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Last month was a very busy month at the Taricaya Ecological Reserve. We had a lot of volunteers arriving and thanks to the help of all of the volunteers we could move on a lot with our projects.

Introduction of a new staff member And Goodbye to Another

After many years at Taricaya Daniel Alvarado is saying goodbye, many of you will know him by his nickname "Gigo" and as Catherine's husband. Catherine who left us a couple of months ago to return to England is patiently waiting for her other half to arrive as well. We would all like to thank Gigo for his many years of service and we wish them both all the best for their future. This leaves me to introduce myself, again...my name is Richard Munday, and I've been working with Projects Abroad for many years now, beginning with many different jobs in Taricaya during the earlier years then working in Costa Rica on the Conservation Project there and finally returning to what feels like home in the Peruvian rainforest!



Project Updates

Animal Rescue Centre

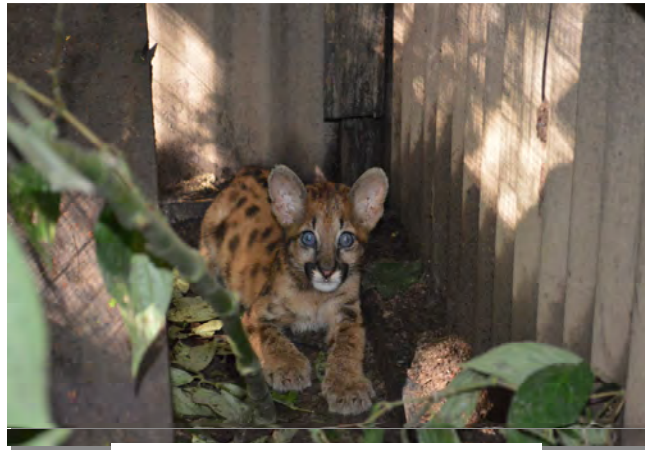
During the last few months we have been incredibly busy working on the Animal Rescue Centre, new buildings, new enclosures, fixing old ones and enriching the cages so the animals are sufficiently stimulated during the day. As has been mentioned in previous newsletters we have been building a new animal hospital and kitchen closer to the rescue centre, which I'm happy to say has now been completed! It's a wonderful building: large, open, clean and with lots of natural light and the best part is that now it's in the centre of the centre! So we can make sure we are looking after all the animals a lot easier now!

Another of the larger projects is also coming to an end now as well. At the start of December we were working hard on a group of new primate enclosures so we can locate some of our more troublesome species there where they will be safer and more isolated. One of the problems we have always had in Taricaya is that the main building material in this area is wood...with the high temperatures and high humidity we have big problems with wood rot which means we have to replace the wood of buildings and enclosures every few years at least. With animals like capuchin monkeys and spider monkeys we also have the added problem that they are very active and very strong and smart, so they are capable of breaking the old wood open and attempting to escape! However the new cages, which only need a few tiny things to be completed are made completely from brick and steel with chainlink fencing! Which will not only last many, many years, but will maintain their strength throughout that time as well!

And finally a late arrival for February in the animal rescue centre has been receiving a lot of attention already! "Simba" who is now officially called Simba Bilbo, is a young male puma who we received a few days before the end of the month. At the moment he is in quarantine like all our new arrivals. But we hope he will be moved to his new cage in the next week or two where he will be happy and healthy.



Work at the Animal Rescue Centre: The New Animal Kitchen, Hospital and Monkey Cages!



Baby Simba in Quarantine.

Rainy Season work

At this time of the year we get a huge change in the climate of Taricaya and this year appears to be especially large! As the rainy season really starts to get moving we are getting at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of the week with heavy rains each day and some days where it's raining all the time! This means we have to make lots of preparations for the end of the rainy season when the ground is saturated, the swamps are full and the river is at bursting point. Many of the important parts of the reserve need a little work to make sure they are safe and usable like the bridges to the canopy platform, the trails around the rescue centre, drains and waste disposal of the buildings and trail markers around the most used trails. All of these small projects take a lot of work to get completed in the short time we have, and everyone has been working especially hard to get things done!



Bird Banding Project

One of our long-term projects in Taricaya is a bird banding project. Since Taricaya began we have been using platforms to monitor bird species around the park to help us know and understand what we have here and how it behaves. Since then we have worked with several

experts, mainly a Peruvian ornithologist, Mauricio Ugarte who is one of Latin America's best ornithologists. With Mauricio's help we were able to work with mist nets to help capture and identify many more species that we hadn't seen in the past and after a few visits he managed to tidy up our list of birds and confirm what we have in the area. All of the birds that were captured at this time we were giving a small identification ring around its leg so we could keep track of the birds' movements around the reserve. Now Rachel Kilby is continuing this part of the project so that we can band/ring many more individuals, which gives us a lot more information on where the birds are moving to throughout the year, and allows us to learn much more about the ecology of the birds themselves. Also we are adding to our species list on a regular basis, with new species for Taricaya being caught every couple of months. During the last bird banding session, quite drawn out due to the rain, we captured several interesting birds, including a pair of Great Antshrikes and two small toucans (Ivory-billed Aracaris). We now have six stations established around the reserve, and aim to band at each station at least three times during the year. In the last year we have captured over 350 individuals of nearly 100 species of bird.

New Farm 2

You may have seen from previous newsletters that last year we acquired a piece of land a little downriver from Taricaya, to enable us to extend our pilot farm and include different kinds of projects. We have been working steadily to clear the land which is secondary forest, freeing all the plants left by previous farmers so that we can expand and improve things. The beginning of the year has seen us starting our new reforestation project, planting saplings of different tree species within the banana plantation, all hardwood species and commonly used for lumber in this area, so we can demonstrate to local communities that their land can be used for both long-term and short-term projects. The banana plantation covers nearly two hectares of land, and we currently have five tree species planted within it, with hopefully a few more to come. We will also be augmenting the fruiting plants at the farm, with saplings of various citrus trees, mango, breadfruit, brazil nut and avocado.