FROM THE CHAIR



I hope this issue of Tapir Conservation finds all of you very well!

Before you go ahead and enjoy the great articles included in this issue, let me keep you here with me for a little while so that I can give you a few exciting updates about the work of the IUCN/SSC Tapir Specialist Group!

Some of us had the opportunity to attend the **First Latin American Tapir Symposium** held in Puyo, Ecuador, from May 8 to 11 (please see Andres Tapia's note about the conference in our Conservation section). This conference was an initiative of our TSG members in Ecuador, with the support from several local organizations including IUCN South America. It was held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Ecuadorian Mammal Society. It was a great conference, with fantastic presentations and loads of new information about the three tapir species in Latin America. Nevertheless, I have to say that the best part of the conference was the opportunity we had to meet a number of new researchers working on tapirs in countries where we do not have a strong representation, such as Venezuela. The conference in Ecuador brought new blood and energy to the Tapir Specialist Group!

Speaking of meetings, I am currently taking the first steps on the organization of the **Sixth International Tapir Symposium** to be held in Brazil in 2014. The conference will be held in Campo Grande, capital of Mato Grosso do Sul State, in the central part of Brazil, where I live and work. Campo Grande is known as the gateway to the Brazilian Pantanal!

In consultation with the TSG Steering Committee we have set the dates for the conference: 16-20 November, 2014. I will now work on the local logistics here in Campo Grande and we will soon start our fundraising campaign. A group of us will be attending the major zoo association conferences in September and October, including AZA, EAZA and WAZA, and we hope to be able to approach as many tapir holding zoos as possible.

Something very new about the Tapir Symposium in Brazil is that before the conference starts we will be holding two days (15th and 16th of November) of short-training courses (4-hour sessions) on specific topics suggested by members of the group. The topics we have considered so far include: fundraising, red listing, communication tools, camera-trapping, evaluation of hunting impact, mapping of tapir distribution and threats, tapir occupancy and abundance (research design and data analysis using R). We already have instructors for most of these courses, and these people will be responsible for putting the training sessions together.

This time we will not have mid-conference trips as we did for previous conferences. Campo Grande does not really have options for mid-conference trips nearby. We will hold a 4-day symposium without any breaks and then offer packages for pre- and post-conference trips for those interested in exploring the Pantanal.

Last but definitely not least, I would like to report that we have just finalized the 2013 funding cycle of the **TSG Conservation Fund (TSGCF)**. We received 12 proposals and five (5) of those were selected for funding (US$2,000 grants). I would like to thank our TSGCF reviewing committee for their hard work reviewing and selecting proposals. In addition, I would like to congratulate our grantees: **Christopher Jordan** (Increasing Innovation and Efficiency of Regional Government in the Prevention of Tapir Hunting, Nicaragua), **Jaime Andres Suarez Mejia** (Evaluation of the National Program for the Conservation of Tapirs in Colombia), **Juan Pablo Reyes Puig** (Andean Tapir Conservation and Monitoring in Chamanapamba Reserve: A Cloud Forest Refuge for the Species in Central Andes of Ecuador), **Lee McLoughlin** (Integrating the National Animal of Belize, the Baird's Tapir, into the National Curriculum through the Development of Compatible and Innovative Educational Materials), and **Nay Myo Shwe** (Rapid Assessment of Malayan Tapir in Five Potential Townships of Taninthayi Range and Vicinity, Myanmar).

We are all looking forward to meeting in Brazil next year!!!

Best from Brazil,

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Chair, IUCN/SSC Tapir Specialist Group (TSG)