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It's been another amazing month in Taricaya, lots of volunteers have meant we could really advance with many of our projects and as the year continues to look very good we have begun planning for even more work in the coming months!

Goodbye to Another Member of Staff!

A couple of months ago we said goodbye to Daniel, our herpetologist. I have to apologize to Daniel and everyone else for not mentioning this sooner but due to several reasons it kept getting moved off the previous newsletters. We would all like to thank Daniel for his time and efforts over the last 7 years in helping Taricaya and everyone here in learning what we now know about all of the herpetofauna in the area, building the Taricaya turtle project to what it is now and basically helping us to become a better project. We all hope he is happy and successful in his next job and we would love to hear back from him in the future.



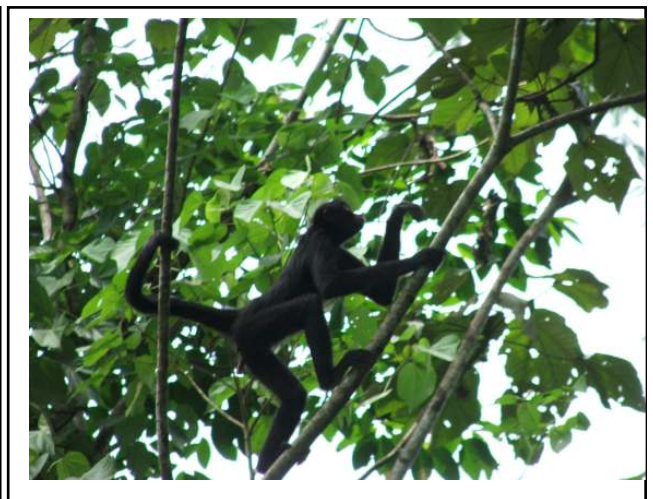
Project Updates

Animal Rescue Centre

We have a lot of great news in the rescue center this month firstly I would like to tell you all about the progress of our monkey cages. For several months now we have been working hard to build the new monkey area of the rescue center, which is out behind the tapir enclosure and will contain 7 enclosures just for the different species of monkey we have in the center. The new enclosures have been built with materials that will last for many years

to come, using cement, steel tubes and chain-link fencing we are sure that we won't have to do any maintenance on them for at least 5 years and the whole structure will be good for much much longer! It's a slow job though, many sections of the fencing have to be tied to the tubing manually using sections of wire to ensure that nothing can get in or out but we are finally nearing the end. At the end of March we only needed to close off the final side and then concentrate on the doors and final cement work, so hopefully in the next newsletter I will be telling you all about how we finished the cages and have moved the monkeys into them!

Another great development in the rescue center is that we have submitted the paperwork to get permission to release the spider monkeys inside the reserve. This is especially exciting for me as I will finally get the chance to begin tracking work with animals released from Taricaya. The aim is to release the monkeys in mid-May, but we can't be more exact than that at this time due to the complications of Peruvian bureaucracy. However we have been testing the radio tracking equipment in preparation for this day and this group of monkeys has been wearing dummy collars for many months so they shouldn't notice when we place the real ones on them. Once we get the permission to release the monkeys will be moved to the pre-release cage at the back of Taricaya where they will stay until they release themselves (The cage is only made of netting so it's more likely they will break out when they are ready than us releasing them when we are ready) Once we or they have released the monkeys we will begin tracking their movements through the forest and possibly into the Tambopata reserve behind us, noting all of their actions and behavior whenever we can. This is possibly one of the most important parts of this project as it will prove that our release program is working and that we can continue with this project to keep on increasing the population of black spider monkeys in the area of Taricaya.



*The Finished Monkey Cages and One of our released Spider monkeys from many year ago,
The next stage for this group we have now!*

Rising River!

March was a busy month for us here in Taricaya for many reasons. The biggest being the looming threat that the river would once again burst its banks and we would be forced to cancel all our normal work just to concentrate on working to reduce the impact of the flood waters in and around the camp. The river level stayed constant throughout January and February and due to the fact that we had only small amounts of rain (compared to the normal levels would expect at this time of the year) but then in March we got a couple of months of rainfall in the space of 1 week and it wasn't only us that got this rainfall, Cusco and the surrounding mountain areas were similarly drenched in water which only compounded the problem for us as all of the rain came down to the Tambopata and Madre de dios rivers which pass by Puerto Maldonado. Fortunately though this year we were lucky and were saved the big task of dealing with flooded buildings by the tiniest amount. The river levels reached an exceptional level and we even spent one evening until about 12am watching the river coming higher and higher before deciding that it was slowing and would begin to drop very soon. We did have to move some of the animals around though; the white lipped peccaries were moved into a section of the tapir enclosure because the whole area there was knee deep in water (Which actually helped clean it up a little!) and we needed to provide some more platforms in the monkey enclosures to make sure everyone was safe and sound there. Previous years have seen much worse flooding in the area but the rainfall this year, although constant has not been anywhere near the levels previously recorded.



The Flood level reached just under the Kitchen this year.

Maintenance work

A good portion of the work we have to do in Taricaya at this time of the year is maintenance of structures, with the high humidity and high rain at this time of the year combined with the high temperatures mean that ropes, wood, string and bamboos need to be changed or repaired on a regular basis to keep everything running smoothly. Last month we took several bamboos from the bamboo plantation in the farm to fix the turtle house and this month we worked on the butterfly house. Taking around 8 long pieces of bamboo from the same plantation which we planted around 8 years ago for these reasons to replace all of the support posts for the netting on the butterfly house. We began the project a few years ago hoping to be able to breed butterflies and release them back into the wild. After a while though we realized that this wasn't working how we hoped so we decided to concentrate on just a couple of species for display purposes. At the moment we have owl butterflies in the house, eggs were taken from the wild and we cared for them until they hatched, fed them until they became chrysalis and then released them into the butterfly house when they transformed into butterflies. Since then we have been slowly but surely building up the butterfly population in the butterfly house using the same eggs that each generation laid. Gradually we will be increasing the different species that we have inside the butterfly house which will give us an interesting group to show volunteers and tourists that arrive to visit the projects at Taricaya.

Bungalow Updates

Finally on another area of repair/renovation, we have finished a large project of renovating all of the volunteer rooms in Taricaya. For many years this has been a weaker area of the camp at Taricaya but we have finally found a good combination of colors and materials to make the rooms look clean and bright! For months we have been painting the walls, beds, shelves and floors whilst Ronald had been putting ceramic tiles in the bathrooms for the floors and showers. Now that we have finished everything I'm sure you all agree that they look fantastic and will help everyone feel more comfortable whilst they are here in Taricaya.

Thanks for your help guys and we hope that you enjoyed your time in Taricaya !

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, 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.

Richard Munday
Volunteer Co-ordinator
Reserva Ecologica Taricaya