

Suiform Soundings

ISSN: 1446-991X

PPHSG Newsletter
Volume 8(1) July 2008



Suiform Soundings

is the newsletter of the IUCN/SSC Pigs, Peccaries, and Hippos Specialist Group (PPHSG). This newsletter is electronically available at: <http://iucn.org/themes/ssc/sgs/pphsg/home.htm>

IUCN
The World Conservation Union

 **SSC**
Species Survival Commission

- forest sites. Pp 31-57 in: Robinson JG and Bennett EL. (eds.) *Hunting for sustainability in tropical forests*. Columbia University Press, Columbia.
- Peres CA. 2001. Synergistic effects of subsistence hunting and habitat fragmentation on Amazonian forest vertebrates. *Conservation Biology* 15: 1490.
- Rodríguez N. 1990. Reserva de la Biosfera La Amistad. *Biocenosis* 7(1): 30-32.
- Sowls LK. 1997. *Javelinas and other Peccaries, their Biology, Management and Use*. 2nd Edn. The University of Arizona Press, Tucson, Arizona.
- Taber A, Chalukian S, Altrichter M. *et al.* In preparation. 2008. *Análisis de la Distribución y el Estado de Conservación del Tapir (Tapirus terrestris) y el Pecarí Labiado (Tayassu pecari) en Latinoamérica y una Llamada de Acción*. IUCN PPHSG, TSG, WCS, Wildlife Trust.
- TNC, INBio, SOMASPA. 2005. *Análisis de Viabilidad de los Objetos de Conservación del Sitio Binacional La Amistad, Costa Rica-Panamá: Documento elaborado en forma conjunta por INBio y SOMASPA para TNC*. 93 pp.
- Vaughan C. 1983. *A Report on Dense Forest Habitat for Endangered Wildlife Species in Costa Rica*. Unpublished report, Environmental Science School, National University, Heredia, Costa Rica.
- Villalobos V and Borge C. 1998. *Talamanca en la encrucijada*. EUNED, San José, Costa Rica. Primera edición.

Status of the peccaries in the Guianas

Benoit de Thoisy¹ and Cécile Richard-Hansen²

1. TSG Coordinator for the Guiana shield, Kwata NGO, Cayenne, French Guiana
2. Office National de la Chasse et de la Faune Sauvage, Kourou, French Guiana

The Guianas region (Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana) hosts a single contiguous forest block that represents more than one third of remaining neotropical forest coverage, with expected good conservation status of several large mammals, including the Jaguar (Marieb 2006), the Giant Otter (Groenendijk 1998), the Lowland Tapir and the peccaries (Taber et al. 2006). Nevertheless, conservation policy remained unsatisfactory for a long time, with evidence of both a lack of ambition and the means to implement policy in the field. Guyana and Suriname have faced decades of political, economic and social difficulties, with biodiversity conservation featuring low on the list of priorities. In contrast, French Guiana has a stronger economy. However, due to its status as a French administrative unit, many judicial decrees relating to nature conservation remain either inappropriate for application in the territory, or legally inapplicable. In addition, divergent ambitions between local authorities and national government agencies complicate the political implementation of a conservation vision for the region.

Status of the peccaries

Habitat loss is limited in Suriname, Guyana, and French Guiana (FAO 2005). The two peccary species, *Tayassu pecari* and *T. tajacu*, are still distributed widely within the three countries, with hunting being the main threat to these populations.

In French Guiana, only 3% of the territory is under strong protection, where hunting is totally prohibited. Outside nature reserves, there is no hunting regulation. As with other species (de Thoisy & Renoux 2004, de Thoisy et al. 2005), harvests beyond the recommended thresholds occur in the North of the country, where most of the human population is concentrated. Currently there is no regulation on peccary hunting,

however discussions with hunters are underway regarding a quota system. Although there is no specific study currently being conducted on these two species, data from multi-species surveys provides basic information on the species status. Line transects were conducted in ca. 40 different hunted and non-hunted sites, while hunting monitoring in several localities allowed for the assessment of harvest rates, associated threat levels, and basic population data such as sex and age ratios.

In Suriname, hunting regulation is restricted to the northern third of the country, with an open harvest season running from August to March for the two species. In the southern parts of the country, no regulations are in place, in order to respect the Amerindian way of life and natural resource use. This policy is now obsolete and should be urgently revised, as numbers of settlements of non-Amerindian peoples are increasing in the south, resulting in unregulated pressure.

In Guyana, protection and management are restricted to the few protected areas, covering less than 1% of the territory.

The Amazonian National Park in French Guiana, a process initiated 15 years ago

At the Rio conference in 1992, the French president stated his intention to create the “Amazonian National Park” in French Guiana. Fifteen years later, in February 2007, the decree was signed. Conflicting interests between national (i.e., from France) and local authorities, between biodiversity spots and gold mining lobbies (Hammond et al. 2007), and a lack of traditional community rights in the French laws, resulted in two aborted pre-projects, before the final signing in 2007. With this new protected area of 20,000 sq km, the country presently contains a comprehensive and well-configured network of protected areas. Together with the Tumucumaque National Park (3,8 millions ha), the ecological station of Grão-Pará (4,3 millions ha) and the Maicuru Reserve (1,2 millions ha), the largest tropical forest area in the world of more than 12 million hectares is now under the legal protection of both France and Brazil.

However, the Guianan National Park is still waiting for IUCN consideration, since I-IV IUCN protected areas status is not reached with the current park regulations. The area remains legally open to hunting practices by tribal communities for subsistence purposes only. Extractive activities are controlled by the same French decrees as outside the park, but are restricted to local communities, respecting their traditional way of life. This decision was controversial, but the Park argues that the rationale behind the decision was based on both scientific monitoring and respect for indigenous livelihoods, which is the solution when it comes to natural resource conservation in inhabited Amazonian forests. An innovative concept of National Parks may thus have been implemented, although difficulties do still remain: intense illegal gold mining pressure within the Park territory, tensions between different indigenous communities inhabiting the Park, continued denial of the project by several locally elected politicians, the implementation of a framework for the daily functioning of the park, ...

References

- de Thoisy B and Renoux F. 2004. *Status of the lowland tapir in French Guiana: hunting pressure and threats on habitats*. Second International Tapir Symposium, TSG/SSC, Panama.
- de Thoisy B, Renoux F and Julliot C. 2005. Hunting in northern French Guiana and its impacts on primate communities. *Oryx* 39: 149-157.
- Groenendijk J. 1998. *A review of the distribution and conservation status of the giant otter (Pteronura brasiliensis), with special emphasis on the Guayana Shield Region*. Netherlands Committee for IUCN. Amsterdam.

- Hammond DS, Gond V, de Thoisy B, Forget PM and DeDijn B. In press. Causes and consequences of a tropical forest gold rush in the Guiana Shield, South America. *Ambio*.
- Marieb K. 2006. *Jaguars in the New Millennium*. Data Set Update: The State of the Jaguar in 2006. Wildlife Conservation Society.
- Taber A, Chalukian S, Minkowski K, Sanderson E, Altrichter M, Antúnez M, Ayala G, Beck H, Bodmer RE, Cartes JL, Gomez C, Gómez H, de Thoisy B, Emmons L, Estrada N, Flamarion de Oliveira L, Fragoso J, Garcia R, Goldstein I, Gómez H, Keuroghlian A, Ledesma K, Lizárraga L, Lizcano D, Lozano C, Medici P, Montenegro O, Moraes E A, Neris N, Noss A, Palacio Vieira JA, Paviolo A, Perovic P, Reyna-Hurtado R, Radachowsky J, Rodriguez Oriz J, Rumiz D, Salas L, Sarmiento Dueñas A, Sarria Perea J, Schiaffino K, Tobler M, Utreras V, Varela D, Ventincinque E, Wallace R and Zapata Rios GA. 2006. *Range-Wide Status Analysis of Lowland Tapir (Tapirus terrestris) and White-lipped Peccaries (Tayassu pecari): Preliminary results for lowland tapirs and conservation implications*. 3rd International Tapir Symposium, TSG / SSC – IUCN, Argentine.

Restoration of the genus *Porcula*

Stephan M. Funk

Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, Trinity, Jersey, Channel Islands Stephan.Funk@durrell.org

The pygmy hog *Porcula salvania* synonym *Sus salvanius* (Hodgson 1847) is one of the world's most endangered mammals (Anon., 1985; Oliver & Deb Roy, 1993). Pygmy hogs differ from members of the genus *Sus* in the extreme reduction in body, ears and tail size, the presence of only three pairs of mammae, relatively short medial false hooves, and snout disc perpendicular to axis of head. There is an absence of warts or gonial whorls. Body shape is more 'streamlined' than in other pigs; in adults tapering from relatively longer hind quarters to smaller forequarters.

Adult dentition in pygmy hog is similar to *Sus* spp.

Hodgson (1847) first described the species as *Porcula salvania* and the sole member of the genus. He argued that the pygmy hog was a genus separate from *Sus* and other Suid genera based on external character differences, especially skull and dental features. This classification was adopted by Pilgrim (1926) and later by Ghosh (1988). However, morphological disparities were subsequently interpreted as 'superficial' and a consequence of body size miniaturization, leading to the widespread acceptance of the pygmy hog as a *Sus* (Corbett and Hill, 1980; Groves and Grubb, 1993; Nowak, 1999). More specifically, Garson (1883), Corbet and Hill (1980), Oliver (1980) and Groves (1981) concluded that the various dental and other features described by Hodgson were based on the immaturity of the holotype, or were insufficient to merit generic distinction from other members of the Genus *Sus*. Following Groves and Grubb (1993), the pygmy hog was included among the non-warty pigs in the *Sus*, and later by Groves (2001) in one of three distinct clusters defined by the ratio between the width of the inferior surface and the posterior surface of the lower canine or "canine index" (Groves, 2001). In both classifications, the pygmy hog was included as a sister species of *Sus scrofa*.

Recent genetic analyses by Funk *et al.* (2007) confirm the original classification of the pygmy hog as a monotypic genus. Using three mitochondrial DNA loci (2316 base pairs of control-region, cytochrome b, 16S), combined with rigorous statistical testing of alternative phylogenetic hypotheses, Funk *et al.* (2007) distinguish the pygmy hog from all other pigs. In particular, the analyses showed that the pygmy hog