

## Poster

### **The Use, Significance, and Importance of Rain Forest Habitat Types Recognized by the Maijuna of the Peruvian Amazon: “Resource Islands” vs. “Avoidance Islands”**

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**Introduction.** The Maijuna Indians of the Sucusari community have an extensive habitat classification system for their traditional lands in the Peruvian Amazon. They classify over 70 different habitats based on geomorphology, physiognomy, indicator plant species, indicator animal species, and disturbance (Gilmore 2005).

**Objectives.** To understand the use, significance, and importance of rain forest habitat types recognized by the Maijuna.

**Methods.** Maijuna consultants were extensively interviewed using semi-structured interviewing techniques. Participant observation, open ended interviews, and semi-structured group interviews were also used.

**Results.** All Maijuna habitat types are not of equal importance; some can be considered “resource islands” while others are “avoidance islands”. According to Posey (1984: 117), “resource islands” are “...areas in the primary forest where specific concentrations of useful plants or animals are found”. Many Maijuna recognized habitats can be considered “resource islands” due to the fact that they are dominated by ethnobotanically and/or economically important plant species. This contrasts sharply with those habitats that can be considered “avoidance islands”; defined here as areas in primary or secondary forest that are generally avoided due to the plants or animals that are present and/or cultural beliefs associated with them.

**Conclusion.** Understanding the “resource islands” and “avoidance islands” of indigenous peoples is critical in providing a comprehensive view of how they perceive and interact with their environment. This information is essential in establishing culturally relevant conservation plans in that it allows conservation practitioners to focus on those habitats that are culturally significant, useful, and important.

**Keywords:** Maijuna, Peruvian Amazon, ethnoecology, indigenous habitat classification

#### **Selected References:**

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2. Posey, D. A. 1984. A preliminary report on diversified management of tropical forest by the Kayapó Indians of the Brazilian Amazon. *Advances in Economic Botany* 1: 112-126.

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