

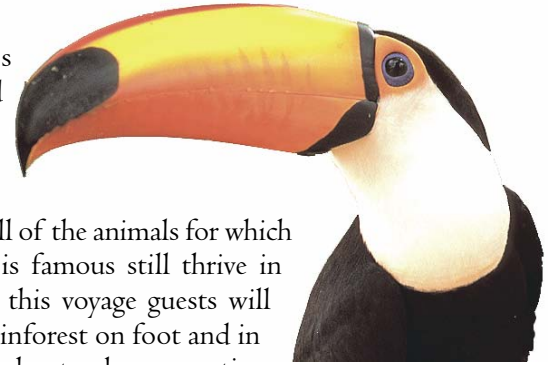
*Expedition Cruise in the Amazon's Newest and
Most Important Nature Reserve*
The Central Amazon Biological Corridor
Voyage to the Heart of the Amazon

In August of 2007 the environmental authorities of Brazil will create the world's largest rainforest reserve the Central Amazon Ecological Corridor. This reserve is in the very middle of the Amazon and covers much of the southern watershed of one of the most pristine and undeveloped rivers in all of the Amazon, The Rio Negro. Currently there is only one cruise that ventures deep into this reserve. The expedition cruise *Voyage to the Heart of the Amazon*, conducted on the Motor Yacht Tucano explores far into this pristine rainforest and spectacular wilderness.

This new reserve, the *Corredor Ecológico Central da Amazônica* encompasses several large river systems and tens of thousands of square miles of uninhabited wilderness. The Brazilian Institute for the Environment, (IBAMA) has combined many smaller reserves and also adjoining lands into an area large enough to preserve the biological diversity of this still undeveloped part of the Amazon. This vast area is so remote that it is off the flight path of planes and still filled with the creatures that have made the Amazon the object of myth and legend.

Access to the reserve will be very strictly controlled, though some nature expeditions to the area will be permitted. One of these is the *Voyage to the Heart of the Amazon*. Over eight days and seven nights the Motor Yacht Tucano will navigate narrow

wilderness channels and explore areas that are uninhabited by humans. All of the animals for which the Amazon is famous still thrive in this area. On this voyage guests will explore the rainforest on foot and in the ship's launches to observe exotic plants and animals. The small groups will be led by skilled naturalist guides so that participants will be able to experience the wilderness in the most authentic way possible.



The Rio Negro and the Central Amazon Biological Corridor

The part of the Amazon Biological Corridor which is within the lower Rio Negro region is called the Anavilhanas Ecological Reserve and is monitored by the Brazilian Institute of the Environment (IBAMA). This area contains one of the largest archipelagos in the world with approximately 400 islands threaded by innumerable small channels and a network of small passages. The Anavilhanas Archipelago is a natural landmark which needs to be preserved not only for scientific purposes but also for its rare scenic beauty.

Within the reserve there is a great variety of vegetation types that include flooded forest (igapó), high forest (terre firme), sandy soil shrub land (chevascal) and flooded shrub land. These different habitat types, combined with the very dynamic seasonal changes in water depth, have created a rich biodiversity

of flora and fauna and also a high degree of species endemism. The scientific term “endemism” means that some creatures have evolved to live specifically in this region and cannot be found anywhere else on earth.

In addition, this reserve protects a number of species under threat of extinction. Among these are the Amazon Manatee, the Jaguar, the world’s largest freshwater fish, the Pirarucu, and several endemic species of birds including the Klage’s Antwren. Other creatures commonly found in the area but which are becoming rare elsewhere are Pink River Dolphins, Grey River Dolphins, River Otter and also Giant River Otter, Macaw Parrots and also the Amazon’s crocodiles, Caimen.

The reserve was created with the objective of preserving the flora and fauna of region but also conducting scientific research.

When fully implemented, there will be no extractive purposes of any kind permitted. Some specific activities that will not be permitted are hunting, fishing, extraction of wood or sand, starting of fires, carrying of arms, or possessing tools for wood extraction. No activities of any kind that threaten flora or fauna will be permitted. The management plan for this region, created in 1999, permits visitation for educational purposes only. The only activities permitted must have as their objective the protection of biological diversity. Scientific research will be permitted only with the authorization of the environmental authority of Brasil, IBAMA.

Translated and adapted from: “Normas, Diretrizes e Procedimentos para Ingresso no Programa de Visitação Educativa”, Estação Ecológica de Anavilhanas, IBAMA, Manaus, Brasil (2007)

