

held on 14–16 November 2005 in Salta, Argentina. The meeting was organized by M.J. Merino and M. Lucherini (Universidad Nacional del Sur) and P. Perovic (Universidad Nacional de Salta) of Argentina in partnership with the Wildlife Conservation Network, USA, BP Conservation Programme, UK, and Darwin Initiative, UK, and included the participation of C. Sillero-Zubiri, Chairman of the IUCN Canid Specialist Group and leader of the successful Ethiopian Wolf Conservation Programme. The workshop also received the full endorsement of the IUCN Cat Specialist Group.

The workshop participants represented seven teams working to increase public awareness and acceptance of the Andean cat in the four range countries. Delegates shared experiences, discussed achievements and problems, and finally agreed on a common educational strategy to support the conservation of this felid through the participation of local communities. The strategy will be summarized in a manual for environmental educators that will include specific formal and informal activities and tools targeted at audiences ranging from school students to adult local inhabitants and the general public. Many of these activities and tools have been tested over the last 5 years by the EduGat programme of The Soul of the Andes project in Argentina. This innovative and highly participative approach will help maximize the efficiency of available resources and may set an example for similar conservation initiatives.

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### New carnivore species in Borneo may not be new

In December 2005 WWF staff claimed to have discovered a new, mysterious carnivore species in the dense, central forests of Borneo ([http://www.panda.org/news\\_facts/newsroom/index.cfm?uNewsID=52960](http://www.panda.org/news_facts/newsroom/index.cfm?uNewsID=52960)) and the information appeared widely in the media. However researchers failed to mention that the mysterious animal looks like the poorly known Hose's palm civet *Diplogale hosei*, a similarly shaped and coloured forest viverrid occurring in the northern part of Borneo.

Comparison with recent pictures of this species (*Small Carnivore Conservation*, 30, 18–19, & 31, 3–5) reinforces this identification. The WWF authors did not provide any information on the height of the camera trap, which would have given an indication of the size of the animal. Apart from size, the only diagnostic feature that may differentiate this animal from Hose's civet is the colour.

However, this can be affected by the flash of the camera-trap. Also, colour variation in carnivores is common and has been described in palm civets (*Mammal Review*, 34, 307–310). As the head cannot be seen entirely in the photographs, identification as another viverrid or cat species, such as the bay cat *Catopuma badia*, cannot be excluded. The WWF authors wrote that local naturalists did not know this species, and that Hose's civet has never been recorded in the Indonesian part of Borneo. Although its range was for many years believed to be restricted to a small area in Sarawak, it has now been discovered in Sabah and Brunei (*Small Carnivore Conservation*, 30, 18–19) and could therefore also occur in central Borneo.

Discovering an unknown carnivore species in this area remains possible. However, we believe that the authors did not adequately rule out having photographed an existing species. Surprisingly, these pictures were taken in 2003 but were not widely circulated within the small carnivore specialist community to check the identification. The camera-trap photographs do not provide sufficiently strong evidence and diagnostic features for claiming that is a new species.

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### Fire seriously damages Flower Valley

A high-profile Fauna & Flora International project has suffered in one of the many fires sweeping the southwest of South Africa. Flower Valley, a globally important area of fynbos located in the Cape Floristic region's Agulhas Plain, was purchased by FFI in 1999 and has become one of the largest exporters of wild-harvested fynbos flowers in the Cape, thus safeguarding the survival of this unique habitat and providing nearby communities with an important livelihood. At the beginning of February 2006, however, a fire that started in Elim swept through Flower Valley, burning 65,000 ha and destroying 50% of productive fynbos. Fortunately no lives were lost and the only buildings destroyed were a few small sheds, but water and electricity cables were damaged. One of FFI's partners in the area was less lucky, however; the award-winning Grootbos Private Nature Reserve lost its new forest lodge when the thatched roof caught fire. Rebuilding of this lodge is already underway, and it is set to reopen in August 2006.