



## Report at a Glance

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## Report at a Glance

### **A RAPID BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE KONASHEN COMMUNITY OWNED CONSERVATION AREA, SOUTHERN GUYANA**

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#### **Dates of RAP Survey**

October 6–28, 2006

#### **Description of RAP Survey Sites**

The Konashen Community Owned Conservation Area (COCA) is comprised of 625,000 hectares of undisturbed forest located in a tropical wilderness area in the “deep” southern region of Guyana. The site is relatively unexplored and considered to be one of the last large and intact pristine areas of forest remaining in Guyana. It encompasses the watershed of the Essequibo River and the tributaries of the Kassikaityu, Kamoia, Sipu and Chodikar rivers. The area’s main mountains include the Wassarai, Yashore, Kamoia and Kaiawakua with elevations reaching 1200 meters above mean sea level. Within the Konashen COCA, the RAP team surveyed two primary sites and the aquatic teams surveyed focal areas encompassing the main waterways.

#### **Reasons for the RAP Survey**

Within the Konashen COCA there is one community (Masakenari) made up mainly of members of the Wai-Wai Indigenous group who utilize the area for their sustenance. The residents of this village have minimal external contacts and thus utilize the natural resources of the COCA for all their needs. Their major form of economic activity is the international wildlife trade, but they may also harvest other raw materials from the forest to support a craft industry in the community. The Wai-Wai of the COCA recognize that their demands on their natural resources are increasing and must be managed sustainably. Therefore, they expressed interest in collaborating with Conservation International (CI) and the RAP program to conduct an inventory of the natural resources of the COCA. The data collected will be used by the community to establish user-thresholds and to develop a management plan for sustainable use and conservation of their traditional resources.

### **MAJOR RESULTS**

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The data collected during the RAP survey indicate that the forests of the Konashen COCA are in very good condition and support rich biodiversity. Water quality was high, with no evidence of pollution. Typical of the forests of the Guayana Shield, the RAP team recorded high species diversity but low abundance levels of species of most groups and low species endemism. The potential for finding new taxa is high due to the lack of scientific exploration.

**Number of Species Recorded**

Ants	200+ species
Beetles	
(Scarabinae)	50+ species
Katydids	73 species
Fishes	113 species
Amphibians	26 species
Reptiles	34 species
Birds	319 species
Mammals	42 species (21 confirmed)

**Species Possibly New to Science**

Ants	at least 1 species ( <i>Trachymyrmex</i> sp.)
Beetles	at least 1 species
Katydids	at least 7 species
Fishes	<i>Hoplias</i> sp. <i>Ancistrus</i> sp. <i>Rivulus</i> sp. <i>Bujurquina</i> sp.

**New Records for Guyana**

Katydids	58 species
Reptiles	<i>Typhlophis ayarzaguenai</i> (blind snake)
Birds	<i>Ramphotrigon megacephalum</i> (Large-headed Flatbill)
Ants	At least 1 species ( <i>Mycetarotes acutus</i> )

**Species of Conservation Concern (IUCN 2008 and CITES 2008)**

Brown-bearded saki monkey ( <i>Chiropotes satanas</i> ), Endangered
Giant otter ( <i>Pteronura brasiliensis</i> ), Vulnerable
Giant armadillo ( <i>Priodontes maximus</i> ), Vulnerable
Bush dog ( <i>Speothos venaticus</i> ), Vulnerable
Brazilian tapir ( <i>Tapirus terrestris</i> ), Vulnerable
<i>Chelonoidi carbonaria</i> , Vulnerable
Blue-cheeked Parrot ( <i>Amazona dufresniana</i> ), Near Threatened
Scarlet Macaw ( <i>Ara macao</i> ), CITES Appendix I
<i>Chelonoidis</i> spp., CITES Appendix II
Black caiman ( <i>Melanosuchus niger</i> ), CITES Appendix I
Dwarf caiman ( <i>Paleosuchus trigonatus</i> ), CITES Appendix II
Emerald tree boa ( <i>Corallus caninus</i> ), CITES Appendix II

**Species Endemic to the Guayana Shield****32 Bird species:**

Black Curassow ( <i>Crax alector</i> )
Caica Parrot ( <i>Gypopsitta caica</i> )
Blue-cheeked Parrot ( <i>Amazona dufresniana</i> )
Rufous-winged Ground-Cuckoo ( <i>Neomorphus rufipennis</i> )
Guianan Puffbird ( <i>Notharchus macrorhynchos</i> )
Black Nunbird ( <i>Monasa atra</i> )
Guianan Toucanet ( <i>Selenidera piperivora</i> )
Green Araçari ( <i>Pteroglossus viridis</i> )
Golden-collared Woodpecker ( <i>Veniliornis cassini</i> )
Chestnut-rumped Woodcreeper ( <i>Xiphorhynchus pardalotus</i> )
Black-throated Antshrike ( <i>Frederickena viridis</i> )
Band-tailed Antshrike ( <i>Sakesphorus melanothorax</i> )

Northern Slaty-Antshrike ( <i>Thamnophilus punctatus</i> )
Guianan Streaked-Antwren ( <i>Myrmotherula surinamensis</i> )
Rufous-bellied Antwren ( <i>Myrmotherula guttata</i> )
Brown-bellied Antwren ( <i>Epinecrophylla gutturalis</i> )
Todd's Antwren ( <i>Herpsilochmus stictocephalus</i> )
Guianan Warbling-Antbird ( <i>Hypocnemis cantator</i> )
Black-headed Antbird ( <i>Percnostola rufifrons</i> )
Ferruginous-backed Antbird ( <i>Myrmeciza ferruginea</i> )
Rufous-throated Antbird ( <i>Gymnopithys rufigula</i> )
Boat-billed Tody-Tyrant ( <i>Hemitriccus josephinae</i> )
Painted Tody-Flycatcher ( <i>Todirostrum pictum</i> )
Capuchinbird ( <i>Perissocephalus tricolor</i> )
Guianan Red-Cotinga ( <i>Phoenicercus carnifex</i> )
Guianan Cock-of-the-Rock ( <i>Rupicola rupicola</i> )
White-throated Manakin ( <i>Corapipo gutturalis</i> )
White-fronted Manakin ( <i>Lepidobrix serena</i> )
Tiny Tyrant-Manakin ( <i>Tyrannetes virescens</i> )
Tepui Greenlet ( <i>Hylophilus sclateri</i> )
Blue-backed Tanager ( <i>Cyanicterus cyanicterus</i> )
Golden-sided Euphonia ( <i>Euphonia cayennensis</i> )

**CONSERVATION CONCLUSIONS FROM THE RAP SURVEY**

(see Executive Summary for more details)

The results of the RAP survey clearly support the Wai-Wai's decision to manage their area for conservation. To achieve their objectives of effectively managing the Konashen COCA, the residents of Masakenari need to address the perceived threats (illegal mining, logging, trapping, etc.) presented by the development of roads in neighboring areas. This will require them to establish community-based regulations and implement a system of vigilance and patrols to repel encroachment by illegal miners, loggers, and trappers from the area.

Furthermore, in order to sustainably manage their resources, the Wai-Wai will need to conduct further studies, including baseline inventories of species most likely to be over-harvested, and establish sustainable thresholds of hunting/collecting/gathering. Due to the socio-economic and cultural importance of hunting to the community, it is important for them to develop and implement a rotation system to distribute the effects of subsistence hunting over as large an area as possible.

In order to sustain their health, well-being and livelihoods while protecting their biodiversity, the residents of the area need to be regularly informed of any changes in the biological and ecological conditions of the COCA (e.g. the quality of their water resources and the status of populations of fish, mammals, vegetation, birds, etc.). This will require them to develop and implement a plan to monitor and assess the species populations that are the Wai-Wai community's most valuable food, hunting and trade resource, and also to establish a water quality monitoring program of the major rivers of the COCA.

Since the Wai-Wai's overarching goal of managing their COCA is to "keep their biodiversity" they need to continue to avoid the trapping and trading of species such as parrots and macaws for the pet trade, and to restrain from hunting and harvesting threatened species.

Ecotourism appears to be a viable conservation-based enterprise for the area. As such, the Wai-Wai community should implement a basic eco-tourism infrastructure that supports research and education-based activities that will further enhance conservation efforts and biological knowledge of the COCA.

As the Wai-Wai's management of the COCA progresses, there will be a need to further enhance the human and technical capacity for management. This will require the formation of formal partnerships with training, research and other conservation institutions, as well as the continued development of the Wai-Wai Rangers to effectively implement actions for the conservation management of the aquatic and terrestrial resources of the COCA.