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SENSOR CAMERAS

Over the years Taricaya staff and volunteers have collected a lot of information about the mammal species that we have here within the reserve. Sensor cameras have been used in the past to help us find out what different species we have; mammal walks by day and by night and “accidental” sightings of mammals as we go about other projects, all have helped us to build up a list of the mammal species we know that are found in these 476 hectares.

Our current study, then, which involves using sensor cameras once again, is not aimed at finding out which species we have here, but at finding out more information about the mammals we already know are here: density, abundance and behaviour, for example.

Back in the wet season diurnal and nocturnal mammal walks took place along specific transect lines around the reserve. Volunteers and staff simultaneously walked along various specific stretches of trails and recorded information on any mammals seen and where. With this data, Raul Bello, our resident mammalogist, was able to calculate information such as the density of animals present per kilometre squared. Now the dry season is upon us, we will be repeating this process again soon, with a view to compare the data collected.

However, such mammal census walks cannot provide all the information we need. Some animals are more secretive and much harder to find in such a way. The sensor cameras provide us with an additional method of collecting data. The cameras have been placed in various sample areas, such as at the Colpa along the swamp trail, and over the last month or so volunteers have been helping to check and maintain the cameras on a weekly basis.



An Ocelot caught by one of the sensor cameras

Where the cameras are placed along a trail, two are placed opposite each other to enable us to see the markings the animals have on both their sides, which helps us to identify individuals. Colpas are good places to position the cameras as they are places which attract a variety of species for different reasons. The mud in these Colpas contains minerals that some species need or, for others, it may be to help neutralize toxins present as a result of plants they have consumed. Other species may just congregate here for social reasons. By placing cameras in these areas we are able to continue to collect data concerning the behaviour, density and abundance of the larger mammals within the reserve.



Peccaries, a red howler monkey and a porcupine

NEW FARM UPDATE

The arrival of June also meant that a *friaje* (cold spell) was likely to be just around the corner. Sure enough a week or more of chilly nights, cool days and cold showers arrived, making a change from the perhaps more expected heat and humidity of the rainforest. It felt quite refreshing for awhile at least and meant that it was a good time to get some of those hot and sweaty jobs out of the way.

The artificial turtle beaches which are located at the farm had become overgrown with grass and have fallen a little into disrepair since they were used last year and so, with the beginning of the turtle project imminent, it was a good time to get out the machetes again and clear away the grass and weeds. They are now looking much smarter and just need some fresh sand to make them ready for the turtle eggs we hope to collect later on in July and August. Unfortunately the heat has returned now so collecting the sand may prove to be just a little hotter!



We also took advantage of the cooler weather to press ahead with a new plant nursery area that we are also setting up at the farm. One of the two 25 metre stretches of grassland has now been cleared and work has begun on the cutting of the bamboo supports we need to attach the netting that will provide the shelter that the young plants need.



The grass area before: with some volunteers somewhere in the midst of it all!



One cleared area with some bamboo supports ready to be used

PALMA REAL

As many of you will know, Palma Real is a local community where we work to promote many of our conservation ideas. It is a relationship that has taken some years to build up, following their experiences with other organisations which have been unable to see their projects through, due to funding falling through, and left the community understandably a little disillusioned and sceptical.

Taking some of the ideas from New Farm, we want to show how it is possible to use the land in a more sustainable way to provide income. There are ten transect lines and in each one we have planted pineapple and banana alternated with mahogany or cedar trees. The fruits produce at different times and the wood from the trees can be used at different levels of maturity: cutting down older trees while younger ones are replanted.

We have been visiting with groups of volunteers this month in order to help maintain these transect lines. Clearing away overgrown bamboo that shades the plants and clearing around the plants themselves so that they have more space and light to grow.



Palma Real



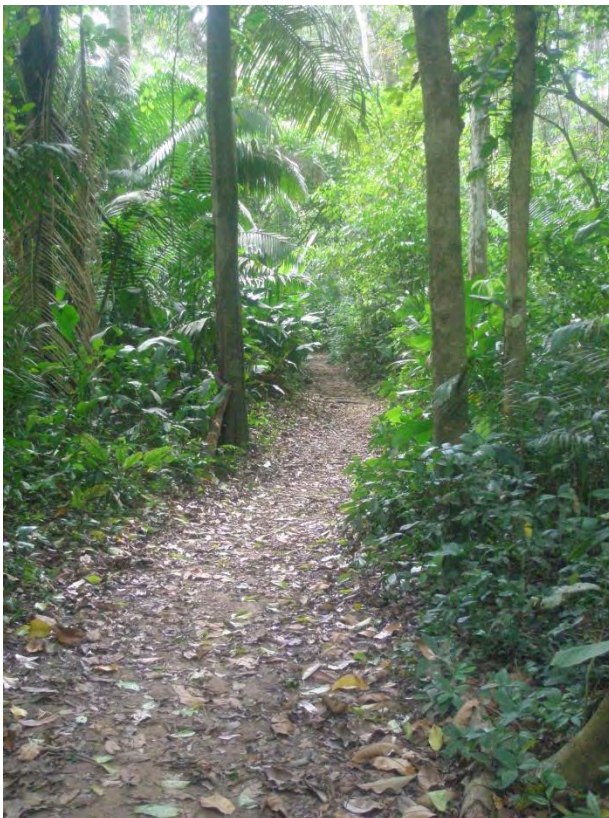
Clearing around the plants

TRAILS

With the onset of the dry season many areas of the reserve are much drier than earlier on in the year. It is no longer necessary to wade through water in order to get to bird observation platforms or when walking about the reserve. So, taking advantage of the dry trails and the busy time of year with many volunteers, we have begun clearing the numerous trails throughout the reserve.

It is not always an easy business, clearing trails. Plants and trees grow rapidly in the hot and humid conditions; wind and storms blow down branches and trees, sometimes blocking trails completely, and wasp or ant nests have a tendency to surprise you along the way, too. It is important for us to maintain these trails on a regular basis, though, to enable us to continue to patrol the reserve as well as access the different habitats easily in order to undertake various projects.

Volunteers and staff spread out along the trail, leaving a safe distance between them, and using machetes clear away all the low-growing plants that have begun



to grow and overhanging branches and vines blocking the path. Or, as sometimes happens, so much debris blocks the old trail that is necessary to create a detour around it. With many trails over a kilometer long, it is a project that will take a while, but so far, the trails Quebrada, Oso Bandera, Creek, Bushmaster, Hummingbird, Heliconia and Gunter are all looking much better.

A JUNGLE JOKE

Why is it hard to play cards in the jungle?

There are too many cheetahs!

Hi,

If you would just like to send a note, we would love to hear from any of you who have volunteered at Taricaya, it doesn't matter how long you were here for or how long ago, we're always interested in what you're doing or where you are now.

We welcome your feedback for the newsletter as well and what you would like to see or hear about here every month.

Also if you have any queries about the rainforest (or Peru), we have a number of qualified biologists on the team who would be very happy to answer any of your questions.

For quick updates or information about Taricaya, check out our website at www.volunteer-conservation-peru.org, or you can reach us through the Projects Abroad website at www.projects-abroad.net.

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

Catherine Turner
Volunteer Co-ordinator
Reserva Ecologica Taricaya