

# The Peruvian Rainforest

The Peruvian rain forest is considered one of the richest all over the world, divided into two levels: La Selva Alta (1000 metres above sea level) and 3000 mm of rain per year and La Selva Baja (700 metres above sea level to 180 metres above sea level) 35°C on average. This region has got very humid climate and covers nearly 65% of the Peruvian territory and gives shelter to endless animal and plant species.

All of these species are currently threatened because of the devastation of their habits. Mundo Verde has identified two main “predators” of this rich region:

- Big wood companies, which destroy what is in their path and all they care is just money to continue destroying the jungle. Mundo Verde can do nothing against them except aware the people about these companies.
- Jungle Inhabitants, this is the “easiest” group to work with, since they are accessible and willing to learn new techniques on living from the jungle and preserving it at the very same time. We have seen some of their problems, therefore the rain forest’s problems as follows:

1. The lack of employment: This is, perhaps, the first cause of devastation in the rain forest, since the inhabitants of this region have no “qualified” skills they cannot find a decent job and they have large families to look after so they have no other choice than walk into the wild and chop down the trees or hunt and fish.
2. The mining activity: Other major problem, since people at this region need to work and since they have no other skills, they take the “easiest” path to “make some money” which barely reaches US\$400.00 per year to support a 6 member family, we are talking about mining in order to obtain gold from the rivers in the rainforest, they drag material from the rivers and use mercury in order to “capture” the gold particles, once they have finished their daily labour, these workers dispose all the remaining mercury into the rivers polluting everything in them and of course, human beings settled down at the banks of the rivers.
3. Agriculture: One important activity at this region with no technical support and this lack of support makes the inhabitants destroy more of the rainforest

in order to get more “useful lands for the agriculture” again, devastating everything.

4. Consumption Habits and Population Growing: Since the rainforest is a region which can easily “feed” a small amount of people, it’s got problems to “feed” a large amount of them, so the consumption habit is one problem to preserve the region. Every year more than 2000 tons are needed in the local market and what local fishers can offer is 500 tons so we have a huge deficit and that is where the overfishing starts.

Having seen these problems, Mundo Verde has started the project in the rainforest:

### **The Fish Farm:**

From all the 245 fish species existing at the rainforest, just few of them 46 are used as food. And even less than that have been studied so there is a lack of data on these species. We have started the Fish Farm to study some of these species:

Arapaima gigas

Colossoma macropomum

Brycon erythropterum

Pseudoplatystoma tigrinum

We are planning on collecting enough information so we can use to “farm” these species in a sustainable way and our main targets for this project are:

1. Knowing about their habits such as reproduction, feeding and time required to achieve the maturity age.
2. Once we have the information, train the locals to start their own fish farms at their own villages.
3. Create new job positions by encouraging the fish farming
4. Supply mercury free fish meat to the local market
5. Give nature a chance to regenerate itself by giving the fish more time to breed in the wild and not cutting down more trees.

### **The Mammal Farm:**

The second project is the mammal farm, in which we will work at the same way as in the Fish Farm, by encouraging the farming of this mammal species: Agouti paca, this animal is hunted because of the taste of its meet and currently is endangered, so our alternative is training the locals to have this animal in huge areas

where roots and other plants are abundant so they can just “monitor” them and have a record on the population of each “farm”, therefore, the market will start having agouti meat from sustainable managed farms.

In order to accomplish these goals Mundo Verde has started preparing the facilities down there so all the staff and volunteers will have a place to stay.

Supporting a Project like this one is very expensive since we are a small organization we have a Spanish School based in Cusco Peru, where we teach Spanish as a second language for foreigners and travelers. We also have one other location for our school located in the Sacred Valley of the Incas near Cusco and soon we will be able to offer another Spanish School in the rainforest at the very place of our project. The incomes that we obtain from this School are used to support this project.