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Climate change and the Amazon Basin

The main focus of this documentary was to discuss the impacts of the changing climate in the small town of Igarpe, near the banks of the Amazon. For years this area was plagued with seasonal flooding, but the locals adapted to the seasonal problem. Historically there was a defined rainy and dry seasons, but that is not the case today.

Now the Rainy seasons comes without prediction and comes with more intense weather than ever before. The turning point for many residents came during the flood of 2009, in which the water rose 8 meters. This forced many residents to leave to a safer community downriver. There appears to be no balance between the seasons, having the rainy season last longer and the dry season to be cut shorter and shorter.

It is predicted that the change in climate was caused by a La Nina weather pattern which plagues the northern portion of Brazil with rain and hostile weather. This is pattern of weather is a natural occurrence happening every 5-8 years, now it seems to be an annual occurrence. Another prediction to the rising waters stems from deforestation. The lack of vegetation and trees allows for erosion of riverbanks and other lands. The roots of the trees also helped the water penetrate the ground, allowing the water recharge the ground. After the forest was slashed, the ground has become water resistant leading to mass runoffs and collections of the water.

Plans to counteract this downfall are in place today. Vegetation, mainly carchuna, has been reintroduced to the area to provide habitat for fish species, water penetration, and protection from the hostile weather. This act of reforestation is greatly

accepted and practiced by the locals, and the practices are being taught to the local school children, instilling that they are the future and their fate lies within their hands.

I was amazed after finishing the documentary about the adaptations made to the conditions these people reside in. They have been able to deal with regular seasonal flooding for generations, and now contend to adapt and work to cope with the new unpredictable climates they face today. I know from personal experience that people in my town lose their sense when the risk of a flood is even mentioned. I can't begin to imagine the immense flooding they face every year.

I enjoyed learning about the fishing industry of the area as well. I admire the practices implemented by the locals of using only rod fishing instead of net fishing underneath the fruit trees. The practice ensures that someone is actively fishing and has to work to harvest the fish they catch compared to simply checking a net some time after it is deployed.

Another fishing aspect I found interesting was the harvesting of certain species when another is prohibited. As they said, it creates a new demand for the prohibited species and the consumer will pay top dollar to get what they desire. Unfortunately for the consumer, the fish is not always what it appears. I can personally relate to their methods of selling. I was a commercial fisherman during high school and early college summers, and we used the same tactic. We would market skate wings as scallops when scallops were out of season, and also market monkfish, as lobster to the people visiting the dock. Most of the time they could not tell the difference between the real, expensive catch and the usually over-sought "junk fish."

Overall, I enjoyed the video and learning about the climate change that is plaguing the area. I hope that their reforestation practices continue to work and benefit the residents and the future generations that will come. They are on the right track, they just need to keep focusing on the goal, and continually adapt to the conditions they are faced with.