

EAZA Rainforest Campaign

Successful Rainforest Campaign closed

by Bengt Holst, Copenhagen Zoo, Denmark, on behalf of the campaign planning group

Everything comes to an end, even the EAZA Rainforest Campaign. After a year of great activity, an incredible display of creativity and enthusiastic work, the campaign officially closed on 19 September 2002 during the annual EAZA Conference in Barcelona. Dedicated Brazilians actively working to conserve the Atlantic Rainforest helped close the campaign, just as they helped launch it.

Fabiana Prado, from the Institute for Ecological Research, Brazil (IPE) and leader of the conservation project for the black-faced lion tamarin, demonstrated the impact of social work in the local community. Increased awareness among local inhabitants can lead to dedication to conservation. Commitment and dedication are essential factors in safeguarding habitats over the long term.

Anthony Rylands, a specialist in neotropical primates working for Conservation International, highlighted the importance of the four lion tamarin conservation programmes for the conservation of the Atlantic rainforest more widely. He demonstrated the

complexity of conservation and how the four programmes manage to include diverse elements in their activities, making the programmes powerful ambassadors for the Atlantic Rainforest.

Claudio Padua, Director of IPE, shared his vision for future Atlantic Rainforest conservation efforts. Corridors – not only between forest fragments, but also connecting large protected areas – would ensure conservation of biodiversity far more effectively than considering protected areas as separate units. The presentation was supported by a brilliant video about the use of corridors in conservation programmes.

Last, but not least, the General Coordinator for Fauna in Brazil and representative of IBAMA (the Brazilian Environmental Agency responsible for conservation of fauna and flora), Iolita Bampi, officially closed the campaign and conveyed the sincere thanks of the Brazilian Government to all participants. She stressed the significant impact of the campaign, not only on existing conservation projects, but also on future conservation activities in the region. She encouraged strengthening of ties between European zoos and ongoing conservation projects in the Atlantic Rainforest in the future.

What did we achieve?

The campaign has reached far beyond the goals set initially. Ninety EAZA zoos from twenty different countries participated in the campaign with activities ranging from poster exhibits to a total transformation of the zoo into a South American landscape. Some of these activities were described

in the last two issues of EAZA News, and some can be seen on the websites of the zoos in question. All these activities were launched with great enthusiasm and had a significant impact.

Fundraising has been extremely successful: as of 16 September we had collected € 145.876,99. This amount was collected from just 60% of the participating zoos; we expect to exceed € 200,000 at the end of the year when most zoos officially finish their campaigns. Well done – and thank you all! While it is difficult to measure the increase in public awareness about the Atlantic Rainforest, PR activities have been comprehensive in all countries, and the message widely spread. Indigenous Brazilian EEP species received much media attention, and I think that we all learned a bit more about these animals when preparing campaign activities. Links were established between European zoos and zoos in Brazil, between European zoos and conservation projects, and it is now up to the zoos involved to keep up that momentum. Conservation is not accomplished with single contributions, conservation relies on long-term commitment. It is our sincere hope that the participating zoos will continue their support of Atlantic Rainforest conservation in the years to come. Only through such long-term commitment can we be sure to make a difference. And we should. The campaign has planted some seeds. It is now up to all of us to nurse the plants as they grow to make conservation of the Atlantic Rainforest real!

