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PROJECT OF THE MONTH

ANIMAL RESCUE CENTRE

There have been so many small changes within the Rescue Centre recently, although looking at it from an insider's perspective, it seems relatively little. However the advances are quite significant compared to the situation within the centre even just 1 month ago.

The first great achievement, on September 4th, was the long-awaited release of our 2 South American Coatis. Mario and TC, having been residents here for nearly 2 years, had been through all the necessary examinations and blood tests between May and July, so at the very beginning of September we had a visit from a representative of INRENA (the Institute for Natural Resources) with whom all our animals are registered, and he provided the final approval for their release.



Those of you who have been here within the last year will have heard of Amazon Shelter, another rescue centre close to Puerto Maldonado. As they do not have jungle of their own, they applied for permission to release their 3 smaller coatis at the same time within our reserve. So, with the animals loaded up in their carrying kennels and a number of willing volunteers to carry them, they were transferred to the release site close to the spider monkey pre-release enclosure. This was chosen as being one of the farthest places from the lodge while still being within a relatively animal-friendly area. Once the kennel



doors were opened the coatis, although not desperate to escape, started to wander around in a way typical of wild coatis, investigating all the interesting smells and movements on the ground and even eating grubs right there. Although a little bit of an anticlimax, it was wonderful to finally see them out on their own and free to go where they please.

Also that day we released the Spix's Guan (*Penelope jacquacu*), a turkey-like bird who has also been with us for over a year. He reached a nice size and was very healthy, and has been released with a ring on his right leg so that he may be identified within the forest.

Those are the animals that have left us; however, we have received several more individuals to take their places. Earlier on in August we became the proud adoptive parents of Sid, a baby Southern River Otter (*Lutra longicaudis*) – see title page for photo.

He is absolutely adorable although very hard to take a good photo of as he is almost constantly on the move. Although he has very sharp little teeth and is very fond of fish his initial diet includes milk formula as he is of an age where he would still be living in close contact with his mother. Currently very friendly, he has the potential to become a little like the coatis, becoming more aggressive with people unfamiliar to him when he reaches adulthood, so he will have to be gradually weaned off human contact. These otters are relatively rare, often being overlooked in favour of the Giant Otter, a much more well-known species.

A couple of weeks later we received 2 young Red Howler Monkeys (*Alouatta seniculus*), yet to be named although the male is starting to become known as Chippy. We had stopped receiving Howler Monkeys in deference to Amazon Shelter as this species was one of their specialities, but they are sadly facing closure, so we agreed to take these animals. Howlers are notoriously difficult to raise owing to their specialised dietary requirements, and then even more difficult to release, so Raúl is developing a special rehabilitation programme for them based on previous examples throughout Central and South America.

Finally, the day of the coati release the representative for INRENA brought us a parakeet with clipped wings, which appears to be a Red-masked Parakeet (*Aratinga erythrogastris*), a bird more commonly spotted in dry forest in the north-west region of Perú. Once he replaces his wing feathers he is likely to remain in the rescue centre for educational purposes.



Plate from Birds of Peru
(Schulenberg et al.)

All these animals have come to us through INRENA, specifically for the purpose of rehabilitation and release. Either they have been donated voluntarily by people who were keeping them as pets, or were confiscated by INRENA itself (to keep wild animals as pets is illegal in Perú, although controls are not implemented in many places due to lack of resources).

Last, but not least, all four of our small felines have been relocated to their new enclosures, giving them all larger areas a little further away from the centre of activity around the lodge and thus a less stressful existence.

PROJECT UPDATES

TURTLE PROJECT

The beginning of August carried similar to July, with several cold days (and nights) and not

many nests being found. Towards the middle of the month though we hit a lucky streak – well mostly Raúl did – so the project carried on right up until the beginning of September terminating with a total of 77 nests, a significant increase from 2008. We had restored the 2 main artificial beaches, each capable of holding 36 nests and had to quickly restore the 3rd one, which had been left untended as the previous year it had not been necessary. Luckily we made it just in time! The first nests were found near to the end of July, and as the eggs start to hatch between 67-90 days of incubation we should be expecting to see the first baby turtles sometime in the first 2 weeks of October, with the majority hatching out a little later on.

As the turtles hatch we will be able to compare them with the hatchlings we have maintained in a pool since October 2008. We kept a number of babies to observe their growth throughout the first year of life, and although they look a little small (if you haven't seen a new hatchling), they will seem like monsters compared to the hatchlings this year, they have grown so much.

BUTTERFLY HOUSE

With the visit from the representative of INRENA, mentioned earlier, he also undertook a routine inspection of the butterfly house. This is a necessary part of the process and will facilitate our progress. Currently conditions in the butterfly house are basically complete; the plants are growing wonderfully, the turtles are happy in their pool and there is a laboratory area attached on one side ready for handling and maintaining the caterpillars once the butterflies start to breed. What we are waiting for now is the final permission from INRENA to collect butterflies from the forest within our reserve to use as reproductive stock. The butterfly house was applied for as a 'breeding centre', so we will be producing our own butterflies most of the time, only taking a few more individuals from the forest occasionally to maintain the genetic variation.

LABORATORY

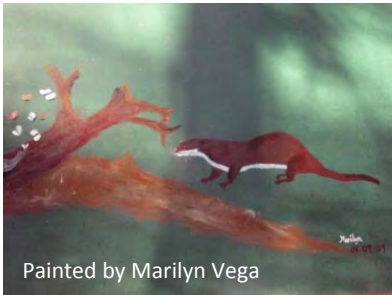
Finally the work areas for 2 of our biologists are complete. You may remember that earlier this year we mentioned the construction of a building close to the river bank which was to serve as a laboratory. Now having the distinction of being one of the only 2 two-storey buildings at Taricaya, the top floor is equipped for Daniel Neira, herpetologist, to maintain the materials needed for studying the reptiles and amphibians of the area and for the processing of collected data. Plantón, (Daniel Medina, botanist) lives in a room on the ground floor, to the side of his laboratory where he has space to organize all the plant data he has been collecting throughout the year. The two work areas have been fully furnished now and are a great addition to the lodge. Occasionally the top floor is also used for educational talks, as there we also have a projector for slide shows and presentations.

EXTRAS

BRIDGES – Before the rainy season began again, we took advantage of the long dry days to clean and repaint the 3 bridges along the trail that leads to the canopy walkway. If not maintained regularly, they will very quickly lose their resistance to the humid conditions within the forest, especially close to the ground.

BOTANY – Plantón has been carrying on quietly every month with the collection of material from the leaf litter traps and with the measurement and evaluation of the young mahogany trees planted at the pilot farm. These are not projects that produce tangible results every month, but hopefully at the end of the year we will have a report for you on how things are progressing.

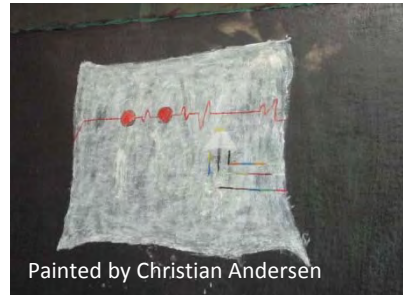
PAINTING – Many of our recent volunteers have had a desire to leave their own mark at



Painted by Marilyn Vega



Painted by Kim Kupper



Painted by Christian Andersen

the lodge, so we have a few new additions to the decoration of the bungalows. When initially built, all the bungalows were painted a dark green colour to blend in a little with the forest. Now many of them have been brightened up with painted contributions from some of our volunteers, their designs perfect for a rainforest environment.

CANOPY – There have been several groups of volunteers interested recently in passing the night on the top platform of the canopy walkway. Although it may sound a little adventurous for some, it is safe as all of the platform is surrounded by a safety net, the volunteers sleep inside a tent and are required to wear a harness at all times. One of these most recent groups, accompanied by a member of staff, happened to spot one of the rarer mammal species in the area. Before anyone spent the night up in the kapok tree (*Ceiba pentandra*), images had previously only been caught with sensor cameras. This is the Brazilian Porcupine (*Coendou prehensilis*), interestingly it has a prehensile tail very similar to that of the spider monkeys, and very long claws making it an excellent climber.



LOCAL NEWS

ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES IN AUGUST:

Volunteer arrivals: Nathalie Gervaise, Christine Donker, Halley Shawn, Erica Bonomi, Julien Landais, Kevin Hill, Emma Rosen, Alex Stergiou, Marilyn Vega, Inês Cardoso, Ele Frere, Christine Blauvelt, Rutger Deluster, Jamie Armour, Kelly Rosenberg, Zack Kennedy, Michael Drummond & Cristina Scheiwiler.

Volunteers leaving: Erica Bonomi, Halley Shawn, Emma Rosen, Kevin Hill, Christine

Donker, Julien Landais, Alex Stergiou, Lexi Slade, Ilona Hirschi, Valerie Smith, Katie Miller, Katie Desmond, Haik Adgere, Bessie Weisman, Elise Leblanc, Ben & Jennie Morris, Beki Hooper, Anouk Voisin, Jean Luc Roba, Sandy Caboio, Eva Tankovic, Jenny Ling, Hadrien Dierickx, Anthony Huynh, Inês Cardoso, Ele Frere, Christine Blauvelt, and Cristina Scheiwiler
Thanks guys, we hope you enjoyed your time in Taricaya

DID YOU KNOW?

- Rainforests are threatened by unsustainable agricultural, ranching, mining and logging practices
- Originally, 6 million square miles of tropical rainforest existed worldwide. But as a result of deforestation, only about one third of that remains

Note: most of our rainforest facts come from The Nature Conserancy

We would love to hear from any of you who have visited Taricaya, it doesn't matter how long you were here for or how long ago, we'd like to hear about what you're doing or where you are now.

Also if you would like to know anything about Taricaya, or have any queries about the rainforest (or Peru), we have a number of qualified biologists on the team who would be 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.org.

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

Rachel Kilby