



ENDANGERED AMAZONIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



AMAZONIA ALIVE:
**PROTECT +
RESTORE**
80% 2025
2030
AVERTING THE TIPPING POINT



COORDINADORA DE LAS ORGANIZACIONES
INDÍGENAS DE LA CUENCA AMAZÓNICA

CITA DE COMPILACIÓN

Guzmán León, Alicia. “Amazonía en peligro”.
*Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indígenas
de la Cuenca Amazónica -COICA-. (2025).*

CONTRIBUCIONES ADICIONALES

Brayn Ludeña, Director Comunicación, COICA
Kely Toapanta, Coordinadora página web Iniciativa, COICA
Gabriela Arciniegas, Sofía Murgueytio
Equipo Técnico COICA

AUTORES

Fany Kuiru Castro (COICA) • Alicia Guzmán León (COICA) • Marlene Quintanilla (FAN, RAISG)
• Carlos Nobre, Diego Oliveira Brandão, Julia Arieira, Marielos Peña Claro (SPA) • Gregorio
Mirabal (COICA) • Cyril Kormos (Wild Heritage), Brendan Mackey (Griffith University Australia)
• Andrea C. Encalada (USFQ) • Silvy Benítez P. (TNC) • Mariana Varese (WCS) • Finer Matt,
Ariñez A., Sierra J.P., Espinoza J.C., Weng W., Vriesendorp C., Bodin B., Beavers J., (MAAP &
Amazon Conservation) • Ribeiro, R.; Singh, C.; Pacheco, P.; Persson, M.; Vergara, A.; Holle, K.;
Flach, R. (WWF) • Raphael Hoetmer, Sofía Jarrín (Amazon Watch), Florencia Librizzi, Juan
Pablo Osornio, Anna Bebbington (Earth Insight) • Denis Coté, Martin Pontocarrero (AQOCI) •
Julio Cusurichi (AIDSEP) • Eligio Dacosta, Vladimir Aguilar Castro (ORPIA Venezuela) • Jam-
ner Manihuari (COICA) • Anne-Gael, French National Research Institute for Sustainable Develo-
pment (IRD) • Sofía Murgueytio (COICA) • Tito Merino Gayas, Pastaza Kikin Kichwa Runakuna
(PAKKIRU) • Ayme Tanguila (COICA) • Patricia Gualinga (Sarayaku leader, UNPFII Member
2026-2029) • Rhett Butler (CEO Mongabay) • Brayn Ludeña (COICA) • Kaianaku Kamaiurá
(COIAB) • Alejandra Macías (CIEP) • Tatiana Schor, Verónica Tejerina Camacho, Amancaya Bri-
seida Conde (IDB) • Susana Muhammad (ex-ministra Colombia) • Carola Mejía, Germán Niño,
Ángela Zegarra (Latindadd).

FOTO DE PORTADA

Mateo Borrero

DISEÑO Y DIAGRAMACIÓN DE INFORME

Diego Corrales

COORDINACIÓN, COMPILACIÓN Y EDICIÓN

Alicia Guzmán León, Ph.D.
Paula Tejada, Asistente de Edición

AGRADECIMIENTOS

Desde la COICA agradecemos la participación de 22 organizaciones y cuatro coaliciones -SPA, FOSPA, Aguas Amazónicas y AQOCI- que abarcan más de 140 organizaciones y a más de 300 científicos. Asimismo, agradecemos a los 55 autores que han construido con nosotros este informe que busca ser una práctica de colaboración y cocreación entre Pueblos Indígenas, ONGs, universidades, líderes amazónicos indígenas y no indígenas cuyo fin es anclar el trabajo de todos a una visión común.

Endangered Amazonia

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report “Endangered Amazonia” is a collection of 22 articles written by 55 authors from different walks: indigenous leaders, activists, decision makers, politicians, etc. is divided into three sections. The first part presents the **“Science behind the tipping point”**, which in recent years has exploded as a new area of knowledge analyzing deforestation and degradation, but also ecosystem integrity, flying rivers, evidence emanating from the territories, and, on this occasion, we include the analysis of water, which is so necessary for a comprehensive view of the basin. The second section presents the **“Drivers of destruction”** with articles that cover the impact of *“commodities”* in Amazonia, the aftermath of “legal” (oil, mining) in key biodiversity areas and indigenous territories as well as “illegal” drivers such as illegal logging and mining. Three indigenous leaders from different organizations include their testimonies on the impact of all extractivism in their communities. The third and final section **“Towards a new Paradigm”** is a collection of disruptive contributions that can radically change the trajectory toward a new paradigm in Amazonia. It’s not philosophy; these are realities already underway that can be replicated, scaled up, disseminated, (re) invented, and developed—in short, change public policy from a different perspective, from the periphery.

THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE TIPPING POINT

WHAT DOES AN ENDANGERED AMAZONIA MEAN FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF THE AMAZON?

Author: **Fany Kuiru**, General Coordinator, COICA.

Jitoma Manayainhö (meaning “sun of dawn”) or Fany Kuiru, leader of the Uitoto people of the Jitomagaro group, the “people of the sun” of the Colombian Amazon, a native Uitoto Minika speaker and the first woman to serve as General Coordinator of COICA in its 42 years of existence, begins this 22-chapter conversation by creating an umbilical cord between the territory, the authors, and the reader of this report. She explains that the relationship of Indigenous Peoples with the territory is intimate, it is within them, it is not a polygon on a map nor a resource,

but rather it forms part of who they are from birth until they reunite with their ancestors in the afterlife. Fany highlights the role of extractivism in any of its forms—agriculture, oil, logging, mining—as mechanisms that push Indigenous Peoples onto the front lines. The Amazon is the most violent region in the world for defenders. The destruction of 30% of the Amazon, however, has put the Amazon region and all of us who live here on the front line, hopefully not the last.

ENDANGERED AMAZONIA

Alicia Guzmán León, Ph.D.: Compiler and Editor of this Report, Founder and Technical Coordinator of the Initiative “Amazonia for Life: protect and restore 80% by 2025-2030”.

- The Report “Endangered Amazonia” is not a continuation of the 2022 Report “Amazonia against the clock.” The data presented here demonstrate the breakdown of a system built over millennia. **30% of what we call Amazonia is deforested and severely degraded.**
- In 2021, we achieved the approval of the first Resolution (129) presented by indigenous organizations in the 72 years of IUCN to “Avoid a point of no return by protecting 80% by 2025” with the vote of 541 organizations and 61 ministries. We did it again in 2025. Resolution 068 approved with nearly 800 votes is a call to an “Emergency action to restore 80% of ecological integrity in Amazonia by 2030, preventing cascading tipping points”.
- We need to protect the remaining 70% as soon as possible and start restoration as soon as we can.
- NDCs of some Amazonian countries do not include indigenous territories, which, according to the Global Biodiversity Framework, are a new conservation category.

In this process, we have created a web, a network of relationships based on solidarity -between communities, scientists, some governments and/or officials, artists, young and old, technicians, communicators-, and all of us who are entangled in this ecosystem.

- There are immediate measures that are being implemented in different countries that can be consolidated on the path to a new paradigm: Direct financing for Indigenous Peoples, a new national account that includes environmental impact like the PINE in Mexico, solutions that address debt, and definitely a permanent

platform to open a permanent dialogue between knowledge systems that converge in another development model, a model that prioritizes life.

PROTECT AND RESTORE KEY AREAS OF THE AMAZON 2025-2030

Author: **Marlene Quintanilla**, FAN, RAISG.

- In total, during the 40 years analyzed (1985-2024), the Amazon has lost 136 million hectares of forest, an area equivalent to almost three times the size of Spain.
- Between 2021 and 2024, the region experienced an unprecedented acceleration in the loss of its natural cover, with a rate of transformation and degradation of around 8 million hectares per year, equivalent to more than 33 million hectares affected in just four years.
- As a result, while 2020 data showed a 26% loss due to deforestation (20%) and severe degradation (6%); by 2024, transformed and degraded areas covered 30% of the Amazon, reducing areas with high ecological functionality to 70%. This trend signals a real and imminent risk of irreversible loss of resilience in Amazonian ecosystems, threatening climate stability, water availability, and the region's biodiversity.
- The analysis of the situation in priority conservation areas by country reveals that the regional trend again positions Bolivia and Brazil as the countries with the highest levels of transformation and degradation of Amazonian ecosystems and landscapes, as already evidenced in the 2022 report “Amazon Against the Clock.” Bolivia and Brazil lead in the ex-

tent of fires in the Amazon, and 2024 is shaping up to be one of the most catastrophic years, with more than 21 million hectares affected by fire. For 2024, the indicators show a moderate increase: 13% in Indigenous Territories and Protected Areas, and 25% in Ramsar Sites, in contrast to a worrying 47% transformation and degradation outside these areas. The results confirm the fundamental role of Indigenous Territories as effective conservation mechanisms, comparable to protected areas.

- By 2024, the Amazon has over 538 million hectares of stable forest, meaning 70% remains standing. Of this total, Indigenous Territories safeguard 202 million hectares, Protected Areas 174 million, and Ramsar Sites 25 million. In contrast, the forests outside these protected areas are the most vulnerable to loss and fragmentation, and urgently require effective conservation and restoration strategies (194 million hectares of forest).

SPA: A CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES AT THE DOORS OF A TIPPING POINT OF AMAZONIA

Authors: **Carlos Afonso Nobre, Diego Oliveira Brandão, Julia Arieira, Marielos Peña Claros.** SPA.

- Amazonia is on the edge of a tipping point. If deforestation exceeds 20% and global warming exceeds 2°C, up to 70% of the forest could self-degrade by 2050, releasing more than 250 thousand million tons of CO₂. Today there is 17% deforestation and global warming is around 1.5°C (Nobre et al., 2016).
- **The Amazon hydrological cycle supports the rivers in South America.** The

“flying rivers” generated by the forest provide around 50% of local rivers and up to 30% of precipitation in the Río de la Plata basin. This capacity of the forest to pump and redistribute moisture maintains the climatic stability of South America. However, the loss of forest cover weakens this cycle, reducing biodiversity and threatening the livelihoods of Amazonian populations that depend on forests and rivers for their food, health and local economy.

- **The frequency and intensity of extreme droughts in the Amazon is increasing.** The extreme sequence of 2023–2024 saw the temperature of Lake Tefé surpass 40°C and the oxygen drop to critical levels. These droughts, which occurred in 2005, 2010 and 2015–2016, are becoming more frequent, which could cause local extinctions of species, alter the availability of food and water, and increase thermal distress and health risks for Amazonian communities.
- **Forest fires worsen the climate crisis.** The majority of fires in the Amazon are caused by deforestation, agricultural practices with fire and the advance of organized crime aimed at degrading and deforesting the forest. The climate change intensifies the problem by drying out the vegetation and soil, making it more flammable. In addition to the ecological and economic loss, fires destroy crops and agroforestry systems, and their toxic humidity affects some 140 thousand people per year in the Brazilian Amazon (Prist et al., 2023).
- **COP30 represents a critical opportunity to reverse the Amazon crisis.** COP30 in Belém, first held in the Amazon, seeks to reorient global climate policy with the goal of zero deforestation for 2030.

It promotes solutions based on naturalness, renewable energy, forest restoration and climate justice, integrating indigenous, local and alternative knowledge as the basis of a regenerative socio-bioeconomy.

A LIVING AMAZON: PROTECTING 80% BY 2025: CLIMATE DIPLOMACY WITH IDENTITY

Author: **Gregorio Mirabal**, Climate Change Coordinator, COICA.

- The Amazon is showing signs of imminent ecological collapse, and its peoples are living with the consequences. With 30% of the Amazon already deforested or degraded—the tipping point is estimated at between 20% and 25%—certain parts of Amazonia are already experiencing irreversible transformation. This collapse is not a future projection: it is already manifesting itself in extreme droughts, unseasonal floods, and disruptions to the ancestral ecological calendar, affecting the production, spirituality, and survival of Amazonian Indigenous Peoples.
- The climate crisis is also a cultural crisis. Environmental degradation erodes the spiritual, linguistic, and social foundations of Indigenous Peoples, threatening their collective identity. Deforestation and climate change are perceived not only as ecological phenomena but also as processes of cultural and spiritual uprooting.
- COICA has succeeded in establishing an evidence-based Indigenous diplomacy for the Amazon. Since its creation in 1984, COICA has transformed its role at the COPs from a marginal actor to a leading advocate, combining ancestral knowledge and science to support the defense of Indigenous territories and rights.
- COICA promotes Indigenous Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) as a key climate tool: Indigenous NDCs seek to formally include ancestral territorial climate strategies in national commitments under the Paris Agreement, recognizing their proven contribution to mitigation and adaptation.
- Direct climate finance is the cornerstone of a new, just governance.
- Less than 1% of international climate finance reaches Indigenous communities. COICA proposes reforming the global financial architecture and consolidating direct, intercultural, and unconditional access mechanisms that recognize Indigenous peoples as climate creditors and legitimate financial actors. The “Amazon for Life” Fund, co-designed and implemented with the Inter-American Development Bank, positions COICA as a pioneer in this financial restructuring. The call we at COICA are making for COP30 is clear: the time has come to redesign climate finance governance to move from an extractive and top-down model to one that is shared, intercultural, and directly accessible.
- Environmental loss and cultural identity are intrinsically linked: Deforestation and climate change erode languages, rituals, biodiversity, and ancestral knowledge. This cultural crisis deepens the social and spiritual vulnerability of Indigenous Peoples.
- Science and ancestral knowledge must engage in dialogue as equals: COICA promotes an alliance between scientific evi-

dence and traditional knowledge as the foundation for climate diplomacy rooted in identity. It proposes co-authorship of reports, cultural indicators, and research networks led by Indigenous Peoples as part of the COP30 agenda.

WILD HERITAGE: AVOIDING A TIPPING POINT IN AMAZONIA MEANS ENDING DEFORESTATION AND DEGRADATION

Authors: **Cyril Kormos**, Wild Heritage ED and Professor Brendan Mackey (Griffith University)

- Forest degradation has a major impact on tropical forests. Tropical forests are highly sensitive to edge effects. Sunlight penetrating a primary forest can cause tree loss up to a kilometer into the forest and cause impacts to vegetation several kilometers from the edge.
- Forest degradation is far more widespread than deforestation.
- while deforestation affects about ten million hectares of forest per year globally (FAO 2024), degradation affects 250,000 million hectares, or 38% of the entire Amazon (Lapola et al. 2023).
- Degradation refers to human disturbances, usually related to industrial activity, that cause rapid and longterm decreases in a forest's ecological integrity (Rogers et al. 2022; Mackey et al. 2024). Ecosystem integrity is in essence a measure of the vital signs of the ecosystem: its ability to maintain key ecological processes, recover from disturbance, and adapt to new conditions, which is measured by its native species composition, vegetation structure
- Forest degradation affects a much larger area than deforestation and also causes very serious impacts, including major losses of biodiversity, while also generating about the same carbon dioxide emissions as deforestation
- Retaining a high degree of ecosystem integrity is fundamental because this is what allows an ecosystem to self-organize and regenerate naturally and, over time, to achieve and maintain its optimum operating state
- Ecosystems with a high degree of ecosystem integrity maximize ecosystem services. For example, a primary forest not only contains many more species than a degraded forest or plantation, but often is also home to more rare, endangered or endemic species, as well as unique species assemblages. Likewise, a primary forest also stores much more carbon, and stores it more securely, than a degraded forest or plantation, it also provides the highest quality fresh water and often maintains more water in the ecosystem
- The second reason why protecting ecosystems with high ecosystem integrity should be a priority is that they are much more stable, i.e., they are better able to resist stressors such as disease, drought, or fire...whereas degraded forests or plantations are much more vulnerable.
- Preventing degradation is therefore a critical goal and should be a key component of the eighty percent protection target for Amazonia.
- First, logging focuses on primary forests with large old trees which are especially valuable because they contain a high

volume of timber. important for wildlife, especially host-specific pollinators, also critical for carbon storage. While large trees generally represent a small percentage of the forest's total trees (<5 %), they store up to 50 % of the above-ground carbon

- Removing just a few large trees per hectare can allow secondary forest species to displace primary species, it can trigger an invasion of vines and lianas that kill even more trees
- One of the most pervasive drivers of degradation globally is the vast increase in the number of roads around the world. Up to 25 million km of new paved roads are expected to be constructed globally by mid-century (Dulac 2013), enough to encircle the Earth more than 600 times. 90 %) of new roads will be in developing countries,
- Degradation is exerting major pressures on forests. For example, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO 2009) estimated that there were 800 million hectares of degraded forests in the tropics alone.
- 75 % of the world's total land area, particularly forests, rangelands, and wetlands, had been degraded and transformed
- And those losses would likely increase to over 90 % within 30 years. Degraded forests are at a much higher risk of emitting carbon and reaching tipping points.
- As noted, ending deforestation has been a global goal for many decades. Ending forest degradation, on the other hand, is a slightly more recent multilateral policy objective, gaining greater prominence with the formation of the United Nations Forum on Forests in 2000

- There is now a clear and strong mandate to retain ecosystem integrity and end both deforestation and forest degradation by 2030. This is profoundly significant for Amazonia, where the need to avoid catastrophic tipping points is urgent
- Primary forests and forests with high ecosystem integrity maximize ecosystem services, including biodiversity protection and climate mitigation and adaptation, and are much more stable, including being more resistant to fire, than degraded forests.
- Avoiding tipping points in Amazonia means ending both deforestation and forest degradation.

AMAZON WATERS ALLIANCE: WATER AND ITS AQUATIC ECOSYSTEMS: BASIS OF THE ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY OF THE AMAZON

Authors: **Andrea C. Encalada**, Global Research and Solutions Center, Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Ecuador; **Silvia Benítez P.**, The Nature Conservancy América Latina, Bogotá, Colombia, and **Mariana Varese**, Wildlife Conservation Society, Lima, Perú

- The Amazon is facing accelerated degradation of its freshwater ecosystems: dams, deforestation, contamination and climate change are fragmenting rivers and reducing the ecological integrity of the basin, threatening the water, food and cultural security of millions of people.
- 2,700 species of fish, of which 1,696 are endemic, and 36 species of aquatic megafauna, more than any other region of the world

- The Amazon basin fulfills vital functions for regional and global climate stability. It **recycles between 24% and 35% of its annual water and contributes significantly to continental precipitation through “aerial rivers” that transport 6,400 km² of water each year.**
 - Through evapotranspiration, **its forests generate up to 50% of the rain that falls in the region**, regulating the patrons of rain in South America.
 - The connectivity **between river and wetland systems is key to the ecological integrity and resilience** of the Amazon, regulating hydrological pulses, precipitation distribution, seed dispersion and food security.
 - The pieces are a main source of proteins, micronutrients and income for rural and urban homes throughout the region. It is estimated that the **total extraction of fish varies between 422,000 and 473,000 tons per year.**
 - Migratory fish represent more than 80% of fishing landings in the basin.
 - Freshwater ecosystems in the Amazon are experiencing rapid degradation, intensified by climate change, which puts their resilience at risk.
 - Hydroelectric development and the construction of dams affect rivers from the Andes to the Amazon plain, blocking the movement of migratory species and altering hydrological patterns
 - **Deforestation associated with infrastructure projects and economic activities reduces evapotranspiration (by 20–41%) and increases temperatures (by 28–45%),** reducing water vapor in the atmosphere and increasing the risk of sequías and fires.
 - Contamination is another critical cause of degradation. Many Amazonian cities lack wastewater treatment plants, which leads to the direct discharge of domestic and industrial water into water bodies.
 - Oil spills affect aquatic fauna and human health, causing physical, mental, genetic and immunological and endocrine system damage.
 - **All Amazonian countries have reported environmental and human exposure to mercury.**
- Climate models project widespread warming in the basin and a sustained reduction in water flows, which could translate into lower availability of surface water, higher frequency of seasonal droughts and additional pressures on aquatic ecosystems
- Aquatic connectivity supports life, biodiversity and the Amazon climate. Maintaining the natural flow of water and the connection between rivers, wetlands, forests and communities is essential for ecological cycles, fishing, climate regulation and human well-being.
 - Conserving and ensuring the sustainable management of indigenous territories, conservation areas, Andean-Amazonian river landscapes and floodplains is a priority and urgent. These ecosystems are sources of biodiversity, water, food, fertility and carbon storage; its conservation maintains the productivity and resilience of the entire basin.
 - Indigenous territorial management, community monitoring and participatory sci-

ence contribute to exercising sovereignty over territories, lands and water. Indigenous and traditional knowledge, community monitoring and participatory science are essential for better territorial management of aquatic ecosystems and natural resources. Dialogue and collaboration between local knowledge and accredited scientific knowledge generates reliable information, strengthens adaptive management and promotes policies based on evidence and environmental justice.

- Strengthening indigenous and community leadership is key to the governance of territories and water. Indigenous Pueblos and local communities play a central role in territorial management, sustainable management of fishing and other natural resources, and conservation of free-flowing rivers, providing essential knowledge for decision-making.
- Regional joint action is indispensable to conserving the integrity of the Amazon basin. Cooperation between Amazonian countries and between States and civil society is required, with low-impact energy transition, contamination prevention and natural-based solutions that help with climate resilience and that integrate equity, justice, and sustainability.

MAAP: THE AMAZON TIPPING POINT - IMPORTANCE OF FLYING RIVERS CONNECTING THE AMAZON

Authors: **Finer Matt, Ariñez A, Sierra JP, Espinoza JC,, Weng W, Vriesendorp C, Bodin B, Beavers J.**

- Contrary to the common perception that the tipping point is a single Amazon-wide event, certain parts of the Amazon are more vulnerable than others.

- Flying Rivers is a natural phenomenon of aerial moisture transport and recycling that flows from the Atlantic Ocean across the Amazon, uniquely facilitated by the rainforest itself.
- Precipitation tends to increase exponentially as moist air travels over forests, but then drops off sharply once it moves beyond them.
- The moisture flows change seasonally in the Amazon. During the rainy season (January–February), the moisture flow is both westward and southward, creating a giant arc. Thus, the continental moisture source is the northeast Amazon. In the dry (July–August) and the dry-to-wet transition (September–October) seasons, the moisture flow shifts more directly westward. Therefore, the continental moisture source is the southeast Amazon, and some studies have identified this region as the most important for maintaining overall Amazonian resilience.
- There is increasing evidence that future deforestation will reduce rainfall downwind. Several recent studies have found that Amazon deforestation has already caused a significant decrease in precipitation in the southeast Amazon, particularly during the dry season. Moreover, deforestation reduces rainfall upwind of the cleared areas, impacting the western Amazon as well. In addition, recent studies have shown that Amazon deforestation delays the onset of the wet season in southern Amazonia.
- Continued deforestation and forest degradation, will disrupt and diminish the critical east-to-west aerial water flow, inducing a “tipping point” of impacted regions that would transition from rainforest to drier savannah ecosystems.

- Multiple sources have reported an increase in the length of the dry season in the southern and eastern Amazon in recent decades, with the largest dry season observed in 2023-2024.
- There are transboundary implications, as actions occurring in an eastern country can have an impact on a western country downwind of the moisture cascade. For example, deforestation in eastern Brazil can negatively impact moisture flow going to Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia, including the tropical Andean mountains.
- Deforestation, additional climatic factors, such as increased temperature and the length of the dry season, are also contributing to the tipping point.
- Drier conditions are leading to record-breaking fire seasons, most notably during the El Niño years of 2016 and 2024.
- The predicted forest-to-savannah change is already happening in places experiencing increased wildfire frequency due to these hot and dry conditions.
- Sensitive areas that are the most vulnerable to deforestation-caused disruption of moisture recycling from the Atlantic Ocean source are mostly located in the southwestern Amazon (Peru and Bolivia), positioning them as the most vulnerable areas to a possible tipping point.

DEFORESTATION AND DEGRADATION DRIVERS

WWF: TRACING THE FOOTPRINTS OF COMMODITY-DRIVEN DEFORESTATION IN THE AMAZON: SUBREGIONAL DATA TO GUIDE POLICY

Authors: **Vivian Ribeiro, Chandrakant Singh, Pablo Pacheco, U. Martin Persson, Analiz Vergara, Kurt Holle, Rafaela Flach**

- **The expansion of agricultural land use—pastures and cropland—is the main driver of deforestation across the Amazon region.** However, the data presented here also show substantial areas of forest degradation throughout the Amazon; highlight the important role of mining in driving deforestation in the Guiana Shield; and indicate that land speculation and indirect land-use change are likely to be prominent drivers of deforestation.
- **Agriculture-driven deforestation shows a declining trend in most Amazon countries in recent years (2017- 2022), with the exception of Brazil—where it is relatively stable—and Ecuador—where it is much higher than historical levels.** Despite cropland expansion accounting for only 22% of total deforestation between 2017-2022, compared to 78% from cattle ranching, trends indicate that it is becoming a more prevalent driver of deforestation across the Amazon region, particularly in Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela.
- **Sub-national deforestation patterns across the Amazon reveal distinct drivers (2017-2021),** with pasture dominating in the eastern and central portions of the Amazon—but advancing into the interior of the region, and crop expansion—particularly soy in Bolivia and staples like maize, rice, and cassava in Peru and Venezuela—prevailing in the west-

ern, southern, and northwestern subregions. These results highlight the need for targeted strategies and interventions to address deforestation, tailored to specific subnational contexts.

- **A key limitation in uncovering explicit drivers of deforestation is the availability of high-quality land use data.** Such data is crucial for understanding complex land-use change dynamics and for accurate attribution of deforestation to specific commodities. Additionally, this data is essential for gaining deeper insights into the impacts of socio-economic factors, such as market dynamics, trade, and finance, on deforestation at a more granular, sub-national scale. Closing this data gap requires active collaboration among state agencies, research institutions, NGOs, and the private sector, ensuring comprehensive data collection, knowledge sharing, and resource coordination to better inform policy actions towards effectively halting deforestation.

AMAZON WATCH: ILLICIT ECONOMIES AND CRIMINAL GOVERNANCE IN THE AMAZON: A THREAT TO THE REGION AND THE GLOBAL CLIMATE

Authors: **Raphael Hoetmer and Sophia Jarrín**

- **Amazon on the brink of collapse:** The combination of accelerated deforestation, intentional fires, agricultural expansion, and mercury pollution is weakening the Amazon's resilience. If it loses its ability to absorb carbon, the region could become a net source of emissions, altering the global climate. Criminal economies are driving this process by promoting the systematic and unregulated destruction of forests.

- **Illicit economies as drivers of degradation:** Coca cultivation, drug trafficking, and illegal gold mining generate billions of dollars a year. These economies attract international networks that invest in machinery, logistics, and money laundering. Their scale makes them major drivers of deforestation, river pollution, and biodiversity loss. Furthermore, their connection to global legal markets allows local damage to have global repercussions.
- **Criminal governance displaces the state:** In regions with weak institutional presence, armed groups and criminal organizations impose rules of coexistence, collect illegal taxes, and exercise control over strategic territories. This "criminal governance" limits state action, undermines local democracy, and prevents the implementation of environmental protection and human rights policies. For indigenous communities, this means living under constant threat and losing autonomy in their territories.
- **Triple border as the epicenter of Amazonian crime:** In the area of Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru, groups such as FARC dissidents, the ELN, and transnational gangs converge to control strategic cocaine, gold, and arms corridors. This concentration of criminal power disrupts traditional indigenous governance structures and creates an environment of violence that prevents the defense of forests and community culture. The result is a vicious circle where insecurity reinforces the illegal exploitation of resources.
- **Impacts on human rights:** Local communities suffer forced displacement, murders of leaders, recruitment of minors, and sexual violence as methods of social control. **This violence fragments**

the community fabric and weakens the capacity of Indigenous Peoples to manage their territories and protect them from invaders. The erosion of indigenous governance also opens the door to the expansion of illicit activities that directly affect the climate and biodiversity.

- **Massive environmental devastation: Illegal gold mining releases tons of mercury into rivers,** contaminating fish and affecting the health of entire communities. The clearing and burning of forests to make way for coca crops or cattle pastures leads to accelerated deforestation, loss of biodiversity, and greenhouse gas emissions. These dynamics degrade ecosystems that are critical to global climate balance, with impacts that transcend borders.
- **Convergence with legal economies:** Illegally mined gold, uncontrolled logging, and meat and soy produced on deforested land are inserted into global value chains. **This intertwining blurs the boundaries between legal and illegal, giving the appearance of legitimacy to activities that destroy the Amazon.** By normalizing criminal extraction, the agricultural and mining frontier expands into indigenous territories and conservation areas, amplifying the climate crisis.
- **A regional and global threat: The criminalization of the Amazon is not only a national security problem for Amazonian states, but also a global challenge to climate security and biodiversity.** The expansion of criminal economies in the rainforest means that the future of the world's largest tropical forest, and therefore the stability of the global climate, is

in the hands of transnational illicit networks.

- **Strengthening international cooperation is key:** the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO) needs to be aligned with the global commitments of the Paris Agreement and COP16 on biodiversity. It is also essential to protect indigenous territorial governance, ensure the safety of leaders and communities, and build sustainable economic alternatives that break the dependence on criminal economies. Without these measures, the Amazon will continue to be captured by illicit networks that threaten the climate, democracy, and human rights.

EARTH INSIGHT: EXTRACTIVE THREATS IN THE AMAZON: OIL, GAS, AND MINING CONCESSION OVERLAP WITH INDIGENOUS TERRITORIES AND KEY BIODIVERSITY AREAS

Authors: **Florencia Librizzi, Juan Pablo Osornio, Anne Bebbington**

- **Critical overlap between extractive concessions and Indigenous territories:** more than 30 million hectares of Indigenous territories (12%) are compromised by hydrocarbons and 9.2 million hectares (4%) by “legal” mining, undermining the territorial and cultural integrity of Amazonian peoples.
- **Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) are under pressure:** around 25.6 Mha (14%) overlap with oil and gas, and 19.7 Mha (10%) with mining, threatening unique habitats and regional ecological resilience.
- **High-integrity forests at risk:** in the Amazon, 66 Mha (13%) of *intact* forests are threatened by oil and gas. Their degradation would compromise rainfall regu-

lation and carbon storage, with regional and planetary impacts.

- **Cases from five Amazonian countries reveal a systemic pattern:** from mining expansion in Brazil to pressure on PIACI in Peru, overlaps in Ecuador, vulnerability in Bolivia, to oil in Colombia, all Amazonian countries face critical tensions between conservation and extraction.
- **The protection of Indigenous territories is essential to meet global commitments:** without securing rights, strengthening PIACI reserves, and applying moratoriums in critical areas, it will be impossible to achieve the 30x30 Target of the Global Biodiversity Framework or the climate goals of the Paris Agreement.

AGOCI: FROM EXPLOITATION TO RESTORATION: CANADA'S PRESENCE IN THE AMAZON AND THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

Authors: **Denis Côté and Martin Pontocarrero**

- **Contradiction in Canada's Image:** A stark contrast exists between Canada's international reputation as a human rights and environmental champion and the destructive reality of its extractive companies' operations abroad.
- **Environmental and Human Rights Violations:** Canadian extractive companies have caused severe damage in Latin America, with documented evidence of 105 oil spills, violations of Indigenous peoples' right to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent in 26 projects, and violent confrontations in 16 projects.

- **Amazon Under Threat:** Canadian mining operations directly affect at least 16 Indigenous ethnic groups in the Amazon region, causing severe damage to biodiversity, forests, and waterways in an ecosystem approaching a dangerous tipping point of collapse.
- **Need for Binding Legal Frameworks:** While Europe made some progress toward mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence laws, Canada continues to rely on ineffective voluntary measures despite widespread calls for robust legislation from Canadian civil society organizations.
- **Transformative International Solidarity:** Effective solidarity requires actors from the Global North to support Indigenous-led struggles, influence governments and corporations, advocate for binding accountability frameworks, and build horizontal partnerships that respect the autonomy and knowledge of Amazonian peoples.

AIDSESEP: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN ISOLATION AND INITIAL CONTACT IN PERU

Author: **Apu Julio Cusurichi**, Shipibo - Madre de Dios, AIDSESEP Executive Council.

- **The Amazon is home to nearly 200 Indigenous Peoples in Isolation and Initial Contact (PIACI)** who are disappearing as they are forced into contact with the outside world, mainly due to extractive pressures such as road construction, oil, mining, and legal and illegal logging, among others.
- **Indigenous peoples in isolation must be a priority on climate and human rights**

agendas, as they inhabit the most remote ecosystems and are the invisible guardians of the Amazon. Protecting them means protecting the planet.

- In Peru, there has been a setback in the protection of Indigenous rights. Legislative initiatives are currently being promoted in Congress to modify the Law on Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation and Initial Contact (PIACI), aiming to block the creation of new Indigenous reserves and to review—essentially dismantle—those that already exist. This puts at risk the lives and territories of the most vulnerable people.
- When Indigenous organizations are strong, they can better influence government action. A solid organization is essential to defend the Amazon, the rights of its people, and the environment.

ORPIA: ECOTERRITORIAL RESISTANCE TO EXTRACTIVISM AND SAFEGUARDING BIODIVERSITY IN THE SOUTHERN ORINOCO: THE CASE OF THE VENEZUELAN AMAZON

Authors: **Eligio Dacosta**, ORPIA's Coordinator and Vladimir Aguilar Castro

- The expansion of the extractive frontier in the Amazon in general, and in the Venezuelan Amazon in particular, has increased unprecedentedly, especially during the pandemic years.
- Indigenous Peoples of the Venezuelan Amazon south of the Orinoco River have been containing the expansion of the extractive frontier in their territories to safeguard biodiversity, through their organizational structures. These range from strengthening grassroots Indigenous organizations to establishing wom-

en's associations that work on and promote socio-productive projects using non-timber forest products, along with the formation of forest guardians.

- The weakened nation-state is giving way to the transnationalization of non-state actors. Illegal gold mining, especially in the states of Bolívar and Amazonas, where 60% of the country's deposits are located, has attracted large migratory flows from within Venezuela and from neighboring countries, causing significant environmental damage and negative impacts on the Indigenous peoples of these states.
- Venezuela is one of the world's largest oil-producing countries. Extractivism is a form of energy accumulation based on the overexploitation of fossil fuels. It represents a logic of subjugating the sources of life (water, oxygen, and forests) to economic interests based on the unlimited extraction of natural resources.
- Our Indigenous and environmental rights are not guaranteed if they continue to operate under a model of energy accumulation that is inherently predatory.

COICA: DEFENDING THE DEFENDERS OF THE AMAZON: CLIMATE JUSTICE, HUMAN RIGHTS AND ENERGY TRANSITION

Author: **Jamner Marihuari**, COICA's Vice-Coordinator

- Violence against environmental defenders reflects a power structure that criminalizes the defense of territory and protects extractive interests.
- Being a defender of the Amazon involves assuming life-threatening risks. The IACHR (2022) has noted that Indigenous

and environmental leaders are subjected to threats, judicial persecution, and assassinations for opposing extractive projects.

- Of the countries in the Amazon basin, three have ratified the Escazú Agreement so far: Ecuador, Bolivia, and Guyana. Other Amazonian countries (such as Peru and Brazil) have signed the treaty but have not yet ratified it.
- Protecting those who defend the rainforest—and recognizing them as legitimate political actors—is a minimum condition for avoiding the point of no return.

- In the context of the climate crisis, states are promoting the “energy transition” toward cleaner sources. However, when this process ignores the rights of Indigenous Peoples or is built upon new forms of extractivism, it becomes a “transition without justice” (Gudynas 2021).
- It is not just about conserving biodiversity but about restoring the reciprocal relationship between humans and nature. Ultimately, a living Amazon offers the possibility of keeping all of humanity safe, and its loss would be an irreversible wound for the planet.

TOWARDS A NEW PARADIGM

IRD-COICA: KNOWLEDGE THAT DIALOGUES TO PROTECT AND RESTORE AMAZONIA

Authors: **Anne-Gaël Bilhaut**, (IRD), Ecuador, **Tito Merino Gayas**, (PAKKIRU), **Sofia Murgueytio** (COICA), **Ayme Tanguila** (COICA)

- The protection of the Amazon requires a new architecture of knowledge. It is necessary to overcome the vision of the Amazon as a “green void” managed by external experts, and recognize that Indigenous Pueblos are diplomatic in their own territories.
- Scientific diplomacy and indigenous diplomacy must converge: the first brings international legitimacy, and the second, legitimacy from the territories.
- The co-construction of knowledge between academia, Indigenous Pueblos and civil society is essential for designing public and community policies capa-

ble of protecting and restoring the Amazon. So that the dialogue of knowledge has structural effects, it must transcend the symbolic scope and translate into institutional cohabitation: it is to decide, in the active presence of indigenous epistemologies within public decision frameworks.

- For Amazonian Indigenous Pueblos, ancestral knowledge and knowledge are not “cultural inputs” for science, but a living system of life and governance that supports health, spirituality and territorial management. Therefore, dialogue with science is only legitimate when it occurs between epistemic peers and under rules that recognize self-determination and governance of knowledge on the part of the communities.
- It is not about integrating the indigenous into science, it is about articulating worlds of knowledge in conditions of equivalence, with shared responsibilities over territory and life.

- Indigenous Pueblos are not repositories of residual knowledge, but subjects that produce integral knowledge, whose cognitive, ontological and normative systems pose their own logic, validity and legitimacy. Talking about epistemic parity does not mean “equalizing” the epistemes, but rather establishing reciprocal relationships of recognition, whereby each form of knowledge can sustain itself without being subsumed beneath the other.
- In a dialogue of genuine knowledge, knowledge cannot be an object of extraction, it is an ethical relationship that continues between those who share it. Epistemic co-responsibility recognizes that every investigation using ancestral knowledge must involve processes of consent, co-authorship, return and community benefit.
- Strengthening indigenous autonomy is fundamental so that traditional knowledge is not subordinated but is recognized under equal conditions with academic science.
- Epistemic governance refers to the capacity of the communities to define the rules of access, use and transmission of their knowledge and knowledge, recognizing that knowledge is part of the territory and not an abstract resource.
- Without recognizing the autonomy and institutions of Indigenous Pueblos, it is difficult to sustain public conservation policies. Interculturality, therefore, becomes the principle of epistemic and territorial justice, where indigenous ontologies are considered legitimate systems of knowledge and not mere complements of Western science.
- Even though interculturality and transdisciplinarity have distinct origins, in practice they converge. Interculturality supports the principle of reconnaissance and redistribution of epistemic power, while transdisciplinarity offers a methodology for collaborating between disciplines and with diverse social and political actors. In the case of the Amazon, it means that climate science, ecology, economics, and anthropology must be articulated on the ground between themselves, within knowledge systems and technologies located in Amazonian towns. In the Amazon, this convergence is indispensable to face threats such as deforestation, agricultural expansion, illegal mining, and geopolitical pressures on strategic resources.
- This focus is not limited to producing diagnoses, but seeks to reduce the epistemic gap and co-construct applicable and legitimate solutions, capable of inspiring public policies that recognize local realities.

PATRICIA GUALINGA: FROM KAWSAK SACHA TO CHASKA KAUSAY: POLICIES FROM THE TERRITORY FOR AMAZONIA AND THE PLANET

Author: **Patricia Gualinga**; Sarayaku

- The existence of Amazonian Indigenous Peoples is at risk. We have shown that we can live with dignity by growing our own food, fishing, and hunting for our substance. However, we stand now at the front line of defense against deforestation, pollution, and extractivism.
- The case of the Sarayaku people demonstrates the ongoing resistance to extractivism from the territory. Indigenous

Peoples activate their governance systems and rely on existing national legal frameworks to defend their rights and territories. When these frameworks fail, they have opened a path beyond national borders to defend their rights. However, the lack of binding mechanisms for national and international decisions and rulings leaves a landscape of dispossession and destruction. The reverse is also true: the resolutions of the UN Permanent Forum urging governments to protect at least 80% of the Amazon have remained on paper. These two examples illustrate the breakdown in the chain of decision-making from the territory to the national, regional, and global levels, and from the global to the territory.

- While the rulings of the IACHR, the Constitutional Court of Ecuador, and the UN-PFII resolutions to protect 80% of the Amazon remain unenforced, Ecuador seeks financing through debt to compensate the companies that violated the rights of the Amazonian Indigenous Peoples and polluted the water, soil, and air of vast Amazonian territories in Ecuador.
- The Ecuadorian State's response to the Sarayaku case remains insufficient and fails to comply with international standards. Despite more than two decades of litigation and the binding ruling of the InterAmerican Court of Human Rights (IACHR) in 2012, the Ecuadorian State has not fully implemented the ruling in favor of the Sarayaku People. Meanwhile, international arbitration awards against oil and mining companies are complied with to the letter.
- Free, prior, and informed consultation must be carried out on the terms of In-

digenous Peoples' and in cocreation with them. Its purpose is consent, although this may or may not be granted. Consent must be understood as an ongoing negotiation, subject to the conditions and compliance of those seeking to intervene in the territory.

- The Kawsak Sacha or "living forest" concept of the Sarayaku People offers an alternative to marketbased conservation models and can be scaled up to the planetary level as Chaska Kausay or living planet. It is a plan based on self-organization, internal consultation, and comprehensive defense of the territory. Amid ecological collapse and climate emergency, this approach reminds us that Amazonian Nature is a basic condition of our existence and must be expanded into a way of life, a comprehensive vision for Pachamama.
- Resolutions 18 and 19 of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (2023) urge Amazonian states to protect 80% of the Amazonian territory by 2025 and to prioritize the legalization of 100 million hectares of indigenous territories. However, these resolutions are not being implemented as quickly as international awards and remain only on paper.
- Just as individual rights and the rights of peoples can only be exercised within the framework of the same rights of other human beings and all peoples, individual and collective rights can only be exercised if governments commit to taking the decision that in 2025, at a historic COP30, 80% of the Amazon will be protected and restored to guarantee life and cultural and biodiversity heritage as a mechanism for the survival of humanity.

HOW TO TALK ABOUT SAVING AMAZONIA

Author: **Rhett Butler**, CEO Mongabay.

- In an information ecosystem shaped by parasocial relationships and partisan cues, who says something often matters as much as what is said. This is not an aesthetic point; it is a theory of change.
- Doom demobilizes. The communications task is to keep the full truth in view while shrinking part of the problem to a human scale where action feels plausible.

Indigenous leaders are essential stewards and credible narrators of what works on their lands; they must be at the editorial table, with budgets, authorship, and languages of their choice.

- A differentiated approach is therefore necessary: match messages and messengers to the audiences with the greatest leverage in each context, while ensuring that Indigenous voices remain central to legitimacy and design.
- If the constituency must widen, the production table must widen too. Co-production is not a workshop at the end; it is a budget line at the start. Contract Indigenous and community media houses to co-design series; hire editors and translators
- Free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) must be a schedule item, not a footnote. Safety, credit, and compensation are part of the plan, not afterthoughts.
- Borrow reach by partnering with creators and organizations who target audiences already trust, across ideologies.
- Choose a few plain themes that can be

spoken credibly by many messengers, then repeat them across a network until they become common sense. So that wherever people turn, they encounter the same logic expressed in voices they trust.

- Governments are tightening enforcement; markets are moving toward deforestation-free supply chains; science and technology have lowered the cost of seeing what is happening; and Indigenous leadership is more visible than ever. These are not guarantees of success. They are clues to strategy.
- For every investigative piece on a land-grab, plan a companion story on an Indigenous-led restoration, a municipal enforcement model, or a market reform that works.
- Protecting and restoring Amazonia is not a boutique moral project but basic self-interest—words, maps, and well-told stories do not merely describe power. They move it.

COICA & COICA: COMMUNICATING IS RESISTANCE: AMAZONIAN ACTIVISM AND THE EMERGENCE OF NEW NETWORKS OF INDIGENOUS COMMUNICATORS

Authors: **Brayn Ludeña** (COICA) and **Kai-anaku Kamaiurá** (COIAB).

- Amazonian communication is a political and epistemological practice that defends life, territories, and ancestral knowledge in the face of the climate crisis and the colonality of knowledge.
- Communicating from the Amazon is an act of resistance and self-governance: it decolonizes language, reframes per-

spectives, and reaffirms the Indigenous worldview.

- Networks of Indigenous communicators are territories of thought that articulate climate justice, collective healing, and the rebuilding of our relationship with nature.

CIEP: NATIONAL ECONOMIC ACCOUNTS BEYOND THE GDP'S TYRANNY: A MECHANISM TO SAFEGUARD MEGADIVERSITY

Authors: **Alejandra Macías**, Executive Director CIEP, Mexico.

- The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ignores the environmental cost of economic growth, which can lead to erroneous public policy decisions. In contrast, the Net Ecological Internal Product (PINE) reduces environmental costs, offering a more realistic and sustainable measurement of the national income of megadiverse countries.
- Between 2018 and 2023, CTADA in Mexico fluctuated between 4.1% and 4.6% of GDP, with airborne emissions as the main component. These data reflect considerable environmental damage that is not reflected in the traditional economic metrics of several megadiverse countries.
- Even though CTADA exceeds 4% of GDP, public spending on environmental protection has remained below 0.7%. Furthermore, effective climate spending is only 0.15–0.18% of GDP, revealing a disconnect between climate discourse and real allocation of resources.
- Despite methodological advances and the implementation of tools such as

georeferencing, CEEM are still not used effectively in fiscal planning and evaluation, which limits their transformative impact.

- The accounts allow us to value ecosystem services and quantify impacts of climate change by region. This is essential to guide adaptation investments, evaluate energy subsidies and align the assumption with the commitments of the Paris Agreement.
- Mexico would be required to mobilize between 2% and 4% of its annual GDP to comply with the climate commitments established in its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs by their acronym in English). Including the PINE will allow defining the percentage of NDC inversion in the Amazon.
- In an era of environmental and climate crisis, relying on solid technical instruments such as the CEEM is not a luxury, but an urgent need to guarantee the ecological, economic and social viability of different countries

INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (IDB): DIRECT FINANCING TO INDIGENOUS ORGANIZATIONS: A CRUCIAL PILLAR IN RESTORING AMAZONIA FROM WITHIN ITS TERRITORIES

Authors: **Dr. Tatiana Schor**, Head of the Civil Society Group (EXA/CSG) in the Department of External Affairs; **Dr. Veronica Tejerina** is a Senior Social Development Specialist in the Amazon Coordination Unit; and, **M.Sc. Amancaya Briseida Conde**, Operations Analyst in the Amazon Coordination Unit.

- **Direct Financing Empowers Communities.** The Amazonia Forever program introduced a transformative approach by channeling funds directly to Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and traditional community organizations.
- **Co-Creation and Ownership are key for sustainability.** Co-design projects with indigenous communities and implement their own projects, ensure cultural relevance, autonomy, and alignment with local priorities.
- **Bioeconomy and Organizational Strengthening Are Central.** The current portfolio of projects focuses on promoting sustainable bioeconomy initiatives and strengthening the institutional capacities of grassroots organizations.
- **Fondo Amazonia para la Vida sets a New Standard.** Fund is the first regional co created fund exclusively for Indigenous Peoples in Amazonia, supporting self-determined development through direct project design and implementation

FOSPA & LATINDADD: A REGIONAL LOOK AT DEBT, THE CLIMATE CRISIS AND EXTRACTIVISM IN AMAZONIAN COUNTRIES

Authors: **Germán Niño, Angela Zegarra and Carola Mejía.**

- The Amazon region faces a vicious cycle of debt, climate crisis, and extractivism, which deepens the vulnerability of its peoples and ecosystems. Breaking this cycle requires comprehensive solutions, systemic reforms, and political will.
- A new, fair, agile, debt-free climate finance model with direct access, especially for Indigenous and vulnerable communities, is demanded.
- Bilateral and multilateral creditors, dominated by countries of the Global North, are also the greatest historical culprits of the climate and ecological crisis. From a climate justice perspective, indebted Amazonian countries should be recognized as creditors of climate and ecological debt.
- Governments are urged to halt fossil fuel and extractive investments in areas of high biodiversity and promote alternative economies based on agroecology and the sustainable use of the forest.
- The regional call is to build an Amazon free of debt and extractivism, with fair financing, climate reparations, and respect for the rights of its peoples.

CITA SUGERIDA DEL LIBRO: Guzmán León, Alicia. "Endangered Amazonia." *Coordinadora de Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica -COICA- (2025).*

The image titled “Water Line” is a photograph of a Ticuna man standing next to a 500-year-old ceiba tree in the Peruvian Amazon rainforest. The tree has a waterline that marks the water level during the rainy season, from April to May. This photograph was taken in May 2024, and by then the water level should have reached its peak; however, rainfall had been scarce. The 2024 drought broke historical records on the Amazon River, with devastating consequences for wildlife and local communities. This photograph by Mateo Borrero won the 2025 Earth Photo contest

Mateo Borrero

A Colombian photographer and engineer, he holds a Master’s degree in Artistic Photography and won the 2025 Earth Photo - Forest Ecosystem award from the Royal Geographical Society and Forestry England. His photographs have been featured in the British newspaper The Guardian, GEO magazine, Vogue, and Frontiers Magazine, where he was named Photographer of the Year. His work has been exhibited in various galleries, including the Royal Geographical Society in London and the Bedgebury National Pinetum & Forest in the UK.

