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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.

## The Quico Community Enjoys A Cup Of Hot Chocolate At 13,450 ft

When one lives at 13,450 ft in the Peruvian Andes, a cup of hot chocolate and a Christmas present have a whole new meaning. On December 20, 2006 our partner organization in Peru, the Asociación para la Conservación de la Cuenca Amazónica (ACCA) organized a Christmas celebration with the children of the Quico community in Cusco.

Quico is a weaving community of about 60 families that live high in the Andean mountains of the Kosñipata Valley. When it comes to weaving their magnificent textiles, all family members participate, from the very young and playful to very old and wise. Their weaving techniques are ancient, dating back perhaps to the times of the Incas.

ACCA works with the Quicos helping them improve their weaving techniques, and providing training in the use of natural dyes as part of a Micro-enterprise initiatives' project funded by the Blue Moon Fund and ACA.

This past December, a team of ACCA visited the Quicos bringing hot chocolate and



Children of the Quico community await cup-in-hand their hot chocolate

presents for 120 children. The Christmas celebration not only was enjoyed by the children, but also by the parents and teachers of the local school. The presents given to the children included musical instruments like *quenás*, *zampoñas* and flutes for the boys; the girls received little toy-stuffed llamas and dolls dressed with traditional clothing.

"This is a good day, we like that we work together, thank you." said Wenceslao, a leader of the community.

## Manu Cloud Forest Observatory and Canopy Walkway System Underway

ACA is pleased to announce a new and exciting project: The Manu Cloud Forest Observatory and Canopy Walkway System.

The project consists of a highly sophisticated aluminum canopy walkway system that will include an observatory in the Peruvian cloud forests, at ~9,500 ft asl. The

walkway will be constructed along steep mountain slopes in the Kosñipata valley and will include a high-end technology classroom tower for educational courses and research activities.

The canopy walkway system will be fully integrated with a trail system to provide a unique experience both for the

general public and for researchers and educators.

Our partners for this project are the ACEER Foundation, Greenheart Conservation, the National Geographic Society, Alcan Inc., the Gordon & Betty Moore Foundation, among others.

More news on the development of this project in our next issue.

## CURIOSITIES



Photo: Michael Goulding

Giant river otters are the largest otters in our planet. This otter species (*Pteronura brasiliensis*) is endemic to South America's rainforest habitat. Unfortunately it is an endangered species listed in the IUCN Red List.



Photo: Francisco Llacma

*Chlorornis riefferii* or Grass-green Tanager is normally found in tropical forests of altitudes between 1,500 and 3,350 m. This particular individual was photographed at our Wayqecha Cloud Forest Research Station (2,900masl).



Photo: Juan Carlos Chaparro

*Hyla armata* is a frog species that grows spine-like projections from the chest and thumbs during the breeding season.

## Preserving Wild Orchids and Their Ecosystems

Wild orchids are disappearing in Latin America due to over-collection and loss of habitat. Peru alone has lost more than 13 percent of its forest from 1950-1992. Thankfully, scientists, students and local resident naturalists are collaborating to document and conserve wild orchids of the neotropics and their ecosystems. In addition to discovering new orchids, there is a comprehensive orchid inventory monitoring program that provides a baseline for documenting overall ecosystem's health.

Team members from the Andes to Amazon Biodiversity Program (AABP) at the Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT) in collaboration with ACA are studying wild orchids in the Andes-Amazon region of southeast Peru. The project is currently based at ACA's Los Amigos Biological Station and Wayqecha Research Station, covering transitional region where the Andes Mountains slope down to meet with the Amazon basin. Experts in the field say that research in Wayqecha could help promote conservation in the area and ensure the protection of these wild orchids and their ecosystem for many years.

The main goals are to study the diversity and ecology of wild orchids and to document this work through the publication of checklists, field guides, scientific papers and an online database. A major goal of the orchid project is to study the effect of habitat, season and elevation on the



Photo: John Janovec

The above orchid, *Telipogon sp.* is one of the hundreds of amazing orchids that can be found in the cloud forests and that are being documented now thanks to the AABP team

change in orchid species diversity and ecology. So far the project has been a success. The AABP field team collected 60 species of flowering or fruiting orchids from forest and wetland areas around the Los Amigos Biological Station in September 2005. In Wayqecha Research Station, in only five days of initial fieldwork in 2004, the AABP team documented 110 orchids in Wayqecha forests.

Orchid scientists and orchid enthusiast are invited to view the AABP orchid collection online at the AABP Atrium website ([atrium.andesamazon.org](http://atrium.andesamazon.org)), where one can view digital images of orchids and other plants collected by project botanists.

## Bear with us!

At the end of last year we had a spectacled bear sighting at our Wayqecha Research Station. Two of our staff workers were doing maintenance work in a trail near the station when a strong, big, messy-coated bear slowly approached them. Our staff stood still, nervous, but still. The bear in turn, was quietly chewing a chunk of Bromelia sp. 5 meters was all that separated our staff from that powerful, robust but yet adorable beast.

The spectacled bear or *Tremarctos*

*ornatus* is an endangered species that can only be found in a few countries of South America. Although this type of bear is adaptable and can be found in many types of habitats, like rainforests, cloud forests, and even in desert lands, the rapid loss of habitat has been the main threat that pushed this bear species population close to extinction.

Over the past decade or so, conservation programs have made a tremendous effort to protect this animal's habitat



Photo: Francisco Llacma

Spectacled bear climbing a tree at ACA's Wayqecha Cloud Forest

and have contributed to a rebound in its population size. However, numbers are still very low and the spectacled bear continues to be listed under the IUCN Red List.

## New Hopes for Sacha Inchi Growers

The Association of Sacha Inchi Growers in Manu (APASI-MANU) has signed an agreement with AgroIndustrias Amazonicas, Peru's main distributor of Sacha Inchi oil, to become one of its suppliers.

After several months of continuous conversations between APASI-MANU and AgroIndustrias Amazonicas, ACA's partner organization in Peru could finally facilitate an agreement that will benefit the Sacha Inchi growers of the Kosñipata valley.



Photo: AgroIndustrias Amazonicas

**Sacha Inchi has 48% of Omega 3**

"We have achieved a unification of interests: the private sector, the community and the ACCA NGO, and this group can have only one result which is the confidence in the future." Said Mr. José Anaya, Director of AgroIndustrias Amazonicas.

This agreement is a milestone achievement of our Micro-enterprise initiatives' project, currently funded by the Blue Moon Fund.

Sacha Inchi, also known as Inca Inchi, is an Amazonian seed high in Omega 6 (36.8 %) and Omega 3 (48.6 %). Being of vegetable origin, the Sacha Inchi oil has 0 cholesterol.

Learn more about Sacha Inchi at <http://www.incainchi.es/home.htm>

### CURIOSITIES



Photo: Jean Olivier

Sloths are found mostly in Central and South America. This mammal has many fascinating characteristics: multi-chamber stomach, eats mostly leaves, slow digestion process, low metabolic rate (that is why it moves so slow, to conserve energy!), grows its fur unlike many other mammals, the hair grows in a direction away from its extremities and can sleep up to 20 hours a day!

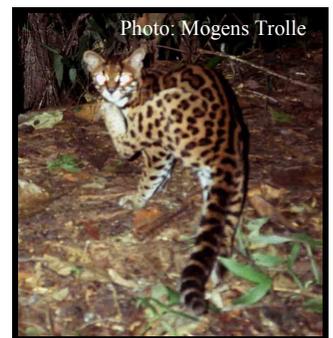


Photo: Mogens Trolle

Camera traps in our Los Amigos Research Station are an essential tool for researchers like Mogens Trolle, who surveyed mammals at ACA's Los Amigos Conservation Concession 2003. Among the many mammals photographed were: margay (picture above), ocelot, tapir, giant armadillo, jaguar, puma and white-lipped peccaries.

## Two New Field Guides For The Field Museum of Natural History

ACA is working with the Field Museum to produce two new field guides in 2007: hummingbirds and terrestrial mammals. Both field guides will depict species surveyed in the Madre de Dios Watershed, including species specifically for our Los Amigos Biological Station and our Wayqecha Cloud Forest Research Station.

There are many field guides produced at Los Amigos that

are already available at the Field Museum website ([www.fieldmuseum.org](http://www.fieldmuseum.org)). These include:

- Mamíferos (Mammals) del S.E. Perú by author Renata Leite Pitman.
- Reptiles del Centro Río Los Amigos, Manu y Tambopata by authors: von May, Emmons, Knell, Jacobs & Rodríguez.
- Arboles y Arbustos del Centro Río Amigos by authors Foster, Betz & Beltrán.
- Herbs of Centro Río Amigos by

authors Foster, Betz & Beltrán.

- Palmas of Centro Río Amigos by authors Foster, Betz & Beltrán.
- Trepadores y Epifitas of Centro Río Amigos by authors Foster, Betz & Beltrán.

Make sure you read our Cicra Letter to learn about other research projects being conducted at our Los Amigos Research Station.

## Vanessa Sequeira: Sailing Along The Amazon Rivers

As some of you may remember, Vanessa Sequeira, a dear friend of us and colleague past away in Brazil last year while doing her thesis research.

Vanessa joined the ACA family in 1999 dedicating herself to work with Brazil nut producers and setting thus the foundations of our now fully-established and successful Brazil nut Project (PCC).

As a way of remembering

Vanessa, our partner organization in Peru, ACCA, built a boat and named it after her. The "Vanessa Sequeira" is

now sailing along the Madre de Dios River in the Amazon basin.



A group of children on its way to CICRA on board the Vanessa Sequeira

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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

