Introduction
The illegal trade in wildlife is driven by the high demand in national and international urban centers, making wildlife trafficking the third most lucrative criminal enterprise in Colombia, after the trade in weapons and drugs (CITES, 2005; Rodríguez and Echeverry, 2005). Together with the swift and pervasive destruction of tropical forests, this places many of the species reliant on these ecosystems in danger of extinction.

This report is based on our observations at the UNAU Foundation sloth rehabilitation center during its first five years of operation, from 2000 to 2005, in the city of Medellín. Here we show how independent pressures have combined to threaten the survival of sloths in Colombia.

Sloths of Colombia
Three species of sloths are known from Colombia (Wetzel, 1982). The brown-throated three-toed sloth, Bradypus variegatus (Schinz, 1825) inhabits both Pacific and Amazonian lowland rainforest and the Caribbean savanna dry forest (pers. obs.) (Fig. 1). Hoffman’s two-toed sloth, Choloepus hoffmanni (Peters, 1859) is sympatric in the north with B. variegatus, sharing the Pacific rainforest and the Caribbean savanna dry forest, but is also found in Andean montane forest (pers. obs.). The southern two-toed sloth, Choloepus didactylus (Linnaeus, 1758) is sympatric in the south with B. variegatus, sharing the lowland Amazonian rainforest (Wetzel, 1982; Eisenberg, 1989; Emmons and Feer, 1999; Fonseca and Aguiar, 2004) but this species has been little-studied in Colombia. The available habitat of these species is limited primarily by the extent of continuous canopy within natural forest (Montgomery and Sunquist, 1978).

Previous authors have assumed the distribution of B. variegatus to include nearly the entire lowland territory of Colombia (Wetzel, 1982; Eisenberg, 1989; Emmons and Feer, 1999; Fonseca and Aguiar, 2004). However, we have developed what we believe to be a more accurate and detailed assessment of its range, based on interviews with local hunters, government officials and other researchers, as well as personal observations and our efforts to track the origin of confiscated animals. Based on this information, we believe that variegated sloths are limited to some areas of the northern Caribbean region, certain localities in the inter-Andean valleys, and the Pacific and Amazonian regions. We have combined presence data from Anderson and Handley (2001) with our own unpublished data to produce a preliminary model of distribution using BIOCLIM (Busby, 1991) and DIVA-GIS (Hijmans, 2005) that we believe presents the probable current distribution of B. variegatus (Fig. 2).

C. hoffmanni has a wider distribution, ranging from the northern Caribbean coast to the south along the Pacific coast, as well as in the central Andean regions (Wetzel, 1982). In Colombia there are two distinct phenotypes of C. hoffmanni; one is found in lower, warmer areas below 1500 m, while the other is typical of higher and cooler zones between 1500 and 3000 m (Moreno, 2003b). These phenotypes may correspond to the subspecies C. h. capitalis and C. h. agustinus, respectively (Wetzel, 1982). C. didactylus has been reported from the Orinoco and Amazon regions (Wetzel, 1982; Eisenberg, 1989; Emmons and Feer, 1999), but this species has been little studied in Colombia.