

FROM THE CHAIR

Letter from the Chair

By *Patrícia Medici*

The IUCN/SSC Tapir Specialist Group is **VERY PROUD and VERY HAPPY** to announce that after **five** long years of dedication and hard work we have concluded the development of the second version of our **IUCN/SSC Tapir Action Plan!!!** This is one of **the** most significant accomplishments in the history of the Tapir Specialist Group and we want all of you to celebrate with us!!!

As reported in several different occasions over the past years, during the First International Tapir Symposium held in San José, Costa Rica, in November 2001, participants agreed that the revision and updating of the first version of the *IUCN/SSC Tapir Status Survey and Conservation Action Plan* (edited by Daniel Brooks, Richard Bodmer and Sharon Matola in 1997) should be one of the priority goals for the TSG. An Action Planning Committee was created and it was decided that a Population and Habitat Viability Assessment (PHVA), as implemented by the IUCN/SSC Conservation Breeding Specialist Group, would be the most appropriate methodology for the development of updated action plans for each one of the four tapir species, listing and prioritizing actions for the conservation of tapirs and their habitats.

Towards achieving this goal we first conducted the **Malayan Tapir PHVA Workshop**, held in Malaysia, in August 2003. The workshop included 30 participants from the Malayan tapir range countries in Southeast Asia, including Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand. The second meeting, **Mountain Tapir PHVA Workshop**, was held in Colombia, in October 2004. A total of 63 representatives from the mountain tapir range countries (Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru) attended the workshop. The third workshop, **Baird's Tapir PHVA Workshop**, was held in Belize, in August 2005. A total of 55 participants from the Baird's tapir range countries (Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and Panama) attended the meeting. More recently, from April 15 to 19, 2007, the TSG carried out the **Lowland Tapir PHVA Workshop**, which was held at the Sorocaba Zoo, São Paulo, Brazil, including 70 participants coming from the 11 lowland tapir range countries throughout South America (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guiana, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, and Venezuela). This last PHVA meeting, like all the previous ones,

was extremely successful and we can now say we have new, updated, prioritized action plans for each one of the four tapir species. Each of these plans focuses on recommendations for the conservation of tapirs in the wild, as well as on captive populations, education and capacity building, research priorities, research gaps, funding and all other relevant topics.

Conservation action plans are designed to promote conservation action financially, technically, or logistically, influencing key players at the local, national, regional, and global levels. They provide a common framework for a range of players, from decision-makers at the governmental level, to those who will implement the conservation actions on the ground to interact, to carry out their work synergistically. Because the conservation actions are prioritized and justifications provided,



CBSG Facilitators and Modellers. From left to right: Anders Gonçalves da Silva (Modeller CBSG Brasil), Leandro Jerusalinsky (Facilitator CBSG Brasil), Arnaud Desbiez (Modeller CBSG Brasil), Onnie Byers (Facilitator CBSG HQ), Patrícia Medici (Chair, TSG and Facilitator CBSG Brasil), and Robert Lacy (Chair & Modeller, CBSG).

scientists, resource managers, agency officials, funding organizations, universities, zoos, and political leaders utilize them when deciding how to allocate available resources. Action plans are also "snapshots in time", providing a baseline set of data and information against which to measure change and monitor progress, indicating where changes of emphasis or direction may be needed to conserve the species. Further, they identify gaps in species research and policy and give direction for future endeavors on what data and knowledge are needed most.

A lot of energy and hard work was necessary to fundraise for and organize these PHVA workshops around the world. Therefore, the publication



Participants of the Lowland Tapir PHVA Working Group that discussed tapir conservation in Protected Areas.



Participants of the Lowland Tapir PHVA Working Group that discussed tapir ex-situ conservation.

of this new Tapir Action Plan cannot be the end of our efforts. We must make sure that our new plan will be actively used by all organizations directly or indirectly involved with tapir conservation, and guarantee that all the actions listed as priorities will be implemented. We want this new Tapir Action Plan to be a **LIVING DOCUMENT**. This means it will constantly be reviewed, updated and adapted according to tapir conservation needs identified in the years to come. To this end, we have already established an Action Plan Implementation Taskforce, which has an enormous responsibility. The taskforce is responsible for promoting the new action plan throughout all tapir range countries in Central and South America, and Southeast Asia, reaching all possible stakeholders and key conservation players. Additionally, the members of the taskforce will be constantly reviewing the action plan and providing technical assistance, help and sup-

port for proposal development, writing and fundraising, and political lobbying. An important outcome of these PHVA Workshops was the creation of a network of professionals and organizations committed to put in practice all the actions listed as priorities. Therefore, another major responsibility of the taskforce will be to keep in contact with these professionals and make sure they work on their actions. The progress made in implementing the Tapir Action Plan will be evaluated during the International Tapir Symposium every two years, where the general TSG audience will be updated on progress in conserving tapirs according to this master plan.

The English version of the Malayan Tapir Action Plan and Spanish versions of the Mountain Tapir and Baird's Tapir Action Plans are available online on the TSG website and can be downloaded in PDF format. The latter two are in the process of being translated



Participants of the Lowland Tapir PHVA Working Group that discussed tapir hunting.



Participants of the Lowland Tapir PHVA Working Group that discussed education and communication.

into English. The Lowland Tapir Action Plan will be published in approximately three months. It will be made available on the TSG website in Portuguese, Spanish and English.

Speaking for all of us in the TSG, I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to all people and organizations that helped us make this happen! In order to organize and conduct these workshops we counted with the support of a **very large** list of institutional and financial supporters that were with us all along the way. Together, we worked tirelessly to organize and conduct each workshop, compile final reports and develop the action plans. Right now, I would like to say a special **THANK YOU!!** to the **Sorocaba Zoo** here in Brazil, our main partners for the organization of the Lowland Tapir PHVA Workshop.

The boxes below provide further information about each one of our PHVA Workshops and Action Plans, including lists of organizers, institutional and financial supporters, and lists of participants per range country. You, the reader, may also want to visit our website at: www.tapirs.org

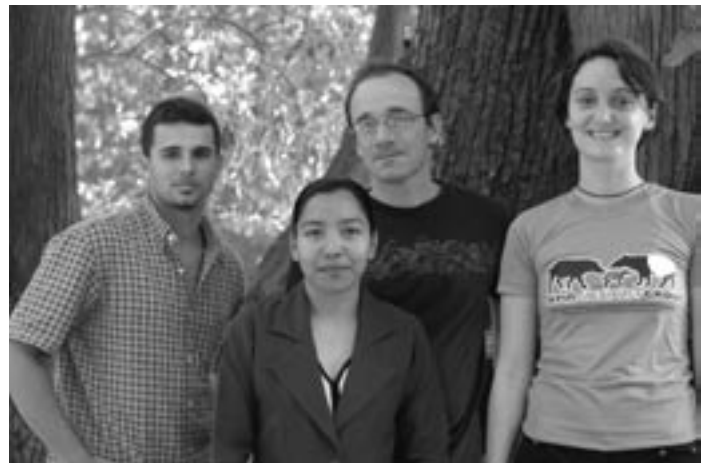
Another **VERY IMPORTANT** announcement is that in January 2007 the board of the Copenhagen Zoo in Denmark approved a proposal to cover the TSG's annual operational costs, including general expenses with the implementation of our new Tapir Action Plan, which is absolutely great news for the TSG. This support will be fundamental to help us establish a system to guarantee that our Action Planning Implementation Taskforce will be able to get started with the process of implementing the actions included in our new action plan. We could not be more grateful for this support, and for the person who is truly behind this... our TSG member and Chair of the EAZA Tapir TAG, Bengt Holst. We will always be grateful for everything Bengt does for the TSG and for tapir conservation in general.

On another important piece of news, we have added over 100 new tapir references to our **TSG Virtual Library**. Our library now contains 450 bibliographical references including scientific papers, book chapters, dissertations etc. all in PDF format!!! The TSG Virtual Library is a joint volunteer project of the TSG and the Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT) and aims to make available all published bibliography on tapirs. We aim to make this a constantly updated and robust resource for tapir researchers and those interested in accessing published studies and articles on tapirs which are often difficult to obtain in hard copy. Visit our library at: <http://atrium.tapirs.org/>

Regarding TSG documents, we have just managed to finalize our **TSG Tapir Field Veterinary Manual**, which will soon be available on our TSG website in English, Portuguese and Spanish. Additionally, we have finalized the very first draft of our **TSG**



Participants of the Lowland Tapir PHVA Taskforce that discussed tapir epidemiology.



Participants from French Guiana and Suriname. From left to right: Krisna Gajapersad (Suriname), Claudine Sakimin (Suriname), Benoit de Thoisy (French Guiana), and Laure Debeir (French Guiana).

Experimental Protocols for Tapir Re-Introductions and Translocations, a document that was developed by a group of TSG members including biologists, veterinarians and geneticists. This first draft will be submitted to the IUCN/SSC Re-Introduction Specialist Group for review and endorsement, and the final document will soon be available online in all appropriate languages. A brief note on these documents is included in this issue.

During the Lowland Tapir PHVA Workshop we added several new members to the TSG, and made a few changes on our group's structure. We now have a new Country Coordinator for Bolivia, Guido Ayala, who works for the Wildlife Conservation Society in Bolivia. And we put together a system of Regional Coordinators for the TSG in Brazil. Brazil is such a vast country that we would never be able to carry out the process



We would like to thank Bengt Holst, Director of Conservation and Science of the Copenhagen Zoo in Denmark, Chair of the EAZA Tapir TAG, and member of the Tapir Specialist Group, for obtaining the funding for the TSG operational costs, a great achievement for the group.

of developing a National Action Plan for this country without having more Brazilians on board. Therefore, we now have coordinators for each region of Brazil and our first step will be to compile a list of people and organizations involved with tapir conservation in the country.



The team responsible for the development of the first draft of the TSG Experimental Guidelines for Tapir Re-Introduction and Translocation. From left to right, standing up: Anders Gonçalves da Silva, Javier Sarria Perea, Joares May Jr., Ralph Vanstreels, and Marcelo Schiavo. From left to right, kneeling down: José Maria de Aragao, Paulo Rogerio Mangini, and Patrícia Medici. Missing from photograph: Leo Salas.



Logo of the Copenhagen Zoo in Denmark.

Last but not least, we would like to announce that we have already started the process of organization of our **Fourth International Tapir Symposium** that will most probably be held in April 2008 in Mexico. The exact dates and venue will be announced very soon! My very best wishes from Brazil!

Patrícia Medici

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Errata

A slight editorial mistake caused us to credit the interview with Mr. Carlos Rodríguez (*Tapir Conservation Newsletter* 15/2: 11-13, 2006) to Kevin Flesher, when the real author was Jeff Flocken. This error was promptly corrected, regrettably only after the issue went to print.

The electronic (downloadable) version gives the correct credit: http://tapirs.org/Downloads/newsletters/tcn_20_low.pdf

Our sincere apologies.

The editors