



November 8, 1976

Sr. Alvaro Dario Maldonado  
P. R. 29  
Valencia, Venezuela

Dear Sr. Maldonado:

I have visited your ranch at Hato El Frio with Mr. Scott Maness on two occasions, but have never had the pleasure of meeting you. I have talked with your father and would like to share with you some of the things that have been discussed.

During the last two years, the Smithsonian Institution has been conducting field research in Venezuela. Much of this work has been done at the ranch of Sr. Thomas Blohm. I have been a part of this research effort working with reptiles (turtles and caimans). Mr. Scott Maness has been working with me and he showed me the wonderful opportunities for reptile research at El Frio. We gathered some data on turtles and caimans last year at El Frio and the results will soon be published. We plan to publish in a Venezuela Journal and we will point out the importance of Hato El Frio as a game reserve and natural resource.

When I met with your father, we discussed the possibilities of longer term studies at the ranch. Your father pointed out the lack of accommodations and suggested that the Smithsonian might provide housing and research facilities. On my return to the United States, I looked into the possibilities and found that, at present, we can only afford a large mobile home (25 meters by 4 meters). I wrote your father on August 31, 1976 and asked if this solution might be acceptable to him. I have not received an answer and am writing you in hope of a response.

I would very much like to make arrangements to work at El Frio during the next year. This summer, I will visit Venezuela again accompanied by an expert in Radio Telemetry. With the help of Scott Maness, we would like to work with caimans. El Frio would be the best place to do this work.

I would like permission to work at El Frio in the summer of 1977 and I would hope for an arrangement for the future.

I feel that cooperation between the Smithsonian and you can be mutually beneficial and should be pursued.

I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely yours,

*Dale L. Marcellini*

Dale L. Marcellini  
Research Curator, Reptiles