MAAP #101: Deforestation Continues in Colombian Amazon (2019)

June 10, 2019

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(https://www.maapprogram.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/DSC_3873.jpg)

Overflight photo of recent deforestation in Chiribiquete National Park. Credit: FCDS/RFN/AAF.

A major deforestation surge continues in the **northwest Colombian Amazon** (MAAP #97 (https://www.maapprogram.org/2019/colombia-2018-4/)).

In **2018**, it resulted in the loss of 199,000 hectares (491,700 acres)*, making it the most concentrated deforestation hotspot in the entire western Amazon (MAAP #100 (https://www.maapprogram.org/2019/west_amazon/)).

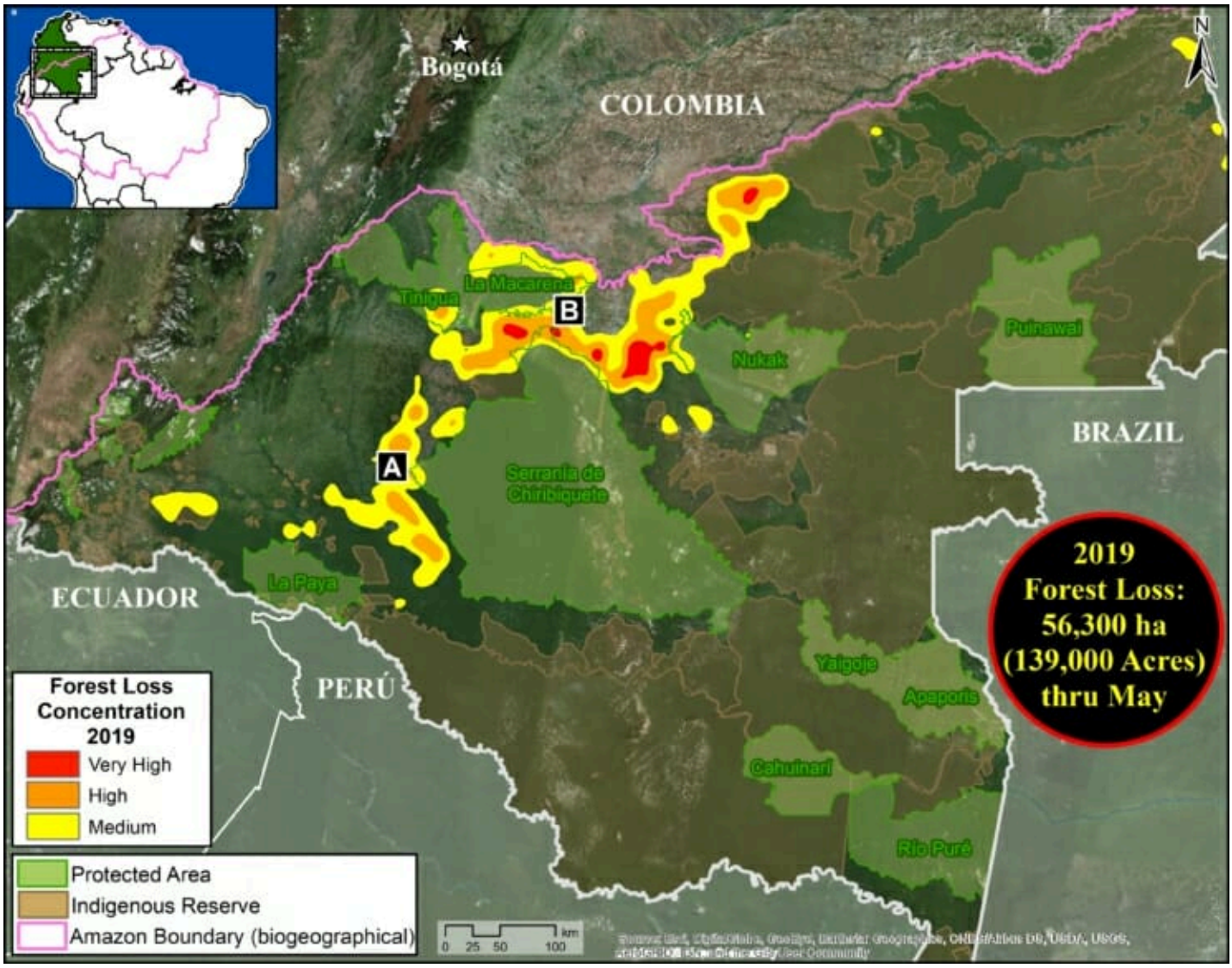
Here, we provide a real-time update for **2019** based on early warning GLAD alerts.** The alerts indicate the loss of **56,300 hectares** (139,100 acres) in the first five months of 2019 (January to May) in the Colombian Amazon.

The **Base Map** (see below) shows the **deforestation hotspots** are again concentrated in the northwest Colombian Amazon.

We focus on **Chiribiquete National Park**, showing **satellite imagery** and **overflight photos** for two sections of the park experiencing recent deforestation.***

We estimate the deforestation of **2,200 hectares** (5,400 acres) inside the Park since its expansion in July 2018.

As described below, one of the main **deforestation drivers** in the region is conversion to pasture for land grabbing or cattle ranching.



(https://www.maapprogram.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/HSMapaBase_ColAmz_May2019_350dpi_Eng.jpg)

Base Map. 2019 deforestation hotspots in the Colombian Amazon. Data: UMD/GLAD, RUNAP, RAISG.

Zoom 1: Western Chiribiquete (Llanos de Yari)

Zoom 1 shows the deforestation in the recently expanded western section of Chiribiquete National Park between February 2018 (left panel) and May 2019 (right panel). The white inset boxes indicate the areas of the overflight photos shown below.

We estimate the deforestation of **555 hectares** (1,300 acres) in this section of the park since July 2018, the date of the expansion of Chiribiquete National Park in this area.



(https://www.maapprogram.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/PanelA_Colombia_May2019_300dpi_Eng.jpg)

Zoom 1. Western Chiribiquete National Park (Llanos de Yari). Data: Planet.



(https://www.maapprogram.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/DSC_4501.jpg)

Inset A1. Overflight photo over Chiribiquete National Park, courtesy of FCDS/RFN/AAF.



(https://www.maapprogram.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/W2.jpg)

Inset A2. Overflight photo over Chiribiquete National Park, courtesy of FCDS/RFN/AAF.

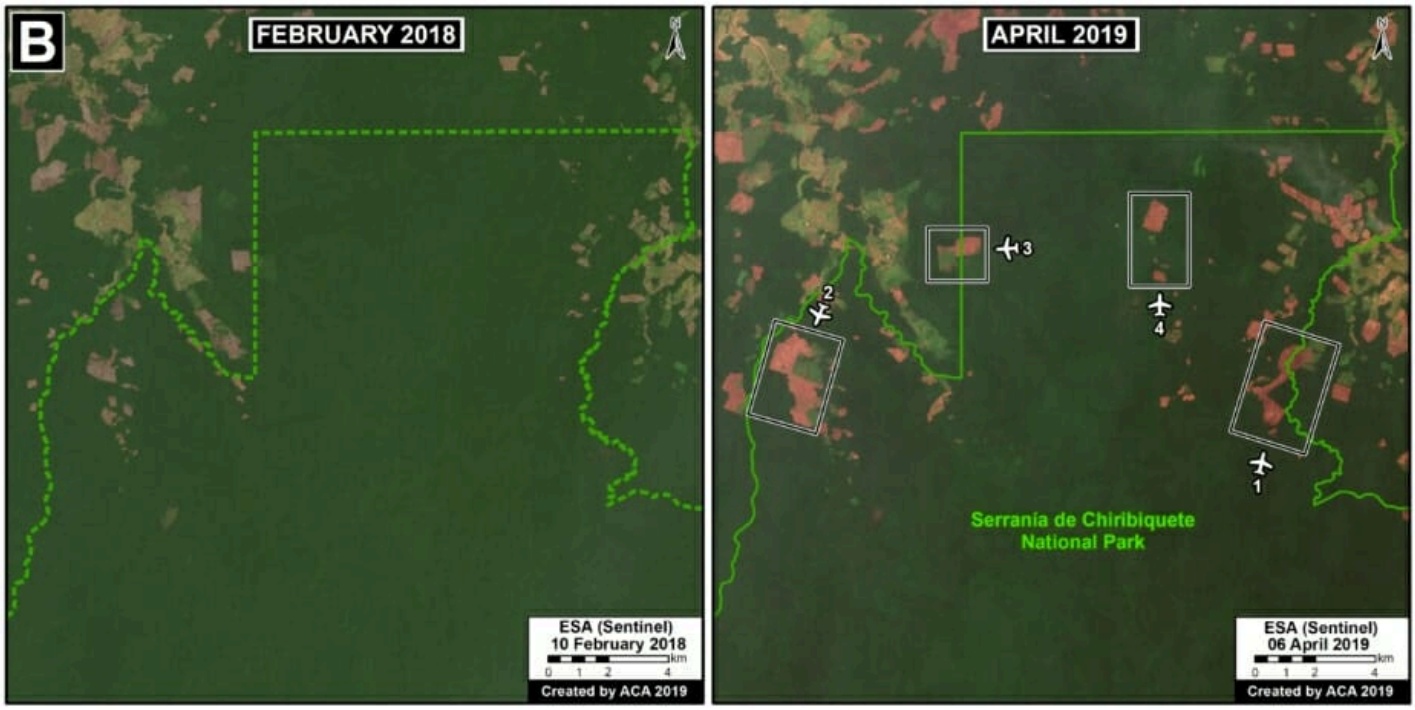
A recent report (http://documentacion.ideam.gov.co/openbiblio/bvirtual/023856/17_BoletinAT-D.pdf) by the Colombian government agency charged with monitoring deforestation (IDEAM 2019) characterizes the situation as follows:

“In this area, the process of colonization is accelerated, causing a growing demand for resources and new lands, which is encouraged by the reconfiguration of organized armed groups and the absence of state control at the local level. The main conversion of the forest is to pasture, destined for cattle ranching or land grabbing. This transformation is advanced by the area’s tertiary road network, which allows access to new areas of forest and burning as a method of rapid removal of coverage. This area is also used for illicit crops.”

Zoom 2: Northern Chiribiquete

Zoom 2 shows the deforestation in the recently expanded northern section of Chiribiquete National Park between February 2018 (left panel) and April 2019 (right panel). The white inset boxes indicate the areas of the overflight photos shown below.

We estimate the deforestation of **1,650 hectares** (4,100 acres) in this section of the park since 2018, the date of the expansion of Chiribiquete National Park in this area.



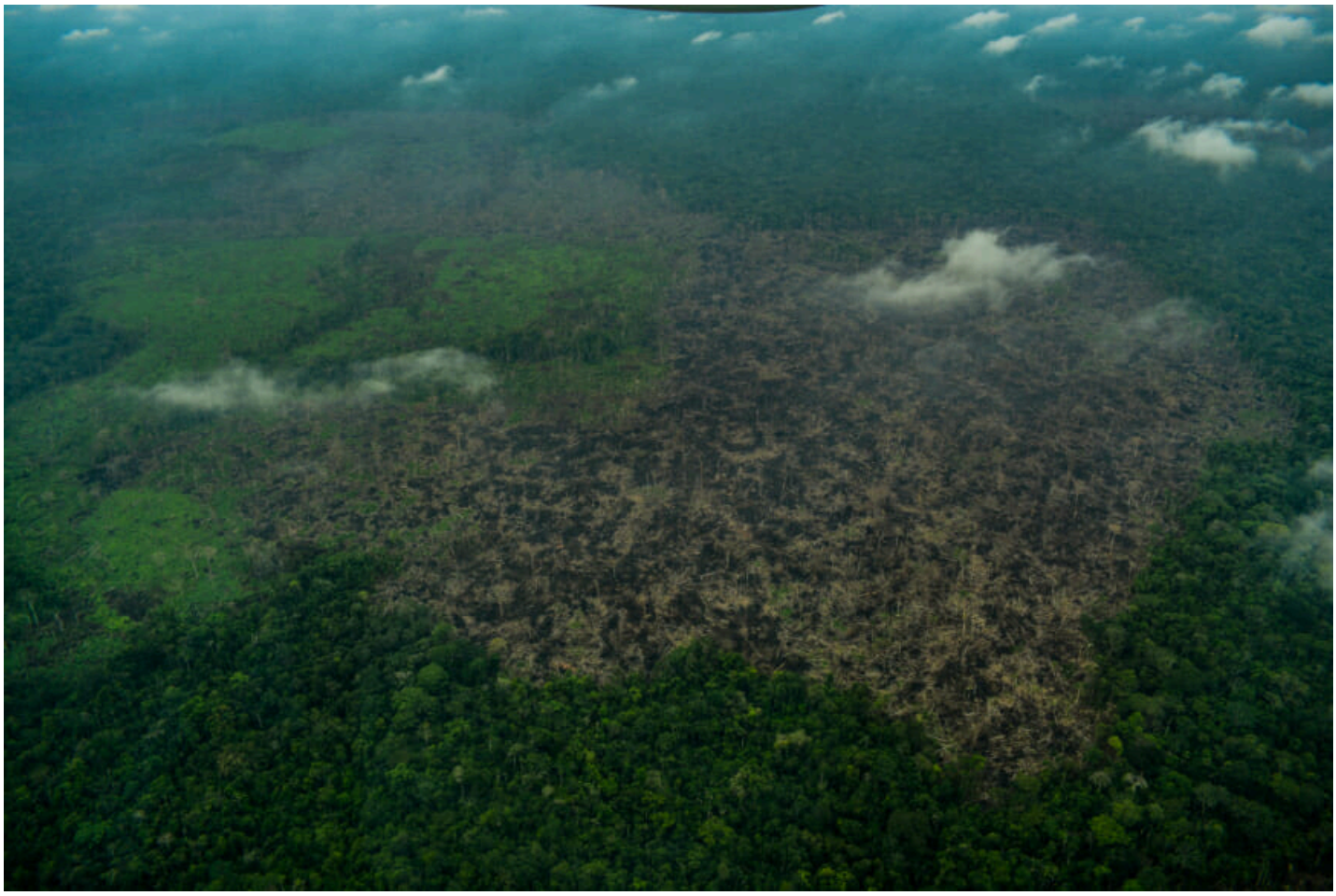
(https://www.maapprogram.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/PanelB_Colombia_May2019_300dpi_Eng.jpg)

Zoom 2. Northern Chiribiquete National Park. Data: ESA.



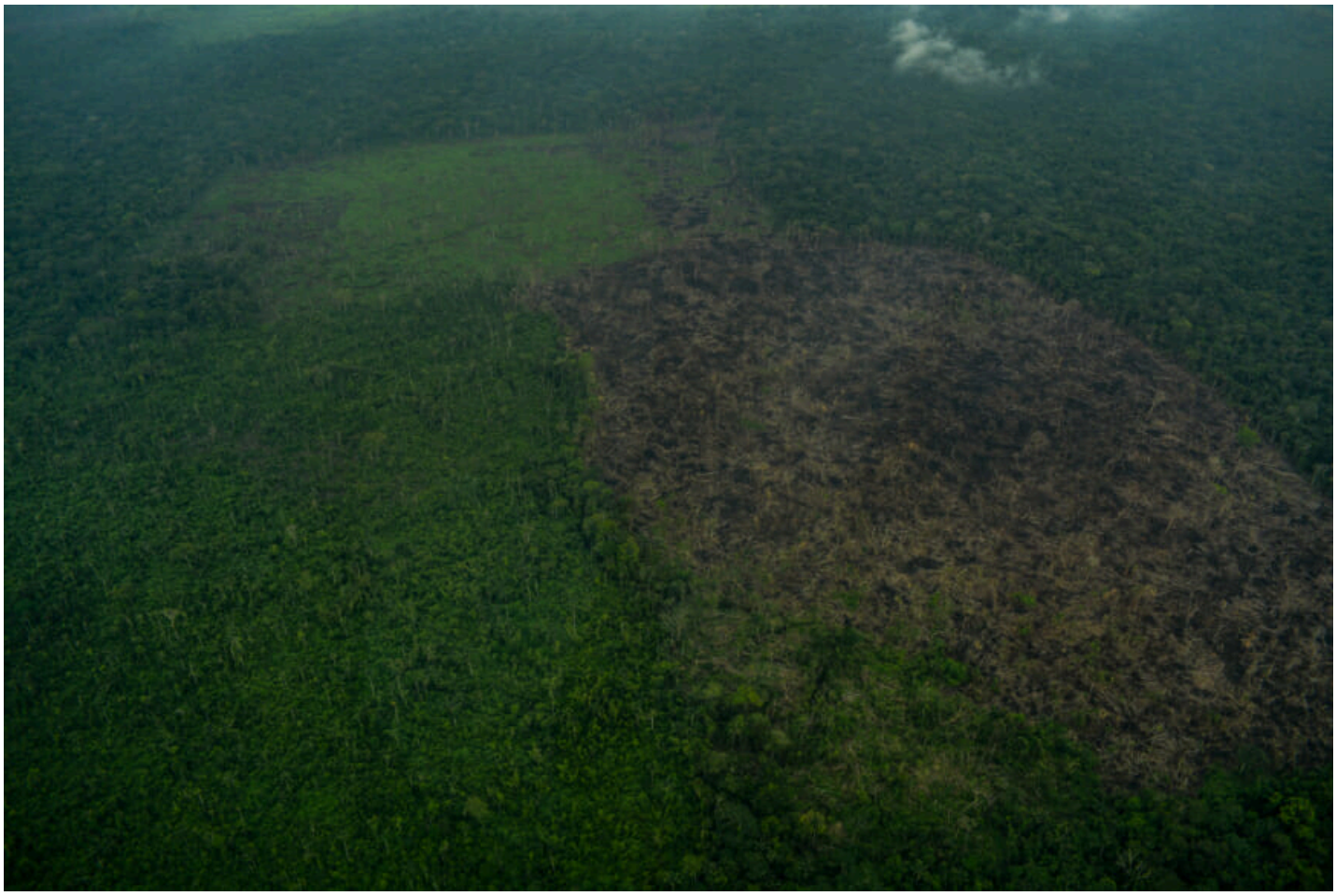
(https://www.maapprogram.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/DSC_3777.jpg)

Inset B1. Overflight photo over Chiribiquete National Park, courtesy of FCDS/RFN/AAF.



(https://www.maapprogram.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/DSC_3821.jpg)

Inset B2. Overflight photo over Chiribiquete National Park, courtesy of FCDS/RFN/AAF.



(https://www.maapprogram.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/DSC_3797.jpg)

Inset B3. Overflight photo over Chiribiquete National Park, courtesy of FCDS/RFN/AAF.



(https://www.maapprogram.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/DSC_3785.jpg)

Inset B4. Overflight photo over Chiribiquete National Park, courtesy of FCDS/RFN/AAF.

A recent report (http://documentacion.ideam.gov.co/openbiblio/bvirtual/023856/17_BoletinAT-D.pdf) by the Colombian government agency charged with monitoring deforestation (IDEAM 2019) characterizes the situation as follows:

“As is common in the Amazon region, the main activity driving the transformation of forests in this area is the establishment of pastures, with the purpose of land grabbing or cattle ranching. This transformation is generally financed by external actors, whose primary motivation is speculation and income generation. The armed actors present in the area promote the development of illicit agricultural activities, as well as the expansion of informal road infrastructure, which affects forests by facilitating access.”

Notes

*Including 154,000 hectares (380,5000 acres) of primary forests. The surge started in 2016.

**GLAD alerts, produced by the University of Maryland and presented by Global Forest Watch, are based on Landsat imagery. To generate the deforestation hotspots map, we conducted a kernel density analysis on GLAD alert data from January 1 to May 31, 2019.

***Overflight was March 22, 2019, carried out by Fundación Conservación y Desarrollo (https://fcds.org.co/), with funding from Rain Forest Norway (https://www.regnskog.no/en/) and Andean Amazon Fund (https://www.andesamazonfund.org/).

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