

# **Sustainable management of Yacare as a strategy for conserving biodiversity and for improving livelihoods of indigenous people and rural communities in Eastern Bolivian Amazon**

**Alfonso Llobet\*<sup>1</sup>, José Argandoña<sup>1</sup>, Mauricio Barba<sup>1</sup>, Wilfredo Paz<sup>1</sup> and Deimer Atiare<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>World Wildlife Fund Inc. Bolivia, Santa Cruz, Bolivia (allobet@wwfbolivia.org)

*Abstract:* The use of *Caiman yacare* in Parque Iténez begins in 2007 with the allocation of an experimental harvest quota granted to farmers and to Bella Vista community. In 2010, the Yacare Management Plan of the Departmental Park and Integral Natural Management Area (PD ANMI) Iténez was prepared and assigned - for two years - an official quota of 680 Yacares to Bella Vista Canton, within the framework of the National Program for the Conservation and Use of this specie. Since 2013 WWF Bolivia begins technical support for Yacare hunters with the aim of improving the effectiveness of the harvesting system and achieving a more comprehensive use of the hunted specimens. After 8 years of support for the activity (2013 to 2019) there is monitoring evidence ensuring that the use of the species is carried out in a sustainable manner. Yacare populations currently have an average abundance value of 36.15 ind/km of shore, with maximum values of up to 132 ind/km of shore in streams and minimum values of 6.93 ind/km of shore in lagoons of tectonic origin. The population structure presented by the species is composed of 46.37% of Class II individuals, 33.27% of Class III individuals and 20.35% of Class IV individuals, complying with the criteria established in the national standard for continuing to carry out selective harvests of adult males. The incorporation of meat in local commerce has significantly improved the income of hunters, with years in which they have obtained more than US \$ 20,000 from the sale of skins and meat from sustainably hunted Yacares. Despite this situation, in recent years the wild fur market has been gradually reducing, which has significantly reduced the income obtained by hunters and jeopardizes the continuity of an activity that has been generating incentives for the conservation of aquatic ecosystems.

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