

TReeS News

March 1989



VIEW FROM LABUNA CHICA TRAIL 350M TREE PLATFORM SUMMER 1988

Introduction

The Zona Reservada de Tambopata and TReeS enter 1989 with a great deal of hope and signs of progress, but with, as ever, a great deal remaining to be achieved. The highlights of 1988 were Helen Newing's co-ordination trip to Peru, the continuing and essential work of AMETRA 2001, the appointment of Didier Lacaze as the TReeS representative in Madre de Dios, and, of course, the scientific work of the naturalists and others in the Reserved Zone. More financial support is desperately needed however, to enable TReeS to work directly in Madre de Dios (through Didier Lacaze and the newly-launched conservation newsletter for the region, 'Bajuaja', to set up a working group of Peruvian conservation organisations, and to continue our support of AMETRA.

I hope all TReeS members will have seen the 'Jungle Pharmacy' documentary on Channel 4 on 19 February, which featured the use of medicinal plants in Amazonia by AMETRA and other organisations. If this project can be coupled with an expansion of the Reserved Zone and an overall increase in the sustainability of development in Madre de Dios, TReeS will be close to achieving its aims. Finally, TReeS now has well over 200 members; the 200th to join was Richard Barton of Pontenewydd, South Wales, who was sent a bonus of past TReeS newsletters!

TReeS Co-ordination Trip to Peru

TReeS President Helen Newing was in Peru from September to November 1988 to assess the situation at Tambopata and plan for our future support. Here is an outline of the results of her trip (full report available on request, £1.50 copying and postage):

It was a fascinating trip. In spite of Peru's economic crisis, which deepened just as I arrived in the country with an overnight price rise of 300%, Peru's environmental movement is blossoming. During my first two days I attended the first national meeting of the Peruvian environmental non-governmental organisations (NGO'S), organised jointly by the Asociación Peruana para la Conservación (APECO), Ecología y Conservación de la Naturaleza (ECCO), the Fundación Peruana para la Conservación de la Naturaleza (FPCN), and the Instituto Nacional para el Desarrollo y el Medio Ambiente (IDMA), four of the biggest of over a hundred such organisations now in existence, most of which have been formed in the last five years. I spent a total of about three and a half weeks of the trip in Lima and Cusco, partly together with our new representative in Peru, Didier Lacaze, talking with such groups about Tambopata and possible ways in which TReeS can stimulate conservation activities there. I was glad to find that Tambopata is well-known among conservationists and regarded as an important site; however, the remoteness of Madre de Dios prevents regular visits by limited conservation staff (other than in Manu National Park, which is geographically isolated from the rest of the department and is approached directly from Cusco).

In view of this and the lack of a strong conservation group in Madre de Dios, the top priority seems to be to provide a framework to stimulate interest in conservation in the Tambopata area both locally and nationally. Since October, TReeS has been supporting Didier Lacaze to act as our local representative; from next June we hope also to pay a Peruvian biologist to work directly from the Tambopata Reserve. These two people will work with governmental and non-governmental groups towards the following:-

1. to improve protection of the Tambopata Reserved Zone and, with local and national authorities, Peruvian Safaris and the Native Community of Infierno, to re-open negotiations for the renewal of a treaty on the custodianship of the Reserve, and to demarcate the reserve's boundaries and improve patrolling.
2. to work for the creation of a larger protected area, and for environmentally sound land use in the Tambopata basin: - set up a work-group on Tambopata requested by Peruvian NGO's, to include both local and national representatives. To build up regular contact with settlers along the Tambopata river with a view to future exchange of expertise.
3. to increase conservation awareness in the departmental town of Puerto Maldonado and its environs, through news-sheets, slideshows, exhibitions etc. A first news-sheet was distributed in December 1988 and as a result a number of people have come forward to join in activities associated with conservation.
4. to develop research and education at Explorers Inn. The Peruvian biologist to be appointed will act as scientific co-ordinator at the Inn. We also hope to offer up to eight grants a year to Peruvian biologists for study at Tambopata on the resident naturalists' programme. In addition, the Centro de Datos para la Conservación (CDC) in La Molina University, Lima, is to prepare a summary publication of research at Tambopata to date, which will act as a basis from which to plan future research.

ANYONE WHO HAS PUBLISHED OR UNPUBLISHED DATA FROM TAMBOPATA AND IS PREPARED TO HAVE IT INCLUDED IN THE REPORT PLEASE SEND DETAILS TO HELEN NEWING, PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT, UNIVERSITY OF STIRLING, STIRLING FK9 4LA, SCOTLAND, OR DIRECT TO JORGE UGAZ/JORGE CHAVEZ, CDC, UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL AGRARIA, LA MOLINA, APDO 456, LIMA 100, PERU.

5. To continue support for the AMETRA 2001 project. AMETRA 2001 has made a real difference to attitudes to the Tambopata Reserve in the Native Community of Infierno - to such an extent that last year, Infierno elected their own warden (presumably Cesar Yohaje) to protect the part of the Reserve which is in their land. The project's new Executive Director, Shipibo Milton Silva, will be responsible for planning for the area's long-term use according to traditional practices. He is based at the Ethnobiological Centre under construction on the Tambopata river, along with Cesar and healer Benito Arevalo. Michel Alexiades has returned to Peru to continue his work on an ethnobotanical data base, this time as a research associate of the New York Botanical Gardens.

Elsewhere in Madre de Dios AMETRA 2001 has met with considerable success. The doctor on the project, Neptali Cueva, has been asked to extend his work along the Alto Madre de Dios into the Manu National Park by the Park authorities - where he worked previously as the Park's doctor.

ZRT News

Didier Lacaze is now the official TReeS representative in Puerto Maldonado. In this role he will co-ordinate TReeS activities in Madre de Dios, and liaise with national and government officials, and other organisations interested in conservation. This should aid the effectiveness of TReeS in Peru greatly. Peruvian Safaris are planning to appoint a scientific co-ordinator. It is intended that the co-ordinator should be Peruvian, and there were interviews planned for January, to be carried out by Didier Lacaze and Dr. Gerardo Lamas, the director of the Museum of Natural History in Lima. This should be a great boost to the naturalist programme, and hopefully there will be more Peruvian resident naturalists in future.

The frequency of the incursions into the Reserved Zone seems to have declined in recent months, and there are no reports of felled trees or hunting in the vicinity. The major problem has been the cutting and planting of two chacras (small farms) inside the Reserved Zone, upstream of the lodge and the mouth of the La Torre River. Following contact with the Ministry of Agriculture in Puerto Maldonado, the owners of these chacras were allowed to harvest their crops, but not to return to the cleared plots. The beneficial effect of this problem has been a move towards greater use of the fascinating Las Colpas trail and the construction of another trail to the Reserved Zone boundary on the far side of the La Torre River. The boundary here has been remeasured by the naturalists, and if the Ministry of Agriculture give permission, boundary signs will be erected, explaining that the area enclosed is a Reserved Zone. This, coupled with the success of the Ethnobiological Centre in promoting environmental awareness, should help to limit future disturbance.

In spite of such problems, there have been encouraging wildlife sightings. Razor-billed curassows, a species highly intolerant of disturbance, were sighted on the main trail. There are also reports of a harpy eagle, crested eagles and ospreys. An undescribed parrotlet, discovered last year in the Madre de Dios Region, has been found to frequent the clearing. A pair of giant otters were seen on Laguna Cocococha in August by Richard Purslow and Judy Bell. Kinkajous, giant armadillos and tamanduas have been seen at night, very close to the lodge. There have been reasonable regular cat sightings, including two pumas and a jaguarundi with two cubs, and a tapir was seen by Helen Newing during her stay at the Reserved Zone.

The naturalists have made important progress in other areas at the Reserved Zone. Large displays have been produced on AMETRA and TReeS, for use in the lodge, the former to help raise money for the AMETRA programme. Two slide-shows have been created, and are now being shown to visitors using the TReeS slide projector, and new signs for the trails and boundaries have been produced. The naturalists also contributed to a new newsletter, 'Bahujaja', produced in Puerto Maldonado, about conservation in the Tambopata region. Bahujaja is Ese-eja for an inhabitant of the area, and it aims to promote traditional culture and conservation. Finally, news that the medicinal plant garden has recently been used to cure a case of shingles, and to remove a bot-fly maggot from the unfortunate naturalists!

AMETRA Report

AMETRA courses were held in upper and lower Madre de Dios in Late June and August respectively. Follow-up work indicated considerable success, and continued to provide health related services. The work of AMETRA in Madre de Dios and Ucayali was filmed by the Television Trust for the Environment for the 'Jungle Pharmacy' documentary, to be shown in Britain on 19 February on Channel 4.

A new caretaker has been elected by the people of Infierno for the Ethnobiological Centre; Cesar Yohaje, the son of the last Ese-eja shaman in the Tambopata region. He and his wife have trained in the use and conservation of community resources with the HIFCO project (a scheme to provide villages and families with gardens using traditional agricultural methods) in Pucallpa. Dr. Neptali Cueva has recently taken on a two-year project for AMETRA in the upper Madre de Dios, to which we aim to contribute in a substantial fashion. Dr. Cueva is experienced in working with the native peoples of this region, and AMETRA has produced a report and budget of \$25000 for this work (available on request). Finally, Benito Arevalo, the father of Guillermo, who founded AMETRA, is continuing to perform healing sessions at the Ethnobiological Centre. Benito is a skilled onana, or medicine man, in the language of the Shipibo-Conibo ethnic group of Ucayali province, from where he comes.

Naturalists and Visitors

Adrian Belcham: Black caiman population census, following up the research of Paul Stewart and Keith Hambler.

Kate Faulkner: Producing a more accurate map of the Reserved Zone, and recording seasonal vegetation changes (e.g. flowering, fruiting and leaf production) with Adrian. This data will enhance our understanding of ecosystem dynamics at Tambopata and produce an interesting display.

Rebecca Ellis: Responsible for new plantings and general care of the medicinal plant garden, and producing a TReeS display.

Chris Luke: TReeS display, and making new signs for the Reserved Zone with Rebecca.

Oliver Tickell: Trail maintenance.

Kim McQuarrie: Producing a self-guided tour to the La Torre and Sunset Point trails, and up-dating the medicinal plant garden self-tour.

Ken Rosenberg: Ornithological studies, based at Louisiana State University, on feeding specialisation in rainforests.

Pete Marra: Studying habitat selection in understory antbirds, for his M.S. at LSU.

Karen Cangialosi: Research for a PhD at Miami University on a social spider, Anelosimus eximus, concentrating on the relationship between that species and a kleptoparasitic (food-stealing) spider, Argyrodes ululans.

Alex Robertson: New assistant manager, responsible for the daily running of the lodge.

Eleven New Tree Platforms at Tambopata

Mark Cole and Anna Culwick were resident naturalists at Tambopata for four months last summer. Mark, a rock climber, spent his time climbing trees using the lianas Tarzan-style, and Anna took photographs. Mark teamed up with Paul Donahue to place eleven tree platforms in strategic trees in the Reserved Zone. These platforms have excited the birders greatly. Mark recorded the song of the plum-throated cotinga, which had been described as silent, with no known vocalisation. Other birds presumed to be rare have been seen regularly from the platforms. Thus it appears that the bird census work will need to be completely revised, and that the tree platforms could facilitate exciting new research on the rainforest canopy in all fields of biology. The canopy has been consistently understudied due to its former inaccessibility.

Mark and Anna are now back in England preparing articles for magazines and slide-shows to help promote Tambopata and the rainforest cause in general. For further information, please contact Mark and Anna at: Three Mermaids, 2, Sea View Place, St. Ives, Cornwall TR26 1PS.

Bird Ringers and Banders

There have been many sightings of colour-marked birds at Tambopata, and others have been mist-netted during Ken Rosenberg's studies. Unfortunately, there are no records of where and when any of these birds were originally marked. If you have ringed any birds at Tambopata, we would appreciate receiving a copy of your records, including the exact location and date of capture, any information on age, sex, etc., and the colour of the bands on each leg. Please send to Ken Rosenberg, Museum of Natural Science, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803, USA. If possible, a copy should also be sent to the resident naturalists, Explorers Inn, Casilla 48, Puerto Maldonado, Madre de Dios, Peru.

TREES AT LAGUNA CHICA



UK News

TReeS/AMETRA Display at the RGS 'Planning a Small Expedition' Seminar, 5-6 November

TReeS was represented on both days of the seminar at the Royal Geographical Society's headquarters in Kensington, and a poster display about the Reserve and the work of AMETRA drew considerable interest from groups planning trips to the Amazon and other jungle regions. The work of AMETRA was highlighted in the Ethno-medicine workshop by Dr Conrad Gorinsky of the Ethno-biological Foundation. A number of leaflets were handed out and several new members have subsequently joined TReeS. A year's free membership of TReeS was donated in the raffle at the end of the seminar, which was won by an employee of the RGS. A year's free membership was also donated to the Friends of the Earth Christmas Raffle.

ICCE

The International Centre for Conservation Education, supported by a WWF grant have donated to TReeS an 80 slide show-pack on tropical rainforest destruction (A Green Earth...or a Dry Desert?). This has a pre-recorded tape commentary, so it will be ideal for showing to visitors to the Reserved Zone. ICCE has also duplicated a number of high-quality slides for TReeS, so that they can be used in all TReeS presentations. Their catalogue of audiovisual productions, which deal with various aspects of environmental conservation, can be obtained from: ICCE, Greenfield House, Guiting Power, Cheltenham GL54 5TZ

Past Newsletters

Members who have joined the society recently may be interested in obtaining copies of past newsletters dating back to early 1986. A selection of five is available at £3 (including postage) from J. Forrest (TReeS), 64 Belsize Park, London NW3 4EH.

USA Branch of TReeS

A branch of TReeS has now been established in North America, and this will help reduce administration costs with respect to the Society's North American members. It is also hoped that during 1989 the US branch will have grown sufficiently to be able to fund certain parts of the Society's activities directly. The contact address for anyone living in the USA or Canada is: Erica Brown (TReeS), 1696 Cooley Lake, Milford, Michigan 48042, USA.

TReeS Active Members

Further to the list of active members in the October and November 1988 TReeS News, the role of the resident naturalists coordinator has been taken over by Anna Culwick, 3 Mermaids, 2 Sea View Place, St. Ives, Cornwall TR26 1PS.

John Forrest would be happy to hear from any members who would like to get more involved in running TReeS. The Society is particularly interested in hearing from anyone with auditing experience, who lives in the London area and anyone with access to free or cheap printing facilities. John would also like to hear from anyone who is going out to Peru as there are always items to be taken, at least to Lima.

Next TReeS Meetings

Saturday, 4 March at the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, St. Philip and St. James Church, Woodstock Road, Oxford. Anna Culwick will give a report from the Reserve, and Paul Franklin will talk on Belize. The meeting will be held concurrently with the Peru Support Group's meeting next door at St. Antony's. *2 pm start*

May: Cambridge Sarah Wilkin on South American Explorations

September: London

Thanks to Oliver Phillips, Helen Newing, John Forrest, Anna Culwick, Didier Lacaze, Kate Faulkner, Rebecca Ellis, Ken Rosenberg, Karen Cangialosi, Richard Purslow and the resident naturalists for contributing to this newsletter. Drawings by Anna Culwick. Printed on 100% recycled paper.



RESIDENT NATURALISTS HUT TAMBOPATA