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Assessment of the Artisanal Giant Cichlid (Petenia splendida) Fishery in Lake Petén Itza, Guatemala

Talk by Yasmin Quintana
Master’s Student
SNRE

March 24
12:45- 1:45pm
Grinter 376

Biographies:
Yasmin received her BS in Biology at the Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala. Yasmin also worked as a freshwater fisheries research scientist at the Organizacion Nacional para la Conservacion y el Ambiente (ONCA). Yasmin is part of a group that started the program "PESCA", associated with the Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala, that works closely with governmental agencies to support natural resource management decisions. She was invited to be on the team that developed the National Biological Diversity and Conservation Strategy for Guatemala and was appointed Wildlife Program Manager in the National Council of Protected Areas in Guatemala in 2013. As a Masters student at the School of Natural Resources and Environment, advised by Dr. Mike Allen, her research will focus on the fishing mortality assessment from artisanal fishery in the giant cichlid (Petenia splendida) in Lake Petén Itza and Yaxhá, Guatemala.

Content:
Small-scale inland fisheries in developing countries extract about one third of the global fish catch. The lack of management in those fisheries is leading to degradation and threatening food supply. Guatemalan inland fisheries are rarely managed and thus, there is a need for stock assessments and management. Lake Petén Itzá, is located in the buffer zone of the Mayan Biosphere Reserve, where the most sought species is the giant cichlid (Petenia splendida). One of the main concerns of the fishermen and local authorities is the giant cichlid reduction of biomass and average size caught in Lake Petén Itza fishery. We assessed fishing mortality for giant cichlid using a tag-reward methodology. We concluded that the fishing mortality was approximately at MSY, and thus regulations such as length limits were not required at this time, and the giant cichlid population recovers with this fishing pressure.