



(Camping has become a regular activity for volunteers lately – Here we Have Rahel, Chantal, Chloe and Emma doing Obs before a night on canopy)

Photo by Chloe Jackson

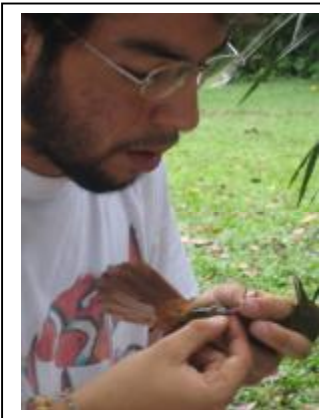
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Birds and Plants...

Over the last 3 years Taricaya has asked several experts to come and work with us for a few weeks to help us start projects, in the past we have had Mauricio (Robin) Hugo (Bat man) and our latest visit has been from Daniel (Poison Ivy)

Now apart from the obvious jokes about Batman the super hero, these three experts have been extremely helpful for us to set up detailed projects within the reserve that have helped us – Increase our species lists, become recognised as a centre for scientific studies and help us learn about and understand the reserve that we are protecting – they have also been amazing people to work with, any of you who are in a specialised profession will know and understand the difficulty of explaining or even working with people who are not as interested/knowledgeable/enthusiastic about that particular area of work, but these three people have been understanding, patient and have had enough enthusiasm for all of us!



Robin, Batman and Poison Ivy

This month Robin (Mauricio) came back to help us with another stage of our bird monitoring project and Poison Ivy (Daniel) came to visit us for the first time to help us set up a Botanical study of the Reserva Ecologica Taricaya.

Mauricio came back to try and increase the species listing and his aim was to break 400 (Which due to bad weather he didn't manage!) Using 3 different methods, mist-netting, visual recordings and audio recordings, he worked with us over the course of 2 weeks and increased the listing by 26 species, which is pretty amazing work considering none of them flew into the mist-nets!

Mist-netting is a procedure used by ornithologists (Bird experts) around the world to safely capture, identify and ring (Placing a small plastic ring on the leg) species that fall into the nets, its impossible to show you a picture of the nets as they are so fine that they don't really appear on photos.

Visual sightings need to be done by people with experience, naturally the more experience you have the easier it is to identify a species that flies past quickly, all of the Taricaya staff, as you know from observations, have good knowledge of the more common species in the area but Mauricio was working along trails (not platforms) this of course takes a lot more work and can only be done successfully if you have the experience.

Audio recordings, not taking tape recordings of bird calls. This is the identification of bird species just by listening to the individual calls that they have. Again this is something that can only be done with experience.

As always we have already made plans with Mauricio to come back to Taricaya in the future to see if we can break that magic 400 number and as plans are at the moment he will be back towards the end of this year.

www.projects-abroad.net

<http://www.volunteer-conservation-peru.org>

Poison Ivy (Daniel) was someone that we met in the Arequipa conservation convention last year, who like most of the people that work with Taricaya became amazed at the amount of work that we are doing in the area (Scientific and social) and planted the idea of setting a project up in Taricaya in the future. So when it came to the planning stage of 2008 (Which was in November/December 2007) we all decided that a botanical project would be a very good thing to have in Taricaya for 3 reasons –

- 1st – Knowing the forest that we work in is very important to be able to conserve it –
- 2nd – Many of the other projects that we have running in Taricaya (Reptile project, bird Project, butterfly project, bat project, Auto-Camera project) Can be fine tuned or altered to comply with a very important fact – Different species of wildlife live in different habitats!

- 3rd – for 6 years Taricaya has been working with volunteers who always sit and ask us what this tree is? Why it does that? How do you know? So this visit was also a chance for the staff to brush up on knowledge on botany (Of course the volunteers learnt a lot at the same time)

Just like Batman (Hugo) and Mauricio, Daniel was amazing to work with, very enthusiastic about the work that he was doing and very patient to explain everything that we were working on and why, which is important for us working with volunteers. Poison Ivy's project had 6 different locations, each with 500m of transect (Work area). Each meter of transect had to be checked for 3 different things – Fruits and Seeds (checking through the leaf-litter to find anything that looked like a fruit or seed), Flower and shrub cuttings (taking samples of flowers and any low level cuttings of plants) and large trees (Which Daniel identified by checking the leaves, bark, any sap that came out and even the seeds that were around the area, These were also measured around the trunk and height estimated for future reference).

Due to the difficult nature of working with this project (Identifying the different species is almost impossible unless you have experience) Daniel will be back with at the end of this year to help us working on stage 2 of this project, which is the same as this stage but during the wet season.

Like anyone who comes to Taricaya we all want to say Thank you for all the hard work, time and effort that these people have given us and of course like everything in Taricaya we couldn't have done it without the help of the volunteers so Thanks to all of you too!!!

Species List

Since 2005 Taricaya has been working hard in creating an accurate and up to date species list, which now includes 359 birds, 54 mammals, 42 amphibians, 54 reptiles and 105 species of butterfly. Various methods have been used to collect this data from mist-netting to manual capture.



Cocoi Heron



Muscovy Duck



Hoatzin



Amazon Forest Dragon



Epipedobates pictus



Common Cat-Eyed Snake



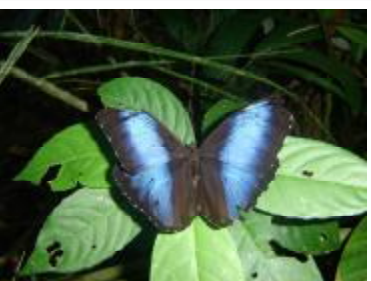
Dusty Titi Monkey



Capybara



Hoffmanns Two-toed Sloth



Auto Camera Feature

Due to certain things that are completely out of my hands, this month, I have been forced to give you something other than the normal new photos from the cameras. So I thought it would be a good time to show you how we can identify individuals within species (I.E 3 different Tapirs and Deer) Obviously when we are identifying individuals we use more than just the one photo that we have here, but you can see the different methods we have used at times.



Female Genitalia



Male Genitalia



Tail is Longer – Scar on Right side



Male Genitalia



No Obvious Genitalia (Female)



Dark scar on back – Tail length short

As promised this month we have an exciting update from Palma Real, in that they actually completed the work we asked them to do! Not only that but they did it ahead of schedule! For the last couple of months we have been working to set up a rubbish collection and general transportation system using one our donkeys.

The work that was needed to complete this project was -
Set up a wired donkey field.
Build a house.
Get the cart and donkey down there.
Create an area to dump the rubbish.
Get the community involved in cleaning the place up!

Doesn't sound like a lot of work does it? But we were determined to get the community involved as much as possible, we could have done the whole project ourselves in a few days, so things took a little longer, about 3 weeks in total, but the good thing is that the work we asked to be done, and was done and done well! With the posts for the field set up, we came down and spent a couple of days putting the barbed wire up (which was a slow and tricky business; I understand why people use it to protect things now!)



(The donkey house inside the field)

Once the field was done, we came to the most difficult part of the project – Getting the donkey from here to Palma real...

Those of you who have not been to Palma real wont realise the difficulty with this, try to remember if you can the river bank that we have at Taricaya, during the dry season this is about 5M high (Or deep depending on your out look on life) the bank at Palma real must be about 25M high and they don't have the nice steps that we constantly build in the river bank.

Unluckily for Stuart it was his job to do this and he actually had a much harder time getting the donkey down to the boat from Taricaya than he did getting it back up the bank at Palma real! The recent changes in river height had made most of the river bank very muddy, not just slippery mud either, but knee deep stuff!

Walking the donkey down the river bank nice and slowly obviously gave him enough time to try an escape plan that he must have had in case of emergencies, which involved the donkey bolting along the river bank, but he didn't take in to account the mud along the sides and got stuck, those of you who know anything about horses, cows, donkeys or any animal of this type will know that this can be a very dangerous situation, limbs can break very easily when an a donkey/horse/cow gets stressed in a sticky situation. So Stuart and his group were immediately on top of the donkey and prising its legs back out of the mud and finally on to the boat with no injuries all round!



(Photo taken during the wet season, but still you can see the big drop!)

Expecting a similar situation when they arrived at Palma real, they parked the boat with the plan of having a little talk about what to do, who was going to be where, ETC, but they didn't have the chance to do any of that, because donkey had had enough of being in the boat and made a run for freedom again, only discover the only route of escape was so that's where he went, straight up the bank, no problems what so ever!

A week later we were back to do the cleaning, most of the staff, all of the volunteers and about 50 children all set and rearing to clean like crazy and boy did those kids like cleaning (Maybe it was just any excuse to not be in class) They went crazy! Running around and getting rubbish from all over the place, running back to their volunteer and filling the sacks we had with us!



Volunteers and Palma real children working together to clean the community

Unfortunately the children couldn't be with us the whole day, school work is naturally a more important than cleaning all day, so after our initial cleaning flourish we set to work on the most walked areas of the community to try and give them all a idea of what a difference it really makes.



Before Taricaya got there



After Taricaya got there

As you can see just from these two photos from one area, it really did make a huge difference!

And although we couldn't have cleaned the entire community ourselves, we hope that the small areas that we did clean will be enough to give them an incentive to slowly, but surely clean the rest of the area as well.

One of the main things that I am sure you are all wondering at this point is where we actually put all the rubbish once we had collected it, unfortunately we couldn't ask them to take the rubbish into Puerto Maldonado, they wouldn't do this so there was no point in asking. We couldn't ask them to burn it, most of it being plastic this would have caused a major pollution problem. So the only thing we could really ask them to do was dig a huge pit and bury it (Huge being 2x2M hole about 1M deep – Any bigger and they wouldn't have done that either) After some research we found a few species of very aggressive vines that can be planted in the pits so that it would effectively trap everything inside it and slowly, over about 50 years, the rubbish will decompose into nothing.

Local News and Update

Volunteers Leaving

David Geary, Thomas Hadlow, Jack Smart, Birgit Suzanne Delbos, Sophie Jean Wilson, Camilla Mary Durie, Hannah Burd, Andrew Woods, Melanie Stonard, Ray Yuill, Amy Barth, Kaitlyn Riddle, Molly Riddle, Larissa Haberer, Amy Clark and Benna Keoghoe.

Thank you for all your help at the reserve, we really couldn't do any of the work we do with out your help.

New Volunteers In May

Andrew Woods, Joep van Belkom, Chloe Jackson, Matthew Ward, Emma Littlewood, Benjamin Jenks, Robert Federl, Rachel Beck, Paul Cohen Tervaert, Danielle Makuch, Melanie Stonard, Ray Yuill, Amy Barth, Chantal Vallis, Kaitlyn Riddle, Mary Riddle, Amaya Syed, Larissa Haberer.

See you all soon! Hope you'll have a fantastic experience with us!

FREEZING IN FRIAJES!

The cold weather has really been giving us a beating this year (Most likely a relation to El Nino) Unlike previous years where cold weather has lasted a few days (4 at the most) this year the trend seems to be a normal friaje will last for 2 weeks! Although not as strong as previous years (Lighter winds, not as much rain ETC) We have been huddling together around fires most nights to keep warm!

JUNGLE FACT!

- 30 million species of plants and animals live in the world's rainforests
- And Two thirds of the world's plants are found in the rainforest

Working with New People

During the last week of the month, we had a visit from the guy we buy fruit from (Fruit for the animals) Asking to speak with Fernando (Who wasn't here at the time) But at the first opportunity we went over to see what the problem was and learnt that he was struggling to make ends meet because of the flood damage to his farm and was asking us for help with ideas, labor and anything else we could do to help him out. After an hours talking we came to an idea we have had in the past, of helping him set up a hostel in the rainforest! A lot of tourists (Backpackers) want to spend a night or two in the forest but there isn't anyway to do so! Now there will be! More news of this project will come when we start working on it...

Lake Sandoval

Another successful trip to Sandoval was made this month, again seeing Howler Monkey's, Giant Otters, Squirrel Monkey's, Capuchin Monkey's, Black Caiman and of course a lot of different species of bird!

Again this trip would have been perfect if it was nice and warm...but it wasn't...in fact it rained again! Taricaya Jinx I think!

If you have any ideas of how Projects Abroad volunteers can be put to good use within the Community then please contact either Richard Munday or Stuart Timson. We are always looking for your suggestions.

New Farm Platform

Last month I began telling you about the changes to observations that have happened over the last few months. Replacing Canopy platform, Lodge Obs (which is now working great thanks to the warm weather coming back) and New farm platform being moved... Which wasn't strictly true, it was pulled down and as far as I knew it was going to be moved to a different point, which I guess technically it has, just the distance it has moved is a lot less than I thought it would be, in fact its only about 5CM, so I guess that doesn't count. But the platform has been rebuilt, another fine piece of work by Pepe and now its a lot nicer than it was, nice leaf roof, strong, secure and lasting structure and after the steel guide ropes were added it doesn't even more as much as the old platform. Sorry for the mix up last month, sometimes people forget to tell me these things!!!



(New Newfarm platform at sunset)

Photo by Chloe Jackson

As usual we are always looking forward to hearing from you all! Years have passed since some of you have spoken to us, some of you have only just got home and still have not gotten in touch to say you're safe, it does not matter how long it's been, we still want to hear from you at some point! Let us know what are you doing? Where are you? Who have met recently?

Those of you meeting up with Taricaya volunteers we really do want photos for our Reunion section in the New dining room, remember though, you need to find an interesting way to include the phrase "Projects Abroad – Reserva Ecologica Taricaya" Write it in Bananas and Papaya, find a small monkey on the road side and get him to hold a sign up for you, paint it on your chests, we have a few amazing ones already which have began appearing on Projects Abroad publicity, so you never know you might be famous...

Also we'd like to know if you guys have any questions about anything? Anything about the rainforest that you want to know about and didn't learn whilst you were here? Or maybe something you've forgotten? And also we would love to hear about an experience you had at Taricaya, something you still remember or something that made your time here perfect, share with everyone, let us know!

And remember that we also have a Taricaya website, which is full of information and updates from our own Stuart Timson, located at <http://www.volunteer-conservation-peru.org>

So until next month keep safe and good bye!

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