



The Hum...

Las Gralarias Foundation Inc. Newsletter

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Señor Tim's Tales

by Tim Krynak, President



Recently I have been re-inspired by a couple of young bird watchers! Their enthusiasm is contagious as their excitement can easily be detected when sharing their adventures. One of these young birders named Lukas was sharing with me how it was so wonderful to be able to observe the behavior of an American Bittern up close, as we had one very cooperative individual near North Chagrin Nature Center where I work. This bird was more than a life bird to him; it was the opportunity to observe something that many would never be able to witness and to have the words from field guides come to life before his eyes. This passion I am sure will inspire future bird watchers for years to come.

Luke, another young bird fanatic from Maine, was able to visit Reserva Las Gralarias in Ecuador and spent over a week at the bird banding station. While there he documented some great birds his commitment to conservation left a greater impression. He was able to raise several hundred dollars for Las Gralarias Foundation Inc in a bird-a-thon that he participated in back in Maine. With his donation we will be able to protect more vital habitat containing many of the animals Luke referred to as "Sweet". We appreciate his time and dedication and hope that he can continue to visit the reserve in the future.

These young individuals are our future conservationists and their enthusiasm indicates our work is reaching across generations. I would like to thank Luke and Lukas and hope that they keep inspiring others as their passion for birds continues to grow. I look forward to the opportunity of birding with them both here in the US as well as Ecuador!

Calendar of Events

- Jan 24, 2009 From Mountain Tops to Jungle, North Chagrin Nature Center, Cleveland Metroparks by Tim Krynak
- January-February 2009 Reserva Las Gralarias Photo Show. CanalWay Center by Tim Krynak
- Jan 17, 2009 Cloud Forests of Ecuador, Lakewood, Ohio
- Feb 13, Cloud Forests of Ecuador, CanalWay Center, Cleveland Metroparks by Tim Krynak
- April 25-26 North Coast Nature Festival, Rocky River Nature Center



Luke's favorite bird photos from his Ecuador visit.



A Gift

By Katherine Krynak



The holiday season is upon us. I can tell because the stores are already decked out in a flurry of green and red, ribbon and sparkle, all before the first snowflake of the year falls. So as I contemplate what to buy for each of my friends and relatives, I dig deep into my heart to find the perfect gift. As many of you, every year I find myself hurriedly searching the internet and stores for that something special, but I usually end up buying myself unnecessary stuff along the way. Stuff..... that is what it is.

One great lesson I have learned over the past few years working in Panama and Ecuador is that "Stuff" isn't what is important in my life. In these countries it is normal for the houses in the rural areas to have only 1 or 2 rooms with a tin roof, sometimes a dirt floor, or maybe a raised wooden planked floor (in areas that commonly flood), a small propane stove, and hammocks hung for each of the family members. The families are large and it is common for grandparents, great grandparents, aunts and uncles, and cousins to all live in the same house.

I have been invited into several of these homes over the years and there is one commonality in each of these structures besides the small nature of the building and it's contents... there is happiness. Not having all the "stuff", festive décor at the holidays, Christmas trees, and brightly lit lights and the sound of tearing gift wrap, you may think that would take away from the feeling of the holiday season, but the truth is, the love that I see amongst family members and the happiness they share, that is a gift. Now, don't get me wrong, most of us really enjoy getting together with our extended families, sharing stories, catching up on the past year and sharing in traditions over a mug of hot coco. Now just think how wonderful the holiday season would be if we could take the stress of holiday shopping and crazy mall parking lots, and irritable sales clerks out of that warm fuzzy picture of the holiday season. Maybe your family would rather focus on just that... family. Good food, jolly laughs and togetherness is all that is needed. Take a look at each person on your holiday shopping list and you donate to a charity in which you know that they would love to support. The website www.justgive.org is a great place to "shop" for the right charity in which to donate in the name of your loved ones. You can also allow the receiver to pick their own charity here. Just purchase a gift card at www.justgive.org! For those on your list who are conservation minded, you can even donate to Las Gralarias Foundation on this website. You can also donate directly to LGF by check. Below is the donation card. You can even designate which program you would like your dollars to go to! Warm the soul of your loved ones with a gift that truly comes from the heart. Maybe your family will experience that same happiness I see in the eyes of the people I've met in my travels. That would truly be a special gift!



Help Save the Cloud Forest!

Adopt an Acre of Cloud Forest

www.lasgralariasfoundation.org

LGF Inc. is a 501 (c) (3) organization

Please send this card and donation to:
(checks only please)

Las Gralarias Foundation Inc.
24140 Gessner Road
North Olmsted, Ohio 44070

I would like to help the Las Gralarias Foundation Inc. preserve The Santa Rosa River Valley of Ecuador by:

Adopt an Acre: (\$280) (package includes certificate of appreciation, recognition on LGF Inc. Website, and a Spectacled bear plush toy)

Making a single donation to LGF Inc. (\$500) (\$100) (\$50) (other: _____)

Donor information *(Please print)*

Name:

Address:

This donation is made: In Honor of In Memory of

Name:

Would you like to specify which LGF program you would like to support? *(please check one)*

Land Acquisition

Environmental Education

Biological Research

I would like to receive LGF Newsletter "The Hum..." via email: Yes No

Email address:

Foundation Update

by Katherine Krynak



With the Thanksgiving holiday right around the corner, I'd like to express my thanks on behalf of Las Galarias Foundation. Recently we have had several LGF supporters step up to help us with our mission. The donation of infrared cameras for surveying secretive life of mammals and making our Foundation Wish List a

reality by donating many of the needed pieces of equipment for biological studies occurring at RLG. One couple donated a digital scale, a collapsible snake hook, flash lights, UV flashlight for surveying insects and tracking rodents, headlamps, a tropical insect net, an illuminated magnifier for, specimen labels, parafilm, digital calipers, AND a micron dissecting kit! Children's books and crafts steadily stream in for the children of escuela Rio Tumbes, donations have been received for acquiring more land, articles have been written and sent to us for future use in The Hum...AND volunteers have presented programs to local bird enthusiasts talking about the mission of LGF!

These supporters are who make LGF work. Together we are all making a difference for conservation of biodiversity. Gandhi once stated "You must be the change you want to see in the world.", and you are all just that, the change I want to see in the world. Now let's keep up the momentum and inspire some more positive changes! That is my 2009 New Year's resolution!



Las Galarias Foundation has also just purchased a major piece of vital research equipment that will be donated to Reserva Las Galarias with the help from our supporters: a HOBO Weather Station! This piece of equipment will be placed at the original reserve and will measure barometric pressure, light, leaf wetness, rain fall, temperature, relative humidity, and wind speed. This device will be extremely important to the research conducted on the reserve. We will be setting up the station in March and we will let everyone know how it works. Ultimately, we would like another station to place on the new property (future home of the RLG research station).



Check out these amazing shots from the donated infrared cameras on RLG from 2008!

See if you can tell who is visiting the trails!



Wisps from the Cloud Forest

By Jane Lyons



Our Reforestation Efforts - Part I

Reserva Las Galarias has had an ongoing reforestation program ever since it was first established. It has been a totally experimental, self-taught effort as there is no book written about how to reforest Andean cloud forest and not even basic information about most of the native species of trees.

The two halves of what is now Reserva Las Galarias were formed when a small road was cut through the forest along a ridge. This allowed access for ranchers, cows and cow pastures. On one half of the Reserve are two watersheds that flow downslope towards the west, and on the other half is the Santa Rosa River watershed that flows from south to north across the equator to eventually join other rivers that flow toward the Pacific Ocean. Over 30 years the two halves were increasingly cut, pastured, hunted and farmed, with corresponding damage to the watersheds. What Las Galarias is now doing is regenerating and reconnecting these two halves and connecting the entire Reserve to other upslope forests. This is a critical corridor connection for the birds and mammals and other creatures that live in the two halves of the Reserve.

We began our reforestation efforts with a three-pronged approach: (1) we invited botanists from the national herbarium to do an initial study at the Reserve to get a basic idea of what we might have; (2) we planted trees and plants purchased from vendors in nearby towns; and (3) we allowed whatever would grow to grow as long as it helped shade out the non-native pasture grass.

The results of the herbarium study were pretty amazing. In just a small 7-hectare (17.5 acre) plot in the lower part of the Reserve at 1720 meters (5160 ft) elevation, and over just 4 days in September 2001, the botanists collected samples of 82 species of plants and trees thought to be useful to birds (which was the focus of the study). Back in their laboratory the botanists dried and identified the plants, saving them as part of the herbarium collection. Of the total 82 species collected, 11 species (13.4%) were endemic to Ecuador, and within some category of conservation concern. One species, *Podandroyne brevipedunculata* of the family Capparaceae is considered "Critically Endangered", while 4 other species are considered "Threatened". The families with the highest number of species represented were Solanaceae (7 species) and Gesneriaceae (6 species) both of which are known to be key species for hummingbirds and other pollinators.

Once we were able to identify at least some of our plants, we were able to plan our trails to avoid disturbing the rare and endemic species. As a result, we now have several thriving populations of the critically endangered *Podandroyne brevipedunculata*. But until now we have not been able to discover what in fact pollinates the beautiful flower, which could perhaps tell us why the plant is endangered. No hummingbird nor butterfly nor bat had ever been seen pollinating the flower. The good news is that in November 2008 I discovered a totally new, albeit small, population of the species along the Santa Rosa River Trail. And especially exciting is that 3 individuals of the same (so far unidentified) butterfly species were in fact feeding on the flower. Chances are that, in our narrow zone of endemism in the western Andes where clouds and mist keep sunshine-loving butterflies to a minimum, the butterfly species that pollinates this plant is also very rare if not endangered. We hope to continue to discover the secrets of these and other plants and their pollinators in order to promote their conservation.



Our second tactic of planting trees and plants purchased from anywhere we could find them was only about 20% successful. Even with the best care it soon became very clear that plants from other, lower, warmer, drier or higher zones simply would not survive in our cloud forest zone. We have had some success (and some failures) with various bird-friendly ornamental plants planted in our gardens around the houses, but very few trees imported from elsewhere survived. Our cloud forest lies on the equator, on the western slope of the western Andes and at elevations between 1700-2200m (5100 – 6600 ft). It receives most of its moisture from clouds generated from the Pacific Ocean and pumped up to our elevation by the heat of the lowlands. The rains brought by these clouds are what nourish the watersheds that Las Galarias protects. Also, at our elevation temperatures are normally cool (50s-70s) with very few really hot days, although our plants do have to adapt to sometimes very hot and even dry conditions.

Once it became clear that tree species from other areas were not going to be very helpful, I began to try to figure out how to find, transplant, grow and replant our own native species. Again, there are no books about this for our cloud forest species. However, some local knowledge has been very helpful. One of the first workers at Las Galarías, Señor Gerardo Obando, a neighboring cattle rancher who became a full-time employee of Las Galarías in 2002, in fact had a good knowledge of some of the trees in the area. So, one of his tasks became to gather seedlings, as well as fallen orchids and other plants, found growing in our trails, which now total 7 miles (12 kilometers) in length. These seedlings, seeds and any other plant that we might be able to grow are brought in to our greenhouse, where they are planted and cared for until they are sturdy enough to be transplanted. However, it is not so easy. Again, with much experimentation we discovered which species would best survive this journey, what soil/water/light conditions they require, and when and how they can safely be transplanted to ensure maximum survival success. Not so surprising, the key ingredient is rainfall. We have learned that the season for transplanting such seedlings is November-April. We plant only on days after good rains have soaked the soil and only at times of the day when the sun is not too direct. We clear a 3x3 meter plot and plant 3-9 seedlings within the plot, depending on the species. This makes it easier to keep the plot cleared of invading grasses or other species and to check on the seedlings. Over the years we have transplanted hundreds of seedlings of native tree species throughout the Reserve, and they have slowly but surely re-established a corridor of trees between the two halves of the Reserve. The first week of November 2008 we planted 67 individual trees that we had been carefully growing in our pots since last April.



Finally, our efforts to allow whatever would grow to grow as long as it helped shade out the non-native pasture grass have become increasingly successful. The pasture grass used in this area is African honey grass, an especially good grass for cattle but horribly tenacious, long-lived and impossible to eradicate except with chemicals or shade. Of course we would never use chemicals so that left us with shade as the best alternative for getting rid of the grass. We tried cutting, even extracting it by the roots, but this grass is only stimulated to grow more when it is cut. I discovered that two species of Compositae (also known as Asteraceae, or the aster, daisy, and sunflower family) if encouraged to grow, were about the only thing that would actually subdue the pasture grass. So, we began to plant clumps of these throughout the pastured areas. The added benefit was that these plants helped not only to subdue the pasture grass but also to nourish the soil and to attract butterflies. Other plants, especially ferns, have also been successful in growing through the pasture grass and helping shade it out. Once the grass is subdued and the soil enriched, we then can go in and plant the more delicate trees.

The process has been long and laborious and not without much frustration. But it has also been exceedingly interesting and rewarding to see our efforts becoming more and more successful.





Foundation Wish List



- * HOBO Weather Station
- * pH meter
- * Dissolved Oxygen Meter
- * Photos from Reserva Las Galarias
- * Recording-analyzing equipment/software for bird and frog calls
- * Headlamps and flash lights
- * Flora/Fauna Field Guides/books of Ecuador (in Spanish and English)
- * Spotting scope and tripod
- * Camping stove
- * Biology and natural science children's books for Los Exploradores (in Spanish)
- * Laptop computer
- * LCD projector
- * Volunteers to present at programs/festivals on behalf of LGF
- * Grant writer

For more information contact Katherine Krynak at glassfrog04@hotmail.com

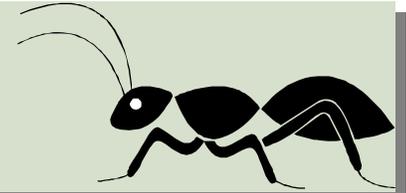
Fundraising/Volunteer Opportunities

- * We are still looking for potential donors to be added to our electronic 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. Black mats to be used for Tim's photos are also always appreciated.
- * Volunteers needed to present programs within their communities to raise money for LGF and spread the word about our wonderful conservation initiatives.
- * LGF is looking for a grant writer to help raise funds for the foundation's mission.
- * If you have anyone interested in being on the distribution list to receive *The Hum...* please contact Katherine Krynak at glassfrog04@hotmail.com
- * If you have questions or would like to contribute to LGF Inc. in another way, please give us a call at 440-777-6353



The E.O. Wilson Experience

by Katherine Krynak



This past September, I had the wonderful opportunity to hear Dr. E.O. Wilson speak at Baldwin Wallace College here in Northeastern Ohio. For those of you who do not know, Dr. Wilson is the founder of “Sociobiology” and essentially, the father of the environmental movement. His love of nature began with a healthy obsession with the social structure of ants in an abandoned lot in his home town at the age of nine. Today, he is in his 70s, but his enthusiasm for studying life at all levels has not been dulled with age. He is one of our world’s greatest naturalists. His passion for preserving this world’s amazing biodiversity is well demonstrated in his writings in such publications as *Biodiversity*, *Consilience*, and *Lord of the Ants*. You can sense his energy when you read his words, but when you meet him, that raw passion is felt. Hearing him speak with such optimism was deeply moving and encouraging. Following his lecture I wondered: How many times he has been told that his ideas and dreams were “too big” to be accomplished? How many times did he apply for grants/funding and was rejected? In fact, I have read that many of his colleges at one time had called his theories and statements flamboyant and outlandish and at a 1978 meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, one such disbeliever dumped a pitcher of ice-water upon him! (CNN.com). His optimism and determination inspires a never give up attitude. He pushed through the barriers of skeptics and negativity winning two Pulitzer Prizes, and dozens of conservation and science awards. He is truly an inspiration.

Today, he warns that we are endanger of the “sixth great extinction”, the man made loss of biodiversity. He has stated that it will take nothing less than a change in the way we think comparable to the Age of Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th centuries to stop such an extinction. Maybe the Mayans had it right, and the time of enlightenment is coming, but until then, it is the responsibility of those of us which have realized the importance of this world’s biodiversity, to do our part to save it.

E.O. Wilson should be an inspiration to us all. Here is a man in the later years of his life taking on the task of creating the “Encyclopedia of Life”, a public access internet site where life as is known of on this earth will be cataloged and viewed by millions of people, helping to instill such passion in the next generations. This project and many others are all based on the idea that we need to change the way we view the preciousness of the world’s diverse life forms.

Here is my plea, take a small step and help Las Galarias Foundation protect a hotspot of biodiversity. We have several programs centered around the preservation of life in the cloud forests of Ecuador. You can donate to help anyone of these programs such as our developing scholarship program, environmental education projects with local schools, land acquisition, biological research, or maybe you have an idea for a program to help the cause. The greatest message of which I took home from the lecture is this: we really can do it. He hasn’t given up, and I promise not to either. Now, find your “Ant”.... and you too can inspire the preservation of the world’s biodiversity! One person can not do everything, but everyone can do something.....

Muchas Gracias!

Thank you to our recent donors and volunteers!

Luke Seitz, Laurie Anne Robinson, Margret and Dwight Robinson, Mike and Sue Clark, Dave Lewis, Laurie Boylan, Mike and Robin Durkalec, Sonia DeFiore, Hannah Koppelberger and Marty Calabrese.

Las Galarias 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.

501 (c)(3) organization

www.lasgralariasfoundation.org



The Hum...

Las Gralarias Foundation Inc. Newsletter

Las Gralarias Foundation Inc.
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