

TReeS News

The Tambopata Reserve Society
Newsletter, No. 19

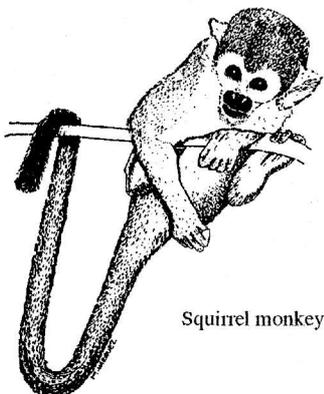
October 1991

Tourist Enterprise Threatened

Peru has experienced a catastrophic downturn in tourist numbers this year. There will probably be just 10% of the tourists of 2-3 years ago. The Cholera outbreak earlier in the year and the manner in which it was reported are principally to blame. Though over 200,000 people were affected and about 2,000 died, the outbreak was almost entirely confined to the very poorest districts, where tourists never go. It had almost completely died out by June, though it may revive towards the end of the year as temperatures rise. On this basis it presents only a minimal risk to tourists who take a few simple precautions. Regrettably, the international Press has not presented it in this way.

In Qosqo (now the official name for Cusco), the main tourist centre in Peru, the number of cases barely reached double figures. However, hotels, restaurants, tour companies and jungle lodges are now in severe financial crisis because of the vast decline in tourist numbers. Almost certainly several are likely to have to close down. News is still awaited from the jungle lodges in the Tambopata area, but undoubtedly they have had a disastrous year. The viability of eco-tourism as a practical means to conserve endangered habitats and to improve the standard of living of their inhabitants has also been brought into question.

As long as a few simple precautions to counter the cholera risk and terrorism are taken, then all the main tourist centres in Peru are still quite safe to visit.



Squirrel monkey

New TReeS Leaflet

We are pleased to enclose with this Newsletter one of the new TReeS leaflets. It now takes into account the creation of the Tambopata-Candamo Reserved Zone in early 1990.

We would request all members to pass this leaflet on to a friend or relative. Members have given the Society wonderful support over the last couple of years but only with a reasonable response to the distribution of this leaflet will TReeS be able to fund the intended scientific research programme in 1992.

TReeS membership and donations from members, provide a crucial part of the funding that TReeS has at its disposal to support projects in the Tambopata region, especially the scientific research work.

Further leaflets are available from J.Forrest on request.

Resident Naturalist News

There have been several exciting sightings over the last few months. These include a Southern Naked-tailed Armadillo, probably for the first time at the TRZ; 2 adult and 2 juvenile Spider monkeys on Main trail, near the Lodge; 6 Giant River Otters with a small juvenile, seen often on L.Cocacocha; 2 Southern Tamanduas and plenty of Squirrel, Dusky Titi, Red Howler and Brown Capuchin monkeys – this has been a good year for monkeys; Grey Brocket deer, Anteaters and possibly a Jaguarundi.

The facilities for RN's at the Lodge have been improved with the donation of a typewriter and stereoscopic microscope by TReeS.

Current and recent RN's include –

- C.Galvez – investigating the various uses of timber by native people.
- F.Chavez – palm tree identification.
- S.Yorath – preparing rainforest education and conservation materials.
- E.Barnes – undertaking ornithological studies.
- M.Timana – various botanical studies.
- O.Philips – investigating the ecology of tropical plants.

In June a short documentary about the TRZ

was filmed by TV Channel 2, which is owned by R.Belmont the mayor of Lima. Several top Government officials also visited the Explorers' Inn briefly in July following a Conference in P.Maldonado.

In late July/early August a group of British 6th form students spent a fortnight at the Lodge undertaking canopy observation, epiphyte identification, a study of 'chacra' farming methods and the testing of river water for pollution.

The few settlers living upriver on the Tambopata from the Explorers' Inn have formed themselves into a community to be known as La Torre. They have built a one-room school and the Ministry of Education has supplied a teacher. TReeS is considering making a small donation to enable the pupils to start a tree nursery and to actively learn about conservation.

TReeS is also hoping to sponsor the first Peruvian student at the new Tambopata Jungle Lodge, run by Peruvian Andean Treks, and located an hour upriver from the Explorers' Inn.

Faucett Airlines are no longer serving Puerto Maldonado and Aeroperu flights are frequently cancelled. The most reliable connection from Qosqo is offered by the new Transamazon Airlines with 2 flights per day. Juan Carlo, the former Peruvian Safaris representative in Puerto Maldonado, is now Transamazon's agent in Qosqo. All internal airfares in Peru have increased substantially over the last year, Lima/PM/Lima is now \$260 return.

TReeS is grateful to Dr. Richard Dawood for 2 copies of his medical guide 'How to Stay Healthy Abroad', published by Penguin, for the RN's library at the Explorers' Inn.

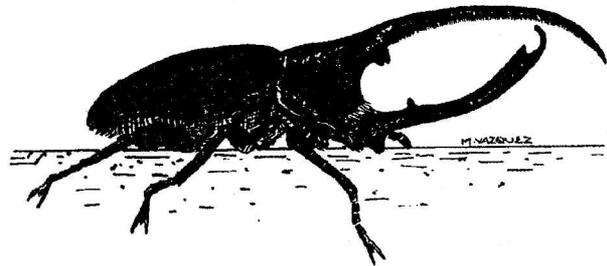
Tambopata-Candamo Reserved Zone (TCRZ) and Centro Eori

EORI is an anthropological research unit based in Puerto Maldonado, which assists native people to pursue their rights. Over the last few years EORI has principally been involved in helping native communities to obtain title to their traditional lands.

EORI is now the first organisation to undertake research directly linked to the TCRZ

designation. A comprehensive study has been carried out within the Ministries of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining to establish the number of concessions granted and the number awaiting approval within the area of the TCRZ falling within Madre de Dios (MDD). 90% of the population within the TCRZ live in MDD.

The results indicate almost complete concession coverage, by at least one activity, along the lower Tambopata and Malinowsky rivers and also along the P.Maldonado/Qosqo road. Most of these are block concessions bearing no relation to the local terrain or drainage pattern. In many areas concessions have been granted for up to 3 different activities to 3 entirely different applicants.



Subsequent to these investigations, EORI has undertaken a census in the region. Over a period of a month EORI interviewed all those present within the designated area. The questionnaire covered agricultural, commercial and social matters including the size of their holding; their practices on it and in the surrounding area; whether they produce any goods for sale; how long they have lived there; their schooling; ages; family size; etc. Finally they were asked to express an opinion about their circumstances and the potential impact, as they see it, of the TCRZ designation. It was found that many of the concessions granted by the Ministries have yet to be taken up.

It is probably the most complete survey of its type to be carried out in the southern Peruvian Amazon. In the upper Malinowsky it was established that there is a small community of 40-50 Pukirieri indians. This is now the only known community where they are the sole inhabitants.

The full survey report will be completed by the end of 1991.

Butterfly Breeding at the Explorers' Inn

Interest in tropical butterflies has blossomed in recent years. As a result, the inhabitants of some tropical zones are finding that the butterflies of their forests are now a potentially valuable resource – to be collected and sold to tourists as souvenirs or to be exported either folded (for souvenirs) or as live specimens to the growing number of butterfly farms and amateur breeders in the North.

While many environmentalists would question the ethics of this trade, one must recognise that potentially it does offer a sustainable way of utilising the riches of the tropical forest without destroying it and of generating an income for its inhabitants.

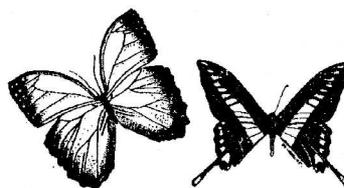


It is with this possibility in mind that biologists from the Centre for Biological Studies initiated a butterfly breeding project, based at the Explorers' Inn with TReeS support. Set up a little over a year ago, this project aims to investigate the feasibility of rearing some of the Tambopata wealth of butterfly species (over 2000 to date) for commercial purposes and to pass on the acquired knowledge and technical expertise to the native people.

As a first step in establishing any breeding programme, it is necessary to gain a detailed understanding of the biology of species concerned. For most of the species known at Tambopata, very little information of this sort exists. While availability of existing knowledge was one of the criteria used by the team for selecting the species to study, together with their potential attractiveness to buyers, they still faced the enormous task of studying, amongst other things, the natural abundance and seasonality of the species involved, their larval and adult foodplants and their breeding behaviour and interactions with other species – including predators, parasites and diseases.

One of the main problems encountered by the team has been finding enough butterfly larvae for study. This is a difficult enough task in English woodland with easily recognised and relatively abundant larval foodplants. Imagine the task of locating caterpillars in a tropical rainforest with perhaps 150 different tree species alone in a single hectare. Even if you do find a suitable foodplant, finding the larvae is still a tremendous task, even assuming you know what they look like – a problem magnified if the host plant happens to be a tree 30m high and the larvae feed some distance from the ground. Even when the larvae are found and transferred successfully to the laboratory for study, the chances of an adult emerging are still extremely slim – what emerges from most pupae are a myriad of wasps, mites and other parasites, an essential part of the natural control system which regulates population abundance in the forest but a nightmare for the butterfly breeder.

Despite these difficulties, the team are now beginning to achieve success in breeding some species in their specially built butterfly house. They have also gained a great deal of useful experience, which should enable a greater degree of success in future years. In addition, a lot of information has been gained on the adult butterflies – how abundant they are, when they are on the wing, their courtship behaviour, preferred nectar sources etc, information which is scientifically valuable in its own right.



The team are therefore entering the second year of the project with a great deal of optimism. By the end of the second year the team hope to have a butterfly breeding house established, possibly at the AMETRA 2001 centre within the native community of Infierno. They would then begin to train AMETRA 2001 staff and volunteers in the running of the project and assist them in developing markets for their products. By providing an income to support the AMETRA 2001 centre, butterfly breeding at Tambopata would then be set to make a valuable contribution to the welfare of both the forest and its people.

Forthcoming Events

15-17th November – Planning a Small Expedition Seminar, EAC, Royal Geographical Society, 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 Tel: 071-581-2057

15-17th November – Global Partnership Exhibition, Horticultural New Hall, Greycoat St., Westminster, London SW1. TReeS Meeting – details in next Newsletter.

AMETRA T-shirts, Postcards, Rainforest Booklet & Rainforest Sounds Tape

T-shirts: Small or Medium – £5.50 each, or 3 for £15.

Large or XLarge – £6.50 each, or 3 for £18.

Postcards: Tree-frog, Tapir, Hummingbird/Heliconia, Hoatzin, and AMETRA 2001 Centre postcards: 10 for £2; 60 for £10; 100 for £16.

TReeS Sound Tapes: recorded by Simon Grove at the TRZ. "Wildlife Sounds" (general interest) and "Birds of South-east Peru" (birders sound guide): £5.50 each; £10 for the 2; £20 for any 6.

Rainforest Requiem Tape: A symphony of sounds from the rainforest - £6.50 each, 2 for £12, 5 for £25.

"The Ecology of Tropical Rainforests - an introduction for eco-tourists". A small booklet published by TReeS, £2.50 each.

"The Budget Traveller's Guide to Peru and Northern Bolivia", 7th edition, April 1991. £4.95 each, including a £1 donation to TReeS.

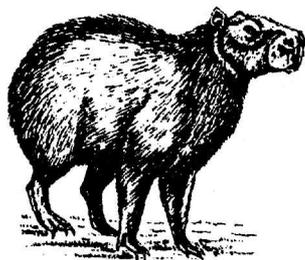
All prices include postage.

Available from: J. Forrest, 64 Belsize Park, London, NW3 4EH.

"The Living Rainforest" – an educational (GCSE) video in 4 parts (70 mins) based on the TRZ. Teachers pack in preparation. For more details contact: A.Culwick, 3 Mermaids, Sea View Place, St. Ives, Cornwall.

Visitors to Peru & Word-Processing

We would be extremely grateful to hear from anyone who is flying to Lima over the



winter months and who could carry a few items needed out there by AMETRA 2001 and the other

research projects that TReeS is supporting.

We would also like to hear from anyone who can assist our esteemed regulars with some word-processing every so often.

If you can assist, please write to J.Forrest with your phone number.

TReeS Contact Addresses

Nick Squirrel, Belhuish Cottage, Coombe Keynes, near Wareham, Dorset, BH20 5PS. TReeS Slide Library. Send a large SAE for a catalogue.

Oliver Tickell, 379 Meadow Lane, Iffley Road, Oxford OX4 4BZ. TReeS Reference Library by appointment only (0865 727082).

Judy Proctor, c/o 70 Manor Road, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 2FZ. RN – project adviser for those accepted as Resident Naturalists.

Pat Curry, 17 Princes Av., London N10. RN – initial adviser.

John Forrest, 64 Belsize Park, London NW3 4EH. Main contact address.

Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7. TReeS Reference Library, by appointment only (071-938 9191).

AMETRA 2001

There will be a detailed update on the project in the next Newsletter.



Ocelot

Kilverstone Latin American Wildlife Park

During the summer, the Latin American Wildlife Park at Kilverstone, in Norfolk, had to close. All the animals have been found homes at other zoos. TReeS is grateful to Lord and Lady Fisher for the support that they gave the Society over recent years.

The work of TReeS/AMETRA 2001 is endorsed/supported by Helpage, ICBP UK/USA, Anglo-Peruvian Society, OXFAM, the Body Shop International PLC, several FoE groups and schools, and various small trusts and charities.



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