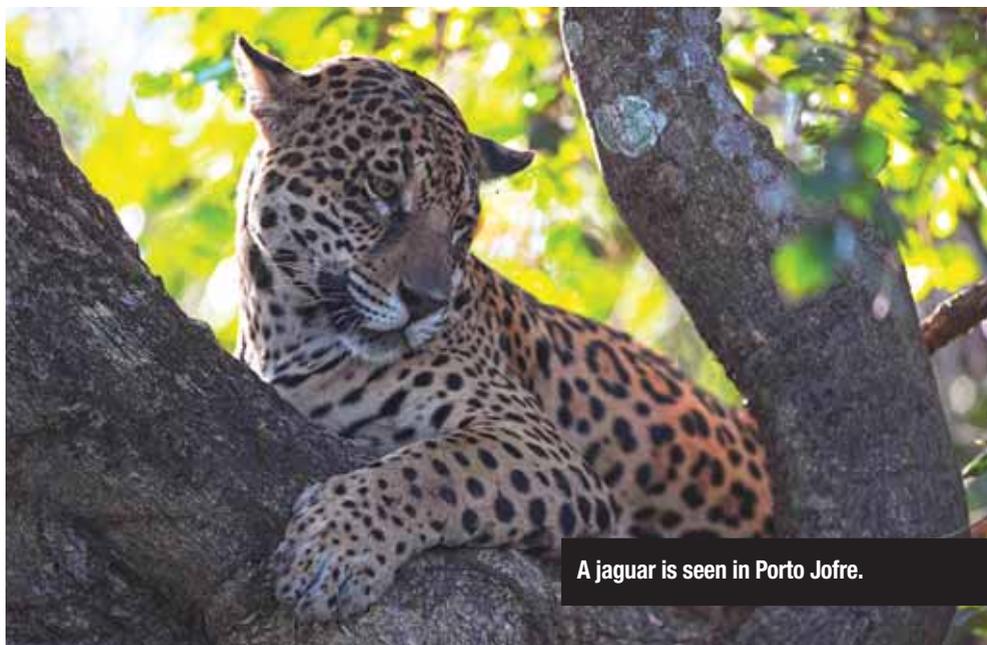


Lifestyle | Feature

Friday, November 12, 2021



A jaguar cub shakes water off its body in Porto Jofre.



A jaguar is seen in Porto Jofre.

Facing starvation

Known for its massive size, fearsome claws and tufts of feathers protruding Beethoven-like from its head, the harpy eagle is, like the jaguar, an apex predator in the Amazon.

Weighing up to 10 kilograms, harpies scope their prey from the canopy, and then swoop in with deadly precision, snatching monkeys, sloths and even small deer. But despite their hunting prowess, they are at risk of starvation. It takes the gray and white eagles, which mate for life, about two years to raise their young. They fledge just one eaglet at a time, but need enormous territory to hunt enough food.

A recent study found harpy eagles are not



Mark, a wild Harpy eagle

adapted to hunt for prey outside the forest, and cannot survive in areas with more than 50 percent deforestation-increasingly common at the Amazon's edges. "They are at high risk of extinction in this region because of deforestation and logging," says Stofel, 43, who works on a harpy conservation program in Cotriguacu, in Mato Grosso state.

The area sits on the so-called "arc of deforestation." In a poignant snapshot of the harpy's plight, AFP journalists saw one eagle eating food set out for it by conservationists, against the backdrop of a logging truck hauling giant tree trunks from the forest. "We've monitored nests where the eaglets starved to death because the parents couldn't hunt enough food," Stofel says.

Matter of survival (our own)

For Cristiane Mazzetti of environmental group Greenpeace, it is crucial to protect the Amazon's threatened biodiversity-and not just for the plants and animals' sake. Nature's complex interlocking web plays an essential role in the planet's ability to provide food, oxygen, clean water, pollination and myriad other "ecosystem services" on which all life depends. "Biodiversity isn't something that can be resuscitated," says Mazzetti. "It's important to protect it for our own survival."—AFP



A jaguar hunts a cayman in Porto Jofre.



Mark, a wild Harpy eagle.



Mark, a wild Harpy eagle.



A jaguar cub and its mother are seen in Porto Jofre.