

Photospot: Ocellated Crane in the Brazilian Cerrado

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Rallids are often an attractive bunch, but perhaps the most stunning Neotropical species of them all is Ocellated Crane.

A species worthy of a Photospot if ever there was one!

The Cerrado is a tropical savanna ecoregion exclusive to South America. The vast majority of this biome is located in central Brazil, making up 21% of the country's land area, with smaller tracts in neighbouring Paraguay and Bolivia. Cerrado is generally considered a type of savanna but encompasses a wide range of habitats ranging from open grassy savannas through more wooded scrub to thick strands of gallery forest that follow the numerous rivers and streams crisscrossing the landscape. This range of habitats supports some fabulous endemic fauna that comprises not just birds but also mammals, amphibians, reptiles and invertebrates. Despite

this, the Cerrado's lower overall biodiversity than the continent's forests or wetlands, the biome can easily be forgotten about or, indeed, overlooked by birders planning a South American trip.

Tragically, as has become particularly apparent this century (e.g. Cardoso da Silva & Bates 2002), the Brazilian Cerrado is one of the most threatened biomes in South America, with agricultural expansion continuing to consume any remaining unprotected fragments. But it's not all bad news. Although the construction of the new national capital of Brasilia during the 1960s came at the expense of large expanses of Cerrado, many of the remaining areas adjacent to the city



1-3 Adult Ocellated Crane
Micropygia schomburgkii,
Altiplano Leste, Brasilia,
January 2020 (Daniel Branch).