



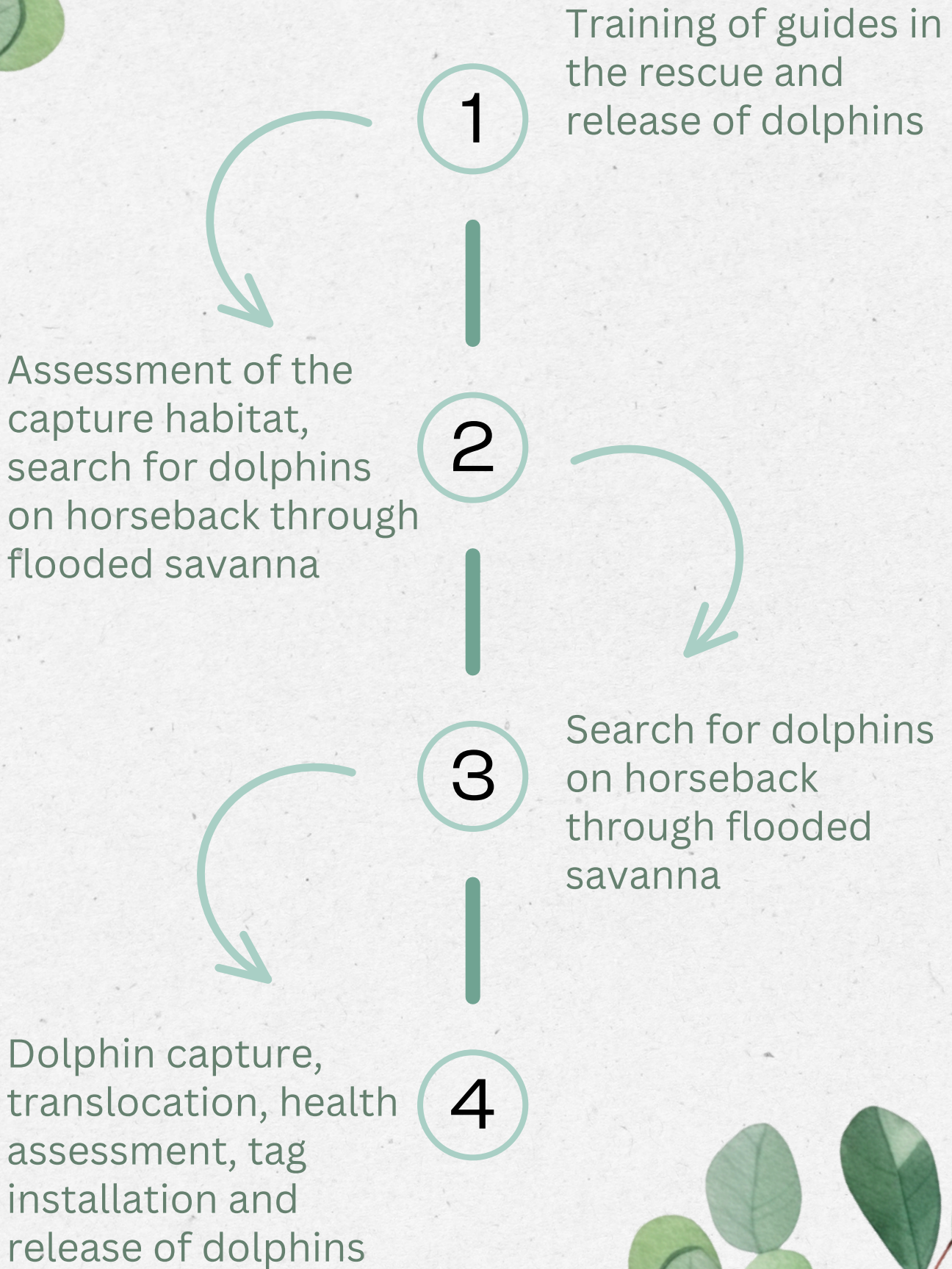
EFFORTS FOR THE RESCUE,
TAGGING, AND HEALTH
EVALUATION OF RIVER DOLPHINS IN
HATO EL CEDRAL, APURE,
VENEZUELA




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FUNDACIÓN
OMACHA


PROCESS





During the recent expedition to Hato El Cedral in Apure, Venezuela, we conducted the capture, tagging, and health evaluation of a group of river dolphins residing in the Guaratarito channel. The objective of this study is to monitor their movements using satellite tracking to better understand their habitat use and determine if they leave the channel during the winter season. During the search for the dolphins, after an extensive horseback ride, we identified two individuals stranded in a fragment of the channel with high aquatic plant proliferation and low fish availability, which was hindering their feeding. In response to this situation, the initial plan was modified to perform a rescue and translocation of the dolphins to a part of the channel with greater fish abundance and space. The rescue was carried out using the bed of a pickup truck, transporting one individual at a time for approximately 40 minutes per trip across the savanna.

The rescued individuals were an adult female and a juvenile. After the transport, they were fitted with a satellite transmitter, underwent a health evaluation, and biological samples were taken. Throughout the process, continuous monitoring of their physiological constants was maintained while they were out of the water. The release was successful, and the dolphins are now providing valuable information on how they use their habitat in an ecosystem highly vulnerable to climate change. Additionally, before the capture effort, the guides of the ranch were trained in dolphin biology, rescue, and release, ensuring the proper execution of these activities.



Training of guides in the rescue and release of dolphins



Assessment of the capture habitat, search for dolphins on horseback through flooded savanna



Evaluation of capture procedure

installation of capture netting with the support of personnel on horseback



Trolley for the transport of dolphins



Dolphin capture

Capture of stranded dolphin in the Guaratarito channel in the middle of aquatic plant ploriferation



Release of rescued dolphin, following translocation, tag installation and health evaluation

