

## Project Update: April 2008

During the last few months we have completed several components of our research. We have mapped around 1200 Brazil nut trees from six Brazil nut stands in our study area. The stands have a density of 1.7-3.6 Brazil nut trees per hectare and the majority of trees in the sample are of intermediate sizes, particularly falling in the categories 100-150 cm in diameter at breast height. Careful searches for small trees and seedlings have only yielded two saplings in the 13 hectares of primary forest currently searched.

However, similar searches in secondary forest found seedlings to be very abundant and seedlings also appear to be highly abundant along existing forest trails used by Brazil nut collectors. Seed dispersal experiments demonstrated that the agouti (*Dasyprocta* sp.) is an efficient disperser of Brazil nuts, scatter-hoarding them up to 50m from the seed stations. However, agoutis were also extremely efficient at later locating their hidden seeds. Resource use varied between seasons as seeds were removed quicker and more were eaten immediately during experiments outside the Brazil nut season – a time of general food shortage in the forest. Another experiment using individually marked fruits showed that agoutis could carry entire fruits more than 50m from the parent tree.



Left: Brazil nut tree. Right: Local kid harvesting nuts.



Left: Brazil nut fruit with nuts. Right: Seed dispersal experiment.



Left: Marked seeds. Right: Agouti (*Dasyprocta* sp.).