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Wildlife of Brazil's Amazon

In this video, the wildlife portion of the Amazonian ecosystem was discussed. The symbiotic relationships between various organisms was a highlight of the film, as well as the amazing physical behavioral adaptations of the animals residing in the rain forest. Another highlight was the relationship between the people of the Amazon and the animals. Each highlight was an incredible eye opening experience.

For the physical adaptations, the Amazon river dolphin was the poster child. The river dolphins have adapted the vertebrae in the neck to be un-fused, unlike their marine cousins. This adaptation allows them to hunt and move swiftly through the tangles of tree roots and other debris in the river.

The posterchild of behavioral adaptations is the matamata turtle, a turtle with a snake like strike. The matamata waits motionless at the bottom and gently extends its neck and snout to breathe. Unlike most turtles who actively hunt, the matamata, wait for prey to come near then uses its mouth to create a vacuum and suck its prey in the mouth, all in the blink of a human eye.

The best example of the symbiosis in the Amazon is the dotted humming frog and the burrowing tarantula. The frog is allowed to live in the burrow unharmed, and well protected by the tarantula, in return the frog eats the ants, a threat to spider eggs and young spiderlings. This is an unexpected relationship, but it's a very beneficial one for both parties.

Finally, the relationship between the animals and the people of the Amazon, is not so beneficial for the animals. For the humans, the bees who pollinate the brazil nut tree's flower, highly benefit the humans. The bees allow the nut to grow and be harvested, consumed or sold by the humans. Another human reliance is on the spider monkey. The monkey is a highly prized meat and is harvested using poison tipped darts. The poison comes from certain plants in the amazon, and other plants are used to heighten their senses and allows for better more successful hunting.

The wildlife in the Amazon fascinates me! There is so much diversity in the animals that live there, but they all fit into the puzzle we call the rainforest. There is so many more amazing animals I learned about for the video I wish I could have included in this paper. The adaptations of these animals is what intrigues me the most. The adaptation of the matamora turtle has to be the most interesting to me. Physically the long neck and snout allows it to remain motionless and still get the needed oxygen, but the behavioral adaptations are the best. The fact that this species evolved to stationarily hunt, is amazing. The vacuum action to engulf the prey is unmatched by any turtle I know.

As an avid outdoors man, I trap and sell snapping turtles in the summer months, and this is the reasoning behind the admiration of the species of turtles. The giant river turtle also peaked my interest. An animal that large is able to haul itself on land to incubate her eggs and warm her body is awesome. The wildest thing is the fact that they can retreat back to the safety of the water so quickly. This speed is incredible and the agility to turn around and speed away is amazing.

Overall, I highly enjoyed the video and am excited to encounter some of the wildlife discussed in the video. I would love to encounter the turtle species and get to witness their beauty and agility first hand. This video has highly bolstered my excitement of the adventure that lies ahead.