Tropinet

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The Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation

Organization for Tropical Studies
where science and nature converge

IN THIS ISSUE:

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For the first time ever, the ATBC issued a press release and "Uberlândia Declaration" at its annual meeting, both of which were drafted under the aegis of the ATBC Conservation Committee. The Declaration focuses on the alarmingly high rate of deforestation in Amazonia, which has accelerated sharply in recent years. The full text follows:

THE UBERLÂNDIA DECLARATION

THE CRITICAL NEED TO SLOW THE PACE OF AMAZON DEFORESTATION

WHEREAS, the forests of Amazonia are of critical importance as an unparalleled refuge for biological diversity, as an enormous heat-engine that helps to maintain regional and global precipitation patterns, and as a massive stock of terrestrial carbon that slows the rapid build-up of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere; and

WHEREAS, Amazonian forests also provide the livelihoods of diverse local and indigenous peoples; and

WHEREAS, two-thirds of the forests of Amazonia are contained within Brazil; and

WHEREAS, the pace of forest destruction has accelerated sharply over the past 15 years in Brazilian Amazonia, where vast expanses of forest are now being destroyed and degraded each year; and

WHEREAS, the Amazonian Protected Area Program (ARPA) has made a significant contribution to conservation by delimiting a number of important Protected Areas; and

WHEREAS, initiatives by past and current Brazilian governments to slow deforestation do not address one of the most critical root causes of forest destruction, the rapid expansion of highways, roads, and other transportation infrastructure in Amazonia that greatly increases access to large, intact forest tracts for ranchers, loggers, slash-and-burn farmers, and land speculators; and

WHEREAS, decisions to construct and improve transportation infrastructure in Amazonia are typically being made without first assessing the real environmental and social impacts of those projects; and

WHEREAS, greatly increased enforcement is needed to prevent the rapid proliferation of illegal roads and illicit logging, mining, farming, and settlement in Amazonia; and

WHEREAS, continuing subdivision of the Amazon by large-scale infrastructure projects is likely to fragment the basin's forests on a massive spatial scale, creating isolated forest remnants that are far more vulnerable than intact forests to predatory logging, wildfires, and encroachment by illegal miners; and

WHEREAS, Amazonian nations already bear a disproportionately large amount of the direct expense and lost-opportunity costs for Amazonian conservation initiatives; and

WHEREAS, inadequate funding and infrastructure for environmental protection is one of the key reasons for predatory exploitation of the Amazon; and

WHEREAS, funding from international lenders, such as the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank, and from commercial lenders has in some cases contributed to the rapid loss of Amazonian forests;

THEREFORE, be it declared, at its Uberlândia, Brazil meeting in July 2005, that the Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation:

1) commends the Brazilian government for its commitment to the ARPA program, and requests that ARPA facilitate the rapid transfer of critical resources for park protection and management;

2) urges the Brazilian federal government to delay planned Amazonian infrastructure projects identified by the Inter-Ministerial Working Group to Reduce Amazon Deforestation as being most likely to cause large-scale environmental damage, especially the BR-319 Highway (Porto Velho–Manaus), BR-163 Highway (Cuiabá-Santarém), BR-230 Highway (Lábrea–Humaitá), Madeira River Hydroelectric Projects (Santo Antônio and Jirau), and Urucu–Porto Velho Gasline; this delay would allow far more rigorous measures to be implemented to reduce the environmental and social impacts of these projects;

3) requests that the Brazilian government make significant efforts to reduce the rapid proliferation of illegal access roads and other infrastructure throughout the Brazilian Legal Amazon;

4) insists that international and commercial lenders uphold the most stringent environmental criteria to ensure that future loans and projects do not promote or increase Amazonian deforestation;

5) urges the Brazilian government to enforce existing environmental regulations, including those applying to spontaneous roads, licensing of government infrastructure, Legal Reserves, and Areas of Permanent Protection within private properties; and

6) urges the international community, especially that of major economies such as the U.S., Canada, Japan, and European Union, to markedly increase direct support for Brazil's Amazonian conservation initiatives, in order to bear a fairer share of the true economic burden of forest preservation.

FREE BIOTROPICA ONLINE ACCESS FOR STUDENTS!

For the first time, *Biotropica* is offering free online subscriptions for all students. This gives you rapid internet access to the journal (but not the other advantages of ATBC membership, such as receiving hard copies of *Biotropica*, free page charges for publications, and discounts for annual meetings). The free student memberships are valid for three years.

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THE 2005 ATBC ANNUAL MEETING IN UBERLÂNDIA, BRAZIL

by William Laurance, ATBC President-Elect
Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, Panama

The 2005 ATBC Annual Conference in central Brazil was one of the best attended and best organized meetings ever for the society. Located in the subtropical city of Uberlândia, in a region once dominated by Cerrado, savannas, and woodlands, the meeting attracted over 900 participants, including many young scientists from within Brazil.

Enormous credit goes to Ethologist Kleber del-Claro and his colleagues and assistants from the Federal University of Uberlândia, who superbly organized the conference. The meeting featured outstanding plenary speakers, a special session by *Biotropica* editor Robin Chazdon with helpful advice for journal authors, highly stimulating symposia, and many excellent posters.

Among the many stimulating plenary speakers were John Thompson, detailing the evolutionary ecology of landscapes; Cathy Pringle, who described the critical role of hydrology in tropical ecosystems; Gary Krupnick, highlighting the evolutionary ecology of plant-pollinator interactions; and Robert Marquis, who focused on the behavior of tropical herbivores.

The conference also included many dynamic symposia, including those on behavioral ecology in the tropics (chaired by Kleber del-Claro and Regina Macedo), Amazonian biogeography (chaired by Tom Lovejoy) and floodplain forests (organized by Florian Whittman and colleagues), the ecology and conservation of fragmented landscapes (chaired by William Laurance and Heraldo Vasconcelos), and the implications of pervasive overhunting for plant communities (organized by Joseph Wright).

In addition, a varied and animated series of contributed papers, and excellent poster sessions added to the intellectual excitement of this southern hemisphere meeting.

As in all ATBC conferences, a major highlight was the opportunity for members to meet and socialize. The annual banquet, held at a giant sporting facility, featured great food and traditional music from central Brazil. A final highlight was the post-conference trip to Serra da Canastra National Park, where participants viewed striking scenery of natural rupestre fields and Cerrado vegetation.

REGISTER FOR THE 2006 ATBC ANNUAL MEETING JULY 18-21 IN KUNMING, CHINA

ATBC TO MEET IN KUNMING, CHINA IN 2006

Meeting to be hosted by the Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden

For the first time in its 40-year history, the Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation will convene its annual meeting in China, where the proceedings will be hosted by Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden (XTBG) and the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS). The venue will be the Harbor Palace Hotel, Kunming. The theme of the meeting is "Tropical Biology: Meeting the Needs of Changing Ecosystems." The meeting will open on July 18, 2006, and run until July 21, 2006.

Located in the extreme south of China, with a warm subtropical climate, Kunming is the capital of Yunnan. The area is renowned for its high biological and cultural diversity. It is located in the Luosuo watershed, a tributary of the Mekong River, close to the borders of China with both Laos and Myanmar. The Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden is not only an academic research institution but also a botanical garden of distinction, hosting many visitors and several successful international conferences over the last several years.

Topics under discussion at the 2006 meeting will include biodiversity conservation; invasive species; tropical forests and global change; long-term ecological research; ethnobiology and its application in biodiversity conservation; the ecology and evolution of biotic interactions; and restoration of degraded areas in the tropics. The official language for the meeting will be English.

The deadline for early registration is March 15, 2006. Abstract submission for contributed papers can be done online, and abstracts are due by April 15, 2006. Hotel bookings at conference prices are available, and should be reserved by April 15, 2006. Registration, hotel arrangements, and other travel information is available at the meeting website, at http://atbc.xtbg.ac.cn/ A variety of post-conference travel excursions is also planned, and attendees can learn more about these trips on the conference website. Tour reservations must be made by March 15, 2006. A valid passport and a visa are required for travel to China. Check with your local authorities for the travel regulations which apply to your country of origin. There are post-meeting workshops also scheduled for Yunnan, in the week following the ATBC meeting. These include the Seventh International Fig Symposium, and a workshop in advanced techniques in frugivory and seed dispersal. Links to these meeting pages can be found on the conference web page. Symposia for the meeting have not yet been announced, but updated program information is posted regularly on the meeting web site.

There are funds available to support a limited number of participants from developing countries. Inquiries should be directed to the Secretariat of the meeting, at atbc2006@xtbg.ac.cn

The Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation

FIRST WINNER OF THE BACARDI CONSERVATION AWARD

In 2005 the Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation initiated the Luis F. Bacardi Advances in Tropical Conservation Award, with generous support from the Lubee Bat Conservancy. Given for the outstanding oral presentation at the ATBC annual meeting focusing on tropical conservation, the award is given to young scientists who have completed their Ph.D. no more than five years previously.

The ATBC is pleased to congratulate the inaugural winner of the Bacardi Award, **Cecilia P. Alves Costa**, for her presentation entitled "Effects of mammal defaunation on the plant community in the Atlantic Forest of southeast Brazil" at the 2005 ATBC meeting in Uberlândia, Brazil. Her talk described the striking impacts of hunting and forest fragmentation on mammal assemblages in southeastern Brazil and the higher-order effects of these changes on plant communities. Her presentation scored top marks for all three criteria used the judges: relevance for real-life conservation, scientific merit, and quality of the presentation.

Cecilia received a personalized certificate and award of $300, and will also be recognized in *Biotropica*. The ATBC thanks her for an outstanding presentation.

Asian ATBC Chapter to be launched in China

The ATBC has decided to launch an Asian Chapter during next year's annual meeting at Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden, China (18-21 Jul 2006). The aim is to better meet the needs of members working in Asia and thereby expand the association's membership in the region. In the future we expect that the chapter will organize regional meetings, workshops, and other activities. At the meeting in China we plan to hold a symposium on "Asian tropical biology and conservation: Analysis and future directions" and in the evening following the symposium we will hold the chapter's inaugural meeting. All ATBC members are invited to attend. There will be a general discussion about the activities of the chapter, followed by approval of the Chapter's charter and election of the officers. In the meantime we will run an email list for messages about research activities and conservation issues of regional interest. If you would like to be included in the list or want to post a message, please send an email to atbc_asia@yahoo.com. Anybody interested in helping to organize the chapter, please feel free to contact us at the above email. --- **Priya Davidar, Salim Ali School of Ecology and Environmental Sciences, Pondicherry University, India, and Rhett Harrison, Research Insititute for Humanity and Nature, Japan.**

May the Pigs Fare Well!

A Review of: Silvius, K. M., R. E. Bodmer, and J. M. V. Fragoso (eds). 2004 *People in Nature: Wildlife Conservation in South and Central America.* Columbia University Press, N.Y. 464 pages. ISBN 0-23112-783-9.

By Pierre-Michel Forget
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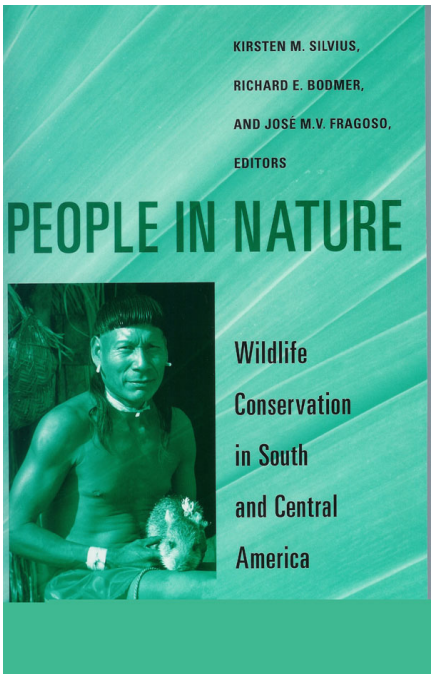
"*Tout est bon dans le cochon*" is a French expression meaning "*All is good in pigs*." In many countries, both temperate and tropical, people like eating pigs, wild and domesticated ones, which are a major source of protein and energy. In the Neotropics, pigs are a staple meat source for indigenous communities. Not only is pork appetizing, but captive pigs also contribute to garbage recycling, eating detritus that we, as human, do not consume. This photosynthesized plant energy is thus transformed into carbohydrates and protein in farms or backyards. In Nature, wild pigs behave in the same way, consuming seeds and seedlings in the forest understory, feeding jaguars as well as indigenous people. The harmonious communion is thus total between People and Nature. Peccaries are also ecosystem designers, rooting up the substrate while they feed upon frugivore-dispersed and rodent-cached seeds, established seedlings, or tubers. They thus play a significant role in Nature, as both seed predators and dispersers (Beck 2005). Indeed, acting as a strong selective pressure on plant recruitment, they limit dominance of plant species (Beck & Terborgh 2002), thus, in theory, promoting tropical plant diversity. One may add that all is good in wild pigs too. "People in Nature" respect them, and even keep orphans as pets, as shown on the cover of this interesting book edited by K. M. Silvius, R. E. Bodmer and J. M. V. Fragoso. But in contrast to Northern communities, People in Nature don't eat their pet pigs at adulthood, just as we decline to eat our fish, bird, cat or dog. Instead, people hunt wild pigs in Nature to meet their daily consumption needs. Thus, peccaries contribute to the diversity of Nature and to the culture of humans inhabiting neotropical forests.

According to the IUCN, European wild pigs or boars are widespread and abundant, and believed to be relatively secure in most countries (http://www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/sgs/pphsg/Status.htm). The picture is the opposite in the tropics, especially in Africa, Asia and Borneo, while the situation in South and Central America is somewhere in between. Even if the collared peccary (*Pecari tajacu*) is considered widespread and abundant, the related white-lipped peccary (*Tayassu pecari*) is beginning to be at risk or rare, threatened by overharvesting (illegal hunting as in Brazil, or legal hunting, as in French Guiana). Although populations have been sustainable for many years in the wild, increases in human population, poverty, and lack of development promoting the production of cheap, abundant alternative sources of protein now put wild pigs at risk in the neotropics. Over harvesting by professional hunters selling meat to city restaurants and supermarkets (as in French Guiana), goldmining and its associated hunting, increased deforestation, and forest fragmentation exert far stronger pressures on peccary populations than did indigenous People in Nature in previous times. Given the important role that these and other animals, such as pacu and arawana fishes, spider monkeys, deer, jaguar, caiman, guans, macaws and other parrots have for indigenous traditional life and culture, one may also expect that cultural traditions will be lost when all these animals have been exterminated. Imagine a seed necklace without its usual white-lipped peccary canine in the middle; something crucial will be missing. Wild pigs as well as all the other components of the fauna are becoming endangered in many Neotropical areas. Despite early warnings (Redford, 1992), the forest is progressively empty, and the increasing bush market trade in the Neotropics will threaten the future of this resource as a part of the diet of indigenous peoples.

In response to these threats, many studies have been carried out in South and Central American countries, and results have been presented during five biennial conferences, held between 1992 and 2001, in Brazil, Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay and Columbia. The book People in Nature is a selection of these presentations. This book is a follow-up to two important, previous books edited by Robinson and Redford (1991) and Redford and Padoch (1992). We have had to wait several years to read the proceedings of these five meetings, but the result is appealing, attractive, and rich in lessons. With this third volume, the book collection in my library is now complete. But will I have to wait another decade to read the results from the last meeting (2004) in Iquitos or the next four? I hope not. With the continuing acceleration of deforestation in the Neotropics and the probable change in the conservation status of peccaries and other animals, especially where they are hunted for legal markets, it is now time to act. We don't have much time left; ten more years of study may not be needed. We already know what is happening to wildlife in South and Central America. People in Nature should be on the shelf of all tropical biologists; not only anthropologists and conservationists, but also forest biologists, ecologists and managers, and politicians – everyone who is concerned about the conservation of the Neotropical rainforests.



In People in Nature the editors invite readers to their table to discuss the sustainability and conservation of wildlife, not from a northern, industrialized, and well-fed viewpoint, but from a Southern perspective. Throughout the book, wild pigs are a major entrée, but not the only item on the menu. The first chapter is the appetizer, a sort of '*mise-en- bouche*' in which the multiple pressures that are exerted on wildlife and some innovative proposals that are sought to sustain harvesting through wildlife management are outlined. As a starter (Chapters 2-8), the editors present key issues bridging "local people and community management." As the first course (traditionally fish, in my country), Chapters 9-12 present "Economic Considerations" of harvesting or breeding wild species in Nature or captivity, starting, appropriately enough, with a chapter on fisheries management. Then, the guests are prepared for the main course. This comes in six chapters (Chapters 13-18) on "Fragmentation and Other Nonharvest Human Impacts." Just as at a *churasquerria* restaurant, the scientific substance is abundant and appetizing, and it's difficult to refuse all the pieces offered by our hosts, whether white meat (Chapter 14 on crocodiles) or red (other chapters on mammals). Then, 'fromage' or 'dessert'? After such ample information consumed, digestion will take a long time, and a rest is needed! We may hope to stop here with our feeding —sorry, *reading*. But a rapid look at the dessert buffet, i.e., Chapters 19-25 on "Hunting Impacts," is a torture for our stomach, which already has reached its limits. This time, however, we'll go beyond the limit for this unique, 10-yr anniversary lunch, almost a wedding breakfast, that of People in Nature.

Paradoxically, after feeding – sorry, *reading* about fishes (Chapter 6, 7, 9 and 23), deer and vicuña (Chapters 10 and 16), reptiles (Chapter 14 and 22), primates (15), big cats (Chapter 17), wild pigs (Chapter 18), birds (Chapter 21) and mammals (Chapters 2-4, 8, 11-13, 19-20, 24), the last chapter (25) about hunting and wildilfe managment in French Guiana leaves us hungry. We hoped to know more about current domestication programs and the peccary breeding farm in French Guiana. At page 400, other chapters claimed that harvesting of large mammals such as tapir and white-lipped peccaries for commercial markets was not sustainable. It is thus difficult to digest the fact that such wildlife is still legally sold in restaurants and supermarkets in French Guiana while, on the other hand, most Central and South American countries are battling to conserve these important resources for indigenous "People in Nature". Nonetheless, after such a satisfying meal, we feel much more informed, closing the book "People and Nature" just as we lay our napkin on the table when leaving the banquet table, satiated. At that moment, we really can conclude that everything is good in the book edited by Silvius, Bodmer and Fragoso even if some little pork feet bones are hard to finally digest!

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BOOK REVIEWS

Celebrating Neotropical Herps the Savage Way

Review of: *Ecology and Evolution in the Tropics: A Herpetological Perspective.* M.E. Donnelly, B.I. Crother, C. Guyer, M.H. Wake and M.E. White (editors). 2005. University of Chicago Press. 675 pp.

By Richard M. Lehtinen
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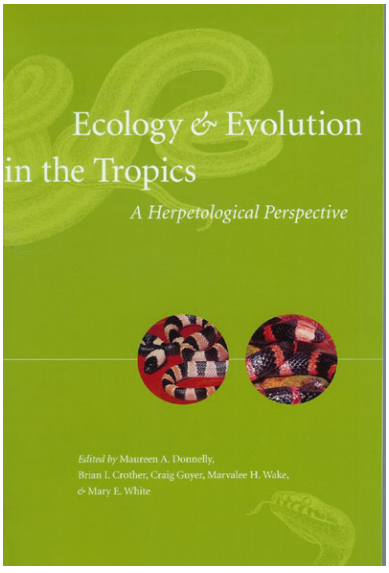
This volume is the outcome of a symposium at the 2000 joint herpetology meetings in La Paz, Mexico. The symposium was held in honor of Jay Savage, one of the most accomplished and prolific tropical herpetologists of the 20th century. Savage was retiring after many years at the University of Miami, and was nearly ready to publish his magnum opus "*The Amphibians and Reptiles of Costa Rica: A Herpetofauna Between Two Continents, Between Two Seas*", which appeared in 2004.

This book is the product of that symposium, made up of eighteen chapters authored by Savage's students, post-docs, collaborators and friends. The book is divided into two sections: "Evolution and Biogeography" and "Ecology, Biogeography and Faunal Studies". Since there was really no conceptual theme to the symposium (other than affiliation with Savage), this division seems artificial and unnecessary. Taxonomically, nine chapters deal exclusively with amphibians, five chapters focus on reptiles (mostly snakes), and four either deal with both groups or neither. Tables, figures and illustrations are generally clear and easy to read, but unfortunately many of the photographs found in this volume are grainy or otherwise of marginal quality.

As with many edited volumes, the quality of the individual chapters is very heterogeneous, ranging from thoughtful, important syntheses to preliminary analyses and what appear to be unpublished dissertation chapters. The length of the chapters varies from relatively brief (e.g., Sharon Emerson's treatment of the physiological basis of sexual dimorphism in frogs (11 pp)) to monograph length (e.g., Roy McDiarmid and Maureen Donnelly's review of the herpetofauna of the Guayana highlands (100 pages)). Topics are similarly diverse, running the gamut from molecular phylogenetic analyses and results of inventory projects, to sexual selection in frogs and historical biogeography of pit vipers, all the way to the training of tropical para-biologists, and philosophical discourses on systematics. Such a hodgepodge of topics is at the same time intellectually stimulating and maddeningly frustrating, but is probably indicative of the diverse interests of the authors and the wide-ranging career of Savage himself. The diverse topics included in this volume inevitably make it a little uneven, and few readers will find all of the chapters interesting. But fewer yet, I suspect, will come away after finding little to arouse their curiosity. From my point of view, a few of the standout chapters include Harry Greene and Roy McDiarmid's synthesis of venomous snake mimicry, Craig Guyer and Maureen Donnelly's analysis of acoustic niche partitioning in hylid frogs, and Arnold Kluge's dense but logical and compelling plea for a more scientific approach to taxonomy.



This book may have been better titled "Ecology and Evolution in the *Neo*tropics," as only one chapter directly concerns organisms from outside the Neotropical region. This is to be expected, however, since Savage and his students have almost exclusively worked in this part of the world. While some chapters are certainly weaker than others, this is a volume that most tropical (especially Neotropical) herpetologists will want on their shelves.

Focus on the Cerrado Biodiversity Hotspot

A Review of: Paulo Oliveira and Robert J. Marquis (eds.). 2002. *The Cerrados of Brazil: Ecology and Natural History of a Neotropical Savanna*. Columbia University Press, NY. 398 pp. ISBN 0-231-12043-5 (paper)

by Geraldo Wilson Fernandes
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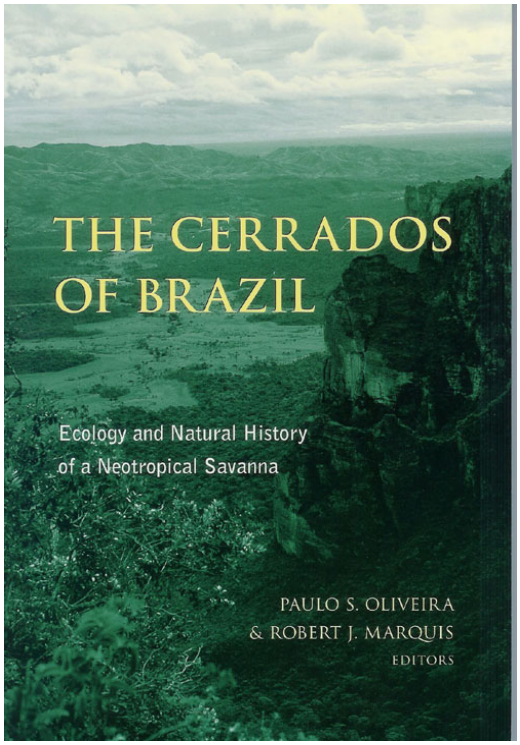
The Cerrado is a large biome, covering approximately 25% of the Brazilian territory (more than 2 million km^2). Habitat heterogeneity prevails in this large land mass as a result of a mosaic of environmental conditions shaped by soil, humidity and topography. The relevance of this biome to global conservation is further augmented when we consider that large areas of similar savannah vegetation also occur elsewhere in South America (Venezuela, Paraguay, Bolivia, Colombia, Guiana, and Suriname). In this realm, natural selection has forged one of the most spectacular floras and floras of the world. Its exotic-looking plants and animals and intriguing interactions provide the raw material for scientists around the world to generate new hypotheses and describe novelties in all areas of the biological sciences. In addition to providing raw material for the development of new ideas about the processes and mechanisms that drive life on Earth, the cerrados of Brazil have tremendous historical importance. They comprised the scenario within which the Danish botanist Eugene Warming, one of the fathers of plant ecology, worked out some of his pioneering ideas on plant communities. Therefore, the relevance of such a book is paramount, and it should bring the cerrados once again into the main stream of ecology.



This book represents an excellent description of the ecology of the cerrado by providing access to historical and current research. The book contains 18 chapters written by different expert authors on various aspects of ecology, natural history and conservation of the cerrado. Chapters are grouped into 5 sections: History and Environment, Plant Communities, Animal Communities, Insect-plant Interactions, and Conservation Biology. The bulk of the book (two thirds) is in the sections on plants, animals, and insect-plant interactions, all of them including plenty of information on each particular system addressed. A description of the basic ecology of the Cerrados is presented, while some aspects of increasing importance such as human influence in the Cerrados are described in general terms.

The book starts by reviewing the research done in cerrados by the editors, Oliveira and Marquis. Although not complete, owing to the methods employed, it will provide fuel for students to begin to understand the development of ecological studies in the cerrado. The clearly written chapter by Motta and colleagues addresses the relation of soils to geomorphic surfaces, while Ledru provides a fascinating account of the evolution of the Cerrados during the Late Quaternary using palynological records. The chapter on fire by Miranda et al. provides enough fuel to understand one of the most relevant aspects of the cerrado, periodic burning. Fire is approached again in the chapter by Hoffmann and Moreira, focusing on its role in the population dynamics of woody plants. Klink and Moreira provide an overview of past and current human occupation and current land use practices in the cerrado. Data on habitat fragmentation and destruction are presented, demonstrating that the rate of loss of this vegetation is of increasing concern. The chapters dealing with plant and animal communities are sufficiently broad to give an accurate overview of their subject. In this regard, the chapters by Oliveira,-Filho and Ratter on vegetational physiognomies, the one by Franco on the ecophysiology of woody plants, and the cerrado mammals by Marinho-Filho et al. should be highlighted due to their clarity. Unfortunately, one of the most spectacular habitats of the cerrado, the rupestrian fields or rocky fields found in the cerrado highlands, was left out. On the other hand, it could represent a book in itself. The remaining chapters deal with insect-plant interactions and provide the most recent findings on ant-plant interactions (Oliveira et al.), herbivory on cerrado plants (Marquis et al.) and pollination biology (Oliveria & Gibbs). Finally, the book ends with a chapter on conservation of the cerrados (Cavalcanti & Joly), a subject of increasing concern.

The Cerrados of Brazil is one of the most comprehensive overviews so far available of this important ecosystem. The work is of consistently high quality throughout and well documented with plenty of examples and data. It is a book that I consider highly recommended for any scientist planning to work in the cerrados or any scientist who wants to broaden their view of tropical savannas and perhaps seek for more solid comparative biology across biomes. In summary, this is an excellent book and highly recommended for anyone ecologist interested in tropical savanna ecology.

NOTE TO LIBRARIANS, ARCHIVISTS, AND SUBSCRIBERS: *Tropinet*, the newsletter of the ATBC and OTS, will assume a new publishing schedule beginning with this volume. The newsletter will appear three times a year, as a supplement to the journal *Biotropica*. As *Biotropica* moves to a 6-issues a year venue, *Tropinet* will mail with the January, May, and October issues of *Biotropica*. Thus, the 2005 volume of *Tropinet*, Volume 16, has only three numbers, rather than the normal four, to accommodate the changeover to this new production schedule. This issue represents the first number of *Tropinet*, Volume 17.

Field Station Report

Project Barito Ulu Rekut Camp, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia

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Project Barito Ulu was set up in 1989 as a co-operative project between University of Cambridge and the Indonesian Ministry of Forestry. Research is carried out at the Muara Rekut base-camp in Central Kalimantan, Indonesia, situated at the headwaters of the Barito River in the geographical centre of Borneo.

The base-camp is situated in a beautiful location at Muara Rekut where the Rekut, a black-water river, joins the larger Busang. There is a wide diversity of forest types surrounding the camp, lowland evergreen rain forest, heath forest (*kerangas*) and intermediate forest types as well as shifting cultivation fallows up to 60 years of age. Over fifty permanent plots (mostly 0.25 ha) have been set-up and there is an extensive trail system within the main 400 ha study site. Recent botanical research has looked at plant-soil relationships including a large-scale forest fertilisation experiment and explaining the occurrence of the locally common heath forest formation and examining forest succession following shifting cultivation. Zoological research is centred around understanding the ecology and systematics of the hybrid gibbons (*Hylobates muelleri* x *agilis*) found at the study site, but has also focussed on birds, bats and other large mammals. A phenological study now in its thirteenth year currently has over 200 trees monitored monthly.

The camp has facilities for up to 18 researchers in three houses; there is also an office, dining area, showers and toilets and a laboratory with a library and extensive herbarium containing specimens from the research area. Electricity is provided by a generator in the evenings which recharges batteries for use during the day. Personal computers and specialist equipment should be brought by individual researchers. There are four full-time camp staff members with more recruited from the village of Muara Bakanon where an association has been in place since the start of the project. The camp is in regular radio contact with Jakarta and also has a satellite phone, both in case of emergencies should helicopter evacuation need to be arranged.

Travelling to the camp takes two to four days from Jakarta. There are a variety of modes of transport but the most pleasant is to take public boats up-river. For the final three hours of the journey a speedboat must be chartered to negotiate the rapids in the upper pars of the river before arriving at the camp. It is sometimes possible to take the Mission Aviation Fellowship plane to Muara Joloi, the nearest village to Rekut camp which is around one hour downstream.

The camp costs are currently £9.50 per day with a reduced rate for Indonesian researchers. Researchers interested in working at Barito Ulu are invited to contact the Project Manager, Rupert Ridgeway (barito@rad.net.id), the scientific director, David Chivers (djc7@cam.ac.uk) in relation to zoological work or Francis Brearley (brearlef@tcd.ie) in relation to botanical work.

MEETINGS CALENDAR 2006

THIRD INTERNATIONAL TAPIR SYMPOSIUM, 26-31 January, 2006, in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Organized by the IUCN Species Survival Commission Tapir Specialist Group, the Fundación Temaikén, Argentina, and the Houston Zoo Inc., United States. For more information, see http://www.tapirspecialistgroup.org/symposium/index.html>tapirspecialistgroup.org/symposium/index.html

SOCIETY FOR TROPICAL ECOLOGY (GTÖ) 19th annual meeting at the University of Kaiserslautern, 21-24 February, 2006. The theme will be "***Connecting microbes, plants, animals and human impact***". See the meeting web site at http://www.uni-kl.de/gtoe2006/

XI INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON ROTIFERA, 11-18 March, 2006, Mexico City, Mexico, Sponsored by the National Autonomous University of Mexico, Campus Iztacala. More information at http://www.iztacala.unam.mx/rotiferaXI/

FOURTH INTERNATIONAL TREE SQUIRREL COLLOQUIUM AND FIRST INTERNATIONAL FLYING SQUIRREL COLLOQUIUM. 22-29 March 2006, Periyar Tiger Reserve, India. Including Conservation Priorities Workshop: Tree and Flying Squirrels in the Developing World. Contact: Nandini R (nandinirajamani@yahoo.co.in) National Institute of Advanced Studies Indian Institute of Science Campus Bangalore 560 012 INDIA Tel: 91-94431 42296 web: http://www.squirrelcolloquia.co.in or http://www.iisc.ernet.in/nias/itsc.htm

IX CONGRESS OF THE LATIN AMERICAN BOTANICAL SOCIETY (IX CONGRESO LATINOAMERICANO DE BOTÁNICA). 19-25 June, 2006, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic – Web http://www.botanica-alb.org/index2.html

SOCIETY FOR CONSERVATION BIOLOGY 20TH ANNUAL MEETING, Conservation Without Borders, 24-29 June 2006, in San Jose, California. See more at http://conbio.org/2006/

HELICONIA SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL 2006 CONFERENCE, 24 June – 1 July, 2006, in Darwin, NT, Australia. More information from Jan Hintze, email hintze@ozemail.com.au.

ASSOCIATION FOR TROPICAL BIOLOGY AND CONSERVATION ANNUAL MEETING, 18-21 July 2006, Xishuangbanna, China. At the Harbour Plaza-Kunming, hosted by the Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical

Garden. The theme for the meeting is "Tropical Biology: Meeting the needs of changing tropical ecosystems". Details available at www.atbio.org.

NINTH INTERNATIONAL POLLINATION SYMPOSIUM**,** 23-28 July, 2006. Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa, USA. The theme will be "Host-Pollinator Biology Relationships - Diversity in Action" More information is at the website: http://www.ucs.iastate.edu/mnet/plantbee/home.html

THE INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL INSECTS (IUSSI), 30 July– 4 August, 2006. Washington D.C. More information at http://www.iussi.org/IUSSI2006.html

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA ANNUAL MEETING 2006, 28 July-3 August, 2006, California State University, Chico. The theme is **"Looking to the Future - Conserving the Past"** More information at http://www.2006.botanyconference.org/

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON FOREST AND WATER IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT, 8-10 August, 2006, Beijing, China. For Scientific Program, please contact: Dr. Jim Vose, Project Leader, USDA Forest Service Coweeta Hydrologic Lab. Email: <mailto:jvose@fs.fed.us> jvose@fs.fed.us

FIRST EUROPEAN CONGRESS OF CONSERVATION BIOLOGY (ECCB)**,** 18-21 August, 2006, in Eger, Hungary. The theme is "Diversity for Europe." See the website at www.eccb2006.org

2006 NORTH AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGICAL CONFERENCE (NAOC), 3-7 October, 2006, in Veracruz, Mexico. See http://www.naoc2006.org/english/

IF YOUR ORGANIZATION HAS AN UPCOMING MEETING OF POTENTIAL INTEREST TO TROPICAL BIOLOGISTS, PLEASE SEND DETAILS TO THE EDITOR FOR INCLUSION IN THIS LIST.

M. Phil. Studentships in Zoology

The Department of Life Sciences of the University of the West Indies (St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad) in conjunction with bp Trinidad and,Tobago (bpTT) is offering three M. Phil. studentships in Zoologystarting January 2006. For more information, see: http://sta.uwi.edu/jobs/index.asp.

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ATBC is an international society that promotes tropical biology and conservation in its broadest sense. ATBC publishes the quarterly journal BIOTROPICA and sponsors annual meetings and symposia. Information: W. John Kress, ATBC Executive Director, Smithsonian Institution, US National Herbarium, Department of Botany, NBH 166, Washington, DC 20560.

OTS is a non-profit consortium of 65 academic and research institutions in the United States, Australia, Latin America, and Asia. Its mission is to provide leadership in education, research and the responsible use of natural resouces in the tropics. Graduate, undergraduate, and professional training and research facilities are provided at three field stations in Costa Rica. Information on OTS and *Tropinet* contributions: OTS, Box 90630, Durham, NC 27708-0630.

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