

Field Course in Primate Behavior, Ecology, and Conservation, Department of Pando, Bolivia

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FIELD COURSE IN PRIMATE BEHAVIOR, ECOLOGY, AND CONSERVATION, DEPARTMENT OF PANDO, BOLIVIA

Ten students and professors from Bolivia and Peru participated in a field course on primates held in the Department of Pando, Bolivia, during August 2004. Leila Porter (University of Washington) gave lectures on primate behavior, ecology, and conservation at the Universidad Amazonica de Pando (UAP) in the city of Cobija, and students conducted field projects at the UAP's newly established Tahuamanu Biological Field Station. Claudia Coca Mendez, of the Center for the Investigation and Preservation of the Amazon (CIPA), UAP, served as the course coordinator. The goal of the course was to introduce students to concepts concerning primate research and conservation, and to provide participants with the opportunity to conduct research on wild primate groups.

The participants were presented with one week of intensive lectures in Cobija. These courses provided an overview of primate taxonomy, behavioral ecology, the role of primates in their ecosystems, concepts of primate conservation biology, and conservation management strategies. Following these lectures, participants developed team research proposals that they presented to each other for peer review. After due revision, students and professors traveled to the field station to start their research projects. At the field station, local guides helped the teams to complete four projects: 1) a census of primate species' densities at the site; 2) an estimation of niche overlap between *Saguinus fuscicollis* and *S. labiatus*; 3) an examination of the diet of *S. labiatus*; and 4) a study of social behavior in juvenile *S. fuscicollis*. In addition to their research projects, participants were given lessons on how to capture callitrichines using blinds and traps and how to collect fruit phenology data. Following completion of field research, students returned to Cobija to analyze their data, prepare a final report, and present their results to other professors and students from the UAP.

The Field Station is home to 11 species of primates, and a number of primate groups (of four species) have been habituated for field studies. The station therefore serves as an excellent location for teaching about primate behavior and ecology. In addition to learning about concepts related to primate behavior, ecology, and conservation, students became familiar with methods for primate research and developed important contacts across Bolivia and Peru. Due to the success of this first Pandino primate field course, more courses are anticipated for the future.

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