

# The Man Who Swam The Amazon

(Martin Strel) by Matt Mohlke (2008)

52-year old Martin Strel from Slovenia began swimming the Amazon River on 1Feb2007 near Atalaya, Peru; and finished on 7Apr2007 (66-days) near Belem, Brazil, 3273 miles away. This was an average of 50-miles per day. The current was faster at the beginning & slowed as the river widened to 12-miles across at some points. The last 100-miles were the worst due to the tides & he had to swim only when they were going out to sea. He gained weight for the challenge & lost 36-pounds by the end.

Some of the dangers were crocodiles, anacondas, piranha, parasites, mosquitoes, pirates and later stingrays & sharks. It was dangerous to swim at night or in the slow-moving currents. There was an escort boat alongside to lookout for whirlpools, debris & find the fast currents. Then the main support boat was a mile back. It was 92-feet long & 3-stories tall. It housed from 20-30 people (not comfortably). The different teams were the swim team, medical team, film crew, ship crew, technical team & security team.

Most of the delays were mechanical problems or slowing down to stay on schedule for scheduled arrivals at different towns. Martin tells himself stories while he swims 10+ hours each day. He transports himself to another world through his daydreaming to avoid the pain & boredom at hand. The Amazon provides 14% of the world's fresh water to the sea. By the time he finished he was beyond the point of exhaustion & needed medical help.

Quotes: "He's too exhausted to socialize & too tired to sleep." (Matt Mohlke)