



One of the wild Jaguars in Puerto's zoo – Not a wild Jaguar, although it does look it.

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Animal Releases

The months of December and January have been very busy once again for the animal release project with us releasing 4 more animals back into the wild.

At the beginning of December we began by releasing a group of 3, recently acquired, Nine banded armadillos.

One of our neighbours, Pedro, who lives just over the river from us, frequently brings us animals that he finds within his land. One day, whilst he was out clearing one of his trails, he came across the 3 young Armadillos hiding under a log. Knowing that there are several people near to his land (And even himself) that would really enjoy a nice Armadillo stew, he picked them up and brought them straight to us where they would stand a much higher chance of survival.

As most of you know we normally keep hold of animals for at least a week or two for health reasons, but due to the fact that armadillos spend most of their waking moments digging in the ground looking for worms, larvae and insects, it would be almost impossible for us to find enough food for them to live healthily.

So the decision was quickly made, without debate, to release them straight away. Here's hoping that they live a long and happy life in the wild.



One of the Nine Banded Armadillos (*Dasypus novemcinctus*) Posing for a photo!



Hard to see from this angle but here we have all 3 waiting for the starter's gun!

Just before we left Taricaya for Christmas we decided to release Winston, our White lipped peccary that had been with us for about a year and a half. Like most of the mammals that we have had, Winston began as a tranquil baby, but when he reached maturity he started to become territorial. This was shown to us as aggressiveness towards anyone who went near HIS enclosure.

This showed us that he was ready to look after himself. In December 2007 he was released near Briolo creek where we hope he will meet some other peccaries and walk free through his forest.

This, as some of you may remember, was our 2nd attempt at releasing Winston, a few months ago we reported to you our 1st attempt, where he managed to make it back to the lodge area before the group that released him! This time though he has about 10km to walk to get back to us, and as of January 28th, I can tell you all that so far he has not made it back here.



Winston (*Tayassa pecari*) Our White Lipped Peccary caught in our new Mammal Transportation net.



At the release site and straight to what he does best – Sniffing around for food! A good sign to us.

Once Winston had been released, we began repairs and preparations to move one of our newest arrivals, Isabella, another Brazilian Tapir. Isabella was rescued from Puerto Maldonado like most of our animals and like most of them she was in a bad situation when we first received her. Badly malnourished and with diarrhoea, it was touch and go if she was going to survive the difficult first few weeks in her new enclosure. Fortunately with a lot of care, attention and Baby milk, she began to put some weight back on and her stomach problems were a thing of the past and with the help of her new favourite food, peanuts, she was well on the way to recovery.

Isabella was moved in to Winston's old enclosure that same day, and although she was a little nervous and scared for the first few weeks, she quickly chose her new den and is now seen and heard every morning during animal feeding.



Tapirus terrestris or Brazilian Tapir.



Baby milk is the best substitute for animals.

In January we released our first animal for 2008. We regularly get baby Brown Agouti's given to us, their mothers are hunted for meat and when the hunter finds babies they usually take them back home as well. A baby Agouti can take up to 2 years to grow to a good size to eat, which most hunters think will be an easy task. But after a few months when the animal starts to eat food instead of drink milk, they soon realise that they cannot provide the attention and food necessary.

This is where we come in. Peanuts, Rice, Papaya, Lemons and Bananas make the most balanced diets possible for animals in this area and the change is quickly seen, eyes become brighter, fur and feathers seem to shine and the animals become a lot more active.

Once the animal has grown to a suitable size, and is showing its natural habits, we can then release it. Catching a Brown agouti was probably the hardest thing that I have ever done though, with such a smooth coat of fur and being so streamlined it was almost like trying to catch a fish!



Dasyprocta variegata or Brown agouti

At the end of January we released our last animal of the month. Willy, our Puerto Maldonado assistant, was travelling along the Cusco road on an errand when he came across a young 3 toed sloth by the road side. Knowing that we have the animal release project he carefully picked the sloth up and brought it back to Brombus. Fortunately we had a boat in town that day so we were able to pick it up straight away. Keeping him in an enclosure for a day for quarantine purposes, we arranged the release for Wednesday at 12:15 – Taricaya time, so about 1pm!

Knowing that Sloth's are amazingly strong animals, I began to slowly remove it from the enclosure, but even being cautious was not enough to prevent him from getting a good grasp on my hand and

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sinking his 3 claws deep into my skin. With the help of 3 volunteers grabbing arms and legs we managed to prise it off me and take it to the release sight – A nearby tree that sloth's use regularly. Placing the animal on a lower part of the trunk we watched for a good 30 minutes as it climbed about 30 cm's round the tree and on top of a nearby enclosure... 30 minutes after lunch, we went back to see how he was doing and found him another 30 cm's higher up the tree...needless to say we cant imagine him getting too far...But we are very confident that he will be safe in the area and soon get in to his normal routine.



Bradypus variegates or 3 toed sloth



Free to climb to the highest point of any tree.

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. Where possible this list has the species name in English, however there are several species that only have scientific names.



Black banded Woodcreeper



Dusty-throated Antshrike



Green and Rufus Kingfisher



Spectacled Caiman



Adenomera sp A



Coral Pipesnake



Nine-Banded Armadillo



Margay



Silky (Pygmy) Anteater



Auto Camera Feature

Since November 2007 we have been using Automatic camera systems to help in the identification of mammal species in the reserve. Once we have a substantial database of photos we also hope to be able to identify individual species. The Auto-Cameras use infra red sensors to detect movement (Like a burglar alarm) which then activates the camera. They have memory for 150 photos and rechargeable batteries which last for up to 1 month. Completely water proof, they can be left out in the jungle in all conditions.



Brazilian Porcupine



Female Brazilian Tapir



Male - Red Howler Monkey



Giant Ant-eater



Female - Paca



Nine Banded Armadillo

Apologies for the bad quality of some of these photos, we can only set the cameras up, if an animal walks too close then the flash will distort the photo – Disadvantage of working with animals!

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Feliz Navidad!

Those of you who have ever celebrated Christmas in a hot climate will know that it never feels like Christmas... There's something about a 28C heat and 96% humidity that takes away all thought of snow and reindeers. And I'm convinced that Santa has a different suit for anywhere in the tropics – Could he really go running around in this heat wearing woolly socks???

But at Taricaya we always try and get some of that Christmas spirit across to the volunteers. Each year Fernando and his family make a huge Christmas dinner at Brombus for the volunteers and staff – Yes we do actually get a break over Christmas! This year we were lucky and had turkey, pork, several types of salad, 4 different types of sauce and of course rice... But nice rice, as it was cooked by Fernando. Indeed all the food was amazingly prepared, with ample portions for everyone – In fact we were still eating leftover's 2 days later!

Those of you who have never spent Christmas in a Latin American country will probably be unaware that we actually start the main celebration at 12am Christmas day, so children are allowed to stay awake to open presents, friends and family don't start arriving until about 10pm for Christmas dinner and everyone stays awake until about 3 am after the mandatory "see who can eat and drink the most contest" In fact Christmas day is a much quieter affair, with most people recovering from the night before and spending most of the day in front of the TV.

Of course we all had an amazing Christmas, even though it felt like the middle august in the south of France! We arranged secret Santa, so at least everyone had 1 present each and Fernando's family bought everyone something small (thanks to Maria Fernanda!) and of course most of the volunteers had presents sent out from home which resulted in a brief period where everyone was a little home sick. But we soon changed the atmosphere with some Christmas music in English, Dutch, German and even French! Multi-cultural indeed!

Once everyone had there fill of food and drink, sat and talked to the small hours of the morning the more hardcore partiers among us went out to the infamous Wittities and partied a little longer – Personally the allure of my comfy bed was too strong and the thought of having a nice long sleep until the afternoon of Christmas day meant I was asleep by about 2am – Little did I know that I would still be woken up at about 8am the next day to help sort out a problem with a rival volunteer companies volunteer, who had gotten herself lost in the middle of know where! No rest for wicked as they say!



Christmas in the Plaza of Puerto



Volunteers and Nandos Family opening Presents

Of course everyone at Taricaya, Brombus and Projects Abroad hopes you all had a wonderful Christmas and new year and that you all got your individual wishes. Here's hoping for a white Christmas next year...

Happenings in Puerto Maldonado and Snippets of Taricaya News!

Volunteers Leaving

In December and January we said goodbye to Laure Cugniere, Leanne Panes, Paul de Vries, Lianne Veen, Daniel Idler, Nadia Gypteau and Charlie Dalby.

Thank you for all your help at the reserve, we really couldn't do the work we do here without your help.

**New Volunteers
IN DECEMBER/JANUARY**

Over the next two months - Nadia Gypteau, Rose Young, Charlie Dalby, Johnathan Cross, Lydia Schaedlich, Alexander Goulder, Steven Mons and Sian Ricketts – Will all be arriving to help us out.

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

December Howling

Coming back from Christmas in Puerto, we had a surprise present for Rachel, An adult male Howler monkey (Picture on front page). We have always had trouble with Howler monkey's due to the amount of attention they need and their diet. But with an almost fully grown male, we are hoping that this one will survive as he is a lot stronger and so more resistant to stress.

In early January we received a younger male, which we have put with the adult, hoping that they will look after each other.

Lake Valencia

The 9th of January saw us taking our first field trip of the year to lake Valencia. This local lake is a great place to relax, see many species of wildlife and have a nice relaxing swim in the lake!

Like most of our field trips, this one was almost rained out, but after a few drops of rain the sun fought its way out and gave us all sun-tanned right arms...

JUNGLE FACT!

A rainforest can have more ants, in weight and numbers, than anything else.

**WHAT'S
HAPPENING
IN PUERTO**

January Vets

On the 7th of January we welcomed a group of student vets from Lima to the reserve for 2 weeks. All 3 of them have completed their first 3 years of studies and came to help us with the animals at the reserve. Alonso, Jean Franco and Talia helped us set up new procedures to monitor the animals, care for the goats and donkeys at the farm and of course we helped them with their English and with general knowledge of the jungle! Thanks for your help guys!

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 Year, New Kitchen

After several months of delays due to shortages of wood, builders being too busy to come down and Fernando and Stuart both being away for a while in December, we have finally managed to move in to the new dining room!

The old dining room was beginning to sink down into the river due to the weight of the upper structure and decay of the lower structure and this year's wet season was not kind on the roof at all, with several large holes forming due to branches crashing down on top of it.

Our new dining room is larger – Meaning we have more chance to spread out in the high season, more open – so its cooler and more light gets in and of course its clean!

All sounds good doesn't it? Unfortunately we have already come across one or two minor design faults – firstly that when it's windy and rainy, we all get wet. The only disadvantage of having large windows is that we are more open to the less friendly elements when they decide to come around.

The second thing is nightly invasion of bugs – Although we had this problem in the old dining room, we hoped that by having a new, sleek and clean dining room it wouldn't reoccur - But it has.

Not to worry though, we have already started "operation – Fix Kitchen" By moving a few walls around, and making the windows slightly smaller on one side we should have the problem fixed by the time I finish this newsletter – Here's hoping anyway!

Of course a new dining room means we have the chance to put in new rules.

1. No shoes, Sandals, Boots in the dining room.
2. Floors and Tables will be cleaned twice a day everyday!
3. Personal items will not be left in the dining room
4. All plates, cups, knives ECT will be washed by the person who used them
5. No walls, tables, doors will be painted by anyone!!!

Of course we will see how long all these rules last, but I personally hope that we will be able to keep the kitchen shiny and new looking for a few years to come at least!



Our new kitchen – Big, Clean and light



The New Kitchen from the outside

We would like to thank Projects Abroad for helping to fund the construction of this new building and of course all the tourists who have visited for the last 6 months, helping to complete the financial side. We couldn't have built such an amazing structure without the help of Sr Wicho and his fellow carpenters and of course all the volunteers who helped out with Painting, transporting wood, fitting the water and electrical systems and with the minor parts of decoration.

Zoo!

During the last 12 months we have completed 2 projects in Puerto Maldonado, the first being the recovery of an area of parkland near the plaza, painting benches, clearing grass, trimming back the trees and repairing fencing. The 2nd and most recent was helping out at the local zoo. The owner of the zoo has always had trouble finding enough money and man power to keep the place in good condition and to keep his animals well maintained.

With the arrival of the vets from Lima (Noted above), we quickly arranged a day in Puerto Maldonado for all the volunteers and most of the staff to help out with enclosure maintenance – doing any repairs and putting sawdust on the floors, and health checks of all the animals – checking for wounds, taking weights, checking diets and worming the animals.



Moving Sawdust from the truck to the enclosures.



Lianne helping to worm a Brown Capuchin.

We began as soon as we arrived in Puerto, transporting all the volunteers, Vets and most of the staff to the zoo to let the staff there know that we had arrived. Then taking some of the volunteers in the truck we went to collect the sawdust from a local saw mill – Even the destruction of trees in the rainforest can have a benefit for us. Sawdust is an important material in helping to keep the enclosures clean and tidy, without it the floors get muddy and fruit quickly becomes rotten, attracting many insects and parasites.

Whilst the sawdust group was busy, the rest of the volunteers and the vets set to work with the animals, going around each enclosure, checking weight and overall health of the animals and of course worming all the animals. This is something that we have been doing with our animals for some years now in full knowledge that animals in the wild, although they would still have parasites, would be able to rid themselves of them by eating certain plants – Which of course animals in captivity cannot do.

The whole task, as you can imagine, took the whole morning and started to eat into the afternoon but once finished everyone had a feeling of accomplishment about them as the enclosures look 10 times better than they did in the morning and we were now 100% sure that the animals were all in good condition.

The reward for doing all this hard labour? Chinese food at the best place in town, Chifa Waseng – for those of you that don't know it, has now got a Chinese chef! Meaning that on request they will make traditional Chinese food.

Nothing like a hard days work to build an appetite – Volunteers who were that at the time will be email shortly after reading this complaining as I wasn't even at the zoo but sorting out flights for some of the volunteers and dealing with a weeks worth of emails! Not exactly hard work, but the food was still appreciated!

We are planning on working at the zoo again in the future, making this a regular 3 month activity so that we can help keep the zoo in good condition.

A little note for those of you who may be slightly concerned that Taricaya is helping support a zoo in Puerto Maldonado, We do have ulterior motives – With the end in sight for all the paper work to do with the animal rescue centre, we will soon be receiving animals from Puerto Maldonado and most importantly from the zoo, so its in our best interest to help keep these animals healthy so that we can release them in the future.

This month like every other month I'd like to get you to send us a passport photo of yourselves, we are still working towards our "Taricaya" Mosaic and we need a lot more of you to make the full slogan – "Reserva Ecologica Taricaya – Projects Abroad Peru" and we won't get there without your help.

Also I would like to hear from some of you about what you are doing at the moment,

A few of you seem to have dropped off the map! Where are you? What are you doing? Do you have any plans to have or join a Taricaya reunion? Let us know what you are up to, we really do enjoy sitting and having a few drinks...oh and reading the emails you send us of course!

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 – Make it new and interesting.

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? Let us know for our new Question area of the newsletter!

So until next month, bye!!!

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>

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