

# THE FIELD NATURALIST

BULLETIN OF THE TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB

26th March 1981

## MEETINGS - 2nd QUARTER

You are invited to attend the monthly meetings of the club to be held in the Audio-Visual Room of St. Mary's College on 9th April, 14th May and 11th June 1981 at 5.30 p.m.

### Agenda

1. Confirmation of minutes
2. Business arising out of the minutes
3. Lecture
4. Announcements
5. Exhibits and Miscellaneous Notes
6. Other business

Lectures: Aldabra - Land of tortoises by Dr. Robin Bruce on 9th April  
The Geology of Trinidad by Dr. Krishna Persad on 14th May  
Studying the Trinidad butterflies by Dr. Matthew Cock on 11th June

### FIELD TRIPS

26th April - Bush Bush (Nariva Swamp). Leave St Mary's College, Pembroke St. at 6.30 a.m. Rendezvous at Curepe Junction 6.30 a.m.  
30th - 31st May - Paria, Tacarib. Leave St Mary's College 7.00 a.m. 30th May. Rendezvous at the start of the North Coast Rd at about 7.20 a.m. Camp overnight some at Paria some at Tacarib.  
28th June - Caroni Swamp. Details later.

### ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

The annual subscription is now due and members failing to pay by 31st March 1981 will receive no further communications from the club until the subscription is paid. Ordinary members pay \$20.00, junior members pay \$10.00 to the Hon. Treasurer please, not the Hon. Secretary. See cautionary tale inside. The Hon. Treasurer is Mr John Hilton, 4 The Straight, Knightsbridge, Cascade. Act now.

The programme of activities is included with this bulletin. Please note that the lectures for April and June as they appear in the programme have been changed to the order given in this bulletin.

Field trip to El Tucuche on 25th January 1981 (V.C. Quesnel)

The usual huge crowd of hikers turned up for this visit to El Tucuche which took place in fine weather. On this occasion, I was determined not to collect any plants in the valley and so I stayed with the bunch for quite a good way. However, by the time we were on the north face of Naranja, Frankie Farrell and I, joined by Brian Cooper, had slipped back to our usual place at the end of the procession. With our more leisurely pace, we were able to spot a flowering tree that none of us had seen before. It had inflorescences of delicate, crenellated white flowers all along the trunk and up into the branches some of which we collected. This was the plant that our chairman announced as new to Trinidad at our February meeting. It was thought at first to be an unrecorded species of Swartzia but was later identified as Macrolobium trinitense a Trinidad endemic only rarely collected before. Another interesting find was Calathea altissima a plant previously known only from the lowlands.

The zoologists had a good day too. Raymond Mendes, a visiting photographer, collected four specimens of Amphodus auratus, the golden tree frog that lives in the bromeliad Glomeropitcairnia and other animals such as scorpions, cockroaches and a crab. Hans Boos got several specimens of the so-called luminous lizard Proctoporus shrenkei. At the summit though cloud prevented a view of Las Cuevas some of us at least were rewarded with the sight of several specimens of the large and beautiful pigeon Columba fasciata.

This trip was at the same time cause for celebration and for dismay. Celebration because Frankie Farrell eclipsed Fr. Graf's record as the oldest person we know to have climbed El Tucuche. Fr. Graf's last trip to Tucuche took place on 26th March 1955 when he was 72 years old. Frankie was 73 last December and he looks set fair to breaking his own record for many years to come. The dismay came at the end of the trip when we found that several cars had been broken into and items stolen from them. A report was made to the Maracas Police but there is little chance of recovery of any of the stolen items.

Field trip to Trinity Hills on 22nd February 1981 (V.C. Quesnel)

As we left St. Mary's College the weather gave only a hint of what was to come. There were several delays along the way and Ewoud Heesterman had the misfortune to suffer 2 punctures and to find his spare tyre flat after the first so that we arrived at the main gate of the Texaco compound much later than planned. By this time, rain had begun to fall, not heavily but persistently and it never let up all day. To my knowledge, the club has never cancelled a trip because of rain and this one went on as planned. The butterfly collectors naturally had a poor time of it. I, like everyone else, was wet and uncomfortable but was happy enough with my collections. The others, or most of them, attained their objective of reaching Horne Derrick the highest point in the area. Capuchin monkeys are known to occur there but no-one reported having seen any.

The climb proved much steeper than I remembered it from our previous trip several years ago and the wet weather made it more difficult but some people seemed even to enjoy the mud.

It is clear that the vegetation is different from that further north and several butterflies known in the south are not known from the north. These differences perhaps account for the fact that so many people expressed a wish to return. We will indeed have to return because our side-trip to Lagon Bouffe never materialized and it should be well worth a visit.

There was one notable plant among those I collected viz. Psychotria horizontalis, a plant that had been collected only once before by Broadway way back in the twenties or thirties and that specimen is in the United States.

Footnote to the trip to Erin Savanna (V.C. Quesnel)

On the Erin field trip Yasmin Baksh and I collected a plant that has now been identified as a species of Buchnera previously unreported from the island. We don't know yet whether it is new to science, which is possible though unlikely, but with the finding of Psychotria horizontalis, and Aristolochia boosi also in the south, it emphasizes that the southern forests are worthy of a lot more careful botanical exploration.



Special Interest Groups

There has been no response yet to Doon Ramsaroop's offer to lead a Marine Special Interest Group. Anyone interested in snorkeling or sea shore life should communicate with the Hon. Sec. preferably in writing.

John Seyjagat is currently studying the silky anteater and would be glad to have help. Anyone interested should contact John.

Quesnel strikes again

Recently, at the start of the field trip to Fig Walk, I was given a \$20.00 subscription to give to the Hon. Treasurer. I was reluctant to take it saying that I would probably forget to give it to him. Under pressure I accepted and can now report that I have remembered that I have \$20.00 for the treasurer. The only trouble is I can't remember who gave it to me. Will the owner speak up. Only one person please! Let this be a warning to everyone else.

Fig Walk is now on the map, at least the camp site is. Details in next bulletin.

The journal is in page proof and will go to press in May.

90th Birthday Celebrations

Exhibitors please remember to get cracking on your exhibits.

What is the food plant of *Catonephile numilia* (Cr.) (Lepidoptera : Nymphalidae)?

M.J.W. Cock, Entomologist C.I.B.C.

Both Julius Boos and Clive Urich have pointed out to me the food plant of the Green Shoemaker, *Catonephile numilia* Cr., and I have found larvae on several occasions on plants growing on the ridge tops of the Northern Range. I recently had this plant identified by Dr. Dennis Adams as *Alchornea triplinervia* (Spr.) (Euphorbiaceae) the only Trinidad species of this genus, and known also from the Guyanas and Amazonia. Malcolm Barcant (Butterflies of Trinidad and Tobago, Collins, 1970) gives the food plant of *C. numilia* as Fiddlewood, *Citharexylum fruticosum* (L) of the Verbenaceae. The only other food plant records I can find are for *Alchornea cordata*, *A. iricurana* and *Nectandra venulosa* (Lauraceae) in Brazil (Silva, A.G. d'A et al. 1968. Quarto catalogo dos insectos que vivem nas plantas do Brasil seus parasitos e predadores. Ministerio da Agricultura, Rio de Janeiro). I consider it unlikely that a species such as *C. numilia* would utilize members of three families as foodplants, and that the normal foodplants are *Alchornea* spp. Incidentally, the Orange Banded Shoemaker *A. acoutius* (L) is recorded from the same foodplants as *C. numilia* in Brazil, so it is likely that its foodplant is also *A. triplinerve*. Since this species has not (as far as I know) been reared in Trinidad, it would be worth looking for larvae on *A. triplinerve* in Forest Reserve where the species has been caught in the past.

On the foodplants of *Actinote* spp. (Acraeidae) in Trinidad (M.J.W. Cock)

There seems to be a certain amount of confusion regarding the foodplants of the two species of *Actinote* found in Trinidad. Kaye (1920, A catalogue of the Trinidad Lepidoptera Rhopalocera (Butterflies). Mem. Dept. Agric. T&T No. 2), states that for the small lacewing *A. pellenia*: "larvae on *Eupatorium odoratum* also on *Mikania scandens* (W. Buthn) *Eupatorium odoratum* (P.L. Guppy)." and for the large lacewing *A. anteus*: "larva on *Ageratum* or *Eupatorium*" Barcant (1970, Butterflies of Trinidad and Tobago, Collins) reduces this to *E. odoratum* as the foodplant for *A. pellenia* and omits any foodplant for *A. anteus*.

In Trinidad, the normal foodplant of *A. pellenia* is *E. inulaefolium* (the species with white flowers in September and October). It will not feed on *E. odoratum* (Cruttwell, pers. comm.) although it will sometimes feed on *M. micrantha* (own observation). *M. scandens* does not occur in Trinidad and was probably misidentified for *M. micrantha*. The normal foodplant of *A. anteus* is *M. vitifolia* (own observations and I have seen it on no other hosts in Trinidad).

These observations are only reliable for Trinidad. For example *A. anteus* will feed on *E. odorata* in Central America (Cruttwell pers. comm.) and *A. pellenia* is recorded from other Compositae in Brazil. All the foodplants mentioned above belong to the tribe Eupatorieae of the Compositae, and it is of interest to note their restricted host-specificity within this small taxonomic unit.