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RE: Update #5 on Insect Project.

This will mark the last week of the first half of our field work. Although the team was only 5 people strong during the week, progress was rapid. With the assistance of Mr. Melvin Smith of Mon Repos, the Troumassee Cloud Forest trap site was successfully established. This will be our most inaccessible and highest trap locality, but also the most unique. The hand-collected material from the area yielded species not yet seen from other areas.

With a full complement of trap sites operating, the sheer volume of material coming in has overwhelmed my ability to keep up with sorting and mounting. When our running total of beetle species collected passed 300, representing 62 families, with no sign of slowing, I began to have trouble keeping the list current. The most interesting tidbit of information has been that Ross Winton has discovered the larval habitat of the mystery tiger beetle mentioned in last week's update, obtaining a larva and several more adults, as well as beginning characterization of the habitat in Escap. It occurs in very un-tiger-beetle-like habitat where scattered dry forest plants occur on undisturbed soil covered with an algal crust.

I have also spent some time with one of my own favorite groups, the longhorn woodboring beetles (Cerambycidae). This group includes several invasive pests and species of importance to forest production, as well as some very unique endemics. Because of the work of a pair of French cerambycidologists in the 1990's who were preparing a book on the Longhorn Beetles of the Lesser Antilles, this group is one of the best documented beetle families on St. Lucia. There were 29 species recorded from here before our arrival, including 4 single-island endemics. One of the 2 Lucian endemic beetle genera (*Paraclitemnestra*) belongs to this group. Although a piece of a dead specimen was found in the second week of our visit, it was not until this week that we

took an intact specimen of this genus in an ultraviolet light trap on Piton St. Esprit. The 2 previously known specimens -- one taken before 1925 and now in the Smithsonian, and the other, an old specimen in the Paris Museum -- were both broken and incomplete. The fact that the species still exists in St. Lucia's protected areas is excellent news, and our ability to fill in gaps in science's knowledge about its form is a further bonus.

Not yet recorded, but known, was a 30th as-yet undescribed species, known from a single specimen collected by Mr. Guy Mathurin. This specimen is now in the Natural History Museum in London, where it is being described by Mr. Max Barclay of that museum. Mr. Winton collected a second specimen near Barre de L'Isle, and has twice seen (and missed) a third. In addition, we have taken 3 more undescribed new species during our time on-island, as well as adding 11 more species not previously recorded from the island, for a total of 44 species so far. This compares with 34 species known from Dominica, 28 from St. Vincent and 56 from Martinique.

All 4 of the undescribed longhorn species are, interestingly, beautiful animals, with very spectacular colors and forms. One mimics an ant, another a firefly, the third has a series of spots that look like ivory, and the one also in London is black with a series of yellow bands running across its body. Images of these species would make a very nice block of postage stamps celebrating the biodiversity of St. Lucia!

On Wednesday, we hosted a meeting with Robert Tennent and Vijay Datadin where GIS data needs by the parties was discussed, and on Friday, at a meeting with Tim Jean-Baptiste of Forestry, we mapped out the coming 2 week's activities.

Rounding our week, on Saturday, Dr. Shawn Clark of Brigham Young University arrived with 4 students to give us more hands to conduct direct collections. That group will be with us for 2 weeks.