

Newsletter

Neotropical Primate Conservation



Long-Whiskered Owlet in La Esperanza



Long-Whiskered Owlet in La Esperanza.

Photo: Shachar Alterman

Long whiskered owlet, one of the rarest birds on earth, was watched and photographed on January the 24th, in NPC's main research area, La Esperanza. The owlet was observed by Shachar Alterman, an Israeli birdwatcher who joined the project for a month to carry out birds' surveys in the region, Noga Shanee, co-founder of the organization, and Edin Fonseca, a local guide who made an excellent job in finding the bird.

Long-whiskered owlet (*Xenoglaux loweryi*) was discovered in 1976, when it was caught in the mist nest of an ornithological team. Since it was first sighted, the owlet was found very few times. It is endemic to very small altitudinal range of the Amazonas and San Martin's humid mountain forest and is categorized as Endangered species by IUCN Red List.

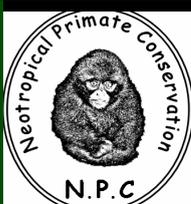
Despite all efforts, by researchers and birders alike, no Long-Whiskered Owlet was seen since 2007. As far as we know, this is only the fourth time this rare bird is ever seen in the wild - and the first time it is captured on video.

On the same night the owlet was found, the N.P.C group heard no less than five birds which responded to the recorded calls played by the team. No previous record of such dense population of *X. loweryi* exists so far. Two other species of rare and endemic birds; Rusty-Tinged Antpitta, Johnson's Tody-Tyrant were identified in the forest at the same trip.

The owlet is threatened by the same hazards which affect the yellow tailed woolly monkey. We are hoping that this new discovery of the Long-Whiskered Owlet's population and the interest it will upraise in birdwatchers and conservationists groups will help to further conservation of this forest for the benefit both species and their habitat.

New Ways to Fundraise

NPC is pleased to announce two new and easy ways you can raise funds for our conservation initiatives. "Easysearch" and "Easyfundraising" are new ways you can help us while using your computer. "Easysearch" allows you to raise money for NPC every time you search the web, visit our page at www.easyfundraising.org.uk/neoprimate, to find out how. "Easyfundraising" is a shopping directory listing some of the biggest online stores (including Amazon.co.uk). Just use the links on the "Easyfundraising" site when you shop online and we'll receive a free donation of up to 15% from every purchase you make. Check our page at www.neoprimate.easysearch.org.uk and use it every time you search the Web.



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La Primavera-Paujil Conservation Concession



A. belzebuth an endangered primate in Paujil. **Photo: Shachar Alterman**

Between the 11th and the 21st of January NPC organized a team of biologists and anthropologists to undertake a rapid biological and social inventory of the forests of Paujil, San Martin. The objective of this is to aid in registration of the area as a conservation concession which will be run by an association made up of people from the neighboring village of La Primavera.

The group of scientists included Julio Tello from the Titi Monkey Project (Proyecto Mono Tocon) in San Martin and Shachar Alterman a journalist, photographer and birdwatcher from Israel, who surveyed the bird species. They identified 218 species including many rare and endemics. Heydi Canales Torres from San Marcos University in Lima made a botanical inventory and found an impressive amount of orchid species. Nestor Allgas a biologist from Lima that now works with our team in La Esperanza surveyed reptiles and amphibians. NPC's Noga Shaneé coordinated the delegation, the large mammal survey and the socio-economic survey which included questionnaires and interviews with many people. All the visiting scientists came as un-paid volunteers, dedicating their time and energy to forwarding conservation. We are very thankful to all of them.

La Primavera – Paujil is a very special place, lying in the central Peruvian Andes with altitudes ranging between 800-2200 m.a.s.l. The area holds an incredible diversity of wildlife. There are species from the lowland rainforest such as the endangered giant otter (*Pteronutra brasiliensis*) as well as species usually found in the higher Andean cloud forests such as the vulnerable Andean bear (*Tremarctos ornatus*).

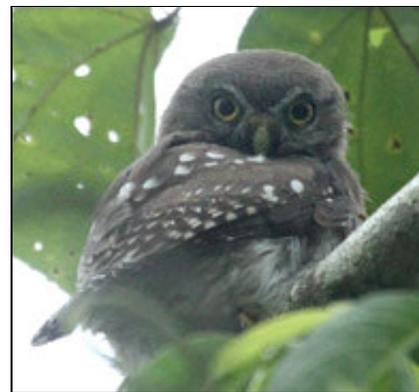
Local villagers are very interested in this project and play a proactive role; in an “environmental capacity building session” given by the Ronda and NPC they not only committed themselves to help in the creation and protection of this reserve but also requested our help in creating a second conservation concession in an area near a neighboring village.



Blue-throated piping-guan

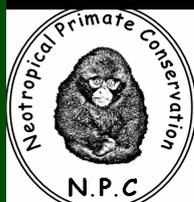


Royal sunangle



Peruvian pygmy-owl

Photos: Shachar Alterman



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Rural Conservation Outreach

In the last few months our team has been visiting many different sites in Amazonas and San Martin to better understand the situation of the remaining forests in the regions. We visited many remote villages and communities both in and out of the yellow tailed woolly monkey's range to assess the situation and to help organize local people to better conserve their forests. This work is done in full cooperation with the Ronda (a net of vigilance and popular court systems in rural areas where the state has little presence). Revealing a picture that is both depressing and hopeful, we found a lot of deforestation and burning of forest occurring but that the communities are slowly organizing themselves with the help of the Ronda to combat these practices. The drying of rivers and climate changes are deeply worrying to the people who survive on small scale agriculture. Another major preoccupation of most of the people is the rapid proliferation of mining, timber and oil concessions in the area.



The paramo of Ollereros, Amazonas. **Photo: Noga Shanee**

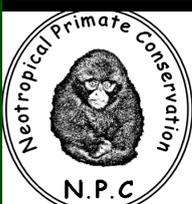
We found pristine areas which are still home to many endangered and endemic species and people that are ready to listen and work towards conservation. We are hoping to help these people through capacity building programs in sustainable management of natural resources and, in some, by developing eco-tourism or by including them in some of the other economic alternatives that we realize in our La Esperanza project.

Environmental Education with the University of Amazonas

As part of NPC's commitment to ensuring the long term reach of our conservation efforts we have been helping students from the University of Amazonas. During November, December and January, 8 final year students studying primary education were given the opportunity to gain the practical experience necessary to graduate by teaching environmental education in four remote villages in Amazonas. NPC funded the students to develop a concise syllabus to teach primary school pupils. Classes were given for one hour each day on a variety of topics with additional practical classes given each Friday. The visiting students, as well as local pupils and school teachers, thoroughly enjoyed their time here and are preparing an environmental education handbook inspired by the experience. Plans are already underway to continue working in this way with more students for next year when we hope to include more schools in villages further a field.



Work in the tree nursery as part of environmental education activities for La Florida school. **Photo: Lenin Perez**



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