



ECOVOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE  
ANIMAL & WILDLIFE CENTRE & ECOLOGICAL SANCTUARY  
COTIA / SÃO PAULO / BRAZIL  
2010

You can freely download this project file and files on other projects from the homepage for this project within the Ecovolunteer website:

<http://www.ecovolunteer.org/> (or from the national ecovolunteer domains).

As it is necessary for you in this project to be able to communicate in English (or in Portuguese or Spanish), this text is provided only in English.

The text of this brochure is developed in cooperation with the project manager. Annually, under the supervision of this manager the text is updated. Nevertheless you may experience some changes in the sanctuary compared to the brochure text. It is inherent to the nature of the sanctuary that during the operations incidentally changes are necessary because of unexpected results, new animals/species arriving, etc. Be prepared for such changes! (Last update December 2009).

Please help us: If you happen to find any of the information below no longer to be valid, or when you have useful additions, then kindly report so to: Ecovolunteer Program: [info@ecovolunteer.org](mailto:info@ecovolunteer.org). That way we shall be able to provide better information to future participants.

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## PREFACE

We offer you a unique opportunity of working with a great variety of native wild, exotic, domestic and domesticated fauna. All animals in our sanctuary originate from environmental crimes arrests.

When you participate in this project, you support the protection of these animals with your time, your energy and your donation. You may also see the daily life of these animals, as they have been victims of cruelty, like violent exploitation, abuse and negligence.

All our animals are now kept in appropriate areas, and unfortunately for most of these animals reintroduction in nature is out of the questions because the damages and mutilation they suffered in the past.

During your stay at the project, you will be in the headquarters of the wildlife rescue centre. There a monitor will provide you with all the necessary information about the routines, rules and precautions in the handling of each animal. Also all the information related to our environmental education program for children and teenagers is available.

There is a wide range of project activities including treatment, maintenance, feeding and general care with the animals, besides direct participation on the environmental education program.

## 1 DOMESTIC, WILD AND EXOTIC ANIMALS

A brief report on the animals you will deal with in the sanctuary. On 35000 square meters we house on average about 600 animals of 20 different species. Many different species that live in the centre, exotic as well as indigenous include lions, a tiger, monkeys, chinchillas, deer, iguana, cattle, horses, land turtles, macaws, parrots, toucans, several bird species, owls, hawks, dogs and cats. Besides a group of lions apprehended in a circus, all the other animals come from apprehensions performed by Brazilian police.

Each animal has its sad past but as soon as it arrives at the rescue centre from that moment on a new life story begins, thanks to all the staff, trainees and ecovolunteers.

- Domestic Animals

Domestic animals often are victims of negligence and may be abandoned, suffering all kinds of violence: hunger, cold, fear, solitude, indifference etc.

The dramatic reality on abandoned animals in our region and the lack of specific politics guided to this situation (birth-rate prevention/sterilization, information, education and conscious at schools, direct support to animals' protection associations etc.) overload the sanctuary with demands, as we offer the only humanitarian option in our region for animal rescue.

- Native Wild Animals

Native wild animals are protected by national legislation that prohibits their maintenance in captivity, except in places of legal commerce. Our native wildlife are pursued and captured in our forests and used in illegal commerce.

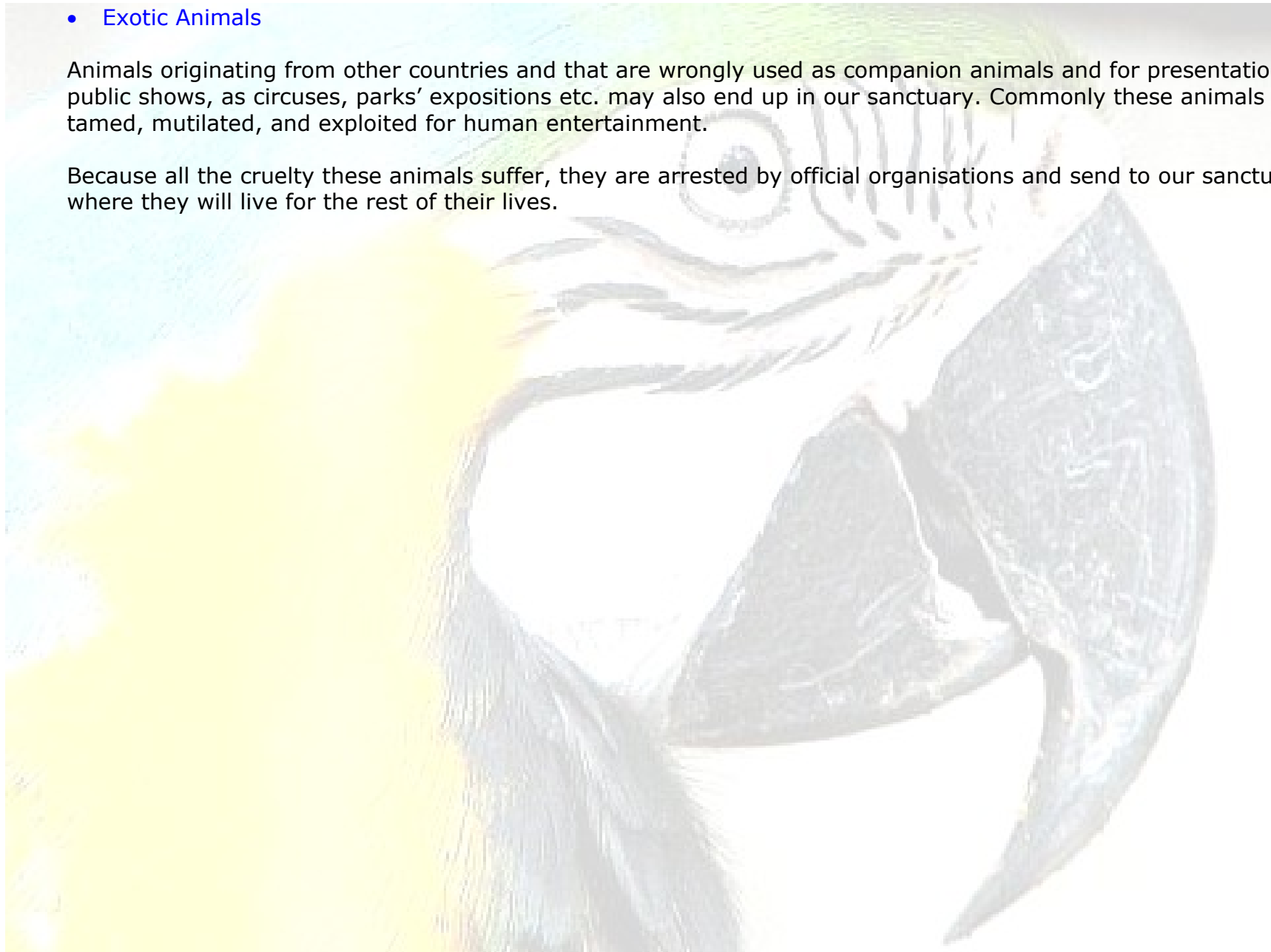
When the Brazilian Environmental Police arrest these native animals from illegal captivity, then these animals are deposited in our sanctuary.

Among 2003 and 2006, from all illegal animals arrests in the state of São Paulo State, 13% were send to our sanctuary for care, rehabilitation and, if possible, reintroduction in nature.

- Exotic Animals

Animals originating from other countries and that are wrongly used as companion animals and for presentation in public shows, as circuses, parks' expositions etc. may also end up in our sanctuary. Commonly these animals were tamed, mutilated, and exploited for human entertainment.

Because all the cruelty these animals suffer, they are arrested by official organisations and send to our sanctuary, where they will live for the rest of their lives.



## 2 COTIA COUNTY / SÃO PAULO / BRAZIL

The Sanctuary is located in Cotia County, west region from Big São Paulo and south-west of São Paulo State, distant just 33 kilometres from São Paulo's initial point.

Cotia County counts on a modern manufacturer park, services companies, condominiums and residential plots from different parts, varied commerce and route for São Paulo countryside and the country's south region. On the other hand the reality shows us the surprise of its country origins, historic places and cultural and anthropological manifestation, ethnical traditions that marked the region's historic moments, and an important ecological pole, that is the Morro Grande Ecological Reserve.

The country presence is represented by a significant gamma of medium and small traditional and organic farmers, florists and many kinds of breeders, fun enterprises as mini farms, fishing places, horse racing places, tracks, radical and adventure sports.

Cotia is between the metropolis and the country, and its panorama is complex and representative, as all cities from metropolitan area.

The city's name origin is indigenous, and it is related to its sinuous ways, as the routes of the mammal agoutis.

Cotia still maintains the preservation of its natural and ecological resources, as the Morro Grande Forest, Pedro Beicht Dam, and Caucaia do Alto District, springs and agriculture regions. Another country attractive that is really known is Roselândia, flowers production farm, especially roses, where a lot of free courses are promoted (ornamental plants and medicinal herbs cultivate), especially on weekends.

The Japanese Square is also an important mark from the Japanese colonization in the city.

The city also counts on attractive places as the International Kart Race Track, many plastic artists' offices, ceramists, variety in gastronomic centre etc.

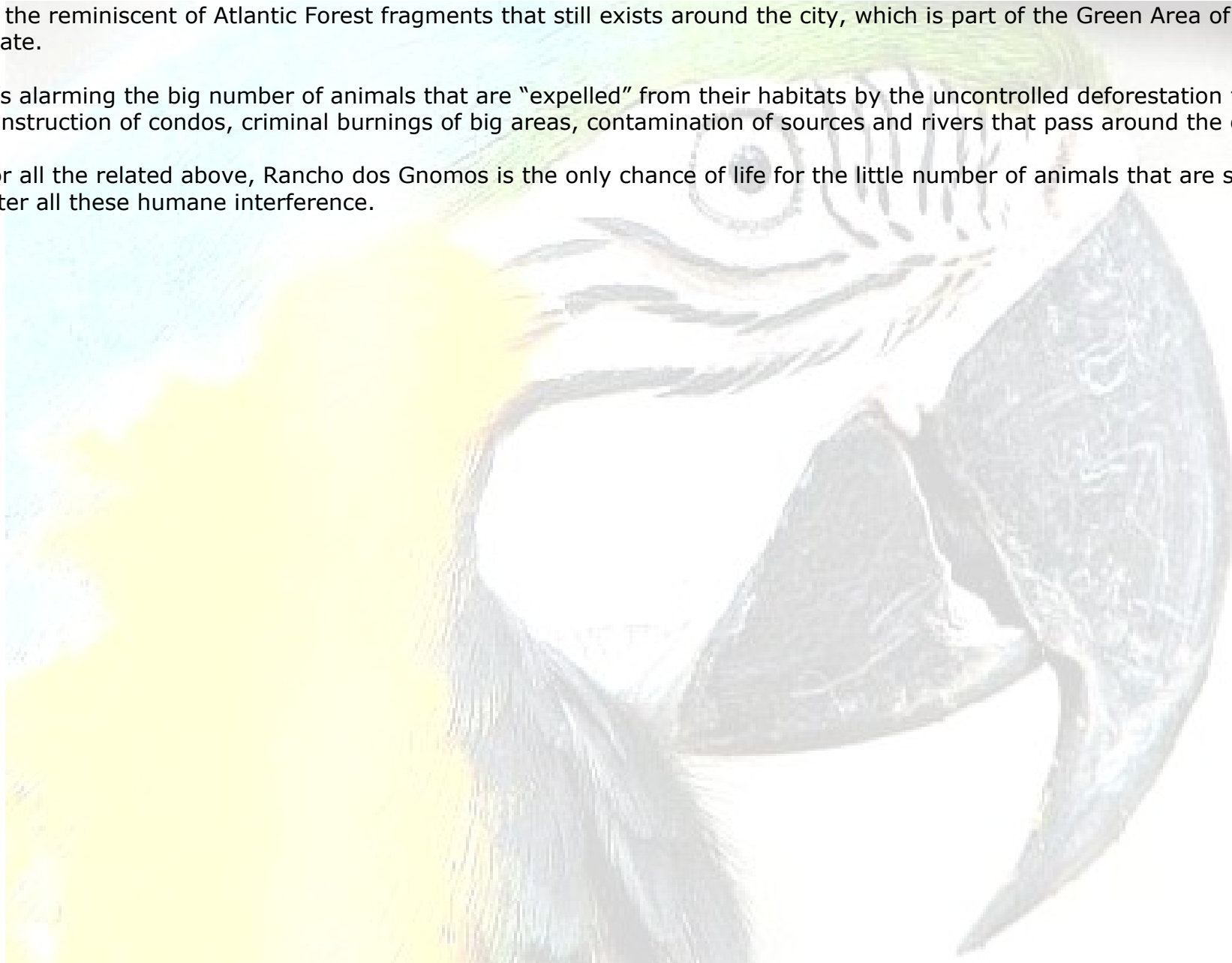
Cotia was emancipated in its politics and administration in 1856.

The wildlife Rescue Centre is located in an area containing 35,000 m<sup>2</sup>, and along the last 15 years, its neighbourhood that used to be a preservation area, now, unfortunately, because of the uncontrolled population growth, was completely destroyed, affecting the local ecological balance. The local fauna is almost all extinct, remaining just some animals because

of the reminiscent of Atlantic Forest fragments that still exists around the city, which is part of the Green Area of São Paulo State.

It's alarming the big number of animals that are "expelled" from their habitats by the uncontrolled deforestation for the construction of condos, criminal burnings of big areas, contamination of sources and rivers that pass around the city etc.

For all the related above, Rancho dos Gnomos is the only chance of life for the little number of animals that are surviving after all these humane interference.



### 3 RANCHO DOS GNOMOS ECOLOGICAL SANCTUARY

The Animal and Wildlife Rescue Centre is an Ecological Sanctuary and an institution ('associação') aimed at preserving animal life (native and exotic wild animals, domestic and domesticated ones also) and sustaining their well being, as also working with environmental education. The sanctuary was founded in 1992 and since 2000 it is officially recognized back by the Environmental National Council CONAMA as well as by the São Paulo's Environmental Council, CONSEMA.

The work is really important and of extreme necessity, because we are always helping governmental offices and its respective environmental organisms 24 hours per day, receiving animals arrested in the traffic, circuses, cock fights, fur commerce, cruelty etc. (we have received 2,500 animals in 2003 and 2,400 in 2004, which corresponds to 13% of all arrests all over our State). All of these animals have been brought by official Brazilian environmental authorities IBAMA as well as cities council's police.

We conduct serious recovery work on all these animals, and this work is performed by veterinarians, biologists and many other people involved in our day-to-day activities. We analyze the possibility of returning these animals to nature, and if it is not possible, we will then house these animals in order to provide them a healthy living.

From our rare resources we try to offer these animals, adapted wide open spaces the closest possible to its natural habitat divided by each species.

We look forward to offering wider open spaces than officially demanded in order to relieve their captivity stress, our philosophy focuses on the use of vibrational medicine, where we use florals, homeopathy, colour therapy, music-therapy, and aromatherapy besides the traditional medicine.

We believe the use of these treatments to be indispensable, where it carefully treats the physical and emotional welfare of the animals.

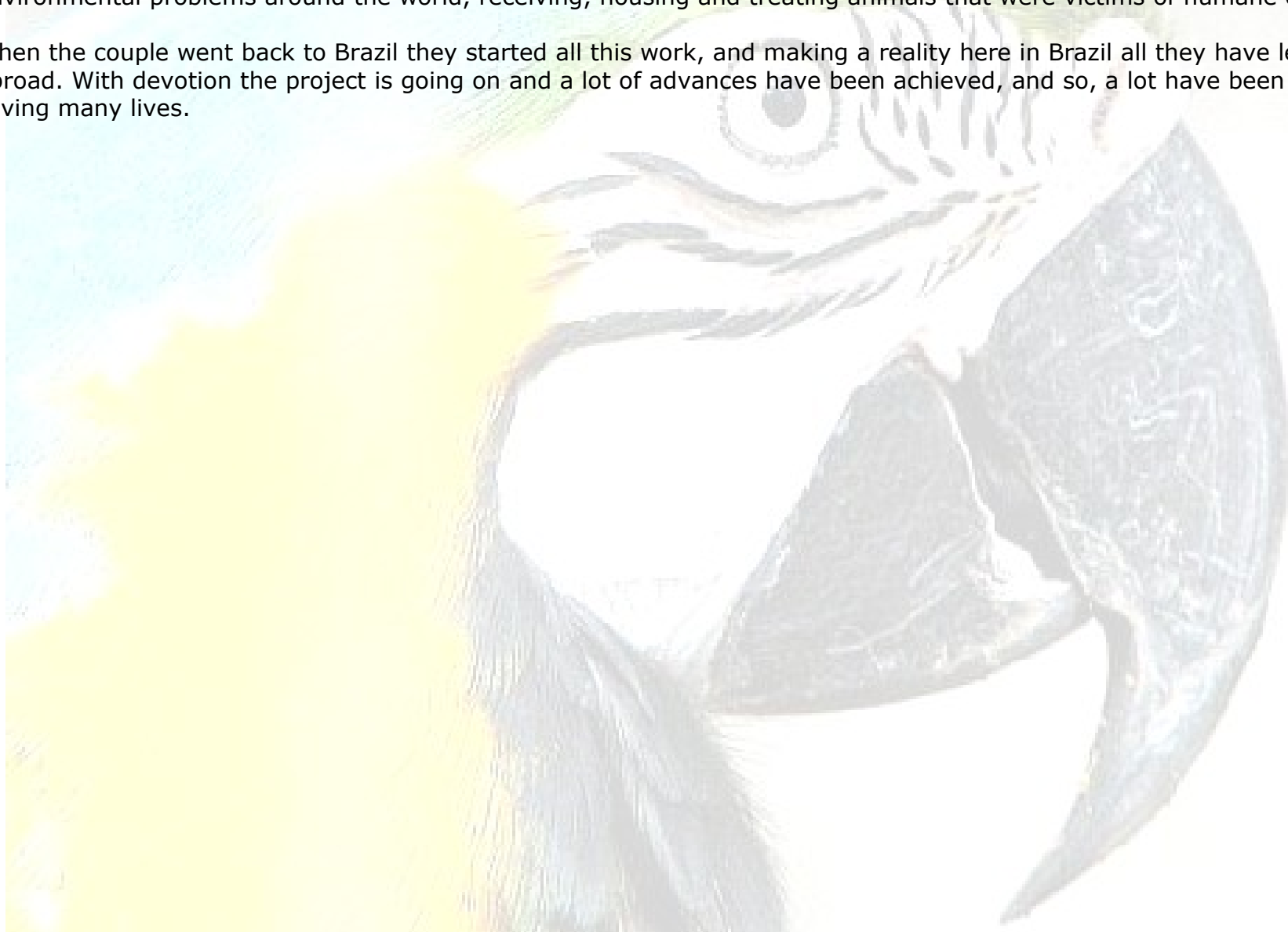
There is also the environmental education works with children and teenagers, informing, educating and making them conscious, and so helping to solve some of the environmental problems all around the world.

Currently (2007) we house around 600 animals – varying numbers: 13 lions, 01 Bengal tiger, 30 monkeys of many species, cows, horses, snake and other reptiles, birds of many kinds and many other animals, as many dogs and cats also. **We receive NO help for our maintenance from the government.**

We are also affiliated to the World Society for the Protection of Animals.

The project was idealized by Silvia and Marcos Pompeu, who have lived abroad, at the US (San Francisco and New Jersey), where they have learned Sanctuary concepts and all its functions, and so making possible some solutions to a lot of environmental problems around the world, receiving, housing and treating animals that were victims of humane cruelty.

When the couple went back to Brazil they started all this work, and making a reality here in Brazil all they have learned abroad. With devotion the project is going on and a lot of advances have been achieved, and so, a lot have been done, saving many lives.



## 4 HOW YOU CAN HELP

This project is not a tourist program! It is a project that is in need of ecovolunteers who want to actively participate in the activities of shelter, the rehabilitation and the maintenance of our animals.

You will actively participate in the diary routine of the sanctuary, helping:

- to clean areas where animals are kept and all around;
- to prepare and to distribute the food for the animals;
- with the construction of new areas for animals;
- with the intake of newly arrested animals;
- in the treatment of ill animals;
- to guide children and teenager groups that participate on the environmental education program;
- in the general maintenance of the sanctuary.

During the work time you will be supervised by the project team and will closely “breath” our reality, of an arduous but gratifying work of saving lives. Responsibility and serious is a must in the daily activities, because you will be to close to wild animals.

The projects necessities will be the guide of what and how things must be done. A week program will be defined, but you also can be sure that will be some time for having fun and relaxing.

## 5 YOUR PARTICIPATION CLIMATE NEUTRAL

The Ecovolunteer Program aims to offset all carbon dioxide emissions caused by your participation in the project. For this we cooperate with the Trees for Travel Foundation.



The Trees for Travel Foundation finances the planting, regeneration and maintenance of forests that will lock up greenhouse gases. The Foundation does her work in collaboration with local people and organisations to not only create a greener planet but also to fight against poverty. So we keep the greenhouse effect in check by contributing a modest amount to Trees for Travel to compensate your greenhouse gas emissions while participating in the Ecovolunteer project. Thus you help to make the world a better place at the same time.

The cost for climate compensation is not added to the price you pay, but is fully covered by the Ecovolunteer Program.

Please note that we only care for making your participation in the project climate neutral. Your travelling from your home to the project is not included. We recommend that you yourself will make your travels climate neutral as well. You could ask your travel agent or your airline to do so, or you can arrange that directly yourself through the Trees for Travel Foundation: Website:

<http://www.treesfortravel.info> Mail: [info@treesfortravel.nl](mailto:info@treesfortravel.nl)

## 6 PRACTICAL TRAVEL INFORMATION

### Period

You can participate all year long. You can register for a period of two or more weeks. Please, we give preference to arrivals in Brazil on Saturdays. Someone from the project will be waiting for you at the São Paulo bus station or airport.

### Prices

See the Ecovolunteer website <http://www.ecovolunteer.org>, or your national web-domain, or consult the Ecovolunteer agency in your country. For information on Ecovolunteer agencies: see <http://www.ecovolunteer.org/contact.html>

### Participants

Maximum of 6 people may participate at the same time.

### Included in the price

- ◆ Supervision;
- ◆ Shared accommodation at the base (including sheets, pillows, blankets, bath and face towels);
- ◆ Vegetarian food;
- ◆ Uniform (that must be used on daily activities);
- ◆ Swimming pool, sauna, DVD, ping-pong, karaoke (just after the daily activities and on free days)

### Not included in the price

- ◆ Travel to and from the project (see below "flights");
- ◆ Airport taxes and excess luggage charges;
- ◆ Cancellation insurance, travel, luggage and accident insurance (see below);
- ◆ Personal trips during your time off, as the food out of our base;
- ◆ Personal expenses such as: laundry, souvenirs, drinks, entrance fees, medicines, Internet use, telephone etc.

### Accommodation & food

Accommodation is based on shared rooms. Rooms are for two persons, two rooms with twin beds and one room with a double bed.

All rooms have keys and they can be locked. There are no special places to lock up valuables but we never did have any problem with theft at the sanctuary.

The food offered is vegetarian food.

Alcohol: no alcoholic drinks are offered and allowed while being on project grounds. Beware if you drink alcohol in your free time out of the ranch: when working in the ranch you need to be 100 % sober.

### Flights & transfers

You will have to make your own travel arrangements to São Paulo, Brazil and on to the project.

From the São Paulo bus station/airport to and from the project base a pick-up can be arranged, but only if you provide your arrival details at least three weeks in advance.

Please schedule your arrival / departure on Saturdays.

Both because the project is not easy to find and for security reasons the project strongly recommends that you do not travel to the sanctuary independently, but that you make use of the pick-up service.

We advise you not to make reservations before your participation in the project has been confirmed. Of course you can also plan your stay at this project as part of a longer trip.

### Medical & health

Always check about six weeks before travelling to the project with the appropriate health authorities in your country to receive updated to date information about health precautions.

The project requires / recommends tuberculosis, tetanus and rabies.

**Ref. Tuberculosis:** we require professional documentation (in English or Portuguese) of a negative tuberculosis test (skin test or x-ray) within the past 12 months or a vaccination against tuberculosis before you are able to help us care for the primates. Tuberculosis is easily spread from humans to primates and is an extremely dangerous disease for them.

**Ref. rabies:** it is not a requirement that you are rabies vaccinated, and in any case of need you will be able to obtain the necessary anti-rabies vaccination in a São Paulo hospital. Up to now the project has always been free of rabies.

**Allergies:** there are all kinds of animals at the base, so be aware of that if you suffer from any allergies for animals!

### **Medical services**

Inside the ranch there is a small hospital where humans and animals can have first aid.

In Cotia, there are good clinics, opened 24 h a day and it takes 10 minutes to arrive there, from the ranch.

In São Paulo, Hospital das Clínicas, public and good, 40 min from the ranch. Hospital Albert Einstein and São Luiz, private and high quality, 45 min from the ranch, in no rush time.

### **Insurances**

You are required to carry both travel insurance and cancellation insurance; the travel insurance should cover for full medical costs. The Ecovolunteer Program nor Rancho Dos Gnomos Project nor your booking office, their officers and employees, will accept any liabilities that could have been covered by travel insurance or cancellation insurance.

### **Conditions for participation**

- The project welcomes almost any person. So, if you got any physical deficiency – mental, audition, and visual and vocal, you are welcome, being a must just that your health is ok. The project is not suitable through for wheelchair users.
- You must respect and love animals;
- You must be tolerant and accepting rules;
- You must welcome team work;
- You must speak English, Portuguese or Spanish (Brazilian staff is not fluent in English fluently, but this does not jeopardize our communication with you though you must be patient and comprehensive);
- You must be at least 18;
- You must be available at least 2 weeks;
- You must vaccinate for tuberculosis, tetanus and rabies;
- You must have a travel, health and cancellation insurance;
- All people will be welcome and can interchange knowledge and interests;
- All participants will have an intake upon arrival at the project, and fill in a personal and a medical question form (see the last pages of this brochure). Make it easy on yourself and project staff, and fill in the forms already before you go to Brazil!

### **Money**

It is recommended that you change money at the airport

### **Smoking**

It is not allowed to smoke inside the house and close to the animals.





## 7 ADVICE ON PERSONAL TRAVELLING NECESSITIES

You do not need a special outfit for Brazil. We advise you to bring airy cotton clothing and during the southern winter season (that is during the northern hemisphere summertime) you should bring a warm coat, as the evenings can be fairly cold. Below you will find a list of items we recommend you to bring:

- ◆ valid passport (and visa – if required for your nationality)
- ◆ a printout of this information brochure and the additional instructions and forms that you will receive after booking.
- ◆ **the two completed question forms (see last page of this brochure) to be handed to staff upon arrival**
- ◆ sunglasses, hat or cap
- ◆ sunscreen lotion
- ◆ swimsuit
- ◆ clothing (long trousers that dry quickly, shorts, T-shirts & shirts with long sleeves, sweatshirt)
- ◆ waterproof jacket
- ◆
- ◆
- ◆ comfortable shoes (sneakers, sandals, slippers)
- ◆ spare glasses for those who wear them
- ◆ insect repellent
- ◆ personal items
- ◆ flashlight (with spare batteries)
- ◆
- ◆ camera
- ◆

You can have your clothes washed at the base (not expensive), so it is not necessary to bring too much clothing.

## 8 PRACTICAL TIPS

### Climate for São Paulo

	<b>Mean temp. (°C)</b>	<b>Rain (mm)</b>
January	23 (max. 27 - min. 19)	241
February	24 (max. 28 - min. 19)	203
March	23 (max. 27 - min. 19)	142
April	21 (max. 25 - min. 17)	58
May	19 (max. 23 - min. 15)	43
June	18 (max. 22 - min. 13)	38
July	17 (max. 22 - min. 13)	28
August	18 (max. 23 - min. 13)	36
September	18 (max. 23 - min. 14)	58
October	21 (max. 25 - min. 16)	150
November	22 (max. 26 - min. 17)	122
December	22 (max. 26 - min. 18)	198

### Electricity

The voltage in São Paulo is 110/220 volts.

### E-mail

There is a 24 hour internet connection available at the base which you are welcome to use any time you like.

### Language

The official language is Portuguese but the Brazilian pronunciation differs from English on some points: instead of 'r', Brazilians say 'h' and their use of words is very different from that of the European Portuguese. If you want to study Portuguese before you visit Brazil, it is advised that you consult a 'Brazilian' tutor.



## Money

The monetary unit of Brazil is the *real*, R\$. One real equals 100 *centavos*.

In July 2006, One US dollar is approximately R\$ 2.21 and one Euro is approximately R\$ 2.80.

Credit cards and traveller cheques are normally accepted.

## Opening hours

Shops, Monday - Monday: 10.00 – 22.00

Banks, Monday - Friday: 10.00 – 16.00

## Passport and visa

Citizens of most countries do not require a visa (USA and Canada are notable exceptions) but we advise you to check this with your booking agency or the Brazilian Embassy in your home country. You should bring enough money to finance your stay and have the ticket for your return trip and any kind of emergencies also.

## Prices

The prices of goods in Brazil are relatively cheap and you can get almost anything you need, unless you want to purchase imported goods.

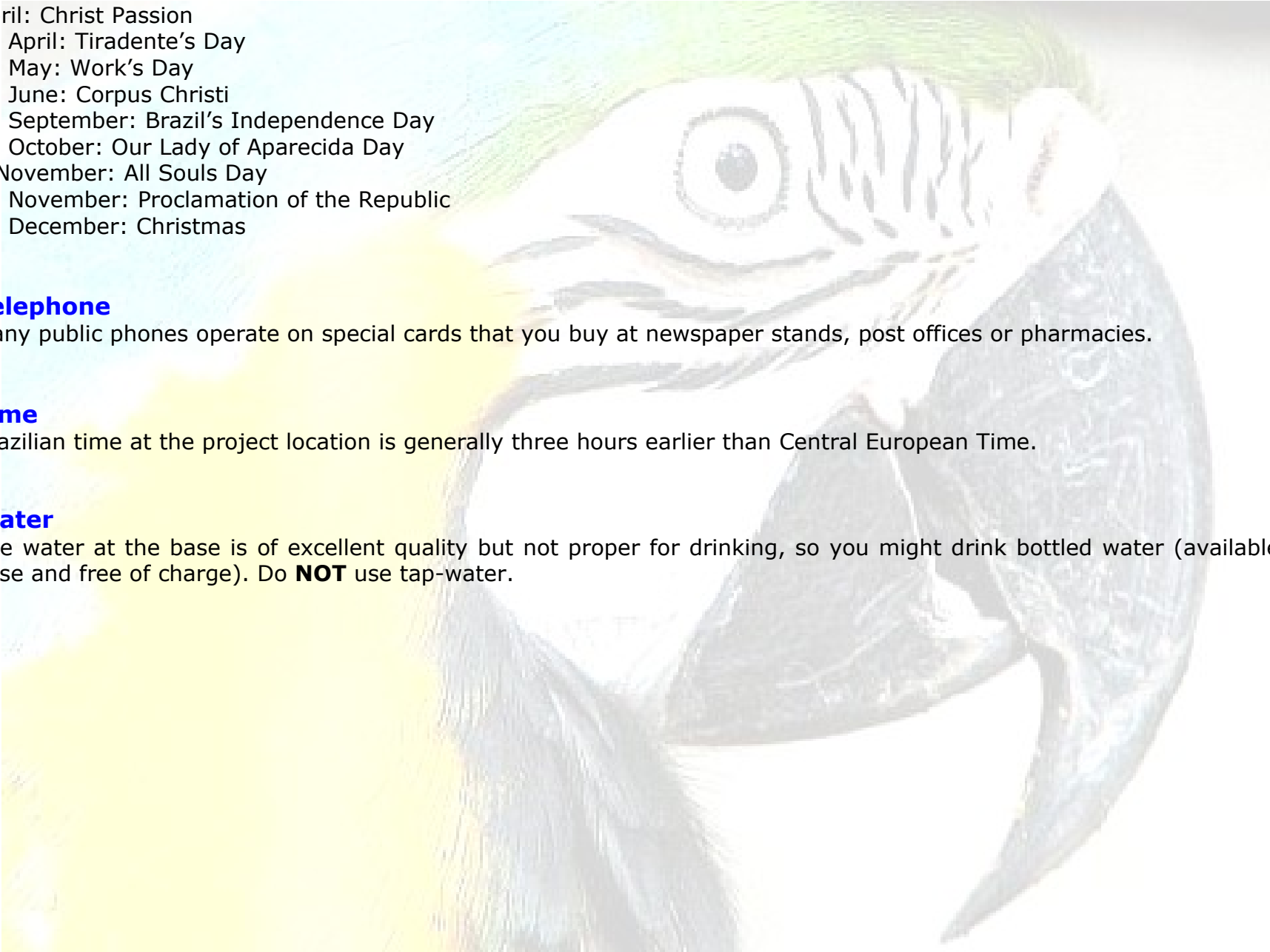
## Safety

At the project base you do not have to worry about your personal safety when you go out. Of course, you should always be alert.

## Special Days

1 January: New Year

February: Carnival (date varies)



April: Christ Passion  
21 April: Tiradente's Day  
01 May: Work's Day  
15 June: Corpus Christi  
07 September: Brazil's Independence Day  
12 October: Our Lady of Aparecida Day  
2 November: All Souls Day  
15 November: Proclamation of the Republic  
25 December: Christmas

### Telephone

Many public phones operate on special cards that you buy at newspaper stands, post offices or pharmacies.

### Time

Brazilian time at the project location is generally three hours earlier than Central European Time.

### Water

The water at the base is of excellent quality but not proper for drinking, so you might drink bottled water (available at the base and free of charge). Do **NOT** use tap-water.

## 9 QUESTION FORMS

Upon arrival at the project there will be an intake, requiring every participant to fill in two question forms, one on your personal background and one on your medical background.

**To make your arrival easier after a long travel, the project staff requests that you print these forms and fill them in on beforehand and hand them over to project staff upon arrival, or even better you may want to send the forms to the project staff by e-mail before you travel to the project. It will make your arrival more relaxed if you arrange this in advance.**

### 9.1 KNOWING YOU BETTER

After you have booked for participation in this project you will receive an extensive questionnaire with personal questions on your background and your expectations about participation. Please read the questionnaire with attention and bring the form filled and signed with your personal info. The idea behind this questionnaire is that project staff Silvia & Marcos appreciate to know you better when you meet.

### 9.2 MEDICAL FORM

After you have booked for participation in this project you will receive an extensive medical questionnaire. Please read the questionnaire with attention and bring the form filled and signed with your personal info. The idea behind this questionnaire is that project staff Silvia & Marcos appreciate to know you better when you meet.