

## WWF'S GLOBAL INITIATIVES

Today, we use 50 % more resources than our planet can provide sustainably. This endangers thousands of species, ecosystems, and humanity itself. To address this critical problem, under its Global Program Framework, WWF has defined two global goals: the conservation of priority areas and species, and the reduction of humanity's ecological footprint (our impact on nature), and organized its endeavors into global initiatives that strategically articulate these priorities. Built upon 40 years of experience in the region, the Living Amazon Initiative is one of such global initiatives.



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## HOW WE PLAN TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

Working in partnership with key stakeholders is essential for any and all WWF interventions in the Amazon. We work with government authorities at multiple levels, local and indigenous peoples, local and international non-governmental organizations, technical and academic institutions, and private sector and global support institutions (government aid agencies, foundations, and multilateral banks), to generate the necessary participatory processes to achieve long-term conservation success.

WWF's strategies for the Amazon	What we look for
<b>Shifting the paradigm of development</b>	Governments, local peoples, and civil society in the region share an integrated vision of conservation and development that is environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable.
<b>Bolstering the value of natural ecosystems</b>	Natural ecosystems are valued appropriately for the environmental goods and services they provide and the livelihoods they sustain.
<b>Sound land planning and conservation</b>	Tenure and rights to land and resources are planned, defined and enforced to help achieve this conservation and development vision.
<b>Sustainable agro-commodities</b>	Agriculture and ranching are carried out following best management practices on lands that are appropriate and legal.
<b>Free-flowing rivers and forest-friendly roads</b>	Transportation and energy infrastructure development is planned, designed and implemented to minimize impact on natural ecosystems, hydrological disruption and impoverishment of biological and cultural diversity.



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### Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

[www.panda.org/amazon](http://www.panda.org/amazon)

### WWF's Living Amazon Initiative

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## THE AMAZING AMAZON: A GLOBAL LIFE-GIVING SYSTEM



Spanning 6.7 million km<sup>2</sup> (twice the size of India) the Amazon biome is virtually unrivalled in scale, complexity and natural beauty, and truly is a region distinguished by superlatives. Not only does the Amazon region encompass the single largest remaining tropical rainforest and the largest river basin on the planet, but it also houses at least 10% of the world's known biodiversity, including thousands of endemic and endangered species of plants, mammals, birds, amphibians and reptiles, among others.

The Amazon River is the largest on the planet. It accounts for 15-16% of the world's total river discharge into the oceans, it flows for more than 6,500 km, and with its hundreds of tributaries and streams contains the largest number of freshwater fish species in the world.

### The Amazon and people

The Amazon is also home to more than 30 million people living across a vast region subdivided into nine different national political systems. According to the Coordinator of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon Basin (COICA), about 9% (2.7 million) of the Amazon's population is made up of indigenous people: 350 different ethnic groups, of which approximately 60 still remain largely isolated.

And yet, for all of its magnitude and apparent remoteness, the Amazon Biome is surprisingly fragile and close to each one of us, especially given its far-reaching environmental services. Just its forests contain 90-140 billion metric tons of carbon, the release of even a portion of which would accelerate global warming significantly.





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## AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE: INCREASING THREATS

Rapidly expanding global markets for meat, soy and biofuels and the imminent realization of large-scale transportation and energy infrastructure projects coupled with poor planning, weak governance and lack of an integrated vision of sustainable development for the Amazon are contributing to deforestation and increased pressure on the natural resources and environmental services upon which millions of people depend around the world.

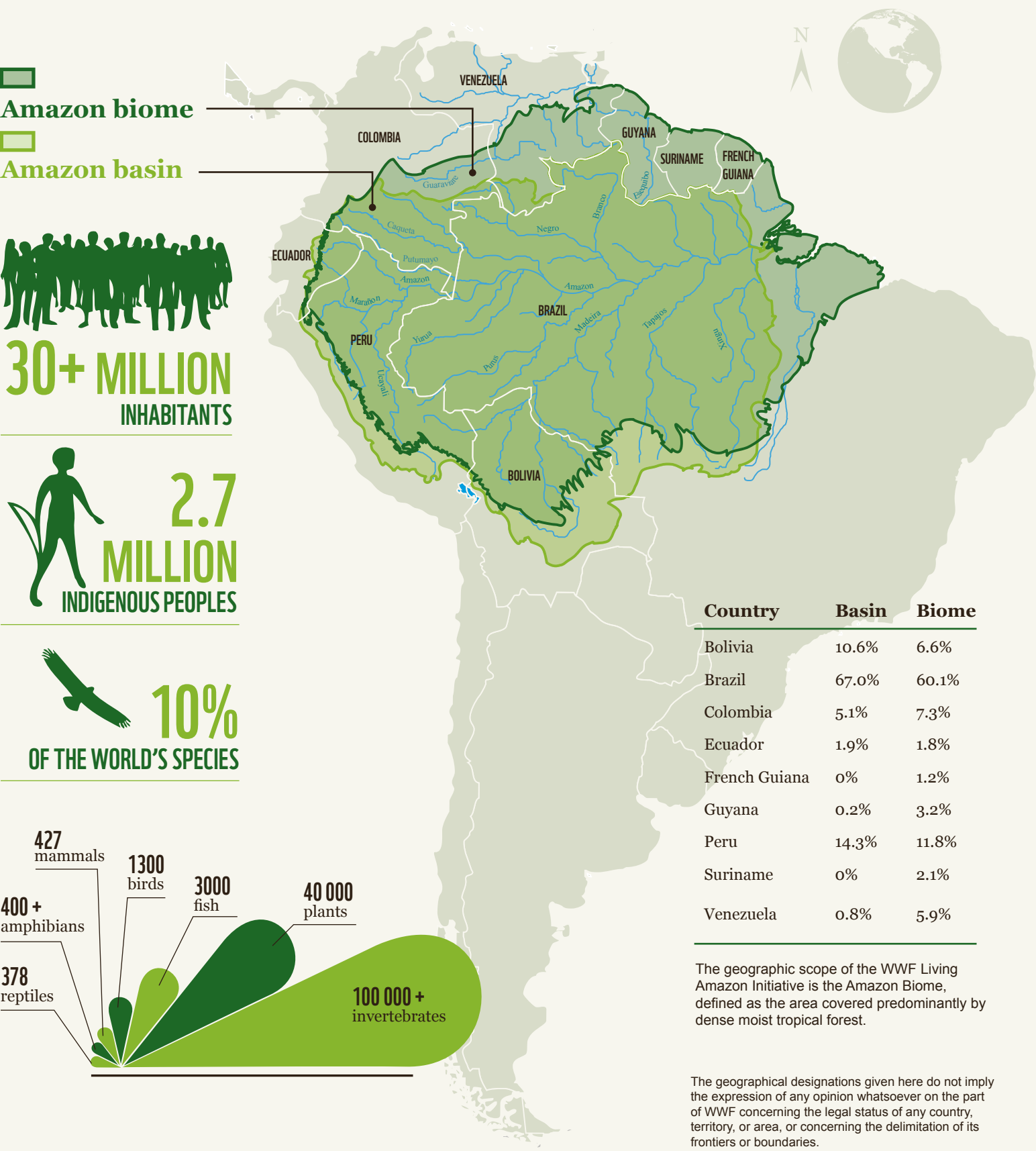
During the last half century, the seemingly endless Amazon has lost at least 17% of its forest cover, its connectivity has been increasingly disrupted, and numerous endemic species have been subjected to waves of resource exploitation.

Furthermore, increased temperatures and decreased precipitation caused by global warming will exacerbate these trends and could lead to a “tipping point” where the tropical rainforest ecosystem collapses. The implications of this massive ecosystem shift for biodiversity, global climate and human livelihoods would be profound.

### Main threats to the Amazon

- **Unsustainable cattle ranching** accounts for 80% of current deforestation throughout the Amazon. Besides forest loss, it increases the risk of fire, causes soil erosion and contamination with organic matter.
- **Agriculture expansion** is the second main cause of forest loss in the Amazon. It also causes significant soil erosion, as well as aquatic contamination with agrochemicals.
- **Poorly planned infrastructure** for transportation has historically facilitated land-grabbing, deforestation, and expansion of unsustainable extractive activities, while dam construction frequently entails a major disruption to river connectivity and interferes with the ranges of aquatic species, including subsistence and commercial fisheries.
- **Climate change** interacts with habitat destruction trends, dramatically speeding up the pace of forest loss and degradation. For some scientists, these synergistic effects could destroy or severely damage 55% of the Amazon rainforest by 2030.
- **Other extractive activities**, when improperly planned, can cause significant damage at local or landscape scales. These include gold mining, oil exploration and exploitation, unsustainable logging and overexploitation of aquatic resources, among wildlife trade and other activities.

## THE AMAZON: BIOME, BASIN AND COUNTRIES



## WWF'S RESPONSE: THE LIVING AMAZON INITIATIVE

Given that the forces shaping the Amazon extend far beyond a local context and know no political boundaries, we can no longer work on pieces of the puzzle in isolation from one another. Rather, we must address the biome as a whole in order to secure the viability of the entire system.

### 40 + years committed to the conservation of the Amazon

WWF has a long and rich history of involvement in the Amazon, beginning over 40 years ago. WWF has, over the years, expanded its work to include species research and scientific analyses, capacity building, policy development, support for the designation and improved management of protected areas, certified forestry and forest management, environmental education, promotion of better management practices for productive activities (forestry, fisheries, etc.), and creation of alternative sources of income for local communities.

Although WWF's presence in the region has been key to many conservation results over the years, it is with the articulation of the Living Amazon Initiative in 2008 that WWF has been able to bring together 40 years of experience as part of a unified proposal to address the challenges to the Amazon Biome as a whole.

The Living Amazon Initiative is one of WWF's global initiatives, and it concentrates some of the organization's most promising and challenging efforts which aim at promoting a biome-scale conservation vision for the largest rainforest and river system on Earth.

**WWF has supported the creation and management of iconic protected areas including:**

- Peru's Manu National Park in 1973
- Bolivia's Pilon Lajas National Park in 1976
- French Guiana's Amazonian Park in 2007
- Colombia's Yaigoje- Apaporis National Park in 2009
- In Brazil, WWF was instrumental in the conception and implementation of the Government's primary mechanism for creation and consolidation of protected areas in the Brazilian Amazon: the Amazon Region Protected Areas program (ARPA) launched in 2002

WWF shares a vision for an ecologically healthy Amazon Biome that maintains its environmental and cultural contributions to local peoples, the countries of the region, and the world, within a framework of social equity, inclusive economic development and global responsibility.

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