



While I always marvel at God's power and marvelous creation I have never considered myself to be much of a naturalist or conservationist and I don't know if it's because I am getting older or if it's that I am finally waking up to the amazing nature we are surrounded with here in the foothills of a world International Parque La Amistad. I know that in Feb of 2010 when Pablo Yoder was here for evangelistic meetings he helped spark a flame of interest that continues to burn within me. This park is virtually unexplored as of yet.

The park's cross-frontier position gives it unique potential to improve bioregional planning. The park's buffer zone includes coffee and beef producers, indigenous subsistence farmers and communities like Santiago. A consequence of the difficulty of the terrain, the park is relatively unexplored and the only substantial scientific explorations deep into the park have been led by the Natural History Museum London, INBio and the University of Panama in the last 6 years (2003-2008). We hope that this will soon change as we wish to open doors of opportunity and create world awareness.

In 2006 the UK's Darwin Initiative funded a three year collaborative project led by the Natural History Museum, London, INBio (Costa Rica) and ANAM (Panama). The aim of which was to generate baseline biodiversity information for the park and a map of the biodiversity. This involved a series of seven multi-disciplinary and international expeditions to remote parts of La Amistad during which over 7,500 plants, 17,000 beetle and 380 herpetological collections were made and deposited in the national collections of Costa Rica and Panama. These expeditions

also lead to the discovery of 12 plant species, one dung beetle species, fifteen amphibian and three reptile species new to science.



With such a diverse range of environments, visitors can expect a very wide variety of wildlife, trees and plant life. It is estimated that two thirds of all the wildlife that resides in Costa Rica can be found here, including jaguars, giant anteaters, tapirs, puma, coatis, monkeys, peccaries, margay and ocelot. An unprecedented 500 species of birds are found throughout the park including the illusive resplendent quetzal and harpy eagle. Of the species listed as &endangered& in Costa Rica, nine of the eleven birds, 13 of the 16 mammals and all the amphibians and reptiles are found in La Amistad Park. Approximately 1,000 fern species, 500 tree species and 130 different types of orchids can also be found within the park borders. Compared to other parks and reserves around the world of similar size, the diversity found here is unequalled.

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If you wish to explore this rugged frontier it is advisable to hire a guide, as many of the trails are unmarked. Camping is allowed in several designated locations within the park; most web sites will inform you that there is no lodging, but this has all just changed! It might be a little limited but its lodging! And you have a couple options!

→† <http://agrosanmigueladventures.com/hospedaje.html> and http://santiagosprings.com/index.php?option=com_igallery&view=gallery&id=1&Itemid=9

both the communities of Santiago and San Jeronimo now have hiking trails to the park. And clear at the top of the continental divide there is a cabin with all the basic amenities to spend a pleasant time camping. Cost of cabin rental \$7 per night (has room for a group of up to 12) Cost

of hiring a guide per day \$50 (It is highly recommended that there be a guide per every 5 persons)

From San Jose, head south via Cartago on the Pan-American, crossing over Cerro de la Muerte until the 3-4 hour drive takes you to San Isidro de El General. From there, you can access one of the park entrances through Santiago. Something that will make Santiago unique is that directly above this mountain community is where this International Park La Amistad and the National Park Chirripo border each other.



One of the reasons I am convinced this beautiful Park will soon be discovered by the world is because endangered species of amphibians and even amphibians that have been given up as extinct are being discovered within the foothills and within this Park.

Amphibian declines around the world have forced many species to the brink of extinction, are much more complex than realized and have multiple causes that are still not fully understood, researchers conclude in a new report.

A threatened species that a UCR biologist found within the last year in Monte Verde southern Costa Rica is the glass frog. While most of the 60 Glass Frog species have a lime green color to them, there are a few that actually have translucent skin. Yep, this means you can actually see their organs without paying for expensive x-rays! Typically, you are able to see their liver, heart and GI Tract without too much difficulty. I confess that once you begin to study these friends you become strangely attached to the idea of defending them at all cost!

Compared to other parks and reserves in the world that are similar in size, the diversity found here in Parque La Amistad is exceptional.



Help us conserve our "White tailed" Deere in:



Did you know ?

**That two thirds of
Costa Ricas wildlife
resides in Parque
La Amistad.**



**Tenemos Cariblancos
"Chancho de Monte" en
*Santiago Springs***



Did you know ?

That of all the species included in danger of extinction in Costa Rica, nine out of eleven birds, thirteen out of sixteen mammals and all amphibians and reptiles are found in our Parque La Amistad.

