

ENVIRONMENT

A Naturalist's View:

Grand Tacaribe



THE Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club over-nighted at Grand Tacaribe on the north coast of Trinidad during the month of August. This secluded bay is a nature lover's dream. It is fringed by coconut trees which quickly give way to tropical forests. The seas are rough but shorelife is abundant. The Club visits Grand Tacaribe annually.



GRAND TACARIBE is a nature lovers' dream.

During the night, light traps were set-up for surveying moths in the forest behind the beach. This bullseye moth (*Automeris liberia*) was one of many interesting species that we recorded. Normally concealed by the brown forewings, the bright orange hindwings and eyespots are exposed when the moth feels threatened, in order to scare off potential predators.

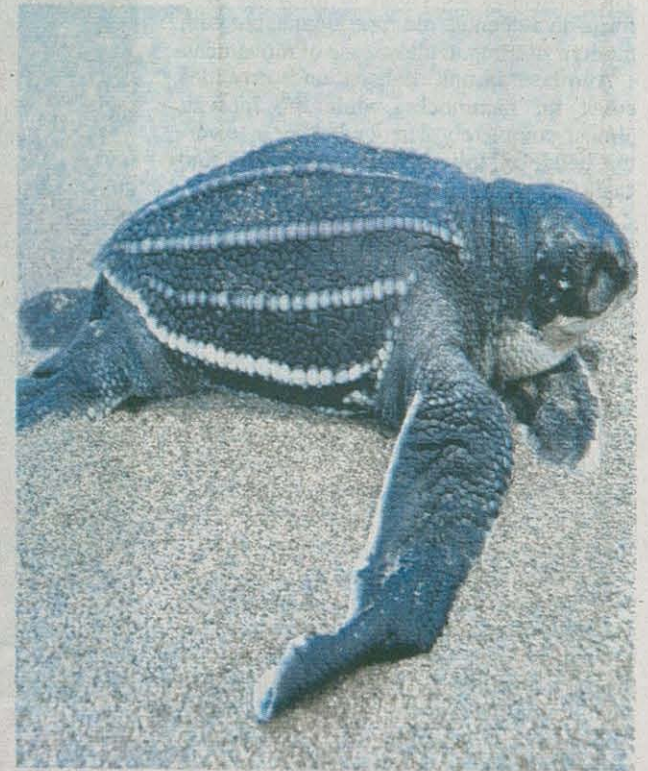


THIS bullseye moth (*Automeris liberia*) uses bright colours and alarming eyespots to protect itself.



THIS grasshopper (*Tropidacris cristata*) has beautiful red wings and a blue abdomen.

Another beautiful insect we encountered was the giant red winged grasshopper (*Tropidacris cristata*). The red wings are only visible when extended, usually only when the grasshopper is in flight. This might be another example of using bright colours to discourage predators, like birds, which attempt to capture them. These grasshoppers are partial to feeding on coconut leaves which are plentiful at Grand Tacaribe.



MANY sea-turtle hatchlings, like this dead leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*), will never make it all the way to adulthood.

Grand Tacaribe is a nesting site for sea-turtles. Tracks of a few turtles were observed on the beach but it was too late in the season to expect much turtle traffic. This dead leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) hatchling was seen on the beach. Hatchlings have high mortality rates and few will ever make it to adulthood. Predators, pollution and accidental capture in fishing nets all take their toll.

For more information on our natural environment, you can contact the Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club at admin@tfnf.org or visit our website at www.tfnf.org. The Club's next monthly meeting will be held today at St Mary's College, PoS. Lecture: "Kayaking in TT" presented by Glen Wilkes.