



# SAVE THE GIANTS 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

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## Thank You | Christina Ward, President

Thank you for your support through our inaugural year in the field! 2018 was full of joyous success stories and invaluable learning lessons. The team travelled from one corner of South America to the next, participating in an eclectic mix of giant otter conservation projects.

We made 3 trips to Guyana, conducting giant otter river surveys along a 20km stretch of the Rupununi River, where we tracked, recorded and catalogued 50 individual otters in the region. Keeping the work within the community, we continued to work alongside of our Guyanese counterparts and added an additional field naturalist to the team this year! Currently, Save the Giants supports 3 in-country employees by offering competitive monthly stipends.

As always, working with the children in the village is always a high point of any of our trips. Partnering with a village member to purchase a designated Save the Giants boat, we now have the capacity to include kids in the otter surveying process! We are also working on making a bigger and more lasting impact on education within the village. Bringing down more educational resources, collected through supply drives here in the States, has allowed the STG's team to host multiple environmental education days in the village! These learning days are extremely popular with the kids and we can already see a marked increase in the children's' enthusiasm for outdoor activities.

During our travels to Peru, we participated in a unique conservation opportunity with the IUCN. Using the data that we collected in the field, Save the Giants made important contributions to the IUCN's giant otter species conservation management plan. The plan outlines the important range-wide steps that need to happen to ensure giant otters are protected in the future.

We've come a long way, but still have plenty of mountains to move. We are all up for the challenge and hope that you will join us!  
Much love, Christina Ward



## 2018 - Save the Giant's Highlights

2018 was a jam-packed year! The Save the Giants team stayed busy, both in the field and at home. Here's a look at some of our most remarkable 2018 accomplishments, all made possible with the support of individual donors, grant monies and STG fundraisers:

- Giant Otter Surveys
- Conservation Super Heroes and Pen Pal Project
- Kara Grotter Children's Book
- IUCN Giant Otter Conservation Planning Summit
- Save the Giants Fundraisers
- Domestic Pet Health Clinics



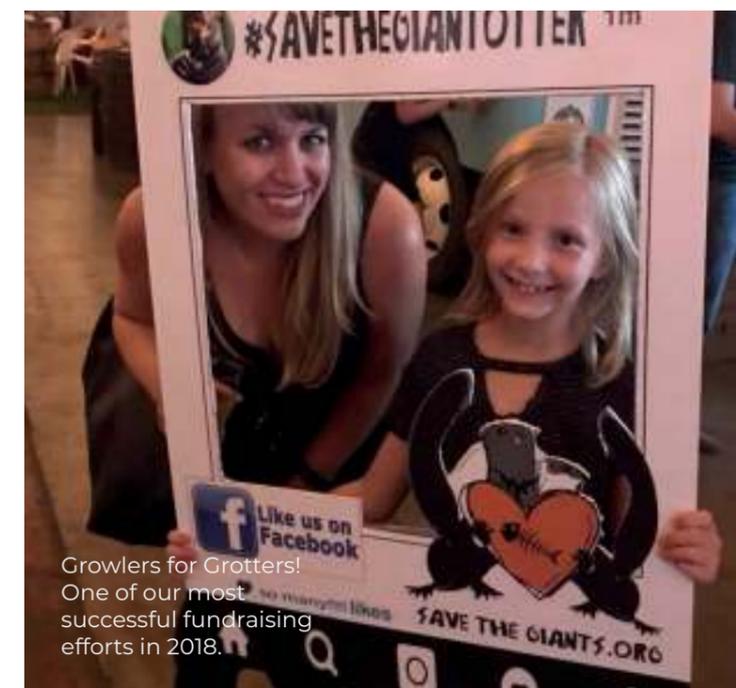
Our proud Conservation Super Heroes!



Giant otters have remarkable neck patterns. This individual is from the "Great White" group, known for their impressive full neck bibs.



Proud participants in the IUCN giant otter global conservation strategy planning summit.



Growlers for Grotters! One of our most successful fundraising efforts in 2018.

## Giant Otter River Surveys

Giant otter populations are estimated to be between 1,000-4,000 individuals. To put this number into perspective, here are a few statistics on comparable large mammal species that are also under threat:



With outside threats, such as gold mining, large scale agriculture and the wildlife trade growing within Guyana's interior regions, Save the Giants feels a sense of urgency to collect the most detailed analysis of critical habitat usage of giant otters. We believe this data is crucial for the otter population's long term success.

Save the Giants has provided field equipment such as a boat, GPS devices, computers, cameras, in addition to training on proper non-invasive field techniques.



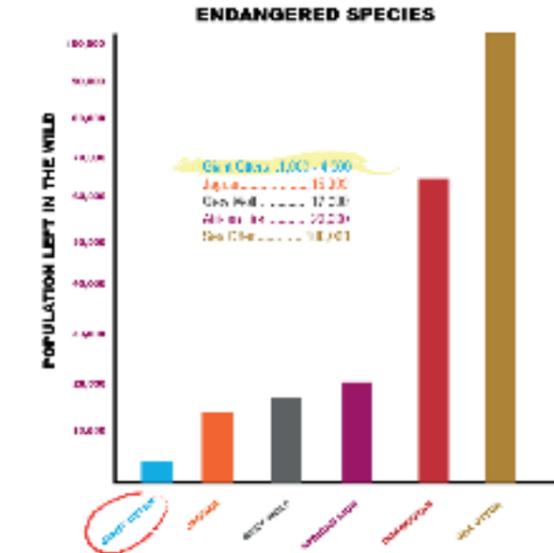
In 2018, Save the Giants conducted 9 rapid river surveys and honed in on effective camera trap techniques for maximizing our data collection.



The survey team identified roughly 50 individual otters within a 20km range on the Rupununi River, including 8 pond systems.



Data was also collected on group size, which ranges from 2-12 individual otters, range size, spanning from 2-3km/otter group, reproductive success, as well as holt, camp-site and latrine locations.



Giant otters are even considered extinct in some of their previous range countries. Guyana stands as one of the species' last strongholds, thanks to lush, mostly untouched river systems

and relatively undeveloped interior regions. As global population and economies continue to boom, Guyana and her otters are growing more susceptible to outside threats.

## Conservation Super Heroes and Pen Pal Projects

In 2018, we rolled out our Conservation Super Hero program! A social media campaign, aimed at collecting super hero sponsorship, raised enough funding to provide over 25 children in Yupukari Village with a Conservation Super Hero kit. These kits were full of goodies meant to encourage outdoor play and creative activities. Donning bright red capes and binoculars, the super heroes enjoyed their new gear and we are sure that the number of recorded smiles was well into the 1,000's.



In hopes of spreading awareness for indigenous cultures and connecting children from vastly different backgrounds, Save the Giants spearheaded a pen pal project. Classrooms all over the US and a school in England

sent letters for their friends in Guyana! Likewise, the kiddos in Yupukari had a blast writing their responses. We even took the opportunity to visit classrooms close to home to hand deliver the letters!





### The Adventures of Kara Grotter

One of our major efforts in 2018 was the publication of our very first children's book! Kara Grotter the Giant Otter and Her Adventures in Becoming Wilderness Wise is the first in what we hope will become a series of children's books written with messages specific to the children of Guyana but enjoyable by people young and old around the world. The focus of this first book is on introducing Kara and her friends and establishing the idea that all of the rainforest animals, humans included, are connected and depend on each other. The book also touches on human/animal conflict as Kara becomes entangled in fishing nets and provides helpful hints on how we can all be "wilderness wise".

The book was written by STG board member Ali Kuehn, illustrated by STG founder Christina Ward, and edited by the entire STG team. In addition, one of the main characters is named after the daughter of one of STG's field naturalists. It was truly a team effort and a labor of love on all our parts!

A major goal moving forward is to take copies of this book, and any future books, to the children in villages across Guyana. The teachers in Yupukari let us know that although there is a library full of books in Yupukari, there are almost no books about Guyana or featuring Guyanese characters. The children want to read stories about themselves but there just aren't many available. We have made it a goal to fill that gap and provide stories where the village children see themselves represented acting in a pro-conservation manner.



"Leya" - The Friendly Human



"Kara Grotter" - The Giant Otter

info@SavetheGiants.Org

Available on :



## MEET THE CREW!



"Swoop" - The Jacamar



"Tank" - The Tapir



"Arrow" - The Arapaima



### IUCN Giant Otter Conservation Planning Summit

Have you ever wondered how the IUCN collects all of the data needed to put together a species distribution map? Personally, I have pondered this very subject and always considered the process to be an incredibly daunting task. In May of 2018, Save the Giants traveled to Peru to attend the first International Symposium for Giant Otter Conservation and had the opportunity to participate in the "re-mapping" process for giant otters.

Representatives from 6 of the 9 current GO range countries (Guyana, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Brazil ) AND Argentina (a country where giants are considered extinct - came to the table with an incredible new plan to re-intro populations!) attended the symposium and over the course of 3 days came together to literally piece together the data to create an accurate projection of the current giant otter range. The new data will be used to make important conservation action recommendations to the IUCN and other influential NGOs, as well as local governments within each country.



Current IUCN giant otter range map



Steps towards a new, more accurate range map!





## Save the Giants Fundraisers

2018 was a dynamite year for fundraising efforts! Organizations and zoological institutions across the country, as well as friends on the international front, joined forces to raise money for the project.



Growlers for Grotters was our most successful fundraiser, with events in 7 different States!

Workshops, Silent Auctions and gift shop merchandise sales were a big part of our fundraising efforts in 2018. We are forever grateful to all of the hard-work put in by so many to make these events and coordinated efforts so successful.



Our friends on Facebook launched fundraisers and raised over \$2,500!



## Holy Merch!



## Domestic Pet Health Clinics

In 2018, Save the Giants hosted the first domestic pet health clinic in Yupukari Village. The clinic provided the local people with a free pet wellness check-up and acute care, such as parasite control, wound care and proper fungal prevention baths.

Domestic pet health is directly related to human health, so by treating domestic pet sickness, we are creating a healthier environment for the community.

Did you know... Entire or partial groups of endangered animals have died from disease outbreaks:

- Amur tiger (distemper – subpopulation dropped from 38 to 9)
- Painted dogs (rabies and distemper, killed entire family in both cases)
- Ethiopian wolves (rabies, 78% died or disappeared in a subpopulation)

Taking proactive steps in preventing these types of disasters is part of Save the Giants long-term goals. Moving forward, we are working on a partnership with a dedicated group of veterinarians who wish to collaborate on our efforts to develop effective domestic pet health protocols to share through monthly pet wellness clinics.

Additionally, we will employ a trained community member to conduct the monthly clinics.



### Our Mission - 2018 and Moving Forward

Save the Giants believes that conservation is a dynamic process. A process that is ever changing to meet the needs of the people and animals within a given region. In 2018, we focused on initial data collection and field observations that would allow us to prioritize and maximize our efforts in 2019. Moving forward, Save the Giants will focus on a one-health conservation model that relies on data collection and research, with an increased focus on education, community development and capacity building.

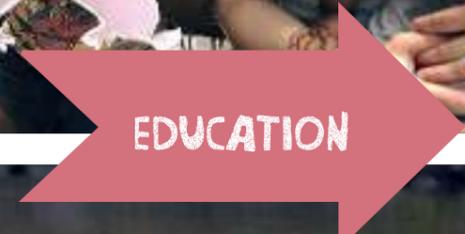
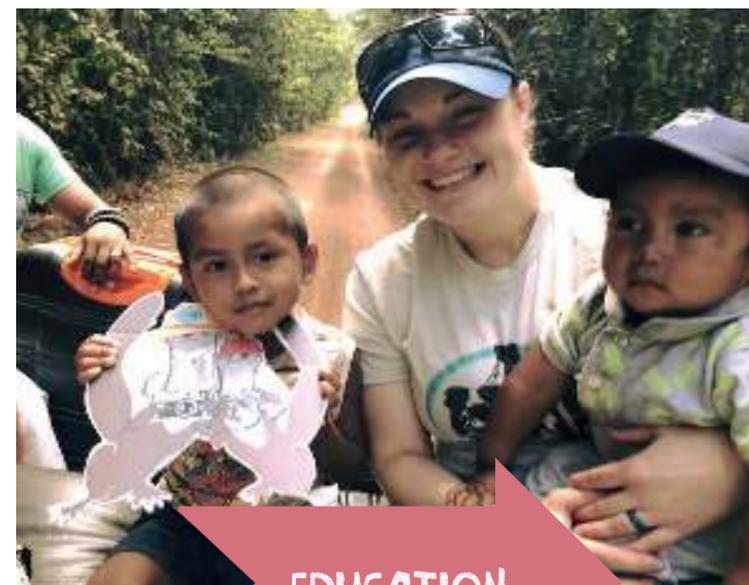


In 2018, our field team focused on population data collection and the Immediate assessment of giant otter populations in our study area.

Currently, the major threats to giant otters in the area, include: gold mining, logging, large scale agriculture and the illegal wildlife and pet trade. Due to the lack of proper data analysis on these given threats, it is hard to provide a concrete summary on the overall impacts.

Currently, we are working with field teams in other giant otter range countries to cross reference data pertaining to the threats listed above, with the goal of developing comparable research studies in Guyana.

Giant otter surveys will continue to play a major role in our work in the field and as the project continues to expand, we will broaden our survey area to include greater spans of territory within the Guyanese interior.



### Moving Forward

2018 was a remarkable year for Save the Giants, in terms of growth and learning opportunities. As we increased our time spent in the field, we also increased our time spent in the village - listening and absorbing information from the indigenous people of Yupukari. Indigenous knowledge is a powerful and invaluable tool that, when utilized, can provide a deeper, more holistic understanding of cultural beliefs and make it easier to inspire behavioural changes.

In 2019, Save the Giants will listen more intently and shape our goals around the needs of the communities that we serve.



## 2019 Goals:

### - *Begin construction on the Yupukari Science Center :*

Save the Giants proposes the construction of a science center in Yupukari Village, in collaboration with Caiman House, to provide a broader, more inclusive educational experience for the village youth and job opportunities for the community.

- *Increase Education Outreach :* collaborating with local non-profit animal welfare groups in Georgetown, Guyana to target public, coastal schools. Additionally, continue to increase our impact zone within the interior by visiting bordering villages to Yupukari and delivering copies of the children's book as well as additional educational resources.

### - *Partnering with NGO's in Giant Otter Range Countries:*

As we continue to actively look for ways to expand the outreach capacity of Save the Giants, we are currently looking to partner with several NGO's in bordering range countries, including:

- Proyecto Iberá - an Argentinian based NGO piloting the first ever giant otter reintroduction project.

- Coexistence with Jaguars - a conservation based NGO working out of the Tambopata reserve in Peru. We are currently working on details of a "field work swap" program.



# 2019

### - *Expansion of the Kara Grotter Book Series :*

With the development of our charismatic leader of wilderness wise behavior, Save the Giants plans on creating a series of books on Kara Grotter and her adventures - each with a different wilderness wise, problem solving theme. Plans for a 2019 Kickstarter are underway.

- *Growth of Domestic Health Clinics:* due to the severity of poor domestic pet health throughout Guyana - both in the coastal and interior regions - Save the Giants will continue to support and expand its domestic pet health clinics. Vet supply drives, held throughout the year, will serve local communities in need of this service. In addition, we are currently working on a collaboration with Tambopata wildlife vets to coordinate free, veterinary check-ups and possible spay and neuter clinics in Yupukari village.

- *Collaboration with Zoological Facilities :* to increase awareness of giant otters and indigenous Guyanese culture through enhanced exhibit signage, distribution of the Kara Grotter book series and participation in otter awareness events. Two zoological facilities signed on to host Save the Giants education days in celebration of the upcoming 2019 World Otter Day!

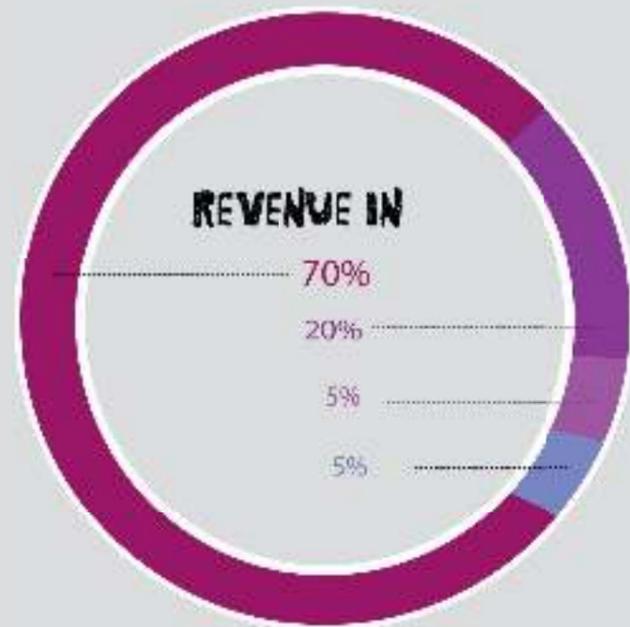
### - *November, 2019 Giant Otter Conservation Workshop in Yupukari :*

In collaboration with the International Otter Survival Fund and Caiman House, Save the Giants will sponsor a multi-village event that trains native Guyanese to properly and uniformly conduct giant otter population surveys, increasing the survey range and creating employment opportunities. Funding secured from the International Otter Survival Fund and the Sequoia Park Zoo's conservation grant program make this workshop possible and expands its reach tremendously.



# REVENUE IN: \$31,969

## 2018 Financial Information



- Fundraisers
- Donors/Online Donations
- Private Donor
- Grants

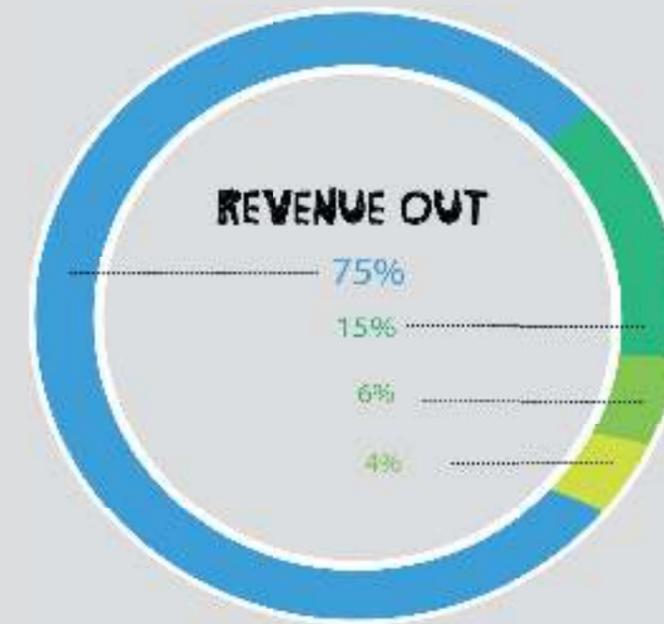
Save the Giants accomplishes our mission utilizing a one-health conservation model. As such, we fund elements of field conservation research while providing local education and economic opportunities and enhancing public health.

Our expenses in 2018 were allocated primarily to in-situ operations, covering operational needs such as domestic vet clinic supplies, transportation for our Guyanese staff to conduct otter surveys, gas for our river survey boat, and monthly stipends for our Guyanese staff that conduct giant otter surveys and implement programming with children. Part of our budget was spent on field equipment such as our survey boat, GPS units, camera traps, field notebooks, and batteries. Our educational materials cover supplies for the local children's Wildlife Club and our Conservation Superheroes programs and visits to schools in the village to promote humane coexistence with wildlife like giant otters. A small percentage of our budget is used for purchasing fundraising supplies.

This important work would not be possible without our supporters! If you are interested in helping support this project, we have plenty of options for you, your nonprofit, or your employer. Check out our website for details. Also, any purchases made from Colors for Conservation ([www.ColorsForConservation.com](http://www.ColorsForConservation.com)) directly support this project, so you can buy that perfect gift for someone while making a difference for wildlife.

Not factored into this reporting are the in-kind donations our volunteer Board Members donate like supplies, skills, time, and travel expenses from the US to Guyana.

# REVENUE OUT: \$26,758



- In-Situ Operations
- Field Equipment
- Educational Materials
- Merchandise/Fundraising

# Lend a Hand!

With so many exciting projects, Save the Giants ALWAYS has room for volunteers!

Here are just a few ideas:

Host a Growlers For Grotters Event in your area

Host a school or vet supply drive, either online or at a local school or vet clinic

**PUT THOSE KIDS TO WORK!**  
Door to door cookie sales are always a win, so why can't we sell books the same way? WE CAN!

Join us in the field - whether as a insightful tourist, or someone with a science/education background

If you are interested in joining the team, please contact:  
info@savethegiants.org  
for more information



shop with us @



for guilt free spending!



Colors For Conservation donates proceeds from every sale directly to Save the Giants!

In 2018, Christina Ward, Owner of Colors for Conservation and Save the Giants President, donated over \$3,000 in monetary contributions and an additional \$9,000 in in-kind donations to the project.

Please Visit:  
ColorsforConservation.com  
for more!



# A GIANT THANK YOU

To our  
Collaborators  
and friends  
in the field  
and afar

info@SavetheGiants.Org 🐾🐾

The Rainforest and Aquarium at Moody Gardens  
Caiman House, Yupukari Village  
Galveston Chapter of AAZK  
Roger Williams Zoo  
Sequoia Park Zoo  
Pittsburgh Zoo  
Omaha AAZK Chapter  
Houston AAZK  
Portland AAZK  
Denver Zoo AAZK  
Odd Otter Brewing - Tacoma Washington  
Galveston Island Brewing  
Greg Adams and Family  
The Edit Ward, LLC  
Kristal White - Penny's Beer Garden  
Bakfish Brewing  
Jodi Palmer and Brevard Zoo  
The International Otter Survival Fund  
Tambopata Park, Peru  
Bakfish Brewing, Galveston  
Tammy Schmidt - Niabi Zoo  
David Hamilton - Otter Keeper Workshop  
Susie Louis - Conservation Fusion

