

## COMPREHENSIVE PROCEDURE FOR BEHAVIORAL REHABILITATION OF PRIMATES: IMPLICATION OF REINTRODUCTION AND WELLBEING

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Reintroduction of captivity raised primates into the wild, as a conservation strategy, has shown little success due to behavioral deficiencies in their repertoire. In order to increase their chances of survival in the wild, candidates for reintroduction must undergo a rehabilitation process which aims at maximizing their behavioral aptitudes. Presently, there is no defined rehabilitation protocol for primates. This study analyzes a rehabilitation program featuring six captive spider monkeys for their possible reintroduction in Mexico, compliant with the governmental animal care committees SEMARNAT. The rehabilitation program includes three progressive training phases that were developed at the captivity and semi-wild facilities at PAFFASIT (Mexico). The program was designed to promote social and ecological rehabilitation. Each phase employed behavioral, trophic, ecological and physiological evaluations to measure the success of the training. Final results indicated that the captive primates' interactions, as a group, resembled the interactive patterns of the wild groups. Subjects in captivity adapted their social behaviours and incorporated new species-specific behaviour similar to those of the wild spider monkeys. They efficiently used the semi-wild facility's resources. They exhibited bright fur and increased muscle mass. It has improved their wellbeing and identifies them as suitable candidates for future reintroduction, which aids the preservation of Mexican primate species. These findings point to the success of the rehabilitation program. Collected data contributes to initiate the systematizing of primate rehabilitation programs, which would outline a new and comprehensive protocol for primate wellbeing and conservation.

Keywords: behavioral rehabilitation, wellbeing, primate reintroduction, *Ateles geoffroyi*