

Project Update: May 2012

The Cloud Forests of the eastern slopes of the Bolivian Andes are habitat for more than 1500 species of butterflies, many of them endemic to the region. The South Yungas region where Tarapari Biodiversity Garden is located is one of the most heavily impacted areas in terms of habitat fragmentation and degradation and increasing use of pesticides for controlling the Ullu (*Eloria noyesi*), a moth that eats the tips of budding coca leaves, the most important agricultural crop of the Yungas.

Butterflies are charismatic animals, attractive to people from all sectors of society and an effective focus for biodiversity conservation education programs for children and adults. Based on experiences over the past 3 years receiving groups of schoolchildren and tourists, the Tarapari Biodiversity Garden has decided to increase its focus on conservation and environmental education programs for butterflies. A RSG Booster Grant will permit us to develop a butterfly conservation and education center for the South Yungas region.

Tarapari will dedicate a room in the Biodiversity Museum to butterflies, develop and offer a wide array of educational programmes on site, in schools, in La Paz and through radio programmes. In this way, we will continue to be a presence for conservation in the region. We also plan to continue sponsoring education programmes and other activities in the community of Chulumani, such as the mural painting and field trips to the garden that Rufford funds have partially supported in the past.

In addition, in 2012 Tarapari will be hosting two of Bolivia's foremost butterfly specialists who are in conducting research throughout Bolivia for the publication of a field guide to Bolivia's butterflies. Their presence at Tarapari will create an opportunity to develop programs and infrastructure improvements to the museum and garden that will strengthen our capacity to support biodiversity conservation in the Yungas.



