

THE GREAT AMAZON RIVER CRUISE



A WWF Journey through the Peruvian Amazon Rain Forest with Meg Symington, WWF's Amazon Senior Program Officer and Kurt Holle, WWF-Peru's Country Director

September 12 - 20, 2020

The Peruvian Amazon is a land of superlatives. First worldwide in its diversity of freshwater fish, first in butterflies, second in birds, and fifth in mammals and reptiles. It is the second largest area within the broader nine-country Amazon rain forest. Its extensive tree coverage—nearly 260,000 square miles—makes it one of the world's largest store houses of carbon.

Travel with WWF experts along more than 600 miles of the Amazon River and its tributaries aboard the luxury Delfin II—disembarking to explore hidden corners of the rain forest by excursion boat and easy jungle walks. Our main focus is the Pacaya Samiria National Reserve near the river's headwaters, a 5-million-acre mosaic of pristine habitats. Founded in part by WWF, the reserve is home to some of the largest wildlife populations in the Amazon: pink and gray river dolphins, troops of howler monkeys, elusive sloths, flocks of brilliant macaws and bright butterflies. Lagoons covered in giant lily pads teem with fish and caimans, while scores of marsh birds hunt from shore. Cultural visits to local villages round out our rain forest wilderness adventure.

Itinerary at a Glance

Day	Date	Location	Accommodations
1	September 12	Arrive Lima, Peru	Wyndham Costa del Sol
2	September 13	Lima / Iquitos / Nauta—Embark / Piranha Caño	Delfin II
3	September 14	Amazon River / Clavero Lagoon / Supay Cocha	Delfin II
4	September 15	Ucayali River / Yanallpa / Dorado River	Delfin II
5	September 16	Zapote River / Pacaya River	Delfin II
6	September 17	Sapuenta Creek / Yarapa River / Puerto Miguel	Delfin II
7	September 18	Amazon Natural Park—Canopy Walk / Yanayacu Pucate / San Regis	Delfin II
8	September 19	Fundo Casual Trail / Nauto Caño Creek	Delfin II
9	September 20	Disembark / Iquitos / Depart Lima	



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Itinerary in Detail

Day 1, September 12: Lima, Peru

Arrive in Lima, where our local representative meets you at the airport just outside customs. You will transfer to our hotel where we will enjoy a welcome dinner this evening with fellow travelers and staff from WWF-Peru.

Overnight Wyndham Costa del Sol (D)

Day 2, September 13: Lima / Iquitos / Nauta—Embark / Piranha Caño

Fly across the Andes to land in Iquitos, a once-booming rubber town that is now one of the largest cities in the Amazon, accessible only by air or water. We will transfer to Nauta, a small riverside town on the banks of the Marañon River whose name literally means the “end of the road.” Here, we board our deluxe riverboat, Delfin II. Cruising slowly upstream, bound for the Amazon headwaters, enjoy panoramic views from the open-air top deck, as our Expedition Leaders provide an overview of the journey ahead.

This afternoon, disembark for a short skiff excursion to Piranha Caño, near the confluence of the Ucayali and Marañon Rivers that join to create the main stem of the mighty Amazon River. Traveling through flooded terrain, we discover a tranquil lagoon rich in birdlife, especially seedeaters that are difficult to find elsewhere. These flooded forests are at risk for human exploitation from mining and logging. WWF has supported conservation efforts in Peru since 1969. Recently, WWF and the Peruvian Parks Service worked together to help prevent illegal logging. This is also a good spot to search for monkeys and sloths. It's important to know at the outset, though, that the prolific wildlife of the Amazon is also skilled at hiding, so it takes an expert eye to locate animals sheltered by the dense vegetation.

Overnight Delfin II (B,L,D)

Day 3, September 14: Amazon River / Clavero Lagoon / Supay Cocha

Board excursion boats and head out for an introduction to the “river sea” that is the Amazon. These legendary waters thrum with small boats coming to market, while the skies overhead are animated with birdlife. On a morning excursion to Clavero Lagoon, we hope to observe egrets, herons, hawks and long-legged neo-tropical cormorants fishing for breakfast. We also explore other linked blackwater lagoons that are part of this huge lake, watching wattled jacanas compete for food with spiders, and spying grasshoppers and butterflies that thrive along the edges of freshwater swamps and marshes. This

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afternoon, take another skiff excursion into Supay Cocha, a lagoon teeming with fish. Watch for troops of squirrel monkeys and birds, including black- and white-tailed trogons and paradise tanagers.

Overnight Delfin II

(B,L,D)

Day 4, September 15: Ucayali River / Yanallpa / Dorado River

This morning we will visit Belluda Caño Creek near Yanallpa, home to the ribereño people, indigenous dwellers of the rain forest for centuries. This small tributary is a prime location to look for pink and gray Amazon river dolphins. These freshwater dolphins are highly social, friendly, and intelligent, with a brain capacity 40 percent greater than humans. We will discuss how WWF works to protect river dolphin habitat in the Amazon region, supports surveys to determine their status and vulnerability—including the use of satellite technology to track the animals' movements and behavior, and helps with research about the impact of dams on the size and dispersal of dolphin populations. Plying the water in open skiffs, we have a chance for close encounters with these rare creatures, if we're lucky. Keep an eye peeled, too, for wide-eyed owl monkeys—the world's only nocturnal monkeys—resting in the forest canopy in preparation for their next forage.

Navigating small waterways off the main river, we are immersed in the verdant recesses of the world's largest rain forest. The Dorado River is our first stop inside the Pacaya Samiria National Reserve, Peru's largest protected area established in 1982 to preserve the exceptional biodiversity of the northern Amazon wilderness. As we cruise slowly along, search for birds such as snail kites, festive parrots, olive-spotted hummingbirds, Amazonian parrotlets, wood creepers and endangered scarlet macaws. Squirrel monkeys move in large, noisy troops overhead while iguanas laze in the sun. We may see more river dolphins slicing gracefully through the water. At every turn, our guides reveal the secrets of the rain forest, helping us spot creatures we would never see on our own given the amazing camouflage of so many masterfully adapted species. Before making our way back to the ship, scan the riverbanks for spectacled caiman, frogs, owls and capybara, the world's largest rodent. After dark, head up to the top deck to listen to the symphony of night sounds in the forest.

Overnight Delfin II

(B,L,D)

Day 5, September 16: Zapote River / Pacaya River

This morning, explore the blackwater Zapote River by kayak and skiff. The water, while clear, is the color of dark tea, an effect of the tannins deposited by the rich vegetation along the banks. Along this small tributary, we frequently observe a variety of monkeys including squirrel, monk saki and brown capuchin. Where dry ground exists, step ashore for rain forest walks, keeping an eye out for a host of birds: large-billed terns, laughing falcons, gray tanagers, snowy egrets, horned screamers, tiger herons, short-tailed parrots, parakeets and perhaps the flashy scarlet macaw. We may even spy a three-toed sloth nestled in a cecropia tree.

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This afternoon, we reach the Pacaya River at the heart of the Pacaya Samiria Reserve. This vast flooded landscape known as the "mirrored forest" covers 10,000 square miles at the headwaters of the Amazon and is home to Peru's greatest concentration of wildlife. Pacaya Samiria Reserve is sustained by funds known as conservation finance, an innovation which WWF is advancing around the world to help finance—and sustain protected areas.

We set out to explore this emerald realm of trees, vines, streams, lagoons and islands. Overhead, look for macaws, black-collared hawks, prehistoric hoatzin birds and capuchins, and listen for red howler monkeys, whose eerie call reverberates through the canopy for miles. We begin to get a sense of the layered richness of the reserve's mixed habitats: its 85 lakes are home to 250 species of fish, while it protects 132 species of mammals (most are very elusive), 150 reptile and amphibian species, and 450 different kinds of birds. The reserve also contains the largest variety of flora in Peru, including huge bromeliads and 22 species of orchids.

Overnight Delfin II

(B,L,D)

Day 6, September 17: Sapuena Creek / Yarapa River / Puerto Miguel

Wake to the sounds of the jungle teeming with life and join our expert naturalists for a dawn birding excursion on Sapuena Creek, a blackwater stream leading to a large lake. Watch for purple and azure gallinules and wattled jacanas along the lakeshore before returning to the ship for breakfast. This afternoon, cruise upstream via skiff to reach the Yarapa River, a remote tributary of the Upper Amazon. Turning into the Yarapa, watch for colorful birds such as the plum-throated cotinga, and look for river dolphins swimming alongside.

Later in the day, disembark for a short skiff ride to Puerto Miguel, a riverside village where we meet indigenous residents whose culture has been a part of this region for centuries. At the arts and crafts market, we have a chance to purchase items that support the community and empower women artisans. Sales indirectly help preserve local fauna, since income generated decreases the pull of illegal hunting. We may also get to visit a local school before heading out on a jungle walk in search of sloths and monkeys—then return to the Delfin II for dinner.

Overnight Delfin II

(B,L,D)

Day 7, September 18: Amazon Natural Park—Canopy Walk / Yanayacu Pucate / San Regis

This morning we head up the other main tributary of the Amazon, the Marañon River. Along the way, we stop at Amazon Natural Park, with the only canopy walk in the area. Suspended 85 feet above the ground, the walkway extends a third of a mile through the upper tier of the rain forest—one of the longest canopy walks in the world. The treetops provide an excellent vantage point for observing the terra firma forest, including walking palms and trees festooned with epiphytes.

Illegal logging is more prevalent in Peru than in most countries around the world. The majority of the timber from Peru is harvested illegally. You will learn how the Peruvian government—with help from WWF and others—is transforming and modernizing Peru's forest sector. In 2014, the National Pact for Legal Wood was signed by four Peruvian government ministers, the private sector, NGOs (including WWF) and indigenous federations. The pact has an ambitious goal: by 2021, all timber produced in the country will come from legal origins.

Board kayaks and skiffs this afternoon to travel farther up the Marañon to a virtually unvisited section of Pacaya Samiria, where the Yanayacu and Pucate Rivers meet. Giant kapok and strangler fig trees along the banks shelter a multitude of wildlife, and our Expedition Leaders explain the various micro-

ecosystems found here in one of the most pristine parts of the Pacaya Samiria Reserve. Search once more for pink dolphins, then continue to San Regis, an isolated village that rarely sees outsiders. We visit with the prestigious shaman Carola, known throughout the region as a healer and spiritual guide. In addition to living a normal village life with her woodcarver husband, she is a spiritual caretaker for hundreds of residents living throughout the jungle.

Overnight Delfin II

(B,L,D)

Day 8 September 19: Fundo Casual Trail / Nauto Caño Creek

Early risers are rewarded with the reserve's most abundant bird and animal life on this morning's excursion. We set out at sunrise, when wildlife is most active in the tropics, to follow the Fundo Casual trail, walking deep into the forest on dry ground in search of sloths, birds and more. Look closely for brightly colored poison dart frogs, leafcutter ants and other intriguing small creatures along our path. After lunch, cruise to the Nauto Caño River, a small creek via which we explore marshes, side streams and oxbow lakes while searching for many different birds and three-toed sloths in the trees.

As the sun sinks below the canopy, an exciting adventure awaits: a chance to witness the transformation of the rain forest at nightfall. An orchestra of sounds evolves as nocturnal creatures awaken, with crickets and night birds providing a percussive rhythm. In the darkness, our guides use powerful spotlights to search for wildlife. Black caiman, frogs, common potoo, black-crowned night heron, pauraques, spectacled owls and nighthawks are commonly spotted along the banks, while fish bats swoop down to scoop fish from the water. Back aboard ship, prepare to bid farewell to the Amazon on the observation deck with one last night of stargazing.

Overnight Delfin II

(B,L,D)

Day 9, September 20: Nauta—Disembark / Iquitos / Lima / Depart

Disembark in Nauta this morning, then visit the Rescue & Rehabilitation Center for River Mammals en route to Iquitos. Here, biologists and volunteers care primarily for Amazon manatees that conservation authorities have seized from fishermen and locals who captured them illegally. Scientists discuss efforts to help these vulnerable mammals, including how they are prepared for reintroduction to their natural habitat. We'll have the chance to see manatee calves and interact with charming, docile adults. In 2018, the Peruvian Government approved the first ever National Action Plan for the Conservation of River Dolphins and Amazonian Manatee, which was supported by WWF and other partners and is a critical tool for the conservation of these species.

Leaving the rain forest behind, we fly together to Lima, where day rooms are provided to relax and freshen up before overnight flights home.

(B,L)

Meet Our Experts

Meg Symington, WWF's Senior Director for the Amazon



Meg Symington has been with WWF for nearly 30 years and is responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of WWF's priorities for the Amazon with a focus on the financial sustainability of protected areas systems. Meg's love of nature led her to pursue a career in conservation, which began with a field study of tropical ecology and primate behavior in the Amazon of Peru. She then served as an environmental advisor in the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean at the US Agency for International Development. While earning her PhD, she spent 27 months in "beautiful, untouched forest" of the Peruvian Amazon, which made her realize she wanted to stay focused on Latin America and "conserve the Amazon so it will be there for my grandchildren".

Kurt Holle, WWF-Peru's Country Director



WWF-Peru's Country Director, Kurt Holle graduated from the La Molina Agrarian University in Lima, Peru as a forestry engineer with specializations in sustainable tourism development and forestry management. For 25 years, he has focused on combining conservation and business, under a vision of sustainability and generating benefits for local population. In addition to being founder and former director of one of Peru's most influential ecotourism companies, Kurt has consulted with leading organizations such as the Moore Foundation, Swisscontact Worldwide, and Nature Services Peru. Together with the Ministry of Environment, he has successfully contributed to strategies to manage tourism in protected areas and generate incentives for conservation.

What to Expect

This program does not require a high degree of physical fitness, as much of our wildlife viewing is done from small motorized skiffs. Getting in and out of the skiffs can sometimes feel a bit unsteady, especially with the current of the river. Some excursions involve walking on nature trails through the rain forest. Guests must be able to walk at least 1.5 miles in high humidity over uneven ground with overgrown roots, in order to participate in all excursions. One trail excursion also requires ascending and descending around 100 steps. Walking on muddy trails or through standing water may be necessary at times. Guests are not required to participate in all activities.

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Accommodations



Wyndham Costa del Sol Conveniently located at the Lima airport, The Wyndham Costa del Sol is ideal for late arrivals and early departures to Cusco the following morning. Its 130 contemporary rooms include free Wi-Fi, mini bar and in-room safe. A 24-hour restaurant and room service offer meals round the clock. The spa and fitness center are likewise open 24 hours a day to help travelers unwind—take advantage of massage therapy, Jacuzzi, steam room, sauna, exercise equipment and an indoor swimming pool.



Delfin II Built in 2009 for Amazon river cruising, the Delfin II is 135-feet long and carries up to 30 passengers in 14 deluxe suites. The ship's design and amenities incorporate features from the rain forest environs, including salvaged forest hardwoods, collected irapay leaves (typically seen on residential huts) that form the roof, and custom-made lotions made of natural jungle ingredients in each guest cabin. Artisan handcrafts made by local village women vibrantly enhance the dining room and every suite.

All guest suites have air conditioning; a king or two double beds with cool, Peruvian pima cotton bedding, indoor sitting area, large en suite bathroom with hot-water showers, organic toiletries and hair dryer, safe box and floor-to-ceiling panoramic windows that provide unobstructed views of the ever-changing river conditions, wildlife and communities along the shore. The covered open top deck features gleaming hardwoods, comfortable lounge furniture, ceiling fans for cooling and a soaking spa. A yoga and exercise room provide a space for pursuing fitness and relaxation. Inside, guests can relax and enjoy board games, films and naturalist presentations in the spacious air-conditioned lounge. The Delfin II has an open bridge policy, and guests are welcome to learn about the navigation systems and chat with the captain at any time.

Most of Delfin II's staff guides were born and raised in the rain forest, in small communities throughout the Peruvian Amazon. They spent their childhoods walking forest paths, climbing trees to pick fruit, fishing the small streams and chasing iguanas along the shoreline. Now, they are proud to share their knowledge and passion with travelers from around the world. Many have also participated in training sessions and projects with Peruvian and North American professors, researchers, scientists and other professionals involved with the study and conservation of the Amazon rain forest. And, as guests will discover during their cruise, they also have delightful musical talents to share!

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About This Trip

This trip is an invitation-only conservation travel program for our closest supporters, along with friends and family, to see firsthand the positive impact World Wildlife Fund is making. These custom-designed journeys are led by WWF experts and offer exclusive opportunities to discover the wildlife and ecosystems we protect; meet community members whose lives are being improved because of our work and immerse yourself in the worlds of our field staff and partners on the ground. Come explore the best of the natural world and see how together we are making a difference for our planet.

About Our Travel Partner



Discovering Our Planet Together

This journey is being arranged by Natural Habitat Adventures of Boulder, Colorado. For more than a decade, WWF has partnered with Nat Hab to take travelers to view nature's greatest sights. WWF selected Natural Habitat as its partner because of its long-standing commitment to conservation and the exceptional quality of its adventures.

Reservation Information & Trip Details

For reservations and additional information, please contact Court Whelan at Natural Habitat Adventures at 888-993-8687, (Int'l) 303-449-3711 or courtw@nathab.com.

DATES: September 12 – 20, 2020

GROUP SIZE: Limited to 24 guests

LAND COST: \$7,410 per person, double occupancy
Internal air cost: \$390
Single supplement: For a single cabin add 50% of the trip price.

INCLUDED: Accommodations aboard our private luxury Amazon ship, services of Nat Hab's professional Expedition Leader(s), local guides and boat crew, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through lunch on final day, local beer and house wine with lunch and dinner on board, most gratuities, airport transfers on Day 1 and final day, room at the Lima airport hotel on final day (may also be used for overnight stay free of charge), all activities and entrance fees, all taxes, permits and service fees.

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 and internet, etc.), airline baggage fees, airport and departure taxes (if any), required medical evacuation insurance, optional travel protection insurance.

PAYMENTS: A nonrefundable deposit of \$500 confirms your space. Payments are accepted by credit card or by check made out to Natural Habitat.

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CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS: Cancellations must be received in writing at Natural Habitat Adventures by US mail, email or fax. At the time Natural Habitat Adventures receives your written cancellation, the following per person penalties apply: On or before 120 days before the trip: Full refund minus \$100. On or before 60 days before the trip: Forfeit 50% of tour cost. After 60 days before the trip: No refund.

INSURANCE: Since the areas we travel to on this trip are remote and wild (that's why we go there!), we require medical evacuation insurance for our guests' safety. If you decline the medical evacuation insurance coverage offered by Natural Habitat, we request that you send us documentation of the independent coverage you have selected. We will add the cost of a medical evacuation policy to your tour invoice until you provide our office with proof of coverage including your insurance company's name, contact number and your individual policy number. Thank you for understanding that our policy exists exclusively in the interest of our guests' safety.

GETTING THERE & GETTING HOME:

Arrival: Arrive in Lima by 4 pm for orientation dinner beginning at 7 pm on Day 1. **Departure:** Depart from Lima after 6 pm on Day 9.

We highly recommend that Natural Habitat Adventures' air department staff make your reservations, as they are intimately familiar with the special requirements of this program. They can also make any necessary extra night hotel arrangements for you.