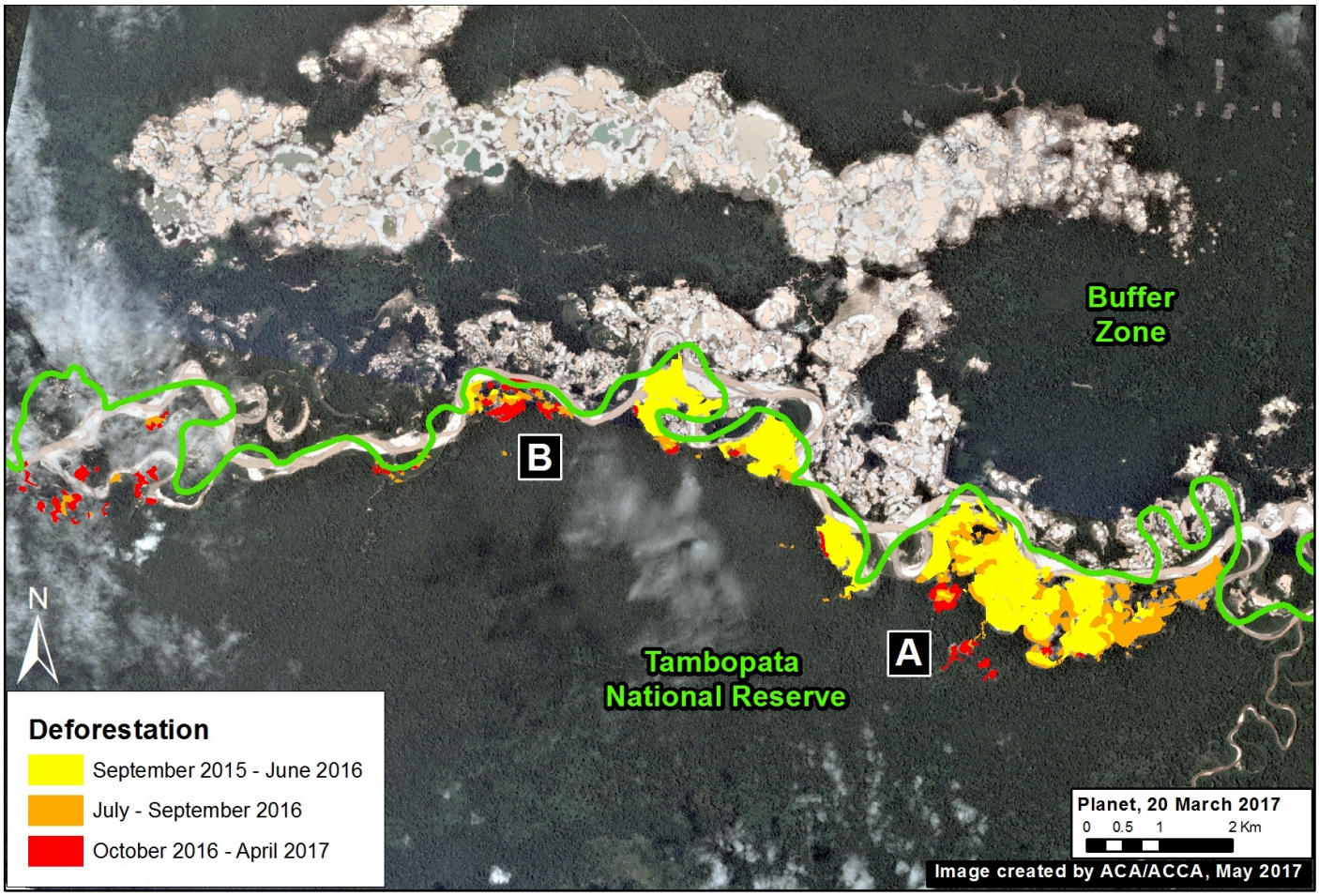
MAAP #61: Illegal Gold Mining Decreases in Tambopata National Reserve

June 6, 2017

Donate

In the previous MAAP #60 (https://www.maapprogram.org/2017/buffer_tambopata_2017/), we showed the rapidly **increasing** illegal gold mining deforestation in the **buffer zone** of Tambopata National Reserve. In contrast, here we show that the rate of illegal gold mining deforestation is **decreasing within Tambopata National Reserve**, due to the active interventions by the Peruvian Government. Tambopata is an important protected area in the southern Peruvian Amazon due to its high biodiversity.



(https://www.maapprogram.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/MAAP_61_Tambopata_def_A1_v1_en.jpg)

Image 61. Data: Planet, MAAP, SERNANP

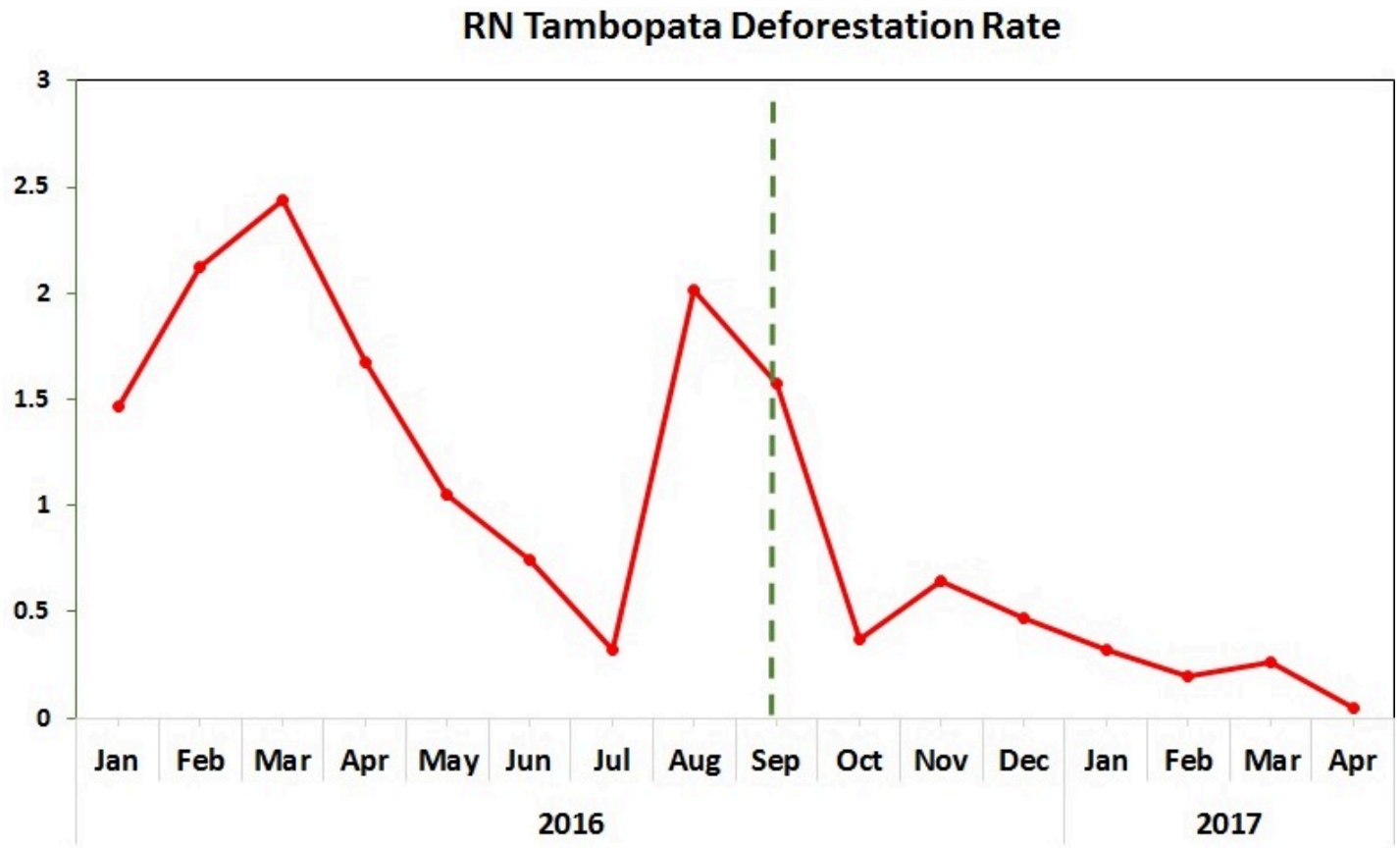
Gold Mining Deforestation within Reserve

Image 61 shows the trajectory of illegal gold mining deforestation within Tambopata National Reserve, from the initial invasion in September 2015 to May 2017. Although the rate has decreased, total deforestation within the Reserve has increased to 1,360 acres (550 hectares*) since September 2015. The Peruvian national protected areas agency, SERNANP, is stating that 90% of the invaded area has been cleared of illegal miners.

* Our estimate of 550 hectares refers specifically to gold mining deforestation within Tambopata National Reserve since September 2015. SERNANP's estimate of 750 hectares includes all mining activities (not just deforestation) since the creation of the Reserve.

Decreasing Deforestation Rate

Table 61 shows how the rate of gold mining deforestation within Tambopata National Reserve between January 2016 and April 2017. Peaks in deforestation occurred in March and August 2016, followed by a sharp decrease in September, when the Peruvian government carried out a series of raids within the Reserve.

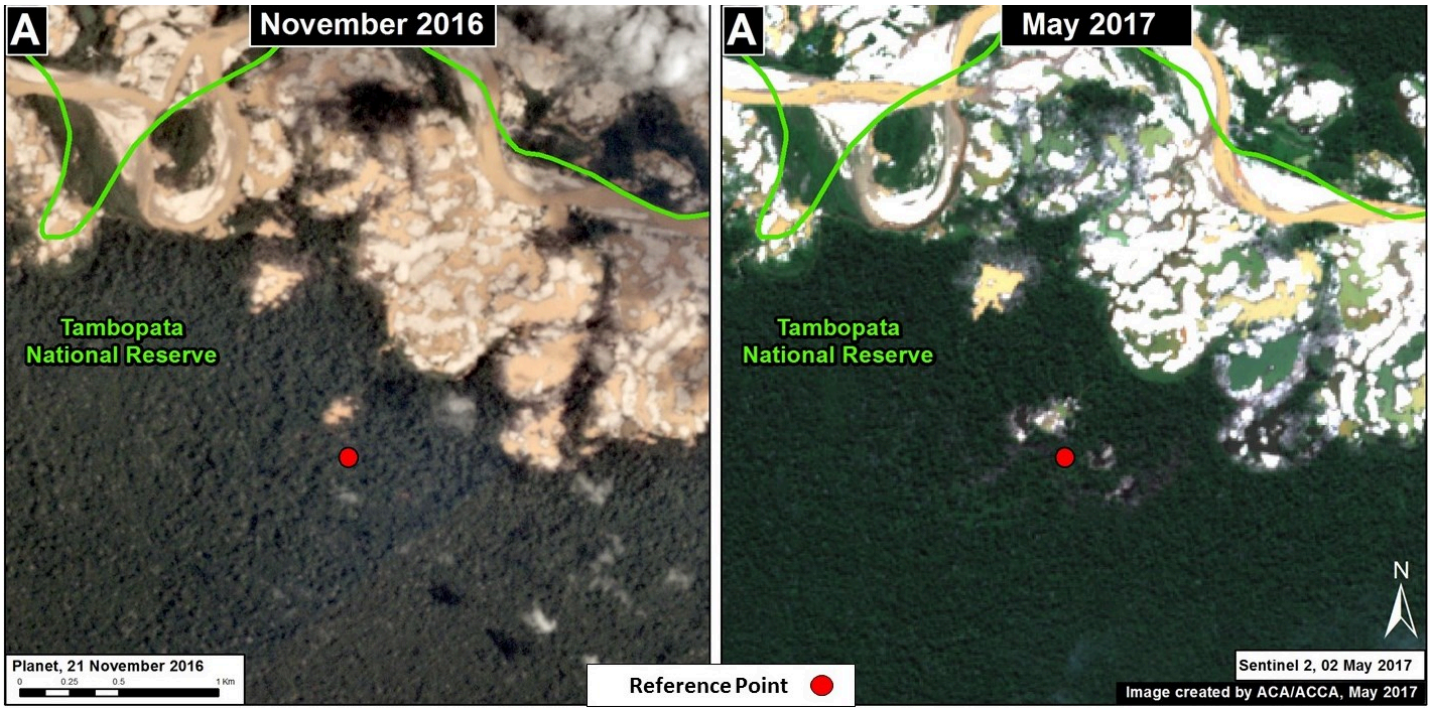


(https://www.maapprogram.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/MAAP_61_Tambopata_def_rates_2016_2017_en.jpg)

Table 61. Data: MAAP

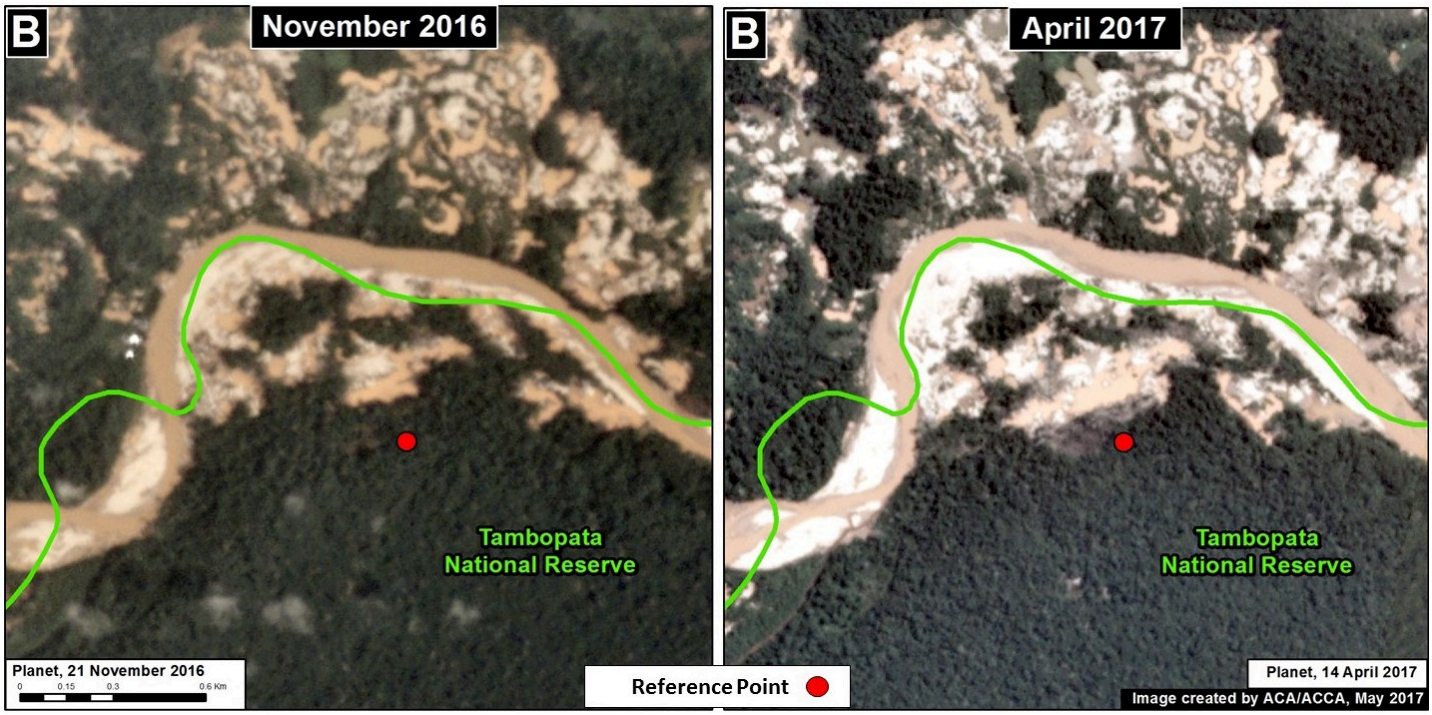
Two Areas to Watch

We detected, however, some recent mining activity in two areas within Tambopata National Reserve (Insets A and B in Image 61). **Images 61A and 61B** show these areas between November 2016 (left panel) and May 2017 (right panel). The red dots (•) indicate the same location across time between the panels.



(https://www.maapprogram.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/MAAP_61_Tambopata_A_m_v1_en.jpg)

Image 61a. Data: SERNANP, RapidEye/Planet, Sentinel/ESA



(https://www.maapprogram.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/MAAP_61_Tambopata_def_B_m_v1_en.jpg)

Image 61b Data: SERNANP, RapidEye/Planet, Sentinel/ESA

In response to these continued, isolated incursions by illegal miners in Tambopata National Reserve, SERNANP has been continuously carrying out patrols and raids, with the goal of completely eliminating illegal gold mining from the Reserve. In fact, prior to this publication, SERNANP, together with other authorities, carried out a raid in the area shown in Image 61b.

Citation

Finer M, Novoa S, Olexy T (2017) Illegal Gold Mining Decreases in Tambopata National Reserve. MAAP: 61.