

# Finding Hyacinth Macaw *Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus* in the Pantanal, Mato Grosso, Brazil

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One of the most sought-after species by ornithologists visiting South America is Hyacinth Macaw *Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*. Formerly much more common and widespread, the cagebird trade has decimated the population and it appears likely that many more are now in captivity than occur in the wild<sup>1</sup>. The species is in danger of extinction and is classified as threatened (Vulnerable/Rare)<sup>1</sup>.

In 1996, we visited the Pantanal in Mato Grosso, Brazil, from 1–6 September. This vast wetland supports a wide variety of spectacular and rare species, and one of our main aims was to find Hyacinth Macaws. We concentrated our search almost entirely along the Transpantaneira, the road running virtually due south from Poconé to Porto Jofre. We only left the road on two occasions for short walks,



Hyacinth Macaws *Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*  
(M. J. Whittingham)

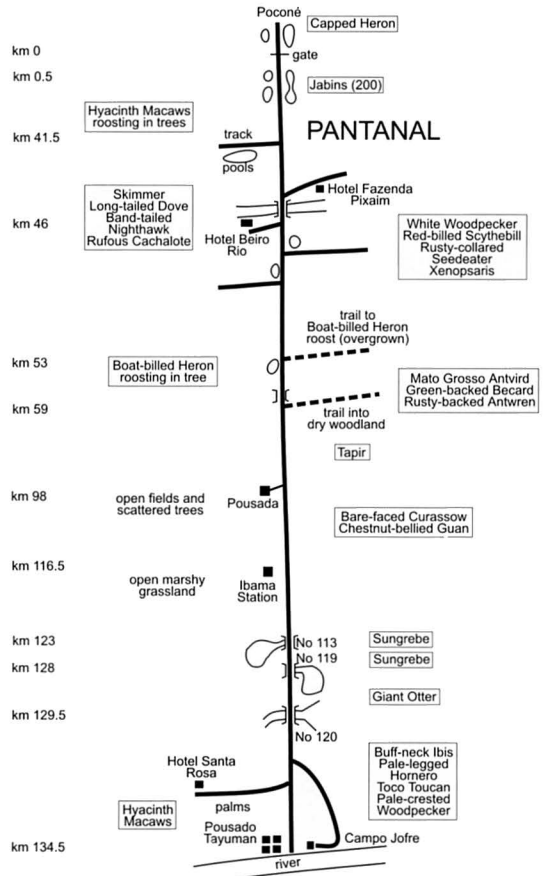


Figure 1. Sketch map of the Transpantaneira

each of less than two hours in duration, into the adjoining ranching/swampland area. Our most interesting observations are shown in Fig. 1.

Hyacinth Macaws were encountered at the following places: one flew parallel with the road and then perched 3 m up in a palm tree near Poconé on 1 September; at least three were in an area of open fields grazed by cattle and with scattered trees between 41 and 42 km south of Poconé on 3 September; and five were in a similar open area with a few large mature trees c.98 km south of Poconé on 4 September. Additional records came from around Porto Jofre (see Fig. 2), where we stayed at Pousada

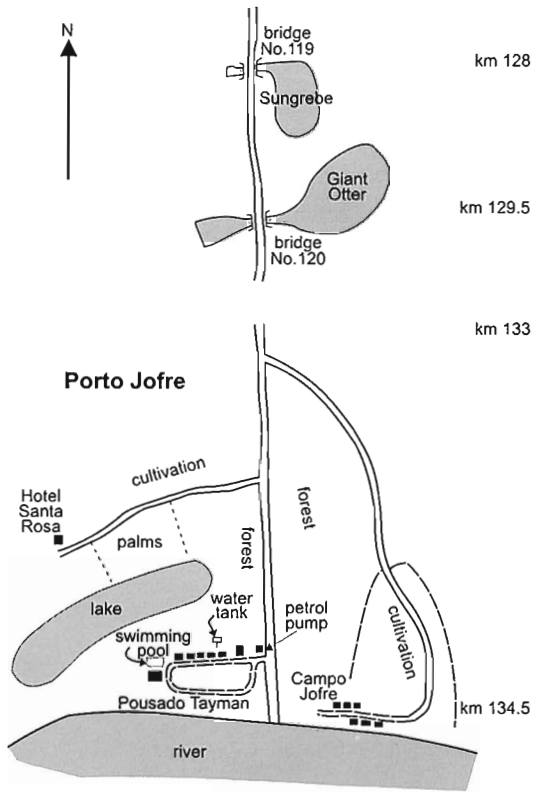


Figure 2. Sketch map of area surrounding Porto Jofre

Tayuman from 4–6 September. Up to 14 Hyacinth Macaws were present throughout our stay and were extremely approachable. They came to feed from buckets placed atop poles within the hotel complex. A maximum of 14 was also recorded nearby, feeding in part of a small oil-palm plantation near the Hotel Santa Rosa. The species was reported in this area in July 1988<sup>1</sup> and it seems possible that this small population has survived for some time in close proximity to humans.

We recommend Porto Jofre, and the Pousada Tayuman in particular, as an extremely good area to obtain prolonged and close views of this species. The use of plantation oil palms and farmland and the species' apparent ability to tolerate human activity may bode well for its future survival in this area.

**Reference**

1. Collar, N. J., Gonzaga, L. P., Krabbe, N., Madroño Nieto, A., Naranjo, L. G., Parker, T. A. & Wege, D. C. (1992) *Threatened birds of the Americas: the ICBP/IUCN Red Data Book*. Cambridge, UK: International Council for Bird Preservation.

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