Project Update: July 2007

After 18 months of hard field work in the Colombian Amazon, and under severe delays due to the logistical and cultural challenges of doing camera trapping in the Amazon, the project has produced 2,894 camera trap nights in two survey areas. An unprotected area, Amacayacu National Park (ANP) with 1,758 trap nights (using 18 stations) and an unprotected area, Calderon River Valley with 1,211 (28 stations). The second camera trapping session was conducted, for the first time in the Amazon, in the wet season. Many jaguar, puma and ocelot photographs were produced, with highlights such as several pictures of black jaguars, pregnant female jaguars and the first data on big cat use of Caatinga habitat recorded by camera traps. The survey area included and enclave of extra sunny white sand habitat composed of short and thin trees, known as Caatinga. Since 2002, this type of habitats has been prioritized as to develop research on understanding how cats, particularly jaguars use it, and if at all. Well, my project found that they love it! In 20 days too pictures of 3 adult jaguars, included a pregnant female and an adult puma going to sun bathe and to nap on non sandy parts that were covered by moss and ferns!

Many dozens of prey species pictures were also developed and these numbers will inform about the cats' prey base status. Including first time pictures of very rare species such as the short eared dog (*Atelocynus microtis*) and the little known species such as giant armadillos, and terrestrial birds such as Spix's guan, razor-billed and nocturnal curassows and trumpeters. All these species are also included in the indigenous hunters menu, so measuring their abundance as well as the hunting pressure will tells us the impact of this hunting. Several hundredths of km of tracking and more than ten month of hunting data were also collected. All this data is in the process of being analysed now and will be sent as an end of project report to the Rufford foundation.