BOJANGLES

BIO

SAVING SLOTHS IN THE WILD
THROUGH RESEARCH AND
CONSERVATION INITIATIVES

THE SLOTH CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

BOJANGLES

SPECIES: Brown-throated three-fingered sloth

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Bradypus variegatus*

APPROXIMATE AGE: 10 months old

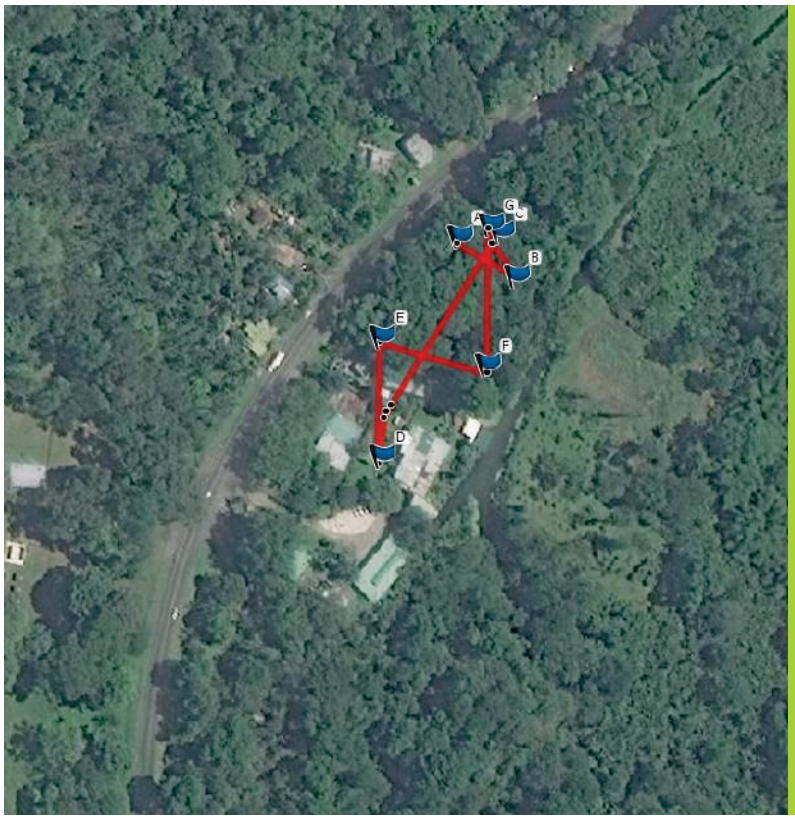
WEIGHT (WHEN FOUND): 1.4 kg

GPS LOCATION: N9° 48.003' W82° 54.857'

DATE FOUND: August 30th 2014

Bojangles is a sloth full of surprises. **His story actually begins with a different three-fingered sloth called Apple**.

Apple was the first female to be tracked and monitored as part of the long-running Sloth Backpack Project.



HOME RANGE

N9° 48.003'
W82° 54.857'

SLOTH BACKPACK PROJECT

This research involves tagging and monitoring wild sloths in Costa Rica with 'Daily Diary' data loggers (to record behaviour) and VHF transmitters (to record location). The Daily Diary logger records 8 different parameters over 40 times a second (that's almost 28 million data points a day), including body movement, activity, direction of travel, energy expenditure, height in the tree, temperature and humidity.

From this information biologists at Swansea University can see exactly what the sloth has been doing, where it was doing it, and what the environmental conditions were like at the time. This information is crucial to understanding the sloths ecological requirements, which in turn helps us to conserve these animals when faced with a rapidly changing world.

HOME RANGE SIZE
DAILY MOVEMENTS
BEHAVIOURAL DATA
PREFERENCES IN DIET

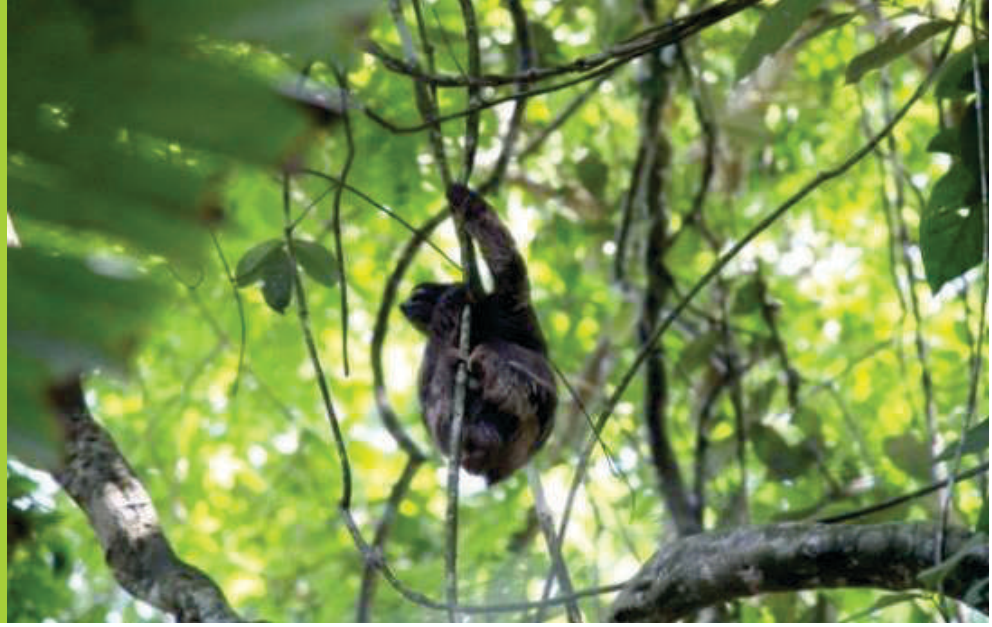
APPLE & PI

Apple was first tagged with a sloth backpack in November 2013 after being spotted hanging out in a Cecropia tree (a sloth's favourite food). At the time, **she was nursing a tiny baby** and the backpack had to be constructed in a way which prevented the nipples from being obstructed. **The baby was estimated to be about 8 weeks old and was named Pi.**

Apple and Pi were monitored daily by biologists and seemed to have a surprisingly regular routine. This was believed to be the first time a wild female sloth had ever been tagged whilst carrying a baby and it was hoped that a lot of information would be gained about how offspring are raised and weaned. Unfortunately, **after several months of tracking her, Apple was spotted one morning hanging completely inverted in the canopy- but Pi was nowhere to be seen.** Days went by without a sighting of the baby, and it was assumed to have fallen and died.

The mortality rate for baby sloths in the wild is sadly quite high. If a mother suspects her offspring to be weak in any way, she will reject the baby rather than wasting her limited energy supplies on raising an infant which is unlikely to survive.

A LITTLE SLOTH BY HIM SELF



7 months later, a surprising discovery was made. Biologists were out tracking Apple when they stumbled across what appeared to be a **baby three-fingered sloth, quietly sitting about 5 meters off the ground.** It didn't look to be more than 10 months old, yet the sloth was completely alone. A baby sloth is thought to stay with its mother for a full year, during which time it learns all of the essential skills necessary to survive alone in the rainforest.

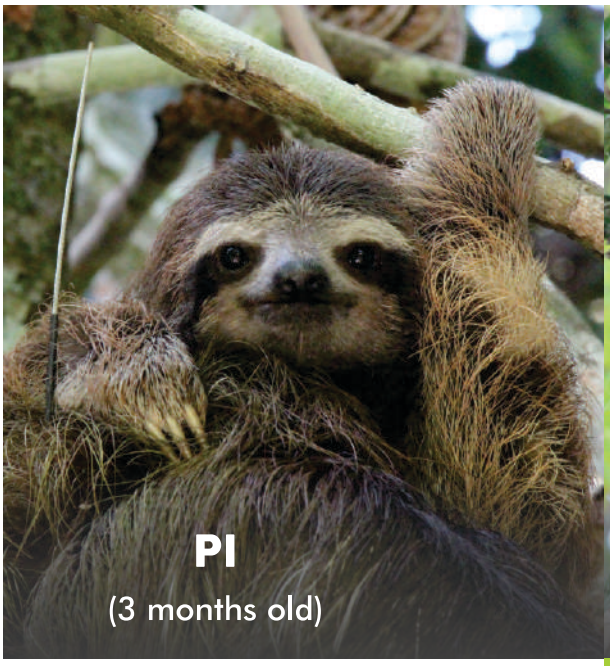
Concerned that the sloth had been abandoned, biologists decided to get it down and complete a full health check. **It was identified as a male, and despite weighing only 1.42 kg, the little sloth was in perfect health** – bright eyes, great skin, a full stomach and lots of strength. We can only assume that he had just been weaned from his mother and was in the process of finding his independence.

This sloth was named Bojangles and he was released into the forest equipped with a miniature sloth backpack!

A COINCIDENCE?

It just so happened that Bojangles had been found in one of **Apple's favourite feeding trees**. It also slowly dawned on biologists that **Bojangles looked very similar to Pi.**

Furthermore, if Pi had survived 7 months earlier, he would be reaching a similar age to Bojangles at that point. **Could Bojangles actually be Pi?**



It took two years and a genetic test to answer this question – yes! **Bojangles is in fact Apple's long-lost baby.** Exactly what happened still remains a mystery, but it appears that Bojangles must have been weaned from his mother at just 3 months old.

Do sloths really stay with their mothers for a full 12 months? More research will be required in order the answer that question
but the case of Bojangles suggests otherwise.

THE MOST STUDIED SLOTH IN THE WORLD

Whatever happened to Bojangles when he was 3 months old **turned him into quite a character.** Since his discovery, he has become the most studied wild sloth in the world.

He has been tracked daily for several years, and because we know his exact age **he is continuing to provide incredibly valuable data** into the weaning process, growth rate and ecology of wild sloths. He has also participated in studies into sloth metabolic rate, temperature regulation and strength.

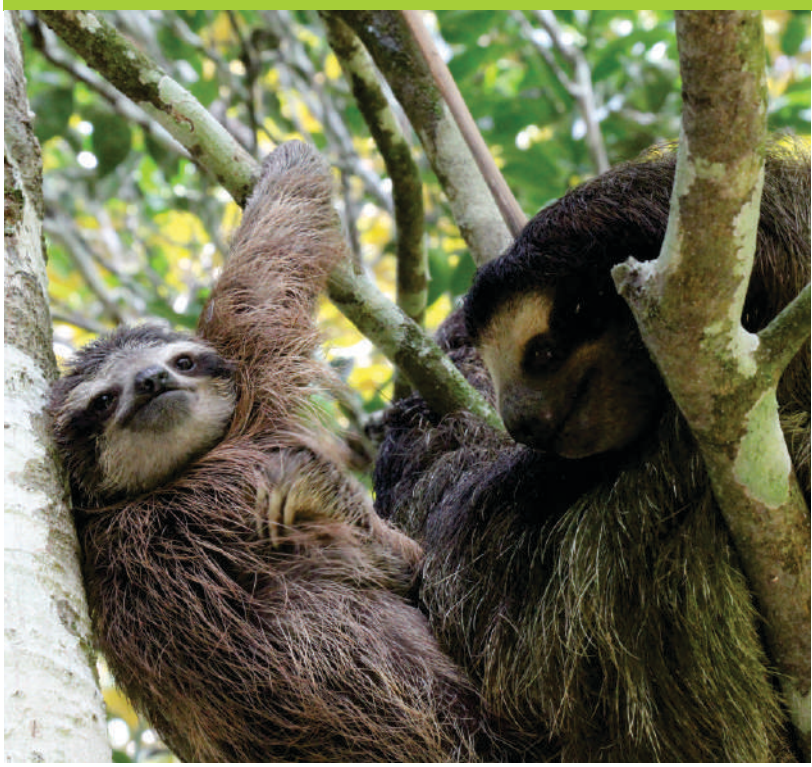
Over 23 sloths have since been tagged with sloth backpacks, but **Bojangles remains the most feisty, flexible and difficult to spot of them all**. Being so small, he camouflages spectacularly well in the rainforest canopy making it incredibly difficult to locate him (despite the fact he has a radio transmitter strapped to his back)!

Thankfully, he regularly uses the same 7 trees and often sits in exactly the same place each time.

Over the years, biologists have learnt which trees to expect him in, and where to look to find him. If he isn't sat in one of his favourite spots, it is now assumed that he has entered a dense section of forest referred to as the "**Bojangles Triangle**". In this location, the signal from his backpack can be detected and points clearly towards the area where he is, but to date, **he has never been visually located in that patch of forest.** The most surprising part is that the Bojangles Triangle is actually only 8 meters squared – and despite days and entire teams of people searching, he remains perfectly hidden.

When he is finally located, **Bojangles likes to make catching him difficult.** Being incredibly strong, he holds onto the branch with a vice like grip and swipes with his small, but very sharp fingers at every opportunity. Furthermore, he is the only three-fingered sloth to have ever bitten the biologists and even caused a permanent loss of sensation by squeezing somebody's finger and refusing to let go. Despite the challenges Bojangles poses, he is a firm favourite of the research team.

He has provided a wealth of data, despite being very young. **He is teaching us an extraordinary amount about wild sloth behaviour.**



50% of all electrocuted animals in Costa Rica are sloths.

SLOTH CONSERVATION: THE PROBLEMS

Sloths are perfectly adapted for life high up in the canopy of tropical rainforests. However, roads, farms, **towns and cities now dominate the landscape**,cutting the once continuous forest into smaller and more isolated segments. **The sloths simply cannot adapt to this rapidly changing environment.**

Saving these incredible animals from extinction therefore requires innovative and long-term conservation solutions that will target both the human and sloth populations, with the goal of **developing sustainable ways in which humans and sloths can coexist.**

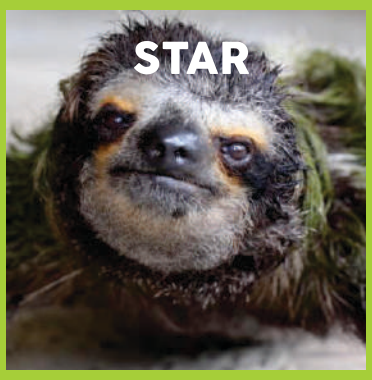
A DIFFERENCE THAT MATTERS

Thank you for your support! Symbolic adoptions such as yours are a huge boost to our work with **100% of this donation going towards supporting our sloth conservation efforts.**

SloCo has developed a range of strategies and programs which aim to achieve our conservation goals in Costa Rica. These range from increasing habitat connectivity in urban areas to educating children in local communities and conducting high quality scientific research.

MEET OTHER SLOTHS YOU CAN HELP AT:

slothconservation.com



THANK YOU FOR MAKING A BETTER WORLD FOR SLOTHS!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