

Location



Introduction

The Republic of Suriname, located in northern South America, is bordered on the north by the Atlantic Ocean, on the east by French Guiana, on the south by Brazil, and on the west by Guyana.

The climate in Suriname is tropical with two dry seasons: one from August to November and one from February to April; and two rainy seasons: a short one during December and January, and a longer one from April to July. Although the country lies outside the hurricane zone, it is subject to extreme heavy rains and flooding in the long rainy season. Average temperature ranges from 33°C in autumn to 23°C in winter.

Suriname and French Guiana dispute their common border between the Litani and Marouini Rivers. Suriname and Guyana dispute control of the territory in the New River Triangle/Upper Corentyne.

Regional Seas and Biogeography

Atlantic Ocean

Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs):
North Brazilian Shelf.

Habitats

Suriname's approximately 364 km of coastline is largely composed of mud and sand banks which are carried from the Amazon via southern equatorial currents; with areas of beach, saline swamp, mangrove forest and tidal estuaries.

- **Mangroves** are found all along the coast of Suriname, and to varying extent, into the mouths of the major coastal rivers of the country.
- **Tidal flats** are also found along the entire coast, extending into the major river mouths.
- **Seagrasses** are sparsely distributed, mainly in the central region of the country's coastline.

Biodiversity Hotspots

→ Ramsar sites

Coppenamemonding Nature Reserve (also a WHSRN site within the North Saramacca IBA) is a wetland complex on a coastal plain consisting of sand and shell ridges alternating with swamps, mudflats and mangrove forests. The site supports hundreds of thousands of migratory waterbirds, shorebirds and waders, as well as thousands of breeding pairs of herons, ibis and egret. The site also supports wintering waterbirds, four species of foraging sea turtle, and American Manatee (VU).

→ Nature Reserves/Multiple Use Management Areas (MUMAs)

Wia Wia Nature Reserve (also a WHSRN site and proposed RAMSAR site) located near the Marowijnje River, consists of shell and sand ridges with mudflats, narrow sand beaches and mangrove forests. The site hosts hundreds of thousands of resident and migratory waterbirds, as well as a number of endemic avian species. Its beaches also host nesting Leatherback (VU), Olive Ridley (VU), Green (EN), Hawksbill (CR), and Loggerhead (VU) Turtles.

Galibi Nature Reserve, at the estuary of the Marowijnje River, consists of sand beaches, mangrove forests, and saline swamps. It is the most important nesting beach in the western Atlantic for Olive Ridley (VU) and the only known arribada (mass nesting aggregation) in the Atlantic. Green Turtles (EN) and Leatherbacks (VU) also nest regularly, with rare nesting by Hawksbill Turtles (CR). Baboensanti Beach is the main turtle nesting beach. Thousands of waders are present during migration.

Noord Coronie MUMA (also an IBA) and *Noord Saaramacca Managed Resource Protected Area*, located on either side of the mouth of the Coppename River, are dominated by mangrove forests, lagoons, tidal mudflats

and brackish swamps. More than 118 avian species are found at these sites, with as many as five million waterbirds, particularly waders, using this stopover during migration. American Manatee (VU) also occur in the area.

Noord Caommewijne Managed Resource Protected Area, located between the Suriname River and the eastern border of the *Wia Wia Nature Reserve*, consists of mangrove forests, beaches, lagoons, tidal mudflats and brackish swamps. It includes the Matapica sea turtle nesting beach, where Green (EN), Leatherback (VU) and occasionally Hawksbill (CR) Turtles nest. American Manatee (VU) and feline species, including Jaguar (*Panthera onca*) and Ocelot (*Leopardus pardalis*) are found here. More than 118 avian species have been documented, with significant numbers of nesting ibis, migrating shorebirds and other waterbirds utilising the area.

→ IBAs

The entire coast of the country is listed within three IBAs -North Saramacca, North Coronie, and Bigi Pan, two of which are described above, as part of other biodiversity hotspots.

Bigi Pan (also a MUMA and Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network site), located near the mouth of the Corantijn River, consists of extensive mudflats, brackish swamps and lagoons, and mangrove forests. Significant numbers of herons, egrets and ibis breed and nest here and large numbers of shore- and waterbirds stopover during migration. American Manatee (VU) occur here and Ibis nest in large numbers during breeding season.

→ IMMAs

The waters off the coast of Suriname have not yet been evaluated for IMMAs.

At risk Wildlife

In this section, some individual wildlife species are mentioned followed by a letter in parentheses. These are species included in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species within the top three categories of risk - Vulnerable to extinction (VU), Endangered (EN) or Critically Endangered (CR). A more complete list of IUCN listed species is found in Appendix 1.

→ At risk birds

Over 115 coastal avian species have been recorded in Suriname, which is situated on the Atlantic Americas Flyway. Its mangroves and tidal mudflats are important wintering grounds for arctic and boreal shorebirds, and other aquatic avian species. Several heron, egret and ibis species nest in large numbers along the coast and several raptor species forage in these areas as well.

→ At risk reptiles

Five species of sea turtle nest on Suriname's beaches. Loggerheads (VU) only nest at *Wia Wia Nature Reserve*, while the other four species are more widely distributed along the coast. Several species of caiman also inhabit the country's coastline.

→ At risk mammals

Thirteen species of cetacean have been recorded in Suriname's waters. In addition, American Manatee (VU) is found in nearshore areas along much of the coast, and, although not considered marine mammals, Giant Otter (EN), Crab-eating Raccoon (*Procyon cancrivorus*), Jaguar (*Panthera onca*) and Ocelot (*Leopardus pardalis*) all forage along the coast and at the mouths of rivers that drain into the sea.

Past experience with oil spill and potential risks

There have not been any significant spills in Suriname's waters.

Oil production in the Suriname- Guyana Basin is rapidly increasing, with much of the area's offshore waters being explored or developed, increasing future spill risk.

International and Regional Treaties and Agreements

→ Oil spill and HNS Response

- CLC Convention 69
- CLC Protocol 76
- CLC Protocol 92

- FUND Protocol 76
- FUND Protocol 92
- FUND Protocol 2003
- LLMC Convention 76
- LLMC Protocol 96
- OPRC Convention 90
- HNS Convention 96
- HNS PROT 2010
- OPRC_HNS 2000
- BUNKERS CONVENTION 01

→ **Marine Biodiversity Protection**

- Cartagena Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment in the Wider Caribbean Region
- The Protocol Concerning Co-operation and Development in Combating Oil Spills in the Wider Caribbean Region (the Oil Spills Protocol)

Oil Spill Response and HNS Spill Response

→ **National Contingency Plan?**

A National Oil Spill Contingency Plan was drafted and approved in 2016 and updated in 2018. A number of companies operating Suriname's waters have contingency plans as well.

→ **Role of Competent National Authorities**

The Maritime Authority of Suriname (MAS) under the Ministry of Transport, Communication and Tourism responds, under the oversight of the National Coordination Center for Disaster Relief (NCCR) and the National Environmental Council's National Institute for Environment and Development (NIMOS). During small events, District Oil Pollution Response Teams would be activated first, with oversight from the NCCR.

Oiled Wildlife Preparedness and Response

→ **Formal guidelines?**

There are no formal guidelines in place for oiled wildlife response in Suriname, however, for other marine wildlife issues, the initial government contact agency is the the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries (LVV). It is likely that the NCCR would take an active role should wildlife response be initiated.

→ **Response objectives and strategy**

It is not clear what the objectives and strategies might be for oiled wildlife response.

→ **Euthanasia or rehabilitation?**

It is likely that rehabilitation would be allowed, however, there are no experienced oiled wildlife responders in the country. Green Heritage Fund Suriname (GHFS) and WWF Guianas would likely be involved should a response to oiled wildlife be initiated.

→ **Impact assessment**

It is likely that the Suriname State Forest Management Service (LBB)'s Nature Conservation (NB) Division would oversee impact assessment. The National Zoological Collection of Suriname (NZCS)'s Environmental Research Centre (CMO) would likely be involved as would GHFS, which developed sensitivity maps and field verification of the entire coast of the country as part of the Marine Spatial Planning Project.

→ **Notification and early response**

There is no system for notification and response to oiled wildlife, however, NZCS, Green Heritage Fund Suriname (GHFS) and WWF-Guianas, which works in both Suriname and Guyana, would likely be contacted in should there be a decision to mount a wildlife response.

→ **Wildlife responders**

GHFS works on marine mammal strandings, is part of the South American Marine Mammal Response group and has been involved in the Cari'Mam project's marine mammal response network in the Caribbean. GHFS also has experience with sea turtle strandings.

WWF Guianas protects sea turtle nesting beaches and is a member of the Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network (WideCast), which may be able to provide further assistance should turtles be affected. NZCS studies nesting ecology of sea turtles.

→ **Cooperation between stakeholders**

NCCR, LBB, LVV, NZCS, GHFS, and WWF Guianas have a history of cooperation on their projects.

→ **Permanent facilities**

There are no permanent facilities for oiled wildlife in Suriname, nor any marine wildlife rehabilitation facilities.

→ **Current processes**

In 2021, a virtual conference Cross-Border Coordination in Spill Prevention and Response in Suriname-Guyana Basin was held.

In 2022, RAC RAMPEITC-Caribe held a steering committee meeting on the 2022-23 work plan which will include national and regional workshops on oil spill preparedness and response.

GHFS is planning an oiled bird response workshop and initiated a marine mammal stranding workshop in 2015.

Documentation and references

SAF CWRP 2012: <https://www.sea-alarm.org/publications/country-wildlife-response-profiles/>

I TOPF Country Profile 2015: https://www.itopf.org/fileadmin/uploads/itopf/data/Documents/Country_Profiles/suriname.pdf

RAC-REMPEITC Country Profile 2015: <http://www.racrempeitc.org/sites/default/files/Suriname%20-%20Country%20Profile%202015.pdf>

CIA World Factbook Country Profile: <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/suriname/#transnational-issues>

Map source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suriname>

World Atlas: <https://www.worldatlas.com/maps/suriname>

Directory of Protected Areas of Suriname: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/262972705_Directory_of_protected_areas_of_Suriname

Large Marine Ecosystems Hub: <https://www.lmehub.net/#north-brazil-shelf>

RAC-REMPEITC 2018 workshop report: https://new.racrempeitc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Suriname-NCP-Workshop-OCT-2018-Final-Report_0.pdf

SWOT Report vol.15 Sea Turtles of the Caribbean 2020: <https://www.seaturtlestatus.org/articles/2020/2/25/sea-turtles-of-the-caribbean>

Sea Turtle Recovery Action Plan for Suriname 1993: https://www.widecast.org/Resources/Docs/STRAP_Suriname_1993.pdf

De Boer M.N. 201%. Cetaceans observed in Suriname and Adjacent waters. *Latin American Journal of Aquatic Mammals*. 10 (1):2-19. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5597/lajam0189>: https://lajamjournal.org/index.php/lajam/article/download/421/pdf_15

List of marine mammal species in the Caribbean (car-spaw-rac): <https://www.car-spaw-rac.org/IMG/pdf/especiesmmcaraibes.pdf>

WHSRN Suriname information: <https://whsrn.org/multiple-use-management-areas-create-crucial-habitat-for-shorebirds-in-suriname/>

Cari'Mam Project: <https://www.car-spaw-rac.org/The-CARI-MAM-project-and-network>

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Appendix 1

→ At risk birds

Common name / Latin name / IUCN Red List Category (CR,EN,VU) / Resident-Migratory (season) / Breeding-Nesting-Pupping (season)

Agami Heron / *Agamia agami* / VU / Resident / Breeding/Nesting (rainy season-June-Sept)

Leach's Storm-petrel / *Hydrobates leucorhous* / VU / Migratory (largely pelagic) / Breeding/Nesting (variesm largely offshore)

→ At risk reptiles

Common name / Latin name / IUCN Red List Category (CR,EN,VU) / Resident-Migratory (season) / Breeding-Nesting-Pupping (season)

Leatherback Turtle / *Dermochelys coriacea* / VU / Migratory / Nesting (Dec-Jan/March-Aug)

Green Turtle / *Chelonia mydas* / EN / Migratory / Nesting (Feb-June)

Hawksbill Turtle / *Eretmochelys imbricata* / CR / Migratory / Nesting (sporadic)

Olive Ridley / *Lepidochelys olivacea* / VU / Migratory / Nesting (May-Aug)

Loggerhead Turtle / *Caretta caretta* / VU / Migratory / Nesting (Mar-Oct)

→ At risk mammals

Common name / Latin name / IUCN Red List Category (CR,EN,VU) / Resident-Migratory (season) / Breeding-Nesting-Pupping (season)

Sei Whale / *Balaenoptera borealis* / EN / Migratory (season not established) / unknown

Sperm Whale / *Physeter macrocephalis* / VU / Migratory (season not established) / unknown

Fin Whale / *Balaenoptera physalis* / VU / Migratory (season not established) / unknown

American Manatee / *Trichechus manatus* / VU / Resident / Year round

Giant Otter / *Pteronura brasiliensis* / EN / Resident / Year round