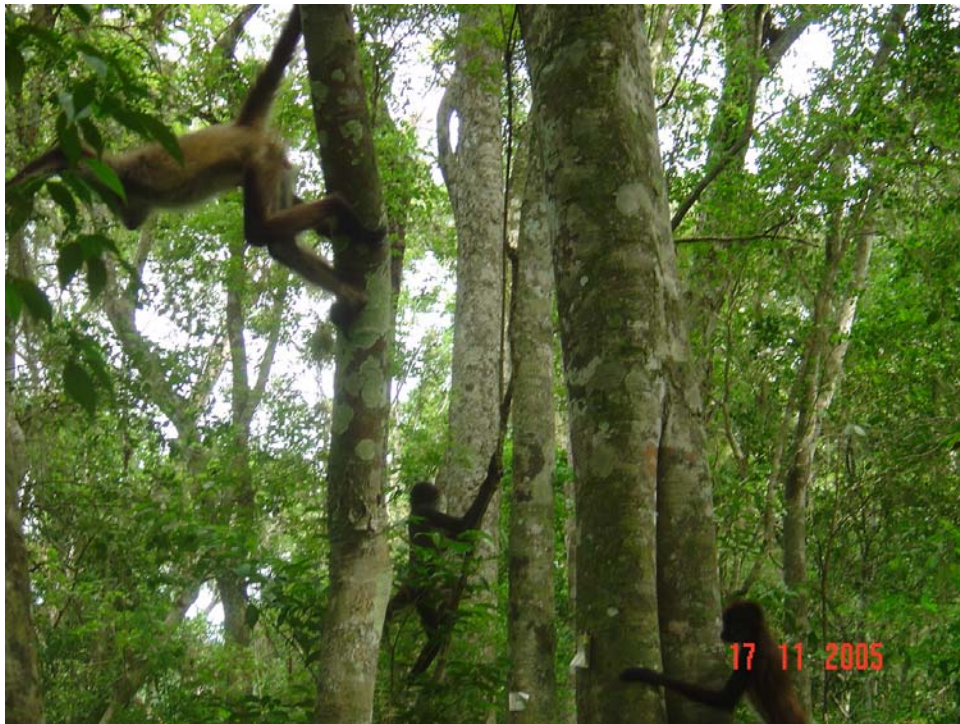


Ethological analysis of Spider Monkeys (*Ateles geoffroyi*) in the Yaxhá-Nakum-Naranjo National Park, Peten Guatemala

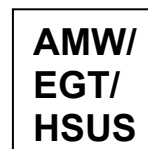
**Wildlife Rescue and Conservation
Association**

**Nacional Council of Protected Areas
CONAP**



Executive Summary in English

Peten, Guatemala, 2006



This study represents the analysis of ethological (behavioral) data collected during the soft release of 10 spider monkeys (*Ateles geoffroyi*) onto Cante Island Yaxhá Nakum-Naranjo National Park, Peten, Guatemala in November-January, 2005. Prior to this soft-release, these monkeys had passed through a roughly five-year process of rescue, rehabilitation and pre-release on the grounds of the ARCAS Wildlife Rescue Center. The purpose of this ethological study is to test the viability of the rehabilitation and release process used at the Rescue Center by comparing the behavioral profiles of the monkeys released on Cante Island with wild ones.

For the purposes of this ethological study, researchers utilized a catalogue of potential behaviors developed by Rowe ('96) which break down behaviors into rest, locomotion, feeding, vocalization and social interaction. Over a two month period, researchers recorded the frequency of these five behaviors, conducting two observations per day using a combination of group (sweeping) and focused individual observations. The behavioral profiles of these 10 monkeys on Cante Island were compared with similar ethological profiles developed at the pre-release site on the ARCAS Rescue Center and profiles developed by Rowe.

In general, this study found that the rehabilitation and release process used by ARCAS and CONAP in fact seems to be producing individuals capable of surviving on their own in the wild. There was some variation between the behavioral profiles of the monkeys at Cante Island, those studied at the pre-release site at the Rescue Center and those studied by Rowe. The Cante Island monkeys spent more time feeding and moving around, and less time in social behaviors and resting. However, these changes could be easily explained by the change in environment (more space, more dispersed food source, etc.) Most importantly, the fact that there was no drastic reduction in the time spent on such important activities as feeding and mobilizing was seen as an indicator of the success of the rehabilitation and release process. On completion of the ethological study in January, 2006, the troupe still seemed to be coherent and the monkeys healthy, and they were fully released into the Yaxha Park.

This spider monkey soft-release and ethological study makes an important contribution to the regional database of knowledge on the rehabilitation and release of these endangered species. It was carried out under a joint project by the Wildlife Rescue and Conservation Association (ARCAS), a Guatemalan NGO dedicated to the conservation of endangered species, and the Guatemalan government's National Council of Protected Areas (CONAP), with funding from the Guatemalan government's Nature Protection Fund (FOGUAMA), the American Society of Primatologists and the Alice Morgan Wright/Edith Goode Trust Fund/Humane Society of the United States. For more information, or a full copy of the study, please contact ARCAS at arcas@intelnet.net.gt