

The Tambopata Reserve Society Newsletter

Anglo-Peruvian Society Expeditions Evening

Featuring talks on TReeS Ramos Project Tambopata and the Durham University trip to Manu. Monday 22 March 6.30 – 9.00 pm at Canning House, 2 Belgrave Square, London, SW1. Nearest tube: Hyde Park Corner. Tickets available from 'the Anglo-Peruvian Society', PO Box 13688, London, SW19 5ZL. Price £5.00. Please state that you are a TReeS member.

TReeS Annual General Meeting – June 1999. Details to be announced in the next newsletter.

Participatory Rural Analysis in Communities in the Tambopata Candamo Reserved Zone

A grant of US\$897 from the Rainforest Alliance in New York allowed TReeS to fund the first stage of a new project with rural communities on the borders of the Tambopata Candamo Reserved Zone. The project was developed by FADEMAD, the Federation of small farmers of Madre de Dios, and was carried out in the four communities on the Tambopata river between La Torre river and Baltimore (La Torre, Sachavacayoc, Condénado and Baltimore) plus five communities along the Puerto Maldonado – Cusco road. A total of 119 people took part.

In the first stage of the project (November 1998 - January 1999) FADEMAD directors and technical staff held workshops in the communities, part of a Participatory Rural Analysis – a standard process used in development projects by which a community can analyse its problems and begin to take responsibility for finding solutions. In this project, participants were asked to write down any problems on pieces of card, and the problems were then ranked by order of priority. All communities were also asked to visualise what they would like their situation to be by the year 2015.

The four communities on the Tambopata river have recently been involved in a clash with a tourism company which was allegedly trying to force them off their land through intimidation. As a result, problems with external companies ranked high in their perceptions of problems; however, they also expressed the need for support in developing their own tourism operations. Other needs identified and prioritised by the communities along the river included a need for training and technical support of farming methods, the need for better community organisation, and a need to improve the tree nurseries in the communities. The visions of the participants for the future included to continue farming through integrated plots; to ensure basic community services; to process agricultural produce; and to work in ecotourism.

Communities along the road also expressed a wish for more training and technical support, and placed more emphasis on the need for improved farming technology, new markets and more flexible credit systems. Communities in both regions identified the poor level of community organisation as a major factor needing improvement.

The overall project consists of three stages, of which the first is now complete. The next two stages will involve training for farmers to develop plans to tackle the problems they have identified; and finally the identification of ways to seek funding to carry out their plans. **A total of US\$6,492 (£4058) has been requested during 1999 to complete these activities.**

New Law for the Peruvian Amazon

A new draft law for the Promotion of Integral Development of the Peruvian Amazon has caused strikes and street protests throughout the region. Although the stated principles of the new law include the conservation of biological diversity, sustainable development, and respect for the identity, culture and organisation of indigenous communities, it has been widely criticised for failing to address these issues, and on the contrary, is seen as a move to centralise power and encourage private investors for large-scale developments, to the disadvantage of local communities and without environmental safeguards.

The national newspaper La Republica (27/12/98) reported that the law will introduce a series of tax breaks benefiting private investors for large-scale developments such as commercial agriculture, cattle ranching, trade, fish-farming and construction, while failing to give the same benefits to local peoples. The promotion of private investment and development will be overseen by an executive committee consisting of three members, all to be appointed directly by central government. There appears to have been no consultation with the regions involved, and regional government departments will have even less influence in development planning than has been the case until now.

The president of the Peruvian Amazon Research Institute (IIAP), the Vice-President of the Indigenous Association for the Peruvian Amazon, and the president of the Centre for Theological Studies of the Amazon (CETA) are among the many who have spoken out against the law. On the other hand, there have been 24-hour general strikes throughout the departments of Tumbes and Ucayali, and complaints from regions in Cajamarca, Puno and La Libertad, protesting that they are not included in the geographical region covered by the new law.

Madre de Dios is one of the main areas covered by the law. A first protest march was held in Puerto Maldonado on 18th January.

Other important laws coming up for consideration include a law of indigenous communities and a forest law.

Exploring the Pampas del Heath

I have lived for the best part of 4 years in Tambopata, first as a Resident Naturalist and then as a research biologist, and have been fortunate enough to have visited many areas of Madre de Dios, although the solitary river Heath had always alluded me. This river not only forms the border between Peru and Bolivia but is also the zone or ecotone between two great ecosystems, the rainforest of Tambopata and the pampas grasslands of Madidi. Peru itself only has a few square kilometers of this moist grassy habitat, which is home to giant Pampas Deer, equally giant Anacondas and rarities such as the Maned Wolf.

A window of opportunity to organise a trip to go in search of these exciting creatures arose recently as a group of us - co-ordinators and assistants of Project Tambopata and resident naturalists from Explorer's Inn and Tambopata Jungle Lodge - sat relaxing in Puerto Maldonado. Talk spread from Jaguars, which we had seen recently, to Giant Anteaters - which we hadn't but would dearly have liked to. Apparently the "Pampas del Heath" was as sure a place as any to sight these "flagged-bears", as they are called locally. Eight of us put what money we had left on the table and vowed to leave at dawn on the 28th of November.

On that day we set-off early in a 14m-long boat armed with a 55 HP motor, 120 gallons of fuel and enough food to last us a good 8 days. With us was our driver, Teo, and our cook, Zenon, famed for his pancakes! Our first point of call was San Antonio, a guard post on the river Heath, where we picked up our guide Don Dario Cruz, a man who used to hunt Jaguars for a living a few decades ago but who has since seen the light and now helps to protect the flora and fauna of this area.

The gateway to the largest of the two Peruvian pampas' is via the guard hut known as Juliaca, which we reached at noon on our second day of travel. Here we set up camp and bathed in a nearby stream, reminiscing the Red Howler Monkeys and Macaws we had seen earlier at a salt-lick. In the evening we sat around as usual as Don Dario recalled his numerous adventures and anecdotes of hunting Jaguar and White-lipped Peccaries, tales of Tapir-riding Jaguars and the story of Shajao, a famous native ese-eja warrior and leader, whose ghost still roamed these parts.

At dawn we set out for the pampas. A 30-minute walk separated the river from the the grassy expanse of the pampas. We arrived early as the silver-tipped grass began to shimmer in the rising breeze and for the first time in a long while our eyes focused on a distant horizon. The pampas here is about 8 km wide and 15 km long and is dotted with Aguaje palms and termite mounds, some of which reached heights of 3 metres or so. A solitary trail led off in the direction of a hidden pool. As we walked we observed many new creatures and plants, many of which were nameless to us. Every now and again a familiar sound (a Macaw or Hawk) would reassure us that we weren't too far away from the forest we knew. It appears that many forest creatures feed, find refuge and even breed in the pampas, although it definitely has a fauna all of its own.

At the pool, full of crystal clear water, we bathed, set up our tents and explored the area until dusk. After dark and armed with a spotlight we encountered Great Potoos and various species of Nightjar. A Maned Wolf was also heard in the distance but unfortunately not seen. On returning to the pool we tucked into our dinner and only then did we see one of the creatures that we had really come to find. Stretched out along the length of the pool was a 7 m-long Anaconda! Over the course of two hours it slowly swam around the pool and finally slithered out onto the bank a couple of metres from our tents where it lay digesting something large! We finished all our rolls of film before we decided to leave this impressive creature to its own devices and retired to bed.

In the morning we were all still alive and the Anaconda was nowhere to be seen. On our slow walk back to the river we spotted a male Pampas Deer feeding behind a termite mound - it shot off through the tall grass but we saw enough of it to count the 8 spikes on its antlers and another pampas special was ours! In a muddy section of the trail we found the footprints of both a Maned Wolf (perhaps the one we heard the night before) and those of the Giant Anteater, which unfortunately did not show themselves.

Back near the river we explored an oxbow lake and practised our Caiman calling with success - two large (4 m-long) Black Caiman were our prize. A little later a family of nine Giant Otters were observed as they passed by. The number of lakes along the Heath is extraordinary and the river basin must harbour a good many of these sleek creatures.

We navigated several days upriver until we ran low on fuel a mere 6 hours from our destination, the Rio Blanco, situated in the foothills of the Andes. We should have taken 150 gallons of petrol come to think of it!

On our return downriver we spotted yet another Anaconda, this one sunbathing on the bank. Our last night we spent on a sandy beach near a large mammal salt-lick. A few intrepid members of the group camped overlooking this collpa and were fortunate enough to see a large silent Tapir walk past them in the moonlight unperturbed by their presence.

Throughout the journey we kept a detailed count of all the interesting creatures we had sighted. The results of which are outlined below and which will never be forgotten.

Mammals		Birds	
Red Howler Monkey	31	Scarlet Macaw	8
Brown Capuchin Monkey	19	Red-and-green Macaw	69
Common Squirrel Monkey	10 groups	Blue-and-yellow Macaw	80
Night Monkey	10	Capped Heron	23
Dusky Titi Monkey	14	Cocoi Heron	11
Saddleback Tamarin	4 groups	Horned Screamer	15
Black Spider Monkey	3 groups		
	(heard)	Reptiles	
Pampas Deer	1	Anaconda	2
Giant Otter	9	Black Caiman	3
Tapir	1	Side-necked Turtle	295
Capybara	37		

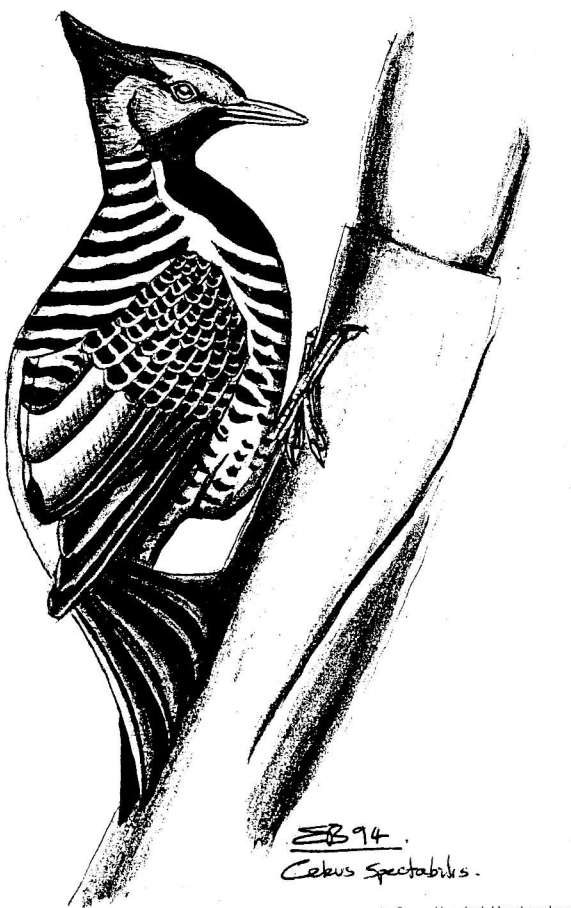
Chris Kirkby (TReeS Ramos)

Peru News

In October 1998 the Peruvian and Ecuadorian governments signed an accord to end their long-running border conflict. However, there has been opposition to it in some northern Peruvian departments, including strikes and demonstrations.

The Peruvian government has allocated \$4bn to targeting poverty over the next few years to help the 2.6m Peruvians deemed to be living in extreme poverty and the 4.5m living below the poverty line.

Peru's international debt now stands at \$29bn. In 1996 Peru was required to pay \$2.5b in debt service, which was 30% of annual government revenues and more than was spent on health care. Furthermore, for every \$1 received in new aid grants, \$12.27 was paid in debt service.



Rufous-Headed Woodpecker

TReeS e-mail links

If you would like to receive the TReeS Newsletter by e-mail in future, please advise your name, address and e-mail contact address when mailing other correspondence to us.

TReeS is currently establishing a website to provide information about the Tambopata area, research opportunities there, the projects supported and other local developments. More details will be given in the next Newsletter.

Project Bahuaja

A few kilometres up the Tambopata river from Explorers Inn, in the community of La Torre, stands Bahuaja Lodge, a new research centre and ecolodge developed by local resident Hilmer Huinga and his British biologist wife, Tina.

The lodge is built on land belonging to Hilmer's family and construction began two years ago, using only locally supplied, sustainably harvested materials such as Palmiche palm thatch and Caña Brava (cane). Slowly (and backbreakingly!) the lodge began to take shape. At the present time the lodge consists of three bungalows, a dining room, toilets and a large kitchen. Recently a M*A*S*H style shower was added, although river bathing is still favoured by many as a refreshing way to end the day. A kerosene fridge (for the all-important cold beers) and a fast 55hp engine for the boat have been purchased, so compared with the early days, it's now very luxurious! For 1999, funds permitting, a large bungalow with a separate study room and a large toilet/shower area will be built to accommodate the scientists and volunteers taking part in Project Bahuaja.

Project Bahuaja is an exciting new venture supported by TReeS, which aims to conduct an in-depth assessment of the flora and fauna in the forest around Bahuaja Lodge. The initial study will last two years and cover mammals, birds, herps (amphibians and reptiles), plants and insects. The studies will be largely undertaken by paying volunteers, supervised by specialist research co-ordinators based permanently at the Lodge. The volunteers need no experience, as training and jungle orientation will be provided. The project will be split into 'phases' of three months, and volunteers can select which area and phase they would prefer to join. Eventually, the project should provide an important baseline for continuous monitoring and further investigation into rainforest dynamics.

Apart from the scientific value of the research, Project Bahuaja and the Lodge aim to give something back to the area, and will support the local community by employing all local staff, and by purchasing fresh produce from local farmers and co-operatives. Students from universities in Peru will also be offered the chance to work on the project, subsidised by the paying volunteers.

In the future, it is hoped that a neighbouring chacra (smallholding) can be bought and used to make experimental agricultural plots available for research, and to provide information to aid local subsistence farmers.

If you would like more information about the project or lodge, please email to project.bahuaja@hotmail.com or write with a large SAE to Tina Smith de Huinga, 70 Digby Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 3NL

Donations to Project Bahuaja can be made via TReeS (computer/photographic equipment, solar panels and motor pumps are amongst the current funding priorities).

Tina Smith de Huinga

New 1999 Membership Rates

Members are reminded that new membership rates came into effect from the 1st of January 1999:

- * Tree-frog - £10 / \$15
- * Hoatzin - £25 / \$40[#]
- * Tapir - £100[#] / \$175[#] ([#] unchanged)

Any members who have not renewed their membership since October 1998 are requested to renew their subscriptions as soon as possible at the above rates.

**** The base funding provided by subscriptions is an essential element of our funding ****

TReeS 1998 Accounts

The TReeS 1998 accounts, as yet unaudited, indicate that the Society had an income of about £13,600 (£34,300 in 1997), whilst expenditure was about £23,700 (£31,900 in 1997). Some funds continued to be handled for Project Tambopata.

Additional expenditure resulted from the change in the TReeS representative in Peru, who became more active in sourcing new projects. A greater variety of projects were supported in 1998. Audited accounts will be available at the AGM later in the year.

Almost 90.5% (92%) of expenditure went on supporting activities in Peru, 5% (2%) on the production of merchandise and 4.5% (6%) on UK administration. A large quantity of merchandise remains in stock. A small contribution to general funds was made by TReeS USA.

Total global membership is now just over 500 individuals.

Peter Bond Remembered

It was with great sadness that we recently learnt of the death of TReeS member Peter Bond. Peter joined TReeS in the late 1980's following his daughter's participation in the RN programme. On retiring he devoted himself to assisting several charities with his computer graphics skills. Peter word-processed several substantial reports, put together the graphics for the TReeS leaflet, produced nearly every Newsletter over the last six years, and the graphics for several TReeS publications. All of these helped to raise the profile of TReeS and were crucial in helping the Society to achieve its present level of support for projects in Peru.

TReeS UK Libraries

Forthcoming deposits will include: a report entitled 'Arachnids which Prey on Amphibians'; a report on a TReeS workshop in Puerto Maldonado outlining the activities of the Society and ways in which local groups can apply for support; a report entitled 'Ecology & Entomological Diversity of Shrub Species in Tambopata'; and several short papers from scientific journals relating to the Tambopata region.

TReeS Merchandise - order now for the Summer !

* **New - "Tambopata Map Guide"** - a fold out guide, with a beautiful full colour illustrated map of the Tambopata region. It gives a brief history of the area and details of the tourist facilities in and around P. Maldonado. Price: **£3.00** (available in English or Spanish).

* **'Macaw T-shirt'** - this very popular T-shirt is now back in stock. Price: **£7.50** (S) and **£8.00** (XL), bleached or unbleached.

* **'Peru: Amazonia under threat'** - a new briefing from the Peru Support Group. It covers environmental, political, economic and social conflicts within the Peruvian Amazon. Price: **£3.00**

* **'Amazon' cards** - currently sold out.

All prices include postage and packing. All other TReeS merchandise as per the listing sent out with the last Newsletter.



Cymbilaimus sanctamae EB 96

Bamboo Antshrike
Endemic S.E. Peru

This edition of the Newsletter has been generously sponsored by -

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Patron - Norman Myers

The work of TReeS has been endorsed/supported by the Rainforest Alliance, IUCN, IWGIA, Helpage, OXFAM, Anglo-Peruvian Society, Body Shop International PLC, Earthlove Fund, Reuters Foundation, the Yew Tree Gallery and the Lindeth Charitable Trust.