

CARETAKERS OF THE FOREST

Tapirs are distant relatives of horses and rhinos. Tapirs inhabit forests of Southeast Asia and South and Central America. Their role in the ecosystem is that of seed disperser, which is key for keeping forests healthy.



Tapirus pinchaque

Mountain Tapir

Range: Mountainous terrain of Colombia, Ecuador and Peru

Characteristics: Up to 6 ft long (1.8 m), 550 lb (225 kg)

Status: Endangered



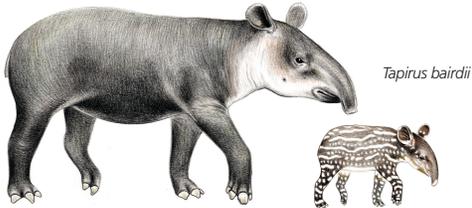
Tapirus terrestris

Lowland Tapir

Range: Rainforest and wetlands of South America

Characteristics: 330-550 lb (150-250 kg), 6.5 ft long (2 m)

Status: Threatened



Tapirus bairdii

Baird's Tapir

Range: Rainforest and wetlands of Central and northern South America

Characteristics: Up to 720 lb (350 kg), 7 ft long (2.5 m)

Status: Endangered



Tapirus indicus

Malayan Tapir

Range: Rainforest Southeast Asia and Sumatra

Characteristics: 550-700 lb (250-320 kg)

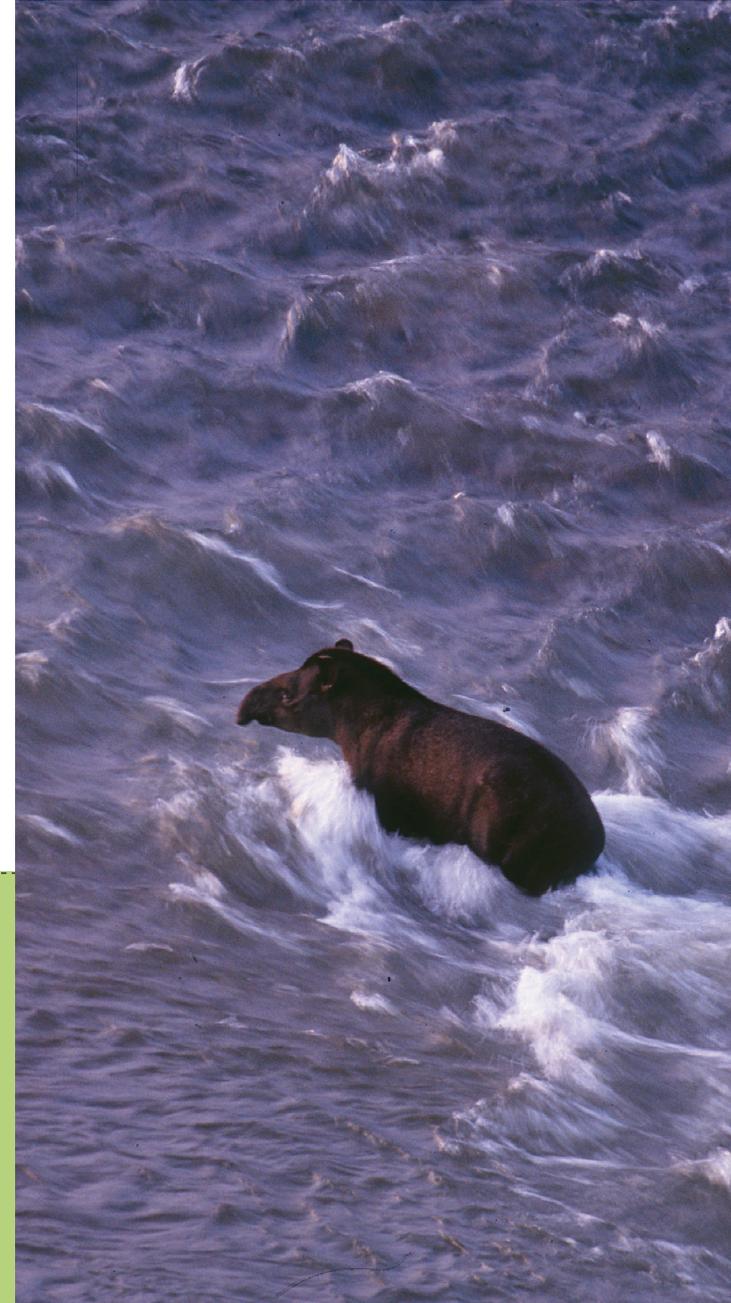
6-8 ft long (1.8-2.4 m)

Status: Threatened

Illustrations by Stephen Nash



Working to save the world's tapirs



TAPIR SPECIALIST GROUP

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E-MAIL

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TAPIR SPECIALIST GROUP

The IUCN/SSC-affiliated Tapir Specialist Group is a global group of tapir biologists, advocates, and researchers, working in partnership to share husbandry information, advocacy expertise, and scientific findings from the field. We are dedicated to conserving tapirs and their habitat through strategic action planning in countries where tapirs live and through educational outreach that shows the importance of the tapir to local ecosystems and to the world at large.

Tapirs are caretakers of the forest

THREATS FACING TAPIRS

- Hunting pressure on tapirs throughout their ranges
- Habitat fragmentation resulting in reduced genetic diversity and home range
- Encroachment into protected park areas by subsistence farmers and illegal logging
- Guerilla war and anti-drug pesticide use



Wild Mountain tapir, ©Craig Downer

threaten Colombia's mountain tapir

A living fossil



Wild Malayan tapir, ©Kae Kawanishi



Captive baby Baird's tapir
©Summit Zoo and Albatross Media



Patricia Medici, TSG Chair

TSG Member Focus

Brazilian Patricia Medici works with Lowland tapirs in São Paulo State, Brazil. By studying the movements of radio-collared tapirs between forest fragments and determining their home range, her research will help influence land policy planning and the design of reforestation corridors to connect the remaining tapir habitats in Brazil.

PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES

Work TSG researchers conduct in the field:

- Collecting ecological and home range information through radio telemetry
- Combining educational components with all field research projects to educate local populations
- Publishing veterinary and husbandry standards for wild and captive tapirs so that all animals receive expert care
- Establishing long-term research projects in key habitat areas that by their very presence prevent poaching
- Conducting census studies in countries, such as Honduras, where no long-term tapir studies have been made before
- Networking with world zoos, universities, and conservation organizations to create broader awareness of tapirs

CHOOSE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Contribute to the TSG Conservation Fund. This fund supports field projects around the world and enables further research and advocacy.

Name: _____

Address: _____

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E-mail: _____

Make check payable to:

Tapir Specialist Group Conservation Fund
and mail to:

Tapir Specialist Group
c/o Houston Zoo
1513 N. MacGregor
Houston, Texas 77030
United States

Or charge:

Visa__ MasterCard__ American Express__
Acct. # _____

Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

You may also contribute online:

www.tapirspecialistgroup.org/tsgcf

All contributions are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law. **Thank you!**



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Cover photo of wild Lowland tapir, ©Kevin Schafer
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Largest mammal of the Neotropics