



## Guyana's Misunderstood Predator: The Jaguar

With its expansive tropical rainforests, savannas and coastal plains, Guyana boasts one of the world's most diverse wildlife populations. Among the over 5,000 species calling these landscapes home, the jaguar may be one of the most misunderstood.

Many recognize the jaguar as our national symbol, supporting the shield on Guyana's Coat of Arms and upholding the "One People, One Nation, One Destiny" principle that has long represented the strength and courage of our people. Many also know the jaguar as a predator – one just as elusive and dangerous as it is majestic.

On November 29, 2021, **International Jaguar Day**, Conservation International-Guyana is recognizing the jaguar's incredible impact on Guyana's biodiversity and the important work being done in Guyana to conserve it.

As Guyana's largest land predator, jaguars are an important link in regulating natural food chains, keeping herbivores in check and ensuring habitats stay healthy. Conserving the jaguar, and the healthy natural spaces that they support, is crucial to our ecosystem restoration and climate regulation efforts.

But despite the jaguar's once robust presence across the Americas, the species has lost over half of its natural territory and has even gone extinct in some countries. Much of this stems from human-driven habitat loss, illegal demand for jaguar parts, and killing of "problem" animals. In Guyana, where jaguar populations are still relatively healthy, incidents of human-jaguar conflict are increasing as development moves into new natural areas.

In the Rupununi savannahs, where cattle ranching has been practiced for hundreds of years, there is still a very strong fear of losing livestock to jaguars. For many Indigenous communities and local livestock owners, cattle are major investments and sources of dependable income. And although jaguar attacks in Guyana are relatively low compared to other parts of the Neotropics, the economic impact of losing individual cattle is significant, at times leading to the killing of any large cats in the vicinity of the attack, leading to an unnecessary loss of even more jaguars.

Conserving Guyana's jaguars will take a broad coalition of partners working to delicately balance the well-being of both our people and the nature on which we still depend. One such effort is underway in the Rupununi, where the Sustainable Wildlife Management (SWM) Programme is working with communities, the Rupununi Livestock Producers Association and the Rupununi Wildlife Research Unit to better understand the interactions between livestock and large carnivores.

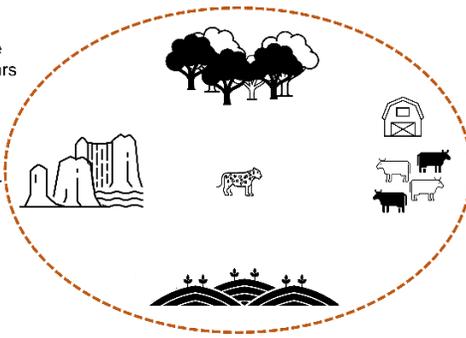
Whether tracking cows with GPS collars, camera trapping jaguars or mapping high risk areas for livestock, this local research is generating new information on how jaguars move across the landscape and interact with cattle. Using this information-driven approach is key to minimizing human-carnivore conflict, improving livelihoods and conserving healthy, productive natural areas.

As we celebrate the jaguar, its important place in Guyana's natural landscapes and the work being done each day by local villages, community scientists, organisations and the government to better conserve this iconic species.

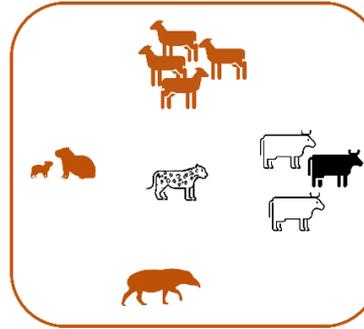
Happy International Jaguar Day!

## What drives human-jaguar conflict?

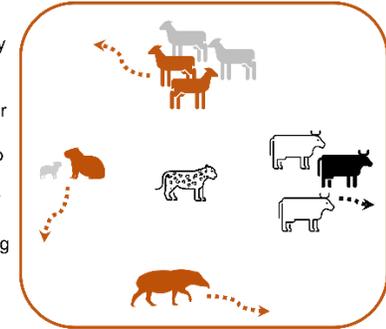
A large range means Jaguars have **higher chances** of encountering humans and livestock.



Naturally feeding on **large ungulates** like deer and tapirs, Jaguars easily mistake livestock for prey, especially when **livestock is brought into natural habitats**.



Cattle are relatively slow moving and **make easy prey**, especially for old or sick Jaguars. Livestock may also be attacked when **other natural prey have been reduced** by hunting or habitat loss.



### Links for more information:

International Jaguar Day:

<https://www.internationaljaguarday.org/>

Sustainable Wildlife Management Programme Guyana:

<https://www.swm-programme.info/country-guyana>

Panthera: <https://www.panthera.org/>

