

# Conserving the waters of the Amazon

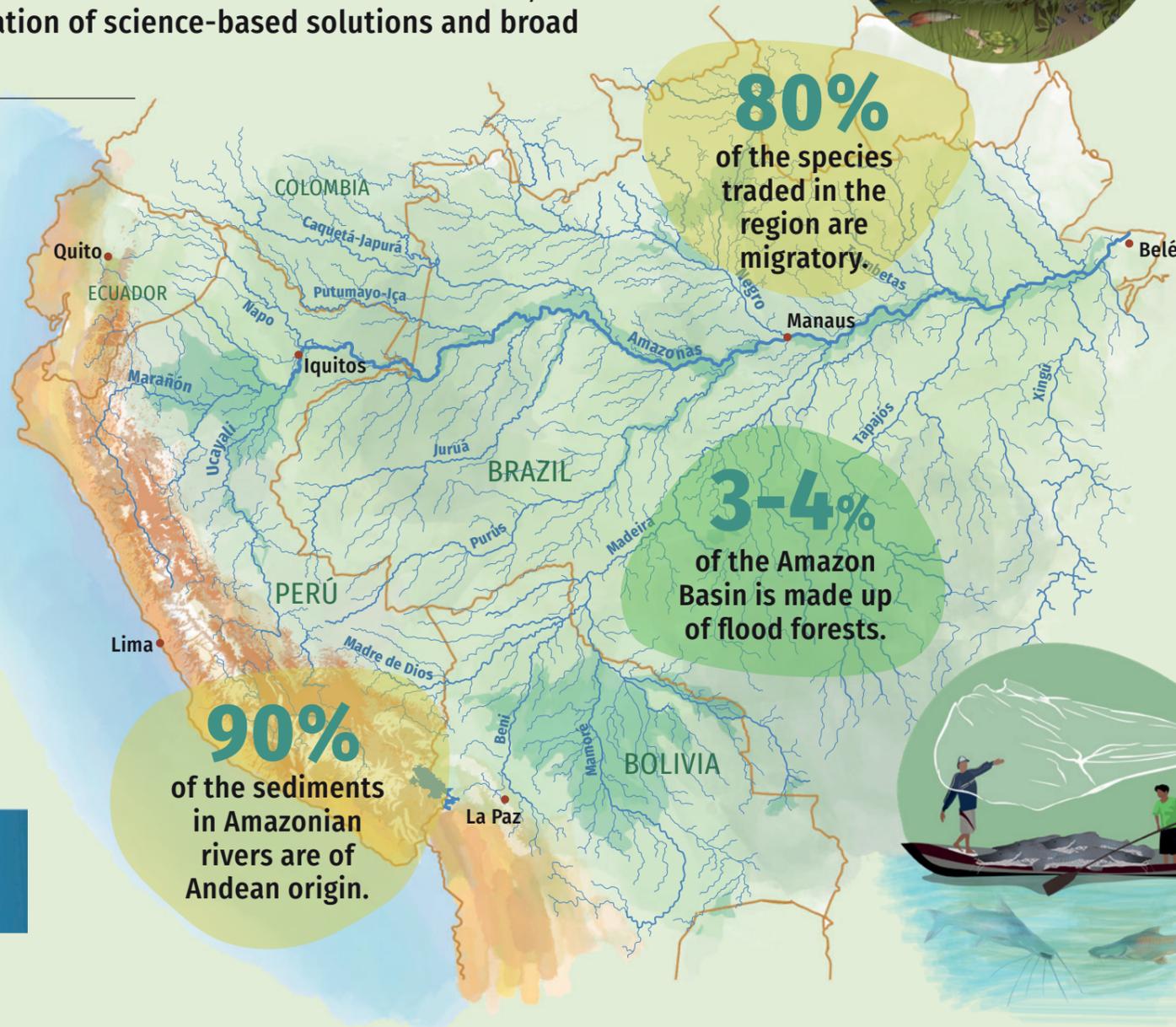
The Amazon is a large and complex river system. Everything we admire about it –its biological diversity, its vast resources, its invaluable ecological services–depends on the basin’s freshwater ecosystems. Beyond its natural resources, 47 million people call the basin home, and their livelihood and culture are intimately linked to its waters. Thus, conserving the Amazon’s myriad habitats, from its wetlands to its rivers and forests, is urgent and is only achievable with a combination of science-based solutions and broad societal participation.

## 1 Keeping riverscapes connected

All the rivers of Andean origin that flow into the main channel of the Amazon originate in the Western Amazon region. This Andes-Amazon connection is a key component sustaining the invaluable biocultural diversity of the Amazon.

### What can be done?

- Maintain river connectivity from the headwaters to the estuary.
- Mitigate the impact of hydroelectric dams.
- Mitigate the impact of road infrastructure (road crossings over rivers)



## 2 Conserving floodplains



Amazon floodplains are among the most diverse and productive ecosystems on Earth. Yet they are being profoundly affected by human activities, which may push them towards a tipping point where they no longer sustain important ecological, economic, and cultural services for human well-being.

### What can be done?

- Reduce wetland deforestation.
- Maintain flood pulses and the natural flow regime.
- Design protected areas that conserve the biodiversity of aquatic systems.

## 3 Sustaining fish and commercial fisheries

The Amazon has the greatest diversity of freshwater fish on the planet. Fisheries are an essential source of food for the 47 million people living in the Amazon and constitute one of the region's main economic activities. Some of the most prized species are the large migratory catfish, whose survival depends on factors such as river connectivity, functional and productive wetlands, and conserved breeding and nursery areas.

### What can be done?

- Implement agreements between governments to manage fisheries and aquatic ecosystems.
- Mitigate the effects of infrastructure on migratory fish species.
- Monitor fish landings and fish stocks.



## A future for the Amazon

### Conservation measures for Amazonian waters

- Mitigate the impacts of infrastructure on biodiversity
- Maintain the natural flow regime
- Protect and restore critical habitats
- Reduce deforestation in wetlands
- Implement actions between governments and communities for sustainable fisheries
- Safeguarding and restoring connectivity