

# Tropical Treasures of Amazonia

June 1-14, 2017



A natural history expedition with Walt Anderson & Micah Riegner



Imagine cruising on a great river with forested uplands stretching as far as the eyes can see; The surface of the water breaks, and one of the two freshwater dolphin species of the Amazon appears as if by magic. Imagine gliding smoothly in a canoe into flooded forest, alert for monkeys, parrots, herons, perhaps even one of the big cats. Envision yourself walking in the intense shade of a forest, senses alert, exotic sounds and ecological stories enveloping you.

You can do more than imagine these things: join three fine naturalists in a voyage of discovery organized through Amazonia Expeditions of Brazil. From the famous rubber-boom city of Manaus on the mighty Rio Negro, we will take the comfortable river boat *Dorinha* to explore the Rio Amazonas and Rio Madeira. From the Madeira, we will take the channel Parana Araria across to the Rio Maues. This channel conveniently crosses several black-water tributaries off the Central Amazon including the Canuma and Abacaxis. These tributaries act as biogeographic barriers to primates (we will have the opportunity to see 4 species of marmosets and various monkeys) and understory birds, but they remain very poorly known.

Our final destination as far as time allows will be the pristine forests of Rio Maues and the Rio Parauari. We will be visiting some wild, wild places, little known to science. New species of birds and mammals are still being discovered in this tropical paradise.

Brazil is an enormous country (half of South America), but instead of dashing around to many sites, we will focus on in-depth exploration of the central Amazon area. This will allow us to sample extraordinary biodiversity while living well and comfortably on the *Dorinha*. Your guides will help you to see more than you could imagine and will provide behavioral, ecological, and evolutionary stories to enrich your understanding.



# Tropical Treasures of Amazonia

Micah Riegner & Walt Anderson — June 2017

This journey will give us access to a remarkable range of habitats, from flooded white-water river islands on the Amazon and Madeira to tall *terra firme* (high-ground forest) along the Maues. We will be on the rivers at high-water season, allowing us to canoe in the canopy of the flooded forest (also known as *Varzea*). We will also hike on several trails cleared last year.

South America is rightly called the “bird continent.” There may be as many as 500 species of birds just in the relatively small area we will explore (if you are a birder, you can reasonable expect to see several hundred species, many severely range-restricted or endemic). It’s good to come prepared to try to distinguish among the many species of hummingbirds, parrots, antbirds, woodcreepers, flycatchers, raptors, icterids, and tanagers.

Birds found on white-water river islands include Black-and-white Antbird, Castle-nau’s Antshrike, Klages’s Antwren, Varzea Piculet, Lesser Wagtail Tyrant, Olive-spotted Hummingbird, Plain Softtail, and Parker’s Spinetail.

Some of the specialty birds possible near Maues include the rare and gorgeous Golden Parakeet; Vulturine Parrot and Bald Parrot (the only place in the world where they occur together); White-tailed Cotinga; Crimson-hooded Manakin; Brown-chested Barbet; White-breasted, Pale-faced, and Harlequin Antbirds; and Hoffman’s Woodcreeper.

On night trips we will have the opportunity to see several species of potoos, owls, and nightjars, as well as nocturnal mammals.

The mammals of the region are diverse and poorly known. We will have the chance to see several species of marmoset (e.g., Maues, Satere, Gold-and-white, and Black-and-white Tassel-eared) and other primates (e.g., Hoffmann’s and Baptista Lake Titi Monkeys, sakis, howlers, capuchins). We also have a good chance to see two species of river dolphin, porcupines, opossums, pacas, agoutis, tree rats, and many awesome bats. These are not your North American opossums or porcupines either!

The Amazon is the world’s greatest river (nothing else even comes close). It is a biodiversity hotspot without equal. The river and its tributaries support over 3000 species of fish (the Mississippi River system has 300 natives, and the Colorado River only 31). Some of the well-known fish are the armored catfish, electric eel, piranha (most species are vegetarian, and they rarely bother eating vegans), neon tetra, and pirarucu (*Arapaima*), one of the world’s largest freshwater fish.

While the diversity is mind-blowing, the ecological relationships are complex and fascinating. The forest trees and the fishes literally depend on each other.

There are thousands of species of plants, too many to identify to species, but there are common types that we will be able to appreciate: palms of many kinds, cecropias, the ceiba or kapok tree, heliconia, and many species of legumes.

Insect diversity is off the charts. Hundreds of species of butterflies, including the dazzling Blue Morpho; ants, including leafcutter and army; termites; beetles (evolution’s darlings), moths, and much more are all worthy of our admiration and contemplation.

Though we naturalists tend to be “taxa collectors,” we intend to go beyond names to the stories behind the species and to the bigger landscape-level context, as well. We also approach nature with the inquisitive enthusiasm of a child, curious and engaged in observation. Both Micah and Walt have considerable experience using drawing/painting tools to study nature, and if you would like to learn basic drawing techniques, you are on the right trip. Walt is also happy at any time to offer photo tips to try to help you to capably capture images to celebrate your discoveries.



Collared Puffbird



Spotted Puffbird

Photos by Micah Riegner





**Activities** We will be doing early morning and afternoon excursions either in canoes or on trails. The terrain around Maues is steep, and some of the trails require a fair amount of stamina, but canoe options also exist at such times. At nights we will do outings to look for nocturnal mammals and set up mist nets to capture bats. Your leaders are happy to arrange special talks, sketching sessions, etc.

**Timing** The boat will leave on June 1st (and will return on the afternoon of the 13th. There will be options (\$25 per person) to visit a canopy tower in Reserva Adolpho Ducke on the mornings of the 1st & 14th. This is the way to get high in the tropics! Instead of looking up into the bright sky through tall trees, you are up there with the birds, an experience to treasure.

**Accommodation:** We will be based on the *Dorinha* for the entire journey. This is luxury wilderness travel: air-conditioned rooms with two bunks, private bathrooms, well-stocked bar, and outstanding food. Imagine watching the sunset from the upper deck of the boat with caiparinha (Brazil's national cocktail) in hand.



**Amazonian Woodcreepers**  
Micah Riegner illustration



“Delight itself is a weak term to express the feelings of a naturalist who, for the first time, has wandered by himself in a Brazilian forest. The elegance of the grasses, the novelty of the parasitical plants, the beauty of the flowers, the glossy green on the foliage, but above all the general luxuriance of the vegetation, filled me with admiration. A most paradoxical mixture of sound and silence pervades the shady parts of the wood. . . . To a person fond of natural history, such a day as this brings with it a deeper pleasure than he can ever hope to experience again.”

Charles Darwin in *The Voyage of the Beagle*

## Your Leaders:



**Micah Riegner**, a rising star among young tropical ornithologists, has been leading trips in the Amazon for the past 5 years. He has participated in research expeditions to remote parts of the Brazilian Amazon and is a popular guide for Amazonia Expeditions and Cristalino Lodge. Micah has a BS degree in Natural History and Ecology, with a minor in Art, from Prescott College, Arizona. He plans to continue studying and painting Neotropical birds at Louisiana State University for his graduate studies.



**Walt Anderson**, Professor of Environmental Studies at Prescott College, teaches natural history, ecology, wildlife management, conservation, ecotourism, nature art & photography. His words, illustrations, and photographs have appeared in many media, both scientific and popular. Walt's extensive experience and knowledge are shared with keen enthusiasm and humor. Walt led the first US ecotourism adventure to the national parks of Brazil for the Stanford Alumni Association, which was followed by many more throughout Brazil and around the world. Walt is an expert in field identification of organisms; in teaching ecological concepts and natural history; in collaborating with foundations, NGO's, and local groups; and in facilitating group dynamics.



**Moacir Fortes Junior**, captain of the Dorinha, grew up in the Amazon and has a Master's degree in biology from the University of Manaus. He is an outstanding birder, herpetologist, and all-around naturalist. He and his family have led Amazon adventures for over 30 years, serving universities and tour companies such as Field Guides, New York Botanical Society, and Bat Conservation International. Deep familiarity with the diverse ecosystems allows him to navigate the maze of rivers to maximize our chances for spectacular wildlife discoveries.



## General Information

**Expedition Cost:** \$4200 per person

**Single Supplement:** \$300 (if it is not possible to find you a room-mate)

Maximum number of guests on this special trip is 14. A small-group surcharge (\$300 each) will apply if we have 11-12 guests.

### Air Travel:

Note that the expedition begins on June 1, 2017 and ends on June 14 in Manaus, Brazil. We are leaving air arrangements up to you, though if we can provide reasonable suggestions, please ask. Most Americans travel through Miami. If you arrive the day before, Amazonia Expeditions can help you with reservations at Hotel Tropical or elsewhere (not included in tour price). You would fly out on the 14th unless you wanted to spend more time in Manaus on your own.

### The tour includes the following:

- Accommodation and meals in the exclusively chartered *Dorinha*
- Instruction and leadership by Micah Riegner, Walt Anderson, and Junior.
- Daily excursions for the 13 nights we are on the boat.
- Pre-departure Information on all aspects of the trip, including reading suggestions, travel tips, etc.

### The tour does not include the following:

International airfare or airport taxes, passport and visa fees, excess baggage charges, personal and baggage insurance, personal items (e.g., room service, laundry, medicines, phone or e-mail bills), alcoholic beverages, other on-board purchases (e.g., t-shirts, jewelry), photographic expenses, optional activities/excursions, (e.g., tower visit in Manaus), airport shuttles, meals or lodging if you stay in Manaus before or after the expedition), or tips to the crew of the *Dorinha*. Tips to your guides are optional but always appreciated if we have served you well.

### Fitness and Health:

Anyone in reasonably good health should do well on this expedition, as activities are generally not strenuous. In the Rio Maues area, there are steep hills and mud to contend with occasionally. Trails are not of US national park quality! Your accommodations are comfortable and food excellent, though you may experience traveler's diarrhea as a consequence of travel. We will provide useful travel and medical tips. Upon registration, you will be sent a reservation and personal information form, which includes the typical liability release. You must fill this out in order to participate. You must be covered by medical insurance that is valid overseas, and we encourage you to take out medical and trip cancellation/interruption insurance. We reserve the right to turn down any application at our discretion.



### \*Travel Protection:

As a travel agent, Walt has access to an **excellent travel insurance plan offered through [Berkshire Hathaway](#)**.

The program is really cutting-edge in responsiveness with access to the company through a smart phone app, Facebook, Twitter, email, Webchat, phone call or even text. Customers can get service for many claims by simply taking photos of documents, receipts and boarding passes and remitting them electronically. You can get real assistance (including money with the assistance services) incredibly quickly (they can deposit money directly to your designated account). There are **two options:**

**ExactCare** is comprehensive, customizable, and affordable based on a fraction of the trip cost. It can even cover **pre-existing conditions** if it is applied for **within 15 days of making the trip deposit** (certain guidelines apply)! Well worth being proactive. **ExactCare can help reimburse you for losses** with respect to trip cancellation, trip interruption, trip delay, missed connection, lost baggage/baggage delay, medical expense benefit (including dental), medical evacuation, and more.

**AirCare** is an alternative if you only want benefits directly related to flights (no medical). For a very modest fee, you can get paid for a delayed flight, missed connection, delayed bag, lost bag, or tarmac delay.

If you have **ExactCare**, you do not need **AirCare** too. Please contact [Berkshire Hathaway](#) for specifics on your program based on our group trip cost and residency state.

You may certainly travel without travel insurance, but personally, I have found that the unexpected is not at all impossible, and I always get it when I travel. I just think this is one of the best options available.

# Tropical Treasures of Amazonia June 1-14, 2017

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ space(s) on the Tropical Treasures of Amazonia tour from June 1-14, 2017.

Price: \$4200 with 13-14 participants; \$4500 if 11-12.

Single Supplement: \$300 (if it is not possible to find you a room-mate; *would be payable with final payment*)

Deposit: \$700 per person \_\_\_\_\_

Balance due: \_\_\_\_\_ Payable by March 1, 2017

Deposits refundable less \$100 handling fee until March 1, 2017.

No refunds after Mar. 1, 2017 (trip cancellation insurance advised; see below\*).

A personal check, cashier's check, money order, or even a bank-to-bank transfer should be possible. My Chase banker told me about Chase Quick Pay. If I have your name and email, Chase can email you a request for funds, which you can then transfer to my account securely (and free). If you choose to *wire* funds, there will be some charges. If you send a check, make it payable to **Walt Anderson**. Talk to your banker and let me know if you need any more information.

Please mail or email Reservation Form to Walt Anderson, 2911 E. Granite Gardens Drive, Prescott AZ 86301-8457, [geolobo@cableone.net](mailto:geolobo@cableone.net). Send deposit by mail or through bank transfer, as suggested above. If you have questions, call Walt at 928-308-9017 or email at [geolobo@cableone.net](mailto:geolobo@cableone.net).

Names of persons traveling \_\_\_\_\_

Signatures (required) \_\_\_\_\_

*You may skip the contact info if you have included it on the separate personal information form and liability release*

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone numbers. Day: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_; Evening: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_; Cell: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail (most information will be sent by e-mail, if possible): \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I am traveling with \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I would like to room alone and am willing to pay the single supplement charge (\$300). (Single rooms subject to availability)

☐ I am traveling alone and would like to share a room. Please assign a room-mate. I understand that if none is available, I will be charged the single supplement.

You must also send the *personal information form and liability release* (required for trip participation).

Travel Protection:

As a travel agent, Walt has access to an **excellent travel insurance plan offered through Berkshire Hathaway**. Use the live link or go to [www.bhtp.com](http://www.bhtp.com) and mention Walt Anderson, Code AA0568. Note that pre-existing conditions are covered if you enroll within 15 days of making your trip deposit. An early decision may save you most of that money if plane tickets go up later. You may still buy the travel insurance right up until travel time, though pre-existing conditions would not be covered.