



What's Inside...

Project Updates:

Spider Monkey Project
Platforms

2-3
4-5

Rescue Centre Update

3-4

Extras!

Puerto Maldonado, Boats, Rain, Volunteer Arrivals & Departures and more....

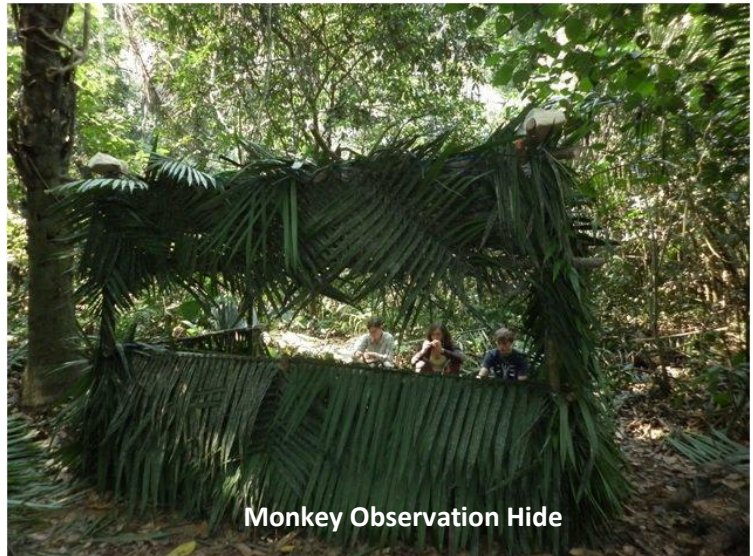
PROJECT UPDATES

SPIDER MONKEY PROJECT

The spider monkey project has moved on rapidly this month; in fact somewhat faster than we had intended...

Half of the behavioural analysis of the adult spider monkeys has been completed, showing amongst other things that the group hierarchy has remained the same. But over the past couple of weeks they have learnt that they can bite through the cage netting and so can now escape at will.

When the spider monkeys were moved to the pre-release site, they were already in excellent condition and were in fact ready for release. The objective of keeping them in the new enclosure was to enable them to get used to a new location, and allow for easy monitoring and analysis. These objectives are partially



complete, and so Raul has allowed the release to move on to the next stage.

A food management system has been installed outside of the release enclosure, and we will continue taking out food to them. This should encourage the monkeys to remain in this area, and allow us to continue their monitoring. We also want to observe in which parts of the forest they spend most time (floor, lower branches, canopy, etc), where they sleep, and how their interactions with each other change now that they are out in the wider forest.

We are still waiting for official government approval of the spider monkey re-introduction project, and we have recently sent a 4th (!) notification to the government pressuring them to hurry up. Until we obtain official approval we won't be notifying them of the spider monkeys' premature release!

The group of four younger spider monkeys (aged between 18 and 30 months) have been moved to the former enclosure of the adult spider monkeys within the rescue

centre, with our youngest monkeys, Nicol (spider monkey) and Muneca (howler monkey), being moved into the adjacent enclosure to build familiarity with the older monkeys.

At the beginning of next year we are hoping to move the next group of spider



monkeys, which consists of Sambo, Abi and Maqui, out to the pre-release enclosure to monitor their interaction with the older group. If it looks positive then we can release them to form a larger social group together with the older monkeys. Meanwhile Balu, Nicol and Muneca will remain together in the rescue centre.

Also this month, Raul presented our spider monkey

project to his peers at the 2nd Congress of the Peruvian Society of Mastazologists (who specialise in mammals) at the University of Arequipa, to great acclaim!

RESCUE CENTRE UPDATE

A beautiful new enclosure has been built for Sid, our southern river otter this month. It centres around the old large turtle pool on the edge of the rescue centre, which has been re-sealed with concrete. Large panels of corrugated iron were embedded deep into the earth to create what we hoped would be an escape-proof enclosure... but Sid had other ideas, and within hours of being moved, he was out! One of the panels had not been nailed together very firmly, and Sid had squeezed

through! After thoroughly checking the rest of the enclosure we tentatively returned Sid to his new home, and thankfully he has not managed to find a way over, under, or through the high-security panels since!

He seems a very happy otter, especially as he is now occasionally given live fish to catch in his large new pool.



And Bella the young jaguar has also benefitted from this, as she now has all of Sid's old enclosure (which has been redecorated) to roam around in.

The mealy parrots, blue-headed parrots and red-masked parakeet have been moved to a larger new enclosure with decorations at different levels to encourage flight. The yellow-crowned parrots remain in the old parrot enclosure, as they are showing mating behaviour and need more privacy. A nesting box has also been installed for them.



And Cheeky Bastard, the saddleback tamarin monkey, has served his time in quarantine, and has now been moved to the small monkey enclosure.

PLATFORMS

Two of the bird-watching platforms, Canopy and HOB, have been falling into disrepair over recent months. They were both originally built in 2004, and it was decided that the time had come for them to be replaced.



So once again, the vast collective strength of our volunteers was called into action... All manner of different sizes of planks, posts and beams of wood were hauled out to the two sites, where Wicho and his team of carpenters were waiting to rapidly assemble the new platforms.

All that remained was for the platforms to be given a lick of paint, and by mid-October both new platforms were ready for a return to bird-watching action (although volunteers who have been to HOB might not agree that 'action' is the correct word to use...!)

The three platforms at Taricaya have been set up in different habitats around the reserve. HOB gives a view of a swamp habitat, the canopy allows birds in and above the tallest trees to be seen, and New Farm Platform (last rebuilt in 2008) looks over open areas, grassland, and riverside habitats.



EXTRAS

PUERTO MALDONADO

The nearby town of Puerto Maldonado, where many volunteers choose to spend their weekends, has been undergoing many changes over the past year.

Not only are many of the dirt-roads now being paved (partly due to election promises), but the huge suspension bridge over the Madre de Dios river is growing close to completion. This bridge is the one missing link of the



Transoceanica, a highway connecting the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of South America, running from Rio de Janeiro and Santos in Brazil, through to the ports of Ilo, Matarani, and Marcona on the Peruvian coast.

It will make large areas of Peru and Brazil more accessible, but its main role is as a trade route for Brazil, so that they can drive exports destined for the Asian market through Peru to the Pacific Ocean instead of shipping them all the way around Cape Horn at the south of the continent. As such, the Brazilians are paying for the majority of this project.

Since 1998 Puerto Maldonado's population has increased from 25,000 to 135,000 today, and this new highway is likely to bring yet more new inhabitants to the town.

BOATS

A brand new addition to the Taricaya fleet arrived at the end of September: a new main boat. This canoe is longer and heavier than any of our other boats, and so will be used for the regular trips into town. The previous main boat has been repaired and refitted and will now be our reserve boat, used for accessing nearby destinations along the river, along with the occasional trip to town when needed.

RAIN!

Finally, at the end of a very long, very dry, dry season, the first storms have arrived! River levels have risen making it much easier to pilot the boats. But also many trees and branches have come crashing down all over the reserve, with a couple only narrowly missing bungalows and parts of the rescue centre. The clean-up operation has already commenced, with the chainsaw being deployed to open up the worst hit trails around the reserve.

Hi,

Well, my time as volunteer coordinator has now come to an end, and I sadly have to return and face the 'real world' of the UK.

I can honestly say that the past year has been the best time of my life, and I'd like to thank all of the staff and volunteers who have made my six months as a member of staff, and three months as a volunteer such an amazing experience. My farewell parties, both at Gigo's house and back in the bar at Taricaya, will live long in my memory (well, the parts that I can remember will!).

I'd also like to extend a warm welcome to my replacement, Bridget Barraclough, and wish her the best of luck in the role.

Adios, for now, I fully intend to return to Peru and Taricaya before too long!

Dan Howell
Volunteer Co-ordinator
Reserva Ecologica Taricaya

If you would just like to send a note, we would love to hear from any of you who have volunteered at Taricaya, it doesn't matter how long you were here for or how long ago, we're always interested in what you're doing or where you are now.

We welcome your feedback for the newsletter as well, what would you like to see or hear about here every month.

Also if you have any queries about the rainforest (or Peru), we have a number of qualified biologists on the team who would be very happy to answer any of your questions.

For quick updates or information about Taricaya, check out our website at www.volunteer-conservation-peru.org, or you can reach us through the Projects Abroad website at www.projects-abroad.net.