

2nd Rufford Small Grant: 46463-2 - Rebecca Louise Smith

The Hooded Capuchins Last Chance: Restoring the Atlantic Forest and Inspiring Conservation Heroes.

Project Update: December 2025

Objective One: Economically-Beneficial Reforestation of the Atlantic Forest

An unexpected achievement of this project (also a result of the environmental education programme) is that the younger generation of men in the community (16-23 years old) have taken the step of banning logging on the Mberu Pirapo'i property. The reason that they have given is that they now understand the importance of the forest (something that they had been completely disconnected from) and that they have seen so much effort going in to reforesting that they want to support this and not destroy anymore forest. This is a massive step forward in the conservation of the remaining forest in the area and a huge success for both the environmental education and reforestation programmes.



## Objective Two: Ensuring Reforestation Sustainability

Para La Tierra Education Director Jorge Ayala worked with community member Roberto Brizuela throughout the year to train him how to care for the tree nursery and how to prepare seed trays and sapling bags with native trees.



Roberto is currently caring for 1500 saplings and when the worst of the summer heat passes he will plant another 3500 seeds. These 5000 saplings will be planted during the 2026 reforestation in April. One particular achievement of the project so far has been the hiring of Roberto to care for the saplings. The income that he is receiving from this stipend has more than tripled the income that his family receives in a month, something that as the father of 8 children has had a huge positive impact on his family.

We had to replace the shade netting as the violent storms destroyed the original netting. The second set of netting we purchased the strongest available netting which should withstand the strong winds.



Objective Three: Improving natural science education in Itapúa

The school year has now finished with each school closing with a School Fair to show what they have learned during the year. In many of the schools the children displayed the work that they had done during the science lessons, showing that they were retaining the material. In Mberu Pirapo'i and Ka'aguy Poty we flew the drone over the community to show the children their community from above.









#### Objective Four: Monitoring of Extractive Activities on the remaining Forest

To date the camera traps have been deployed for 5,733 camera trap nights (on December 7<sup>th</sup> 2025) in Nueva Gambach and were deployed for 680 camera trap nights in Arroyo Moroti (two properties in the Área para Parque San Rafael or Tekoha Guazu). One camera was stolen in Arroyo Moroti and three camera traps stopped working in Nueva Gambach and had to be taken down after extremely heavy rains. The cameras were removed from Arroyo Moroti on November 5<sup>th</sup> and redeployed in Nueva Gambach. They will be returned to Arroyo Moroti in January or February.

Though we will not state where the sighting was for the safety of the animal an incredibly exciting record was made in November 2025. We found a jaguar footprint, the first confirmed evidence of the species in the San Rafael area for many years. The partial print is small and likely from a young individual or a female.



We haven't added any new species to the overall list (20 species) that we have captured on the camera traps but we have seen signs of the jaguar and capybaras have been seen in the forest for the first time in over a decade (photograph of their scat included).



The wildlife in Arroyo Moroti (centre of the forest) has not been as diverse as Nueva Gambach (edge of the forest) but a big difference has been that a lot of animals have been recorded during the day, something very rare in Nueva Gambach where almost all captures (except of the capuchin monkeys) are at night. Another big difference is the presence of the Solitary Tinamou. This bird has only been recorded once at Nueva Gambach, back in 2021 but we have recorded several individuals in Arroyo Moroti.



