

Announcements

VORTEX 10 Course Announcement

VORTEX was recently completely rewritten to enable the code to take advantage of the latest capabilities of Windows, to improve the user interface, and to add new options for modeling. There will be a short course on the use of VORTEX 10 modeling software, held 5-8 May at the Brookfield Zoo near Chicago. This course is targeted to individuals who already have some experience using VORTEX (version 9) and would like to learn more about the new and enhanced features in VORTEX 10. The course will be led by Robert Lacy and Kathy Traylor-Holzer. For more information about the course and to learn about how to register, visit <http://www.cbsg.org/sites/cbsg.org/files/Vortex10course.pdf>.

Show the Wild Face of Climate Change!

You are invited to join Zoos & Aquariums for 350 for a day of action on **Thursday, 22 May 2014**, during which zoos and aquariums around the world will organize activities using the “Show the Wild Face of Climate Change” photo project as a central theme.

Show the Wild Face of Climate Change incorporates the “Zoos & Aquariums for 350” logo – or some other creative representation of “350” – into a photo that features zoo species. The photo caption can connect how the species (or wildlife in general) are affected by climate change. For more detailed instructions about the day, [please view this document](#).

Participating zoos and aquariums can submit their photos to <http://www.cbsg.org/content/wild-face-climate-change>. CBSG will collect and share the pictures and stories from the day through social media, a press release, and our website. Zoos can choose to post the photos on their own social media sites, organize additional 350-focused educational or program activities for visitors, and offer materials about 350/climate change.

The purpose of this activity is to demonstrate the zoo and aquarium community’s participation in the global climate change movement, and to creatively communicate to the public about how climate change affects species.

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We already have early submissions coming in: NR Zoo in Brazil Shows the Wild Face of Climate Change!

Potential for Chacoan Peccary PHVA

The Chacoan peccary (*Catagonus wagneri*) is an endemic and endangered species that inhabits the thorn forests of the Gran Chaco of Bolivia, Paraguay, and Argentina. The situation of this rare peccary is deteriorating rapidly due to habitat destruction and overhunting. Until recently, the Chaco region was mainly covered by forest and inhabited by colonists and natives living on a subsistence economy. However, recent economic changes have greatly boosted the export of natural resources and agricultural production, leading to the rapid destruction of the forest. These trends, in addition to the already unsustainable subsistence hunting that occurs in the region, represent a major threat to the survival of the Chacoan peccary.



Photo: Leonardo Maffei

The IUCN SSC Peccary Specialist Group proposes to carry out a workshop to develop a PHVA involving the main stakeholders (government, NGOs, researchers, etc.). This plan will first assess the status and trends for the Chacoan peccary and then prioritize detailed actions for the conservation of the Chacoan peccary and its habitat. This work will provide indispensable information to decision makers to better plan and regulate land use in the region. This work is critically important for the survival of the Chacoan Peccary, and the Peccary Specialist Group is currently seeking funds for the workshop. Please contact CBSG if you are interested in helping to fund or in learning more about this initiative.

Update on Brown Howler Monkey Conservation in Argentina

About one year has passed since the Brown Howler Monkey Conservation Workshop was held in Argentina. At that time, the main goal was to assess brown howler population status and analyze the main threats to its persistence in Misiones province of Argentina. The biggest challenge identified for brown howler conservation in the region was yellow fever, an epidemic disease that can decimate howler monkey populations. The threat analysis enabled workshop participants to define 12 specific actions. Every action is aimed at reaching one of the following objectives: (1) carry out a health assessment of brown howlers in Misiones; (2) organize a surveillance system for yellow fever; (3) acquire a better knowledge of brown howlers; and (4) understand yellow fever dynamics. The second biggest challenge identified during the workshop was the lack of awareness among the authorities and the community about the species' situation. The Brown Howler Monkey Conservation (BHMC) group has made several advancements towards the proposed objectives:



Photo: Ilaria Agostini

- To raise awareness, a Facebook page was created for the group.
- Several Brazilian colleagues were invited to participate and develop actions in the future.
- A final workshop report (click [here](#) to read) was presented to CBSG headquarters, the IUCN Species Conservation Planning Subcommittee, and donors (the Banham Zoo and Margot Marsh Biodiversity Foundation - Conservation International).
- A Spanish version of the report was distributed to local stakeholders.
- A manuscript summarizing the main results of the PVA for brown howlers and the analysis of the yellow fever threat was published in March 2014 in the open access journal *Tropical Conservation Science* (click [here](#) to read). Another publication on the public health implications of yellow fever dynamics involving brown howlers is in preparation.
- Workshop results were presented at the II Latin-American Meeting and XV Brazilian Congress of Primatology in August 2013.

To estimate current brown howler distribution and abundance in Misiones, the BHMC plans to carry out a survey using a trained dog to track brown howlers' feces. The group is seeking funding to conduct the survey, and has secured funding to analyze any fecal sample collected during future census surveys for analysis of metapopulation genetic diversity. With the support of the Instituto Nacional de Medicina Tropical (INMeT), the BHMC will start tackling the actions involving mosquito trapping and isolation of yellow fever virus during 2014. Logistical and some material support has been secured from INMeT for this purpose.



Recent Activities

CBSG Facilitation and Communication Skills Training

Expert facilitation is a key component of CBSG’s workshop processes. From 10-13 March, 14 participants were trained in this skill by course instructors Susie Ellis (International Rhino Foundation), Jamie Copsey (Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust), Onnie Byers (CBSG), and Phil Miller (CBSG).

A series of plenary presentations highlighted key aspects of facilitation – active listening, group development, conflict resolution, analyzing complex problems, developing strategies and solutions, and more. Most presentations were followed by exercises and role playing so that participants could practice the topics discussed. Through these exercises, participants gained a number of skills and resources to use in real-life facilitation situations. Participants from the zoo, aquarium, and CBSG community were joined by a group from the United States Army Corps of Engineers, which added to the diversity of experience in the course. The training was hosted by the Saint Louis Zoo, CBSG, and CBSG North America, and is the first of what is hoped to be a series of future training courses to build a network of facilitators in North America and beyond.



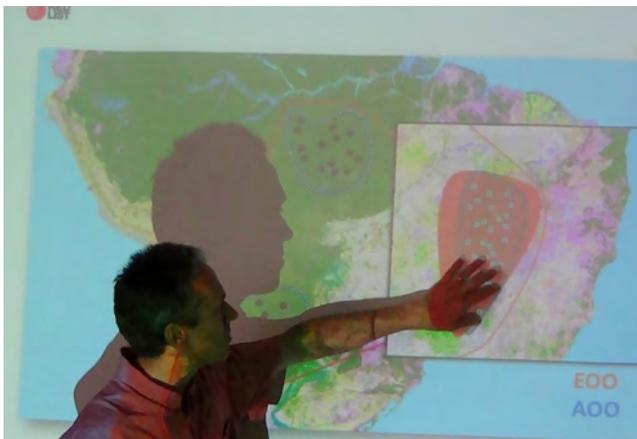
Photos: Andrea Fidgett and Onnie Byers

WildCare Institute Planning Meeting

In January, CBSG was invited to facilitate a workshop designed to develop a five-year strategy for the Saint Louis Zoo’s WildCare Institute (WCI). Thirty-eight participants from nine organizations and three countries worked together to describe an integrated approach for WCI that adheres to their stated ideals and helps to achieve the Institute’s mission: *To create a sustainable future for wildlife and for people around the world.* The resulting plan will become the foundation upon which the zoo’s conservation efforts will be based.

Conservation Status Assessments of the Amphibians and Reptiles of Costa Rica’s National Red List

In early March, 24 herpetologists representing 14 institutions gathered to assess the population status of 201 amphibian species and 241 reptile species native to Costa Rica. The workshop was organized by the Amphibian Conservation Group of Costa Rica network (CONSAFI). The goal of the workshop was to compile a list of the threat status of native amphibians and reptiles. The resulting list will be given to the National Conservation Areas System of the Environment Ministry to be used as the Costa Rica National Red List.



Gerardo Chaves and Federico Bolaños provided the list of Costa Rican species, and the participants reviewed current information to confirm the conservation status for the species in Costa Rica. Bruce Young from Nature Serve gave a presentation about IUCN Red List Criteria, and Jose Joaquin Calvo, Wildlife Manager of SINAC-MINAE, explained the importance of using scientific methodology for developing and justifying the National Red List.

As a result of the workshop, the threat category of some species changed, calling for further consultations with a broader group of scientists who were unable to attend the workshop. The list is expected to be completed by August 2014.

Action Plan for the Brazilian Society of Zoos and Aquaria (SZB)

Brazil has 121 zoological institutions (109 zoos and 12 aquaria), which hold approximately 50,000 animals. The Brazilian Society of Zoos and Aquaria (SZB) was created 35 years ago to represent Brazilian zoos. The SZB has faced many challenges, such as lack of participation from zoos and aquariums, inefficient organization and structure, and lack of clear purpose and objectives. As a result it has lost many of its members and its credibility. Brazil needs a strong zoo association to help improve its zoos, create captive breeding initiatives, and coordinate the captive breeding programs for threatened species as recommended by the Brazilian government. Furthermore, Brazil's efforts need to be integrated with those of the international zoological community.



Currently there are two zoo associations in the country: SZB on a national level and SPZ (São Paulo Zoo Association) at the regional level. This has created a situation where zoos and aquaria have to choose which association they will be affiliated with, as most of the zoos do not have the budget to be part of both. The existence of two associations weakens both.

The SZB elected a new board in March 2013, which is working tirelessly to reverse this situation. Almost exactly one year after its election, the SZB organized a planning workshop with the help of CBSG. Twenty-five participants, including representatives of Brazilian zoos and the government, gathered at the São Paulo Zoo to create a strategic plan for the association. Three CBSG networks (Brasil, North America, and Europe) worked together to design, facilitate, and provide technical support for this workshop. A member from Wild Welfare also contributed expertise. The structure and function of AZA, EAZA, and PAAZAB, as well as the tools used in captive breeding programs, were presented and discussed. The participants described their overall vision for the SZB: *To bring together and actively represent Brazilian zoos and aquariums, to highlight their importance in research, conservation, education and recreation, to provide tools, training, political and institutional support to approved members of the organization.*



Through working group sessions and plenary presentations, a detailed list of actions was assembled. The main actions are to: unite the two zoo associations to create one strong zoo association, hire a full-time executive director, start cooperative breeding programs, and create an accreditation program for the SZB. The Action Plan will be presented publicly at the SZB conference at the end of May. Monitoring and evaluation of the plan will occur in March 2015, during the SZB Annual Congress. The three CBSG networks involved will continue supporting this long term initiative.

This workshop would not have been possible without support from: Copenhagen Zoo, Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, Fundação Zoológico de São Paulo, International Species Information System (ISIS), Parque das Aves, and Wild Welfare.

Hainan Gibbon Conservation Planning Workshop

Once numbering around 2,000 in the 1950s, the Critically Endangered Hainan gibbon (*Nomascus hainanus*) now is one of the most endangered primate species in the world due primarily to past habitat loss and poaching. An estimated 23-25 individuals remain, all in one population inhabiting the Bawangling National Nature Reserve (BNNR) on Hainan, China, making them an Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) species and a focus of international concern. A conservation planning workshop for the Hainan gibbon was held in 2003. Since that time, numerous management activities have been conducted, including efforts to protect and restore potential gibbon habitat, with concurrent growth in the gibbon population up from 13 individuals. Despite these positive actions, the small size of this single population means that it continues to be at high risk due to stochastic events as well as other threats.



In conjunction with Hainan BNNR, IUCN China Primate Specialist Group, and the Zoological Society of London (ZSL), CBSG was invited to facilitate and provide modeling support at an international species conservation planning workshop for the Hainan gibbon to update the conservation plan. Over 50 participants from government, universities, conservation NGOs, zoos and rescue centers, and local communities participated in the mid-March workshop in Bo'ao. *VORTEX* population modeling informed the group regarding the vulnerability of this small single population. This led the group to conceive a vision for the expansion of the gibbon population, both in size and number of populations, into several large areas as part of intact biodiverse forest ecosystems.

Working groups discussed priority actions related to population-related concerns, habitat constraints, impacts related to human activities, and policy and communication challenges. Key goals included the effective protection of current habitat (BNNR); the expansion of gibbons into additional good quality habitat; continued monitoring and improved understanding of factors affecting successful dispersal, breeding group formation, and colonization into new habitat; development of an emergency action plan in the event of a crisis situation; and improved communication to facilitate collaboration among stakeholders. Strong support was shown by all stakeholders to develop a more secure future for this species.

A summary of the workshop and Hainan gibbon situation can be found in the 10 April 2014 issue of Nature and at: <http://www.nature.com/news/time-running-out-for-rarest-primate-1.15009>.



Recent Publications

Risk Assessment for the Conservation Translocation of African Penguins

Following many months of engagement with the statutory authorities CapeNature and the South African Department of Environmental Affairs (Oceans & Coasts), the “Risk Assessment for the Conservation Translocation of African Penguins” prepared by PAAZAB and CBSG Southern Africa has been completed and accepted. This exciting development gives the “green light” for the PAAZAB conservation breeding program (APP) to proceed with putting together specific proposals for the conservation translocation of captive bred African Penguins. This carries the potential to reinforce the existing and catastrophically declining wild population, and also to investigate techniques for the establishment of new breeding colonies within their existing range. The completed risk assessment is one of the very first completed in line with the revised IUCN “Guidelines for Reintroduction and Other Conservation Translocations” published in 2013. The publication will be made available soon.

