

TRIP REPORT

BRAZILIAN ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW POLICING MISSION

Três Marias, Pirapora and Belo Horizonte, Brazil
May 25th – 27th, 2003

Captain Arley Ferreira
Polícia Militar de Minas Gerais

World Fisheries Trust Visit Report

To Lieutenant Cel, Specialized Activities Assessor

As shown by the attached documents, a visit to Três Marias was carried out from May 25th-May 27th 2003 by participants of the project “Interior Fisheries in Brazil: Participative Conservation and Management”: an initiative of a Canadian, non-governmental organization, World Fisheries Trust (WFT), with the Military Police as a partner.

Joachim Carolsfeld (Yogi) and Gerald Kurten (Texan fish culturist), accompanied by the author, drove from Belo Horizonte to Três Marias.

Upon arrival in Três Marias, Mr. Raimundo Marques, President of the Federation of Professional Fishermen accompanied us, and we continued on to Pirapora, where we arrived to spend the night of the 25th [of May].

On the morning of the 26th in Pirapora, we met with the staff of the 11th Company of the Military Police, where we were presented to two Volunteer Environmental Agents (AAVs) of the “Angels of the São Francisco”, who had been trained by the Brazilian Institute of the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (IBAMA).

The following people participated in the meeting in Pirapora: Major Renato Zenobio, Commander of the unit; Major Silvio, of the 3rd CAE RPM; Lieutenant Ferraz, of the 3rd CAE RPM; Lieutenant Mauro Alves, Commander of the Pel Espz, Pirapora; Sub-Lt. Carlos, of the 3rd CAE RPM; Sgt. Abdon, of the Pel Espz Pirapora; Mr. Raimundo Marques, President of the Federation of Professional Fishermen; Prof. Ernando, specialist in geography and the environment from the University of Montes Claros (UNIMONTES); Yogi, of WFT; Gerald, Texan fish culturist; Isaac Sanches and Jose Henrique, volunteers from the AAV; and myself, the author.

The meeting had as its purpose to show, to the visitors, how the “Angels of the São Francisco” - AAV work, as well as the results that have been reached to date. It was an informal debate in which everyone participated freely and amply, expressing opinions, criticisms, and suggestions for the improvement of the activities being undertaken by the “Angels of the São Francisco”.

In his talk, Yogi re-emphasised the importance of the participation of professional fishermen in the management of the fishery, and was supported by Prof. Ernando of UNIMONTES. He explained about the project “Peixes, Pessoas e Agua” that was discussed in a workshop that took place in Salvador, Bahia, on May 20th, 2003 (folder attached).

Speaking about the work that they developed in partnership with the Military Police of Minas Gerais (PMMG), the AAV (“Angels”) explained that they fill out Notes of Occurrence (“autos de constatacao”) that they send on to the Military Police, IBAMA and the Public Prosecutors; that they go out to do enforcement in groups of four or five, with the support of only one military person; that they have been well accepted in the community, which normally respects its

recommendations; that they have managed to help the Military Police get alternative financing, especially for use in environmental enforcement; that they “filter” reportings, to ensure that the Military Police’s efforts aren’t applied irrationally; that they have presented educational lectures (environmental education) in primary schools; that the AAV of São Francisco are part of an NGO that is receiving money from the Terms of Adjustments of Conduct (TAC), carried out by the local Public Prosecutors. Yogi handed out a document written by the fishermen of Três Marias (copy attached) with the help of Barbara Johnsen - Secretary of the Environment of that Municipality - which was presented at the workshop that took place in Salvador, Bahia, and shows evidence of the hopes of the Três Marias community of professional fishermen from that the military police that police the fishery be trained to deal with social issues that permeate this kind of work [the fishery].

Sub-Lt. Carlos, of the 3rd CAE RPM, suggested that the Development Company of the São Francisco Valley (CODEVASF) become involved in training new AAV volunteers in Três Marias, where there is a campus of UNIMONTES that could provide support in terms of installations and professors.

After the meeting we had a short excursion on the São Francisco River, near the rapids and to the Pirapora Industrial Park, situated along the shores of the river. It was possible, on the trip, to see that the new “Selva Mariner” brand outboard motors, recently acquired by the PMMG, are showing technical defects and creating difficulties in their application for environmental policing. Besides the technical problems, the lubricating oil that they use is difficult to find at local commercial outlets - it is only found in Belo Horizonte.

In the afternoon, we returned to Três Marias, arriving there at around 5:00 pm. We met with Prof. Alexandre Godinho, a researcher from the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG), at which time there were discussions about technical issues in pisciculture.

On the morning 27th of May 2003, we met at the Municipal Secretariat of the Environment of Três Marias. Participants in the meeting were: Barbara Johnsen, Secretary of the Environment for Três Marias; Mr. Raimundo Marques, President of the Federation of Professional Fishermen; Sgt. Eduardo, Commander of the Environmental Group for the Military Police; Yogi; Gerald; the author; and members of the local media (interviews and filming). The objective of the meeting was to tease out general strategies for the implementation of the project’s activities related to increasing the participation of fishermen in the management of the professional fishery. Yogi suggested that the representatives of the partner organisations travel to Canada to get to know some of the activities that are working out in that country, serving as “benchmarks” for implementing activities of interest in Três Marias. Barbara and Raimundo complained about the lack of effectiveness in collection of water and fish [samples] when there are mortalities, alleging that they have not yet received any results of the sample collections of which they were aware.

In the afternoon we drove to the CODEVASF Fish Culture Station, where we made contact with Professor Sato, a scientist that has been working with restocking of endemic fish species of the São Francisco River since the company was first established in the Municipality. At this opportunity, Gerald marked specimens with tags recently developed by North American

scientists. These fish were placed in individual cages separated from all the rest, to be verified for tags effectiveness after 90 days.

At approximately 6:00pm, we returned to Belo Horizonte, without registering any problems.

The PMMG is participating in a new novel synergy involving efforts of the national scientific community and a foreign NGO, with the intention of equalising and improving the citizenship of Brazil's professional fishermen.

It is important to note the good impressions the foreigners had of the support and effective participation of the Military police in the project, which does not occur in other states. This also provides evidence that we have advanced significantly towards the proposed actions for the project in 2003, emphasising the need to implement a philosophy of "community policing of the environment", something we will try out as a pilot study in the fishery of Três Marias this year. Belo Horizonte, May 29th, 2003.

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