

## THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF ATLANTIC FOREST ATELIDS

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### Abstract

We briefly describe in this paper the objectives, structure and organization of the International Committee for the Conservation and Management of the Atlantic Forest Atelids. This is an advisory group established to assist the Brazilian Institute for the Environment (*Instituto Brasileiro do Meio Ambiente e dos Recursos Naturais Renováveis – IBAMA*) in the definition of effective conservation measures for the two species of miquiqui (*Brachyteles hypoxanthus* and *B. arachnoides*) along with the northern brown howling monkey (*Alouatta guariba guariba*), all of which are on the Brazilian Official List of Fauna Threatened of Extinction. We also describe the participation of IBAMA's Center for the Protection of Brazilian Primates (*Centro de Proteção de Primatas Brasileiros – CPB*) and the Coordination for the Conservation of Threatened Fauna and Migratory Species (*Coordenação de Conservação das Espécies da Fauna Ameaçada de Extinção e Migratória – COFAU*). These are the sectors of IBAMA most involved with the planning and execution of conservation actions for threatened primates in Brazil.

**Key Words** – threatened primates, Atelidae, miquiqui, *Brachyteles*, Atlantic forest, Brazil

### Introduction

The efforts of one person or organization alone are rarely sufficient to save a threatened species. Numerous people, organizations, and voluntary initiatives concerned with the imminent demise of a species, and working towards the same end, however, are also no guarantee of success in reversing the decline of a species—mitigating, neutralizing or removing the causes.

The Brazilian Institute for the Environment and Natural Renewable Resources (IBAMA) (*Instituto Brasileiro do Meio Ambiente e dos Recursos Naturais Renováveis*) is the principal government institution charged with executing national environmental policy. Although one of its mandates is the protection and conservation of Brazil's wildlife (Decree No. 5,718, 13 March 2006), it is obvious that no single institution can work in isolation in the resolution of the gamut of environmental issues which afflict such a large and fast-developing country as Brazil. This fact is clearly stated in the Federal Constitution, which recognizes that an ecologically-balanced environment is everybody's right and that all public institutions and the people must work towards this, to preserve a healthy natural environment for future generations. For this reason, the internal regulations of IBAMA allow for formal agreements and partnerships with other public institutions and private organizations, besides the creation of advisory councils, commissions, working groups and committees, to provide the wherewithal and expertise necessary to achieve success

in promoting and carrying out the measures demanded of it (Brazil, 2002)

With regard to its efforts for the conservation of threatened species, IBAMA has taken recourse to numerous mechanisms to bring together the people and stakeholders involved, but none has been so successful as the formation of conservation and management committees. The number of committees that have now been formed—33 in all—is proof of government policy in their favor, fully backed up by IBAMA, and endorsed by the Ministry of the Environment over the last four years.

### The Committees

The first instituted by IBAMA was the International Committee for the Conservation and Management of the Golden Lion Tamarin (*Leontopithecus rosalia*) (*Comitê Internacional para Conservação e Manejo do Mico-Leão-Dourado* [*Leontopithecus rosalia*]) in 1990. It included researchers and representatives of national institutions such as the Rio de Janeiro Primate Center (*Centro de Primatologia do Rio de Janeiro*), and overseas organizations such as the San Diego Zoo, California, the National Zoological Park, Washington, DC, and the University of Maryland, USA. Committees were subsequently set up for each of the four lion tamarins, *L. chrysomelas*, *L. chrysopygus* and *L. caissara* and, later, united to form a single committee for the genus (Mallinson, 1989; Kleiman and Mallinson, 1998; Rambaldi *et al.*, 2002). Although each committee

has its particularities, the lion tamarin committee and its *modus operandi* became the model for those established later by IBAMA for other threatened species.

A most important aspect of the lion tamarin committee was the fact that, over time, its role extended beyond one of assisting and advising IBAMA on specific issues. It turned into a permanent forum for discussion concerning the definition of methods, procedures and measures, *in situ* and *ex situ*, for the conservation of the lion tamarins. The responsibility for implementing conservation measures was shared among the committee members, both personally and institutionally. The committee generated a sharing of roles and responsibilities that amalgamated the work of the researchers and environmental authorities into a formal common agenda, which was reviewed and adjusted at each meeting. This dynamic was possibly one of the principal factors that contributed to the success achieved in the conservation of the golden lion tamarin, signalled by it being upgraded from Critically Endangered to Endangered on the IUCN Red List (IUCN, 2006).

The Lion Tamarin Committee even went beyond its mandate when it set up a system to raise funds for the conservation of the four species—the Lion Tamarins of Brazil Fund. Funds were raised through initiatives of the individual members of the committee, using their connections with the zoos, especially those in Europe and the USA, involved in the international captive breeding programs for *L. rosalia*, *L. chrysomelas* and *L. chrysopygus*. Funds were raised specifically for field research and conservation projects, and included the mechanism of “adopting a wild lion tamarin group” (Mallinson, 1994; Rambaldi *et al.*, 2002). A newsletter, *Tamarin Tales*, was edited by the National Zoo, Washington, DC, to inform donors of progress in lion tamarin conservation each year, and provide news on the groups that donors had “adopted.”

This phenomenon of sharing roles and responsibilities was seen as a key aspect: one that should underpin each committee. While identifying and discussing key issues and measures that fall strictly within the competence of the environmental authorities, the meetings also provide an excellent forum for the various research and conservation groups to discuss their projects, progress and results, providing for complementarity and collaboration, discussions of “lessons learned”, and allowing for the development of comparable protocols for their diverse initiatives.

So as to include all of Brazil’s threatened primate species with permanent forums for discussion, in 2004 two new committees were formed, and the scopes of two of the previous committees were expanded. The Committee for the Atlantic forest capuchin monkeys, *Cebus xanthosternos* and *C. robustus*, created in 1992 and resuscitated in 2002 (Santos and Lernould, 1993; Baker and Kierulff, 2002), took in a Working Group created in 2003 for Barbara Brown’s titi monkey (*Callicebus barbarabrownae*) and Coimbra-Filho’s

titi monkey (*C. coimbrai*) (both occurring in northeastern Brazil). The working group was created to outline emergency measures for the two species following their placement on Brazil’s Official List of Threatened Fauna (*Lista Oficial da Fauna Brasileira Ameaçada de Extinção*) published in 2003 (Oliveira and Marini-Filho, 2003). The titi monkeys and the capuchin monkeys are all from the northern Atlantic forest and face the same threats, and the institutions and researchers interested in their conservation are, in many cases, the same. As of 2006, IBAMA has established the following advisory committees for threatened primates:

1. International Committee for the Conservation and Management of Lion Tamarins (*Comitê Internacional para Conservação e Manejo dos Micos-leões*) – including *Leontopithecus rosalia*, *L. chrysomelas*, *L. chrysopygus*, and *L. caissara*;
2. Committee for the Conservation and Management of the Primates of the Northern Atlantic Forest and Caatinga (*Comitê para Conservação e Manejo dos Primatas do Norte da Mata Atlântica e Caatinga*) – including, *Cebus xanthosternos*, *C. robustus*, *Callicebus coimbrai*, *C. barbarabrownae*, *C. melanochir*, and *C. personatus*;
3. International Committee for the Conservation and Management of the Atlantic Forest Atelids (*Comitê Internacional para Conservação e Manejo dos Atelídeos da Mata Atlântica*) – including *Brachyteles hypoxanthus*, *B. arachnoides*, and *Alouatta guariba guariba*;
4. Committee for the Conservation and Management of Amazonian Primates (*Comitê para Conservação e Manejo dos Primatas Amazônicos*) – including *Saguinus bicolor*, *Saimiri vanzolinii*, *Cebus olivaceus kaapori*, *Chiropotes satanas*, *C. utahickae*, *Cacajao calvus calvus*, *C. calvus novaesi*, *C. calvus rubicundus*, *Alouatta belzebul ululata*, *Ateles marginatus*, and *A. belzebuth*;
5. Committee for the Conservation and Management of Callitrichids (*Comitê para Conservação e Manejo dos Calitriquídeos*) – including *Callithrix flaviceps* and *C. aurita*.

Each committee includes researchers, either active in studying the species of interest or promoting measures for their conservation, or with a particular understanding and expertise on the genus and regions where they occur, as well as people involved in *ex situ* conservation initiatives and breeding programs, and of course government and non-governmental organizations which have the capacity and intention to participate in promoting and executing the appropriate actions on behalf of each species.

### The Committee for the Atlantic Forest Atelids

The International Committee for the Conservation and Management of the Atlantic Forest Atelids was created by IBAMA through Edict No. 89/05 of 8 December 2005. This committee in fact originated from one designated solely to the muriquis, *Brachyteles*, created through Edict No. 432/03-N of May 2003; a result of the recommendations

arising from the Population and Habitat Viability Analysis (PHVA) workshop for the genus held in Belo Horizonte in 1998 (Rylands *et al.*, 1998). The committee was created by IBAMA following extensive discussions and negotiations with the institutions and researchers involved, and making use of the opportunity provided during meetings on miquiqui conservation held at the Serra dos Órgãos National Park in 2002.

The composition of the committee changed little as a result of its expansion in 2005 to include the northern brown howler monkey (*Alouatta guariba*). The participation of the Associação Pró-Miquiqui, the Fundação Biodiversitas, Conservação Internacional (CI-Brasil), the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the Federal University of Espírito Santo, and the Rio de Janeiro Primatology Center (CPRJ/FEEMA), along with the Center for the Protection of Brazilian Primates (CPB/IBAMA), provides the expertise necessary for the definition of research and conservation measures for the maintenance of the wild populations of all three species.

The committee is preparing conservation action plans for the miquiquis, which will build on two previous documents: the PVHA workshop of 1998 (Rylands *et al.*, 1998), and the more recent action plan developed specifically for the northern miquiqui, *B. hypoxanthus*, by Mendes *et al.* (2005) through the nationwide Project for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Brazilian Biological Diversity (*Projeto de Conservação e Utilização Sustentável de Diversidade Biológica Brasileira – PROBIO*) of the Ministry of Environment (MMA). As such, the action plans will be the principal planning tool for the committee, guiding what needs to be done and how, and providing the means to evaluate progress and the effectiveness of the measures taken.

#### *IBAMA's role in the committee*

Formally, as a collegiate organ of IBAMA, the committee's role is consultative and advisory, created to help in identifying effective measures for the conservation of the two miquiqui species. As is so often the case, in reality the workings of the committee go beyond its formal mandate, in that the members take on and share the responsibilities for the measures needed. Likewise, the participation of IBAMA is diversified, involving as it does the support of a number of different departments beyond the Center for the Protection of Brazilian Primates, including those concerned with threatened fauna, protected areas, and environmental fiscalization, each with the power to directly authorize and execute specific measures within, of course, their organizational mandates—highly beneficial in terms of allowing IBAMA to take action on the recommendations and decisions of the committee.

The departments most involved in the committee are the Coordination for the Protection of Fauna (*Coordenação de Proteção de Espécies da Fauna – COFAU*) and the Center for the Protection of Brazilian Primates (CPB). Both play

a fundamental role in the elaboration of the action plans, and in IBAMA's implementation of the appropriate conservation measures they recommend.

The COFAU's mission is the conservation of threatened species, through 1) compiling and analyzing the information available on such as the biology, demography, geography and status of Brazilian wildlife in order to prioritize conservation measures and also to elaborate the Brazilian red list of threatened animals; and 2) developing and promoting ways to strengthen conservation measures for threatened species, often otherwise limited by lack of human and financial resources, for example. Key aspects include: 1) working with the various other sectors of IBAMA that can bring to bear such measures as the creation, implementation and management of protected areas where the species occur, and fiscalization, especially when, for example, trade and hunting are issues; and 2) establishing alliances and partnerships to implement and finance conservation programs for the threatened species. Advisory committees such as those mentioned above are a key element, not only in promoting these partnerships and alliances and providing for effective and strong conservation actions, but also in facilitating articulation among the various key sectors of IBAMA to support them and carry them out.

The Center for the Protection of Brazilian Primates (CPB) is one of IBAMA's specialized centers<sup>1</sup>. Created 18 October 2001, its aim is to carry out and support research and conservation measures for the Brazilian primates, especially those which are threatened, as well as coordinate the management of zoonoses and epizootics in wild and captive populations. Besides providing technical assistance to other sectors of IBAMA, it serves as the reference source for all information on Brazil's primate species and subspecies (more than 130 of them), providing information on their taxonomy, biology, distributions, conservation and management. Most of that information can be assessed on the Internet at <[www.ibama.gov.br/cpb](http://www.ibama.gov.br/cpb)>. The CPB also guides IBAMA in its role in licensing (transport and research), in the control and management of captive colonies, and in the implementation of public policies concerning the conservation and use of primates (in research, for example).

The advisory groups and the CPB comprise, as such, the specialist technical-scientific arm of IBAMA for primate conservation and management. CPB has the institutional competence to act directly on aspects of management and research which require IBAMA's involvement. This direct involvement is especially evident with the threatened primates of Northeast Brazil (*Cebus*, *Callicebus*, and *Alouatta*) where the CPB is based.

<sup>1</sup> The other centers are dedicated to sea and freshwater turtles, wild cats and canids, marine mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians, plus five regional centers for fish.

The CPB's involvement in the Committee for the Atlantic Forest Atelids, is centered mainly on the parks and reserves which are now so vital for the survival of the miquis. They are known to occur in more than 20 private, state and federal protected areas (Rylands *et al.*, 1998). This is considerably more than is generally the case for threatened primates, and is a reason for optimism. Most of the primates on the Official Brazilian List of Threatened Species are there because they are what is now referred to as "restricted-range species" in areas where their habitats have been or are being destroyed. Miquis have a broad geographic distribution and also inhabit montane regions where the topography and remoteness have favored the survival of their forests and distanced them somewhat from the centuries of intensive hunting that has eliminated them elsewhere in the Atlantic forest. Protected areas in these regions are now key to the survival of the miqui. The CPB supports research and conservation measures not only within the protected areas but also in the areas adjoining them, and on populations which are as yet unprotected, but must be in the near future if the populations are to survive.

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