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PROJECT UPDATES

BUTTERFLIES AND BEETLES

Our butterfly house and project have been underway for a couple of years now and Marco Delgado Coila, a visiting biologist from Arequipa, returned this month to help our continuing work in identifying the butterfly species that we have here in the reserve. Previously the total number of butterfly species identified at Taricaya stood at 259. We knew there should still be many more to be found and hoped we might even reach 500 species in these weeks of intensive study. Marco, with the help of various volunteers and Daniel Alvarado, who is in charge of the butterfly project throughout the year, placed butterfly traps along different trails in different habitats all around the reserve.

The butterfly traps consist of a tube of netting with a plastic base hung underneath on which to place the bait. We often use rotting fruit for this purpose as many butterflies are attracted to the sugars. However, Marco used a more potent bait of rotting fish which, despite its not-so-attractive smell for us, is very attractive to butterflies and moths. It contains 2 other of the food groups needed by butterflies: proteins (amino acids) and salt. The bait was effective and the traps quickly filled up with numerous butterflies and moth species.



Various butterflies found in the traps and attracted to the salts on our skin

However, although this method is useful for identifying many species of butterflies, there are some that are not likely to be caught in this way. In particular, some smaller species of butterflies, such as in the *Lycaenidae* and *Riodinidae* families, are more often to be found hidden under leaves and the best way to catch these is by hand. Large butterfly hand nets are used for this purpose and, with an experienced and swift figure-of-eight movement, can be another useful way to trap and identify butterflies. Marco was particularly interested in finding these butterflies and it was a group largely missing from our previous butterfly species list as they can be more difficult to spot and to catch by less experienced butterfly catchers.



Although we still have a way to go before we reach a total of 500 butterfly species, during these weeks we have found at least around 30 new species for Taricaya. There are still many more that are sure to be here, so far undetected, and we will continue to look out for them throughout the coming year.

On this visit to Taricaya, Marco was also accompanied by Fernando Ancco Valdivia, a biologist interested in the study of beetles.

The study of beetles at Taricaya is a less explored area for us, so Fernando Ancco was only beginning to find out a little about what we have here. He was focusing in particular on Dung Beetles, of which there are around 230 species in Peru. He suggested that it may be possible to find around 60 species here in Taricaya and from his few weeks here he has found around 15 so far. In order to catch the beetles baited traps were again used. Baited with equally smelly substances such as rotting fish or excrement, he placed traps in different areas of the reserve. The traps consist of a cup suspended over a larger container containing water mixed with a little detergent. The cup contains the bait to attract the beetles and the detergent is used to break the surface tension of the water in order to trap the beetles.

We hope Fernando will be back, with Marco, to continue these studies next year. Many butterflies and beetles can be useful biological indicators on the health of a rainforest and so it would be very useful information to have for Taricaya.

REFORESTATION PROJECT

New Farm has undergone quite a few changes over the years. From guinea pigs to mahogany trees to donkeys and goats, there are always new ideas to try in order to show local families and community's alternative and sustainable ways to use their land in order to provide income and food without cutting down more trees or using up already dwindling resources, such as Brazil nuts.

Now we are looking for ways to reuse an area of grassland which, in previous years, provided food for goats and donkeys at the farm, without destroying more of the surrounding rainforest. In previous newsletters I have written of the work that went into creating a new plant nursery area at the farm. Hardworking volunteers cleared an area of the tough grass and erected bamboo posts to support a cover of black netting, shading the area underneath and reducing the re-growth of the grass.

We then constructed wooden beds in which we planted seeds and filled them with sawdust. Sawdust was used as opposed to soil as it retains the humidity more effectively. The idea is to grow Cedar and Iron Wood seedlings which we can use to create a sustainable plantation in place of the grassland.



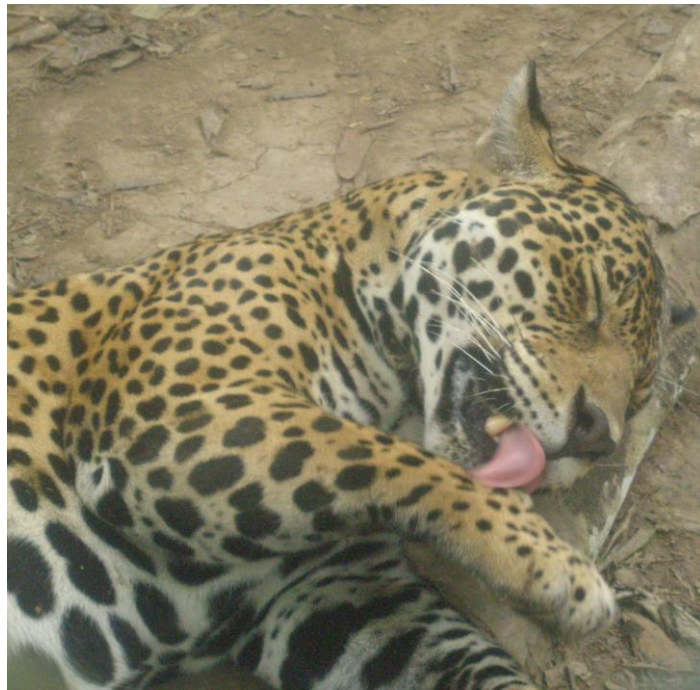
First, the seeds were collected on various excursions into the rainforest, looking for the fallen seeds along the trails. Over the wooden beds, we created a grid formation, using raffia, so that we could plant the seeds at set distances apart to give them the best chance of germination. The seeds are watered regularly and now we wait and hope the seeds germinate successfully. We will keep you updated in future newsletters!



ANIMAL RESCUE CENTRE

In the Animal Rescue Centre this month there has been quite a lot of work focusing on our jaguar, Preciosa. She has been with us for many years and is one of the cases, as unfortunately sometimes happens, that is unlikely to be released. This is due to a number of reasons, such as her history and poor treatment before she came to us, her resulting small size and the length of time she has spent in captivity.

We have been undertaking observations of her behaviour as she has shown signs of some repetitive actions, such as pacing, and we wish to address this. Every week, when she is fed, we are redecorating her cage with leaves and branches to create shelter and hidden areas. We are thinking of various ways to hide her food or present it in different ways: hanging or hidden inside something. We are also using scents around her cage to capture her attention. *Hugo Boss*, is proving surprisingly attractive for her! There are also plans to build a new platform for her in her cage. We will continue to make observations of Preciosa in order to see if we are successful in changing the pattern of her behaviour.



Alongside this, we are also beginning with some training. If we are able, for example, to get her to lie down at the edge of her cage when we need her to, we would be able to take blood samples or give injections when necessary without the more traumatic use of sedatives. In order to train her, the idea is to use a bell and food rewards. We will keep you updated on her progress.

NEW ARRIVALS

It has been a busy month for the rescue centre with a number of small new arrivals. It began with a male night monkey who arrived in a cardboard box, weak and unable to move. Little is known about his history, found with some people who, it seems, did not know how to treat him well. In fact, it seemed almost inevitable that he would not survive the first night; but then, he did. Then to survive until the weekend still seemed quite unlikely; but then, he did. In fact he continued to survive and little by little his condition improved. It was time to give him a name: Lazarus seemed fairly appropriate.



At first, Lazarus lay very still, eyes closed and half way on the other side already. With some encouragement he began to eat a little and then with growing enthusiasm and eyes opened. He was very thin and full of parasites and for awhile he still seemed unable to move. It may be that he had suffered a blow to his spine and we began to think it might be possible that the damage was irreparable. However, with nerve treatment and some gentle exercise he eventually began to show signs of improvement; so much so that he scampered up a tree one day and promptly fell asleep at the top. Anxious staff and volunteers waited below with a blanket just in case he fell out: he was still very weak.

Lazarus is not fully recovered and does not climb much at all. It is possible he has some problems with his sight as well and so we are continuing to observe him and encourage exercise. The cage alongside the animal hospital has been adapted with low branches to try and stimulate his ability to climb. We will keep you updated on his progress.

Following the arrival of Lazarus was Salsa, a baby howler monkey who, just like Callie our previous youngest howler monkey, when she first arrived, is still very dependent on human company.



Although, as she gets older we will aim to reduce this dependency, at the moment it is necessary for her health and wellbeing. When her quarantine period is over and we know she is healthy enough, she will be put with Callie and Muñeca, a young female howler monkey we also have.

With a similarly vague history, most probably having been kept as a pet, Salsa arrived with an injury to her hand that resembled a burn. With treatment it has been healing well and she has been entertaining volunteers and staff with her playful manner of swinging and clambering on anything she can find.

The last new arrival was perhaps the most unexpected. For a while now we have had two Tapirs in the Rescue Centre: Bonito (a male) and Isabella (a female). There had been signs of interaction between the two, but with a gestation period of around 13 months, we felt that any surprises of that sort were still a little way off. However, one Saturday, the staff and volunteers who had decided to stay the weekend got a big (or little!) surprise: a very new, very stripy, little baby tapir. Isabella had given birth! It was a lovely surprise, however, it fairly soon became clear that things were not going to go according to plan. Isabella



seemed to be having trouble producing milk, and then, when she was able to do so, seemed a little careless about her offspring and kicked out a little at Esperanza (Hope), as the new baby was called, while she was taking milk. Esperanza became ill: very weak and unable to stand and with an infection that became too difficult for her to fight off and, very sadly, she finally died about a week later.

So, we have had some happy and sad events this month, as can happen with animals. We look to

the future now for Isabella and Bonito and with the other baby animals that are doing well and hope to see many more happy events for them.

EXTRAS

FIRST AID AND FIRE SAFETY TRAINING

We were lucky enough to have two Swedish volunteers, Markus Joelsson and Jerry Nilson, stay with us this last month who were training to be fireman. They were keen to undertake some safety training with us in order to help them in their courses. So, one Friday afternoon, the staff gathered in the bar for some refresher advice on Basic First Aid. It was also an opportunity for us to reconsider the possible risks within our own specific areas of work and discuss some possible changes in practice.

Following on from this, all staff and volunteers were given some basic advice on Fire Safety. Some exciting-sounding competitions had been prepared for us, involving putting out fires, but unfortunately the Amazon rainforest chose this moment to rain quite heavily during the day and the activity had to be made a little shorter. Piles of wood lay under tarpaulins attempting to stay dry and, as the rain eased off in the evening, Markus and Jerry were able to show us how to safely check and use fire extinguishers to put our fires. It was good to have the practical experience so that we know if this ever does happen exactly what to do without hesitation. We also had a go at extinguishing the flames with water...equally effective it seemed.



Checking the fire extinguisher and putting out fires

Hi,

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.

Have a good month, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Catherine Turner
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Reserva Ecologica Taricaya