

Project Update: November 2017

The aim of this study is to better understand the role of wild sympatric canids as sentinels of ecological health, also to understand the dynamics of diseases and conservation threats for the maned wolf that lives in the northeast of Argentina.

During 2017, we completed three field trips during February, August and October. In general, good results were obtained, with the collection of the expected number of fecal samples from foxes and domestic dogs for parasitological analyses. Interactions with neighbours were positive, as it was possible to sample a larger number of domestic dogs at the interphase between domestic and wild animals at San Nicolas State Park (SN) and Mburucuya National Park (MNP). We conducted interviews with local residents who lived within the interphase area in each site, and we explored the number of dogs per household. The next field trip will be in December 2017, during which we will continue the planned field work, including a new state park (Rincon Santa Maria), where the maned wolf has been actively seen. Unfortunately, April and June field trips were cancelled due to the strong floods that affected Corrientes province.

As a result of heavy rains Corrientes and other three provinces in Argentina have been impacted by the floods, and it is estimated that 10,000 people have been evacuated. Most of the access roads to the study sites included trails and transects were closed.



Taking samples of dogs and talking with their owners.

During the three field trips, 180 samples were collected. A pool of these samples was analysed under an optical microscope to evaluate the presence of parasitic forms. It was possible to detect the presence of parasite eggs at both sites (MNP and SN), which affect the gastrointestinal system of wild and domestic canids. Regarding the interactions between domestic and wild animals, it was possible to observe the presence of dog tracks within the interphase at each study site, including around the portal of the parks, as well as the animals roaming on the border of the protected areas.



Left: *Capillaria* spp. egg found in foxes' scats. Center: working in the lab. Right: *Cerdocyon thous* in San Nicolas.

Together with the educational team from the Biological Field Station integrated by Dr Verónica Romero and nature guides Patricia Fernández and Barbara Romero, we have planned and run educational activities and workshops related to wild canids conservation. We have worked with children from elementary and high school, through games and other educational activities where they could learn the role of canids in nature.



Looking fox's tracks and running to save the maned wolf.