
Reserva Ecológica de Guapiaçu



Caixa Postal 98112
CEP 28680-000
Cachoeiras de Macacu-RJ
Brasil

++55 21 9986 4715
aregua@terra.com.br
www.regua.org.br

REGUA NEWSLETTER

Year 2 Issue 7

05th December 2004

Dear friends of Regua

Everyone at Regua has been very busy with a sudden spate of development in every field. Raquel and I went to England to discuss the funding proposals of 2005, this year's activities and explore some contacts to attract funding for our project. We were able to visit the Wetland Trust and the Rye Reserve in South Sussex. The area constitutes a unique biome for visiting migratory birds and has many important plants. The wetlands serve as an example of the need of a diversity of habitats to be made at REGUA: areas of reeds, islands and deep and shallow water. We were both very impressed also with the history of the area.

We returned very keen to develop our own wetlands to produce this same mosaic pattern. Arriving we have been very pleased to see developments in every sector. Eduardo's monitoring produced another photo of the puma, this time a male animal on a different trail. We have been planting seeds in the forest and all the seedlings have germinated showing brilliant results. Piet was able to put the weather station working perfectly and soon we shall be presenting the first results.

The NGO Biomas completed their studies, a rapid appraisal of the fauna and bromeliads. The weather was poor with a lot of rain and as yet we haven't the results to be able to show you, but they were overall pleased with their studies and the degree of safety offered at Regua in their walks. Eduardo has also mapped out all the paths with corresponding notes on distances. We are at the moment drawing up a small guide leaflet which will include a species list of the birds to be found at the reserve so that the visitor may note which ones were seen on what day together with maps of trails and useful tips about the reserve.

I am ecstatic to be able to announce that the neighbouring Schincariol beer factory has offered Regua the opportunity to monitor their reserve. Considering that Regua land surrounds this immense block of land, some 2500ha, we were keen to secure the possibility of monitoring so as to increase the size of the Regua reserve up to 5000ha. Although we form part of the 3 Picos park - an astounding 43.000ha, the only area that is properly protected with a team of dedicated rangers is Regua. The Serra de Tucanos lodge is supporting our activities by paying for an extra guard, so we may start surveying the Schincariol reserve shortly. Something else we are really proud of is the replanting of our first 2 hectare plot near to the Villa São José lodge, the first of the 65 ha proposal we submitted to the IUCN in Holland earlier this year. We had prepared all the land, with good sized fertilized holes and awaited good weather to plant. It took a while but St Peter, our patron saint of rain, blessed us for a good 10 days allowing us to plant Regua's own trees, purchased and donated native species and some introduced fruiting type attractive to bats and birds. We were so thrilled that we consider preparing and planting the next plot.

Regua has done very well in the month of November achieving a record bed nights of 74 in the month.

We had a distinguished group visiting from America as well as English and Finn naturalists. Only a couple of new species can be added to our bird list, but one fact most surprising was the list of endemics that a two week tour could produce in between Regua and the higher altitudes, somewhere close to 100. We have now a list of 400 birds, a quarter being endemic to the Atlantic Rain forest. Considering we have lost 92 % of this biome over the last 500years and 60% in the last 100 years, then we really lost the equivalent percentage of fauna.

We are considering making a small simple base for tourists wanting the ultimate experience, a night out in the forest at 550m above sea level. With a good vehicle access and located on a grass knoll, above the surrounding forest with a 270° view onto the mountains, home of the Muriqui, howler monkey as well as countless birds including the blue bellied parrot, we are absolutely convinced of the success of this base camp. Solar powered energy will provide a warm base for those tourists wishing to awake in the forest itself in the early hours of the day. We have started a campaign to fund this base so anyone wishing to contribute please contact me.

We had applied to Conservation International jointly with another 2 NGOs – Tereviva and Olhar 21 from Nova Friburgo for funding the socio-economic study of the 3 Picos Park, and we were just advised that the consultation letter has been approved for study. This recently created park is one of the most important in the State of Rio, a massive 43.000ha of good quality Atlantic Rain Forest. CI's aim is to protect the narrow though long corridor that runs parallel to the coastline of the states of Rio de Janeiro, Espirito Santo and Bahia.

The last two months have been very exciting for our Education program. Eleanora represented Regua at an Environmental Education Seminar at national level in the city of Goiânia with very positive results. Eleanora also attended a WWF seminar in São Paulo on a priority action aid program for the Atlantic Rain Forest in SE Brazil. Conservation International is currently working in the Serra do Mar corridor with its critically endangered areas program. This is a most successful and important independent funding body to help fund grass root NGOs all clamouring for greater environmental control in their areas. Very good work indeed.

Our own young guard program funded by CI is now terminating with our 8 young monitors thrilled at every occasion to walk and inspect the forest. These young agents spread the word and encourage their peers to respect the forest in way that is difficult for the average teacher to copy. We are finalizing our own report on the whole activity but are really satisfied with the results. We have already applied to the Schincariol brewery for funding another group of students next year. I should have news in the next letter.

As of next year we are concentrating our education activities at Regua and Eleanora has budgeted funds for remodelling an existing building which we call the future visitor centre and turning it into a classroom within the 3 Picos Park. Of course we would like the wetland to ready, but we are content to build things up slowly and surely.

We have just heard that the Agenda 21 budget is about to be approved and consequently funds released. The work on the Agenda 21 will be a most important tool for looking after the forests in the municipality of Cachoeiras de Macacu, itself an area of close to 1000km squared in a coordinated and sensible manner and we are really chuffed at being selected for doing this case study.

So you may see that the Regua project is gaining stature in the conservation world. It is rewarding to meet so many deeply committed and responsible people with a common cause.

Best regards from us all at Regua

Nicholas and Raquel

