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ABOUT US

Amazon Conservation Association (ACA) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to conserving the biological diversity of the Amazon Basin, with offices in the United States and Bolivia. ACA's associate organization in Peru is the Asociación para la Conservación de la Cuenca Amazónica (ACCA).

We envision a network of state, community, and private lands managed for conservation and sustainable resource use to conserve the biological diversity of the southwest Amazon basin.

In partnership with governments, local communities and other actors, we are developing new ways to protect the fragile habitats of the Amazon. Our actions are informed by scientific research and designed to achieve measurable outcomes. We are committed to concentrating our resources and capabilities where they have the largest conservation impact. We believe that long-term conservation is best ensured by active and informed participation, and we work closely with forest users seeking to improve their resource management practices.

ACA Opens New Research Station in Southern Peru's Cloud Forest

In June, ACA's Wayqecha Research Station, located at 2,900 m of elevation in the cloud forest region of Cusco, Peru, opened its doors to researchers from around the world. In the months of July and August alone, Wayqecha hosted 29 different researchers from various American, British and Peruvian institutions, such as University of Florida, University of Missouri, Texas A&M University, and Oxford University.

Wayqecha Research Station aims to protect the cloud forest's biodiversity as it facilitates research which will lead to a better understanding of this ecosystem. Cloud forests receive hundreds of inches of rain every year. Their trees, mosses and soil work as giant sponges capturing the abundant rainfall and then releasing it slowly into a network of small streams and creeks that represent the smallest tributaries of the vast Amazon drainage. Cloud forests are of critical conservation value for many reasons: 1) they contain a vast storehouse of species, many of them narrowly endemic, 2) they are among the ecosystems hardest hit by the amphibian extinction crisis, and 3) they will serve as natural corridors for plant and animal species pushed uphill by global warming.

At the moment, Wayqecha is ready to receive up to 12 people at a time. The station



Wayqecha cabins overlooking the Kosñipata valley

is equipped with 3 cabins for researchers, a dining room for up to 40 people, a kitchen, a laundry room, and a camping area. Satellite internet and VOIP are also available.

In addition to research in the cloud forest, ACA is actively involved with communities in the region to develop sustainable resource use practices. We have three projects already in place: 1) extraction of essential oils from medicinal plants, 2) production of high-quality cooking oil from the native Sacha Inchi plant, and 3) production of natural dyes used to color traditional textiles. The new Wayqecha station is just 175 km from our Los Amigos station in the Amazonian lowlands. Together, research at these sites will provide a full panorama of the biodiversity and climate changes in the Andes-Amazon region.

Funding Research Today for a Sustainable Tomorrow

In 2003, ACA and its Peruvian partner, Asociación para la Conservación de la Cuenca Amazónica (ACCA), launched a grant program to support research in the Amazon region. Since then, the program has granted 90 scholarships. All this has been possible due to the generous

support of the Gordon & Betty Moore Foundation.

The main objective of this research grants program is to provide economic assistance to young scientists to conduct research at our Los Amigos station. There are three grant categories that support field

research in pure and applied biology and resource use and related topics: 1) grants for Peruvian undergraduate students, 2) grants for master's and doctoral students, and 3) seed grants or matching grants for post-docs or established researchers.

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CURIOSITIES



Photo: Renata Leite Pitman

Couroupita flower

The cannonball tree is one of the rarest species found at Los Amigos. Its basketball-sized fruits are borne directly on its trunk.



Photo: Rudolf von May

Epicrates cenchría, also called the rainbow boa due to the iridescent, multicolored light reflected from the snake's body and head, has labial pits bearing organs that are sensitive to heat. This feature allows the snake to detect some of its warm-blooded prey (e.g., birds and rodents).



Photo: Rudolf von May

Hemiphysalis helioi is one of the 'neotropical horned frogs'. The females carry fertilized eggs on their backs, where they undergo embryonic development. In some cases, more than a dozen juvenile frogs (miniature copies of the adults) have been observed attached to a female's back!

Remembering Vanessa Sequeira: A Passionate Conservationist and Member of the ACA Family

On September 3, 2006, Vanessa Sequeira, 36, a dear friend and former member of ACA was killed in the Brazilian Amazon. She was working on her doctoral research for Costa Rica's Center for Tropical Agricultural Research. Her dream was to promote programs of sustainable development in the Amazon region. She worked side by side with local communities and helped them develop techniques that would benefit them economically without cutting or destroying the forest. This goal became a priority in her professional and personal life.

She was a passionate conservationist who worked hard to see her dreams come true. When she first joined the ACA family back in 1999, as Field Director of the Brazil Nut Program in Peru, the pro-



Vanessa Sequeira in the Peruvian Amazon

gram had just started. As she took over and assumed many responsibilities, she laid the groundwork for ACA's advances since. She turned the Brazil Nut Program into a sustainable economic and ecological alternative to ensure the conservation of the Peruvian Amazon. Her legacy in the conservation field and at ACA has been tremendous. Her hard work with the Brazil Nut Program made ACA a worldwide pioneer in the field.

Vanessa was a wonderful person with an incomparable passion for her work. She has left us a valuable scientific, professional and humanitarian heritage. She will always be in the hearts of Brazil nut growers, her colleagues in the environmental community and all of us at ACA. May Vanessa be always remembered with love and respect, and may her legacy continue for decades to come.

Funding Research Today for a Sustainable Tomorrow

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In 2006 ACA and ACCA awarded 21 grants: 4 to Peruvian undergraduate students, 7 to master's and doctoral students, and 10 to established researchers at the post-doc level. Research projects conducted by these students include topics on climate change, vegetation inventory, plant-animal interactions, fishes, birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, invertebrates, and many others. Results from this work will help us better understand the Amazonian ecosystems and to develop strategies to help preserve the

richest rainforest on Earth. Our research grants represent a significant financial resource for Latin American scientists. Of the 90 grants awarded to date, 54 have been given to Peruvian scientists, 2 to Argentinean scientists, 2 to Brazilian scientists, 2 to Colombian scientists, and 1 to a Mexican scientist.

We are very proud of the research activity and results generated by these grants and hope to continue offering them for many years to come.



Working at Los Amigos

For more information about our research grants and a list of the projects funded to date, please visit: www.amazonconservation.org/home/grants.htm

Welcome César Morán! Our New Conservation Director

César Morán, an experienced Peruvian environmentalist, joins the ACA family as our new Conservation Director starting this month.

César was born in Lima, Peru, and studied Zoology at the La Molina University in Lima. He then pursued a Master's degree in Environmental Management at the Yale School of Forestry. César has a vast experience in the environmental conservation field. He developed a hands-on environ-



César Morán, ACA's new Conservation Director

mental education program at the La Molina University aimed to teach school children in Lima about organic gardening.

Later, he worked for seven years as Project Coordinator for the Machu Picchu Program, a debt-for-nature swap between the countries of Finland and Peru which supported the park in environmental issues.

We are delighted to bring him along in our journey and are confident that he will help ACA accomplish major conservation goals. Welcome César!

Brazil Nuts as an Economic Alternative



Brazil nut grower opening the Brazil nut pods

In July Luz Marina Velarde, Director of our Brazil Nut Program, organized a workshop on sustainable management of Brazil nuts in the Madre de Dios region in Peru. Approximately 50 local Brazil nut growers attended the workshop. Delegates from Brazil and Bolivia

were also present.

The purpose of the workshop was to give Brazil nut growers a framework to share experiences and discuss the different techniques they have developed over the past years in their respective communities.

The workshop also helped address issues affecting local communities, such as environmental and social risks and benefits associated with the use of Brazil nuts as an economic alternative. Ms. Sara Hurtado and Mr. Amancio Ibanez, harvesters in the areas

of Alegria and Alerta of Madre de Dios, discussed how their lives have improved with the use of Brazil nuts as a sustainable development and economically viable alternative.

In Madre de Dios, Brazil nuts represent more than half a year's income for thousands of families. ACA promotes regular workshops to increase awareness of the benefits resulting from harvesting Brazil nuts, not only for the community but for forest conservation as well.

Seven Species Added to Los Amigos Bird List

In August-September 2006, fieldwork at ACA Los Amigos research station by Drs. Joseph Tobias and Nathalie Seddon (Oxford University, UK) added seven new bird species to the Los Amigos list. The new species include the White-bellied Seedeater (*Sporophila leucoptera*) and the White-chinned Swift (*Cypseloides cryptus*). Both of these sightings were documented with

photographs, and represent the first records for the department of Madre de Dios, Peru. Indeed, there is no previous documented Peruvian record of the Seedeater, and the Swift is only known from a handful of specimens (mainly old records from the department of Puno, Peru). Their discovery is just another example of the vast biodiversity of Los Amigos yet to be explored.



White-chinned Swift over the CICRA clearing in September 2006: the first record for Madre de Dios

CURIOSITIES



Photo: Amanda K. Neill

Gurania (Jungle Cucumber) is one of the largest genera in the cucumber family. The pickle-like fruits are eaten by bats and birds.



Photo: Mathias Tobler

Like Victoria, one of the tapirs collared by the Andes Amazon Biodiversity Program in Los Amigos, tapirs often visit mineral licks to eat clay which is high in minerals and serves as a supplement to their diet.



Photo: Rudolf von May

Chiasmocleis ventrimaculata belongs to the "narrow-mouthed frogs" family, which inhabits the leaf-litter. Some individuals live in spider burrows in southern Peru. Even though they are much smaller than the spiders, the spiders do not feed on them (but may feed on other frogs).

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In 2001, the Peruvian government awarded ACCA a long-term renewable contract for the world's first conservation concession. The Los Amigos Conservation Concession protects 360,000 acres of Amazonian forest and connects with more than 12 million acres of wilderness in Manu and Alto Purús National Parks in the Madre de Dios River basin of southeastern Peru.

ACA/ACCA manages the Amazon's most active research station adjacent to the conservation concession. CICRA (as the station is known from its Spanish acronym) provides scientists with access to the concession, as well as excellent facilities for long-term research in several types of Amazonian habitat. CICRA is also a center for field courses conducted by universities in the United States.

This year, ACA/ACCA launched a bid for a second conservation concession: the Río Keros Conservation Concession. This concession will follow the Los Amigos model, including a research station that will give access to Andean cloud forests, one of the least understood and most seriously threatened habitats on Earth.

ACA/ACCA's third major initiative assists Brazil nut producers to manage natural forest around the city of Puerto Maldonado. Brazil nut harvest provides an income for local families, and provides an economic incentive to avoid clearing forested land for other uses.

In Bolivia, ACA is conducting research projects to study the Pampas del Heath, a complex system in which natural fires maintain biodiversity-rich savannas. ACA works closely with local authorities to ensure protection and conservation of the Pampas del Heath and surrounding protected areas.

WHERE WE WORK

