



Thinking about 2010, I realized that I have been the Chair of the Tapir Specialist Group for 10 years! Yes, 10 years... I have to say that it has been a most exciting, productive decade and we have managed to accomplish so much as a group. The TSG is an impressive group of people and I am very proud of it. Reflecting on our accomplishments since 2000, I thought of a few highlights I would like to mention here...

We made major re-structuring of the Tapir Specialist Group through the creation of several committees, taskforces, working groups and positions *i.e.* species coordinators, country coordinators. This was done in order to better address the challenges and issues of tapir conservation across different continents, locations and circumstances. The decentralization and improvement in communications made us much more efficient. We organized and hosted four international tapir symposia (Costa Rica, 2001; Panama, 2004; Argentina, 2006; Mexico, 2008) that brought the international tapir conservation community together on a regular basis. The First International Tapir Symposium held in San José, Costa Rica, in 2001, was a major boost for tapir conservation and since then the Tapir Specialist Group has been evolving and improving as a group. We developed Strategic Plans for the TSG during each tapir symposium, establishing priority goals and actions to be implemented in-between conferences in order to make the group more effective and pro-active. We updated the 1997 Tapir Action Plan by carrying out Population and Habitat Viability Assessment (PHVA) Workshops for each tapir species (Malayan tapir, Malaysia, 2003;

Mountain tapir, Colombia, 2004; Baird's tapir, Belize, 2005; Lowland tapir, Brazil, 2007) and developed new Tapir Action Plans including priority goals and action steps for each species. Most importantly, we put together an Action Plan Implementation Taskforce, which has been working towards ensuring that these plans are going to be fully implemented. We have continuously supported our TSG Country Coordinators in the process of developing National Action Plans for Tapir Conservation in several tapir range countries, a process that is still ongoing. We have considerably improved our tapir Red List Assessments. We established the TSG Conservation Fund (TSGCF), a vehicle to raise funds and offer support through small grants to tapir field projects. We established strong, long-term partnerships with the AZA and EAZA Tapir Taxon Advisory Groups, an alliance that provided us with a perfect platform for successfully linking *in-situ* and *ex-situ* tapir conservation, as well as for raising funds for the TSG and for tapir conservation in general. We built a fantastic website, which constitutes the group's main communications and awareness tool for the tapir conservation cause. We developed promotional and educational brochures and flyers to be used by tapir conservationists worldwide. We also managed to put tapirs in the media on a regular basis! We built a virtual tapir library as part of our website, including PDF copies of e-v-e-r-y-t-h-i-n-g that has been published on tapirs so far... which is pretty incredible! We worked really hard to make this newsletter what it is today, a well structured, peer-reviewed resource for publications on tapirs. Speaking of publications, we developed and published a number of documents relevant to tapir conservation including the "Tapir Field Veterinary Manual", "Manual for the Collection and Storage of Tapir Samples for Genetic Studies", "Guidelines for Tapir Re-Introductions and Translocations" among many others. All brochures and scientific documents published by the Tapir Specialist Group have been translated into all relevant languages so that they can be used by tapir conservationists in all tapir range countries. I could go on and on and list many other accomplishments of the Tapir Specialist Group over the last 10 years... All in all, I strongly believe that as a consequence of all these activities, thanks to the commitment and passion of our incredible membership, tapir conservation now features very prominently on the international conservation radar!!!

Nevertheless, I personally look forward for 10, 20 more years of work with the Tapir Specialist Group, because we still have so much to do! In fact, 2010, is going to be an extremely busy year for the TSG. One of our most important activities for 2010 will be the organization of the upcoming Fifth International Tapir Symposium to be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in March 2011. We will be organizing and holding

the symposium in partnership with the Malaysian Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP). We are currently putting together a planning committee to take care of the logistics of the event, a scientific committee to work on the symposium agenda and selection of papers and posters, and a fundraising committee to raise the necessary funds for the conference. Our local organizers are actively seeking an appropriate venue for the symposium. We should be able to open for registrations and to send out a call for abstracts very soon. This is going to be a very exciting conference and I hope **all of you will be able to attend!** We will keep you posted about the developments on this front.

Besides the tapir symposium, in 2010 we will be focusing on developing the activities of our Action Plan Implementation Taskforce, and we will put a lot of energy into developing National Action Plans for Tapir Conservation. We already have plans for Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, and Mexico. The action plans for Guatemala and Indonesia are well on their way.

SPOTLIGHT

The Tapir Research Spotlight

Anders Gonçalves da Silva, Mathias Tobler

Welcome to our second research spotlight. As reminder, the objective of the spotlight is to feature a selection of the scientific literature relevant to tapirs, tapir conservation, or tapir scientific inquiry. For this edition, we picked three articles, although two are connected and will be covered under one headline. The first is about a topic dreaded by civil liberty activists and loved by right wing fanatics, surveillance. The other two bring us to the forefront of conservation genetics, or what might be called conservation genomics... **Tapiromics, in our case! I hope you enjoy it!**

Big Brother is Watching You!

Tobler. 2009. New GPS technology improves fix success for larger mammal collars in dense tropical forest. *Journal of Tropical Ecology* 25: 217-221.

We will continue to have lots more to report in the upcoming issues of Tapir Conservation. I hope you will enjoy this issue!

All the best for a wonderful 2010,

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In 1949, George Orwell published his famous book, *1984*, which described a totalitarian society constantly under surveillance by their leader, Big Brother. Although spooky and creepy, Orwell wasn't too far from the truth. Open the newspaper in 2009 and you are greeted with news of the Swiss government suing Google because their Google Map Street View application impinges on Swiss citizen privacy; or that our cellphones and Facebook accounts are being tracked to figure out our movement patterns and habitats for reasons as diabolical as tailoring product ads. News pieces of this flavor always make me think about the famous words: *Big brother is watching!* And leads to the obvious conclusion that surveillance is pervasive in our society. Whether good or bad is not the purpose of this piece to discuss, however it lends itself to much debate between civil rights activists and people of the right wing persuasion. The irony is that, in spite of our left leaning tendencies as conservationists, in a broader discussion about surveillance, we would definitely have to side with the right-wingers on this one. Surveillance (although, we conservationists prefer the word *monitoring*) is essential to conservation biology, and nothing will get our group more excited than a dinner discussion about how to best get inside information on the movement, preferences, friendships, feuds, etc. of the individuals of our favorite tapir population. In fact, it is probably safe to say that at the top of our Christmas list is having "critter cams" (collars fitted with video cameras that transmit live feed), like the ones deployed by the National Geographic crew on bears in Alaska, fitted to all individuals in our