



Open wetland in the Pantanal

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- Argentina
- Belize
- Bolivia
- Brazil**
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- Guyana
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- Peru
- Venezuela

LIVESTOCK DEPREDATION IN THE PANTANAL

The Pantanal, located in the center of South America, just south of the Amazon, is the largest wetland in the world and harbors the greatest diversity of wildlife in all of the Americas. Approximately 670 species of birds, over 450 species of fish, and 64 mammal species are known here. WCS' activities are focused at better understanding the region's ecology, particularly that of landscape species such as the jaguar, and developing biodiversity friendly management.

The Human Aspect

The Pantanal has experienced more than 200 years of occupation and economic exploitation. Over 90% of the area is currently comprised of large private properties (56% of the area with ranches greater than 10,000 ha). In the savannas and gallery forests of the region, cattle ranching has been a traditional activity with thousands of cattle being grazed in habitats also used by jaguars and other wildlife.

Threats

The major source of conflict with humans in the region is the killing of livestock by jaguars. In an effort to reduce economic losses, many ranchers continue to indiscriminately, and illegally, kill jaguars on their property. Killing jaguars in conflict with human interests is a serious threat to their long-term survival.

Highlights

Total Area

- 54,040 mi²
- 140,000 km²

Habitat Types

- lowland grassland
- flooded savannahs

Wildlife Present

Birds

- jabiru stork
- Southern screamer

Mammals

- Jaguar
- Puma
- Ocelot
- Giant anteater
- White-lipped peccary
- Maned wolf
- Crab-eating fox
- Six-banded armadillo
- Marsh deer

Reptiles

- Anaconda
- Caiman

Plants

- Ipe tree
- Gravata

WCS involvement

- Since 1973





Cowboys in the Pantanal, Brazil

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WCS Activities

The Pantanal is recognized as an important site for the long-term survival of the jaguar. The numerous and indiscriminate killing of jaguars and the ever increasing number of complaints about livestock depredations requires devising ways to mitigate jaguar/livestock conflicts. Non-lethal management methods such as frightening devices, aversive conditioning, compensation plans and cooperative systems among cattle owners, all need investigation. However, finding effective solutions will not be possible without first understanding the dynamics of jaguar depredation. If factors can be identified that influence depredation on cattle, we may be able to apply alternative measures of depredation prevention and/or minimize economic damages in a more efficient way.

In an effort to address this important jaguar conservation issue, WCS is examining interactions between these cats and livestock on a cattle ranches in the southern Pantanal. We are collecting information on jaguar movements and habitat use, and examining foraging patterns of depredating and non-depredating cats in relation to livestock management practices. In addition, we are assessing the impact of livestock depredation by jaguars in the context of other causes of mortality.

Important Next Steps

- Determine demographics (density, survival, and mortality rates) of jaguar populations in the Pantanal as the basis for planning conservation programs in the region.
- Provide opportunities for the development of education and outreach of local professionals.
- Disseminate preliminary results in a way that will interest local residents and stakeholders.
- Examine the prospects of applying alternative non-lethal methods for depredation control.

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Mission

The Wildlife Conservation Society's International Conservation program saves wildlife and wild lands by understanding and resolving critical problems that threaten key species and large, wild ecosystems around the world.

WCS Strategies

- Site-based conservation
- Research
- Training and capacity-building
- New model development
- Informing policy
- Linking zoo-based and field-based conservation

Support this Project!

Donations can be sent to:
The Jaguar Conservation
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