

## Conservation Status of the Black-faced Lion Tamarin, *Leontopithecus caissara*

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In May 1993, the International Committee for the Management of the Black-faced Lion Tamarin (*Leontopithecus caissara*), created by the Brazilian Institute for the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (Ibama) in September 1992 (Edict No. 106-N, 30 September 1992), met on the occasion of the 1st International Symposium for the Lion Tamarins at the Poço das Antas Biological Reserve, Rio de Janeiro, to draw up an emergency action plan for the species. This Emergency Action Plan was based on a previous and similar document presented at the *Leontopithecus* Population Viability Workshop held in Belo Horizonte in June 1990 (Teixeira, 1990). It was finalized and sent to Ibama in June 1993 (Câmara, 1993a, 1993b). The principle proposals and priorities can be summarized as follows:

- the creation of new conservation units within the known distribution of the species;
- transformation of the entire or substantial part of its continental distribution into a fully protected area;
- improvement of the protection afforded to the already existing conservation units;
- research programs to study the ecology and behavior of the species;
- the elaboration of an environmental education program;
- studies on the feasibility of translocating individuals between the Island of Superagüi and the continent, following appropriate genetic research;
- establish a captive breeding program, involving at least two institutions, one in Brazil and a second overseas, using preferentially animals arising from confiscation;
- the preparation of management plans for the existing protected areas, notably the Superagüi National Park.

The International Committee met again in April 1994 to analyze the current status concerning the measures proposed in the July 1993 Action Plan, and discuss

methodologies currently being used by two teams which are studying the distribution, habitat, and status of *Leontopithecus caissara* from: a) the National Museum in Rio de Janeiro and the "Capão de Imbuia" Natural History Museum in Curitiba (Vanessa Persson and Maria Lucia Lorini, see Lorini and Persson, 1990, 1994a, 1994b; Persson and Lorini, 1993, 1994) and the University of São Paulo in collaboration with the São Paulo State Forestry Institute (Paulo Nogueira Neto, Paulo Martuscelli and Marcia Rodrigues, see Martuscelli and Rodrigues, 1992).

The following conclusions were reached at this meeting:

- none of the priorities or proposals contained in the Action Plan had yet been attended to by the Brazilian Institute for the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (Ibama);
- research on the distribution and habitat of the species was continuing, and beginning to provide estimates with some degree of confidence regarding their accuracy as to the status of the species, although this is made difficult by the rarity of the species and the finding that a number of at least more northerly populations are isolated;
- attempts to capture a group for an ecological/behavioral study (the project of Marcia Rodrigues, University of São Paulo) had till then proved unsuccessful;
- the São Paulo State Government had received a formal proposal for the creation of a reserve in the northern part of the species' range, but to date nothing had resulted;
- there is an urgent need for a captive breeding program;
- action needs to be taken concerning the recent finding that indian groups had settled in the Superagui National Park, the most important protected area for *L. caissara*, and that the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI) was intending to establish an Indigenous Area within the Park.

Concerning this last point, the Committee members agreed on the serious consequences for the survival of *L. caissara* should the integrity of the Superagüi National Park be compromised by the superimposition of an Indigenous Area. The Ministry of the Environment and Legal Amazonia, of which Ibama is part, was contacted alerting to the situation.

Finally, the Committee discussed the vital need for Ibama to act on the Action Plan submitted to them. Conservation measures must be taken immediately if the future of the black-headed lion tamarin is to be guaranteed even in the short term.

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