

TROPILUNCH

Research in support of conservation –
transparency, capacity building, and
collaboration in going from data to action

Dr. Matthew Hallett

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BIO

Dr. **Matthew Hallett** is an Assistant Research Professor with the Wildlife Ecology and Conservation Department at UF, a position which is supported through a partnership with the Jacksonville Zoo & Botanical Gardens (JZBG), and is a core faculty member in the Tropical Conservation and Development Program. He joined UF after completing his Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Ecology in the School of Natural Resources & Environment and TCD Certificate at UF in 2017. Dr. Hallett's research focuses on the effects of habitat, hunting, logging, and livestock on the abundance and distribution of medium and large-bodied Neotropical mammals, as well as the efficacy of approaches that integrate community participation into research, conservation, and management. Much of this work has been conducted in the Rupununi Region of Guyana, where Dr. Hallett joined a group of highly trained local scientists in co-founding the Rupununi Wildlife Research Unit (RWRU). The RWRU collaborates with indigenous communities, private landowners, government agencies, and NGOs on wildlife monitoring activities across Guyana's interior.

SUMMARY

Dr. Hallett will share his experiences with co-founding the RWRU – a research collaboration with a growing number of indigenous villages, private ranches and conservation organizations in the Rupununi region of Guyana. The RWRU values transparent communication and emphasizes relationship building in their open-source and team-based approach to research and project management. Their leadership team informs research questions, methodologies, and decision-making, valuing scientific and traditional ecological knowledge equally. Investing heavily in local capacity, the RWRU has trained hundreds of local researchers in a wide variety of research techniques using a scaffolded approach that promotes the emergence of leaders by generating new challenges, creating new opportunities to learn, and granting increasing autonomy. This investment in people has been supported by a variety of projects and sources and has ultimately elevated their grassroots efforts to informing regional, national, and international conservation efforts.

 **Tuesday - September 30, 2025**

12:45 - 1:45 pm

 **Grinter Hall 376 or**
Zoom link

Tropilunch is a seminar run by graduate students from the Tropical Conservation and Development (TCD) Program. It provides a forum for a range of discussions and presentations related to TCD work and research. Special guests, visiting scholars, and practitioners also participate. It happens weekly around lunchtime.

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