

EX TROPICIS



AE
AGÊNCIA ESTADO

ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

FEATURES / AVAILABLE ON MARCH,

1. CONSERVATION: PREDATORY FISHING FOR EXPORT

Large amounts of lobsters, shrimps and commercial fishes continue to be caught along the Brazilian coast, even during the defense period. IBAMA, the federal environment protection agency, tries to control exports and fishing boats, but fishermen insist on their illegal activity, some even resisting arrest.

The numbers of commercial fishes and crustaceans have drastically reduced in the past few years, denouncing the killing of the young. Aware of the problem, the Fishing Institute, in São Paulo, helps the traíra reproduction (a native fish) during mating season.

2. AMAZON: NEGRO RIVER'S "FLOATING PEOPLE"

On the river banks of one of the poorest and most beautiful rivers of the Amazon, the Negro, entire families live on boats. The kids grow up diving from the "homeboat" to the reddish-black waters of the river, eating native fruit, and learning early on how to stand up on tiny wooden canoes.

The women season the catch of the day with herbs they grow in plastic boxes on the roof of the boat. The men earn their pay by collecting whatever the river is able to give: ornamental fishes for export, big commercial fishes for the local market, and threatened amazon turtles. Sometimes, they leave the family to guide foreigners up the river's maze of islands and dangerous sandbanks. Sometimes they join transportation companies to help carry heavy cargos through ebbing rivers. Always close to the water, always in and around the Negro.

3. TOURISM: ATLANTIC RAINFOREST HIDES UNIQUE CAVERNS

More than 150 almost unexplored caverns can be visited in Bethary Valley, southern São Paulo State. Protected by PETAR State Park guards, the caverns are surrounded by exuberant Atlantic rainforest flora and fauna. Camping and hiking are allowed, as well as swimming in crystalline fresh water. And, for those who want to risk an exciting adventure, there are groups of spelunkers ready to include unconventional tourists into their explorations.

4. FORESTS: BRAZILIAN PINE FORESTS EXPLOITED TO EXTINCTION

The pine (*Araucaria brasiliensis*) forests in the south of Brazil are literally disappearing. Although they have been widely used in the paper and furniture industry, construction, and for export, the pine forests are rarely replanted. Scientists denounce the devastation of these native forests. Fossils help piece together stories of forest evolution and climate change. In regions where agriculture has been the main cause of deforestation, the absence of trees has provoked serious erosion processes.

Two paper and pulp industries try to reforest and manage natural areas of Brazilian pine in Parana and São Paulo.

EDITORIAL PAGE

Environmentalist Mary Alegretti, director of the Amazon Studies Institute (IEA), of Curitiba, Parana, writes our March Editorial: "Rubber tappers: The trial legacy".