

WILDLIFE TRADE IN THE AMAZON REGION

A SNAPSHOT



Background

The Amazon region covers an area of 7.7 million km², accounting for approximately 40% of South America and over half of the area of the eight member States of the **Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO)**.

A total of over 12,000 species native to the Amazonian countries are listed by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).



This factsheet presents a brief **overview of trade in CITES-listed wildlife** from the Amazonian countries over the period 2005-2014. As the region is principally an export market, this overview focuses on exports during the ten-year period.

This brief overview is the result of a joint collaboration between the Amazon Regional Program (BMZ/DGIS/GIZ) and UNEP-WCMC. The analysis will be expanded following CITES CoP17 to provide CITES Authorities in the region with a detailed baseline of knowledge that can inform future trade management. A thorough exploration of legal trade patterns can also contribute to our understanding of the illegal trade.

The **Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO)** is an intergovernmental body that brings together the eight countries that share the Amazonian region: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela.



Main trade routes (regional level)

Figure 1 highlights the main trade routes for key commodities from Amazonian countries using a regional approach.

- Peccary skins and vicuña fibre are destined primarily to Europe. Europe is also the main importer of live aveloz plants (*Euphorbia tirucalli*).
- North America is the main importing region of arapaima and green iguanas.
- Most sea cucumbers and freshwater turtles go to Asia.
- Timber and queen conch are significant imports within the Central and South America and the Caribbean region.

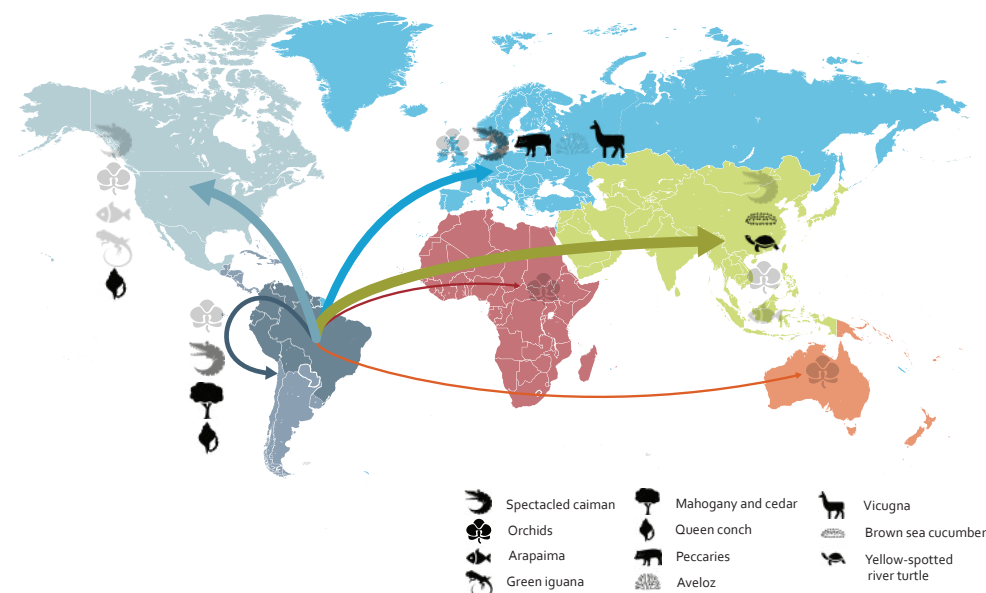


Figure 1. Main groups exported from Amazonian countries to each of the six CITES regions¹. Groups are ordered by trade volume and shaded by source (black: >75% wild; dark grey: 25% - 75% wild; light grey: <25% wild). Arrow width denotes relative volumes.

¹ The CITES regions are: Africa, Asia, Europe, Central and South America and the Caribbean, North America and Oceania. The Amazonian region is highlighted in a darker shade within the Central and South America and the Caribbean region.

Exports by species

Exports from the region are summarised by number of individuals (Figure 2), weight (Figure 3) and volume (Figure 4). They mainly consist of:

- Materials for the **fashion industry** (spectacled caiman *Caiman crocodilus* and collared peccary *Pecari tajacu* skins and vicuña *Vicugna vicugna* fibre);
- Live reptiles for the **pet market** (side-necked turtles *Podocnemis* spp., green iguanas *Iguana iguana*, boas Boidae);
- Live orchids (Orchidaceae) and live *Arapaima gigas* fish for **ornamental purposes**;
- Meat for the **food industry** (arapaima, spectacled caiman and queen conch *Strombus gigas* meat);
- Brown sea cucumber *Isostichopus fuscus* bodies, which are used also in **traditional medicine**; and
- Forestry products for the **timber industry** (Spanish cedar *Cedrela odorata* and mahogany *Swietenia macrophylla*).

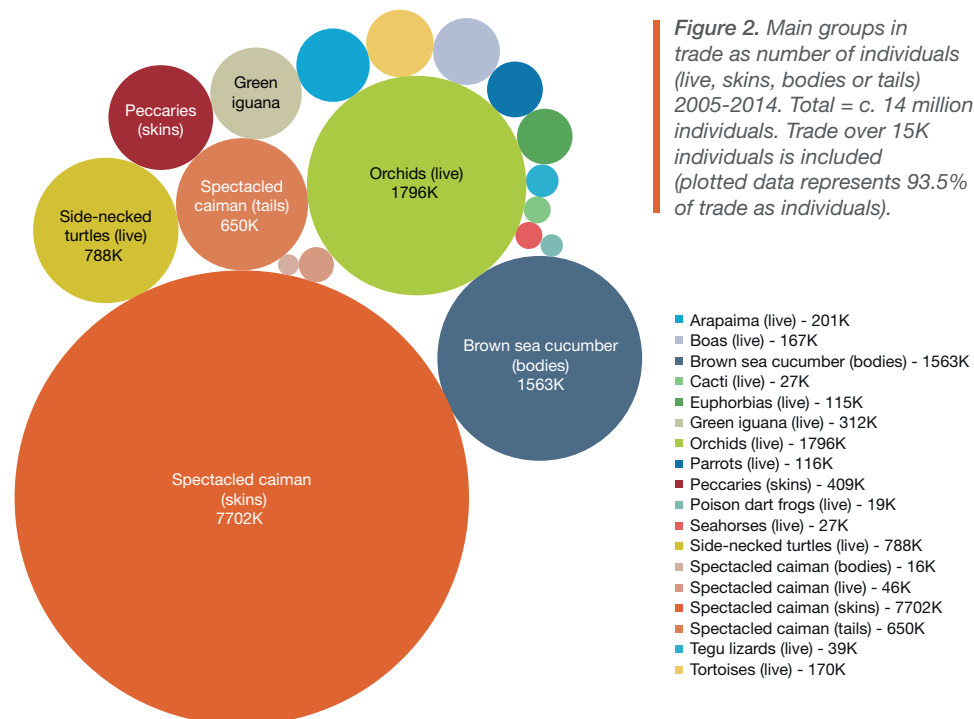


Figure 2. Main groups in trade as number of individuals (live, skins, bodies or tails) 2005-2014. Total = c. 14 million individuals. Trade over 15K individuals is included (plotted data represents 93.5% of trade as individuals).

Figure 3. Main species in trade by weight (in kilograms), 2005-2014. Total = c. 1 million kg. Trade over 500kg is included (plotted data represents 99.5% of trade by weight).

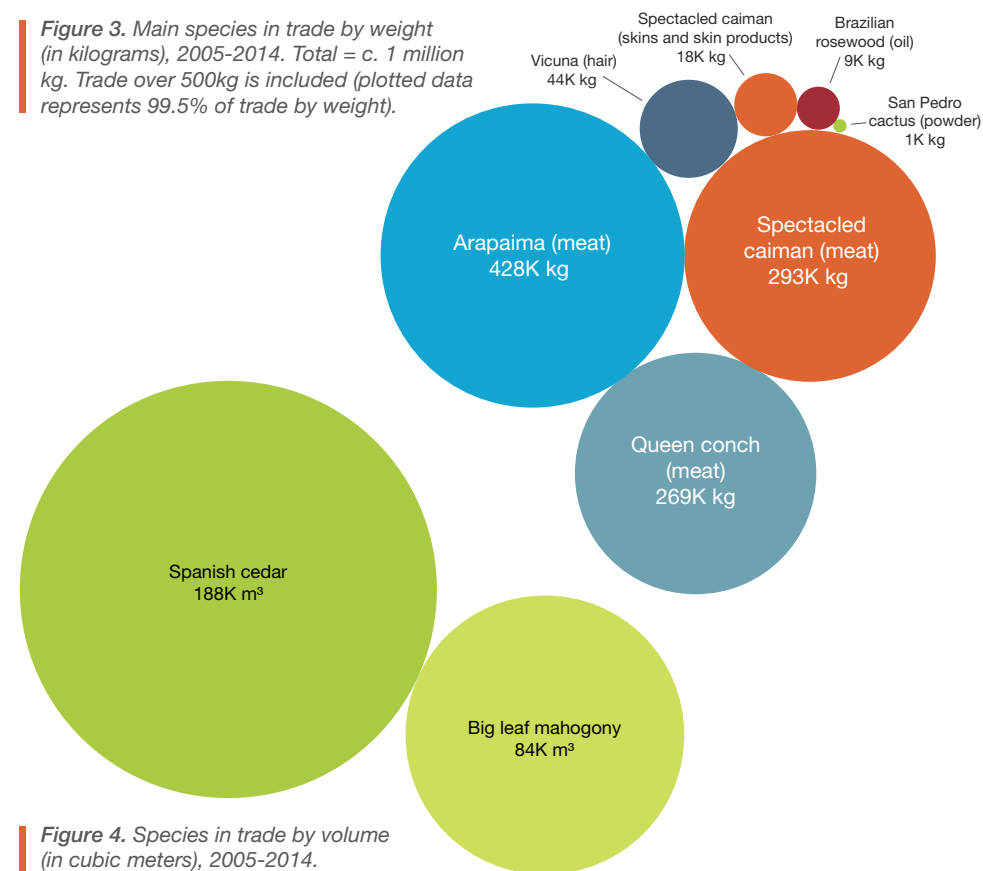


Figure 4. Species in trade by volume (in cubic meters), 2005-2014. Total = 0.27 million m³.



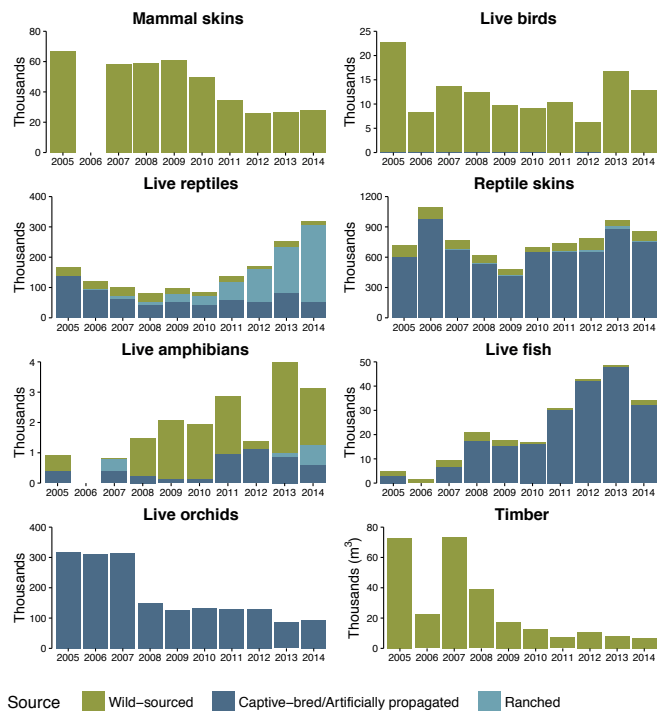
Exports over time

Sources: Exports of mammals, birds and timber were primarily **wild-sourced**, while exports of reptile skins, live fish and orchids were primarily **captive-bred/artificially propagated** (Figure 5).

Trends: Exports of mammal skins, live orchids and timber **declined** 2005-2014, whereas exports of live reptiles, amphibians and fish **increased** over the same ten-year period. These increases were driven largely by substantial growth in the export of ranched yellow-spotted Amazon river turtle *Podocnemis unifilis* (in the case of live reptiles), captive-bred and ranched poison dart frogs Dendrobatidae (in the case of amphibians) and, for fish, captive-bred *Arapaima gigas*.

Levels of exports remained largely **stable** for birds with the exception of a decline between 2005 and 2006, possibly caused by the European Union bird import ban that entered into force in 2006. Exports of reptile skins also remained relatively constant, apart from a dip in 2008-2009, potentially due to reduced demand for luxury fashion products during the 2008-2009 global financial crisis.

Figure 5. Exports of key groups/commodities over time, 2005-2014, by source.



Exports by country

Colombia was the main country of export within the region both by number of individuals (mainly spectacled caiman skins) and for trade reported by weight (predominantly queen conch and spectacled caiman meat). Peru was the main country of export of timber by volume, followed by Bolivia.

Figure 6 provides an overview of the relative volumes of trade from each Amazonian country. Table 1 summarises the main commodities exported from each country and their chief import markets.

















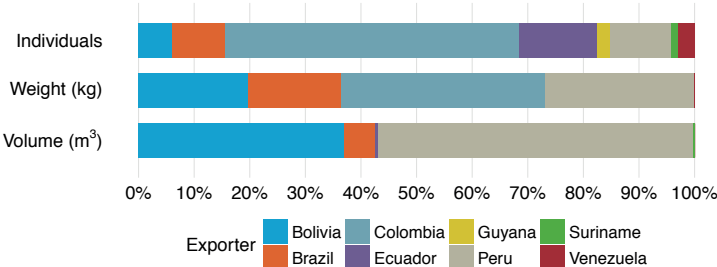
Exporter	Taxon	Top Importer(s)
Bolivia		Italy
		USA
Brazil		Netherlands
		Netherlands
Colombia		Singapore
		USA
Ecuador		China
		Germany & USA
Guyana		Mexico
		Singapore & Thailand
Peru		Hong Kong, SAR
		Italy
Suriname		USA
		Netherlands
Venezuela		Germany
		USA

Table 1. Main groups in trade and major importers, by country of export, 2005-2014. The colour of the icons indicate the predominant source (black: >75% wild, grey: <25% wild).

Figure 6. Proportion of trade volume by country of export by category (individuals, weight, volume), 2005-2014.



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