



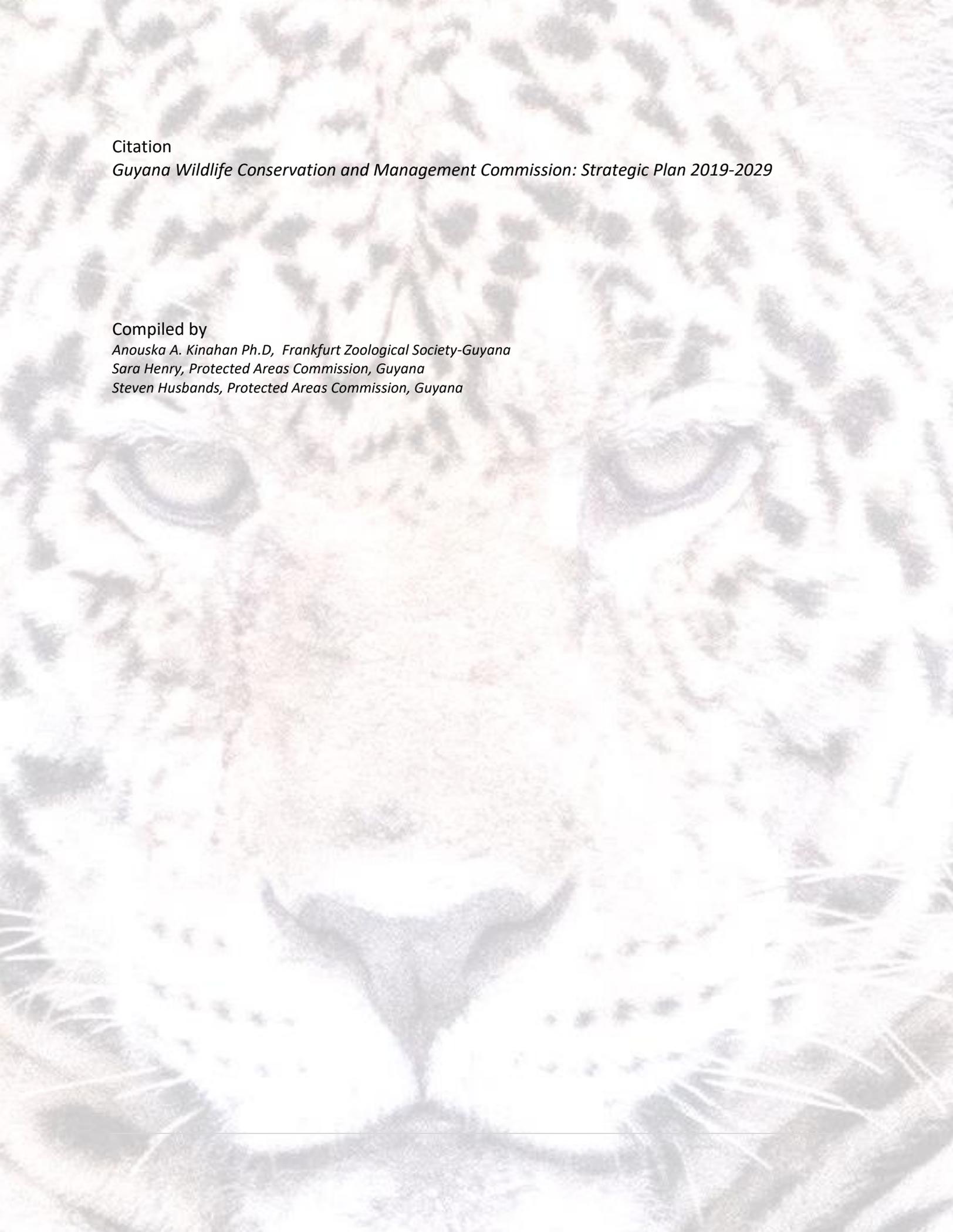
Guyana Wildlife Conservation and Management Commission



Strategic Plan 2019-2029

*Securing the Future
of Our Wildlife*



A close-up photograph of a tiger's face, showing its eyes, nose, and whiskers. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent white box containing text.

Citation

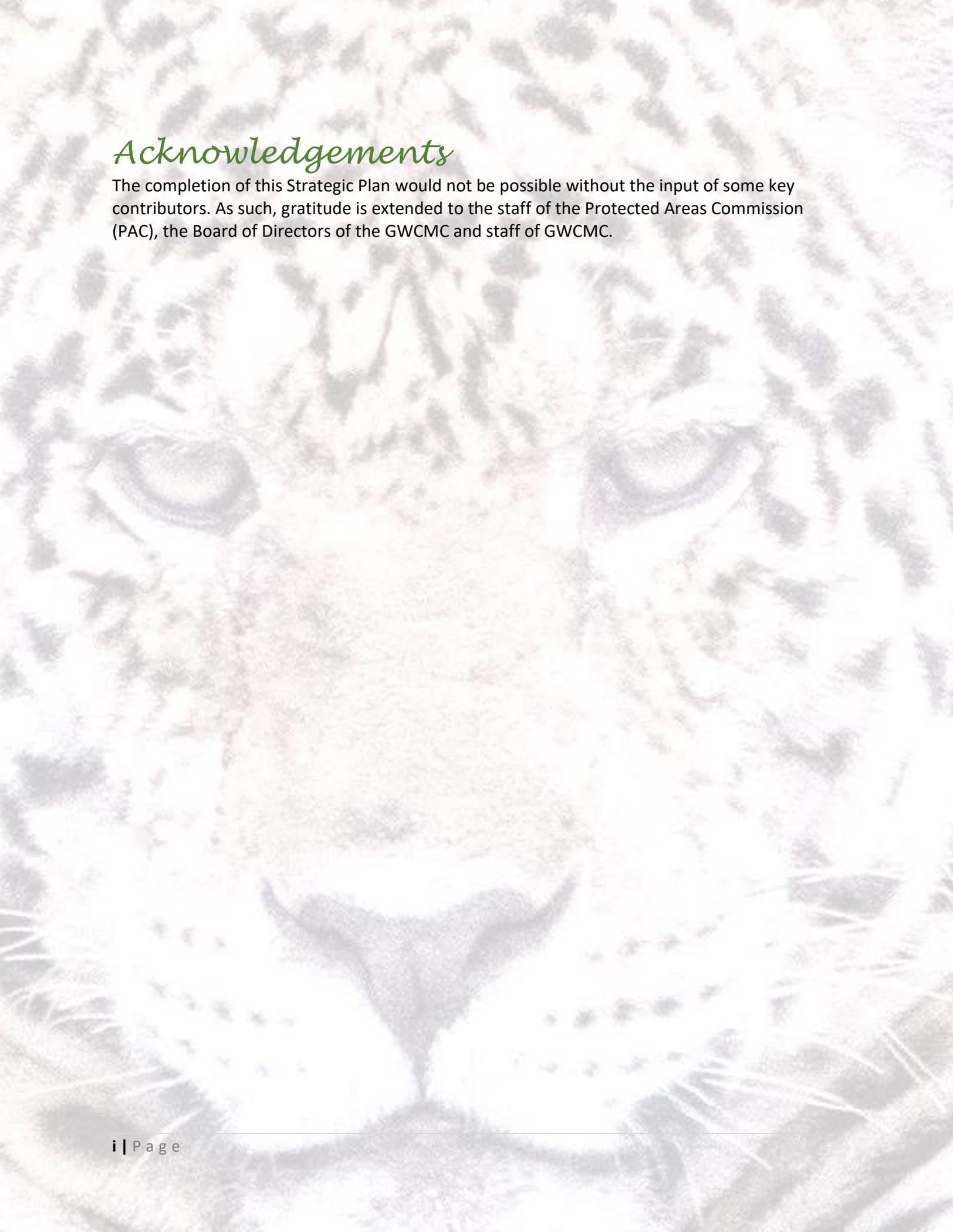
Guyana Wildlife Conservation and Management Commission: Strategic Plan 2019-2029

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Acknowledgements

The completion of this Strategic Plan would not be possible without the input of some key contributors. As such, gratitude is extended to the staff of the Protected Areas Commission (PAC), the Board of Directors of the GWCMC and staff of GWCMC.

Foreword

The Guyana Wildlife Conservation and Management Commission (GWCMC) was established in 2016, replacing the Wildlife Division which had existed in much the same form for almost thirty years. While the Wildlife Division focused mainly on the international wildlife trade (functioning as the Management Authority for the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora – CITES), the mandate of the GWCMC is much broader, including:

- Captive-breeding/Ranching – drafting of regulations and monitoring of offspring
- Zoos – drafting of regulations and monitoring of facilities
- Human-Animal Interactions – responding to reports and resolving issues
- Wildlife population surveys
- Regulation of the domestic trade – a constant, complex and labour-intensive task including the wild meat trade and medicinal plants



It was soon recognised that a strategic plan was needed to prioritise the work of the Commission, chart a course to address those priorities and establish parameters for measuring and assessing the progress.

This Strategic Plan (2019-2029) was prepared with the guidance of an expert consultant, but (equally importantly) with the input of the staff of the Commission, who were all invited to two retreats for this purpose. As such it represents the requirements of the Act and the views of the persons who will be charged with implementation. It is therefore not simply an excellent document on paper, but a realistic guide for the next ten years of wildlife conservation and management.

Dr. Karen Pilgrim A.A.
Board Chairman
Guyana Wildlife Conservation and Management Commission

Message from the Commissioner

This Strategic Plan reflects years of efforts to have a comprehensive approach to wildlife management. Wildlife management in Guyana over many years was not very comprehensive and regulation focused primarily on the international trade. The international trade was regulated by the Wildlife Division which was the operational arm of the Wildlife Management Authority. The domestic trade and other activities affecting wildlife were largely unregulated.

The Wildlife Conservation and Management Act 2016 which establishes the Guyana Wildlife Conservation and Management Commission (GWCMC) was brought into effect on June 1, 2017. The establishment of the GWCMC as the authority responsible for the protection, management and conservation of wildlife in Guyana is a significant step in the right direction. The Strategic Plan outlines the direction that the GWCMC will take over the next 10 years. The Commission's vision to secure the future of our wildlife will be grounded on values of integrity, transparency, accountability, reliability and adaptability. As the GWCMC embarks on the implementation of its Strategic Plan, we look forward to the support of our sister agencies and stakeholders. Our collective efforts will surely secure the future of our wildlife.



Alona Sankar
Commissioner
Guyana Wildlife Conservation and Management Commission

GWCMC Strategy



Executive Summary

The Guyana Wildlife Conservation and Management Commission's role is to manage and conserve all aspects of our wild flora and fauna so that we can **Secure the Future of Our Wildlife** for current and future generations.

In February and March 2018 two workshops were held outside Georgetown with staff from the Commission to develop this plan. This Plan provides a road map for the next 10 years to assist the Commission in the effective management, conservation, and sustainable use of Guyana's wild flora and fauna. The Strategy was developed in accordance with the Wildlife Management and Conservation Act, 2016 and with due consideration of the functions of the Commission outlined in the Act. During the process, a SWOT and stakeholder analysis were carried out (see appendices) which also guided the development of the overall strategy. As a newly established Commission this represents the first Strategic Plan for the Guyana Wildlife Conservation and Management Commission (GWCMC).

This Strategic Plan is intended to act as a tool to guide the Commission's annual planning as well as to inform the people and wildlife users of Guyana of the Commission's intended way forward and goals for the next 10 years. As such, the main document provides an overview of the strategies for a wide audience, with a more detailed strategic framework, which will guide the Commission's work annually provided in the appendices and available on the Commission's website.

The plan focuses on four focal areas that group activities in a logical manner. These areas are:

- i. *Operations and Finance:* In this focal area, activities are directed towards improving the Commission's internal processes, administration and management capacity (including establishing appropriate infrastructure). This will ensure that a more efficient service can be delivered to wildlife users as well as increase the Commission's overall ability to secure the future of Guyana's wildlife.
- ii. *Legislation and Compliance:* Here, activities will focus on ensuring appropriate legislation to protect wildlife is in place and that systems are implemented for the Commission to monitor and enforce compliance with these regulations.
- iii. *Awareness, Education and Outreach:* For this focal area activities will focus on disseminating relevant information, such as wildlife use rules and regulations, to appropriate stakeholders as well as promoting a greater knowledge, appreciation and awareness across the general public of Guyana's wild fauna and flora.
- iv. *Research and Management Interventions:* Activities under this focal area will work towards gaining a better understanding of wildlife and threats to wildlife, as well as developing protocols to deal with wildlife emergencies and situations that arise as a result of interaction with humans or otherwise.

This Plan is meant to be adaptive and as such will be reviewed periodically and adapted in response to changing needs and environments. The plan will be monitored and evaluated against the Key Performance Indicators detailed in the appendices, both at mid-term (2024) and at the end of the 10 years (2029). This will enable the Commission and stakeholders to assess progress related to the strategy and to make revisions for the subsequent 10 years.

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About Us

Established in 2017, the Guyana Wildlife Conservation and Management Commission is one of Guyana's newest environment agencies. **Securing the Future of Our Wildlife** through the effective management, conservation and sustainable use of Guyana's wild fauna and flora is the ultimate purpose of our Commission.

Our Story

Recently established, the Guyana Wildlife Conservation and Management Commission (GWCMC) has evolved over the years from its first incarnation, the Wildlife Division, which was created in the 1980's to regulate wildlife use. In the 1990's the then Wildlife Division was moved from under the Ministry of Agriculture to the Office of the President, following a recommendation to suspend wildlife trade for Guyana by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Almost 20 years later, the Wildlife Division was once again moved and the

accounting arm was placed under the Environmental Protection Agency, with the operational arm becoming independent and overseen by the Wildlife Management Authority Board. Responsibility for oversight of the Wildlife Division changed a few more times until 2016 when the Department of Environment, Ministry of the Presidency assumed the role.

The GWCMC was formally established by the passage of the Wildlife Conservation and Management Act of 2016 which was brought into force on June 1, 2017. In addition to establishing the GWCMC, the Act also outlines the functions of the Commission, provides guidelines for the Wildlife General Fund and establishes the Wildlife Scientific Committee (WSC) to meet the requirements of CITES (Sections 4, 6, 12 and 8 respectively). The GWCMC is designated as the CITES management Authority for Guyana overseeing all international wildlife trade and the WSC is the CITES Scientific Authority of Guyana.

Our Mandate

“Wildlife” includes any non-cultivated or non-domestic flora and fauna occurring in Guyana’s land, air or waters

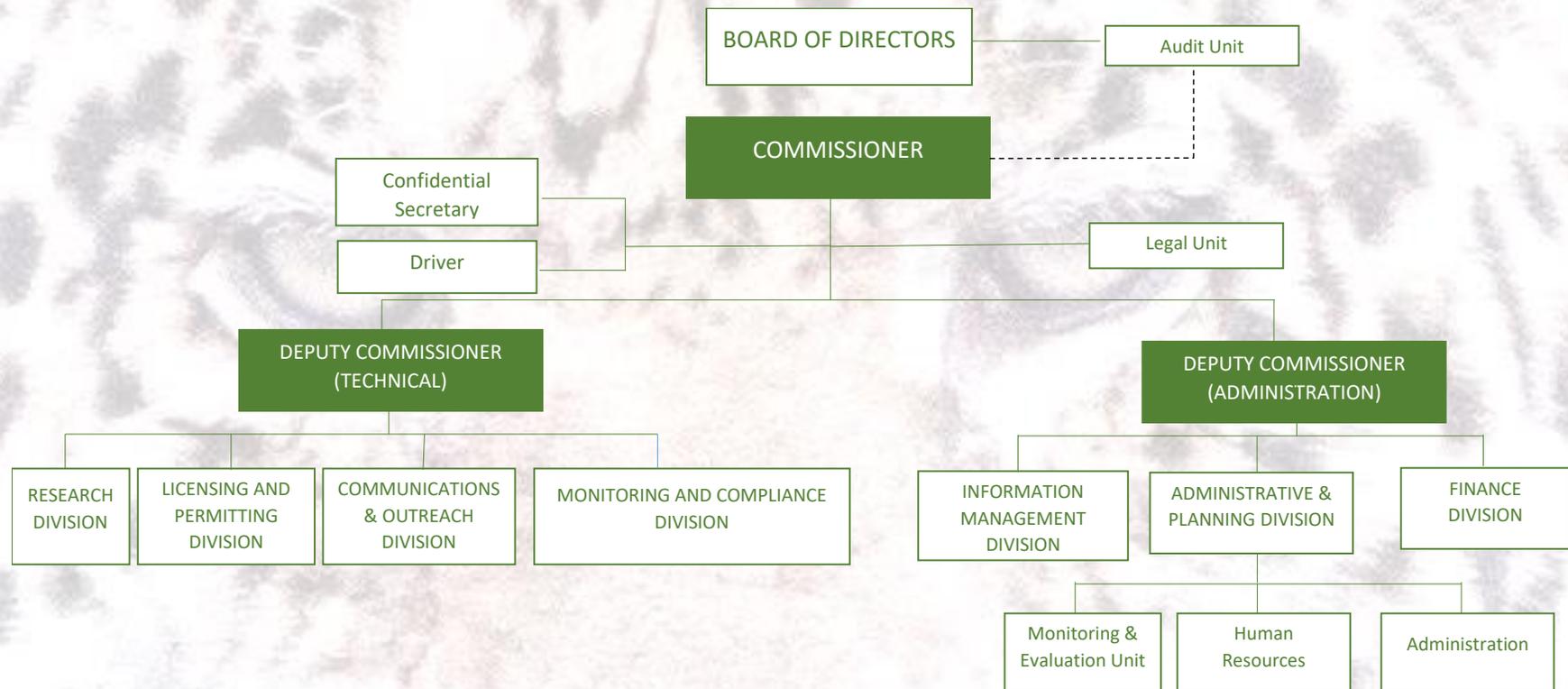
In accordance with the Wildlife Conservation and Management Act (WCMA), 2016, GWCMC is responsible for the overall effective management, conservation, and sustainable use of wildlife, with specific functions including:

- Granting, amending or cancelling licences, permits and certificates for wildlife related activities;
- Monitoring and enforcing compliance with wildlife regulations;
- Promoting awareness, information and education of wildlife related issues;
- Carrying out scientific research and monitoring of wildlife;
- Developing wildlife management plans and programmes in collaboration with stakeholders, and strengthening community participation in wildlife management;
- Determining rules for the hunting, trapping and trade of wildlife;
- Overseeing the design, management and operations of holding premises and transportation of wildlife;
- Regulating the establishment, and operation of zoos and rescue and rehabilitation centers in Guyana; and
- Advising government on wildlife-related matters and international agreements.

Our Shared Values

- We will act with **integrity** at all times, while also considering the needs of stakeholders in decisions made and actions taken.
- We endeavour to be an open and **transparent** organisation internally as well as with our stakeholders and we shall be held **accountable** in all that we do.
- We are committed to being a **reliable** organisation that will **adapt** to changing circumstances as needed, to ensure we continue to achieve our vision of securing a future for our wildlife.

Our Organisational Structure



Other supportive wildlife related national legislation

Environmental Protection Act, 1996

To coordinate environmental management activities of all persons, organizations and agencies in Guyana

Fisheries Act, 2002

To regulate fishing in Guyana's waters

Forestry Act, 2009

To encourage the sustainable development and growth of forestry in Guyana

Protected Areas Act, 2011

To establish and manage Guyana's National Protected Areas System

National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) (2012-2020)

To provide the strategic framework for Biodiversity Management in Guyana

Other wildlife related International Agreements

United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), 1994

To ensure the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources

Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPA) Protocol 2010

A protocol of the Cartagena Convention to protect, preserve and manage wildlife in a sustainable way.

National Context

The first national legislation pertinent to Guyana's wildlife was the Wild Birds Protection Act in 1919, which provided for the protection of certain wild birds. Eighty years later the Species Protection Regulations 1999 was enacted to prevent over-exploitation of species as a result of unregulated importation and exportation. In 2008, a review of the Species Protection Regulations began which then led to the preparation of the draft Wildlife Import and Export Regulations. These regulations were subsequently amended to the Wildlife Import and Export Bill which was tabled in Parliament in 2014. In 2015 this Bill was reviewed, amended and renamed the Wildlife Conservation and Management Bill. Finally, in August 2016, the Wildlife Conservation and Management Bill was passed by Parliament and assented to by His Excellency President David Granger in October 2016. The **Wildlife Conservation and Management Act (WCMA), 2016**, was brought into effect on June 1, 2017 and is the overarching Act under which we operate. Despite this new Act, regulation gaps still remain, for example the domestic trade. As such developing appropriate legislation, monitoring wildlife use, and ensuring compliance were all identified as key activities under this Strategic Plan.

International Context

Guyana became Party to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in 1977. As the CITES Management Authority of Guyana, CITES is our most relevant international agreement. As a result of the recent enactment of the Wildlife Conservation and Management Act, 2016, Guyana was upgraded by CITES to Category 1 status in 2017 after a previous Category 2 rating. Category 1 status means that it meets all the legislative requirements for implementing the provisions of the Convention, specifically it:-

- Designates at least one Management Authority and one Scientific Authority;
- Prohibits trade in specimens in violation of the Convention;
- Penalizes such trade and confiscates specimens illegally traded or possessed

Overview

Guyana is part of the Guiana Shield region that forms part of the Amazon Biome. It is thought to be home to approximately 8,000 plant species (including 1182 native tree species), 467 fishes, 130 amphibians, 179 reptiles, 814 birds, 225 mammals, 1,673 arthropods, over 1,200 fungi, 33 bacteria, 13 nematodes, 44 algae and 17 molluscs¹. Of these, 4.5% of mammals, 0.4% of birds, 3% of amphibians, 3.3% of reptiles, and 0.3% of freshwater fish are globally threatened¹. Despite their globally threatened status, many of these species have healthy populations across their Guyana range. There are a total of 24 faunal and floral species currently Red listed as Critically Endangered or Endangered.

Critical Endangered (CR) and Endangered (E) Fauna and Flora of Guyana

Mammals

- Giant Otter (*Pteronura brasiliensis*) E

Birds

- Rio branco antbird (*Cercomacra carbonaria*) CR
- Hoary-throated spinetail (*Synallaxis kollari*) CR
- Sun parakeet (*Aratinga solstitialis*) E
- Red siskin (*Carduelis cucullate*) E
- Great-billed Seed-finch (*Sporophila maximiliani*) E

Amphibians and Reptiles

- Hawksbill Sea Turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) CR
- Green Sea Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) E
- Gymnophthalmid lizard (*Echinosaura sulcarostrum*) E
- Robber frog sp. (*Pristimantis aureoventris*) E

Fish

- Daggernose Shark (*Isogomphodon oxyrhynchus*) CR
- Caribbean Electric Ray (*Narcine bancroftii*) CR
- Atlantic Goliath Grouper (*Epinephelus itajara*) CR
- Largetooth Sawfish (*Pristis pristis*) CR
- Nassau Grouper (*Epinephelus striatus*) E
- Scalloped Hammerhead (*Sphyrna lewini*) E
- Squat-headed Hammerhead Shark (*Sphyrna mokarran*) E
- Atlantic Bluefin Tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) E
- Golden Tilefish (*Lopholatilus chamaeleonticeps*) E
- Whale Shark (*Rhincodon typus*) E

Flora

- Wacapao tree (*Vouacapoua americana*) CR
- Mahogany tree sp. (*Trichilia surumuensis*) E
- Magnolia tree sp. (*Aniba rosaedora*) E
- Klotsch's Phragmipedium (*Phragmipedium klotzschianum*) E
- Selenipedium stevermarkii (Stevermark's Selenipedium) E

¹ Guyana's 4th report to the Convention on Biological Diversity, Environmental Protection Agency, 2010



Guyana engages in the commercial exportation of wildlife. The commercial exportation of wildlife is regulated (as per CITES convention) through a system of licences and permits issued by the GWCMC. Exporters of live wildlife are also required to hold these in monitored premises licensed by the Commission. An annual export quota, recommended by the Wildlife Scientific Committee, is established for species authorised for trade. The current cap on the number of licences issued per year is 25, with approximately 125 species of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and arthropods approved for export.

Mammals

There are 21 species of mammals authorized for commercial export including four species of primates. Of the mammals, the two-toed sloths (*Choloepus didactylus*), lesser anteaters (*Tamandua tetradactyla*) and kinkajous (*Potos flavus*) are the most popular species in the export trade.

Birds

Thirty-one species of birds are approved for commercial export including various species of parrots, macaws, toucans and song birds. The blue-and-gold macaw (*Ara ararauna*), red-and-green macaw (*Ara chloropterus*) and yellow-crowned parrot (*Amazona ochrocephala*) are the most popular parrot and macaws exported while the toco toucans (*Ramphastos toco*) are the most popular of the toucans. Surprisingly, the song-bird quota, which includes towa towa (*Oryzoborus angolensis*) and twa twa (*Oryzoborus crassirostris*), is poorly utilized.

Amphibians and Reptiles

Forty-nine species of reptiles and 19 amphibian species are approved for commercial export. Animals include three species of caiman, 10 species of venomous snakes, 11 species of non-venomous snakes, 13 species of lizards, five species of poison arrow frogs and 12 other species of frogs and toads. The most popular species exported from Guyana are Cuvier's dwarf caiman (*Paleosuchus palpebrosus*), Cook's tree boa (*Corallus hortulanus*) and the emerald boa (*Corallus caninus*). Other popular species for international export are the yellow footed tortoise (*Chelonoidis denticulata*) and red-footed tortoise (*Chelonoidis carbonaria*).

Fish

Ornamental fish species currently do not have annual export quotas assigned. The number of ornamental fish exporters has always been low and for the past several years there has only been one exporter licensed to export ornamental fish.

Invertebrates

Seventeen species of arthropods are authorized for commercial export including three species of tarantulas. The most popular species exported in this category are the bird-eating tarantula (*Theraphosa blondi*) and the pink-toed tarantula (*Avicularia avicularia*). Dead blue-morpho butterflies (*Morpho menelaus*) are also popular in this category. The remaining species are not exported to a great extent.

Flora

To date, no licenses have been applied for nor granted for trade of Guyana's flora although certificates of origin for the export of red cedar (*Cedrela odorata*) have been issued.



What we will do over the next 10 years

Our strategy over the next 10 years is based on four core focal areas or strategic goals, which together will help us achieve our vision of **Securing the Future of Our Wildlife**. The four themes cover both internal and external mechanisms and processes.

To have effective and efficient operational and financial systems and procedures in place

We will provide an enhanced quality of service to stakeholders and secure the future of Guyana's wildlife by ensuring competent and motivated staff are employed, housed and equipped appropriately. In addition, we aim to have streamlined, efficient and accessible operations, while at the same time meeting long-term funding needs.

Key Activities

- **Recruit and retain sufficient, motivated and capable staff**
 - Hire staff according to HR structure
 - Build skills and improve performance of staff
- **Build infrastructure and procure equipment**
 - Build and purchase as per needs assessment
 - Construct administration and field-based monitoring infrastructure
 - Construct rescue and rehabilitation center
 - Develop IT network
 - Develop appropriate signage
- **Improved financial procedures and sustainable financing**
 - Improve internal financial and procurement procedures, including appropriate accounting software
 - Develop and implement plan for sustainable financing mechanisms and increase income generation
- **Improved internal procedures**
 - Improve license and permitting procedures
 - Streamline internal processes
 - Develop safety Standard Operating Procedures

Goal 2

To develop an appropriate legal framework and ensure compliance with the laws governing wildlife in Guyana

We will endeavour to ensure that Guyana’s wildlife is secured by developing and overseeing the adherence of appropriate and relevant legislation by wildlife users through the effective monitoring of wildlife use and enforcement of wildlife laws.

Key Activities

- Develop and revise relevant legislation
- Monitoring
 - Develop and implement monitoring plans
 - Build capacity in staff and key stakeholders in monitoring protocols
 - Feedback monitoring results for improved decision-making and planning
- Enforce wildlife laws
 - Establish and build capacity for GWCMC enforcement and investigations unit
 - Collaborate with agencies for development of enforcement protocols
 - Build capacity in key stakeholders for the implementation of enforcement procedures and protocol



Goal 3

To foster appreciation of wildlife across Guyana and to ensure stakeholders understand the rules, regulations and relevant procedures of the GWCMC

We will encourage a greater appreciation of wildlife nationally, as well as an increased understanding of the practices and procedures necessary to secure the future of Guyana’s wildlife in all stakeholders using key national events, publications, awareness campaigns and communication strategies.

Key Activities

- Increase appreciation and understanding of wildlife importance nationally
 - Support national wildlife events
 - Establish and support wildlife clubs
 - Develop PR campaign and produce publication material
- Disseminate information on wildlife regulations and procedures to relevant stakeholders
 - Carry out awareness campaigns of relevant regulations, GWCMC procedures and best practices to relevant stakeholders
 - Inform general public on wildlife emergency procedures
 - Lobby government to include wildlife-related issues in its decision-making and planning

Goal 4

To gain a better understanding of the threats to the future of Guyana's wildlife to ensure better decisions and management practices

We will make more informed decisions that will help secure Guyana's wildlife by promoting research in priority areas and incorporating relevant results into management practices. We will also ensure that wildlife incident reports such as human-wildlife conflict, wildlife emergencies such as stranded or injured animals and protected species being held by private persons for example, are dealt with in an effective, efficient and appropriate manner.

Key Activities

- Carry out and provide feedback to management on priority research
 - Identify research priorities
 - Promote and facilitate relevant research by external researchers and institutions

- Respond and intervene to emergencies in a timely and appropriate way
 - Develop appropriate and relevant wildlife management plans
 - Develop SoP's for rescue, problem and injured animals as well as other wildlife emergencies





List of Appendices

Appendices can be found on our website
<https://wildlife.gov.gy>.

Appendix 1: Swot Analysis

Appendix 2: Stakeholder List

Appendix 3a&b: HR Structure

Appendix 4: Strategic framework with Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)