El Tuparro /Picture alemartin /

Declared a National Monument and Biosphere Reserve Core Zone in 1982, El Tuparro National Natural Park is a vast green savanna, crossed by big rivers with golden beaches and powerful rapids, brooks of crystalline water, gallery forests and luxuriant vegetation, and surrounded by huge round hills of solid rock. It is estimated that more than 320 bird species, most of them aquatic, live in El Tuparro.

The Park is located in the Department of Vichada, on the northeastern section of the Llanos Orientales, or Eastern Plains, near the Venezuelan border.

A privileged place due to its miraculous ecological equilibrium.

As a tourist destination, El Tuparro Park is a privileged place. Its natural attractions of unmatched beauty delight visitors with a broad range of recreational activities. Besides admiring the rapids and the exotic scenery, travelers can hike along the trails, go kayaking, fishing, climbing, and take photographs. There are Indian cemeteries decorated with pictographs, as well as a broad offer of handicrafts, including works by the area's indigenous communities.

Characteristics

- The park is made up of 548,000 hectares of plains, forests, rivers and lakes and is one of the most singular and beautiful regions of the Colombian Eastern Plains.
- It was declared a World Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO in 1982. Its rock formations, belonging to the Guyana Shield, and its rapids hold a high-level tourist potential.

How to get there

There are three alternatives to get to this remote area of the country:

By land: by the Bogotá – Villavicencio road and then (during the dry season) across the Llanos Orientales.

By plane: direct flight to El Tuparro, landing at the administrative center airstrip.

By plane and river: a flight to Puerto Carreño and then a boat ride on the Orinoco River to the park.

Communities

The park area used to be inhabited by nomadic Indian groups who were hunters and gatherers, as archaeological findings among the rocks have proven. At present, a Sikuani semi-nomadic group inhabits the Park.

Fauna

The fauna in El Tuparro is quite diverse. In regard to mammals, there are five species of primates, as well as otters, including giant otters; panthers; and pumas, among others. It is estimated that there are over 320 bird species and a great variety of fish. One of the most amazing is the osteoglossum ferreyrae, knows as the “living fossil, which emigrated from the Amazon to the Orinoco region.

Flora

The forests in the park are riparian (also called 'gallery forests'); that is, they follow the course of rivers and creeks. Some of them are floodable while others are not. The second type is non-riparian. At the headwaters of the streams there are two quite typical tree communities: those containing moriche palms and those with saladillo trees. Other vegetation includes the grasses on the savannas.

The forests in the park are of two kinds, riparian or gallery forests, which follow the banks of rivers and streams. Some of these are floodable forests or reservoirs, while others are non-floodable.

Activities

- Hiking
- Rafting
- Birding
- Culture tourism
- Mountain biking
- Sports fishing
- Kayaking

Attractions

- Maipures visitors center.
- Camping area.
- Maipures and Tuparro rapids.
- Maipures interpretive trail.
- Laguna Azul.
- Pedro Camejo Island.
- Tomo, Tuparro and Orinoco rivers
- Cerro Peinilla.
- Sikuani and Cuiba Indian communities.
- In the surroundings: Puerto Carreño, Puerto Ayacucho (Venezuela), Centro Padre Javier de Nicoló.

Access

Consult your travel agency or visit www.parquesnacionales.gov.co

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