

## The Tambopata Reserve Society Newsletter

### FENAMAD launches campaign to defend isolated indigenous peoples in Madre de Dios

Logging companies are poised to invade the territory of isolated and, in some cases, uncontacted indigenous peoples in northern Madre de Dios – an area where some nomadic peoples have already been forced to flee their traditional lands.

The new Peruvian government is considering applications for logging concessions in the area and the Federation of Native Peoples of Madre de Dios (FENAMAD) has launched an international campaign in conjunction with Survival International to oppose it. In July 2000 the 'Upper Purus Reserved Zone' was created by the previous Peruvian administration to safeguard the lands of several isolated indigenous groups but a crucial area of territory in northern Madre de Dios was omitted. If the loggers enter this area then it is highly likely that many colonists will follow, bringing with them the risk of infectious diseases fatal to the isolated tribes.

We enclose a detailed leaflet prepared by Survival International so that TReeS members can also join the campaign in support of these peoples.

### Transoceanic Highway update

There have been major protests in Puno and Cusco in recent weeks in favour of the Transoceanic highway passing through their respective regions. Cusco is hoping that the road will run from P.Maldonado via Quincemil to Urcos near to Cusco and on down to the coast via Arequipa or Abancay/Nazca, while Puno wants the road to run up the Inambari valley to Juliaca en route to the coast.

The protests have been taken as far as Lima where President Toledo is organising the implementation of his 'A Trabajar' plan to get 40,000 workers back to work - on projects such as road building, amongst others.

The Transoceanic highway will speed up the export of products from central Brazil, such as soya, to Far East and US west coast markets via Peruvian ports. It is estimated that traffic levels will reach up to 100 trucks a day, plus increased local traffic as the rainforest hinterland along the highway is opened up and exploited. Many local people see it as an opportunity for employment and greater wealth, rather than a threat to the environment.

The Brazilian government is also planning a series of dams on the river Madeira, aimed at overcoming the rapids. This will allow vessels to sail from Brazil via the river Beni and thence up the river Madre de Dios to P.Maldonado, where goods would be transhipped to trucks for the final leg to the coast along the Transoceanic highway.

Map

### Giant bamboo

*During a recent trip to Peru, TReeS committee member Chris Kirkby spent three months studying the ecology of a new species of bamboo as part of his Masters degree.*

I had read that bamboos can grow fast, but I was not prepared for what I came across this summer. Having just finished measuring the last of a series of 6-week old stems from a new species of giant bamboo, I totted up the height increments on my calculator. The resulting average growth rate was an astonishing 16 cm (6½ inches) per day! Frightening! Could this trifold be a candidate for the fastest growing plant in the World?

I had been invited back to Peru by the Amazon Conservation Association ([www.amazonconservation.org](http://www.amazonconservation.org)), who now manage the 136,000 hectare Los Amigos Conservation Concession (gazetted July 2001) situated in the heart of Madre de Dios. I was to undertake a preliminary study of a new species of bamboo, locally known as Marona (*Guadua cf. angustifolia*). Due to its structural properties it has the potential to be harvested as a non-timber forest product for the construction of houses, flooring, furniture, etc.

Marona is characterised by large, green, hollow, thorny stems, which may reach 30 m in height and 20 cm in diameter. It grows in small patches of up to 200 stems, and is reputed to flower only once every 30 years or so, after which it dies. Only the native Arakhambut have historically used Marona – in their case for making arrows. More recently people in Puerto Maldonado have seen the potential of this species and have started using it for construction purposes.

To date it has only been found in restricted areas in the seasonal floodplains of large rivers such as the Madre de Dios and Tahuamanu. It is completely absent from the Tambopata area. Why it should be distributed so is still a mystery. Ecologically, it appears to favour seasonally inundated soils in areas prone to multiple tree falls, where soil moisture and light levels are high.

The tasks I was set were to determine the distribution, abundance and growth rate of this plant in a 200 km<sup>2</sup> study area of floodplain forest straddling the Madre de Dios River. Determining distribution using satellite imagery was a non-starter, due to the small patch size. However standard transect techniques revealed an average density of 24 patches per hectare but only 6 large economically important stems per patch. From this data I was able to tentatively calculate the standing value of Marona at \$5.00 (£3.50) per hectare. Further research on this plant is planned for 2002 in order to assess whether it meets the ecological, economic and social requirements to merit active management.

*More details on this project will soon be available on the TReeS website: [www.geocities.com/treesweb](http://www.geocities.com/treesweb)*

Chris Kirkby

## Notes from Picaflor Research Centre

**July** brought us two British biologists on our recently initiated volunteer programme, offering special rates to those whom also work for the Centre for 4 hours a day. The rest of the time you can pursue your own interests, which makes it a convenient way for budget travellers to spend time in the rainforest. There is no shortage of tasks for volunteers here; we can design projects to suit a range of abilities and aptitudes. Tom and Phil embarked with enthusiasm on the accurate measuring and mapping of our existing trail system, and opened a new trail linking two *castañero* trails, giving us a useful 2km loop. Their time in the field was rewarded with good wildlife sightings, the highlight being a face to face encounter with an ocelot on Picaflor main trail.

July saved most of its rain for our camping trip to El Chuncho colpa (a short distance up the Tambopata river from the Tambopata/Malinowski confluence), but between the showers we had two good mornings viewing the colpa. On the first day, blue-headed parrots were the first to go down in a large flock together with a couple of chestnut-fronted macaws. A mixed flock of 15 red and green macaws, 4 scarlets and two blue and yellow macaws gathered in the trees opposite us, and were working their way nicely down the vines overhanging the cliff when simultaneous thunder and lightning gave us a couple of seconds advance warning of another downpour. The next morning was more settled, with over 30 red and green macaws and 3 scarlets waiting to follow the blue-headed parrots down; around 15 macaws settled on the clay at any one time. El Chuncho is becoming my favourite camping site, not least for the capybara, tapir and jaguar tracks to be found close to the tents in the morning.

Back at Picaflor, TReeS volunteer Rebecca Warren looked in on a lightning speed tour of Picaflor and the surrounding forest.

July weather: temperature range 12.5-30<sup>0</sup>C, 10 days rain.

**August** at Picaflor was hot and dry, the river low - the ideal time for some maintenance in preparation for the next rainy season. We hauled the boat out onto the beach with the aid of the local football team and soon had it resealed and painted. The paint had barely dried when the boat acquired an unusual resident - a large tree frog (*Hyla boans*) settled onto one of the roof supports, its subtle brown with black mottling doing it no favours against the gaudy blue post. Our frog has now been for several journeys up and down the river; evening trips are punctuated by rhythmical croaking. I am wondering if it is a male that has chosen the puddle in the bottom of the boat as his breeding pond - in which case he is calling for a female to hop aboard. I am waiting for further developments with interest.

Out on the trails, a big cat scat by the *mirador* closest to the bungalows was a reassuring confirmation that there are major predators around; prey species including agouti, paca and peccary are regularly encountered on the trails. The seasonal *cocha* dwindled and dried up this month, leaving a feast of dried fish for peccaries and no doubt other opportunists. We discovered another fish eater closer to home when Pico hung out some fillets to dry - usually extremely cautious, our largest resident lizard (a tegu?) came out into the open and demonstrated its proficiency as a scavenger.

I would like to find out more about the reptiles in the area, if any TReeS reader is a herpetologist who has worked in the Tambopata area, please could you get in touch ?

August weather: temperature range 19-32<sup>0</sup>C, 4 days rain.

Picaflor Research Centre is now contactable by e-mail: [Picaflor\\_rc@yahoo.com](mailto:Picaflor_rc@yahoo.com). Website: [www.puylobier.demon.co.uk/Picaflor/](http://www.puylobier.demon.co.uk/Picaflor/)

Laurel Hanna

## Macaw nest box scheme in Infierno

*Dr. Don Brightsmith, a macaw specialist working with Rainforest Expeditions, received a TReeS grant last year to establish macaw nest boxes in the Native Community of Infierno.*

Nearly all macaw species in Madre de Dios are suffering to some degree from population declines, at least on a local scale. This is due to hunting and habitat loss, particularly the loss of nesting cavities in big trees that are felled. Collection for the pet trade does not appear to be important in this region of Peru. The people having the greatest impact are usually members of local communities that live and work within the ranges of these large frugivorous birds. In this report I discuss the expansion of the Tambopata Macaw Project to the lands of the Native Community of Infierno and the new conservation initiatives within this community.

From interviews conducted by the author with the members of the community it seems that the most common use of macaws in this area has been for food. Such hunting, along with logging and agriculture, is probably responsible for the lower densities of macaws in the community when compared to areas within the adjacent Tambopata National Reserve and Bahuaja Sonene National Park. One goal of initiating a macaw conservation project in this community is to provide a buffer on the edge of these protected areas to help maintain the region's macaw populations and increase their long-term survival probabilities.

The project also aims to help the members of the community and ensure the long-term conservation of macaws on community land. The project is working under the basic assumption that increasing the number of macaws in the community (especially in the areas surrounding Posada Amazonas Lodge and the nearby clay lick) will be beneficial to the long-term success of the lodge. In turn, this will benefit the community as they currently receive 60% of lodge profits and will receive 100% of profits in 17 years time.

The project has been constructed to provide environmental education, community involvement and a mix of short-term and long-term benefits to the community, while aiding macaw conservation and increasing our understanding of basic macaw biology. The short-term benefits include employment of 4-5 community members per year to work as project assistants. These people will receive training in tree climbing techniques and data collection, which will qualify them for future work with scientists, wildlife film makers and in ecotourism. Community members will also be given small cash awards for finding natural macaw nests or for agreeing to host macaw nest boxes on their lands. One-half of these payments will be given up front (about \$25) and the other half will be given only if the nest is successful and one or more chicks fledge. This will provide a financial incentive to members to make sure that the birds survive to fledge.

The project was formally presented at one of the community's monthly assembly meetings earlier this year. In addition, the community's high school students dedicated a morning to help us construct wooden macaw nest boxes. During this activity I explained to the students about the project and why it is important to conserve macaws. Fourteen nest boxes of 4 different designs have been successfully hung in the community in the hopes that Scarlet (*Ara macaw*) and Green-winged Macaws (*A. chloroptera*) will nest in them. Nest boxes will be monitored closely for the next few years to determine how successful they are in alleviating the shortage of natural nest sites.

*If you would like more information on the project please contact Dr. Brightsmith at [parrots@rainforest.com](mailto:parrots@rainforest.com)*

Don Brightsmith

### **Reaching new heights**

How will tropical forests respond to climate change? What will happen to the vast quantities of carbon stored in these ecosystems, as a result of increases in temperature and atmospheric carbon dioxide? What effects will climate change have on tropical forest biodiversity? These are some of the questions that are being addressed by a new project initiated by researchers at the Universities of Leeds and Edinburgh, UK, entitled, 'RAINFOR' (Amazon Rainforest Inventory Network, Red Amazonica de Inventarios Forestales, Rede Amazonica de Inventários Florestais). By bringing together researchers who maintain forest plots throughout Amazonia, this project aims to monitor long-term changes in forest biomass and dynamics and answer crucial questions concerning future trends in the global carbon cycle.

Forest plots maintained in the Tambopata region of Peru play a critical role in this network. Originally established by Al Gentry, starting in 1979, and since maintained and augmented by Oliver Phillips, they provide some of the most valuable, long-term data on forest dynamics in the Amazon region. Repeated measurements of these plots over the last 20 years have played a vital role in establishing two key results: both forest biomass and turnover rates (the mean of mortality and recruitment) have significantly increased in Amazonian forests since the 1970s.

An important function of the network is to maintain regular censuses of existing forest plots. I worked with Oliver Phillips and Rodolfo Vásquez, in the Iquitos region of Peru earlier this year, re-measuring trees in the cluster of forest plots that have been established in this area. However, the network also provides the opportunity to develop a wide variety of other research, and answer questions at a regional scale that has previously been out of reach. I am currently interested in the differences in stand height between different forest types, and how this relates to climatic and edaphic variation. Understanding these patterns will improve our estimates of forest biomass. Currently, above-ground biomass is simply estimated from stand basal area (the total cross-sectional area of all stems >10cm diameter, in each of the one hectare plots). However, stand height varies between forests growing in different climates or on different soil types, and therefore forests with equivalent basal area may not have equivalent biomass. To address this problem, I will be working in the Tambopata region with a Peruvian botanist, Antonio Peña Cruz, and comparing stand height

here, with data from across western Amazonia: northern Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia. Having visited Iquitos earlier this year, I am really looking forward to returning to Peru with this opportunity to visit the forest plots in Tambopata, and, with luck, add something to our understanding of tropical forest structure on regional and global scales.

Tim Baker

### **The Giant Otter Project in Peru**

Further details about the on-going Giant River Otter research across Madre de Dios can be found at: [www.giantotters.com](http://www.giantotters.com) The following details are extracts from the latest newsletter –

#### ***Giant Otter diet in the Palma Real River, Tambopata National Reserve***

I am a student of San Marcos University, Lima, and I am concluding my BSc thesis "Determination of the diet of the Giant Otter by means of analysis of hard parts present in spraints collected in the Palma Real watershed, Madre de Dios, Peru". No less than 66 fish taxa have been recorded. Knowledge of the habits of many of the fish species and genera confirms that the Giant Otter prefers to hunt in slow-flowing waters, with plenty of bank vegetation. Seasonality differences were observed in the diet, as well as differences with Giant Otter diet in lotic habitats (lakes).

Roberto Quispe

#### ***Giant Otter monitoring in Cocococha ox-bow lake, Tambopata National Reserve,***

Since January 2001, I have been working as a Resident Naturalist at the Explorer's Inn lodge (EI), on the Tambopata River. I soon realised that there was a need to gather more information about the Giant Otters on Cocococha lake which is visited by every EI tourist group. I was lucky enough to see four during my first excursion on the lake. The group periscoped and barked around our boat as we toured the shores accompanied by birdwatchers. From then on, I began to record all visits to any site near EI with possible Giant Otter presence. I collected data such as Giant Otter movements, behaviour, times, distances and any negative impacts, and also compiled 15 years of sightings records from EI log books.

To each group of tourists, I began to propose a different type of visit to the 'Giant Otter's Home'. This meant silence, respect and patience. We would hide on a boat by the shore vegetation and wait for at least one hour. We were rewarded by the best sightings ever, of natural behaviour, sometimes very close, without the Otters noticing our presence. No more quick alarm; instead, we watched them fishing, playing, eating or just passing by. All tourists were of course so pleased and the Otters were at peace..... From this obvious and dramatic behaviour change, we could confirm that boats in the middle of the lake were a disturbance.

A management plan for Cocococha lake is on its way. We changed the tourism package so that guests are informed about the Giant Otters before going on the lake; a talk is now given to each group. No boats are going around the lake any more and excursions are limited to a short littoral distance. Most important of all, we are all working hard on the construction of a hide, which will further reduce the impact of tourists, boats and noise. Maybe we'll even witness a successful reproduction from this hide.

Raphael Notin

## Peru News

In the second round of the Presidential elections in early June Alejandro Toledo emerged as the winner with 53% of the valid vote to defeat Alan Garcia (13% of votes cast were invalid). Toledo's party – Peru Posible – is the largest single party in Congress, gaining 45 out of 120 seats, but lacks a majority and has made alliances with several smaller parties.

Toledo held part of the inaugural ceremonies for assuming the Presidency at Machu Picchu and in Cusco, reflecting his indigenous roots and his stated intention to focus to a greater extent on the Andean region than most previous Presidents.

The latest economic data shows external debt standing at \$28bn, with debt servicing running at 25% of the national budget of which just 7% is spent on health and 13% on education. Nearly 50% of Peruvians live below the poverty line, unable to afford a basic basket of goods priced at \$75/month in urban areas and \$42/month in rural areas.

Ex-President Fujimori remains in Japan. Peruvian Congress has voted unanimously to lift his constitutional immunity so that he can be charged with 2 massacres carried out by the 'Grupo Colina' military death squad during his term.

Fujimori's right-hand man Vladimir Montesinos was captured in Venezuela. Despite rumours of extensive plastic facial surgery he was easily identifiable. He claims to have 30,000+ videos of his dealings while in power and is accused of having amassed \$250m in foreign banks. 500 others have been accused of conspiring with him in the corruption scandal.

In late June a significant earthquake (6.9 on the Richter scale) hit southern Peru. 120 died, 1500 were injured and 75,000 homes were affected. Arequipa cathedral and Santa Catalina convent were both badly damaged.

The latest deforestation rate figures for the Peruvian Amazon give an annual deforestation rate of 300,000 hectares per annum. At such a rate most accessible unprotected areas of forest will have disappeared in 50 years. Currently, no Peruvian timber company is producing certified timber in Peru according to the internationally recognised certification scheme.

## Bruno Manser

Many TReeS members may be familiar with the name Bruno Manser, a Swiss national, who for many years worked tirelessly to support the rights of the Penan indigenous people of Borneo in their struggle with Malaysian and Indonesian loggers.

Bruno disappeared mysteriously **over a year** ago in the rainforests of central Borneo and is now presumed dead. Further details are displayed on the Bruno Manser Fonds website: [www.bmf.ch](http://www.bmf.ch)

## English Language Scholarships

As a result of the ad in the last newsletter, three scholarships have been confirmed for learning English. Three young people from the Ese eja should start their classes in the next few weeks

## Forthcoming events

**World Fair** - 8th December, 11-6pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1 (nearest tube – Holborn). TReeS will share a stall with the Peru Support Group. Do

your Xmas shopping from fair trade stalls with goods from all over the world to the sound of world music.

**Realm of the Incas**, a talk by the photographer Max Milligan, 28th November, 6.30-9pm, Canning Ho., Belgrave Square, London SW1 (nearest tube – Hyde Park Corner). Advance tickets only from – The Secretary, Anglo-Peruvian Society, P.O.Box 13688, London SW19 5ZL. Max has been taking wonderful photos in and around the Cusco area for several years – signed copies of his new book can be bought at the event.

**The Unknown Amazon**, British Museum, London, until 1.4.2002, £7. An exhibition of ancient carvings, ceramics, masks, etc from Amazonia, especially the Marajoara tribe from Brazil. Many of the artefacts have never previously been put on public display.

## TReeS UK Libraries

Forthcoming deposits will include –

- Rainfall data from the Explorer's Inn (1971-1998);
- Ese'eja Cultural Centre activity reports for several months this year;
- Giant River Otter Project newsletter June '01;
- Regional working group for sustainable development in Madre de Dios meeting report June '01 (untranslated);
- Conservation International reports entitled – Experiences of the sustainable management of forests in Tambopata (1996-2000), Evaluation of Fish resources in Tambopata (1995-1998), Agro-forestry management systems reports I & II: produced in conjunction with FADEMAD, (all untranslated);
- Brazil-nut project report/manual looking at the organisation of brazil-nut gatherers plots in the lower Tambopata;
- Cambridge University report on an expedition to Serjali, to the west of Manu;
- A brief report entitled "Macaw Conservation & Management in Tambopata - Report IV";
- A report entitled "A study of deforestation and land-use change in NC Bahuaja using remote sensing and geographic information systems".

## New Peruvian Amazon Websites

\* Amazon Indigenous peoples website - the Peruvian Human Rights Commission has just announced the establishment of a new website - [www.iniciativaamazonica.org](http://www.iniciativaamazonica.org) - which will offer information about protected areas, indigenous communities, the impact of international policies and agreements, and research projects pertaining to the Peruvian Amazon. The website aims to connect indigenous communities, NGO's, local officials, and others interested in Amazon issues.

## TReeS Merchandise

\* **NEW - Toucan T-shirt** – based on a plate painting of South American toucans by rainforest artist Eustace Barnes. Price: £9 (XL), £8 (S) bleached and unbleached.

### **The Tambopata Reserve Society (TReeS)**

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Patron - Norman Myers

**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.

\* **Rainforest Animal greetings cards** (blank inside) by L.Hanna - 7 beautiful designs featuring an Ocelot, Tree-frog, Scarlet Macaw, Razor-billed Currawong, Puma, Saddleback Tamarin and Black Caiman. Price (including envelopes): £5.00 (set of 7).

\* **Colonial Angels greetings cards** (blank inside) depicting C17th archangels playing a variety of musical instruments. The cards are based on colonial paintings, by the Cusco school of painting, in churches in Cusco. 6 full colour designs. Price (including envelopes): 6 for £6.60.

\* **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 nearly 40 minutes. Price: £9 (£4 to TReeS).

\* **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 postage and packing.

### **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](http://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 Peru website**

TReeS Peru has established a website which can be found at: [www.geocities.com/treesperu/memoria2000.html](http://www.geocities.com/treesperu/memoria2000.html)