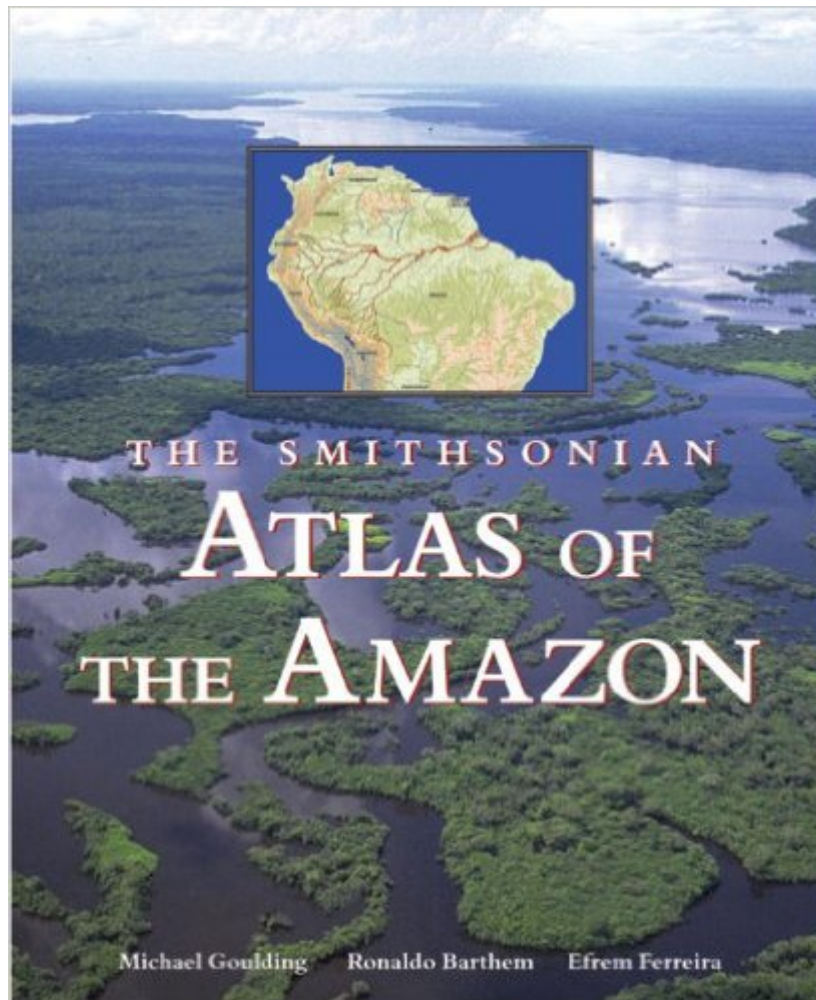


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Smithsonian Atlas Of The



Synopsis

The River flows more than 4,000 miles through the world's greatest rainforest, into the delta, and finally into the Atlantic Ocean. This extraordinary atlas is the first comprehensive view of not only the River but also its thirteen major tributaries. More than 150 color maps and nearly 300 vivid photographs provide spectacular views of the river and rainforest. Along the way, the authors explore many intriguing topics such as why some of the Amazon's tributaries have black water, what happens when the freshwater of the Amazon reaches the salty ocean, and why we all should be concerned about the deforestation that contributes to the loss of species biodiversity.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

While thorough in some areas, such as its discussion of sedimentation and flow volume river by river, this atlas of the Amazon is sorely lacking in others. Some examples: while major tributaries are named, many large ones that are minor only by Amazon standards are never named. Despite the fact that many maps cover significant mountainous areas, including the Andes, none of the maps are colored to show altitude, which would greatly help the reader in visualizing the direction and rate of riverine flow. Too few cities are shown on the maps, and then only on some. Cities that are mentioned as being in a map area are sometimes not shown on the relevant map at all. Other items significant to an atlas are completely omitted. Areas used for cattle ranching, rice growing, etc., are mentioned, but there are no maps that delineate them. Such areas are only shown as "deforested". Important roads, such as Pucallpa-Lima, are not labeled. Important proposed roads are referred to, but their routes are not shown. With the exception of Macchu Picchu, important archeological sites are

mentioned but not shown. Contentious oil discoveries are discussed, but their locations are not shown on any maps, nor are the relevant pipelines. On page 213, protected-reserved areas are shown via three separate maps, but the areas are not combined, which would give a clearer picture of how much of the region being discussed (Rio Negro) is actually under some form of protection. Writing tends to be repetitious. Despite the biological diversity of the basin, virtually no photos of indigenous wildlife are included. Some photos look like low-rez digital shots that have been enlarged too much. A couple are notably blurry. A useful reference book to be sure, but far from definitive.

An atlas is generally defined as a collection of maps and charts. Calling the Smithsonian Atlas of the an "atlas" is a bit of a stretch. It is more a compilation of statistics about the region; useful and interesting to be sure, but not an "atlas" in the conventional sense. I was looking for detailed maps and charts of the region. You will not find them in this "atlas."

The Atlas of the is the best comprehensive view of the many different natural and social aspects that encompass the river basin. It does a thorough job of describing the natural environment and the differences between sub-regions. Unfortunately, the entire is altogether too large and too diverse for a single volume such as this one, but I believe that it does reasonably well at condensing some of the main aspects and choosing specific themes to focus on. For example, the book focuses on the geology of the region, explaining the differences in river color by showing the different origins of the rivers (there are yellow, black, green, and transparent waters). Additionally, the book singled out the lifecycle of local catfish, that crisscross the region by their feeding and breeding habits. One of the outstanding qualities of this book is the images, which try to do justice to the beauty of the region. Through the pictures, one can tell the deep differences between the sub-regions; some are mountainous, some are plains, some are swamps, in some places the forest is denser, etc. If you are planning a visit to the , or have a strong interest in the river ecosystem, this may be the best book available today. I strongly recommend it.

This is simply the best atlas I have ever reviewed on the subject of riverine hydrology, and presents the huge scope of the Basin (not just the river itself but all of the contributory watersheds) in a wonderful mix of maps, photographs and accompanying text. As an environmental engineer and scientist who routinely works with production of this type of document, I am very impressed with the level of detail, and the very reasonable cost of an atlas of such quality. If you are interested in the hydrology and ecosystems of the , this atlas is for you....

Beautiful atlas with huge amount of information and large number of pictures related to each issue and map. Lot of space is devoted to the description of dynamics that are shaping the entire river basin and the river and its tributaries themselves. Weather and rainfall pattern, bedrock and resulting water qualities are related and well described. Quite well balanced ecological informations and human interaction with it are available for the reader throughout the book. The whole concept is very well set, so information always come with the reasoning. The book is definitely opposite of the type of encyclopedia fact loaded dull text and maps. Reader will learn what makes each river different and why that happens, what are the factors behind each distinct fact stated here. There are some mistakes when some pictures are related to the map, so it will make the reader to think a bit more and take the quiz where they belong but those are minor bugs. Overall I rate this book with five stars and wish to get similar one about different ecosystem or place on earth. It will be a hard task as the bar is set quite high...

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