

## 2015 Sabin Amphibian Conservation Prize: Arturo Muñoz and Claudia Cortez



**Arturo Muñoz** and **Claudia Cortez** are Regional Chairs for the Amphibian Specialist Group Bolivia. They were selected to jointly receive the Sabin Amphibian Prize on account of their incredible response to an emerging crisis—the catastrophic decline of the Critically Endangered Titicaca Water Frog, *Telmatobius culeus*. Arturo and Claudia were called upon by an international consortium of conservation groups because of their expertise in the area. They went above and beyond the call of duty in rapidly securing funds to take some individuals into a captive breeding facility, and worked tirelessly to lobby for government support and produce a conservation strategy for the rare frog. Their response serves as a model and inspiration for amphibian species recovery programs around the world.

## 2015 Sabin Turtle Conservation Prize: Dr. Sabine Schoppe



**Dr. Sabine Schoppe** studied biology in Germany, receiving her Ph.D. in 1993 from the Justus Liebig University. Since 1994, she has been working on wildlife conservation in Southeast Asia, first as a community-based conservationist in Leyte, Philippines, then as guest professor in Palawan. She has served as a TRAFFIC consultant in Malaysia and Indonesia and as co-manager of the Philippine Cockatoo Conservation Program. Sabine is the director of the Philippine

Freshwater Turtle Conservation Program, and has been working long-term on the research and conservation of the Palawan Pond Turtle since its rediscovery in 2003. In June 2015, she led the rehabilitation and repatriation efforts for more than 3,900 of these rare turtles after they were confiscated at a trader's warehouse. She is a founding member of the Palawan-based NGO, the Katala Foundation, Inc., and since 2007 she has worked full-time there, serving as secretary/treasurer since 2008.

### **2015 Sabin Primate Conservation Prize: Dr. Maria Cecília Martins Kierulff**



**Dr. Cecília Kierulff** graduated in Zoology at the Federal University of Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, Brazil in 1988. She completed her master's in wildlife management there in 1993. Her thesis was the result of a range-wide survey of the then Critically Endangered Golden Lion Tamarin, endemic to the state of Rio de Janeiro; providing the first population estimate (about 560 individuals) for the species since the 1970s. Having found 12 very small, isolated populations, she then set up a program for their capture and subsequent translocation to a larger, safer forest within the species' natural range. From 1994 to 1998, she captured six groups (42 Lion Tamarins), and released them in the 2,400-ha forest of the Fazenda União, which, thanks to her efforts, was decreed a biological reserve in 1998, doubling the area of forest protected for this species. The project comprised her doctoral thesis awarded by the University of Cambridge, UK, in 2000. By 2006, the translocated population had grown to more than 220 individuals in 30 groups, occupying the entirety of the reserve. This pioneer program was carried out as part of the Smithsonian Institution's Golden Lion Tamarin Conservation Program (GLTCP), begun in 1983, which included ecological and demographic research, reintroduction of captive-bred lion tamarins, environmental education and outreach and, predominant today, habitat restoration. The enormous and ongoing investment in saving the Golden Lion Tamarin—a flagship species for the conservation of the remains of the devastated Atlantic forest—has resulted in a population today

exceeding 3,200, and consequently a change in the species' status on the IUCN Red List, from Critically Endangered to Endangered. Her pioneer work in translocation has resulted in a number of publications concerning techniques and comparisons and the cost/benefits of translocation vs. reintroduction.

In 1998, however, a population of introduced Golden-headed Lion Tamarins was reported in the municipality of Niterói in Rio de Janeiro. Otherwise native to the state of Bahia way to the north, this species is fully capable of hybridizing with the Golden Lion Tamarin, and in captivity is behaviorally dominant. It transpired that the Golden-headed Lion Tamarins had been released in 1994. The population, increasing fast and expanding its range, was threatening to invade the forests occupied by the golden lion tamarins, with predictably disastrous consequences. In an atmosphere of much dithering among the members of the international committee set up to deal with this sort of emergency, it was Cecília who took up the challenge. With her experience in finding and catching Lion Tamarins, and her superlative capacity to organize and mobilize endangered species programs, she began a capture program in 2012; translocating entire groups back to their forests in southern Bahia—all carefully vetted for their health and capacity to survive in the wild. Those that did not pass muster were placed in captivity. Initially, it was thought that a horde of 200 was moving toward the Golden Lion Tamarins. By March 24, 2016, she had caught 797, with a few groups still out there evading her traps.

Besides her involvement with the Golden Lion Tamarin Association (AMLD) and the conservation of the Golden Lion Tamarin, in 2000 Cecilia began working with Conservation International in Brazil, first in the Atlantic Forest program (2002–2003), and then as manager of the Tropical Ecology, Assessment and Monitoring (TEAM) (2003–2006). During this time she set up a research and conservation program for the Yellow-Breasted Capuchin in Bahia (2002–2011). Her field research on its distribution, numbers, and ecology showed that it was less threatened than was supposed, and it was consequently assessed as Endangered rather than Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List. Cecília was co-chair (with Jean-Marc Lernoùld) of the international management committee for the species, and was instrumental in establishing a breeding program for this capuchin in Europe and Brazil. In 2007, she created her own conservation NGO “Instituto Pri-Matas.” From 2007, she was coordinator of the wildlife management center at São Paulo Zoo, and in 2012, moved to Espírito Santo, to organize field courses and research in the Reserva Natural Vale of the Companhia Vale SA at Linhares. In 2014, she gave up her job there to dedicate herself full time to the capture, translocation, and monitoring of the Golden-headed Lion Tamarins that had

invaded Rio de Janeiro, and, with a post-doctoral position at the Federal University of Espírito Santo, São Mateus, she is now carrying out genetic studies on the invasive Niterói Lion Tamarins.