

PHOTO CARL TRAEHOLT

PHOTO PATRÍCIA MEDICI



# Cooperation for tapir conservation

Siân S. Waters, deputy chair IUCN/SSC Tapir Specialist Group, United Kingdom and Patrícia Medici, chair IUCN/SSC Tapir Specialist Group, Institute for Ecological Research, Brazil

**The IUCN/SSC Tapir Specialist Group (TSG) is committed to the conservation of all four species of tapir and their habitats in South and Central America, and in southeast Asia. The TSG has 93 members from 25 countries worldwide. The vast majority of these members are working with tapirs in captivity and in the wild. Both the EAZA and AZA Tapir TAG chairs are active members of the group, and these groups are today the key groups working on developing and implementing tapir research, conservation and management programmes.**

## Support from zoos

Many of the field projects being conducted by TSG members are financially supported by zoos in Europe and North America. Those supported by EAZA zoos include Patrícia Medici's lowland tapir project in Brazil: an investigation of the tapir's potential to be used as a landscape species for the restoration and conservation of the Atlantic Forests of São Paulo State. Patrícia's project is supported by a number of European and American zoos that contribute small grants every year. Her donors in Europe are the Dutch foundation 'Zoos Help' in the Netherlands, Amnéville Zoo in France, and Chester Zoo in the United Kingdom.

## Joint venture

One of very few research projects focusing on Malay tapirs is being undertaken as a joint venture between the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) in Malaysia and the Copenhagen Zoo, Denmark. The research, which began in 2002, is on the behavioural ecology of the Malay tapir in the 63,000 ha Krau Wildlife Reserve. The results from this

study will be very important for the future management of Malay tapirs in the area.

## Partnerships

TSG also works in close partnership with the IUCN/SSC Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG) and using their expertise, have now held three successful Population and Habitat Viability Assessment (PHVA) workshops, one for the Malay tapir and one for the mountain tapir and the most recent, for the Baird's tapir. All workshops were supported either totally or partially by European and American zoos. The Malay tapir PHVA report is available from our website ([www.tapirspecialistgroup.org/downloads](http://www.tapirspecialistgroup.org/downloads)) and both the mountain tapir and Baird's tapir reports will be available in Spanish and English when they are completed in the next few months. The PHVA workshop participants include people working with tapirs in the wild and in captivity as well as other stakeholders.

**For further details** on the work of the Tapir Specialist Group, please visit: [www.tapirspecialistgroup.org](http://www.tapirspecialistgroup.org)



## Establishing new partnerships

An important major goal for the TSG over the next two years is to have at least ten EAZA or AZA zoos that have established partnerships with tapir field researchers. A list of TSG approved field projects is currently being updated and will be sent to all tapir holding zoos that might require further information on conservation projects for all four species of tapir. The list includes surveys on the effects of deforestation on Malay tapirs in Sumatra, the status and distribution of lowland tapirs in Argentina, a status survey of Baird's tapir in Belize and local people's perceptions of the mountain tapir in Colombia. Please contact either of the authors for a copy of this list ([epmedici@uol.com.br](mailto:epmedici@uol.com.br) or [sian\\_s\\_waters@hotmail.com](mailto:sian_s_waters@hotmail.com)). •