



Glacier of the Month July 2024



CHIMBORAZO GLACIER

1903 Courtesy of Paul Grosser



2023 Courtesy of Hugo Pineida



The Chimborazo National Park - Reserva de Producción de Fauna Chimborazo in Spanish - is a nature reserve that was established in 1987 and includes the volcano of the same name. According to the latest figures, the Chimborazo is 6,267 m asl high; its height was previously given as 6,310 m asl. This inactive volcano is located in the western cordillera of the Andes and is the highest mountain in Ecuador. It has a diameter of 20 km at its base. As of an altitude of around 5,100 m asl, its summits are completely covered by glaciers. Some glacier arms extend as far down as 4,600 m asl. However, the ice masses on Chimborazo are shrinking as a result of climate change, sharing the fate of almost all glaciers on Earth.

The Chimborazo is a tropical glacier and mainly falls into the category of the so-called warm (temperate) glaciers, where the whole glacier is at the pressure melting point, except for seasonal freezing of the surface layer. It therefore reacts relatively quickly to changes in temperature and is a fast indicator of climate change. Local mountain guides report that ten to twelve years ago the glacier along the normal route to the summit extended up to 150 m further down the mountainside.

The glacier also plays a crucial role in the life and livelihood of the people living nearby, especially in terms of water supply.