

TAMBOPATA RESERVED ZONE

NEWSLETTER NO. 3

MAY 1986

Introduction

This newsletter, like earlier numbers, aims to make information available to all interested on the activities and scientific research (both pure and applied) at the Tambopata Reserved Zone (TRZ).

Smithsonian Institution

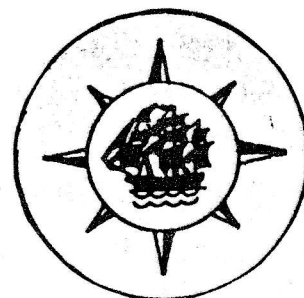
The Smithsonian Institution (SI) is continuing its research at Tambopata in the fields of entomology, canopy arthropods, herpetology and botany. The Entomological Society of Peru recently published a special issue on the insect fauna of the TRZ, giving information on various studies carried out by a team of entomologists from the Smithsonian Institution and San Marcos University (Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, UNSM).

Bioresources

Bioresources is a British organisation affiliated to the Earthlife Foundation and is dedicated to the conservation and rational use of natural resources in the neotropics. Its first action in Peru was to establish an ethnobotanical database at the TRZ, under the direction of Michel Alexiades. At present the database contains information on more than 250 plant species and hopefully an Ethnobiological Centre will be established at Tambopata soon. The Centre will form part of an international network of databases. The ethnobotanical information obtained can be used in ecodevelopment programmes (i.e. the development of sustainable production), health and research in general.

Operation Raleigh at Tambopata

Operation Raleigh is an organisation formed by young people from many countries, who are taking part in scientific and community projects all over the world. After a visit by three representatives in January 1985, a group of scientists, engineers and 60 young volunteers stayed at the Tambopata Reserved Zone over a period of 6 months. They carried out ecological studies of mammals, amphibians and insects and began the construction of tree platforms. So far two platforms have been completed. We are still hoping for the necessary funds to complete the other two, which would make it possible to do much scientific work on the forest canopy.



Amazon Garden

This project (formerly known as the Mayan Gardens project - see TWR Newsletter No. 1) - is being run by student Antonio del Aguila (Agrarian University, Lima) under the auspices of Dr Terry L Erwin (Smithsonian Institution). Its aim is to find an alternative to intensive agricultural production in the Amazon region. Based on a method of cultivation used by the Mayan Indians, the 'garden' consists of small plots of land which are enriched with a mixture of organic soil from the swampy areas, ash, and termite nests surrounded by a ditch which allows recycling of nutrients. In the first phase of the pilot study, the garden has been planted with peanuts, vegetables and medicinal plants. A first report on this has been made.

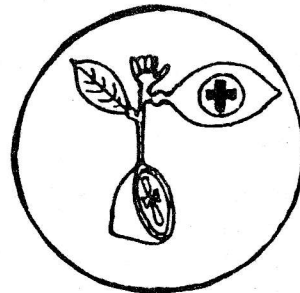
AMETRA 2001 (Application of Traditional Medicine)

AMETRA is run by FECONAU (Federation of Native Communities in Ucayali) and has been in existence since 1982. Its aims are to recover the value attached to traditional medicine in Amazonian Peru, and to promote its use in the treatment of various health problems in the region using local plant resources.

After the success of the first AMETRA course in October 1984, a second course took place at the Native Community of Infierno in March this year. It was coordinated once more by Didier Lacaze (now with the support of CORDEMAD - the Development Corporation for Madre de Dios - and FENAMAD - the Federation of Native Communities of Madre de Dios). Participants included representatives from the Native Communities of Madre de Dios and experts on traditional medicine from Cusco, Ucayali and Madre de Dios, as well as a doctor and a pharmacologist.

Themes covered in the course included traditional traumatology, gastro-intestinal diseases, bites and stings, sight and dentition, venereal disease, skin conditions and postnatal care.

In addition, a medicinal plant garden was constructed at the Explorer's Inn in order to demonstrate the use and high value of the plants more directly.



San Marcos University (UNMSM) Research Projects

Dr Gerardo Lamas M., an entomologist from the Natural History Museum, is continuing his work on an inventory of the TRZ's Lepidoptera (Journal of the Peruvian Entomological Society).

Srta. Isobel Bohorquez, also from the Natural History Museum, is coming to collect entomological material in the TRZ; she will be concentrating on the Coleoptera, Homoptera and Arachnida.

Finally, Srta. Monica Romo, a student at the Faculty of Biological Sciences at San Marcos University, visited the TRZ for a second time to complete the list of Chiroptera (bats) and make preliminary ecological observations.

Other Research in the TRZ

Paul Stewart and Keith Hambler (University of Southampton, England) are carrying out a study of the black caiman as part of their work as Resident Naturalists for Peruvian Safaris S.A. The preliminary results of the census indicate that the TRZ holds one of the largest populations of this endangered species.

Meanwhile, Dr. Andrzej Dyrz (University of Wroclaw, Poland) has completed an ecological study of the TRZ's bird communities.

EXPANSION OF THE TAMBOPATA RESERVED ZONE

Peruvian Safaris has been proposing an expansion of the TRZ to the Peruvian government since 1981. The expansion would be to 72000 hectares, with a change of status to that of National and Communal Reserve (See Newsletters 1 and 2 and the 'Green Book'). Its aim would be to assure effective conservation of the TRZ and to promote scientific research.

In spite of the progress made on this issue, we are still waiting impatiently for the government's final answer. The expansion is all the more essential in face of the growing pattern of deforestation which is affecting both the Zone and Amazonia in general.

The company Shell was carrying out oil explorations in Madre de Dios from July to December last year; such activity is suspended for the time being but could start again at any time. Felling and agriculture around the TRZ are of equal if not greater importance, as are the incursions by hunters and fellers into the Zone.

In March 1985, Peruvian Safaris presented a technical report on the TRZ expansion to the authorities at the Ministry of Agriculture (= 'the Green Book'). Subsequently the 24th Agrarian Zone of Madre de Dios produced a favourable report on the matter and the national press is recognising the issue. In order to strengthen the proposal, the Draft Agreement with the Native Community of Infierno is to be presented in July of this year in order to reach an agreement as to a possible Communal Reserve (See map).

At a local level, Peruvian Safaris has given presentations in Puerto Maldonado on the conservation of the Amazon forest and also the value of the TRZ and the necessity for its expansion.

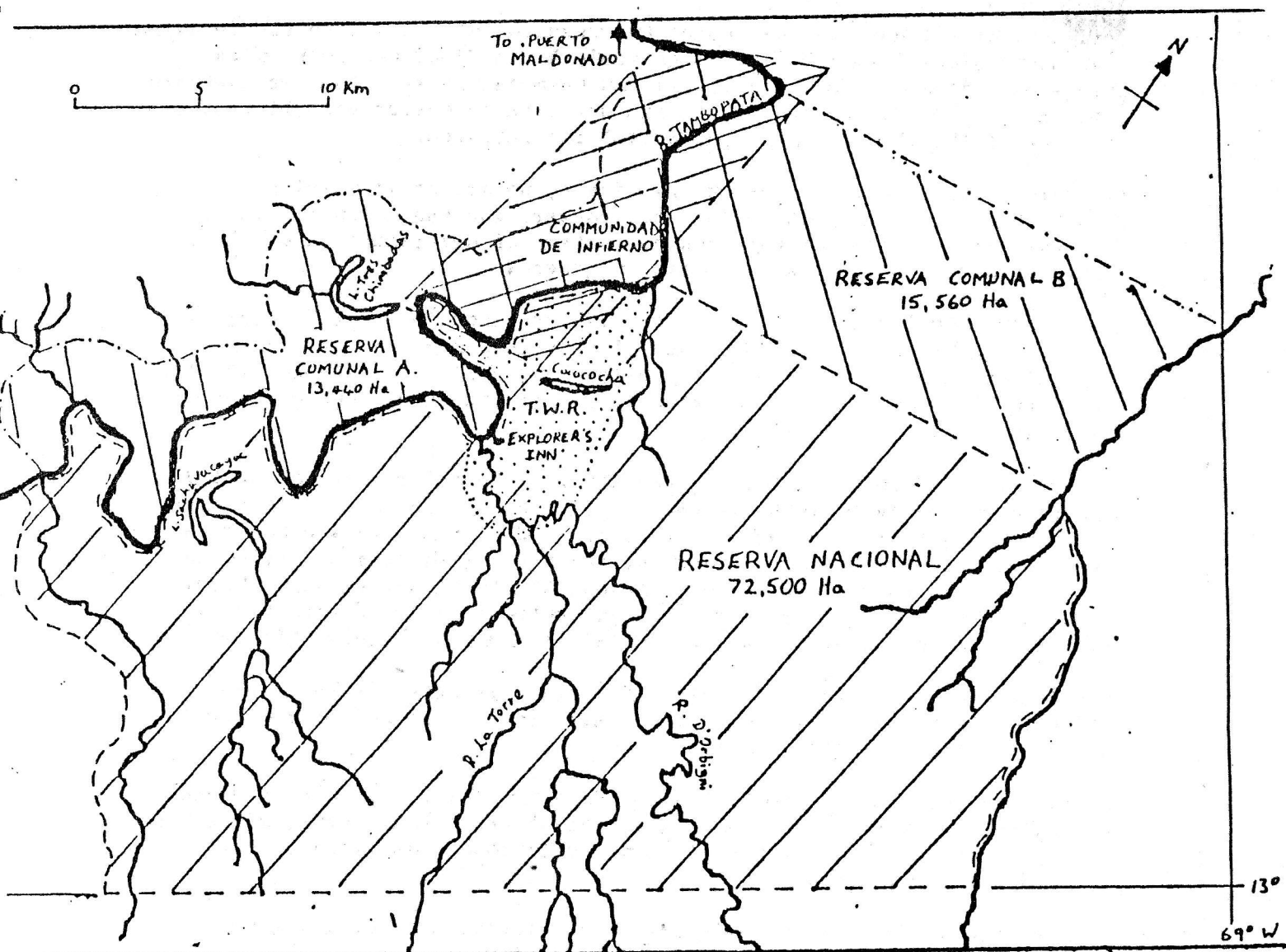
To the same end, the Tambopata Reserve Society (TReeS) has been founded in England. Its patron, the eminent ecologist Dr. Norman Myers, gives his total support both to the work going on at Tambopata and also to the proposed Reserve expansion.

We have high hopes of success in these objectives, and you can give practical help by writing a letter to the following address:-

Senor Director
Direccion de Forestal y Fauna
Ministerio de Agricultura y Alimentacion
Natalio Sanchez No 220-3er Piso
Lima - Peru

In the letter you should mention the Zone's value and its unique richness, the support of both national and foreign scientific institutions for research work and conservation action in the region, and the need to expand and protect the Tambopata Reserved Zone.

Map of Reserve Expansion.



Scale: 1:250,000

If you are interested in further information about the Reserve and/or the research projects, please write to the following address:-

Dr. Max Gunther
Peruvian Safaris S.A.
Garcilazo de la Vega No 1334
P O Box 10088
Lima 1 - Peru