CIFOR

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

cirad

WCS

©FAO/Samantha James

SWM SUSTAINABLE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

Facts and figures from inland fisheries in North Rupununi

2019-2020 Report

Required citation:
FAO, CIRAD, CIFOR and WCS. 2021. *Facts and figures from inland fisheries in North Rupununi 2019–2020 Report.*

Facts and figures from inland fisheries in North Rupununi

2019-2020 Report

CONTENTS

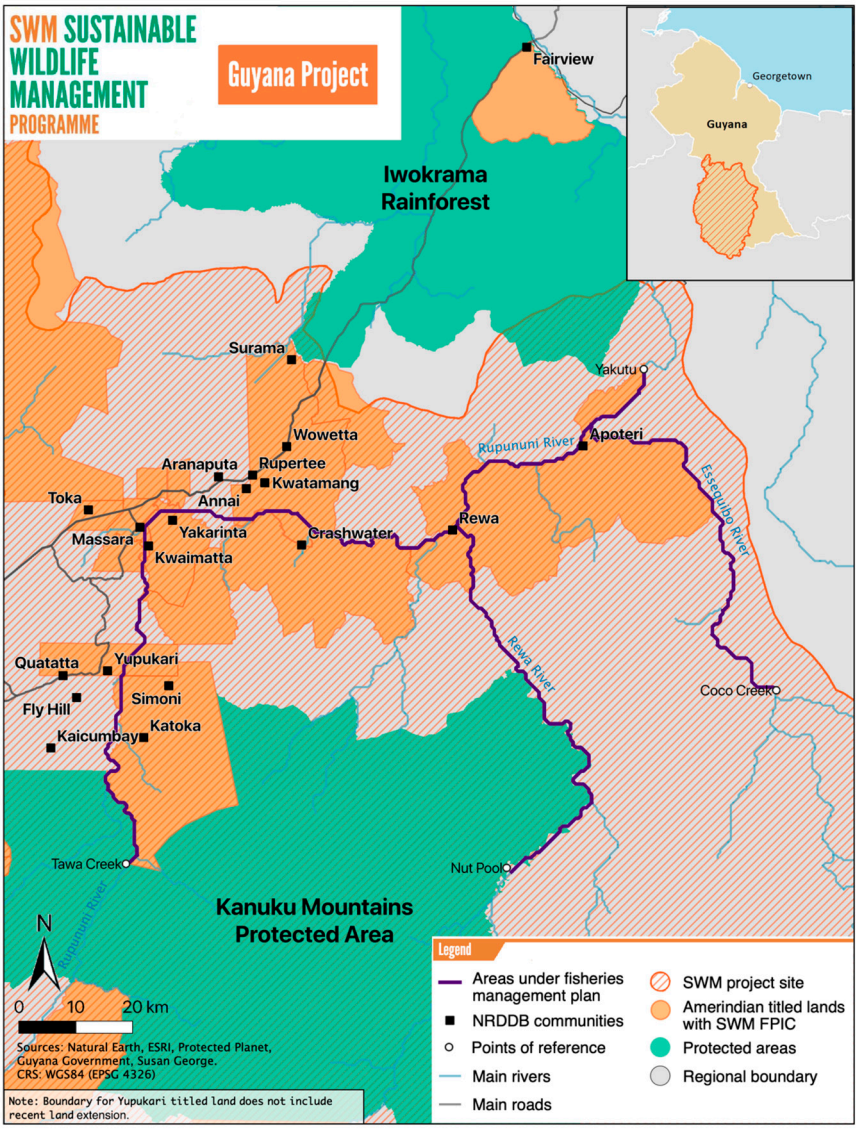
©FAO/Nathalie van Viet

The Rupununi, Region 9

is a seasonally flooded wetland and an integral ecosystem for healthy fish populations. On recognizing diminishing fish stocks and threats from mining, large scale agriculture and over-harvesting back in 2011, the North Rupununi District Development Board (NRDDB) mobilized local communities and developed a plan to **manage fish resources in a sustainable manner.**

In 2018, with support from the Sustainable Wildlife Management Programme and in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Fisheries, the NRDDB started piloting the first inland fisheries management plan in Guyana with the active participation of both community leaders and community members. Implementation started in 2019 with awareness raising about the fisheries guidelines through **village meetings** and **river patrols.** Additionally, a comprehensive monitoring system was put in place.

Who is involved in the NRDDB fisheries management plan?



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of FAO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers and boundaries.

The Fisheries Management Plan covers 386 km of the **Essequibo, Rupununi** and **Rewa rivers** and involves guidelines for sustainable fisheries, monitoring of fish use and trade, monitoring of fish stocks, and river patrols for awareness raising.

The Fisheries Management Area includes 20 communities that are members of the NRDDB with a population of about **7 146,** mainly from the Makushi tribe.

sustainable fisheries

monitoring of fish stocks

monitoring of fish use and trade

river patrols

How is data collected?

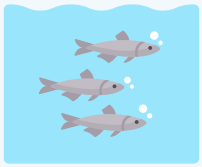
Data collection started in July 2019 and is currently ongoing. Below, we present data collected over one-and-a-half years from **July 2019 to December 2020.**

The type of data collected includes:

Interviews with
78 fishers
about their catch and fishing practices

Interviews with
67 village shops
about fish trade

13 river patrols
to raise awareness but also to monitor fishing activities along the river

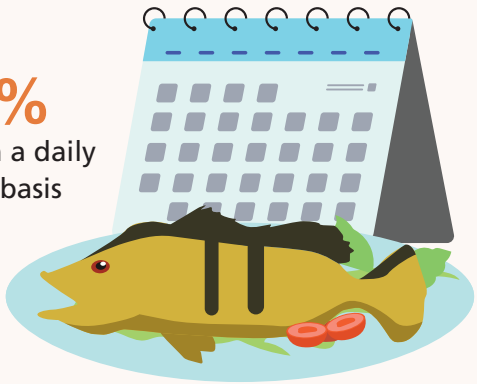


Fish stock assessment
in **23 sites**
to assess species, quantities and fish length

Monthly consumption surveys conducted by Community Environmental Resource Workers (CREWs) among
787 households

Household consumption per year

85.5%
eat fish on a daily or weekly basis



When fish is brought home, it is cooked, and this dish may provide for **1 or 2 daily meals**

The amount of fish eaten per capita is **0.13 kg per day.** This is equal to **50.74 kg** of fish per capita per year, higher than the national average and among the highest averages worldwide

Fishing practices

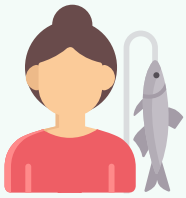
86.3%
of the households interviewed go fishing daily or weekly

About **66%** of the fishing trips last one day, although some fishing trips last up to more than a week

Fishing trips also often combine other activities such as **hunting and farming**

90%
of the fishers are men

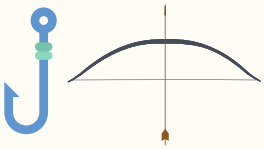
10%
are women



Women participate in **23%** of the fishing trips, among other engagements in fishing, cooking and preservation of fish by smoking

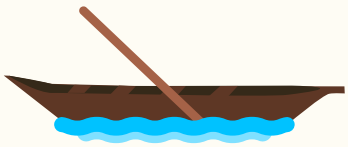
Average catch per day ranges between **10 to 20 kg** of fish

Fishing gear and species caught

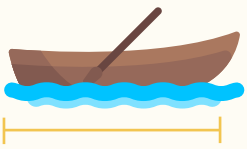


Hook and line as well as **bow and arrow** are the methods most often used by fishers

Most commonly caught species in boat fishing trips include: baiara, black perai, lukanani, amuri and tiger fish



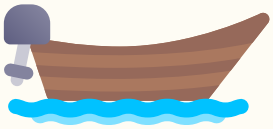
When fishing from a boat, **45%** of the fishing trips are done in dugout canoes



76% of the boats are less than 5 metres long and **72%** of them use an outboard engine

Fish is preserved either by **smoking or salting,** but a minority (1.1%) have access to coolers to conserve the fish on ice

31% are in aluminum boats



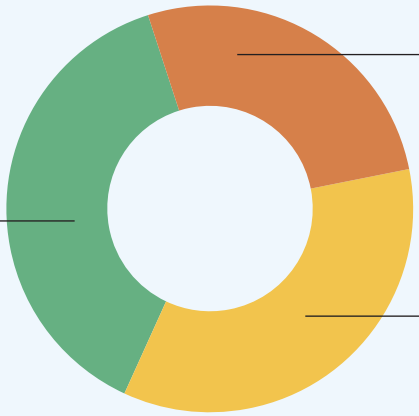
23% are in wooden boats

Subsistence or trade?

Subsistence as well as small- and medium-scale commercial fishing are practised in the North Rupununi

Out of those 786 interviewed, 27% sold part of their catch

Of the fishers who sold their catch:



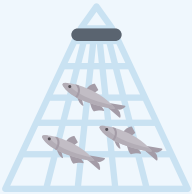
27% sell about **three-quarters** of their catch

38% sell **half** of their catch

35% sell about **one-quarter** of their catch

©FAO/David Mansell-Moullin

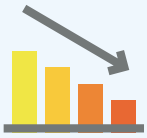
©FAO/Samantha James



In most cases commercial fishing is done with the use of **seines, nets** and occasionally with **traditional techniques**

Fish is sold for **GYD 400 per pound** (USD 2 per pound)

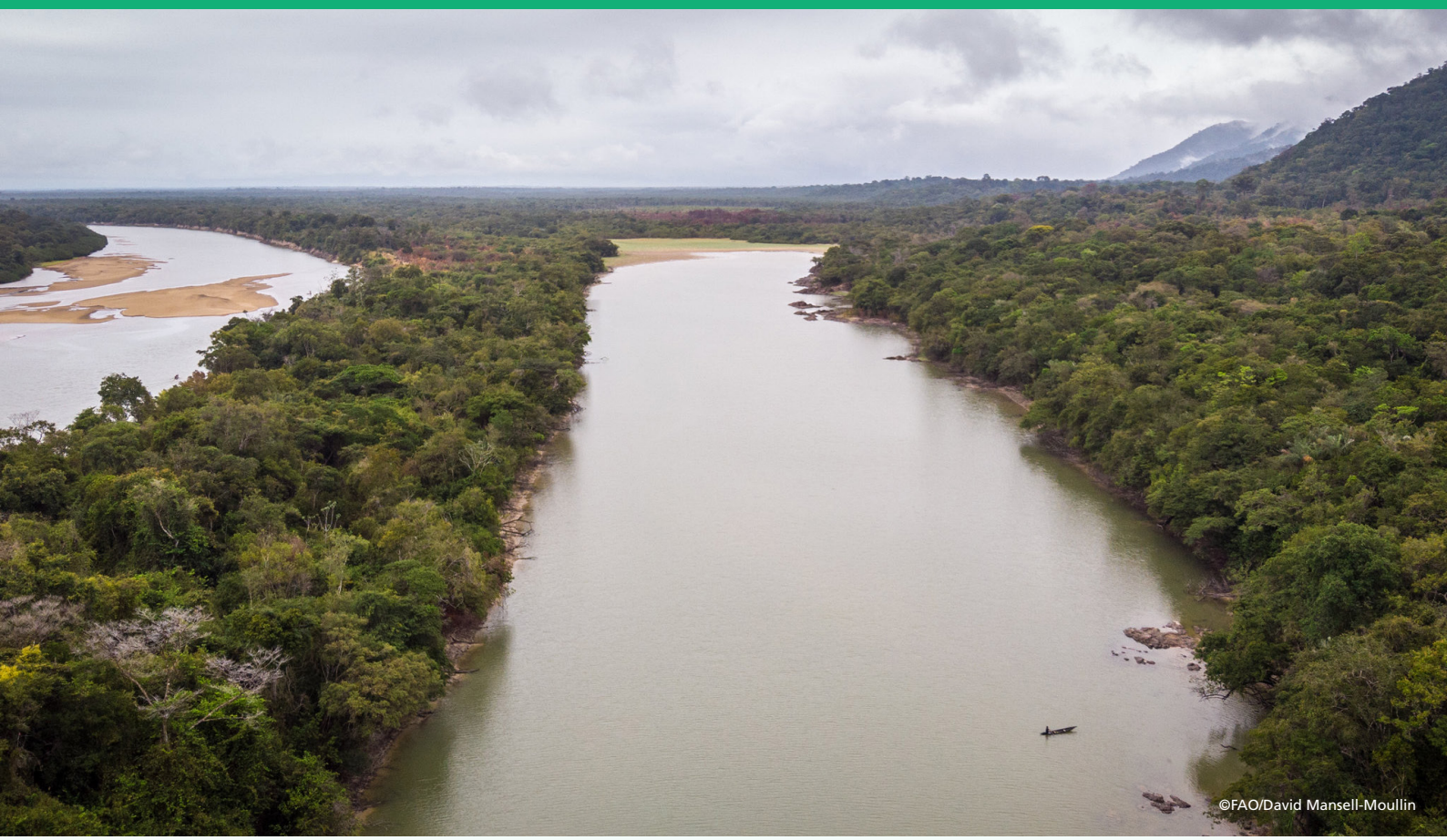
81% of the local shops sell fish products and most sell between **25 to 50 kg** of fish per month



Fishers perceive a **decline** in arawana *(Osteoglossum bichirrossum)*, lukanani *(Cichla ocellaris)*, large cat fishes and aimara *(Hoplias aimara)* which are all often targeted for commercial purposes

Lukanani is by far the most commercialized species

Awareness and enforcement


©FAO/David Mansell-Moullin

70% of the fishers that were interviewed are aware of the NRDDB management plan

Between 2019 and 2020, activities under the NRDDB management plan focused on monitoring and awareness raising. A new set of simplified guidelines and protection measures will be discussed with all community members during a consultation planned in September/October 2021.

Way forward

Monitoring data collected in the first year of assessment already clearly point out the need for continuation of the commercial fishing activities' monitoring. Some species require particular attention (eg. lukanani, arapaima etc.). Sport fishing activities are also part of the monitoring plan and, as soon as COVID travel restrictions are lifted, this data will be considered.

For a management plan to be successful, guidelines and protection measures need to be developed in close consultation with community members and regularly updated based on the information generated through the monitoring system in place. Success is based on inclusiveness and cooperation. Ongoing advocacy is important for this.

At the time of writing, the National Inland Strategy for Fish and Aquaculture is being reviewed through a collaborative process facilitated by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). In this context the NRDDB's Fisheries Management Plan could lay the groundwork for a pilot co-management structure, where NRDDB coordinates the fisheries team, community leaders help raise awareness and control, and the Fisheries Department contributes with enforcement.

For more information, email:
northdevboard@gmail.com

www.swm-programme.info

Supported by

Funded by
the European Union

National partner

CB6659EN/1/09.21