



CANADIAN ORGANIZATION FOR TROPICAL
EDUCATION AND RESEARCH CONSERVATION

RAPHIA

ISSN 1188-7425



Tropical Treat 2004

Atrium, Toronto Zoo

October 16, 2004

Phone (905) 831-8809

Fax (905) 831-4203

coterc@interhop.net

Volume 13, Issue 1

Summer, 2004

Join us for a wonderful
dinner!

Silent and Live Auctions!
Tombola!

Ticket Price: \$50.00 per person

Contact the COTERC office
NOW for your tickets!



Don't forget!
Oct. 16
Tropical Treat!

Featuring:

- ☉ Tropical Treat
- ☉ News from Cano Palma
- ☉ News from the Directors
- ☉ Yellowknife class creates a rainforest
- ☉ In Memoriam—Jim Brown
- ☉ Experiences of a researcher

It has now been a year since Raphia was last published, for various reasons. Please be assured that every effort will be made by your Board to ensure that future issues will appear in a more timely manner.

In this issue you will see reports from most of your new Directors, as well as news from Cano Palma Biological Station. In future issues, we hope to bring you more stories that will interest our members.

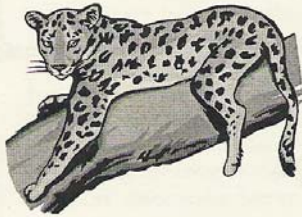
We are always seeking material for the newsletter, so please consider sharing your photos or stories about the station or about COTERC in Canada.

Like all charities, we rely upon volunteers to get most of the jobs done. If you would like to get involved, please contact our office. We are currently seeking an enterprising person to take on the job of newsletter publisher, as well as people to assist with Tropical Treat and our education programs.



Message from the Chair

Well, here I am back again!! What a surprise, both to me and others! However, I have missed the involvement that I had with COTERC, and am very pleased to once again be participating on the Board.



As your new Chair, I plan to carry on the work that Andrew Cresswell has so ably been doing. Andrew will continue in the role of Vice Chair, and I look forward to working with him and the rest of the Board in the future.

As is so often with charities, COTERC needs money in order to carry on its programs – particularly at Cano Palma Biological Station. Since I left the position of Executive Director a few years ago, I have had a number of new experiences, and I hope to be able to lend my grant-writing knowledge to COTERC.

Janet Vatcher, Director of Marketing, is hard at work planning Tropical Treat and if you have any comments or suggestions about how we could do it better, please do get in touch with her. We are also forming a sub-committee under Janet to assist her with her many jobs. If anyone is interested in helping, either with events, fundraising in general, sponsorships, promotion, etc., etc., please let Janet know. She can be reached at janet.vatcher@sympatico.ca.

We could really use some help in acquiring equipment for Cano Palma Biological Station too. In particular, our boat engine needs replacing with a more environmentally-friendly 4 stroke engine. If you know of any suppliers who might be interested in donating such an engine, then please let us know.

Helen Huggett, Director of Membership, is also looking for ways to expand our membership, and may be contacting you in that regard.

I am slowly meeting with all the Directors to see what their thoughts are and how we might proceed for the future, and I hope to be able to report on other exciting aspects in future is-

Tom Mason Steps Down (sort of)

After serving in one directorial capacity after another for many, many years, Tom Mason has stepped down as Vice Chair. This is not to say that Tom is abandoning COTERC. Far from it – Tom will still head up the sub-committee that administers Cano Palma Biological Station, and will still be actively involved in any decisions relating to the station. Andrew Cresswell will be the new Vice Chair.

Tom has been a tireless, invaluable resource to

COTERC since its inception, and it is safe to say that the organization would not be where



it is today if not for Tom. He has always been available for guidance, but more importantly, he has stepped up and taken on many challenges that have faced COTERC over the years. He still continues to take groups down and demonstrates his knowledge and skill with the flora and fauna, much to the delight of the participants who join him.

Tom has also been an active and willing participant in every major fundraising event that COTERC has put on – and will continue to do so in the future. In fact, he has agreed to be an interim Director of Site Services while Bryan Bridgeman takes a leave for personal reasons. Thanks for everything, Tom!!

sues of Raphia.

I also want to acknowledge and thank Fran Mason for all the hard work she has done while she served as Administrator of COTERC. Basically, she and Blue Enright single-handedly organized Tropical Treat, and Fran organized numerous barbecues as well as running the bingos. This was all on top of handling correspondence and all the other duties required! Thanks, Fran, for all your work.

I would also be remiss if I did not acknowledge the ongoing work of Blue Enright, who has been a long-time participant on the Board, and who continues to serve on the sub-committee that looks after the affairs of Cano Palma Biological Station. Blue was always willing to lend a hand where needed. Thanks to you too, Blue.

Blue's wife is now the Executive Director. So it is all in the family. June Enright comes from a solid business background and has just retired. So you know what that means – she has time to volunteer with COTERC!! She has already demonstrated her organizational skills by peppering all the directors with emails on a daily basis! Good for you, June – keep up the good work!!

Also, a BIG thank you to Cathy McCartney who has generously given of her time as our bookkeeper for many years. What would we do without you, Cathy??

And lastly, thank you to Derrick Fulton, a past president of COTERC who continues to do legal work for us.

I am truly pleased to be back, and am looking forward to working with everyone, both old friends and new. If you have any comments or ideas, please do feel free to contact me at monos@auracom.com

Marilyn Cole

Critters of Cano Palma

Neotropical River Otter (*Lutra longicaudis*)

The River Otter is a long, streamlined animal with short limbs, a long thick tail and webbed feet. The upper parts are entirely covered with glossy dark, short dense fur. The upper lip, lower cheek, throat and belly are silvery whitish to yellowish. The head is small and flat; the muzzle broad. The neck is thicker than the head and the eyes are small. The ears are short and rounded. On land the head and tail are carried low and the back is humped high. Adult weight is about 5-9.5 kg. (15 lbs.). These otters are found in Central and South America, Mexico south through Central America to northern Argentina, although

now they are considered endangered throughout their range. They live in riverine habitats in burrows on riverbanks; the entrance may be above or below the water level, in both deciduous and evergreen forests. They are believed to be diurnal, semi-



aquatic animals and feed on

fish, mollusks and crayfish. Small mammals and birds are sometimes eaten. They are graceful swimmers and divers. Gestation is about 2 months, after which time 2-3 cubs are born in a den with a nest consisting of mostly plant material for bedding. The cubs' eyes open after about 5 weeks. At about 7 weeks they are weaned and at 10 weeks they leave the nest. At around 3 months they are into the water and learn to swim and hunt on their own by 8 months of age. The lifespan in the wild is about 12 years.

These animals are well adapted to their life in the water by having webbed feet, short limbs, a streamlined shaped body, flat head with eyes near the top. The fur has two layers; an under-layer of fine fur for insulation & a thicker outer layer for waterproofing.

When you visit Cano Palma, be sure to visit Tortuguero National Park where otters are quite common. Perhaps you'll be fortunate enough to see one.

Helen Huggett, Director of Membership

Hello from Flooded Tortuguero

The time I've spent in this tropical paradise is too short! But certainly I've learned that the respect and awareness this place inspires is amazing, and very difficult to express in words.

At the age of 8 I became interested in the jungle, wondering all the time what could be in that big mass of trees that everyone could see from the bus window in a place named "Quebrada Honda" (meaning deep creek) very close to my home town. My early trips to a river named la Mica (named after the tiger rat snake (*spilotes sp.*), swimming in its cold but always clear water, surrounded by a beautiful and immense curtain of greens, with lianas, tree ferns and flowers of all shapes and colours, made me understand that there was nothing else I wanted to do but live in a jungle.

With the passing of time, I became more skeptical about my dream and a lot of things were changing from the little world that I used to live in as a child. Having finished high school and university, I suddenly became extremely worried about what was happening to our ecosystems. First born son of a loving Costa Rican couple, the Gods of the Jungle could not have given me any more luck than the chance to live in this wonderful Tropical Paradise.

My first visit to Tortuguero was astonishing — a big red profusion of canals, some of them black (due to the high accumulation of tannins and humic acid), plants and wildlife — everything together in the same location. My expectations were fulfilled and an endless obsession of knowing about this amazing tropical forest started growing within me. The obsession was primarily

focused on knowing about the medicinal properties utilized by native people. From this interest developed a desire to learn and I began to ask the local people if they knew about medicinal plants.

By the time I began the search for this knowledge, one of my most important sources was gone. My grandmother, who died when I was 16

years old, was known by the people of my town as the lady who could treat diseases with home remedies.

Why not worry about saving this wonderful knowledge that people have gained from their years of living in an environment surrounded by nature?

Now working as the manager of Estacion Biologica Cano Palma, I have initiated a project to start recording the medicinal uses made by the local people of the plants on the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica, focusing the study in the Tortuguero area. No chemical research is intended, but instead I am recording a knowledge that is almost lost, to preserve it for the future.

Today we worry too much about many things. Why not worry about saving this wonderful knowledge that people have gained from their years of living in an environment surrounded by nature? There may even be the keys to cures for our modern-day ailments!

Mario Garcia, Station Manager

Executive Director's Notes

It's like Christmas here! Boxes upon boxes arrived along with a full filing cabinet, computer, printer, boxes of stationery, etc. There are a lot of items required to run the office of COTERC. I have gained a large appreciation for my predecessors and I am beginning to understand the amount of work required to keep the wheels in motion.

I would like to point out that our telephone service has now reverted to our original telephone number (905) 831-8809 with our fax number of (905) 831-4203. Our mailing address of Box 335,

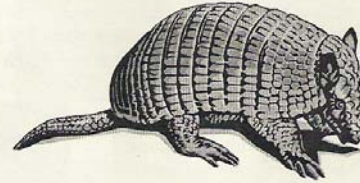
Pickering,
Ontario, Canada
L1V 2R6 remains the same.

I look forward to hearing from you over the next while, and hope to work closer with many of you in our joint efforts to keep this worthwhile organization going. We are always looking for volunteers, both here in Canada and also in Costa Rica.

Give me a call for any questions, and let me assist you with any plans to visit Cano

Palma Biological Station. I can assure you from personal experience that it's an experience you will cherish for the rest of your life!

June Enright



Director of Education

The primary focus of the Director of Education is to ensure the production of educational resources that will help COTERC achieve its mission. In 2002, a series of scripts were developed for slide shows for students in Grades 2, 4, and 7. The content of each show was linked directly to the Ontario Science Curriculum expectations to ensure that both the goals of COTERC and the Ontario Ministry of Education are achieved. After the scripts were

written, COTERC's Board of Directors felt it might be best to convert the traditional slide shows into multimedia presentations that could be purchased by individuals and schools alike. These multimedia presentations were completed in 2003 and are ready for purchase.

In 2004, our goal is to complete more multimedia presentations for those involved in Scouting and Guiding. Specifi-

cally, presentations that can be used by Cub, Scout, Guide, and Pathfinder groups alike will be linked to the requirements for badges such as Naturalist and World Conservation. Resource materials for use in classrooms are also being compiled and put into CD format for easy distribution. Proceeds from the sale of these educational materials will go directly to help fund the operation of Caño Palma, COTERC's biological research station in Costa Rica.
Josh Feltham

Yellowknife School Creates Rainforest

Every once in awhile we receive a letter from someone remarkable. Gayla Meredith, a teacher at Range Lake North School I Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, is such a person.

Despite their location in the Far North, under Gayla's guidance, she has once again inspired her class to really get involved in their study of the rainforest by creating their own, from materials at hand. You will see from the photo just how successful they were! They held a bake sale as well and invited their friends and family to view their efforts. We have

sent them some rainforest seeds so that they may propagate some of the plants that would actually be

encountered, should any of them ever have a chance to visit Cano Palma.



We want to thank Gayla and her class also for their donation to COTERC's Partners in Preservation program — proceeds from their event.

Congratulations on a great job!!

Word From Cano Palma

The last several months have been hectic for the Board of Directors in regards to Cano Palma. Three board members, Josh Feltham, Bryan Bridgeman and I visited the station over the end of February and the first part of March. A total of 24 people joined us at the station. These included reptile lovers, fish experts, Toronto Zoo volunteers and one insect enthusiast. Needless to say, many adventures came our way and everyone left with that sense of wonder that the forest there leaves you with. Even after visiting for 10 years, I was able to find reptiles and amphibians that I had never seen before. Hopefully many of these adventures will be read in future issues of Raphia.

Two of the directors, Bryan Bridgeman and I, also went to visit a couple of other stations. One of our stops was a sister station in the Osa Peninsula, Campanario. It was a beautiful place and we enjoyed ourselves thoroughly. It was wonderful to see two tropical forests that were so different. The Osa has steep slopes running to the ocean, while Cano Palma just rises above sea level.

Since then the communication at the station has not stopped. The station now has a new manager, Mario Garcia. This is the first time that we have had two Costa Rican employees working at the station. It has also created a new step in our association with Costa Rica. Cano Palma employees now will be eligible for Costa Rican Social Security, including medical insurance, workman's comp. in case of injuries, and a pension plan. This is great news for the staff. It is a very positive step created by the new manager.

Two ex-managers have been at the station helping out. Gabriel David has remained at the station for a few months as a volunteer. While there he worked

on his study of bird moulting in the tropics and acted as a guide to eco-tourists visiting the station. Ross Ballard took on the job of re-landscaping the compound. Ross had landscaped the compound during his four year tenure as manager. In the two years since Ross had left, the tropical sun and rain had changed the pleasant garden to dense forest. Ross returned to clean up and tame the compound. We really appreciate the dedication that these past employees still have for our work. We all look forward to seeing the change.

The station has also seen a good flow of visitors over the past few months. Besides our groups, a researcher from Kent University is studying the world decline of amphibians and using the station as his study site. Hillary Joys from Fredonia College in New York is at the station for several months identifying the diversity of aquatic plants in the region. It is something no one else has done in Tortuguero. We have also had visits from biologists from Ontario and Georgia during April.

Finally in May, a student from York University started her internship at Cano Palma. This program gives the student a chance to work in the field on a project selected by the hosting group. It does not give them any credits for their degree, but it does give them the chance to experience work in a third world country. It is the first year York has done this program and we are very proud to be a part of it. Adriana Laborer arrived at the station in May to conduct a feasibility study on a conservation project on sea turtles. The beach south of the mouth of the Tortuguero River has been protected for

many years. The most famous sea turtle researcher of all, Dr. Archie Carr set up a program that still protects the beach for 21 miles. But no one has paid attention to the beach running to the

north. Until recently, it was thought that turtles preferred the south beach. But reports of sea turtles coming to the north shore have grown and many of these specimens are being poached because the area is not

patrolled. To protect this area will take the coordination of many people. The parks people, local eco-guides, the towns people and the owners of the lodges in the area all have to buy into the project. And most importantly, there has to be support from the research group in the area. The Caribbean Conservation Corporation has years of experience in studying the sea turtles and their help is essential for a program to work. Adriana will find out who the key

players are and how receptive they are to do this. She will also have to determine if there are enough turtles in the area. If insufficient numbers are present, then eco-tourists will soon lose interest in patrolling empty beaches. We wish Adriana the best of luck in this endeavour. So many things have happened in Costa Rica. Cano Palma is active and the Board of Directors is very busy doing what they can to make the station a success.

We always welcome your input and ask you to join us in all our endeavours. We want to expand our efforts and hope that you can join us in all that we do.

Tom Mason



"many of these specimens are being poached because the area is not patrolled"

Greetings from Director of Marketing

I am very excited to report on what COTERC has been doing in the recent months. We are in the process of updating and giving our website a brand new look. Thanks to Josh Feltham, Director of Education, for all his help and wisdom in the redesign!

Another way that COTERC can be visible is through displaying our organization at different events that would provide us the exposure to a large number of people. The more we can address the population, the better we will be known. Recently we have had the opportunity to attend two events as exhibitors.

On April 17th, we attended the Scouts Canada National Conference held at the Delta Meadowvale Hotel in Mississauga. This conference brought Scouters from all across Canada for a weekend of friendship, training, and brainstorming ideas. The event planners also felt that having an exhibit room of various companies and organizations would be beneficial to all who attended. We were invited to participate and gladly accepted. Tom Mason and I were on hand to promote COTERC and its diversity and Tom was great in discussing the history of our Cano Palma Research Station and the many different species found there. We handed out many COTERC membership brochures and were very pleased with the interest of so many Scouters in volunteering at the station.

On May 1st, we were invited by the Independent Earth Movement (IEM) to attend their "Earthstock" Day in St. Catharines, Ontario. IEM is endeavouring to increase awareness of environmental concerns by presenting public education within a creative format.

'EarthStock' aimed to promote environmental awareness by bringing groups working towards environmental and social causes together with the public for a benefits music festival. It was a free admission event that took place at Montebello Park in downtown St. Catharines. They had local bands performing from 4:00PM-10:00PM.

Andrew Cresswell, the then Chair of COTERC, and I spoke with many people about COTERC, the Cano Palma Biological Station, and our goals and mission. We received two new memberships, several donations for our famous COTERC Critters and certainly were pleased with the interest our display table generated.

From a marketing point of view and the organization in general, we will continue to attend various events that will promote COTERC in any way possible.



Sincere regards,

Janet Vatcher
Director of Marketing
COTERC
janet.vatcher@sympatico.ca

My First Impressions of Cano Palma

Drs. Ken Mantai and Mindy LaBranche offered a Fall semester Tropical Biology class at SUNY College at Fredonia, which culminated in a 17-day trip to Costa Rica in January of 1998. The summer before, I worked three jobs to cover the cost of the trip. This was to be my first trip to the Neotropics.

January 5, 1998
Time: 8:00pm, Place: Mawamba Lodge,
Tortuguero, Costa Rica

Day three of four in Tortuguero. Most of the students were in the pool or at the bar. I told my friends I would join them later, but right now something else held my undivided attention. I had to figure out how on earth I could get back to Caño Palma. Having just spent a beautiful two nights at the station, I was itching to get back, so Pat Opay, the assistant manager, suggested to write a letter to Marilyn Cole - COTERC's founder and, at that time, executive director. Taking a couple of

rainforest dampened pages and a pen (that refused to write well across wet smudges), I poured my heart out about what an amazing place I thought the station was, and how I would like to come back... internships? Or wait... a semester abroad! Never in my life had I such an outpouring of emotion on paper. At 20 years old, I realized, for the first time, what I wanted to do with the rest of my life. I had found true love. In my heart I knew I wanted to be a biologist. All these

In Memoriam: James Murray Brown

Sadly, I wish to report the passing of one of COTERC's board of directors. Jim Brown was our Director of Finance. He passed away on September 3, 2003 at the age of 57.

He was the devoted husband of the late Linda (nee Wood), father of Debra and her husband Shawn Mills of Stouffville. Son of Milton Brown & the late Eva. Brother of Jerry, Marge, Marilyn and John.

Although he only joined the Board in May of 2003, Jim had contributed much to the support of

Cano Palma. Jim was the first of a large number of fish enthusiasts to join expeditions to Cano Palma to see what fish species lived in the region. In his short stint as director, he had begun a change in how we looked at our books.

Jim was a retired bank manager and a staunch member of the Lion's Club in Newcastle. He was a hunter and entrepreneur, but will

remembered best as a judge, breeder and exhibitor of unusual tropical fish.

For his kind nature, good humour and great intelligence, he will be sorely missed.

Tom Mason



things would later happen (I would even do my Masters research there), but little did I know that when I was sitting in my cabina trying to write this letter.

Two days earlier...

After getting into some trouble in San Jose (the kind of horror stories you read about in the Tico Times, Costa Rica's English newspaper --- Dr. Mantai would later embarrass me for years to come, instructing his future classes about "what not to do when you are in San Jose") and breathing in copious amounts of diesel exhaust, one of my childhood dreams had come true... I was really in a tropical rainforest! Now you can watch nature specials on TV, or read a good book, but nothing can mentally prepare you for experiencing a rainforest firsthand. Sensory overload consumes your every waking moment. You are dazzled and bewildered at every corner. Everything you have read about is there, all at once. Sights and sounds abound around you: Flashes of blue morpho butterflies fluttering past, hearing the call of a howler monkey for the first time, seeing your first keel-billed toucan, or a sloth high up in a Cecropia tree. Amazing!! Fate seemed to be directing me, as the

luck of the draw would have it, I was a member of the first group to see the station. (Our class was huge and was divided into 4 rotating groups, so over four days, each group would get to spend a night at the station). Also, at the time, I didn't realize what a logistical juggle it was for the station to accommodate 45 people. To this day, I still don't know how they did it! The two staff members, Ross Ballard (the indispensable chef), and two volunteers did a wonderfully superb job hosting our group for an overnight stay (this was also at a time before a washing machine was there, so just imagine the work!). I was really the first Fredonia student to set foot on station property. Our particular boat had arrived early at Mawamba, so while we were killing time on the docks waiting for the other boatload of students, a captain offered to take myself, Josh, and Dr. and Mrs. Mantai over to the station. We gladly accepted, so with the light load, we motored our way around Quatro Esquinas, up the Rio Penetencia kilometer after kilometer, until we happened upon this small entrance of dark water: Cano Palma's entrance. The black coffee-like water, and the huge Manicaria and Raphia palms gave this place a truly exotic feel. The

young captain then "hit the juice" and we careened at suicidal speeds down the canal (a big No No, the station's staff tries to enforce a speed limit to prevent erosion). We came to a stop in front of the docks of Cano Palma,

and it was love at first sight. We enjoyed following Spider Monkeys with Jim (and flooding our boots, a station requisite), night hiking with Cari (one of the volunteers), canoeing the Caño, and the best meal we had in our 17 days in Costa Rica (thank you Ross!). I was hooked. The next day I convinced my professor to switch places with me, so I could spend another day at the station. Seeing how much I loved the station, he indulged me one more night in tropical paradise. I gave no heed to Mawamba's beautiful lagoon-like pool, or the bar... I came here for experiences like the one I was having at Caño Palma! Dr. Mantai left me in charge as the "alpha-Gringo", and I waved goodbye to him and

~~~~~  
 "You are  
 dazzled  
 and  
 bewildered  
 at every  
 corner."  
 ~~~~~

Board of Directors 2004-05

Marilyn Cole, Chair
Andrew Cresswell, Vice-Chair
June Enright, Executive Director
Janet Vatcher, Director of Marketing
Helen Huggett, Director of Membership
Josh Feltham, Director of Education
Bryan Bridgeman, Director of Site Services (on leave)
Tom Mason, Interim Director of Site Services
Bill Rapley, Director of Conservation
Bob Murphy, Director of Research
Barry McKee, Director of Finance
Hilary Lee, Membership Secretary

Box 335
Pickering, Ontario L1V 2R6, Canada
Phone (905) 831-8809 Fax (905) 831-4203
Email: coterc@interhop.net



to him and the rest of my classmates, as they headed for the comforts of Mawamba. I don't think he would have been surprised to never see me again (half-jokingly, I flirted with the idea of spending the entire 17 days at Caño Palma). The subsequent groups did not have the same appreciation I had for the biological station. The second night, the students were more interested in drinking beers, while the night before, our group enjoyed poking around the station's property in search of insects, the chorus of frogs, spotting caiman, or to watch *Bufo marinus* eat insects (and these beasts ate them with impunity). I did not allow myself to be disappointed in my fellow students, after all, I paid to be here and was enjoying myself to the fullest extent possible. That night, Ross and I sat out on the docks, had my first guarro, and had philosophical jousts and imaginative discussion about the nearly limitless research opportunities at the station, until the wee hours of the morning. The next day, my third and last, I elected to stay behind while Pat Opay took the students out across the canal on a hike. Today was the first sunny day, and I enjoyed the tranquility of the place. I caught some butterflies, delved into the station's library, and made a species list for my journal. Ross helped me identify many of the plants around the station. It was the perfect morning, and bitter-sweet in a way, as it was my last day at the station. I would have been perfectly happy to never leave the station, but Ross convinced me to enjoy the rest of the trip, which would take me to Almonds and Corals tent camp (near Manzanillo on the Caribbean Coast near the border of Panama), and Bocas del Toro, Panama.

Since that initial visit, I returned to Caño Palma for a few days in

July 1998, when my mother (and fellow biologist) Diane Wickham and I took a 28-day Tropical Ecology course at La Suerte Biological Station, which was just 20 km up the Rio Suerte. Before leaving Tortuguero in January 1998, I gave Pat Opay that soaken letter and it found its way to Marilyn Cole. I would return with Dr. Mantai's class the following year in January 1999, along with my future wife. I enjoyed the class, and said goodbye to everyone at the end of the trip... I didn't use my round trip back to Toronto. Instead, I took a domestic flight back to Tortuguero, where I would complete a five-month internship, and research project at Caño Palma in May 1999. For five months, I barely slept, collecting moths by blacklight at night, and chasing butterflies by day. The biodiversity survey of the Lepidoptera was a success, so I enrolled for a Masters program, under Dr. Mantai, and returned to Cano Palma for the summer of 2000 to focus on the Sphingidae (Sphinx moths) of Cano Palma Biological Station. I received my degree in May 2002, and am now working on my doctorate in Entomology at SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, in Syracuse, New York, studying the chemical ecology of the Asian Longhorn Beetle, the latest invasive species in Toronto, Chicago, and NYC.

Here are ten great memories I had of the station:

1. The sound of a Tinamou calling in the dark
2. Howler Monkeys bemoaning your existence at 4:00AM
3. Falling asleep to a chorus of frogs and the sound of Caribbean's waves crashing
4. Giving a great tour and seeing an occasional \$20 donation from someone you have inspired
5. Ross's Gallo Pinto (he makes a mean one), his humour, and seeing his love for the station, expressed in his brilliant gardening and virtually limitless knowledge of the station's plants and animals
6. Watching the sunrise from atop the Cerro, after a long night of research
7. Watching fishing bats, caiman, and kiskadees eat your research (the predators were quick to grow wise around the blacklight)
8. The visit from the Board of Directors in March 1999. I learned so much from everyone, and enjoyed making new friends. I knew they were my type when a few of them set a fer-de-lance loose in the main building for a photo shoot.
9. Seeing the southern cross rising above the Caribbean, just minutes before the sun came up
10. On my last visit (Dr. Mantai's third class trip), we got a rare treat: Ross's orchid garden was in full bloom at the end of the rainy season in late December 2000 (orchid lovers - this is THE best time for seeing orchid flowers). Ross spent three years rescuing orchids from tree falls, and we witnessed a spectacle of the most fantastic display of inflorescences I have ever seen in nature. It also rained so hard, that we canoed the station's trails instead of walking them.

If any of you readers get a chance to visit the station (please put it on your life list of "things to do"), I hope you will love the station as much as I do, and you can make your own memories. The station is really the "crown jewel" of COTERC.

Jake Wickham