



RAMSAR SITE  
NUMBER  
**1828**

## Estuaire du fleuve Sinnamary //



FRANCE

Area :  
**28 400 ha**

Date of designation :  
**September 15<sup>th</sup> 2008**

Coordinates :  
**05 ° 25' N 53 ° 05' W**

### Summary

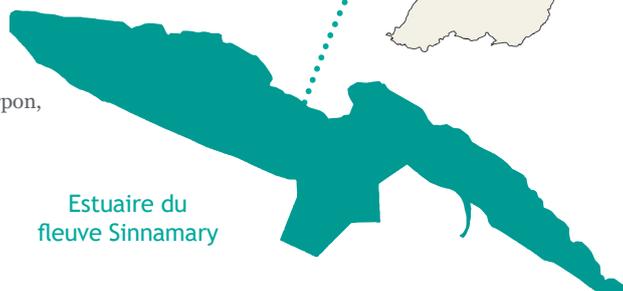
Located in the northwest of Guyana, the site is composed of a set of mangroves, swamp forests and forests on sand, swamps and dry and flooded savannahs. It is part of one of the three Ramsar areas of the department. Between land and sea, this mosaic of aquatic and terrestrial environments is the meeting place of a varied fauna and flora. The marsh area of this site hosts one of the largest and most remarkable populations of spectacled caiman in Guyana, as well as giant Amazonian otters. The mangroves protect the coast and the spawning grounds of many species. A pre-Columbian archaeological site is also present at the estuary.

### International importance

The site is home to many species of migratory birds. It is also one of the feeding and breeding grounds of caimans. The littoral part also constitutes a privileged habitat for the Caribbean manatee, a species classified as vulnerable at the world level. The mangroves, which are well represented on the site, offer a diversity of habitats for many marine species that find in these ecosystems very favorable feeding grounds (rays, tuna, fry and shrimps). They also play the role of nursery for different species of fish including the tarpon, important in coastal fishing.

### General location

This set of wetlands extends over about forty kilometers along the shores of Sinnamary and Iracoubo, coastal municipalities located in northwestern French Guiana, halfway between Suriname and Brazil.



Estuaire du fleuve Sinnamary

### Services provided by wetlands

The estuary of the Sinnamary River is a site of exceptional value, both for the diversity of animal and plant species that it harbors and for its mosaic of habitats. It serves as a refuge, feeding and reproduction area for many species, and plays a role in water purification. Easily accessible by road, the site of the Yiyi Pripris, included in this vast complex, represents a terrain conducive to the development of tourism and recreational activities. It is frequented all year round by locals and tourists, who can discover the site thanks to several facilities (hiking and boating trails, ornithological observatories, museographic space, observation tower).



### Adverse factors

The main problem of this site is the natural closure of the savannah and swamp environments, which is accentuated by past anthropic activities (especially road development). The site managers must also deal with the appearance and spread of certain invasive exotic species (such as *Acacia mangium*). The uses of this environment and recreational activities on the site (fishing, hiking, swimming and canoeing) remain limited. However, a tourism development project for the site is underway. The pressure of frequentation of the site is therefore bound to increase.

A simplified management plan carried out on a restricted area of 1000 ha (Yiyi pripris) integrates these problems and proposes action plans (development of methods to fight against invasive exotic species as well as the enclosure of the environment, ...).



## Four species representative of the site



**WHITE CAIMAN**  
(*Caiman crocodilus*)

It is one of the 4 species of caiman present in Guyana. It is the most common and the most widely distributed on the territory. It can be observed in all types of wetlands, although it has a preference for open areas. Intensive night hunting is the main threat to this species, but also the destruction of its habitat. A monitoring of this species has been conducted on the site for several years.



**CAPYBARA**  
(*Hydrochaeris hydrochaeris*)

The capybara, the world's largest rodent and an inundation specialist, is an emblematic species of the site. The species seems to have strongly decreased on the site over time and is now rarely seen. Hunting as well as the modification of its habitat could explain this trend. A follow-up by phototrap and presence clues is also set up on the site.



**ANHINGA**  
(*Anhinga anhinga*)

This aquatic bird is also called "snake bird", because of its fishing technique, which consists in being totally immersed in water and harpooning its preys with its beak. It is a fully protected species in French Guiana, because it is threatened by human activities and the destruction of its habitat. It is often observed fishing on the marshes.



**GIANT OTTER**  
(*Pteronura brasiliensis*)

Exploited for its fur in the 1970s, this species is fully protected and classified as endangered by the IUCN due to the destruction of its habitats, intensive fishing and pollution of waterways by gold mining. Nicknamed "water tiger" in French Guiana, it can reach 1.80m long (with the tail) and weigh 30 kg. It lives in family groups and is found in swamps and rivers. The otters of the site under management are the subject of participatory science.



## Management and conservation

The site is owned by the Conservatoire du littoral, a public institution whose mission is to acquire fragile and remarkable areas of the French coastline, in order to protect them from urbanization and open them to the public.

The Yiyi pripris, a restricted area of 1000 ha, is jointly managed by the Sinnamary town hall and the SEPANGUY association. Since 2016, the Sinnamary town hall has been the main manager and SEPANGUY the ecological manager. Its latest management plan 2016-2021 has as main objectives to strengthen the attractiveness of the site for the reception of the public, to conserve the diversity of landscapes and natural habitats, and to promote the reappropriation of the site by its inhabitants.



## Biodiversity

The mosaic of habitats (mudflats, mangroves, flooded forests, sandy strips, pripris, flooded savannahs, estuaries...) favors the presence of numerous species: the flora is estimated at 600 species, most of which are aquatic or semi-aquatic.

For the fish fauna, the data, far from being exhaustive, describe at least 59 species, some of which are rare in Guyana.

The avifauna counts at least 213 species, divided into very specific groups of the various ecosystems.

We will note the presence of several remarkable species, such as the caiman with glasses and red caiman, the red ibis, the green turtle, or the cabiaï.

This mosaic, in addition to being a buffer zone like most wetlands, plays a major role in maintaining biodiversity.



### The Ramsar Convention

The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, commonly known as the Ramsar Convention, is a global inter-governmental treaty that provides the frame-work for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. It is the only global treaty to focus on one single ecosystem.