

TReeS News

The Tambopata Reserve Society
Newsletter, No. 20

January 1992

1992 TReeS Membership

1991 was another very successful year in terms of the funds that TReeS was able to raise and this is reflected in the development made by the projects supported, both old and new.

The support that TReeS is able to offer is very much dependent on the subscriptions and donations received from members, which were well down in 1991 compared to the previous two years. TReeS annual membership runs from 1st January each year, unless you have joined since 1st October of the preceding year. We would be most grateful if those members who do not subscribe by banker's order could renew their 1992 subscriptions accordingly. Banker's order and Covenant forms are available from J.Forrest; paying by either greatly reduces our administrative costs. We would encourage all existing members to persuade others to join.

Tambopata/Tambopata-Candamo Reserved Zones (TRZ/TCRZ) Update

In early 1992 ACSS (Association for the Conservation of the Southern Rainforests) are expected to submit a new proposal to the Ministry of Agriculture regarding the TCRZ. It is expected that this will be heavily oriented towards pure nature conservation with the greatest emphasis placed on the creation of a National Park, covering the upper Tambopata and the Candamo drainage basin, with severely restricted entry. This follows the pattern already established within Manu National Park.

A buffer zone with limited access for eco-tourism is also proposed, probably covering the territory between the confluences of the river Tambopata with the rivers Malinowsky and Candamo. The spectacular Colpa (a sandy bluff where parrots, especially macaws, come in large numbers to lick salt and other minerals) and the nearby camping facility of Tambopata Nature Tours (TNT – who have strong links with ACSS) would lie within this zone.

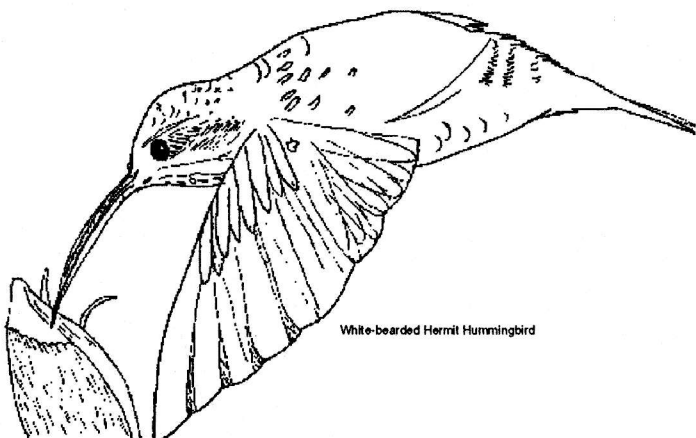
The TRZ is likely to fall within the third zone, the area proposed for a variety of agricultural practices. No special reference is made to the TRZ or the outstanding diversity of species that is known to exist there. ACSS has indicated that they feel that the gradual expansion of agricultural activities in the lower Tambopata over the next few years means that the TRZ could not be retained as a viable Conservation unit.

On the contrary, TReeS, and the scientists and researchers who have studied there over the last 15 years, believe that there is a future for the TRZ. Most importantly the existing area must attain a more permanent protected status but in the long-term it is crucial that the TRZ is enlarged. The TRZ alone (5500 ha) is not of a viable size to support many of the larger mammals currently found there. A clear option is to extend the TRZ back towards another protected area – the Rio Heath National Sanctuary, running along the Bolivian border, and also to include the La Torre and D'Orbigny drainage basins.

The forest in this region is largely undisturbed and uninhabited. A few Brazil nut collectors and rubber tappers operate there but their rights as sustainable agriculturalists could be maintained within an enlarged TRZ. A further possibility is that tourists entering the area could pay a small fee to be divided between those administering the area and the local native peoples organization.

It is with this in mind that we enclose with this Newsletter a letter addressed to Señor Ugaz – Head of the National Parks division of the Ministry of Agriculture, in Lima. We would request all TReeS members to sign and post this letter (preferably after re-writing or re-typing) to express our concern at the possible loss of the TRZ.

The Explorer's Inn: closely linked to the future of the area is that of the Explorer's



Inn, the presence of which acts as a means of safeguarding the area. The prospects for tourism in 1992 are unencouraging, with little positive coverage in the Press of the many wonderful sights that Peru has to offer. It now looks very unlikely that tourism alone can keep the Lodge open.

Several alternatives are under consideration; the most interesting concerns the establishment of a Biological research station adjoining the Lodge. Peruvian Safaris, owners of the Lodge, have indicated that they could sell or lease part of their land on the edge of the TRZ for such a purpose and in return would accommodate and provide logistical support for the scientists and researchers to make up the shortfall from tourism.

The proposal envisages participation from a consortium of American and European institutions, which would form a Foundation to provide the necessary funding for the construction and running of the station. The local management of the station would be undertaken by Peruvians, either a Conservation organisation or an academic institution. This would ensure complete integration of research work with Peruvian scientists and students. A programme of environmental education in the local area would also be tied in to the activities.

An enlarged TRZ would be zoned for tourism, traditional medicine (under the auspices of AMETRA 2001) and scientific research. A major element of the scientific research would be applied projects to investigate further ways in which the rainforest could support the local population in a sustainable manner.

The crucial position of the Explorer's Inn, at the start of the large tracts of undisturbed forest along the Rio Tambopata, would also ensure a long-term role in the management and administration of future developments within the TCRZ.

Any member who can provide any contacts or practical advice with respect to the above is invited to write immediately to: Dr Max Gunther, Peruvian Safaris S.A., P.O.Box 10088, Lima 1, Peru.

TCRZ Update: the Ministry of Agriculture in conjunction with Conservation International (CI), a US organization, has appointed a Peruvian biologist to make a study on the feasibility of undertaking a comprehensive flora and fauna inventory within the TCRZ. Her brief also includes proposing specific Conservation units within the TCRZ and a

long-term plan of investigation for the region, including the potential sites for biological research stations.

In May 1992 CI will fund a Rapid Assessment Team to undertake specific inventory work in selected areas. It is likely to include among its members eminent scientists well acquainted with the TRZ such as Al Gentry, Louise Emmons and Ted Parker.

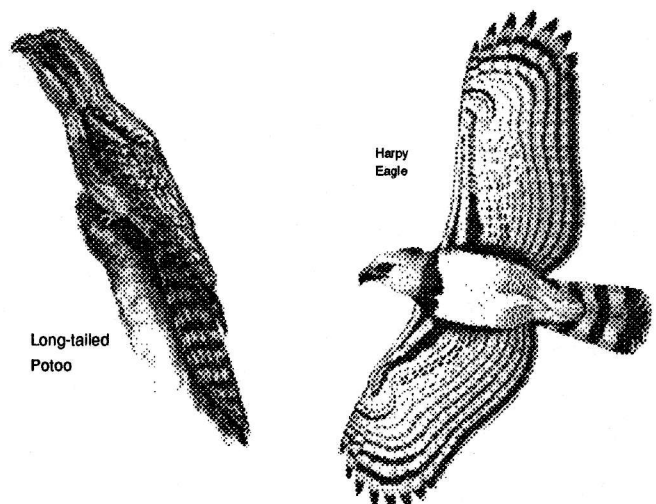
With respect to all these developments TReeS will fund J.Pejoves, a member of the team of biologists undertaking applied biological research at Tambopata with TReeS funding, to attend the 4th World Congress of National Parks in Caracas, Venezuela (10-21st February). This has been made possible through a specific donation from two TReeS supporters.

Tambopata-Candamo Expedition 1992

Expedition members take this opportunity to express their thanks to those TReeS members who turned up and also those who sponsored the Scrub Bash at West Kent Golf Course Nature Reserve in mid-November. Over £400 was raised towards expedition funds. The expedition intends to undertake inventory work along the river Tambopata in the autumn of 1992.

Resident Naturalist News

There continue to be some exceptional sightings on the Reserve this year. Three new bird species have been recorded in recent months – orange-backed tropical bird, jet antbird and long-tailed potoo. A harpy eagle has been observed on several



occasions and may be nesting on the reserve. A large cat was spotted at dusk close to the Lodge; it was probably a puma

but may have been a jaguar. Along Main Trail (1050m) a giant anteater with young was seen and a young margay at 3200m from the Lodge. The giant river otters have remained at Cocococha but three have also been seen at Katicocha. Six collared peccaries were found close to Laguna Chica and a group of white faced capuchin near Big Tree. October was a wet month with 228mm of rain; the temperature range was 14–34°C.

Current and recent RN's and visitors include:

E.Barnes – studying Antbirds.

P.Huertas & L.Sierra – working on the Butterfly project.

K.&E.Schenk – returned for another 10 days to continue their giant river otter studies.

B.Robinson – came from the Smithsonian Institute with 4 other lepidopterists and found 14 new species of butterfly for the reserve, including one that is completely new to science.

H.Beech – a former RN, returned for a follow-up visit.

L.Short (American Museum of Natural history) & J.Short (National Museum of Kenya) – spent three weeks studying toucans for a forthcoming book.

The TReeS representative in Peru (P. Huertas) attended the Jungle Week (1st week of October) in Puerto Maldonado and spoke about the area.

Former RN A.Hofer, in conjunction with the photographer Gunter Ziesler, has produced a book (Urwaldpfade) all about the reserve but it is only available in German at present.

Alex Robertson - An Appreciation

On 11th October at about 1.30pm a twin-engine 9-seater turboprop plane operated by AeroCondor crashed on the banks of the Río Alto Madre de Dios. It was 10 minutes short of its destination, the landing strip at Boca Manu. One witness, a local fisherman, saw the plane flying in at a very low level, then the tail fell off into the river and the plane crashed into a tree. The cause of the accident remains a mystery.

Among those killed was Alex Robertson, who will be fondly remembered by visitors to the Explorer's Inn in 1988/89, where he was manager for a year. Other TReeS members may have met Alex at the bar of the Cross Keys pub in Qosqo or, most recently, as a partner in Expediciones Manu – a highly successful eco-tourism company organising camping trips into the Manu

region.

On leaving college Alex became an accomplished wind surfer and windsurfing instructor, before entering the insurance industry. But, in 1988, he decided that the 9-5 grey-suited life was not for him and, aged 23, he embarked on a trip around South America. After he lost everything in a mugging at Qosqo station, he got a job in the Cross Keys. A few months later he became manager at the Explorer's Inn.

In 1990 he joined Expediciones Manu as a third partner, and began to lead groups on journeys into the rainforest. "He was a marvellous guide", said friend and colleague Max Milligan. "He was very good with people and a great talker, witty and intelligent and he loved the jungle . . . All the people who went on his trips really enjoyed themselves." At the same time Alex was working behind the scenes for the conservation of the jungle. One of his biggest coups was to help prevent Faucett Airlines from developing a 500,000 ha cattle ranch in the northeastern forests of Madre de Dios close to the Brazilian border.

Others killed in the accident were the pilot, a Yugoslav restaurateur and Charo, the wife of the well-known British ornithologist Barry Walker – owner of the Cross Keys and co-founder of Expediciones Manu. In spite of this tragic event and its devastating impact, both enterprises will remain in business.

AMETRA 2001 – Recent Developments

In addition to backing up the four general objectives (see Newsletter No. 18) of AMETRA 2001, TReeS support for the project has always aimed to empower the native people of the region to take greater responsibility for their affairs and to participate fully in local, regional and national decision-making, especially on matters associated with traditional health care.

A natural progression of this policy is for all the native people of Madre de Dios to assume full responsibility for AMETRA 2001 through the local native peoples organization – FENAMAD (Federation of native peoples of Madre de Dios). Outside advisers such as Didier Lacaze and those from the original AMETRA project near Pucallpa (in central Peru), who were both so essential in the formation of the project, would take a lesser role. The original intention was for this to take place in the second

half of 1992. At the 7th Annual Congress of FENAMAD, in August, Bertha Solisonquehua (Vice-President of AMETRA 2001) was appointed by FENAMAD to oversee the transition.

However, during a series of subsequent discussions in the autumn it was decided by AMETRA 2001 and FENAMAD that there was little to be gained from waiting a year to effect the changeover. AMETRA 2001 now falls officially under the auspices of FENAMAD, with Bertha Solisonquehua as the principal coordinator. FENAMAD/AMETRA 2001 hope that this move will enable them to attract those native communities within Madre de Dios not currently participating to become involved in promoting traditional medical care, and to decide their own priorities more democratically. It also means that AMETRA 2001 no longer needs its own political standpoint on many issues because this will now be covered by FENAMAD.

The 5th AMETRA 2001 AGM was held immediately before Xmas and further details will be given about the AMETRA 2001 programme for 1992 in the next Newsletter, once the AGM report has been received. Once translated, all AMETRA 2001 documents are placed in both the TReeS library and Natural History Museum (see listing in Newsletter No. 19) for viewing.

Forthcoming Events

6th February – Third Kew Environmental lecture, at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew; to be given by His Excellency the President of Peru – Señor Ingeniero Alberto Fujimori. (By invitation only).

TReeS Meeting – 1st February, 2-5pm at the House for Nicaragua, 121 Tyers St., London SE11 (Tel: 071.820.0580) (Nearest tube – Vauxhall, a 3 minute walk). Updates from John Forrest, report back from most recent RN – Sylvia Yorath, and details from Barry Nicholson about the 1992 Tambopata-Candamo expedition.

T-Shirts, Postcards, Rainforest Booklet & Rainforest Sounds Tape

Earth Warrior T-shirt (bottle green design on unbleached cotton): XL only – £8 each, or 3 for £20. A limited edition of 100 in this colour.

AMETRA T-shirts: Small or Medium –



£5.50 each, or 3 for £15.

Large or XLarge – £6.50 each, or 3 for £18.

Postcards: Tree-frog, Tapir, Hummingbird/Heliconia, Hoatzin, Butterfly and AMETRA 2001 Centre postcards: 10 for £2; 60 for £10; 100 for £16.

TReeS Sound Tapes: recorded by Simon Grove at the TRZ. "Wildlife Sounds" (general interest) and "Birds of South-east Peru" (birders sound guide): £5.50 each; £10 for the 2; £20 for any 5.

Rainforest Requiem Tape: A symphony of sounds from the rainforest – £7.50 each, 2 for £14, 5 for £32.

"The Ecology of Tropical Rainforests – an introduction for eco-tourists". A small booklet with b&w photos published by TReeS, £2.50 each.

TReeS Newsletters (back numbers): any 5 – £2, please specify the numbers required.

"The Budget Traveller's Guide to Peru and Northern Bolivia", 7th edition, April 1991. £4.95 each, including a £1 donation to TReeS.

All prices include postage.

Available from: J. Forrest, 64 Belsize Park, London, NW3 4EH.

Visitors to Peru, Word-Processing, Translating & Accounts

If any member knows of anyone travelling to Peru over the next few months who could carry some documents and merchandise out there for TReeS we would very much like to hear from them.

Due to an increasing number of documents coming from Peru, we would also be extremely pleased to hear from anyone who can assist our esteemed regulars with some rapid word-processing and translating every so often. If you could offer both this would be ideal.

We are grateful to TReeS member J.Karas for casting her eye over the early TReeS accounts. We would now like to hear from a qualified Accountant or Auditor who could, on a voluntary basis, look at our more recent ones.

If you can assist, please write to J.Forrest with your phone number.

The work of TReeS/AMETRA 2001 is endorsed/supported by Helpage, ICBP UK/USA, Anglo-Peruvian Society, OXFAM, the Body Shop International PLC, several FoE groups and schools, and various small trusts and charities.



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