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ECOLOGY AND CONSERVATION OF RED HOWLER MONKEYS (*ALOUATTA SENICULUS*) IN MONTANE FOREST FRAGMENTS IN THE MAIN COFFEE-GROWING REGION IN COLOMBIA

Carolina Gómez-Posada

At least seventy percent of the original montane ecosystems have been lost from the Colombian Andes. Forest remnants are mostly small, isolated, and on privately-held lands. Animals persisting in this landscape have adapted to human encroachment and some have managed to survive in highly degraded habitats. However, this does not guarantee the long-term survival and health of populations. Andean forests in Colombia urgently need management and conservation programs. We have developed a project aimed at evaluating how howler populations are responding to loss and fragmentation of their natural habitats in the Colombian Andes, with the expectation that this could lead to measures to prevent further losses. We are studying howler populations in montane forest in three provinces of Colombia in the coffee growing region and Cauca Valley (900 to 2200 m a.s.l.), evaluating the demographic and behavioral responses of howlers to habitat fragmentation and diminished resources. This research has included eleven theses of undergraduate and graduate students from nine Colombian universities, addressing the following topics:

- Status of wild populations of red howler monkey in forest fragments (natural forest, “guadua” bamboo forest, forestry plantations);
- Ranging patterns, use of food resources and habitat of red howler monkey in isolated Andean forest fragments;
- Genetic variability and endogamy of red howler monkey in isolated Andean forest fragments in the coffee region in Colombia;
- Use of anthropogenic habitats by monkeys and productive systems as alternative tools for conservation in private lands;
- Conservation strategy of the red howler monkey in the coffee region in Colombia.

We have interacted with government agencies, large private land owners, and small ranch farmers. We consulted with farmers and the largest forestry plantation company in Colombia to understand their points of view, in order to explore different management options that would allow them to use their land without destroying the resources needed for monkeys and other wildlife to survive. These results were used to develop the conservation strategy for this species in the region, and some of the proposed conservation actions now have been implemented by land owners and local environmental authorities.

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MARINA SILVA RECEBE MAIOR PRÊMIO DE MEIO AMBIENTE DAS NAÇÕES UNIDAS

A ministra do Meio Ambiente, Marina Silva, receberá o maior prêmio das Nações Unidas na área ambiental, o “Champions of the Earth” (Campeões da Terra) de 2007, como reconhecimento ao seu trabalho em favor da preservação da floresta amazônica e da valorização das comunidades locais e tradicionais da região. O anúncio foi feito nesta quinta-feira (01) pelo Programa das Nações Unidas pelo Meio Ambiente (PNUMA). Marina Silva é uma das sete personalidades que serão premiadas. O “Campeões da Terra” será entregue numa cerimônia prevista para o dia 19 de abril, em Cingapura. O sub-secretário da Organização das Nações Unidas (ONU) e diretor-executivo do PNUMA, Achim Steiner, em carta enviada à ministra, elogia a sua dedicação na defesa das questões ambientais. “Vossa Excelência reconheceu que a construção de uma aliança de apoio para proteger o meio ambiente exige adesão a um conjunto básico de valores. Sua crença de que o sucesso da luta para salvar a vida sobre a Terra exige que princípios estejam à frente de nossos esforços fez com que fosse merecedora do prêmio Champions of the Earth 2007”, escreve ele. O prêmio existe desde 2004. Seu objetivo é contemplar pessoas que tenham uma contribuição significativa e reconhecida, global e regionalmente, na proteção e gestão sustentável do meio ambiente e dos recursos naturais.

Fonte: InforMMA.