Amazonian Brazil

May 21 – June 5, 2018
Expedition Overview

In the mid-19th century, a young English naturalist, Alfred Russell Wallace, sailed into the delta of the world’s largest river, pushing upstream to seek his fortune in the central Amazon. Little has changed in the region since that time. There are still few roads, air access is negligible, and what settlements exist are clustered along the rivers, still the only access routes into this isolated area.

The intervening century of biological exploration since Wallace has, however, transformed our appreciation of Brazil’s phenomenal biological riches. It is the world’s most biodiverse country, boasting more animals and plants than any other. Mammal diversity exceeds 500 species, with primates alone numbering over 100 species, almost a third of all primate species on Earth, and the bird tally runs to a jaw-dropping 1,910 species.

Join Apex in exploring the central Amazon on a quest for some of the rarest, least known, and most sought-after creatures on Earth!
Monday, May 21: Manaus
Arrive into Manaus this afternoon and transfer to your hotel, set on a bluff overlooking the Amazon’s largest tributary, the Rio Negro. Gather this evening for a welcome dinner and briefing at the Wyndham Garden Manaus.

Tuesday, May 22: Manaus / Santarém / Embark the MV Iracema
Kick off your Amazonian experience with an early morning stroll around the hotel’s sprawling tropical gardens, a haven for wildlife. Pale-throated Three-toed Sloths are not uncommon, and with perseverance and careful scrutiny of the treetops you may also locate the shaggy, primarily nocturnal Southern Two-toed Sloth, or a family of beautiful Golden-faced Sakis. The real prize here, though, is Pied Bare-face Tamarin, an endangered primate with a highly localized range centered on Manaus. The familiar yelping of White-throated Toucans and liquid notes of displaying Crested Oropendolas are constant background sounds, and mixed flights of parrots and parakeets are commonly seen high over the Rio Negro.

In the late morning, head to the airport for the short flight eastwards to Santarém. Upon takeoff, gain an aerial perspective of the famous “Meeting of the Waters”, the inky Rio Negro and café-au-lait Amazon flowing side by side for miles downstream of their confluence. Santarém is a bustling river port some 500 miles upstream of the Atlantic Ocean, at the confluence of the Amazon and Tapajos Rivers. In the late afternoon, board the MV Iracema, a classic, triple-decker river boat with a shallow draft; comfortable air-conditioned, en suite cabins; and abundant deck space for easy wildlife observation. Meet the experienced captain, Mo Fortes, affectionately known as “Junior”, and his crew, and join the expedition team for sunset drinks on deck as you push out into the Amazon River and commence sailing upstream.

Photos: Guianan Cock of the Rock, Pale-throated Three-toed Sloth, Golden-faced Saki
Wednesday, May 23: Alter do Chão

Wake at Alter do Chão, an area of clear, fresh water and sandbars in the Tapajos River, to a routine that will become familiar over the coming days, with sunrise coffee on deck to appreciate the sights and sounds of the rainforest coming to life. After breakfast, board the slender boats that are your mode of transportation into these narrow waterways, for the first foray into the flooded forest. The trip has been specifically timed to coincide with the peak of the annual Amazon floods, when high water levels facilitate easier access to remote areas, as well as more intimate viewing of wildlife in the canopy.

The forest east of the Tapajos River is home to the impressive Spix’s Red-handed Howler and the diminutive Silvery Marmoset, the first two of an incredible 30 possible primate species during our transect from Santarém to Manaus. No other trip on Earth boasts so rich and diverse a primate fauna, and one of the primary objectives of this expedition will be to find, and spend time with, as many of these spectacular creatures, as possible. Although the primates are the principal focus, you will also be looking for such rare and localized birds as White-crested Guan and the glorious Golden Parakeet. Toast the end of the day in Lago Mapirá, as the first fishing bats emerge to skim the waters.

Thursday, May 24: Lagoa Itapicuru and the Trombetas River

Dawn at Lagoa Itapicuru will find us appreciating one of the Amazon’s most celebrated plants, the *Victoria amazonica* waterlily. Although the giant, three-foot-wide leaves of this nocturnal blooming lily are capable of supporting the weight of a baby, we’re more likely to find noisy Wattled Jacanas trotting across their lily pads, alongside a plethora of other Amazonian waterbirds, from Anhingas and Black-collared Hawks to Amazon and Ringed Kingfishers.

After breakfast, use the *Iracema* as a mobile observation tower, motoring slowly along the forested edges of the Trombetas River, a tributary that penetrates remote territory on the north bank of the Amazon. Scan the treetops for movement and listen carefully for the telltale calls that may reveal the presence of Martin’s Bare-face Tamarins, a rare and localized primate scarcely seen by any Western primatologist until our indomitable captain located a population here.

Friday, May 25: Ventilado, on the Trombetas River

Visit Ventilado, a village far up the Trombetas River. The settlement traces its roots to refugees from Brazilian sugar plantation slavery in the early 1800s. Meet with some of its inhabitants, and discover their fishing and subsistence agriculture way of life, unchanged in centuries.

Trails behind the village offer access to tall *terra firme* forest growing on white sand, an extension of the Guianan forests. Spend the morning searching for groups of Golden-handed Tamarin, a primate endemic to the Guianan center of endemism, along with an array of Guianan avian endemics, from puffbirds to cotingas and woodcreepers to antbirds.

In the afternoon, climb to the dancing arena of the Guianan Cock-of-the-Rock, a brilliant orange cotinga whose displays rank as some of the most spectacular bird displays on Earth.

Photos: *MV Iracema*, Crimson-bellied Parakeet, Giant South American Turtle, White-throated Toucan
Saturday, May 26: Mamiru River
Sail down the Trombetas River overnight and cross the Amazon once again, to continue your exploration of the south bank in the vicinity of the Mamiru River. The Amazon River and its major tributaries divide the rainforest into discrete blocks, and act as substantial biogeographical barriers to animal dispersal, separating related forms and explaining some of the basin's extraordinary biodiversity. The area to the west of the Tapajos River is the range of the hulking Black Howler, as well as the gorgeous Black and White Tassel-ear Marmoset, also known as the Santarem Marmoset. Tamarins and marmosets differ from other New World monkeys by their small size and by possessing claws instead of nails. But it is their habit of routinely giving birth to twins that is most endearing, and the hope is to encounter a family with youngsters as they forage for flowers, fruits and plant sap.

Sunday, May 27: Furo Maçuari
A pre-dawn departure gets you into position to search for the rare Hoffmann’s Titi Monkey. Favoring areas of dense, vine-tangled forest, titis are medium-sized monkeys best located at dawn, when they vocalize vociferously. If fortunate enough to hear a group within striking range, you’ll carefully pick your way through for a view of these shy, reclusive folivores. Over lunch, relocate to the small Maués-Mirim River, to another area known to support a healthy population of Black and White Tassel-ear Marmosets.

Nocturnal excursions are an exciting component of any exploration of the Amazon, yielding a completely fresh complement of creatures, from Spectacled and Black Caimans to Rainbow Boas, and Kinkajous to prehensile-tailed porcupines.

Monday, May 28: Campina do Parauari
Dawn will find you high up the Maués River, in a complex system of lakes and river channels. Higher ground here supports a unique, fairly open and beautiful forest type growing on poor soils known locally as “campina”. This is the habitat of yet another rare, little known, and downright glamorous marmoset known as the Maués Marmoset. While exploring this campina, be on the look out for swarms of army ants, which may be attended by so-called inveterate ant swarm followers, such as Pale-faced Bare-eye and Harlequin Antbird.

In the afternoon, head to high forest on a quest for Golden Parakeet and Bald Parrot, and watch the horizon for flocks of these two magnificent and highly endangered psittacines winging to roost. This is amongst the most pristine forest of your voyage, and you have the possibility of encountering Razor-billed Curassow and White-crested Guan, indicator species of very low hunting pressure.

Tuesday, May 29: Amana River
A large tributary of the Maués Açú channel, the Amana River offers an excellent chance to find the hulking Black Howler Monkey, handsome White-fronted Capuchin, and one of the most peculiar of all monkeys (even in the context of the slew of bizarre marmosets to date), the Gray’s Bald-faced Saki.

Sail down the Parauari River in the late afternoon, watching for the rare White-tailed Cotinga perched in the riverside canopy, before the bats and Ladder-tailed Nightjars start moving over the water.
**Wednesday, May 30: Paraconi River**
Spend a final morning in the Maués interfluviu, with the last chance of finding Maués Marmosets. Our afternoon is expeditionary, as we forge further up this attractive river. If the opportunity presents itself, set off on short hikes in the late afternoon and into the evening, searching for nocturnal creatures while appreciating the sounds of the night forest.

**Thursday, May 31: Abacaxis**
Today, rise to the challenge of trying to view the Sateré Marmoset, an elusive species restricted to the area between the Abacaxis and Madeira Rivers. Golden-backed Squirrel Monkeys are decidedly more numerous, and birding is excellent in this area, with colorful Red-necked and Chestnut-eared Aracaris, Crimson-crested and Yellow-tufted Woodpeckers, and the elegant Paradise Jacamar regularly encountered.

**Friday, June 1: Madeira / Nova Olinda**
With high floodwaters, the captain prefers to sail along a system of parallel channels to the main Amazon, and you emerge today from the small channel of Arariá, into the Madeira River, one of the largest tributaries of the Amazon.

Just as you leave the channel, you’re in prime territory for spotting the monkey known by the local people as ‘algodão’, meaning cotton, but known to primate biologists as the Golden-white Tassle-eared Marmoset. While exploring the area in canoes, listen for the distinctive morning chorus of the Lake Baptista Titi Monkey, which has one of the smallest distributions of any primate. The flooded forest around Nova Olinda also hosts the jewel-like Crimson-hooded Manakin, which boasts a head as brilliant as sealing wax.

**Saturday, June 2: Laguinho**
The Laguníno area of the Madeira River is one of the best places to experience the phenomenon of Amazon river islands. Islands in the main Amazon are constantly shifting, eroding at their upstream edge and depositing on their downstream side, effectively migrating downriver with time. This complex pattern of plant succession creates a spectrum of habitats that appeal to a distinctive suite of unique birds, some of which are never seen off a river island, such as Red-and-white Spinetail, the dapper Black-and-white Antbird, and Varzea Piculet, a minute woodpecker. In the afternoon, sail towards Manaus, in order to arrive in time for early exploration.

**Sunday, June 3: Manaus and the MUSA Canopy Tower**
Visit the Museu da Amazonia (MUSA) Canopy Tower, situated in the forty-square-mile Ducke Reserve. Watch sunrise from atop the 120-foot tower, with a veritable surround-sound cacophony of birdsong, in the realm of dazzlingly colorful cotingas, toucans, trogons, and tanagers. Large flights of parrots, from Scarlet and Red-bellied Macaws to Caica and Blue-headed Parrots, pass by at eye level, and, with luck, you may even encounter the magnificent Red-fan Parrot. Guianan Red Howler Monkeys are often equally vocal, with other primate possibilities including Pied Bare-face Tamarin and Bearded Saki, with its bizarre bouffant hair-do. Walking the trails below the tower, watch for Red-rumped Agouti and Guianan Squirrel.

Return to the *iracema*, and sail to the isthmus between the Rio Negro and the main Amazon, or Solimões, as its known by Brazilians. Here, still further primate species, from Common Squirrel Monkeys to White-fronted Capuchins, may be seen.
Monday, June 4: Janauacá River and Praia Grande

The elusive Chestnut-bellied Titi and Gray’s Saki Monkey are your two main target primates in this area of the Rio Negro, south-west of Manaus on the Janauacá River. For your primate finale, you have an opportunity to spot Black Uakari Monkeys. Uakaris are the most active of all New World monkeys, due to a varied diet high in nutritional value, and are very mobile and tricky to track down, as a result.

Venezuelan Red Howler, Humboldt’s Squirrel Monkey and White-fronted Capuchin Monkeys are all more numerous and regularly encountered here.

Tuesday, June 5: Praia Grande / Manaus

End your Amazon wildlife experience with one of the most extraordinary wildlife encounters on Earth: swimming with Pink Dolphins! Known locally as Boto, these undeniably and indescribably pink, freshwater cetaceans are completely wild, and yet accustomed to the presence of humans, allowing close approach in the tea-colored water of the Rio Negro. Appreciating them in such intimate a fashion is a fitting culmination of an epic voyage, spanning over 1,000 miles, multiple interfluvia, countless micro-habitats, and, if all goes according to plan, over TWENTY FIVE species of primate!

Return to Manaus and enjoy a final farewell dinner before heading to the airport for flights homeward.
A – Manaus
B – Santarem
C – Amazon Exploration

By Air       By Ship

Map is for illustration purposes only. Actual voyage routing will vary.
Jonathan Rossouw

Jonathan Rossouw is one of the world's most experienced expedition leaders, having guided wildlife trips in over 150 countries on all seven continents. He combines a legendary energy and enthusiasm with a broad knowledge of all aspects of natural history, gained from three decades spent in the pursuit of the world's mammals, birds, reptiles and coral reef fishes. Indeed, having seen over 8,500 species of birds, 1,000 mammals and 2,000 coral reef fishes, he will likely experience more species of vertebrate animals than anyone in history!

A medical doctor by training, Jonathan was born and raised on South Africa's east coast and spent his family vacations in the games reserves of Zululand. It was here that the foundation was laid for a lifelong passion for wildlife and wild places and, in 1996, a “short break” to cycle across South America from Buenos Aires to Cusco led to two years spent guiding at eco-lodges in the Amazon and doing bird surveys in the Andes. He returned to Africa to start a birding travel company, before joining Peter Harrison and Shirley Metz, to assist in expanding their global portfolio of natural history destinations. An accomplished photographer, Jonathan's images have appeared in many books and magazines, and he has co-authored birding site guides to Uganda, Southern Africa and Madagascar.

Diogo Lucatelli

As a young boy, Diogo discovered a passion for the natural world and his curiosity led him to study Biology, Ecology and Natural Resources in his hometown, Salvador da Bahia, Brazil. After graduating, he immersed himself in getting to know and understand the wild wetlands of the Pantanal.

In 2012 Diogo joined the team at Caiman Ecological Refuge and by 2013 he was an integral part of the Onçafari Jaguar Project, leaning on his biology background and guiding skills, he also underwent special tracking-skills training. His love for Brazil's environment, wildlife, people and culture are evident in the way he shares insights and experiences with guests. Tracking, birding and wildlife photography are only a few of the means through which he feeds his passion for nature.

“When it comes to expedition travel, in particular, one needs to be led by a knowledgeable, enthusiastic, entertaining and confidence-inspiring professional. We have yet to meet anyone quite like Jonathan who so completely ticks all these boxes!”

– Pat G., Durban
Expedition Details

Amazonian Brazil  May 21 – June 5, 2018
$ 9,770  Per Person Rate
$12,420  Solo Rate
16 Days  Trip Length
18 Guests  Group Size
Manaus / Manaus  Start/End

Included
Apex Expeditions’ rates include one hotel night in Manaus and accommodations onboard MV Iracema, in air-conditioned cabins (upper & lower berth); all meals, activities and excursions as described in the itinerary; air Manaus to Santarem, as noted in the itinerary; services of two Apex Expeditions leaders and local guides throughout the itinerary; local beer & wines at lunch & dinner; all gratuities; airport transfers; permits and entrance fees; all taxes.

Not Included
Costs not included in the price of your Apex expedition include travel to and from the start and end point of trip; premium brand drinks and liquor; travel insurance (Trip Cancellation and Interruption, as well as Emergency Medical and Evacuation insurance, are highly recommended); airport departure taxes; equipment rental; excess baggage fees; passport and/or visa fees; items of a personal nature (phone calls, laundry, souvenirs, etc.); and independent travel arrangements pre- or post-trip.

Payments & Terms
20% of the trip cost will confirm your place on the expedition. The final balance is due 150 days prior to departure. All prices are quoted in U.S. dollars and must be paid in U.S. dollars. Per person pricing is based on double occupancy. The solo rate is paid by participants who specifically request single accommodations and is subject to availability. If you are traveling alone and wish to share accommodations, we will try to match you with a roommate of the same gender. However, if a roommate is not available, the published solo rate will be charged. Upon confirming your reservation you will be required to pay the published Solo Rate, if we are able to pair you with a roommate, the applicable difference will be refunded at the time that the final trip payment is due for all participants. Please note that solo accommodations are limited and cannot always be guaranteed throughout. For our full set of Terms & Conditions, please visit our web site at www.apex-expeditions.com/about/terms-conditions/

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**Person 1: (Primary Contact)**

Passport Name: 

Preferred Name: 

Date of Birth: 

Email Address: 

**Mailing Details:**

Address: 

City: State: ZIP Code: Country: 

Phone: Fax: 

☐ Double ☐ Solo 

**Person 2: (If applicable and at same address, otherwise please submit a second Reservation Form.)**

Passport Name: 

Preferred Name: 

Date of Birth: 

Email Address: 

**Deposit Information:**

☐ My deposit check is enclosed (20% of total tour fare)

☐ Charge my deposit to my: ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express 

Card #: Expires: CCV Code: 

Name on Card: 

Signature: 

Please return this completed form to Apex Expeditions.

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