

## **Liza Maria Veiga (1963 – 2012)**

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## OBITUARY

Liza Maria Veiga (1963 - 2012)



Liza Maria Veiga was born on October 31st, 1963, in London, England. She graduated in Business Economics at Cardiff University in Wales, in 1994, and took her masters in Environment and International Development at the University of East Anglia (UEA), in England, in 1995. In 1996, Liza became a researcher for the Overseas Development Group at UEA, where she developed studies on the traditional knowledge and subsistence systems of rural populations for DFID, the British government body for International Cooperation and Development. In 1997, as a member of the socio-economic team of the Environment and Natural Resources Program, Liza embarked on her first research in the tropics; in Tanzania and other African countries.

In 1999, Liza was involved in her first professional activities in Brazil, where she participated in a study of human activities in the Amazon estuary, analyzing the evolution of local practices for the management of the environment and natural resources—continuing the activities she had begun in Africa some three years previously. This first Brazilian project was coordinated by Dr. Edna Castro of the *Núcleo de Altos Estudos Amazônicos – NAEA*. Environmental questions, which Liza had previously considered to be no more than one aspect of the life of rural populations, began to take on an increasingly important role in her approach to this research, and eventually became her principal focus. This shift in focus probably inspired Liza to seek new research horizons more directly linked to the environment, biodiversity, and a unique group of mammals. Amazonian primates and their conservation began to dominate Liza's intellectual interests and her professional activities at around this time (2000), firstly as a DTI assistant at NAEA, and then through her graduate research in the Behavior Theory and Research Program of the Department of Experimental Psychology at the Federal University of Pará (UFPA). Between 2001 and 2004, Liza was involved in research projects on primate ecology and conservation, as well as surveys of mammal populations, which had now become her principal study subjects. Her main study during this period was a project entitled “Management of the Populations of *Chiropotes satanas* in the Area of the Tucuruí Reservoir,” coordinated by Dr. Stephen Ferrari; a project which later became the embryo of her doctoral research. In 2004, as a graduate student at the UFPA Experimental Psychology Department, Liza began to teach undergraduate courses. Her doctorate was supervised by Dr. Stephen Ferrari, and co-supervised by Dr. Olavo Galvão.

In 2005, Liza became a scientific consultant to the Center for the Protection of Brazilian Primates (CPB-ICMBio) and a member of the International Committee for the Conservation and Management of Amazonian Primates. This period was marked by the increasing intensification of her involvement in all fields of Primatology.

Liza defended her doctoral dissertation, entitled “Ecology and Behavior of the Black Cuxiú (*Chiropotes satanas*) in the Fragmented Landscape of eastern Amazonia” at UFPA

in 2006. In her dissertation, Liza demonstrated not only her profound interest in the ecology and behavior of the cuxiú, but also her preoccupation with the conservation and protection of these animals, which would become the primary focus of her professional activities in subsequent years.

In 2007, Liza became a member of the Primate Specialist Group (PSG) of the Species Survival Commission of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and played an important role in the Global Mammal Assessment (GMA), participating in the production of the Red List for Neotropical primates (Pitheciidae) as part of the Biodiversity Assessment Initiative of IUCN/SSC and the Center for Applied Biodiversity Science (CABS), based at Conservation International in Washington, DC. She was also a collaborator on the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC), and participated in the development of the Pitheciine Action Group (PAG) of the PSG (Neotropical Section), as well as being active on the subcommittee for the integrated development of research of the International Committee for the Conservation and Management of Amazonian Primates (IBAMA).

Liza became a member of the Brazilian Primatological Society (SBPr), was part of its executive council, and participated in the scientific committee of the Society's 13th congress. In 2007, she began to intensify her relationship with the Goeldi Museum (MPEG) in Belém, first by becoming a DTI grantee in the Professional Training Program until the middle of 2008, and then, at the end of the year, by becoming a postdoc in the joint UFPA/MPEG Graduate Program in Zoology (PPGZool). As a postdoc, Liza had a grant from the CAPES National Post-doctoral Program (PNPD), and in 2007 and 2008, she coordinated the project entitled "Ecology, Social Organization, and Conservation of the Black Cuxiú (*Chiropotes satanas*).” In 2007, she joined the TEAM ("Ecology, Evaluation, and Monitoring of Tropical Forests") project, collaborating with Conservation International (Brazil), first as project manager, then as vice-coordinator, and finally as coordinator, between 2008 and 2010.

As a postdoc and an associate researcher at the Goeldi Museum, Liza was a graduate supervisor, and contributed to the teaching of a number of courses, including "Behavioral Ecology," "Conservation Biology," "Primateology," and "Special Topics in Primateology," in which she administered the topic "Reproductive Behavior and Ecology." Between 2008 and 2010, Liza participated in a number of surveys of medium-sized and large mammals, and worked as a private environmental consultant. However, it was as a postdoc at the Goeldi Museum that Liza advanced even further as a professional. She participated in the ongoing project "Ecology and Conservation of the Endangered Primates of the Brazilian state of Pará," coordinated by Dr. José de Sousa e Silva Júnior. This project aims to provide a database on the ecology, distribution, and extinction risk of the threatened

primates of the Brazilian state of Pará (*Cebus kaapori*, *Chiropotes satanas*, *Chiropotes utahickae*, and *Ateles marginatus*), one of Liza's main concerns. Between 2008 and 2010, she participated in the project "Endangered Species and Critical Areas for the Biodiversity of the Brazilian state of Pará," coordinated by Dr. Teresa Cristina Ávila Pires, during which she contributed to the development of a database of the information available on the species included in the state list of endangered taxa.

Between 2009 and 2011, Liza coordinated the project "Conservation of the primates *Cebus kaapori* and *Chiropotes satanas*," during which she conducted field studies of both species, as well as a population viability analysis of *Chiropotes satanas*. This project sought to develop guidelines for the conservation and management of these species. During the same period, she coordinated the project entitled "Survey of Medium- and Large-bodied Mammals and the Use of Camera Traps in the Tucuçu Environmental Protection Area," and began participating in the project "Biodiversity in the state of Pará: Development of the first Atlas of Priority Areas for Conservation" coordinated by Dr. Ana Luisa Albernaz, and during which she contributed to the definition of the priority areas for the conservation of the state's biodiversity.

In 2012, Liza initiated a project entitled "Distribution and Conservation of the Remnant Populations of the Ka'apor capuchin (*Cebus kaapori*), a Critically Endangered Species," undertaking a survey of the remaining populations of this species in the remaining habitat, with the ultimate aim of capturing and translocating a vulnerable group of these primates in the area surrounding the Tucuçu reservoir. This project also involved the National Primate Center and the CPB.

In 2009 and 2010, as a member of the IUCN Primate Specialist Group (PSG-SSC), Liza participated in the evaluation of the conservation status of Brazilian primates, an initiative of the CPB and the Brazilian Environment Ministry (MMA), contributing to the production of the lists of Brazilian endangered animal species and the "Action Plan for the Mammals of Southeastern Brazil." As a private consultant, Liza also participated in a Rapid Ecological Assessment (RAPELD) in Guyana. In 2011, she joined the Neotropical Section of the PSG, providing the focus for the development of the primate Red List for the Amazon region. As a member of a joint task-force between the Species Survival Commission (SSC) and the World Protected Areas Commission (WPC), Liza contributed to the evaluation of the impact of protected areas on biodiversity, and the identification of new key areas for conservation. She also became a member of the Strategic Assessment Group of the National Action Plan for the Conservation of Endemic Endangered Species of the Middle and Lower Xingu River, an initiative of the Coordination for the Development and Implementation of Action Plans (COPAN), part of the Chico Mendes Biodiversity Institute (ICMBio).

Liza was especially active as an educator, and supervised or co-supervised a number of undergraduate projects and dissertations, and masters theses. She co-supervised a study of tufted capuchins, and supervised studies of the ecology and behavior of *Chiropotes satanas* and *Cebus kaapori*. The thesis on *Cebus kaapori* is the only systematic study of the ecology and behavior of this Critically Endangered species. Liza accepted three new masters students in 2011 and 2012, developing ecological studies of the primates and felines of the region of Alta Floresta (Mato Grosso). She was also supervising a number of undergraduate students who were researching the behavior and ecology of primates in the Tucuuruí region. Liza's students were always profoundly involved in the research projects that she developed with such dedication.

Liza was a member of the editorial board of *Neotropical Primates* and the *Pitheciine Action Group Newsletter*, and a reviewer for the *American Journal of Primatology*, *Folia Primatologica*, the *International Journal of Primatology*, and the *International Zoo Yearbook*. She attended many scientific events, such as conferences and workshops, where she presented papers and participated in scientific committees, and was the principal editor of the book *Evolutionary Biology and Conservation of Titis, Sakis and Uacaris*, just recently published by the Cambridge University Press. She published numerous papers, including articles in journals, book chapters, texts in newspapers and magazines, as well as congress abstracts. Liza Maria Veiga passed away prematurely on October 28th, 2012.

*José de Sousa e Silva Júnior, Helder Lima de Queiroz and Maria Aparecida Lopes  
Museu Paraense Emílio-Goeldi; Universidade Federal do Pará*

Being an editor can be a lonely job, with most of one's time spent alone in front of the computer. It is made much more interesting at *Neotropical Primates* by the lively international e-mail exchanges among the editors, on topics that range from the fate of particular articles, to our opinions on primatological controversies, to more personal conversations as we have gotten to know each other better and have become friends. The best part is the few occasions, usually at international meetings, when the editors actually get to spend time with each other in person. Here, we acknowledge the tremendous loss of one of our editorial team members, Liza Veiga, and make a tribute to her work for the understanding and conservation of primates, and in appreciation of her persistent efforts to improve *Neotropical Primates*.

The first time I met Liza Veiga was at the Congress of the International Primatological Society at Edinburgh, Scotland, in 2008, about a year after I started work at *NP*. I had assumed she was Brazilian until then, and I left the meetings still unsure—perfect Brazilian Portuguese, perfect British English, thick black silky hair, Asian eyes, stylish modern blouse, old jeans, Amazonian jewelry. She defied simple categorization. What I noticed about her then was her intensity, her focus, and her seriousness. She was ready with several ideas of how to improve the journal, and after the meetings she was the first to contact others and implement the changes.

I saw Liza again briefly at the Brazilian Primatology Meetings in Curitiba, Brazil, in 2011. She spoke as part of a roundtable discussion on "Amazonian Primates." She was ill at the meetings, had nearly lost her voice, and she admitted she was feeling dizzy and might faint. Nevertheless,



Neotropical Primates editorial team, August 2008. IPS meetings in Edinburgh, Scotland. From left to right, Brenda Solórzano, Erwin Palacios, Liza Maria Veiga, Liliana Cortés-Ortiz, Jessica Lynch Alfaro, Eckhard Heymann, Anthony B. Rylands, Júlio César Bicca-Marques.



she soldiered on with her presentation. She delivered her words slowly, precisely and quietly. It was, without doubt, the most moving and devastating talk I have ever seen. Up until that moment I had harbored the illusion that the vastness of the Amazon Basin remained relatively safe, relatively pristine. Liza demonstrated, in careful detail, the arc of deforestation that has denuded most of eastern Pará, and she went on to explore other threats—the impact of hydroelectric dams, the new rise in soybean plantations, the ever-expanding cattle ranches—that are devouring the Amazon rainforest from all sides, from the outside in. There never was such a convincing advocate as Liza for the desperate need for research and conservation work on Amazonian primates. I left that roundtable with a new worldview after hearing Liza's message.

The last time I spent time with Liza was in the summer of 2012, at the Assessment Workshop for the Conservation Status of Brazilian Primates, at Iperó, São Paulo, Brazil. It was a workshop she had helped to organize, and I was grateful for the invitation to participate. We ended up as roommates there, and this is where I really got to see the personal side of Liza. She was hilarious, charming and brimming with ideas about everything. She could hold a room enthralled with her stories from the field. She loved to imitate everyone and everything: the park guards who sat around all day scratching themselves; the Indians around Tucuuruí who would stick a lower lip out farther and farther to show how truly far away something was; her students circling back to her with more and more questions; the field guide who fell out of the boat with the motor still running; the bearded saki males huddled together in a greeting; the capuchin monkey that threatened her from the doorway so she couldn't enter her own house at the field station...

Liza loved to laugh. She lived and breathed Brazil, the Amazon, the animals. She was the Amazon's biggest champion, with so much determination to solve the gargantuan problem of habitat loss against all odds. She was tireless in her fight. She also embodied a huge wealth of knowledge about Brazilian fauna. A tiny example: We had heard that the lake near the workshop in Iperó had capybara, a species I'd never seen in the wild. As she was leaving the workshop

and we said our goodbyes, Liza told me if I walked up slowly enough, capybaras don't get scared. The next morning at dawn I followed her advice at the lake, creeping nearer until I could sit right next to that giant rodent at the water's edge.

What Liza had inside of her was unique, particular, and can't be recreated. She saw things in the forest that no one else has seen, and that perhaps may never be seen again. But also, she desperately wanted to share her experiences. She was so very excited about the upcoming publication of her book on the pitheciines, after ten years of hard work and waiting. Liza was so very alive, so in the middle of things, she had so much that she still wanted to accomplish; but she was also deeply tired from so much desire, so much passion, and so much struggle. I am grateful for the time I had with her, as co-editor, collaborator and friend. We will all miss her terribly at *Neotropical Primates*, and we thank her wholeheartedly for all of her contributions, that have accomplished so much in promoting the research and conservation of Brazilian primates.

*Jessica Lynch Alfaro, Editor of Neotropical Primates  
University of California, Los Angeles*

The 2008 IPS meetings in Edinburgh gave me the opportunity to meet Liza Veiga in person for first time. I only saw her again a few other times, but regularly heard from her due to her enthusiastic and efficient participation in *Neotropical Primates* and her devoted actions towards the conservation of Amazonian primates. Liza always showed a great passion for research, a strong commitment to share her knowledge with colleagues and students, and a tremendous devotion to truth in her actions.

*Liliana Cortés-Ortiz, Editor of Neotropical Primates  
University of Michigan*

I met Liza for the first and only time at the 2008 IPS meetings in Edinburgh. From the first moment on, it was inspiring to talk to Liza, and I appreciated her collegiality and friendliness. Her ambitious and conservationist spirit will be missed.

*Eckhard W. Heymann, Editor of Neotropical Primates  
Deutsches Primatenzentrum GmbH (DPZ), Leibniz-  
Institut für Primatenforschung*

Liza was truly a special, a kind and trustworthy person and an excellent researcher, editor and student advisor. Sadly, our great new and growing friendship and collegueship ended quite prematurely. Brazilian primatology and the Amazonian biodiversity will miss her. Hopefully her warrior spirit will continue inspiring us all.

*Júlio César Bicca-Marques, Editor of Neotropical Primates  
Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul*

Liza was always ready to devote time to give advice, no matter the time of the day or the size of her workload; she was a fantastic friend and teammate. I will miss her.

*Erwin Palacios, Chief Editor of Neotropical Primates  
Conservation International Colombia*

I first met Liza at the Brazilian Primate Congress in Porto Alegre and immediately appreciated a certain specialness about her. Her calm, elegance, and sweet nature combined with a remarkable courage, energy and determination in her work. Liza's pioneer research on the black saki was outstanding, and she rapidly became an important contact and reference for teaching, research and the general business of primate conservation and ecology in Brazil; and most particularly for the pitheciines. She played a fundamental role in the IUCN SSC Primate Specialist Group as a member of the Executive Committee, as the PSG liaison with the Brazilian government on the assessment of the conservation status of the Brazilian primates, and as a member of the editorial board for the PSG newsletter and journal *Neotropical Primates*. Her distinguished academic achievements are well represented in her book, recently published, *Evolutionary Biology and Conservation of Titis, Sakis and Uacaris*. She was dedicated and brilliant, and adored and respected by all her colleagues and those who had the privilege to work with her.

*Anthony B. Rylands, Deputy Chair  
IUCN SSC Primate Specialist Group*

Liza was a wonderful person, and a very active member of our IUCN/SSC Primate Specialist Group. And of course I followed her work very closely because she studied the pitheciines, probably my favorite primates in the world, and especially *Chiropotes*, a genus to which I have a particularly close attachment. She was at the peak of her career, which makes her loss even more tragic. We will all miss her, and remember her outstanding contributions for the rest of our lives. I am especially saddened by the fact that she did not see her book on the evolutionary biology and conservation of the pitheciines finally published, but it is a fitting memorial to all that she achieved in her career.

*Russell A. Mittermeier, President  
Conservation International, and Chair, IUCN SSC  
Primate Specialist Group*

*Neotropical Primates* editorial team, August 2008. IPS meetings in Edinburgh, Scotland. From left to right, Brenda Solórzano, Erwin Palacios, Liza Maria Veiga, Lili-ana Cortés-Ortiz, Jessica Lynch Alfaro, Eckhard Heymann, Anthony B. Rylands, Júlio César Bicca-Marques.

Brazilian Primatology owes a lot to scholars who weren't born in Brazil, but adopted this country as their own. Many great individuals in our history didn't grow up in Brazil. Liza is proof of this. No one would say that Liza wasn't Brazilian. Her love of primates, of the Amazon, and for all she did in her work is revealed in the articles she wrote. We know much more about the pitheciines now, thanks to Liza's particular dedication to this group. At the time that she left us, Liza was on the directorial board of the Brazilian Primatological Society (SBPr). Her willingness and readiness to share information was essential to SBPr running smoothly. We will always have Liza as an example—of love and complete dedication to the study of Brazilian primates.

SBPr will never let this example be forgotten. Thank you for so very much, Liza.

*Maria Adélia Borstelmann de Oliveira, President  
Brazilian Primatological Society*

Brazilian Primatology has lost an excellent researcher and a wonderful spokesperson, and primatologists have lost a dear friend. The members of the Centro Nacional de Pesquisa e Conservação de Primatas Brasileiros (CPB/ICMBio) offer their tribute to Liza Maria Veiga with heavy hearts.

Liza's work highlighted black bearded saki (*Chiropotes satanas*) conservation in both Brazilian and international primatology. She promoted conservation action for the family Pitheciidae in general, and worked in favor of Brazilian primate conservation even more broadly, with a focus on the Amazon. Her technical abilities and her great willingness to collaborate are shown through her work as the coordinator of both the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) Pitheciine Action Group and the IUCN Primate Specialist Group.

CPB honors Liza as a valuable researcher and a great friend, and thanks her for the generous help and participation in several Center projects, most recently for her role as Taxon Coordinator in the Evaluation Process for the Conservation Status for Brazilian Primates in 2012, where her efforts were essential in facilitating the interactions with and among the scientific community. As always, she made use of her collaborative nature for which we were so grateful.



Our tribute goes beyond just the research accomplishments and professional partnerships; what we most want to celebrate is Liza as a dear and special friend. She will always be remembered for her important work fighting for the conservation of Brazilian primates, and for the sum of her intelligent and ethical personality.

*Centro Nacional de Pesquisa e Conservação de Primatas Brasileiros (CPB/ICMBio)*

I first met Liza Veiga at the Primate Society of Brazil's conference in Belém in 2000. A little lost in a city I didn't know at all, in a language in which I was only half-competent, I was ever so impressed when a rather Chinese-looking person with a very Brazilian name (Liza Maria Veiga, after all) suddenly started speaking to me in fluent English—especially as she had just concluded a conversation in rapid fire and apparently perfect Portuguese (she also spoke fluent French; languages being one of Liza's many talents). By sheer happenstance, we were both starting PhDs; I was in flooded forests, she was in flood-created islands. And we were both working on one of the least-known of the Neotropical primate groups, the pitheciines; she was studying *Chiropotes*, I was studying *Cacajao*. I remember tea (real tea!) in a garden somewhere in Belém and the conversation evolving into one that decided that "something must be done."

Fast forward six years and we are in another conference, this time in Entebbe, Uganda, and we are about to see the fruition of about 18 months of hard work—the first-ever symposium dedicated solely to pitheciines, their ecology and conservation. Like the Pitheciine Action Group and the soon-to-be-published book on Pitheciine ecology and conservation, my initial idea for the symposium was seized upon by Liza with what can only be described as zeal and glee. Things first expanded and then fell into place, both with a remarkable speed as Liza's training in business logistics swung into action.

That is one of the many remarkable things about Liza Veiga, that for fully three-quarters of her all-to-brief life, she didn't do biology at all. With a degree in Economics and a Master's in International Development Studies, Liza only came to monkeys via a strange set of steps that Stephen Ferrari has already described so well. A curious course from which primatology benefitted greatly.

The Liza I first met was brisk, charming, funny and breath-takingly efficient. To-do lists had a habit of rapidly vaporizing into nothing in her presence. Finishing her PhD on a Friday in 2006, she had a job by the following Monday—possibly a record for post-grad unemployment. And how she networked, and how hard she worked, and how much she helped others. And she took on students and she took on projects with Conservation International and IUCN and the SSC and became member of various committees and commissions and spread herself thinner and thinner so that gradually the phone calls and e-mails stopped being

bouncy and full of vim, and slowly depression clouded the life of our dear friend and colleague.

And now she's gone, and I still can't quite adapt to the fact. It's not true that I'll never get another e-mail from her, or have another crackly skype call, never see her again at conferences—juggling students and presentations, talks to see and committees to attend, all with a smile and a busy busy cell phone. We will publish those papers we were always just about to be going to get round to—Liza's out in the field, she'll be back ...

A book on pitheciines—her first and foremost primatological love—was published in April 2013 by Cambridge University Press. It's dedicated to her, but I just wish it didn't have to be. I wish it were a celebration of her still-present competency and drive, rather than a memorial of much-missed abilities.

Primatology has lost a great colleague, and a person of remarkable vision, ability and drive. Many students have lost a magnificent and insightful mentor, I have lost a dear friend, and primates in general have lost a small, bustling and much-loved champion.

Liza Maria Veiga, remembered-in-primates.

*Adrian Barnett  
Roehampton University, London*

The trajectory of Liza Maria Veiga shows us that a successful career must be constructed through hard work and dedication, but also with intense love for the chosen work. The field of primatology was lucky to have Liza fall in love with it, and Liza dedicated herself not only to the study of primates, but also to the mentoring and professional development of several students. She loved to work collaboratively, and she was always sharing her experiences.

Liza was a great friend, and she participated in many important moments of my professional life, always with much generosity. It was my privilege to have her on my doctoral thesis committee, and I greatly benefited from her rich knowledge of *Chiropotes* and her experience as someone who had gone through similar difficulties during long and arduous fieldwork. She was the author of one of the most thorough studies of *Chiropotes* ever conducted. Her work with the black bearded saki, *C. satanas*, in the Tucuquí region in Brazil, caused admiration among primatologists for the seriousness and effort that she put into it.

From the beginning of her career as a primatologist, she showed commitment, collaboration and tireless dedication to primate conservation in Brazil. She came to Brazil in 1999 with a dream of exploring new worlds and dedicating herself to new causes, both of which happened in her short and intense career. Those with the luck of sharing in her life can give testimony that her genuine happiness and admirable disposition, in addition to her ethics and her

commitment, made Liza a captivating researcher. An example was her participation in the symposium “Pitheciines: Ecology and Conservation,” organized by her and Adrian Barnett for the XXI International Primatological Society Meetings, in 2006 in Uganda. An outcome of this symposium was the book *Evolutionary Biology and Conservation of Titis, Sakis, and Uakaris* that demonstrates the full force of the combined qualities Liza possessed. Liza also acted on her passion for primatology through her collaboration in the evaluation of threatened species for IUCN, as the primary person responsible for data collection to support the evaluation of the Pitheciidae in 2008. She also played an important role in the Evaluation Workshop of the Conservation Status of Brazilian Primates, held by the Centro Nacional de Pesquisa e Conservação de Primatas Brasileiros/ICMBio in 2012. Liza was remarkable and courageous in her position in the post-doctoral program at the Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi, where she advised students, lectured, and collaborated in diverse lines of research.

Besides her dedication, her ethics, her efficiency, and her joy, Liza Maria Veiga added love in her particular way of acting and living. Her death has transformed her trajectory into a legacy and has consolidated what I already knew before her untimely departure: everyone loved her, and she deeply deserved our love.

*Liliam Patricia Pinto*  
*Centro Nacional de Pesquisa e Conservação da*  
*Biodiversidade Amazônica – CEPAM/ICMBio*

The recent loss of Liza Veiga is a painful fact that saddens us all profoundly... not only is the sudden death shocking in itself, but so is the loss of such a pivotal researcher with a brilliant, flawless and aspiring career. We are forced to realize that we cannot turn to her anymore for her much-needed help in our unending shared fight for a world that takes responsibility in protecting the environment. We have lost a great friend who was loving, caring, attentive, genuine, and extremely fair. It is unnecessary to describe her competence and seriousness, to try to enumerate all the virtues that Liza possessed as a professional—we all know these and can attest to them. In truth there is no way to express the pain of losing someone as special as her, and all we can do now is try, with our best efforts and sacrifice, to make up for, at least partially, her loss... In life she waged an enduring struggle to fight against the imminent threat of extinction for our Brazilian primates... We will continue this mission in her absence, though now it seems even more impossible, and without Liza, more arduous, lonely, and sad!

*Fabiano Rodrigues de Melo*  
*Universidade Federal de Goiás*  
*University of Wisconsin, Madison*

Teaching is an extremely rewarding profession, and it is hard not to get involved with one's students, especially at the graduate level, when a somewhat intimate relationship inevitably arises from the long hours spent together

discussing projects and data, and worrying over analyses and deadlines. In Liza Veiga's case, the sense of a familial bond was especially strong, for a number of reasons. While I think neither of us felt an especially strong link with our home country, the fact that we were both English was perhaps the most important factor, possibly for no better reason than being able to share the odd moment of typically British humor to the blank-faced consternation of the Brazilians around us. It was nice to have someone to chat to in English now and again, although we would more often than not talk to each other in Portuguese.

There were other, minor coincidences. We both had mixed backgrounds—Liza's father was Chinese and mine was Italian—so in some ways, we were both quirky, atypical Britons who shared a slightly distinctive viewpoint on the world. We were both also late starters, following unusual, roundabout paths to finally become primatologists. But Liza beat me hands down for originality, having graduated in Business Economics and taken a masters degree in International Development. In fact, when she walked into my office at the Federal University of Pará, in the Amazon city of Belém, and told me she was an economist, one of the last things I imagined her doing was a doctorate in experimental psychology based on a study of primate ecology. But a few short years later, she was defending her thesis, and nobody would ever imagine she had ever been anything but a career primatologist.

During the intervening years, Liza taught me, her academic mentor, many important lessons, beginning with the old adage that “anything is possible.” As far as she was concerned, in fact, “nothing is impossible” would have been a more appropriate motto. In addition to her incorrigible enthusiasm and dedication to her work, studies, and research, she was endowed with an impressive ability to organize things, which represented probably the major difference between us. I would often feel almost embarrassed, in fact, whenever she was in my office, because I'm sure she found the absolute chaos of my typical absent-minded academic's workplace at the very least a little annoying, if not totally frustrating or infuriating. She never criticized, although she would sometimes say something like “my goodness, this place could do with a good spring cleaning,” and all I could do would be to agree wholeheartedly. But she did once clear it all out, repaint the walls, and rearrange everything to her satisfaction, which was nice, even though I subsequently spent weeks trying to find all my important stuff.

While she was meticulous in the extreme—which I can only see as being a positive trait in a scientist—Liza was far from being a fuddy-duddy, cloistered away in ivory towers. She was always full of energy, always good for a joke and a laugh, and only very rarely would she refuse an invitation for a happy hour (or two or more) after a long day's hard work. In addition to brightening up the laboratory environment with her invariably good humor, Liza was always ready to lend a hand too, whether it was helping



me to make a deadline, finding a reference for one of her colleagues, or just chipping in around the department in general.

Liza's dedication and attention to detail, not to mention her eagerness to learn, more than compensated for any lack of formal training in biological sciences, and she was an exemplary doctoral student, going to extremes to guarantee the collection of her data. She had her fair share of mishaps in the field, including a "shipwreck," when the boat she was travelling in to her field site hit a submerged log at a fairly high speed and threw her and the boatman into the water.

Liza took this and other minor disasters in her stride, with typically British stoicism, but about halfway through her fieldwork, she hit an unexpected barrier. She always took pretty good care of herself, and was a regular in the gym (when she was in town), but she pushed herself to the limit and the long, hard days in the field finally took their toll on her health. However, the problem was not so much her blistered feet, bad back, and almost clinical exhaustion, but the fact that she was determined not to miss any of her planned fieldwork time. She was monitoring two groups of cuxiús (*Chiropotes satanas*) simultaneously, and was worried that any interruption of her schedule would jeopardize the quality of her data. I had my work cut out to convince her that she could more than compensate by obtaining comparative data in consecutive years, but in the end, she realized that her health issues were a little more serious than she wanted to believe, and she took a much-needed two month sabbatical.

Liza needn't have worried, because her study was excellent. It bore all the characteristics of her trademark dedication and efficiency. Her dissertation transformed her from a novice economist-cum-monkey-watcher into a fully-fledged primatologist, more than ready to go on to higher things. Most people tend to relax after finishing their degrees, but Liza wasn't like that. In fact, she seemed to thrive on hard work and new challenges, and almost before the ink had dried on her diploma, she was off managing projects, working as an environmental consultant, and then taking up a postdoctoral position at the Goeldi Museum, where she dedicated herself to new research initiatives, and in particular, teaching.

I had moved away from Belém by this time, and sadly, we saw each other only very rarely over the past few years, although we continued to work together on many new projects and publications, and would still chat regularly through long e-mails. While Liza had become a proficient primatologist, her administrative skills also showed through, and she was active in many different capacities, perhaps most importantly, the IUCN Red List and the Pitheciine Action Group, as well as being an editor of *Neotropical Primates*.

My memories of Liza Veiga are as a cheerful, hard-working, and dedicated student, colleague, and friend. I am proud

to have been able to help her achieve her dream of studying the monkeys of the Amazon forest, and even prouder to know that she did so much to share her knowledge and experience with the rest of us, and in particular her students. As a teacher, there are few more satisfying things than seeing an ex-student carrying on the tradition, and while she was with us for such a painfully short time, Liza's contribution to primatology will stand proud for many generations to come.

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Universidade Federal de Sergipe

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Furthermore, Liza Veiga is author or co-author of 38 species accounts in the latest version (2012.2) of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (see <http://www.iucnredlist.org>)

## NEWS

### 2013 CONSERVATION AWARDS

The Conservation Leadership Programme is currently soliciting applications for 2013 Conservation Awards. These awards are aimed at early-career conservationists (no more than 5 years professional experience in the conservation sector). Awards that will be offered in three categories: 1) Future conservationist, 2) Conservation follow-up, and 3) Conservation leadership. The application deadline for all awards is 9<sup>th</sup> November 2012. For more information go to [www.conservationleadershipprogramme.org](http://www.conservationleadershipprogramme.org)

### PRIMATE ECOLOGY AND ANIMAL BEHAVIOR

The “Primate Ecology and Animal Behavior” course will be offered in Panama from December 20th, 2012 to January 9th, 2013. The course is given at Bocas del Toro Biological Station is located on the north end of Isla Colón. The purpose of this course is to give the student a foundation in primate ecology, primate behaviour, field techniques and analytical tools in a tropical setting. The material covered is equivalent to a university upper level course in primate ecology. For more information go to [www.itec-edu.org/info.html#course](http://www.itec-edu.org/info.html#course)