

Commercial fisheries and fish resource status in the Madeira river basin

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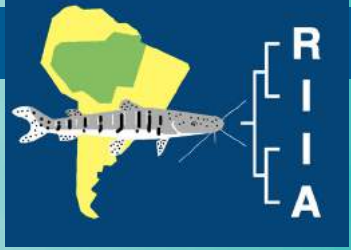
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The Madeira River and its upper tributaries drain one of the major river basins of the Amazon. The lower 10% of the river basin is situated in Brazilian territory, 85% (upstream) is situated in Bolivian territory and the remaining 5% (upper Madre de Dios basin) is situated in Peru. Fish communities and populations in this basin are increasingly affected by human activities, such as hydropower dams, deforestation of riparian forests and industrial development. The present document provides a base line on the commercial fisheries of the Madeira basin, organized in five geomorphologically differing regions: the upper Madre de Dios basin in Peru, the lower Bolivian Amazon (Beni and Mamoré river basins), the Iténez or Guaporé basin, the lower Madera river in Brazil, and the middle Madera river in Brazil. The lower stretches of the Madera river basin are dominated by lotic environments, whereas upper stretches have vast floodplains intersected with oxbow and tectonic lakes. Base line data for biological, social and economic indicators were systematized. The fish landings in the five areas were compared in terms of mean capture weight, trophic level and fish diversity. The Bolivian Amazon is characterized by under-exploited stocks, whereas stocks in the Peruvian and Brazilian Amazon are heavily exploited. These indicators may allow anthropogenic impacts to be detected against the background of current fisheries patterns.



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