



## The Blue Amazon and the Conservation of the Cagarras Archipelago: Challenges and Opportunities for Marine Sustainability in Brazil

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### Introduction

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The **Blue Amazon**, a concept coined to designate Brazil's vast exclusive economic zone, harbors invaluable marine biodiversity and strategic resources essential for the country's sustainable development. **The Cagarras Archipelago**, located off the coast of Rio de Janeiro, is one of the most emblematic examples of the importance of conserving this natural heritage. However, recent studies have revealed the presence of microplastics that threaten local biodiversity (Veja Rio Magazine, 2024), highlighting the urgent need to expand investments in environmental conservation and marine sustainability.

In this context, this article discusses the relevance of the Blue Amazon and the challenges faced by the Cagarras Archipelago, emphasizing the need for greater involvement of public and private actors in financing effective environmental projects, especially considering **COP 30**, which Brazil will host this 2025.

### Threats to the Biodiversity of the Cagarras Archipelago

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Research conducted in the first half of 2024 identified alarming levels of microplastics in the marine ecosystem of the Cagarras, directly affecting local fauna and potentially compromising marine food chains (Veja, 2024). The impact of these synthetic pollutants, originating from urban waste and nautical activities, underscores the urgency of mitigation strategies and the adoption of more effective public policies.

In addition to plastic pollution, the archipelago faces challenges related to unregulated tourism, predatory fishing, and climate change, which affect water temperature and acidity, threatening vulnerable marine species. The event held at the **Naval Museum** in November 2024 highlighted the need for environmental preservation in the region, proposing measures such as continuous monitoring, environmental education, and increased regulation of impactful activities (Agência Marinha do Brasil, 2024).

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## Positive Discoveries and the Importance of Conservation

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Despite these threats, there have been significant advances in research and biodiversity monitoring in the region. In this February 2025, a released study from one of the prestigious Universities in Brazil headquartered in the State of Rio de Janeiro, the **UFF Universidade Federal Fluminense**, revealed the presence of a previously unrecorded fish species in Copacabana, indicating an increase in marine diversity and reinforcing the importance of habitat conservation (O Globo, 2025). These discoveries demonstrate the resilience of the ecosystem and highlight the potential for environmental recovery when protection measures are effectively implemented.

Projects such as **PIR Projeto Ilhas do Rio (Ilhas do Rio Project)**, led by the Mar Adentro Institute, play a fundamental role in this context. This same PIR has been recognized for its innovative approaches to biodiversity conservation, species monitoring, and community engagement, establishing a successful integrated management model for protected marine areas.

## COP 30 and the Need for Greater Investment in Marine Sustainability

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With COP 30 taking place in Brazil, there is a growing opportunity to strengthen national and international commitments to the preservation of the Blue Amazon. The Cagarras Archipelago, due to its ecological significance, should be at the center of discussions on climate financing, sustainability, and innovation in marine conservation.

To ensure effective protection of this ecosystem, it is essential to increase public and private investments in structured environmental projects, such as PIR, and to establish strategic partnerships between governments, civil society organizations, and the private sector. The creation of tax incentives for companies investing in marine sustainability, as well as the development of technologies for plastic waste removal, are some of a myriad of the well-researched and existing measures that can be adopted.

## Final Considerations

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The conservation of the Cagarras Archipelago and the entire Amazon Blue is a commitment that requires continuous efforts and collaboration among multiple sectors. As the host country of COP 30, Brazil has the responsibility to lead

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initiatives that promote the balance between economic development and environmental preservation. Supporting already established and successful projects, such as PIR from the Mar Adentro Institute, is essential to ensuring a sustainable future for current and future generations.

Investing in the protection of Brazilian seas is not only an ecological necessity but also a smart strategy to strengthen the blue economy, promote sustainable tourism, and consolidate Brazil's position as a global reference in marine conservation. The time to act is now, and COP 30 represents a unique opportunity to advance this priority agenda for the planet.

## References

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