

# Customary sustainable use of wildlife: case study from Suriname & recommendations



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JOINT MEETING OF THE CBD LIAISON GROUP ON BUSHMEAT AND  
THE CITES CENTRAL AFRICA BUSHMEAT WORKING GROUP

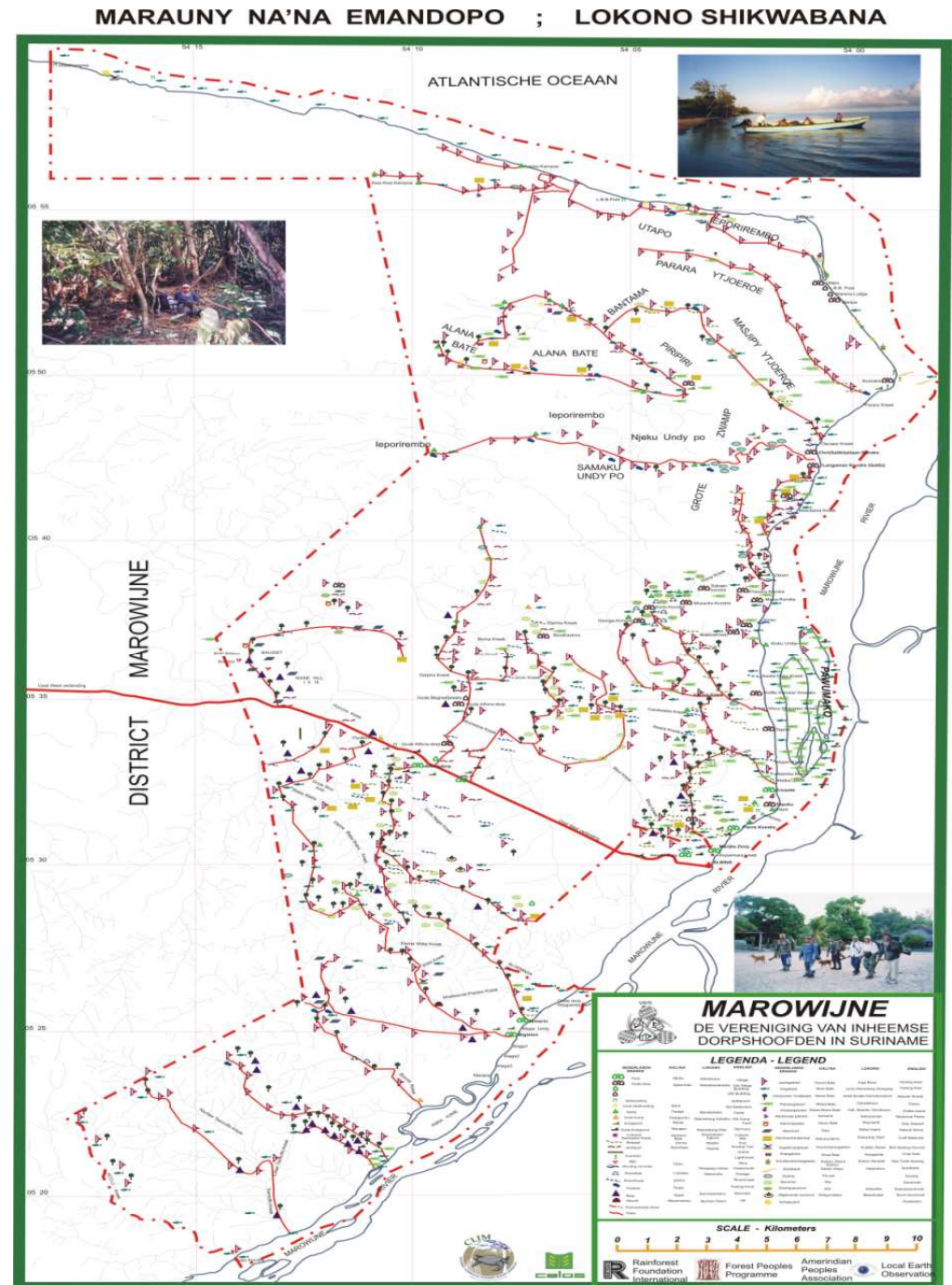
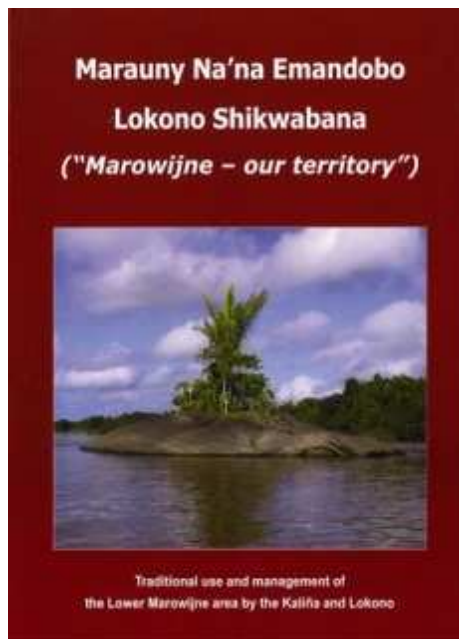
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Location:



2004 – present:

- Documented customary resource use (practices, rules and laws)
- Mapped traditional territory and land use





# Hunting in Marowijne (Suriname)

- Originally one of the most important activities: main means of subsistence
- Wild animals are used for:
  - Food
  - Sambura (big drum)
  - Bird feathers (e.g. parrot, marai, harpey eagle) for hair dress & ritual events
  - Some parts have healing power (e.g. howler monkey (*baboen*) for stammering / cough, etc.



# Hunter's knowledge

- Hunters have extensive knowledge of the forest
- Know best spots: e.g. where fruits fall that are eaten by animals, or by creeks
  - Read the signs where game is:
    - Animals' tracks
    - Animal's scent
- Know the forest: not get lost (use hunting lines)



Tracks of a jaguar (left) and a cayman

## **Sustainable use: spiritual / cosmological underpinnings**

- According to Kaliña and Lokono, everything on earth is alive (even stones) and interconnected
- All animal, plant, fish species, but also trees, rivers and creeks, have spirits that protect them and which humans must take into consideration
- Preserving the right balance between man and nature is of high importance
- If balance is upset (by incorrect/excessive use): there may be adverse effects such as disease, accidents, misfortune
- Shaman plays important role in preserving the balance: he is in contact with spirits

# Customary rules and laws

Main categories of rules:

- 1) Avoid young animals and pregnant animals
- 2) Take only what you need / can carry
- 3) Don't waste
- 4) Respect the animal: don't bully them
- 5) Certain species are not used (e.g. sea turtle, giant otter)

Rituals: talking to spirits and pay respect (pray) for fortune and good luck



# Game population: issues and challenges

- Still enough game, but:
  - More difficult to find
  - Deeper into the forest

## Problems:

- Close by mining and logging concessions
  - Noise of big machines, use of big lights: animals move away
  - Forest destroyed (gets smaller)
  - Fruit trees (fruits eaten by animals) are cut down
  - Roads are constructed: open access for poachers and sports hunters



*Pakoeli* – a favourite forest fruit  
for many animals



# Underlying issues

- No recognition of indigenous peoples land and resource rights:
  - State owns indigenous lands
  - Issues concessions to companies and individuals
  - No effective control of illegal activities
  - Restricted access to protected areas in indigenous territories
- No support and respect for traditional institutions and customary laws
  - Indigenous peoples forced to use government hunting calendar and policies
  - No application of traditional knowledge in wildlife management plans and indigenous peoples not involved in wildlife monitoring or management

**Bush-meat process:**

**key views, messages and  
recommendations**

## **Process so far:**

- Lack of full and effective participation of ILCs

## **Need for:**

- Ensuring inclusion of community-based views, input and solutions
- focusing not only on the effects of unsustainable harvest and illegal trade of bush meat on biodiversity, but also on biodiversity-dependent livelihoods
- Considering not only dietary value of bush meat, but also cultural significance Indigenous peoples

Indigenous and local communities are rights holders, not stakeholders, in this process!

## **Alternative income-generating projects:**

- Must be culturally appropriate
- Need to be established and implemented bottom-up (by and with communities, no 'forced' top-down projects)
- Need for funds and support, to assist communities in their own community-based livelihood and income projects

## **Addressing unsustainable harvesting of bushmeat and illegal trade:**

- also important for communities: adverse effect on their livelihoods which depend on forest and wildlife resources.
- However, communities should be involved in these actions, or communities should be supported to do this.
- Also, look at underlying causes of bush meat poaching/trade: illegal logging, opening up the forest/construction of roads: areas become more accessible to outsiders and sports hunters



- “Education” or awareness raising projects to teach indigenous and local communities how to use bush meat sustainably disrespect and under-appreciate the role of traditional knowledge and customary rules and laws about sustainable hunting and wildlife conservation.
- Rather than applying top-down solutions from a ‘western’ perspective, approaches to meet the ‘bush meat crisis’ should incorporate traditional knowledge and customary practices, and local solutions and strategies.
- Consider community-based monitoring of wildlife.

## **Protected areas as a solution:**

- Only if protected areas are established with the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and in full respect of their rights (in line with Decision VII/28, and the Programme of Work on Protected Areas, in particular programme element 2 on governance, participation, equity and benefit-sharing, and the UNDRIP)

# The village councils of the 8 Indigenous communities in Lower Marowijne



Thank you!