



## **Vegetation fire in the savannas of the Llanos Orientales of Colombia**

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Stretching across the borders of Colombia and Venezuela, from the Andes to the Atlantic, the Orinoco watershed covers about 990,000 km<sup>2</sup> (63% in Venezuela and 37% in Colombia) and represents one of the most biologically rich areas of the world. At least in the Colombian part, fires are one of the most important natural and human factors associated to the expansion of the agriculture frontier in the Llanos orientales de Colombia. These ecosystems are highly threatened by this driver and this has led to the transformation and loss of many natural ecosystems and species endemic to this area. Results from an ecosystem mapping effort for the year 2000 (scale 1:1,000,000) undertaken at the Alexander Humboldt Institute indicate that from the total extension of this watershed, vegetation fire accounted for 1.5% (488,927 ha) of the total studied area (34,713,506 ha). The possible effects of fires in the area have hardly been studied in Colombia, reason why it is necessary to carry on research that could help to understand the possible effects on global change due to the disappearance of species and biomass burning. This paper is part of work in progress at Humboldt Institute.

**Keywords:** vegetation fire, savannas, remote sensing, global change