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“Solidarity in a competing world —  
fair use of resources”

## Identification of Species and the Traditional Uses of Edible Insects by Indigenous Communities Awajún in Peruvian Amazon

RUBEN CASAS REATEGUI<sup>1</sup>, ZBYNEK POLESNY<sup>1</sup>, PABLO PEDRO VILLEGAS PANDURO<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Czech University of Life Sciences Prague, Fac. of Tropical AgriSciences, Dept. of Crop Sciences and Agroforestry, Czech Republic*

<sup>2</sup>*National Intercultural University of the Amazon, Dept. Agroforestral Acuicola, Peru*

### Abstract

Currently, insects are a resource exploited as food by indigenous communities in the Peruvian Amazon as important source of protein for these populations. The proposed study was conducted in four Awajun communities of the district of Cenepa in Northwest of the Peruvian Amazon. The main objective was to document the traditional knowledge on usage and collection patterns of edible insects in Awajun communities. Secondary objectives were to determine species/taxonomic of edible insects. Samples of insects used as food were collected and preserved in vials with 70 % alcohol. For the identification and characterisation of the collected insects published keys were used. A consolidated list of edible insects used in the four indigenous communities Awajún has been prepared. The list is based on thorough, semi-structured field-interviews with 44 informants of each communities. At least 10 insect species, belonging to two orders were considered edible. Coleoptera (05) *Metamasius hemipterus* (Picudo Rojo), *Rhynchophorus palmarum* (Suri), *Rhinostomus barbirostris* (Suri blanco) of the Curculionidae family; *Stenagostus rhombeus* (Chuu) of the family Elateridae; *Megaceras crassum* (Papaso) of the Scarabaeidae family and Hymenoptera (05) *Cephalotes atratus* (Dakerae), *Crematogaster sordidula* (Hormiga), *Atta cephalotes* (Squisapa), *Agalaia pallipes* (Avispa amarilla), *Mischocyttarus* spp. (Huayranga) of the Formicidae family. As far as usage and collection of insects are concerned, food insects are chosen by members of the communities according to taste, as well as regional and seasonal availability. Depending on the species, only certain, but sometimes all, developmental stages are consumed. The preparation of the food insects for consumption involves mainly roasting, boiling or covering these with leaves.

**Keywords:** Awajún communities, edible insects, entomophagy, forms of consumption, traditional knowledge