THE FIELD NATURALIST

Quarterly Bulletin of the Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club

July – September 2013 **Issue No: 3/2013**

Field Trip Report, Sunday September 30, 2012

CHERT HILL

Report by Reg Potter

Only 5 persons turned up for the trip to Chert Hill on September 30, 2012. *(continued on page 6)*

Left to right : **Dan Jaggernauth, Bebe Rajaram, Eddison Baptiste, Betsy Mendes, Esparanza Luengo, and Bobby Oumdath, on the bank of a small stream at the base of Chert Hill; a very steep hill that rises suddenly made primary of the very loose "chert" rocks that make it very difficult to climb. It is believed early Arawaks used chert to make arrow heads.** *Photo: Reginald Potter*

Inside This Issue

1 **CHERT HILL**
(Field Trip Report, Sunday September 30, 2012)
- Reginald *Potter*

3 **FISHING POND BEACH AND ENVIRONS**
(Field Trip Report, Sunday June 30, 2013)
- *Reynold C. Boyce*

7 **RIO SECO WATERFALL**
(Field Trip Report, Sunday July 28, 2013)
- *Kris Sookdeo*

10 **KAPUR RIDGE**
(Field Trip Report, Sunday September 28, 2008)
- *Bruce Lauckner*

12 **JABIRU STORK**
(Sunday Sept. 15, 2013 Report/Observation)
- *Jalaludin Khan*

15 **WEST INDIAN MANATEE**
(Stranding Reports/Observations)
- *Jalaludin Khan*

17 **MONKEY- BUSINESS IN NATURAL HISTORY**
- *Hans Boos*

20 **SEA TURTLE CONSERVATION IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**
- *Ian Lambie*

Short Notes

22 **TOADS HERE AND THERE**
- *Christopher Starr*

22 **DESERT LOCUSTS IN THE CARIBBEAN**
- *Christopher Starr*

23 **HERPETOLOGICAL COINCIDENCES AND CONNECTIONS 1975**
- Hans Boos

27 Management Notices

28 Notes to Contributors

Editor's note :
Many thanks to all who contributed and assisted with articles and photographs.

Disclaimer :
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July - September 2013

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Field Trip Report, Sunday June 30, 2013

FISHING POND BEACH AND ENVIRONS

Report by Reynold C. Boyce

At 8:30 am a group of about two dozen members assembled at the Tourist Information Centre in the Fishing Pond Lagoon area.

After a brief introduction by Dan Jaggernauth I was asked to give some brief remarks as a resident of the village. Having lived in Fishing Pond for a mere eleven years the area is still shrouded in mystery to me. For some reason the glory days of extensive rice farming - during the first half of the last century - had withered away. However, the large wheels and other metal fixtures remain behind as relics of a very sophisticated 6-stage, *sluice-gate* irrigation system set up by the colonial authorities. Evidently, two watchmen were employed around the clock - adjusting the wheels - to ensure the adjacent Caigual river fed the rice fields with just the right level of water. So successful was this system, with its one-acre plot per family, that Fishing Pond village supported at least 3 rice mills up until the 1970s .

As we headed around the lagoon's dirt track a number of newly dug irrigation ponds were evident. These have been the latest initiative of the Ministry of Food Production to support what's left of the local farming community in their endeavour to grow short crops. However, these practices continue to limit the restoration of the natural lagoon habitat.

Nonetheless, a number of native plants continue to survive. Among these include:

- Extensive amounts of **Aquatic canna,** *Canna glauca* whose rounded seed pods act as chac-chacs used as percussion instruments in local music.
- **Fwen/Sweet broom,** *Andropogon bicornis* whose long dried inflorescence acts as sweeping brooms when better can't be done.
- **Cupid paint brush,** *Emilia fosbergii* whose brilliantly red flowers brighten the mood of even the most stolid of passers-by.
- **Water thistle,** *Neptunia plena* whose flowers and retractable leaves are almost identical to those of the ever-present timarie except for its bright yellow flowers and minute thorns.

Left: **Rohan Cheenibass and**
Right: **Dan Jaggernauth examining a sluice-gate and canal, one of the relics of a once very sophisticated 6-stage, sluice-gate irrigation system set up by the colonial authorities in the early 1900s**

Photo: Edison Baptiste

A few local fauna showed their presence as well. A **pied water tyrant,** *Fluvicola pica* jumped from one aquatic canna to another displaying its contrasted black and white wings. Also fluttering close to the ground was a **southern lap-wing,** *Vanellus chilensis.* Further ahead an innocuous pigeon pea plant displayed a batch of **stag-horned beatles** on its stem (species unidentified). Two of these kept entangled in their mating position even as they tried to escape from our encroachment.

Walking over a plank-covered drain we entered the "Nature Trail" which heralded a quarter mile or so of pathway into the natural wind belt forest. This cool undulating walk took us alongside many native trees which were tagged - a while back - with their scientific and common names.
Among these were the following:

- **Monkey apple,** *Genipa Americana*
- **Wild primrose/watikae,** *Rheedia acuminate*
- **Bois pois,** *Swartzia pinnata*
- **Balata tree,** *Manikara bidentata*

Of these, *Rheedia* attracted the most attention since it harboured an unusual yellow- skinned, tomato-shaped fruit with a delicious sour/sweet flavour. Another object catching the attention of the group was a large Hummingbird nest amidst the low lying branch of a tree. The flurry of photographic attention, however, kept the nest builder away making it impossible to identify the species of the Hummingbird.

At last, after a tricky balancing skip and jump over a swampy area, we came upon the wild Atlantic-swept beach. As luck would have it, we discovered a short coconut tree at the edge of the beach with a hearty crop of water nuts. There seem to be just enough nuts to refresh us all after the hour-long journey.

As we walked along the sand we witnessed the newly formed tracks of what had to be **leather back turtle,** *Dermochelys coriacea* laying sites.

Then to our great horror the carcass of a butchered turtle lay on the sand minus its head which was found a few yards away. Dan pasted the head and body together, posing in the process, alongside his handy work, to the photographic delight of members.

As we continued along the beach we constantly had to skip over chains of crawling vines heading to meet the crashing waves. Their fragile pink flowers easily identified them as *Ipomoea pes-caprae* commonly known as **sea vine** or **beach morning glory**. All the while, both **(black)** *Avicennia germinans* and **(red)** *Rhizophora mangle* **mangrove** trees lined the beach separating it from the extensive swamp that lay behind. In fact, in the not too distant past, the Civilian Conservation Corp. had constructed a board walk which provided a shortened, alternative route to the beach – giving access to the nesting sites of crabs, as well as other fauna that inhabited the swamp. However, like most state projects, maintenance fell by the wayside and nature soon took its course to the detriment of visitors and other beach lovers.

Walking back along the beach after a short picnic lunch, those who were marine inclined would have noticed the small spiral-shell relics of the **ram-shorn squid,** *Spirula spirula* washed up among the ocean drift. These shells are from small pelagic animals that exist almost worldwide in most ocean waters.

On getting back to the cars the group was invited to the Fishing Pond home of yours truly for homemade Mauby and Sweat Bread. However, the field trip did not end here, for amidst the mango and other fruit trees the group inspected the giant nests of two wasp species: the **jep tattoo,** *Synoeca surinama* and the **cohong jep,** *Polybia rejecta* both revered for their attacking nature and ferocious sting when provoked.

The group disbanded around 1:30pm but not before viewing a museum-styled collection of molluscs (shells), insects and assorted invertebrates collected locally and internationally over the years. Judging

from the length of time spent in conversation, it's fair to say, an interesting time was had by all.

Left :

Dan Jaggernauth showing the yellow flower of water thistle (*Neptunia plena)* whose flowers and retractable leaves are almost identical to those of the ever-present timarie *(Mimosa pudica)*

Below looking south :

Wild Atlantic - wind swept beach east of Fishing Pond

Photos: Eddison Baptiste

CHERT HILL

(Continued from page 1)

This was the second time we had visited it, the first being in September 2006 when we had a large turnout, and a very successful trip that was! The drive took us through Cumuto where we branched left and continued to the Little Coora left turn. From there we followed Little Coora to the end where we branched right on the Guaico Tamana Road collecting Bobby and Esperanza at their home, then onward to the south. Shortly after passing through the little village of Guaico the road deteriorated steadily, becoming eventually a largely gravel road. Past Ragoonan and McHardy traces (those I remember) we came to Romain Trace which turned off to the left up and over a hill where we parked near to two thatched huts of the Forestry Division.

The trail is a wide open, cleared firebreak on the right off Romain Trace, just past the huts. After the brief routine introduction by Dan we set off at 08:45 down to a river crossed by a bridge, and on through a plantation forest of teak, and a wild profusion of the dashine-like plant 'malanga' which seemed to have colonized the open trail. Red Howler monkeys were heard quite close at hand to the south seemingly protesting loudly at the sprinkling rain that had started. This wide trail essentially follows a low ridge and heads more or less south, but then, worryingly turns increasingly south west, which is not the correct bearing for Chert Hill. Vegetation seen was a more or less monoculture of teak by the Forestry Division, but some cedar and a few mahogany were seen and a few wild palmiste palms.

Eventually after about 2.5 km the wide trail ended and I took a GPS reading which showed us to be heading away from Chert Hill. Taking GPS readings in the rain, which had by now started, is slow, and the danger is that one's map would get wet and the typical computer-printer ink would run leaving the would-be navigator with nothing! Reluctantly Dan agreed to turn around and head back to a side turning he knew.

Having back-tracked to the side turning we followed this trail (which would have been a left turn had we taken it on the way in) and followed this north east down a gentle incline. Dan pointed out the pois doux fruit in abundance on the ground which is a favourite feed for lappe. A fairly large snake disappeared rapidly into the bush. Being a dark colour it liked somewhat like a tigre or machette. Then we arrived at a river flowing north north west and noted another trail to our left also arriving at this point from the north west. The river here shows evidence of hard rocks which strew the river bed. Many of these are the "chert" rocks of Chert Hill.

Across the river we immediately came to a fork from the south and followed what seemed to be a hunter's trail more or less following the left fork upstream, now flowing from the east. The trail was fairly clear but left the river for a brief excursion uphill but rejoined it where it was flowing from the south. Thereafter the trail became very confused and we were navigating by GPS which told us that Chert Hill was ever closer but still invisible. Frequent rain showers meant that by now we were all soaked. Concerns were now mounting that we would run out of time so we agreed to continue till 12.00 noon before giving up.

At just about noon we came to a cliff rising steeply out of the forest with the river flowing at its base. This is the north face of Chert Hill and it always amazes me that such a large hill is completely invisible in the forest until you more or less bump into it. We skirted the base to the west until a climable spot was reached. The toil up the hill was difficult but all made it to the top, arriving about 12:20 and scouting around the 'summit'. The mosquitoes here are absolutely terrible and Betsy's citronella and Esperanza's 'Odorono' were much in demand but of limited effect. We saw outcrops of the 'chert' that is believed to have been used by early Arawak Indians in making tools and arrow heads and, possibly, knives. This rock is not actually a chert but an extremely fine-grained pink and light brown siliceous mudstone that can be broken to give a sharp cutting edge. Both Dan and I thought the top looked rather smaller than on previous visits and we did not sight

(continued on page 9)

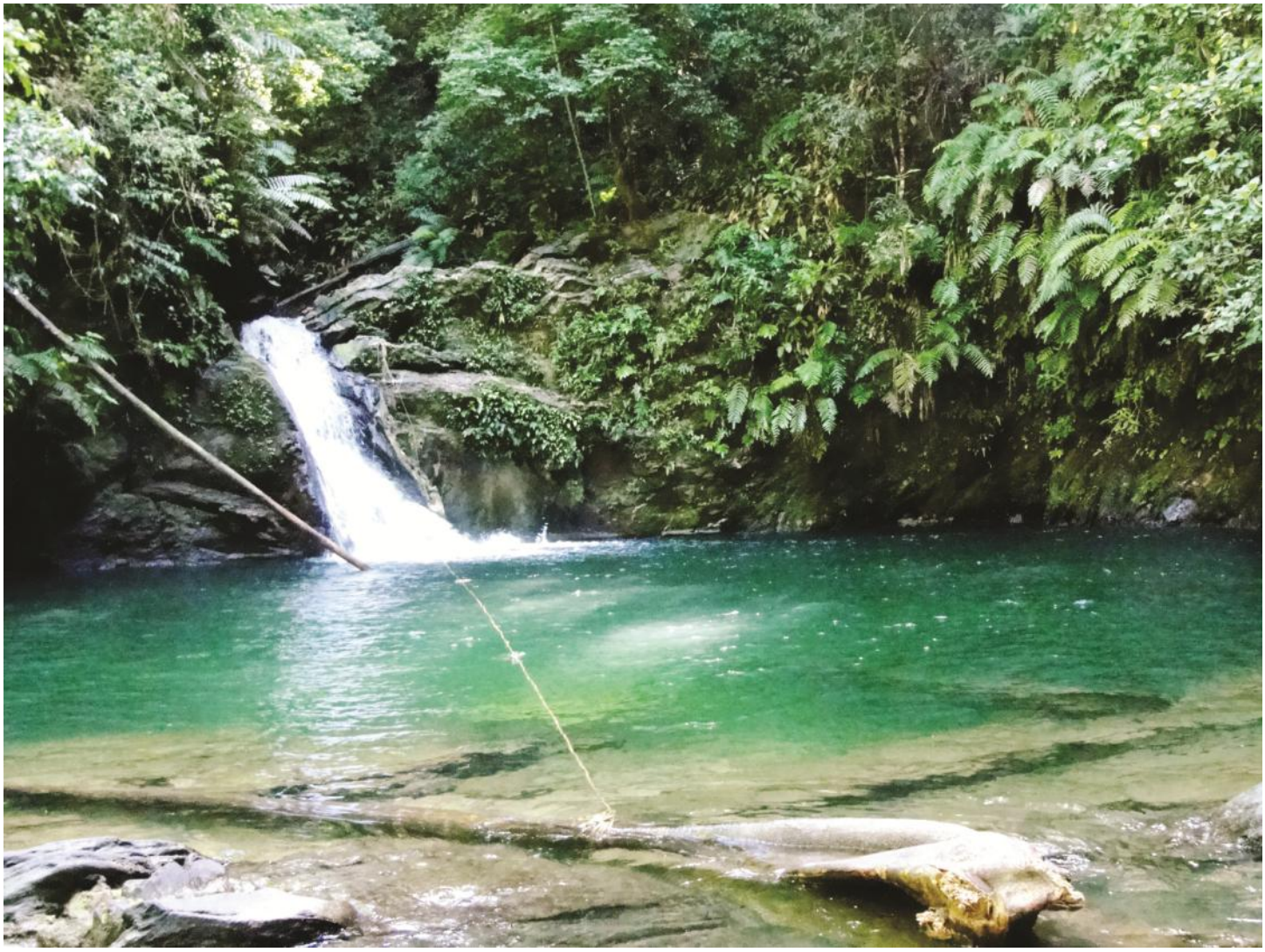
Field Trip Report, Sunday July 28, 2013

RIO SECO WATERFALL

Report by Kris Sookdeo

The Rio Seco Waterfall is one of the better known waterfalls in Trinidad and on Sunday July 28, 2013 fifteen members of the Club turned out for the short field trip. The long drive to Salybia was relatively uneventful but one thing I did notice was the number of roadside stalls in Valencia which were offering Fat Pork for sale – one of our native fruits which appears to be slowly declining in popularity.

On arrival at Salybia, the convoy of vehicles drove up Salybia Matura Trace to the start of the trail. Unfortunately, the trailhead was marred by several bags of trash that had evidently been deposited there, intact, by returning hikers but had now been torn apart and scattered, perhaps by scavenging animals. Also of note were several pairs of shoes, tied together by the laces, which had been thrown into the trees and now remained dangling in the branches above us.



Rio Seco Waterfall 2013

Photo: Eddison Baptiste

After a brief pre-trip meeting, we set off through the forest. Along the way we noted several interesting trees including genipa, *Genipa americana* and mora, *Mora excelsa* - a particularly common species in this area. In fact as we proceeded deeper into the forest we found that the mora dominated large sections of the trail. So large are some of these mora trees that a few specimens along the well marked trails had been cut down and the large stumps left intact either as a curiosity or as large garbage receptacles. The forest undergrowth was full of mora seedlings of various ages. Indeed, the dominance of mora is said to be partially attributed to this high seedling density. Also, mora seedlings are known to contain a toxin which might limit the damage that seed predators can inflict. Dan Jaggernauth uprooted a seedling about 45 centimeters tall and showed the massive seed that helped sustain it.

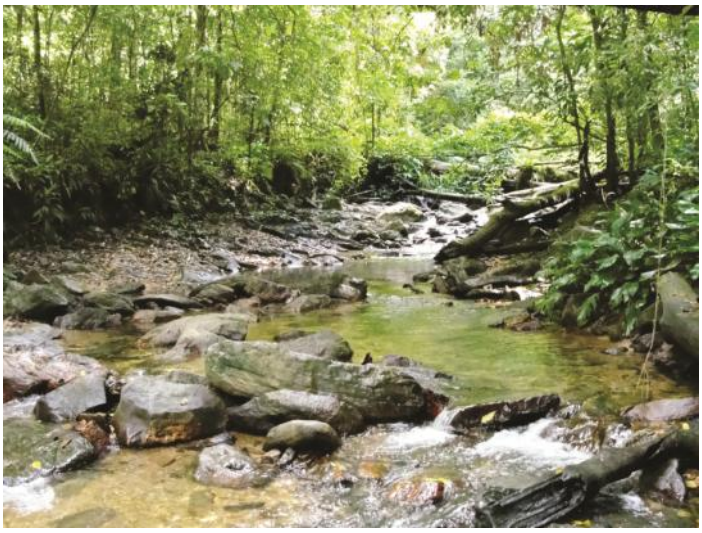
Pressing on, we eventually made it to the end of the trail and we were greeted by the beautiful sight and sounds of the Rio Seco Waterfall. While the fall did not appear to be particularly high, roughly 4.5 meters above the water surface, the plunge pool is in fact quite deep and was estimated by Dan to be around 7 meters feet. While we did not measure the width of the pool itself, it looked to be about 9 meters wide.

As such, there was ample space for Club members to rest, snorkel, swim or look for fish and anything else of interest. Indeed there were quite a few fish to be seen but by far the most common species was the mountain mullet, *Agonostomus monticola*. The mountain mullet is unusual among the Mugilidae/ Mullet family in that it travels far inland away from the coastal environments typical of the family. Indeed they are a familiar sight at several waterfalls on the island. They are omnivorous, eating a range of plant and animal matter and we were able to easily attract them by tossing in bits of bread or rice.

In addition to the mullet, I noted several jumping guabines, *Anablepsoides hartii*, a small goby-like fish and a large brown crab (both of which went unidentified). The pool and stream was also occupied by several small prawns, *Macrobrachium sp*. I really regretted not having brought a net with me so that we could get a better look at all the aquatic life and I resolved to keep that in mind for the next time the Club visited such locations.

A small freshwater prawn, *Macrobrachium sp*

Photo: Kris Sookdeo



Rio Seco - mid river

Photo: Eddison Baptiste

Dan in the meantime had decided to walk up the short trail to the top of the fall and would later casually report to us that there was a mapepire balsain, *Bothrops cf. asper* on the trail (this of course not being the kind of thing that worries our fearless trip leader).

After about 40 minutes a hiking group arrived and the Club members gave way so that the newcomers could enjoy the falls. In fact, as we made our way back out we passed several other noisy groups on their way to the soon-to-be-crowded falls – a good reminder on the virtue of the Club having an early start when visiting popular locations. Also making a lot of commotion on the way out were several calling bearded bellbirds, *Procnias averano* which, despite careful searching, could not be located in trees above. Another point of interest on the trail was small metal sign that Dan had evidently installed several years ago which read "DO NOT LITTER PREVENT ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION DAN J. 31/DEC 97". One final observation of note was a lone ornate hawk-eagle, *Spizaetus ornatus* that I heard and then saw circling high above the forest canopy.

The rest of the walk out was uneventful and all members made it back to their vehicles safely and contented with what had been a lovely trip.

Swamp bloodwood,
Pterocarpus officinalis
on the bank of Rio Seco's (lower river)
very near to the river's mouth

Photo: Eddison Baptiste

CHERT HILL

(Continued from page 6)

the well-known coconut tree from which we had picked nuts on the last visit. None of the famous yams that give rise to the local name "Yam Hill" were seen either.

It was time to be getting back however so we all descended and were back in the river by 13:00 where we ate some lunch before proceeding. A canonball tree was seen beside the river. The trek back was much quicker now that we knew the way. At the first river crossing we had arrived at going in, we took the other trail we had sited and this took us all the way to the big wide fire trace with the rich growth of 'malanga' we had started on. We were back at the huts by 14:00, tired but successful we thought.

Back home I plotted the GPS readings on the map and imagine my surprise – we had missed the main hilltop entirely! In our haste to get back we had missed the point where two hills are joined by a fairly flat neck on the south east, leading to the main Chert Hill where we would have seen all the familiar land marks observed on the last trip. The descent on that side is more gentle and that route eventually crosses the Cuche River and leads on to Biche. But that is another trail for another time.

Field Trip Report, Sunday September 28, 2008

KAPUR RIDGE

Report by Bruce Lauckner

Although this field trip was advertised as visiting Kapur Ridge, it turned out to be a visit to a very interesting old oil field located some 5 km after the Rio Claro Guyaguyagare Road turns eastward, after heading in a fairly straight south easterly direction for 15 km from Rio Claro. This location is about 10 km north west of the Kapur Ridge as marked on the 1977 series 1:25,000 map of Trinidad, but as place names on those maps were not always synonymous with local usage we could not be certain that we were not near to Kapur Ridge.

Only about 12 naturalists decided to make this trip; perhaps others were put off by the distance to be driven and by the torrential mid morning to early afternoon downpours of the previous days, which were expected to be repeated.

The approach route was from Grand Bazaar to the Tarouba turn off the Solomon Hochoy highway, thence to the Naparima Mayaro road to Rio Claro (with the bypass taken to the south of Princess Town). This seemed a rather tedious alternative to the more direct and scenic route through Tabaquite. However, when this correspondent returned via the Tabaquite route, it took some 10-15 minutes longer, even though the road carried little traffic and was quite well paved for all but a few miles through Brasso and Flanagin Town.

We left Rio Claro and travelled along the poorly maintained Rio Claro/Guyaguayare Road. About 2 km after the Cat's Hill Road turn off, a newish looking sign appeared that advised "Road closed". Trini motorists usually ignore road signs and we duly paid little attention. However after another very slow 15 minutes driving, we encountered a muddy morass where a culvert appeared to have been washed away and on the other side of the morass was a backhoe apparently sent to repair the damage. As this was Sunday there was no one at work, except a young watchman who was probably not expecting to see one vehicle for the whole weekend and who was clearly very surprised to see our convoy.

The trip leader, Reg Potter, got out his GIS positioning equipment and determined that we were about 3 km short of our destination and somewhat tentatively asked the group whether we should walk. Although the sun was very hot and humidity very high (seemingly promising a good downpour in the next couple of hours) all present readily voted to walk.

The road was fairly straight and quite undulating and although both sides were thick with forest there was little shade on the roadway. The sides of the road had not been cleaned for some time and typical Trinidad weeds were observed. Some of these are listed at the end of this report. A Short Horn Grasshopper was sunning itself on the bank of roadside vegetation. Dan Jaggernauth stretched into the forest and pulled out the pod of *Pentastoma broadwayi* and also a piece of stem of *Uncana tomentosa.* A prominent forest tree was pois doux and the advantage of walking became clear as we heard the incessant call of the cicada, which certainly would not have been heard in an air conditioned vehicle. Many butterflies were sighted including the migratory American Monarch and White Tailed Page. The latter swarms every 7-8 years towards the end of September; this year does not appear to be a "swarm" year, but a good few were fluttering around.

None of those present were knowledgeable enough to identify many birds, but a White Swallow Tail was noted (common apparently in South Trinidad); also spotted in a branch was an attractive yellow bellied

bird; nobody was able to identify this, but several pictures were taken from a distance. Perhaps one of these will aid identification.

Seemingly at random, Reg announced that it was time to enter the forest and almost immediately we encountered some old pieces of metal. We soon came upon more historical artefacts including pieces of oil drilling equipment, a large boiler and several old oil wells.

Reg was able to give us a very comprehensive history of the oil field in this location. In 1902, nearby Guyaguayare saw Trinidad's first oil exploration activity. We were in a field which was opened for drilling in 1928, but the returns were not sufficient for commercial purposes and the field was abandoned in 1939. Only 49,800 barrels were produced in that 11 year period, which was a very poor return. The field was set up at some cost; building of the original Rio Claro/Guyaguayare Road started in 1911, but only went for 13 km and did not reach Guyaguayare. Burnt clay was used to construct the further 5-7 km or so to the oilfield. (This explains the sudden change in direction from south east to east noted in the first paragraph). As many as 22 wells were sunk, but only 13 produced; the deepest well was 2,890 feet. We located (with Reg's help) four of these wells. In their vicinity the stench of hydrocarbon was quite strong and oil was oozing out of the ground at one location. A definite bubbling sound of gas was heard at another well; the geologists amongst us said that if we lit a match we might get a pretty flame or we might get an explosion big enough to flatten the forest. Nobody decided to light up and investigate.

The relatively large pieces of equipment in the middle of forest which was not quite primary, but certainly not too degraded was a surprise to all. There was some evidence of old roads, but the forest had almost reclaimed totally. There was some criticism of the old oil companies for putting profit ahead of the environment, but the truth is that they took no more of the forest than they needed and this has now been reclaimed.

Vegetation in the forest was fairly typical of lowland Trinidad forest. Fig trees included *Ficus maxima* and *Ficus amazonia*; fruit was available from many hog plum trees and further refreshment was available from the edible nut of *Ommphalia sp.* (Hunter Man's Nut). A few other forest trees are listed below, but even Victor Quesnel was unable to identify a very tall tree with large buttress roots; all that could be ascertained is that it was not a Fig species, but the leaves were above the canopy of the other trees and difficult to see.

We scrambled back to the road as the thunder was rumbling ominously. Then we noticed a sign warning travellers of the dangers of flames in the area. A couple of out of place looking royal palms was a sign to passers by that somebody once was trying to "develop" this area. The return to the cars was fairly uneventful; the sun had by now disappeared, but the thunder and heavy rain managed to keep to the background. 

Sunday September 15, 2013
Report/Observation of a

JABIRU STORK, *Jabiru mycteria*

In Nariva Swamp, Trinidad.
Contribution to Natural History Ornithology Record
of Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Reporter/Observer: Jalaludin A. Khan
Contact email : jhantt@gmail.com

Observation of one adult jabiru stork, *Jabiru mycteria* was made mid morning on Thursday, September 12, 2013 in Kernahan Village, Manzanilla, Nariva Swamp, Trinidad. The bird was observed actively feeding on juvenile black conch, Pomacea urseus and in flight within the irrigation furrows of a watermelon agricultural field. Farmers in the area also reported seeing the bird feeding on armoured cat-fish or *cascadura, Hoplosternum littorale*. It was noted that the bird was tolerant of the close presence of humans and a farmer's dog while feeding, and did not move off or fly away as the three human observers came within fifteen metres of it.

The bird was reported to be one of a pair of mature jabiru storks, *Jabiru mycteria* that have been present in the local area over the last two months within the Kernahan Village agricultural fields. This is the second observation of this species in the wild by this author, who can reconfirm the 1998 first documented reported sighting of the species in Trinidad and Tobago at Buccoo Point wetlands in Tobago (The Field Naturalist, 1988).

The species distribution for Trinidad has been reported from south western and eastern marsh wetlands and from the south western wetland of Tobago. There have been over eight reported observation of the jabiru storks, *Jabiru mycteria* within Trinidad and Tobago, from Nariva Swamp, Trinidad (Sookdeo 2011), Mon Desir, South Oropouche, Trinidad (Sookdeo 2009), Nariva Swamp (Trinidad and Tobago Newsday Newspapers, 2009), Buccoo Point area swamp, Tobago (The Field Naturalist, 1988). The species is reported to be a very rare visitor to the wet lands of Trinidad and Tobago (Kenefick et al 2007). Only five records have been reported in the main bird reference guides over the last twenty years, the last being in 2009 (Kenefick et al 2007); a single record was reported from Tobago in 1988(French R. 1991).

The jabiru storks, *Jabiru mycteria* is a protected species in Trinidad and Tobago under the Conservation of Wild Life Regulations (Act No. 16 of 1958). After discussion with local community farmers, a species protection and conservation intervention action needs to be put in place immediately to protect and conserve the pair of birds, due to the high risk of their being killed by illegal hunting and or other human related harassment. Daily protection monitoring of the birds is recommended. This can be started through a community and farmers education partnership meeting, where a species protection and conservation notice education flyer could be circulated among farmers and residents; it could also be posted at local farms, in homes, shops, and religious houses, etc. and supported by daily (morning and afternoon) and weekly local species protection monitoring by National Wildlife Game wardens in the area.

Acknowledgements
Kernahan Village farmers for their contributions.

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Jabiru stork, *Jabiru mycteria*

Thursday, September 12, 2013.

Kernahan Village, Manzanilla, Nariva Swamp, Trinidad agricultural fields eastern Nariva Swamp, Trinidad and Tobago

Photograph by Ally Ifill.

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Jabiru storks, *Jabiru mycteria*
General Species Information

McKinley, A. 2006 report that jabiru storks geographic species range can be found in the Western Hemisphere, as far north as Mexico and as far south as Argentina. They are most commonly found in wetland regions of Brazil and Paraguay. Jabiru have been spotted in Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Columbia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, French Guiana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, and Venezuela, with rare sightings as far north as Texas. They are found near rivers and ponds, usually in large groups. They prefer open wetlands, especially flooded savannas. They are also seen in freshwater marshes and open country that is near water.

These birds usually build their nests atop tall trees.

Jabiru storks can grow as tall as 1.15 m and weigh as much as 8 kg. Their wingspan averages 2.6 m. The beak is upturned, black, and broad, and can extend to 30 cm. The plumage is white, the skin on the head and neck are featherless and black. On the top of the head there is a silver tuft of hair. There is a 75 mm band of skin around the lower portion of the neck. When jabiru are inactive, the band is a deep pink. When they are irritated, it turns a deep scarlet colour. jabiru also have a featherless red pouch at the base of the neck. Both genders have dark brown irises and black legs and feet. An oval of pink skin is located just above the sternum, but is only visible when the bird is erect just before take-off. Males are noticeably larger than females and have a larger and straighter bill.

Like most storks, they have an average lifespan of about 30 years, although some have been known to live past the age of 40.

Their reported behaviour is that they are active during the day and are social, being found in groups in both breeding and non-breeding seasons. jabiru do not migrate, although they do move within a large range throughout the year, seeking optimal foraging areas. During breeding season mated pairs may separate themselves from large groups, but nests are found near other nesting jabiru. Jabiru patrol wetlands with long wing beats, usually in flocks. These birds usually need two to three jumps before they can take flight. In flight, jabiru carry their necks extended with a bulge formed by the loose throat skin. The flapping is relatively slow, about 180 flaps per minute. They follow every 5-8 flaps with a short period of gliding. During warm periods of the day they may glide on thermal air currents. They walk slowly and methodically, taking under a step per second covering less than one metre each. When pursuing prey they occasionally use a rapid jog. When jabiru perceive a threat, they stand erect and tall, with the neck extended, and may snap their bills at the threat.

The species reported feeding behaviour is that they consume large amounts of fish, mollusks, insects, and amphibians. They may also eat reptiles and small mammals. During dry seasons, they have been known to eat carrion and dead fish. They feed in flocks and usually forage by wading in shallow water. They detect prey more through tactile sensation than vision. They feed by holding their open bill at a 45 degree angle to the water. When prey is contacted, they close their bill, draw it out of the water, and throw their head back to swallow.

Source:
McKinley, A. 2006. "Jabiru mycteria" (On-line), Animal Diversity Web. Accessed 9/15/2013 8:01:07 PM at http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/accounts/Jabiru_mycteria/

Jabiru stork,

***Jabiru mycteria* in flight**

Photo source : Wikipedia

Stranding Reports/Observations of a WEST INDIAN MANATEE, *Trichechus manatus manatus*

In the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Report by : Jalaludin A. Khan
Contact email : jhantt@gmail.com

Over the last twenty-three years 6 manatees have been estimated stranded based on documented and unconfirmed reports. The most recent reported incident occurred in July of 2013; this was about one juvenile manatee that died. Most documented reports are from Nariva river drainage / Ortoire river East Coast Trinidad area. This listing is not a fully comprehensive list from all habitat areas.

Standings reports 2013- 1990

2013 July (1) -One male baby manatee was reported rescued from the Ortoire River, Trinidad on 11th July, 2013. The manatee was 40 inches in length and weighed approximately 14 kg. The rescue was a joint effort by the Zoological Society of Trinidad and Tobago Inc., the Manatee Conservation Trust and Forestry Division. The manatee died after a period of care at the Zoological Society of Trinidad and Tobago Inc. Zoo in Port of Spain. The baby manatee died 16 days after he was found stranded at the mouth of the Ortoire River, Manzanilla. Newspapers reported that necropsy findings conducted by Dr Ray Ball of Lowry Park Zoo, Florida, USA, senior veterinarian and director of medical sciences, showed that he had no body fat reserves, was suffering from pneumonia, gastroenteritis, ulcers and intestinal damages, and that the right flipper x-rays showed it had been dislocated which made it difficult for the manatee to swim. The dislocation appeared to be a natural deformity. The dead animal was reported being stored in a deep freeze at the zoo.

2011 December to October (2) - Two adult manatee carcasses reported: one at the mouth of the Mitan River (Nariva) and the other on the shore of Cocos Bay. The Manatee Conservation Trust reported villagers were concerned that one of the manatees while in the sea north of the Ortoire River was being harassed by fishermen who kept passing a boat over the area where the manatee was observed. Signs of abrasions on the back of one of the manatee carcasses, most likely from collision with the boat, lend credence to this report and the Trust condemns this act of cruelty. *Newsday newspaper.*

2000 September (1) – One Manatee calf which was illegally taken from the mangrove near the Mitan River (Nariva River) by an individual who had intentions of selling it to the Zoological Society of Trinidad and Tobago Inc. Zoo. Zoological Society of Trinidad and Tobago Inc. and the Manatee Conservation Trust reported that they investigated and found the calf swimming around in a shallow ravine behind a house in Las Lomas. (Central Trinidad) The animal was reported to have been rescued and rehabilitated back into its natural environment at the Nariva Swamp by the Manatee Conservation Trust.

1994 (1) – A dead adult manatee was reported sighted in the Mitan River.

1993 (1) – The birth reported of a manatee calf in 1993 in Nariva swamp; it was not reported as being stranded.

1990 (1) -- One adult manatee sighted at the L'Embaranche River was accidentally caught in a fishing net and butchered.

Jalaludin Ahmad Khan [1 2 1]

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West Indian Manatee,
***Trichechus manatus manatus* adult with calf**

Photo source : Wikipedia

MONKEY- BUSINESS IN NATURAL HISTORY

by Hans E.A. Boos, June 2013

I live in the depths of the Petit Valley and outside my border fence is a tributary of the Blue Basin River, and rising up from this seasonally flowing stream, to the hills that separate this property from the North Coast, there is a dense secondary forest covering with lush bamboos and a mixture of other jungle vegetation.

One day several weeks ago I heard a rustling in these bamboos and to, my astonishment there were three or four dark shapes, of some animals moving agilely through the bamboos and as I ran to get my camera I recognized these animals as monkeys, Capuchin Monkeys.

On two other occasions I saw them again and my neighbour confirmed he too had spotted them behind his house moving through the low trees where some Chile Plum trees were bearing fruit.

I knew there were troops of Capuchins further to the west, for I had encountered them some years ago walking down the river gorge that parallels the road up to Morne Catherine.

And having seen them on that occasion at fairly close quarters I could see they were not our native species, *Cebus albifrons*, which are found in the eastern part of Trinidad. These ones in the Chaguaramas area looked like Tufted Capuchins, *Cebus apella*, which are South American in origin.

I had seen them crossing the road that leads up to the satellite dish several years ago as well.

So this species has become so well established on the western peninsula that it is breeding in such numbers that it is beginning to expand its foraging range to accommodate the increased numbers in the troops.

Throwing my mind back I remembered an event in the 1960s, when I was a member of the Council of the Zoological Society of Trinidad and Tobago, (not as the Curator of the Emperor Valley Zoo 1973 - 1998), a monkey, chased across the field opposite Swan Hunter dockyard, had dropped its baby, which had been picked up by the boys playing football there. This had been reported to the then Curator as a Capuchin Monkey, but attempts to get it for the Zoo were unsuccessful.

Then Peter Lenard, spear-fishing off Point Gourde in the late 1970s, had seen a small band of dark - furred monkeys foraging on a beach, and from his description they were Capuchins.

Now Trinidad is home to two species of primate, the Red Howlers and the White-fronted Capuchins and though Howlers are well known and recorded from the Chaguaramas Peninsula, how did these South American, dark-furred and distinctive Tufted Capuchins get there?

Tufted Capuchins have been smuggled into Trinidad for years, forming part of the illegal trade between South America and Trinidad in parrots, finches, macaws, and who knows what other commodities that have come in on our south coast over the years. I saw capybaras in a pen in Moruga and it was rumoured that there was a tapir hidden in the village somewhere.

Many of these monkeys, illegally imported to this island, ended up in the Emperor Valley Zoo and many more were held by the Wildlife Department of the Forestry Division of the Government, who with neither the cages, space, or facilities to maintain them, obviously disposed of them, and though it was not the policy, it was well known and talked about that it was the practice to release the unwanted monkeys in Chaguaramas.

Hence the successful introduction of an alien species to the Island.

But my ears were pricked up by the contents of an

e-mail I received that claimed that anecdotal evidence pointed to these monkeys originating from ones released by the United States forces from a Zoo that was maintained in Chaguaramas during World War II.

Though possible, I thought this seemed improbable, for had enough monkeys been released soon after 1945 their presence would have been noticed and noted at least twenty years before in the numbers we are now seeing. Also, by 1952, the Emperor Valley Zoo had been established and would have been a perfect repository for animals from the Chaguaramas Zoo, as it was for those from the Santa Cruz Zoo kept by Major Knaggs, when that Zoo was disbanded.

I had had the fortune to meet the man who had established the Zoo in the American Base. In the late 1970s, George Campbell came into my office in The Emperor Valley Zoo, and introduced himself to me. He brought me a copy of one of his books, "Jaws Too," about the Florida Alligator, and told me that as a seaman on a cargo ship during WWII he signed off when he got to Trinidad to provide some entertainment for the troops stationed on the base, as was his bent and interest. He established a small Zoo there, first on the bend where the second closed-off road leads west into the present golf course, and later, getting funding, he had a better facility established in Scotland Bay, the ruins of which can be found today.

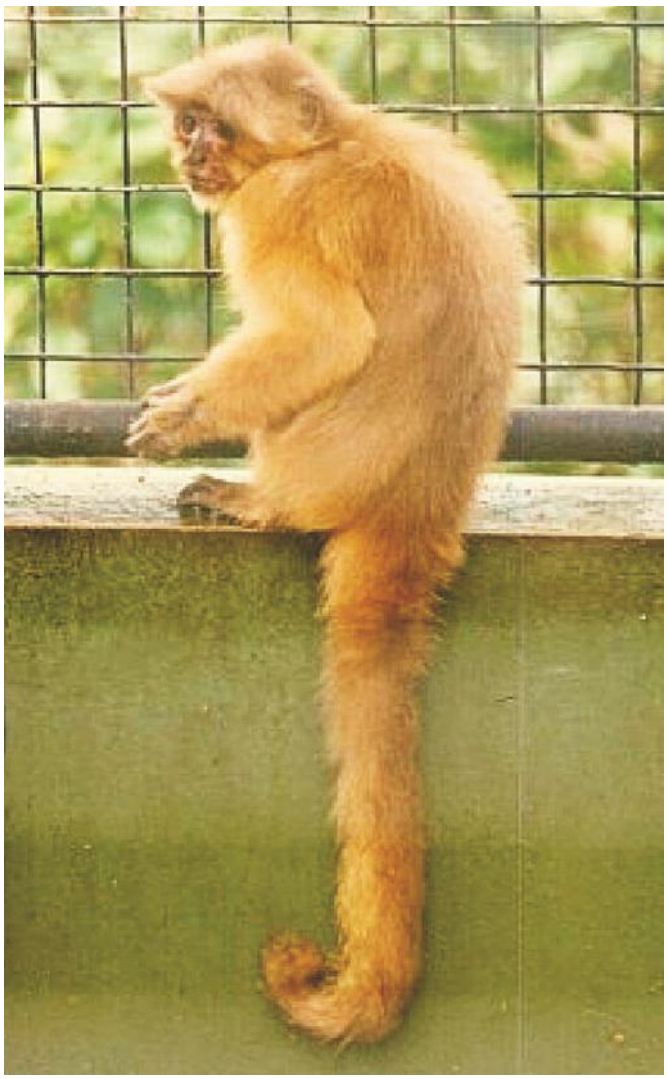
Now comes the "Monkey Business" in Natural History.

Enquiries into the "anecdotal" evidence for an American release led me to a paper published in the "Proceedings of the 1st Research Symposium on Biodiversity in Trinidad and Tobago" Published by the Department of Life Sciences-The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, in November 2010, where, on page 20 is stated, "…the tufted capuchin (*Cebus apella*) of the family Cebidae, was introduced on the Chaguaramas peninsula during the United states military occupation from 1941-1977(John-1998)."

However, when I checked the paper by John used as a reference for the facts that supposedly support the above statement, in the paper by Boswell John, published in TriniView.com, and available on-line, under the title "Changing Patterns of Land use in Chaguaramas," nowhere is there any mention of monkeys, much less that they were released by the Americans occupying the Base in Chaguaramas.

I wrote to the authors of the paper to give them the opportunity to explain how pure supposition and guessing was published as fact, but to date I have received no reply.

Unless there are some facts as yet unrevealed or unpublished, I believe that there is no data to support a release of monkeys in Chaguaramas by United States Forces after WWII.



Right :
Red Howler monkey,
Alouatta seniculus
Photo taken by
Phillip Boos
"Son of Hans Boos"

Trinidad Capuchin,
Cebus albifrons

Photo : Hans Boos
Taken at the
Emperor Valley Zoo

Above : **Tufted Capuchin, *Cebus paella***
Photo: Jalaludin Khan in Chaguaramas

Short Notes

Ian Lambie

"THE LAND OF THE HUMMINGBIRD"

We have been taught incorrectly that the Amerindian word "Iere" means: *"Land of the Hummingbird"*. However, we now know that *"Iere"* or *"Kairi"* simply means *"The Island"* or *"Island."* *You may verify this with the Dept. of Linguistics at UWI.*

The hypothesis of Dr. David Snow, Curator of Birds at the Natural History Museum in the UK and Richard ffrench, foremost ornithologist, and author of "A Guide to the Birds of Trinidad and Tobago.

In the collection at the Natural History Museum there are hundreds of preserved specimens of hummingbirds (Hummingbird skins). Many are labled "Origin Trinidad". Dr. Snow alerted Richard ffrench, who was doing research for his book on the birds of Trinidad and Tobago, to the fact that many of these specimens had never existed in Trinidad and had arrived in England during the latter half of the 19th Century and early 20th Century.

At that time the use of birds feathers was very popular in the millinery trade and large numbers of hummingbird skins were imported into England from Trinidad for that purpose. However the majority of these hummingbirds had been captured in countries on the South American mainland and were shipped to England via Trinidad. Thus these shipments containing large quantities of hummingbird skins were received from Trinidad and the specimens acquired by the Museum were incorrectly tagged "Origin Trinidad".

Hence Trinidad became known as *"The Land of the Hummingbird"*

The preceeding was told to me by Richard ffrench about 30 years ago.

(note date -10th November ,2000)

"LA YSLA DE LA TRINIDAD "?

Why the name "La ysla de la Trinidad ?"

On setting off on his Third Voyage, Columbus had decided that the first land which he encountered would have been named for the "Holy Trinity". Hence on 31st July,1498, when he sighted an island he named it *"La ysla de la Trinidad"*.

Page 528 "Admiral of the Ocean Sea" by Samuel Eliot Morison"

Columbus considered it to be a miracle, bearing in mind his earlier decision, that the highest points seen on the island were three hills. We know these hills to be "The Trinity Hills".

On Page 533 of his book *" Admiral of the Ocean Sea"* *, Samuel Eliot Morison states that Columbus' men landed at Erin Bay. It is believed that Columbus did not "set foot" on Trinidad because of a foot or leg ailment.

Resource persons : Professor Bridget Brereton and Mr. Gerald Besson

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SEA TURTLE CONSERVATION IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

by Ian Lambie

The Turtle and Turtle Eggs Regulations of 1952 made it an offence to hunt turtles, or be in possession of, or offer for sale, any turtle meat or turtle eggs between June 1 and September 30 of any year.

In 1963 , the Trinidad Field Naturalists' Club, as it was then known, paid a visit to the Matura Beach, to investigate a report that turtles were being slaughtered when they arrived to nest on the beach. Unfortunately on the first visit the Club members together with a group of UWI students were unable to find the access road to the beach.

A daytime visit was made by a Club member and several carcasses in various stages of decomposition were seen.

In 1964 having found the access to the northern section of the beach known as "Rincon" a few members of the Club visited this area where they encountered a nesting leatherback turtle and saw many carcasses in various stages of decomposition.

In 1965, the Club began a study of the breeding biology and nesting behaviour of sea turtles on the beaches of Trinidad and Tobago.

During the next five years regular beach patrols were made by Club members, invited secondary school students and friends at Matura Bay during the Nesting Season and it soon became apparent that the June to September "Close Season " was inadequate to protect the turtles, since turtles were being recorded as nesting as early as March. Our observations also dispelled the belief that turtles came to the beaches to lay their eggs on moonlight nights. On one occasion when the Matura Beach was patrolled for 10 consecutive nights, nesting turtles were recorded on every night. Visits were also made to the beaches at Fishing Pond, Big Bay at Tobago, Grand Riviere and Las Cuevas. In the 1970s, in addition to these beaches, visits were made to Paria Bay, Murphy, Tacarib and Madamas bays in Trinidad and to Grafton (Stone Haven Bay), Turtle Beach (Courland Bay), Speyside, Parlatuvier, and Bloody Bay in Tobago, where evidence of turtle nesting activity was seen on all beaches visited.

Beginning at the start of the **1970** Nesting Season the Club embarked on a Turtle Tagging Project using equipment supplied to it by Dr. Peter Pritchard of the University of Florida at Gainsville, Florida, and by the end of the 1980 season, 336 turtles (330 Leatherbacks) had been tagged.

In **May 1977**, the Club tagged a leatherback turtle at Turtle Beach during a visit to Tobago.

What a big difference it is between the 1970s and today when it is not uncommon to record more than 200 nesting leatherback turtles in one night at Matura. Present records for Grand Riviere are even more spectacular, with more than 300 nesting females visited nightly during the peak of the season.

The Turtle Conservation Group, Nature Seekers, at Matura was established in 1990. 

Short Notes

Christopher K. Starr
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TOADS HERE AND THERE

We are all familiar with *Bufo marinus,* known in Trinidad as the crapaud and elsewhere by such names as marine toad, giant toad and cane toad. It is native to the continental neotropics, although no one is quite sure whether Trinidad is within its natural range. What is certain is that it has been broadly introduced elsewhere, mostly intentionally as an ill-advised pest-control measure. In the Philippines, where I have found it to be about as abundant as it is here, its introduction has had no obvious ecological impact. This is far from the case in Australia, where it is regarded as a very serious pest. Among other reasons, even tadpoles and young toads of this species are highly poisonous, and it has had very serious effects on some native predators that have not learned to avoid it.

I would like to draw your attention to a wonderful movie, about 45 minutes long, about *B. marinus* in Australia. It is titled *Cane Toads: An Unnatural History* and is now accessible on YouTube at

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ucQsDM7ZpsQ

Much of the movie is taken up with interviews with a variety of Australians. These have varying views of the toad, ranging from warmly positive (a minority) through concernedly negative to blisteringly antagonistic. Although this is a straight documentary, the attitudes of some of the people (together with their hilarious accents) give parts of the movie a distinctly comic air, and I have known American biologists to screen it as a comedy. Still, it delivers a very serious lesson about misguided biotic introductions.

DESERT LOCUSTS IN THE CARIBBEAN

In a comment on L.A.A. DeVerteuil's (1858) book about Trinidad (Field Naturalist 2011 no. 2:18), I noted his remark that locusts descend on the island at long intervals and wondered if this could refer to the desert locust of Africa and the Mideast, *Schistocerca gregaria*. The occasional outbreaks of this grasshopper can be quite spectacular and have been well known since ancient times.

However, there are about 50 species of *Schistocerca* in various parts of the world, several of which have a swarming locust phase under some conditions. It may, then, be that most such outbreaks are of one or another New World species, but Johanna Darlington has pointed out to me that swarms of *S. gregaria* have been blown across the Atlantic at least once in recent times.

In September to November 1988, substantial numbers of *S. gregaria* were reported throughout the Eastern Caribbean. There were many reports of them feeding on local vegetation, but they seem not to have bred here.

I thank Lilory McComie for calling to my attention the proceedings of a regional meeting on the topic (*IICA Misc. Publ.* A2/tt-89-01), to which she contributed the Trinidad and Tobago island report. It is plain that the arrival of these unfamiliar insects in very large numbers created quite a buzz throughout the region. I hope to be here the next time they come calling.

12 Blue Basin Gardens, Diego Martin, March 2011

HERPETOLOGICAL COINCIDENCES AND CONNECTIONS 1975

by Hans Boos

My early fascination and interest in reptiles was especially peaked by the family of snakes that includes the Boas and Pythons: collectively known as the Boidae. On the islands of Trinidad and Tobago there are four species of Boas: the largest, the huille or anaconda, *Eunectes murinus gigas*; the boa constrictor, *Boa constrictor*; the cascabel dormillon, *Corallus rauchenbergeri*; and the smallest, the rainbow boa, *picrates cenchris maurus*.

In my personal collection between 1962 and 1968, when I kept quite an extensive menagerie of reptiles to study their habits and to begin my photographic recording of every species I could find on the twin islands, for comparison, and for the love and fascination for the Boidae, I acquired several species of other boas and at least five species of pythons. Trips to the other West Indian islands and to British Guiana (Guyana) allowed me to collect some of the species found there and to photograph them in their astounding variety.

In my studies of this family of snakes I soon discovered there were some anomalies to their worldwide distribution. The subfamily, the Boinae were found mainly in the New World, i.e. North and South America and the Pythoninae in the Old World: Africa, Asia and Australia. But a few strange little boas were also found in India and in New Guinea and the surrounding islands and three medium sized species on Madagascar, and there was a strange python-like species found in Mexico.

In 1968 I immigrated to Australia and within two weeks I was working in the job I had travelled half way around the world to seek. I was hired as a trainee keeper in the Reptile Department of Taronga Park Zoo in Sydney, the capital of New South Wales, Australia. I got this job mainly due to my knowledge of the snakes I had been studying from the books in my growing collection and from correspondence with professional herpetologists from around the world.

As I started my duties, here were some of the pythons of which I had only seen photos in books and I began to get hands-on experience with these (to me) rarities and to my added delight there were three specimens of the Solomon Island Ground Boa, *Candoia carinata paulsoni*. Over the next four and a half years, and through the good graces and encouragement of the Curator of Reptiles at the Australian Museum, Dr. Harold Cogger, I managed to amass in the Zoo collection all the species and perceived subspecies of this tidy group of Pacific boas, from far flung Fiji to the mountains of New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago.

Through Dr. Cogger, I also began to amass photocopies of every reference paper I could uncover on these snakes and once a week he allowed me access to his library in his office in the Museum and to the bottled preserved specimens held in the collection there. Among these papers was one I considered most important, by Andrew Stimson (1969), that listed all the species of Boas in the world.

Though this paper was published in a German Journal "Das Terreich", Stimson actually worked in the herpetological department of the British Museum, where some of the major work on herpetological taxonomy had been done under such lights such as Boulenger in the late nineteenth century.

In some of the living material collected by Dr. Cogger and his teams were several specimens of these little boas (none were over a metre in length) and there were some smaller individuals that, though they conformed to the general form and description of the species I was finding in the literature, I could detect something slightly different, something slightly "off." Was there a new species in the specimens I had under my care and husbandry?

I discussed this with Dr. Cogger and asked him what I should be looking for to make my suspicions into concrete proof, but he wisely refused to help me, forcing me to muddle through my confusion, for that way he knew that if I came to any conclusions my findings would stand or fall on the thoroughness of my research.

I began to dig deeper, going back in time and looking at every scrap of paper that had been written about these snakes. And there was in fact quite a lot. Papers and catalogues dating back to the eighteenth century, and they were buried in some of the rarest books in any library. The oldest I found was a Thesaurus done by Seba in 1735.

My research had to be cut off due to my getting the post of Curator of the Emperor Valley Zoo, and I returned to Trinidad in April of 1973, where the pressure of work in reorganizing an almost defunct Zoo left me little time to continue my investigations into the group of snakes that I began to refer to as the "Candoias": their generic name.

However over the next few years I sporadically would pick up the thread of this research and I managed to get more and more of the rarer papers on these snakes from museums and libraries around the world, and finally I managed to get a copy of the page in Seba's Thesaurus that showed possibly the first specimens of the species ever seen in Europe or by a European.

But alas the copy was in black and white and the essential colour patterns and distinctive features I needed were not visible. Colour copies were not generally available except at great cost or until later years when colour copiers were more common in institutions which could afford them.

Then in 1981 I made contact with Andrew Stimson at the British Museum, for I sent him a specimen of snake found dead on the road to Icacos which I did not recognize nor could I key it out with any of the available species keys for the snakes of Trinidad available at the time. This snake he identified as a species of *Thamnodynaste*s, a new record for Trini dad. Two more specimens were found and sent off to him for identification as well and it seemed that these were probably a new species to science and were not officially described until several years later. In 1982 I was invited to present a paper at an international Herpetological Conference at Oxford University in England, on the breeding successes I had had while in Australia with several python species for the first time in the world in captivity, and I travelled from Toronto via New York to attend this conference.

After the conference I went down to London to search for several historical papers in the British Library and then paid a social visit to the British Museum in Kensington to pay my respects and to meet Andrew Stimson. We got on well from the onset and during our talk I asked him if he had a copy of Seba's Thesaurus and, if he did, I would like to have a look at the page where the little Candoias were illustrated.

Saying that that would be no problem, he took me into the rare book stacks after checking with the guardian librarian, and soon he was pulling this rare tome down from the shelf and spreading it on a display table for me to search for the page. Then, there it was, the same page as I had seen in Harold Cogger's office in Sydney. In bright hand-painted colours.

"Boy," I said, " I would sure like to get a colour copy or photograph of this page." As I pointed to the fine engraving that covered a large folio page, and to my surprise and amazement Stimson said, "Well, go ahead," for he had seen I was carrying my camera slung for ready access. In my shoulder bag I had the flash accessories so that I could take photos in almost any and all conditions, and after ascertaining that he was serious, I quickly set up my camera and began to flash off multiple exposures of the page.

After the fourth of fifth flash explosion, there was a scream behind us as the enraged librarian yelled, "What are you doing?" It took a while for Stimson

to calm her down with assurances that I was a serious researcher and that the photos were not for commercial or any other uses. But nevertheless we packed up shop and got out before she raised more of a fuss.

After the conference and this visit to England, I returned to the hurly-burly of running the Emperor Valley Zoo, but always, every month or so, revisiting my research into this interesting group of snakes, importing preserved specimens from far-flung Museums in North America and Europe, counting the scales and noting salient features on specimens dead and preserved for decades, looking for that elusive characteristic in the little ones I had kept alive in Taronga Park Zoo, that would perhaps set them apart and designate a new variety or species of Candoia.

The Kodachrome slides I had taken of the page of the Thesaurus came back from the processing lab in England, and they were clear and detailed, and showed me the colour patterns I needed.
In the meantime, in 1987 I once again had to depend on Andrew Stimson to identify two specimens of a little snake which, I guessed, could only be the same as a single specimen collected by Ivan T. Sanderson (1940) fifty years before. Stimson confirmed that it was indeed the same: *Leptophis riveti* (as it was then known).

Then in 1995, Keith Harding, who I had met at the conference in Oxford years before, assessing the three specimens from Trinidad held in the British Museum, and comparing them critically to the ones from Ecuador, with which it had originally been compared and identified, deciding that the ones from Trinidad were different enough to warrant being described as a different and endemic species, renamed them *Leptophis stimsomi* (Harding 1995).

In my collecting mania I have amassed quite a library, for I appreciated the knowledge stored in books, if even it is a scrap of information that leads an enquiring mind into new channels of pleasure and discovery. I have been always reluctant to throw away any book I have ever been given or bought, and still have books that were given to me as presents by my parents at almost every birthday or Christmas.
I give them full credit for fostering this interest, even if it had deteriorated into a compulsion that has followed me for my entire life. Amongst these compulsions is an interest in surreal art, and when I could, I acquired books that depicted this art, and once I managed to buy a print by a famous surrealist which still hangs on my wall.

But you may ask what has this to do with herpetology?

One day about 1988, looking through a book of the surreal art of Max Ernst (1891-1976) (Gatt. 1968), which I had bought in Toronto, Canada, I came across one of Ernst's works on page 25 that brought me up short. Ernst was an artist somewhat like Salvador Dali (1904-1989) who juxtaposed the strangest images in his compositions, which to the viewer made no sense at all, but still somehow conveyed a strange fascination. Ernst also made collages, pasting together clippings and pages from other printed works, and the page that stopped me was one of these. There was undoubtedly the lower half of the same page from Seba's Thesaurus that I had been caught photographing in The British Museum in 1982. There were the same snakes in full colour that I had hoped would have been useful to me in my researches. I compared this page to the transparencies I had in my files and they were doubtlessly the same. Had Ernst used the upper half of the page this would not have had the same significance, for the snakes illustrated there were in fact rainbow boas, *Epicrates cenchris*.

I realized then that Ernst had actually obtained a copy of the Thesaurus (a very rare book by any standards) and from a rare book collector's point of view, destroyed it by pulling out a page and cutting that page in two to use in that collage. I was staggered by the coincidence that had pulled all these facts together and the connections between all these facts that have inspired this article.

Maybe one day I will write the paper on Candoia that has been deferred by all these scattered coincidences and connections.

References on page (27)

TTFNC 2014 ANNUAL CALENDAR

(Available from December 2013. Please pre-order and support the Club's publication efforts)

front cover

THE TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB
P.O. Box 642, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. e-mail: admin@ttfnc.org web page: http://ttfnc.org/index.php

First Citizens

Swallow tanagers,
Tersina viridis occidentalis

cover photo: Anushka Seemungal
Male and female swallow tanagers, at Las Lapas in the Northern Range in June, 2011. Las Lapas is known to be a location where they may be sighted.

back cover

2014 Annual Calendar

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:
The Publications and Calendar Committees thank all Club Members who sent photos to be considered for inclusion in the 2013 Calendar.
Publication Committee: Elisha Tikasingh, Graham White, Palaash Narase.
Calendar Committee: Amy Deacon, Eddison Baptiste, Mike Rutherford, Reginald Potter
Artwork: Eddison Baptiste. Text edited by Elisha Tikasingh.
We also thank Michael Tikasingh for technical advice and enhancing of the photos.

First Citizens

HERPETOLOGICAL COINCIDENCES AND CONNECTIONS 1975

(Continued from page 25)

References:
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The Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club (TTFNC) thanks

First Citizens

For its generous support of the Club in the form of sponsorship of our 2013 Arima Valley BioBlitz
(Noon Saturday 21st to Noon Sunday, September 22, 2013)
and our 2014 TTFNC Annual Calendar

First Citizens

TTFNC QUARTERLY BULLETINS ONLINE LINK :
http://ttfnc.org/photojournals/index.html

Management Notices

New members; Volunteers; Publications

New Members

The Club warmly welcomes the following new members:
Junior members:

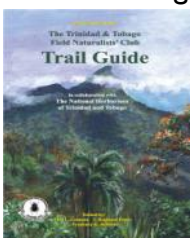
Ordinary members: **Aarti Gosine, Jason Douglas**

New life members:

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

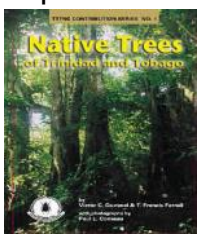
PUBLICATIONS

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



The TTFNC Trail Guide

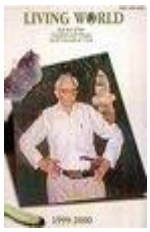
Members : TT$160.00

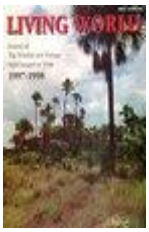


The Native Trees of T&T

2nd Edition
Members :
TT$80.00

Living World Journal 1892-1896 CD
Members :
TT$95.00





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

Living World 2012 supplement

Due to limited supply Living World 2012 supplements are $20.00 each.

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 the areas of flora and fauna) in Trinidad and Tobago. Full details are available on their website: http://www.greenhallstrust-wi.org/link.htm

Your 2013 Annual Membership Fees are Due:

Please view bottom right of the mailing label to check if your subscripition has been paid.

Submission of articles and field trip reports:

1. **All articles must reach the editor by the eighth week of each quarter. Submission deadline for the 4rd Quarter 2013 issue is November 30, 2013.**
2. **Electronic copies can be submitted to the 'Editor' at: admin@ttfnc.org or directly to the editor or any member of Management. Please include the code QB2013-4 in the email subject label.**