

The Tambopata Reserve Society Newsletter

New Forest and Wildlife Law for Peru

A much-awaited Forest and Wildlife Law was approved in July 2000, replacing the previous Law which dated from 1975. The general impact of the Law is to introduce measures to control resource use from natural forests, and encourage the development of plantations of products such as oil palm and Brazil nuts.

Under the new law, forest lands will be classified as production forests; forests for future use (plantations, secondary forests and regeneration areas); protection forests (mainly for soil and watershed protection); protected areas; forests in native and campesino communities; and local forests, which will be granted in concession to local populations for sustainable use.

The system of timber concessions has been modified and will consist of two types, both valid for up to 40 years:

- Concessions of 10,000 - 40,000 ha., granted by auction.
- Concessions of 5,000 - 10,000 ha., granted by tender.

There appears to be no category to replace the previous one for concessions of up to 1,000 ha. This will obviously disadvantage small operations. Current concessions up to 1,000 ha will run to 30th June 2002.

For the first time, a separate system will exist for non-timber concessions, including non-timber forest products, ecotourism, conservation, carbon sequestration and other environmental services. The procedure for their creation is yet to be defined.

A detailed management plan will be required for all concessions and also for resource harvest by native and campesino communities from their land. It should be based on criteria and indicators for sustainability. Use of multiple species will be encouraged. Commercially managed forests with voluntary certification (ie. the FSC stamp) will be given a percentage reduction in the harvesting fee. From 2005, trade of forest products will be restricted to those originating from managed forests properly accredited by the Ministry of Agriculture. While these are admirable goals in the long term, their immediate effect is likely to be to put commercial resource harvest out of reach of most rural families.

Farming will also be affected. A change of land use to farming must be authorised by INRENA. All burning of forests is banned throughout Peru, except with express authorisation by INRENA. Presumably this means that all slash-and-burn cultivation is outlawed. Farmland must maintain a minimum of 30% tree / shrub cover and also a border of at least 50m along riverbanks, water bodies and similar features.

The Law states that development programmes in the Amazon should prioritise industrial plantations of species such as oil palm, palmito, Brazil nuts, rubber, medicinal trees and shrubs and others. "Forestation" concessions will be granted for periods of up to 40 years. Rehabilitation of abandoned or degraded land will be encouraged.

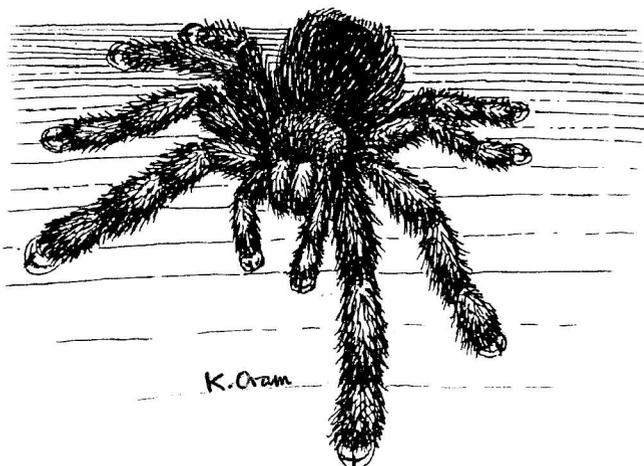
In order to maximise income by promoting in-country processing of forest products, harvest fees will be reduced for operations that cover the whole chain from extraction of raw materials, local processing, and sale. This will favour large companies over rural producers. Export of raw materials is banned. Extraction of mahogany and cedar is banned from extensive areas for ten years, and export of all mahogany and cedar is banned from the end of 2000, except as crafted pieces.

Wildlife use will also be more heavily regulated than up to now. Subsistence hunting will continue to be allowed. Commercial and sport hunting will be allowed in Wildlife Management Areas, to be granted in concession for management of populations of specified wildlife species. Again, a detailed management plan prepared by an accredited professional will be required.

The Law creates two new bodies: a National Consultative Forest Policy Council (CONAFOR) within the Ministry of Agriculture, which will be responsible for high-level consultation with public and private sector parties; and a Timber Supervisory Body (OSINFOR) within the Ministry of the Presidency. OSINFOR will monitor and enforce the new concessions system. The Law also approves National Plans for Forest Development, for Prevention and Control of Deforestation, for Reforestation, and a National System for Forest Fire Prevention and Control, as well as a land use zoning proposed by INRENA.

In December 2000, TReeS facilitated a regional workshop to come up with concrete suggestions for improvements in the new law, which have now been formally submitted to Congress through the national environmental group Foro Ecologico.

Helen Newing



News from Puerto Maldonado

Hello from Peru. My name is Rebecca and I am in Puerto Maldonado for one year volunteering for TReeS. I am on a placement with the Overseas Training Programme run by Volunteer Service Overseas. In a (brazil) nutshell, the programme gives people like me (undergraduates between their second and third year – I am studying social anthropology at the University of Kent) the opportunity to gain experience working in the field of development and conservation (and all things related).

So here follows a few brief reports on what has been happening in Puerto Maldonado and TReeS Peru month by month:

August and September: Protests in Puerto Maldonado made the headlines with a strike halting trade and demonstrations taking place, sometimes daily. A number of groups were demanding government attention but perhaps the most prominent were the trade organisations and people representing the small forest extractors of Madre de Dios who have been hard hit by the new forestry laws passed in July. These favour the large timber merchants and discriminate against those at the smaller end of the commercial chain. They do not adequately take into consideration the regional differences in non-timber products, such as brazil nut harvesting, which here in Madre de Dios is an important and economically sound means of income. The indigenous groups also contributed a strong voice, demanding better protection for voluntarily isolated indigenous groups and a better legal position for indigenous groups in general.

I arrived amongst this, and quickly got thrown into Puerto Maldonado life, mostly taking photos and trying to work out who was who and what was what. Alfredo Garcia, the local TReeS co-ordinator, published several articles in national magazines and we created displays of these along with the photos for both FENAMAD and FADEMAD.

October: The proposed modifications to the new forestry laws presented to INRENA by the department of Madre de Dios were not incorporated in their new draft, which was sent out with only two weeks for review and comment. This was viewed as a grave insult to the people who had worked so hard to try and better the law, not just in Madre de Dios but in other regions of Peru as well. After protests, this consultation period was extended and TReeS worked with other institutions, particularly FADEMAD and IIAP, to organise participatory workshops so that local people could have maximum understanding and input to the process.

I had my first visit to the Ese Eja Ethnocultural Centre (Centro Nape or CEE) and was introduced to the botanical garden, the history of the Centre etc. and was involved with a planning meeting discussing both short term and long term goals. The team want the Centre to play a bigger part in the resurgence of cultural interest amongst the Esa'ija which has been gathering pace since the political split with the non-indigenous members of the former community of Infierno. They also want to be less dependant on outside help and to try and start generating their own income, for example from visits by tourists. The medicinal healing component of the project is still going strong and I watched medicines being prepared and patients treated.

November: On the 15th and 16th, despite heavy rainfall delaying the start, a workshop on the forestry law took place, with Alfredo Garcia of TReeS facilitating. After a thorough introduction, sub-groups were formed with the task of each looking at a specific part of the law, comparing the new draft with the modifications proposed by Madre de Dios and then suggesting alterations needed. Work continued late into the nights and at the end of the process the workshop was able to present another modification draft to the Foro Ecologico (a forum for discussion and change).

Three young men in the Bahuaja community started working at the Ese Eja Centre full time. In no time they had assembled the framework for a new house, which will be exclusively for the preparation of medicine. With the help of another community member they also built a canoe specifically for the Centre.

The Brazil Nut Project held the last of a long series of meetings to agree on criteria for Madre de Dios for the certification of brazil nut harvesting forests. The certification of forests is an international scheme that encourages good forestry management, workers rights and conservation. If supermarkets and other buyers select produce from certified forests then they ensure fair prices, good working conditions and the protection of the forests from abuse. Madre de Dios was the first brazil nut harvesting region to achieve an agreed standard, which was reached with the participation of indigenous groups, harvesters, agricultural groups, NGO's etc.

December: The rainy season started and turned Puerto Maldonado into a big puddle, swelling the rivers and making journeys upriver twice as long and those coming down much shorter. I visited CEE and made a tremendous blunder. I was there to be a godmother at a mass baptism of many Ese'ija children. Amongst the Ese'ija community I have met most people from two very large families, the Mishajas and the Peshas. The Mishaja women are numerous and look very similar. Having only met my god daughter's mother once, and her sister once, and given the fact they have identical missing teeth and daughters of the same size, and that it was early in the morning, I don't think I can be held totally to blame for mixing them up and then putting the christening dress on the wrong child ! There then proceeded an embarrassing extraction of wrong child from dress and I felt quite bad, but thankfully they just laughed about it !

Christmas came and as is the custom here, we celebrated at 12 midnight on the 24th of December. Unfortunately we all got mild food poisoning and were struck down by attacks of the runs ! Despite that it was a lovely evening, dancing until 4 am and celebrating Xmas the Peruvian way.

January: New year saw Puerto Maldonado turned into a war scene for half an hour, with smoky bangers and fires outside every house. After that things settled back to normal. TReeS Perú is running a competition for local children to design a logo, which will hopefully raise awareness of TReeS and our work at the same time. The work with Bahuaja continues and I am recruiting some enthusiastic young volunteers who are here teaching English to help me produce presentations to increase visitor awareness of the area. There is still lots to be done and many challenges to face!

Rebecca Warren, TReeS, Puerto Maldonado

El Experiences

The liquid call of the Oropendula was my introduction to Explorers Inn, as the boat that had brought me from Puerto Maldonado cut its engine and docked. From suburban north London, I had finally arrived in the real jungle, and now surrounded by its green vastness, so far from where I lived, I felt strangely at home.

That was nearly four months ago and although the days are long, time has flown by. But what a time I have had. I never thought I would be living in a place where I would be woken by the howls of monkeys, where macaws screeched overhead and vultures wheeled high in the sky. Five kilometres from here, through the humid forest, there is a lake where on any day you might see two of the world's most endangered species – the Giant Otter and the Black Caiman. In the scrub and high trees all around are hoatzins, herons, kingfishers, toucans, parrots and hawks and in the brown waters below, the infamous piranha.

The forest itself is always a revelation. The incredible diversity of the vegetation and the myriad shapes and sounds. Treading softly along any one of the trails, any moment may take you by surprise. It could be the alarm cry of a startled bird as it bursts out from the undergrowth heading for deeper forest; it could be a family of coatis, a deer, peccaries or a group of monkeys feeding in a nearby tree. More than once I have been stopped dead in my tracks by the sight of a snake facing me in the middle of the trail. The joy is that you never know what you might see. For me, to see a wild animal and be close to it in its own habitat is an unforgettable experience.

I am here in the wet season and when it rains...yes you guessed it....it really rains! However, it is sporadic and although some days the trails can be very wet and muddy, they are still passable as long as you are wearing your wellies. The wet season also means that tourist numbers are down. Some days there aren't any here at all. This makes for a much more peaceful atmosphere at the lodge than in the high season (by all accounts) when most people come.

One of the definite highlights of my trip so far has been my visit to the Colpa (clay lick), six hours further up the Tambopata from Explorers Inn. The spectacle of hundreds of macaws feeding from the clay and screaming overhead is nothing short of breathtaking. I had only seen macaws in cages before, a sight I don't relish seeing again. These birds seem to have such a zest for life and seem to fly just for the sheer joy of it!

Before I left England, as a last minute decision, I brought a camcorder with me and I'm surprised it has survived the rain and humidity this long. I have filmed endlessly, especially when I first arrived and everything was new - nearly 10 hours so far! Now, while I wouldn't expect anyone to sit through all of this but myself, I am glad that I made the decision to bring it. It means that I will have a permanent record of the most special and amazing place I have ever been to in my life. It will do me fine until I can get back here.....and I know I will be back....one day!

George Bareham,
TReeS Committee Member and RN, Explorer's Inn

Peru News

In November President Fujimori suddenly resigned while on an official trip to the Far East. This followed further revelations about the activities of Vladimir Montesinos, the former head of the secret service (SIN) and Fujimori's right-hand man. It is now clear that Montesinos was involved in gun running to left-wing Colombian guerillas and in the cocaine trade, as a result of which he was able to deposit at least \$48m in overseas bank accounts. Furthermore, he was in the pay of the CIA for much of this time while also acting as Fujimori's closest political adviser. Montesinos is, officially, the world's 'most wanted man' but his whereabouts is currently unknown. He was last sighted under-going plastic surgery in Venezuela!

Fujimori has now taken up residence in Japan as a Japanese national, once again raising questions as to whether he was actually born in Peru and permitted to hold a Peruvian passport and, thereby, become President.

Fujimori was quickly replaced by Valentin Paniagua, a respected elder statesman, as the 55th President of Peru and Perez de Cuellar, the former UN Secretary General, was appointed Prime Minister. This has brought a short period of political stability prior to the new elections on 8th April.

The election campaign began with a record number of 17 candidates, suggesting that the fractured political pattern of recent years with established parties performing poorly would be repeated. Opinion polls currently show Alejandro Toledo, fraudulently defeated by Fujimori last year, leading with 32% of the vote. The two main rivals, both with 10%, are Lourdes Flores Nano, ex-Partido Popular Cristiano (PCP), and former President Alan Garcia (APRA) - the latter making a remarkable comeback for someone who had to flee the country via the Colombian Embassy after spending 2 days hiding in a water tank at the end of his last Presidential term.

Giant Otters in Cocha Tres Chimbadas, Tambopata

The Posada Amazonas Lodge in the native community of Bahuaja collected data during 2000 as part of a medium-term monitoring plan to evaluate the status of the Giant Otter on the Tres Chimbadas ox-bow lake. One of the principle objectives of this study was to determine the impacts of human presence, namely tourist groups, on a family of Giant Otters. Levels of tourism in the area are increasing year by year. Tres Chimbadas is roughly 2km in length and is relatively easily accessed, following a walk of about 30 minutes from the Tambopata river.

Preliminary findings indicate that the strategy adopted by Posada Amazonas Lodge, of regularly following a fixed circuit, in a single catamaran, and entering only half of the lake, has had favourable results when considering monthly sightings of the Giant Otters. About 80% of tourist groups that visited the lake during 2000 saw otters. Moreover, thanks to the emphasis placed on appropriate observation behaviour, such as maintaining silence and avoiding unnecessary movements on the catamaran while in the vicinity of the otters, the characteristic alarm vocalisations have reduced markedly.

Patricia Herrera C.
(Extracted from the newsletter of Friends of the Giant Otter, No. 2, December 2000)

Picaflor Research Centre

TReeS member Laurel Hanna has recently opened the Picaflor Research Centre on the banks of the Tambopata River. The Centre is interested in receiving enquiries from institutions and individuals who wish to initiate short, medium or long-term projects in the Tambopata area. For further details please see the enclosed leaflet. We would be most grateful if members could also pass it on to anyone they know who might be interested. Further copies of the leaflet are available from TReeS.

Forthcoming events

Expedition Evening - the annual Expedition evening of the Anglo-Peruvian Society will be held this year on Tuesday 13th March, 6.30pm, at Canning Ho., 2 Belgrave Sq., London, SW1 (Nearest tube station - Hyde Park Corner). Speakers include representatives from a Cambridge University expedition which looked at land tenure and resource use in a Nahua community on the Upper Mishagua valley, which forms a buffer zone on the western side of Manu National Park and the Raqchi project, which aims to integrate the development of a tourist infrastructure with archaeological investigations at a temple complex south of Cuzco. Tickets (£5, including refreshments) from - The Secretary, P.O.Box 13688, London, SW19 5ZL.

TReeS AGM - Mid-June, William Ellis School, London, NW5 1RN, 2-5pm (Nearest tube station - Kentish Town). Further details in the May newsletter.

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.

Trek Peru with Barnado's

Some members will find a Barnado's 'Trek Peru' leaflet enclosed with their TReeS Newsletter. If it is not of interest please pass it on to a friend. Barnado's are one of several organisations organising fund-raising treks and this year they are running one in Peru. Barnado's are sending out an equal number of TReeS leaflets to those participating in their Peru trek this year, several of whom are also likely to visit Tambopata before or after the trek.

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/slunita>. 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 article on p.2). The diary can be found at <http://www.lucy.ukc.ac.uk/OTP>.

TReeS UK Libraries

Forthcoming deposits will include:

- a report on the meeting of the native community of Bahuaja in Nov. 00
- Dec. 00 report of the Frankfurt Zoological Society Giant Otter project
- a paper entitled 'Nesting behaviour of the Rufous-headed Woodpecker'
- a paper entitled 'Population densities of the Black-faced Cotinga'
- Annual report of the Ese'eja Ethnocultural centre in the community of Bahuaja.

TReeS Merchandise

* **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.

* **O.S.Map Interactive Atlas** - Ordnance Survey interactive atlas of Great Britain CD-ROM (1:250,000) (PC version only) (published 1996). Price: £5.00 (RRP - £10).

* **Rainforest Toothbrush** - An American company has produced a 'Rainforest' toothbrush - a normal toothbrush (soft) from which a percentage of the sale price comes to TReeS. Price: £1.50 each, 4 for £5, including p & p.

All prices include postage and packing.

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Patron - Norman Myers

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.