

Project Update: December 2008

Just a short update after returning from a fieldwork trip in October and November. We have collected more data on the status of leaf litter frogs between 2600 and 3600 m and are working on the description of three new species of frogs. Unfortunately, trends are not encouraging. We have also installed two automatic recording devices in the field and trained a local field assistant to download data and change batteries periodically; therefore we will be able to continuously monitor selected frog species (those that produce vocalizations and are found near the recording devices) at a greatly reduced cost. We are currently seeking additional funding to purchase and operate more recording devices, based on priority habitats/species selected after comparing monitoring data of 1996-99 with those recently collected in 2007-8 and identifying declining frog species or populations.

We still have funds available for the 2009 wet season, and we plan to complete monitoring activities (leaf litter quadrats), collect more skin swab samples, visit new localities (most likely by joining other expeditions of the Amazon Conservation Association, to reduce costs), and possibly install more recording devices (depending on funding) at the main monitoring locality in Kosnipata. We are also taking advantage of education activities organized by the Frankfurt Zoological Society (visits of local school groups to the park ranger stations and the Wayqecha Biological Station) to give presentations on frogs and to involve children in monitoring activities. In May 2009, I will be producing a final report of all activities conducted with the support of the Rufford Foundation and other funding agencies between 2007 and 2009.

I have given a plenary lecture on the project at the scientific symposium organized by the Manu National Park, the Amazon Conservation Association, the Frankfurt Zoological Society, CREES and the University San Antonio Abad de Cusco for the 35 years of Manu NP in Cusco last month (<http://www.symposium.acca.org.pe/>). I will be giving a presentation next Monday at the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology here in Berkeley. I am attaching a PDF of an article about the project that appeared in the last issue of the Peruvian magazine Viajeros (<http://www.viajerosperu.com/>). Another reportage will appear in December in the Italian version of the magazine GEO (Italian photographers Emanuele Biggi and Francesco Tomasinelli spent some days with the field team last February); hopefully this article will be translated and published in other versions of GEO.