

TReeS News

The Tambopata Reserve Society
Newsletter, No. 12

May 1989



ZRT News

One of the most encouraging developments at Tambopata recently has been the increasing involvement of Peruvians in the Resident Naturalist's programme. Alfredo Begazo, an ornithologist from La Molina, is studying mixed flocks. His conclusions are tying in with those of Charlie Munn and John Terborgh in Manu National Park, and we look forward to the publication of his work, which will be available to TReeS. Alfredo has also translated the recently produced guides: the Medicinal Garden tour, the self-guided nature tour and the river trip guide are now available in Spanish. Alfredo Coloma, also from La Molina, is studying the vampire bat Desmodus rotundus, the most significant bat in the transmission of rabies: his work should enable biologists to look for rabies in wild populations. Renan Valega will be the first Peruvian RN to benefit from a grant partly provided by TReeS. Renan is an agronomy student and is collaborating on the ethnobotanical inventory with Michel Alexiades. He is working with Michel in the area under the custody of AMETRA and is staying at the Centre.

For some time TReeS has been campaigning for boundary signs to demarcate the Reserved Zone. The Ministry of Agriculture has issued instructions for the design of signs to mark the perimeter, and the signs themselves are now under construction, using materials paid for by TReeS.

On the debit side, the threat posed by gold mining continues to grow: another government department has issued some additional gold prospecting concessions along the river. We await further news about the implications of this development: because of the wealth it generates, gold mining takes precedence over all other activities in Peru, including tourism, and the expansion of gold prospecting could have devastating effects on the ecology of the Tambopata area. The Resident Naturalists are at present seeking help from the EORI centre which looks after the rights of local people, whose lives could be dramatically affected by the concession.

The reserve continues to produce the usual crop of exciting sightings; the following five are all of animals listed in the IUCN Red Data Book of Endangered Species. An ocelot was sighted on the Ant Trail on 2nd Jan at 9.30 p.m. A pair of jaguarundi turned up on the banks of the Tambopata during a tourist river trip, and the extremely rare bush dog has been seen twice: Max Gunther Jr. was lucky enough to see one of them. There have been several sightings of giant river otter on all bodies of water, including the rivers, and a giant armadillo walked over the main trail near the lodge on 16 February.

Other notable sightings include 3 coatimundi on the Capirona Trail on 14 February, 2 Kinkajou on the Bamboo Trail on 2 February, and two sightings of brocket deer. Amongst the commoner species, agoutis are in particular evidence at the moment; brazil nuts, a favourite part of their diet, fall at this time of year.

Various creatures have also been rescued from Puerto Maldonado and released on the reserve, namely a two-toed sloth and a number of snakes, mostly boas.

Amongst the other RNs currently working on the reserve, Kevin Kennedy is trapping bats with mist nets and comparing species composition in the different forest types to be found on the reserve. He has discovered three new species during his investigations into bat diversity, taking the reserve's list to 38 species. Rebecca Ellis has beautifully painted a large display promoting TReeS and the TWR. She continues to maintain the Medicinal Garden and retains close links with AMETRA. Richard Iwaniki is studying treefalls on the reserve, and hopes to construct an epiphyte garden. Ruth Bond is carrying

out a primate census with Chris Sharpe. Chris has sent TReeS a detailed list of suggestions for future research projects at Tambopata which will prove invaluable as a guide for prospective RNs.

AMETRA Report

AMETRA hopes to extend its courses to the contacted communities in Manu National Park for a one year trial period; agreements have now been signed with both the National Park, and the Department of Health of Madre de Dios. Unfortunately, the anticipated funding for this expansion will not now materialise, at least in the short term. Any assistance that TReeS can offer in terms of securing substantial additional funds, from trusts known to members or from private companies, would be very welcome. The work in Manu would be an important step for AMETRA: it needs our support. AMETRA's last general assembly was held successfully between 2 and 4 March, and a report is available in our AMETRA library.

TReeS has now received a limited number of the new AMETRA T-shirts produced by the Rainforest Alliance in New York. These are all cotton and made by 'Fruit of the Loom', with red and black AMETRA designs printed on the front and back. Available in large size only, they are priced at £6 each, 3 for £15 or 10 for £45, including p and p. The shirts are available from Oliver Tickell, 379 Meadow Lane, Iffley, Oxford OX4 4BL.

UK News

ICBP (International Council for Bird Preservation)

ICBP have advised us that they consider that the work of TReeS in Peru 'will make a valuable contribution to international wildlife conservation', and have endorsed our project as part of their conservation programme. ICBP was founded in 1922 and has over 300 member organisations in 100 countries, including the RSPB in the UK. It campaigns for the preservation of birds and their habitats. With over 580 bird species, Tambopata is one of the richest bird habitats on earth.

The Body Shop

TReeS was the only specific project organisation to be invited to a recent seminar organised by The Body Shop to discuss acceptable and feasible means of distributing funds to projects in the Amazon region relating to the disappearance of the rainforest. The other groups invited included FoE, the GAIA Foundation, Survival International, WWF UK, the Ecologist and the Living Earth Foundation.

Support for Peruvian RNs: School Sponsorship Scheme

Our approach to CONCYTEC (the Peruvian Government Council for Science and Technology) for funds to cover the airfares of eight Peruvian biology students to enable them to go to Tambopata as RNs in 1989/90 has been successful. Didier Lacaze, the TReeS representative in Peru, has now received the money. However, TReeS needs to raise \$150 (£90) per student to enable them to go to the reserve for a three month period. £90 would be a realistic sum for a school to raise, in return for reports and photos from the student at the reserve. If any TReeS member is able to set up such a sponsorship scheme, then she or he should contact John Forrest.

TReeS meeting in Oxford, 4 March 1989

Anna Culwick, a recently returned RN, gave a fascinating talk on the tree canopy platforms at Tambopata. The reserve now has arguably the most accessible rainforest canopy in the world. Anna's slides illustrated how tree platforms can revolutionise our understanding of the canopy, perhaps the least understood aspect of the rainforest ecosystem. Paul Franklin, a past RN, talked about the Shipstern Nature Reserve in northern Belize and about Belize's other conservation areas. The Shipstern Reserve was set up relatively recently; there are plans to set up an RN scheme similar to the one at Tambopata. TReeS's increased commitments, in supporting a Conservation Coordinator and a Scientific Coordinator

in Peru were emphasised; we need to raise considerably more funds, and establish a firmer financial base. A membership covenant form will now be prepared. The idea of a school sponsorship scheme was raised.

Paul Franklin indicated that after May he would not be able to contact recent visitors to the reserve to persuade them to join TReeS: Paul will be in Belize until the end of the year. Paul Wilkin indicated that he will not be able to edit the next two issues of the newsletter. Judy Bell and Richard Purslow will undertake this.

Helen Newing, who was instrumental in the founding of TReeS and who has been the principal driving force behind the Society's development, resigned as chairman due to other commitments which will take her abroad for much of next year. John Forrest was elected as her replacement. Other postholders remain unchanged.

Following the meeting Oliver Tickell and John Forrest gave a talk on environmental matters at a conference on Peru at St. Antony's College. With 83 out of 114 global habitats scientifically identified by the IUCN, Peru is a country of global environmental significance, and interest in Peruvian Conservation, in Peru and Britain continues to grow rapidly.



VIEW FROM LAGUNA CHICA TRAIL 350M
TREEPLATFORM SUMMER 1988

Next Meeting

10th June, (2-5pm), Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC2 (Tube Holborn). Sarah Wilkin will speak on her recent travels in South America, which took her from the Darien Gap to Lake Titicaca and from the Galapagos to Tambopata. Members from a recently returned Cambridge expedition will talk on the exotic wildlife of the Madagascan rainforest. The following meeting will be in London or Oxford in September.

Update on TReeS active members

Nick Squirrel - 112 Harold Road, London E13 0SF: administrator of the TReeS slide library (replacing Paul Franklin).

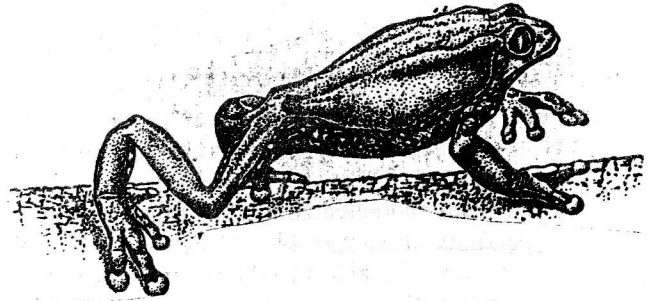
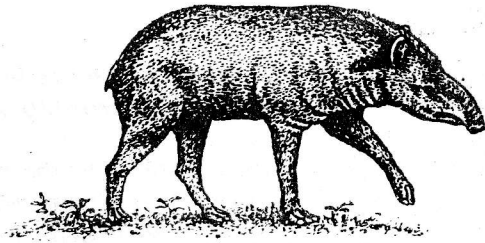
Anna Culwick - 3 The Mermaids, 2 Sea View Place, St. Ives, Cornwall: prospective resident naturalist adviser.

Rachel Byers - 7, Longfield Avenue, Walthamstow, London E17: responsible for contacting people who have visited the Reserve from Europe and advising them about TReeS (replacing Paul Franklin).

Other active members are as per TReeS News No. 11.

Oje Orphans

Angus Davies has six small (15-20 cm tall) oje trees (the sap is used by AMETRA to cure intestinal parasites), grown from seed, in pots. If you would like one, contact Angus at Hill Cottage, Sutton Place, Abinger Hammer, Dorking, Surrey RH5 6RL.



Membership

The TReeS annual membership subscription has now been split into three categories, each one represented by an animal that is often recorded at the Reserve. We have already been able to supply members of the 'Tapir' category with a copy of the Channel 4 'Fragile Earth' series programme 'Jungle Pharmacy', which featured the work of AMETRA. We hope to offer members in this category and in the 'Hoatzin' category some other benefits during the course of the year.

Tapir (Superior, £100 per year) - The Brazilian tapir (*Tapirus terrestris*), one of four species in the world, is found at Tambopata. A relative of the horse and the rhino, it has been an identifiable species for at least twenty million years, and is the largest ungulate found in the Amazon. It is reddish brown in colour, but has lighter horizontal stripes when born. About two metres long and one metre tall it is a good swimmer and forages at night in the wet areas for aquatic vegetation using its extremely extendable snout.

Hoatzin (Family, £20 per year) - Hoatzins (*Opisthocomus hoazin*) are found throughout the Amazon in areas of flooded forest and may derive their name from the Aztec word for their call. The species has a unique feature: the claws on the end of the wings of young, which enables them to move easily around the trees. Adults use their wings for clambering about, but are only capable of flying twenty metres or so in one go, though they are good divers. For these reasons the hoatzin is considered a close relation of birds from the dinosaur age, somewhere between tree lizards and modern birds on the evolutionary scale. They live in flocks of ten to twenty, nest in colonies and feed almost exclusively on the pimply thorn tree and the giant caladium.

Tree Frog (Basic, £5 per year) - there are over five hundred species of tree frog (Hylidae) in the world and several of them are found at Tambopata. A few centimetres long and usually brilliant green in colour, most tree frogs live, in the rainforest canopy. Their toes are equipped with sucker pads and this enables them to leap about with great agility in search of the insects which form their staple diet. At night, when they are most active, their distinctive clicking vocalisations echo throughout the jungle.

New Brochure

Enclosed with this newsletter are two of the new TReeS brochures, with which we hope members will persuade their friends, relatives and colleagues to join the society. If every member ensures that a new member joins for each of the brochures TReeS membership will reach four figures and, more importantly, it will enable TReeS to support the conservation co-ordinator and the Scientific Coordinator under then end of 1989. Despite the recent publicity concerning environmental matters, TReeS only receives sporadic support from trusts and companies. Our essential funding from membership remains absolutely crucial to the support we can give to the Reserve and to AMETRA. Please do your best to increase our membership.

