

Recent Activities



Photo: Zoos Victoria

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In the past few months, CBSG has focused on completing reports, finishing projects from 2012, and planning ahead for a busy spring and summer. Ongoing population modeling projects for Eastern barred bandicoots, free-roaming domestic cats, Mesoamerican river turtles, and yellow-shouldered blackbirds/shiny cowbirds have challenged us to use PVA in innovative ways. Workshop reports detailing the results of these projects will soon be available. Conducting *VORTEX* training activities, following up on Annual Meeting tasks and actions, and exploring exciting new initiatives have kept us busy the rest of the time. You can read about upcoming projects in this eUpdate and look for more information in the coming months.

CBSG Regional Networks Meeting

On 1-3 March, convenors and representatives of CBSG's regional networks gathered in Minneapolis, MN, USA to energize and inspire each other in their commitment to CBSG. Each network developed goals and a four-year plan for implementing CBSG's activities both within their region and on a global scale. Networks encouraged each other in their conservation work by sharing new tools and initiatives, unique experiences, and helpful advice. On 4 March, the CBSG population modelers (joined by CBSG Science Advisor Bob Lacy) discussed advanced *VORTEX* modeling techniques and new software developments. Overall, the meeting was a great success, and plans for regularly scheduled future meetings were discussed.





Upcoming Activities

Workshop on Conserving Prairie Endemic Butterflies of Minnesota

Native tall-grass prairie once covered about one third of the state of Minnesota. Less than 1% of that native prairie remains today, threatening many wildlife species that depend on this fragile habitat. The Minnesota Zoo is developing a program to study prairie butterflies of Minnesota and the upper Midwest and promote their conservation. The zoo has asked CBSG to provide guidance in the use of population viability models to explore demographic drivers of butterfly population growth and to identify the best management strategies to minimize risk of local extinction. A workshop will be held at the Minnesota Zoo from 8-10 March where species experts will gather to assemble existing information, discuss conservation status, and develop specific objectives and success criteria for this imperiled species.

Great Ape Heart Project Database Planning Meeting

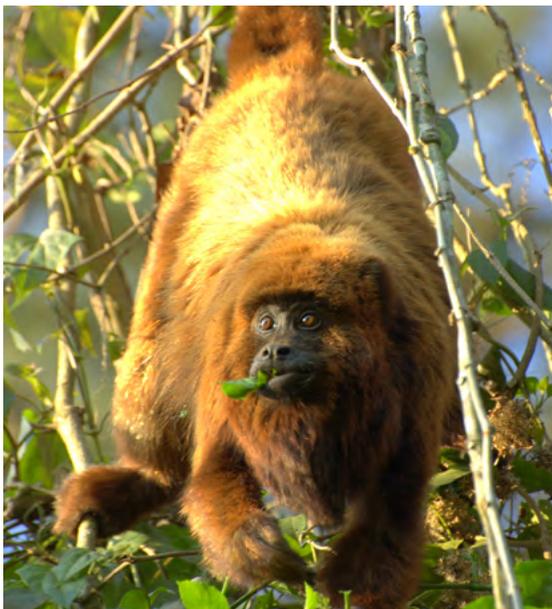
In March, CBSG will facilitate a database planning meeting for the Great Ape Heart Project (GAHP). Based at Zoo Atlanta, the GAHP is a collaboration of veterinarians, cardiologists, geneticists, epidemiologists, nutritionists, animal managers, ape specialists, and research pathologists working to understand heart disease, reduce mortality, and improve cardiac health in all four great ape taxa—gorillas, orangutans, chimpanzees, and bonobos. CBSG facilitated the first planning meeting of the GAHP in 2011, where participants assessed current available resources and identified needs, challenges, and specific actions moving forward. From 19-22 March, the project's second planning meeting will initiate progress toward developing a "Request for Proposal" (RFP) for the design and development of a professionally designed database. This database will include clinical, pathologic, nutritional, and other information related to great ape cardiac health. The meeting participants will determine and define data fields, assess data collection challenges, and discuss quality control, access, and confidentiality.



Photo: Rebecca Spindler

Brown Howler Monkey PVA Workshop

A PVA workshop for the brown howler monkey (*Alouatta guariba ssp. Clamitans*) will be held in Puerto Iguazú, Misiones, Argentina from 26-29 March. Since early 2005, a small group of biologists from Centro de Investigaciones del Bosque



Atlántico (CelBA) and the Instituto de Biología Subtropical (IBS – sede Iguazú, Facultad de Ciencias Forestales, Univ. Nacional de Misiones) has undertaken comparative studies on distribution, behavior, and ecology of the small Argentinean population of brown howler monkey and the sympatric congener black and gold howlers (*Alouatta caraya*) in the Province of Misiones in northeastern Argentina.

In 2008 and 2009, severe yellow fever epidemics struck and decimated populations of both species, driving the already small population of brown howlers to the verge of extinction in Misiones. This situation creates an urgent need for conservation action. In order to establish conservation priorities for this species and its habitat in Argentina, it has become critical to assess the current brown howler population status, main threats, and potential management alternatives that are most likely to be effective in preserving the species. The CelBA's team of howler monkey specialists selected the population viability analysis (PVA) methodology as the most appropriate and efficient tool to reach

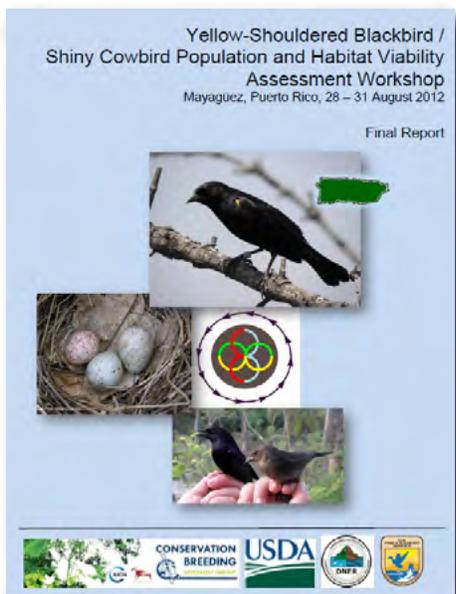
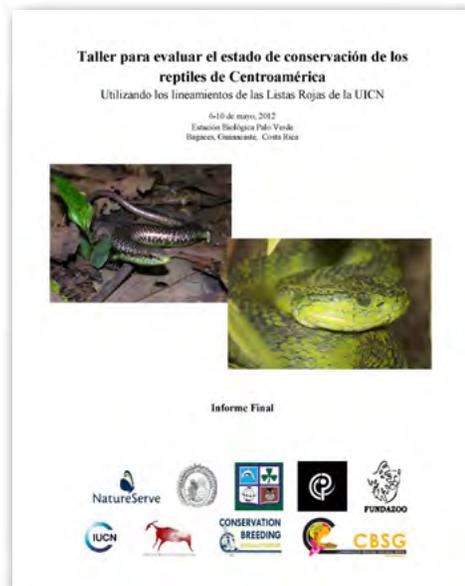
these goals and invited CBSG Brasil to complete the PVA. CBSG Brasil will be joined by CBSG Headquarters staff in using *Outbreak* software to model yellow fever behavior in these species.



New Publications

Central American Reptiles Status Assessment Report

The final report of the IUCN Red List Assessment Workshop for Central American Reptiles is now available. Research indicates that nearly a fifth of Central American reptiles are threatened with extinction. CBSG Mesoamerica was invited to co-convene a Red Listing workshop in Costa Rica in May 2012. Over the course of a week, workshop participants evaluated a total of 468 species. This report contributes to a global assessment being led by the IUCN to determine the Red List status of reptiles worldwide. The report contains both Spanish and English sections. Click [here](#) to download.



Yellow-Shouldered Blackbird/Shiny Cowbird PHVA Report

The final report of the Yellow-Shouldered Blackbird/Shiny Cowbird PHVA Workshop is now available. This PHVA represents the first application of a two-species *VORTEX* metamodeling approach to assess the complex interactions between a threatened native species and an invasive species. Shiny cowbirds are brood parasites of blackbirds, laying eggs in their nests and lowering blackbird reproductive success. The two-species metamodel enabled the workshop participants to better evaluate the impact of management actions targeting both species and to develop more effective conservation strategies. For CBSG, this project represents a milestone in two-species metamodel development to better address the challenges of managing harmful invasive species. Click [here](#) to download.