**News**

**DIORENE SMITH IS A DISNEY CONSERVATION HERO!**

Diorene J. Smith, who is a member of our Specialist Group and represents us in meetings with the Panamanian authorities in matters related to the protection of the pygmy sloth and Escudo de Veraguas, has won the Disney Conservation Hero award of the year!

Diorene’s project to protect and conserve the Island of Escudo de Veraguas, Panamá as the unique habitat of the highly endangered pygmy sloth (*Bradypus pygmaeus*) was selected from many other contestants worldwide. We are proud of Diorene’s pioneering and visionary work, and her selfless dedication to protecting these extraordinary animals. The conservation of this Critically Endangered Species is a priority if these charismatic animals are to survive into the next decade and beyond.

For additional information, please visit <https://thewaldisneycompany.com/disney-conservation-fund-announces-2016-conservation-heroes/>

**ARMADILLOS DE CHILE**

*Armadillos de Chile* fue creado el año 2016 como un espacio de colaboración, educación, investigación y fomento de las tres especies de armadillos presentes en Chile (*Chaetophractus villosus*, *C. vellerosus* y *Zaedyus pichiy*). Este grupo de 12 voluntarios ha sido muy activo desde su fundación. Su primera iniciativa fue desarrollar la “Guía de identificación de las tres especies de armadillos presentes en Chile”, la cual está disponible sin cargo en su página de Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/Armadillochile>. Le siguieron distintas colaboraciones en stands de educación y sensibilización en zoológicos, museos, festivales y reuniones científicas, talleres de capacitación para las autoridades y charlas en universidades, instituciones que trabajan con fauna y otras abiertas al público en general. *Armadillos de Chile* ya tiene muchas actividades planificadas para el 2017, incluyendo charlas educativas en colegios y universidades, participación en diversos stands educativos, salidas a terreno y apoyo en las actividades que se desarrollen con el embajador de la fauna nativa de ese año, el quirquincho de la puna.

Para mayor información, los invitamos a visitar la página de Facebook de Armadillos de Chile. Si desea apoyar este interesante proyecto, puede comunicarse con sus responsables por E-mail a <armadillos-chile@gmail.com>.

**¡EL QUIRQUINCHO DE LA PUNA ES EL EMBAJADOR DE LA FAUNA CHILENA 2017!**

Por tercer año consecutivo, el 5 de noviembre de 2016 el Instituto Jane Goodall Chile, con el auspicio del Museo Nacional de Historia Natural, realizó la celebración del Día de la Fauna Nativa de Chile. Esta iniciativa tiene como objetivo generar interés en la ciudadanía sobre especies nativas para que la comunidad conozca, valore y proteja el patrimonio natural de Chile. En el marco de esta celebración, el público tuvo la oportunidad de elegir al Embajador de la Fauna 2017 entre cinco candidatos: el picaflor de Juan Hernández (*Sephanoides fernandensis*), el abejorro chileno (*Bombus dahlbomii*), la rana chilena (*Calyptocephalella gayi*), el delfín chileno (*Cephalorhynchus eutropia*) y el quirquincho de la Puna (*Chaetophractus vellerosus*).

Gracias al incansable trabajo de los voluntarios de *Armadillos de Chile*, el quirquincho de la Puna fue electo Embajador de la Fauna Nativa de Chile 2017. Esperamos que esta iniciativa le dará la visibilidad que esta especie necesita.

¡Felicitaciones por este gran logro!
The Three-banded Armadillo Program conducts an expedition through the Poti River Canyon

The Three-banded Armadillo Program conducts an expedition through the Poti River in Brazil. Researchers and biologists were in the Crateus, Ceará backwoods in order to identify areas of occurrence of the three-banded armadillo (*Tolypeutes tricinctus*), categorized as Vulnerable by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

The expedition was organized by the Three-banded Armadillo Conservation Program, which is supported by the Fundação Grupo Boticário de Proteção à Natureza and the IUCN/SSC Anteater, Sloth and Armadillo Specialist Group, and coordinated by the Associação Caatinga (Brazilian tropical dry forest Association). The researchers surveyed the area and explored archaeological sites in the Serra da Baleia (Baleia Hills), searching for animal traces. The first day of the expedition started with great excitement: at night, the period of greatest activity of the species, they found a three-banded armadillo, collected samples from it for study, and analyzed the place where it was found. Interviews with local residents were also conducted in order to determine other areas where the species might be observed.

The team conducted a survey of a new archaeological site and found another rare species of the Caatinga: the urubu-rei (king vulture). Such findings underline the importance of the Three-banded Armadillo Program in the conservation of species and habitats.

On the night of Saturday, 6 August 2016, assisted by the residents of the Bebedouro community, the researchers found another three-banded armadillo, this time a female. On Sunday, they went to Conceição dos Marreiros, a location where they camped.

Flavia Miranda, the lead researcher, says that the mission of the expedition was fully realized. “We came back with a feeling of accomplishment. In more than 1,000 km of Caatinga traveled in the last 10 days, we found five three-banded armadillos, cataloged several archaeological sites, and mapped the future National Poti River Park. These are extremely positive results” she says.

The expedition to the Poti River canyon came to an end on 11 August 2016, having produced interesting discoveries and more confidence to continue the work of the Three-banded Armadillo Program. The Three-banded Armadillo Conservation Program has already initiated the next, ambitious step: to transform this area into a National Park to ensure the long-term protection of this fascinating species as well as the other residents of this special place.

For additional information, please visit the Three-banded Armadillo Conservation Program’s website <http://tatubola.org.br>.

The AZA Pangolin, Aardvark and Xenarthra TAG has a new Chair and leader!

We are delighted to announce that Lindsay North has been appointed as the new AZA Pangolin, Aardvark and Xenarthra TAG (PAX TAG) Chair. Lindsay works at Omaha’s Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium, and is currently the Screaming Armadillo Red SSP Coordinator & Studbook Keeper. The IUCN SSC Anteater, Sloth and Armadillo Specialist Group welcomes Lindsay and looks forward to working with her extensively. Our Specialist Group would also like to take the opportunity to thank the past PAX TAG Chair, John Gramieri, for his amazing work over the past years. We are happy that we will be able to continue to count on his wholehearted support as a Specialist Group member.

Embryonic Material of Armadillos Needed for a Histological Study

Jaap Hillenius and Susan Rehorek are looking for embryonic material of armadillos for a histological study. They are interested in the ontogenetic timing and pattern of development of the orbital glands, nasolacrimal duct, and associated nasal structures. This project is part of a larger study of the comparative organogenesis of these structures in mammals. Armadillos are of particular interest because of their unusual orbital glands; however, embryonic material has been challenging to locate. Ideally, they are looking for histological data from a growth series of embryos that includes the...
earliest inception of the orbital glands and nasolacrimal duct and associated structures. Typically, these structures appear comparatively late in gestation, so older embryos will probably be of more use for this project than very young ones. If at all possible, Jaap and Susan would like to examine multiple specimens for each age class from the second half of gestation. If you would like to collaborate with this interesting project, please contact Jaap Hillenius at <HilleniusW@cofc.edu>.

THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL MEETING FOR THE WELLBEING AND CONSERVATION OF SLOTHS WAS HELD IN PANAMA

In 2010 the first International Meeting for the Wellbeing and Conservation of Sloths was held in Colombia. The main objective of the meeting was to share experiences and foster relationships among institutions that work with sloths in order to create an international working group. Collaborative efforts among institutions began in early 2005.

This year, the third International Meeting for the Wellbeing and Conservation of Sloths was held in Gamboa, Panama from October 19–23 as a joint initiative of Fundación AIUNAU, APPC (Asociación Panamericana Para la Conservación), and Proyecto ASIS of Costa Rica. Participants included specialists from institutions that specialize in sloth rehabilitation.

The main objective of the meeting was to analyze current issues and share conclusions with international organizations. The participants agreed that the situation regarding sloth rehabilitation and conservation is worrying. There is considerable controversy about the role of sanctuaries in conservation, especially for sloths. Furthermore, in some regions these species are being exploited and the publicity produced is stimulating the desire to keep sloths as pets.

The meeting included the presentation of the National Program for Conservation and Sustainable Use of Xenarthra that Colombia has enacted, in the hope that it might be a model that other countries, such as Panama, could use in order to draft similar programs of their own. Panamanian researchers also shared their investigations related to sloths at this meeting.


A new edition of the symposium on the Xenarthra (“Xympsiyum”) took place during the 11th International Congress of Vertebrate Morphology (11-ICVM) held in Bethesda, Washington DC, USA, from 29 June to 3 July, 2016.

There is a tradition of holding symposia that focus on the morphology of the Xenarthra at the ICVM. The first one was organized by Sergio F. Vizcaíno and Richard A. Fariña, and held during the 6-ICVM in Jena, Germany, in 2001; the second by Gerry De Iuliis and H. Gregory Mc Donald during the 8-ICVM in Paris, France, in 2007; and the third by François Pujos and Tim Gaudin during the 9-ICVM in Punta del Este, Uruguay, in 2010. To keep this tradition alive, M. Susana Bargo (Museo de La Plata, Argentina) and John A. Nyakatura (Humboldt University Berlin, Germany), decided to bring together morphologists working on extant and extinct xenarthrans worldwide, and organized the fourth symposium entitled Morphology and Evolution of the Xenarthra.

They received great feedback and enthusiasm from the X-people, with 14 oral presentations (including a keynote speaker) and 8 posters, from 24 contributors that attended the meeting. They were assigned a 6-hour (full day) symposium. It was an excellent opportunity to present the latest research in the field, with a nice balance between presentations on extant and extinct xenarthrans, reviews and original works, as well as old hands and young talent. The Symposium was attended by colleagues from all over the world, from Argentina, Uruguay, Canada, USA, France, Germany, Sweden, Spain, and Australia. They presented diverse approaches and techniques to elucidate the morphology and evolution of the group including functional morphology, biomechanics, bone histology, geometric morphometrics, biogeography, and phylogeny.

The program and abstracts of the 11-ICVM have been published in The Anatomical Record and are available online at <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1002/(ISSN)1932-8494/homepage/icm11-2016_program_and_abstracts.htm>. The “Xympsiyum” abstracts can be found starting
Susi Bargo and John Nyakatura are now working on the edition of a Special Issue of the “Xymposium” that will be published in the *Journal of Mammalian Evolution*. The volume will include about 12 contributions, original works and reviews that expand on the topics presented during the 11-ICVM symposium.

Another issue discussed during the “Xymposium” was the need for a larger and independent meeting (not within the ICVM) to include xenarthrologists working on other fields (physiology, ecology, behavior, conservation, etc.). Sergio Vizcaíno, Susi Bargo and Néstor Toledo offered to organize a three-day, low-cost workshop in La Plata, Argentina, in 2018. Further news about the 2018 meeting will be announced next year through Edentata.