



AMAZON RESEARCH CENTER FOR
ORNAMENTAL FISHES

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



Letter from the Founder

Who would have thought that almost one year later we would still be battling a pandemic that continues to impact us in ways yet to be discovered. For us, here at the Amazon Research Center, we have begun to experience some of the “unintended consequences” in a myriad of different ways. We were saddened to learn that two of the local fishermen we have worked with for many years passed away from COVID. Our resident director and his family all contracted COVID, but thankfully, they are recovering. Unfortunately, the opening of the Aquarium has been delayed until the summer of 2022 as we were forced to reduce the number of workers to the bare minimum beginning January 2021. Additionally, the price of the acrylic for the large tanks has skyrocketed. Many of these challenges are not unique to us nor have all of the unintended consequences been adverse. The pandemic forced us to look at different ways to continue to raise money and build awareness. In the fall of 2020, we did a virtual “fall fundraiser” that raised \$11,181 (111% of our goal) and in March of 2021, we will launch a virtual “Talk with the Experts” lecture series the focus of which will be on conservation, impacts to the biodiversity, sustainability, and sustainable breeding. Sometime ago, I read the following quote: “Adversity is inevitable, but difficulties or misfortunes don't have to keep you from achieving your intended goals and finding the happiness you seek in business and in life.” I do not know who wrote this, but it helped me to stay the course over this past year. Adversity is a part of life. What is also a part of life is having the support, encouragement, and collaboration from our donors, volunteers, students, and other followers. To all, please accept our heartfelt gratitude and let's keep moving forward.

Anthony and Renee Mazeroll



Research Center Recognition

Carlos Chuquipiondo, Resident Director of the research center, has not been idle over the past several months. Carlos is actively participating in the development and editing of two books. The first is an Identification Manual to be used by customs officials and the Ministry of Fishes to aid with fish identification in shipments that are being illegally exported out of Peru. The manual includes critical facts about each fish in order to give the fish the most appropriate care. The team is in the final phase of editing and the manual should go to the printers this Spring. The second book provides a description of the ornamental fish that are exported worldwide and their ecological importance. The book will include DNA bar codes of these fish and help customs officials with accurate identification of the fish.



Additionally, the research center is working closely with the Peruvian Amazon Research Institute (IIAP), an extension of the Ministry of the Environment. ARCOF, along with the IIAP, is currently planning the reintroduction of a large shipment of Trigrinus catfish that were being illegally exported from Iquitos, Peru. The fish are being housed in the fish lab at the research center while the details are being worked out. One of the goals of the center is to reintroduce as many fish as possible. A key element of the reintroduction process is getting these fish back to their native habitat. Releasing the fish into an unknown environment could be deadly for the fish or the environment the fish has been released into. Consequently, not only do we evaluate the fish's health for reintroduction we also take the time to determine where in the vast waterway system surrounding Iquitos these fish came from.

Financial

The two single most expensive costs associated with the research center are labor and construction costs associated with the building of the public aquarium. As the pandemic worsened steps were taken to reduce labor costs and were reevaluated monthly. Construction of the internal areas of the aquarium was put on hold indefinitely. That said, assuming the pandemic improves we are planning on beginning the completion of the interior of the aquarium Summer 2021.

Total income:

<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>
\$84,811	\$211,821*	\$100,779

- *We had a major capital donor who supported construction of the dormitories and the aquarium.

Total Fixed Assets:

<u>12/31/2018</u>	<u>12/31/2019</u>	<u>12/31/2020</u>
\$41,301	\$236,979	\$293,244

Total Operational Expenses:

<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>
\$43,962	\$33,933	\$44,205

- Operational expense of 2018 includes:
 - Labor for construction which was separated out in years 2019 and 2020.
 - Costs associated with outside marketing firm who redesigned the website, logo and letterhead.
 - Costs associated with contracted grant writer
- Operational expense for 2020 includes;
 - Full time security costs, full time resident director salary and full time maintenance staff.
 - Costs associated with adding three-phase electrical capabilities to the research center.

Network for Good

Contract signed April 21, 2020 – 8 months of data

- Rolling 12 months on dashboard
- Number of donations increase 249% over previous year
- Active donors up 14%
- Lapsed donors down 46%
- New recurring donors at 4
- Donors this year up 323%
- Retention rates are increasing

The Data Management Tool

- Facilitates end of year summary letters to all donors
- Provides all donors who donate via the website or fundraising pages immediate receipt with tax information.
- Tracks all donors, when last donation was made and lapsed donors.
- Facilitates mass email communication, webinars, events and thank you videos and letters.

Support

- Development consultant Lucas Metropolis. Lucas has extensive experience working outside of the United States.
- Numerous webinars on fundraising techniques and how to maximize the data management tool.

The screenshot shows a fundraising page for 'The Aquarium of the Amazon'. The main heading is 'Help us to acquire two specialty aquaria "tanks" !'. Below this, it says 'The tanks are unique & will be a draw to the 1st public aquarium in this part of the world.' There are two buttons: 'Start Fundraising' and 'Donate'. A progress bar shows '\$11,181 TOWARDS \$10,000'. Below the progress bar, there are four statistics: 111% TOWARDS OUR GOAL, 10 FUNDRAISERS, 93 DONATIONS, and 1 RECURRING DONOR. On the right, there is a 'Featured Recurring Donor' section for JENA QUESTEN, who is 'GIVING \$25 MONTHLY'. At the bottom, there is a 'Start Fundraising' button and a message: 'We are fundraising to save the Amazon. Help us to acquire two specialty aquaria "tanks" for the first public aquarium in the Peruvian Amazon. These tanks are unique'.

Year in Review

The COVID-19 pandemic hampered many of the planned initiatives, however, when we look back at 2020 we did keep moving forward. Below lists some of the highlights of 2020.

- Completed construction on all of the following with the first quarter of 2020
 - Office, instrument lab, fish room/housing, dormitories, well, public bathroom, warehouse, bridge over creek at front entrance, retaining wall, and the Aquarium structure (all but interior finishes, aquaria and associated equipment).
- Website update completed by quarter 1 of 2020
- Added new Board Member who is bilingual and happy to review communication that needs to go out in Spanish.
- Microsoft designated ARCOF as an "approved" nonprofit and consequently we received 10 free licenses for Microsoft 365.
- All paper work was completed and approved by the California Registry of Charitable Trusts for ARCOF to hold raffles.
- Entered into an agreement with Network for Good (see page 5)
- Anthony Mazeroll PhD presented at World Fish Migration Day and the International Conference on Biodiversity.
 - Both of his talks highlighted the research center and the work being done.
- Began collaboration with the International Union on the Conservation of Nature.
- Launched a peer to peer fundraiser in the Fall of 202 which raised enough money to purchase the specialty tank you see below.
- Held the annual Christmas party for the children of the village (Treinta y uno de Mayo). For many of these children this is the only Christmas they have.

