

program involved visiting educational institutions and reaching out to students (more than 3500) and the communities at large.

To begin, we visited the Bolivarian school

“Evelio José Aponte” in Cuibas and the community of Agua Viva in the Palavecino Municipality and organized activities teaching about the species living in Terepaima National Park. We called that

part of the program “The Little Savage is our Friend, let’s Take Care of Him” and 210 students participated. A research team consisting of 3 students from Yacambu’s University held a teacher workshop where they offered support materials, pictures and videos of Andean bears. The Andigena Foundation led a program called, “The Andean Bear goes to School”. The resulting reports were presented during the Environmental Education class at Yacambu’s University.

The success of the initiative in Las Cuibas prompted the desire to replicate it in Cubiro and Sanare. There, we organized a series of hands-on activities such as “Playing, learning to know the bear”. This program won a contest called “100 ideas for Barquisimeto” and was publicized in one of the *Impulso* magazines.

The program was also publicized in the *International Bear News* (“Fronti, the Andean Bear goes to School” Vol. 13, No. 4, p. 28, 2006). Other press that covered the program includes: *Gala* magazine (“Saving the bear”), *Okey* magazine (“The Andean Bear, a guaro who wants to live”), *El Nacional* (“In Lara the Andean Bear is protect-

ed”), *Gente Uny* of Yacambu University (“Lara The Paramus where bears sleep”) and the *Ucamari* newspaper of Barquisimeto.

Presentations were made in



Barquisimeto with the support of Yacambu’s University and FUDENA, as well as an exhibition at the International Fair of Barquisimeto (2005), thanks again to Yacambu University.

A number of other educational activities followed “Fronti The Guaro Bear goes to School” and they include

- Visits to the study area and creation of a project called “Taken care of the forest, we protect the Bear” to avoid the destruction of the bear’s habitat by agricultural activities;
- Meetings with community members and environmental groups to stimulate environmental agendas and the creation of a project called “Oso Adentro” as well as others;
- Educational conferences in the Bolivarian school “Augusto Graterol Partidas” and the Bolivarian high school of Cubiro, aimed at supplying information about the species and assessing, through a questionnaire, the level of knowledge of students. It turned out that students know about the problems with Andean bears and their habitat and are

well intentioned to dealing with them; what they lack is the institutional and financial support to address such problems; and

- Activities for toddlers “You know the Andean bear”, including the showing of an Andean Bear video.

The activities above were presented by Imarú Lameda and supported by Yacambu’s University and the Cubiro’s community, including local schools, institutions and environmental groups. ✻

Are Andean Bears Predators of Mountain Tapirs?

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In the cloud forests and paramo (high altitude grassland) regions of Ecuador, very few people have had the experience of seeing an Andean Bear (*Tremarctos ornatus*) pursue cattle for consumption.

Although many people familiar with the Andean Bear have doubted reports of bears attacking livestock, on April 22nd 2007 I personally witnessed this behavior in the Yanahurco region. I was accompanied by a BBC film crew which included Jeff Goodman (cameraman), Jake Drake-Brockman (sound recorder), and Angel Garcia-Rojo (assistant producer).

While filming for the Natural World documentary series we saw an adult bear chasing a herd of wild horses, possibly in search of a juvenile, weak, injured or old individual as easy prey. Unfortunately, we could not

film this remarkable occurrence, as it happened very quickly and the filming equipment was not set up. Later, the chased horses dispersed between the nearby cattle; the bear seemed to concentrate more on the cattle, chasing it for over 4 km, after which it stopped for a moment. The bear repeated this chasing behaviour several times in a test of resistance that ended with the weakest cow becoming the bear's prey. We did not see how the bear caught its prey as during the charging phase it disappeared into the rolling hills and thick brush.

The following day, in another area of the Yanahurco region a 7 person-team including myself, saw a bear stalking a cow in the paramo. This time, the cattle's tried to escape from the bear by getting inside thick bushes of the paramo. However, this did not deter the bear from chasing it down through the vegetation. Once again we were unable to determine whether the bear managed to prey on a cow as the cattle disappeared into thick vegetation at a long distance from our position.

Although all these experiences were very surprising to me, I was more surprised when we went to investigate Andean bear predatory behavior in the Cosanga region of northeast Ecuador. Here we met Mrs. Rosa Chup, who lives in the SierrAzul reserve. She told me of an experience she had a couple of months before. While fishing she heard heavy breathing close by. Startled, she turned rapidly towards the noise and saw a large mountain tapir (*Tapirus pinchaque*) in the vegetation. The frightened tapir ran away with damaged and bleeding hooves. Seconds later an enormous Andean bear came into sight in pursuit of the tapir. Upon seeing Mrs. Chup, both animals stopped and each, frightened by her presence, headed different ways back into the forest. In this case there were no more accounts to back up Mrs. Chup's experience, but I believe her story after having heard similar reports in the same region some years before. Additionally, I have

found Andean bear scat filled with tapir remains. However in that case I believe the tapir was eaten as carrion.

All this evidence points me to the hypothesis that the Andean bear may occasionally prey on mountain tapirs and even did so centuries ago, before the era when the Spanish colonials introduced cattle to the South American continent. 🍌

North American Black Bear Survey Published in *Ursus*

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Personnel from Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife recently completed a survey regarding black bear management in North America. Below is the abstract of the manuscript that has been accepted by *Ursus* and will be published later this year.

How Agencies Respond To Human-Black Bear Conflicts: A Survey Of Wildlife Agencies In North America.

Managing interactions between humans and American black bears (*Ursus americanus*) has evolved from public feeding and viewing of garbage-habituated bears to nationwide bear education campaigns focused on removing food attractants. We conducted a self-administered electronic survey questionnaire to assess how wildlife agencies respond to human-bear conflict and identified techniques currently used to manage conflicts throughout United States, Canada, and Mexico. Forty-eight agencies responded to the survey and provided answers about current bear populations, levels of complaints, types of

interactions, and agency responses. Major findings include: 1) seventy-five percent of agencies relocated problem bears, but only 15% believed relocation was an effective tool, 2) fifty percent of agencies always marked problem bears that were captured and released, 3) fifty percent of agencies both monitored the results of relocated bears and maintained a database, and 4) sixty-nine percent of agencies ranked garbage/food attractants the most common type of human-bear conflict. Our results suggest that management components that have the most potential for improvement likely include: 1) marking, monitoring and maintaining a database of released bears, 2) transitioning from a reactive to a proactive approach for garbage management, 3) developing a comprehensive bear education program that strives to make education a more dynamic and interactive public process, and 4) implementing a system to evaluate the effectiveness of the various approaches for preventing conflict. 🍌

Alaska

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NPS Alaska Region Bear Aversive Conditioning Workshop

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The Alaska Region of the National Park Service completed a Bear