

BUILDING CAPACITY IN PRIMATOLOGY: A NEW SERIES OF PRIMATE FIELD COURSES IN BRAZIL

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The lack of qualified personnel is a great concern for leading researchers in Primatology. Without trained people the efficiency and continuation of decades of primate research is threatened. Brazil is the foremost megadiverse primate country. Currently field primate research is well established in at least seven biomes. Subsequently, there is the critical need of training field personnel in local building capacity programs. Moreover, trained people are required for both established long term research programs and new investigations on less studied species. We present here the results of two initial series of the Brazilian Field Primatology Course, which were conducted during 10 days in 2009 and 2010 and held at Michelin Brazil Farm, in Ilhéus, BA. During these courses a total of 45 students were trained. These students came from 22 of 25 provinces in the country and financial aid covered all local students costs but air/ bus travel to the course's venue. Classroom teaching topics included primate field studies, statistics, scientific, behavioral and ecological methodologies, diet, pathology, animal capturing and radio tracking, ethnological techniques and, threatened species. Lectures were conducted by several leading Primatologists and researchers, including the organizers. Initial measures of success indicate that 97% of the attendees highly approved and would recommend the course and subscriptions for the second course nearly doubled due to the popularity of the first course. In addition, many students from these courses have continued and 47% are currently enrolled in primatological M.Sc/Ph.D studies. The prospective biennial continuation of this field course aims to tackle the lack of training opportunities in Primatology as well as to provide new generations of qualified young primatologists in Brazil. Funding and support provided by Primate Action Fund, CI (USA), Michelin-Brazil, CNPq, Pró-Muriqui Association, CECO & UESC-Ilhéus (Brazil).

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