



The Taricaya Team minus Stuart (Who was in England) and Eugenio who had an early night, plus a few special helpers!

## What's Inside...

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### Lake Valencia

2 By Catherine Turner

---

### Auto Camera Feature

5 6 Years of Taricaya

---

### Other News

8

---

### The Canadian Connection

---

## Lake Valencia

It was a hot and sunny day when we decided to go to lake Valencia. The plan was to spend some time observing the wildlife there with some time for a swim too, hopefully!

The Lake is reached via a creek which, on this particular day, was fairly shallow. Fallen trees and branches bleached white by the sun of glistening black and half hidden under the water, littered the banks and water of the creek. Our rather large Canoe carefully began to negotiate its way through the debris. We only had to experience one or two worryingly wooden bumps beneath the Canoe before we were spotted by another passing Canoe (*Ex guides from another lodge*) Half of us got out and into this Canoe and they were kind enough to take us further down the creek to a checkpoint. With its lighter load Taricaya's Canoe managed to avoid the worst of the submerged branches.

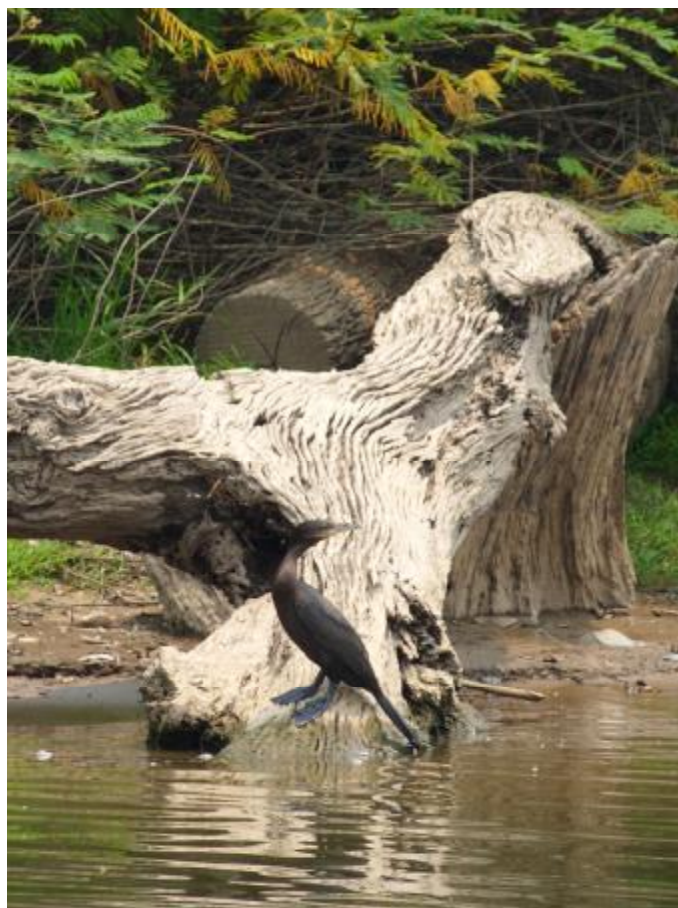
Later reunited, we continued towards the lake, getting out and pushing the Canoe through the shallower sections. It was actually quite refreshing at times to be able to get into the water (*Hangovers can be quickly cured with a cold bath!*), even if it was to help push!

It was a pretty journey down the creek on our way to the lake: Sunshine and open green tree-lined banks. Lake Valencia appeared at the end of it serene and still: a wide expanse of calm water. As Eugenio steered the Canoe along the banks of the Lake we watched closely for signs of life. It wasn't long before we spotted a number of Hoatzin – Large, ungainly, chicken-like birds (With spiky heads) – perching and moving noisily through the bushes and trees along the bank. An Anhinga sat with its wings spread to dry in the sun and another swam by with just its smooth, snake-like head poking out above the water. We saw a number of other birds too, such Cooi Herons and Greater Egrets, but I think my favourite sight was the Neotropical Cormorants. Each sat perched on a fallen branch jutting out from the water. They sat perfectly still (Until we got very close) and made a perfect photo.



(Neotropical Cormorants)

We stopped the motor for a little while and drifted while we had lunch. Chicken and rice wrapped up neatly in a palm leaf (*Huanes*) has never tasted so good! After lunch we found a place to stop and go for a swim. Butterflies flitted around along the banks, forming beautifully coloured groups. There were a few varieties on the small beach where we had stopped, so the cameras quickly came out again.



(Neotropical Cormorant Near the beach where we stopped to swim)

The swim was lovely, alternating between, hot and cold water as we made our way around the boat. We dried off in the on the journey back, still keeping the Canoe close to the shore and watching for birdlife.

The trip back down the creek was made successfully, despite passing one or two other Canoes stuck in the shallow water on logs (*Timber workers extracting wood had made their Canoes too heavy and needed to create rafts from the wood they were carrying to move over the shallow water*)

It was a good, fairly relaxing day and good to see some different birdlife to those we see at Taricaya. I learnt a few more bird names to tick off my list!

By Catherine Turner

(*Story was written for August/September newsletter but there was not enough space to include it*)

[www.projects-abroad.co.uk](http://www.projects-abroad.co.uk)

## Auto Camera Feature

Welcome to a new feature in the Taricaya newsletter – Auto Cameras. As you know we have been working with the cameras now for about 2 months and we have already accumulated over 100 photos! So from now on this section will show a selection of photos as they come in.

The Auto-Cameras use infra red sensors to detect movement (Like a burglar alarm) which then activates the camera. They have memory for 150 photos and rechargeable batteries which last for up to 1 month. Completely water proof, they can be left out in the jungle in all conditions.



(Brazilian Tapir – Not Winnie)



(Spix's Guan – Male)



(As yet un-identified but due to size we think they are fruit bats)



(As yet un-identified)



(Collard Peccaries – Male and female)



(White Lipped Peccaries)

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## 6 years of Taricaya

The 5<sup>th</sup> of November is a day that Taricaya can never forget. We celebrated 6 years of working with Projects Abroad.

Over the course of the last 6 years we have received approx 600 volunteers.

Created around 40km of trails (Which need to be maintained every few months)

Built 20 buildings, including 7 platforms – Including the highest Canopy walkway in South America.

Identified 56 species of mammal, 359 species of bird, 42 species of amphibian, 54 species of reptile and 105 species of butterfly.

Released 130 animals back into the wild and rescued and release 2028 Taricaya turtles in 3 years.

We are now working with 7 farmers and communities developing projects that we have tested in the farm.

Increased profit from New farm from 0 soles to an average of 834 soles per month.

Just to name but a few of the things that we have achieved with you the volunteers help and of course the invaluable help of Projects Abroad.

So what better way to celebrate such a day than with a BBQ and a party!

Well that would have been a perfect day especially combined with the release of this years turtles, but unfortunately it rained, and rained, and kept on raining until about 5pm. This didn't stop us having a good day though.

Spending the first few hours of the day removing all the turtles from the pool to be marked and weighed before release.



Me (Rich) Removing some turtles whilst Pedro (Behind) is starting the water pump to remove the water.

Then we moved off down the Madre de Dios river towards the turtle beach to release them back in to the wild. Freezing cold winds blowing up river, rain pouring in from all sides and no sign of the clouds breaking, spirits were souring!



Before we even left Taricaya – You can see how yet everyone is, but even still smiles are shining!

Once at the beach it took a full 10 minutes for all the turtles to make their way down the river bank from the basket we had carried them in.



Daniel, Pedro and Nelson discussing the problems that might arise during the next phase of release.

Once the turtles had been release, with many of us taking videos and photos for this years release video (Any suggestions for music for this year's video will be gladly considered) it was time to head back on the boat to Taricaya – As you can see in this next photo the mood is a lot damper now!



(Cold, wet and missing the turtles already. And still the rain pours down!)

Once we got back to Taricaya the rest of the day was free for festivities (Had nothing to do with the fact that it was still raining...) Cake had to be made, meats prepared for the BBQ, salad made and all the other things that make a party good! Needless to say we had a good night, drink was drunk, cake was eaten and some good games were played before bed.

The plan now is every year on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November to release the baby turtles in celebration of Taricaya's anniversary.



(AMAZING! Cake made by Maria Fernanda Rosemberg. The rain stopped at about this time.)

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Happenings in Puerto Maldonado And Snippets Of Taricaya News!

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**Volunteers Leaving**

Henry Mertinkat, Elena Rudolf, Catherine Turner, Mallory Pickett, David Williams, Simone Beck, Joanna Blint and Stefanie Caravatti.

Thank you for all your help at the reserve, we really couldn't do a

lot of the work we do here with out your help.

**New Volunteers IN DECEMBER**

Marius Gutter and Nadia Gypteu.

See you all soon! Hope you'll have a fantastic experience with usJ .

**ANIMAL RELEASE'S**

Over the last two months we have released – A Red bellied macaw, A Giant armadillo and a Sloth.

Unfortunately we only have photos of the Giant armadillo due to rain stopping us photo graphing the others.



**WHAT'S HAPPENING IN PUERTO**

**GPS'ing the Trails of Taricaya**

In our efforts to increase the efficiency and scientific nature of the work we do at Taricaya we have commenced mapping the entire reserve. Using GPS coordinates we believe we can create a very accurate map that will be a huge help in the work we are doing.

**JUNGLE FACT!**

Thundershowers, on average, occur 200 out of 365 days a year which creates a very humid atmosphere.

**Rains**

During October we witnessed the change to the wet season. The rains have started to fall heavily on a weekly basis, with River levels going up all the time and the swamps already starting to fill, we think this year could be wetter than normal!

*If you have any ideas of how Projects Abroad volunteers can be put to good use within the Community then please contact either Richard Munday or Stuart Timson. We are always looking for your suggestions.*

## The Canadian Connection...

The simple link between Anaconda, a Caiman and Canada... Only at Taricaya!

It really is a simple connection, Rob from the Projects Abroad Canadian office came to visit us during November, and the aim of his visit was for him to see how we run the project and what sort of things we are doing.

Whilst he was here we decided to take him on a long walk through the forest – A walk to the back of the reserve to collect the Auto-Cameras, which were located at Anaconda Colpa! A bit of sad news for those of you who know and love this platform...It is no more, unless you don't mind sitting on the roof, which is now on the floor... So now we have a connection from Canada to Anaconda's. The Caiman is easy, One of Stuarts famous Caiman hunts.

So that's how you link an Anaconda with a Caiman and Canada... Like I say only possible at Taricaya!!!



(Rob looking slightly worried perhaps?)