

At 6 am on May 16 some of us kayaked up and back along a tributary of the Marañon, the Nauta cañon. While we enjoyed the sounds of the early morning forest, we were mainly concerned about going straight against the current. At 9 am everyone boarded the skiffs for a journey further up the Nauta cañon. We soon saw a sloth in a kapok tree. At this time of year the kapok trees are denuded of leaves but rich in fruits so that foraging sloths are easy to see.



The kapok fruits, the dark red blobs, can be seen along the bottom border of the photo. Note how the sloth adeptly balances on a single one inch diameter branch. A close-up shows him really relaxed. The kapok fruits are now seen in the lower right-hand corner.



The next photo shows clearly the three toes (fingers) on the right hand, and the two orangish stripes alongside the backbone that are characteristic of a male.



Not much is known about sloth religion generally, but the one below is Buddhist.



Today we see Black-collared Hawks everywhere. Well into the trees and dense growth our skiff operator is instructed by our guide to gun the motor and try to cross through 30 meters of water plants (grasses, water hyacinths, etc.) that clog the waterway. We fall short by about 4 meters (the week before this would have been easy with the higher water level). While rocking the skiff from side to side several times to get free, I hear the sound of an escaping breath of air. At first I wonder if it isn't an elusive manatee. They love eating the water hyacinths. Soon we hear more such sounds and see that there are a few pink dolphins with several very young ones in their care. We get free and leave them to their nursery.

During the afternoon skiff ride we explore a beautiful swamp in Piraña cañon. We see more Jacanas, a White-eared Jacamar, who's kinship with kingfishers is evident,



a Snail Kite, whose markedly curved sharp beak is used to winkle out the snail's soft body from the hard shell,





and more sloths.

After dark, many of us go on a galoshes walk on slippery *terra firme* in order to see, feel, smell and hear the forest at night. Each of us carries a flashlight and the guides bring bright torch lights. We see an Anole. Yes, that's it, a small lizard just like the ones I have at home around my front stoop. There may not have been much wildlife to see or hear but at least it was muddy and slippery, and dark. Some of us conspire to tell our comrades who stayed on board the Delfin II something like: "I never expected to to see as many frogs as we did."

Today was our last day on the Marañon. Tomorrow we will be on the Ucayali. The confluence of these two rivers is the western end of the great Amazon and will be acknowledged by a glass of champagne, much like is done on crossing the equator.