

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Much has happened over the past six months. First of all, I would like to tell you that the TSG has a new logo – you can see it below and on the cover page of this newsletter! Gilia Angell, an experienced web/graphics designer who works for Amazon.com in Seattle, United States, supported by Kelly Russo, communications specialist of the Houston Zoo, worked together to create the logo. The development of the logo involved an exhausting process of working on many



different designs based on the feedback from TSG members until we reached a final design that seemed to appeal to everyone. For that, I am extremely thankful to both Gilia and Kelly! After we were done with the logo, Gilia volunteered to help us with the design of the new TSG web site and she is once again relying on the group's feedback and support to create the site. The domain (www.tapirspecialistgroup.org) has already been purchased and the site is up, although only a few links are currently working. We still need a few months to have all the information available on the site. Any suggestions, comments, criticisms etc. will always be more than welcome! We strongly believe that this new site will be an excellent tool to promote the work of the TSG, to publicise tapir conservation initiatives and projects and to raise funds for tapir conservation. On another note, Kelly Russo and Alberto Mendoza, Community Programmes Coordinator of the Houston Zoo, continue to work on the development of tapir and TSG brochures! Thank you, Gilia, Kelly and Alberto!!!

The TSG Conservation Fund (TSGCF) finally became reality and we conducted our first funding cycle in July. Most of the funds were raised through the "Friends of TSG" campaign conducted in partnership with the Tapir Preservation Fund (TPF), and consisted of personal donations from tapir researchers, supporters and enthusiasts worldwide. Once again, I would like to thank those of you who made donations for the campaign! The TSGCF only accepted applications from TSG members for the 2003 funding cycle and seven proposals were received. A TSGCF committee reviewed each application and selected projects based on the merits of each proposal and its significance for tapir conservation. Three tapir researchers – Iván Lira Torres from Mexico, Adrián Naveda from Venezuela, and Emilio Constantino from Colombia – were awarded small grants (for further details see "TSG Conservation Fund 2003" in this issue). We are really happy about this, and about the fact that after so many years we are finally moving in the direction of being able to support

some projects financially. I will do my best to make sure that our contributions are wisely used, always for the benefit of tapirs in the wild and in captivity. Hopefully, we will be able to raise a larger amount of funds in 2004 and fund even more projects. Right now, TSG members and supporters have been discussing some marketing ideas to better promote the fund and some fundraising strategies to get more donations for next year's cycle.

In August, we held the Malay Tapir Conservation Workshop at Krau Wildlife Reserve, Malaysia, which was a very successful event. The workshop was organised by the TSG, the EAZA Tapir Taxon Advisory Group (TAG), and the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP), Malaysia. It was facilitated by Dr. Phillip Miller and Amy Camacho, who are members of the IUCN/SSC Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG). We had 35 participants from Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand, and also TSG representatives from several other countries. The final outcome of the meeting

The Honorable Minister of Science, Technology and Environment for Malaysia, Datuk Law Heing Ding, who spoke during the opening ceremony of the Malay Tapir Conservation Workshop, held at Krau Wildlife Reserve, Malaysia, in August 2003.

Photo by Charles R. Foerster.



The Malay Tapir (*Tapirus indicus*) was the focus of a conservation workshop held in Malaysia, in August 2003. The main outcome of the meeting was an updated action plan for the conservation of the species.

Photo by Charles R. Foerster.



was a revised and updated action plan, listing and prioritising strategies and actions for the conservation of Malay tapirs. The CBSG team is reviewing the first draft of the action plan, and as soon as we have the final version of the document we will print and distribute copies to all interested parties in Southeast Asia. This document will also be incorporated into the next version of the IUCN/SSC *Tapir Status Survey and Conservation Action Plan* (1997), currently under revision. The TSG would like to thank all those people and organisations directly or indirectly involved in the workshop, especially

the staff of the DWNP in Malaysia, who organised the most tiring and complicated part of any event, the logistics! Also, we are extremely grateful to the Copenhagen Zoo, Denmark, the major funding source for the workshop. For further details about the workshop see the article "Malay Tapir Conservation Workshop: A Major Success" in this issue.

Speaking of TSG events, we keep working on the organisation of the Second International Tapir Symposium, which will be held in Panama City, Republic of Panama, from January 10 to 16, 2004. Currently, the planning committee is working tirelessly to raise the necessary funds for the conference. As one of the fundraising strategies, the TSG, in partnership with the AZA and the EAZA Tapir TAGs, is approaching all zoos and other institutions holding any of the four species of tapirs worldwide to request contributions for the symposium. Zoos are contributing and we are moving forward with the organisation. The Second International Tapir Symposium website (<http://www.caligo.com/tapir/>) is set up for registration, and the planning committee has been receiving

and reviewing abstracts. The first part of the Symposium will consist of talks by keynote speakers and paper and poster sessions addressing tapir biology, research and conservation. Some of the speakers already confirmed are Joe Fragoso, who has worked on tapirs in Belize and Brazil for most of his professional life, and will give a keynote speech; Rick Barongi

TAPIR SYMPOSIUM



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and Lewis Greene, respectively former and present chair of the AZA Tapir TAG, will make a presentation about the recently developed Tapir TAG Action Plan; Bengt Holst, chair of the EAZA Tapir TAG, will tell us about the activities of the group and let us know about their plans for captive tapirs in Europe; and Alan Shoemaker, will make a presentation about two important documents recently published, the AZA Tapir TAG Regional Collection Plan for Tapirs, and the Tapir Husbandry Standards. Wally van Sickle with Idea Wild, Gilia Angell with Amazon.com, and Kelly Russo with Houston Zoo, will conduct workshops focusing on fundraising and marketing ideas for the TSG. Anders Gonçalves da Silva, a Brazilian researcher who is doing his Ph.D. at Columbia University, and Javier Sarria from Colombia, will conduct a workshop on tapir genetics. Phillip Miller with the IUCN/SSC CBSG will conduct a workshop about Population and Habitat Viability Analysis (PHVA) and action planning for tapirs. Susie Ellis with Conservation International will once again help us with the facilitation of the TSG planning workshop. We are all very excited about this upcoming symposium and we are expecting more than 100 participants from over 25 countries.

During the past months, we have added five new members to the Tapir Specialist Group. Ms. Siti Khadijah Abd Ghani and Mr. Carl Traeholt from Malaysia, field coordinators

of the Malay Tapir Project recently established in Krau Wildlife Reserve, Malaysia. Siti and Carl are doing an amazing job in Krau, and I am certain that they will be able to contribute a lot to our activities regarding the conservation of Malay tapirs in Southeast Asia. Mr. Anders Gonçalves da Silva from Brazil, who, as I mentioned before, is currently doing his Ph.D. at Columbia University working on landscape genetics. Anders is planning to develop a major genetic study for Latin American tapir species all over their range and will present his initial ideas during the upcoming symposium in Panama. Don Goff, Director of Animal Programmes for the Beardsley Zoological Gardens, and AZA Studbook Keeper for lowland tapirs. Joe Roman, Curator of the Virginia Zoo, and AZA Studbook Keeper for Baird's tapirs. Both Don and Joe have been keeping the studbooks for many years and have constantly supported the work of the AZA Tapir TAG and the TSG.

On another note, it is with regret we had to accept Dr. Nico van Strien's wish to step down from the position as the TSG Malay Tapir Coordinator. Nico has done a tremendous job for the TSG during the past three years and his constant contribution will be missed. Nico will continue as a member of the group and will certainly keep helping us in Southeast Asia. In view of this we had to look for another person to take over this important role. During the Malay Tapir Conservation Workshop in Krau Wildlife Reserve, Malaysia, we held a small TSG meeting in order to discuss potential candidates for the position and there was a general consensus that our next Malay Tapir Coordinator should be a person from a Malay tapir range country. The process of identifying the right person for the position will take some time. In the meantime Mr. Carl Traeholt has kindly agreed to take over the job on a temporary basis. I would like to thank Nico for all his hard work over the past years and to welcome Carl to the TSG and to the Malay Tapir Coordinator position.

A few months ago, Dr. Mariano Gimenez Dixon, Programme Officer of the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC), informed us about recent progress regarding the IUCN Global Mammal Assessment (GMA). The GMA will be a collaborative effort of all the SSC Specialist Groups concerned with mammals. For the collection of data, IUCN will provide each Specialist Group with the "Data Entry Module" of the Species Information Service (SIS) software, which will be a way to jump-start data acquisition capabilities for the mammal Specialist Groups. The data incorporated in this project will not only serve the GMA, but will also go back to the Specialist Groups to be maintained, managed, and continually updated as part of the SIS. There are various advantages in using the data entry module as it will allow the collection of information on species in an electronic format making it easily available for future use; data will be entered using a standard format and standardised authority files, which will facilitate data entry and allow comparisons between different taxa. Copies of the module can then be sent to different Specialist Group members to enter information. This method

will allow the workload to be distributed between various people and allow experts to enter information on their particular species, while maintaining consistency in the overall process. The information coming from different colleagues will then be merged "centrally". It is envisioned that the GMA will take two years to reach completion. In April 2004, IUCN plans to conduct a comparative analysis of the conservation status of mammals, birds, and amphibians. By this date, the conservation status of all the known species of these three major taxonomic groups will have been evaluated (or re-evaluated) according to the IUCN Red List Categories, allowing a comparative analysis. The TSG will be actively involved in the GMA project.

Finally, I would like to tell you that I have just returned from the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA) Annual Conference that was held in Columbus, Ohio, United States. This was a very productive event for the TSG. Gilia Angell prepared basic, simple TSG brochures that were widely distributed during the conference along with copies of previ-

ous issues of the *Tapir Conservation* newsletter. During the conference, members of the AZA Tapir TAG and myself made sure to promote the upcoming Tapir Symposium and work on funding possibilities for the TSG Conservation Fund.

Once again, I would like to thank Rick Barongi and the Houston Zoo for sponsorship of printing and distributing the TSG *Tapir Conservation* Newsletter!

The next months will be very busy, as always, and will certainly bring lots more positive results and good news about TSG. I will make sure to keep you posted!

Best wishes from Brazil,

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TSG NEWS

TSG Conservation Fund 2003

By **Patrícia Medici**

The Tapir Specialist Group Conservation Fund (TSGCF) was recently established as a vehicle to raise and contribute funds towards tapir conservation initiatives. The organisations involved in the management of the TSGCF are the IUCN/SSC Tapir Specialist Group (TSG), the Houston Zoological Gardens, the Tapir Preservation Fund (TPF), the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA) Tapir Taxon Advisory Group (TAG), and the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) Tapir Taxon Advisory Group (TAG), which are today the key groups working on coordinating and implementing tapir research, conservation and management programmes. The money in this Fund consists of personal donations from tapir researchers, supporters and enthusiasts worldwide, as well as contributions from conservation organizations and tapir holding institutions and zoos.

A TSGCF committee reviews each application submitted and decides to fund projects based on the merits of each proposal, significance for tapir conservation, and several other criteria. Grants are given to projects targeted at research with wild and/or captive tapirs; projects targeted at restoration, protection and conservation of tapir habitat in South and Central America and Southeast Asia; education and capacity-building programs for local communities within the tapirs' range in South and Central America, and Southeast Asia;

and implementation of the recommendations of the IUCN/SSC *Tapir Status Survey and Conservation Action Plan*. The proposals must be cooperative in nature and have matching funds. The fund does not support salary, tuition fees, scholarships, conferences, courses and meetings, or operational/overhead costs for institutions or established projects and/or programmes. The proposal must be scientifically significant and sound, logistically feasible, must have a high probability of success and clearly contribute to the conservation of tapirs and their remaining habitats.

During the 2003 funding cycle, the TSG Conservation Fund received seven proposals and three of those were selected for funding. On the following page, you can see the titles and coordinators of each project, as well as brief abstracts from each one. I would like to congratulate Iván, Adrián and Emilio for the excellent job they have been doing in Mexico, Venezuela and Colombia respectively.

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