

TReeS News

The Tambopata Reserve Society
Newsletter No. 24

May 1993

1993 TReeS Membership Reminder

TReeS annual membership runs from the 1st of January each year, unless you have joined since 1st October in the preceding year. We include with this Newsletter a Reminder to those members who have not renewed their membership recently. Membership income in the first three months of 1993 was at its lowest first-quarter level for 4 years. This will have a direct impact on the projects and initiatives that TReeS is able to fund in the Tambopata region at a time when the threats to the area appear once again to be mounting.

TReeS 1992 Accounts

The TReeS accounts for 1992, as yet unaudited, indicate that the Society had an income of about £23,050 (£13,850 in 1991). Expenditure was about £20,850 (£20,625). Approximately 84% of income went on supporting activities in Peru, 7% was spent on UK running costs, administration and the promotion of TReeS, and 9% on producing merchandise.

Income was boosted in 1992 by three sizeable donations, while members were very generous and continued to contribute a substantial part of the Society's income. However, markedly fewer members were recruited in 1992 than in previous years. A much greater proportion of the charity's income was derived from the sale of merchandise. A substantial quantity of postcards, sound tapes, T-shirts and other merchandise remained in stock at the end of the year. A small balance remained in the account of TReeS USA at the end of 1992.

Resident Naturalist News

The rainy season was one of the wettest for many years this year with 407mm recorded in December and 275mm in January. Temperatures ranged from 18-32°C in this period and relative humidity was in excess of 90%. In February rainfall was only 95mm but rose to 169mm in March, with the temperature range and relative humidity little changed from January.

Significant recent sightings include: a very large number of White-lipped and some Collared Pecaries on Main and Tapir Trail in late February; a 3m long Bushmaster on Laguna Chica trail; a Harpy Eagle very close to the Lodge in March; a large (about 6m) Black Caiman in Cocococha; Howler Monkeys have frequently been seen eating the fruits of the Pona palm; there now appear to be up to 11 individuals of Giant River Otters, possibly living in 2 distinct groups on Cocococha; a group of about 15 Coatimundis on Capriona Trail; a Spider Monkey (this species was thought to have disappeared from the TRZ in the mid-1980's); and a large number of other

monkey species.

Current and recent RN's and visitors to the Explorer's Inn include:

M.Pehovaz & L.Lopez – working on the TReeS Butterfly project.

A.Lizarraga – working on the TReeS Biological Control project.

B.Nicholson – collating the data obtained by the TReeS expedition to the upper Tambopata.

E.Ortiz – 2 assistants have continued the on-going Princeton University project investigating the productivity of Brazil-nut trees. This project now also receives some direct funding from TReeS.

J.Herring – studying reptiles.

A.Bartshi – BBC wildlife photographer of the year, undertaking a photographic study of E.Ortiz's brazil-nut project.

F.Lansing – National Geographic photographer, on a Macaw assignment.

N.Anthony – first foreign RN at the Tambopata Jungle Lodge, collecting small rodents and mouse opossums.

A.Gentry – came from Missouri Botanical Gardens, with several students from San Marcos University, working on the 'Flora of Tambopata'. The most surprising visitors were the 10 finalists in the 'Miss Puerto Maldonado' beauty contest who spent a weekend at the Lodge!

The winner of the 'El Comercio' competition to write a paper about the importance of the TRZ was Ben Collantes of La Molina University, in Lima. He will visit the Lodge shortly.

A conference for 10 teachers from several schools in P.Maldonado was organised at the Lodge by the CEB (Centro de Estudios Biologicos) last November. A full weekend of forest familiarisation activities was arranged for the teachers, many of whom come from the Sierra and have little direct experience of the jungle. O.Rada, the Ministry of Agriculture officer with responsibility for the TCRZ, also attended.

Bungalows 5 and 6 at the Lodge have deteriorated beyond repair through under use. Some materials were salvaged and will be used to repair other bungalows.

The rainforest Conservation/Anti-animal souvenir sign at P.Maldonado airport, originally paid for by TReeS, is being repainted at our expense.

Peru News

The local elections in January passed with few violent incidents, further reflecting a substantial reduction in the number of major outrages that have taken place since the arrest of A.Guzman last autumn.

Inflation has risen slightly in the first few months of 1993. Peru is now more expensive than either Bolivia or Ecuador.

Tourist numbers remain low.



President Fujimori visits Puerto Maldonado

In February President Fujimori paid a brief visit to Puerto Maldonado. His itinerary was principally concerned with agricultural matters and other 'development' projects. He held no discussions with respect to the TCRZ nor did he meet with FENAMAD (The Federation of Native People of Madre de Dios). During his visit he donated \$40,000 to the Brazil-nut Association and various pieces of equipment to FADEMAD, the small farmers federation. More significantly, he announced that the 6km road from P.Maldonado town centre to the airport was to be asphalted.

This will help to facilitate the construction of the most significant development of all – the building of a 720m long bridge over the river Madre de Dios. This is a long-standing political promise to the town, first made by F.Belaunde in the early 1980's and revived by Fujimori in his 1990 election campaign. 2,500 tonnes of steel has already been flown into P.Maldonado airport. The construction of the bridge, which will be the longest in Peru (!), has major implications for the long-discussed Transoceania Highway. Ostensibly, this will link the heart of the Brazilian Amazon to the Pacific coast and greatly facilitate the export of timber to the Far East. Though the roads north to the Brazilian border and west to Cuzco from P.Maldonado are poor, the construction of the bridge would greatly encourage investment in improving them. The Madre de Dios region of Peru, traversed by the road, would automatically be opened to 'development' as a result.

The original route for the Transoceania Highway, from Cruzeiro do Sul in Brazil to Pucallpa in Peru was shelved in the late 1980's due to the level of terrorist activities in the central Andes and to western opposition: at Emperor Hirohito's funeral, President Bush asked the Japanese not to fund the project.

TReeS/CEB is attempting to discover who is financing the construction of the bridge. There are rumours of a Peru/Japan debt deal whereby Japan would gain access to certain raw materials including tropical hardwoods.

The CEB took part in a discussion programme on Radio P.Maldonado about the President's visit. The likely impact of the bridge, agricultural developments in the area and the use of pesticides were some of the topics discussed.

It has recently been reported that Mobil Oil have been awarded an exploration contract covering much of Madre de Dios, excluding Manu National Park. Further details are being sought.

TReeS Tambopata-Candamo Expedition '92

An Ecological Survey of a Peruvian Rainforest. Martin Butt writes: "in early August 1992, with a years' preparation behind us, we were at last ready to enter the field. A team consisting of four Peruvians, a North American and three British ecologists gathered in Lima to finalise arrangements and then flew to Puerto Maldonado. Two days of frantic activity followed – stocking up with food, fuel and equipment, and confirming the

boat and native guide hire with Tambopata Nature Tours.

"For two days we travelled up the Tambopata river to the heart of the Tambopata-Candamo Reserved Zone (TCRZ). Almost continuous 'slash-and-burn' chacras along both banks were only interrupted by the lush vegetation of the Tambopata Reserved Zone during the first day. Beyond the confluence of the rio Malinowski, the largest tributary of the Tambopata and location of extensive gold extraction operations, seemingly undisturbed forest rose on either side. No signs of permanent habitation were noted above the Malinowski. At times we had to heave our 10m canoe through shallow stretches and over small rapids but often we could just sit back and enjoy the glorious vegetation and occasional glimpses of Capybara, Caiman and Macaws. We passed the small platform lodge at the Collpa and made our first camp a few kilometres up the rio Tavara, in the foothills of the Andes.

"**Study Site 1** – rio Tavara (13° 25.02' S, 69° 38.58' W): a steep-sided valley covered with low Montane forest. A four hour hike through dense vegetation up the valley sides brought us to a ridge summit at an altitude of about 1200m. To our surprise, we found a small patch of cloudforest, well below the usual lower limit for this habitat. We observed similar cloudforest 'islands' crowning neighbouring ridge peaks. The potential biological diversity of such an area, containing a matrix of isolated patches of similar habitat, is enormous and makes this part of the TCRZ a key area for greater protection.

"The undisturbed nature of this first camp site was highlighted by sightings of Tapir, a large number of giant Anteater holes and troops of Spider monkeys set against a backdrop of the distant snow-capped mountain peaks of the Andes. Bud Widdowson, the team ornithologist, felt that the discovery of certain bird species out of their normal habitat range, like Chestnut-collared Swift, Scaled Fruit Crow and Red-headed Barbet, was of particular interest as birds are constantly expanding and retracting their ranges due to human and climatic intervention.

"At each site data was collected for use in the production of a Vegetation map of the TCRZ. We took printouts of sections of a Landsat satellite image of the region into the field with us. These images provided sufficient detail of the forest canopy to enable us to choose areas of particular interest to work in. By comparing forest types recorded at these sites, which were ground-truthed using a Ground Positioning Satellite system with the satellite image, we hope to be able to map these habitats throughout the TCRZ. If successful, the map will be the only Vegetation map available covering the area and should provide valuable information for use in the zonification process of the TCRZ.

"**Study Site 2** – the Plateau (13° 21.46' S, 69° 33.65' W): a second camp was established a short distance up the Tambopata from its confluence with the Tavara, at the base of a Plateau. The

Plateau runs east-west for roughly 100 kilometres, rising steeply 1-200m from the Tambopata but sloping much more gently to the north. It consists of alternating strata of clay and sandy gravels. Our guide cut a trail 10m up the steep gravelly slope enabling us to reach the stunted, dry forest on the plateau top. The vegetation was dominated by trees not encountered elsewhere, principally members of the Laurel family ('Moena') and dwarf palms ('Ponilla').

"Numerous 'quebradas' cut into the plateau, the most impressive we encountered was at least 100m wide and deep. The micro-climate of the 'gorge' was much hotter and drier than that of the nearby plateau slopes and this might explain the almost complete absence of vegetation in the gorge. In the rich vegetation at the base of the plateau, where the quebradas joined the flood-plain, large numbers of Dragonflies, Fish, Butterflies and Amphibians were collected for identification. Puma, Brown Capuchin monkeys and King Vulture were all sighted.

"**Study Site 3 – The Collpa** (13° 08.31' S, 69° 36.46' W): several days were passed at the basic lodge operated by Tambopata Nature Tours, which has an extensive trail system and is sited adjacent to a Macaw lick or 'collpa'. This is a river cliff of soft clay at which Macaws in their hundreds come to extract minerals essential to their digestive systems. Many of the birds nest in a nearby area of Mauritia palm, the young being raised in holes made in the curious bulges found near the top of the trunks of these trees.

"Studies were made of floodplain forest; swamp forest, dominated by the Mauritia palms; and bamboo forest, which was much more extensive than anywhere else along the river. Particular emphasis was placed on investigating the little studied area to the east of the river.

"**Study Site 4 – The Small Cocha** (12° 59.74' S,

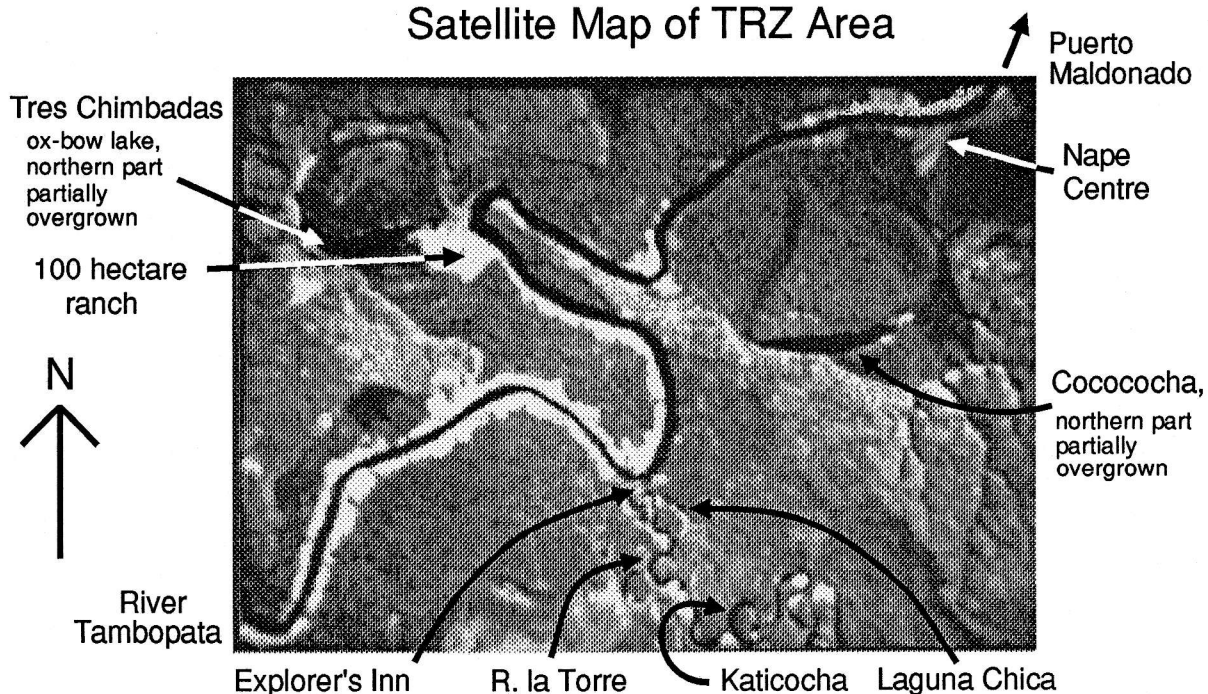
69° 29.58' W): a lowland forest area just upriver from the confluence of the Malinowski with the Tambopata. Studies were made of the flood-plain and Terra Firme Clay forests. There were wonderful views of the unusual Hoatzin along the fringes of the cocha as well as Rufescent Tiger herons and Anhingas (Snake bird). Evidence was found of many large mammals, including Jaguarundi and Capybara, despite the proximity of the site to the gold miners on the Malinowski. One member of the team was fortunate enough to encounter a Jaguar sunbathing.

"Insects were a major problem throughout the trip. A local remedy was applied to the removal of a tick from the ear canal of one of the Peruvians. The first step involved blowing cigarette smoke forcefully into the invaded orifice. This was followed by tilting the head to one side, inserting a large paper cone into the ear and setting the open end alight. Memorable was the sight of a large flaming cone protruding from the head of a primatologist. After several attempts at fumigation, the offending arachnid was then extracted with a pair of tweezers.

"**Study Site 5 – Tambopata Reserved Zone (Explorer's Inn):** lowland forest at 200-250m. A few days were spent at the lodge to undertake an initial assessment and collation of the specimens collected.

"The final report of the Expedition is due out in late 1993. The Vegetation map of the TCRZ produced from combining forest type distribution data with satellite imagery will, hopefully, provide conservationists with valuable leverage for the protection of this area. There is no doubt that this region is of fabulous ecological diversity. The results of this expedition will be used by the groups concerned with the future of the TCRZ to try to ensure a sustainable future for its peoples and wildlife."

Satellite Map of TRZ Area



"Millenium" – A Review

In early January BBC2 screened the first programme in a lavish anthropological series entitled "Millenium", produced by Cultural Survival (a US group with some similar aims to those of Survival International). The series was reported to have cost nearly \$1M per programme but this did not save it from a variable Sunday afternoon slot.

It was presented by David Maybury-Lewis, the head of Cultural Survival, who, 20 years earlier had achieved a close bond with a previously uncontacted tribe in Brazil. In the first programme he set out to contact and achieve a similar relationship with the Mashco-Piro living deep inside Manu National Park. The film expedition proceeded despite the fact that FENAMAD has decided not to allow native people within Manu National Park to be filmed. It also ignored the fact that the Mashco-Piro have specifically shunned contact with the outside world for many years and choose to live in the most isolated part of the Park.

Assisting the programme makers was a former Head of Manu National Park, now the WWF representative for the Park through WWF's Peruvian counterpart organisation (FPCN), who would have been fully aware of these matters.

The film team, however, approached FENAMAD and asked for permission to film. This was refused. The entire filming schedule, of a series traversing the world, was threatened. After much persuasion FENAMAD agreed that the crew could film but only from a distance (powerful zoom lenses largely overcame this), and that a payment should be made for the right to film native people.

Limited contact was made with three Mashco-Piro women who have lived outside their communities for some time but no communication of any note was established with the main group of Mashco-Piro. The programme made no reference to the nature of the long-term projects that would need to be established, if contact had been formally made. Instead it ended with Maybury-Lewis, in a remarkable action for an eminent anthropologist, leaving a heap of metal pots, pans and machetes in the middle of the jungle as a 'gift' for the Mashco-Piro to find!

Footnote – it is understood that WWF/FPCN have received major UK or EC government funding for the continuation of their work in the Manu National Biosphere Reserve. Ironically, this will be concentrated on improving the standard of living of recently arrived colonists in the buffer zone areas, who are perceived as the greatest threat to the wildlife of the Park. The native people of the Park will receive minimal support as their needs are not considered appropriate to be addressed at this point!

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

T-shirts – Photo enclosed with some Newsletters. Also available from the address below, if required.

'Earth Warriors' (Purple design on unbleached cotton, XL only): – £8 each, or 3 for £20. A limited edition of 100 is produced in any one colour.

Martin Jordan 'Scarlet Macaws' painting TReeS T-shirt design (scarlet macaws against a blue background on bleached cotton): L and XL – £9 each, 3

for £25.

We are also able to offer two other designs featuring paintings by Martin Jordan – **'Toucan'** (XL only), **'Tree Frog'** (S only) & **'Toad'** (B & W design, XL only) (on bleached cotton) – £10 each.

Postcards: Tree-frog, Tapir, Hummingbird/Heliconia, Hoatzin, Butterfly and AMETRA 2001 Centre postcards: 10 for £2.50, 60 for £12.

TReeS Sound Tapes (recorded by Simon Grove at the TRZ): **'Wildlife Sounds'** (general interest) & **'Birds of South-east Peru'** (Birders Sound guide): £5.50 each, £10 for 2, £20 for any 5.

'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 6 – £2, please specify the numbers required.

'The Budget Travellers Guide to Peru and Northern Bolivia', 7th edition. £4.95 per copy, including a £1 donation to TReeS.

All prices include postage and packing.

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

South American Bird Prints

Two high quality prints produced to the highest standards using fade resistant inks by Eustace Barnes are on offer to TReeS members. The prints feature the **Andean Cock-of-the-Rock** and the rare **Rufous-headed Woodpecker** set in their natural habitats. The offer is being made to support the work of TReeS in Peru. Each print costs £25 (20% to TReeS), plus £2.50 p&p. For further details contact:- Eustace Barnes (0702 705557) 2 Mile End Green, Dartford, Kent, DA2 8EB.

TReeS USA – New Address

We are grateful to Mike and Amity Doolittle for looking after the basic administration of TReeS USA for the last couple of years. **Bud Widdowson**, a former RN and member of the TReeS expedition to the Upper Tambopata last autumn, takes over. His address is-

5455 Agostino Court, Concord, CA 94521, USA.

Forthcoming Events

TReeS Meeting – 19th June, 2-5pm, Meeting Room 1, Youth Hostel, Prince St., central Bristol (on the waterfront, near the Arnolfini Arts Centre). Martin Butt will talk about the TReeS expedition to the Upper Tambopata last autumn, and John Forrest about current local issues.

June 5th, World Environment Day, various events around the country.

June 6th, BBC2 8.30pm, '2 seconds to Midnight', a general overview of the global environment as it stands today with a look ahead into the future.

'Life and Death in the Rainforest', C4, sometime in the next 3 months.

'At Play in the Fields of the Lord' is now available on video.

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

Patron – Norman Myers.



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