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TReeS-Peru, PO Box 28, Puerto Maldonado, Madre de Dios, Peru | TReeS-Peru is a Peruvian not-for-profit organization.

Back to Tambopata

Adela Griffin – Project Manager



On behalf of the Project I'd like to welcome you to The Howler – the first newsletter for Fauna Forever Tambopata. A mixture of research, project updates, and news from the Tambopata region of Peru, there is something for everyone!

After my first trip to Peru in 2000, I have returned several times to carry out research and work as a rainforest guide. You could say it has become an addiction! I am lucky enough not only to be involved in such a worthwhile project, but to be able to contribute to the conservation of wildlife in arguably the most diverse region on Earth!

Wildlife Monitoring

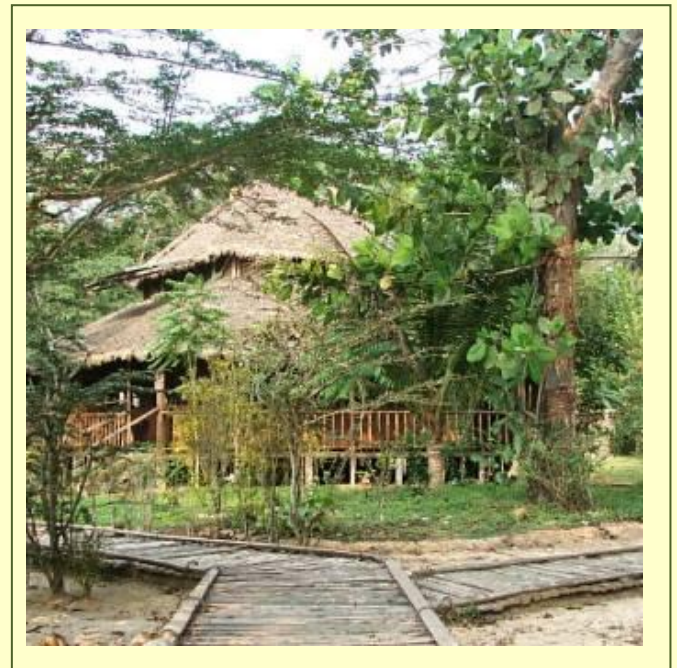
Chris Kirkby – Director

With a total of 36 months of wildlife monitoring in Tambopata already chalked up under the banner of Fauna Forever, we are in a very good position to be able to ascertain (with a fair degree of accuracy) how any changes in the socio-economic landscape brought about by the Interoceanic Highway will affect the status of wildlife populations in Tambopata. This includes the expected surge in growth of the ecotourism sector.

Another round of monitoring will kick-off in July 2009, supported by a host of other complementary data that both myself, and other colleagues, have collected over the years in the wider Tambopata region.

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One of the research stations: Explorer's Inn, Tambopata

This time around we also plan to collect more detailed information on 1) the motivations of tourists for visiting Tambopata, 2) their levels of satisfaction with the wildlife species observed around the lodges, and 3) the economics that underpin the ecotourism industry. Not to mention data on the land-use characteristics and economics of rural households (mainly farmers, ranchers and Brazil nut collectors) located close by in an effort to develop a more balanced picture of the costs and benefits of ecotourism in this area.

Please see *Ecotourists* on page 3

Year of the Frog

Rowland Griffin – Lead Herpetologist

32% of all amphibian species are threatened globally. These declines are mainly due to habitat loss, climate change, and disease. The Year of the Frog Campaign was launched in 2008 to raise awareness of the plight of amphibians and encourage captive breeding programmes at Zoological Parks as part of species recovery projects.

Fauna Forever Tambopata gave a presentation at the launch of Year of the Frog at Blackpool Zoo (UK), to promote the importance of amphibian conservation in Peru. Populations are particularly at risk from a disease spread by a fungus, called “chytrid” which is particularly prevalent in the tropics where conditions favour its rapid spread.



Patron of the campaign Sir David Attenborough comments that “the global zoo and aquarium community have taken on the challenge with enthusiasm and are providing appropriate facilities and breeding grounds within their institutions.”

Read more at www.amphibianark.org

Introducing the Fauna Forever Tambopata Project Team

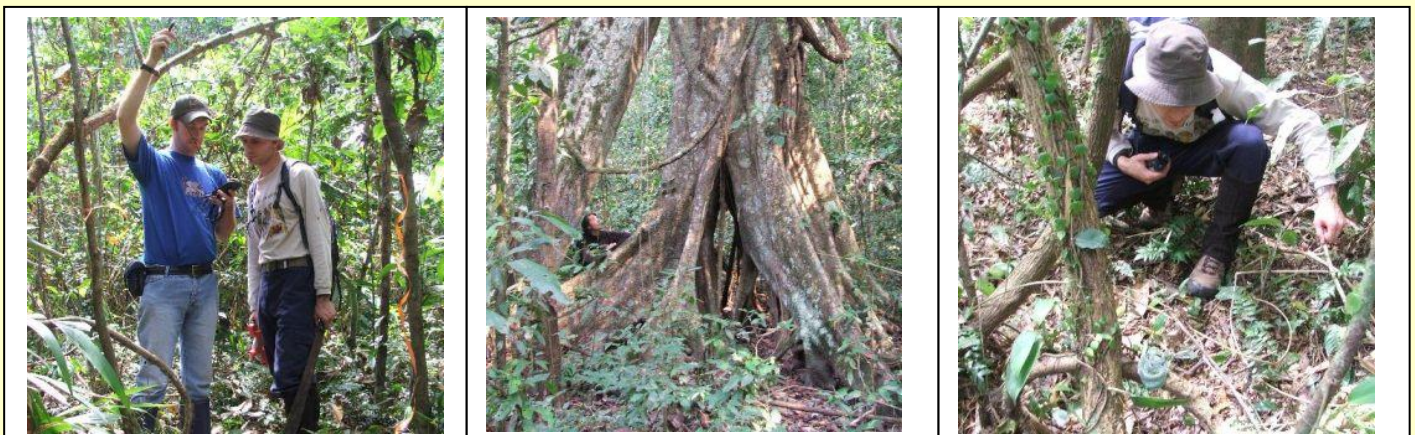
The Director: Chris is currently based at the University of East Anglia (UEA) in the UK, where he is writing up his PhD thesis.

Project Manager: Adela is currently managing a team of education rangers in the New Forest National Park (UK).

Lead herpetologist: Rowland is busy analysing reams of data and developing surveying protocols for the herp team!

We are pleased to announce our expansion into the US with an addition to the FFT Project Team: Alex Markham (USA Liaison Officer). Welcome aboard Alex!

“Fauna Forever Tambopata are on Facebook! Join the group to chat with past volunteers... www.facebook.com”



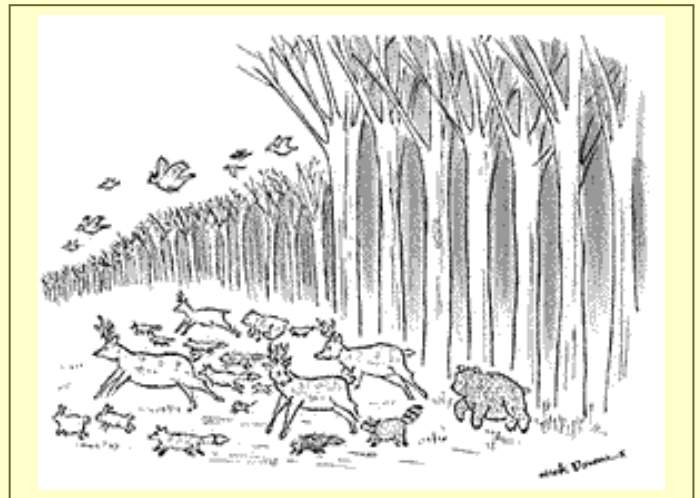
The Project Team carrying out monitoring at Explorer's Inn, Tambopata

Ecotourists scare away endangered wildlife.

An article by Adina Merenlender and Sarah Reed discusses a recent study on the impacts that nature lovers and ecotourists have on wildlife populations, in this case within a protected forest in California, USA.

They found that no matter how discreet ecotourists were when using forest trails, some groups of endangered animals were scared away. The most susceptible were carnivores such as bobcats and coyotes.

In Fauna Forever Tambopata we are interested in this very same issue, except for a different biome (humid lowland tropical rainforest). With our growing database we are increasingly able to determine which species are most susceptible to the presence of ecotourists in their habitat.



What fire? We're fleeing ecotourists.

Indeed, as Adina and Sarah have found, we have increasing evidence that large carnivores are the first group of mammals to be affected by ecotourists.

Read more... New Scientist, 13 Aug 2008

The Interoceanic Highway

Chris Kirkby

Progress on building the Interoceanic highway which will pass just north of the Tambopata National Reserve (TNR), has been swift of late as the contractors take advantage of the favourable weather conditions during the dry season (from April to October). When completed, in late 2009, it will become the first paved road connecting the Brazilian Amazon and the Pacific Ocean.

The cattle- and soya-rich states of the Brazilian Amazon, namely Rondonia, Mato Grosso and Acre, are looking forward to the day when they can use the highway to export their products more directly and thus more cheaply to Asia, whilst Peruvian potato farmers, cement manufacturers and mining companies are also gearing up to provide the Brazilians with their products.

The highway and associated port developments in the coastal cities of Ilo and Matarani will cost a little shy of US\$2 Billion. An amount that the Peruvian tax payer and highway users will

ultimately pay for over time. The 723m-long "Billingshurst" bridge over the Madre de Dios River, near Puerto Maldonado, will be the longest suspension bridge in Peru.

Ecotourists who currently visit Tambopata arrive almost exclusively on scheduled flights from Cusco and Lima. Flying is a relatively expensive mode of transport. The highway will open up the area to further tourism development as transportation costs come tumbling down and as trans-continental tourism on this route becomes possible, making Tambopata an ideal stopping-off point on route between Cusco and Rio de Janeiro.

The highway will likely benefit agriculture, bush-meat hunting, timber and gold mining activities in Tambopata. We are already seeing the expansion of secondary roads, which improve access to the forest. These activities are likely to expand in the

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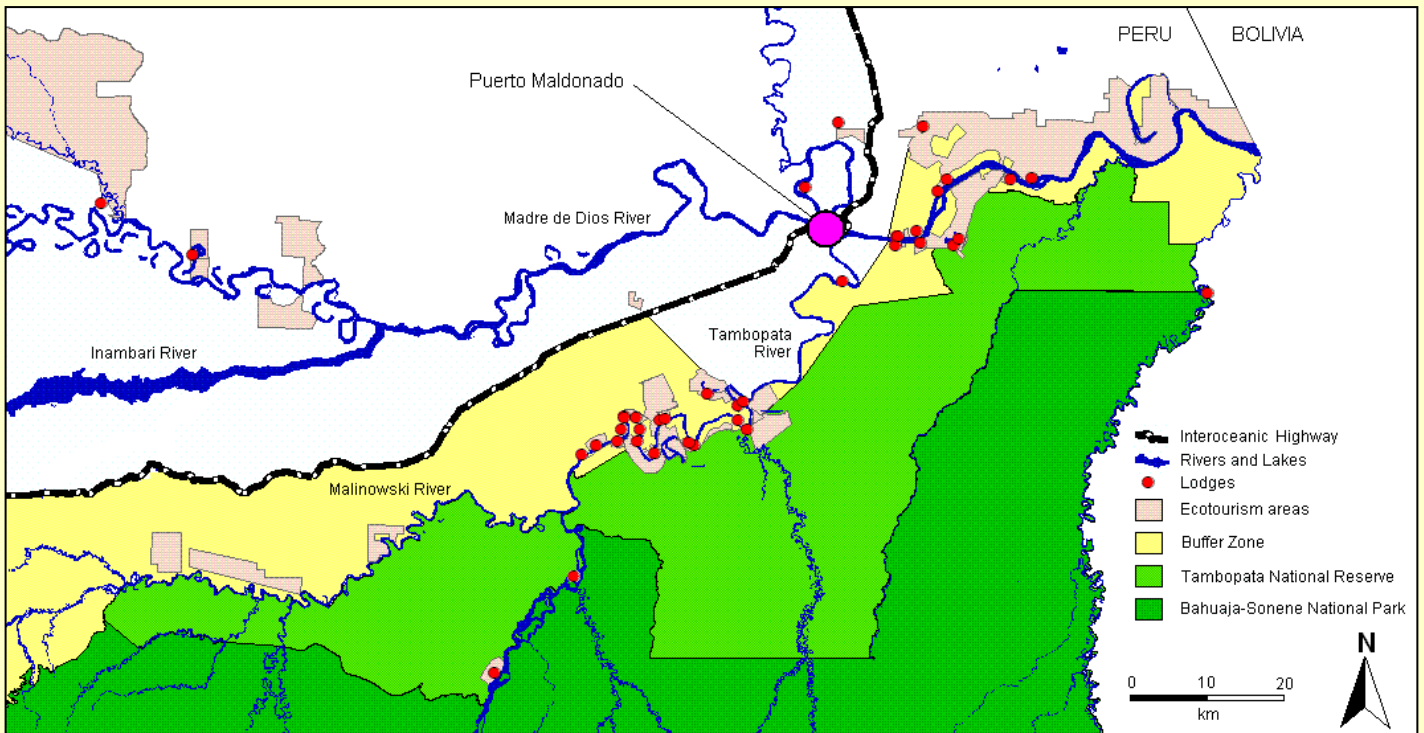


Figure 1: Map of the Tambopata area showing the location of Puerto Maldonado, lodges and ecotourism areas in relation to protected areas and the Interoceanic Highway.

coming years and will result in further degradation and loss of forests in Tambopata. The TNR and associated ecotourism lodges in the buffer zone are only 10–20 km away from the highway, well within the 50–km “impact zone” observed for other paved roads in the Amazon.

The wildlife populations in Tambopata are therefore expected to come under severe pressure over the next 5–10 years, mainly from loss of habitat, noise pollution from chain saws, and an increasing incidence of bush-meat hunting.

Much of the forest and many oxbow lakes used for ecotourism may be saved from total destruction if the ecotourism lodges and the TNR Administration actively invest their profits and ecotourist entrance fees, respectively, into protecting habitats.

However, an increasing influx of ecotourists (50,000 in 2007) and further growth in the number of lodges in the area (37 in 2007) may negate some of these benefits as the increasing

presence of humans in natural habitats may scare away some species and thus alter the natural balance of populations and perhaps the ecosystem processes (predation, herbivory, seed dispersal, etc.) of which they are an integral part.

Read more at:

www.conservation.org.pe/pdf/interoc_iniciativa_eng.pdf

Supporters thanks to...

The Sussex Amphibian and Reptile Group (SARG) and ARG-UK for their support. The East Sussex Reptile & Amphibian Society (ESRAS), and Blackpool Zoo who kindly donated funds to the project.

Sussex Wildlife Trust, the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre, and Hampshire Wildlife Trust for their interest and enthusiasm for the Project.

*Please contact us if you would like to get involved.
The Project Team would love to hear from you!*

*Either by email: mail@faunaforevertambopata.org
Or check out the website: www.faunaforevertambopata.org*