

Brazil's Amazon Residents Learn Sustainable Fishing

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Beginning in 2006, Brazil's sustainable pirarucu management project will be extended to all Amazon conservation units with the potential to breed this very large, edible, bony variety of fish found in the rivers of northern South America. According to Júlio Siqueira, head of the nucleus of fishing resources at the Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (IBAMA), this process is already underway in the Mamirauá and Fonte Boa Sustainable Development Reserves.

The technique, first adopted in 1999, involves counting the fish and setting a limit on the catch, which is authorized by the IBAMA. The project, which began with three tons and is now around 300 tons, has accompanied the growing scale of production.

According to Siqueira, the positive aspect is in the reproduction of the fish, which get to be quite large, and, as a result, the communities earn more money from what they catch. The negative aspect continues to be illegal fishing, according to him.

"We believe that this process of placing inexpensive, quality, legally caught fish on the market hinders and diminishes illegal fishing," he informed.

He indicated that one of the new activities planned for 2006 is to teach communities to aggregate value to the pirarucu as a whole, such as utilizing the scales in handcraft pieces.

"This guarantees extra income from an item that would otherwise go to waste."

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