

SWM SUSTAINABLE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

Guyana Project QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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 SUSTAINABLE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME - GUYANA PROJECT


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GENERAL OVERVIEW OF SWM GUYANA

The Sustainable Wildlife Management (SWM) Programme in Guyana was launched on November 9, 2018. The SWM-Guyana 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, in coordination with the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR). The initiative is funded by the European Union, through the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS).

The SWM-Guyana Project was developed and launched after a continuous consultation process with governmental agencies, non- governmental organizations and community members across the region.

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

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PROJECT UPDATES

CAMERA TRAPPING

Training

As part of SWM-Guyana Project's commitment to strengthening local capacities, our Wildlife Officer Courtney Peters has been conducting camera-trapping training activities in the south. So far, he has trained 23 representatives in Aishalton, Awarewaunau, Baishaizon, Karaudarnau, Maruranau and Shea. The training sessions involved both theoretical and practical work. The participants were taught the importance of information from camera trapping and learned how to select and prepare camera-trapping sites, as well as to set and calibrate camera traps.

Camera-trapping activities

Our camera-trapping team is now collecting data from all of the 100+ camera traps laid across the Rupununi region. These traps have been recording information all through the dry season since September 2019. We expect to see very interesting data and cannot wait to start our analysis!



© Courtney Peters/SWM

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

The North Rupununi District Development Board (NRDDDB) – with SWM support – has started field activities with local wildlife clubs. So far, four of them have been trained in how to observe and monitor birds, and to set camera traps; and have started collecting data on birds and terrestrial wildlife.



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SWM has been supporting the South Rupununi Conservation Society in its Environmental Education Curriculum project and has just completed Term 2 exercises. The students and teachers are enjoying lessons, while the support and involvement of parents and community members are increasing. Plans for the end-of-year festival – to be held in July – are still being made. So keep on the lookout for an update!

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

With support from SWM, the NRDDDB is continuing to implement the fisheries management plan. Two river patrols were carried out in February and March along the Rupununi River and in the main creeks. The fisheries patrol team is comprised of the fisheries coordinator or a fisheries officer; the Toshao (indigenous leader) of the river section monitored; and the boat captain.



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Generally, the team introduces itself in Makushi, explains the purpose of the stop and asks the fisherman whether he knows about the NRDDDB fisheries management plan. If appropriate, the team then explains the plan's main aspects and asks some questions about the fishing activities carried out by the fisherman (e.g. number of fish, species, fishing methods, number of days/hours spent fishing). Some members of the SWM team tagged along on the first patrol. It was awesome to go out and see the hard work that the NRDDDB fisheries team does!



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LIVESTOCK

Establishment of livestock hub

With support from SWM, the Rupununi Livestock Producers Association (RLPA) has established its first livestock hub in the compound of the Amazonas Hotel in Lethem. This hub will act as a central point for all livestock-related items: expertise, equipment, medicine, feed, hatchlings as well as veterinary and general supplies. While its primary aim is to support its membership, the RLPA will also help bolster livestock production for the Rupununi region in general.

Veterinary outreach

The RLPA carried out veterinary outreach in northern, southern and central Rupununi. The association visited about 16 communities, meeting with RLPA members and the general public to offer advice, to answer questions and to promote the RLPA livestock hub in Lethem.



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TRAINING AND WORKSHOPS

The RLPA conducted its first training exercise on poultry production, with 30 participants! They received training in basic animal husbandry for poultry, including pen



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construction, feed, standard veterinary issues and general management. The RLPA also conducted a workshop for its executives, developing skills in advocacy and lobbying – which are especially needed to ensure government support for projects in the Rupununi. This training will prove to be very useful to the RLPA leadership in the coming months and years.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Under the SWM-Guyana Project, the Wapichan Wiizi Wildlife Management Committee raised awareness about wildlife management and the latest components of the wildlife management plan during visits to seven communities: Achawib, Awarewaunau, Karaudarnau, Katoonarib, Maruranau, Shea and Shulinab. In addition, the committee organized meetings with four pilot communities (Maruranau, Parabara, Potarinau and Sawariwau) to develop guidelines for managing wildlife on their lands.

All communities have observed declining wildlife populations (both fish and game animals) in recent years, and there is general agreement that steps need to be taken to ensure that wildlife populations are sustainably managed for future generations. This may include reintroducing and encouraging traditional hunting techniques and practices (e.g. with bows and arrows) using the Wapichan seasonal calendar.

The village councils play a leading role in these efforts, regulating practices – such as hunting, fishing, savanna burning and land clearing – that directly affect wildlife populations.

TURTLE CONSERVATION

With support from SWM, Rupununi Learners Inc. in Yupukari village has been busy rehabilitating its turtle incubation pond. The nonprofit organization has also been continuously collecting nesting data – i.e. number of sites, active maternal presence, predation, etc. – in the section of the Rupununi River that passes through Yupukari.



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HIGHLIGHTS:

- The RLPA livestock hub is open for business.
- River patrols have started on the Rupununi River and in the main creeks.
- The turtle festival in 2020 is canceled due to COVID-19 measures.
- Quadad DeFreitas is out in the field as a photographer taking incredible pictures of SWM activities!



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MEET A MEMBER OF OUR TEAM:



© Nathalie Van Vliet/SWM/CIFOR

MEET RUDOLPH ANTHONY ROBERTS

He was born in Quatata, a satellite village of Yupukari. With support from SWM, Rudolph works with Rupununi Learners Inc. as the head of a turtle conservation project in Yupukari.

"Sustainable wildlife management isn't just a catchphrase – it is part of a way of life. We are all inhabitants of this beautiful place and we need to be mindful of how we treat it. Treat it well and it will flourish. Treat it badly and you will destroy your home."

COVID – 19 AND SWM-GUYANA PROJECT

As you are all aware, the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is affecting every crevice of society. The work of SWM in Guyana and the Rupununi is not shielded from this disease. Currently, the SWM team is keeping a close eye on developments and is trying to adapt activities and plans to deal with the situation. All activities that involve the movement and gathering of people, including visits to villages, have been suspended. We are using this time to reflect on our progress and to finalize plans for future activities. We are confident in our ability to navigate our way through these turbulent times.

SWM PROGRAMME

The SWM-Guyana Project is part of the SWM Programme, which is an initiative of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS). The SWM Programme is funded by the European Union through the 11th European Development Fund. The programme mobilizes an international group of partner organizations that have experience and expertise in wildlife conservation, food security and policy development. The SWM Programme is implemented through a consortium partnership that includes the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR); the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations; the Wildlife Conservation Society; and the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD). Projects are implemented in 12 participating OACPS countries: Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Guyana, Madagascar, Mali, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Congo, Senegal, Sudan, Zambia and Zimbabwe.