wonderful boat trips and a dynamic that made us laugh every time we could. It was one of those trips that will be remembered for many years, when other experiences have faded away.

It has been a privilege to be your VENT leader. Please consider joining me in other destinations equally contrasting and hosting a unique flora and fauna. Some of these tours and cruises are:

*The Amazon River Cruise*

Photo album (2023 cruise):

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/davidascanio/albums/72177720308130339>

Video (2016 cruise):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1b3xYG0cPSo>

*Costa Rica Relaxed & Easy*

Photo album (2022 tour):

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/davidascanio/albums/72177720304189529>

Video (2015 tour):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mzgD6NfVNSE>

*Cuba: Supporting the Cuban people while birding this amazing island.*

Photo album (2023 tour):

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/davidascanio/albums/72177720310234940>

Video (2015 tour):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yIRHvB1jzdI>

I look forward to seeing you on another VENT tour!

**\* For detailed information regarding numbers of individuals and dates when the bird species was seen or heard, please refer to the link above: *eBird Trip Report*.**

## **BIRDS:**

### **Tinamidae (Tinamous)**

**Gray Tinamou** (*Tinamus tao*).

**Undulated Tinamou** (*Crypturellus undulatus*).

### **Anatidae (Ducks, Geese & Allies)**

**Muscovy Duck** (*Cairina moschata*).

**Brazilian Duck** (*Amazonetta brasiliensis*).

### **Cracidae (Guans, Chachalacas & Allies)**

**Speckled Chachalaca** (*Ortalis guttata*).

**Spix's Guan** (*Penelope jacquacu*).

**Red-throated Piping-Guan** (*Pipile cufubi*).

**Razor-billed Curassow** (*Mitu tuberosum*).

### **Columbidae (Pigeons & Doves)**

**Rock (Feral) Pigeon** (*Columba livia*).

**Pale-vented Pigeon** (*Patagioenas cayennensis*).

**Scaled Pigeon** (*Patagioenas speciosa*).

**Ruddy Pigeon** (*Patagioenas subvinacea*).

**Common Ground-Dove** (*Columbina passerina*).

**Ruddy Ground-Dove** (*Columbina talpacoti*).

**Scaled Dove** (*Columbina squammata*).

**Ruddy Quail-Dove** (*Geotrygon montana*).

### **Cuculidae (Cuckoos & Anis)**

**Guira Cuckoo** (*Guira guira*).



**Greater Ani** (*Crotophaga major*).  
**Smooth-billed Ani** (*Crotophaga ani*).  
**Squirrel Cuckoo** (*Piaya cayana*).  
**Black-bellied Cuckoo** (*Piaya melanogaster*).

### **Caprimulgidae (Nightjars & Allies)**

**Least Nighthawk** (*Chordeiles pusillus*).  
**Band-tailed Nighthawk** (*Nyctiprogne leucopyga*).  
**Blackish Nightjar** (*Nyctipolus nigrescens*).  
**Common Pauraque** (*Nyctidromus albicollis*).  
**Little Nightjar** (*Setopagis parvula*).

### **Nyctibidae (Potoos)**

**Common Potoo** (*Nyctibius griseus*).

### **Apodidae (Swift)**

**Pale-rumped Swift** (*Chaetura egregia*).  
**Short-tailed Swift** (*Chaetura brachyura*).  
**Short-tailed Swift** (*Chaetura brachyura*).  
**Fork-tailed Palm-Swift** (*Tachornis squamata*).

### **Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)**

**White-necked Jacobin** (*Florisuga mellivora*).  
**Black-throated Mango** (*Anthracothorax nigricollis*).  
**Black-bellied Thorntail** (*Discosura langsdorfii*).  
**Long-billed Starthroat** (*Helimaster longirostris*).  
**Fork-tailed Woodnymph** (*Thalurania furcata*).

### **Opisthocomidae (Hoatzin)**

**Hoatzin** (*Opisthocomus hoazin*).

### **Rallidae (Rails & Crakes)**

**Gray-cowled Wood-Rail** (*Aramides cajaneus*).

### **Heliornithidae (Sungrebe)**

**Sungrebe** (*Heliornis fulica*).

### **Aramidae (Limpkin)**

**Limpkin** (*Aramus guarauna*).

### **Charadriidae (Plovers & Lapwings)**

**Pied Lapwing** (*Vanellus cayanus*).  
**Southern Lapwing** (*Vanellus chilensis*).

### **Jacanidae (Jacanas)**

**Wattled Jacana** (*Jacana jacana*).

### **Scolopacidae (Sandpipers)**

**Spotted Sandpiper** (*Actitis macularius*).

**Laridae (Gulls & Terns)**

**Large-billed Tern** (*Phaetusa simplex*).

**Eurypygidae (Sunbittern)**

**Sunbittern** (*Eurypyga helias*)

**Ciconiidae (Storks)**

**Jabiru** (*Jabiru mycteria*)

**Anhingidae (Anhingas)**

**Anhinga** (*Anhinga anhinga*)

**Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants)**

**Neotropic Cormorant** (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*).

**Ardeidae (Hérons, Egrets & Bitterns)**

**Rufescent Tiger-Heron** (*Tigrisoma lineatum*).

**Cocoi Heron** (*Ardea cocoi*).

**Great Egret** (*Ardea alba*).

**Snowy Egret** (*Egretta thula*).

**Cattle Egret** (*Bubulcus ibis*).

**Striated Heron** (*Butorides striatus*).

**Cathartidae (New World Vultures)**

**Black Vulture** (*Coragyps atratus*).

**Turkey Vulture** (*Cathartes aura*).

**Greater Yellow-headed Vulture** (*Cathartes melambrotus*).

**Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles & Kites)**

**Hook-billed Kite** (*Chondrohierax uncinatus*)

**Swallow-tailed Kite** (*Elanoides forficatus*).

**Harpy Eagle** (*Harpia harpyja*).

**Mississippi Kite** (*Elanoides mississippiensis*).

**Plumbeous Kite** (*Ictinia plumbea*).

**Roadside Hawk** (*Rupornis magnirostris*).

**Gray-lined Hawk** (*Buteo nitidus*).

**Short-tailed Hawk** (*Buteo brachyurus*).

**Strigidae (Typical Owls)**

**Tropical Screech-Owl** (*Megascops choliba*).

**Amazonian Pygmy-Owl** (*Glaucidium hardyi*).

**Trogonidae (Trogons & Quetzals)**

**Black-tailed Trogon** (*Trogon melanurus*).

**Green-backed Trogon** (*Trogon viridis*).

**Amazonian Trogon** (*Trogon ramonianus*).

## **Momotidae (Motmots)**

**Amazonian Motmot** (*Momotus momota*).

## **Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)**

**Amazon Kingfisher** (*Chloroceryle amazona*).

**Green-and-rufous Kingfisher** (*Chloroceryle inda*).

## **Bucconidae (Puffbirds)**

**Pied Puffbird** (*Notharchus tectus*).

**Black-fronted Nunbird** (*Monasa nigrifrons*).

**White-fronted Nunbird** (*Monasa morphoeus*).

**Swallow-winged Puffbird** (*Chelidoptera tenebrosa*).

## **Galbulidae (Jacamars)**

**Rufous-tailed Jacamar** (*Galbula ruficauda*).

**Paradise Jacamar** (*Galbula dea*).

**Great Jacamar** (*Jacamerops aureus*).

## **Capitonidae (Barbets)**

**Black-girdled Barbet** (*Capito dayi*).

## **Ramphastidae (Toucans & Aracaris)**

**Lettered Aracari** (*Pteroglossus inscriptus*).

**Chestnut-eared Araçari** (*Pteroglossus castanotis*).

**Red-necked Aracari** (*Pteroglossus bitorquatus*).

**White-throated Toucan** (*Ramphastos tucanus*).

**Channel-billed Toucan** (*Ramphastos vitellinus*).

## **Picidae (Woodpeckers & Allies)**

**Bar-breasted Piculet** (*Picumnus aurifrons*).

**Yellow-tufted Woodpecker** (*Melanerpes cruentatus*).

**Red-stained Woodpecker** (*Dryobates affinis*).

**Lineated Woodpecker** (*Dryocopus lineatus*).

**Golden-green Woodpecker** (*Piculus chrysochloros*).

## **Cariamidae (Seriema)**

**Red-legged Seriema** (*Cariama cristata*).

## **Falconidae (Falcons & Caracaras)**

**Crested Caracara** (*Caracara plancus*).

**Red-throated Caracara** (*Ibycter americanus*).

**Black Caracara** (*Daptrius ater*).

**American Kestrel** (*Falco sparverius*).

**Bat Falcon** (*Falco rufigularis*).

## **Psittacidae (Parrots, Macaws & Allies)**



**Golden-winged Parakeet** (*Brotogeris chrysoptera*).  
**Blue-headed Parrot** (*Pionus menstruus*).  
**Yellow-crowned Parrot** (*Amazona ochrocephala*).  
**Mealy Parrot** (*Amazona farinosa*).  
**Red-fan Parrot** (*Derophtus accipitrinus*).  
**Crimson-bellied Parakeet** (*Phyrrura perlata*).  
**Orange-winged Parrot** (*Amazona amazonica*).  
**White-bellied Parrot** (*Pionites leucogaster*).  
**Red-bellied Macaw** (*Orthopsittaca manilatus*).  
**Blue-and-yellow Macaw** (*Ara ararauna*).  
**Chestnut-fronted Macaw** (*Ara severus*).  
**Scarlet Macaw** (*Ara macao*).  
**White-eyed Parakeet** (*Aratinga leucophthalmus*).

### **Thamnophilidae (Typical Antbirds)**

**Fasciated Antshrike** (*Cymbilaimus lineatus*).  
**Glossy Antshrike** (*Sakesphorus doliatus*).  
**Barred Antshrike** (*Thamnophilus doliatus*).  
**Plain-winged Antshrike** (*Thamnophilus schistaceus*).  
**Amazonian Streaked-Antwren** (*Myrmotherula multostriata*).  
**Rondonia Warbling-Antbird** (*Hypocnemis ochrogyna*).  
**Spix's Warbling-Antbird** (*Hypocnemis striata*).  
**Blackish Antbird** (*Cercomacroides nigrescens*).  
**Gray Antbird** (*Cercomacra cinerascens*).  
**Silvered Antbird** (*Sclateria naevia*).  
**Chestnut-tailed Antbird** (*Sciaphylax hemimelaena*)

### **Grallaridae (Antpittas)**

**Alta Floresta Antpitta** (*Hylopezus whittakeri*).

### **Formicariidae (Antpittas)**

**Rufous-capped Antthrush** (*Formicarius colma*).

### **Furnariidae (Ovenbirds & Woodcreepers)**

**Plain-brown Woodcreeper** (*Dendrocinchla fuliginosa*).  
**Strong-billed Woodcreeper** (*Xiphocolaptes promeropirhynchus*).  
**Striped Woodcreeper** (*Xiphorhynchus obsoletus*).  
**Spix's Woodcreeper** (*Xiphorhynchus spixii*).  
**Dusky-capped Woodcreeper** (*Lepidocolaptes fuscicapillus*).  
**Plain-crowned Spinetail** (*Synallaxis gujanensis*).

### **Pipridae (Manakins)**

**Dwarf-Tyrant Manakin** (*Tyranneutes stolzmanni*).  
**Fiery-capped Manakin** (*Machaeropterus pyrocephalus*).  
**Red-headed Manakin** (*Ceratopipra rubrocapilla*).

### **Cotingidae (Cotingas)**

**Amazonian Umbrellabird** (*Cephalopterus ornatus*).

**Screaming Piha** (*Lipaugus vociferans*).  
**Bare-necked Fruitcrow** (*Gymnoderus foetidus*).

### **Tityridae (Tityras, Becards & Allies)**

**Masked Tityra** (*Tityra semifasciata*).  
**Varzea Schiffornis** (*Schiffornis major*).  
**Brown-winged Schiffornis** (*Schiffornis turdina*).

### **Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)**

**Short-tailed Pygmy-Tyrant** (*Myiornis ecaudatus*)  
**Helmeted Pygmy-Tyrant** (*Lophotriccus galeatus*)  
**Spotted Tody-Flycatcher** (*Todirostrum maculatum*)  
**Yellow-browed Tody-Flycatcher** (*Todirostrum chrysocrotaphum*)  
**Ochre-lored Flycatcher** (*Tolmomyias flaviventris*).  
**Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet** (*Tyrannulus elatus*).  
**Forest Elaenia** (*Myiopagis gaimardii*).  
**Bright-rumped Attila** (*Attila spadiceus*).  
**Vermilion Flycatcher** (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*),  
**Cinnamon Attila** (*Attila cinnamomeus*).  
**Grayish Mourner** (*Rhytipterna simplex*).  
**Dusky-capped Flycatcher** (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*).  
**Short-crested Flycatcher** (*Myiarchus ferox*).  
**Cattle Tyrant** (*Machetornis rixosa*).  
**Lesser Kiskadee** (*Philohydor lictor*).  
**Great Kiskadee** (*Pitangus sulphuratus*).  
**Boat-billed Flycatcher** (*Megarynchus pitangua*).  
**Streaked Flycatcher** (*Myiodynastes maculatus*).  
**Piratic Flycatcher** (*Legatus leucophaeus*).  
**Variegated Flycatcher** (*Empidonomus varius*).  
**Sulphury Flycatcher** (*Tyrannopsis sulphurea*).  
**Tropical Kingbird** (*Tyrannus melancholicus*).  
**Fork-tailed Flycatcher** (*Tyrannus savanna*).

### **Vireonidae (Vireos & Greenlets)**

**Rufous-browed Peppershrike** (*Cyclarhis gujanensis*).  
**Gray-chested Greenlet** (*Hylophilus semicinereus*).  
**Slaty-capped Shrike-Vireo** (*Vireolanius leucotis*).

### **Donacobidae (Donacobius)**

**Black-capped Donacobius** (*Donacobius atricapilla*).

### **Hirundinidae (Swallows & Martins)**

**Black-collared Swallow** (*Pygochelidon melanoleuca*).  
**White-banded Swallow** (*Atticora fasciata*).  
**Southern Rough-winged Swallow** (*Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*).  
**Gray-breasted Martin** (*Progne chalybea*).  
**White-winged Swallow** (*Tachycineta albiventer*).  
**White-rumped Swallow** (*Tachycineta leucorrhoa*).

### **Troglodytidae (Wrens)**

**Moustached Wren** (*Pheugopedius genibarbis*).

**Buff-breasted Wren** (*Cantorchilus leucotis*).

### **Turdidae (Thrushes & Allies)**

**Hauxwell's Thrush** (*Turdus hauxwelli*).

### **Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)**

**House Sparrow** (*Passer domesticus*).

### **Fringillidae (Finches & Euphonias)**

**Purple-throated Euphonia** (*Euphonia chlorotica*).

**Golden-bellied Euphonia** (*Euphonia chrysopasta*).

**Violaceous Euphonia** (*Euphonia violacea*).

### **Passerelidae (New World Sparrows)**

**Pectoral Sparrow** (*Arremon taciturnus*).

### **Icteridae (Orioles, Blackbirds & Allies)**

**Red-breasted Meadowlark** (*Leistes militaris*).

**Crested Oropendola** (*Psarocolius decumanus*).

**Yellow-rumped Cacique** (*Cacicus cela*).

**Shiny Cowbird** (*Molothrus bonariensis*).

**Giant Cowbird** (*Molothrus oryzivorus*).

### **Cardinalidae (Cardinals)**

**Amazonian Grosbeak** (*Cyanoloxia rothschildii*).

### **Thraupidae (Tanagers, Seedeaters & Allies)**

**Red-capped Cardinal**

**Magpie Tanager**

**Fulvous-crested Tanager** (*Tachyphonus surinamus*).

**Silver-beaked Tanager** (*Ramphocelus carbo*).

**Blue-gray Tanager** (*Thraupis episcopus*).

**Palm Tanager** (*Thraupis palmarum*).

**Turquoise Tanager** (*Tangara mexicana*).

**Swallow Tanager** (*Tersina viridis*).

**White-bellied Dacnis** (*Dacnis albiventris*).

**Blue Dacnis** (*Dacnis cayana*).

**Green Honeycreeper** (*Chlorophanes spiza*).

**Blue-black Grassquit** (*Volatinia jacarina*).

**Yellow-bellied Seedeater** (*Sporophila nigricollis*).

**Bananaquit** (*Coereba flaveola*).

**Buff-throated Saltator** (*Saltator maximus*).

### **MAMMALS:**

**Dusky Titi Monkey** (*Callicebus molloch*).

**Squirrel Monkey** (*Saimiri sp.*)



**Common Woolly Monkey** (*Lagothryx humboldtii*)  
**Brown (Tufted) Capuchin** (*Cebus apella*)  
**Red-nosed Bearded Saki** (*Chiropotes albinasus*).  
**Black-spider Monkey** (*Ateles paniscus*).  
**Capybara** (*Hydrochaeris hydrochaeris*).  
**Long-nosed Bat** (*Rhynchonycteris naso*).  
**Jaguar** (*Panthera onca*).  
**Tayra** (*Eira Barbara*).  
**Neotropical Otter** (*Lontra longicaudis*).  
**Giant River Otter** (*Pteronura brasiliensis*).  
**Collared Peccary** (*Pecari tajuca*)  
**White-lipped Peccary** (*Tayassu pecari*).

### **OTHER SPECIES:**

**Spectacled Caiman** (*Caiman crocodilus*).  
**Ameiva Lizard** (*Ameiva ameiva*).