

# Children's Tropical Forests News



Children's Tropical Forests UK  
25 Broadway, Peterborough PE1 1SQ  
[www.tropical-forests.com](http://www.tropical-forests.com)

Volume 11  
October 2006

Editor: Roger Littlewood



Bilsa Reserve in North west Ecuador. Red dot on map.

## WOOLLY MONKEYS

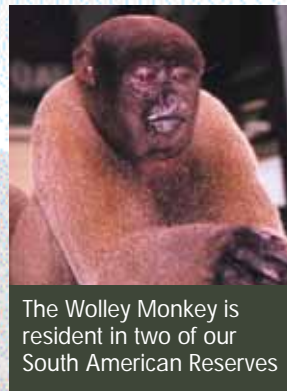
The common, or Humboldt's, Woolly Monkey (*Lagothrix lagotricha*), one of the chunkiest and heaviest New World primates, lives in the rainforests of the Western Amazon river basin, including the CTF supported Reserves at Uwasu in Western Brazil and Jatun Sacha in Eastern Ecuador.

Reserves such as these are critical for the survival of these monkeys. They inhabit river edge gallery forest; palm woodland; seasonally flooded varzea and dry terra firma primary forest; and high altitude cloud forest. They prefer mature, continuous, undisturbed humid tracts – and will not live in secondary woodland which has re-grown after logging.

Covered in short, dense fur, they have large, round heads with a bare black or brown face. Their bodies are thick, with sturdy limbs, and their protruding bellies have given them the Portuguese name 'barrigudo' or 'big belly'. They average 16–24 inches in length (40–60 cms), excluding their thick and prehensile tail.

They are active during the day – and gregarious – living in social groups of 10 to 70, often in company with capuchins, howlers and other species of monkeys. Rather slow moving, they generally travel on all fours, but often swing by their hands, feet and tail – or by the tail alone. On the ground, they can stand erect using their tail for support, but they are happiest in the forest mid-canopy at 7–12 metres (22–38 feet).

Their principal food is ripe fruit, supplemented by leaves, seeds and some insects. Seeds are most important early in the rainy season when ripe fruit is not readily available.



The Wolley Monkey is resident in two of our South American Reserves

### Most intensively hunted

Females reach maturity at 6–8 years and males any time after 5 years. Females bear single young after a 7–8 months gestation period and feed their babies for 9–12 months. The young are carried for the first month or so on the abdomen of the mother and climb onto her back after 6 weeks.

It is at this time that woolly monkeys are at their most vulnerable. They are the most intensively hunted primate species in South America – a mother normally being killed so that her infant can be sold on the pet market. Tragically, it is estimated that ten mothers are sacrificed for every live individual infant that actually reaches the market.

Groups of young woollies are very playful in the wild, while grooming is a common activity within a social group. Adult males receive the most grooming, whilst adult females are usually groomed by their juvenile daughters. Communication is by voice, facial expression and other visual behaviour and woollies can show subtle changes in mood and intention by employing a variety of expressions.

Restricted to the Western Amazon basin of Northern South America, common woolly monkeys occur in the upper Magdalena River valley in Colombia; throughout much of the upper Amazon basin of Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia; in Brazil west of the Rio Negro; and in the foothills and Eastern slopes of the Andes up to 3,000 metres.

## OUR NEW WEBSITE

Our computer whizzkids have been jazzing up our website. When you get to the Home page, resplendent with gorgeous rainforest creatures, click on the exotic icons down the right hand side to find out more about us.

A scarlet macaw tells you 'About CTF', its aims, objectives and a bit of history, and lead you to a welcome message from our Patron, Bill Oddie. An umbrella cockatoo introduces you to our News page where you can read a selection of our Newsletters and a panther chameleon lead you to our fact sheets on rainforests and their plants, animals and indigenous peoples; the consequences of rainforest destruction and what can be done to save them.

Follow the black panther, inhabitant of the dark interior of the rainforest, into our Project pages with maps, pictures and some brilliant Links into some of the most exciting Rainforest Reserves in the World, every one of them which you with CTF UK have helped to create. Find out how you – young or old – can volunteer to work on rainforest reserves in Ecuador or enjoy exotic eco-holidays in Costa Rica. The button to press is 'Find out more'.

Our red-eyed tree frog explains the many ways in which you can help the environment and a keel-billed toucan, surely one of the World's most spectacular birds, will tempt you to make an on-line donation to CTF UK. A stunning blue morph butterfly beckons you into a sensible reading list of just four books if you really want to get your teeth into some detail; and perhaps the World's most beautiful pussy cat, the Margay will ask you for some Feedback.

And finally, an Emerald Tree Boa will slide you into another set of information-packed Rainforest Links, many of them also connected with CTF UK.

We would like to say thank you to our Web Designer Duncan Stigwood for helping to bring rainforests – and their salvation – right into our living rooms.



## CTF DIPS INTO RESERVES TO PURCHASE FOREST IN N.W. ECUADOR

continued overleaf

A rapid response by CTF UK to an urgent request for funds from the Jatun Sacha Foundation has secured the purchase of a strategic forest tract at the Bilsa Biological Station in North-Western Ecuador.

The request came from Mike McColm, Chief Executive of the Jatun Sacha Foundation, on 7th November 2005 – and by 10th December 2005, CTF UK was able to release \$9,000 from its reserves to fund the purchase. We are launching an Appeal to our supporters with this Issue of CTF News to recoup this amount so that we are able to respond to similar urgent requests in the future.

CTF UK has been steadily supplying funds for land purchase at Bilsa since the Biological Station was first established, but further progress with the consolidation of the Reserve has been halted until recently.

### Fighting corruption

Prior to the establishment of the Bilsa Station, ownership of the land was split up into many different parcels, somewhat resembling the strips in a mediaeval English manor. Over a period of years, the Jatun Sacha Foundation has been buying these parcels of land to stitch together a large coherent block of protected forest.

But in the year 2000, a decision by the Ecuadorian Government to extend the existing 45,000 hectare Mache-Chindul Reserve on Ecuador's Pacific coast to encompass the Bilsa Biological Station and surrounding forest areas, prevented the Foundation from consolidating the Bilsa Rainforest by purchasing the remaining strips of land within the Reserve boundaries still in the hands of private owners. The extension of the Government Reserve brought with it a ban on private purchases of land in the area.

Since then, the Jatun Sacha Foundation, in concert with other conservation bodies, has fought these Government plans to extend the Reserve. This might seem a rather curious stance to take but the reality of the situation is that the legal protection given to the existing Mache-Chindul Government Reserve is totally ineffective against continued logging incursions, some of them enforced by violent action. A government minister connected with the establishment of the Government Reserve also had a close involvement with a logging company. And even though only about 2% of Ecuador's Pacific Coast Rainforests are still standing, some 90% of the Country's exported wood still comes out of this region.

### Protection for jaguars

But the situation has now changed. Government plans to extend the Mache-Chindul Reserve have not gone through, partly because of opposition from organisations like the Jatun Sacha Foundation.

Instead, the area surrounding the Bilsa Station is not a National Park, but is now called the Mache-Chindul Ecological Reserve. The legal implication of this is that private purchases of land can now take place and the Jatun Sacha Foundation can continue with its consolidation of the Bilsa Forest Reserve.

# Remember... you can now help save rainforests by donating online using our website!

## CTF DIPS INTO RESERVES TO PURCHASE FOREST IN N.W. ECUADOR continued

And Michael McColm considers 'that the 3150 hectare Bilsa Biological Station continues to be the only sustainable and viable conservation initiative in the Mache-Chindul region'.

The Foundation is seeking funding for forested properties within the Bilsa Boundary, which, all together, total about 250 hectares. But the 24 hectares that has just been secured by the CTF donation was the most urgent.



The Eye Moth is a resident in the forest at Bilsa

It is Pre-Montane Tropical Wet Forest - probably the rarest forest type in Western Ecuador with less than 1% remaining. The purchase will connect two existing important tracts of this type of forest inside the boundaries of the Bilsa Station. The forest is along the higher ridge-line of the Reserve and at this elevation provides habitat and protection for Jaguars, the exotic Long-Wattled Umbrella-bird and the rare, large and striking Banded Ground-Cuckoo as well as watershed protection for the Dogola River.

This river is one of the few in Western Ecuador still surrounded by forest habitat and protects a correspondingly high level of unique endemic fish species - species found in no other coastal river in the region.

### Unique wildlife

The Bilsa Biological Station's biodiversity credentials are certainly impeccable. Two thousand different plant species have been documented, including 30 species completely new to science.

Abundant animal and bird populations indicate an intact ecosystem. To date, 24 mammal species are known to live in Bilsa, five of which are on international threatened species lists. Apart from the jaguar, these are the jaguarundi, oncilla, giant anteater and troupes of mantled howler monkeys.

More than 300 species of birds have been documented, amongst the highest totals for any Western coastal forest in Ecuador. But once again, it is the uniqueness of many of the birds which makes Bilsa so special. It is listed as a key area for the protection of birds in both the Choco and Tumbesian endemic bird areas (confined respectively to Ecuador and Colombia and Ecuador and Peru), which between them hold 96 species of birds found nowhere else in the World.

## COSTA RICA: FUNDRAISING PUSH AS MONTEVERDE CLOUD FOREST EXPANDS AGAIN

After several years of consolidation, the Monteverde Conservation League, which owns and manages the First Children's Eternal Rainforest in the highlands of Costa Rica, has embarked on a new phase of land acquisition to expand the area of protected cloud forest.

CTF UK has responded with an immediate donation of \$6,000 towards the total \$150,000 price tag for 102.5 hectares (250 acres) of pristine, primary highland forest. And we are launching a new fundraising campaign to assist with further stage payments due on the new purchase.

An E-mail from MCL's Executive Director, Carlos Munoz, dated 15th May 2006, sent 'Greetings from Monteverde to our friends from the Children's Rainforest UK. It is a beautiful day here on the mountain after a few days of rain which were also nice.'

With the E-mail, Carlos sent a map of the newly acquired 'farm' which is largely surrounded by existing areas of the Children's Rainforest (Bosque Eterno de los Ninos - or BEN for short). The new tract has been named Santamarias, the surname of the family from whom it has just been bought, and is 99% primary forest. There is just one small clearing - 20 metres by 20 metres - where the family built a small cabina. This area will revert to forest naturally.

### Powerful partner

The first purchase instalment on Santamarias of \$47,500 has already been paid, with a second payment of \$32,500 plus legal and land title fees due in January 2007. CTF UK's \$6,000 will go towards this second instalment and the fees, as will \$21,000 raised by the Monteverde Conservation League, US. A last payment of a further \$32,500 is due in January 2008. In our November 2005 Issue of CTF News we reported the formation of MCL US, which will serve as a support and

fundraising centre for the League in the United States. It promises to be a powerful partner for the other conservation charities working for the Bosque Eterno de los Ninos. Advance information about the biological importance of Santamarias reveals that it provides critical habitat for the shy and endangered tapir. It is already known that tapirs use the area for migrations from middle elevation to low elevation forest. We are hoping to receive fuller information about the biology and wildlife of Santamarias in time for our next Issue of CTF News when we'll report on fundraising progress for the new land acquisition.



The Childrens Rainforest Monteverde the location of our latest forest purchase

## BRAZIL: NEW HOPES FOR THE CREATION OF A NATIONAL BIOLOGICAL RESERVE

CTF UK's co-operative venture with Birdlife International to purchase and preserve critically threatened 'mata de cipo' forest in the Boa Nova region of Eastern Brazil has encountered difficulties since the launch of the project in our January 2005 Newsletter.

Initial positive talks with local owners for the purchase of the two most critical forest tracts have fallen through. But as we told our readers in our last Newsletter, Birdlife's Ten Year Action Plan for the Boa Nova region has been developed with broader objectives than just land purchase.

Now there is a completely new factor in the equation. By alerting the Brazilian Federal Government to the critically threatened habitats in the Boa Nova region, Birdlife has spurred the Ministry of Environment into seriously considering the creation of a State reserve to protect both the seasonally dry deciduous 'mata de cipo' forest and the lower elevation humid forests in the area.



The Slender Ant Bird is one of Brazil's most endangered species found at Boa Nova

Since January 2006, a Ministry of Environment team, accompanied by Birdlife's conservation officer, has been visiting the region to conduct biological and socio-economic surveys. During these visits, the team mapped threatened locations and identified key areas for biodiversity conservation.

### What type of Reserve?

A key question as far as Birdlife, and its policy of land acquisition in the area (and its use of CTF funds) is concerned, is what category of Reserve the Environment Ministry will decide on for Boa Nova.

A Government official reported that during the last meeting of the Environment Ministry in April 2006, the investigating team considered the possibility of creating a 'Refugio de Vida Silvestre' (Wildlife Refuge) in Boa Nova of approximately 20,000 hectares (50,000 acres). This area would encompass preserved remnants of 'mata de cipo' and humid forests, as well as degraded areas located amongst them. The objective of maintaining these degraded areas inside the boundaries of the reserve is to allow them to regenerate in the longer term.

The problem for Birdlife with this category of Reserve is that the current owners of the land retain

ownership of their properties but have restrictions on the use of it without receiving compensation. Therefore the State does not have effective control over these areas.

### Unthinkable a few years ago

Birdlife is in contact with the Ministry of Environment and is trying to influence this decision in favour of a more restricted category Reserve - for example, an Ecological Station or Biological Reserve.

Although this would probably be smaller in area, it would have no existing human settlements and, say Birdlife, 'we believe that this would ensure the effective conservation of threatened species like the Slender Antbird. We also believe that the overall situation in Boa Nova is very favourable to this as the community is supporting the creation of the Reserve and there are no major problems relating to ownership. Perhaps the major problem lies in the fact that the Government might not have the funds to buy the projected Reserve lands from the existing landowners'.

'The decision about the category is still under discussion, but we are happy to know that the team from the Ministry of Environment is totally convinced about the need to create a protected area in Boa Nova, something that was unthinkable a few years ago.'

The funds donated by CTF UK supporters for Boa Nova are being retained by us. As things stand, if the Boa Nova Reserve ends up as a 'Refugio de Vida Silvestre', Birdlife may acquire a portion to ensure its immediate protection. If it becomes an Ecological Station or Biological Reserve, the funds could be used to help the Government begin the process of land purchase to create this type of Reserve.

Meanwhile, Birdlife's Brazilian staff have been working hard with local people and local organisations in Boa Nova. Within the last year, they have conducted a 'Participatory Rural Appraisal' in the Region with funds provided by a Dutch Government Agency.

The participants discussed how poverty, development and the environment are linked - and possible plans to improve both the local community's quality of life at the same time as contributing to the protection of Boa Nova's threatened biodiversity.

### 'They got really astonished'

One important achievement of the PRA was simply to tell local people about the biological importance of Boa Nova. The participants in the Appraisal were simply not aware of the Region's rich and unique bird life and 'got really astonished in having this knowledge'. Local Government officials asked for information and pictures of Boa Nova's rarest wild resident, the Slender Antbird, and produced banners which are now being used to disseminate information about Boa Nova's biodiversity to local schools and landowners.

As a result, local community members, including landowners, are already contacting Boa Nova's Environment and Agriculture Secretariat about the occurrence of the Slender Antbird on their lands. Birdlife plans to investigate these areas in the future.

The PRA also revealed that there are already a number of initiatives under way in Boa Nova to provide sustainable life styles for local people and to protect the environment. Among these is a bee-keeping project involving 50 families; the setting up of a tree nursery (3,500 seedlings of native species) to be followed by a planting scheme to restore riverine forests; and the creation of an Environment and Water Resources Council.

Once the results of the PRA are fully analysed, they will contribute to the production of a feasibility study on agroforestry systems and other sustainable sources of income in Boa Nova also being financed by the Dutch Government.