

ECOLOGICAL REPORT
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BIOLOGICAL STATION CASA ITA

ECOLOGICAL REPORT OF B.S. CASA ITA

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INTRODUCTION

Biological Station Casa ITA is located on the left bank of the Madre de Dios River approximately 40 min outboard ride from the city of Puerto Maldonado, it is passed the Rolin Island and near the port of the Station is a small stream named Carachamayoc.

METHODS

All species named in this document are acknowledged by direct (seen and / or heard) and indirect (tracks, feces, etc.) sightings. Most sightings were occasional however in some cases hikes were done with visitors to search for animals. The areas where the species were recorded were: the staff track gauge, Track gauge A, Track gauge D, Anaconda Walk, Canopy Walk, close to Casa ITA and during the boat rides to the various field stations.

RESULTS:

Reptiles:

Lachesis muta (Photo N°1 and N°2) was found near the E. Canopy while carrying out maintenance work. This specie of snake is from the Viperidae family. It is found in Central and South America found more commonly in primary forests. Locally it is known as "Shushupe" and it can reach 6 to 8 feet long, the one we found being 70 cm.

The shushupe is a terrestrial, solitary and nocturnal species that feeds mainly on small and medium-sized mammals. It is not usually aggressive, but responds quickly to disturbances often inflating the neck and rattling its tail, becoming aggressive when assaulted. A specimen of these can reach sexual maturity at about two years old. During the breeding season the females release a smell which attracts males. It should be noted that the species of the genus *Lachesis* are the only vipers who are oviparous putting between 5-19 eggs per clutch.

The shushupe is widely feared in the Amazon by the power of its venom. However bite cases of this kind are rare because it avoids contact with humans. The mortality rate of people bitten by this reptile is 20%. Unlike most vipers its potent poison has proteolytic,

hemorrhagic and neurotoxic effects. The poison causes severe pain, inflammation and necrosis at the site of the bite, sometimes followed by gangrene.

Anolis punctatus (Photo N° 15) was found on the main trail that leads to the Canopy. This is characterized by both females and males having the same size and its back being soft green which may or may not have small white dots. These individuals are able to change color, sometimes turning to a reddish green. These diurnal tree species prefer shady areas. To get their meal they prefer to stay in one place and wait for something to approach, if nothing approaches they just move to another nearby site and waiting for something again.

Mammals:

In less than a month there were 2 sightings of a small family of *Allouata seniculus* (Photo N°3 and N°4). The sightings were both in the Canopy. The first occurred on the 4th platform at about 4:30 pm and the second on the 2nd platform at about 5:00 pm. The family consisted of a father, a mother and two children, one of whom was almost a complete adult and the other within the range of the first year. The family was not bothered by the presence of humans during the sighting as they came to almost 10 meters from where we were. During the first sighting the family remained almost motionless on a bare trunk, which made it easy to observe them. In the second sighting these were moving and feeding. Generally these species move quietly, which makes it difficult to see.

Bradypus variegatus (Photo N°5 and N°6) was found in 2 chances. During the first record the brown-throated sloth was found with a baby, although these were not together (the cause is unknown). Both were in the same palm (*Socratea exorrhiza*) but at different levels. The mother was in the highest part of this, but the offspring was a few meters above the ground trying to get to her. While the offspring was climbing at a slow pace, few thin vines surrounding the palm did not help; it made a constant sound calling the mother, similar to a cry of a hawk or eagle. The second sighting was in front of the station.

Tamandua tetradactyla (Photo N°7) is a species of diurnal and nocturnal, arboreal and terrestrial that was found near the station. *Sciurus spadiceus* (Picture N°8) is the most common around the trail system.

At night we could record an individual *Potos flavus* (Photo N°9). It was found on a palm "huicungo" (*Astrocaryum sp.*) feeding on fruit at about 11:00 pm on the trail A. It should be noted that its diet comprises about 80% fruit and 20% of insects. During the dry season it feeds on the nectar of flowers. The "chosna" as it is locally known, is a mammal usually spends most of his time in the forest canopy; they are very agile and can travel quickly.

Saimiri sciurus (Photo N°10) was found traveling through the bank of the river. At least about 80 individuals were recorded. These monkeys are diurnal and always stay in groups of 20 to over 100, even reaching 200 individuals. These monkeys eat insects, berries and nectar. They are always in constant motion and are very noisy. They are often associated with brown capuchin (*Cebus apella*) and travel with them for many hours, but in this group there was no register of any.

Birds:

Due to the onset of the dry season, the river level has been declining and growing almost constantly. The formation of sandbars (beach) is noticeable in some parts of the lower Madre de Dios. Rolin Island is one of the places that offer a habitat for stationary species of birds like *Phaetusa sp*, *Rinchops niger*, *Mycterias*, among others. *Mycteria americana* (Photo N°11) was sighted about 50 meters on the banks of the river from the port of the station. He was alone and was not yet fully an adult judging by its plumage coloration. Other species that were also recorded were: *Nystalus striolatus* (Photo N°12), *Tangara mexicana* (Photo N°13) and *Cathartes melambrotus* (Photo N°14).

ANEX



Photo N°1.- *Lachesis muta*



Photo N°2.- *Lachesis muta*



Photo N°3.- *Allouata seniculus.*



Photo N°4.- *Allouata seniculus*



Photo N°5.- *Bradypus variegatus*



Photo N°6.- *Bradypus variegatus*



Photo N°7.- *Tamandúa tetradactyla*



Photo N°8.- *Sciurus spadiceus*



Photo N°9.- *Potos flavus*



Photo N°10.- *Saimiri sciurus*



Photo N°11.- *Mycteria americana*



Photo N°12.- *Nystalus striolatus*



Photo N°13.- *Tangara mexicana*



Photo N°14.- *Cathartes melambrotus*



Photo N° 17.- *Anolis punctatus*