



**Community-based conservation program of three endangered species of river turtles with Amazonian indigenous communities of Colombia and Peru – Awareness-raising and environmental education in Peruvian communities**

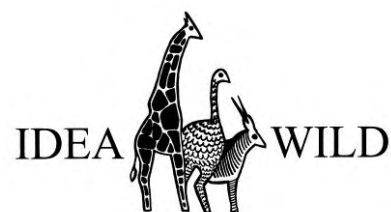
**Progress report 2010**

**Presented by:**

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**Russell E. Train**  
**Education for Nature Program**



## **Presentation**

Since 2008, Fundación BioDiversa Colombia started a community-based turtle conservation program in the Amazon River with indigenous communities of Colombia. The program sought to raise awareness among the communities and generate appropriation of turtle conservation. By 2009, three local conservation groups of 12-15 people were formed in two communities, which actively protected nests and nesting females during the reproductive season, and rose awareness among neighbor communities. The aim of the 2010 phase was to carry out a strong educational campaign in two Peruvian indigenous communities, and to motivate them to form their own local conservation groups and join the Colombian communities in their efforts to preserve the turtles.

## **Educational campaign with Peruvian communities**

The campaign was based in the experiences learnt during the environmental education program that took place with Colombian communities in 2009. During 2010, the activities took place in the communities of Yahuma I and Yahuma II of the Mariscal Ramon Castilla Province, Peru, located just across the River from participating Colombian communities.

In each community, we worked very intensively with a group of young people. They learned to operate audiovisual equipment and were in charge of the interviews and organizing the activities with children and adults. We presented a video of an awareness-raising stageplay that had been created by the children and the young people from one of the Colombian communities (the video can be seen in this [link](#)). Several art and play activities were carried out with the children and with active participation of the young people, to raise awareness about the importance of conserving the turtles for future generations. The games focused on the importance of using turtles sustainably and watching over them to avoid their extinction. Elder adults were interviewed by the young people about tradition regarding turtles and about their decline during the last decades. They were also invited to the school to tell the children traditional stories, songs and dances related to turtles. In Yahuma I, of a strong tikuna tradition, a grandmother thought them a turtle dance that they prepared for the rest of the community. In Yahuma II, the children prepared a stageplay based on the stories of the grandparents and the importance of watching over turtles. Mothers were involved in the preparation of the costumes and disguises. During closure days, the plays were presented to the rest of the community and the artwork of the children and the young people was exposed in the classrooms.

At the end of the program, we gathered together the four participating communities: two experienced from Colombia and two new from Peru. Each community carried out activities regarding traditional knowledge about turtles (dances, stories, a stageplay) and we showed videos and photos of the activities carried out in 2009. We believe that these activities will motivate the Peruvian communities to form their own local conservation groups for the follow-up activities.

## **Follow-up**

A video of the stageplay and of the dance is being edited to create a DVD of all the activities. In December, the video will be given the young people group to present it to the rest of the community. We will then invite them to form their own local conservation groups and get involved in the turtle conservation activities. With the groups formed, we will organize a

capacity-building workshop with the six local conservation groups (three experienced and three new, two from Peru and four from Colombia). The trainers will be members and expert allies of FBC and the groups will receive proper theoretical and practical training in different areas, such as: turtle biology and conservation; monitoring of nests and nesting females; gathering and analyzing data; sustainable management of natural populations; communication; organization capacity; and project planning, fund-raising and execution. We expect that, with that training, the six groups will be ready for the follow-up activities.





Presentation of photos and videos of previous activities during gathering day of participating communities

Art activities with Yahuma I school children and exhibition for the adults during the closure day





## Young people group in Yahuma I



Young people group of Yahuma I with co-researcher Iván Ulloa

Young people group of Yahuma I interviewing a fisherman of the community about decline of turtle populations



Grandmother teaching a traditional turtle son to children and young people



Traditional turtle dance in Yahuma I





## Art activities with school children of Yahuma II



Smaller children with co-researcher Diana Gutiérrez







Young people group and interviews with grandmothers on tradition regarding turtles

## Stageplay in Yahuma II



The turtles



The fishermen



The turtle guardians



