



Blue Enjoying a Taste of Freedom!

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July is always a very busy time in Taricaya and this year is no exception! We have the construction work in the rescue centre, the normal work we do feeding and cleaning the

animals in the rescue centre, the work we do in the farms and communities, the turtle project and the spider monkey project! Luckily everyone knows what they are doing and is moving forward with each project daily and like I have already mentioned, we have a lot of volunteers who are more than willing to get stuck in and do some hard work to help us get things done!

## Project Updates

### *Rescue Center!*

As part of our on-going efforts to improve everything in Taricaya for the use of volunteers, staff and of course the animals, we have begun renovating and replacing our big tapir enclosure and our puma enclosure. Those of you who know Taricaya will know how large the enclosure for the tapir is and how necessary it is! They are large animals! Fortunately most of the enclosure was easy to replace and it was a simple enough task without needing to climb around or work in difficult positions! We are almost finished with this project and you can see from these pictures that the enclosure now has steel posts, chain link fencing and bamboo along the top so we can climb in and out easily! We should easily finish this by the start of August and then the tapirs will be allowed back in to the main part of the enclosure, they are currently being held in a smaller section around the back. The puma enclosure is a completely different matter though. After we received Simba we knew that he would grow very quickly and we would need to replace his first enclosure. At the start of July we moved him to a temporary enclosure and then quickly pulled down his old one. During this time we were able to remove a few trees that were leaning dangerously towards other enclosures and then we began the process of building our new Puma enclosure. Digging a small trench so we could lay the bricks, which as you can see from these photos is a high wall followed by the steel poles and chain link fencing that we have in every other new enclosure. We are progressing as quickly as we can but still have a few big things to finish off. Hopefully we will have everything in place by the middle of August though and Simba will be able to move into his new home which will last him for a long time to come.



The Finished Tapir Enclosure



The Finished Puma Enclosure

There have also been several new arrivals in the rescue centre that I have not had time to write about over the last few months. We are looking after three baby monkeys, one spider monkey that was actually a star in the TV programme we did last month; one white and one brown capuchin monkey. We also have another blue and yellow macaw who is becoming good friends with Blue, who has been around the rescue centre for years.



The Baby White Capuchin Monkey



One Of The Baby Spider Monkeys

### ***Turtle Project***

The turtle project is one of the biggest projects of the year for us, something we have been doing for many years now and have had huge success with, and it's the namesake of Taricaya Ecological Reserve. The Taricaya turtles are not hunted so much itself anymore but the eggs are rare delicacy that can only be found at a certain time of the year and in few places of the country. Obviously taking the eggs from the wild and eating them is affecting the population and our project is one of the only ones in the country actively working to reverse this. We go to a local island which turns into a huge beach at this time of the year and we camp out each night for six weeks so that we can patrol the beach and collect the eggs ourselves, bring them back to Taricaya where we have artificial beaches and keep them safe from poachers until they are ready to be released. The whole project starts with us cleaning and refilling the artificial beach which is a tough job alone, the beaches have to be in complete sunlight for as much of the day as possible so we placed it many years ago in new farm which is a hot place just in the shade! Once the beaches are clean and ready we just have to wait until the end of July and start checking the beach for turtle tracks each morning until we find something. Once this happens we need to start camping out to make sure we are there before the poachers arrive at night that take the eggs and eat or sell them. At the time of writing this we have already collected nine nests but we hope to get many more before the end of August.

Another part of the turtle project is monitoring how the population increases each year, after all the work we have done we don't want to suddenly have too many turtles in any one point in the Madre de Dios river. The turtle census is the easiest way of doing this where we

take one of our boats and slowly drive down the river for a couple of hours and count as many turtles that we possibly can along the way an average number that we have found during these trips is around 200 along 10km of river and after the many years of working this way we have seen that everything is going very well and the numbers are increasing slowly which is reversing the impact of all the eggs that are taken illegally each year by poachers.



A Taricaya Sunning Itself During  
Turtle Census



The Artificial Beaches At New Farm

### ***Weather Update***

We find this time of the year very tough for so many reasons, obviously having 44 volunteers and so much work is very tiring but the main thing for most of us is that we are moving further and further in to the dry season which is very hot! The highest temperature we have recorded so far is 40°C in the shade so you can imagine what it's like working in the sun with the humidity! We are lucky though; other parts of rainforest get equally hot but are not lucky enough to have "Friaje" which is four to five days of cold weather. Basically the wind normally comes from the North or East which is all forest like here in Taricaya and the air heats up even more. But head south from us and there's Bolivia and the Argentina and Chile which are pretty cold places at this time of the year because it's obviously winter in the southern hemisphere. This means that the air coming in is freezing cold, after passing over many km of land it gets to heat up a little but by the time it reaches us here is only about 10-15°C which in comparison to the heat we can have is such a relief! There was once a report of hail in the city of Puerto Maldonado, that's how cold it can get! It always seems so bizarre to tell volunteers to bring a set of cold weather clothes to such a hot place.

### ***Spider Monkey Project***

Finally it's time to tell you about the advances we have made in the spider monkey release project and its great and okay news. Unfortunately we had to relocate them a few weeks ago because they were causing a few problems with tourists on the canopy platform so we took them further into the reserve and re-re-released them. But the amazing news is that as

we have been following them we have actually found them coming closer and closer and into contact with the first group of spider monkeys that we released a few years ago. Unfortunately we were unable to put radio collars on the first group so when we lost track of them. But amazingly the second group has taken us right to them and we now know that the first group is alive and healthy, which is a huge success for a pilot project like this in Taricaya. We hope that the two groups will join permanently as this will be a lot easier for them and us. They will have the advantage of more numbers for protection against predators and a larger DNA pool for breeding and it will be easier for us because we can follow both groups just by using the radio collars on the second group. The project is another hard one though, we are sending two groups each day from 6am to 12pm and then from 1pm to 6pm. Walking through the entire reserve and following the monkeys, recording all the information we can and not having the comforts of Taricaya is obviously a little hard for all of us but like with all the work we do the volunteers we have are vital to help us complete everything and Taricaya volunteers are hard, strong and perseverant people! Thanks to you all!

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 on 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](http://www.volunteer-conservation-peru.org), or you can reach us through the Projects Abroad website at [www.projects-abroad.net](http://www.projects-abroad.net).

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

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