

Project Update: February 2013

Good news! In this study, agricultural crops (maize and rice) selected are surrounded by live fences consisting mainly of gallery forests. Although the importance of these natural areas for the agricultural ecosystem functioning is beyond the scope of this study, observations made recently (February 2013) suggest that these sites are the natural refuges of an diverse assemblage of insect-feeding bats that could be providing ecosystem services of high value (e.g. control of agricultural and forest pest, and control of parasites vectors). In Acarigua, for example, we managed to capture and identify different species of insectivorous bats (*Eptesicus diminutus*, *Rhynchonycteris naso*, *Micronycteris megalotis* and *Noctilio albiventris*) that use distinctive spaces of provisioning (open spaces, gaps and forest edges). Furthermore, in this same place, by a Pettersson D240x, we detected constant activity of bats (18-21 hours) in different frequency ranges (20-70 kHz) that are typical of Emballonuridae, Molossidae, Vespertilionidae, Mormoopidae and Noctilionidae.



Figure 1. Cultivation of rice surrounded by gallery forest fragments in Acarigua (A and B). In a section of this living fence, we observed a jabillo (*Hura crepitans*) (C) inhabited by a colony of 8-10 individuals *Saccopteryx bilineata* (D). (Photos of Azofeifa, 2013)