

RAPHIA

Canadian Organization for Tropical Education & Rainforest Conservation

TROPICAL TREAT 2002

Yes, it's time once again to be marking your calendars for Tropical Treat — our very popular annual fundraiser. If you have never been, then don't miss this exciting event. If you have been to previous ones, then you'll want to be sure to be part of this year's fun.

Tropical Treat is a rainforest-themed dinner featuring a tropical menu, plus a live and silent auction all set within a rainforest especially created for the event. There will be a special guest speaker



Join us for lots of fun at Tropical Treat!

Tropical Treat 2002

- COTERC's annual fundraiser
- Tropical Themed decorations
- Saturday, October 19
- The Atrium, Toronto Zoo
- Only \$45.00 per person includes tropical dinner, guest speaker, live and silent auction

When: Saturday, October 19, 2002

Where: The Atrium, Toronto Zoo

Price: \$45.00 per person

Tickets are available from the COTERC office.

GET YOURS NOW BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

WANTED: ITEMS FOR THE LIVE AND SILENT AUCTIONS. In order to make this year's event the best one so far we need your help. How about asking businesses you deal with if they would be willing to donate either an item or a service? What about those friends of yours who

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MIGRATORY BIRD DAY

On Saturday, May 11th COTERC participated in the third annual International Bird Day event held at the Toronto Zoo. It gave us an opportunity to promote our organization and Caño Palma Biological Station, through a large display showing images of the station and the sale of rainforest seeds and local Costa Rican art. We had copies of the books *Mammals of Central and South America* and *Bats of Papua New Guinea* for sale.

by Fran Mason

The books were illustrated by Fiona Reid, a COTERC advisor and former Board member. Many native Canadian birds do migrate through Costa Rica each year, so it was fitting that we could be on hand to promote our work.

Bird watching walks were available and 65 species were sighted on Toronto Zoo property on that day, making it worthwhile for all participants.

BOOK REVIEW

CANADIAN FEATHERS— A Loon-atics Guide to Anting, Mimicry and Dump Nesting

by Pat E. Bumstead, Simply Wild Publications Inc.,
100 Lake Lucerne Close SE,
Calgary, Alberta, T2J 3H8
www.simplywildpub.com



Strictly speaking, this is not a book about tropical birds; however, many of the birds mentioned in this book winter in the tropics, so it can justifiably be reviewed here. Besides, it is such an unusual treatment of a bird book, that it should be of interest to any Canadian birder. There is a wealth of information presented here, but in such a manner as to be easy to find. It is not a field guide,

by Marilyn Cole

but rather the type of book that you pick up many times, just to read the snippets of interesting facts. For instance under the section on quails, in a highlighted paragraph, we find that "Quail have been kept in captivity for thousands of years. They were kept by the Romans as food and in ancient Greece they were kept as pets where it was the custom for a man to give his lover a pet quail." There are illustrations of many birds, and each family is covered, but there are also sections on Habitat, Migration, Threats to Birds, Birds by Another Name, Life Spans, Internet addresses; Naturalists Clubs of Canada, Provincial Information and a Glossary.

This book would make a valuable addition to the birdlovers' library, and maybe even convert some who aren't particularly interested in birds, just because of the fascinating information provided.

COTERC HAS A BBQ

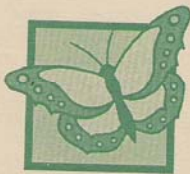
On Saturday, June 22 COTERC held a barbecue in front of a Loblaws supermarket in Pickering, Ontario. The turnout was not as good as we have had in the past, but we still raised over \$280. A special thank you to Josh Feltham, Bryan Bridgeman, Pam Evett, Barry McKee, Collette McKee, Sue Crawshaw, Debbie Martin, Chris Broughton & Daniel Mason.

ANOTHER WAY TO HELP

...
Do you shop at Canadian Tire? How about donating your Canadian Tire money to COTERC? We can use this to purchase much-needed supplies for Caño Palma Biological Station. This is a very painless method for you to help us maintain the station.

Thank you!!

CAÑO PALMA RESEARCHER ATTAINS HIS MASTER'S DEGREE



Many of you will recall Jake Wickham's articles from past issues of Raphia, in which he related his experiences while conducting research on insects at Caño Palma Biological Station. Jake is a student at Fredonia University, and has recently completed his Master's thesis, which is a study of the sphinx moths of the Tortuguero area.

Not only did Jake do an outstanding job, but he has most likely discovered a new species of sphinx moth, heretofore unknown to the scientific community.

We would like to extend our heartiest congratulations to Jake on this wonderful achievement and wish him all the best for the future!

A WALK IN THE RAINFOREST

By Betty Foo

As I entered the vast, green jungle
The majestic trees rose to greet me
The birds sang their melodious songs.
While twirling above in the dense, green leaves
The bees buzzed hungrily while searching for food.
And the strong worker ants marched on home to their queen.
I could smell the sweet scent of the blooming flowers,
And the air so thick one could almost taste
The moisture that hung in the air.
Big, ripe berries, as sweet as pie,
Hung on the bushes, colourful and lush.
I was overwhelmed with the feeling,
of freedom and joy,
Unfelt elsewhere, and hard to come by.
This precious place, so beautiful to us,
Will soon disappear, with the blink of an eye.
The desire to stay in this wonderful place,
That soon will be gone, as will the natives' race,
Allows me to realize that we are harming all,
And life should go on, like a waterfall.

Betty Foo is a Grade 7 student at Sir Alexander McKenzie Senior Public School, Scarborough, Ontario

Costa Rica's Caribbean Coast Saved From Oil Drilling

It is great to be able to report a positive story for a change in the battle against large corporations determined to destroy the precious environment for the sake of the almighty dollar.

In response to many messages sent to Costa Rican Environment Minister Elizabeth Odio, plans to drill oil off the Caribbean area of Talamanca were rejected. The U.S. based company Harken Energy had lobbied stren-

ously, but the new Costa Rican president Abel Pacheco has confirmed his opposition to oil drilling and mining in his inaugural speech on May 8, 2002.

This is a great victory for the future environmental stability of Costa Rica's natural heritage, and we'd like to congratulate President Pacheco on his courageous stand.



FAREWELL FROM PAUL GRANT

From Tom Mason, Vice President – It is with regret that I must announce that our station manager Paul Grant has decided to move on. Paul had been with us for just over a year and is planning to return to university to work on a Masters' degree. Paul saw great weather and floods. His comment about having his favourite fishing hole (the office) dry up will be one for our records. All of us who have worked with or visited him in Costa Rica will miss him. Paul brought humour, a great work ethic and dedication to Caño Palma. And he became well respected by and helpful to all the growing community on Caño Palma. To Mario, our Costa Rican resident at the station, Paul has been a brother.

Although not at the station anymore, Paul has offered to promote Caño Palma and COTERC with his university contacts. Discussions have also taken place that would have him return to Caño Palma to do his research. COTERC would aid him with a grant to help cover his costs while there. No matter what he decides, we know that Paul will continue to help and we thank him for helping us in the past year.

Good luck, Paul, and remember if you plan on returning to Costa Rica, there are several people who will be happy to join you.

As most of you are aware, June 1st is my last day here at Caño Palma, before I return to Canada. It feels as if the cool rivers of time are flowing by at an increasingly rapid rate as my departure date sneaks up on me. While I am looking forward to my first summer back in Canada in four years, it comes with mixed feelings. It will be hard to leave such an amazing, rich area and all the good friends that I have made here. However, I hope to return some day and delve further into the limitless research opportunities this place provides.

As the number of days I have left here narrows, it seems like the amount of things that need to get done increases. However, I am happy to say that despite the long drawn-out process, hampered by floods in Limon and at the station, the boat registration process is finally completed!

As for projects around the station that still need to be done...there are many. One of the most important projects is taking care of the electric pole that is sitting in the water off the dock. The best way to correct this would be to purchase more cable, extend the wiring and attach it onto the existing dock, high up and safe from dangerous rising water levels.

The tin on the dorm rooms also needs to be replaced. The problem is that there is a cashew tree growing right behind and over the building. It is a wonderful tree to have and

attracts many birds and animals. However, the raw cashews contain very caustic oils that corrode metal very rapidly. The result is the two back dorm rooms get very wet during heavy rains and are not suitable for visitors in this condition. Therefore, the roof needs to be replaced and the tree needs to be cut so it doesn't overhang the building.

There should also be a small high locker built next to the boat shed to keep mainly the gas and generator out of the water during flooding. This last November the generator needed to be disconnected and moved so it wouldn't be submerged underwater. That meant the station had no emergency power source.

It is frustrating in some ways because this property has so much potential, but we are almost stuck in a catch 22. We need to get people here to raise money to improve things, but we also need to improve things to get more people here. One of the things that somehow needs improvement is the dorm rooms. This has been a long outstanding problem. They are generally too cramped and poorly ventilated for most people.

For the future it would be nice to purchase Edgar's property across the canal. He has all the accommoda-

tions already built, plus a newly installed pool. Not only would we have space to house large groups, but it would also stay dry throughout the year. Most people, whether they are volunteers, students or researchers, after a wet muddy day in the field want to come back to somewhere dry and clean to relax.

I think that it is also very important that we start advertising at Canadian universities; hence, the new station posters. There are a HUGE number of students who come to Costa Rica every year for field school. I believe that if Canadian students knew there was a Canadian-run field station, most would be very interested in coming here.

I would also like to thank the groups that came down in March with all the supplies they brought with them. The buildings now all have brand new screen on them.

I would also like to thank the friends I have made down here in Costa Rica, COTERC and all its members for the support everyone has given me during my time here. It has been a pleasure and a fantastic experience to have been able to work down here!

Paul Grant,
Station Manager, Caño
Palma Biological Station

INTRODUCING OUR NEW STATION MANAGERS

With the departure of Paul Grant, the COTERC Search Committee became actively involved in finding a suitable replacement. After sifting through many applications, and interviewing various candidates, the Committee was very pleased to choose a husband and wife team, who

will share the duties and work alongside our faithful and hard-working resident assistant Mario.

You will see that they are both eminently suited for the task of operating Caño Palma Biological Station. Ernie is familiar with Tortuguero, having previously worked with the Caribbean Conserva-

tion Corporation monitoring sea turtles.

We welcome Ernie and Laurie Clarke, and wish them great success as they take up their new duties. Here is a short article in which they introduce themselves.



ERNIE AND LAURIE CLARKE

We are delighted to have been chosen as the new station managers for Caño Palma Biological Station. Laurie and I are very familiar with life at a biological research station, having lived and worked at numerous stations while training as biologists. For the past three years we have lived at Audubon's Starr Ranch Sanctuary, a 4000 acre preserve in southern California. We participate in education programs, research and community outreach at Starr Ranch. We are also involved in sanctuary maintenance and hosting visiting scientists who conduct research here.

In addition to being accus-

tomed to the workings of a research station, we have other qualifications that apply to the position at Caño Palma. Ernie has basic carpentry skills, some experience with small engine maintenance and knowledge of small boat operations. We have each developed and presented numerous natural history and biology programs and we both very much enjoy teaching. We both have studied Spanish in college, and have been trained in first aid.

Laurie is completing an MS in Biology at California State University, Fullerton. Her true passion is bird conservation research, although she has

worked as a field biologist on a variety of projects including pollination studies, water quality research and weed control. Ernie completed an MS in Marine-Estuarine Environmental Sciences at the University of Maryland and currently manages an invasive species control/habitat restoration project at Starr Ranch. He has also participated in research on large and small mammals, amphibians, reptiles, invertebrates and birds.

Ernie has told his wife many wonderful stories about life in Tortuguero, and is eagerly looking forward to introducing Laurie to the area.

"I have told my wife many wonderful stories about life in Tortuguero & I am eagerly looking forward to introducing her to the area"



STUDENTS BUILD A RAINFOREST

Some teachers really go out of their way to make learning a wonderfully rewarding experience. Gayla Meredith is one such example. Gayla teaches grades 2 and 3 at Range Lake North School in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories — not somewhere that you would first consider as an area interested in rainforest conservation. Here is her story.

"We've just built a Rainforest! It was a 20'x8'x4' (all enclosed) tropical rainforest in our school atrium. We held tours for people during our school's recent Family Fun Night and sold the "Colours of the Rainfor-

est Treats" we made from marshmallows and Jello.

Our rainforest had green lights, all sorts of animals hiding in the trees (with real 'people' eyes peering at the tourists), rafflesias and lots of bright colourful flowers blooming, monarch and morpho agea butterflies flying, snakes slithering, vines hanging, mist falling and water dripping off the tips of leaves, a rotting log full of edible worms (cookie crumbs and gummy worms) and all of this was complete with sounds of the rainforest!

The students had a great time and learned lots about the rainforest, animals, vegetation, conservation and being responsible. They conducted the tours and were official Tour Guides, sharing their expertise with interested visitors. We had over 400 people through our rainforest in two hours.

We were able to use \$50 from our event to contribute to the Partners in Preservation program, and chose to save the habitat of a morpho butterfly. We are very proud to send this cheque, knowing we are doing our part to help conserve vital areas of this planet.

Gayla did send some photos of the event, but unfortunately we could not reproduce them for the newsletter.

We do want to thank Gayla and her Grades 2/3 classroom for their donation and congratulate them on their efforts to promote rainforest conservation in the far northern regions of Canada!

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF COTERC

The Annual General Meeting of Canadian Organization for Tropical Education and Rainforest Conservation was held on May 11, 2002 in the Board Room of the Toronto Zoo. COTERC President Derrick Fulton opened the meeting with a welcome to the 35 members and Board of Directors in attendance. He read a report from Station Manager Paul Grant. Paul has maintained a great rapport with the local community of Tortuguero, but will unfortunately be returning to Victoria, B.C. at the beginning of June. We have received several applications for a new manager and the Hiring Committee is

currently reviewing them.

Josh Feltham, Director of Education, gave an informative slide presentation on his March trip to Caño Palma when he led a group there. He also explained plans for a new educational program being set up to coincide with the new curriculum. It is hoped that this program will be available for the fall.

Director Robb Langridge is a teacher at Sir Alexander McKenzie Senior Public School in Scarborough, Ontario and had samples of his Grade 7 students' work on the rainforest.

Our current membership is down from last year.

Two Awards of Recognition were presented recognising support given to COTERC throughout the year. Dollies and Boxes Unlimited have always supported COTERC and have donated storage boxes and a dolly to the office and Tropical Treat as auction items. Spencer Sibbald Creative Services donated their time and expertise to prepare a power point presentation on reptiles of Tortuguero, which was shown at Tropical Treat last October.

President Derrick Fulton introduced the current Board members. Two directors, Andre Bail-

by Helen Huggett

Largeon and Fiona Reid are stepping down due to work and time commitments. Fiona will still act as an advisor. Many thanks to the time and effort that Andre and Fiona have given to COTERC. Bryan Bridgeman and Andrew Cresswell were welcomed as new Board Members. At present we are looking for a Secretary. Fiona Reid gave an interesting slide presentation on the Bats of Tortuguero, which was very well received. Dianne Devison, a Toronto Zoo Animal Care Foreman, attended the meeting with Colin, an Egyptian fruit bat which she was hand rearing. It

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gave everyone an opportunity to see a bat up close to appreciate how beautiful they are.

The meeting adjourned, and everybody enjoyed refreshments.

Raphia Editor Marilyn Cole is looking for articles, crossword puzzles, photos, artwork, etc., etc. for future editions. Please forward any and all to the COTERC office. Without content, there can be no Raphia!!

2002 COTERC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President	Derrick Fulton
Vice President	Tom Mason
Education	Josh Feltham
	Malcolm Enright
	Helen Huggett
	Bruce Gill
	Bryan Bridgeman
	Robb Langridge
	Bill Rapley
	Andrew Cresswell
Advisor/Research	Fiona Reid
Honorary Director	Peter Silverman
Bookkeeper	Cathy McCartney
Administrator	Fran Mason
Honorary Patrons	Sir Charles and Lady MacKerras



A VISITOR'S IMPRESSIONS

by Jen Rowsell

Jen was part of a group who visited Caño Palma in March and she has kindly provided an excerpt from her diary.

"Walking through the jungle today I was contemplating perspectives — from observing to being observed (a la "Honey, I Shrank the Kids"), and I was really blown away by it all. As a zoo keeper, you grow sort of accustomed to being the one doing the observing. Here in the jungle there are countless creatures that no one (except maybe Tom!) can see, and you know they're there, just not precisely where. Well, they know exactly where

YOU are and that probably has something to do with why you can't see them! This was especially evident on the night hikes we've gone on. What an amazing place."

"From that very first journey into Caño Plama to that last trip up the tangled waterway to Tortuguero airport, it was one adventure after another. From eco-flops, to eyelash vipers, to waking to the sound of Jim snoring, (oops, I mean howler monkeys!). And we can't forget Laura's peccary. The food was great too, all of it! The plethora of life in the whole area was simply incredible. It's kind of difficult to de-

scribe what it was like to be there, as the English language lacks the words for it. I don't think any dictionary in the world is equipped with the vocabulary needed to convey the sheer energy of the place, or the sense of awe that I was filled with for the majority of the trip, especially every time I stepped into the rainforest.

"Here in the jungle there are countless creatures that no one (except maybe Tom!) can see"



Kingfisher

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INTRODUCING NEW COTERC BOARD MEMBERS

Bruce Gill is a biologist with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's Centre for Plant Quarantine Pests in Ottawa. He works to reduce biological pollution through the rapid detection & identification of exotic pests moved in international trade. As an avid entomologist specializing in the taxonomy of scarab beetles, he has travelled extensively in tropical regions promoting the study of insects and the conservation of habitats.

Bryan Bridgeman is a retired Paramedic who lives with his wife Sonja in the small Ontario town of Omeme, northeast of Toronto. He is a founding member of the Ontario Herpetological Society and currently has a collection of reptiles that have been acquired through rescue situations, the largest group being abandoned iguanas. Bryan trav-

elled to Caño Palma Biological Station in a group headed by COTERC Vice President Tom Mason in November, 2000, and has become increasingly aware of the need for proactive conservation measures. Bryan has served on the Board of Directors for the Kawartha Haliburton Children's Aid Society, as well as being a representative for the Foster Parent Society of Ontario, so he brings a great deal of experience to his new position with COTERC.

Andrew Cresswell has also visited Caño Palma Biological Station recently and brings to the COTERC Board a great deal of expertise in the field of global and political studies. He has held several positions with Scouts Canada and has organized advocacy campaigns for the Canadian Tibet Committee, The Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and has also been involved with the Region of Peel Athletic Association. Andrew has a Masters of Science degree from the University of Leicester in the U.K., and is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Education at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Andrew lives in Brampton, Ontario and is interested in hiking, canoeing, martial arts and reptile husbandry. -

Welcome aboard, Bruce, Bryan and Andrew: No doubt you all will add an invaluable new dimension to the COTERC Board!

NEW TROPICAL POSTER AVAILABLE

Caño Palma Biological Station, in conjunction with COTERC and Campanario Biological Reserve (located in the Osa Peninsula on the southwest coast of Costa Rica) have produced a joint poster advertising both locations as study sites for Neotropical Research in Costa Rica. If you would like more information, please contact the COTERC office.

