

RAINFOREST REVIEW



SPRING 2003

Awacachi - making the connection
Watershed conservation in Ecuador
Turtle protection for Panama
The power of local partnerships
Our new interactive 'e-flet'

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RAINFOREST CONCERN

Registered Charity no 1028947

Trustees: J L M Denham, P R Lawton, M C B Syed

Peter Bennett – Director
Fiona Dalrymple – Administration, Events and Volunteers
Ralph Pannell – Fund Raising
Fiona Pérez – Ecuador Projects Manager
Julia Robinson – Communications

PARTNER ORGANISATIONS:

ALLPA (Ecuador)
BTCV (UK)
CIBT (Ecuador)
DECOIN (Ecuador)
Discovery Initiatives (UK)
The Eden Project (UK)
Endangered Wildlife Trust (Costa Rica, Panama and UK)
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Jatun Sacha Foundation (Ecuador)
NYTUA (Ecuador)
Planet Drum Foundation (Ecuador & USA)
Quest Overseas (UK)
Rainforest Information Centre (Australia)
Rainforest Rescue (Sri Lanka)

RAINFOREST CONCERN

27 Lansdowne Crescent
London W11 2NS
England

Tel: 0207 229 2093
Fax: 0207 229 4094

Email: info@rainforestconcern.org
Website: www.rainforestconcern.org

Cover photo by Frans Lanting

Design by Paice 07989 507078
Printed by Tourop Print tel 01444 892127

Tackling the bush meat problem in the Ecuadorian Amazon

by Ralph Pannell

THE HUNTING of wildlife for "bush meat" is a problem most commonly associated with Africa. However, the problem is also widespread in the Amazon, including Ecuador. In the boom town of Coca which is at the forefront of development in the Ecuadorian Amazon, wildlife hunted from the region's forests is readily on sale, either for meat, for the skins or for the live animal trade.

In the more remote parts of Ecuador's Amazon, the forests are still very healthy with a great diversity of wildlife. In areas where oil companies have forged roads and where subsequent development is moving at a fast pace, the forests that remain may still appear healthy at first glance, but you are only likely to see birds and very few mammals.

The problem has spread to areas where we are working with our local NGO partner, FUNEDSIN. The people who live here are the Quichua - the largest indigenous tribe in the Ecuadorian Amazon, who occupy a niche both physically and culturally between hispanic settlers and Ecuador's smaller indigenous tribes such as the Huaorani. Although the Quichua have a strong traditional respect for the forest, their population is growing and their lands are under considerable pressure from deforestation and hunting by other settlers.



A live parrot and a dead paca for sale

Wildlife hunted from the region's forests is readily on sale, either for meat, for the skins or for the live animal trade

In certain areas, wildlife populations have fallen so low that some Quichua are copying the settlers by clearing rainforest for cattle ranching. This is not a long term solution as soil erosion soon leaves the land completely unproductive. Compaction by cattle hooves also makes it impossible for natural regeneration to take place, so just like the settlers, these Quichua either have to migrate to new forest areas, or we have to help them find ways of living sustainably within a smaller area of forest.

With funding from the Rufford Foundation, we have been able to embark on a pilot project to establish three demonstration farms, rearing selected free-range native animals for which local demand and upriver demand is high (notably paca and capybara). Farms of this kind have already been established successfully elsewhere in Ecuador and other parts of South America. However, they have not been developed as a direct alternative to cattle ranching by which captive-reared native animals can live in the natural shade of healthy forest.

If these pilot farms are successful, then we will have found a way of providing the Quichua with a valuable source of familiar protein that does not require the further clearing of rainforest. It will also help prevent the need for the Quichua to explore deeper into remote areas to hunt wildlife.



An armadillo, another victim of the trade

REFORESTATION FOLLOWING TWO NATURAL DISASTERS

by Peter Berg, Director of the Planet Drum Foundation

THE COASTAL CITY of Bahia de Caraquez and its surrounding dry tropical forests suffered two catastrophes in 1998. The greatest El Niño storms in a century brought rain nearly every day of the year which caused mud slides killing sixteen people in one neighbourhood. As if this wasn't enough, last August a 7.2 Richter Scale earthquake severely damaged most buildings and caused more of the rain-saturated hills to collapse.

The 40,000 residents had to make urgent recovery plans but instead of simply replacing what had been there before, the people chose to transform Bahia de Caraquez into an ecological city, "Eco-Bahia". A bylaw was passed to re-establish the mangroves in the river estuary of the Rio Chone and forests on the hillsides and to carry out activities to supply public needs which are ecologically sustainable. It was an opportunity to create an urban environment that would restore and maintain natural systems and could become a model for Ecuador and elsewhere in South America.

Since 1999, the Planet Drum Foundation has been reforesting the hillside neighbourhood that was destroyed by mud slides. Thousands of native plants have been planted to prevent future erosion, creating a ten hectare wildlife park with paths and tree identification markers for school children and other visitors. Only native plants are used, grasses to cause water runoff, bushes to hold the surface soil and trees to retain subsurface soil and rocks. In order to win the cooperation of landholders, as most of the land is privately owned, the city has granted them the right to harvest fruits and seeds, provided no trees are cut.



Peter Berg of the Planet Drum Foundation

Through a grant from Rainforest Concern, the Planet Drum Foundation is able to oversee the initial phase. This involves building a greenhouse for seedlings and placing plants in strategic places along the length eroded hillsides. It is expected that it will take at least two years to complete the project by planting several hundred thousand more trees.

From Peter Bennett, Director of Rainforest Concern

THE WORLD SUMMIT on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg during August last year unsurprisingly concluded that the world's environment continues to suffer. Biodiversity loss is escalating at an alarming rate, desertification is on the increase and scientific evidence to support global warming is now even being acknowledged by the US government.

Despite this depressing news some significant achievements have been made. Broadleaf mahogany has at last been placed on CITES Appendix II, which means that it will now be much harder for countries to turn a blind eye to illegal logging and it will enable EU member states to check the legality of imports. In New Zealand, after a massive public campaign, 130,000 hectares of temperate rainforest earmarked for logging in the South Island have been given permanent protection.

With your help Rainforest Concern also made sound progress in 2002. In Ecuador, the north phase of the Choco-Andean Corridor became a reality with the purchase of the final piece of land needed to make the connection. Our focus has now returned to the southern phase of the Corridor. Here, in the Intag area, we have had encouraging results from our watershed protection project with 280 families from seven communities benefiting. We have also helped to extend the Yachana Reserve on the Rio Napo on the Amazonian side of the Andes.

In Central America, the success of the turtle protection programme in Costa Rica has encouraged us to start another project in Panama, where a six kilometre beach in Bocos del Toro is for the first time being given real protection from poachers.

Our volunteer programme expanded considerably with over 100 volunteers providing valuable help for our projects in Latin America. The majority of these were enthusiastic gap year students sent through Quest Overseas.

Here at home, we have developed an interactive website or "e-flet" aimed at children between seven and eleven years. This is proving to be equally popular with adults!

We have had a fantastic response to the Membership programme and if you have not already joined please may I urge you to do so now. Thank you for your valuable support and helping us to make a real difference.

March 2003

RUNNING FOR THE RAINFOREST!

The Flora London Marathon 2002

LAST YEAR'S Flora London Marathon was an even greater success than the year before. With six runners and an enthusiastic team of street collectors, we managed to raise a grand total of £8,850. A special thank you to everyone who took part: Jonathan Byers, George Donne, Philip Moore, Anna Quayle, Gavin Sugden, and especially Carsten Swift who was sadly unable to complete the course due to an injury, but still managed to raise over £1,000.

We would also like to thank the team of supporters who had a frantic day trying to catch the runners at certain "cheer points" along the course. Their enthusiasm encouraged the runners



Anna Quayle (left) in training with her sister

right up to the finish line. Most felt as if they had completed a Marathon themselves by the end of the day, but everyone enjoyed it!

Would you like to join in the fun next year and set yourself a challenge of a lifetime? We have places for the 2004 Flora London Marathon, so if you are interested please contact Fiona Dalrymple on 020 7229 2093 before they are all snapped up!



ECUADOR

size: 283,561 km² (109,484 sq m)

population: 12.7 million

capital: Quito

NORTH WEST ECUADOR

AWACACHI

Making the connection



One of numerous species of heliconia

Significantly, the creation of the corridor has also greatly hindered advances from the west of palm oil plantations. Sadly, pressure on the Awacachi Corridor has increased substantially this year due to the completion of a new road between Ibarra and the coastal town of San Lorenzo. After several years of construction the road was officially opened by the President of the Republic in September. It has opened up the area to business and has made it more attractive for people to move into the region.

The palm oil and logging companies continue to pose a serious threat to the future of these incredibly diverse forests. This year, a television film was produced to highlight the problems involving the palm oil companies in the

by Fiona Pérez (née Woodward) in Ecuador

AT LAST, after three years perseverance and a lot of hard work, we are delighted to tell you that the vital connection between the Cotacachi Cayapas and the Awa Reserve has been made.



Leaf-cutter ants

The vital connection between the Cotacachi Cayapas and the Awa Reserve has been made

This was possible with the joint efforts of Rainforest Concern, Fauna & Flora International and our Ecuadorian partner NYTUA, but we particularly wish to thank you, our supporters for helping to make this happen.

This connection is still narrow but we are currently working on widening it with further purchases. In total we have made 46 purchases and have bought 10,353 hectares, which is an additional 2,553 hectares since we published details in the last edition of Rainforest Review. In linking the biggest reserves in western Ecuador, mammals, birds, reptiles, insects and even plants can now move freely between the two.

Esmeraldas province. Curiously however, during its transmission time on national television, the broadcasting service in Esmeraldas underwent technical problems and so no one in the region managed to see the negative aspects of the palm oil companies that surround them!

Up until now the main focus of our project has been on land purchase, in order to establish the Awacachi Corridor as quickly as possible, before the forest is lost forever due to the serious pressures on it. Land purchase will continue to be an important activity in order to widen the corridor, but we also now need to concentrate on the community development in the buffer zone of

Ecuador occupies only 0.2% of the Earth's land surface, yet contains 10% of known plant species



NORTH WEST ECUADOR



Photo: FFI

spider monkey and this was undertaken by Ecuadorian biologist, Xavier Jimenez. Results showed that on average four individuals were present per group and the composition of genders was approximately 30% male, 44% female and 26% juvenile. The biologist is of the opinion that the population has decreased in comparison to other surveys in the general area, but this is hardly surprising given the tremendous pressures on the habitat from the logging and oil palm companies.

On an inter-organisational level our partner, NYTUA, has formed part of an ecological group of NGO's working in the Esmeraldas province. This consists of forums and campaigning and has greatly strengthened the conservation voice for this area. We continue to work on an agreement with the Ministry of Environment to show its support for the corridor project and hope this will strengthen the project on a national level.

Once again, many thanks for all your help in turning the Awacachi dream into a reality!

the Corridor. As with most protected areas, it is imperative that we offer alternatives to the surrounding communities and, thankfully, it is very clear that they want us to assist in providing these.

In response to this, we have had support from the Maurice Laing Foundation and are setting up a water treatment system in Durango and Ventanas, the two main communities in the buffer zone. We are also making vast improvements to the rather rustic mode of transport to the community of Ventanas. Owing to the old train service being abandoned, the only way to get to these communities was by using a gravity fed platform on wheels, with a couple of branches acting as brakes as it raced downhill! Now however, a system is being put into place with an improved and more robust version of this platform, which even has the luxury of seating! Instead of having to rely on pushing the contraption uphill for a long and steep 17 km, there is a hydro-power system to charge batteries, which will then pull it back up the hill. This may appear a small improvement but it will have an enormous impact on the lives of the people in Ventanas.

Although security in this politically volatile area is still an issue, limited ecotourism is also being considered and, in November, a Danish birding group came to visit the area. There's no doubt this could flourish in the future given the unique variety of rare and endemic species that can be seen there.

There are six park guards now in place after receiving preliminary training last year. John Gavitt, a US enforcement consultant for Wild Aid, came to Ecuador in 2002 to assess the corridor area and come up with a strategy to implement an efficient protection programme for the reserve. He carried out some basic training with the guards, which they found to be of great use and they very much look forward to participating in the rest of the programme.

Environmental education for the local communities

A grant from the IUCN Netherlands for \$50,000 enabled us to develop a management plan for the Corridor and will cover certain protection costs allowing us to properly map the area.

Research has been an important activity within the corridor. An initial survey was carried out to confirm the distribution and population of the





NORTH WEST ECUADOR

THE SOUTHERN PHASE



photo: KAREN WARD

Our main focus is on the purchase of areas in such danger that no other method is likely to save them

extremely steep slopes. As the population grew, these small farms were fragmented into even smaller holdings. Habitat degradation was further aggravated by settlers who were unfamiliar with their new environment and who did not know how to manage it sustainably.

WHY THE CHOCO-ANDEAN CORRIDOR?

Article by Jefferson Mecham,
President of ALLPA and Fiona Pérez

NORTH WEST ECUADOR contains the southern part of the Choco region, which consists of a band of tropical rainforest extending from southern Panama along the Colombian Pacific coast into north west Ecuador. It is considered by many scientists to have the greatest levels of species diversity on the planet.

Rapid deforestation and increased population are threatening this Choco region and, in particular, the area we have called the "Southern Phase" of the Choco Andean Corridor. This lies between the privately protected Mindo forest and the Cotacachi Cayapas Ecological Reserve. The forests of this area lie between 1,200 and 3,500 metres, and cover a great range of habitats. They are best known for the 'cloud forests' which, as the name suggests, are characterised by swirling mists, enveloping the trees and keeping them permanently moist. This environment provides ideal conditions for the staggering variety of bromeliads, orchids, ferns and mosses that support an equally impressive diversity of animal life. These include spectacled bears, ocelots, anteaters, pumas, humming birds, toucans, and the extraordinary cock-of-the-rock.

The cloud forest of the Southern Phase

Many of you will have recently received an appeal letter highlighting the need to save the southern phase of the Choco-Andean Corridor. If we are to expect your ongoing support, we think it is important for you to understand why this area is so threatened. The principal reasons are as follows:

1) Land settlement

Perhaps the single largest contributor to deforestation in Ecuador were the Agrarian Reform Laws (of 1964 and 1972) which promoted the colonisation of so called "vacant" forest land as the solution to relieving social and population pressures, particularly in urban areas. These laws considered forested land as wild and unproductive and thus available for occupation. The law required both property owners and colonists to clear 50 to 80% of the forest existing on their holdings. This resulted in the elimination of huge areas of forest to demonstrate that the land was being utilised. Ironically, much of the cleared land was never used for productive agriculture. By the time this law was changed in the early 1990's, unnecessary forest clearing had become standard procedure for settlers.

2) Unsuitable agricultural lands

After more than 35 years of land reform most of the land suited to agriculture is still in relatively few hands. Over half of the farmers are located on mountain slopes where cultivation occurs on gradients up to 70%. This was the case with the Santa Lucia project, where farmers were originally dedicated to cattle farming but on

3) Unsustainable economic activity

Logging, charcoal burning, "slash & burn" subsistence farming and cattle ranching are typical activities which result in deforestation.

"Slash and burn" is the method by which farmers cut back the forest, sell the large trees if they can, burn the rest and then plant cash crops such as maize or sugar cane. After a year or so, when the soil is no longer capable of nourishing these crops, grass is usually planted for cattle. Once again, when the nutrient level of the soil of these pastures becomes so low that even the grass becomes too poor for cattle, the land is often abandoned. Inevitably, it is then necessary for the farmer to start again by cutting back more forest. In hilly areas, this is particularly serious as without the roots of trees to hold the soil together the steep hillsides become liable to erosion.

Large areas of rainforest are unlikely to catch fire but the small fragmented pieces that often result from slash and burn, are susceptible to drying out and a fire fanned by a breeze can more easily take hold. The custom of burning the stubble of crops, old grass and weeds to prepare for new planting is a major risk in this respect. Many of these fires get out of control and mass destruction is caused, as in the case of the Intag area during the drier months. Many plant species cannot survive these fires and the wildlife is driven out and dispersed. The output from these farms is very low and this method of farming is totally unsustainable.

4) New roads

The opening of roads into previously inaccessible areas can be highly destructive. Highway projects

Deforestation in Ecuador is 3% per year, one of the highest rates in the world

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The Golden-headed Quetzal

have greatly developed Ecuador's road network in recent years but this has made hitherto inaccessible areas easily accessible to settlement and logging companies, thereby contributing to fragmentation of natural habitats. In such situations, species eventually become vulnerable, being left with critically low populations in small and isolated forest fragments.

5) Land trafficking

This is a serious problem, which goes largely unnoticed by the authorities. Here, opportunist land traffickers fraudulently gain possession of land, often by offering bribes in order to sell the land on for quick profit. Some even engage local people to "squat" or move on to poorly protected land to strengthen their claim. The actions of land traffickers and colonists are steadily removing the highly diverse forests of the Andean outer slopes because most of the land is sold on for agriculture.

6) Timber extraction

The timber industry, which is directly responsible for roughly a third of annual deforestation in Ecuador, is also responsible for building new roads in remote areas. This promotes deforestation by settlers, from whom they buy timber cheaply to reduce their operating costs. The logging companies are notorious for non-compliance with management plans and failure to reforest, but do so with impunity as the laws are seldom enforced.

7) Mining

The menace of large-scale mining currently looms on the horizon. In the 1970's oil replaced bananas as Ecuador's leading source of export earnings. With the end of the nation's oil reserves already in sight, the current government has pushed through a law to attract foreign investment in large-scale mining. Local communities, indigenous and environmental organisations are now left with the task of defending their forests, water supplies, lands and livelihoods from the ravages of mining.

This is the biggest threat to the area of Intag, where the Government is encouraging foreign mining companies to establish an open-pit copper mine.

8) Lack of financial resources

Ecuador, with its nineteen national parks and other protected areas, has one of the highest percentages of protected forest in Latin America. However, a lack of political will and government policy has failed to effectively protect and, in some cases, actually threaten these areas. Petroleum, mineral extraction and road-building which are permitted in or near protected areas have had a devastating impact. In addition, the existing national parks and other protected areas are chronically under-funded.

As a result of all these factors, the Choco region of Ecuador is one of the most threatened pristine forest ecosystems on the planet. So what can we do to change this?

To help overcome these problems private organisations have had to play an increasingly important role in conservation and have created many private reserves. Rainforest Concern is working in partnership with several of these groups in the southern phase of the corridor, namely Santa Lucia, DECOIN, CIBT and ALLPA. Since local residents usually depend upon forest destructive activities for their livelihoods, the focus of our work has to be with local communities in the long term process of environmental education and the development of economic alternatives compatible with forest conservation. Only by doing this will we be able to make the vital connections in the Southern Phase of the Corridor.

In Santa Lucia, we are supporting alternatives to the cattle this community used to live off. As you will see from Mary Finn's article (page 8) they are now involved in eco-tourism. We are also funding a reforestation programme to regenerate forest in areas where previously the local farmers had cut down trees for pasture.

In Intag, where mining is a major threat, we are supporting the Junin community with their ecotourism project. We are also helping them with a protection fund to patrol their community reserve, which Rainforest Concern together with DECOIN, helped them to establish.

In other areas of the southern phase we are working to keep land traffickers out, and trying to get protected status for the forests.

As you are aware, due to the relentless pressure and threats to these forests, our main focus is on the purchase of areas in such danger that no other method is likely to save them. In this way we can guarantee their long-term survival. In many cases, it is a race against time.

Thank you and we urge you to continue your support!

FOCUS ON ECUADOR



ECUADOR occupies only 0.2% of the Earth's land surface, yet contains 10% of known plant species, which is the greatest number per unit area of any country in the world. Despite its small size, Ecuador also ranks third in the number of amphibian species, fourth in birds and reptiles, fifth in monkeys, and sixth in the number of mammal species.

While blessed with one of the highest levels of biodiversity, Ecuador also has one of the world's highest rates of deforestation estimated at over 300,000 hectares or 3% per year. If allowed to continue at this rate, the country will be completely deforested within 30 years. Ecuador also has South America's highest population density at 45 inhabitants per sq. km and the peak rate of population growth on the continent averaging around 3% per year in the last decade.

The rapid exploitation of Ecuador's natural resources could perhaps be justified if the income gained from this was used to invest in the future to improve the quality of life for the country's population and to protect its outstanding natural heritage – the rainforests and wildlife. But after three decades of development based upon resource extraction and export crops, the debt per capita is over 20 times higher than when the oil rush began in the early 1970's, and an estimated 80% of the population still live in poverty.

However, to halt deforestation requires profound changes in policy to invest in Ecuador's human and natural resources, its biological and cultural diversity and its genuinely renewable and sustainable sources of wealth. Tragically, current policies go in exactly the opposite direction: they continue to exhaust non-renewable resources, contaminate the ecosystems and degrade their life supporting capacity. Natural habitats, species and peoples' security and culture are sacrificed for no other reason than to satisfy in the short term the greed of a few companies and individuals.



NORTH WEST ECUADOR

A year in the cloud forests of Santa Lucia

by Mary Finn at Santa Lucia

2002 was a busy year here in the Ecuadorian cloud forest and one in which we made significant progress with our conservation and community development goals.

What's been achieved with your help:-

Thanks to the supporters of Rainforest Concern, Santa Lucia's Reforestation Project has been funded for a second year. With their support and the help of hard-working gap-year volunteers from Quest Overseas, we have planted 1,175 trees, of eleven different native species, in five hectares of steep, degraded pasture areas. Rainforest Concern has also funded a much needed programme for park guards to protect the Santa Lucia reserve from the ever-present threat of invaders and poachers. We also made great progress in our agroforestry plantations. Thanks to Quest volunteers, we planted about 2,000 sugar cane plants which will provide 'panela' (unrefined brown sugar) for use in the Eco-lodge and for sale in the nearby villages.



The organic garden at Santa Lucia

Santa Lucia is now receiving around four to eight volunteers per month on a regular basis, in addition to the Quest volunteers' annual visits. We have also begun receiving some independent visitors, many of them referred to us by Rainforest Concern or by previous volunteers. We hope to attract more visitors in the coming months through local and international publicity (especially via the internet), and through contacts we are making with agencies that support community-based ecotourism projects.

With the level of success reached in its ecotourism project to date, the community now has a sufficient income to provide steady employment for a handful of its members, and part time work for others. The residents thus feel that they are well on the road to achieving sustainability. The members of Santa Lucia are proud that with Rainforest Concern's help, they have been able to demonstrate that a community can conserve its resources and earn a sustainable livelihood at the same time.

Local residents of the surrounding villages have also taken notice of Santa Lucia's success, and shown an interest in learning how to live in a sustainable way. Capitalising on this interest, during spring 2002, Santa Lucia began an education programme which includes an organic garden, a small tree nursery and classes in English and environmental education for the local children and youths.

Santa Lucia has also begun to expand its knowledge of the cloud forest ecology, through visits from researchers such as birders Robert Planqué and Dennis Sheets, and graduate student Sally Nunnally from Yale's Forestry programme. Sally is analysing the effects of

silvopasture systems on improving pasture productivity, and we hope that her results will help us improve our reforestation programme even further. Artist-volunteers, including botanist Marjorie Powell and Jo Beels from Paignton Zoo in the UK, have helped us with illustrations, signs and leaflets for future ecotourists and graphic arts designs for posters and pamphlets. We have a new t-shirt design (thanks to Quest volunteer Andrea Hulser), and even a wall mural for the community education centre (thanks to Rosie, Jessica and Jeff). Many of these volunteers have come to us via Rainforest Concern and Quest Overseas.

We have also updated our website www.santa-lucia.org, which now has a photo gallery and a section on our conservation and community development projects. Photos, stories or other contributions to the website are always welcome.

What we hope to accomplish in the coming months:-

One of our major goals for the forthcoming year is to ensure that all of the Santa Lucia community members benefit from the ecotourism and conservation projects. To this end, we will be actively promoting our ecotourism project in the hope of receiving sufficient visitors to provide steady employment for more of the community's members.

The reforestation project will also be running through the next year, with continued funding from Rainforest Concern. We have produced thousands of trees from a variety of native species which we hope to plant during the planting season. This will be followed by a long period of



NORTH WEST ECUADOR

maintenance and follow-up studies on the progress of forest regeneration in the planted areas. New agroforestry plantations are also in our plans for the next Quest visit this spring, including a small, organic coffee plantation which will complement our existing plantations of bananas and sugar cane.

We plan to expand the education programme through the renovation of an existing building to create a small community centre with classrooms, a library, and reception and office space for Santa Lucia. We are also investigating the use of new sustainable, appropriate technologies in the Ecodge and community centre, including solar water heating and purification, ecologically sound lavatories, and the installation of an old-time, spring-house type refrigeration system. These systems will help us save energy (minimising those long mule trips hauling gas cylinders up the mountain), reduce pollution and also serve as demonstrations for the community at large. Many of these projects also have the potential to serve as attractions for future ecotourists, and to generate employment for local people.

Last but not least, we hope to begin a programme of conservation monitoring and mapping, using GPS (global positioning systems) technology. An integral part of this programme will involve the training of locals as 'para-biologists' (locals trained in basic field methods) to gather key biological data in the reserve. This programme also ties in to our goal to attract more university researchers to add to our knowledge of the cloud forest.



Reforestation - everyone lends a hand

Birding, singing and running for the cloud forests...

October was International Birding month and also coincidentally the month in which some Santa Lucia volunteers organised some fun and imaginative fund-raising events in support of some of the projects mentioned above. Here in Santa Lucia we had a group of nearly 40 young children visiting the reserve, to learn a bit about the cloud forest, plant some trees in support of our reforestation project, and do some birding.



The Lodge at Santa Lucia

The members of the co-operative feel that they are well on the road to achieving sustainability

The children were all participants in our environmental education programme in the villages, and had a great time as well as learning about conservation. Some of their parents accompanied them as well and were taken on a tour of the community tree nursery and given tips about starting organic gardens.

We also held a bird count during the month, with our local guides and the aid of two ornithologists, Rael and Helene Loon from South Africa, with over 100 species counted.

Meanwhile in October in the UK, Anthony Johnson (who starts voluntary work at Santa Lucia in January 2003) braved gale force winds and generally appalling conditions to run the Stroud Half Marathon. Anthony finished the race in just over 1 hour and 25 minutes, and raised around £1,200 to purchase equipment for a Conservation Monitoring project which he will help get off the ground during his stay.



photos by KAREN WARD



NORTH WEST ECUADOR

New community watershed protection project

Carlos Zorrilla, President of DECOIN, reports from Intag in north west Ecuador.



Fi Pérez with Carlos Zorrilla

MOST community conservation projects face a wall of indifference from communities, making them much harder or nearly impossible to implement, which almost guarantees their failure. In contrast, the main problem we have identified with the Community Hydrological Reserve Project in Intag is that all the communities want to get in on it. That is, all the communities that we have contacted (42 as I write this), want us to help them buy their watershed to create community owned and administered protected natural areas. All of them! And they all want it now! The problem of too much interest, which is one that most projects only wish they had to confront, is that we cannot attend all communities in this first phase of the project. The investigation we are carrying out at the moment, however, is helping us to identify crucial areas to purchase, in terms of water shortages and biological importance, and areas to expand into in the future.

Community Water

When DECOIN and Rainforest Concern started this unique project, I was sure that it would be easy to get the communities interested in the conservation project (as I wrote in last the Review). I was surprised, however, at the level of enthusiasm expressed by them. This level of enthusiasm will guarantee the success of the project and is a sign that it is successfully meeting

the real necessities felt by the communities. Additionally, the project's environmental education focus will strengthen the community's interest and commitment to natural resource conservation in general.

Water, of course, is a crucial resource for everyone to be concerned about. In Intag, all sources of water for communities come from land that is privately owned. Many of them are deforested, with their owners using the land as pasture for their cattle or to plant crops. This kind of land tenure and use has led to serious bio-physical degradation of the watersheds, and to very serious water pollution problems. In many cases, as our investigation is discovering, deforestation of the watersheds has resulted in serious reduction of the quantity and quality of water. Many communities have the bare minimum quantity of water during the 4-month dry season in Intag. Last year's extended dry season, in fact, led to some of the sources all but drying up.

Because of this, most communities are now aware of the negative impacts of deforestation, and are willing to take steps to rehabilitate their 'micro watersheds'. In the areas where the watersheds are protected by native forests, and luckily in Intag their numbers are significant, the communities are anxious for us to secure the area before their owners log them. It is in these forest remnants that an important part of Intag's biological diversity resides, and their conservation is a main focus of our project. Several of the areas previously purchased were mostly forested with native species, and we want to continue increasing these areas in the future.



Project update

To date, since starting this project, we have helped five communities buy their watersheds (more correctly, the land around their source of community water, since watershed implies a much larger area). The last purchase will benefit the communities of Peñaherrera-Cristal, and its 146 families who, until now, have been obtaining their water from pastures over-run by cattle. The purchase will take place with the assistance of every one of the 146 families of both communities, who will contribute \$800 towards the total purchase price of \$4,500 for 25 hectares. We see this involvement by the communities as an important guarantee that the project will succeed and the reserve will be well taken care of. In addition to this local funding, the communities agree to cover all costs related to legalisation of the land.



Edmundo Varela handing over the title deeds

Because the area has been almost totally deforested, the community is required by the project to carry out a reforestation plan. Community members, the local high and grade school, plus the personnel in a local nursery group in Cristal, have all offered to help carry out the reforestation. The project calls for using native plants, and a contract for 20,000 native trees is being worked out with local nurseries. There is so much interest in this particular purchase, that other NGO's in the area have offered to help the community pay for some of the costs of the plants. Besides Cristal-Peñaherrera, we hope to

have five other areas purchased by the end of the first year of the project. The following year we hope to advance to at least twice this number.

Rainforest Concern would particularly like to thank the Maurice Laing Foundation for their assistance in helping to fund this project.

GVI in Junin

Global Vision International (GVI), is now carrying out environmental studies in the Junin area with 15 volunteers from the UK, USA and France. The GVI project is part of a Rainforest Concern, Decoin and Junin initiative, which seeks to help the community to create an environmental database and transfer knowledge and information to community members. Undoubtedly, the volunteers will also benefit from the knowledge and experience of community members, in addition to learning Spanish. The first GVI group went into Junin in September, and will be carrying out their studies until early December of this year.

The majority of the studies, including species inventories and water quality testing, will be carried out in the 2,000 hectare forest reserve belonging to the community, and bought in part with funds from Rainforest Concern. The reserve is rich in native cloud forests, and pristine rivers and streams, and within one of the Earth's most important biological regions, the Chocó-Darien Western Ecuadorian Biological Hotspot. To have a better idea of the biodiversity of this particular area, when an open pit copper mining project threatened the area a few years ago, Decoin identified 28 species of mammals and birds whose habitat would be impacted by these potential mining activities. The list included: Spectacled Bears, Jaguars, Pumas, Ocelots, Mountain Tapirs, a very rare species of canine, 2 species of monkeys, the rare and tiny Esmeraldas Woodstar hummer, as well as one of the tropic's most beautiful toucans, the Plate-billed Mountain Toucan. The list would grow much, much longer, had there been reliable information on plants, insects, amphibians, and reptiles. The area is also exceptionally diverse in orchids, and several new orchid species have been identified at the nearby Los Cedros Biological Reserve. Undoubtedly, discoveries new to science await the GVI teams.



Partly deforested watershed



The Junin community

To date we have helped five communities buy their watersheds



A community meeting

As it is, the number of threatened species gives a good indication of the biological uniqueness of this precious area, and what is at stake in preserving this ecological jewel. In this context, the information which will be gathered by the GVI team, will be extremely important in helping to conserve threatened forested ecosystems such as Junin's.

During their 10 week trip, the volunteers will be staying at the all-bamboo eco lodge cabin built as part of a DECOIN project to give Junin a viable and sustainable alternative to extractive activities such as mining. In all, 45 community members from two communities are participating in the community tourism project and, thanks to the GVI project, many of its young people are now learning how to carry out ecological studies, identifying birds and plant species and learning scientific procedures. This knowledge will stay in the community and give them the tools and information to better conserve their unique and

diverse forests, wildlife and rivers. The GVI team, in turn, will be participating in cultural activities with community members and learning about such projects as the organic, shade-grown coffee initiative being implemented in the region, and other sustainable initiatives developed by DECOIN.

Ultimately, we are hoping that such initiatives as the Community Hydrological-Biological Reserves, the GVI programme, the shade-grown sustainable coffee, and the community ecological tourism project in Junin, serve, not only to conserve the area's threatened natural resources, but also to create saner alternatives of development. Alternatives that, on the one hand, provide for the real needs of the people to make an acceptable living from the land, and on the other, safeguard the social well being of local populations and the ecological integrity of the forest and the amazing wildlife they support.



The Lodge at Junin



WESTERN ECUADOR

Tito Santos Research Station

by Michael McColm, Director of Jatun Sacha Foundation

RAINFOREST CONCERN, together with World Parks Endowment, have financially assisted a well established organisation in Ecuador called the Jatun Sacha Foundation, enabling it to start-up the Tito Santos Biological Station. The private reserve consists of 2,000 hectares, located near the town of Jama, in the northern section of the Manabi Province. Tito Santos lies in the middle of a critical corridor of transitional dry forest running from Pedernales down to Canoa. This 100 kilometre-long corridor of forest is of key importance because it connects the wetter forests of the Mache-Chindul region in the north to the dryer Tumbesian forest to the south. The Tito Santos Forest is completely transitional in nature, housing a beach desert habitat, completely deciduous dry forest up to 150 metres elevation, semi-deciduous forest between 150 and 350 metres elevation and an evergreen tropical humid forest between 350 and 500 metres elevation.

Creating the Reserve

The Jatun Sacha Foundation has been considering the establishment of a Dry Tropical Forest Reserve since 1996. Various sites were visited during a period of five years for analysis and consideration. Based on the recommendations of botanists and ornithologists the Tito Santos site was decided to have the most representative forest for the region. The initial contract for starting up the reserve was signed in August of 2001 and



A puma

Foundation staff received their first visitors at the beginning of April 2002. During 2001, the first visitor lodge was partially completed, and during 2002 Foundation staff have worked to complete the first cabin, which is situated in the lower dry forest portion of the reserve. The second cabin constructed with funds from Rainforest Concern is set on the top of one of the highest ridge-tops in

in a variety of activities including small group research, reforestation and agroforestry work in the Plant Production Centre. They are also led on natural history walks throughout the reserve where they are introduced to a number of biodiversity themes. All staff are Ecuadorian and, based on income from the international volunteers, the station is able to support Ecuadorian volunteers and also Ecuadorian university students completing their thesis projects. Contacts are being sought to develop natural history courses for groups from the US and Europe.

The plight of the dry forests is well documented. Less than 2% of the dry forests remain standing and unless additional concrete action is taken, most of the remaining forests will be lost during the coming decade, mostly to agricultural conversion. In order to promote conservation initiatives in this region, the Jatun Sacha Foundation will be inviting the Ceiba Foundation to work out of its Central office in Quito. The Ceiba Foundation is planning to

We are conserving a very important area of dry forest in western Ecuador

the evergreen tropical humid forest. This cabin, set in a completely different habitat to the one below, will be used by researchers, natural history groups and volunteer groups

Re-Planting

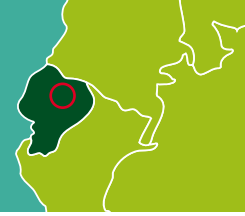
In addition, Jatun Sacha personnel have started the development of a Plant Production Centre at Tito Santos. This will be a central nursery and educational platform for the development of reforestation and agroforestry initiatives both in and outside the reserve, involving local families and communities. So far tens of thousands of seeds of a variety of species have been planted, including tropical cedar and a highly productive Chirimoya fruit tree variety. The dry forest section of the reserve houses a large number of extremely fine hardwoods that are virtually extinct from both the commercial timber market and from the Manabi Province outside of this corridor area. Some of these fine hardwoods include Ecuadorian Ebony and Cascol, both of which are a beautiful black colour and were previously used for furniture construction. Some additional species include Coastal Balsamo, Coastal Caoba, and the Rio Palenque Mahogany, all of which are nearly extinct and will be included in future reforestation projects.

Volunteers and Education

The station has received its first volunteer groups composed of international volunteers from Germany, Denmark, England, Canada and the United States. Volunteers at the station participate



develop a second private reserve initiative of about 3000 hectares near the Tito Santos reserve. Jatun Sacha has also signed a working agreement with The National Herbarium and CEDA (Environmental lawyers) to develop additional conservation initiatives for this important corridor. Finally, The Foundation is participating in a consortium of groups from Ecuador and Peru called 'Forests without Borders' which is interested in developing processes to conserve the remaining dry forests in both countries.



AMAZONIAN ECUADOR

The Power of PARTNERSHIP

by Juan Carlos Garcia and Christopher Sacco, FUNEDESIN

IN 1999, FUNEDESIN and Rainforest Concern joined forces to fight the destruction of Ecuador's imperilled Amazonian rainforest. Since then our partnership has achieved incredible results and served as a model for other non-profit organisations working together for conservation. Our alliance works because we share the same objective and agree upon how best to achieve it. Preserving the world's biological heritage is not easy or simple. It requires a multi-faceted approach that includes conserving and protecting habitat and helping the rainforest's inhabitants to become stewards of their own resources.

Protected Forest and ACCES Centre

With the help of Rainforest Concern we have significantly expanded our Protected Forest, which now covers over 1,400 hectares of primary and secondary rainforest. This year, Rainforest Concern's generous contribution helped to buy two parcels of rainforest totalling 103 hectares. The 50 hectare parcel has been integrated into the Protected Forest and the 53 hectare parcel will be the future site of the Amazon Centre for Conservation, Education, and Sustainability (ACCES Centre). This environmental education centre will provide quality environmental and sustainable living education for thousands of students from hundreds of rural schools located across the region.

Aside from facilitating the purchase of more land, Rainforest Concern has played a key role in helping ensure that forest conservation is achieved by providing the funds necessary for the salaries and basic equipment of two forest guards in charge of patrolling and monitoring our reserve.

Managing the Protected Forest

Less than one percent of Ecuador's forests are managed. I'm proud to say that our Protected Forest is one of them. Although the country's legislation obliges forest owners and concessionaires to implement management plans, the Ministry of Environment does not have the resources to regulate the tens of thousands of properties and concessions and must rely on forest owners to develop plans voluntarily.

In July 2002 we completed a Forest Management Plan. Rainforest Concern made an invaluable contribution in the form of aerial photographs and satellite images of the Protected Forest. Without these photos and images we could neither have accurately assessed the forest's resources nor developed strategies for conserving them.



Canoes arriving with supplies on the Rio Napo

Protecting the Forest from loggers and poachers

Rainforest Concern's support has also allowed us to purchase two-way radios and other equipment used by our forest guards. The radios facilitate communications between FUNEDESIN's principal field station and the guard post, dramatically improving the level of protection we provide. Before the radios, the guards were isolated and we had to travel 15 minutes downstream in a motorized canoe to communicate with them.



Cacao ready for harvesting

Environmental education

In addition to helping us buy land for the ACCES Centre, Rainforest Concern has made essential contributions to the professional development of our field personnel. Thanks to them, all of FUNEDESIN's forest guards and guides receive on-going education and training in environmental awareness. Rainforest Concern also sent our Protected Forest Field Co-ordinator, Arturo Yanez, to Costa Rica where he received extensive training in environmental management and had the opportunity to visit several national parks and private reserves.

Quest Overseas

FUNEDESIN continues working with Quest Overseas. This year we welcomed three more groups at Yachana Lodge. Our Quest volunteers have helped tremendously in our conservation projects. Of all their activities, one of the most important contributions was the reforestation of an area of secondary rainforest cleared by its previous owner for cattle ranching. They also

helped build volunteer housing and harvested cacao for Yachana Gourmet, a company created by FUNEDESIN to provide an economic alternative to logging and cattle ranching. We look forward to welcoming future Quest groups, since they have demonstrated a genuine interest in conservation, representing an exemplary helping-hand to FUNEDESIN and our work in the Napo region. We count on them to continue contributing in the implementation of new projects for our Forest Protection and Sustainability Programme.

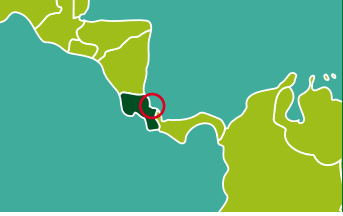
Yachana Gourmet

Poverty and its causes inevitably leads to environmental degradation. To break the cycle of poverty and rainforest destruction, FUNEDESIN created Yachana Gourmet, a green company designed to purchase cacao, which is native to the rainforest, and open international markets. Yachana Gourmet produces Yachana Jungle Chocolate, a unique product unlike any other on the market – it is chocolate in its purest form; 100% roasted cacao beans, sweetened with a touch of sugar cane juice.



The factory processes jams and cacao

Yachana Gourmet has enjoyed great success in the United States and has recently taken steps to open the United Kingdom and European markets. In September 2002, Yachana Gourmet representatives travelled to the UK and France to promote Jungle Chocolate. They were enthusiastically received and we expect the Jungle Chocolate to be available at retail stores in the near future. The packaging of Jungle Chocolate in the UK will also promote awareness of Rainforest Concern's conservation efforts.



COSTA RICA

size: 51,022 km² (19,700 sq m)

population: 3.7 million

capital: San José

COSTA RICA

PERSEVERANCE PAYS OFF FOR THE LEATHERBACKS

A partnership with the Endangered Wildlife Trust

Fay Martin reports from
the Pacuare Reserve

THE SIGHT of a magnificent Leatherback turtle hauling herself out of the sea is a memory that will stay with you forever. This effort, undertaken under the cover of darkness, seems so great that you might feel inclined to rush down in an attempt to give her a hand. Once ashore this huge animal then takes an even longer time to decide on a suitable patch of beach to make a nest and only then does the real work begin! Using her giant flippers she digs a large and deep cavity in order to lay an average of 80 shiny and spherical white eggs. The eggs laid at the beginning and end of each clutch are infertile and serve to protect the others from over-heating and drying out. With her desperate mission almost accomplished, she fills in the nest with sand and meticulously churns up a large area around it, presumably to help to confuse a would-be predator. Finally, utterly exhausted, she drags herself back to the security and freedom of the vast ocean.



The beach at Pacuare

Thanks to the existence of the Pacuare Reserve, this event should be guaranteed for a long time into the future. As many of you will know, the Reserve is located on the north east coast of Costa Rica, bordered in the North by the Pacuare River and a lagoon in the South. The reserve has one of the most important beaches in the world for the endangered leatherback turtle. It is also home to an incredible variety of wildlife in the 800 hectares of tropical lowland forest it comprises.

The reserve was established in 1989 and in seven years, with growing concerns for the future of leatherbacks, a conservation programme has been introduced to monitor and record them. As well as Leatherbacks, two other species of sea turtle also nest on the reserve's beach, these being



A leatherback turtle covers its eggs with sand

The reserve has one of the most important beaches in the world for the endangered leatherback turtle

Green turtles and, in lesser numbers, Hawksbills. Leatherbacks lay their eggs from March to June, Greens from July to September and Hawksbills intermittently.

The reserve is open for volunteers from the beginning of March until the end of August with the data collection of Leatherbacks officially starting at the end of March. Green turtles continue to nest after the reserve closes, but the guards continue working to monitor and protect the population.

Education is important in the conservation of the reserve. Consequently Pacuare is open throughout the season to a large number of visitors. Many of these come with Ecology Project International who provide student groups from the USA and Costa Rica, whilst EcoTeach provide high school groups from the USA. These student groups amounted to 462 individuals in 2002. The 124 volunteers we received were made up of gap year students from the UK and a variety of independent volunteers from all over the world and without their hard work the reserve could not have met its objectives.

It is so important that the local people, particularly children, understand what we are trying to achieve at Pacuare. Many would not make the connection between someone casually eating a turtle's egg with a drink in the bars of the local towns with the declining population of turtles. In itself this might be a manageable problem but, combined with the loss of suitable beaches in Central America, the pressure is unsustainable. Ironically, many of these turtle

beaches are being developed for "eco-tourism"! The roads that serve the hotels usually run parallel with the beaches and the accompanying street lighting prevents the turtles from making their nests without the security of the dark that they require.

Protection involves regular nightly patrols of the beach and data collection, such as tagging the turtles and recording the number of eggs laid. This information will help us to improve our knowledge of population size and migration for more effective conservation. The presence of student and volunteer groups patrolling the beach at night is a huge deterrent to poachers, but the relocation of nests is still sometimes necessary to protect against sand erosion and persistent poaching in vulnerable areas.

As well as the regular nightly patrols, everyone works hard to clean the beach of debris. It is a constant battle trying to keep the beach clear of driftwood and plastic to enable adults to nest and hatchlings to make it back into the ocean.

We recorded a total of 824 leatherback nests last season. This concerns us as it is one of the lowest results for the reserve since our records began. Hatchling success was harder to determine but it is estimated to be lower than normal due to unusually early and severe storms. Our protected hatchery was used to care for the eggs confiscated from poachers by the coast guards but again, due to the heavy storms, it was



Volunteers building a turtle hatchery



gradually washed away. Luckily none of the nests inside were effected, thanks to those who kept a close eye on the impending waves and assisted with a few rapid relocations often undertaken in the middle of the night.

As I write this we have recorded 100 green turtle nests. However the number of adults emerging from the sea is about double this number owing to "false crawls" when turtles emerge from the sea but fail to nest. This can be for a number of reasons: the turtles may find the beach to be too steep or too flat, the sand too dry or too wet, their path may be obstructed, they may be disturbed by dogs or people or discouraged from laying by the advance of dawn.

Unlike Leatherbacks, Green turtles are attractive to the local community for their meat as well as their eggs, so our efforts to protect the beach from poachers are even more important. One of the most heart-breaking and tragic sights in my six months working at the reserve, was discovering a mature Green turtle washed up on our beach with her shell almost split in two by a harpoon and her flippers tied together. There is very little we can do about locals poaching from their boats in the ocean, but it made everyone all the more determined to protect the Green turtles and their nests whilst they are present on the Reserve's beach.



An emerging hatchling

Although the focus at Pacuare is the protection and monitoring of sea turtles, there is also much more to see here. The Reserve can only be reached by canal and the journey itself is beautiful and the diverse wildlife is not difficult to see. It is home to two species of sloth, three species of monkey, porcupines, tayras, coatis, caimans, crocodiles and many birds including roseate spoonbills, toucans, parrots, trogons, herons and ospreys. Brilliantly coloured poison arrow frogs are also easily found here.

As with every season we experienced a number of setbacks, but thanks to the dedication of everyone involved with the Reserve they were overcome, and the victories far outnumbered the defeats. Sea turtle conservation is an effort requiring many years of consistent research, protection and education. Everyone at the Reserve feels rewarded that for another nesting season these important goals have been achieved.

TURTLE PROTECTION extends to Panama

by John Denham and Ralph Pannell



A leatherback lays an average of 80 eggs

JUST AS filming for the latest "Survivor" television series came to a close in the Province of Bocas del Toro, north eastern Panama, Ralph Pannell visited the area and the site of an important new turtle conservation initiative.

The year 2001 would have been much like any other in recent years for a female leatherback turtle, landing at Soroopta Beach in Panama to lay her eggs. No protection from poachers and a slow hard gauntlet to run, up the beach in search of a suitable nesting site.

Almost every nest along this six kilometre stretch of beach was raided for its eggs. Many giant leatherbacks did not make it back into the ocean. They were amongst the 57 females butchered on the beach for their meat which is sold for the restaurant trade.

During the nesting season from March to June, a leatherback will lay about eight times at intervals of about ten days. Each time she will lay an average of 80 eggs. With the street price of a turtle's egg about three times that of a hen's egg, it can be a lucrative business. Even more profitable is killing a leatherback for its meat which is considered a delicacy in Panama, although fortunately not in neighbouring Costa Rica where poachers only take the eggs. As leatherbacks in Panama also nest in Costa Rica, efforts to protect the beaches along a 100 mile stretch of Caribbean coast are largely in vain when the same turtles may be killed as they come to lay in Panama. Soroopta had become the worst of the killing beaches.

Panamanian law is on the side of the turtles as it is illegal to kill them or steal their eggs. However, the state Environment Service is

overstretched and under-funded, and in practice there is no government protection of the beaches.

March 2002 saw the hopeful start of a new era for leatherbacks at Soroopta. After several months of preparation, John Denham and Carlos Fernandez who run the Reserva Pacuare in Costa Rica (John is a Trustee of Rainforest Concern) had arranged the conversion of a delapidated timber hut behind Soroopta Beach into a simple house to accommodate volunteers.

Cristina Ordoñez from ITEC (the US Institute of Tropical Ecology and Conservation) was in overall charge of the project and two young biologists from Colombia and Argentina, Catalina and Germán, were recruited to live at Soroopta and run the operation. They were there to co-ordinate four newly employed local guards, a cook, a policeman and as many volunteers as could be enlisted in nearby Bocas del Toro or through our website.

Like any new volunteer programme, gathering sufficient volunteers was not easy. At times, patrol teams were well below the twelve ideally needed to share the nighttime shifts. Despite the teething problems, the turn-around in fortunes on Soroopta was startling. In all, 514 turtle tracks were spotted along the beach; 188 leatherbacks were witnessed laying their eggs; and a total of 449 nesting sites were observed. Of these nests, four were found excavated by animals and just five by human poachers. Not one dead turtle was found throughout the whole season! This is a major achievement for all the team involved. It could also be a major step forward in the struggle to save this colony of critically endangered turtles.

The goal for 2003 is to maintain this record of protection. Importantly, the house and two hectares of land around it has now been purchased, thus securing the project headquarters.

Volunteers are essential to make this project work and the rewards are immense for those who have the privilege to protect these huge animals as they lay their eggs. To take part in volunteer activities in 2003, please visit our website or call 020 7229 2093 for details.



BRAZIL

size: 8,511,965 km² (3,286,488 sq m)

population: 176 million

capital: Brasilia

WESTERN BRAZIL

PROTECTING RAINFOREST by helping indigenous people

The Yawanawá of Western Brazil by Peter Bennett



The Yawanawá ceremonies are spectacular

WE ARE ALL AWARE of the enormous pressure being placed on the Brazilian rainforests and the indigenous tribes that are still dependent upon them. Until now Rainforest Concern has tended to concentrate its efforts on protecting forests either through land purchase or by working with the local non-indigenous populations to find realistic alternatives to forest clearance. These locations have generally not involved land occupied by indigenous communities - but this could be about to change.

Some months ago, a dedicated supporter, Hylton Murray-Philipson, asked if we would be interested in helping an indigenous group in the state of Acre in Brazil, known as the Yawanawá. The aim being to protect their traditional way of life and, in doing so, protect the rainforests with which they have co-existed for thousands of years. Hylton had recently met the chief of the tribe, Tashka Yawanawá, was impressed by his vision and determination and resolved to assist his people and their forests.

I write this at the beginning of December, having just returned from one of the most extraordinary adventures of my life. Brazil is a vast country and Acre, being one of the nation's smaller states, is comparable in size to Ecuador. After three internal flights taking over ten hours and crossing three time zones, we descended on to a bumpy grass landing strip, but ahead of us, we still had a five hour journey by canoe to reach the Yawanawá's principle village of Nova Esperança. As we finally rounded the last bend in the river we could hear the rhythmic singing of several dozen Yawanawá and saw them dancing for us in greeting, looking down on us from high up on an escarpment. We had arrived; and for the next four days we were the very privileged guests of these charismatic and proud people.

Following the trip, and at the Yawanawá's request, we are now looking at ways to work with the tribe to improve health in their villages, in particular by establishing water, sewage and refuse treatment. We aim to assist with their education on health, diet, and the dangers of alcohol dependency and sexually transmitted diseases. We will also look at ways to assist in promoting the traditions, crafts, language and culture of the Yawanawá. We also hope to continue the initiative started with AVEDA in finding new markets for urucum (please see

following article on page 19) and other forest products which can be harvested in a sustainable manner.

The tribe must also be prepared for the imminent tarmac surfacing of the west Acre section of BR-364 highway, which will pass to the north of the community. This is part of the Brazilian government's huge and misguided 'Avanca Brasil' programme to open up the Amazon region for development with a network of new Transamazon highways. At the moment the flow of traffic along the earth road is very limited as for much of the time the road is a river of mud. Once sealed, the road will inevitably bring timber and mineral extraction and further colonisation of the area.

We held extremely encouraging meetings with the Governor of the State, Jorge Viana, and with CPI (Comissão Pró-Índio) the local and highly experienced NGO based in Rio Branco, the capital city of Acre, who we aim to have as partners in this project.



The Rio Gregorio



Deforestation for pasture rapidly follows road construction, as this photograph clearly shows

More than 5 million acres of rainforest are destroyed each year in Brazil



Yawanawá shaman and warriors

WHY THE YAWANAWÁ DESERVE YOUR SUPPORT

Based on a document written by Tashka Yawanawá, Chief of the Yawanawá people

HISTORICALLY, the Yawanawá were nomadic, frequently moving from one place to another in order to hunt and fish. Then they lived in a perfect balance with the forest which provided absolutely everything they required. The arrival of the white man changed this and now these people live mainly in a handful of permanent villages.

Unlike other Amazonian groups with disbursed populations, the Yawanawá people form a cohesive geographic and cultural unit. Their 670 members live in their own original, but much reduced, territory of 240,000 acres along the Rio Gregorio, a remote area in the state of Acre in Amazonia, in the far west of Brazil, close to the Peruvian frontier. Incidentally, Acre was the home state of Chico Mendes who did so much to forge understanding between indigenous communities and the rubber tappers before being killed by landlords eager to fell the forest to make way for cattle.

The Yawanawá territory is so remote that the first contact with the 'whites' or criollos did not occur until the end of the 19th century, when rubber tappers came to exploit the rich reserve of rubber trees in the Amazon resulting in the virtual slavery of the Yawanawá. They were subjected to systematic abuse and cruelty. However, the second and most significant foreign contact was with members of the New Tribes Missions, the US missionary organisation that came to forcibly evangelise the Yawanawá community in the early 1970's. The missionaries were granted permission to enter the region by the Brazilian government in exchange for providing rural health services, services that were systematically withheld from those resisting conversion. The missionaries' attempts to convert the people proved an all out form of cultural genocide; among other things, they outlawed the practice of all native religious practices and attempted to eradicate their native language.

For many years, the Yawanawá were forced to live with the missionaries and to toil as unpaid labourers for the rubber barons. Their culture was on the verge of total destruction and their numbers had dwindled to a mere 120 members. Then, only as recently as the early 1980's, the Yawanawá, led by some of their most determined young people, expelled the majority of the criollos and all of the missionaries from their community. It is hoped that other tribes will follow this example as, incredibly in this new millennium, the New Tribes Mission and others similar to it, continue their misguided practices in Brazil and elsewhere in Latin America.

By then, the Yawanawá had become dependent on commodities from the outside, such as kerosene, ammunition, soap, sugar, salt and clothes. They turned to the collection of rubber latex on their own behalf in order to pay for these. However the price of rubber soon plummeted making its collection uneconomic.

In 1993 the Yawanawá established their own organisation, the OAEYRG, to fight for the well being of the Yawanawá people, to live in harmony with the rainforest and to defend and protect the Yawanawá territory, tradition and culture. Its job is also to look for resources to support their diverse productive activities and improve education and health programmes through partnerships with government and non-governmental bodies.

In the same year, as a result of a partnership the Yawanawá formed with the North American cosmetic AVEDA Corporation, they began a project for the production of urucum. This is a shrub commonly found in the area whose seeds, when crushed, create a red dye called bixin, traditionally used to decorate the faces and bodies of the tribe - as you can see from these photographs. AVEDA saw the opportunity to use this organic component in their products and, in doing so, helped this community replace the vacuum left by the rubber trade.

With the assistance from AVEDA, the Yawanawá people built the new village of Nova Esperança,

meaning New Hope, and planted several hectares of urucum in conjunction with other tropical plants from the Amazon Region like cashew nuts, bananas, pupunheira or peach palm, and guarana, used for a popular Brazilian beverage.

Because the Yawanawá now live in settled villages, health has become a real issue. One of the major problems in the principal villages of Nova Esperança and Mutum is that they do not have access to clean drinking water which is taken straight from the Rio Gregorio. With the heavy rainfall, waste water is simply washed from several villages straight into this river causing several diseases and parasites. Diarrhoea is particularly serious and has even resulted in fatalities of young children. Another problem is the lack of a system to treat the increasing problem of refuse which has resulted from increasing trade with the outside world.

Alcoholism is a growing problem in the Yawanawá community after its introduction by rubber tappers and this is now a difficult problem to solve. Its use causes aggression not typical of the Yawanawá and several of the community have died of cirrhosis. Sexually transmitted diseases have also increased due to increased contact with outsiders.

About 30% of the population are children and the education they receive is very basic. The community require more trained teachers and school rooms which can prepare children for the realities of the outside world, whilst preserving the uniqueness of the Yawanawá's wonderful heritage.

Now, the Yawanawá are looking for partnerships to work alongside organisations in search of sustainable development projects. They must find effective ways to ensure the well-being of indigenous communities in the face of contact with the "modern world", while maintaining their co-existence with their natural environment and preserving their traditions and culture.





90 million unwanted mobile phones will end up as 12,000 tonnes of landfill

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Turn your used printer toner cartridges and unwanted mobile phones into acres of rainforest!



- In the UK over 2 million non-biodegradable toner cartridges are thrown away annually.
- There are an estimated 90 million unwanted mobile phones lying around which laid end-to-end could reach from London to New York and back again! Not to mention ending up as 12,000 tonnes of landfill waste. This includes their batteries that contain toxic compounds such as cadmium.

With a new scheme we have developed with our counterparts at the charity Action Aid, all it takes is an email or a phone call for us to organise the collection of your unwanted Cartridges, Mobile Phones and Mobile Phone Chargers. These are refurbished and sold, using the profits to save acres of rainforest and fund sustainable development projects.

How?

Label an old cardboard box in your office or at school at a single collection point and encourage others to do the same. You can download an A4 poster promoting the appeal from our website (<http://www.rainforestconcern.org>) and click on "Sponsor an Acre Online".

Once you have collected 10 or more items, email us and we will arrange for someone to collect them within 3 days. It costs you nothing, but it can help us to raise funds for our projects. The recycling of as few as 15 inkjet cartridges and mobile phones can enable us to purchase and protect an acre of forest, as well as all the plants and animals that it contains.

Register for collections by emailing us on recycling@rainforestconcern.org when you have at least 10 items

RECYCLING your mobile phone can also help to reduce the impact that mining of the mineral coltan is having on the forests and wildlife of the Congo. Coltan is used to make the rare metal tantalum needed in mobile phones. It comes from Congo rainforests where miners are invading national parks and otherwise unpopulated areas, illegally hunting and slaughtering wildlife to supplement their diet (this is known as "bush meat"). Thousands of endangered animals are being killed including elephants, chimpanzees and forest antelope. In one mining area over half the population of lowland gorillas has already been massacred. Please recycle your old mobile phone so that we can protect areas of threatened rainforest and the incredible wildlife that they contain.

In one mining area over half the population of lowland gorillas has already been massacred



Lowland gorilla

Photo: DR. LIZ WILLIAMSON

Offset your own CO₂ emissions

by Ralph Pannell

FEW PEOPLE realise that more Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) is emitted through the burning of tropical forests than emissions from cars - between 20%-30% of annual global greenhouse gas emissions, not to mention the huge related loss in biodiversity and social upheaval.

Since the Kyoto Summit, there has been a lot of focus on reducing emissions of the greenhouse gas CO₂. In the UK companies are coming under greater government pressure to monitor and reduce their CO₂ emissions. Homeowners may be finding that replacement boiler systems and double glazing are more expensive due to new energy-saving standards which are coming into force.

You might also have noticed one or two companies who are offering to help you "offset" your personal CO₂ emissions, including tree planting schemes. Rainforest Concern does plant trees in a way which could qualify for tradable CO₂ "credits". However, most of the reforestation we are involved with is complete habitat restoration, so the costs are generally higher than those achieved by industrial tree plantations. These large-scale plantations are often mono-cultures and have limited ecological and social value.

With more than 20% of CO₂ emissions caused by the burning of natural tropical forest, we at Rainforest Concern feel very strongly that replanting is generally less important than saving existing rainforest. By sponsoring acres of rainforest with our approved projects, you are not only protecting highly diverse habitat, but you are also, very importantly, helping to establish long-term economic alternatives for communities who know no other way of living than by slash and burn agriculture. Yet another reason to become a member by standing order of Rainforest Concern!

To make an exact calculation of what it costs us to offset a tonne of CO₂ is not easy. However, based upon studies conducted in Ecuador, we have calculated that it costs Rainforest Concern approximately £40 to offset the average British person's 12 tonnes output of CO₂. Of course, some people are more average than others, so if you commute every day or fly to more than one European destination each year, then you might want to bear this in mind whilst considering the addition of a CO₂ offset to your membership level.

In Sumatra, estimates are that all lowland forest will be destroyed by 2005



HOW YOU CAN HELP



African oil palm nursery

The impact of the palm oil industry on Ecuador's rainforests

by Ralph Pannell

IN ECUADOR, plantations of the African oil palm, *Elaeis guineensis*, continue to expand through the clearing of primary rainforest. After logging the forest of its most valuable timber, the remaining trees and vegetation are burned, emitting huge volumes of the greenhouse gas - carbon dioxide. Once clear of all vegetation and wildlife, the land is flattened and prepared using bulldozers.

Completing the connection in the northern phase of the Awacachi Corridor has helped block palm oil companies in Ecuador from clearing forest in some very important areas. However, we are still in competition to purchase more land around the centre of the corridor where it narrows to less than a kilometre in width. Our attempts to do this have not been helped by an Ecuadorian government decree which has allowed the conversion to plantation of a further 15,000 hectares of forest in the area.

Expansion of palm oil plantations is not only a major cause of deforestation in Ecuador, but worldwide. In Sumatra, where huge areas have been cleared for palm oil estates, the World Bank estimates that all lowland rainforest will have disappeared by the year 2005. You may recall the huge forest fires that raged across Indonesia and Malaysia during the last major El Niño event in 1998? A high proportion of these were lit to create new African oil palm plantations.

Rainforest Concern has been trying to help stop this global threat to rainforests by pressing major European buyers of palm oil to buy only from plantation owners who have stopped clearing and burning primary forest. Major users of palm oil in this country include manufacturers of toiletry products who convert palm oil into soaps, lipsticks, shampoo ingredients (surfactants) and other products. Palm oil is also used in margarine, biscuits and other confectionery, but it is often only referred to as "vegetable oil" in ingredient lists.

Unfortunately, there is only one company that we are aware of who is buying palm oil from environmentally sustainable sources. This is the Swiss retailer and manufacturer Migros. They make sure that the palm oil in their margarine and detergent products comes only from plantation companies who have not cleared primary rainforest within the last 8 years.

One of the world's biggest buyers of palm oil is the Anglo-Dutch company Unilever. They have not yet installed a green buying policy in the way that Migros have, but it is something they are considering with the help of certain producers like the British Government-owned company CDC plc.

Many of you will be familiar with Ecover's range of washing powders and detergents. You may not be aware that the company uses palm oil to produce a number of its biodegradable detergents

and have no selective buying policy at this point. However, in 2002, the company wrote to us to say, "A goal for Ecover ... is to develop a programme so that, by the end of the year, we will be able to screen our suppliers on the subject of sustainability." Detergent manufacturers who have advised us that they do not use palm oil at all include Bio-D and Earth Friendly Products.

As a charity which promotes active conservation, Rainforest Concern's main efforts to block the destruction of rainforest by palm oil growers will continue to centre around the purchase and protection of rainforest land. However, we will continue to work to press companies to adopt responsible buying practices and support those who do.

The next twelve months is likely to be critical in resolving whether the producers and major buyers of palm oil will ever commit themselves to environmentally sustainable production.

Check the products you regularly use at home to see if they contain palm oil



Deforestation caused by palm oil plantations

Do you use palm oil at home?

We suggest you check the products you regularly use at home to see if they contain palm oil. If you are not sure about a particular product, it will make a difference if you ask the manufacturer, highlighting your concerns about the continued loss of rainforest associated with the expansion of palm oil production. Point out the great loss of primary rainforest habitat and the biodiversity it contains, as well as the huge emissions of the global greenhouse gas Carbon Dioxide that results when the forest is burned. Tell the company how important it is that they only buy palm oil from producers who no longer clear primary rainforest. If they do not know where their palm oil comes from, persuade them that they should and until they do know, you will not be buying their products.



SUPPORT FROM SCHOOLS

FOR SEVERAL YEARS Rainforest Concern has been helping teachers to promote rainforest awareness in classes in hundreds of schools world wide. Although the rainforests are still disappearing at an alarming rate, school children have great optimism and work towards its protection with incredible energy. We are all encouraged by their determination to raise awareness and funds and the past year has seen many events organised by both schools and children that have raised considerable amounts and made a very significant contribution towards the purchase of forest.

We are extremely grateful to everyone who organised events on our behalf. We would particularly like to thank the students of Mount Madonna School in California who raised a staggering \$4,500 - (please see letter below). A big thank you also to Anaïs Charles and Nashilu Mouen Makoua who organised a fun run in Battersea Park and managed to raise nearly £2,000! They both worked very hard to organise a wonderful day that everyone enjoyed.



Fi Dalrymple with Natasha and Anaïs

Other more unusual fundraising initiatives include a sponsored five hour roller coaster ride by two pupils in Essex. Pupils at the Manor Preparatory School in Abingdon, Oxfordshire held an Easter egg hunt to raise funds for the Choco-Andean Corridor and one form at St Paul's Girls School in London sold doughnuts and popped balloons to win a prize! Thank you to all of the other schools who have raised funds for us including St Peter's School, Clifton, York who chose us as one of their charities for 2001-2002 and Class P7 at George Watson's College Edinburgh who staged a performance called 'Along Came Man' illustrating how mankind is destroying the world and held a collection after each show.

Dave and Sue Shaw are continuing to drum up support from many schools through their Rainforest Roadshow, which has enthralled many children over the years. Phil Williams' "World In My Shoe" talks, which provide a truly magical insight into forest life. Our thanks go to both of them for their energy, enthusiasm and loyal support.

Mount Madonna School raise \$4,500 with a sponsored RIOT!

WE ARE DELIGHTED that Mount Madonna School in California raised enough money to protect 112 acres of rainforest with their "Read Instead Of Television"

campaign. I'm sure after reading the letter below that you will agree that many British children would greatly benefit from following their excellent initiative.

Dear Rainforest Concern,

This year for our cultural awareness focus we engaged in explorations of South America and the tropical rain forests there. We have all come to know the great importance and need for our rain forests to remain healthy and growing. In an effort to contribute to the preservation of these sacred and crucial areas to the health of our planet, the students of the Mt. Madonna pre/K-5th grade sponsored a "RIOT" (Read Instead Of Television) read-a-thon. By raising \$4,500, we joined thousands of other students who have helped to protect threatened rainforests.

We sent our proceeds to Rainforest Concern. Rainforest Concern is an organisation whose goal and mission is to educate and help preserve imperilled rainforest. Our money will go towards acquisition and management of those areas so critical to the conservation of global biological diversity. Since \$40 can buy and protect one acre, we estimated that we have protected approximately 112 acres, no small feat for a school with only 85 elementary students!

Sarojani Rohan, organiser of the fundraiser said, "Our children need to be empowered to know that they CAN make a difference in their world. What better way than to improve their literacy and help save the rain forest all at the same time! What we each do with our time, energy and resources does matter. On some level, we all need to know this about our existence."

Congratulations to all the Mt. Madonna School's pre/K-5th grade students, their teachers and their family and friends who made this life-lesson such a stellar success. May we all continue doing our part in sharing our concern for all living things and putting our Love into Action.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Garretson
Mount Madonna School
California, USA



Pupils and teachers of Mount Madonna School



SUPPORT FROM SCHOOLS

Take a look at our new tailor-made rainforest education programme!

IN RESPONSE to ever increasing interest from schools and with the generous support of several foundations, we have developed a revolutionary, computer based education programme for

children which demonstrates the importance of rainforests and the need to protect them. Using the very latest 'e-flet' technology, we have produced a fun, innovative and fully interactive lesson with detailed printable notes.



Our online educational guide for children

Saving on both the financial and environmental costs involved in sending out printed manufactured packs, the 'Rainforest Concern e-flet' can be passed on by email and viewed on the web. The programme was developed with the guidance of an education consultant, Catherine Browne, and designed for children aged 7 to 11. Although, believe me, most adults will find it equally fascinating!

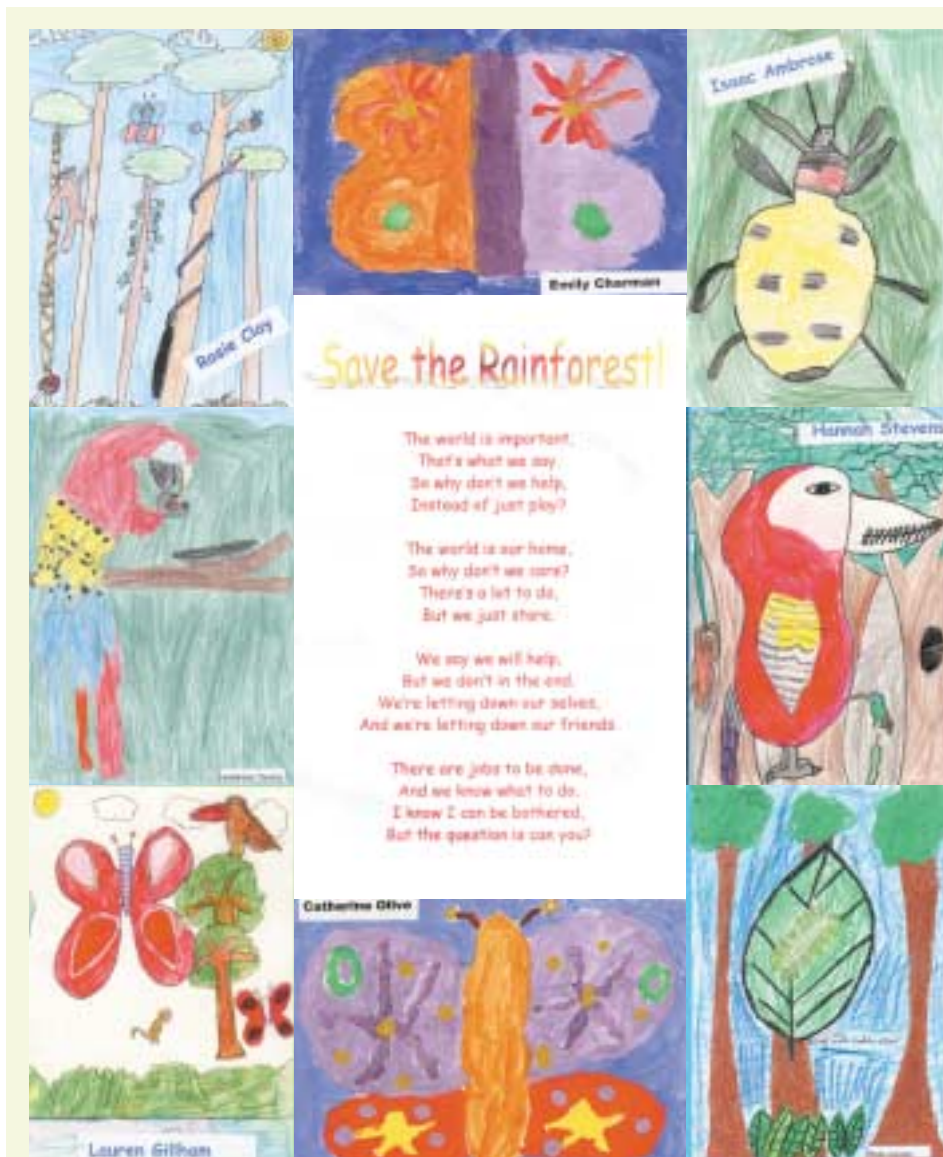


Learning is fun with "e-flet" technology

The graphics are exciting and colourful and the text is easy to read. Children are encouraged to find out compelling facts about the rainforest through the interactive site which uses a variety of animated effects and noises, such as facts and quizzes, which pop up by clicking on crawling beetles and butterflies!

See for yourself by visiting

www.guidedtour.rainforestconcern.org



Just some of the wonderful pictures we have received and a poem written by Victoria Stewart

Our special thanks to the following schools that have joined us in the past year or have been actively involved with Rainforest Concern for many years:

Bridgwater College, Somerset; The Godolphin and Latymer School, London; West Sleekburn Middle School, Northumbria; Tahreer English School, Kuwait; Enfield County School, Enfield; Cwmtawe Environment Club, Cwmtawe Comprehensive School, Swansea; Kingussie Primary School, Kingussie; Aspin Park Primary School, Knarborough; Park Hill Junior School, Kenilworth; St. Stephen's CE Middle School, Redditch; Painter's Ash County Primary School, Kent; Thorpe Acre Junior School, Loughborough; Montgomery Combined School, Exeter; The Australian International School, Kowloon, Hong Kong; St. James C of E Primary School, West Midlands; Cuffley School, Hertfordshire; Elmbridge Infant School, Gloucester; Sir William Perkins's School, Surrey; Sir William Borlase's Grammar School, Marlow; Pembridge Hall Girls School, London; The Meads CP School, West Sussex; Plantation Primary, Knowsley; Allsley Primary School, Coventry; The Manor Prep School, Abingdon; William de Ferrers School, Cheltenham; St Giles School, Derby; Heath Fields Primary School, Derby; Roberts Primary School, Dudley; Corringham Primary School, Stanford-Le-Hope; The Bromfords School, Essex; Welcombe Hills School, Stratford-Upon-Avon; Kings School, Cambridgeshire; St. Clere's School, Essex; St Peter's School, Clifton; Moat Hall Primary School, Walsall; Clatford Primary School, Goodworth; Our Lady of Compassion Catholic Primary & Nursery School, Solihull; Oldfields Hall Middle School, Uttroter; Williams Burgh Primary School, Renfrenshire; Mount Madonna School, California, USA; Saint Luke's C of E Primary School, Cambridge; Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School, Glenrothes; Kirkliston Primary School, Kirkliston; Moray Primary School, Grangemouth; Vale County First And Middle School, Worthing; Fivemiletown Primary School, Co. Tyrone; St Paul's Girls' School, London; St Ignatius R.C Primary School, Middlesex; Dunblane Primary School, Dunblane, Castle Sixth Form Centre, Dunino Primary School; The Lewes New School, East Sussex; George Fentham Endowed School, West Midlands; St Margaret's School; Mayals Primary School, Swansea; Bursley C. P. School, Staffordshire; UIISW Girls; St Clere's School, Essex; St. Peter's School, Hertfordshire.



VOLUNTARY WORK

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR FOR QUEST'S VOLUNTEERS

by Jon Cassidy



Douglass McMeekin and Jon Cassidy discuss priorities for voluntary work at Yachana Reserve

FOR FIVE YEARS Quest Overseas have been supporting Rainforest Concern by sending gap year students to Rainforest Concern's projects.

Yachana Reserve, Amazonian Ecuador

Working in conjunction with FUNEDESIN, Quest Overseas teams have been able to focus on the long-term goals of rainforest conservation and preservation of both the traditional and new ways of life that exist among the Amazonian communities. Besides actual hands on work the mere fact that western students have travelled to live and work alongside the communities helps to instill the importance of the rainforest and its various ways of life at a local level.

The projects with which we have been involved are many and varied and range from the installation of a water filtration system and pipes for the Clinic, Lodge and Visitor Centre, to potting

1,000 young hardwood trees in the reforestation programme. Special focus in the future will be placed on newly purchased land, of 150 acres, which needs incorporating into the protected

forest. Trail construction and maintenance is vital so that the area can be used for education, research and ecotourism.

Santa Lucia Community, north west Ecuador

2002 saw us working with the Santa Lucia community for the second year running and things are really beginning to take shape for them. Teams this year managed to complete a seven kilometre trail from the lodge up to the community's border with Yunguilla, allowing both communities to offer an eco-tourist package which combines both lodges. They planted in the region of 1,000 sugar cane plants, which will not only provide sugar for the lodge and local trade but whose leaves can also be used for roof thatching. They also worked on the ongoing reforestation of the old cattle pastures.

Plans for our two teams in 2003 include the creation of a three hour circular trail from the lodge (which incorporates two beautiful waterfalls), the planting of 500 coffee saplings for local consumption and the continuation of reforestation work.



Parque Ambue Ari, Santa Cruz, Bolivia

An exciting new project in 2003 for Quest Overseas and Rainforest Concern is an animal rehabilitation sanctuary in the Santa Cruz district of Bolivia, run by the Inti Wari Yassi community, which the students will be helping to establish.

The sanctuary already exists with around 500 animals under its care, but it is on state owned land which is about to be repossessed. Quest, together with Rainforest Concern, bought a 150 hectare area of forest for the foundation, to which the animals were moved during November and December 2002.

Our two teams in early 2003 will have two main tasks: assisting with the care and rehabilitation of the animals (including five species of monkey, dozens of species of parrot and macaw, four ocelots and two pumas) and helping to create an infrastructure for the park. This will include building cages for recently arrived animals, trails to walk the animals and a veterinary clinic.

Due to the size and urgency of this project, Quest Overseas will be sending a third team out to Parque Ambue Ari in mid-2003. All hands are welcome!



In addition to Quest Overseas we are pleased to announce volunteering opportunities with our new partners - British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) in Ecuador and Global Vision International (GVI) in Panama.

If you would like to discuss possibilities for voluntary work on a Rainforest Concern project then please call us on - 020 7229 2093 or click on the 'volunteers' button on our website - www.rainforestconcern.org



Rainforest Concern, 27 Lansdowne Crescent, London W11 2NS, UK.

tel 0207 229 2093, fax 0207 221 4094 email: info@rainforestconcern.org website: www.rainforestconcern.org

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