

The Tambopata Reserve Society Newsletter

New TReeS address * Important *

All general correspondence, merchandise orders, etc, for TReeS should with effect from the 1st of June 2001 be addressed to: **TReeS, c/o J.Forrest, P.O.Box 33153, London, NW3 4DR.**

TReeS Annual General Meeting

Saturday 7th July, William Ellis School, London NW5 1RN, 2-5pm (Nearest tube station – Kentish Town, buses C2 or 214 or C11). Helen Newing will be the keynote speaker, reporting back on her recent visit to TReeS supported projects. Please try to attend if you possibly can.

A visit to the Nape Cultural Centre

During a recent trip to Peru, TReeS committee member Helen Newing spent three days at the Nape Centre reviewing progress and discussing TReeS' support with the team who work there. TReeS has supported the Centre since its foundation in 1987 for its joint aims of traditional health care, cultural revival and forest conservation.

It was just over a year since I had visited the Centre, and much had changed. Don José Mishaja is still the healer, but the other members of the team have all changed in the past 6 months. Victor Pesha, the previous co-ordinator, is now fully occupied as President of the community. The new team members are Alex Mishaja (Don José's son), Jorge Mishaja (Don José's brother) and Arturo Poje. They have worked hard and the Centre is in a good state of repair, with improved infrastructure: there is piped water, with a small enclosure for bucket-showers and clean drinking water (boiled and sometimes treated with chlorine). The gardens are well tended, and with the help of TReeS volunteer Rebecca Warren, painted signs have been prepared to label medicinal plants in the gardens. The new team members were also full of questions about TReeS and what we understand by conservation, which occupied us far into my first night there.

Apart from its function as a healing centre, the Nape Centre was set up to care for the surrounding area of forest (the 'community reserve'), and the team have carried out regular patrols. During my visit it was impossible to patrol most of the reserve because it was flooded. However, I walked with Don José eastwards along the riverside on a trail that leads to Posadas Inn, and westwards as far as the mouth of the creek from the Tambopata river to the lake. We found no evidence of hunting, though at the western-most point, we found piles of Brazil nut husks. Clearly someone had been coming into the area without the knowledge of the Centre team to harvest Brazil nuts. This was discussed on our return to the Centre, and was to be brought up at the next community meeting.

I was interested to see whether there was evidence of healthy animal populations in the community reserve area, but it rained very heavily the previous night and the ground was sodden, so it was not possible to find tracks. It was still cool and overcast, and there was little mammal and bird activity. However, we did see several pairs of Spix's guan

(usually one of the first species to succumb to hunting) and several groups of saddle-backed tamarins. Don José told me that many animals are increasing; now there are giant otters in all the creeks, and spider monkeys, which had been absent at least since the 1970s, were back at lake Cocococha. Further into the forest there are curassows – another species susceptible to hunting. He also said that there were many white-lipped peccaries each year, after many years when they were absent. This was later confirmed by Alex Mishaja, who said that he saw white-lipped peccaries a few years ago for the first time since he was 5 years old. Similarly I was told that the population of caimans has increased, both in the river and in lake Tres Chimbadas. The Mishajas gave me two reasons for the increases in fauna: firstly, since the clampdown in Puerto Maldonado on wildlife products, almost all commercial hunting has stopped; and, secondly, because of restrictions on hunting within the National Reserve (although subsistence hunting is still permitted).

Funding needs:

Don José spends most of his time at the Centre, tending his herb garden and treating patients. During the past few months several patients have stayed at the Centre for treatment, and medicines have been distributed in the community for common ailments. Nonetheless, Don José's work is limited by a lack of basic equipment – buckets, a set of scales, a press to extract juices. This is one example where small amounts of extra funds will make an immediate difference to the functioning of the Centre. TReeS currently gives a total of US\$250 per month to maintain the Centre and support the team who live there. We have been asked to provide additional funds for several specific expenses. Donations of £10+ would be most welcome. Please send donations to TReeS marked "Nape Centre", to allow the Centre to buy new equipment and expand its activities.

Brazil-nut Industry Update

Many TReeS members wrote to and doggedly pursued their MEPs last year with respect to European Union regulations impacting upon the brazil-nut industry. Dr Helen Newing of TReeS has recently co-authored a paper (see Library deposits section) outlining and updating this matter. Members who would like a copy and/or to send one back to their MEP should send a stamped addressed envelope (A4) to TReeS.

**** Giant River Otters of Peru - BBC1, Sunday, 10th June, 7.30pm ****
Most of the footage was shot in Madre de Dios, especially Tambopata.

Sponsor a Student

During my recent trip to Madre de Dios, I received two requests for student sponsorship by TReeS. One was from the native community of Baawaja (Infierno) to send children to Secondary school. The other was to send local people on intensive basic English courses to allow them to work in the tourism industry.

Secondary school scholarships for Ese'jea students

Cost: £50 per month (for 1 to 6 years)

TReeS has been supporting the native community of Baawaja for 16 years, and during that time the community has become more and more determined to conserve their forests and way of life. However, one major limitation is the poor level of education: there is no-one in the community who has completed Secondary school education. Children need money for school fees, books and uniforms, and also to stay in Puerto Maldonado (though this last expense may change, because there are plans to build a bilingual Secondary school in one of the Ese'jea communities). The community has asked TReeS to find scholarships to allow some children to complete Secondary school.

English language scholarships

Cost: £125 (£25 per month for 5 months)

Tourism in Madre de Dios continues to boom and has the potential to create jobs, taking people away from more environmentally destructive businesses such as logging and cattle ranching. However, most skilled personnel – including guides – are brought in from outside the area, because local people don't have the necessary skills. One particular skill that is in short supply is English. Tina Smith, an ex-RN, has set up an English Academy in Puerto Maldonado that has been highly successful and currently has some 60 students. However, many committed students are excluded by the fees and the cost of living in Puerto Maldonado. Tina offers occasional scholarships to the most promising students, but cannot afford to do so regularly. Meanwhile, TReeS has been asked if it could help with English training by the Ese'jea and representatives of other native communities. The basic course lasts for 5 months and puts much emphasis on conversation.

If you are interested in sponsoring a student, please send donations to TReeS marked "Scholarships" or contact me directly for more details at: 12 Baker's Lane, Chartham, Kent, CT2 4NS; H.S.Newing@ukc.ac.uk).

Helen Newing

News from Puerto Maldonado

Greetings from Puerto Maldonado, where we are just coming out of a 'friaie', a freak breeze that drops the temperature from its usual HOT (38°C in the shade the other day) to a more comfortable 16°C and induces all the taxi drivers to wear woolly hats !!

My time here is slipping away, only 3 months left, and as life would have it, it is only now I feel that I am really coming to grips with the issues, people and work here. So what has happened recently in Puerto ?

Everyone seemed to get into the election, with lots of banner waving and trucks racing round the main plaza. It

was peaceful, if noisy, maybe due ban on alcohol sales over the election period.

I recently attended a workshop run by Conservation International. Amongst other things, it considered a plan for evaluating the environmental impacts likely to be caused by the Trans-oceanic highway that will run from Brazil to the Pacific coast of Peru. Institutions and other environmental agents from Brazil, Bolivia and Peru were invited. An all weather road has been completed on the Brazilian side of the border and then again from Puno down to the Peruvian coast. The missing link runs right through Madre de Dios, using the route of the road already in place, through Puerto Maldonado and on to Cusco/Puno. The roads in Madre de Dios are presently unsuitable for continuous heavy traffic and, in the wet season, are often impassable. A new tarmac road would bring a lot more trade, immigrants, services, etc., with resultant environmental impacts. Group work focused on the bio-physical, social and economic consequences of the road, and from analysing these attempted to construct criteria for evaluation.

What struck me as strange was that it was all very passive. The road is, in essence, already here, and no one gave any opinions as to whether it was a good or bad thing, or talked about trying to reduce the negative impacts before or during the birth of the road. It is unknown when the road will be built. If the government decides to get on with it, it could be here within 2 years, but I am guessing that a 5-10 year estimate is more likely.

Centro Ñape, our longest running project, has produced a botanical garden walk which includes about 30 medicinal plants that tourists can touch, sniff, chew, produce dye from as well as seeing the magical springy leaf which is the Viagra of the jungle. They are currently in negotiations with Rainforest Expeditions (whose lodge is within the community) who want to transfer their botanical garden walk to the Centre. The Ñape team would also like to open it up to other lodges to get a better income, but are currently under an exclusivity contract. They are hoping to be able to negotiate round this. The aim is to generate an income for the Centre while causing minimal disruption to the medicinal work.

In February I put a small article in the Shropshire Star appealing for old cameras. The response was surprisingly good and produced 10 functioning cameras. I approached FENAMAD (Federation for native people in Madre de Dios) and told them what I wanted to do: to give the cameras to a community and ask the people to document their daily lives. The photos will provide an alternative voice and could be used to create a presentation for FENAMAD to use in its campaigns. The project will take place in Paríamanu, an Amahuaca community about four hours from Puerto Maldonado, which has been badly affected by gold mining. I hope to stay with the community for up to a week in June and then return later with the developed photos for them to provide an explanation of the images and help to direct the project. If anyone would like to help with developing costs, I estimate between 10 and 15 rolls of film will be used at approximately US\$8 per film, we will therefore need in the region of about US\$100.

Rebecca Warren (OTP volunteer)

Book of Forest Animals of Madre de Dios

Victor Valesquez Zea, a biologist, has worked for the last 3 years in the control of forest wildlife within INRENA (the National Institute for Natural Resources) in Madre de Dios. He is also the general co-ordinator for the association ECOFAUNA, which was set up to provide environmental education to teachers and students at secondary school level (see below). Victor has also written a book on animals found in the surrounding forest.

The first edition of the book was very successful and has contributed to the efforts of environmental education in this part of the Amazon. However, the high costs of the publication has meant that the design consists of a modest text where the characteristics and lives of some of the animals of the tropical rainforest of Madre de Dios are described.

A second preliminary edition of the book, "The Animals of the Forest in Madre de Dios", has recently been produced. Victor would very much like to publish a final higher quality edition with colour photos, directed at students, teachers and the general public. He believes it will contribute to the protection and conservation of natural resources in the Tambopata area.

The budget for the publication of 1,000 copies is \$3,000. Any member who is interested in this initiative can contact Victor directly via TReeS Peru - treespem@wayna.rcp.net.pe

Environmental Education Programme in Madre de Dios

The ECOFAUNA project has held several very successful workshops and is currently looking to extend its programme with a comprehensive in-field experience for students and teachers that will compliment their school curriculum and, hopefully, increase their interest and knowledge of their natural surroundings. TReeS organised and funded a forerunner of this project some years ago with local teachers visiting Explorer's Inn.

Active participants in ECOFAUNA include Victor Velasquez and some of his colleagues at INRENA, the regional directorate of tourism and the regional directorate of education. Young volunteers who study tourism in the Superior Technology Institute, in Puerto Maldonado, also take part.

The programme will take the form of interactive educational workshops, held in the community of San Francisco, whose members are also involved in the project. The students will visit a parcel of forest managed by ECOFAUNA, explore the surroundings with guides and the community, who will explain the importance and functions of the forest and the animals and plants that are found there.

This is the first environmental education initiative of this magnitude that has been attempted in Puerto Maldonado and it has the full support of all the secondary schools in the area and the co-operation of the rural and indigenous communities of the area.

Peruvian institutions are covering much of the cost. TReeS support for the project will consist of paying for stationary, display materials, transport costs, etc, on an on-going basis. Small lump sum donations can be made to TReeS towards these costs (£30 = \$50 donation).

Rebecca Warren

Ecotourism Accreditation for Tambopata

In 1998 I took part in Project Tambopata, a study of tourism impacts in Tambopata. As well as assisting the bird team under the auspicious eyes of Huw Lloyd, I also undertook research for my undergraduate dissertation entitled 'An assessment of the environmental performance of Ecotourism Lodges in Peru'. The environmental standards at several lodges were found to be disappointing although some good conservation practices had taken place in the past. Nevertheless, interest and motivation for conservation does exist at varying levels within the tourism industry in Tambopata. The challenge of approaching conservation issues whilst maintaining a viable and productive tourism business led me to research a potential solution which could address the fundamental issues of how to reduce the impact on the environment and not impair business activities. After much research I came across the Australian National Ecotourism Accreditation Programme - a system which could be adapted and applied effectively in Tambopata.

To determine the level of interest amongst tourism stakeholders for an accreditation system in general, and to determine whether such a system could feasibly be developed in Peru, I decided to travel to Peru and undertake the necessary investigations as part of my MSc studies at the University of the West of England (UWE).

I travelled to Peru in June 2000 with the aim of gauging opinion about tourism accreditation and identifying those factors that would be necessary for the implementation of an effective system for Tambopata. Prior consultations with professionals in the area led me to believe that there would be some interest in the system, and the ideas that I had put together during my earlier research. After just a few interviews with stakeholders I was pleasantly surprised at the level of interest in certification systems not only for jungle lodges, but also for hotels and tour operators as a whole. Whilst in Lima I was invited to a meeting with the resource manager at Consejo Nacional del Ambiente (CONAM). I also met with representatives of Promperu, which in turn resulted in an invitation to the Altur 2000 conference at Cajamarca, where tourism certification would be an item for discussion. At the conference I was given the opportunity to express my ideas, and put forward some requirements that would be fundamental to the implementation of an Ecotourism Accreditation Programme. The conference was successful in raising the awareness and knowledge of certification systems currently in operation around the world.

Returning to my own research, results are very promising and the majority of stakeholders (big and small) with whom I discussed the issues are in favour, in principle, of an accreditation system for Tambopata. One of the products of my research to date is a report entitled 'The Next Step' (El Proximo Paso) which provides a working outline on how to achieve an accreditation programme for Tambopata, a formula that if successful could easily be expanded to encompass the whole country. This report has been distributed to all relevant stakeholders. In addition I am writing a proposal for a pilot accreditation programme based on this report centred on Tambopata.

Andrew Ashton (aashtontal@yahoo.com)

Peru News

There was a major upset in the 1st round of the Presidential elections which independent observers confirmed were held freely and fairly with few irregularities, unlike those which saw ex-President Fujimori returned to power last year. Ex-President Alan Garcia (APRA) came from nowhere to secure 25.8% of the vote against 36.5% for Alejandro Toledo (Peru Posible), the favourite, with Lourdes Flores (Unidad Nacional), who had been expected to come second, securing 25.2%. With no candidate securing 50%+ of the vote there will be a second round of voting on 3rd June. Current polls show Garcia closing on Toledo as a result of his public speaking skills and the fact that many younger voters don't remember his disastrous previous administration (1985-90) and see him as the more experienced politician.

In late April a Peruvian Air Force plane, under US anti-drugs administration (DEA) guidance, shot down a small plane of a US-based missionary organisation near the Colombian border, north of Iquitos. The plane had been wrongly identified as making a potential drug running flight. A mother and child on board were killed.

The remains of the left-wing MRTA members - several of them teenagers - killed in the Japanese Embassy siege in 1997 have been exhumed to try to establish whether they were killed when the military stormed the building or executed afterwards.

Membership Rates

Members paying their membership by bankers order are reminded that since January 2000 the basic annual membership rate is now £10 and the family rate is £25. We would be most grateful if those members who have not amended their bankers order could do so accordingly.

TReeS Bank details

Some members may have had problems recently in establishing a standing order with TReeS following the takeover of the TSB by Lloyds Bank PLC. Any members setting up or amending their standing order with us should ask their banks to use the Sort Code '30 99 83', for the Queen Square, Wolverhampton branch of Lloyds Bank PLC.

Internet Donations to TReeS

It is now possible to make donations to TReeS via the internet by using the 'Care4free' organisation: www.care4free.net. TReeS is located via 'Conservation' down the 'Causes' pathway or by typing in our full charity name - but not yet via 'Peru' down the 'Geographical location' pathway.

TReeS on the Web

You can now keep up with TReeS activities and Tambopata news via the web. An experimental website has been set up by Chris Kirkby and can be found at <http://www.geocities.com/treesweb>. TReeS members are welcome to visit and send in comments. We are also looking into the possibilities of distributing the newsletter by email. Anyone who is interested in receiving their newsletter this way should send their email address to treesweb@yahoo.com.

Another site of interest is a web diary being kept by Rebecca Warren, who is volunteering with TReeS Peru in Puerto Maldonado for the next year (see news on p.2). The diary can be found at <http://www.lucy.ukc.ac.uk/OTP>.

Richard Schultes (1915-2001)

Richard Schultes was a leading authority on hallucinogenic plants of Amazonia and one of the founder members of modern ethno-botany and ethno-pharmacology. He travelled widely in Amazonia but undertook most of his research in Colombia, where he collected over 24,000 plant specimens and documented the medicinal applications of over 2,000 of them. Schultes lived amongst native peoples for many years always acknowledging their deep knowledge of the forest and the debt that he owed them. His experiences made him a pioneering campaigner for the long-term sustainable use of the rainforest. In 1988 he appeared on the Channel 4 Fragile Earth series programme 'Jungle Pharmacy' which also featured the AMETRA 2001 project based at Centro Nape, Tambopata.

TReeS UK Libraries

Forthcoming deposits will include:

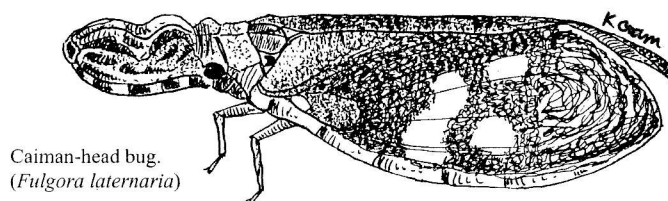
- a paper entitled 'European Health Regulations and Brazil-nuts: Implications for Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Rural Livelihoods in the Amazon'; Mammal survey data from the Explorer's Inn for 1999;
- a report entitled 'An Integrated Approach to Assessing, Conserving and Managing Amazon Forest Biodiversity'
- Centro Nape report for December '00.

TReeS Merchandise

* **New - Girl of the Rainforest:** a creative CD of popular Andean music (some very nice tracks) and new poems set to Andean music by Sophia Buchuck and friends; full details are given on the inlay card. 10 tracks, lasting 37 minutes. Price: £9 (£4 to TReeS).

* **New - Fiesta Music from Peru:** a CD of traditional Andean music recorded at fiestas in small mountain villages all over Peru. The inlay card gives full details of all the pieces heard. Over 60 tracks, lasting over an hour. Price: £10 (£4 to TReeS).

All other merchandise as per the Merchandise List sent out with the last Newsletter. All prices include p. & p.



Caiman-head bug.
(*Fulgora lateralis*)

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Registered Charity No. 298054

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.