

The Superagüi National Park: Problems Concerning the Protection of the Black-Faced Lion Tamarin, *Leontopithecus caissara*

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The Superagüi National Park is located on the northern coast of the state of Paraná. It was created by Decree No.97688 on 25 April 1989. It includes two coastal islands, the Ilha de Peças and the Ilha de Superagüi and, excluding areas in the proximity of fishing villages, totals 21,400 ha. The principal ecosystems include Atlantic forest, *restinga* (coastal forest and scrub on sandy soil), mangrove swamps, dunes and beaches. Superagüi was formerly part of the mainland of the state of São Paulo, and the island was created only in 1953 when the Canal do Varadouro was constructed in order to facilitate navigation for small boats between the neighboring states of São Paulo and Paraná.

The Park lies within the estuarine-lagoon complex of Iguape-Cananéia-Paranaguá, within the boundaries of the Environmental Protection Area (APA) of Guaraqueçaba, in the municipality of the same name. This APA was created by Decree No.90883 on 31 January 1985, with an area of 313,400 ha. Besides the Park, there is also the Guaraqueçaba Ecological Station (14,000 ha) created on 31 May 1982 by Decree No.87222 for the protection of the mangroves and areas of *restinga*, and the Area of Relevant Ecological Interest (ARIE) of the Ilha de Pinheiro and Ilha do Pinheirinho (109 ha) created on 5 November 1985 by Decree No.91888, specifically to protect roosts of the endangered blue-cheeked parrot, *Amazona brasiliensis*.

The Guaraqueçaba Environmental Protection Area, therefore, serves as a buffer zone for these protected areas, and it should be emphasized that the Superagüi National Park is not, as such, isolated. However, despite this, and despite the wealth of environmental legislation governing the Park and its surrounding protected area categories, its effective protection is no way guaranteed. The black-faced lion tamarin, *Leontopithecus caissara*, was discovered in the Park

only in 1990 (Lorini and Persson, 1990), one year after it was created. Distributional studies have since shown that the species occurs throughout a large part of the Park as well as on the mainland in both Paraná and southernmost coastal São Paulo (Persson and Lorini, 1993; Lorini and Persson, 1994).

When the Superagüi National Park was created, a decision was made to allow for the permanence of the local and traditional human populations, the principle occupations of which involved fishing, by excluding them from the Park limits. There are six on the island: Barra do Superagüi, Barbados, Canudal, Vila Fátima, Ararapira and Barra do Ararapira, with a total population of 747 people. The existence of these fishing villages is not in itself a threat to the integrity of the Park. Incursions into forested areas are infrequent. However, a real threat arises from the pressures on the part of tourists to sell their land for the construction of holiday homes, as well as their serving as bases for palm-heart gatherers. The northern part of the island is near to the town of Ariri, already in the state of São Paulo and a popular tourist resort. It is there that the pressures are greatest, and where there is also a minor industry involving the supply of sand for construction. Likewise the entire coastline on the east of the island is excluded from the Park, and there is a serious threat in the short term of the establishment of housing lots and a tourist infrastructure along the beach area which would be highly prejudicial.

Patrolling of the area is carried out by the Brazilian Institute for the Environment (Ibama), the Paraná State Environment Institute and the Forest Police. However, the number of personnel is minimal and insufficient for the large areas under their jurisdiction. There are besides, some problems which current legislation is incapable of resolving. This is the case with groups of Mbya-Guarani Indians occupying parts of the island in the north and south. Besides cutting

and burning the forest for small-scale agriculture (they usually destroy areas larger than they need), they also hunt directly and using traps. They also make extensive use of a palm, locally known as Jerivá, and which is an important food resource for the lion tamarins. They have also been observed attempting to sell lion tamarins and the blue-cheeked parrots to tourists.

Discussions are underway between Ibama, responsible for the maintenance of the Park, and the Indian Foundation (FUNAI) to resolve this conflict (see Câmara, 1994). FUNAI is, however, demanding the delimitation of indian reservations within the Park. Although sympathizing with the indians, it must be emphasized that there are numerous other areas in the region of Guaraqueçaba providing identical living conditions which they could occupy, whereas Superagüi is the only protected area within the tiny distribution of the already scarce lion tamarins.

References

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Black-faced lion tamarin (*Leontopithecus caissara*). Photo by Zig Koch.