



## The Amazing Amazon

Recent expeditions to locate the precise origin of the Amazon have found that the Amazon is actually the longest river in the world at 4250 miles long.

The Amazon basin covers 2.7 million square miles, 40% of the total area of South America. 1.9 million square miles of that is covered by tropical rainforest.

About 20% of the Earth's oxygen is produced by the Amazon rainforests

It is estimated that as much as 25% of all life forms on the planet live in the Amazon basin, including over 1500 bird species.

Fifty percent of annual rainfall evaporates or transpires from the Amazon forest to the atmosphere. Extensive deforestation will result in less rainfall and have significant effects on global climate.

The Amazon basin contains the largest number of freshwater fish species in the world, far more than the number of fish species found in the entire Atlantic Ocean.

One of the world's largest freshwater fish, the pirarucu, a giant air-breathing fish growing up to 10 feet and 400 pounds, is one species that is at risk of being over-fished because of its marketability and size.

The Giant River Otters found in the Amazon are social animals that can grow to be up to six feet long, the size of full-grown humans.

Ocean-going ships anchor in the mouth of the Amazon so that the fresh water will kill the barnacles and other salt-water organisms attached to the hull.

The Amazon represents over half of the planet's remaining rainforests and comprises the largest and most species-rich tract of tropical rainforest in the world.

A big tree in the Amazon stores about 1.3 tons of carbon. Worldwide, the cutting and burning of forests contributes about one-fifth of the carbon going into the atmosphere.

At the mouth of the Amazon, there is an island as big as Switzerland.