

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT OF PROYECTO TITÍ



# Tití Times

Vol. 4 May 2009



Please visit our website at: <http://proyectotiti.com>

## BABIES ON THE WAY

It's that time of the year again! Our cotton-top tamarin "moms" are getting ready to welcome the 2009 babies very soon. Tamara, Narda, Claudia, Jackie, Maria, Nistar, and Sofia have all been observed with very large bellies and we should see the appearance of those tiny little faces peeking over their parents' shoulders very soon.



How do we know that the cotton-tops are pregnant? We conduct our very own "in home" pregnancy tests. Similar to the tests that have been developed to detect pregnancy in women, we have developed tests that allow us to determine if cotton-top tamarin females are pregnant.

Felix and German, our field researchers,



have collected those tiny fecal samples from the females in our study groups and we've been able to look for hormone levels that indicate pregnancy. It's an exciting time of year as we wait for the birth of the babies.

Females generally give birth during the rainy season when there is a lot of fresh fruit available in the forest. They need to consume a lot of calories so that they can successfully nurse those twins. Because of the energy demands of trying to take care of twins, moms need the help of everyone in the group to raise the babies. It truly takes a village of tamarins to care for the new additions to their family.



## THE ART OF AGING GRACEFULLY ... TAMARIN STYLE

Cotton-top tamarins in zoos or captive facilities can live and continue to reproduce into their teens. In fact, the oldest cotton-top tamarin on record is 24! Do wild cotton-top tamarins live as long as their captive cotton-tops? That's a question we have been trying to answer. At Hacienda El Ceibal we have study groups of wild tamarins that we have been following for years. Not all of our animals remain in our study area. Some leave and move to a different forest but we've been fortunate to be able to follow the lives of some tamarins that have been part of our study groups for many years and they are giving us new insights into their lives.

Meet Carlos. He is one of the oldest males in our study groups at Hacienda El Ceibal. He was in the first group we habituated for observations 10 years ago.

As the dominant male in the group, we know that he had to be at 3-4 years old when our study began. He is starting to look a little older now.



His dark black face is starting to turn a lighter shade but he still moves through the trees like a young monkey. Carlos was the first to figure out that he didn't want us to capture him any more so that we could dye his hair. The last time he entered the traps was in 2006. He still comes to the traps to eat his banana but he won't go inside of them any more.

Carlos has been the dominant male in three different groups each with a new female. He also holds the record for siring more offspring than any other male in our study ... 13 babies.



And then there is our favorite cotton-top ... Tamara. Tamara and her mother, Sara, lived in their group for two years until a new female moved in and evicted Sara and Tamara from the group. For almost a year, they wandered through the forest looking for other cotton-top groups to join or find some other animals looking to form their own group. Finally, they established their own group and Sara became pregnant again. That's when we really began to see who was trying to take over the group. Tamara kidnapped Sara's twins and would not let her nurse them. She eventually evicted her own mother from the group and became the dominant

female in Group 11. Six years later, she still holds the title of dominant female. Other females have tried to evict her, but she still remains the strongest female... even though she now has a crooked tail, an injury she sustained in a fight with a female trying to take over her group. Tamara is a record holder in cotton-top tamarin natural history. Now 9 years old, Tamara has the longest tenure as the dominant female in any group, and has given birth to 14 infants in the last 5 years.

Narda is a female that we have been observing for 9 years. She is another tamarin with quite a strong personality! Adult cotton-top tamarins are known for sharing food with the youngest group members. Narda is clearly not your



typical tamarin; she has been observed stealing food from everyone in the group, even her youngest offspring! But, she is a great mom. She has given birth to 14 babies in the last 6 years and was the first cotton-top tamarin we observed giving birth to triplets.

Here's to many more years for these amazing cotton-top tamarins and thanks for giving us a better understanding of their natural history.

### **A DREAM COME TRUE FOR ASOARTESANAS**

A program that began with 12 women and some plastic bags has grown beyond everyone's expectations. This program began by recruiting women who were interested in learning how to make eco-mochilas, tote bags crocheted from plastic bags as a means to generate income so that they would be less dependent on extracting products from the forests that the tamarins need to survive. This group of determined women has grown into skilled artisans that have invested their

earnings into their families and their communities. They are working with Proyecto Tití to protect forests and continue to champion the protection of Colombia's natural resources. What is so inspiring is to see how these women have grown into leaders in their community and successful conservation entrepreneurs. So when ASOARTESANAS had a dream of building a conservation center that would function as a place where people who visited the village of Los Límites could learn more about how they are actively protecting cotton-top tamarins and also serve as a workplace for the artisans, we reached out to some of our great conservation partners and donors to help make that dream a reality. The artisans saved enough money to buy the land for the center, and Proyecto Tití has helped to raise funds to build CALL (Centro Artesanal de Conservación Ambiental de Los Límites). The grand opening of CALL will be on August 15<sup>th</sup>, the Day of the Cotton-top Tamarin celebration in Colombia.



## **PLUSH COTTON-TOP TAMARIN TOYS ON THE WAY!**



Creating opportunities for communities to get involved in conservation efforts that provide a sustainable income is a priority for Proyecto Tití. We have trained 30 women from the village of Hobo to make plush cotton-top tamarin toys. They've learned how to sew by hand and are now perfecting their techniques so that they have quality products to sell in the near future. Our goal is to commercialize these plush toys in Colombia and continue to create awareness about the need to conserve this critically endangered primate.

## **THE NATURE CONSERVANCY CONSERVATION LAND PURCHASE PROGRAM IS READY!**



The Nature Conservancy has finished an analysis on prioritizing forested areas that can be purchased for long-term protection in the department of Bolívar. These are important areas to be protected since they represent some of the last remaining tropical forests in the region. We are very pleased that the forest of El Ceibal, where Proyecto Tití is based, was chosen as the core conservation area in this region.

Now that the land purchase program has been approved by the regional conservation authority, CARDIQUE, the process to purchase lands will begin. Several governmental and non-governmental agencies will be involved in negotiating the land purchase and we will continue to work to raise funds to ensure that we will have a protected area for cotton-top tamarins very soon.

### **COTTON-TOPS IN NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC**



Thanks to the amazing talent of Lisa Hoffner, cotton-top tamarins were featured in the January issue of National Geographic's magazine. Lisa's photo of cotton-top tamarin "Tamara" taken in the forests of El Ceibal was featured in "Wildlife As Canon Sees It" This was a great opportunity for the general public to learn about cotton-top tamarins!

### **CARTITILLA: NEW WORKBOOKS FOR OUR COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROGRAMS**



As part of our community education program we are designing a new CARTITILLA, a workbook that engages elementary school children in activities that promote their involvement in cotton-top tamarin conservation. CARTITILLA

are readily accepted into the school's curriculum and teachers are very excited to have a new resource available so that they can teach about conservation issues of the region.

We will be pilot testing our new CARTITILLA in the next few months and then it will be ready for the new school year! We look forward to providing these workbooks to thousands of children in Colombia.

### **A SINCERE THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR DONORS AND VISITORS!**

On behalf of all of us at Proyecto Tití we thank all of you for your continued support of our efforts to protect cotton-top tamarins in Colombia and empowering local communities to become actively involved in protecting wildlife and wild places. We couldn't do it without the generous support of individuals and organizations that have provided us with donations or purchased eco-mochilas recently: Wildlife Conservation Network, Disney's Worldwide Conservation Fund, Sea World Conservation Fund, Zoo Boise, Cincinnati Zoo, Utah's Hogle Zoo, Central Florida Zoo, Brevard Zoo, International Society of Primatologists, Houston Zoo, Salisbury Zoo, and the American Society of Primatologists.

