earthwatch expeditions
by Nat Hab

Explore with Purpose

Surveying Wildlife in the Upper Amazon

Track the Impact of Water Levels on Wildlife in One of the World's Most Biodiverse & Interconnected Ecosystems

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Trip Details:

Days
8 Days / Jan, Mar, May, Aug–Sep, Nov

Price
From $7942 (+Air)

Surveying Wildlife in the Upper Amazon

Track the Impact of Water Levels on Wildlife in One of the World's Most Biodiverse & Interconnected Ecosystems

In the flooded forests of Peru's Upper Amazon, water levels affect everything. Rivers rise and fall with the seasons, reshaping habitat and determining animal movements and behavior. In the face of climate change, water patterns are changing, and typical seasonal variations are shifting. Join one of Earthwatch Expeditions' longest-running studies to track that impact, noting how more extreme floods and droughts are altering habitats and populations of mammals, birds and fish. Aboard a riverboat near the headwaters of the Amazon River system, you are immersed in a dynamic ecosystem where dolphins ply narrow channels, monkeys swing through the canopy, and scarlet macaws flush from the dense forest. Your work in recording the presence of these and other species helps grow our understanding of how changing water levels impact their populations, offering critical insight for conservation.

Research at a Glance

Your Role in Research

The Research Focus

Since the early 1990s, this long-term study in the Peruvian Amazon has tracked wildlife across interconnected habitats, examining how flooding, drought and heat affect population distributions and behaviors.

What You'll Do

Rotate through active field studies, including dolphin surveys, rainforest transects, bird counts, fish sampling and nighttime caiman searches, collecting data alongside scientists across multiple habitats and times of day.

Why It Matters

Project data is used by Peruvian agencies to guide how wildlife and protected areas are managed as drought and extreme heat impact species, habitats and ecosystems across the Amazon.

Trip Highlights

Survey pink river dolphins, primates, birds, fish and caimans across interconnected habitats, helping to track how species respond to environmental change

Live aboard a private riverboat, traveling deep into the tropical jungle, navigating remote waterways and flooded forests to reach secluded research sites

Participate in hands-on field research that relies on sustained contributions, making long-term monitoring possible in a region undergoing rapid change

Itinerary At A Glance

Day 1
Lima, Peru

Day 2
Lima / Iquitos / Nauta—Embark Ship / Marañon River Cruising

Days 3 & 4
Pacaya-Samiria National Reserve

Days 5 - 7
Amazon Field Research / Wildlife Surveys / Community Connections

Day 8
Nauta—Disembark / Iquitos / Lima / Depart

Surveying Wildlife in the Upper Amazon Itinerary

Track the Impact of Water Levels on Wildlife in One of the World's Most Biodiverse & Interconnected Ecosystems

Day 1: Lima, Peru

Arrive in Lima, where our local representative meets you at the airport and transfers you to our hotel. Our location near the airport provides convenient access for tomorrow's flight to Iquitos. Enjoy dinner on your own this evening.

Day 2: Lima / Iquitos / Nauta—Embark Ship / Marañon River Cruising

From Peru's capital, fly east across the spine of the Andes to Iquitos, a riverside city accessible only by air or water and one of the largest in the Amazon Basin. Continue to Nauta, a small town on the banks of the Marañon River, one of the major tributaries in the Amazon headwaters region. Board your riverboat and begin cruising upstream. From the open-air deck, watch small boats moving between riverfront communities as birds fly overhead. This vast waterway—often called a "river sea"—is flanked by dense rainforest on either bank, and our journey takes us deeper into it with every mile we travel toward its source.

As night falls, head out by skiff into the Nauta Caño area. With spotlights illuminating the banks and your guides' trained eyes adjusted to the dark, search for caimans, bats and frogs—an introduction to the distinct and vibrant world of the Amazon after sunset.

Days 3 & 4: Pacaya-Samiria National Reserve

Wake early when the forest is most active and travel by skiff into the Pacaya-Samiria National Reserve. Established in 1982 to protect the exceptional biodiversity of the northern Amazon, this 5-million-acre sanctuary is Peru's largest protected area—an immense wilderness shaped by water, where rivers, creeks and inundated forest converge. Along narrow channels, river dolphins surface and disappear just as quickly. Giant kapok and strangler fig trees line the banks, sheltering an array of wildlife—monkeys moving through the canopy, sloths folded into branches, birds crossing overhead. Water wends between trunks, reaching spaces where animals feed and shelter beyond the main channel.

In the afternoons, we head out to more remote waterways where you may try your hand at traditional piranha fishing while learning how fish populations are monitored and how they support both the ecosystem and local communities. Return to the riverboat each evening for dinner, discussion and stargazing after dark. On Day 4, it's time to meet your research team, setting the stage for the fieldwork rotations that begin the following day.

Days 5 - 7: Amazon Field Research / Wildlife Surveys / Community Connections

Over the next several days, delve into the fieldwork you've come for, as our studies spanning river and rainforest contribute to long-term datasets that track how flooding and drought alter the availability of resources for wildlife. Among our research pursuits, we'll engage in the following tasks:

Survey River Dolphins & Aquatic Life
Travel by skiff on rivers, lakes and creeks, scanning for pink and gray river dolphins as they surface briefly before disappearing again. These species serve as indicators of aquatic ecosystem health, with sightings recorded across habitats and water conditions.

Observe Wildlife in the Forest & Canopy
Work along forest edges and within the interior where visibility is limited and wildlife is detected through subtle cues. Learn to follow calls, movements and feeding signs revealing species that remain hidden, as we build an understanding of how wildlife is distributed across the forest.

Study Fish Populations & Local Food Systems
Take part in fish surveys using gill nets and hook-and-line techniques, examining species that support both ecosystem function and local people's livelihoods. Data collected helps track how fish populations shift with changing water levels and climate conditions, and what longer-term impacts may be.

Conduct Nocturnal Wildlife Surveys
Return to the river after dark as activity shifts with nightfall, capturing species and behaviors missed during daylight surveys. Use spotlights to locate caimans along the banks, as well as frogs, bats and nocturnal birds that also emerge.

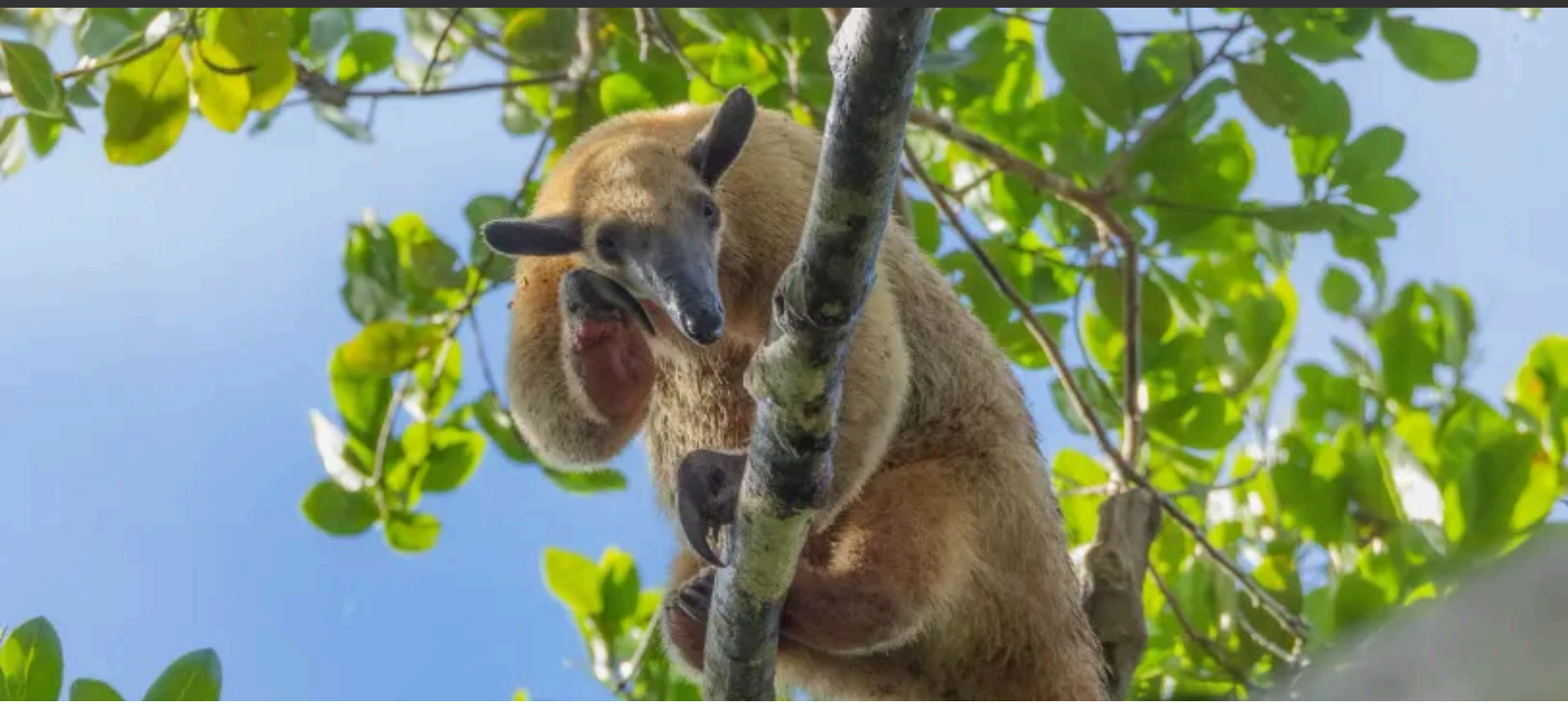
Visit a Cocama Community Along the River
Spend time in an Indigenous Cocama community where daily life is framed and influenced by the water and wildlife we've been studying. Learn more about how their culture, traditions and use of natural resources, including fishing, are being affected by climate change and shifting seasonal patterns, with their subsistence lifestyle closely tied to the health of the surrounding ecosystem.

At the close of Day 7, gather for a farewell dinner on board our riverboat as we assess our field research contributions and reflect on the current and future fate of this vital tropical rainforest ecosystem.

Day 8: Nauta—Disembark / Iquitos / Lima / Depart

Spend a final morning on the river, with time for one last outing or quiet observation from the deck. By now, the landscape reads differently—subtle movement, distant calls and small shifts along the water's edge are easier to recognize, given our intimate immersion in this complex, multilayered landscape. Once we reach Nauta, it's time to disembark. Head ashore to explore the small port city's market and visit the Amazon Rescue Center, which focuses on rehabilitating and releasing Amazonian manatees and other wildlife. Continue to Iquitos once more to meet your flight to Lima and onward international departures.

As you leave the Amazon, you depart with a clearer sense of how this mighty ecosystem functions, having studied and tracked integral elements of it during our fieldwork. It's rewarding to know that your participation has helped sustain research that is vital for tracking crucial environmental change and guiding conservation efforts for years to come.



Accommodation Details:

Wyndham Grand Costa Del Sol

Amatista

For detailed descriptions, visit nathab.com/earthwatch-expeditions/peru-amazon-riverboat-conservation-travel/accommodations

Surveying Wildlife in the Upper Amazon Accommodations

Track the Impact of Water Levels on Wildlife in One of the World's Most Biodiverse & Interconnected Ecosystems

Wyndham Grand Costa Del Sol

Connected directly to Lima's airport, this soundproof hotel pairs runway-view rooms, blackout curtains, and 24-hour room service with a heated indoor pool and pisco cocktails between flights.

Amatista

A traditional wooden riverboat cruising the Peruvian Amazon, this vessel offers open observation decks, panoramic dining and guided excursions through rainforest waterways rich with wildlife.

Meet the Scientists

Ph.D. Richard Bodmer

Professor, Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology

Dr. Richard Bodmer is Professor of Conservation Ecology at the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology at the University of Kent in the UK. His research focuses on wildlife conservation in the Amazon, particularly the sustainable management of species affected by bushmeat hunting. He has spent more than two decades working in Peru's Pacaya-Samiria National Reserve, examining how hunting, livelihoods and conservation intersect in one of the Amazon's largest protected areas. He earned his Ph.D. in Zoology from the University of Cambridge, along with master's and undergraduate degrees in biology and ecology from the University of Illinois, and he holds an Honorary Doctor of Science from the National University of the Peruvian Amazon in Iquitos, Peru.

Dr. Bodmer's work centers on wildlife conservation in regions where hunting pressure and local livelihoods are closely linked. By connecting field data with how wildlife is managed on the ground, he helps define conservation strategies that protect species while supporting the communities that depend on healthy ecosystems. His research has contributed to the development of community-based conservation models in the Amazon, showing that collaboration between local communities and government agencies can maintain healthy wildlife populations while preserving intact rainforest ecosystems.

In the field, his research involves long-term monitoring of wildlife populations, including surveys of mammals and birds, as well as wading bird counts and mist-netting studies. This work tracks how wildlife populations change over time and how those changes are shaped by hunting pressure and environmental conditions. Over decades of research, Dr. Bodmer has helped advance a model of conservation in which protecting wildlife and supporting local communities are not mutually exclusive—and indeed are part of the same long-term solution.

Education

Honorary Doctor of Science, National University of the Peruvian Amazon, Iquitos (Peru)
Ph.D. in Zoology, University of Cambridge (UK)
M.S. in Biology, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign (U.S.)
B.S. in Ecology, Ethology and Evolution, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign (U.S.)

Supporting Scientists

M.S. Tula Fang

Logistics Coordinator, AmazonEco

Wildlife Conservation, Peruvian Amazon

Science & Impact

On this long-running project, you're contributing to a substantial body of research in one of the most dynamic ecosystems on Earth, where changing water levels have a marked impact on wildlife, from aquatic species to forest-dwellers that thrive from floor to canopy. Each observation helps scientists understand how wildlife responds to drought, flooding and accelerating climate change—and how ecosystems and communities persist in a constantly shifting environment.

Research Focus

Since 2006, scientists in the Upper Amazon River Basin have studied how changes in water levels on the Yarapa River and surrounding channels determine where wildlife feed, move and ultimately survive, and how those shifts are affecting the people who live among them. Fieldwork centers on species integral to the regional ecosystem: endangered pink and gray river dolphins, fish that sustain local food systems, primates and birds in the canopy, and terrestrial mammals such as peccaries and jaguars. Surveys follow these animals across river channels and through the forest, recording where they occur, their movement patterns, and how populations change as water conditions shift.

Dolphins and fish serve as indicators of aquatic health. Camera traps capture images of elusive mammals on land. Bird counts and forest observations reveal how species use the canopy and understory. These datasets are then aligned with long-term water level records to show how environmental change impacts the entire ecosystem—and what the consequences may be.

Conservation Impact

Driven by climate change, flooding and drought are impacting the forests of Peru's Upper Amazon, altering wildlife populations and the resources local communities depend on. For more than three decades, this research project has tracked those changes and measured impacts, making these contributions:

- **Built more than 30 years of continuous data**, creating one of the most comprehensive long-term records of Amazon wildlife and climate impacts
- **Informed establishment of the Tamshiyacu-Tahuayo Community Reserve**, a model for community-based conservation in the Peruvian Amazon
- **Supported the expansion of conservation areas** across Loreto, including community-managed and co-managed reserves that now protect a significant portion of the region
- **Defined sustainable harvest levels for fish and bushmeat**, supporting both biodiversity and food security
- **Guided local decisions on fishing pressure, hunting practices and habitat use** as environmental conditions shift

- **Shaped wildlife management and protected area planning** by Peruvian agencies and regional authorities
- **Anticipated emerging threats** by informing responses to large-scale river modification projects that could cause detrimental changes to water levels and habitat structure

This work continues year after year, with each observation strengthening the long-term record used to understand change and guide conservation across one of the world's most complex ecosystems.

Your Role in the Research

Head out by skiff at first light, scanning the water's calm surface for the brief rise of a river dolphin. Call out sightings, track group size and record location and behavior as we move through rivers, lakes and narrow channels. In the rainforest, work along the edges and into the dense interior, following calls, movements and feeding signs to locate birds and primates. Walk short transects and record what you seen and where. On fish surveys, catch fish with a pole and line and occasionally assist with net-based fish sampling. Identify fish, recording size and number as part of ongoing surveys to assess ecosystem health and local food systems.

After dark, return to the river with spotlights, scanning the banks for the reflected eyes of caimans. Move slowly along the shoreline, counting individuals and recording size and location as nocturnal species become active. Each observation is recorded and added to long-term datasets tracking how wildlife responds to changing water levels and climate conditions.

Life in the Field

Days are structured around times when wildlife is most active. Early mornings begin on the water, traveling by skiff through rivers and narrow channels, stopping often to scan, listen and record sightings as they happen. By midday, heat and humidity build and activity slows. We return to the riverboat to rest, review data and prepare for the next fieldwork session. In the afternoon, study resumes in different waterways or along forest edges, with changing light and weather conditions affecting where surveys occur and what we might see.

After dinner, evenings evolve into night work along the river. Using spotlights, teams move slowly along the banks to locate caimans and other nocturnal species like fishing bats or frogs spotted during surveys of floating islands of vegetation. Some outings bring steady sightings, while others require patience, with long stretches of quiet between animal activity.

Field Conditions

Fieldwork takes place in a tropical environment with high heat and humidity. Expect early mornings, long days and time on the water after dark. During studies, we travel by small skiff and on foot. Walking

on land, we move over uneven, sometimes muddy terrain, with frequent stops to watch, listen and record. On the water, spend extended periods seated or standing while scanning for movement across the surface and along the banks. Expect insects, wet surfaces and exposure to sun and rain. Flooded forest areas may involve navigating tight channels and maneuvering between partially submerged trees.

After dark, surveys are conducted by spotlight along the riverbank, with attention focused within a narrow beam. Plans shift with weather, water levels and research priorities. Wildlife is not guaranteed —sightings depend on timing, conditions and sustained observation.

Discovery in the Field

1. **Explore One of Earth's Most Biodiverse Environments**
   Travel by private riverboat far upriver into flooded forest near the Amazon headwaters, entering remote habitats where Amazon wildlife feeds and concentrates.

2. **Work Across Three Varied Habitats in One Expedition**
   Experience three diverse Amazon habitats—the river, forest floor and canopy—encountering different species in each and seeing how these layers connect to support one of the most complex ecosystems on Earth.

3. **Study the Rainforest With Scientists Who Know It Intimately**
   Spend concerted time with researchers who have worked in the Upper Amazon for decades as they share how to read the forest, find wildlife and understand the forces that shape this dynamic ecosystem.

4. **Stay Deep in the Amazon on a Restored Riverboat**
   Live aboard a restored riverboat offering access to remote Amazon tributaries, surrounded by roadless rainforest.

5. **Discover the Amazon After Dark**
   Head out at night when nocturnal species take over along the river and in the forest, looking for frogs, caimans, bats and more.

6. **Witness Elusive Amazon Wildlife**
   Encounter dolphins, primates, birds and caimans up close, experiencing the density and diversity of life that defines the Amazon—plus, each sighting contributes to the long-running dataset.

7. **Search for Endangered River Dolphins**
   Navigate narrow channels in search of pink and gray river dolphins, endangered freshwater mammals uniquely adapted to life in submerged forest.

8. **Take Part in Meaningful Research**
   Work alongside scientists on ongoing field studies that depend on participant involvement, contributing to long-term monitoring used by conservation groups and government agencies in Peru.

Explore with Purpose

9 **Spend Time Among Indigenous Communities**
Visit Cocama communities whose lives are profoundly influenced by the river, offering a firsthand look at how conservation, culture and survival are deeply connected in this landscape.

10 **Explore in a Small, Focused Group**
Because we limit the group size on our expeditions, each participant is ensured closer interaction with scientists and a more active role in daily research activities.

11 **Travel with Purpose**
Take part in fieldwork that supports ongoing conservation research, contributing to the protection of Amazon wildlife and the habitats that sustain it. The expedition fee also supports necessary research expenses, enabling this work to continue.

Dates & Pricing Summary:

Prices:
From $7942 (+Air)

Group Size:
Limited to 20 Travelers

Surveying Wildlife in the Upper Amazon Dates, Pricing & Info

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2027 Departures

Departure	Return	Notes
Jan 23, 2027	Jan 30, 2027	$7942 USD (+internal air)
May 1, 2027	May 8, 2027	$7942 USD (+internal air) Habitat Club Pricing Available
May 29, 2027	Jun 5, 2027	$7942 USD (+internal air)
Aug 7, 2027	Aug 14, 2027	$7942 USD (+internal air)
Sep 25, 2027	Oct 2, 2027	$7942 USD (+internal air)

Dates & Pricing Summary:

Prices:
From $7942 (+Air)

Group Size:
Limited to 20 Travelers

Departure	Return	Notes
Nov 6, 2027	Nov 13, 2027	$7942 USD (+internal air)
Nov 13, 2027	Nov 20, 2027	$7942 USD (+internal air)
Nov 27, 2027	Dec 4, 2027	$7942 USD (+internal air)

2028 Departures

Departure	Return	Notes
! Prices and dates not confirmed for 2028		
Jan 23, 2028	Jan 30, 2028	$7942 USD (+internal air)
Jan 30, 2028	Feb 6, 2028	$7942 USD (+internal air)
Mar 27, 2028	Apr 3, 2028	$7942 USD (+internal air)
May 1, 2028	May 8, 2028	$7942 USD (+internal air)
May 29, 2028	Jun 5, 2028	$7942 USD (+internal air)
Aug 7, 2028	Aug 14, 2028	$7942 USD (+internal air)
Sep 25, 2028	Oct 2, 2028	$7942 USD (+internal air)
Nov 6, 2028	Nov 13, 2028	$7942 USD (+internal air)
Nov 13, 2028	Nov 20, 2028	$7942 USD (+internal air)
Nov 27, 2028	Dec 4, 2028	$7942 USD (+internal air)

Pricing

See https://nathab.com/earthwatch-expeditions/peru-amazon-riverboat-conservation-travel/dates-fees for the latest pricing details.

Included

Accommodations, services of Nat Hab's professional Field Guide(s), local guides and camp staff, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through lunch on final day, some alcoholic beverages, some gratuities, airport transfers on Day 1 and final day, all activities and entrance fees, all taxes, permits and service fees. A portion of your trip fee supports research expenses.

Not Included

Travel to and from the start and end point of your trip, some alcoholic beverages, some gratuities, passport and visa fees (if any), optional activities, items of a personal nature (phone calls, laundry, etc.), airline baggage fees, airport and departure taxes (if any), required medical evacuation insurance, optional travel protection insurance.

Internal air: All light aircraft flights within the itinerary (this will be listed separately on our invoicing).

Mandatory Insurance

Since the areas we travel to are remote and wild (that's why we go there!), we require that all guests have, at minimum, medical evacuation insurance for this program. This is for the safety of all guests. We require that your chosen independent insurance plan includes a **minimum of $250,000** in medical evacuation coverage.

To protect your investment and to provide peace of mind while you travel, we also strongly recommend purchasing comprehensive travel insurance. Plans may cover everything from medical treatment to trip cancellations and delays and lost luggage. Please contact our office if you would like more information about the medical evacuation and comprehensive travel insurance policies we offer by calling 800-548-7555.

Getting There & Getting Home

This trip begins and ends in Lima, Peru.

Because this is a long international journey with significant travel time, **we recommend that you arrive the night before Day 1** to rest from your travels and begin the trip refreshed. For guests who come in early, recommended hotels will be included in your pre-departure materials.

If you plan to arrive on Day 1, you may arrive in Lima at any time, as there are no scheduled activities until later in the itinerary.

You may depart Lima any time after 8 pm on the final day, and most international flights typically leave late in the evening.

Our Travel Desk can best assist with your travel reservations, as our staff is familiar with the specific requirements of this program and can help arrange the most efficient itinerary. Please call us at 800-548-7555. While we offer the best available rates to us on airfare and additional nights' accommodations, you may occasionally find special web rates or lower fares online.

Explore with Purpose

Know Before You Go

Whether you're preparing for your upcoming expedition or simply want to learn more about the Peruvian Amazon, these resources offer a closer look at one of the most biologically diverse regions on Earth. Discover the wildlife that inhabits the Amazon's rivers and rainforests, learn how researchers monitor ecosystem change and explore the connections between conservation, biodiversity and Indigenous communities in this extraordinary landscape.

Why Is the Amazon One of the Best Places in the World to Study Wildlife and Ecosystem Change?

The Amazon is one of the most biologically diverse regions on Earth, where river channels shift, forests flood and wildlife moves with the rhythm of the water. Seasonal flooding reshapes habitats across vast areas, influencing where species live, feed and reproduce.

These changes also affect the livelihoods of Indigenous Cocama communities, whose knowledge and sustainable use of natural resources are closely tied to the health of the forest and waterways. This combination of biodiversity, environmental change and community-based conservation makes the Amazon a powerful setting for participants to contribute to long-term scientific research.

Quick Facts: Surveying Wildlife in the Upper Amazon

- **Location:** Peruvian Amazon near Iquitos
- **Research partners:** Amazon Eco & University of Kent–DICE
- **Primary species:** Amazon river dolphins, birds, primates and freshwater fish
- **Key activity:** Boat-based wildlife monitoring, forest transects and ecological data collection
- **Conservation focus:** Biodiversity monitoring, ecosystem change and community-based conservation

What Wildlife Will I See on an Amazon Riverboat Expedition?

The Amazon supports an exceptional diversity of wildlife across river, forest and canopy ecosystems, with research taking place across aquatic and terrestrial habitats. These interconnected ecosystems—rivers, flooded forests and upland rainforest—support one of the most complex and species-rich environments on Earth.

Participants may encounter:

- **Amazon river dolphins** in freshwater channels
- **Macaws, parrots and other tropical birds** flying above the canopy
- **Primates** such as squirrel monkeys and howler monkeys in the forest canopy
- **Sloths** resting in riverside trees
- **Caiman** during nighttime surveys
- **Freshwater fish** such as piranha and other species during sampling
- **Bats, amphibians and reptiles** in forest and river habitats

What Is the Climate Like in the Amazon?

The Amazon has a hot, humid tropical climate year-round, with consistent warmth, high humidity and frequent rainfall. Conditions can feel especially intense on the water, where sun exposure is direct and shade is limited.

Rain can occur at any time, often in short, heavy bursts, and river levels shift seasonally, influencing where research takes place and how participants access field sites.

Condition	What to Expect
Daytime Temperatures	82–95°F
Nighttime Temperatures	75–82°F
Humidity	High year-round
Winds	Light to moderate
Rain	Frequent showers possible year-round
Seasonal Notes	River levels rise and fall with seasonal flooding cycles

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need research experience?

No prior research experience is required. Scientists and field staff provide training in research methods and data collection.

What type of research will I assist with?

Participants assist with wildlife monitoring and ecological research across river and rainforest habitats. Activities may include dolphin surveys, bird counts, fish sampling, terrestrial wildlife monitoring and nighttime surveys for caiman.

What is the conservation impact of this research?

This expedition supports conservation through ongoing research in the Peruvian Amazon. Data collected in the field helps scientists monitor wildlife populations and understand how environmental changes affect ecosystems and local communities.

How physically demanding is the expedition?

Participants should be comfortable spending extended time outdoors in hot, humid conditions, stepping in and out of small boats and walking short distances on uneven, muddy forest trails.

Can weather affect research activities?

Yes. Weather conditions such as rain, flooding or river conditions may affect fieldwork and daily schedules.

Researchers adjust plans as needed to maintain safety and continue monitoring wildlife and ecosystems.

What happens in case of an emergency?

Participant safety is a priority on all expeditions. Field staff follow established safety procedures and maintain communication during research activities.

If medical care is required, staff coordinate transportation to the nearest appropriate facility.

Do I need travel insurance?

Travel insurance is strongly recommended and should include coverage for trip cancellation, interruption, medical expenses and emergency evacuation.

Earthwatch Expeditions provides travel medical insurance for participants.

What immunizations & travel vaccinations do I need?

Participants should consult a healthcare provider before travel, as vaccinations such as yellow fever and hepatitis A may be recommended for travel to the Amazon region.

Participants should review current health guidance before departure, including risks such as malaria and dengue.

What should I bring?

Participants receive a detailed packing list before departure outlining recommended clothing, field gear and personal supplies.

Essential items include lightweight clothing, appropriate footwear for boat and forest conditions and insect protection.

What safety measures are in place during the expedition?

Participants travel aboard a research riverboat operated by trained crew members certified in emergency procedures. Life vests are provided and must be worn during all small-boat activities, and the vessel is inspected for safety by the Peruvian Coast Guard.

Swimming is not permitted during the expedition due to safety considerations related to river conditions and wildlife.

What Should I Pack for an Amazon Riverboat Expedition?

Participants should pack for hot, humid conditions and activities on both water and forest terrain, with gear suited for rain, mud and strong sun exposure. Recommended items include:

- Lightweight shirts and pants
- Long-sleeved shirts for sun and insect protection
- Rubber boots for muddy forest trails
- Closed-toe, non-slip shoes for boat decks
- Headlamp or flashlight
- Wide-brimmed hat
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen (SPF 30+)
- Insect repellent
- Refillable water bottle
- Small daypack
- Dry bags for electronics

A lightweight rain jacket is recommended, as rain can occur at any time and conditions can shift quickly between sun and heavy showers.

What Will I Experience While Surveying Wildlife in the Upper Amazon?

Participants travel by riverboat through remote rainforest waterways, working alongside scientists to monitor wildlife and collect ecological data across multiple habitats. The experience combines river

travel, forest exploration and hands-on research, offering a direct connection to both the science and the landscape.

What Does Daily Fieldwork Look Like?

Fieldwork takes place throughout the day and night, with activities rotating between boat-based surveys, forest transects and nighttime wildlife monitoring. Participants may assist with dolphin surveys, bird counts, fish sampling and caiman searches, depending on research priorities and environmental conditions.

earthwatch expeditions
by Nat Hab

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