THE FIELD NATURALIST

Quarterly Bulletin of the Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club

January - March 2010 **Issue No: 1/2010**

The journey that is Chacachacare - *part 1/3*

A personal account by Hans E.A.Boos

Several years ago I was asked, by Yasmin Comeau of the National Herbarium, U.W.I St. Augustine to write a short history titled **"Human occupation and impact on the island of Chacachacare**" (which constitutes the main body of the account below), which was to be a part of a larger work on the vegetation of the island of Chacachacare. But, in that I do not know if it was ever published in any part or its entirety, I thought I would share it, and some more recent additions and observations, with the members of the Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club, a club of which I have been proud to be a member since the middle of 1960.

A part of the Leper colony
Photo Hans E. A. Boos

Chacachacare holds a special place in my interest, which interest will be elaborated on below, and which was again sparked during a recent excursion of the Club to this island on Sunday March 28th 2010.

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Editor's note

Many thanks to all who contributed and assisted with articles and photographs.

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THE FIELD NATURALIST

Quarterly Bulletin of the Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club

January - March 2010

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The Journey that is Chacachacare

A personal account by Hans E.A.Boos

Feature

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So this expanded account will also include my personal connection to this island which plays a part in my ancestry, and which has afforded me a lot of pleasure in the years past.

COLUMBUS.

When Christopher Columbus sailed his fleet around Icacos Point in the South West of Trinidad on August 2, 1498, if the day was a clear one, and if there were no rain squalls to the North, for August is the mid point in the rainy season in Trinidad, he would have sighted the gap in the ridge of mountains on the northern horizon. This gap, this passage, would have been the Grand Boca, between The Paria Peninsula of Venezuela and Chacachacare, the westernmost island of the Boca Islands.

The gaps between the other islands are much narrower and the first and third Bocas are partially obscured from the viewpoint where Columbus anchored, in the lee of the Los Gallos rocks on the north side of Icacos Point.

Morison (1942 p.255) states that Columbus " could see thirty-five miles to the northward across the gulf of Paria, the jagged Cerro Mejillones on the Venezuelan promontory…" and thinking that this land was another island, he named it Ysla de Gracia.

Sailing dead north, Columbus made landfall on the south of the Paria Peninsula and anchored in a small bay near the easternmost point. According to Morrison (p.258) this bay is possibly Bahía Celeste. From here Columbus could see Chacachacare Island and he named it El Caracol (the Snail). From his anchorage in Bahía Celeste he could not see the other Bocas or individual islands which, from this point, must have appeared as a single mass of land .But, from the fact that he named Huevos, El Delphin, and did not distinguish Monos as an island, it would appear that, as he sailed north from Icacos, he could discern the second and third Bocas.

Morison (p.260) lists some trees found on the islands as manchineel, silk cotton, butterwood, and Christmas Hope.

Columbus sailed south and west again, along the south of the Paria Peninsula, searching for evidence that the land he had named Ysla de Gracia was in fact an island, and after eight days of failure he turned around and headed east once more and, according to Morison, he crossed the Grand Boca and anchored in the south eastern bay of Chacachacare Island.

Whether Columbus really crossed the treacherous Grande Boca and anchored in the bay of Chacachacare, and then sent a boat to Huevos (El Delphin) to a bay there to collect water, and to record a village with enough small houses to warrant the name of El Puerto de las Cabanas (Harbour of the Cabins), is belied today by the lack of any standing or running water or space for a small village, on Huevos, a small, and very dry, island.

The recent maps of Chacachacare show a seasonal stream running through the lowlands in Sanders Bay, and it is here that Columbus, if in fact he did anchor in Chacachacare Bay, would have found any water that might have been available, rather that to have his men make a foray across the treacherous third Boca to search for water on the very much drier island of Huevos.

Today, any streams or gullies on Chacachacare only have water in them during heavy rains during the rainy season which lasts from July to December. All settlements on this island, over time, have had to depend on imported water stored in cisterns and tanks, or rainwater off roofs for their water supply.

There are the remains of several small dams in the ravines high up on the slopes on the island that were built by the earliest settlers in the late 1700s, the water from one of these small storage ponds being channeled to cisterns built beneath the main house on a windy nearby ridge.

AMERINDIANS.

These islands, whether they were inhabited by the indigenous Amerindians on a permanent basis or were

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The journey that is Chacachacare

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used as temporary fishing and turtling camps we are left to speculate. Columbus' possible sighting of some huts on Huevos and the finding of a prehistoric ceramic potsherd odorno (Bullbrook 1925, in Boomert1984 p.30) in a small cave in Perruquier Bay (now called La Chapelle Bay) on Chacachacare, is evidence that the islands in the Bocas were from time to time visited or domiciled by prehistoric people. Discovery of more pottery in Sanders (an anglicized version of Spanish, Sanda) Bay points to a more extensive settlement than had been suspected of native Amerindians on the island, (Boomert 2000) where possibly a fishing village was established for enough time for the inhabitants to create a substantial kitchen midden in which was deposited the broken and discarded pottery.

Apart from the occasional use of the local trees to supply firewood and building materials for whatever structures were needed to sustain either temporary or permanent housing on Chacachacare, there was probably no substantial deleterious effect on the vegetation on the island by the Amerindians.

THE SPANISH.

The Spanish occupation of mainland Trinidad over the almost three hundred years after the voyage of Columbus, certainly must have included visits and perhaps temporary occupation of suitable sites on Chacachacare, where fishing villages may have been established. The journey over to the Venezuelan mainland was a quite hazardous one due to the fierce currents in the Grand Boca, and pirogues or sailing vessels would naturally put into the sheltered bays of Chacachacare to await the more favourable tides and weather to make the trip across this stretch of water.

Even today, in the months of August to November, returning to Trinidad in a small pirogue, or other fishing or pleasure craft, after a day around Chacachacare, the crossing into the southeasterly wind and waves, can be a hazardous and scary trip.

However in 1637, Jacques Ousiel, the Public Advocate and Secretary of the Colony of Tobago reporting to the directors of the Chartered West India Company of Amsterdam stated "In the Bocas del Drago are found some islands where there is fresh water and they are all uninhabited where from the months of March to November inclusive, multitudes of turtles and sea parrots come up into the sandy bays."(THS #137). Ousiel was either repeating hearsay of the time in error or was reporting a condition that has not existed since.

Around 1771, according to a family tradition, a man named Geraldine Carige, a refugee from the Catholic persecutions in Ireland, first went to Spain where, falling sick, he was recommended the balmier West Indies as a health cure. Possibly in the service of the Spanish military, he settled in the island of Margarita, a Spanish possession and health resort, where he recovered and married. Due to some unspecified service to the Spanish Crown or authorities, sometime before 1791, Carige was granted the Island of Chacachacare. He had possibly come to Trinidad earlier, seeking refuge from the gathering storm of the revolution brewing on the mainland of Venezuela.

In any event he set up a hacienda on Chacachacare, and began to farm the arid island and he also rented out tracts of land to others that showed an interest in doing the same. One such family, the Sanda's, has left the legacy of their name for one of the smaller bays on the island. (THS #534, 668.)

These settlers and farmers must have cleared land to begin the planting of mainly cotton which was in great demand and which grew well on these dry hilly islands. According to Carmichael (1961 p.437), "In 1791, there were many people living on this island [Chacachacare], cultivating ground provisions and sugar apples (*Anona squamosa*)."

Today there are scattered growths of cotton (*Glossypium barbadense*) bushes, certainly the wild descendants of these cultivations.

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The journey that is Chacachacare

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They also seem to have tried growing tobacco. (Mavrogordato c.1972.p.3) as there was an historical precedent for the profits to be made from tobacco-cultivation, and since certain cultivars did well in arid conditions, (Purseglove 1988 p.538) Chacachacare would have seemed a good location to attempt a revival of the tobacco industry.

By 1910 very little agriculture seems to have been carried on the island, and it became a popular place from which fishing expeditions were launched. There were four residences that could be rented by families on holiday and several popular "banks," where the fishing was good, were popularized. Vincent (1910) states that the Creoles living on Chacachacare and nearby Monos went across the Grand Boca to the Venezuelan mainland and there established large gardens, planting maize, plantains and even cocoa, as the soil there was much more fertile and productive than on the "poor dry soil" (p.12) of their islands of the Bocas.

Whatever available lumber, gleaned from the natural vegetation growing on Chacachacare, was un-

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Early 80's Field Naturalist camp Chacachacare
Photo Hans E. A. Boos

My boat Jolle Rouge Chacachacare
Early 80's Naturalist camp
Photo Hans E. A. Boos

The journey that is Chacachacare

A personal account by Hans E.A.Boos

Feature

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doubtedly utilized to construct huts and sheds and other small buildings to facilitate these settlers and farmers. Main houses were probably constructed from materials brought from the mainland, Trinidad in the east, and Venezuela in the west.

Look out for Part II in the next issue of the QB.

Leper Colony Buildings Early 80's Chacachacare
Photo Hans E. A. Boos

BG

Insect Guide

Water striders using water surface Tension when mating

Photo (source: Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_strider)

Water Striders

Kingdom:	Animalia
Phylum:	Arthropoda
Class:	Insecta
Order:	Hemiptera
Suborder:	Heteroptera
Infraorder:	**Gerridae** Leach, 1815

Water striders can vary in length from 1.6 mm to 36 mm. Similarly, their body shape ranges from slender and elongate to almost completely round. One common feature is their elongated legs (only the first pair is short and stubby) which the animals use for moving over the water surface. These are predatory insects which rely on surface tension to walk on top of water. They live on the surface of ponds, slow streams, marshes, and other quiet waters. There they hunt for insects and other small invertebrates on top of or directly below surface using their strong forelegs which end with claws. They can move very quickly, up to 1.5 m/s. They paddle forward with the middle pair of their legs, using fore- and hind legs as a rudder. Five species of *Halobates* sea skaters are the only insects that have successfully colonized open ocean habitats.

(source: Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerridae)

La Table 31st January 2010

Reginald Potter, with input from Eddison Baptiste

Monthly Field Trip Reports

La Table (usually pronounced "La Tab") is a small bay on the south coast just east of Las Tablas point, reachable by boat, or by a long hike through the Victoria Mayaro forest reserve starting from the "Main Field" road through Guayaguayare at a point a little west of Lagon Bouffe. An extension of the Trinity Hills forms a steep ridge trending NE – SW runs all the way to the coast at Moruga, and this natural barrier separates the La Table River, which flows east to the coast, from the land to the north which all drains to the west into the Moruga River.

We were to discover just how long that hike might be and something about that ridge when we converged on Guayaguayare on Sunday 31st January .

24 persons made the trip to Guyaguayare and after collecting our guide Ignacious Phillip Cummings we met at the Petrotrin gate at about 9.00 am. We had met Phillip before when he guided us to Canari bay.

In the car I received the first bit of bad news – Phillip had not been to "La Tab" for 20 years or more! And that trip was largely in the night when he was called there on news that his brother and 4 others were drowned while bathing.

Dan Jaggernauth investigating signs of illegal logging

Nevertheless he was confident that he could find the place and being a well-known 'bushman' we had little choice but to trust him. We were at the starting point at 10.05 am, crossed the NGC gas pipeline wayleave, entered the forest, and proceeded briskly down an old exploration well access road that runs due south, making good progress initially. Traces of imported limestone and old washed out culverts provided proof that this was indeed a road, but vegetation including large cedars had grown up in the roadway since its last use. There were clear signs of timber poaching by illegal loggers who had used a portable sawmill to plank those beautiful cedars. Evidently they must have been interrupted because some logs were left abandoned and still round.

We trecked through Semi Evergreen Forest seeing a wild chatigne tree with fruit (edible), a massive Silk Cotton tree that echoed of forgotten folklores, (traditions, and superstitions that brought reflective smiles and murmurs). We saw a Carapa guianensis tree, (Crappo fruit) which is used as an herb for coughs and colds and lumber for building. There were carat palms, wild nutmeg with it's buttress roots which, unlike our shoes, made it stable in soggy soils. All this info: was courtesy Dan.

We saw (or rather heard) two birds:- one was the White Bearded Manikin and the other the Yellow Tail Crested Oropendola. Clayton Hull also heard a toucan several times and the unmistakable sound of a woodpecker. As usual no wildlife was seen, partially due to the constant chatter of our large party.

After several detours to cross streams (all flowing west and practically devoid of fish life) and rejoining the road, we started slightly uphill and came to what appeared initially to be a hunters' camp. This was a bit of a surprise since the area is a game sanctuary. In fact the presence of a well worn trail in a sanctuary was enough to arouse suspicion. The camp appeared well and recently used, with beds and clothing and even torches and cooking equipment in evidence.

From this point our troubles began. Phillip chose a well marked trail which quickly began to look unlikely since it took us across gullies that were otherwise easily avoidable. He turned back and tried another trail only to return again claiming it quickly lead to a steep incline that would present difficulty to some members. However those who managed to keep up with him reported seeing a marijuana field.

Back down the slope and branching this time more to

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La Table 31st January 2010

Reginald Potter, with input from Eddison Baptiste

Monthly Field Trip Reports

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the east he took us through forest with no visible path, 'chipping' brush to mark the way. We quickly came to another steep incline and this time he decided to ascend. One look at the hill facing us and the less agile members were urged not to go further, but everyone insisted on attempting the slope. This was indeed the NE – SW ridge separating us from the La Table valley.

Well Phillip of course made the top of the ridge and proceeded immediately to follow it to the southwest which took us further away from our destination. By this time most of the group had had enough and agreed to return to the cars. 5 persons continued up the hill, called Phillip back and redirected him to follow the ridge in the opposite direction and look for an opportunity to descend. Off he went along the ridge then down the slope and his answers to calls becoming fainter. We followed his 'chipped' trail down through beautiful forest into a stream gully showing hard rock outcrops. The gully became larger as we descended and permanent water appeared, but eventually becoming too steep to continue with the time remaining. Small crayfish were seen in the stream, promising more and larger specimens lower down. In fact the La Table River is well known as a good crayfishing river for those who can get to it. At 13:33 hours we agreed it was time to start back. At this point we were about half way to the destination according to my GPS. There was no sound or sign of Phillip so we assumed he was pushing ahead to reach the sea.

Back up that terrible ridge and down the other side we slithered and made our way back the way we had come in, arriving at the cars at 16:20 hours.

A report was made to the Petrotrin police about the illegal logging (they had actually caught the offender but he got off on a technicality) and the marijuana planting. Phillip eventually emerged after everyone had left and made his own way home. He reported having reached the sea and found a better trail back, which took him near the hunters' camp and had no serious hill to cross. Maybe some time in the future we will try that way.

Photo Corner

Photos from the TTFNC – Bird Group -
BRASSO SECO WEEKEND 10th April, 2010.

Club members overnight at O'Farrell's Estate in Brasso Seco.

(humming birds) White-necked Jacobin—*Florisuga mellivora* and Bananaquit—*Coereba flaveola*.

Photos courtesy Gerard Williams

IN A BLAZE OF GLORY

Christopher K. Starr

Feature - botany

Members of the palm family can be regarded as the tropical plants par excellence. They are a conspicuous part of almost any tropical landscape, yet they are conspicuously absent outside of the tropics and subtropics. To someone who grew up in cold-temperate latitudes and never set foot in the tropics until he was almost 30, there is something unceasingly magical about live palms, up close and personal. Much has been written about these plants, and Corner's (1966) book is among the very readable general accounts of palms.

Up until the mid-1990s there were three towering talipot palms at the northwest corner of the UWI campus. Now there is one. In a few weeks there will be none.

The talipot palm, *Corypha umbraculifera*, is native to south India and/or Sri Lanka, although it has been in cultivation for so long that its exact native range is unknown. It is possibly the most massive of all palms, as its exceptionally stout trunk (sometimes more than a meter in diameter) can be up to 25 m tall. Its enormous palmate (i.e. fanlike, not featherlike in shape) leaves can be as much as 5 m long and broad on stems at least as long.

Talipot palm, *Corypha umbraculifera*
Photo Wikimedia

However, the most remarkable aspect of this palm is not its sheer size but its mode of reproduction. Most perennial plants -- mango is a familiar example -- go through repeated reproductive periods, a habit known as *iteroparity*. In the (less common) alternative, *semelparity*, the plant delays reproducing until the very end of its life, devoting everything to the production of a huge quantity of seeds at one time.

Semelparity is the reproductive pattern in only about 7% of palm species (Henderson 2002: Appendix I). The talipot palm is one of these. It grows vegetatively for about 40-70 years and then produces several great long inflorescences -- almost the largest of all inflorescences in the world -- smothered in some hundreds of thousands of small, pale-yellow flowers (illustrated by Comeau *et al.* 2003:90). When in flower, this palm is a powerful sight, conspicuous from a long way off. The very rarity of its flowering makes it that much more impressive.

These hundreds of thousands of flowers give rise to a similar quantity of fruits. The dark green fruit is round, about 3-4 cm in diameter, with a single seed in the center. This seed is round, smooth, about a centimeter in diameter, with a hard outer coat. After this grand reproductive output, the fruits fall to the ground and the palm, its reserves exhausted, falls and decays. As of this writing (March 2010), the one remaining talipot palm at UWI has produced its fruits, which are now falling to the ground. It is at the spectacular end of a long life.

Reproduction in most plants requires the participation of animals. Flowers of the talipot palm give off a sour smell that attracts bats, which presumably leads to pollination. In the present case, it is not plain how the palm came to be pollinated. I am not aware that any other of its species has been in flower in northern Trinidad in the last year. If it is self-pollinated, it seems not be suffering from it, as fruit and seed production is good, and many healthy seedlings are already growing nearby.

Another reproductive task for which many plants rely on animals is seed dispersal. The talipot palm would appear to be well adapted for this. The fruit, in its prime, is easy to chew off the seed and has a slight sweet taste. It also has a very unpleasant aftertaste that, I confess, has limited my sample size to just two. Nonetheless, to an animal that doesn't mind this aftertaste the fruits would appear to furnish an abundant and easily edible food

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IN A BLAZE OF GLORY

Christopher K. Starr

Feature - botany

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source. It is easy to conceive of a large fruit bat or rodent picking up a fruit, carrying it to a sheltered spot, eating the pulp and dropping the seed, and it is likely that many do. However, the seed is so uncommonly round and smooth that I suspect the main native seed disperser is a much bigger mammal that swallows large numbers of fruits entire and defecates the seeds some hours later at a distance.

The seeds of many plants contain substantial food reserves and so are eaten by animals. If you break open a sample of almost any fair-sized seeds, you are likely to find that some contain insect larvae, which are eating them from the inside. The incidence of this form of seed predation can be quite high. I once collected a large sample of cocorite palm (*Attalea maripa*) seeds and found that after a time a certain species of beetle emerged from almost every one of them, boring a neat emergence hold on its way out. The palm's huge production of fruits, in this case, yielded only a modest number of seeds capable of germination.

One advantage of semelparity may be in allowing the plant to escape from the attentions of seed-predatory insects. After all, a population of specialist insects cannot persist if its food source is present only sporadically. I have collected a sample of 200 talipot palm seeds and will wait to see what, if anything, emerges from them. I also have a sample of 200 seeds from the Manila palm (*Adonidia merrillii*), a common ornamental, to see what may be eating them from the inside. I should note that neither of these is native to this region, so it is possible that their seed predators were simply left behind when they were introduced. Even so, if this very rough experiment shows a difference between the two species, the talipot palm is predicted to suffer much lower seed predation on account of its semelparous habit.

Thanks to Paul Comeau and Julian Duncan for suggestions on this piece.

Talipot palm, *Corypha umbraculifera*
Photo Wikimedia

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PUNGENT IS AS PUNGENT DOES. *Part 1.*

Christopher K. Starr

Feature - serial

Pseudosphinx tetrio is a common hawk moth or sphinx moth (Sphingidae), found throughout most of the neotropics and into the southern edge of the USA. You may not be aware of the adult, which is a well-camouflaged mottled gray (e.g. http//:biological-diversity.info/pseudosphinx.htm). However, you have almost certainly noticed the larva, a robust caterpillar that grows to about 10 cm in length and more than 1 cm in diameter. And, unlike the adult, it is far from cryptic. Rather, it has bright pan-african colouration, contrasting red and yellow marks against a black background.

***Pseudosphinx tetrio* caterpillar**
Photo Wikimedia

P. tetrio feeds exclusively on frangipani (*Plumeria rubra*; Apocynaceae), a small tree with a relatively open growth form (Janzen 1983). Accordingly, the big, colourful caterpillars are by no means hidden as they munch on leaves and walk slowly on the stems. If you have frequent occasion to pass by any frangipani tree, you will likely have noticed this and may have remarked that there seems to be a distinct "crop" of caterpillars two or three times a year. At the end of larval development, the caterpillars walk down from their tree to pupate in leaf litter.

As naturalists, many of you have probably gone beyond these basic observations to pose questions about why the caterpillars are they way they are. In particular, how can they possibly survive? Each of them is a big, juicy piece of meat, sitting there in plain view, coloured in such a way as to call attention to itself. Yet you have never seen a bird or other predator eating one, have you? This is rather remarkable. Why are the abundant, voracious kiskadees (*Pitangus sulphuratus*) not feasting on these caterpillars to extinction?

I have posed this question many times over the years, and naturalists almost always suggest immediately that the caterpillars are distasteful and possibly poisonous. This very reasonable hypothesis arises naturally out of biological thinking. If the caterpillars do, in fact, have a nasty taste, it makes biological sense that they should advertise this by means of a distinctive appearance. In this reasoning, every kiskadee out there has at some time eaten one of the caterpillars (while you weren't watching), spat it out in disgust, and never tried another one.

That makes for a nice story, but is it true? I'm not going to tell you. I will, however, tell you how to find out for yourself. Pick up a late-stage caterpillar -- it will thrash about in your hand and attempt to bite, but it can't deliver more than a harmless little nip -- and prick the body wall with an ordinary pin or needle to a depth of a couple of millimeters. Then taste the droplet of blood that appears at the hole. Well, is it perceptibly bitter? Is there reason to think that the body as a whole is distasteful enough to deter a vertebrate predator? You can then release the caterpillar, which will suffer no lasting harm from the small wound. Do this simple (and perfectly safe) experiment now. We will take this topic a step further in the next issue.

Refernces

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A Tale of Two Lizards.

Hans E. A. Boos April 2010

male Iguana — Photo Wikimedia

These thoughts came to me by the joining of two unrelated incidents, linked by the fact that they both concerned lizards, in this case, Iguanas.

Several weeks ago while driving north into the Santa Cruz valley, at about half past one in the afternoon, it being about the hottest time of the day in one of the hottest, driest months we have had in years, just a little outside of the village of Boug Mulatress, ahead of me, I saw, crossing the road, a very large male Iguana. I could see it was a male by the heavy build and the spiny crest along his dorsal surface.

He was taking his time crossing the asphalt from left to right and I could see a car coming down the road towards me begin to speed up, and it seemed the intent of the driver to hit this magnificent lizard. After all no one swerves for a lizard as I was once told I did, by an American lady I was touring with, to avoid a *Polychrus marmoratus*, a cousin of the Iguana, on the Toco road. And Iguanas are considered just another kind of free wild meat, chance bounty, thrown up by fortune, regardless whether it is the hunting or closed season.

You see "lizards" are allowed to be hunted in the open season in Trinidad, and this I guess means that the Iguana is fair game no matter how you hunt it whether by shotgun , noose or motor car.

To try to save the old fellow I too speeded up and coming abreast of him I banged on the outside of my door, hoping the noise would scare him into a swift scuttle off the road to safety. But it was happening all too fast.

There was a car close behind me, so stopping suddenly was out of the strategy, so I banged away like mad and I saw the oncoming car swerving and braking to line up the lizard under the left wheel. As we went past I lost sight of the lizard and the next thing I heard was the screeching of brakes and the sickening crash of the car behind the Iguana assassin slamming into his rear end. A quick glance in my rear view mirror showed the two cars jammed together, crumpled bonnets and fenders pyramiding into the air. And that horrific shattering of glass that accompanies every motor car accident.

All for the greed to kill a lizard.

I could not see if the Iguana had made it to safety or was lying mangled under the wheels of the car. I can only hope he got away, and the driver in the front car got his just deserts, though I was angered that the driver in the car behind was now in a world of inconvenience and expense, over the stupidity of the driver who saw Iguana on the menu.

And to stop and walk back to see the extent of the damage and perhaps gloat over this idiocy could have been dangerous in these times, so I drove on with the hope for the safety of such a magnificent animal who had perhaps become lazy in his ripe years.

Then on the Field Naturalists' trip to Chacachacare on the last Sunday of March 2010, I was hiking from the landing at La Tinta over the ridge to the old Nunnery Dormitories, and was resting with a couple of other Club members at the top of a rather steep incline to catch my breath, when we could see and hear four young men coming up behind us at a brisk run. It was only when they sped past us, as we stepped aside on the narrow path to let them by, that I registered that they were carrying a sack, a sack that bulged with a very uneven object inside.

Looking enquiringly at my companions I silently signalled if they had noticed what I had, and they confirmed that they thought too that there was an iguana in the sack, and these young men were actively hunting these lizards that sometimes are found on this island.

By the time we realized that maybe we should have tried to stop them and release the unfortunate animal, they were gone out of sight and we never saw them again for the duration of our stay on the island.

It is this kind of ignorance and lawlessness that bodes very ill for all our diminishing fauna in Trinidad and Tobago.

Awards for outstanding contributions Botany 2008

Presentation Lester Doodnath to Winston Johnson

Presentation to Dan Jaggernauth by Juanita Henry

Esteemed stalwart members of the TTFNC Botany Group were presented with tokens for their very valuable input through the years to this very vibrant group. This occurred on March 15, 2008 on the Monos Field Trip. Winston Johnson of the National Herbarium of Trinidad and Tobago was presented Lester W. Doodnath, Head of the Botany Group with a scanned copy of the vegetation map from the book, The Natural Vegetation of Trinidad and Tobago by J. S. Beard. While Dan Jaggernauth, John Lum Young, Juanita Henry and Betsy Mendes were presented with blue crocus bags to carry their field apparatus for these trips. All tokens were supplied by Lester for their support and commitment.

Presentation to Dan Jaggernauth by Betsy Mendes

Presentation to Dan Jaggernauth by Juanita Henry

Club Christmas Lunch 2009 at Blanchisseuse

Photo Collage- photos courtesy Valerie Thumb

Management Notices

New members; Volunteers; Publications

Management Notices

New Members

The Club warmly welcomes the following new members:
Ordinary members:
Darshan Narang, Imran Khan, Mario Manuel, and Sharleen Lianna Khan.

New Website

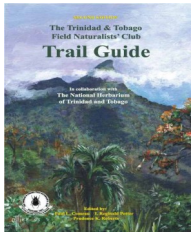
The Club has transferred to a new domain name and email address. The change allows us more space and greater control to reach out to the public and stay in touch with members.

Website: www.ttfnc.org **Email:** admin@ttfnc.org

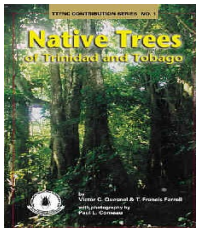
facebook http://www.facebook.com/pages/Trinidad-Tobago-Field-Naturalists-Club/68651412196?v=info

PUBLICATIONS

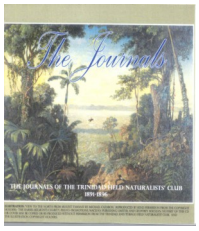
The following Club publications are available to members and non-members:



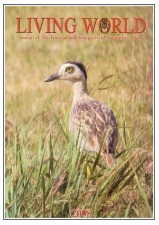
The TTFNC Trail Guide
Members = TT$200.00



The Native Trees of T&T
2nd Edition
Members = TT$100.00



Living world Journal 1892-1896 CD
Members = TT$175.00



Living World Journal 2008
Living World Journal back issues
Members price = free

MISCELLANEOUS

The Greenhall Trust

Started in 2005, in memory of Elizabeth and Arthur Greenhall, dedicated artist and zoologist respectively, the Trust offers financial assistance to aspiring artists and biologists (in areas of flora and fauna) in Trinidad and Tobago. Full details are available on their website: http://www.greenhallstrust-wi.org/link.htm

Club Polo Jerseys

Available Sizes: medium Colours: Kahki and green Costs: TT$50.00

Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club
P.O. Box 642, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

NOTES TO CONTRIBUTORS

Guidelines for Articles and Field trip reports:

Contributors and authors are asked to take note of the following guidelines when submitting articles for inclusion in the newsletter

1	Font Type:	• Times New Roman
2	Font Size:	• 12 point
3	Maximum Length:	• 1,750 words (approx. 3 pages unformatted)
4	Content	• Field trip reports should include a separate table listing the scientific names, common names and families of plants and animals already identified within the body of the report.
5	Photographs	• Provide images in the following format JPEG, BMP, PICT, TIFF, GIF • Images **must not** be embedded into the word processing files. • Information on the image content including names of individuals shown **must** be provided.
6	Format	• Acceptable formats for electronic submissions are doc and txt.
7	Deadline	• All articles **must** reach the editor by the ninth week of each quarter. • Submission deadline for the 2nd Quarter 2010 issue: **May 31st 2010.**
8	Email	• Electronic copies can be submitted to the 'Editor' at admin@ttfnc.org • Include the code **QB2010-2** in the email subject label.
9	Hard copies	• Hard copies can be delivered to the editor or any member of the Management Committee.