MAAP #117: New Oil Road Deeper into Yasuni National Park (Ecuador), Towards Uncontacted Indigenous Reserve

Yasuní National Park, located in the heart of the Ecuadorian Amazon, is one of the most biodiverse spots in the world and overlaps ancestral Waorani territory. In the recent MAAP #114, we showed the construction of four new oil drilling platforms (and access road) in the controversial ITT oil block, located in the heart of Yasuní.

Here, we show that, beginning in mid-March **2020**, we detected the construction of a new access road heading further south from the last platform (**Image 1**). As of early May, this road construction was **4.7 km** through primary forest.

Updated: June 30 (4.7 km); June 14 (3.7 km); May 17 (2.2 km).

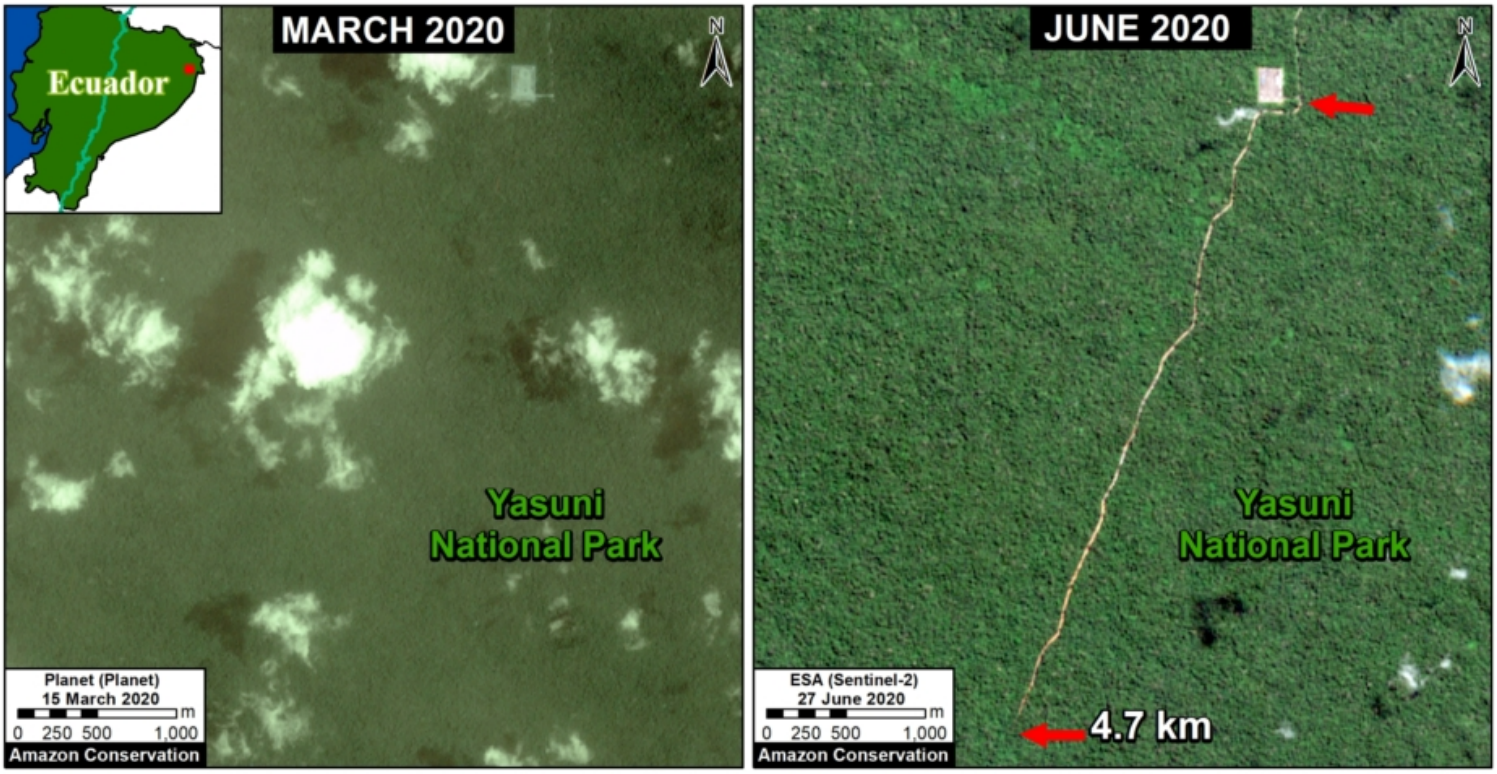

Image 1. Construction of a new 4.7 km oil access road deeper into Yasuni National Park between March (left panel) and June (right panel) 2020. Click to enlarge.

Implications of the New Oil Road

This finding is concerning because it brings oil development closer to the "Zona Intangible," a reserve created to protect the territory of indigenous people in voluntary isolation (Tagaeri, Taromenane), isolated relatives of the Waorani.

In **Image 2**, the location of the new road (indicated in **red**) is shown approaching several planned oil drilling platforms just outside the buffer zone of the Zona Intangible. **Image 3** shows a zoom of this area.

It is also concerning because construction is occurring during the **coronavirus pandemic**.

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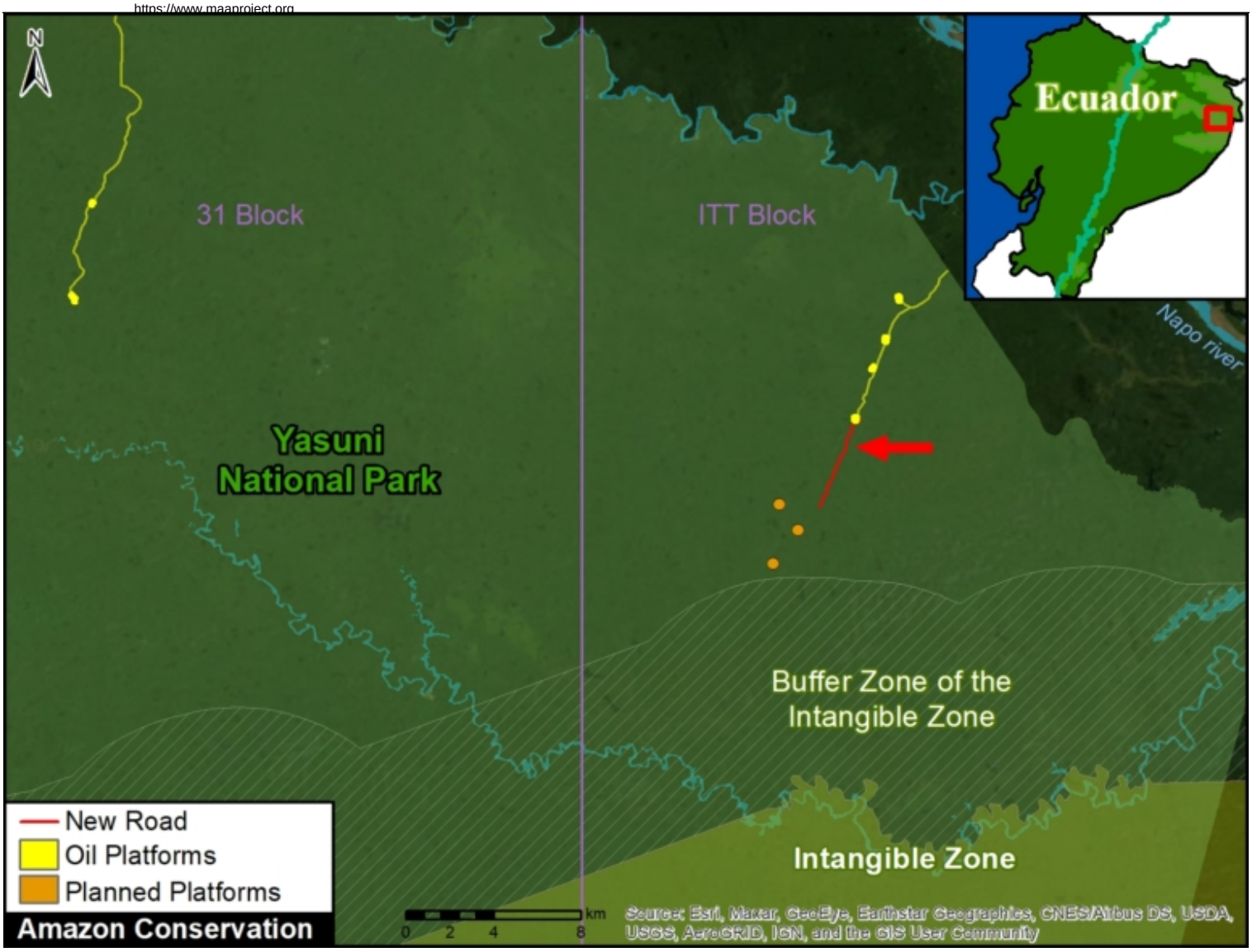

Image 2. The new oil acces road (in red) approaching the Zona Intangible.

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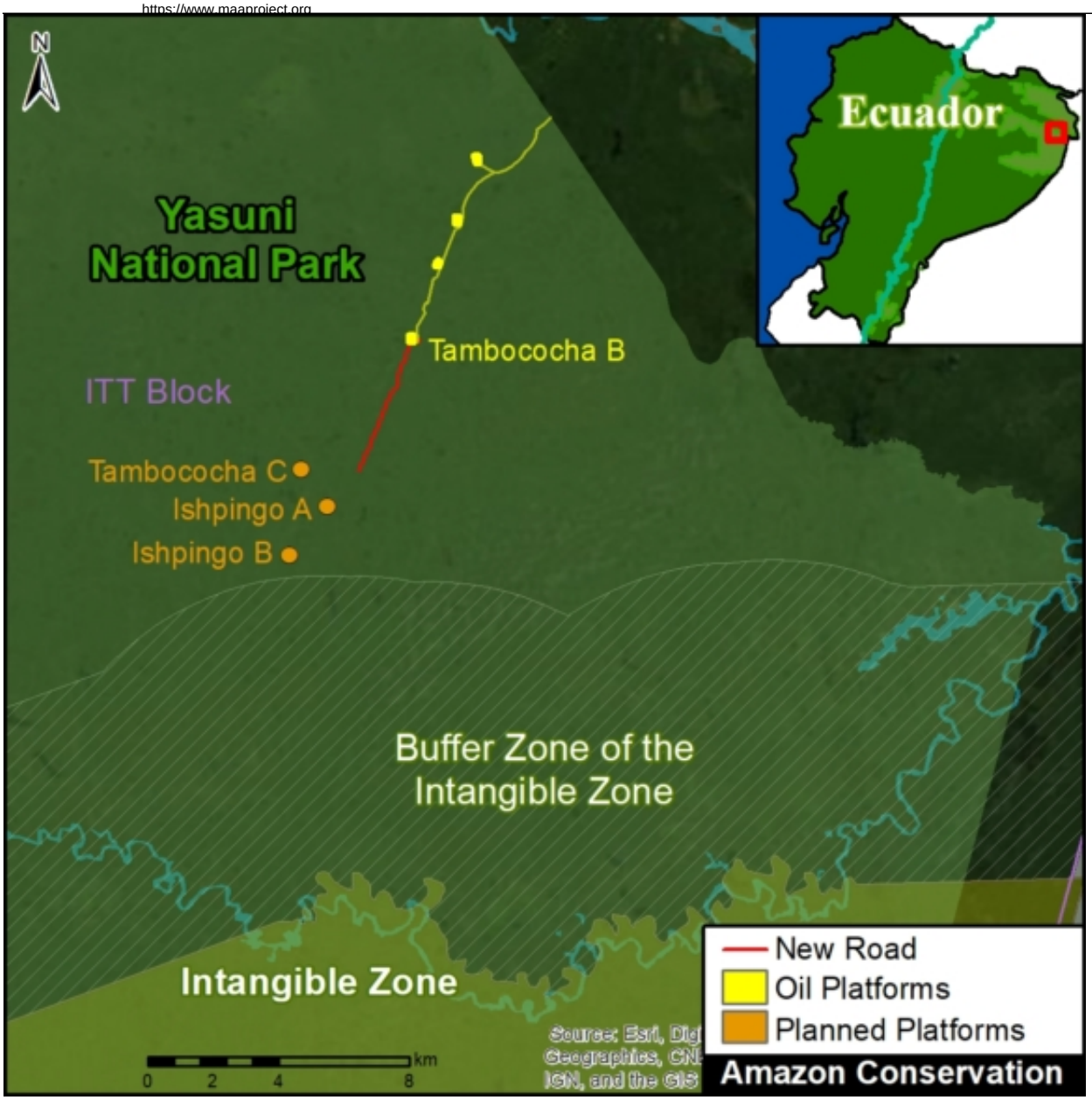

Very High Resolution Image

We have also obtained a very high resolution satellite image (Skysat, 0.8 meters) of the new oil access road. Below are two examples of this image; the first shows the complete route of the new highway and the second is a zoom of the most recent expansion to the south. ***Click to enlarge***.

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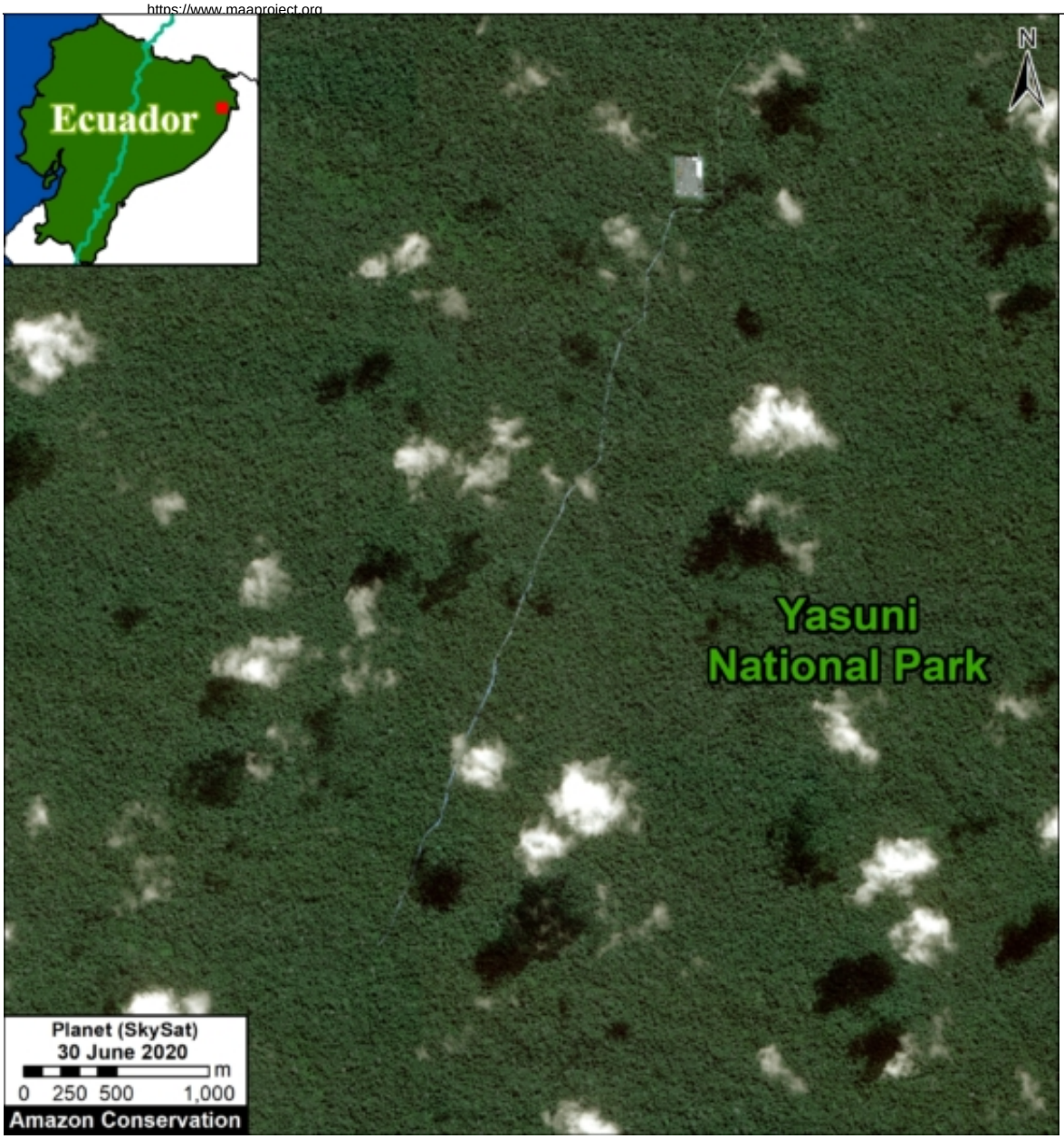

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