

Project Update: October 2014

Observations

As mentioned last month, Regner our motorist was at the hospital and the boat is in bad condition. Regner was unavailable from 1st-8th October 2014 but good news, he is better now. With the boat it's different; no idea how many time we can still use it before it sinks straight to the bottom and now also the motor is showing some weaknesses. Anyway we have made observations on the Amazon River close to the city of Iquitos with seven outings in October 2014 (9th, 11th, 14th, 17th, 20th, 25th and 29th) but one was stopped early because the motor was collapsing and we didn't take any risks, so we will consider only six outings. The motor is repaired but still not in good state. A total of five different volunteers have participated with an average of six per outing. A total of only 20 river dolphins were counted, nine pink dolphins *Inia geoffrensis* and 11 grey dolphins *Sotalia fluviatilis* - on 14th October we didn't see any dolphins. Like in September 2014, this low number is probably due to the low water level of the Amazon River but the variation is very strange - between 14th and 18th October 2104 we had an **increase** of 1.38 m (52 cm in 24 hours between 15th and 16th October) while between 22nd and 27th October we had a new **decrease** of 1.05 m. Do the river dolphins feel this strong changes? How do they react? Do they avoid big rivers to wait in small rivers ("quebradas") and lakes that the water level is more constant?

Education

We have organised 10 presentations in the same primary school (Sara Alicia Saberbein Pinedo), with levels 4, 5 and 6, morning and afternoon sessions. A total of 322 children have received a diploma in October 2014. This school is in Belen, the poorest district in Iquitos. One day (when I was in Lima) there was a general power cut and the volunteers had to work without the beamer but they did it well. Also while we were explaining to the children that pollution is not only petrol and mercury but that human contamination with plastics is also part of the problem, we were really uncomfortable with what we could observe in the street. Indeed all street shopkeepers are throwing their garbage at the corner of the building, close to the entry/exit door and the children are passing at the front of this pile of rubbish twice a day. After a discussion with the Director it seems its worse every day and the municipal authorities are not helping. So we have decided to call the press and we had an article in the regional newspaper, asking action from them.

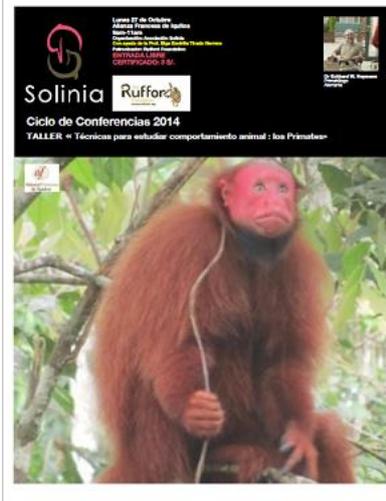


Meetings

Four weekly meetings were organised, always on a Thursday. An average of four volunteers were present. During the last meeting we had a special guest, Joaquin Leguia Orezza who is Founder and Director of ANIA (www.aniaorg.pe), an organisation working in environment education with children, based in Lima but having collaboration with other associations in all regions of Peru. We had a 1 hour discussion and probably that Solinia will be part of this red.

Conferences

On 27th October 2014 from 9.00 am to 12.30 pm we organised a workshop with Prof. Dr Eckhard W. Heymann (Germany) about the technics to observe animals. Dr Eckard is primatologist, specialist in monkeys in South America and he did a very nice presentation with also a practical work (video case). With a total of 38 participants, essentially young students from the regional universities, it was a great success. After event with snacks and drinks was also well appreciated. Dr Eckard has received a t-shirt as well as Prof Emerita (from the UNAP, Amazonian National University) who helped us to organize this workshop.



Others

I was in Lima from 20th to 23rd October 2014, so one observation (outing) and five conferences were managed only by volunteers.

As I have already mentioned last month, I am invited to a big congress in Cartagena (Colombia) the first week of December 2014 to talk about river dolphins and to make a presentation about the work of Solinia in Peru. Finally I have to be there already on 28th November 2014 to make a presentation during a workshop with a limited number of specialists (32 from 8 countries) about the status of the river dolphins in Peru with a summary of all available data (biology, distribution, threats and conservation initiatives); huge work but so exciting and it's an honor to represent Peru.

For more than three years now I am still in Peru with tourist visas but on 31st October 2014 my resident visa was approved, good news for me, my wife and... Solinia!



La Región, Iquitos jueves 3φ/1φ/2φ14

► Desarrollan charlas educativas en diferentes colegios de la ciudad

Asociación Solinia exige mayor atención en problema de basura



Cúmulos de basura se puede encontrar tanto en Belén como en toda la ciudad.



Cédric Gilleman, integrante de la asociación Solinia.

Solinia, como asociación sin fines de lucro para la conservación del medio ambiente y protección de los animales, especialmente de los delfines de río, tiene como proyecto la programación de charlas educativas en diferentes colegios de Iquitos.

Cédric Gilleman, director de proyectos de esta organización, refiere que durante esta semana vienen realizando charlas en diferentes instituciones educativas, precisamente ayer durante toda la tarde tuvieron una intervención en la Institución Educativa 61006 Sara Alicia Saberbein Pinedo del dis-

trito de Belén, ubicado en la calle 7 y 16 de Julio, en el cual buscan brindar información a los niños sobre la importancia de los delfines de río y de las amenazas, especialmente como la contaminación con plásticos.

Asimismo, muestra su preocupación por la abundante basura que se encuentra en este distrito. «Hemos observado bastante basura cerca de la institución que hemos dictado el taller, principalmente al frente de la puerta donde salen todos los niños y las niñas. Después de una discusión con la Directora de la Institución, la

señora Lic. Rosa Elizabeth Vásquez Echevarría, nos dijo que esta situación es peor cada día y las autoridades no hacen nada para ayudar a limpiar este lugar», precisa.

Sin lugar a duda, el problema de presencia de basura viene afectando a todos los distritos de la ciudad, generando focos infecciosos que afecta la salud de todos los que vivimos en esta ciudad, que lamentablemente se viene deteriorando.

Integrantes de esta organización hacen un llamado a las autoridades para dar solución a este problema, antes de generarse un caos de salud pública desde el enfoque ambiental. (MIPR)