

ENVIRONMENT

A Naturalists' View: *Brasso Venado*

THE Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club visited Brasso Venado in central Trinidad during the month of July.

One of the highlights in this area is the Doppler weather radar station which sits atop one of the many hills in the area. Standing 20 metres high, the radar was constructed in 2008 and allows for the surveillance of weather at various ranges, up to a distance of 400 kilometres in all directions.

The lights of the radar facility attract numerous insects at night, including this white-plaquet sphinx (*Manduca albiplaga*) which settled on some nearby vegetation. The colouration of this moth allows it to effectively camouflage itself when resting on lichen-covered surfaces or on the trunks of trees.

Perhaps attracted by the presence of these insects, this squirrel cuckoo (*Piaya cayana*) put in a brief appearance. These birds are so named on account of the way they swiftly move along the branches of trees as they hunt for beetles and other insect prey.

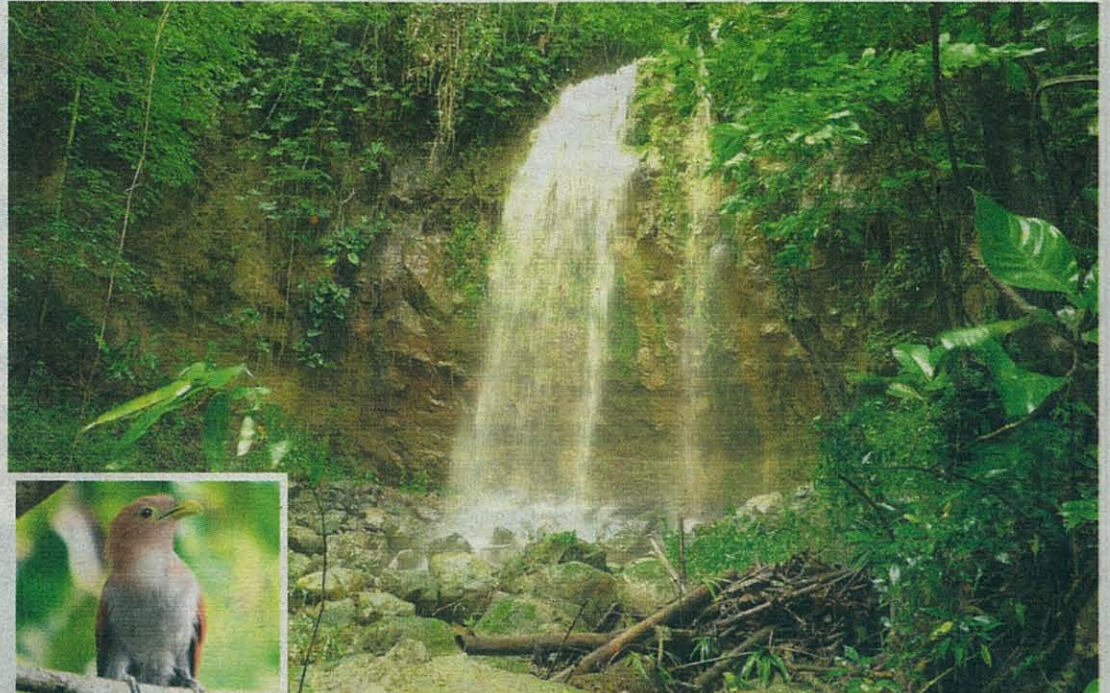
Nearby is a waterfall which has no popular name. The volume of water in this waterfall tends to be quite low, but that can change rapidly during the rainy



THE Brasso Venado Doppler weather radar station.

season, at which point the fall becomes quite a sight.

For more information on our natural environment, you can contact the Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club at admin@ttfnc.org or visit our website at www.ttfnc.org. The Club's next monthly meeting will be held on Thursday September 11 at St Mary's College, PoS. Lecture: "Recording the biodiversity of TT" presented by Mike Rutherford of the UWI Zoology Museum.



THE waterfall at Brasso Venado.



THE squirrel cuckoo gets its name from the way it quickly moves about branches.



THIS white-plaquet sphinx moth would be better camouflaged if it was on a lichen covered tree trunk.



THE TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB