

# Las Lianas

## Resource Center for Science, Culture, & Environment

Quarterly Update--December 2004

Welcome to Las Lianas' first Quarterly Update. Every three months, we will highlight one aspect of our program. This end-of-year issue offers a report on the annual cycle of our fish-farming project.

### Indigenous Aquaculture Completes a Cycle

Here in the north, December brings short days, long nights, and the true start of our cold season. In Ecuador's Amazon region, where Las Lianas is developing native fish-farming with our Secoya partners, this month heralds the start of the dry season. The next few months will be a good time to build and repair fishpond dams, and to collect wild fish to populate fishponds.



*Collecting wild fish to stock in fish ponds.  
Cuyabeno, December 2003*

The top priority of our aquaculture program is to develop the full-lifecycle aquaculture of native Amazonian fish and in the past year we have made important progress. Last December, we organized a fish collecting trip to the flood-plain lakes along the Cuyabeno River (a traditional fishing area northeast of the Secoya's modern territory) where falling water levels made it relatively easy to capture live fish. We brought back close to 100 fish of five different cichlid species to serve as brood-stock in Secoya fishponds.

*Continued on back*

## THANK YOU!

We want to thank everyone who has contributed to Las Lianas in our first full year as an independent organization. Individual donations represent an important and growing part of our overall budget and we are grateful to our many friends and supporters. Checks to support our work can be sent to:

Las Lianas Resource Center  
301 East Hadley Road  
Amherst, MA 01002

You can also donate on-line at our website:  
[laslianas.org](http://laslianas.org)

### Other Highlights From 2004

- Las Lianas helped stop construction of a road through Secoya territory planned secretly by Occidental Oil Company, the local municipal government, and neighboring settlers, without consulting the Secoya. The road may eventually be built, but the Secoya have established that it requires their approval and discussion under the terms of the Code of Conduct signed in 1999.
- Las Lianas has begun a partnership in Ecuador's southern Amazon with the Achuar and Shiwiar peoples, to help unify all the land holdings of each nationality under a single collective title. In 2004, we carried out an analysis of the legal status of their lands. Over the next 2 years we will provide technical and legal support to solidify land claims and reaffirm the collective and indivisible nature of their territories.
- We have begun incorporation of Las Lianas in Ecuador, an important step that will facilitate our ability to develop new programs.

# A Year of Fish Farming



*Secoya fish farmers collect baby fish from one pond to distribute to their neighbors. Oct. 2004*

*Continued from page 1*

A second trip in January, carried out by project participants on their own using techniques we developed in December, brought additional fish. Since then we have been working closely with the Secoya fish farmers to manage the care of the fish to ensure good survival, growth and reproduction.

The work has been very successful and in the second half of the year we have taken advantage of the rainy season to collect and distribute second-generation fish to new ponds. (Rainy conditions make it safe to lower pond levels to collect the fish since we can be confident the pond will quickly fill again.) One pond, initially stocked with twelve wild fish, provided over 150 fish, another yielded 80 for distribution. (These are in addition to fish the families have already begun harvesting to eat.)



*Jatuhuani, one of the Amazonian cichlids collected from flood plain lakes and now reproducing in Secoya ponds.*

Unlike hatchery-produced fish, these fish will continue to reproduce naturally in ponds and become a permanent resource for Secoya families. We are working to improve our knowledge of these fish and the best methods to raise them since these are not fish that have been previously used in aquaculture. In addition, we will continue to occasionally collect wild broodstock since we need enough new fish to ensure genetic variety in our stock.



*Nancy Piaguaje releases 2nd-generation fingerlings into her pond. They and their offspring will provide food for her family.*

---

## Looking Ahead

The following are some of the new activities we aim to begin in 2005.

- Expansion of our Indigenous Aquaculture Initiative. Las Lianas hopes to develop village to village training, drawing on Secoya expertise and experience with two communities on the Napo River to the south of Secoya territory.
- Telling the truth about Occidental Oil. OXY's advertising in Ecuador claims that it is "Creating the Future" through sustainable development and respect for indigenous cultures. We will use the Secoya experience, as well as the record of the OXY's dealings with other indigenous groups, to tell the Ecuadorian people the true story.
- Regional Environmental Monitoring: The monitoring we and the Secoya are carrying out provides important data about the impacts of oil development, but it is just one small perspective on a very large problem. Soon we hope to help start a regional effort for environmental monitoring with other indigenous communities affected by oil.