

# MAMIRAUÁ SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT RESERVE

Located in the heart of the Brazilian Amazon, between the Solimões, Japurá and Auati-Paraná rivers.

## What is the MSDR?

The **Mamirauá Sustainable Development Reserve (MSDR)** is the largest protected floodplain forest in the world, covering over **1,124,000 hectares**. Established in 1990 as an Ecological Station by the State Government of Amazonas and converted to a Sustainable Development Reserve in 1996 — the first of its kind in Brazil — it protects the várzea floodplains at the confluence of the Solimões and Japurá rivers, near the town of Tefé, 600 km west of Manaus.

Recognized by the Ramsar Convention as a wetland of global importance and listed as a UNESCO Natural World Heritage Site, the reserve is an international model of participatory conservation.

## The Várzea Ecosystem

The **várzea** is the forest periodically flooded by rivers rich in sediments and nutrients. In Mamirauá, water levels rise between 7 and 15 meters each year, completely transforming the landscape for up to six months. This creates a unique ecosystem where flora and fauna have developed extraordinary adaptations — submerged-root trees, fish that feed on fruit falling into the water, and monkeys that live in the treetops during the floods.

## Biodiversity

- Over **400 recorded bird species**, including toucans, harpy eagles, hoatzins, herons, and woodcreepers
- Two **endemic primates**: the white uakari (*Cacajao calvus*) and the black-headed squirrel monkey (*Saimiri vanzolinii*)
- Aquatic mammals: Amazon river dolphin (*Inia geoffrensis*), tucuxi (*Sotalia fluviatilis*), and Amazonian manatee (*Trichechus inunguis*)
- Over **300 fish species**, including pirarucu, tambaqui, and piranha
- Big cats: jaguar (*Panthera onca*) and ocelot

## Communities and the Mamirauá Institute

The reserve is home to **177 riverside communities** with approximately 11,500 residents, who actively participate in the management and conservation of the territory. The **Mamirauá Institute for Sustainable Development (IDSM)**, founded in 1999 and overseen by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, coordinates scientific research and sustainable management programs, making Mamirauá a world reference in participatory conservation.

Tourism revenues are reinvested in community infrastructure, health, education, and conservation projects — demonstrating that environmental protection and improved livelihoods go hand in hand.