



# BANANAGEDDON

Costa Rica Report 2018

### Day 1 25/02/2018

The team all arrived in San Jose, the capital of Costa Rica, today, having travelled from three different countries on four different flights! Julian was first to arrive and checked into our B&B, bought water and sorted out SIM cards. At 9pm the rest of the team arrived, jet-lagged, tired and hungry so we sorted out some food, checked into our room for the night and went straight to bed!

### Day 2 26/02/2018

We were up for a 6am breakfast and took a taxi to pick up our rental cars. We got straight in the cars and headed off to EARTH University, arriving around 10:45 after a 2 hour drive through the Braulio Carrillo National Park. Upon reaching EARTH we met the communications director Wayne over lunch in the university canteen. At 13:30 we had our first interview of the trip, the University's banana plantations manager Erick Garcia. Erick spoke to us about the work that EARTH do and explained the importance of taking care of workers on the plantation. We then went and filmed the on-site banana sorting and packing facilities and we then interviewed Professor Luis Pocasangre, who told us about biosecurity on their banana plantations.



Director Jackie filming our interview with Erick.

### Day 3 27/02/2018

The team were up at 06:00 to meet a class of students studying soil nematodes and root health. We also took the drone out for its first fly and got some amazing footage of the plantations and surrounding forest from above. After lunch we met Armando who runs the campus' agroforestry plot. We walked through his plot as we interviewed him and he told us about his integrated farming, involving co-planting of complementary crops and using chicken and pig manure for fertiliser.



Armando's circular farm

### Day 4 28/02/2018

Today the team interviewed an organic banana baby food producer and a PhD student working on banana agriculture. We spent the rest of the day filming B-roll footage (supplementary footage to show throughout the documentary) of the campus and the agroforestry plots that we saw yesterday.

### Day 5 01/03/2018

We left EARTH today and spent most of the day travelling back to San Jose where we met Roberto, who runs a non-profit conservation and sustainability organisation, Asociación ANAI. We spent some time backing up our footage and then went into the city for dinner in the evening.

### Day 6 02/03/2018

In the morning, we interviewed a Masters student from Sweden who is working on banana farming in indigenous communities and after lunch we set out for the long drive to Finca Pasiflora in Mercedes. Eventually we arrived in the dark at 19.30 after having to negotiate some confusing roads and wrong turns. We were welcomed by Wade Moore, the owner of the farm and shown to our bunk house. After an amazing dinner, we chatted with Wade about our plans and then headed to bed.



Wade's farm from above

### Day 7 03/03/2018

Wade gave us a tour around his farm in the morning, we were amazed by the beauty of the place and were particularly excited to see an incredible eyelash viper, along with various butterflies and birds. He showed us some of the bananas he's growing, he has over 50 different varieties growing throughout his farm! He grows these alongside other crops such as sweet potato and papaya, he also has pigs, chickens and paca (a large kind of rodent). After lunch, we focussed on seeing his banana crops, and his ripening room where we got to try a few of the different varieties he grows on the farm, they all tasted amazing! We also filmed his dehydration room where he makes banana raisins to sell at the local farmer's market.



Wade in front of the camera and a bunch of praying hands banana in his ripening room

#### Day 8 04/03/2018

The survey teams, birds and plants, started early to begin their first surveys of the trip. The camera team consisting of Nick, Mollie and Jackie shadowed and filmed Wade going about his morning jobs. After lunch we interviewed Wade, did more filming of the farm and in the evening interviewed Wade's wife, Yami and enjoyed our last evening around a campfire.

#### Day 9 05/03/2018

We left Wade's mid-morning to travel to Punta Uva, after getting a bit lost and having to turn around on a terrible road we finally made it to our accommodation for the night where we cooked a team dinner and played some cards.

#### Day 10 06/03/2018

After a busy week on the go we had a catch-up day and allowed ourselves some relaxation time. We did our laundry and food shopping and then went to see a local waterfall for a swim in the river.

#### Day 11 07/03/2018

We had a morning on Punta Uva beach, trying to surf and enjoying the sun! After lunch, we had a team meeting to plan our work for the next week.

### Day 12 08/03/2018

We left at 05:30 to drive to a farmer's market in San Isidro where we filmed Wade selling his produce. We interviewed another local farmer and then set off for another long drive across the country to Hone Creek. Hone Creek is in the heart of the Talamanca region - the part of Costa Rica where commercial banana plantations were first established and now home to hundreds of plantations. We stayed in a lodge owned by a man named Christian, who helped to run the Workers' association ACAPRO. The association includes producers of banana and cacao, and Christian himself is also a producer. Our accommodation was our own house so we managed to properly unpack and set up shop as we had planned to spend a week here.

### Day 13 09/03/2018

We met Juanita today, a 58 year-old indigenous farmer and interim leader of APPTA, a small producers association. We were given a tour of APPTA's cacao processing plant and agroforestry plot. The plot was really interesting for us to see as this is an alternative way of producing bananas. It involves growing crops of different height all on the same plot of land, so that the overall vegetation structure has more resemblance to a forest. This plot had bananas and cacao growing together, a system commonly used by smaller scale producers. Agroforestry plots also commonly include native tree species, and research is currently working on understanding whether these native trees amongst crops can help to support biodiversity. After a quick lunch, we visited Juanita's own farm to interview her and film B-roll at her cacao plot.

### Day 14 10/03/2018

Marina left to return home to her studies today, we had lunch in the local town, Puerto Viejo and bought some postcards to fill out and send to our family and crowdfunding supporters. Julian made some calls and arranged interviews for us for the rest of the week.



The team before Marina departed

### Day 15 11/03/2018

Up at 05:00 to drive out to visit an indigenous community of farmers, the Bri-Bri. We parked the cars on a river bank and took a dugout canoe taxi across the river to meet Candida, another farmer who grows banana and cacao. We interviewed Candida and heard about how the Bri-Bri use different plants for medicines.

### Day 16 12/03/2018

Today we visited a commercial banana plantation, one where Jackie had stayed in her previous visit to Costa Rica. We met her host family and were treated to a lovely meal, after which we went on a night walk arranged by a local women's group along a beach to find nesting leatherback turtles, but sadly we didn't see any.

### Day 17 13/03/2018

We returned to the Bri-Bri community to film the process of banana collection by Trobanex, a banana transport company who bring together all the bananas grown in the remote communities and sell them on to larger buyers. We followed a farmer harvesting his bananas and then transporting back several bunches on the back of his horse. Lots of farmers had brought their bananas for collection day so they were weighed and then loaded into the back of an old school bus, which was an amazing sight. After lunch, we filmed a local farmer at his farm and interviewed him about being a small banana producer in a commercial world.



Ready to bring bananas back to the bus.



A bus load of bananas.

Day 18 14/03/2018

We went back across the river to complete the filming of the banana transport as they made it down to the river and were ferried across on the same dugout canoe taxi that we'd been taking. We took some amazing footage using the drone of the boat on the river and filmed a final interview with a Trobanex coordinator.



Bananas crossing the river



### Day 19 15/03/2018

The survey teams set up morning surveys at the APPTA agroforestry plot, and the film crew filmed some general footage of the area. We visited Christian's plantation and filmed two of his workers going about their business of harvesting bananas. We then interviewed a banana vinegar producer, a popular alternative banana product in the area, and had a tour of his facilities.

### Day 20 16/03/2018

We performed plant and bird surveys at Christian's plantation and took some more footage of the area. In the afternoon, we took some time off and visited Cahuita National Park and walked through the lowland swamp forest where we saw a sloth, monkeys, birds, snakes and a caiman.

### Day 21 17/03/2018

Half the team were up early for some extra filming at Christian's plantation and then we packed up and travelled to another hostel on the other side of Puerto Viejo.

### Day 22 18/03/2018

We had a final trip across the river to film the last scenes we needed and met two more indigenous farmers. On the drive back we stopped to help a sloth cross the road. We had an hour on the beach in the evening before a team dinner.



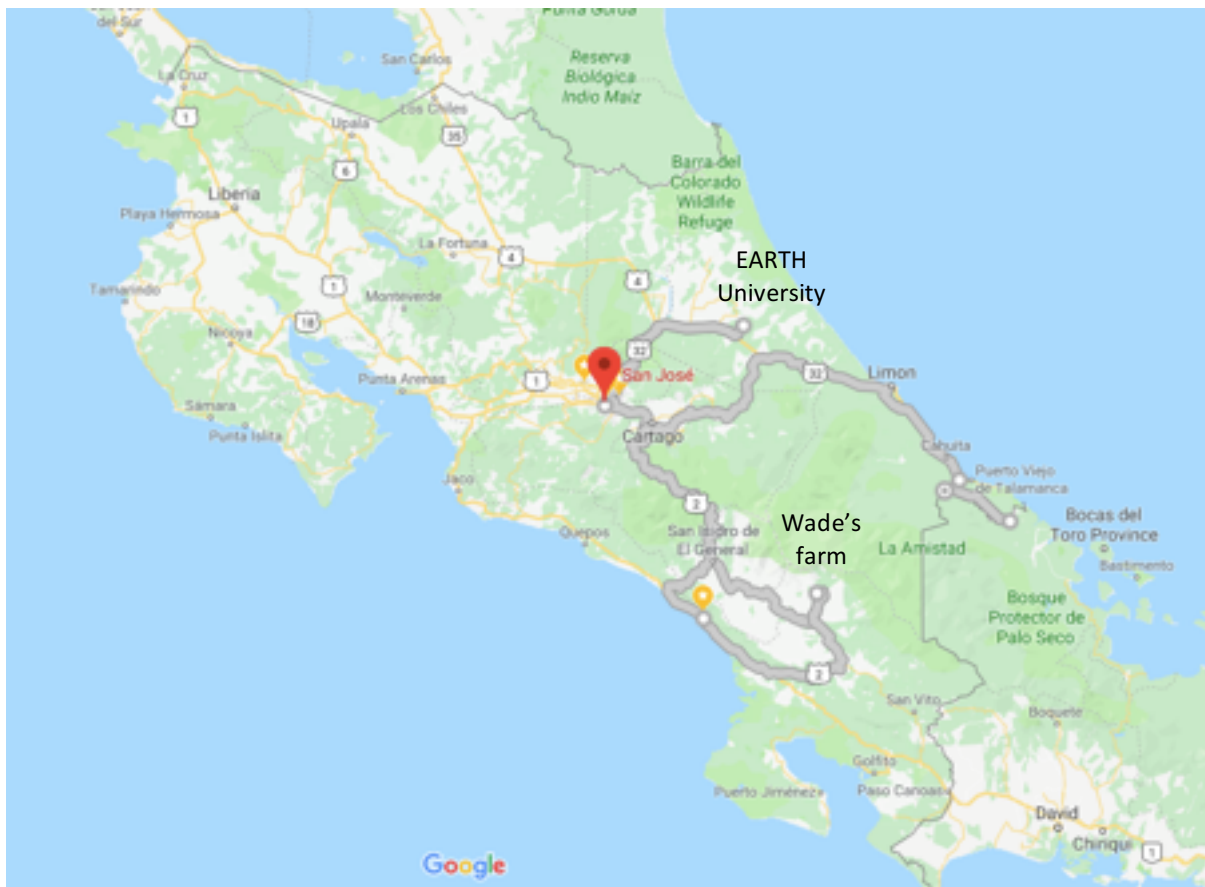
The team during an amazing walk through Cahuita National Park.

### Day 23 19/03/2018

We travelled back to San Jose, stopping off at EARTH University on the way back to interview a worker there who also used to work for a commercial banana producer. We got back to San Jose in the evening and prepared our equipment for our departure the next day.

### Day 24 20/03/2018

The team headed off in all different directions after a hugely successful three-week filming expedition! Since then we have continued to interview prominent scientists and campaigners across Europe, we have been working on transcribing the interviews and producing a trailer. We plan to use this trailer to raise further funds so that the final documentary can be put together soon.



Our route across Costa Rica