

FEATURES



SCENIC North Manzanilla Point.

A view of North Manzanilla Point

IN APRIL, the Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club journeyed to North Manzanilla Point in east Trinidad.

While the area was initially settled by Amerindians, it remained largely inaccessible until 1822 when it became one of the company villages in which black soldiers of the disbanded Third West India Regiment were settled.

On their way to the coast, our members walked the forest trails of the windbelt reserve and the "Road to Hell". The peculiar name is a remnant of the days of United States military training at the Camp Road base which was used to prepare troops for combat in the Far East. If training in the dense vegetation and swamps was not hellish enough, live ammunition was reportedly in use and several deaths occurred as a result.

Some of the notable observations that morning included a flock of orange-winged parrots (*Amazona amazonica*) feeding on the fruit of the matapal (*Clusia* sp). One of the parrots even left behind a lovely tail



CHEWED matapal and a parrot's tail feather.

feather as evidence of their presence alongside the chewed fruit.

Besides the matapal, exploration of the dry windbelt reserve, which serves to protect inland settled areas from the fierce wilds coming in over the sea, also turned up several wild immortelle (*Erythrina pallida*) which bore large amounts of seeds. These seeds are the familiar red and black jumbie beads often seen in handicraft (there is also a smaller jumbie bead which is produced by a vine).

Eventually members arrived at the scenic coast with its steep slopes, tall palmist palms and

interesting rock formations. As with many of our beaches, the shoreline was littered with sargassum.

This influx of sargassum has been linked to a new cluster of sargassum growing off the coast of Brazil and not the traditional Sargassum Sea in the North Atlantic.

All photos by Jeffrey Wong Sang. For more info on our natural environment contact the TT Field Naturalists' Club at admin@tfn.org, our website at www.tfn.org, Facebook and YouTube pages.



SARGASSUM on the shores.

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