

TReeS News

The Tambopata Reserve Society
Newsletter No. 25

October 1993

Resident Naturalist News

From the Explorer's Inn:

In April there was 95mm of rain; in May 135mm, though half fell on one day; in June 33mm, all falling in the first week of the month. The temperature ranges were 22-28°C in April; 20-27°C in May, though there were friajes on 2 nights with temperatures falling to 12-13°C; 18-26°C in June with 2 further friajes.

Significant Recent Sightings include – Sightings remain good with cat tracks encountered frequently along Main and Tapir trails; 2 large forest tortoises, which are rarely seen, were encountered; there have been numerous sightings of a variety of monkey species throughout the TRZ and the giant river otters remain on Cocacochoa.

Current and Recent RN's and visitors to the Explorer's Inn include –

J.Herring – a comparison between diurnal and nocturnal dung beetles and their ectoparasite load.

H.McGregor – Studying nocturnal animals and preparing a tourist guide to them.

S.Jones – studying turtle nesting behaviour.

R.Dietrich – studying Red Brocket deer.

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

The Collpa – up to a dozen researchers are studying Macaws under the auspices of Tambopata Nature Tours.

Biological Control Project – A.Lizarraga, the project coordinator, has just returned to Peru from an international Biological Control Congress in Cairo. The early findings of the project, funded by TReeS, in the Tambopata area were presented to the Congress.

Butterfly Project – field investigations have been suspended while the initial research is reviewed and the long-term future of the project is considered. The possibility of importing pupae, sustainably bred in small gardens on the chacras of local people, now appears to be much more realistic than originally thought. Many successful examples exist in other countries of small-holders breeding pupae in enclosed gardens of just a few square metres. Sizeable revenues can be generated from the breeding of just a few pupae of the most attractive species.

The logistical aspects of pupae importation are under investigation as well as the long-term co-ordination of the project on this basis. Current discussions concern the establishment of a Butter-

fly House and Rainforest Education Centre in Puerto Maldonado. Not only would this act as the co-ordination centre for the project and a breeding centre in its own right but also as an education centre for the schools of P.Maldonado and for tourists passing through the town - there are few attractions for tourists in the town at present.

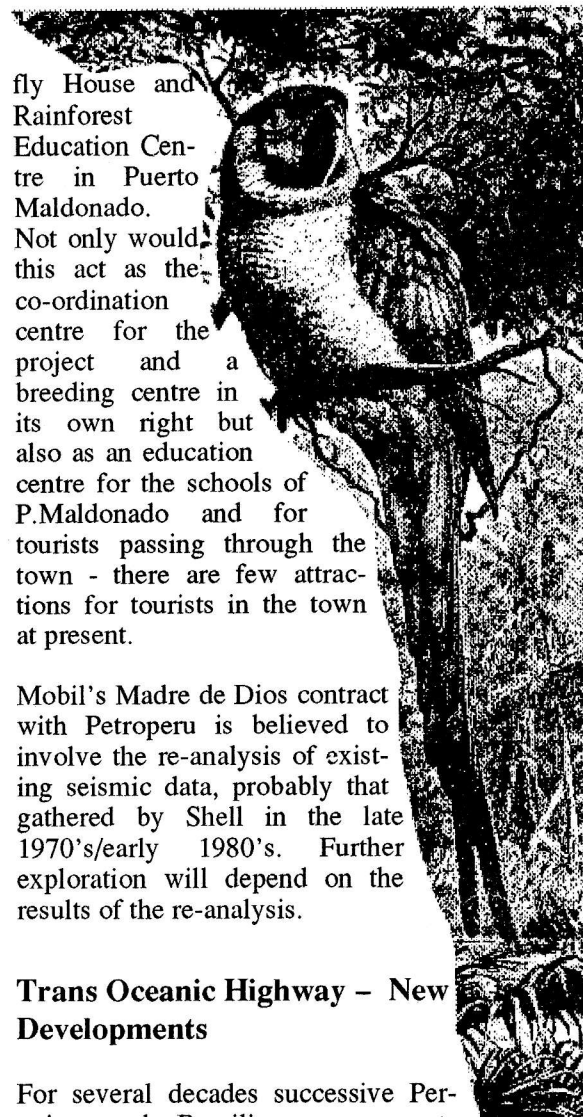
Mobil's Madre de Dios contract with Petroperu is believed to involve the re-analysis of existing seismic data, probably that gathered by Shell in the late 1970's/early 1980's. Further exploration will depend on the results of the re-analysis.

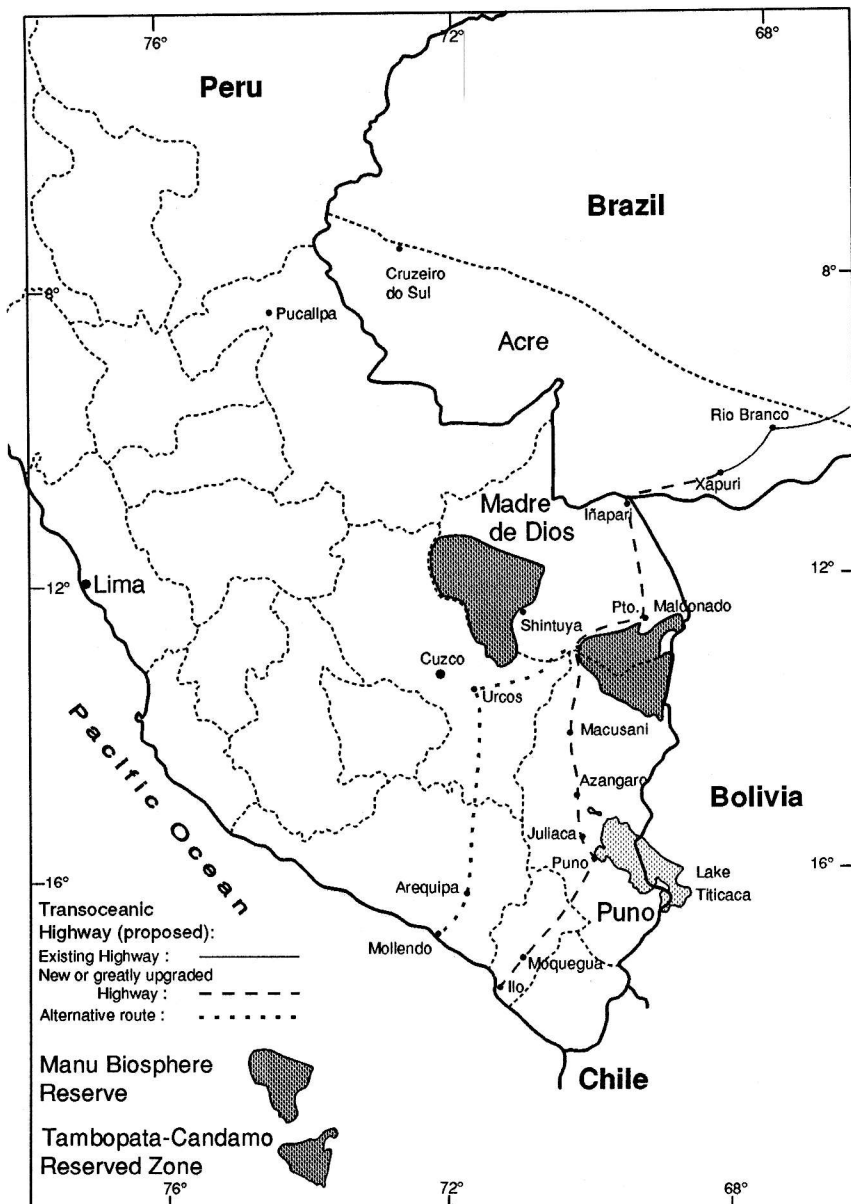
Trans Oceanic Highway – New Developments

For several decades successive Peruvian and Brazilian governments have harboured plans to construct a 6,000km highway traversing the South American continent, effectively linking the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, crossing the daunting barriers of the Amazon jungle and the Andes mountains en route. Initially seen as a symbolic action which would finally 'conquer' the Amazon frontier region, the trade route potential for the highway has assumed far greater significance in recent years. Far Eastern markets especially, are eager to gain easier access to the timber resources and agricultural heartland of Brazil.

During the 1970's and 80's new highways tore through the Brazilian Amazon with little thought for the natural environment. The original plans for a Transoceanic highway, from Cruzeiro do Sul in Brazil via Pucallpa to Lima, were suspended in the late 1980's following an international outcry at the destruction caused by the BR-364 in Rondonia, in western Brazil, and the growing influence of the Sendero Luminoso terrorist group in the central Andes.

A more southerly route is now favoured following the extension of the BR-317 from Rio Branco to Xapuri, in Brazil. Xapuri is less than 300 kms from Inapari, in the department of Madre de Dios, on the Peru/Brazil border. As a result, the long-term future of the Tambopata region and, to a





certain extent, the Manu region - two of the world's out-standing reservoirs of biodiversity - is being brought into question. The rapid colonisation, which accompanies Highway construction, also poses a huge threat to the few remaining native people in the area who will find it harder to maintain their traditional practices and values.

The plans for a network of highways opening up the Peruvian Amazon date back to the regime of Pres.F.Belaunde in the early 1960's. Central to his land reform schemes for Andean peasants was the colonisation of the slopes of the eastern Andes and Upper Amazon. Access was to be provided by a new highway running the length of the country with numerous feeder roads - the 'Carretera Marginales' (Marginal roads). Few sections were completed and those that were constructed were not linked effectively into the national road network. Ironically, the area where most construction took place - the Huallaga valley - has subsequently become Peru's principal coca growing region.

In Madre de Dios two roads were built during this period and they remain the only roads of note, into an area larger than Wales, to this day. Both roads

are uni-directional on alternate days and for 4-8 months a year are impassable. A dirt track also runs due north from Puerto Maldonado to Iñapari on the Brazilian border but is in an even worse state of repair. Ground transport elsewhere is undertaken by river.

Madre de Dios has remained a remote region, oil and gas explorations in the early 1980's drew a blank and the most significant growth industry over the last decade has been gold-mining, with large numbers of seasonal migrants arriving annually from the Andes once the wet season ends. The movement of peasant colonists from the Andes escalated in the 1980's as the influence of Sendero Luminoso in the mountains spread southward. Between 1985 and 1992 a further 10 kms of forest along the Tambopata river, for example, was cleared and occupied by colonists. The vast majority are subsistence farmers living off 'chacras' (farms) of 4-10 hectares. Few ranches have been created in the area, as in Brazil.

Like most Amazonian peoples, the native people of Madre de Dios have undergone a process of severe deculturalisation during the twentieth century. It began with the rubber boom at the turn of the century and has been compounded by the activities of various religious groups since the 1950's. Though they remain at the bottom of the Peruvian social ladder, they have found a greater voice and confidence since the mid-1980's. The native people retain many aspects of

their traditional lifestyle and are very aware of the fate that has befallen their counterparts in large areas of the Brazilian Amazon.

In April 1993 President Fujimori announced that a huge bridge would be built over the river Madre de Dios. At 720 metres it would be the longest bridge in Peru and would link two, virtually impassable, dirt roads. Shortly afterwards TReeS obtained a copy of a proposal to construct a Transoceanic Highway drawn up by Odebrecht, a major Brazilian multi-national construction firm. The estimated cost of completing the route, with associated projects, is \$1.1bn. 1210 kms of road will need to be built or greatly upgraded, 920 kms of which lie within Peru. A traffic flow of 9-10 trucks per hour in each direction along the Highway is anticipated.

The routing follows the existing dirt road due south from the Brazilian border to P.Maldonado and then the Cuzco road, along the northern boundary of the TCRZ, as far as Puente Iñambari. The favoured option is for a new road to be built up the Iñambari and Sangaban valleys, along the south-western boundary of the TCRZ, and over the eastern Cordilleras of the Andes to Azangaro

on the Altiplano. Existing roads will be upgraded via Juliaca, Puno and Moquegua to Ilo on the coast. The alternative routing, which is 100kms longer, involves the upgrading of existing roads from P.Inambari to Urcos, near Cuzco, before turning due south to Arequipa and Matarani on the coast.

All the evidence from the construction of similar roads in Amazonia indicates that the present population of P.Maldonado of roughly 25,000 will grow considerably. The upriver incursions into the rainforest to create chacras and extract timber would increase greatly. This bodes ill for the native people, 10 native communities lie within close proximity to the road, and colonists of long-standing in the area, unless they can participate fully in formulating a development management plan. If the activities of new colonists can be kept to within 50 metres of the road and restrictions are placed on certain activities, then the environmental impact could be minimised. However, only \$40m, less than 4% of the total budget in the proposal, is allocated to the environment and native people and the likelihood of this happening is remote.

A small article based on the above will appear in Geographical Magazine, probably in December.

Alwyn Gentry & Theodore Parker III – An Obituary

Alwyn Gentry, the field botanist, and Theodore Parker III, the biologist, were two of the major players in South American rainforest conservation. Their deaths, in a plane crash in southern Ecuador in early August, is a tragic loss to both their chosen fields and efforts to retain many outstanding rainforest areas.

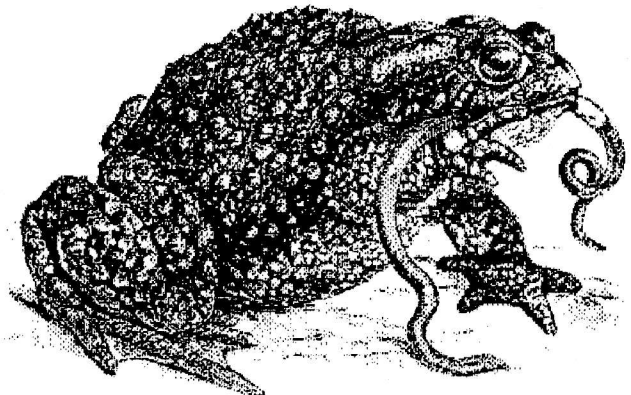
Both men had extensive field experience and contacts throughout South America but will be especially missed by those working in the Tambopata region of south-eastern Peru. Since the mid-1970's they were regular visitors to the Explorer's Inn jungle lodge, adjoining the Tambopata Reserved Zone (TRZ). They were foremost in the research and species identification which established the TRZ as, arguably, possessing the greatest biodiversity on earth (580+ bird species, over 150 tree species in a one hectare plot, 1230+ butterfly species,). They also provided tremendous inspiration to the many British scientists who have stayed at the TRZ over the last 15 years and were fortunate enough to coincide with one of their trips.

A walk with either of them along the extensive trail system from the lodge led you not only to marvel at the wonders of the rainforest but at their ability to assimilate and recall a vast mass of detailed information. Gentry's knowledge of the almost infinite flora of South America was unsurpassed. He collected over 70,000 plant specimens and, though he had over 200 publications to his name, much knowledge remained unwritten and has been lost with him. Visitors to the Explorer's Inn may have coincided with one of the many

workshops he ran there for foreign and Peruvian researchers.

Parker's first expedition to Peru was in 1973 at the age of 20. He returned to Peru regularly, often with small groups of tourists to the Tambopata area. He was able to recognise virtually all bird species found within the TRZ by call alone and was said to be able to recall over 4,000 South American species in total. Two Peruvian birds, the Ash-throated Antwren (*Herpsilochmus parkeri*) and a sub-species of the Coppery Metaltail (a hummingbird) were named after him. The completion of the "Flora of Tambopata" by Gentry and the "Birds of Peru" by Parker will be a near impossible task in the short-term in their absence.

Aside from their specific scientific interests both were renowned conservationists, in the broadest sense. Parker established the Rapid Assessment Program (RAP), on behalf of Conservation International, which took select teams of scientists (including Gentry) to investigate remote and endangered areas. In 1992 both were members of the RAP team into the upper regions of the vast and little known Tambopata-Candamo Reserved Zone, the first scientific expedition into this remote region. Their contribution to the conservation strategies that are currently under discussion with respect to the future of this unique area and for many others in South America, will be greatly missed.



Conservation and Sustainable Development in the Manu Biosphere Reserve – Discussions between TReeS and WWF-UK

In conjunction with FENAMAD, TReeS has recently held discussions with WWF-UK about their current proposal for the Manu Biosphere Reserve. The project aims to prevent the inhabitants of Alto Madre de Dios, which forms part of the Park's Buffer Zone, plundering the resources of Manu National Park to the detriment of the environment and the indigenous peoples living in the Park. However, TReeS was concerned about the degree of involvement of native people in both the project planning processes and the individual projects. There are 5 native communities in Alto MDD which is bordered to the south by the newly established Amarakaeri Communal Reserve which, in turn, stretches southward towards the TCRZ.

TReeS was concerned about the orientation of the projects towards colonists, only one small project is based in a native community; the involvement of 'Adventistas' in the only native community where a project is planned; the likelihood that more colonists would be attracted to the area, presuming that the projects are a success; the lack of reference to the establishment of Communal Reserves – a highly significant achievement for native people, especially as proposed amendments to the Peruvian Constitution are likely to reduce existing native land rights.

TReeS highlighted to WWF that there are many local organisations experienced with development projects in the area whom WWF, as an environmental organisation, should consult.

The full project document and the comments submitted by TReeS to WWF are available in the TReeS libraries.

TReeS Merchandise – some unusual Xmas gifts!

T-shirts – (photos available, if required, prior to purchase) –

'Earth Warriors' (Blue design on unbleached cotton, XL only): – £8 each, or 3 for £20.

Martin Jordan 'Scarlet Macaws' painting TReeS T-shirt design (scarlet macaws against a blue background on bleached cotton, XL) – £9 each, 3 for £25. We can also offer two other colour designs featuring paintings by Martin – **'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 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

High quality prints featuring the Andean Cock-of-the-Rock and the rare Rufous-headed Woodpecker set in their natural habitats, are on offer to members in support of TReeS work 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.

Word-processing & Translating

Due to an increasing number of documents coming through from Peru, we would also be extremely pleased to hear from anyone who can

assist our regulars with some rapid word-processing and translating, on a voluntary basis, every so often. If you could offer both this would be ideal. If you can assist, please write to J.Forrest with your phone number.



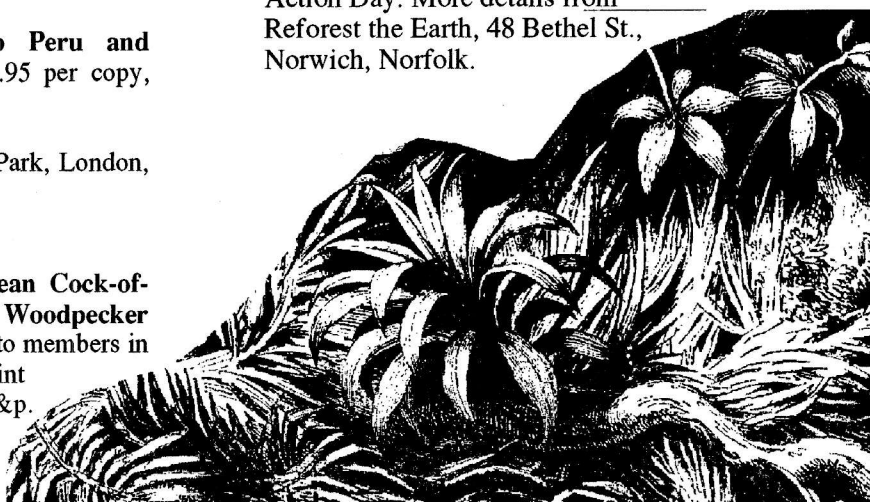
Forthcoming Events

TReeS Meeting – The Peru Support Group have organised a Conference on 30th October, 11am – 5pm, at St. Anne's College, Woodstock Road, Oxford. Entrance – about £5. Political, economic and human rights issues in Peru will be discussed. TReeS will have a display, all members welcome. A TReeS meeting is planned end '93/early '94, with reports back from recent RN's – details in the next Newsletter.

October – 'Rainbow Warrior' (Greenpeace flagship) sailing up the Amazon.

3-7th November – 2nd London Environmental Film Festival, showing a wide variety of international films, at the Royal Geographic Society.

December 10th – National Mahogany Action Day. More details from Reforest the Earth, 48 Bethel St., Norwich, Norfolk.



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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