

MARGARITA TOURS, INC.

We Are Professional Amazon Jungle Outfitters



is pleased to present a

Tropical Fish Collection & Natural History Expedition

Week 1: Napo & Mazan Rivers and tributaries

25-31 January 2009

Led by Dr. Devon Graham

From \$1,485.00 per person per week, ground portion only (i.e., from Iquitos)

A TROPICAL FISH COLLECTION AND STUDY EXPEDITION based aboard our traditional-style Pamacari riverboat, sailing from the port of Iquitos, with experienced crew, tour leaders and biologists. Led by Dr. Devon Graham a tropical ecologist who has been working in the Peruvian Amazon since 1994. Optional visits to fish exporting facilities in Iquitos.

The Amazon, the last great wilderness on earth, is home to pink river dolphins, jaguars, huge ceiba trees, tiny hummingbirds, anacondas, giant arapaima fish, dart poison frogs, giant water lilies, millions of butterflies, some of the friendliest people on the planet, and much more. It is also a fish enthusiast's paradise, with more species of fish found in the Amazon basin than in the entire Atlantic Ocean! Some recent estimates of the number of fish species in the Amazon Basin are as high as 5,000 species, although only about 2,600 species have actually been described. This is an astounding number, but not entirely surprising as we regularly collect undescribed fish on our expeditions. The largest river system on earth, the Amazon and its numerous tributaries are more than just 'rivers', but comprise an entire complex ecosystem of network of channels fed by thousands of rivers, creeks, lakes and flooded forest – all with varied water chemistries and widely varying terrestrial influences. With 30-45' (~10-15 m) changes in water levels over the course of each year, the system varies dramatically from season to season. Our expedition is timed for low water on the targeted rivers since fish collecting is far more productive when fish aren't swimming through the trees!

We are pleased to offer a special tropical fish collection and study expedition, specifically designed for those with an interest in tropical fishes. This trip will also appeal to those interested in nature and people photography, and to others with a wide range of natural history interests. Explore the vast Amazon jungle, its forests and rivers under the guidance of Dr. Devon Graham. Dr. Graham is a tropical ecologist, and between frequent scientific, educational, and medical service expeditions to the Peruvian Amazon teaches courses on the Everglades and the Amazon in The Honors College at Florida International University. This is a unique opportunity to combine a passion or pastime with the chance to experience and learn about the Amazon region in an exceptionally intimate manner. Fish, photograph, and explore the Amazon in company of recognized experts in the field, and have a great time while doing so!

Margarita Tours has been offering speciality natural history and adventure tours (tropical fishes, herpetology, photography, birding, kayaking, educational groups, etc.) in the Peruvian Amazon since 1983, and we take great pride in our service to our clients (many of whom are repeat customers!) and are always happy to provide references.

Please read the following information carefully, and keep this information with your trip file. Margarita Tours, Inc., is a licensed tour agency and holds passenger deposits in an escrow account. Complete the Reservation Form, and attach your reservation check for \$400.00 per person*. Reservation forms and other materials can also be downloaded from the Margarita Tours website – go to “Document Center”. Please make your check payable to:

Margarita Tours, Inc.

10821 SW 48th Terrace; Miami, FL 33165-6122; USA

Phone (786) 232-2674 (Eastern Standard Time) / (619) 562-2422 (9 AM-5 PM Pacific Standard Time)

Email: info@amazon-ecotours.com or mionectes@aol.com

<http://www.amazon-ecotours.com>

*If you are coming from outside of the USA or wish to pay by bank-bank transfer of funds, please contact Margarita Tours to make payment arrangements. We cannot accept checks drawn on non-US banks or checks in other currencies due to long processing times and additional bank fees. Payment may also be made by Paypal to mionectes@aol.com. All deposits/payments will be acknowledged as soon as possible after their receipt.

GENERAL INFORMATION

What's included:

- Airport reception and assistance with baggage upon arrival in Iquitos, Peru. Domestic and international flight reconfirmation and assistance with luggage and airline counter check-in when you depart Iquitos.
- Transfers to/from Iquitos airport, hotel in Iquitos the nights of Saturday prior to expedition departure on Sunday (if needed) and on Friday upon return to Iquitos; luggage handling.
- Remaining days and nights based aboard pamacari-style riverboat and/or field stations with bunks, full bedding and linens, mosquito nets (if needed), etc.
- All meals daily from Sunday through Friday of the expedition, breakfast on the following Saturday. Meals are hearty, varied and tasty and we can accommodate most dietary needs if given advance notice.
- All guide services, excursions, etc.
- Use of expedition skiffs, kayaks, and safety equipment.
- Services of expedition leader(s); boat crew and additional interpreter/guide.

Not included in expedition pricing:

- Round-trip transportation from your hometown to Iquitos, Peru.
- Fees for passports and other travel documents.
- Tips to guides and crew; alcoholic and carbonated beverages (available for \$2/beer and \$1/soda aboard your riverboat). Tips are pooled and divided equally among all the crew, as each is essential to the success of an expedition, although some crew may be more visible than others. Trip leaders do NOT accept tips. Recommended tipping is \$25-\$30 from each trip participant, but you are free to contribute more, less, or nothing.
- Peruvian airport taxes, including US \$6.05 and \$3.71 domestic flight taxes (flights between Lima and Iquitos), and international flight tax of US \$30.25 (when you exit Peru).
- Prescription medicines, insect-repellent, personal items, souvenirs, etc.
- Some meals in Iquitos if you arrive early or depart later. Extra nights of hotel in Lima or Iquitos (beyond those specified in the itinerary) are not included, but we will be happy to make reservations for you.

- Any permits that might be required for exportation of specialized items, excess luggage fees, etc.
- Fees for fish permits and shipping costs (paid to the Peruvian exporter, US customs brokers [or other-depending on the regulations of your home country], and airline freight offices) (only necessary if you are taking fish back home with you). These fees include Peru customs and fish & wildlife fees and permits, US customs and Fish & Wildlife fees, services of fish exporter in preparing the shipment, etc. Depending on the total size of the shipment and final destinations, costs vary widely between \$80-\$180 per large box (for fish going to the USA). Currently, no airlines will knowingly accept fish as checked luggage, so sending the fish as a commercial shipment is the only option for taking fish out of Peru. For fish going to non-US/Canadian destinations, it is the responsibility of the trip participant to obtain the necessary permits and/or to contact a customs broker to import fish into their home country.

Please read our “travel information” document for additional details about preparing for an Amazon expedition. This document is available on the website in PDF format, or we will be happy to send it to you as an e-mail attachment.

IMPORTANT ITINERARY NOTE:

The following detailed itinerary is tentative only. Because of extreme seasonal variation in water levels, and variation in the timing of wet and dry seasons, some destinations might not be available at a given time, or might not be accessible by larger riverboat. With our extensive experience in operating on rivers in the region, however, we always have alternative sites and destinations in mind should substitutions become necessary. Due to the geographical location of Iquitos, when water levels are lower on the Amazon, they are higher on the Napo River, a major tributary of the Amazon, and vice versa, so good collecting and exploration destinations are readily available year-round. Participants will be notified of any necessary itinerary changes as early as possible.

Tropical Fish Collection & Natural History Expedition 25-31 January 2009

DAY 0 (Jan 24/Saturday)

Trip participants should plan on arriving in Iquitos the evening of Saturday prior to the Sunday of the expedition departure (preferable), or on the very first morning flight into Iquitos on the Sunday of departure. Check with your travel agent for the most recent flight schedules. If you arrive in Iquitos on Saturday, hotel for that night will be included in the trip cost. If you need to spend a night in Lima either incoming our outgoing, we will be happy to make hotel reservations but the cost of extra nights in Lima is not included.

DAY 1 (Jan 25/Sunday)

Breakfast at your hotel in Iquitos from 7-7:30 AM. Please have your bags packed and in the lobby by 8 AM for transfer to the port of Iquitos for departure. Following a brief orientation aboard our Pamacari-style riverboat, we will depart Iquitos. There will be plenty of time to photograph the scenery and river traffic and you may also wish to take a nap once we are underway to get caught up on your sleep if you are still experiencing some jet-lag or travel fatigue. Before long, however, we will make our first collecting stop at a sandbar to see what fish we might encounter with the big seines. We will make another brief collecting stop in the late afternoon. By mid-day will be on the Napo River, a major tributary of the Amazon descending from the mountains of Ecuador. Since the headwaters of the Napo River are north of the Equator, water levels in this river are six months out of sync with the Amazon proper and its many tributaries that enter from the south. Thus, while water levels will be too high on the Amazon for effective collecting, they should be ideal on the Napo River.

DAY 2-3 (Jan 26-27/Monday-Tuesday)

Our days start early as we cruise upriver to new collecting sites – you are more than welcome to enjoy the comfort of your bunks while we travel, however, and coffee is always available for those early birds who don't want to miss any of the scenery. We will be making frequent stops at a variety of collecting sites including the villages of Urcu Miraña, Oro Blanco and Tostado, Zapote stream and its adjoining blackwater lakes, and Negrollrio. Depending on local river and fish collecting conditions, alternate fishing locations may be substituted.

DAY 4 (Jan 28/Wednesday)

We depart early from our anchorage and after breakfast, arrive at our first collecting area for the day. Traveling downriver on the Napo, we will enter the Mazan River, a black-water influenced river that has many fish in common with the Nanay River. Numerous blackwater streams and oxbow lakes occur in the lower stretches of the Mazan, so we are anticipating collecting a number of fish species that have not previously been encountered on our collecting trips.

DAY 5 (Jan 29/Thursday)

Early Thursday morning, grab a cup of coffee to wake up, and make our last collecting forays on the Mazan. By late afternoon, we will begin the departure back to the Napo, and thence on to the Amazon for the return to Iquitos. As opportunities present themselves, we will make short collecting forays by speedboat during the downriver trip while the larger boat continues to make headway. Supper is served as we cruise down the Rio Napo, and somewhere along the way we will overnight on the riverbank.

DAY 6 (Jan 30/Friday)

As we have breakfast, we continue on the Amazon toward Iquitos, arriving in the early afternoon. The morning is the time for organizing and bagging fish for transfer to the exporter's facilities when we arrive in Iquitos. You may wish to purchase additional fish from the exporters when we visit. In the late afternoon and early evening we will have time to visit the Plaza de Armas, the riverfront walk, and view many of the rubber-boom era buildings present in the downtown area of Iquitos. When you are finished at the fish exporters, or if you are not taking fish home, sightsee and shop until 7:30 PM when we will meet for a final dinner at a popular local restaurant *El Meson*. After an excellent and varied meal, you are free to party all night!

DAY 8 (Jan 31/Saturday)

Breakfast at the hotel. If your flight to Lima on onward isn't until the evening, you will be able to remain in your hotel room until it is time to go to the airport. You should have your baggage packed and ready in the hotel lobby about two hours before your scheduled departure time. Early risers may wish to walk along the riverfront promenade; this is an excellent location to watch the sun rise over the Amazon, and to view the early morning river traffic. Alternatively, you may wish to walk around the *Plaza de Armas* (close to the riverfront) and enjoy some of the turn of the century architecture. The heyday of Iquitos was at the height of the rubber boom, and one of the buildings on the plaza was actually designed and built in Europe by Monsieur Eiffel himself, of Eiffel Tower fame, then disassembled and shipped to South America where it was reassembled.

If your flight out isn't until the evening, we will be happy to make arrangements for those who would like to visit the very photogenic Belen marketplace for a few hours – this is best visited in the morning to take advantage of the abundance of produce, the good light, and the cooler temperatures (and less intense smells). Alternatively, you may wish to visit additional fish exporter facilities!

At the airport, you will receive plenty of help with luggage and check-in procedures. Your flights will have been reconfirmed while you were still downriver. The exporter will arrange a bulk commercial shipment of everyone's fish to a broker in the US, who will then transship individual boxes on to their final destination – arrangements will finalized

once final fish purchases are made, and we have the contact information and details for all of those shipping fish back home. For fish going to other countries, we will work with you to make appropriate arrangements.

When scheduling your flights in the US (or elsewhere), allow at least three (3) hours connecting time for your connecting flight to your home town. All baggage must be collected, and customs and immigration cleared in your first US port of entry. Flights are occasionally delayed so schedule ample time.

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EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

The best laid plans of men and mice sometimes go astray! If there is an emergency, if a flight is delayed or cancelled, or if you miss a flight for ANY reason and are arriving on another, contact us at one of the numbers below, so that we will know where you are, and how best to help you! We won't leave you in Iquitos for a week if you don't arrive as planned, but if we don't know where you are or when you are arriving, it is difficult to make appropriate arrangements!

Contacting Margarita Tours personnel:

USA: If you are still in the US: call us at **1-786-232-2674** (Eastern Standard Time) or at **1-619-562-2422** (9 AM to 5 PM, Pacific Standard Time) (if calling from Peru dial 001 – the US country code, then the area code and 7-digit number)

PERU: If you are in Lima or elsewhere in Peru: you can also call us at **51-65-967-0516** or Guillermo Guerra (our transfer agent) at **51-65-961-0257**. If you are in Iquitos, you just need to dial the last 7 digits. To call either of the last two numbers from locations outside of Peru, dial the international dialing code “011” first. We do have a satellite phone with us for emergency use, and also use it to check in with Guillermo Guerra on a near daily basis, so any urgent messages should be left with him (by phone or by email at gaguerra2003@yahoo.es). It is not possible to have the satellite phone in reception mode 24/7, and reception may only be possible on top of the observation tower, so calling the satellite phone number from the US is not productive.

The international country code for the USA is “001”, the international country code for Peru is “011-51 (international dialing code and then Peru country code)”.

In the event that you are unable to contact us in person, please leave a message telling us the problem and where we can get in contact with you. We will respond as soon as possible.

Contacting Hotels in Peru: The desk personnel at the hotels noted below all speak English.

Hotel Manhattan Inn (Lima): If for any reason you do need a hotel in Lima, this is the hotel that we recommend and use ourselves. It is clean, comfortable, secure, reasonably priced, and best of all, less than 5 minutes from the airport if you are getting in late or departing very early. The hotel address is Jr. Luna Pizarro 168, Urb. La Colonial, Callao, Peru. Telephone is: 011-51-1-464-5811 (if calling from the US), or 464-5811 (if calling from Lima) or 01-464-5811 (if calling from Iquitos). The desk personnel all speak English. The hotel can be contacted by email at reservas@hmanhattan.com, and is good at responding with a confirmation. Airport transfer service is available upon request, and is recommended. For airport pickup, a hotel employee waits for you outside of immigration (or the exit gate for local flights) with a placard with your name on it, and assists you with luggage, etc.

Hotel in Iquitos: In advance of your trip, we will send the contact information for the hotel we will be using in Iquitos.

Other Information:

For record keeping, and travel security, photocopy your passport prior to departure from home, and keep the copy apart from your passport. Double-check to see that your passport is current and not about to expire. Also, carefully check the information on your flight ticket itself to ensure that the dates and times are what you wanted! **This is very important!!** The airline agents at the counter will be going by what your ticket actually says, not the itinerary that your travel agent printed out for you, and which could contain an error.