

Project Update: May 2010

A pilot field season was conducted from September 2010 to February 2011. We have obtained the appropriate fieldwork licences from The Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (IBAMA) to conduct the project (Licence number: 25727-1). During this pilot season, two field sites have been established. One is located in the state of Pernambuco and is approximately 210 ha in size. The other is located in the state of Paraíba and approximately 800 ha in size. The areas are privately owned and we have obtained formal authorisation from the owners to conduct fieldwork in the areas.

The areas were surveyed by searching for vocalisations, ground tracks and other signs left by the monkeys in the forest. Camera trap were also used in the surveys. We observed the animals directly (e.g. obtaining video footages, still images and recordings of vocalisations of the animals) and indirectly (e.g. detecting ground tracks, leftover diet items, and still images from cameras trap). The animals were mostly observed using primary and secondary Atlantic Forest. However, they also entered areas of sand dunes, mangroves, sugar cane and corn plantations, all of which bordered the forest fragments. They were observed using the ground and all layers of the forest. The size of the tracks of the blond capuchins on the ground were $72.40 \text{ mm} \pm 3.12 \text{ SEM}$ for hand ($n=20$) and $95 \text{ mm} \pm 2.87 \text{ SEM}$ for foot ($n=22$). Direct observations and camera trapping revealed social groups of up to 32 individuals in site 1 and 68 individuals in site 2. Further behavioural observations still need to be conducted, but the animals seem to present a complex fission-fusion social organisation. A total of 21 different items was found in the diet of the species.

During this pilot field season, two local students and two guides have been trained to work on the project. Preliminary acoustic, behavioural, ecological and molecular data have been collected. Non-invasive genetic techniques have been tested and are currently being optimized. A new field season is scheduled to start in August 2011.



