

ISSUE 2 | APRIL TO JUNE 2019

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 SUSTAINABLE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME - GUYANA PROJECT



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## General Overview Of SWM Guyana

The Sustainable Wildlife Management Programme (SWM) – Guyana Project was launched on November 9, 2018. The project is being implemented in the Rupununi Region over a period of five years (2018-2023), by the Government of Guyana through the Guyana Wildlife Conservation and Management Commission (GWCMC), in coordination with the Centre of International Forestry Research (CIFOR). The project is funded by the European Union, through the Africa, Caribbean, Pacific Secretariat.

It was developed and launched after a continuous consultation process over the past two years with Governmental Agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations and Community Members across the region.

SWM seeks to ensure that the Rupununi can continue to offer sustainable options for food security and livelihoods in accordance with traditional lifestyles. To this effect, SWM will build upon existing community-driven initiatives that contribute to maintaining healthy fish and terrestrial wildlife populations at the landscape level.

## Project Updates

From March to June 2019, several activities have been going on:

### CAMERA TRAPPING

The camera trap monitoring team has been very busy, as the first data from camera traps set in the South Rupununi and at Manari Ranch have returned from the field. There are so many amazing photos of wildlife it was difficult to choose, but we have included a few of the highlights here. Teams were out again in mid-May positioning the project camera traps at 100 rainy season locations across the North, Central, South, and Deep South Rupununi, and South Pakaraimas. These cameras will remain in the field until October when they will be checked by our teams and re-positioned for the dry season. In the meantime, our project leads will be analyzing the 80,000+ photographs that we have already accumulated so that we can report back in the future with some more detailed information on Rupununi wildlife.



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### TURTLE FESTIVAL

On April 13, 2019, the SWM- Guyana Project partnered with Caiman House to celebrate the 8th Annual Turtle Festival under the theme "Generation with Opportunities to discover Earth's Biodiversity". The festival focuses on two species of river turtles which are prized for their meat and eggs by local people. It featured the release of turtles produced in the Caiman House hatchery and numerous cultural presentations. The festival was an excellent platform to bring together community members working in environmental conservation and spread awareness about the SWM Programme's activities with communities. SWM had a booth and conducted an interactive discussion with children and adults alike on activities related to camera trapping and bird watching. We also facilitated the transportation of representatives from Shea, Sand Creek, Shulinab, Kumu and Karasabai Villages to participate in the days' event.



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### WILDMEAT TRADERS SURVEY AND BEST FOOD SAFETY PRACTICES

The SWM team has recently commenced the market survey along the coastal region of Guyana, from Berbice to Charity. This survey targets vendors involved in the wildmeat trade chain and aims at gathering information on food safety practices related to wildmeat. Surveys are being conducted at major public markets along the coast to allow for a sufficient sample size. Survey methods include semi-structured interviews recorded using the Kobo collect app and is scheduled to be conducted over a period of six weeks. The information gathered will inform the development of guidelines for food safety practices.

### NORTH RUPUNUNI ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION TEAM

The Coordinator, Susan George, hails from Katoka, is an expert in community monitoring review and verification



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From left to right, Nadira Pedro, Susan George, Rocky Van Long, Marlyn Brown.

(CMRV), was a teacher, and loves fieldwork. Marlyn Brown, a Makushi woman from Kwatamang also has teaching experience, and like Rocky Van Long, was one of the first youth interns at Bina Hill in Annai. Since then Rocky has been an announcer on Radio Paiwomak, 97.1 FM and now is a council member in Kwatamang.

Along with Radio Paiwomak announcer, Nadira Pedro, the team attended and covered Yupukari's Turtle Festival in April, and has been developing SWM related program material for broadcast.

In April SWM team members - Samantha James (Community Education Specialist) and Susan George (Education Coordinator), visited Karasabai Village in the South Pakaraimas, to consult on an education plan for the South Pakaraimas. This beautiful and mountainous area is home to many rare species, and SWM is looking forward to working with teachers and youth in this area to promote the sustainable and wise use of resources.

#### ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SOUTH RUPUNUNI WILDLIFE COMMITTEE

On April 16, 2019, the South Rupununi District Council called a special executive meeting to discuss the establishment of a Wildlife Committee. The meeting discussed the role of this committee and outlined activities to be undertaken. At the end of the meeting, the SRDC Wapichan Wiizi Wildlife Committee was established. The committee is made up of 5 members: Toshao Vitalis Alfred of Awarewanawa, Toshao Nicholas Cyril of Katoonerib, Sonita Ernest of Aishalton, Angelbert Johnny of Sawariwao and Gorette Lewis of Shulinab. The committee will assist in providing advice on policy, and manage activities and programmes related to wildlife in the South Rupununi.

## Training Sessions

#### KOBOCOLLECT TRAINING

In April and May 2019, several training sessions coordinated by Dr. Nathalie Van Vliet (Site Coordinator, CIFOR) and Judah Kenyon (Data Manager and Kobocollect, Consultant) were provided to the NRDDDB Fisheries Management Team (7 women, 8 men) and Rupununi Learners Turtle Project Members (2 women, 4 men) on the use of KoboCollect – a data collection and management app used extensively in modern research projects. The training sessions aimed at introducing the advantages of digital data collection forms. It taught participants how to: use Kobotoolbox, by developing digital forms online, collecting data using smartphones offline, and uploading and analyzing data again online. The training involved very practical experience including fieldwork and allows the teams to develop survey forms that will subsequently be used in the implementation of SWM activities.

#### VIDEO PRODUCTION TRAINING FOR BINA HILL STUDENTS

On the 16th of April, a video production training was provided

to approximately 12 students (aged 16-20 years old) from the Bina Hill indigenous training institute by David Mansell Moullin (SWM Programme, Communications Coordinator). The course covered the practical aspects of filming, editing and making a simple video story using SWM project smartphones. The aim was that students would then be able to produce simple stories to collect local knowledge from community elders on hunted wildlife species (e.g. agouti, paca, deer, and peccaries).

## Focus on Preliminary Results

#### THE ROAD IMPACT ASSESSMENT STUDY

Concern about the impacts of roads on biodiversity is rapidly growing, as are the road networks themselves. Roads are the main drivers of habitat degradation, fragmentation, and loss of connectivity between wildlife populations. The Georgetown-Lethem Road (GLTR) is a laterite road where maintenance and partial upgrades occur irregularly. Because of current progress in the plans to upgrade the GLTR, the overall objective of the study was to evaluate the current



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*Example of a wildlife crossing friendly construction with sufficient height and length permitting free flow of water and sufficient dry space with some vegetation on the side for small and large terrestrial species. RIGHT: example of bridge which does not support wildlife crossing. It should be noted that with water hitting the wings of the structure, it affects water flow, may tend to need frequent repairs due to water damage.*

impact of the road and its associated structures on wildlife which inhabit the area. It seeks to: (1) determine the relationship of the road in general with animal crossing clusters and associated roadkill, and (2) conduct an assessment of the design of current bridges/culverts and recommend ideas that should be implemented during planned the road upgrade that will permit wildlife underpassage.

So far Lethem-Surama section ("North") and Lethem – Aishalton section (South) of the road was surveyed. Together, this took about 66 days and totaled 9,672Km. This resulted in 72 records of roadkill being observed.

Bridges/culverts were evaluated through a rapid assessment of their functionality as a wildlife underpass based on the wide array of characteristics. We found that that there is a wide variation in the construction methods of bridges in the Rupununi. Some bridges are more "wildlife crossing friendly" and generally are of better construction whereas some are not very conducive to wildlife crossings.

We will combine the bridge/culvert assessment information, camera trap data and models to predict animal movements for a better understanding of the current situation and predictions of future scenarios. We will use this combined data to prioritize structures and provide detailed recommendations for their future upgrading.

## Events Corner

Our first SWM Site Steering Committee will take place on the 5<sup>th</sup> of June in Lethem. The objectives of the Site Steering Committee are to evaluate year 1 activities, plan for year 2 activities and discuss and find solutions to potential issues related to implementation.

## Meet a Member of our SWM Team

My name is Michelle Kenyon. I am from the Rupununi born in Lethem growing up between Lethem and Saddle Mountain in the South Rupununi. My role in the Sustainable Wildlife Management Project began as the FPIC (Free, Prior and Informed Consent) Consultant, which has now been expanded to include Gender and Monitoring.

The Rupununi has always been very central to who I am and where I want to go. Being part of the SWM team, working towards an effort I truly believe in and being able to contribute to the development of the Rupununi is very rewarding for me. My job has been as so far equally rewarding as is challenging.

We all need to understand that we need nature more than nature needs us - our food and livelihoods come from nature- and so we all need to make an extra effort towards caring, respecting and protecting our environment.



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## SWM Programme

The SWM Guyana Project activities are part of the SWM Programme, which is an initiative of the African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) Group of States. It is being funded by the European Union through the 11th European Development Fund (EDF). The Programme mobilizes an international group of partner organizations with experience and expertise in wildlife conservation, food security, and policy development. It is implemented through a consortium partnership, which includes the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD). Projects are being implemented in twelve participating ACP countries, namely: Chad; Democratic Republic of Congo; Gabon; Guyana; Madagascar; Mali; Papua New Guinea; Republic of Congo; Senegal; Sudan; Zambia and Zimbabwe.

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