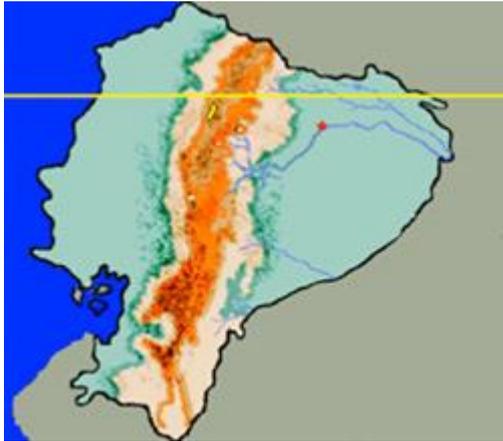


Yasuni National Park



The Yasuni National Park, created in 1979, is situated in the eastern and central part of the Ecuadorian Amazon Region, more specifically in the Orellana and Pastaza provinces between the Napo and Curaray rivers. This conservation unit, the biggest in continental Ecuador, encompasses an area of about 980,000 ha. (2,450,000 acres). For this reason, the Yasuní N.P. was chosen as the core area of the biosphere reserve. The most important rivers that flow through the park are Yasuní, Cononaco, Nashiño and Tiputini. Añangucocha (Ant Lake), Yuturicocha, Pañacocha (Piranha Lake) and Jatuncocha Napo River drainage. The Yasuní contains an amazing biodiversity of flora and fauna. There are, for example, more than 185 mammalian species, more than 650 bird species, more than 180 species of reptiles, more than 100 amphibian species and more than 600 fish species.

**Ecuadorian Amazon Basin*



Although Ecuador is a minute country with seashore on the Pacific Ocean and with the Andes dividing the country from north to south, almost one third of the country lies in the Amazon basin. The size of the Ecuadorian Amazon basin, so called “Oriente”, is around 135600 Km² that is 40% of Ecuador’s area and only two percent of the entire Amazon basin. The “Oriente” is bounded on the west by the eastern Andean range also known as Cordillera Real (Royal Mountain Range). The eastern side of Ecuadorian Amazon Region is boundless because it expands toward the Amazon plains. The oriental flank of the Cordillera Real has an abrupt terrain that go down from an altitude of 6000-4000 m to 500 m in less than 100 Km. For this reason, most waterways of the Ecuador’s Amazon system initiate along the slopes of the Cordillera Real where torrential, high gradient streams with changeable course flow southeastward to generate three main hydrographic basins: the Napo, the Pastaza and the Santiago basins.



The Ecuadorian Amazon basin lies on deep tertiary alluvial deposits above Cretaceous marine sandstones with Pliocene and Miocene formations and recent alluvial deposits from the Quaternary. The topography of the lowland region is characterized by the presence of irregular and round hills, terraces and alluvial plains. The soils are red-brown lateritic (oxisols) in well drained areas closest to the Andes, while in poorly drained areas away from the Andes the soils are red-yellowish podzols (ultisols).

Napo Basin (area where all the lodges we work with are based)



The Napo Basin originates east of the Ecuadorian Andes and expands southeast to the convergence of the Napo and the Marañón rivers in Peru. The area of the funnel-shaped basin is 98445 Km². The Ecuadorian part is about 31400 Km² that is 30% of the total basin area. Additionally, the Napo basin is the largest in Ecuador covering about 20% of the entire Oriente. The annual rainfall in the Napo Basin can reach 3800 mm with an average monthly rain of 260 mm. The wettest month is, usually, July with 400 mm and the driest is December with 130 mm. The rainfall seasonality in the Napo is bimodal. In other words, there are two wet seasons, one between March and July, and the other between October and November. The mean annual temperature is 25.5 °C with a mean maximum temperature of 30 °C and a minimum of 23 °C. November, December and January are the hottest months whereas July is the coldest. The relative humidity is high during the whole year. In the dry season, the annual mean humidity is about 83% while in the rainy season is almost 90%.



The Napo with only 1,300 Km is a small Amazon affluent that has a discharge rate of less than 1% compared to other major Amazonian watercourses like the Rio Negro in Brazil. The upper Napo River, almost 460 Km long, is entirely situated in Ecuadorian territory while

the rest (840 Km) goes across northeast Peru. The Napo would be classified as a white water river because its appearance is turbid, the predominant color of water is pale-brown and the suspended sediment load is high. In the lowlands, the Napo riverbanks are continuously being changed by lateral erosion associated with meanders. That leads to the formation of temporary channels locally known as 'chictas*', sand beaches (quartz), islands, oxbow lakes and floodplains. The water level in these types of rivers is constantly changing due to local rains and precipitation in the Andes. Sometimes during the rainy season, variations in water depth can be as much as 4 m in less than 8 hours.