

## **Knowledge and emotions to improve human attitudes toward wildlife conservation in El Triunfo Biosphere Reserve, Mexico**

### **Updates**

From October 2023 to April 2024, 23 workshops for creating storytelling and 4 etnozoological walks have been applied in 15 communities of El Triunfo Biosphere Reserve. In these activities, around 260 people (children, young, and adults) have participated.

The main objective of the workshops and the etnozoological walks is to collect information about human perception of wild animal species, the emotions that wild animals cause, and the conservation attitudes. Evaluation of the two activities reports that both are accepted by inhabitants of the communities, however, the storytelling workshop has been reported as the more accepted activity due to the available time of the participants. In the workshops of storytelling, participants created around 50 stories where the most frequently mentioned species have been: the quetzal (*Pharomachrus mocinno*), horned guan (*Oreophasis derbianus*), Baird's tapir (*Tapirus bairdii*), white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), and jaguar (*Panthera onca*). The quetzal, horned guan, white-tailed deer, and Baird's tapir have been mentioned in stories where empathy emotions are the most frequent. In the case of jaguar the perceptions, emotions, and attitudes are different. People express fear emotions for the mammal due to its carnivorous habits as well as some predation experiences.

Storytelling and etnozoological walks have been an opportunity to exchange information among participants and the project. The dialogue has allowed people to reflect on the population changes of wild animal species and their threats, as well as the importance and pressures of rainforests of the El Triunfo. Besides, the older generations have noticed the lack of interest that children and young inhabitants have in the animal species. In this sense, they mentioned that storytelling is a manner to encourage these groups to know, learn, and gain affection for animal species. Besides, through storytelling has been detected some social elements that have impacts on conservation. In this sense, illegal hunting in some communities has been identified. Also, the anthropomorphization of animals has been reported. These elements are important to design and direct conservation strategies.

Finally, it is important to mention that the project is developed with the collaboration of the reserve's managing institution. The main findings are reported to create future conservation strategies together.

### **Limitations**

Environmental and social events have impacted the project time scale. The main activity in the reserve is the coffee harvest because people cannot participate in the activities during the first months of the year. Also, fire season affects major roads and people were working on fires. These events stopped the field work.