Silvia Chalukian collecting samples in the study area.

in Salta Province, Northwestern Argentina. It covers an area of 44,162 hectares and has a subtropical climate with seasonal summer rains. The Yungas forest is the dominant type of vegetation. The Park is almost completely surrounded by mountains, whose heights range from 750 to 2,300 m asl.

We selected sites with and without cattle where we marked, measured and positioned 8 km of transects per site (16 km total) along stream beaches, where we counted tapir tracks to assess frequency of habitat use. We also collected foraged plants and faeces (both tapirs and cattle) for analysis of food items and parasites. We performed "rainy season" sampling and habitat structure analysis along the transects. We recorded abundance and frequency of trees, shrubs, saplings and herbaceous species, canopy, soil and vertical cover using circular plots. Preliminary analysis shows a significant difference on transect use by tapirs between areas with cattle (less used) and without. Vegetation cover is obviously low and sapling predation high in the first areas.

The project is supported by the Wildlife Conservation Society and Wildlife Trust and we have received equipment from Idea Wild. It was declared of Institutional interest by the National Parks Administration and has logistical support from the Park´s authorities and employees. We plan to continue our research next year with the addition of another site outside the Park, in order to assess the impact of ranching activities. We are also looking for funding to survey the current distribution and status of tapirs in other areas of northern Argentina.

The current work team consists of the following members: Silvia C. Chalukian (M.Sc., wildlife management, team leader), Soledad de Bustos (biologist, assistant), Maria Saravia (biologist), and Roberto L. Lizárraga (natural resources management student, maps). The cattle control project coordinator, Sergio Giménez, gives us logistical support in the field, and students of natural resources are invited to assist in field trips.

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Brazil

Camera Trapping Reveals the Status of Lowland Tapir *Tapirus terrestris* (Linnaeus, 1758) in a Private Natural Reserve in Southeastern Brazil

By Edsel A. Moraes Jr., Joaquim A. Silva & Rafael L. A. Freitas

A study to ascertain the status of lowland tapir in southeastern Brazil is being undertaken by IBIAUARA – Biodiversity Research Group of Minas Gerais State in Brazil. The project is based in the Serra do Caraça Natural Reserve (10,188 ha). This area is located in the southern part of the Espinhaço Range (20º05' S; 43º29' W) in Minas Gerais. This orographic system is represented by a mountainous complex that represents a contact zone between the "Cerrado" (savannas) and the Atlantic Forest, in its southern portion, and transition zones of "Cerrado", Atlantic Forest, and "Caatinga" (tropical deciduous forest), on its central and northern borders (Giulietti & Pirani 1988; Harley 1955; Giulietti *et al.* 1997). The reserve is comprised of three main vegetation formations which are represented by seasonal semideciduous forests, "campos de altitude" (high altitude grasslands), and "campos rupestres" (rocky grasslands), these occur at elevations of between 850 and 2,072 m. The climate in this region has a rainy summer (October-March) and a dry winter (April-September). "Campos rupestres" consist of grasslands surrounded by rocky outcrops, as well as shrubs and small trees (Fig. 1). Vegetation patches in different stages of ecological succession are present in the region as a consequence of timber extraction and "slash-and-burn" agricultural practices used in the past. The reserve represents a rich artistic, cultural and historical heritage resulting from over two centuries of human occupation (Andrade, 2000).

The aim of this study was to evaluate the distribution of lowland tapir along the elevational gradient of Serra do Caraça, and to investigate habitat use by this species in different vegetation and its relationships with water courses.

The camera trap was located in a trail near the forest edge. During 20 trap/night the first results confirmed the presence of lowland tapir in 1,380 m with three photos (Figs. 2, 3 and 4). In addition, tapir presence was determined at high altitudes (2,000 m) by tracks and faeces. A rugged relief marked by abrupt elevations formed by quartzite rocks characterised the area occupied by lowland tapir. In this region, large expanses of flat areas are scarce or absent.

This is the first camera trapping project conducted in the reserve and these results will be of the utmost importance in the development of conservation strategies for the lowland tapir, a species on the endangered list of Minas Gerais State.

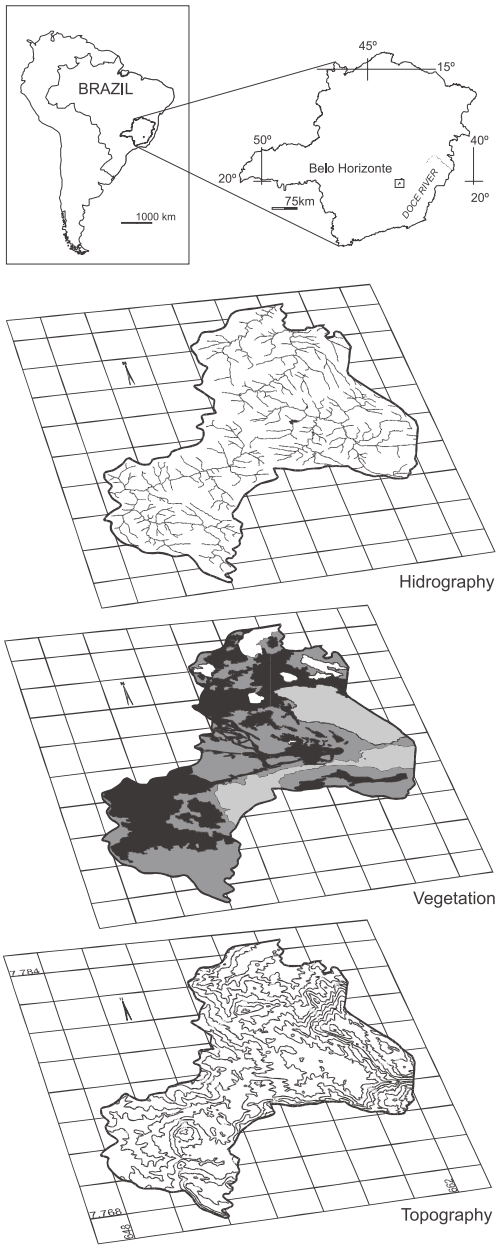

Figure I. Map of the Private Natural Heritage Reserve Serra do Caraça, MG, Brazil. Graphic by Joaquim A. Silva.

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Figures 2, 3 and 4. Picture of a lowland tapir captured on film by an infrared camera-trapping system in Caraça Reserve, MG, Brazil.
Photo Credit: IBIAUARA – Biodiversity Research Group.