

# TReeS News

The Tambopata Reserve Society  
Newsletter No. 23

December 1992

## FENAMAD Health Programme (formerly AMETRA 2001)

*"For many years, FENAMAD has been asking for the acceptance and recognition of traditional medicine. This is because we know our traditional medicine is very effective for us, and we do not want to forget it."*

FENAMAD delegates  
Traditional Medicine Programme  
Oamanokkæe Centre  
2nd February 1992.

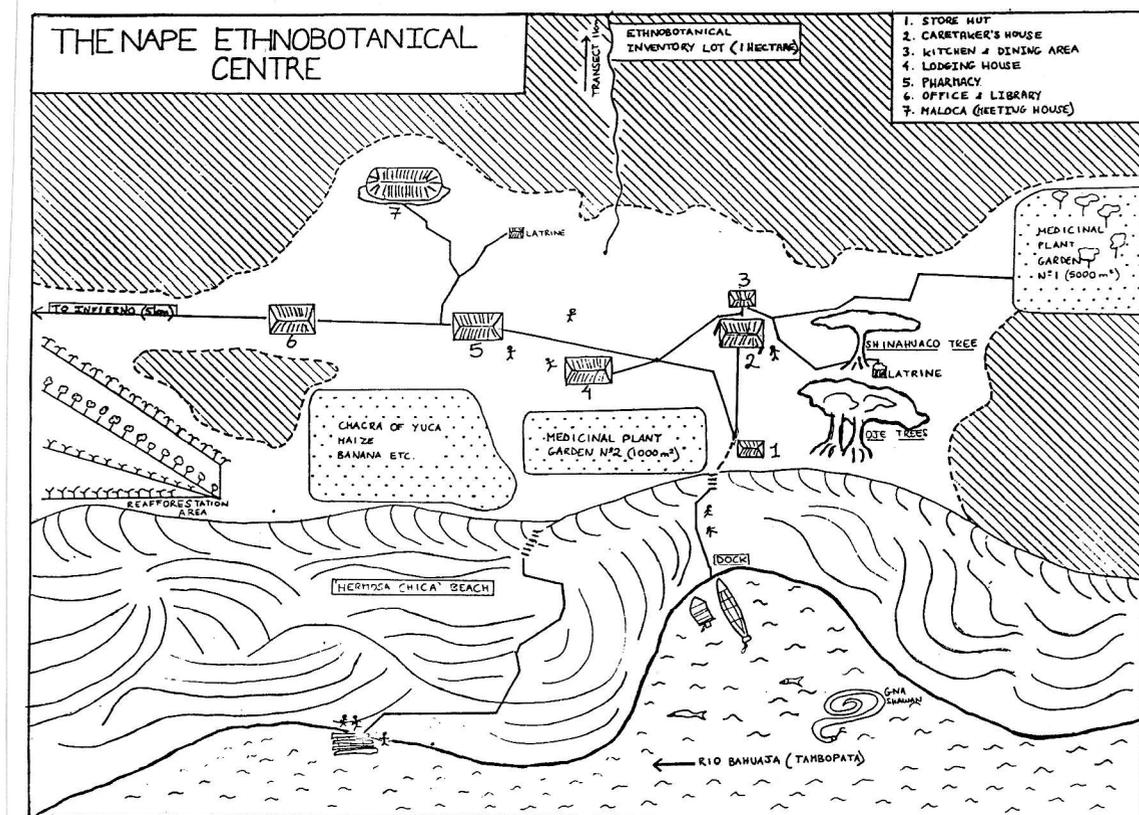
The transfer of the AMETRA 2001 project to the Federation for Native Communities of Madre de Dios, FENAMAD (see Newsletter no. 21) represents an important step towards self-determination of the native people in health issues. It took place a year earlier than planned, following a decision by FENAMAD leaders that they were ready to assume responsibility for the projects, and that AMETRA 2001 was now in many ways working in parallel with FENAMAD which created unnecessary confusion.

Bertha Solisonquehua, the health secretary

of FENAMAD and vice-president of AMETRA 2001, was appointed to oversee the transfer of the projects, and a health committee was set up by FENAMAD to help her. AMETRA 2001 had an office in the FENAMAD headquarters in Puerto Maldonado, which remains the project's main administrative centre; the Nape Centre on the Tambopata river and the Oamanokkæe Centre of the Alto Madre de Dios continue as operational centres for rural activities. Didier Lacaze remains an advisor to the projects but now plays a lesser role in the central administration.

Aside from the major communication problems presented by the natural conditions found in Madre de Dios, improving the administration of the project also presents FENAMAD with a major challenge. Many of the active FENAMAD members grew up in what were then very isolated native communities and were only able to obtain a limited formal education. With the help of EORI, an independent anthropological research unit, FENAMAD will need to improve its budgeting, management and reporting procedures. TReeS continues to support the projects through FENAMAD.

AMETRA 2001's work was centred on a series of training courses for voluntary health workers from different communities, who could spread the information they had learned through the communities on their



return. This approach has been successful in that it has re-awoken interest in preserving traditional healing, both amongst native people and to some extent among government health departments; however, the degree to which communities have adopted the measures promoted by the courses varies from place to place. Each ethnic group and each community has a slightly different tradition of healing, and particular remedies or practices will be more acceptable to some communities than others. In this respect, the task of AMETRA 2001 in Madre de Dios is far more complex than that of the original AMETRA project in Pucallpa, which works only with the Shipibo-Conibo people and is thus dealing with a culturally more uniform situation.

#### **Manu Biosphere Reserve**

This Reserve contains native communities in all stages of acculturation, from those who have all but lost their traditional way of life (such as many groups around the Mission at Shintuya) to uncontacted tribes deep in the Manu National Park. The Dominican Mission has a huge influence on many aspects of daily life in the contacted communities. They have brought guns, chain-saws, cattle and, earlier this year, a large satellite television dish to the community of Shintuya. Traditional pastimes are now being forsaken for evenings spent watching Brazilian 'soap operas'. Work with these native groups is consequently an extremely complex and sensitive issue, and thus the area needs special attention over and above the normal activities set in motion by AMETRA 2001. In early 1991, AMETRA 2001 began a special project in Manu. It was based from the Oamanokkae Centre and consisted of visits to the native communities already in contact with the outside world, in order to identify needs and find possible courses of action to improve health conditions in the area. Most native people continue to practice a variety of traditional health remedies to cure common ailments.

Following AMETRA 2001's dissolution in late 1991, the professionals involved in the project formed "SERI" – an independent consultancy organisation with expertise to advise on the continuation of this work. FENAMAD has contacted SERI to take over where AMETRA 2001 had left off in the Manu Biosphere Reserve. The group is coordinated by Didier Lacaze and includes Dr. Neptali Cueva, who was AMETRA 2001's doctor, Asa Castillo (biologist),

Heinrich Helberg and Eda Zavala (anthropologists). Their aim is to advise on medicinal, anthropological and ecological matters, with a focus on the development of an integrated concept of health. In order to avoid a loss of self-sufficiency and a build-up of dependence of communities on healers from outside, the project does not aim at a permanent presence in different communities but continues to be based at Oamanokkae, with regular visits to other communities.

At two meetings of the new FENAMAD health project in February and March 1992, some new approaches in the project's activities were outlined. It was clear that the approach taken must be tailored to the specific cultural, economic and social conditions of each group involved. Health work in the native communities should be linked with traditional healers rather than voluntary health workers, thus reinforcing the position of the traditional healers and incorporating the healing practices specific to each community. The health project's role would be advisory, rather than to provide medical experts:

*"We (the delegates) want to make it clear that we are not here to cure diseases ourselves. Our task is to provide opportunities and advice on the current common health problems in our communities..."*

Rather than holding general courses for community health workers, courses would be held only on specific topics, such as traumatology and women's issues (an initial course for women's issues was held in 1990). However, villagers would come to the Ñape Centre for 15-day periods, when they would assist the caretaker and traditional healer and learn about the Centre's approach to health care.

#### **Activities:**

**Ñape Centre, Tambopata** – work at the Ñape Centre has been slowed by a lack of overall co-ordination, to date, within FENAMAD. However, plant cultivation has progressed with the sowing of traditionally important trees including ojé, sangre de drago, poña, huasai and pifuayo. A four-day meeting of delegates of the FENAMAD health project at the Centre in March 1992 concentrated on discussion of the project's activities, but a morning was spent identifying medicinal plants and outlining preparations; also, Victor Pesha (who has been working with Michel Alexiades of

New York Botanical Gardens on ethnobotany) gave a talk on traditional botany, and Paul Huertas, the TReeS representative, gave a talk and slideshow on the conservation of natural resources.

**Oamanokkæ Centre, Shintuya, Alto Madre de Dios** – The Oamanokkæ Centre is in the Manu Biosphere Reserve in the remote Alto Madre de Dios and is under the care of Asencio Pateachi, the Vice president of FENAMAD; it runs along similar lines to the Ñape Centre.

*“Oamanokkai is a word in the Harakmbut language, Oamanokkai means something that is good for you. So you could say a plant is Oamanokkæ. Oamanokkæ is not something you can see with your eyes; but you can be, or have, Oamanokkæ. Oamanokkæ is certainly good for you . . . Strengthening our traditions, our culture is Oamanokkæ. So the name of this house, and all that it stands for is: OAMANOKKAI.”*

### Resident Naturalist News

The rainy season began in October with over 270mm of rainfall recorded, while the maximum temperature reached 39°C the minimum was no lower than 18°C.

Animal sightings have remained excellent. Highlights are: up to 9 Giant River Otters seen regularly on Cocacocho, and individuals on Katicocha and Laguna Chica; a 2-toed Sloth was seen at 3850m on Katicocha trail; a group of 5 male Peccaries at 1000m on Main Trail; and a group of 5 ‘Cotomonos’ have been coming close to the lodge.

**Current and recent RN’s and visitors include:**

**P.Huertas & M.Pehovaz** – working on the TReeS Butterfly project.

**A.Lizarraga** – working on the TReeS Biological Control project.

**J.Edwards, M.Butt & C.Galvez** – collating the data obtained by the TReeS expedition to the upper Tambopata.

**E. Ortiz** – 2 assistants have continued the on-going Princeton University project investigating the productivity of Brazil-nut trees. This project now also receives some direct funding from TReeS.



**A. & G. Roddick** – the owners of the Body Shop made a quick visit during a tour of various places in Latin America. The Body Shop has previously funded the AMETRA 2001 project and some other funding possibilities are under discussion.



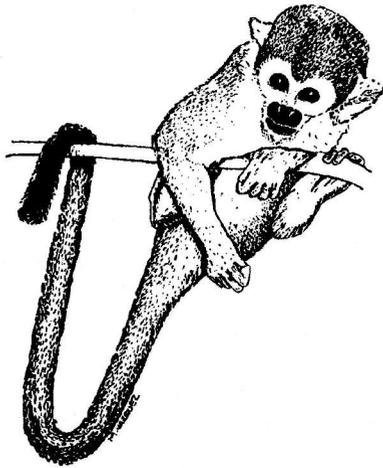
Harpy Eagle

### Teachers Conference

10 teachers came up from P.Maldonado for a successful weekend, 16-18th November. A report on the weekend will be placed in the TReeS library in due course.

### Peru News

The major news from Peru in the last 3 months was the arrest of Abimael Guzman and many other senior members of Sendero Luminoso. The number of terrorist activities in Lima has diminished, though there have still been some serious incidents in the central Andes. The local elections in November passed relatively smoothly; a first step in returning Peru to full democracy. Though over 20% of people failed to vote effectively, this is not uncommon in Peruvian elections. The hope must be that Peru can now enter a more stable period, both politically and economically, though this is far from certain yet. Much will depend on President Fujimori’s ability to control the armed forces whose possible hidden mandate was highlighted in a series of reports by the BBC’s John Simpson in October.



## Forthcoming Events

**TReeS Meeting** - See separate leaflet enclosed with this Newsletter.

**Clothes Show**, BBC1 on Sundays at about 5.30pm; 2 shows in the current series will be devoted to traditional and modern day dress in Peru.

**'Millenium'**, BBC2, Sunday, January 3rd, 7.15pm; produced by Cultural Survival with funding from the Body Shop. The series has attracted much comment for the in which it represents native customs and the manner in which the programs were made. The first programme features the **Matsigenka** indians of Madre de Dios.

**'Right to Reply'**, C4, 6.30pm, January 9th and midday, January 11th. It will include a response to the content and nature of the first 'Millenium' programme.

## T-Shirts, Postcards, Rainforest Booklet & Rainforest Sounds Tape

T-shirts -

**'Earth Warriors'** (Purple design on unbleached cotton, XL only): - £8 each, or 3 for £20. A limited edition of 100 is produced in any one colour.

**Martin Jordan 'Scarlet Macaws'** painting TReeS T-shirt design (scarlet macaws against a blue background on bleached cotton): L and XL - £9 each, 3 for £25.

We are also able to offer two other designs featuring paintings by Martin Jordan - **'Toucan'** (XL only) and **'Tree Frog'** (XL or S) (on bleached cotton) - £10 each.

**Postcards:** Tree-frog, Tapir, Hummingbird/Heliconia, Hoatzin, Butterfly and AMETRA 2001 Centre postcards: 10 for £2.50, 60 for £12, 100 for £18.

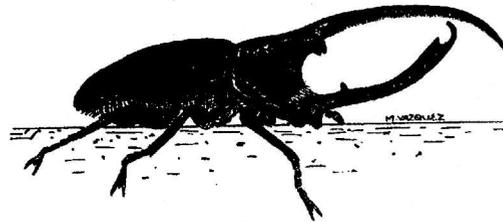
**TReeS Sound Tapes** (recorded by Simon Grove at the TRZ): 'Wildlife Sounds' (general interest) & 'Birds of South-east Peru' (Birders Sound guide): £5.50 each, £10 for 2, £20 for any 5.

**'The Ecology of Tropical Rainforests** - an introduction for eco-tourists'. A small booklet with B&W photos published by TReeS, £2.50 each.

**TReeS Newsletters** (back numbers): any 5 - £2, please specify the numbers required.

**'The Budget Travellers Guide to Peru and Northern Bolivia'**, 7th edition. £4.95 each, including a £1 donation to TReeS.

All prices include postage and packing. Available from: J. Forrest, 64 Belsize Park, London, NW3 4EH.



## Primary School Slide Pack

An ex-RN, Jean Egerton, has put together a slide pack entitled 'Life in an Amazon Rainforest Community', containing 48 colour slides. It comes with extensive notes, orientated towards their being used with primary school classes. Price: £33, plus VAT. Further details from:- Naturetrek Educational, Freepost CS21A, St.Asaph, Clywd LL17 0AZ.

## Photographic Services

We would like to hear from any TReeS members who can offer reduced rates for colour enlargements, or knows of somewhere that offers very competitive prices, so that some new TReeS displays can be prepared.

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

Patron - Norman Myers.



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