

The Official Newsletter from Costa Rica



Editors' Letter

Happy Month to Everyone!

Welcome to Costa Rica's February newsletter edition, this time I have the pleasure to share with all our readers, special information about current important activities that are happening in Liberia city. So I encourage you to keep reading and keep sharing with our Costa Rican newsletter, thanks a lot and remember to be "Pura Vida".



“Beginning of lessons in most of the Schools and High schools in Liberia City”.

On February 4th most of the schools around the country were open to start a new school year. Kids had their first lessons since that date and now all of them are in the process of analyzing schedules and teachers as it is every year.

Once this is done, they start their studies formally. Volunteers this month have been located in the different placements Projects Abroad Costa Rica work with, now they are starting with their projects having a nice experience at the different schools.

These are pictures of some of the volunteers who are already located doing a great job as part of Projects Abroad.



Festivals around Liberia City

From February 20th until March 3rd, Liberia city will celebrate some festivals around, in which people can enjoy many cultural activities such as bullfights, national and international concerts, typical food and more.

These festivals are a tradition in the city which has been held for many years, many cities around like to come join to see what this offers. One special aspect of these traditional festivals is that during the whole two weeks you can enjoy pumps, fireworks, you can look or hear a special group of people around 5am moving by a car visiting the different neighborhoods of the city, playing local music with different instruments just with the purpose to announce that we are in festivals.



Social Activities at Soccer Centre and Pizza Pronto Liberia

On February 7th and February 21st, most of the volunteers were part of the social events that happened. They had a fun soccer match in one of the private soccer fields in the city in which they played in groups meeting each other and having fun together.

The second activity was a nice dinner at one of the most delicious pizza restaurants called “Pizza Pronto”, there they also could have the opportunity to meet new volunteers and have another time to have fun.



Culture Workshop with our Volunteers in Program

On Thursday 14th the Costa Rica office had for first time the Culture Workshop with the volunteers in program, with this presentation the staff members tried to involved them with the culture, behaviors, communication, how to deal with the culture shock and more important topics in order to let them know what to expect while there are volunteering in the city and as part of the country.



Conservation Article

Management plan

This month ended the Barra Honda conservation management plan, this document shows the aids, justification, methodology and summary of all the projects that we are doing and will do in this national park.



The first thing that a Conservation Project needs to start publishing scientific projects is to have a good management plan. Now Barra Honda, following this new plan, can produce documents that are important for the environmental conservation of Costa Rica.

This is because we have the opportunity to be an example for all the Tempisque Conservation Area (in Spanish ACT) in some subjects like waste management, environmental education and research.

Nursery garden and seed trees

November and December were necessary to search and classify seed trees in the forest. Once they were marked, we proceeded to choose the best seed trees.

In this month we know the places and the best time to go and collect the seeds, for now we are working with two species: Cedro amargo (*Cedrella odorata*) and Cocobolo (*Dalbergia retusa*).

The seeds are being processed in the nursery garden, for this is necessary to take them out of the fruits, classify them like good or bad seeds, counting them and subjected them to a scarification process.

When they are ready, they are moved to the seed germination beds, at the end of the process, the seedlings are moved to bags and are watered twice by day.

Butterflies Project

All Tuesdays we do the Butterflies' Project, we are uniting two methodologies, height fruits traps (Van Someren Rydon) and butterflies nets to catch butterflies that are not attracted by fruits, to generate the inventory of the national park.



With just tree time of project, we identified a new species for Barra Honda (*Hamadryas amphinome mexicana*). Although we are working almost all day in the creation of the first butterflies filed guide of the national park Barra Honda.

Bat Project

For almost all the bat projects, it has been necessary to create camps in the forest because the places we are studying are really far away from the central camp. We leave the camp in the afternoon and come back the next morning. This is because the bat activity starts after 5pm and there is another after 12pm.

During the first monitoring in the sector Las Cascadas (the waterfalls), we had a new report for Barra Honda, *Micronycteris minuta* and also we captured an individual *Micronycteris silvestris* which, had not been seen in the area since 2004.

Volunteer story

This month was the end of the project for one volunteer that was with us for five important months, when we started new projects, and finished some others like, make transects.

This was what he said about the project:



Gunnar Ottemann.

Which were your expectations for this project?

I never thought that Barra Honda Dry forest conservation was so big, I thought I will come to a really small place with least staff members, least volunteers and not so many interesting projects. When I was in Germany, I didn't know which works I will come to do in Barra Honda. I read some newsletters and I saw that maybe I would come to clear trails and make some other works in the forest.

When I came, I started doing hard work, because we were starting with the biodiversity project, we needed to work hard to finish before the rain came. In the beginning, I didn't have enough strength to work like the staff members worked, but then I saw I was getting strong and working like a Tico (Costa Rican guy).

Which were the projects you most like to do in Barra Honda?

Well, I liked almost all the projects, there were some I liked more than others, but I always tried to do my best in all of them because I knew they were important for the national park, an example is making the transects dip in the forest.

Before you came to Barra Honda, what were your goals in life in Germany?

I really didn't know what my goals for life were, I just liked playing soccer and being with my friends, and also I spent a lot of time doing nothing. When I came here and started to work for the national park, I felt really proud, so I realized what life means and I started to think what I wanted for me and my future.

How is the lifestyle in Barra Honda?

In the beginning, I needed to get used to speaking other languages (Spanish and English). Then I needed to learn how to live with people from different cultures and countries, but then I felt that I had a new family here and we started doing things you do at home with your family, like playing soccer, video games, listening to and sharing music, go out to eat, going to the beach and other national parks. Some of the best things I experienced were celebrating Christmas and New Year with other cultures, other family, without snow and cold weather, but with a lot of happiness and shelter.

What do you think is the most important thing you learned in the time you spent in Barra Honda Dry Forest Conservation?

My mentality about life is different now; I am stronger and ready to deal with life's game. Now I want to go back to my country and make my floor, study with wastes management because I loved to work with waste in Barra Honda and try to paint my life in Germany with the Pura Vida lifestyle I lived in Barra Honda.

Jose Mario Gonzalez

Volunteer supervisor