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The Brazilian Amazon*
Key facts

14%
(29 million) of Brazilians live in the Amazon[1]

10%*
live in extreme poverty[2]

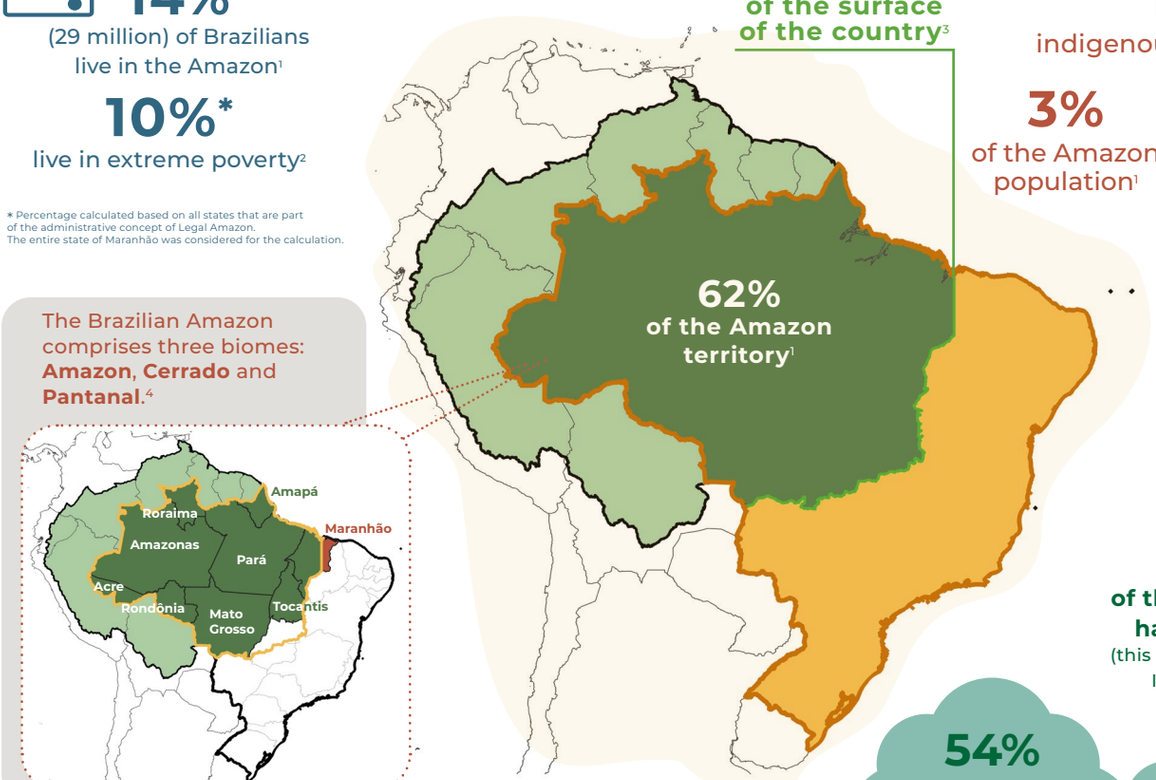
* Percentage calculated based on all states that are part of the administrative concept of Legal Amazon. The entire state of Maranhão was considered for the calculation.

62%
of the surface of the country[3]

190
indigenous communities[1]

3%
of the Amazon population[1]

0,4%
of the total population of Brazil[1]



The Brazilian Amazon comprises three biomes: **Amazon**, **Cerrado** and **Pantanal**.[4]

Under the administrative concept of "Legal Amazon", the Amazon region comprises

9 states[4]

- 8 complete states
- 1 state with partial area
- Brazilian Amazon Basin

44%
of the Brazilian Amazon has Protected Areas
(this includes Natural Areas and Indigenous Territories)[1]

54%
(1.240 million km²)*
Protected Natural Areas[1]

50%
(1.153 million km²)*
Indigenous Territories[1]

*There is an overlap between both areas, the total percentage does not give 100%

Land use

79%
of the Amazon surface had natural vegetation in 2021.[5]

73%	forest **(forest formation, savannas and mangroves)**
6%	non-forest natural formation
19%	agricultural use
0,2%	areas without vegetation (urban infrastructure, mining)
2%	bodies of water (river, lake)[5]

⁎ The Amazon concept used for this document considers three criteria: biogeographic, watersheds and political boundaries to define the Amazon region.

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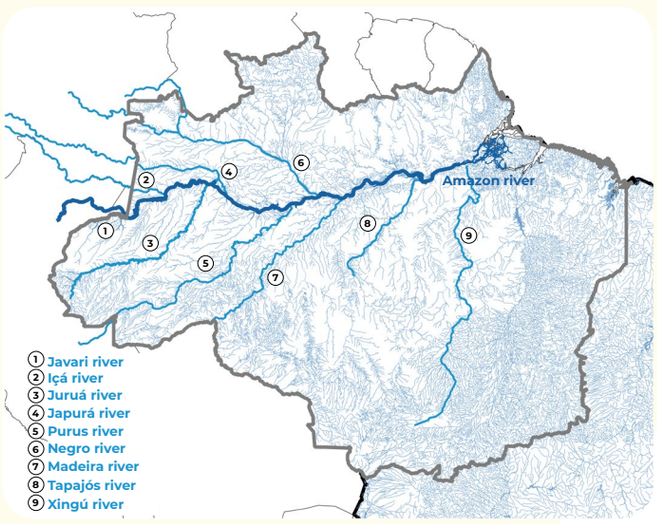
Rivers and biodiversity

The Amazon basin has the largest freshwater system in the world, discharging one fifth **(20%)** of the world's freshwater into the Atlantic.[6]

Rivers provide many **ecological**, **economic**, and **cultural benefits to the communities** that live around them, as fish are the main source of protein for local populations, and rivers are essential for energy production, transportation, and other ecosystem services.[7,9]

Map of Brazil's Amazonian rivers



The main tributaries of the Amazon River (Solimões-Amazonas) are the **Xingú**, **Tapajós**, **Madeira**, **Purus**, **Juruá**, **Içá**, **Javari**, **Japurá** and **Negro** rivers.[8]

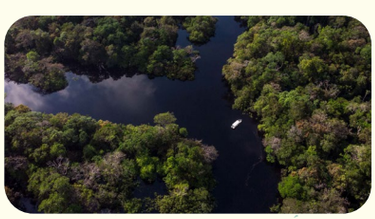


Photo: Funbio

The Amazon is home to

13%

of the world's freshwater fish.[7]

The **Pirarucu** (*Arapaima gigas*) is an emblematic fish of the Amazon and the basis of food security for hundreds of communities and of economic importance for aquaculture.[10]

Madeira river basin:[11]

- It has **1.4 million km²** of extension
- It is **3.300 km long**, and the most important tributary of the Amazon
- It has a flow of **31.200 m³/s** (contributes 15% of the total discharge from the Amazon River to the Atlantic)
- Home to **+91 indigenous ethnic groups**
- Covers 3 countries: **Brazil, Bolivia** and **Peru**

Fish consumption in the Amazon is high, with commercial and subsistence fishing producing almost **425 000 tons of fish each year.**[9]

Forest and biodiversity

The Amazon is home to the most extensive tropical forest in the world and a great diversity of ecosystems

Forests are a source of **Non-Timber Forest Products** (NTFPs), such as açai (*Euterpe oleracea*), castanhado-Pará (*Bertholletia excelsa*) and copaíba (*Copaifera officinalis*). These fruits provide the communities with a livelihood and a source of income.[12]

Brazil has **382 million hectares** of natural forest in the Amazon.[13,15]

The **Pink Dolphin** (*Inia geoffrensis*) is an umbrella species, its conservation status reflects the health of the habitat and the community. It is classified as an endangered species by the IUCN due to the fragmentation of its habitat, due to the construction of dams, and the contamination of rivers and lakes by extractive activities.[7]

Photo: Walter Wust

The Amazon basin is one of the most important carbon reserves, with **123 billion tons of carbon** stored on its surface and below ground.[14,15]

Brazil storages 70 billion tons of carbon.[13,15]

Photo: Walter Wust - SERNANP

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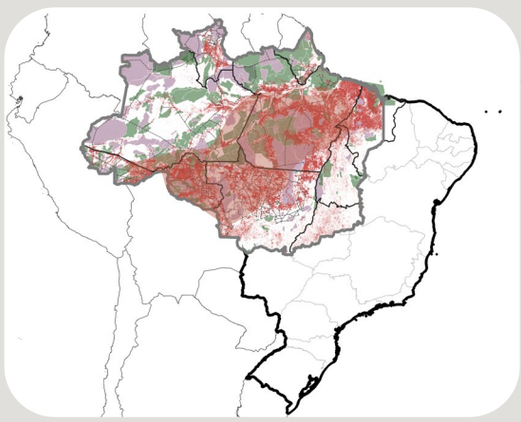
Threats in the Amazon

In 2022, were **deforested**

1,4 million hectares of primary forest in the Brazilian Amazon[16,17]

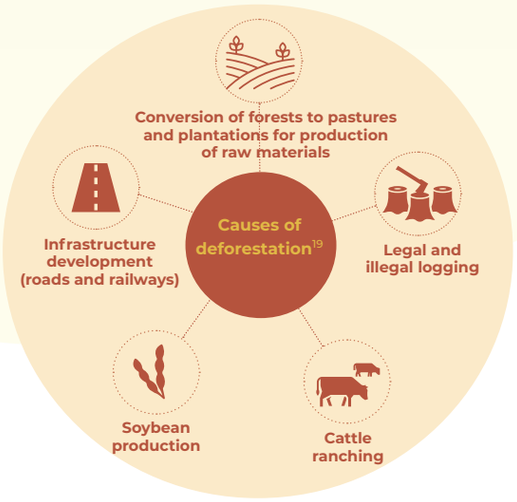
The "**deforestation arc**" is concentrated along the main road networks of the states of **Acre**, **Amazonas**, **Pará** and **Rondônia**.

Between 2020-2022, many areas experienced a combination of deforestation followed by anthropogenic fires (71% of all fires), affecting indigenous territories and protected areas.[17]



Deforestation rate of native vegetation in the Amazon for the period 2000-2021.[18]

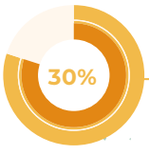
Deforested areas | Protected areas | Indigenous Territories



95% of deforestation in the entire Amazon is produced within **5,5 km** of a road[20]

54 legal oil blocks in the Brazilian Amazon[21]

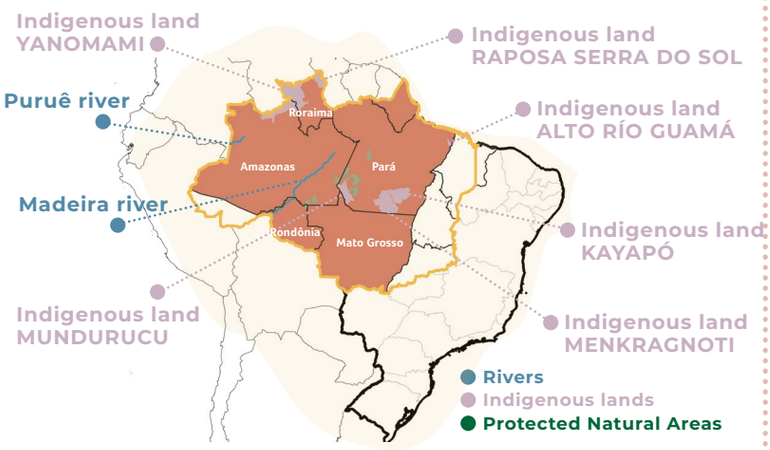
Cattle ranching has been the main driver of deforestation since 1960, currently it is estimated that it is the cause of **80%** of deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon.[19,22]



It is estimated that **30% of the gold produced in Brazil is of illegal origin**[23]

The main centers of illegal mining are in 5 states: **Amazonas**, **Pará**, **Mato Grosso**, **Rondônia** and **Roraima**.[23]

Illegal gold mining affects **forests** and **rivers,** and in many cases overlaps with **Protected Natural Areas** and **Indigenous Lands** such as **Kayapo**, **Menkragnoti**, **Yanomami** and **Mundurucu**.[23,24,25]



This activity directly causes **forest deforestation**, **river contamination**, and the **development of other illegal activities** such as **land invasion** and **drug** and **human trafficking**.[25]

628 hydroelectric plants in indigenous territories[21] (the Belo Monte power plant is the third largest in the world, located in the Xingu River basin)

Poorly planned infrastructure development threatens river connectivity, impacting ecosystem services and the life cycle of aquatic species.[26]

The **use of mercury in mining** generates the poisoning of ecosystems and aquatic fauna. Through the trophic chain it is absorbed by humans, generating impacts on the nervous and cardiovascular systems.[27]

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