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## The Iwokrama Centre and Forest: Introduction to Special Papers

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### Abstract

The Iwokrama Programme is a partnership between the Commonwealth and the people of Guyana. Iwokrama brings together local people, national and international interests in a variety of businesses. The idea of Iwokrama was born during the 1989 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting and Iwokrama has grown to be the Commonwealth's Flagship environment project. Iwokrama is a working example of developing partnerships for effective natural resource management and sustainable human development. This paper describes the background to Iwokrama and the role of the faunal surveys of the Iwokrama Forest led by the Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia in the early development of Iwokrama. Thirty researchers spent over thirty months in the Iwokrama Forest, a virtually pristine tropical rainforest, between July 1996 and January 1998. These researchers came from more than ten research institutes to carry out the faunal surveys of the Iwokrama Forest. This work has made the fauna of the Iwokrama Forest one of the best documented in Northern South America. However, much more work remains to be done as we have only scratched the biodiversity surface of Iwokrama. The papers assembled here are the result of that work.

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