

BolivianExpress

Free Distribution / Issue 18 / 2012

Magazine



ANIMALS

FOLLOW US

 BOLIVIAN EXPRESS  @BOLIVIANEXPRESS

WWW.BOLIVIANEXPRESS.ORG

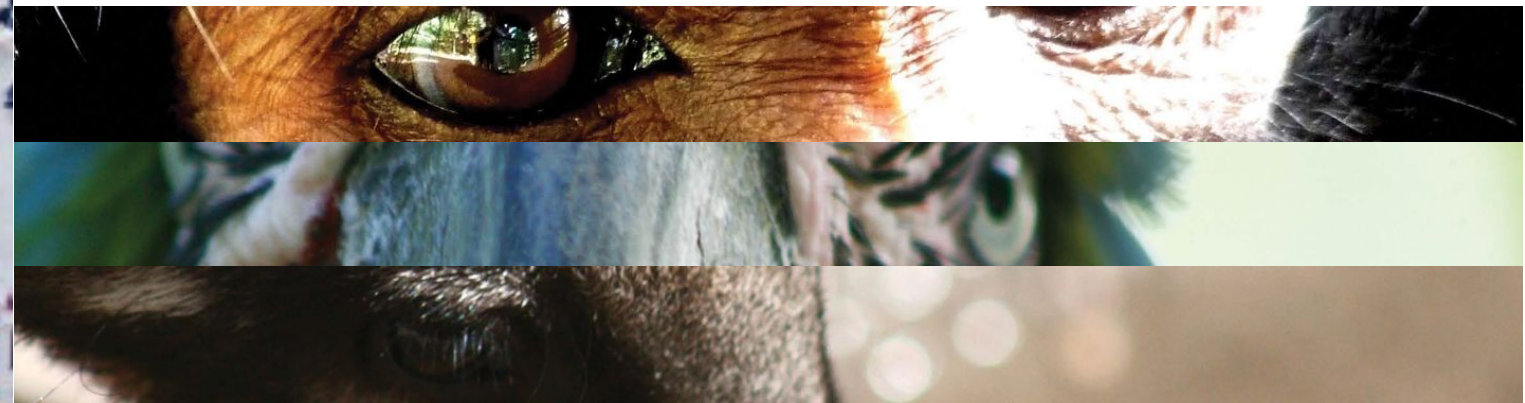


EDITORIAL

We eat them, we wear them, we ride them. We love them, we fear them. Human's relationship to animals is intimate, ancient and diverse. Models of interaction vary from exploitation to symbiotic cohabitation, and in this issue we delve into the Bolivian picture. The country is famed as one of the most biodiverse in the world, boasting not only several ecological regions, but also a number of smaller ecological niches within those regions. From urban dogs of La Paz to semi-tame monkeys, from the free soaring condor to the pink river dolphin, Bolivia houses habitats for an overwhelming range of species. These animals are a thread in the country's cultural tapestry: they feature in legends of creation, endure as symbols on national monuments and coats of arms, and are everyday features of the landscape. Traditional Aymara beliefs connect the animals to the earth they live in as protective spirits, but sadly many today are under threat. At its most obvious harm to wildlife is serious because it is cruel and, when it occurs on a large scale, can unbalance an ecosystem. But above all it is controversial. In a country where many people struggle below the poverty line the needs of animals can easily be sidelined. Is it our place to tell a man who cannot feed his children that it is prohibited to traffic an endangered creature? That is not a question we seek to answer here, but it is important to consider. We would hope that awareness of the animals in our environment and their importance for the survival of the **Pachamama** we leave for our children could bring about cultural changes that might prevent the issue from arising. And this month, that is what Bolivian Express hopes to achieve. From Altiplano to Amazon, we pay homage to the four-legged, the finned and the winged across Bolivia.

By Xenia Elsaesser

N.B. Several Spanish and Aymara words are marked in **bold** throughout this issue. Their meanings can be found in our glossary



CONTENTS

IT'S A DOG'S LIFE IN LA PAZ p.6

ANIMALS AT ALTITUDE p.8

BOLIVIAN WILDLIFE UNDER THREAT p.10

LA SENDA VERDE p.12

INTI WARA YASSI p.14

AYMARA SYMBOLISM p.17

CULTURAL CALENDAR p.18

Directors: Amaru Villanueva Rance, Jack Kinsella, Xenia Elsaesser, Ivan Rodriguez Petkovic, Sharoll Fernandez. **Editors:** Xenia Elsaesser, Matthew Grace. **Web and legal:** Jack Kinsella. **Printing and Advertising Manager:** Ivan Rodriguez Petkovic. **Social and Cultural Coordinator:** Sharoll Fernandez. **Design:** Michael Dunn Caceres. **Journalists:** Helena Cavell, Bindu Viswanathan, Caroline Risacher, Harry Shepherd. **Our Cover:** Fernanda Prudencio. **Marketing:** Jack Kinsella. **The Bolivian Express would like to thank:** Fernando Molina, Daniel Viveros, Rodrigo Barrenechea, Alejandro Loayza Grisi, Fernanda Prudencio, Carlos Diez de Medina, Alvaro Gumucio Li. **Advertise with us:** ivan.rp@bolivianexpress.org. **Address:** Express Press, Edificio Quipus, 5to piso, Pasaje Jauregui. **Join Us:** Mob. 78862061- 70503533

www.bolivianexpress.org
 :Bolivian Express  @Bolivianexpress



La Paz - Bolivia,
May - June 2012

GLOSSARY

AMAROU	Snake or Rainbow Snake
KALLAWAYA	Andean Shaman or Traditional Medicine Man
BUFEO COLORADO	River Dolphin
LA SENDA VERDE	The Green Path
LOS MONOS	Spanish word for 'the monkeys'
MAMA	The Great Female Protective Spirit
PACHAMAMA	The Mother Earth (Aymara)
VIROTOS	Magical Darts owned by Kallawayas



4
CORNERS

LA PAZ BOLIVIA

FOR FOOD FUN



www.4cornerslapaz.com
Calle Murillo, Tarija & Cochabamba



La solución contra el mal de altura
The solution for high altitude sickness
La solution contre le mal d'altitude
Die Lösung gegen die Höhenkrankheit
こうざんびょうのたいしょうほう

Es un producto de:
CRE2PAL
Laboratorios CRESPAL S.A.



www.sorojchipills.com

IT'S A DOG'S LIFE IN LA PAZ

TEXT: HELENA CAVELL

PHOTO: ALVARO GUMUCIO LI

Leashless, a Scottish terrier takes itself for a measured stroll down the avenida San Pedro. Strays are a reality in any major city, but in La Paz loose dogs are often not the tramps they appear to be. They may well have a lady tending to them at home, who lets them out to roam in the morning, and welcomes them back to a warm spaghetti Bolognese at night. Between the cities of El Alto and La Paz, there are 300,000 dogs on the street. Half of these are 'semi-strays' - domesticated dogs posing as tramps, scavenging through bins alongside the genuine hobos. If you are used to a domesticated 'pet and owner' type of relationship between man and dog you may ask, what is the point of owning a dog if it is rarely seen?

The freedom dogs enjoy here in Bolivia can be understood as a more ancient and respectful alliance: dogs are free to do as they please and owners enjoy their company on occasion. Nevertheless, the reason why it occurs is not a high-minded respect for dogs' roaming rights, but financial need and cultural norms. The majority of dog owners who let their animals run free possess animals for security reasons; they may not desire the company of a pet, but feel the need of extra protection. However, few of these owners can afford to keep a dog, and letting the dog roam the street and feed off the rubbish it finds provides a solution to this problem. In other cases, immigrants from the countryside, where it is common practice to let a pet roam free, continue to do so when they migrate to the city, failing to realise that while it is harmless to do so in the countryside, in the city it creates problems.

Susana Carpio Ormachea, President of Animales SOS has pinpointed the issues that free-roaming dogs create: overpopulation, rabies, and dog bites are the most serious. Furthermore, unpleasant mess in the streets and an 'irresponsible' attitude towards animals are listed as the less pressing concerns. The City Kennel in La Paz receives 25 calls a day reporting dog bites. She informs me that in Bo-

livia 80% of the people who are attacked by dogs are children, and 90% of these attacks are to the face, often leaving the victims with scars. Furthermore, rabies is still prevalent in Bolivia; other countries have managed to eradicate the disease, but here millions of bolivianos are spent each year on distributing free vaccinations and treatments. Stray dogs, undeniably, create health and economic problems. 'Still the number of dogs continues to grow, and the number of people dying from rabies continues to grow, because a lot of dogs on the street have rabies, and you can't blame anyone when you don't know who the owners are'. This seems to be the underlying problem: owning a dog as a 'semi-stray' means that no-one is given full responsibility for the animal, and therefore nobody can be held accountable for the trouble that they create. In other countries, when a dog mauls a baby, the owner is charged, and this incentivises people to control their pets; in Bolivia this is not the case, and so there is no example to discourage further incidents.

Stray and semi-stray dogs are a problem that need to be solved; the number of strays is increasing exponentially, and with it the gravity of the problems they create. Carpio Ormachea sustains that the method currently in use to diminish the number of strays is not successful. 'At the moment they take the dogs off the street and they kill them. This doesn't solve the problem. According to the OMS (World Health Organisation), if you successfully get rid of 400 dogs in a city where there are 500 dogs, because you haven't got rid of the rubbish in the city of which they live off, this 100 have more success in feeding themselves. This means that they reproduce more. So you're achieving the exact opposite of the desired result when you only capture and kill them.' Furthermore, regardless of the fact that this tactic does not seem to work, it is also of questionable ethic. Until recently, homeless people, the majority of whom were drug addicts or alcoholics, were offered a sum of money to strangle or hang stray dogs that were captured. Currently the dogs are either poisoned, electrocuted, gassed, or shot. Neither of these 'solutions' present an appealing scenario - Animales

SOS are trying to change this.

They have suggested sterilisation as an alternative, and this is now being taken seriously as a more humane and effective solution. The organisation pay half the price towards the surgery for families with low incomes wishing to sterilise their dog, in hope that it will encourage more pet owners to take this step. Other methods to alleviate the problem are also in progress, one of these being a system of obligatory registration of all dogs. 'For me, this means a tattoo in the ear. Because Bolivia is a third world country, and we have very few economic resources, a large proportion of the country is poor. The people who are the poorest tend to have the most animals, often in very bad conditions. So to put a chip in the dogs for example, would be difficult'. She argues that the registration needs to be free and must not be centralised, rather it needs to be organised by city zones. Anyone who has a dog which has not been registered would have to pay a fine of 5000 bolivianos. 'Having a tattoo on the ear means that once the dog is registered, people can't abandon it, because they will have to pay a large fine. You can leave it in an animal shelter but not on the street. If you live in a dangerous area and you need dogs for protection that's fine, but you'll have to make sure they're registered and well looked after.' This tactic will hopefully awaken a sense of responsibility in the owner of a dog - knowing that they will be identified as the owner and subsequently punished if their dog is found biting someone, they will be reluctant to let that dog out onto the street to do as it likes.

If Animales SOS is successful, Bolivia's liberal and unique way of enjoying canine company might be coming to an end. But given the widespread problems they have caused, perhaps that's not such a bad thing. Of course if I were a dog, I'd rather roam free than be cooped up. But then, if I had to choose between the risk of being herded up for electrocution, or being kept indoors with a tattoo, there's little doubt which one I'd pick. The action proposed by Animales SOS could be a solution for all citizens of La Paz, two and four-legged alike.

The World's Most DANGEROUS Road

BOOK A COMBO NOW

BOOK WITH US ONLINE AT GRAVITYBOLIVIA.COM



WWW.SENDAVERDE.COM



ZIPLINEBOLIVIA.COM

The immense Bolivian altiplano is a high plateau covering over 100,000 square kilometers between 3,000 and 4,900 meters above sea level. Its landscape varies from grassy fields to seemingly desolate vistas that recall the vast emptiness of Mars. Its climate is dry and cold; vegetation in some places can be sparse, with only shrubs, cacti and strange-looking yareta – a dry evergreen plant that hugs the ground for warmth and has a lifespan of up to 3,000 years. Temperatures range from 15°C during the day to -25°C during the night. Compared to Bolivia's bio-diverse wetlands, the altiplano has scant vegetation and animals that live there must be of hardy stock. Most of the fauna are endemic species that are localized to specific and scattered territories which make their observation and protection even harder. These conditions impose severe limits on life-but that life is there and it is fighting for its survival.

The animals of the altiplano not only live in extremely harsh conditions, but they also have to face a vast array of dangers. Some of these dangers are relatively new, such as tourism and mineral-extraction processes; others are old as humanity, such as hunting for food and fur or for ingredients for indigenous rituals and healing traditions. The habitat is also being damaged by agricultural growth from quinoa plantations and the breeding of non-native species such as cows and sheep. And increasingly, tourism has grown exponentially in the area. It not only affects the once-pristine view of the landscape (with tire tracks, waste and people), but it also has repercussions for the native plants and animals that will only increase in the coming years.

FAUNA

To understand that fragile ecosystem better, let's have a look on the most commonly known animals present. Llamas and alpacas, of course, are familiar throughout the world. However, there is a rich variety of wildlife to be found if one knows where to look. Let's start with the llama's cousin, the vicuña, a delicate and graceful creature that can be seen throughout the altiplano, most often in groups eating in the grassy plains during the day. Unlike the llama, the vicuña is untamable, and it is a protected and vulnerable species. Because its fur is finer than almost any other natural fibre and it cannot be raised in captivity, the vicuña was once almost hunted to extinction. But thanks to anti-poaching laws, the vicuña population is now recovering. Vicuñas, which can be recognized by their light brown or cinnamon-coloured fur, are smaller than their Camelid-family cousins, which include the guanaco, the al-

paca, and the llama.

The mountain viscacha is another easily spotted animal from the altiplano. An angry-looking rodent that's reminiscent of a big fat rabbit or wallaby but genetically similar to the chinchilla, the viscacha is quite common in rocky areas. It has short forelimbs, large hind legs, and a long, bushy tail. Mountain viscachas are eaten by local people, and their long and dense fur is used in clothing. Nonaggressive and gregarious, mountain viscachas spend most of the day among rocks and ledges.

Finally, the majestic flamingo: Most commonly known for living in the tropics, it can also be found in the altiplano, where it lives on lakes that freeze overnight. This colorful bird is most threatened by the increasing tourism in the area and mining in its habitat. The flamingo can be found throughout the world wherever there are salt pans,

brackish waters or lagoons to exploit. Because it is dependent on bodies of water to feed and reproduce, it is not as mobile as other animals in the altiplano, which can migrate away from tourist traffic. Even if the number of flamingos remains stable, the bird's habitat can be easily disturbed by the presence and actions of tourists.

The altiplano also hosts myriad other less-known animals such as the suri, an ostrich-like land bird; The Andean fox; the Andean condor; the huallata, a type of goose; the tuco tuco, a large rodent; the giant coot, a flightless black bird; the Andean puma; and a host of different sorts of lizards. The Reserva Nacional de Fauna Andina "Eduardo Avaroa" (REA), a nationally funded reserve in the Lipez province of the Potosi department in the southwest of Bolivia, is home to two species of fish, four species of reptiles, five types of amphibians, 23 species of mammals and 80 species of

ANIMALS AT ALTITUDE

TEXT : CAROLINE RISACHER

PHOTO : ALEJANDRO LOAYZA GRISI



birds. Mainly dedicated to the protection of flamingos, suris and vicuñas, the REA was created in 1973 to protect the vulnerable species present by regulating human visitors. The REA also educates visitors about the dangers of pollution and other human impacts to the ecosystem.

The Bolivian altiplano is such a vast region that one cannot present an exhaustive list of all its wildlife. Moreover, because of the altiplano's immensity and inaccessibility, few studies or monitoring of its animal population has been done outside of protected reservations, making it difficult to give an accurate depiction of the wildlife in the region.

ECOLOGIC IMPACT OF TOURISM

Only twenty years ago, the altiplano was mostly untouched by global tourism and industrialization. However, human impact has grown more pronounced recently, with a nearly twen-

tyfold increase in the number of visitors over the last 13 years-approximately 80,000 visitors a year now. Tourism and technology have made this formerly quiet corner of the world accessible to the masses. Now, jeeps roam through the desert and plastic bottles and bags, cans and all sorts of human waste-including diapers-disturb the wilderness and contaminate the soil and water. Moreover, visitors disturb the flamingo breeding sites when they get too close to the wild birds. According to Dr. Omar Rocha, executive director of BIOTA, an NGO dedicated to the protection of the biodiversity of Bolivia, common sense rules need to be respected, such as maintaining distance when photographing the birds, not feeding them and not disturbing their eggs.

In addition to tourism and its impact, industry can create disturbances that the animals encounter. For example, Laguna Colorada, also known as Red Lake

(for the colour of its algae-rich waters), is threatened by borax mining and geothermal development. The construction of hostels with no proper sanitation systems also threatens the flamingo population, along with egg harvesting by the local indigenous population.

Simple things such as eco-friendly infrastructures and well-enforced tourist paths can be implemented to regulate the flow of tourists. Awareness from visitors is essential, but Bolivian guides must also follow the basic rules to respect the flora and fauna of the altiplano and prevent the negative consequences of mass tourism. As visitors, we need to be reminded that visiting the altiplano is a privilege and that the ecosystem we are stepping on is extremely delicate. We affect the ecosystem by just being there. There is much more than the eye can see – let's not be blinded by the beauty of the sights and remember that there is life out there and that we are guests in their environment.



BOLIVIAN WILDLIFE UNDER THREAT

TEXT: HARRY SHEPHERD, WITH RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION BY BINDU VISWANATHAN
PHOTO: CARLOS DIEZ DE MEDINA

TRAFFICKING

One of the biggest threats to the wildlife of Bolivia, and indeed the rest of South America, lies in the animals' economic value and the worldwide commerce of wildlife trafficking. After the markets for drugs and guns, wildlife trafficking is understood to be the third most valuable illicit commerce in the world, with an estimated value of around \$10 billion per annum. Latin America is subject to widespread trafficking because of its extraordinary biodiversity. Birds are the most common contraband, with approximately 4,000 different species being traded worldwide. In Bolivia, and particularly in the cities of Santa Cruz and Cochabamba, the illegal capture and trafficking of parrots is particularly grave. The most frequently sold birds are the Blue-fronted Parrot (*Amazona aestivalis*), the Monk Parakeet (*Myiopsitta monachus*) and the Blue-winged Parrotlet (*Forpus xanthopterygius*). The critically endangered Blue-throated Macaw (*Ara glaucogularis*), a species endemic to Bolivia, also attributes its threatened status to dramatic population declines owing to illegal trapping and trade. Along with birds, many turtles, crocodiles, snakes and other reptiles are also trafficked, as well as mammals, most notably monkeys, and even some insects.

Animals ripped from their habitat suffer: they may be destined for a local zoo, or smuggled in such containers as thermoses and nylon stockings, drugged and shipped to the United States, Europe and Japan. Conservationists state that many captured wild animals perish before reaching a buyer; it is estimated that 75% of parrots taken from the wild will die from stress, disease, rough handling, asphyxiation or dehydration during capture and transit, before even getting close to potential consumers.

DEFORESTATION

Despite the notoriety and habitually shocking nature of animal trafficking, habitat loss poses perhaps the greatest threat to species. The world's forests, swamps, plains, lakes and other natural

habitats continue to disappear, an issue not uncommon in certain parts of South America, including areas of Bolivia in this ever-enduring destruction of our natural world. The hunger and driving force of human consumption leads to destruction of the environment to make way for agriculture, housing, roads, pipelines and other hallmarks of industrial development. Global forest areas have been under a continuous threat from civilisation, with over 50% of the world's original forests having now disappeared. In Latin America, market forces, population pressures and infrastructural advancements continue to pry open the Amazon rainforest, one of the world's leading habitats for wildlife – home to at least 10% of the planet's known biodiversity. The biggest threat to the future of the Amazon comes from the harvest of oil and natural gas in an effort to feed the global demand for fuel. On average, the Amazon suffers a loss of 580 square miles per annum – namely in areas adjacent to urban centres, roads and rivers. 17% of the Amazon has been lost in the last 50 years, although much of this destruction has occurred in the eastern and south-eastern parts of the rainforest in Brazil, nicknamed the Arc of Deforestation. Bolivia has also seen some of its part of the Amazon disappear, and the knock-on effect from deforestation elsewhere means that many animals' natural habitats are disappearing. Gold mining, illegal logging and the overexploitation of aquatic resources also occur in the Amazon although these threats are considered minor in relation to Amazonian deforestation.

HUNTING

Hunting animals without regulation is also a controversial and harmful issue that exists extensively across Latin America. Bolivian law states that indigenous populations can hunt certain animals and use natural resources for traditional reasons such as ceremony, dress and decoration. The hunt for feathers and meat from the flamingos at the Poopo Lake is a very current issue, as is the on-going hunt and demand for the Andean deer. Indeed the extinction of the chinchilla seems inevitable due

to the demand for its fur. Inside of protected areas such as the REA, plans are being set up to regulate these activities from the local populations and help to ensure the safety and future of endangered species.

MINING

The mining and extraction of borax in the salty lagoons in the south of Bolivia represent a potential threat to wildlife but as of yet, many animals remain unaffected by this industry. In comparison the size and scope of mining in Chile has led to the destruction of natural habitats across the country. The smelting and of copper in particular is a hazard as it releases noxious chemicals that seep into the soil.

TOURISM

Tourism in Bolivia is in many areas only a potential threat. Again, looking at the southern areas of Bolivia for an example (the Salt Flats at Uyuni are one of Bolivia's most popular tourist destinations) there is no significant decrease in the population of flamingos and fauna in the touristic areas although the expanding numbers of tourists could prove problematic in the future. However, in Rurrenabaque the Anaconda population have been suffering the consequences of frequent snake hunting tours through the marsh. The insect repellents and sun creams used by tourists are toxic to them and recently around 25 to 30 anacondas in the area have been found dead every year.

PROTECTING BOLIVIAN WILDLIFE

A consequence to the business of wildlife trafficking is the necessary foundation of animal refuges dedicated to the defence and rehabilitation of both animals and the environment. In Bolivia the founding of such refuges as *La Senda Verde*, near Coroico in the Yungas, and *Comunidad Inti Wara Yassi*, which runs three sanctuaries across the country, don't only provide care for animals that have been taken out of their natural habitat but also raise awareness about the importance of life, conservation, and preservation and restoration of our biodiversity. Find out more about these refuges in our features on their work.



LA SENDA VERDE

TEXT: HARRY SHEPHERD
PHOTO: FERNANDA PRUDENCIO

La Senda Verde animal refuge, located below the town of Coroico in the heart of the Amazon basin, is a safe haven for a range of wildlife. More than simply housing and feeding the monkeys, tortoises, wild cats and bears, the sanctuary gives animals who have suffered mistreated and unsettled lives another chance at happiness, where they are safeguarded with love and care by Vicki Ossio and Marcelo Levy, the sanctuary's owners.

The animals are the primary focus of **La Senda Verde**, and parallel to this the refuge supports social awareness and education about the natural world. The sanctuary also operates as a privately run eco-tourism resort; a natural retreat offering relief from the stresses of modern day life. In this tranquil environment it is easy to forget that the prior hardships endured by the animals often stem from heartless human behaviour. This tough backstory conceals itself behind the sanctuary's utopian façade of harmonious cohabitation between man and beast.

take care of it in a responsible manner. Following the arrival of Ciruelo, which means plum in English, LSV has become the new home for over 350 animals including approximately 70 monkeys of various species including Squirrel, Spider and Howler monkeys and capuchins. The monkeys in particular have suffered appallingly in the past; Chaska, Anachi and Tuego – three female Capuchins, were rescued from a house in Potosí, where their owner had dressed them up in clothes and made them dance in the street for money. Another capuchin, a male named Martin, was fed copious sugary treats, causing him to lose his front incisors. As well as 40 turtles and 50 tortoises LSV also houses a margay, an ocelot, and a caiman. There are a vast number of birds including numerous parrots, guinea fowl and a toucan. Many of the animals are brought in by Animals SOS, an organisation which finds animals in inappropriate and often inexcusable circumstances. The ambiance turns dejected as Vicki explains how humans frequently forget that animals have feelings and how 'awful it is that the animals have to come here'. Yet her face lights up when she describes how the animals are 'given back the opportunity

certain endangered animals back into the wild, but by living comfortably in semi-captivity these creatures can fulfill a pedagogic role. **Los Monos** in particular possess abundant primitive spirit, and observation of their instinctive behaviour is fun and educational, a key component of the LSV experience. The refuge plays host to both school and university groups, as Vicki believes there exists a 'responsibility to educate' future generations. As human beings, she explains, it is imperative to appreciate the responsibility we owe to the Pachamama to take care of the natural world. Vicki also devised a scheme to develop awareness of wild creatures, asking that school notebooks display photos and information of an animal on their covers as opposed to depicting contemporary pop stars and TV personalities. Unfortunately her proposition was unsuccessful. Further to their personal educational aims at LSV, Vicki and Marcelo are adamant that commercial zoos should be required to focus on educating visitors rather than solely concentrating on generating profits. Nevertheless, LSV must also ensure its financial survival. There are scarce state resources for wildlife projects in Bolivia, and in addition, the sanctuary's remote location means that founding and developing communications with potential investors is a problematic affair. The refuge must rely heavily on its eco-tourism resort for economic support.



Fortunately eco-tourism also brings dedicated volunteers, without which the inspirational work carried out at La Senda Verde could not occur. Working together to complete tasks, volunteers either rotate around the various areas of the refuge or are designated to special projects. Volunteer Joe Rodgers for example, who has returned to LSV for the third time, is tending to a baby ocelot that has recently arrived at the site. Although not normally a 'cat person', he loves spending time with the animal which shares his room, is keen to play fight, scrabbles at his shoelaces and sucks on his thumb! Another volunteer, Surya Schimana-Chillel, is taking part in a surrogacy project with a baby howler monkey named Barbus who requires 24 hour care. The volunteers love their work at the sanctuary; volunteers Adi Einav, Michelle Taylor and Ben Manning, as well as Joe, have all returned to the centre. I heard that some volunteers' parents have even visited the site and stayed to help out with the work. Volunteer Rosalie Miller, whose connection with and love for the monkeys is especially captivating (despite the fact that a male spider monkey left an unwanted surprise in her shoe!) explains how 'time disappears in this place'. Her words exemplify the serenity that LSV propagates upon its volunteers, visitors and permanent staff. La Senda Verde is a true refuge, and Vicki and Marcelo's mission is to enable animals and humans to learn from each other, rediscovering the meaning of love and the value of nature.

Vicki and Marcelo began the project that was to become La Senda Verde in 2003 and the refuge has since developed into one of the leading gateways to explore the wilderness and wild animals of Bolivia. Vicki fell in love with the area of Yolosa and the idea of founding an eco-tourism centre that could educate citizens of La Paz and develop relations between the city and the natural world. They also planned to provide facilities and hot food for mountain biking tours on the infamous 'Death Road'. On a day that would change their lives Marcelo brought back a male Capuchin monkey to their new home after he had stopped an animal trafficker on the track which runs through the valley. The Capuchin was to be sold in a market until Marcelo convinced the man to hand over the monkey in order to

find a family and live happy lives'. The couple's consideration for the animals is also evident in the rehabilitation system they have developed. They provide appropriate living conditions for the creatures, in accordance both with their corresponding natural environments and their individual needs. LSV works by means of semi-captivity; the animals are given a certain degree of freedom with suitable nutrition – analogous to what they would obtain in their natural habitat. Semi-captivity also means that for their own protection some animals, notably the monkeys, are required to bear tethers. New and naughty animals are often quarantined before being allowed to enter or re-enter designated areas.

Laws in Bolivia forbid the reinsertion of

THROUGH THE EYES OF A VOLUNTEER

I wake up to the alarm at 5:30am under the mosquito net and listen to the steady pounding of rain on the thin metal roof. The tropical rain that began at sunset the previous evening is still holding steady. At sunrise it will be replaced by a humid, sticky heat that will intensify through the day, as it has for the two weeks that I have spent volunteering here, at this small animal refuge bordering the rainforest in central Bolivia. My work day at the refuge's Monkey Quarantine begins at 7am, and I am usually early. After a quick breakfast at the refuge's little vegetarian café, I hurry in to begin work.

I first check on the small monkeys who spend nights indoors. Cici, an orphan Capuchin, is the youngest, barely a few months old. In the wild she would still be with her mother. I worry every morning that something dreadful would have happened to her overnight. She and her companions begin to chatter loudly when they see me. I bring them to the shaded area outdoors to join the thirty-five other monkeys who live there in bigger enclosures, all waiting out their quarantine period. Some are violent, and have behavioral problems from extended abuse. Others are young and playful, and have a better chance of being free again.

When I open her cage, baby Cici quickly clambers over my arm and onto my shoulder, her tail wrapping around my neck. She has had diarrhea for several days now, and seems extra tired today. At the small veterinary office, Cici looks tiny and vulnerable on the examination table, as she dips her entire head into her cup of tonic, lapping up the medicine.

Inti Wara Yassi lies by the rainforest outside the sleepy little town of Villa Tunari in Bolivia's central Chapare region. The closest cities are 170km away: Santa Cruz to the east, and Cochabamba to the west. The refuge is run by a few Bolivian employees and volunteers from the world over, who commit to work a minimum of 2 weeks, and pay \$90-110 for the opportunity.

Breakfast is a frantic chore, where we work as fast as possible, trying to simultaneously feed forty hungry, chattering monkeys. Later, as they play under the shade of avocado trees, I sweep the floor while other volunteers wash soiled monkey-blankets and do the dishes. Cici clings to my arm and tries to catch the water from my hose as I clean the cages. The morning passes quickly in a buzz of activity.

The post-lunch respite is my favorite time of day, when I can watch the



monkeys play. I can easily tell them apart, for each monkey has its own unique personality.

Arturo, a clever little Capuchin, likes to undo his rope and run off to hide, waiting to be found each time. He lies on my lap this afternoon, watching a tortoise amble through the enclosure picking up scraps that the monkeys have dropped.

Matensita, a beautiful Capuchin, lives in a large cage with her mate. She was kept tethered outside a house and abused for six years. As a result, she is very aggressive, and attacks everyone. She can never be free.

Miel is the prettiest little Capuchin, with golden fur and soft brown eyes. She quickly learns to undo my shoe laces when I am not looking. She also loves to climb onto people's heads, grabbing their hair with her tiny fingers.

And then there is Bibi, a quiet Spider monkey who likes to stay hidden. She is wary of people, but delighted me with a tight hug the first time I saw her. Bibi was rescued from sexual abuse at the hands of men. When I try to hug her back, she grows uncomfortable and slinks away each time.

The tiny squirrel monkeys are gentle and playful, each small enough to fit in my palm. There are several in the refuge, but a large band of wild squirrel monkeys raids the kitchen constantly, bringing endless amusement to the volunteers.

The refuge houses about 300 monkeys of seven different species (spider, capuchin, squirrel, nocturnal, titi, howler and tamarin), birds, ocelots, pumas and a jaguar, as well as coatis, turtles, and snakes. Since the refuge is not funded by the Bolivian government or any other agency, it is usually

strapped for funds and supplies. Dinner for the monkeys is at 6pm. Pandemonium reigns once again, as we hand out chopped vegetables and fruits. Dinner is followed by bed time, and we take the animals back into their enclosures one by one.

After one last stroll through the quarantine area to make sure the tarps above the enclosures are secure, I bring in the smallest monkeys. This is always the hardest time for me, when I pry Cici's tiny arms from around my neck and put her into her laundry basket for the night. As soon as she gets her blanket though, she cuddles with it and settles down.

The café is deserted. Most of the volunteers have left already. I get myself a cup of tea and sit down at a bench by the road to watch the rain clouds gather in the sky. There is a moist stillness in the air, an anticipation for the approaching rain.

Large trucks still thunder down the highway that runs outside the refuge, as they have been doing all day long. They are mostly filled to the brim with timber from the disappearing forests.

As refuges like Inti Wara Yassi struggle to accommodate orphan monkeys and wildcats for rehabilitation, they are fighting a losing battle. Wildlife habitat is disappearing at an alarming rate, and the resulting human-wildlife conflict is creating victims faster than refuges can take them in. Innocent animals like baby Cici are left clutching at a blanket for comfort when they should be with their mother in the wild.

There surely must be something more that I can do! I finish my tea, and ponder this question on my walk back to the hostel, as the first drops of rain start to fall.

**INTI
WARA YASSI**
TEXT AND PHOTOS: BINDU VISWANATHAN

PROFILE:

A SAFE HAVEN FOR THE ANIMAL VICTIMS OF ABUSIVE SITUATIONS AND ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE. RESCUED ANIMALS COME HERE FOR REHABILITATION AND HOPEFULLY, AN EVENTUAL RELEASE BACK INTO THE WILD. THE REFUGE'S NAME IS DRAWN FROM BOLIVIA'S THREE MAJOR LANGUAGES: INTI IN QUECHUA MEANS SUN; WARA IN AYMARA MEANS STARS; YASSI IN GUARANIMEANS MOON.

HISTORY:

FOUNDED IN 1992 BY JUAN CARLOS ANTEZANA, A ROLE MODEL IN CONSERVATION FOR MANY UNDERPRIVILEGED BOLIVIAN CHILDREN. ASPIRING TO HELP POOR CHILDREN FROM THE SHANTYTOWNS AROUND LA PAZ, JUAN CARLOS STARTED OUT MENTORING THEM, AND TAKING THEM ON HIKING TRIPS IN THE JUNGLES. ON ONE SUCH HIKE, THEY CAME ACROSS A BURNED PATCH OF FOREST AND A STARVING CAGED BIRD, AND INTI WARA YASSI WAS BORN. AS WORD ABOUT THIS REFUGE SPREAD, A STEADY STREAM OF CONFISCATED AND SICK ANIMALS STARTED TO ARRIVE, AND IT BEGAN TO GROW INTO A FULL-FLEDGED SANCTUARY FOR SPECIES AS DIVERSE AS BIRDS, MONKEYS AND WILDCATS.

WEBSITE:

[HTTP://WWW.INTIWARAYASSI.ORG/](http://www.intiwarayassi.org/)



CREATURES OF THE CHACANA

THE CHACANA IS THE INCA CROSS, SYMBOLIZING DIFFERENT LEVELS OF LIFE THROUGH WHICH THE SHAMAN TRANSGRESSES IN TRANCE. HE GOES FIRST TO THE UNDERWORLD, EMBODIED IN THE SNAKE, AND LEARNS 'I LIVE. DON'T LIE.' HE PASSES THROUGH THE CURRENT WORLD, WHERE THE PUMA REPRESENTS 'I WORK. DON'T STEAL.' FINALLY IN THE UPPER WORLD, GODS THE CONDOR SPEAKS, 'I LOVE. DON'T LAZY.' FOR A SHAMAN (OR **KALLAWAYA**, IN AYMARA) THE SNAKE'S SKIN, JAGUAR OR PUMA'S TOOTH AND CONDOR CLAW ARE VITAL TALISMANS.

Text: Xenia Elsaesser

SNAKE

'Amaro' or 'amaru' is the Quechua word for dragon or snake. The first Incan king was called Manco Capac Amaro. It is sometimes said that he himself was an amaro. More prevalent, however is the understanding that he in fact killed one, adding 'Amaro' to his name as a badge of victory. Thereafter anacondas and boas were often offered as tribute to Inca kings, and the snake adorned the royal arms and shield. This tradition was continued by the renowned Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, on whose shield two intertwined amaros are depicted.

In Quechua meteorology rainbows are understood to be enormous two-headed snakes that emerge from the earth during rain and return when the rain is over. This cycle marks the beginning and end of the rainy season. Because of this the snake has aquatic connotations and it is also said to have guarded lake Titicaca.

PUMA

Lake Titicaca was originally called Lake Titicala, meaning 'puma rock,' but after it was wrongly transliterated to Spanish, it was left with the name it has today. There are varying stories as to why the name Titicala was originally given. One tells of a couple boating on the water who found many dead pumas floating there and named the lake in their memory. Another less gruesome version has live pumas brought in to protect the Isla del Sol, then known

as Tapyquala. The animals were to be seen sunbathing on the rock all day, and gradually the name Tapyquala morphed into Titiquala, meaning gray puma rock.

CONDOR

The condor is the ancient messenger of the gods, to whose high echelons it ascended, carrying the people's prayers. It may also have borne the sun into the sky. Incorporated into the Bolivian coat arms, it is the national bird of Bolivia, Chile, Colombia and Ecuador, and carries symbolic weight in Peru and Argentina.

A SELECTION OF EARTHLY ANIMAL SYMBOLS

MAMA

The **mama** is the spirit of a great female deity. Natural places or plants can be associated with a protective mama spirit, which often takes animal form. For example, as snakes are associated with water, a lake's mama might be a particular boa constrictor. Should that boa constrictor be killed, the lake will dry up.

TANGARANA ANT

Tangarana ants in the Amazon are believed to be the mama of the tangarana tree. These trees have hollow stems housing colonies of large ants. They are very aggressive creatures, and should any foreign body bump against the tree bark the ants pierce them through the bark with a very painful sting. They also tend to the tree

by snipping any unwanted vines, and the tree returns the favour by producing extra-floral nectars which they can eat. Traditionally, adulterers were tied to this tree to suffer endless pain from the powerful stings.

PINK DOLPHIN

Bufoes colorados, or river dolphins, are believed to be powerful shape shifters who might become human in order to impregnate women. Their whistling has caused them to be linked to shamans, who blow **viotes**, or magical darts. It is also rumoured that sorcerers might attract women by use of a charm made from a ring of dolphin tissue, cut from around the vagina of a bufeo.

CONOPA

The conopa is a stone or wooden llama figurine. It is painted with llama fat and dirt, and has a hole in its back where the fat can be packed tighter, and coca leaf offerings are sometimes placed. It is a symbol of fertility, good luck and prosperity, and is placed both in llama corrals and people's homes.

LLAMA FOETUS

Like the conopa, a dried llama foetus symbolizes prosperity, fertility and good luck, but it is even more powerful than the conopa. It might be buried under the foundation of a house or kept conserved in a large jar. It is given to the **Pachamama** as an offering.



GANADORES DEL PREMIO INTERNACIONAL:

The Buzz 2012
— Award —
"FEEL THE DIFFERENCE"

PASAJE JAUREGUI 2248, BETWEEN 6 DE AGOSTO & 20 DE OCTUBRE, SOPOCACHI
RESERVATIONS: (591-2) 2441368 - (591) 70125000
WWW.RESTAURANTPRONTO.COM
MON - SAT 10:00 - 23:00

ZIP The Flying Fox  *Come "Fly" With Us!*

Located in Yulasa, at the end of The WMDR "Death Road" bike ride

- Speeds of up to 85 km/h
- 1555 meters of Zipline divided into three exciting segments
- Built to exceed U.S. ACCT (Association for Challenge Course Technology) standards with 1/2" steel cable rated for 12,600 kgs!

Book now at www.ziplinebolivia.com - info@ziplinebolivia.com - Phone in La Paz 231-3849

ZIPLINEBOLIVIA.COM
FIND US ON FACEBOOK AS "ZIP THE FLYING FOX"

In the heart of the city of La Paz - Bolivia (20th street San Pedro Square - 30 mins to El Prado Boulevard) Colombia Street 257 Tel. (+591-2) 2 490 456 info@onkelinn.com

At Titicaca's Lakeshore Copacabana - Bolivia (10 mins walking from Main Square or 5 mins by car) Condesa Ave. Tel. (+591) 706 454 77 bluestone@onkelinn.com

Onkel·Inn 1886
Friends & Guest house

El Alto International Airport - Bolivia mezzanine main room (+591-2) 2 490 456 sleepbox@onkelinn.com

Hostelling International
Discover the real hostel experience **HI** to the world



**PROSPECTIVE PROGRAMME AT EL DESNIVEL THEATRE
DA VINCI BUILDING, AV. SANCHEZ LIMA 2282**

MAY

SMELL (YO NO SOY ESE TIPO DE GENTE)

Smell (I Am Not That Kind of Person)

Starring Patricia García, Bernardo Arancibia, Antonio Peredo, Denisse Arancibia and Rodrigo Reyes Ríos
Dates: 12, 13 / 19, 20 / 26, 27 Saturdays and Sundays, 20:00

Roy and Matías are a part of a theatre group; they love and believe in theatre, and want to stage a play. But they don't really understand what theatre is about. A director and his pregnant wife (a stage actress) want to reignite the flame of their dying relationship and go looking for new experiences. But they are not that kind of people. An art student has to turn to the art of prostitution to survive. He finds himself dealing with women, men and couples alike. But, he is not gay, or in other words he is not a queer. Or in other words he's not a fairy, poofter, bumder or queen. None of these are ideal situations. The only thing that they have in common is that none appeal. They stink.

JUNE

BUENAS INFLUENCIAS, BONITOS CADÁVERES

Good Influences, Pretty Corpses

Dates: 9, 10 / 16, 17 / 23, 24 Saturdays and Sundays, 20:00

Two women meet before they board flight 163, flying to Buenos Aires and Miami. The first of the two women (Berta) dreams of leaving the country, she wants to live abroad. She needs friends...a life... she needs someone to remember her. Pet, the other woman, doesn't want anything new, she doesn't need anyone new, in spite of the fact that Berta and a euphoric farewell entourage (who are at the airport) assure her it would be best to buy a cheap flight and leave the country. The events succeeding this encounter cause the women to influence each other to such an extent that they confuse their personalities and dreams. Time becomes twisted... the two paths cross, crash, are taken to pieces, reinvented and confused excessively.

JULY

DI COSAS COSAS BIEN (OH MY COUNTRY IS TRÈS JOLIE!)

Say Things Well (Oh My Country Is Very Beautiful!)

Starring Patricia García, Cristian Mercado, Mariana Vargas and Bernardo Arancibia

Dates: 7, 8 / 14, 15 / 21, 22

Felipe needs work, he needs to be successful, he needs someone to tell him that he could be important. Alicia doesn't remember her own name, she tosses and turns and lives in her own filth, waiting for Felipe, who has left in search of work. Various characters take advantage of the confusion that arises. Di Cosas Bien... is about our abuse of words, our abuse of stereotypes, and our need to validate ourselves. Playing with spaces, objects, and shapes... exploring the right way of existing in the world. Speeches with words that are used to classify, label, and give power.

(LITTLE POP MARKET: ART FROM LA PAZ)

Saturday June 16, 11 am - Midnight

Location: Calle Murillo 826, In between Sagárnaga and Santa Cruz.

A small market created by the most innovative designers and artists in La Paz. An interactive experience that welcomes the curious, connoisseurs, cool hunters, artifact lovers and fans of La Paz cultural motifs. Our projector turns on at 6 PM to screen a series of mixed media works, the party fires up at 8 PM and burns 'til midnight to the sound of sticky tropical mixes by Sonido Martines. More info: colectivocaravana.blogspot.com

Sótano del Centro Sinfónico Nacional

Each play starts at 20:30

Mayo desde el sótano.

Three plays form this event: "Los B. Apolíticas consideraciones sobre el nacionalismo Vol. I" (By Percy Jiménez, inspired by "Los Buddenbrook" by Thomas Mann), "Piezas. Sobre textos de Heiner Müller" and "Mis muy privados festivos mesiánicos" (by Felicia Zeller). Textos que Migran present Mayo desde el sótano. The event offers the work of more than 20 people, working under the direction of Percy Jiménez:

Los B. Apolíticas consideraciones sobre el nacionalismo Vol. I:

Saturdays: 5, 12, 19, 26 May and 2 June.

Sundays: 6, 13, 27 May and 2 June.

Piezas. Sobre textos de Heiner Müller

Thursdays: 3 and 10 May.

Fridays: 4 and 11 May.

Mis muy privados festivos mesiánicos

Thursdays: 17, 24 and 31 May.

Fridays: 18, 25 Mayo and 1 June.

SOME ANIMAL WORDS



QUECHUA ANIMAL WORDS

ALPACA
DONKEY
DOG
PIG
CONDOR
LLAMA
CHICKEN
COW

ALLPAQA
BURRU
ALQO
KHUCHI
KUNTUR
LLAMA
WALLPA
WAKA

AYMARA ANIMAL WORDS

ALPACA
DONKEY
DOG
PIG
CONDOR
LLAMA
CHICKEN
COW

ALLPACHU
CH'TU
ANU
KHUCHI
MALLKU
QAWRA
CHIWCHI
WAKA

