

## Tapirs and Hunting in the Tacana Indigenous Territory

By Rob Wallace, Humberto Gomez and Maria Copa  
(Wildlife Conservation Society – Bolivia)

The Northwestern Bolivian Andes Landscape Conservation Programme is working with a number of local communities across the landscape towards the sustainable use of natural resources. We focus on community investigation projects requested by the community and much emphasis is placed on encouraging and facilitating true community participation in the management process, with the recognition that building a community decision making process is a long term activity.

This community project approach includes three Tacana indigenous communities situated along the Beni River who are working to document their hunting activities through a self-monitoring program. Tapirs are hunted in all three communities and provide a significant percentage of the wild meat consumed by the population.

Self-monitoring is considered a first step towards assessing the sustainability of this subsistence activity, and the communities have all recently decided to conduct line transect methodologies within their hunting grounds and in immediately adjacent source areas in order to assess the abundance of hunted wildlife and subsequently the sustainability of their hunting activities for different species. A major challenge will be the estimation of density for primarily nocturnal animals such as lowland tapirs and fixed width strip night transects might be the only feasible methodology available. Tapir productivity will also be examined in the near future through the collection and subsequent examination of reproductive tracts from hunted animals.

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## Tapir Ranging Behaviour and Activity Patterns in the Tropical Dry Forests of the Gran Chaco

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The Bolivian Chaco is a major ecosystem and is now protected by the immense Kaa-Iya protected area and the adjacent Izoceño Indigenous Territory. Indigenous communities practice subsistence based hunting of many species including the lowland tapir (*Tapirus terrestris*), a particularly valuable target animal due to its relatively large size. Nevertheless, little information exists for this species in the Izozog or in the Gran Chaco in general, and this lack of data limits the capacity for the Kaa-Iya protected area administration and the Izoceño indigenous communities to manage lowland tapir populations.

In this study a total of five adult tapir (2 females and 3 males) were radio-collared and monitored for approximately one year at the Cerro Cortado research camp in the Izozog. A total of 2100 locations were collected using radio-telemetry triangulation techniques and activity patterns were assessed every 15 minutes by way of activity sensors within the radio-collars.

Average home range size for males was 281 ha and for females 218 ha (Minimum Convex Polygon 95%), with home range overlap evident between males and females but not between males. On the basis of home range data a preliminary density estimate of 0.5 ind./km<sup>2</sup> was calculated for the study site. Activity levels peaked between 01:00 and 06:30 hours, with very little activity between 11:00 and 15:30 hours. Tapirs are primarily nocturnal and crepuscular in the Bolivian Chaco.

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