

GIANT ANTEATER FOUND NEAR LAKE SANDOVAL

A Giant Anteater (*Myrmecophaga tridactyla*) was found in Tambopata on June 11th. Inkaterra field guide Gabriel Barriga was leading a group of travellers in an excursion to Lake Sandoval, a water mirror surrounded by wetlands and palm trees where howler monkeys, black caimans, giant river otters and a wide variety of bird species can be observed. About 50 meters away from the trail that heads towards the lake, the group saw a large animal moving its exceptionally long and bushy tail. It was a full-grown adult anteater –about three meters long and 80 kilos weight– offering an amazing spectacle, as it was digging to feed from a termite nest.

The largest species in its suborder, this insectivorous mammal is native to Central and South America. It is easily identified by its tubular snout with a long and thin tongue that can reach underground insect colonies; a small head that it keeps facing the ground due to a hump; and a tail almost as big as the body. Its fur has earthy colors and a bold pattern that disrupts camouflage, as it is a defense mechanism known as *Aposematism* or warning coloration.

This is an extremely rare sighting as the Giant Anteaters are under a vulnerable conservation status according to UICN, and had not been found by Inkaterra field guides for several years.

