NPC Peru 2019 REPORT TO TiME

Update on lands purchased in 2017 and 2018

July 2019
Background

NPC is dedicated to the conservation of Neotropical primates and their habitats in South and Central America. We aim to promote the conservation of forest habitats and wildlife, specifically non-human primates, through a variety of means. These include: land protection and the creation of reserves; conservation orientated scientific investigation with local ‘parabiologists’; improvements to degraded habitat for wildlife; public awareness campaigns and environmental education; assisting the rescue, rehabilitation and reintroduction of wild animals to their natural habitats and working to stop the illegal trade in wildlife. All our work is carried out in conjunction with, and for the benefit of local people.

NPC has been instrumental in the creation of 11 protected areas, as well as corridors between critical habitat for multiple Threatened species. For the creation and management of these reserves we have carried out biological inventories, capacity building, provided legal advice and helped raise funds for management. We have first-hand knowledge of the social, economic and environmental conflicts related with the establishment of protected areas, negotiating agreements and coordinating work with the local organizations.
Project focal areas:

The Campesino Community of Yambrasbamba lies within a high priority site for conservation at the heart of the “Tropical Andes Biodiversity Hotspot”, the most biodiverse region on earth. It is also one of the most threatened areas and is home to many endemic and endangered species. The community’s forests occupy a strategic area between several protected areas, which according to the IUCN, makes the area a priority for conservation as it will protect part of a natural biological corridor between protected areas, allowing organisms to travel between areas.

An endemic Andean night monkey (Aotus miconax) in the Yambrasbamba community.

The 7,418 ha Royal Sun Angels Gardens, has been unofficially protected since 1988 by a dedicated group of villagers, and got awarded status as a Concession for Conservation in 2012. The reserve’s horse-shoe shape makes it harder to protect. An offer came up to purchase the land in the interior of the “U” shape and add it to the reserve which would help protect the forest as a whole and it’s resident wildlife. We approached TiME on behalf of the local reserve managers to see if it would be possible to raise funds for this project.
Activities to date

The grants from TiME allowed the purchase of three land parcels in two areas of northern Peruvian montane and pre-montane cloud forest.

Panoramic view of the Jardines Angel del Sol Conservation Concession, taken during monitoring trips in 2019.

Purchase I:

The first, in the district of Yambrasbamba in Amazonas state, comprised 66 has of lands, 46 has of which were primary forest, with 20 has of pastures. The lands were purchased in the name of local resident and long-time collaborator Isidoro Lozano and his wife Donatila Mego. Both of whom signed a conservation agreement that in exchange for use of the already existing pasture land the couple would ensure protection of the primary forest areas in perpetuity and allow NPC and our collaborators free access to the site to carryout conservation activities and scientific investigations on native fauna and flora.

Improvised camp where Dan Doolan camped during his thesis research. Surrounding forest are part of the purchased lands, and are continuous with the Pampa del Burro Private Conservation area (In the background).
Since completing the purchase, the lands have remained intact with no deforestation or hunting occurring. NPC has been able to carry support Master’s degree student Dan Doolan, from the University of Roehampton, on the completion of his thesis research into the occupancy rates and population densities of the Endemic and Endangered Peruvian night monkey (*Aotus miconax*). The site has also been used for the reintroduction of a rescued *A. miconax* individual. This animal was caught from the wild locally to be kept as a pet. Thanks to the quick intervention of wildlife authorities we were able to return it to the forest before it became ill or accustomed to life as a pet.

Additional activities at the site have included the physical marking of the boundaries of the land, clearing small perimeter trails and marking rocks, trees and other landmarks to ensure there is no encroachment on forests in the area. Similarly signs have been installed in key places along the perimeter. Also, small scale reforestation activities have taken place, with living fences and shade trees being planted. All trees planted are native species to the area, that fix nitrogen in soils, improving fertility of soils.

**Purchase II&III:**

The second and third purchases, in the district of Pachiza in San Martin state, comprised of 250 has and 40 has, respectively, all of which were primary forest, with only minor disturbance from previous selective logging and minimal areas cleared. The lands were purchased in the name of local conservation association “Asociación de Productores Agropecuarios La Primavera” (APALP). We have been working with APALP for several years, mainly in the creation and management of a ~7,200 ha Conservation Concession. The purchased lands bordered the existing concession, with the intention of later incorporating them into it. Along with the purchase, APALP signed a conservation agreement that they would ensure protection of both areas in perpetuity, incorporate the lands into the concession when possible, and to allow NPC and our collaborators free access to the site to carry out conservation activities and scientific investigations on native fauna and flora.
Since the purchases were made, we have returned to the areas to carry out monitoring activities. In July 2017 a team of Biologists, led by Gabriel Mendoza (mammalogy), together with Andrea Echeverry (herpetology) and Roger Barboza (ornithology) visited the site for 5 days. A total of 20 species of mammal were recorded, divided into 6 orders and 15 families. The most important mammal species for conservation were the white-lipped peccary (*Tayassu pecari*), jaguar (*Panthera onca*), spectacled bear (*Tremarctos ornatus*) and white-bellied spider monkey (*Ateles belzebuth*). A total of 71 species of bird species were recorded, divided into 26 families. Eighteen new species were registered for the Conservation Concession compared to previous monitoring trips, increasing the number of species known to inhabit the area. A total of 10 amphibian species and 4 reptile species were recorded. There were 9 new herpetological species recorded when compared to previous surveys in the Concession area, again increasing the number of species known to inhabit the area.

Further monitoring trips, solely for large mammal species, were carried out in March, May and June 2019, for 5 days each. During these trips we recorded capuchin monkeys (*Cebus yuracus*), ocelots (*Leopardus pardalis*), jaguars (*Panthera onca*), night monkeys (*Aotus sp.*), ant eaters (*Tamandua tetradactyla*) as well as white bellied spider monkeys (*Ateles belzebuth*) and howler monkeys (*Alouatta seniculus*). These trips were carried out as part of a project funded by the “Small Grants for the Purchase of Nature” program of the IUCN Netherlands, through local NGO AMPA. This grant also included the purchase of further lands neighbouring the original Conservation Concession, the construction of tree nurseries and a project to improve local organic coffee production.

We have also run several education campaigns in the surrounding villages and NPC Peru vice-president, Yeissy Sarmiento, is currently undertaking a project that evaluates the attitudes of local women to conservation and their perception of levels of inclusion. This will hopefully result in greater impact of conservation work in the future.
Drones:

TiME has also financed the purchase of two Drones for monitoring both areas, and other sites we are helping conserve. One drone was given to APALP, together with training on it’s use, so that they can monitor hard to access areas of their Conservation Concession. This drone has been used a number of times, including in the selection of further sites to purchase and during monitoring trips. The other drone remains with NPC and has been used for monitoring the land purchased in Yambrasbamba district as well as other reserves we support.
Future Plans

We plan to continue working in both areas into the future, helping ensure their management and protection. Specifically, in the next two years we aim to:

- Support the conservation of both lands through financing patrol and demarcation activities.
- Increase Environmental Education work in surrounding villages.
- Continue developing scientific investigation and monitoring work at both sites, primarily focused on Threatened species.
- Look for funding to finance further land purchases to increase the size of protected lands.

Thank you!