

Project Update: May 2010

Since August 2009, I have concentrated my field efforts in Amacayacu Natural National Park and the surrounding indigenous communities of Mocagua, Palmeras and San Martin. As in 2008, the main objective has been to understand the lick's ecology (which animals use them, how and when) and the relationship human communities have with them, boosted in the comparison between the two sites I have been working during the project.

The similarities between the two areas and how licks work and the diversity of animals that visit them are striking, except by the fact that single licks are more often used by several species in Amacayacu than in Caquetá, where most of the big licks are only used by tapirs. In this early stage of data managing is difficult to draw conclusions, but it is possible that this perception can be answering the different approach to the licks by the local communities. In Caquetá, a more remote place with less western influence, licks are truly a protein source by means of hunting. So the known and frequented licks are the ones preferred by tapirs which represent a better hunting reward. On the other hand, Tikuna people in Amacayacu rely less and less on bushmeat hunting, preferring fish, and at the same time are more involved in tourism that provide enough money to buy their food in the nearest big city of Leticia.

The comparison between both places promises to be very interesting and provide meaningful insight of the effect of hunting and other activities as tourism, although in an indirect way, to the licks and the wildlife conservation.

As a way to share these preliminary results with the local people I have been planning the "Festival de la danta" (Tapir festival) to take place in the nearby community of Mocagua in July 2010. This will be the opportunity for all the indigenous co-researchers to share the knowledge gained during the last 2 years, show the photos from the cameras in the licks to a wider audience and at the same time it will be an space for the sharing of traditional knowledge between different Amazonian indigenous families if we achieve the aim of including Miraña, Muinane, Andoque and Aduche people in the festival. Currently, I am finding the money to be able to provide means of transport to the people from far away communities that will need plane flights to arrive to the festival.

Finally the photo-identification process has successfully started, now we can recognise at least seven different individuals that frequently visit the licks; this will allow us to use the data to estimate local population by capture-recapture methods and continue, in the long term, monitoring the local populations and hopefully to devise a final protocol to apply in several places along the Colombian Amazon always based in the close work between parks staff, local communities and researchers.

Species	Montenegro (2004)	Tobler (2008)	Pfeifer Coelho (2006)	Caquetá This study	Amacayacu This study
Sampling effort (camera days)	412	NA	470	225	937
PRIMATES					
<i>A. seniculus</i>	5			3	31
<i>A. caraya</i>			24		
<i>A. paniscus</i>	13				
<i>C. cay</i>			10		
CARNIVORES					
<i>S. venaticus</i>	1				2
<i>L. pardalis</i>	4		3		1
<i>P. onca</i>	1				
<i>P. concolor</i>			5		
<i>N. nasua</i>			33		2
<i>P. cancrivorous</i>			2		2
<i>C. thous</i>			5		
<i>E. barbara</i>			3		
UNGULATES					
<i>T. terrestris</i>	31	229	654	120	190
<i>T. pecari</i>	29	70	804		14
<i>T. tajacu</i>	5	3	46	5	4
<i>S. scrofa</i>			34		
<i>M. americana</i>	10	74	50		22
<i>M. gouazobira</i>			24		
Bats			18	1422	NA
OTHERS					
<i>T. retradactyla</i>			2		
<i>M. tridactyla</i>			1		
<i>E. sexcinctus</i>			1		
<i>P. maximus</i>			7		
<i>S. brasiliensis</i>			3		
<i>C. paca</i>			2		
<i>D. azarae</i>			58		
<i>D. fuliginosa</i>	5			1	98
<i>A. paca</i>	12			5	129
<i>C. prehensilis</i>	1			18	42
<i>Proechimys</i> sp.	1				
<i>D. marsupialis</i>				1	
<i>B. variegatus</i>					4
<i>C. didactylus</i>					4
<i>M. pratti</i>					2
BIRDS					
<i>A. pipile</i>					94
<i>A. cajanea</i>					17

<i>C. mitu</i>					16
<i>Leptotila</i> sp.					331
<i>B. sanctihomae</i>					34
<i>P. barrabandi</i>					71
<i>P. crepitans</i>					1

