

Project Update: February 2024

When the project idea was proposed, it was believed that it would be possible to acquire images of Amazonian manatees in semi-captive areas in Peru for confirmation. However, previous studies were unable to obtain these images. Nevertheless, this doesn't prevent new attempts to detect the animals using side-scan sonar in the Amazonian water bodies, using images obtained for *Trichechus manatus* as a reference.

In September 2023, I traveled to the interior of the Amazonas, Tefé, to participate in a red river dolphin (*Inia geoffrensis*) capture activity developed by the Amazonian Aquatic Mammals Research Group of the Mamirauá Institute for Sustainable Development. In the end of the month, I started the fieldwork with side-scan sonar in the Amanã Sustainable Development Reserve (RDSA).

During this period, some transects were initiated in Lake Amanã, and promising images were captured, which will be analysed together with all the images. Throughout this time, various manatee traces were also observed in the region, including the observation of several "rebojos," which are marks they leave on the surface after floating and breathing.

However, the fieldwork was interrupted due to a significant cetacean mortality in Lake Tefé (reported all around the globe), which required an emergency operation to be installed with all the necessary assistance. As I was on-site, I ended up joining the team working to necropsy the animals in the hope of finding the cause and preventing further mortality. Thus, for the next 20 days, I participated in this operation, which required a lot of effort and dedication.

During this process, manatees were also observed in Lake Tefé, where the incident occurred, indicating it as a potential area for the study. Since it was not possible to continue the fieldwork, the plan is to resume it in the year 2024 and complete all the activities that had been previously proposed.



Realizing transects by boat using side-scan sonar at Amanã Lake.



Camila and Antonio Looking at the side-scan sonar screen searching for manatees.



Antonio showing areas where manatees are commonly find in Lake Amanã.