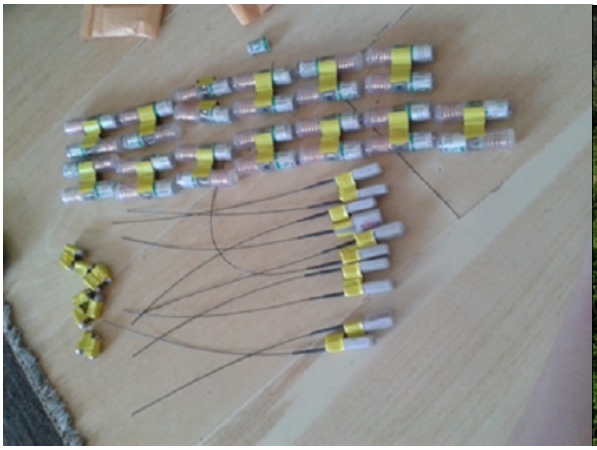
Project Update: June 2014

I have spent the end of last year and the beginning of this one acquiring the missing part of the equipment necessary for my project. We held our first capture campaign in March 2014. For this campaign, I was able to count with the help of a professional vet, Vinicius Gasparotto (from the NGO Tamanduá Brasil), who performed all the surgeries, and an undergraduate veterinary student, Ariel Canena. Ariel worked with us for 3 months and was trained both on the veterinary techniques used and, on the capture, and monitoring techniques. On the second month of our fieldwork activities, we received an ecology undergraduate student, Ana Carolina Vasques, who is doing her mandatory course completion thesis in our project. She is studying the diet of yellow armadillos. Ana is also being trained on capture and telemetry monitoring techniques and will participate on our field activities until the end of July 2014.




Left: ATS Intra-abdominal and Glue On Transmitters acquired with the support of Rufford Small Grants. Right: Armadillo capture.


Left: Yellow armadillo (Euphractus sexcintus). Right: Releasing one of the captured nine-banded-armadillos.

We have already implanted radio transmitters on 12 yellow armadillos and on two nine-banded armadillos. We are successfully monitoring the implanted armadillos on monthly field excursions. Most of the implanted animals have also been equipped with external GPS devices. In addition, we have opportunistically captured other armadillo and fitted them with GPS devices, allowing short term monitoring. Considering these animals, we have already performed a short-term intensive monitoring on 20 armadillos in the first 4 months of fieldwork. We have collected biological samples and the DNA and parasites samples have already been forwarded to our collaborators.

We were also very lucky to find out that three of our monitored yellow armadillos are with cubs and we are having the opportunity to gather a great amount of novel information on parental care behavior, duration, burrow use, juvenile movement and dispersion and genetic population structure.

Left: Radio transmitter implant procedure on a yellow-armadillo. Right: Yellow-armadillo and its cubs leaving a burrow.

Recovering a GPS that fell off an armadillo's tail inside its burrow