

Nasampulli Reserve: putting the Management Plan into action

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The winter landscape at Nasampulli

It has been seven years since Rainforest Concern became involved in the development of the Nasampulli Reserve, aimed at conserving the Araucaria (monkey puzzle) forest ecosystems which have been present in Chile and Argentina since the Jurassic period. Other important conservation values of the Reserve are the pristine headwaters of the Trafampulli River and endemic fauna, including the Magellanic Woodpecker, the tiny Pudu, a deer only 18-20 inches tall, and the Güiña wild cat, all of which are classified as threatened species.

We are very satisfied with the progress made during the last year. Important advances have been made in the study of introduced wild boar through monitoring with camera traps, as well as in the proposal for the establishment of a collaborative relationship between the reserve and the nearby community of Molulco. Other activities have included the restoration of an abandoned logging road, from which we have gained experience for more extensive restoration in the reserve, the reopening of some trails that had become blocked by the

re-sprouting of vegetation, and the installation of more than 20 well-designed signs to facilitate the use of the trails for self-guided hikes. The three-bedroom cabin, finished in 2010, has been furnished, equipped and improved and now it is cosy and comfortable! It sleeps 10 people and can be used in summer as well as in winter, when the area is covered by 3 to 6 feet of snow. Another important achievement is the building of a wooden platform 6 feet high which provides a safe and breath-taking close-up view of the recently discovered Trafampulli

waterfall. All of these activities are part of the Reserve's Management Plan, developed in 2009 by Montserrat Lara and Enrique Cruz (see Rainforest Review Autumn 2010).

The research on introduced wild boar and native wildlife in the reserve is being carried out with great enthusiasm by Dr Oscar Skewes from the University of Concepción. Dr Skewes' work is self-funded and involves the collaboration of three veterinary students who are doing their theses under his supervision. Carlos Castro is

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Professor Antonio Lara with Peter Bennett and Hala Saffarini at the reserve

studying the rooting of wild boar, which causes a significant impact on the understorey, tree regeneration and soil. He is analysing rooting seasonality and forest type preference. Felipe Inostroza is studying the relative abundance of wild boar in Nasampulli Reserve and seasonal variation. Alex Espinoza is studying avian and non-rodent mammal biodiversity in Nasampulli. All these studies are expected to be finished by April 2013 and will provide key information for the control of wild boar.

Another important activity in April was the first attempt by a group of 11 expert hunters to control the boar population. Although the result of the hunting was disappointing because they did not see or shoot a single boar, we learned an unexpected lesson: the population of boars that was recorded in the summer by the camera traps had left the reserve! According to Dr Skewes, they were probably looking for more abundant food at lower elevations since this was a poor year for *Araucaria* pine seeds, *piñones*, in the reserve.

Denise Rocco from the University of Valdivia carried out the study mentioned earlier on the development of collaboration links with the Molulco community, a community made up of farmers with small properties. She completed this study for her thesis for the degree of Engineer in Conservation of Natural Resources, and it provides important information and

recommendations for establishing collaboration links with Molulco and promoting their involvement in the conservation work that we are developing in Nasampulli Reserve, as considered in the Management Plan.

In April, Peter Bennett visited and stayed overnight in the reserve with Hala Saffarini, so we had time to see the progress and discuss future plans.

In summary, it was a great year, not only for the reserve, but for strengthening the growing Nasampulli team and their individual capacities. Denise defended her thesis in May and got the maximum grade in her exam; Monserrat and Enrique are close to completing their Master's degrees in Environmental Studies at the University of Melbourne; Christian Little, also part of the team, got his PhD in Forest Sciences at Universidad Austral de Chile; Marco Cortés started his PhD on the same programme, and all of these students were awarded highly competitive grants from the Chilean Government for their studies. It has been great to incorporate Dr Skewes and his students. We are also grateful to José Miguel Gatica, finishing his studies of Food Engineer at U. Austral, who spent most of

the summer in Nasampulli doing a lot of the work mentioned, with the help of some people from Molulco and under the close supervision of Marco Cortés, who visited the reserve weekly to check on progress.



Newly completed cabin for research students

Future plans include exploring the possibility of purchasing another parcel of land to expand the reserve, joining the Forest Credits programme to increase funds available for the management of the reserve, developing a collaboration plan with the Molulco community, continuing the studies of wild boar and control of their population, as well as continuing restoration activities and trail improvement.



Pumas are occasionally encountered in the Nasampulli Reserve