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Friends of the Osa is a nonprofit organization committed to conserving the terrestrial and marine biodiversity of Costa Rica's Osa Peninsula. Our programs focus on protection of the Osa's wildlife and ecosystems, providing environmental education and training, conducting ecological research, and supporting sustainable livelihoods for the



www.osaconservation.org

AN OPORTUNE TIME

2008 was a year both good and difficult. On the good side of the ledger we were able to expand the Osa biodiversity properties by purchasing the 600+ hectare Cerro Osa properties. The acquisition is a huge step forward for conservation, as these properties play a very strategic role in wildlife movement and have amazing old growth forest, protect vital headwaters and contain buildings that will serve as a new environmental education and training center to complement the Osa Biodiversity Centers research facilities. The latter operation, led by Guido Saborio, expanded its teaching and research activities substantially this year. In the following newsletter you can see and read about these and other advances.

On the negative side it is fair to say that the Arias administration, rather than acting on their professed "Peace with Nature" initiative, showed every sign of engaging in a "War with Nature". For example, the administration has signed a highly questionable exemption for a Canadian gold mining company to clear forest in northern Costa Rica, relaxed the ban on shark finning, and is promoting a new international airport for the southern Pacific zone without any strategic vision for an ecologically sustainable development future of the region. SETENA, the administration's environmental assessment agency, approved work on two massive marinas on both sides of the Golfo Dulce and gave the green light to continued development of an ecologically disastrous tuna ranch (see earlier newsletter or our website for more details). The Osa canton continued to assert his right to encourage develop-

ment of the steep slopes of Fila Costeña and wetlands without restraint or proper permitting. Is it sensible to threaten the uniquely beautiful and biological value of the irreplaceable Golfo Dulce and the Osa as a whole, to further tarnish Costa Rica sinking reputation as a green country just to benefit a handful of foreign speculators? That is the predominant direction of development in Costa Rica today and the Osa that is blessed with the least developed coastal zone and lowland forest region left in Meso-America is perceived by many as merely a huge development opportunity.

The collapse of the stock market, drying up of credit, and the precipitous drop in gasoline prices is not a bad thing. We hope that it dries up financing for these development projects that represent short term profit taking made at the expense of the health of the Osa. Those profits are usually destined to quickly leave the region and create impoverishment in the long term. We hope that the collapse in oil prices makes expansion of palm oil and cane for bio-fuels less attractive. But at the same time this economic down turn has dried up support for conservation.

These are difficult economic times. But if you care about the Osa this is a highly strategic time in which to increase your support for conservation in the region.

SWIMMING COLLARED PECCARIES



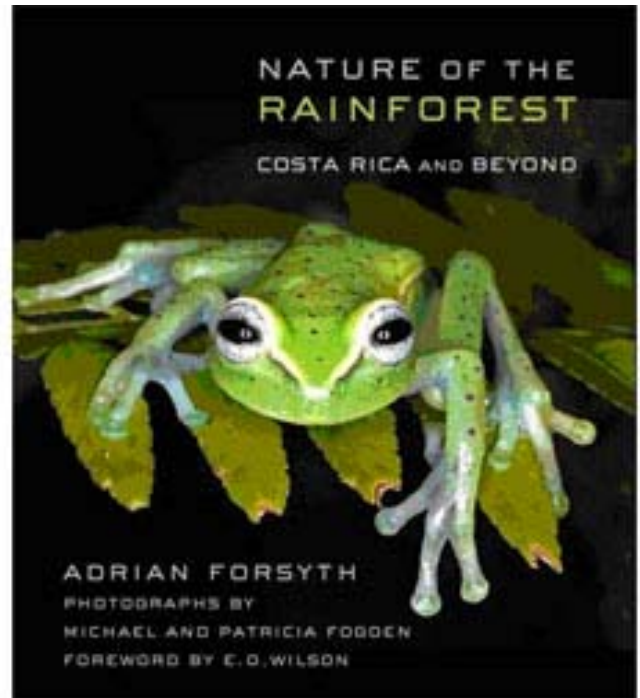
A group of four collared peccaries swim in tight formation across the Esquinas River near a series of properties recently bought by TNC to increase biological connectivity between Corcovado and Piedras Blancas National Parks. This method of swimming may reduce vulnerability from attack by the American crocodiles common in the Esquinas.

EVERGREEN FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM



NATURE OF THE RAINFOREST REPUBLICATED

FOO is proud to announce the republication of Adrian Forsyth's book, *Nature of the Rainforest: Costa Rica and Beyond*.



"Adrian Forsyth contributes with this book to the genuine literature of ecology, wherein exact knowledge is expressed through the prisms of disciplined emotion. Such writing requires a rare combination of scientific training and metaphorical skill, and Forsyth displays the instincts of a creative writer, taking us deep into the tropical rainforest. *Nature of the Rainforest* calls attention to the best of this planet and to the compelling reasons why we should look south, inland, to the forest of dreams." -- from the foreword by E. O. Wilson

← Marine biologist Eva Salas gathers data on coral reef fish. As part of the Evergreen Fellowship Program, FOO supported research on the association between coral reef fish and dolphins around Caño Island. Research was conducted by members of Keto Foundation.

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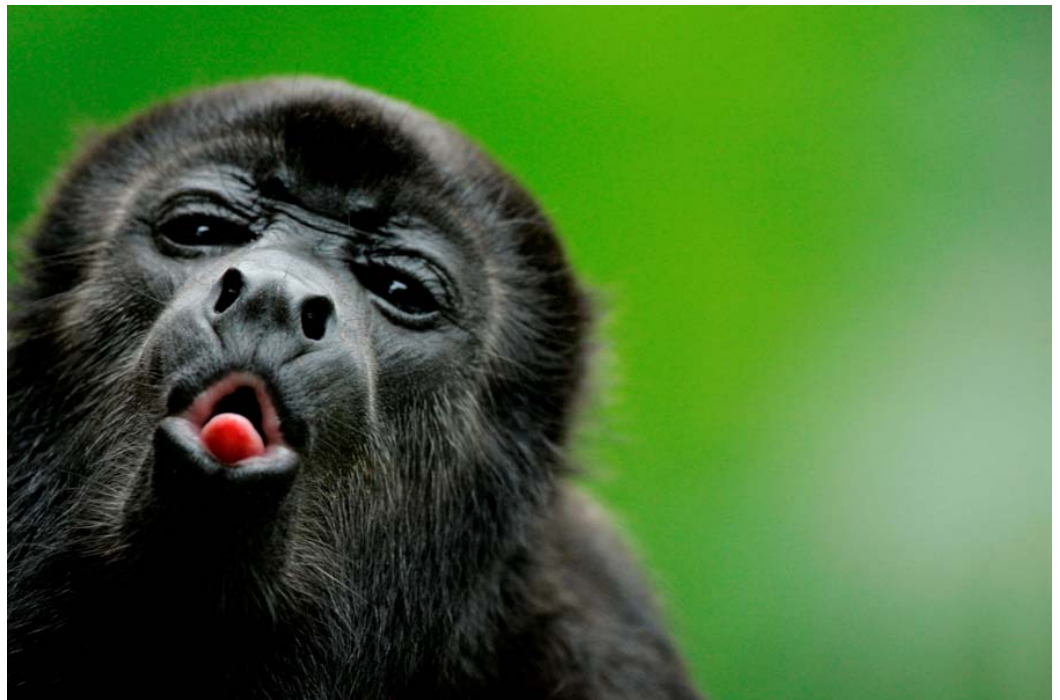
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HOW YOU CAN HELP PROTECT THE OSA



Nicole Barton photographed a howler monkey. Winner of the photo contest, wildlife

Our activities in the Osa would not be possible without contributions from our supporters. We would like to thank those who supported us though online and check donations, in-kind contributions, volunteering, sending photos and letters, or through learning about the Osa. Stay tuned! For online donations, please visit www.osaconservation.org/donate.html.

Two additional websites with information about Osa conservation issues are:

www.coalicionsur.org

www.the-osa-peninsula.com

Friends of the Osa is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization, and contributions to our work are tax-deductible in the United States.

Your donation supports the conservation of land and wildlife, scientific study of the Osa's ecosystems, environmental education and outreach, and sustainable livelihoods for local communities.

We strive to be an efficient and effective organi-

Friends of the Osa has now a Facebook page!

Become a fan at: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Friends-of-the-Osa/54714501997?ref=ts>

And join the cause at: http://apps.facebook.com/causes/177357?recruiter_id=7482595

zation where 90 cents of every dollar donated goes directly to program activities. Donations can be submitted via our website (www.osaconservation.org) or by mail to our Washington, DC address.

To speak with someone about the work we do and how your support can make a difference, please call or email us at: info@osaconservation.org.