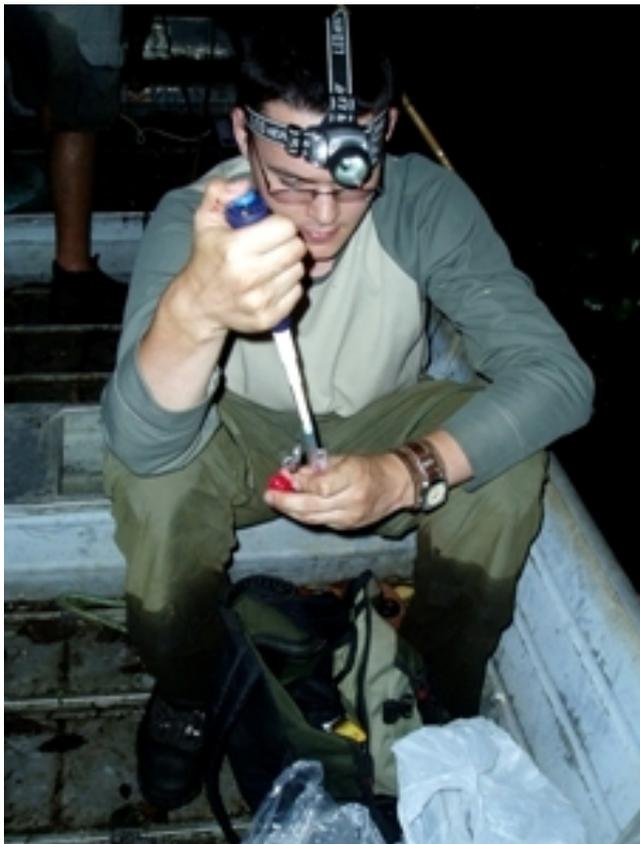


Project Update: March 2009

In March, we sampled our first caiman from a polluted river in the Southern Pantanal. A town of 50 000 with no water treated facilities was situated 15 km upstream, and rice, bean and soya plantation drained directly into the river. It was not a surprise to discover that the caiman inhabiting this stretch of river were in a poorer condition than the animals from pristine habitat. They had a reduced body mass, and their body tissue contained high levels of mercury, cadmium and lead. We also found some, as of yet unidentified, foreign organic compounds, which may have originated from pesticide and herbicide. However, further investigation is required to determine the exact nature of these compounds. Our next aim it to assess how far these pollutants are spreading outside the confines of the main river during the seasonal flood.



A volunteer preserves blood samples on a night time expedition.