



**April 2016
Newsletter**

SOUTH RUPUNUNI CONSERVATION SOCIETY



Ongoing Protection and Monitoring of Red Siskins in the South Rupununi, Guyana

SRCS RED SISKIN UNIT

EXECUTIVE TEAM

Nicholas Fredericks, SHULINAB
Leroy Ignacio, SHULINAB
Kayla de Freitas, DADANAWA
Erin Earl, DADANAWA
Justin de Freitas, DADANAWA
Asaph Wilson, SHULINAB
Chung Liu, DADANAWA

ACTIVE RANGERS

Leon Baird, DADANAWA
Nicholas Cyril, KATOONARIB
Samuel Cyril, KATOONARIB
Eion Gray, SHULINAB
Abraham Ignace, SHULINAB
Maxi Ignace, SHULINAB
Angelbert Johnny, SAWARIWAU
Frank Johnny, SAWARIWAU
Henry Joseph, RUPUNAU
Richard Peters, DADANAWA

CADET RANGERS

Terrence Augustin, SAWARIWAU
Vidia Caitano, RUPUNAU
Lucia Cyril, KATOONARIB
Maya de Freitas, RUPUNAU
Louis Eusebio, SHULINAB
Tracy Eusebio, SHULINAB
Leandrew Fredericks, SHULINAB
Dean Jackman, SAND CREEK
Levi Joseph, RUPUNAU
Lexroy Joseph, RUPUNAU
Ponila Joseph, RUPUNAU
Judah Kenyon, SADDLE MOUNTAIN
John Paulin, SAWARIWAU
Paul St. Hill, SAND CREEK
Kim Spencer, KATOONARIB
Flavian Thomas, RUPUNAU
Nathaneel Wilson, KATOONARIB

INACTIVE RANGERS

† Harold Isaacs, POTARINAU
Perpetua Adolph, SHULINAB
Andrew Everton, SAND CREEK
Derek John, SAND CREEK
Jane Wilson, RUPUNAU

† Deceased 8th Feb 2015



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.

The SRCS has completed its currently scheduled Red Siskin field surveys with two years of continuous Siskin banding between March 2014 and April 2016. Over the course of the project, a team of Rangers and Cadets successfully trained and carried out Red Siskin research at sites throughout South Rupununi, and led school groups on field trips to observe and identify the birds in their communities. We have closed off banding operations in anticipation of the 2016 rainy season, and plan to resume Red Siskin banding this October.

We would like to take this moment to recognise and thank Rangers and Cadets for their dedicated fieldwork and accomplishments in the ongoing protection and monitoring of Red Siskins in the South Rupununi, Guyana. We thank the Tshaos, village councils, and communities of Katoonarib, Potarinau, Rupunau, Sand Creek, Sawariwau, Shulinab, and the families of Dadanawa and Saddle Mountain for their permission, support, and generous assistance. We would also like to thank the late Harold Sampson Isaacs of Potarinau, the late Gen. Kooldeep Looknauht, Dr. Michael Braun, Dr. Brian O'Shea, Dr. Brian Coyle, Dr. Maggie Macpherson, Dr. Alex Jahn, Dr. Evi Paemelaere, Mike Martin of Rupununi Learners, De Vaughn Lewis and Melissa Lewis of the Guyana Red Cross Society, the South Rupununi District Toshao Council, EPA Guyana, the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples Affairs, and too many other individuals and organisations to name who have all contributed to Red Siskin conservation and the success of our current work. We hope to continue saving all the beautiful birds of the South Rupununi for generations to come.



Top: (1) A male and female Red Siskin banded at Wii Wii Tau in April 2014. From left to right: (2) Scientists and ornithologists including pictured here, Dr. Brian O'Shea and Dr. Maggie MacPherson, training Rangers from each participating village including Nicholas Cyril and Abraham Ignace as Rangers, and later volunteers as Cadet Rangers including Vidia Caitano and Kim Spencer, in bird research methods. (3) Between 1-3 trips were carried out each month, with Rangers, Cadets, and other volunteers and visitors piling into the venerable Old Girl (Toyota hilux) and two by two on motorcycle and bicycle, or boat or foot, to reach Siskin areas and band. (4) The team including here Kim Spencer also carried out school trips at Primary Schools in each village to guide students in bird observation and identification, and to lead them on short bird-watching tours around the village.

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Watch out for these birds!

The Red Siskin is an internationally endangered bird whose largest last population is at here at home in the South Rupununi, Guyana. The SRCS Red Siskin Unit has worked continuously for the past two years to protect and monitor Siskins throughout their range, and to reach out and educate local communities and visitors alike on Red Siskins and hundreds of other bird species found in the region.

Left column to right, from top to bottom: Birds banded at different sites have different coloured bands. For example, (1) Red Siskins in Rupunau have lime green or brown bands. (2) Red Siskins at Shulinab have pink or purple bands. (3) Red Siskins at Potarinau have red or (4) white bands. (5) Birds at Mabiwau have yellow bands. (6) Birds at Sand Creek have blue bands.

If you see any of these birds please let your friendly village Ranger or Cadet know! We banded these birds so that we can see how they travel back and forth throughout the South Central Rupununi. Now that we have banded just over a hundred Red Siskins, we are starting to sight banded birds at different times, or at different sites, in the project.

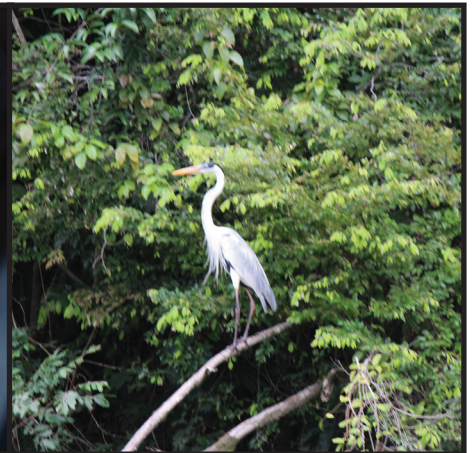
As we continue banding and observing, we hope to be able to come to a better understanding of this tiny giant of Guyana!



BIRDS OF THE RUPUNUNI

This section features photos and a short description of bird species found in the Rupununi taken by SRCS members during routine field activities, while guiding for bird-watching expeditions, and all sorts of other opportunities. This Newsletter includes the Guianan Cock-of-the-Rock, the Little Hermit, and the Cocoi Heron.

From left to right: (1) The **Guianan Cock-of-the-Rock (Kowanari)** is one of Guyana's most recognised birds, with males having bright orange feathers and a large round crest on its head. In Guyana it can be found in forested areas between the mid-levels to the upper canopy, and nesting on rocky walls and slopes. It mainly eats fruits and insects. Owing to its distinct appearance and beautiful colouration, the Cock-of-the-Rock is also frequently found on many pages of Guyana's tourism and conservation publications. (2) The **Little Hermit** is a small hummingbird, one of the many in Guyana and the South Rupununi (there are over 27 species of hummingbirds known to inhabit the South Rupununi alone!). It feeds on insects and spiders at lower levels of the forest, and resides around secondary forests, mangroves, and swamps. (3) The **Cocoi Heron (Washnao)** is the largest heron in Guyana, and a common sight around swamps, creeks, and river banks. It is a skillful predator that waits patiently around the water to hunt fish, frogs, insects, and even small mammals.



Note: The endangered Red Siskin (*Sporagra cucullata*) is officially protected by the South Rupununi Conservation Society. The SRCS is currently researching its ranges in the South Rupununi, to be included as a proposed Important Birding Area (IBA). The South Rupununi Conservation Society is based at Dadanawa Ranch, South Rupununi, Region 9, Guyana. Contact via **radio at 4-0 on 7900 or 5300, **phone** Kayla (+592) 668 8562 and Erin (+592) 680 8102, or **email** Erin (earl.erin@gmail.com) and Kayla (epiona04@yahoo.ca).**