



Iquitos Foundation,
Amazon Rescue Centre



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Iquitos Foundation, Amazon Rescue Center is the result of a united effort among institutions like "The Dallas World Aquarium" – The DWA, "Dirección Regional de la Producción de Loreto" - DIREPRO, "Instituto de Investigaciones de la Amazonía Peruana" - IIAP and "ACOBIA - DWAZoo"; with the purpose to develop rescue, recovering and release programs of aquatic mammals and wild fauna in Loreto, supported by an environmental education program, contributing to the conservation of these species and their ecosystems.



OBJECTIVE

Provide inter-institutional support for the rescue, rehabilitation and destination of aquatic mammal specimens and endangered wildlife in Loreto, anchored by an environmental education program.



The Amazonian Manatee is the smallest of the sirenians, reaching beaching between 2.8 and 3.0m in total length up to 450kg in weight and the one which occurs exclusively in fresh water, being widely distributed in the Amazon basin.

It feeds exclusively on aquatic and semiaquatic freshwater plants, consuming about 8% of its body weight per day, due to these characteristics, the Amazonian manatee is considered a biological controller of aquatic weeds.

The species has been commercially exploited since 1542, with the meat and hide being the main products extracted. This commercial, combined with their very low reproductive rate, has seriously reduced the manatee population.



PROBLEM:

The Amazonian manatee *Trichechus inunguis*, is an endanger specie in Perú due to factors like illegal hunting and habitat degradation, however, spite of the international and national law to protect them, the problem still goes on, because in many Amazon villages its meat is still eaten.

The problem got worse with the calves illegal trades, which are sold as pets to fish farmer or tourists lodges where a high mortality percent exist.





WHAT WE ARE DOING

In November 2007 a rescue and recovering of orphan babies Amazonian manatees and environmental education program started, thanks to this work 15 specimens of Amazonian manatees were rescued so far and they are being rehabilitated successfully.



RESCUES

"Suramerica" was the first manatee rescued, came with 18 kg. of body weight, she currently weights 110 kg.



"Yana" was one of the youngest manatees rescued, she was in captivity at a shaman fish farm, came weighting 16 kg. and she currently weights 85 kg.



"Chamito" spent 2 months in a floating cage before rescue him. He currently weights 135 kg.



"Yacuruna" had a very hard intestine clog due to an inadequate diet; he was often floating, had terrible stomachaches and placed the flippers over the stomach. Thanks to the veterinary treatments he got better, came with 18 kg. and he currently weights over 100 kg.



"Aantu" came with a very deep harpoon and machete wound but he is currently completely healthy.



"Requena" spent almost one year in captivity, just feeding herself of rinds of banana, she was extremely skinny and two weeks after she was rescued increased 8 kg; she is still recovering.





The environmental education program; by means of lectures and workshops related Amazonian manatee and another kind of endanger wildlife; is a key piece in order to make people get involved about the respect to Amazonian wildlife and ecosystems conservation, the program is developed in schools of Iquitos and communities of Peruvian Amazon basin.



AQUATIC MAMMALS RELEASE

In these last years, the work developed by the Rescue Center was based on the rescue and rehabilitation of aquatic specimens and also in the successful release of the same ones. Two pink dolphins *Inia geoffrensis* were released, a female called "Puca" in 2008 and a male "Apú" in February of 2011 in the "Uvos's cocha"—Yarapa river.





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The Dorado lake, located inside the Pacaya Samiria National Reserve, was the place chosen to the first manatee's release in Peru; five specimens of *Trichechus inunguis*, which were rescued in severe state of malnutrition and dehydration; they became rehabilitated thanks to the arduous work developed by the Rescue Center and now they are swimming freely in the waters of those that should never come out.



In both cases the work of environmental education developed through the years with the communities of those areas, was a key piece, because it guarantees an acceptable grade of environmental conscience in the population for the conservation of the Amazon fauna.

