

# We are Selva Maya

## Editorial

A new phase or in this case, a new year, is often associated with excitement and good intentions. The challenge is to reach the end of it with at least the same enthusiasm with which it began.

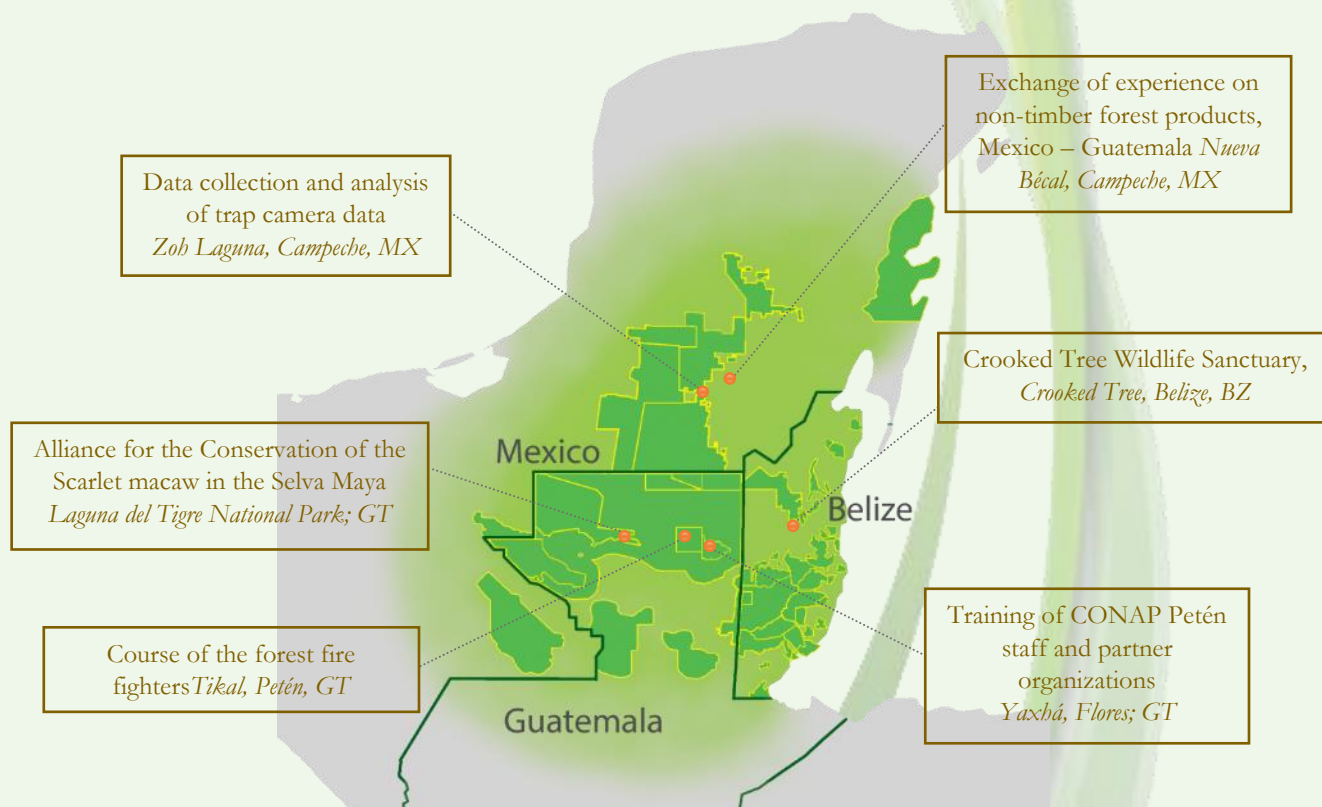
Keeping this in mind, the Selva Maya team expresses the sincere desire to consolidate the initiatives and projects planned for 2019, in particular those focusing on the conservation and protection of biodiversity and on positive action against climate change.

In the fourth edition of our bulletin *We Are Selva Maya* we present some activities that took place in the second half of 2018. Two topics, which we hope will be of interest and pleasure, will also be addressed: *Community Birdwatchers, an opportunity for Citizen Science* and the *Green List Initiative* of protected and conserved areas. Of course, all your comments, suggestions and criticisms are always welcome, to make this bulletin a functional source of information for everyone.

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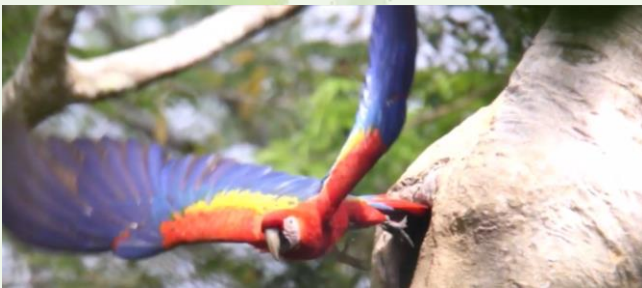
## News



## Alliance for the Conservation of the Scarlet macaw in the Selva Maya

The Selva Maya is the habitat of the highly endangered Scarlet macaw (*Ara macao cyanoptera*). Illegal trade and the loss of its habitat – mainly caused by forest fires, livestock and human settlements – has reduced its population to less than 1000 individuals throughout Central America.

Some organizations have been working for several years on the recovery and conservation of the species. In 2018 the Belizean organization Friends for Conservation and Development, the Guatemalan Wildlife Conservation Society and Natura Mexicana founded the Alliance for the Conservation of the Scarlet



Beauty that deserves to be conserved

macaw in the Selva Maya. This forms the basis for the exchange of experience and technical cooperation.

It has been recorded that the Scarlet macaws reproduce in the Guatemalan part of the Selva Maya and travel to the Mexican part after the breeding season. As a result, one of the challenges for effective conservation is to gather information on habitat use and survival strategies in this region.

With the use of satellite transmitters, it is possible to gain in-depth knowledge of their feeding sites and the regions used by the macaws at the end of the breeding season. The results of these findings identify the priority areas for protection. The Selva Maya Programme supports the Alliance's efforts to maintain a sound understanding of the mobility/ flight routes of individual Scarlet macaws between Guatemala and Mexico with the aim of promoting measures for the management and protection of the habitat and thereby contributing towards the conservation of the Selva Maya. An example of this is the workshop on satellite broadcasting that took place from August 3<sup>rd</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> in the Laguna del Tigre National Park, Guatemala.

## Exchange of experience on non-timber forest products, Mexico – Guatemala

In the Selva Maya region, there is a growing awareness of opportunities and activities that simultaneously increase families' sources of income and ensure the preservation of the natural environment. The spaces which to exchange experiences are without doubt an essential source of learning. With the aim of strengthening the knowledge and use as well as the commercialization of non-timber

forest products, such as chicle, organic honey and products of the Breadnut tree, an exchange of experiences between community groups from Petén, Guatemala and Nuevo Bécil, Campeche, Mexico took place from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> October.

The exchange included a visit to the Chicza Chicle Company in Chetumal, Mexico, where a presentation about the project and its successes was given. In addition, during a two day stay in the community of Nuevo Bécil, its members showed the visitors how to harvest, use and cook chicle (*Manilkara zapota*) in the field. The Guatemalan visitors took the opportunity to introduce the locals to use of Xate (*Chamaedorea elegans*), a type of palm tree that is widespread in the region and has great harvesting potential. Finally, the Mexican hosts presented some progress in their beekeeping activity and the Guatemalan visitors reported on the successes they had achieved by using the products of the Breadnut tree (ramón).



Activities during the exchange

### Course of the forest firefighters

Based on the comprehensive fire protection strategy of the Petén, Guatemala, and within the framework of the implementation of the plan of the Forest Fire Commission for the Prevention and Control of the 2018 – 2019 Forest Fire Season, the Course for Forest Firefighters was held from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> of August 2018 in the Research Centre for the Conservation of the National Park Tikal, Flores, Guatemala.

It should be noted that this course is part of a capacity building process to prevent and control forest fires and that this is the first course to be conducted at the national level of the new version of the forest fire fighters' course (CBF). They focused mainly on issues related to personal security. The participants were certified as forest fire fighters by the Office for Foreign Disaster (OFDA) of the United States.

The course was coordinated by the Fire Protection and Control Unit of the National Council of Protected Areas (CONAP), Petén, with the support of the project Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Selva Maya

(GIZ), the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), the Association of Forest Communities in Petén (ACOFOP), the National Institute of Forests (INAB), the National Commission for Disaster Reduction (CONRED), the Ministry of Culture and Sport (MICUDE), the BALAM Association and the ProPetén Foundation.



Delivery of certificates to the participants

### Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary

Between October and December 2018, five workshops were held in the Crooked Tree community, Belize, as part of the process of changing the Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary (CTWS) from a Category 1 to Category 2 protected area. The process was facilitated by Wildtracks, funded by the Selva Maya Programme, and led by the CTWS Steering Committee which consists of the Belize Forest and Fisheries Departments, Crooked Tree Community Council, Belize Audubon Society and other community representatives.

CTWS is a space animated by the community. Here, the responsible administration of wetlands and other natural resources, is sensitized to the issues of sustainable use – based on traditional practices – to ensure the use of these resources for present and future generations.

With the recent changes in Belize's protected areas legislation, CTWS has the opportunity to move from a Category 1 to Category 2 protected area. This means

that natural resources can be used in a sustainable way and through traditional practices. Therefore, a new management plan must be drawn up.

In February 2017, the CTWS Steering Committee signed a Memorandum of Understanding that paves the way for a future of collaborative management in which the Crooked Tree Community plays an important role in decision-making and implementation of the management plan.



CTWS Visitor Center

## Data collection and analysis of trap camera data

Monitoring wildlife by means of camera traps allows the understanding of habitat conditions and behavior of species, in particular that of those which have nocturnal living habits or are difficult to see with the human eye. With motion-sensitive devices, that are tactically placed in areas visited by wildlife, such as waterholes, watered pathways and other areas, images can be captured. One of the advantages of the camera traps is that they generally do not disturb animals, the most recent models use black- or infrared light, either of which are not visible to most animals.



Camera traps to monitor the wildlife in the Selva Maya

As a strategy to strengthen the technical capacities to monitor wildlife in protected areas, as part of the GIZ project Support of Biodiversity and Climate Change Monitoring in the Selva Maya Region (Belize, Guatemala, Mexico) on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU), a workshop was held in Zoh Laguna, Campeche, Mexico from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> July 2018 to collect and analyze camera trap data.

The workshop was held for technical field staff and representatives of the respective protected areas of the three countries Belize, Guatemala and Mexico, by staff of Calakmul Biosphere Reserve, Mexico. The participating institutions were: *Corozal Sustainable Future Initiative (CSFI)*, *Program for Belize (PfB)* and *Forest Department Belize*; *National Council of Protected Areas (CONAP)*, *Institute of Anthropology and History (IDAEH)* and *Center for Conservation Studies (CECON)*, Guatemala and the *National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP)*, in Mexico.

## Training of CONAP Petén staff and partner organizations

The Education and Development Department of the National Council of Protected Areas (CONAP) of the Petén Region has a training plan tailored to specific target groups.

The objective is to strengthen the capacities of personnel working in protected areas. Thus, from July 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018, a training on the *Manual de Guardarrecursos* was held, focusing on instruction of the institutional mandates: the importance of the protection and sustainable management of natural and cultural resources in and around protected areas, accompanying communities to support them in socio-environmental conflict resolution; unauthorized hunting of wildlife; biodiversity monitoring; patrolling and conducting campaigns to prevent and combat fires.

The activity took place in the facilities of the National Park Yaxha - Nakum – Naranjo, 58 park rangers and technical field staff of the National Parks Sierra del

Lacandón, Laguna del Tigre, Mirador-Río Azul, Complejos I, II and IV of the protected areas in the south of Petén, participated as well as representatives of the Institute of Anthropology and History of the Ministry of Culture and Sport (IDAEH / MICUDE) and the Petén Environmental Protection Unit of the Centre of Environmental Protection (CECON) of the University of San Carlos in Guatemala.



Trained staff

## Topic of interest

### Learn more about the Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas

The Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas is a programme proposed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) with the objective of successfully managing protected areas. This should lead to effective results in nature conservation and thus bring greater benefits to the population. The quality requirements of the Green List seek to foster governance, design and planning of the protected areas and the effectiveness of conservation to improve the management of the protected areas.

These quality requirements are designed to be applied in any protected area, the only prerequisite being that the protected area meets the IUCN definition of a protected area or is subject to a governance agreement. The local applicability of the standard is achieved by adapting the generic indicators and characteristics to the context of each area.

#### Management effectiveness in the Selva Maya

The Selva Maya natural resources protection project, financed by German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through the Development Bank (KfW) and implemented by IUCN, seeks to maintain the ecosystem functions and cultural values of this strategic area of important natural ecosystems shared by Mexico, Belize and Guatemala, thus contributing to the well-being of domestic and global ecosystem resilience and -services. Priority areas include improving the efficiency of protected area management by strengthening its institutional management and regional coordination to ensure the

conservation and sustainable use of the region's biological and cultural diversity.

In this context, a common reference framework for the effectiveness of management will be created for the Selva Maya. This aims to maintain the use of existing, effective, national management tools in protected areas and to ensure their continuous application, complemented by information necessary under the quality requirements of the green list. This process promotes:

1. Reviewing the indicators of the national instruments with those of the Green List quality requirements in order to identify important information gaps.
2. The establishment of the Green List expert evaluation group for the Selva Maya.
3. Adapting the Green List standard to the Selva Maya region in order to consolidate this common regional reference framework, which allows progress to be assessed in terms of management effectiveness.
4. The support of government and other actors involved in nature conservation in the systematic recording of compliance with global goals that aim to ensure nature conservation. In particular, those linked to the CBD Strategic Plan 2011-2020 and the Aichi targets, in particular Objective 11.



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#### EAGL Selva Maya

The Selva Maya Expert Assessment Group for the Green List (EAGL) consists of four local experts from each country convened by Selva Maya Strategic Coordination Group (GEC). As the name suggests, the field of action corresponds exclusively to the protected areas contained in this geographical area. The main objective of the EAGL Selva Maya is to promote the continuous improvement and adaptive management of protected areas using the common reference framework based on adapted quality requirements and to facilitate technical assistance.

## Topic of interest

### Community monitoring of bird species – an opportunity for Citizen Science

Bird monitoring provides extremely useful data for implementing measures and actions to conserve biodiversity. One of the tools used to collect bird related data is the e-Bird platform, a project of the Cornell Ornithological Laboratory and the National Audubon Society of the USA. This tool enables the users (so-called birders) to collect and retrieve online information about the bird species identified at a certain location and at a certain time. In addition, through this program, the various communities of bird observers, composed of experienced bird watchers as well as civil society, are directly and actively involved. Here we are talking about Citizen Science because civil society contributes to the recording of precise and updated data on biological monitoring, in this case, of birds. Thanks to this important contribution, we can get to know the status of bird populations, their behaviour and their evolution over time.

The number of bird observers in Community monitoring has increased. An example of this is the network of community bird observers, founded by the Mexican National Commission for Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity (CONABIO), which was created in collaboration between the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI-Mexico) and the Coordination of Biological Corridors and Resources.

In September 2018, the 6th meeting of the CONABIO Community Birdwatchers took place at the facilities of the Chetumal Technological Institute. This meeting was attended by community bird watchers and regional coordinators from Belize, Mexico and Guatemala. These events promote and facilitate communication and exchange of experience between the birdwatchers and the community.

In November and December 2018, in cooperation with NABCI-CONABIO, three training workshops for birdwatchers were held at various locations on the Yucatan Peninsula with the aim of promoting bird watching. The first workshop took place in the Municipality of Conhuas, Calakmul, Campeche, the second in the Santa Teresa Station of the Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve, Quintana Roo, and the third in the Toh, Puerto Morelos, Quintana Roo facilities. The participants (women and men) were local residents in the communities near the venues, students and staff of the National Commission for Nature Conservation Areas (CONANP). This training also provided the groups with the necessary equipment for the observation, identification and surveillance of birds.

Capacity expansion with two follow-up workshops is planned for 2019.



Monitoreo Comunitario de Aves



Left: Exercises during the training for bird watching  
Right: Basic material of a birdwatcher  
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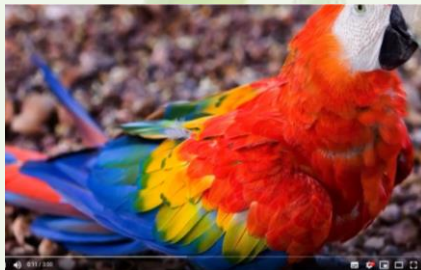
## Publications



**DOCUMENT (Spanish)**  
***Sistemas silvopastoriles intensivos  
y bancos mixtos de forraje***

Published by: *MAGA / Pastoral social VAP / Municipality of Flores / Rainforest Alliance / WCS / Selva Maya Programme GIZ*

Available at: <http://selvamaya.info/es/3526-2/>



**VIDEO (Spanish)**  
***Monitoreo de guacamayas***

The routes of the scarlet macaws in the Selva Maya are monitored by transmitters and GPS chips to promote their conservation and protection

Published by: *Selva Maya Programme GIZ*

Available at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_xwfhmLkGd8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_xwfhmLkGd8)



**VIDEO**  
***Living off the forest***

*Sustainable community initiatives that generate income for the residents and at the same time promote the preservation of the Selva Maya*

Published by: *Deutsche Welle*

Available at: <https://p.dw.com/p/32MrZ>



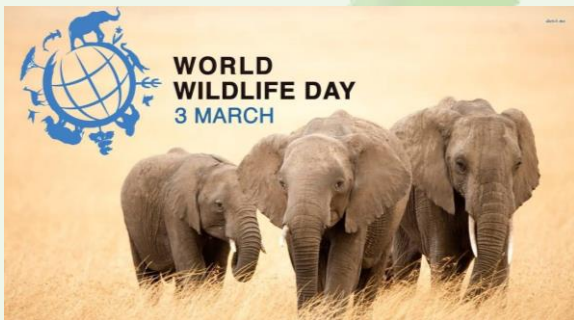
**VIDEO**  
***Conservationists turn to smartphones***

With the support of software, the protected areas are monitored in order to preserve them better and manage them effectively

Published by: *Deutsche Welle*

Available at: <https://p.dw.com/p/3465I>

## Important dates and commemorations



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