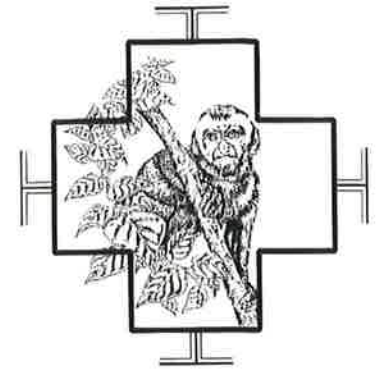


TReeS News No.62

June 2007



Trans-Oceanic Highway - update

Since the completion of the bridge over the River Acre on the Peru/Brazil border, in August 2005, work has continued apace to upgrade the Trans-Oceanic highway through Madre de Dios.

The all-weather road from P.Maldonado to the frontier has been improved and transit times reduced to five hours. The section from P.Maldonado to the foothills of the Andes is now being worked on and a new arterial road to Boca Colorado, halfway along the river Madre de Dios towards Manu, has been constructed. As a result several tour companies are now accessing Manu via Boca Colorado, following a flight to/from P.Maldonado and a 5 hour taxi journey.

Construction work has also now begun on the foundations of a bridge over the river Madre de Dios, in P.Maldonado. Cargo and passengers are currently transported on a numerous small crafts over the river (see Photo 1). The new bridge will cross the river from the port on the northern bank (see Photo 2) to enter Puerto Maldonado along Avenida Velarde - the north side of the Plaza de Armas.

The improvements to the road so far have had a significant impact upon transport links to the rest of Peru. There are now four daily buses to / from Andean towns - two to Cusco, via Urcos, and two to Juliaca, via San Gaban. This creates the potential for 50,000+ passenger journeys each way per year.

In the longer-term there are plans to improve the road links via Puno and Arequipa to the coast and also via Cusco and Nazca towards Lima. A strong rivalry exists between the cities of Puno and Cusco as to which route will be preferred.

NGOs from a variety of backgrounds concerned about the potential impacts of the Highway met in Lima last Autumn to discuss how they could best respond. Local NGO meetings have also been held in both Puerto Maldonado and Cusco.

In late 2006 the results of the Environmental Impact Assessment were presented to the public in Puerto Maldonado. However, the whole study was not made available and amid complaints from those attending it was stated that the Ministry of Transport & Communications would hold a further meeting in 2007 at which more details would be presented.

The construction of the Trans-Oceanic highway has prompted the regional authorities to consider other potential road schemes. Current discussions include linking Shintuya, along the banks of the river Madre de Dios, to Boca Colorado, and a link from Pilcopata to Quincemil across the eastern flanks of the Andes.

Historically, new highways have led to more arterial roads, greater migration and consequent deforestation. It seems that a new wave of migration to Madre de Dios could be imminent.

TReeS is a member of a local working party, formed by NGOs and other local representative organizations, to monitor social and environmental developments.

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Macaw Project Report

Due to their large size and great beauty, macaws make excellent flagship species and serve as charismatic focal points for the conservation of the ecosystems where they occur. Unfortunately throughout most of tropical America large macaws have suffered major population decline. The reasons for macaw decline are many and include habitat loss and collection for the pet trade. The threats faced by large macaws are compounded by the fact that these species have naturally low reproductive rates. Given the threats that face macaw populations today, it's obvious that protecting large tracts of habitat is vital to the survival of macaws and the thousands of species that share their habitat. The Tambopata Macaw Project, currently under the directorship of Dr Don Brightsmith, has been working since 1989 to understand the ecology of these beautiful birds with the ultimate aim of trying to find ways to preserve them and the forests they live in. The Tambopata Macaw Project has compiled probably the single largest parrot data set in the world with the help of international and Peruvian volunteers on many aspects of parrot and macaw behaviour and biology, especially in relation to clay lick use.

Along the Tambopata River hundreds of individuals of up to 17 parrot species congregate daily to descend to the river and stream banks to eat clay. This clay provides an important source of sodium and neutralizes the toxins in the seeds that the birds eat. The fact that macaws return daily makes the birds particularly vulnerable to hunters in these locations. For example, groups of up to 200 or more macaws may frequent large clay licks such as those along the Tambopata and Madre de Dios Rivers in south-eastern Peru. The same predictability that makes clay licks good sites for hunters also makes these locations ideal sites for tourism. As a result, a string of ecotourism projects have sprung up in the last decade that offer macaw viewing at clay licks as a central part of their itineraries. Significant areas are currently being protected from hunting and logging by these ecotourism companies because these tourism projects have a vested interest in protecting the nests and clay licks near their lodges.

To determine if the number of birds at the lick changes because of seasonal migrations we are conducting year-round censuses of the parrots and macaws at several sites along the Tambopata River. During 2006 the Tambopata Reserve Society (TReeS) sponsored the participation of local Peruvian student Yesenia Leonor Quispe from Puerto Maldonado to help a study led by Alan Lee of the Manchester Metropolitan University looking at the impacts of clay licks on parrot and Macaw abundance. The results of this study will provide some of the first abundance data for many of the parrot and parakeet species of the Tambopata, and potentially even the endangered Blue-headed Macaw.

The study has highlighted the importance of clay licks on a landscape level as populations of birds using clay licks rise during peak periods of clay lick activity in forest close to clay licks compared to an area where there are no clay licks in the immediate vicinity. In addition, the study has identified a relation between large macaw abundance and numbers using clay licks, highlighting the importance of clay licks as a population monitoring tool.

If you are interested in participating in future research as a volunteer in the Tambopata Macaw Project, please contact Alan Lee at: alan.tk.lee@gmail.com, or to find out more about the project go to: www.duke.edu/~djb4 or the TReeS website.



The Giant Otters (*Pteronura brasiliensis*) of Lake Cocococha, Tambopata National Reserve

Recent research, co-ordinated by the Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS), suggests that if you decide to visit Lake Cocococha, which is situated on the lower Tambopata river, you have, depending on the season and time of day, approximately a 50 % chance of seeing the Giant Otter. Currently a family of 6 otters are living at the lake, including a new cub born in June/ July 2006. One solitary individual has also been sighted, possibly one of the family group which is beginning to become independent. The otters at Cocococha are a fairly timid group, however they often move down the southern side of the lake fishing in the early mornings, so they are often a welcome sight close to the hide.

The lake is used by the Explorer's Inn lodge (EI), which has also been involved in monitoring the impact of tourism on the Giant Otter. According to Elisban, an employee of the lodge who has spent most of his life in the rainforest, the first study was conducted in 1988 and its aim was simply to know how many individuals were living in the lake, to find their territory, dens, campsites, etc. A family of 8 Otters lived at Cocococha in those days. There was then a break in research until 1991, when regular Otter monitoring was started by one of the RNs (Resident Naturalists) based at the lodge.

Since then, Otter monitoring has always been one of the RNs tasks, although now it is mainly done by the guides. They observe the Otters while guiding tourists at the lake, whereas the role of the RNs is to undertake control monitoring (ie. in tourist-free areas), provide logistical help, and support and motivation to the guides. More recently a hide for Otter (and other wildlife) observations was constructed on the lakeside and, secondly, an area on the lake where tourist groups are allowed to go was designated. This left most of lake without human presence at least in theory. According to the results of monitoring for over a decade now, the highest number of Otters recorded was 13 (!), but this was a temporal reading, when two families were sighted at the same time during a period of one week. For further details contact: www.szfperu.org

* **Macaw Project:** see report on page 4.

* **Ecology & Abundance of Ants (Hymenoptera: Formicidae) project:** a project researching ants of the genus *Pheidole* to measure how a species characteristic (caste ratio) varies between two sites (Ecuador & Peru) with similar species composition but differing species abundance.

The study is now based at the Explorers' Inn - similar ecologically to previously studied sites: Tiputini Biodiversity Station in Amazonian Ecuador and the Picaflor Research Centre, Peru.

* **FENAMAD Congress:** in February FENAMAD held their XIV Congress, the first Congress for 2 years. Delegates attended from across Madre de Dios to discuss a wide range of issues including oil/gas exploration, the Trans-oceanic highway, logging, etc. TReeS provided funding towards the cost of bringing community leaders to P.Maldonado and the running costs of the event.

* **FADEMAD Assembly:** in November TReeS provided small-scale funding to the Federation of small farmers of Madre de Dios to meet. Over 80 members, from 80 small farming communities, attended the meeting in P.Maldonado. New elections were held for the organising committee and various issues of common concern were discussed. FADEMAD members farm small plots, often on a semi-sustainable basis and it is important that they have a strong voice in discussions associated with developments in the area.

* **Programa de Becas (Small grants program) 2007:** for the first time TReeS decided to adopt the model followed by several other NGOs working in the area and offer small-scale support for field research through an internet announcement. Grants in the \$200-500 range were offered to biology, resource management or ecology researchers to facilitate their fieldwork in Madre de Dios. A significant contribution towards the grant costs was received from the Blackpool Zoo 'South American rainforest campaign' in 2006.

A total of eighteen applications were received, of which the following seven were successful:

Botanical evaluation of the effects of a forest fire at Lake Sandoval, Tambopata National Reserve, Peru.

US\$500 awarded to Ericsson Urquiaga & Marco Olivera

From knowledge transfer to knowledge exchange: analysis of the perceptions of small farmers and professionals on tree planting in the south-eastern Amazon.

US\$375 awarded to Juan Carlos Montero

Plant volatiles in the Amazonian forest: indicators of biodiversity change ?

US\$484 awarded to Ana Huaita

The role of wild cats in inventorying marsupials: are cats more effective than capture traps ?

US\$500 awarded to Eveling Tavera

Preliminary analysis of diurnal butterfly communities (*Lepidoptera: Papilionoidea*) at Fundo Mascoitania, Madre de Dios.

US\$500 awarded to Jose Cerdeña

Ant assemblages in mono-dominant and mixed canopy rainforests: exploring the role of trade-offs in the generation and maintenance of biodiversity.

US\$180 awarded to Roxana Arauco

The impact of human activity at viewing towers on flagship species: lessons for the ecotourism industry (Amount tbc) awarded to Yesenia Quispe Huanca

Appeal: £500 to contribute to the costs of the 2008 grants program and to enable total grants in excess of \$1,000 to continue to be awarded.

GLOBAL CONSERVATION PRIZE WINNER FROM MADRE DE DIOS

Julio Cusurichi Palacios, a Shipibo, has been awarded the prestigious 2007 Goldman Environmental Prize for South America. The prize was awarded for his contribution, through involvement with the Federation of Native Peoples of Madre de Dios (FENAMAD), to the struggle of the indigenous peoples of Madre de Dios in the defence of their rights against logging, oil and mining company interests.

Cusurichi participated in the establishment of a territorial reserve for indigenous peoples living in isolation in 2002. He is also now involved in the filing of a lawsuit in New York against the US Departments of Homeland Security, Interior and Agriculture, and three US timber importers. The lawsuit charges that by importing mahogany from Peru, the US is violating the US Endangered Species Act and CITES. The case is currently being heard and if successful, could cut off the main market for this illegal product and thus greatly reduce the threat of illegal logging in the reserve, and thereby permit the protection of this species, the conservation of one of the most pristine forests of the Amazon, and the life, culture and knowledge of peoples living in voluntary isolation.

The Goldman Environmental Prize was created in 1990 to recognise environmental defenders. It is the world's largest prize honouring grassroots environmentalists. The six winners, chosen every year from each inhabited continental region, receive US\$125,000 apiece.



Gold-mining in Huaypetue

Climate Update

There was significantly more rainfall in Tambopata and the Peruvian Amazon in 2006 compared to 2005. The incredibly dry 'wet' season of 2005 was not repeated. However, some dry season months were drier than in 2005 and, consequently, river levels in the dry season were again very low. Average temperatures were slightly lower in 2006 than 2005 reflecting the higher rainfall.

Many predicted that this year (end 2006/early 2007) would be a significant El Nino year but this has not proved to be the case. However, the northern coast has been warmer and wetter than usual and there have been heavy rains throughout the Andes. On the 17th of February this had a dramatic impact on the Tambopata region. Heavy rains in the preceding days in the upper La Torre basin greatly increased its discharge. A wall of water swept down and completely washed away 'Sunset Point' - a popular spot for visitors to Explorer's Inn to spend the end of the day. More details and photos of the 'Great La Torre flood' can be found at: <http://riolatorre.blogspot.com>

The Head of Peru's state oil company 'Perupetro' has been heavily criticised for recent comments including: "It's absurd to say there are uncontacted people when no-one has seen them." If they do exist, he suggested, that they should be contacted and 'consulted' about potential oil exploration on their lands. This comes as the Peruvian government steps up encouraging oil/gas exploration activities in the Amazon region, especially in the north, despite widespread international media coverage of a series of oil spills on Achuar native lands in northern Peru. In response to the criticism the government is now investing in a programme to install equipment to inject waste back in to abandoned wells.

Late News: at the very start of June the Peruvian government announced that the Spanish company *Repsol* and US company *Barrett Resources* would not be allowed to continue with plans to explore for oil in northern Peru because their Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) failed to address sufficiently concerns about uncontacted indigenous peoples living within their concessions.

In Madre de Dios a new oil exploration lot (Lot 133) has been designated by the government. It covers the area between existing Lots 76, 111 and 113, including 75%+ of the Los Amigos Conservation Concession. Its designation means that almost all of Madre de Dios bar Manu National Park, the Alto Purus National Park and Tambopata protected areas is assigned for oil exploration. Lot 133 will soon be put out to tender to international oil companies interested in investigating its hydro-carbons potential.

In the meantime, the Chinese state oil company (represented in Peru by SAPET), which was awarded the exploration concessions in Lots 111 and 113 in 2005, has announced that it will not enter the territory of isolated indigenous peoples even though their concession overlaps with the indigenous territory. Lot 113 was super-imposed over the reserve for 'indigenous peoples living in voluntary isolation'. After pressure from local indigenous organisations, especially the Federation of native peoples of Madre de Dios (FENAMAD), SAPET asked for the boundary of Lot 113 to be modified to exclude the reserve. The Peruvian government has complied with this request. This kind of action by an oil company, whilst still rare, would have been unthinkable twenty years ago, and shows how local and international campaigns have forced multi-national companies to give greater consideration to the rights of indigenous peoples.

FENAMAD also responded when GEMA, a sub-contractor of SAPET, presented an EIA for Lots 111 and 113 that was full of inaccuracies. It became apparent that GEMA had merely adapted an existing document referring to an EIA for a Lot in northern Peru and had made few field visits to Madre de Dios. Consequently, references were made to places not in Madre de Dios, indigenous peoples living only in northern Peru and fauna, such as river dolphins, not found in south-east Peru. The Ministry of Energy & Mines has now accepted a fully revised version of the EIA and this will be used for monitoring purposes in Lots 111 and 113.

TReeS Appeal: TReeS would like to thank all members who made generous donations following the appeal in the last Newsletter. As a result FENAMAD representatives have been able to visit many of the native communities affected by the exploration Lots to discuss the implications. In some cases they were able to be present during the visits of SAPET in which it proved necessary to counteract some of their claims and clarify the traditional promises. TReeS has been the principal funder enabling FENAMAD to respond on this issue as outlined above and to prepare a contingency fund in case of large-scale contact with 'indigenous peoples living in voluntary isolation' in the future.

Further donations to this fund would be most welcome.

Survival International Campaign

Isolated indigenous peoples living in the very remotest parts of Peru in isolation from mainstream society are the focus of a new campaign by Survival International. The campaign highlights that many indigenous peoples in the Peruvian Amazon now live in 'semi-isolation' to avoid loggers and miners, and ensure their survival while others have never had contact with 'western' society.

It is estimated that there are approximately 15 'isolated' tribes. These include the Isconahua, Capanahua, Cacataibos, Murunahua, Mastanahua, Matsigenka, Ashaninka, Mashco-Piro and Nanti the latter two in Madre de Dios. Estimates of the numbers in each isolated tribe vary, for example, the Isconahua: 20-40 people, Cacataibos: 150-200, Mastanahua: 20, Mashco-Piro: 250-600 and Nanti: 130. However, it is certain that some groups are close to extinction.

The majority are nomadic hunter-gatherers who live in the rainforest moving across large areas, fishing and hunting many kinds of wild game. Turtle eggs, which draw the isolated tribes to the riverbanks in the summer when the water is low, are a particularly important source of food.

Further details at: <http://www.survival-international.org/news.php?id=2041>

Ashaninka elder



Peru News

Valentin Paniagua, interim President after Alberto Fujimori fled to Japan in 2000, has died. Paniagua ran as a candidate in the 2006 Presidential race, finishing fifth. He was well regarded for his leadership during a politically complex period. Fujimori remains under house arrest in Chile. Meanwhile Valdimir Montesinos, currently serving a long prison sentence for illegal arms sales and corruption, is also being tried over the killing of the MRTA hostage-takers following the 1997 Japanese embassy siege.

In November 2006 local elections there were set backs for the main political parties. President Garcia's APRA won control in only 16 of 195 municipalities and, surprisingly, its support weakened in its traditional northern strongholds. Meanwhile, the PHP (party of Presidential runner-up: Ollanta Humala) faded in its southern strongholds only winning control of 10 councils. The majority of councils remain in the hands of regional groupings and independents, including Madre de Dios. The left-wing UPP increased its support in rural areas and Fujimori sympathisers, many standing as independents, did well.

New President Garcia's second term has begun undramatically though his bill to reintroduce the death penalty for terrorists was easily defeated. Economic indicators show that GDP growth in 2006 was 6%, the highest level since 1986, while exports are valued at \$24bn compared to just \$7bn in 2001, while inflation was just 1.14%, the lowest for 4 years. One of Garcia's highest profile campaigns to date has been to try to improve Peruvians notoriously poor time-keeping through the 'Peru: on time' campaign which commenced at noon on March 1st. In mid-May an explosion killed 6 in a market in Juliaca but immediate indications suggested a fireworks explosion and not a terrorist bomb.

Recent scientific reports relating to Madre de Dios - the following papers will be placed in the TReeS Libraries.

They are also available from TReeS (£1 each, plus an A4 sae).

* Mammals and Macaws: research at Refugio Amazonas: a preliminary report on 8 months of transects.

* C19th ethnography in C21st perspective: A review of sources for the Madre de Dios basin.

* The role of fruit and flowering patterns of lower Amazonian canopy trees in determining the seasonal movements of parrot, macaw and other frugivorous bird species.

* Observaciones tecnicas al estudio de impacto ambiental para la prospeccion sismica de los Lotes 111 y 113 (untranslated).

TReeS London Library - the TReeS London Library has found a new home. The Library will be transferred there in the next few weeks and further details will be given in the next Newsletter.

NEW - *El Ojo Que Cuenta: Mitos y costumbres de la Amazonia indigena ilustrados por su gente*

(Eyes that tell: Myths and customs from indigenous Amazonia illustrated by its people)

(in Spanish/English) 160 pages, with many beautiful full colour illustrations painted by indigenous artists.

28 stories from 7 ethnic groupings (Shipibo, Uitoto, Shawi, Tikuna, Ashaninka, Awajun/Wampis and Matses) plus profiles of the storytellers, including photos. Stories include: 'The jaguar, the woman, the toad and the scorpion (Matses), The black jaguar and the loggers (Shipibo) and The mysterious toad (Shawi). *TReeS Members price: £17.50, including P & P.*

SPECIAL OFFER: 'DIVERSITY IN THE RAINFOREST' video

Now only £5.00 - last remaining copies (PAL & NTSC versions available)(50 mins). Beautiful footage of butterflies recorded in the natural forest, featuring 150 of the 1234 species found in the original Tambopata Reserved Zone.



TReeS Merchandise - for Birdwatchers ** Special Price if all 3 purchased - £36.00 **

* **Tambopata Bird Checklist:** 2nd edition of the Checklist listing nearly 500 of the 592+ bird species identified in the former Tambopata Reserved Zone. The Checklist gives details of Habitat, Foraging Position, Sociality and Abundance of each species, is cross-referenced to 'Birds of Colombia' (Hilty & Brown). It provides information about the Tambopata area and is illustrated by Eustace Barnes.

TReeS Members Price - £6.00, including P & P.

* **Bird calls of SE Peru CD:** featuring 93 species commonly heard in the Tambopata area, recorded by Simon Grove. All species heard are listed in chronological order. *TReeS Members Price - £10.00, including P & P.*

* **'Where to watch birds in Peru' book:** by T.Valqui describing locations in Peru where many Peruvian bird species can be observed. The book is divided in to 7 sections and describes 151 birding sites and explains how to reach them, where to stay, where to look for birds and what to expect. There are 60 site maps, 7 regional maps and 3 thematic maps. The 15 biogeographic bird regions are described and illustrated. There are descriptions and pictures of the 42 most important bird habitats. More than 1200 bird species are mentioned in the text and there is a complete up-to-date Peru bird checklist. *TReeS Members Price - £22.50, including P & P.*



**Further information
available from :**

**TReeS, P.O.Box 33153,
London NW3 4DR**

www.tambopata.org

Time-travelling in the jungle

An illustrated talk by Conrad Feather

Wednesday, 20th June, 6.30pm

At Canning House, 2 Belgrave Square, London SW1

Conrad will describe his travels with the Nahua people to survey the uninhabited forests of the upper Manu region to establish their land rights.

Pre-booking essential. Contact Maria Varela:

angloperuvian@society494.fsnet.co.uk

State that you are a 'TReeS' member.

Peruvian Handicrafts Fair

Saturday 23rd June, 11-5pm

Westbourne Grove Church, corner of Westbourne Grove and Ledbury Road, London W11. TReeS will have a stall.

TReeS 2006-2007

Committee members

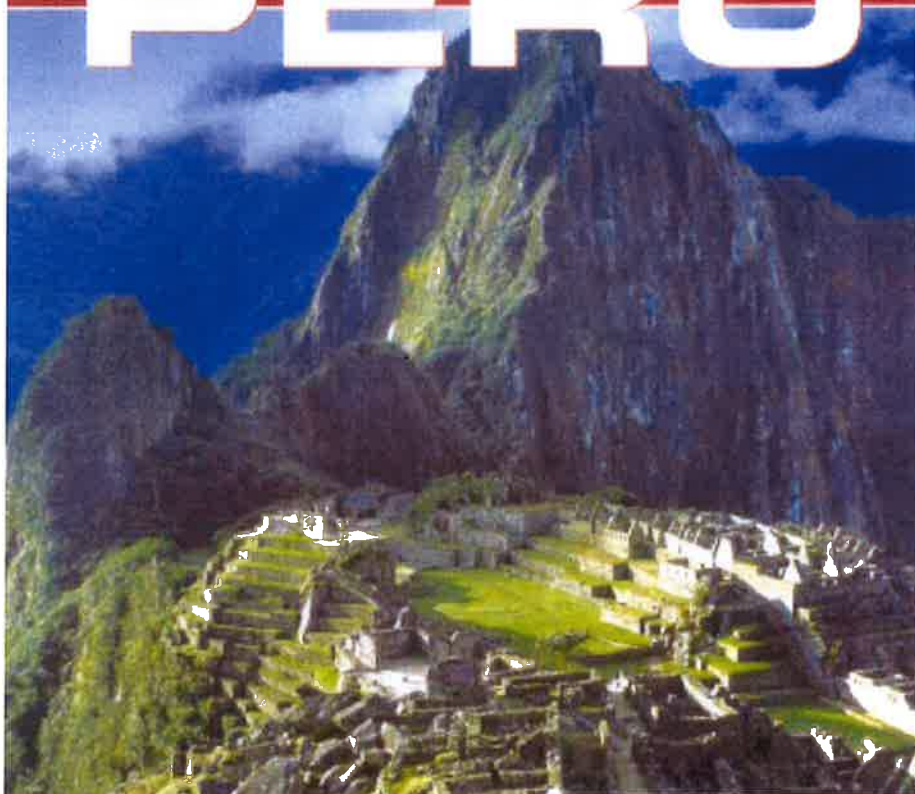
- Dr Helen Newing
- John Forrest
- Barry Nicholson
- Sally Edwards
- John Farnsworth
- Elizabeth Raine
- Daniel Turner
- Rebecca Warren

TReeS 2007 AGM — will be held in October 2007. Further details in the next Newsletter.

a quick guide to
customs & etiquette

CULTURE SMART!

PERU



This edition of the TReeS Newsletter is sponsored by: *Culture Smart Guides to Customs & Etiquette*

The newly published '*Culture Smart Guide to Peru*' (2006) (168 pages) includes sections covering: Values & Attitudes, Customs & Traditions, Peruvians at home, Traveling, Time out, Business briefing, plus a Brief History of Peru.

Available from TReeS at the RRP - £6.95, but including P & P (£1.50 per copy to TReeS).