



These black-browed spider monkeys (*Ateles geoffroyi frontatus*) were photographed in southwestern Nicaragua near the Costa Rican border. Photo by Paso Pacífico

Primate Conservation Inc. UPDATE

2016

Director's Report

Primate Conservation Inc.'s mission is to provide support for projects that study and protect the least-known and most endangered primates in their natural habitats. This is our 23rd year of giving small grants and matching funds to help graduate students and conservationists.

My colleague Marc Myers and I are working night and day as editors to finish the *All the World's Primates* book in 2016. It will lavishly illustrate with color photographs and a few drawings all 508 currently known species of primates. In the two decades since *The Pictorial Guide to the Living Primates* was published, greatly increased fieldwork and new molecular genetic techniques have increased our understanding of the true diversity of our primate order. Now, more than twice the number of the species are known. Since 1990, a total of 105 species and subspecies new to science have been discovered, including 4 new genera. Madagascar had 51 species, Central and South America 27, Asia 16, and Africa 11. These include 59 prosimians, 44 monkeys, and 2 gibbons.

What this means for the conservation of primates is that more than twice as much work needs to be done to protect these species and the habitats they need for survival. Many of these new species have very small ranges, and the threats to their existence are increasing as the expanding human population demands more resources and as the global climate changes in ways we can't reliably predict for a given locality. Many more people are needed to protect our closest biological relatives—for the benefit of current and future generations.

If you haven't supported PCI yet, you can donate by credit card or PayPal at www.alltheworldsprimates.org. Members are rewarded with access to our exclusive website, which has well-referenced information, as well as

photos and video and audio recordings of all the species and subspecies of primates currently known.

The field reports in this PCI update are for supported projects in Nicaragua and Peru.

PCI and Paso Pacífico—A Decade of Primate Conservation in Nicaragua



Kimberly Williams-Guillén (far right), Sarah Otterstrom (2nd from the left), and their team in 2005. Photo by Suzanne Hagell

Kimberly Williams-Guillén and Sarah Otterstrom, Paso Pacífico:

- Survey and Assessment of Primate Populations in Chacacente Wildlife Reserve, Nicaragua. *Spring 2005, \$1,990*
- Assessment of Fragmented Landscapes as Habitat for the Central American Spider Monkey (*Ateles geoffroyi*) in Southwestern Nicaragua. *Spring 2006, \$2,230*

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- Establishing a New Protected Area for the Endangered Black-handed Spider Monkey (*Ateles geoffroyi*) in Nicaragua's Tropical Dry Forest. *Spring 2015*, \$2495

In 2003, Sarah Otterstrom had a dream: to conserve and restore the highly fragmented and degraded tropical dry forests of Nicaragua's Pacific Slope, where she had conducted research for the PhD in Ecology that she had just received from UC Davis. In collaboration with Liza González, then director of Nicaragua's system of natural protected areas, Sarah wanted to start Paso Pacifico, a nonprofit dedicated to reversing the tide of forest loss while also building economic security for the local communities. Liza and Sarah chose 3 flagship species to focus on for conservation of these coastal forests: sea turtles, yellow-naped amazon parrots, and spider monkeys. Although abundant in many of Costa Rica's well-protected parks, the Central American spider monkey (*Ateles geoffroyi*) had all but disappeared from Nicaragua's Pacific coast.

The first step would be to figure out where spider monkeys remained in the area, so Sarah reached out to her colleague Kim Williams-Guillén, who had recently earned her PhD from New York University for a study of howler monkey ecology in Nicaragua. In 2005, PCI helped fund Paso Pacifico's first primate conservation project to locate spider monkeys in the area and describe their conservation status. Since that time, Sarah, Liza, and Kim have established a thriving spider monkey conservation program, monitoring primate populations, protecting forested areas, reforesting hundreds of hectares of degraded pasture, and educating local youths throughout the region about the importance of primates for the health of these forest ecosystems. As a result, spider monkey populations have demonstrated statistically significant increases and can be found foraging in areas that were cattle pastures 10 years ago. After a decade of work, PCI recently provided further support for Paso Pacifico to help us with the logistics of purchasing a tract of well-conserved forest. We have established our first reserve there and named it after the local Nicaraguan term for spider monkeys, Finca Mono Bayo.

Paso Pacifico is incredibly grateful to PCI for its initial support. From that small seed grant has grown a vibrant and successful primate conservation program that has helped secure the future of the most important primate population in western Nicaragua.

The following is an excerpt from an email that PCI received in March 2016. It embodies PCI's mission to help more people be involved in the conservation of primates.

Silvy van Kuijk, Oxford Brookes University:

Conservation Efforts for the San Martin Titi Monkey in Ojos de Agua, Peru. *Spring 2013*, \$2,400

Throughout the last two years, whenever I was not in the field and had some Internet connection, I worked on a manuscript of my MSc study of the San Martin titi



Silvy in the field measuring the diameter of a tree trunk. Photo by Eduardo Pinel

monkey (*Plecturocebus* [formerly *Callicebus*] *oenanthe*). Last Saturday, that finally got published online. It is my first publication, and what a great feeling that is! Attached you will find the paper:

van Kuijk SM, García-Suikkanen C, Tello-Alvarado JC, Vermeer J, and Hill CM. Estimating population density of the San Martin titi monkey (*Callicebus oenanthe*) in Peru using vocalisations. 2015. *Folia Primatologica* 86: 525–533.

I want to thank you again for your financial help in the project. It was a great experience that has given me a direction and path for the future. Studying the ecology and behavior of monogamous Neotropical primates and working on their conservation will be what I work on in at least the next few years and hopefully long after that. I am currently in the Department of Anthropology PhD program at the University of Texas at Austin. I found an important interest in working as a teaching assistant. I really enjoy it and want to build on my skills to become one of those teachers who can make every student fall in love with and want to conserve primates and their habitats.

How to Support PCI

PCI is an all-volunteer, tax-deductible private operating 501(c)(3) foundation. Since our first grant in 1993, we have supported with full, partial, or renewal funding more than 500 projects in 28 countries with primate habitats. Projects in Asia have received 40% of our funding; Africa, 32%; Madagascar, 22%; and South America, 6%.

If you would like to contribute cash, stock, or real estate to PCI or would like more information on a specific project, please contact me at the address below. To keep our overhead to a minimum, so that as much as possible of the money raised is used to support field conservation projects, this is our annual appeal for your donations. Please do not forget about this, as you will not receive other mail from us, nor will we share your name with others. We appreciate your support and hope you will give generously to help fund these vital primate projects.

Sincerely,

Noel Rowe