



The Hum...

Las Gralarias Foundation Inc. Newsletter

Inside this Issue

Senior Tim's Tales	1
Foundation update	1
Conservation Corner	2
Species Spotlight	2
Wisps from the Cloud Forest	3
Los Exploredores News	4
Foundation Wishes	5
Volunteer Opportunities	5
Thank You	5
Mission Statement	6
Board Members	6

Señor Tim's Tales by Tim Krynak, President

It was another beautiful morning at the nets at Reserva Las Gralarias, but now the fog had rolled in and things were quiet. We decided to close the nets and head back for lunch. On our way we stopped by a tree that a pair of very vocal Plate-billed Mountain Toucans had been hanging around. While we (Kathy, Benji and I) were standing there an adult came in with a fruit in its bill and calling excitedly. Next we heard a different noise and I said to myself "those are chicks" and sure enough after some searching we found the nest cavity high up in a tree!

Discoveries such as these may

sound trivial to many but are very important in the scope of conservation. There is still so little known about the biology of many tropical species that every observation is valuable and can lead to other important discoveries. The goal of Las Gralarias Foundation Inc. is to provide an opportunity for these discoveries to continue well into the future while protecting this valuable habitat.

We were lucky enough to observe this Toucan nest as two chicks fledged just two days after our initial discovery. After hanging around for only one day the



family of four moved on to other areas of the reserve. We all hoped for the best as the young birds start their new life in the forest. What will be the next discovery as we continue to write the chapters in this ongoing novel in

Calendar of Events

- April 28
Las Gralarias Foundation Board Meeting
- April 29 – 30
North Coast Nature Festival at Cleveland Metroparks
- May 7
Children's Festival Cleveland
- May 10
Northern Ohio Amateur Herpetologists
- May 26
Fairfield North Elementary School Sponsored by Buttler Tech
- July 25
Next publication of The Hum...
- August 5 and 6
Greater Akron Aquarium Society Auction
- December 16, 2006
RLG Christmas Bird Count

FOUNDATION UPDATE BY TIM KRYNAK

The exciting and important news is that we have officially submitted our application for tax-exempt status. This process can take several months to complete, but we are now underway.

Las Gralarias Foundation Inc. now has a wonderful display that can travel to programs and events to promote the organization. We have currently used this display at four programs and have received several hundred

dollars in donations. These programs include Animal Attractions at the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo, a brown bag luncheon at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo, Travel Lecture Series at Rocky River Nature Center, and The Greater Akron Aquarium Society meeting.

The hot items for our fundraising efforts have been the matted photographs taken at Reserva Las Gralarias of various animals, plants and

scenery. Also, as you are reading this newsletter, we will have just completed a large fund raising effort at the North Coast Nature Festival in Cleveland Metroparks on April 28 – 30 where we plan to have a booth, Bird-a-thon, and program by Jane Lyons. Look for how things went in the next issue of "The Hum".

Foundation Update
continued on Page 4.

Conservation Corner by Katherine Duffey

The Global Amphibian Crisis

According to the IUCN (The World Conservation Union) one third of the world's known population of amphibians is threatened with extinction. That is 32% of amphibians, compared to 12% of birds and 23% of mammals. This extinction crisis is happening at a rate that has been compared to the disappearance of the dinosaurs. Can you imagine a world without amphibians? Of course we would miss the sweet sounds of peeps, chirps, and dinks, but what you might not think about is the extinction of animals whose food source is exclusively amphibians and so on up the chain. And what about those insects????

In areas where the frogs are disappearing, studies are beginning to show a dramatic increase in insect populations, which of course can lead to an increase of insect born disease. Amphibians are also the cold and slimy version of the canary in the coal mine because they tell us so much about our environment and warn us of trouble ahead.

Why are amphibians disappearing? Habitat loss, pollution, UV exposure, over collection for the exotic pet trade are all reasons for the declines, but there is another

culprit called "Chytrid". Causing the disease Chytridiomycosis, this fungal epizootic is spreading all over the world decimating amphibian populations by keratinizing their skin, inhibiting their respiration and water absorption. Once in an area, the fungus lives in the moisture rich environment killing amphibians as it moves like a wave through the land. Cloud forests like that of Reserva Las Galarías are in particular danger of becoming home to the fungus for it has a preference for the cooler humid tropics. Chytrid is in Ecuador and we all have to do our part to slow it's spread. See Page 4 for our poster on how everyone can help by following a few simple rules.

So with the amphibians disappearing and Chytrid in the wings awaiting its opportunity to attack, Tim Krynak and I started the first amphibian survey of Reserva Las Galarías supported by the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo. Using this initial survey we will initiate an ongoing amphibian monitoring program to keep track of those peeps, chirps and dinks.

Great news! We learned during the initial rapid assessment survey in January that Reserva Las Galarías is home to an abundance of *Eleutherodactylus eugeniae* (we call it the "Dink frog"), a species considered in danger of extinction by the IUCN. Several other species were also found including *Eleutherodactylus*



Giant Glass Frog of Rio Santa Rosa

appendiculatus, *E. w. nigrum*, *E. achantinus*, *Hyla carnifex* (pond frog), and *Centrolene grandisonae* (giant glass frog). By utilizing Visual Encounter Surveys in conjunction with audio surveys we were able to determine presence and abundance of these animals. We also hope to publish the results of these surveys so that this information can aid in future amphibian conservation initiatives.

In conjunction with this amphibian survey, a water quality monitoring program has begun to track the health of the stream systems of the reserve. Cattle farming can take it's toll on the environment by polluting the water, and by degrading the land, but with Jane's restoration projects and land purchases, Reserva Las Galarías' water systems can be a healthy home to those of the amphibious kind for years to come.



Thousands of *Hyla carnifex* tadpoles were found at a breeding pool on Reserva Las Galarías.

Species Spotlight

Eleutherodactylus eugeniae By Katherine Duffey



As stated in the **Conservation Corner**, *Eleutherodactylus eugeniae* is considered an endangered species by the IUCN. This small, 25-37mm in length, dusky yellow frog with pale orange spots was formerly found in only 3 localities in the upper valley of Rio Pilaton, in the Province of Pinchincha; and now has been documented in great abundance on Reserva Las Galarías. Previously only found in forests away from streams, only 9 specimens were known (Lynch and Duellman, 1997), but during our first amphibian survey we found this frog throughout the reserve, along side the road, within the forest, and alongside the streams, but always utilizing the higher stratum of the forest. The "dink" sound made by *E. eugeniae* brought out the tree climbing child in Tim and me.

My antecedents were *Eleutherodactylus*
Long ago there were just a few of us
But as the Andes arose
Some of us nearly froze
So we dispersed in response to this stimulus

We differentiated without much of a fuss
Preferring climates that others would cuss
Where it rained it would pour
So we'd speculate more,
For us, others' nonplus was a plus

But all did not remain thus
For the diversity of *Eleutherodactylus*
The forests were cleared
Our habitats disappeared
So now there are fewer species left of us.

-Duellman and Lynch

Wisps from the Cloud Forest

by Jane A. Lyons

In early April we were able to make a significant addition to the reserve by purchasing 44.5 hectares/111 acres adjacent to the southern boundary of the current reserve. The new area is 80% forest and the remainder is regenerating pasture. It also contains two important water systems, including the upper watershed of the Chaluayacu River. Volunteers will soon begin to survey the area to see what birds, other animals and plants may be there.



This now gives the reserve a total area of 224 hectares/561 acres. Most importantly there is now a protected habitat connection between the Rio Mindo valley, the lower section of Reserva Las Galarías and the Santa Rosa Valley. Even though it is currently a narrow corridor, only 250 meters/750 feet wide, it is no doubt an important corridor for the birds, mammals and other creatures who inhabit the hills and valleys of this area and whose habitat has become increasingly chopped up by roads, farms and towns. We will continue to acquire other properties of significant habitat to expand the corridor and ensure the habitat connections between 1600-2300m elevation and especially to protect the pristine Santa Rosa River Valley. We are still in the process of raising funds to acquire another 200 hectares which form the upper watershed of the river and are eager to know of any donors who may be interested in helping us. A hearty thanks to our generous donors who made our recent land purchases possible.

After a long summer we have had an intense winter rainy season, with frequent heavy rainfall and storms which have played havoc with our electricity and our roads. Unfortunately, with the heavy rains and strong winds, trees have been broken and limbs have fallen. Carolina Toapanta, a volunteer biologist from Quito, has been carefully collecting the fallen orchids and bromeliads and has planted them around the guest house. The good news is that the rain has helped tremendously all of the trees and plants we have planted during the past few years. We are in the process of finishing up the plantings for this year as summer is just around the corner again!



We have also been rearing caterpillars and documenting birds, nests and plants. Carolina has carried 20 plants to the Catholic University for drying and identifying. In addition we are hosting a project by the Catholic University Herbarium to identify and catalogue the many species of ferns on the reserve and in the wider area. We have also had our share of giant earthworms and caecilians, small snakes and prehistoric-looking rhinoceros beetles, not to mention all the slugs, snails, tarantulas and unidentifiable creatures that emerge from the saturated soils.



Carolina has also written an environmental education plan that we hope to begin to implement once classes commence after the semester break.

Now that spring is turning into summer, the Blue-and-white Swallows are back in the nest boxes and the Green Violetears have shown up in mass to establish breeding territories in the forest. Our northern migrant species are just about gone now, but on 2 April I saw a brightly-plumaged male Blackburnian Warbler singing in the forest behind the guest house, we also wait the return of some of our summer specialties, such as the beautiful Crested Quetzal. Recent good bird sightings from the reserve include Black Hawk-Eagle and Tawny-throated Leaf-tosser.

The guest house has been visited regularly by birders and nature-enthusiasts, with 11 groups staying at the house between January 1 - March 31, 2006. We also now have RLG logo t-shirts and RLG logo binocular straps and are beginning to sell those to visitors. We have finally finished the guides/volunteers quarters and the new greenhouse, except for the outside painting which will have to wait for drier months. With three more bedrooms scheduled to be ready by August, our main construction efforts will be completed. We will then turn our attention to some minor outbuilding projects, specifically refurbishing the small wooden cabins found in several sites on the reserve. These will be used mostly as sites for visitors to rest during day hikes and will also help to maintain a presence near the reserve's boundaries.

I look forward to my visit to Cleveland and Austin for the North Coast Nature Festival in Cleveland Metroparks and to visit with Board members of the Las Galarías Foundation, as well as to see family and friends. I may even have a chance to observe some of those migratory bird species that will have left their vacation home at Reserva Las Galarías and returned north to commence the hard work of raising their young. 😊

Los Exploradores News

Environmental Education Update by Katherine Duffey



Uno...Dos...Tres! The children scream as they run into the "bat church", but now they know that there isn't anything to scream about!

In January Tim Krynak, Kathy Duffey and Milton (whom works on Reserva Las Galarias) visited the Escuela Rio Tumba, near Reserva Las Galarias, with gifts of Spanish comic books donated by Bat Conservation International. The books centered around

a group of "Super Hero" bats that help save the environment by pollinating the plants, dispersing seeds, and eating insects. It was a great educational tool that helped us explain the importance of bats to the ecosystem.

During our bird walk the children lead us to an abandoned church that was home to hundreds if not thousands of insect eating bats. It was great to be able to show the kids how amazing bats are and how they aren't going to swoop down and drink their blood!

Upon arriving back at the school we began making our list of the birds that we saw while on our walk. Cowbirds, vultures, flycatchers, hummingbirds, parrots, pigeons and sparrows are some of the birds that the children identified using their donated binoculars. After having talked about the different types of bats and what they eat, we expanded on this and discussed the diets of the birds that we had seen that day.

We always have so much to talk about with the children and it is always amazing that the language barrier never gets in the way!

Foundation Update Continued

We are moving forward nicely and currently have several more speaking arrangements scheduled as well as some other events that you will see in the "Calendar of Events" schedule.

We are always looking for new ideas, comments, suggestions and contacts to further our organization's goals, so please chime in and let us know your thoughts on how to improve our efforts. You can email me direct at TKRYNAK@aol.com

A special Thanks goes out to a young conservationist from The Greater Akron Aquarium Society. This young man personally donated to Las Galarias Foundation Inc. to help with our mission. This touching gesture should remind us that it is how we influence the next generation that will make this world a better place. Thank you Nathan!



Las Galarias Foundation Inc.'s new display. The display is used for presentations and events to advertise the

Do your part to save the



AVISO/WARNING



- Si usted ha viajado a los bosques de montaña, especialmente en el oeste de Panamá, Costa Rica, y Ecuador, es posible que usted esté transmitiendo a los anfibios una enfermedad a través de sus pertenencias. (If you have been traveling in the montane rainforests, especially in Panama, Costa Rica, and Ecuador, you might be transmitting amphibian disease on your belongings.)
- Esta es una enfermedad micótica que está matando a los anfibios alrededor del mundo y probablemente ha causado la extinción de varias especies aquí en Ecuador. (This is a fungal disease that is killing amphibians all over the world and probably has caused the extinction of several species here in Ecuador.)
- Los anfibios nos ayudan en el control de los mosquitos y otros insectos. Si los anfibios desaparecen, estos insectos que son plagas, las enfermedades que éstos transmiten a los humanos y el daño que éstos hacen a cosechas aumentarán dramáticamente. (Amphibians help control mosquitos and other insects. If amphibians disappear, these insects pests, the diseases they transmit to humans, and the damage they do to the crops will all increase dramatically.)
- Para ayudar los anfibios y prevenir esta enfermedad, favor restrígue manualmente el barro/tierra de sus botas y equipo, seguidamente esterilícelas usando productos de limpieza que contengan: (Please, to prevent spreading this disease manually scrub the mud/soil from your boots and equipment and sterilize them using cleaning agents containing:)
- 1% de cloruro de benzalkonio (lysol), o (1% benzalkonium chloride, or)
- 0.4% de cloro, o (0.4% bleach, or)
- Alcohol al 70% (70% alcohol)





Foundation Wish List

- * Digital cameras
- * HOBO Weather Station
- * HOBO Program Boxcar 4.3
- * Digital Scales
- * pH meter
- * Conductivity Meter
- * Dissolved Oxygen Meter
- * Photos from Reserva Las Gralarias
- * Digital Recorder and PC software for analyzing sounds

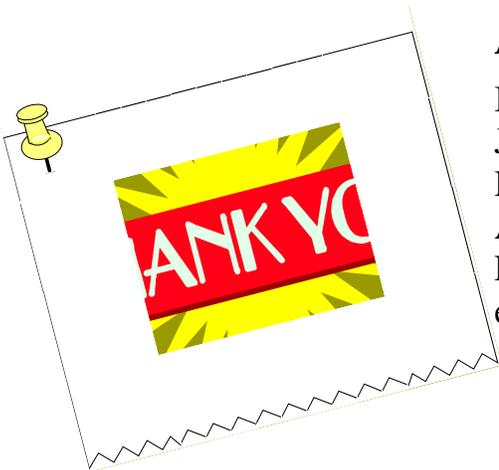
- * Biology/natural science children's books for Los Exploradores (in Spanish)
- * Flora/Fauna Field Guides/books of Ecuador (in Spanish and English)
- * Video camera
- * Night vision camera
- * Insect nets/dip nets
- * Hummingbird feeders,
- * Headlamps/flash lights
- * Bird/Bat netting equipment

- * Laptop computer
- * Laptop weatherproof case
- * Walky talkies
- * Emergency chair

For more information contact Kathy Duffey at glassfrog04@hotmail.com

Fundraising/Volunteer Opportunities

- * We are still looking for potential donors to be added to our mailing list. Please send contact information to Jo Ann Kubicki at jak1@clevelandmetroparks.com
- * Matted Prints of photographs from the reserve are needed for donation gifts. Email Tim Krynak at tkrynak@aol.com for more information.
- * Volunteer(s) needed to create, print and coordinate sales of T-shirts for Las Gralarias Foundation Inc.
- * Volunteers needed to present programs within their communities to raise money for the Foundation.
- * Volunteer needed to translate the newsletter into Spanish to be posted on the website.
- * If you have anyone interested in being on the distribution list to receive *The Hum...* please contact Katherine Duffey at glassfrog04@hotmail.com



A big thank you to all of our recent donors!

Bat Conservation International, Robert and Patricia Duffey, Jo Ann Kubicki, Bob Warneke, Tim Krynak, Katherine Duffey, Terri Martincic, Rich Serva and The Greater Akron Aquarium Society, Wayne Toven, Nathan Kalsek, Biagio Frusteri and all individuals that donated at presentations and events in this past quarter. It is greatly appreciated!

Donations can be made to :
Las Gralarias Foundation Inc.
24140 Gessner Rd.
North Olmsted Ohio, 44070



The goal of Las Gralarias Foundation Inc. is to raise funds for projects and programs of Reserva Las Gralarias, located in the parish of Mindo, Ecuador, including the purchase of adjacent and nearby lands that will enhance protection for rare endemic birds, plants and other animals as well as supports reserve management, reforestation efforts, biological research, environmental education projects, scholarships, and appropriate tourism programs.

**LAS GRALARIAS
FOUNDATION INC.**

www.lasgralariasfoundation.org



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**Las Gralarias Foundation Inc.
Board Members**

- President:** Tim Krynak (*Ohio*)
- Vice President:** Jane Lyons Ph.D. (*Ecuador*)
- Secretary:** Katherine Duffey (*Ohio*)
- Treasurer:** Jo Ann Kubicki (*Ohio*)
- Bob Barth Ph.D. (*Texas*)
- Nancy Charbeneau (*Texas*)
- Noreen Damude (*Texas*)
- Jeffrey Miller Ph.D. (*Oregon*)
- Shamus Terry (*Wisconsin*)

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