
Reserva Ecológica de Guapiaçu



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REGUA NEWSLETTER

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Dear friends of REGUA

Here we find ourselves at the reserve reasonably content with the rain though looking forward slightly drier days. We have been very busy since our annual trip to Argentina. Our return coincided with a bird tour group from England's Parrot Society led by Steve Brookes keen to see some of the Psittacidae in the wild. Our guests have had a terrific time. The weather has been rainy and it's also very difficult to see parrots and though they are often seen flying past screeching in largish numbers. To see parrots resting or roosting is hard work. We have been on day tours walking to the waterfall and driving to David's to see the hummingbirds and some parrots at the higher elevations. We were able to travel to the Primate Centre to see the golden lion tamarin and we also went to the coast at Cabo Frio to see the amazons (orange winged parrots) flying over the coast to get to roost at an island close by. Back at Regua we were able to find a roosting position one morning on the road to Hannibal's and there we saw a good number of scaly headed parrots, toucans as well as what appeared about 200 plain parakeets. Though the weather hasn't been brilliant we have had a really good time and the group loved the cooking and the workers here at Regua. I took Steve up the road in REGUA's land and showed them where we wished to construct our base camp 3 for the forest experience and he fell in love with the site and immediately requested for a project with its plans and costing so he could present it to the Parrot Society, of which he is a member. He reckons it stands a really good chance of getting funded. I asked him whether a base camp like this would serve to further protect and conserve the Psittacidae of SE Brazil and he thought definitely so. He would like us to consider asking a student to fund at masters level relating to a parrot study and he was very keen to pass this cost to the Parrot society as well as the Base Camp cost. I have already asked via e-mail what Fabio, Jacqueline and Prof Maria Alice of Rio State University and Conservation International think of this. I got an answer from Maria Alice who supports the idea and said that there isn't anyone she is aware of studying Psittacidae in the state, and a project like this would be very welcome. She has put me in touch with the Brazilian Parrot expert Pedro Sherer Netto from Curitiba. Though Jacqueline is just having a baby, I have since news that Birdlife want to help us and liked the sound of the whole project. I also contacted the 3 Picos Park manager, Flavio who fully approves of the initiative.

Eduardo and I visited the CRAX project recently, an initiative by Eduardo though blessed by Roberto who was only too apologetic concerning the time that this project seems to be taking. His consultation letter to the IBAMA was approved and he is drawing up the full project for presenting the IBAMA and REGUA with time frames and costs. His partner James Simpson expects to have it ready fairly soon. Considering the importance of this reintroduction project, the first of its kind in the state of RJ, outside

of the MG state, the 30 years work put into the breeding of these birds he is taking care to get everything perfect. He is very happy about the reintroduction and looking forward to the success. As for the birds they themselves are all ready. The 5 species to be are *Crax blumenbachi*, *Pipile jacutinga*, *Tinamus solitarius* (he suggests the site be analyzed before reintroducing to establish the size of the existing population numbers) and *Crypturellus nocturagus nocturagus*. Incidentally the Harpy eagle-breeding program is developing really well and the chicks we saw on our last visit are absolutely huge. The Crax project is getting so famous that he has received a pair of Lear's macaws coming from some frustrated wild bird traffickers caught in Sao Paulo airport and is presently expecting a pair of Spix's macaws. So I returned delighted with Roberto's and James's optimism to write to Mika and try and organize the tree planting campaign at Regua.

REGUA's friend Mika Peck works at Sussex University and is proposing to ask the University on our behalf funds to compensate greenhouse gases emissions. This is the very first time that we are directly seeking funds for our reforestation project in England and we are motivated by the terrific response from so many people who applauded the initiative and offered guidelines for the proposed prices. Our first 2000 trees are growing superbly and have doubled in size the last 3 months due to the rain and heat. We are virtually ready to plant the second lot which likewise should be close to this number. Regua was invited to participate in a symposium for discussing Conservation International's project work in the Serra do Mar Central Corridor. Eleanora, Raquel and I were there and some important contacts were made. We met with a couple of young Biologists living near Sumidouro where the 3-Toed Jacamar is found and where they have on site the blue winged macaws. They have established a small RPPN reserve and were very happy to relate the existence of the Ferruginous Antbird. I also found the site on the coast where there are several Restinga Antwrens and a completely different site for the Merganser duck *Mergus octosetaceus*; though that's a good drive from Regua- Serra do Canastra. A lecture on the recent status of wildlife by Conservation International revealed that of the 1677 species of birds in Brazil, 160 species are threatened, of which 60 % live in the Atlantic Rain Forest. Between the years 2000 and 2004, 25 species left the critical list though another 23 entered it. Up to 2% of the Atlantic Rain Forest is protected in UC's (UC's = Conservation Units and RPPN's = Private reserves) though UC's reserves are estimated at an average of 10600ha, a size questioning genetic significance especially for the larger mammals. The Atlantic Rain Forest has a total surface area of 2 and a half million hectares protected in UC and RPPN status which is an area smaller than the last park created by the government in the Amapa state. CI is looking seriously at Biodiversity corridors which depend significantly on representation of habitat, endemism and connectivity. The lectures were really good and a record participation proved CI's success in gradually channelling thought, concern and action in a coherent manner. More and more people through NGO's are working in a cohesive manner and acknowledge CI's and the CEPF's funding to start them up. It is rewarding to see this growth. The projects themselves fall in various categories such as "Administration and recuperation of the Atlantic Rain Forest", "Research and Conservation of threatened species" and finally "Implementation of protected areas". I had time to speak to a representative of the Ministry of the Environment who said that a new line of financing is to become available mid-year concerning Reforestation and suggested we participate with our Conservation Centre as part of the Wetland Project. With our current recognition and support this is going to be most exciting. All in all the entire meeting was terrific and thoroughly worthwhile to see all the growing initiative.

Talking of wetlands we are virtually ready to hand in our project to the SERLA, our State Government's rivers and lakes Authority. Their permission to rebuild the wetlands now doesn't seem so far away. Let us keep our fingers crossed. I will have a surprise for our visitors in May/ June though. More about that in our next newsletter.

Whilst hosting out birding friends I found the most extraordinary bird at Hannibal's that being the black winged Tityra. I was continually looking for a tree frog until after a while I found him lurking in the canopy of the tree. I also have never seen as many channel billed toucans as with this last group of visitors. We really did see lots of birds including a really noisy flock of yellow-green grosbeaks.

I am very pleased to relate that REGUA has permission to monitor the Schincariol reserve enabling us to boast a reserve of 5000 ha. We are also asking them to fund some project work at REGUA.

Eleanora has been hard at work organizing the school visits. She has equipped the single classroom with school chairs and a blackboard, a donation from the Golden Lion Tamarin Project and REGUA starts the weekly visits from local schools as of April. We were able to gain support from the local authorities with the offer of a school bus to transport the children to the reserve, a significant contribution. Aside from this initiative Eleanora was sought by local children from the village to rekindle the young guard program and she was sufficiently moved to consider its continuation for this year. We aim to seek funding from an English charity considering the reception and impact in the community of this project.

Hope the UK is not so cold

All the best from us here

Nicholas and Raquel