

FROM THE CHAIR

Letter from the Chair

Patrícia Medici

Over the past six months, the Tapir Specialist Group has made considerable progress on developing **National Action Plans for Tapir Research and Conservation**. Argentina and Ecuador have recently finished and published their plans! As you all know, after holding Population and Habitat Viability Assessments (PHVAs) and developing new action plans for each species of tapir, the TSG has shifted its focus to developing National Action Plans for each tapir range country. So far, Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador and Mexico have finished their plans. French Guiana, Guatemala, Indonesia, Peru and Venezuela are well on their way. In Brazil, the TSG is working with the Federal Environmental Agency (ICMBio) on the revision of the Brazilian Red List – which includes lowland tapirs – and the results of this work will be used for the development of a National Action Plan for lowland tapirs in Brazil. A workshop to evaluate the status of lowland tapirs in all Brazilian biomes where the species occurs will be held in November 2010. All tapir action plans can be downloaded in all appropriate languages from the TSG website (www.tapirs.org). I would like to express our gratitude to all TSG Country Coordinators who have been working really hard on developing and publishing the National Action Plans! In addition, I would like to thank all organizations that have provided institutional and financial support for our action planning activities in each country.

As I mentioned before, the **Fifth International Tapir Symposium** will be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in 2011. This is the first time the TSG will bring the conference to a Malayan tapir range country and we are very excited about it! Originally we planned to hold the conference in March 2011. However, due to personal reasons on my part we had to postpone the symposium to the second half of 2011. The new dates are from **17-21st of October, 2011**. An organizing committee consisting of members from the Malaysia Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) and our TSG members Carl Traeholt and Boyd Simpson are working together on the local organization of the conference. A scientific committee has been formed and we will soon post a call for abstracts. A fundraising committee formed by members of the TSG as well as members of the AZA and EAZA Tapir



Patrícia Medici and José Aragão (Pantanal Tapir Program) profiled on Revista Brasileiros in Brazil.

and stayed with us for an entire week! We captured and radio-collared two tapirs during her stay! Liana has worked as a professional journalist since 1977 and specialized on Science and Environmental Reporting back in 1983. She is a huge tapir fan and major supporter of tapir conservation in Brazil. In 2002, she won the Biodiversity Reporting Award with a feature story on lowland tapirs based on my tapir project in the Atlantic Forest. Since then, Liana has published several media articles on tapirs. For years I had been inviting her to join my team in the field, and we finally managed to make it happen! As a result of her visit to my project in the Pantanal she wrote and published an incredible article in a national magazine called **“Revista Brasileiros”** (July Edition 36)! The article profiles tapirs, tapir conservation issues, my long-term tapir work in Brazil and talks about the Tapir Specialist Group. It is by far the most beautiful, complete article ever written about our tapir conservation efforts here in Brazil. The article is available online at: <http://www.revistabrasileiros.com.br/edicoes/36/textos/1081/>.



Environmental Journalist Liana John, Major tapir conservation supporter in Brazil.



Veterinarian Paulo Mangini (Pantanal Tapir Program) being interviewed by Repórter ECO.

The article is in Portuguese, so apologies to the English speakers! Another outcome of Liana's visit to the Pantanal was our decision to work together on a **tapir coffee table book** to be published in both English and Portuguese! The main focus of the book will be on the lowland tapir... including biological and cultural information about the species. We are currently raising funds for the initiative and we are aiming at having the book published before the next Tapir Symposium in Malaysia. We know it is a tight schedule, but we want to give it a try!

In August, we hosted a TV crew from "TV Cultura", an extremely well-known, well-respected Brazilian TV channel. They have a show called "Repórter ECO" that focuses on nature, wildlife and environmental issues in general, and it is aired every Sunday afternoon to the entire country. The Repórter ECO crew came to the Pantanal with us and obtained footage for an entire **show dedicated to lowland tapirs and the Pantanal Tapir Program!** The show was aired last September and made available online on the TV Cultura website (www.tvcultura.com.br). I would like to take this opportunity to thank TV Cultura for this opportunity to profile tapirs on national television in Brazil, the exposure was priceless!

In the meantime, our tapir presence on **Facebook** (www.facebook.com), the most popular social media tool these days, has been growing by the day! The TSG Facebook profile created in 2009 has attracted **718** friends so far. The TSG Group page, also created in

2009, has recruited **370** members. I created a Cause Page for my Lowland Tapir Conservation Initiative here in Brazil and we have managed to recruit **1,335** members in less than six months! The page dedicated to World Tapir Day has recruited over **3,000** fans! The Colombian Group page called Red Danta recruited **106** members in a few months. All these people who have become members, friends or fans of these tapir Facebook pages are now receiving regular information about tapirs and tapir conservation issues and needs and that is extremely powerful!

We will continue to work hard to maintain tapirs high on the list of conservation priorities worldwide!

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