Identification of species and the traditional uses of edible insects by indigenous communities Awajún in Peruvian Amazon

[1.] Rubén Casas Reátegui, [1.] Zbyněk Polesný, [2.] Pablo Pedro Villegas Panduro

[1.] Department of Crop Sciences and Agroforestry, Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences, Czech University of Life Sciences Prague, Kamycka 129, Prague 6-Suchdol, 165 21, Czech Republic. [2.] Departamento Agroforestal Acuicola, Facultad de Ingenieria y Ciencias Ambientales, Universidad Nacional Intercultural de la Amazonia, Carretera a San Jose, Km. 0.5, Ucayali, Perú.

INTRODUCTION

In many parts of Africa, Asia, South America and Australia a wide range of animal products are eaten that may not be common or known, these include many different insects, such as locusts, grasshoppers, termites, ants, beetles, and caterpillars. The insects consumed generally have a high protein content and may significantly contribute to the total protein intake of indigenous populations at least during certain seasons of the year (Bukkens, 1997). The consumption of insects has a longer history among indigenous people in the Peruvian Amazon as important source of protein for these populations. The proposed study was conducted in four awajun communities of the Peruvian Amazon.

The main objective was document the traditional knowledge on usage and collection patterns of edible insects in Awajum communities.

Figure 1. ***Metamasius hemipterus L.*** **(Coleoptera:Curculionidae)**

Figure 2. ***Rhynchophorus palmarum L.*** **(Coleoptera:Curculionidae)**

METHODOLOGY

Samples of insects used as food were collected and preserved in vials with 70% alcohol, for the identification and characterization of insects was used published keys. A consolidated list of edible insects used in four indigenous communities Awajún, District of Cenepa in Northwest of Peruvian Amazon, has been prepared. The list is based on thorough, thirteen semi-structured field-interviews and freelisting with 44 informants of each communities.The average age was 42 years, interviews were conducted 6 men and 5 women in each community, the children don't were interviewed, before making the interview, workshops of sensibilisation was developed in their own language.

Figure 3. Interviews with community members

Figure 4. ***Agelaia pallipes*** **(Hymenoptera:Vespidae)**

RESULTS

The most percentage of use of edible insects were *Rhinostomus barbirostris*, *Rhynchophorus palmarum* and *Agalaia pallipes* (Figure 5) in all native communities studied.

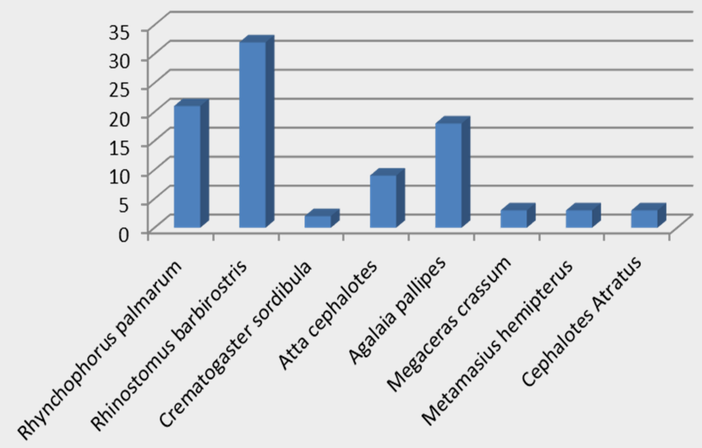

Figure 5. Percentage of insects consumed

In Table 1. The name shown in Spanish language and Awajun language of the main species of insects used as food, in peruvian amazon.

Table 1. Awajun name of the edible insects.

Gender	Specie	Spanish name	Awajun name
Cephalotes	*Atratus*	Hormiga negra	Dakerae
Crematogaster	*Sordidula*	Hormiga	Maña
Atta	*Cephalotes*	Siquisapa	Week
Agelaia	*Pallipes*	Avispa amarilla	Usuk etc
Mischocyttratus	*spp.*	Huayranga	Shanu
Metamasius	*hemipterus*	Picudo rojo	Daish
Rhynchophorus	*palmarum*	Suri	Bukin
Rhinostomus	*barbirostris*	Suri blanco	Datush
Stenagostus	*rhombeus*	Papaso tronquero	Chuu
Megaceras	*crassum*	Papaso cuernudo	Kuru

CONCLUSIONS

As far as usage and collection of insects are concerned, food insects are chosen by members of the communities according to taste, regional and seasonal availability of the insects. 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 covered with leaves.

REFERENCES

Bukkens, G.F., 1997. The nutritional value of edible insects. Ecology of Food and Nutrition 36:2-4, 287-319

CONTACT

Ruben Casas Reategui.
rcasasr@unia.edu.pe