

2017 SMALL GRANT IN AID FOR RESEARCH – ANNUAL SUMMARY REPORT
The Society of Marine Mammalogy

Evaluation of the Amazonian manatee (*Trichechus inunguis*) perception in the Amanã Sustainable Development Reserve (ASDR), Amazonas, Brazil.

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For hundreds of years to the present, hunting has been the main threat for the Amazonian manatee (*Trichechus inunguis*). This species is endemic to the Amazon basin, and protected by national and international laws. In the western Brazilian Amazon, the Amanã Sustainable Development Reserve (ASDR) is one protected area that has supported research and conservation efforts on the Amazonian manatee before and after its creation (1998). The ASDR covers 2,350,000 ha, and is home to about 3,860 people in 86 localities linked, at different levels, to Amazonian manatee hunting events. Members of the Amazonian Aquatic Mammal Research Group (GPMMA, in Portuguese) have carried out studies and conservation activities in Amanã, Castanho and Paranã do Amanã sectors of the ASDR, which harbor a migratory route of this species. To identify whether the perception of the local population regarding the Amazonian manatee changed over time due to the actions of the GPMMA visits, semi-structured interviews and informal conversations have been conducted since August of 2017 in those three political sectors. The project is still ongoing, to date it was possible to carry out 37 interviews: Amanã sector n=10, Castanho sector n=16, and Paranã do Amanã sector n=11. Six former manatee hunters were selected to contribute life stories: one from Amanã sector, two from Castanho sector, and three from Paranã do Amanã sector. Additionally, in two communities of the Amanã sector conservation education activities were carried out in June 2018. The best attitude about Amazonian manatee conservation was identified in Amanã sector, highly visited area by GPMMA, and the most unenthusiastic local communities were found at Castanho sector, where distance and poor accessibility in dry season limit conservation efforts.

Funding awarded by The Society of Marine Mammalogy allowed the purchase of 780L of motorboat fuel (pure gasoline), contributions of food supplies were made in two ship expeditions to the Castanho sector, and five community members from Amanã sector were paid per diem to assist as field assistant, boatmen, and conflict mediators. **Special thanks to The Society of Marine Mammalogy for the financial support provided to this research.**