

MANU NATIONAL PARK

the last natural haven



M. Del Solar / PromPerú

Manu National Park

The Manu National Park, covering an area of 1,716,295 hectares (4.3 million acres), is Peru's largest protected natural area and one of the largest on the planet, with a biological megadiversity that is unparalleled. It includes the entire Manu River basin, across territories within the regions of Cuzco and Madre de Dios.

It was created on May 29, 1973 to protect the rich biodiversity of the area from irrational use and development. In 1977, UNESCO established the Manu Biosphere Reserve and ten years later, in 1987, declared it a World Natural Heritage. The area covers three forms of protection: a nucleus area that is limited to a few scientists, to protect the flora and fauna; a reserved area, where a programmed use is permitted of resources, research and tourism; and a cultural area, where villages and farming are allowed.

The park is home to more than 800 species of birds, including the harpy eagle, jabiru, jungle goose and cock-of-the-rocks; over 200 species of mammals such as the yellow-tailed choro monkey, spider monkey, giant river otter, jaguar, ocelot, spectacled bear, huemul deer and over 100 species of bats.

There are many varieties of insects and reptiles yet to be classified. There are more than 2,000 species and unique varieties of plants, including giant orchids and trees towering up to 45 meters high and 3 meters in diameter (147 feet tall and 9.89 feet in diameter).

A number of native communities also live in this area, with their own traditions, language and culture: the Mashiguengas, Amahuaca, Yaminahua, Piro, Amarakaeri, Huashipari and Nahua.

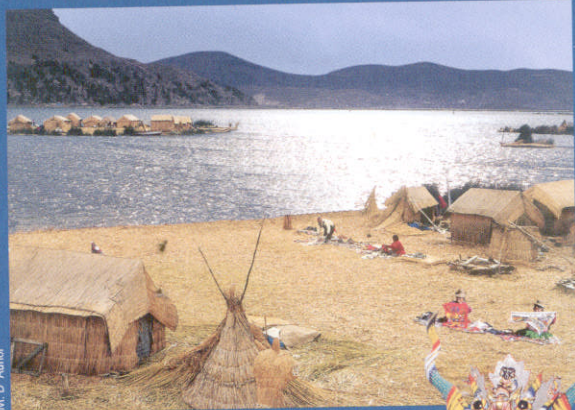


W. West

River giant otters

LAKE TITICACA

the world's highest navigable lake



M. D'Availlo

Unos island, Titicaca Lake



Nestled in a vast highland plain in the Puno region between Peru and Bolivia, Titicaca is the world's highest navigable lake, at 3,820 meters (12,500 feet). It covers an area of over 8,300 square kilometers (3,205 square miles), of which 4,700 km² (1,815mi²) are in Peru. The ancient Andean civilizations of the Quechua and Aymara, the two most important ethnic groups of ancient Peru, believed the lake was sacred and legend has it that the founders of the Inca Empire, Manco Capac and Mama Ocllo, emerged from its waters.

The lake is very popular among tourists and scientists alike. It is a national reserve and is home to numerous species of birds and water fowl, a dozen species of fish, several mammals and seven amphibians, including a unique species of giant frog.

The lake is also home to the floating islands made of reeds that are populated by the Uros, descendants of a nearly-extinct culture. Also attractive are the islands that maintain their ancient social and farming systems: Taquile, Amantani and Suasi.

The city of Puno includes colonial architecture, as does the town of Juli, famous for its four 16th and 17th churches.

Tourists are recommended to visit towns by the lake shores: Chucuito, Juli and Pomata, as well as the Sillustani chullpas or burial towers and the towns of Lampa, Pucara and Ayaviri (Tinajani rock forest).

Puno is the Folklore Capital because there are more than three hundreds of different dances, including the Diablada, Morenada and Llamera.



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Taquile island

