

## **Project Update: April 2011**

One of the main things we discovered in the Ka'apor Capuchin Monkey Project is just how challenging it is trying to study an unknown primate species in an area where there is intense pressure on both the primate and the forest it inhabits! So far, we have decided that the project has had more than its fair share ups and downs! After several months undertaking surveys we only managed to locate three groups; one of these became the study group and we started the long process of habituation of the animals so we would be able to collect data on their diet, use of habitat, grouping and behaviour patterns. Sabine Oliveira, a determined masters student, after a great deal of persistence braving tropical downpours and disappearing monkeys, managed to tame the group of nine monkeys (two infants were born in 2010) and collect the first data on this shy species. We are delighted with the results of this study and we now know that the Ka'apor capuchin monkey is able to reproduce and survive in small areas of secondary forest.

Unfortunately, our original plan to create a privately owned reserve is no longer possible. The landowner changed his mind about creating a private reserve, deciding instead that the area is just too important as a source of income to leave "unused" and has already started cutting the forest down. We were all greatly saddened by this decision but were completely powerless to do anything about it and were only able, with the support of officials from the hydroelectric company Eletrobras S.A., and backing from Brazilian state and national environmental agencies, to postpone deforestation of this small tract of land but we have no idea for how long. The group of monkeys has retreated to another area but their long-term survival there is unlikely as they are outside the limits of the Tucuruí Reservoir State Reserve and the forest around them is disappearing at an alarming rate. Local people claim that Ka'apor monkeys are aggressive and attack their dogs, so in addition to losing the forest they inhabit, these monkeys are at constant risk of being hunted. The study confirmed just how rare and at risk this species is, clearly deserving its Critically Endangered conservation status. In addition to writing articles to publish data on its ecology (to be fed into Conservation Action Plans), we are currently planning a new phase to the project, to translocate the group to an area within a protected reserve and to start collecting biological material from other groups for ex-situ conservation measures.