

The Gran Chaco covers over one million km² of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, and Paraguay (an area the size of Texas and California combined).

Argentina holds 60% of this region and its impressive biodiversity spread over various landscapes including humid and dry forests, wetlands, gallery forests, and savannahs. Unfortunately, much of this

floating males and females replace resident adults through aggressive interactions that sometimes even lead to the death of the resident adult. The captured monkeys have provided a large sample size to examine the extent of sexual dimorphism in the species. Although there is very slight sexual dimorphism in body mass and canine size, there is a high-degree of intrasexual competition in both sexes.

As expected, given the elusive nature of giant armadillos, progress has been slower in this project. Still, the team led by biodiversity graduate Natalia Ceresoli gathered some promising new data on their habitat use (see *Zoonoos* September issue). She identified 32 giant armadillo burrows in collaboration with Toba Indian guides. The exact location of the burrows was recorded with a GPS and later mapped to evaluate their geographical distribution and their association with various kinds of vegetation and soil. Every burrow was monitored monthly to collect data on location, vegetation cover and pattern of use (e.g. fresh, abandoned). The data were used to confirm the presence of giant armadillos in the area. During 2004 the goal will be to capture at least one individual and fit it with a GPS radio-collar. Natalia will also conduct surveys in various parts of the Argentinean Chaco to evaluate the conservation status of the species and to identify other suitable sites for long-term conservation action.



Natalia Ceresoli (Fundacion ECO, Formosa, Argentina), Bill Toone (CRES: Applied Conservation), and (Toba guide) join efforts in locating giant armadillo tracks in the Argentinean Chaco. Photo taken by: Roy Toft.

biodiversity is being severely affected by overgrazing, logging, and the expansion of the agriculture frontier. As part of its conservation efforts in the region, the Zoological Society of San Diego is currently conducting a long-term project on owl monkeys and has more recently begun a project on giant armadillos.

The owl monkey project led by Millennium Postdoctoral Fellow Dr. Eduardo Fernandez-Duque in the Argentinean Chaco entered its fourth year. The research team continued collecting genetic, behavioral, and demographic data to describe the species' patterns of dispersal, mate choice, pair formation, and male-female relationships. The radio-collared individuals (100 individuals captured so far!) offered some unexpected insights into the social organization of this monogamous primate. The population not only consists of socially monogamous groups, but it also includes up to 30% of adults living alone, wandering among social groups in search of reproductive opportunities. These