

**Protected areas
or threatened areas?
The endless gold rush
in the Indigenous Lands
and Conservation Units
of the Amazon**

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Protected areas or threatened areas? The endless gold rush in the Indigenous Lands and Conservation Units of the Amazon

Study carried out by Instituto Escolhas

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São Paulo, February 2021

INSTITUTO ESCOLHAS CARRIES

OUT STUDIES AND ANALYSES

ABOUT THE ECONOMY AND

ENVIRONMENT SO AS TO MAKE

DEVELOPMENT POSSIBLE



The endless gold rush in the Indigenous Lands and Conservation Units of the Legal Amazon

6,2
million hectares

Area covered by prospecting requests for gold mining within **Indigenous Lands** and **Conservation Units** in the Legal Amazon.



2 countries like **Belgium**, or **40** cities like **São Paulo**

3,8
million hectares

Area covered by prospecting requests for gold mining within **Conservation Units** in the Legal Amazon.



1 country like **Switzerland**, or **7** cities like **Brasília**

2,4
million hectares

Area covered by prospecting requests for gold mining within **Indigenous Lands** in the Legal Amazon.



1 state like **Sergipe**, or **20** cities like **Rio de Janeiro**

Extent of gold prospecting requests in the Indigenous Lands and Conservation Units of the Amazon

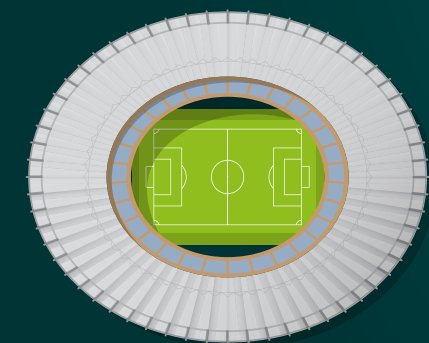
Tapajós Environmental Protection Area

1,2

million hectares

This is the Conservation Unit with the largest area covered by gold prospecting requests. It is located in the state of Pará.

Equivalent to
1,7 million



Maracanãs Stadiums

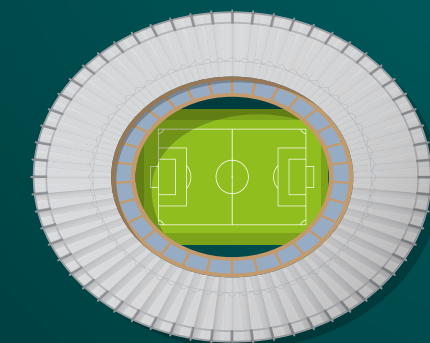
Roraima National Forest

583,420

hectares

This is the Conservation Unit with the second largest area covered by gold prospecting requests.

Equivalent to
817 thousand



Maracanãs Stadiums

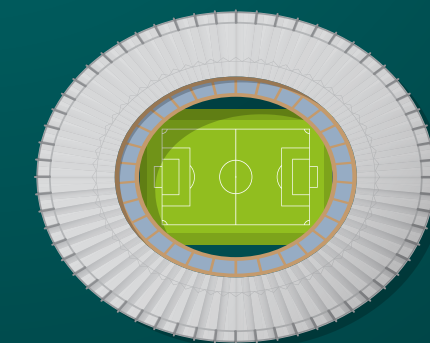
Yanomami Indigenous Land

748,674

hectares

This is the Indigenous Land with the largest area covered by gold prospecting requests. The territory is located in the states of Amazonas and Roraima.

Equivalent to
1 million



Maracanãs Stadiums

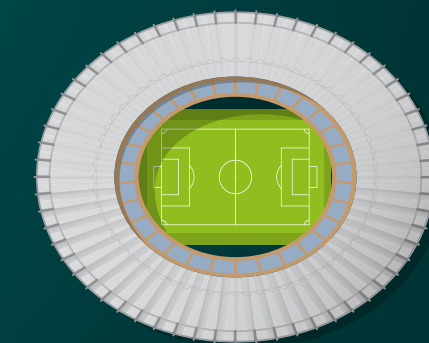
Baú Indigenous Land

470,524

hectares

This is the Indigenous Land with the second largest area covered by gold prospecting requests. The territory is located in the state of Pará.

Equivalent to
659 thousand



Maracanãs Stadiums

Introduction

Around 6.2 million hectares in Indigenous Lands and Conservation Units in the Legal Amazon are threatened by the rush for gold. This is the extent of prospecting requests for exploration of the metal in protected areas, equivalent to two times the size of Belgium or 40 times the size of the city of São Paulo.

Mining is not permitted in Indigenous Lands¹, yet the area for gold prospecting covers 2.4 million hectares. Since 2018, there has been an increase in the number of requests for such areas, with a record 31 requests made in 2020.²

In Conservation Units, gold prospecting requests cover 3.8 million hectares and present a threat to these areas, established by the government precisely to guarantee environmental protection, which is not compatible with a high-impact activity, as is the case of mineral extraction, as seen with the disasters in Mariana and Brumadinho.

A total of 85 Indigenous Lands are affected by gold prospecting requests, as well as 64 Conservation Units. In the Yanomami Indigenous Land, which straddles the states of Amazonas and Roraima, 749 thousand hectares are covered by requests. In the Baú Indigenous Land, in Pará, the second in terms of area covered by requests, 471 thousand hectares are registered, occupying a quarter of its territory.

Gold Prospecting Requests

85 Indigenous Lands

64 Conservation Units

This is the result of this new study, which features updated data until 2020³ on the size of the threat that gold poses to protected areas in the Legal Amazon. To accomplish this, the study analyzed all gold prospecting requests (prospecting applications and permits) registered with the National Mining Agency (Agência Nacional de Mineração – ANM) – since these requests indicate private interest in the areas – while being careful to not only check the public databases but also to ask the agency itself for truly active requests, ensuring the accuracy of the analysis of requests so as to estimate overlays with Indigenous Lands and Conservation Units.

The analysis is extremely relevant in light of the current scenario of increasing gold production in the Amazon, which has been accompanied by initiatives to allow mining on Indigenous Lands – such as Bill 191/2020, presented by the Federal Government –, and in Conservation Units, and to legalize operations that are already taking place within these areas.

For instance, in 2020 the financial compensation for gold extraction that was collected by the municipalities of the Legal Amazon was 60% higher than than the entire year of 2019, and 18 times above the value registered ten years ago. These municipalities accounted for only 13% of nationwide collection in 2010, but they reached 47% in 2020.⁴

Unfortunately, this increase in gold production is accompanied by widespread environmental and social destruction, and it does not bring development for the region, as confirmed in a recent study by Escolhas.⁵ Very often, newspapers run stories about gold that is tarnished by the invasion of indigenous territories, violence, drug and arms trafficking, money laundering, slave labor, prostitution, contamination of rivers and of people by mercury, and deforestation.

The gold rush in the Amazon is rooted in illegal practices, which today account for about 16% of the country's production, with extraction taking place in prohibited areas without any sort of control⁶. But that slice of illegality may be much bigger, since there is no way to measure it with precision.

Social control over this activity is scant. There is a lack of transparency and verification mechanisms for sector data, and there is no system for effective traceability that would allow the origin of gold that is produced to be monitored. This undermines the inspection and control actions and encourages illegal trade in the country, putting further pressure on the areas that should be protected for the good of the environment and society.

¹ According to the Federal Constitution (Articles 176 and 231), mining in Indigenous Lands can only take place by law (authorization) issued by the National Congress and with consultation with the communities, but today there is no legislation that regulates the activity within the territories.

² Considering the number of records in the last decade.

³ Data analyzed by November 25, 2020.

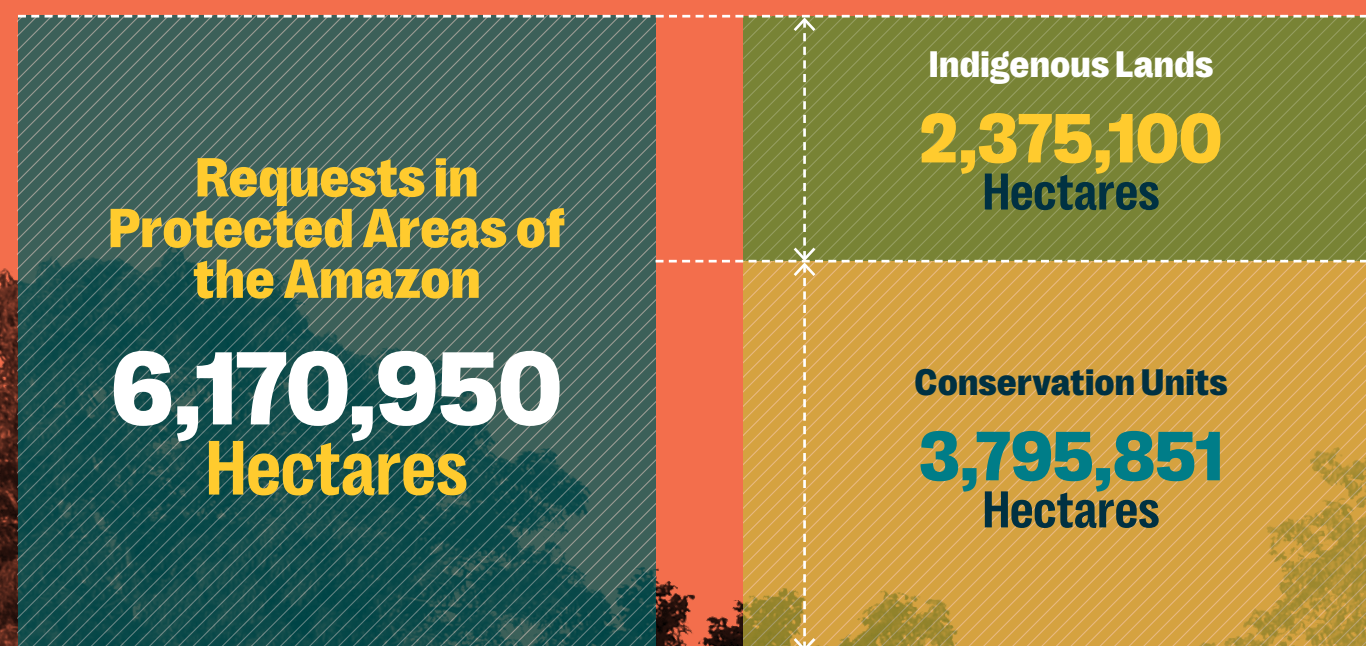
⁴ According to data from the Financial Compensation for the Exploration of Mineral Resources (Compensação Financeira pela Exploração de Recursos Minerais – CFEM), which are made available by ANM. 2020 data were analyzed up to the month of October.

⁵ Access the study "What is the real socioeconomic impact of gold and diamond exploration in the Amazon?" at: <https://www.escolhas.org/biblioteca/estudos-intituto-escolhas/>

⁶ Data estimated by IBRAM in "Public Policies for the Mineral Industry," 2020.

The extent of gold prospecting in Indigenous Lands and Conservation Units

EXTENT OF GOLD PROSPECTING REQUESTS IN PROTECTED AREAS WITHIN THE LEGAL AMAZON



Source: prepared by the authors, drawing on data on ANM active processes on 25 November 2020.

Note: the prospecting requests include prospecting applications and permits.

Today, 6.2 million hectares within Indigenous Lands and Conservation Units in the Legal Amazon are covered by gold prospecting requests.⁷

In Indigenous Lands alone, where mineral exploration is not permitted⁸, requests are spread over 85 territories and add up to 2.4 million hectares. The Yanomami Indigenous Land, in the states of Roraima and Amazonas, and Baú, in Pará, are those with the largest areas covered by requests.

In Conservation Units that are incompatible with mining activity, since they were established by the government precisely to guarantee environmental conservation, gold prospecting requests total 3.8 million hectares and are spread over 64 units.

⁷ The prospecting requests analyzed include the application and authorization processes, research authorizations registered and active in the ANM.

⁸ Considering the conditions provided for in the Federal Constitution, in Articles 176 and 231.

A complete list of Indigenous Lands and Conservation Units of the Legal Amazon, with the respective areas superimposed onto gold prospecting requests, is presented at the end of the document, along with maps that show some of the affected areas.

INDIGENOUS LANDS IN THE LEGAL AMAZON WITH THE LARGEST AREAS COVERED BY GOLD PROSPECTING REQUESTS

Indigenous Land	Area covered by prospecting requests (hectares)	% of the territory covered by prospecting requests
Yanomami (AM/RR)	748.674	7,7%
Baú (PA)	470.524	24,6%
Raposa Serra do Sol (RR)	139.960	8%
Kayapó (PA)	122.289	3,7%
Menkragnotí (MT/PA)	115.152	2,3%

CONSERVATION UNITS IN THE LEGAL AMAZON WITH THE LARGEST AREAS COVERED BY GOLD PROSPECTING REQUESTS

Conservation Unit	Area covered by prospecting requests (hectares)	% of the territory covered by prospecting requests
Tapajós Environmental Protection Area (PA)	1.228.330	59,0%
Roraima National Forest (RR)	583.420	13,2%
Crepori National Forest (PA)	441.602	58,8%
Amana National Forest (PA)	345.224	62,8%
Jamanxim National Forest (PA)	252.633	19,2%

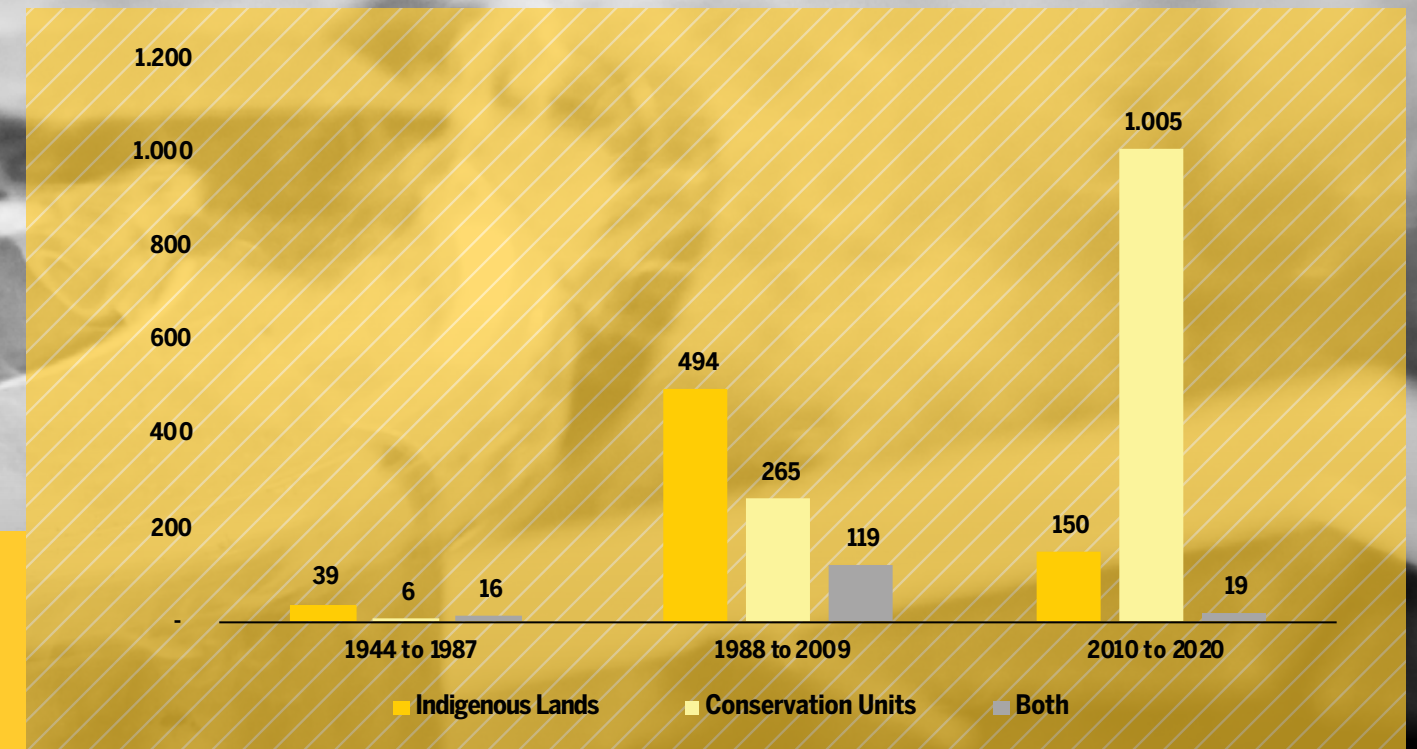
Source: prepared by the authors using data on ANM’s active processes on November 25, 2020. Note: prospecting requests include prospecting requirements and authorizations.

Pressure cooker

2.113
gold prospecting requests
in Indigenous Lands and
Conservation Units

The extension of gold prospecting requests, which today cover **6.2 million hectares** of protected areas in the Legal Amazon, result from **2,113 prospecting requests**, including applications and permits that have been registered and remain active at ANM.

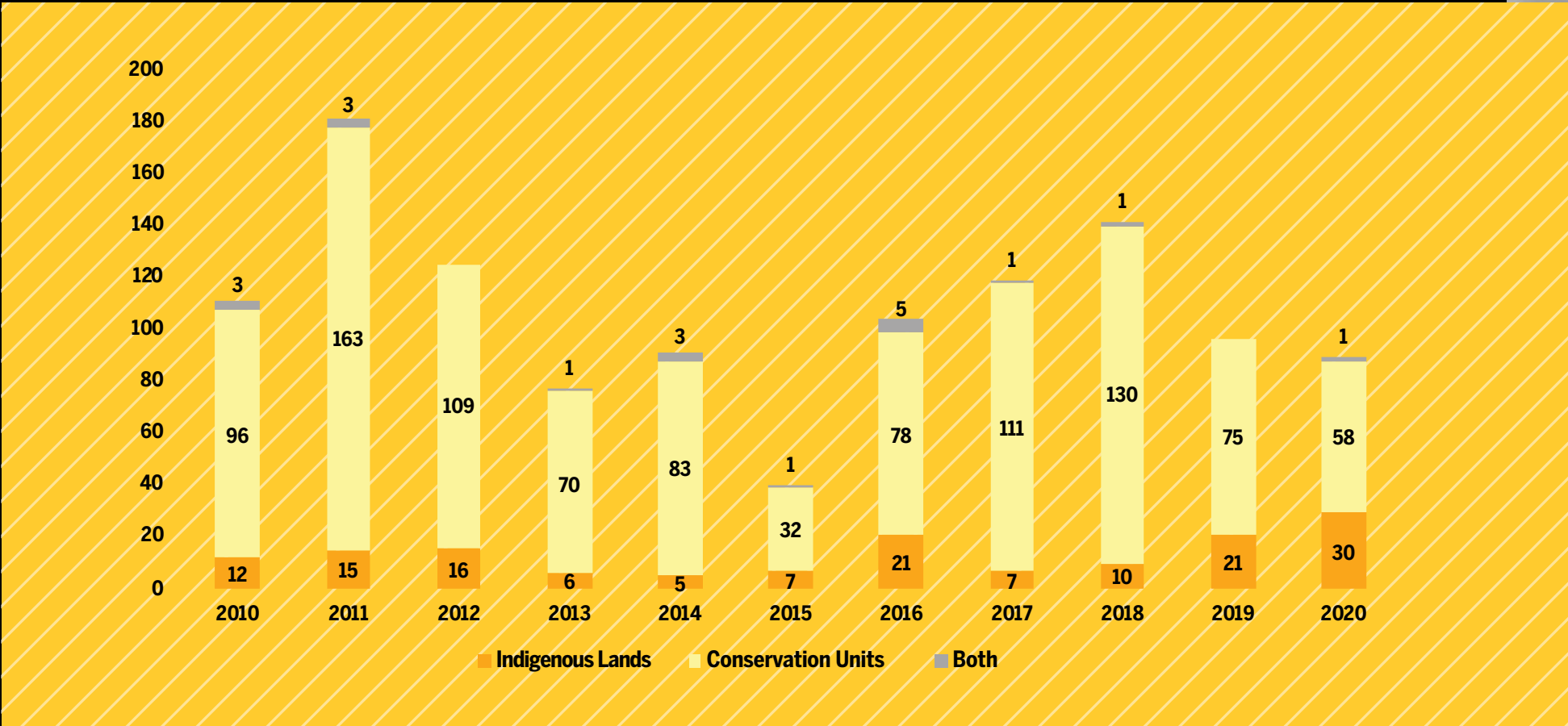
NUMBER OF GOLD PROSPECTING REQUESTS REGISTERED WITH ANM, SUPERIMPOSED ON PROTECTED AREAS OF THE LEGAL AMAZON BY PERIOD OF REGISTRATION



Source: prepared by the authors using data on ANM's active processes on November 25, 2020.
Note: prospecting requests include prospecting requirements and authorizations.

In the last decade, there has been a significant growth in these records, mainly within Conservation Units. In Indigenous Lands, even though the number of records is smaller, it is possible to verify growth starting in 2018, but especially in 2020, a year with record of registrations. The figures confirm the growing private interest in the exploitation of gold in these areas.

NUMBER OF GOLD PROSPECTING REQUESTS REGISTERED WITH ANM SUPERIMPOSED ON PROTECTED AREAS OF THE LEGAL AMAZON BY YEAR OF REGISTRATION



Source: prepared by the authors using data on ANM's active processes on November 25, 2020.
Note: prospecting requests include prospecting requirements and authorizations.



Understand how the extent of gold prospecting requests was analyzed within protected areas in the Legal Amazon

To estimate the extent of the rush for gold within protected areas in the Legal Amazon, this study chose to analyze all gold prospecting requests (prospecting applications and permits) registered with the National Mining Agency (ANM), with some overlap with these areas.

According to the regulation of the mineral sector⁹, the prospecting phase is the first step towards future mining, so requests were interpreted as indicating private interest for those areas and adopted as a reference for the analysis. In the case of irregular gold mining (independent gold mining permits), there is no requirement for previous exploratory prospecting. Even so, prospecting requests were considered to indicate private interest, in the broader sense.

Initially, ANM's public database was analyzed, with all mining processes in the country, for all minerals and exploration phases until the date of 25 November 2020. A request was made to ANM for active requests only, in order to ensure that the analysis did not include inactive orders that may appear on the public base. Next,

only those for gold and for the prospecting stage (prospecting applications and authorizations) were requested. The requests, despite still being active, may include situations such as prospecting reports that have not been approved or expired prospecting permits, among others, but – since they are active in the ANM – their areas are not available for the registration by others.

Then, using geoprocessing techniques, gold prospecting polygons were selected within the boundaries of the Legal Amazon. This subset was superimposed onto the boundaries of Conservation Units and Indigenous Lands, based on the georeferenced data made available by the National Register of Conservation Units (Cadastro Nacional de Unidades de Conservação – CNUC), the Ministry of the Environment (MMA) and the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI).

Soon afterwards, a spatial analysis methodology was applied so as to measure the extent of this overlap in individual values for each of the Indigenous Lands and Conservation Units.

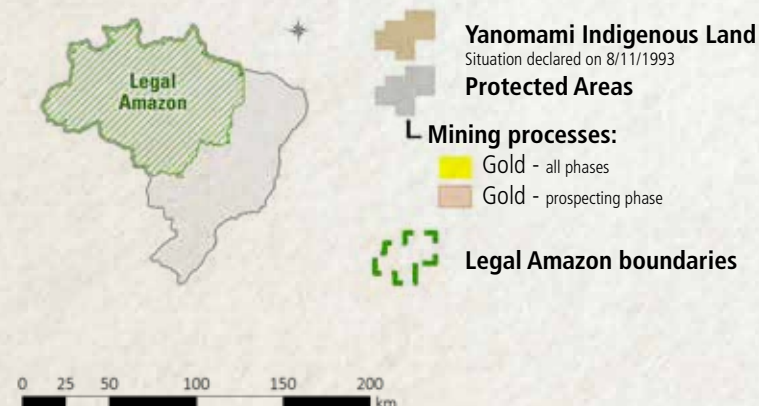
Often, different requests feature polygons that overlap, totally or partially. That is, it is not uncommon for requests to be “on top of each other.” To ensure that the results of the study did not double count areas, a technique of mixing requests was used in a single surface. Thus, the results represent the continuous extent of the polygonal lines, rather than a simple sum of their total areas. In addition, only overlaps with protected areas of more than ten hectares were considered, avoiding possible measurement errors.

⁹ Mineral exploitation norms are now set by Decree 9.406, of 2018, which regulates the Mining Code, Decree-Law 227, of 1967. They are: (i) the authorization regime, used for prospecting; (ii) the concession regime, used after prospecting to extract gold; (iii) the permission regime for independent gold mining; (iv) the licensing regime, for some types of minerals; and (v) the monopolization regime, which depends on direct or indirect execution by the federal executive branch.

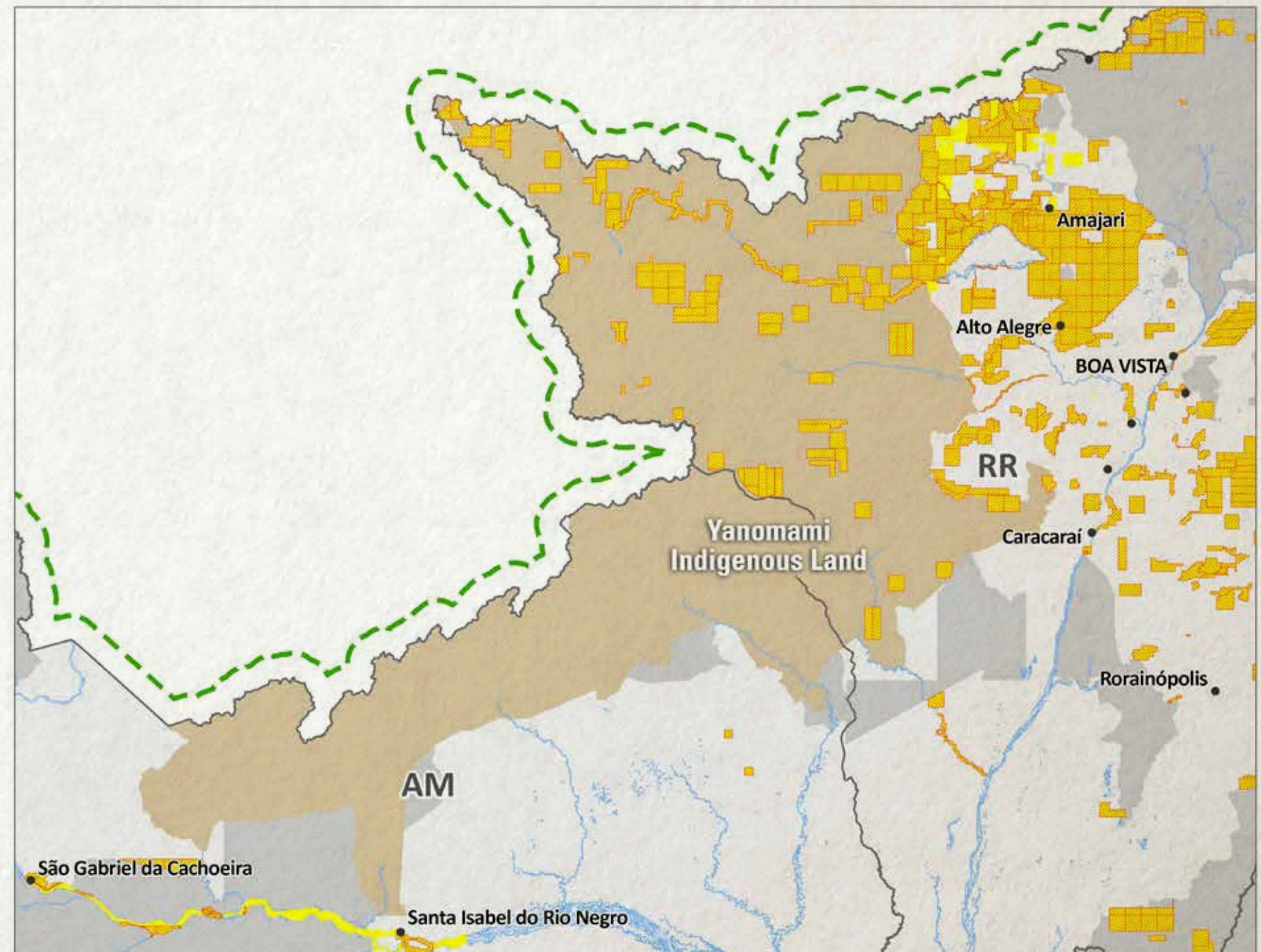
Areas with gold prospecting requests

The following maps illustrate the gold prospecting requests in the Yanomami Indigenous Land and in the Baú Indigenous Land, which are the Indigenous Lands with largest areas covered by requests. The maps indicate that mining is also around those areas, increasing the pressure and threats to the protected areas of the Amazon.

Yanomami Indigenous Land

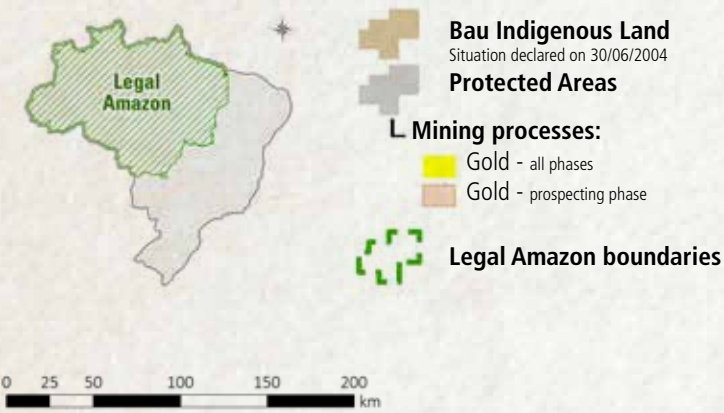


Source:
Ministry of the Environment (MMA, 2020),
National Indian Foundation (FUNAI, 2020),
National Mining Agency (ANM, 2020).]

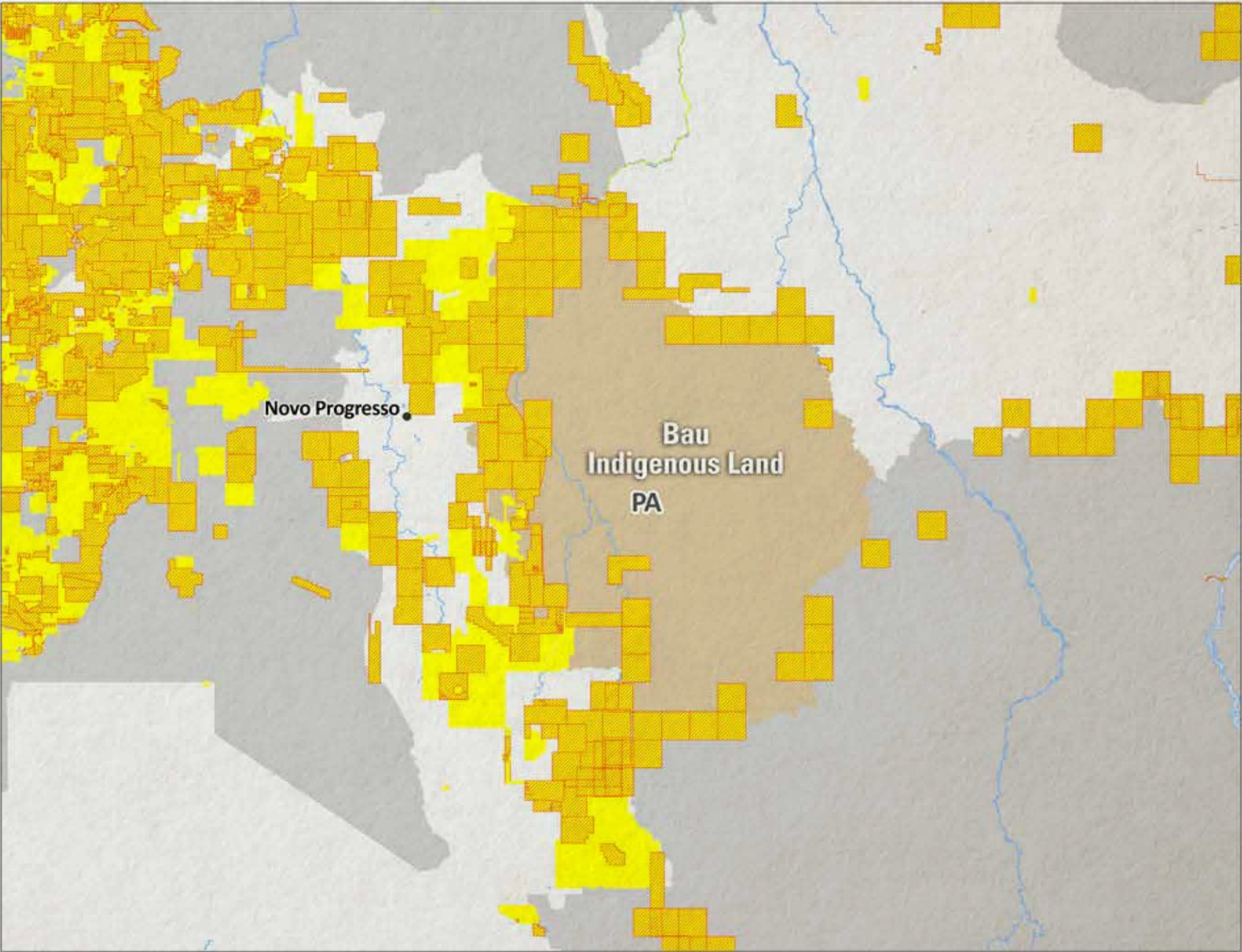


Areas with gold prospecting requests

Bau Indigenous Land



Source:
Ministry of the Environment (MMA, 2020),
National Indian Foundation (FUNAI, 2020),
National Mining Agency (ANM, 2020).



EXTENSION OF THE GOLD PROSPECTING REQUESTS IN INDIGENOUS LANDS AND CONSERVATION UNITS OF THE LEGAL AMAZON

Overlaps of gold prospecting requests with Indigenous Lands in the Legal Amazon			
Indigenous Land	Total Area (ha)	Area affected by requests (ha)	% of the territory with requests
Terra Indígena Yanomami	9.694.295,42	748.673,51	7,7%
Baú	1.914.643,61	470.523,93	24,6%
Raposa Serra do Sol	1.758.240,82	139.959,50	8,0%
Kayapó	3.325.837,22	122.288,63	3,7%
Menkragnotí	4.991.239,37	115.152,27	2,3%
Rio Paru d'Este	1.209.733,03	105.261,99	8,7%
Waimiri-Atroari	2.623.992,17	81.232,12	3,1%
Munduruku	2.418.795,24	76.103,01	3,1%
Xikrin do Rio Catete	442.315,59	70.157,11	15,9%
Araçá	51.677,51	50.467,67	97,7%
Parque do Tumucumaque	3.111.567,02	40.768,42	1,3%
Trombetas-Mapuera	4.022.548,36	39.851,81	1,0%
Alto Rio Guamá	281.228,44	38.952,70	13,9%
Apyterewa	784.334,57	29.853,84	3,8%
Jacamim	195.547,29	20.111,95	10,3%
Nhamundá-Mapuera	1.063.197,79	19.979,59	1,9%
São Marcos - RR	661.052,88	17.558,08	2,7%
Sai-Cinza	126.252,46	16.417,62	13,0%
Ponta da Serra	15.629,67	15.420,84	98,7%
Cayabi	167.118,76	14.928,95	8,9%
Wai-Wai	410.885,30	13.532,31	3,3%
Barata Livramento	13.227,35	13.049,80	98,7%
Trincheira-Bacajá	1.675.205,90	12.609,11	0,8%
Terra Indígena Alto Rio Negro	4.685.371,62	10.372,79	0,2%
Kuruáya	169.081,33	10.171,92	6,0%
Boqueirão	16.600,64	9.609,40	57,9%
Aningal	7.646,28	7.538,40	98,6%

Panará	503.412,16	6.665,30	1,3%
Truaru	6.426,00	6.339,46	98,7%
Sucuba	6.125,14	5.788,62	94,5%
Malacacheta	28.851,66	5.276,68	18,3%
Pium	4.627,46	4.562,05	98,6%
Alto Turiaçú	537.381,60	4.177,56	0,8%
Mangueira	4.014,56	3.959,63	98,6%
Raimundão	4.337,45	3.465,17	79,9%
Anta	3.263,39	3.218,99	98,6%
Araweté Igarapé Ipixuna	956.643,24	2.935,00	0,3%
Terra Indígena Médio Rio Negro I	1.808.233,88	2.308,51	0,1%
Badjonkore	225.912,03	1.579,18	0,7%
Terra Indígena Karipuna	156.100,42	1.094,25	0,7%
Kararaô	334.099,83	995,14	0,3%
Mãe Maria	63.449,10	887,57	1,4%
Aripuanã	753.528,93	807,91	0,1%
Karajá Santana do Araguaia	1.461,52	805,17	55,1%
Santa Inez	31.046,12	796,24	2,6%
Arara do Rio Branco	115.544,01	726,61	0,6%
Terra Indígena Tubarão Latunde	117.659,05	711,50	0,6%
Xerente	167.206,80	675,92	0,4%
Terra Indígena Igarapé Lage	108.676,66	603,73	0,6%
Funil	16.251,23	561,71	3,5%
Terra Indígena Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau	1.892.706,49	449,05	0,0%
Terra Indígena Rio Branco	238.757,19	406,82	0,2%
Umutina	28.446,58	400,73	1,4%
Sararé	68.220,55	381,11	0,6%
Terra Indígena Médio Rio Negro II	318.654,12	372,20	0,1%
Terra Indígena Rio Biá	1.201.556,18	321,97	0,0%
Ouro	14.136,02	291,92	2,1%
Terra Indígena Rio Mequens	109.302,43	275,01	0,3%
Parakanã	354.938,79	271,30	0,1%
Pequizal	10.161,48	236,84	2,3%

Terra Indígena Igarapé Lourdes	196.605,96	212,99	0,1%
Arara	278.501,92	201,98	0,1%
Parque do Aripuanã	1.623.797,22	167,04	0,0%
Portal do Encantado	43.503,85	163,47	0,4%
Erikbaktsa	84.936,23	125,07	0,1%
Terra Indígena Rio Omerê	26.489,62	119,13	0,4%
Pimentel Barbosa	334.676,58	118,05	0,0%
Terra Indígena Kaxarari	148.689,01	112,47	0,1%
Terra Indígena Alto Rio Negro	3.365.956,81	104,37	0,0%
Terra Indígena Vale do Guaporé	243.552,95	101,69	0,0%
Terra Indígena Tikuna de Feijoal	39.748,68	98,99	0,2%
Serra Morena	149.356,85	87,06	0,1%
Maranduba	209,27	85,28	40,8%
Terra Indígena Ipixuna	218.238,74	81,32	0,0%
Terra Indígena Kwazá do Rio São Pedro	17.010,35	79,89	0,5%
Waiãpi	616.440,57	67,57	0,0%
Terra Indígena Igarapé Capana	130.867,12	61,73	0,0%
Terra Indígena Juma	39.074,12	45,49	0,1%
Parque do Araguaia	1.397.176,68	42,99	0,0%
Terra Indígena Karitiana	90.870,62	41,47	0,0%
Uaça	477.098,30	25,77	0,0%
Areões	182.621,11	22,14	0,0%
Paquiçamba	4.071,13	14,51	0,4%
Terra Indígena Lago Jauari	12.188,72	12,75	0,1%
Andirá-Marau	802.715,75	10,21	0,0%
TOTAL	66.552.795,92	2.375.099,55	3,6%

Source: prepared by the authors, based on active processes registered with the National Mining Agency. Note: research requests include research requirements and authorizations. Only overlaps larger than ten hectares were considered.

Overlaps of gold prospecting requests with Conservation Units in the Legal Amazon			
Conservation Unit	Total Area (ha)	Area affected by requests (ha)	% of the area
com pedidos	2.083.846,32	1.228.329,51	58,9%
FLONA de Roraima	4.426.807,74	583.420,06	13,2%
FLONA do Crepori	751.117,95	441.601,54	58,8%
FLONA do Amana	549.464,62	345.224,15	62,8%
FLONA do Jamanxim	1.316.850,50	252.632,58	19,2%
RESEX de Curupuru	2.226.021,10	180.228,84	8,1%
FLONA de Itaituba II	430.332,86	121.797,26	28,3%
FLONA de Carajás	401.490,60	54.075,01	13,5%
FLONA de Altamira	773.465,15	47.998,21	6,2%
REBIO Nascentes da Serra do Cachimbo	347.614,69	46.669,45	13,4%
APA Arica-Açu	75.892,60	46.024,89	60,6%
FLONA do Tapirapé-Aquiri	199.841,65	37.866,85	18,9%
FLONA de Mulata	219.434,84	35.395,41	16,1%
FLONA do Amapá	464.713,47	30.340,95	6,5%
FLONA de Pau-Rosa	988.922,69	29.080,30	2,9%
APA da Chapada dos Guimarães	257.324,76	28.869,16	11,2%
Parque Nacional da Serra do Pardo	452.703,61	25.386,23	5,6%
APA Nascentes do Rio Paraguai	71.523,77	24.683,35	34,5%
APA Lago de Palmas	63.895,55	19.954,37	31,2%
Parque Nacional do Jamanxim	871.185,34	19.891,96	2,3%
APA das Cabeceiras do Rio Cuiabá	478.615,10	18.948,73	4,0%
APA do Pontal dos Rios Itiquira e Correntes	207.055,22	18.100,69	8,7%
FLONA do Bom Futuro	277.743,08	15.209,67	5,5%
FLONA do Tapajós	551.660,98	14.503,29	2,6%
FLONA do Itacaiúnas	82.516,73	11.274,63	13,7%
APA Lago de Peixe-Angical	76.375,49	10.719,97	14,0%
RESEX do Rio Ouro Preto	203.622,07	10.211,03	5,0%
APA Lago de Tucuruí	195.014,50	10.167,37	5,2%
FLONA de Itaituba I	224.914,14	9.876,83	4,4%
RESEX Rio Iriri	399.771,33	8.811,99	2,2%

APA Serra do Lajeado	128.167,10	7.367,57	5,7%
RESEX do Rio do Cautário	75.389,55	6.772,39	9,0%
APA Upaon-Açu-Miritiba-Alto Preguiças	1.583.541,57	6.714,24	0,4%
RESEX Riozinho do Anfrísio	745.892,13	6.182,53	0,8%
APA do Igarapé Gelado	20.040,93	5.234,52	26,1%
APA do Rio Dantas e Morro Verde	75.578,72	5.105,86	6,8%
APA Ilha do Bananal	1.590.365,08	4.571,97	0,3%
APA Foz do Rio Santa Tereza	50.764,34	4.468,82	8,8%
REBIO do Tapirapé	101.530,25	3.920,79	3,9%
Parque Nacional da Amazônia	1.125.176,97	3.854,57	0,3%
APA do Salto Magessi	7.939,33	2.368,78	29,8%
FLONA de Anauá	262.128,69	2.083,65	0,8%
APA Baixada Maranhense	1.843.678,33	1.860,77	0,1%
Estrada-Parque Poconé-Porto Cercado	4.132,43	1.809,86	43,8%
APA dos Meandros do Rio Araguaia	345.279,27	1.076,57	0,3%
FLONA do Amazonas	2.157.121,37	1.062,83	0,05%
APA do Jalapão	477.726,74	869,02	0,2%
Estrada-Parque MT 040-361	4.533,83	743,38	16,4%
Parque Nacional do Monte Roraima	115.438,85	741,14	0,6%
Estrada-Parque Rodovia MT-251	5.630,09	368,12	6,5%
Parque Nacional Montanhas do Tumucumaque	3.882.617,43	236,71	0,01%
Estrada-Parque Chapada dos Guimarães	1.992,72	184,98	9,3%
Parque Nacional Serra da Mocidade	379.013,42	162,44	0,04%
Reserva Ecológica Culuene	3.674,29	132,59	3,6%
Estrada-Parque Transpantaneira	8.634,84	129,57	1,5%
Parque Estadual da Serra de Santa Bárbara	121.440,24	118,03	0,1%
Parque Estadual Dom Osório Stafell	6.638,06	113,61	1,7%
Refúgio de Vida Silvestre Quelônios do Araguaia	82.098,65	85,88	0,1%
FLONA do Jatuarana	579.475,17	80,95	0,01%
Parque Nacional do Juruena	1.980.972,58	51,93	0,00%
RESEX Marinha de Gurupi-Piriá	74.684,03	30,62	0,04%
Parque Nacional do Viruá	233.198,19	26,28	0,01%
Monumento Natural Morro de Santo Antônio	261,21	12,97	4,8%
Estação Ecológica Serra Geral do Tocantins	719.855,60	12,19	0,00%
Total	38.464.350,42	3.795.850,41	9,9%

Source: prepared by the authors, based on active processes registered with the National Mining Agency. Note: research requests include research requirements and authorizations. Only overlaps larger than ten hectares were considered.



Aerial view of an indigenous community in the Amazon. Photo: MarkFoxPhoto

See the complete study at:

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