



"Rite in the Rain"®

ALL-WEATHER


FIELD

No. 350F

Tim Hain


Trinidad 2006

Book 1



During my PhD, I went to Trinidad to do research on guppies. In that country, guppies are everywhere, from pristine mountain streams to roadside gutters, but some populations of guppies attract more interest than other populations. We would go to some rivers that were not easy to get to, and some of those rivers would have very few fish because of overharvesting by scientists. At these rivers, we would have to spend a lot of time with our nets just to get a few fish.

We were fortunate to have a well-connected collaborator, Indar Ramnarine - a professor at the University of the West Indies, who enlisted a technician (Raj Mahabir) from the department to help us get to all our sites.



The first day that we went out collecting fish, we went to the Upper Aripo River. It was quite an eye-opener. We drove into the rainforest, down a steep road, and I really had to wonder why the road existed at all. We had not seen a house for several kilometres. Then, oddly, we saw a woman walking down the hill, carrying a large bag. I have no idea




where she was walking from - there was nothing of note behind us - but it soon became clear that she was walking towards the small village we saw just to the right of the road we were on. The village was tiny, but after we had finished collecting the fish, Bonnie was able to buy some clear plastic bags from the store. We drove past the village, and went deeper into the forest. Just before we reached a small bridge over a stream, we saw two boys walking together. One was wearing a green shirt with gold trim, and a white "4" on the back. Just above the number was a name, also in white: "Favre". The boy looked about 8 years old. He was carrying a rusty machete that was about two feet long. The two boys played in the jungle for a while, but we saw them again after we had finished collecting the fish

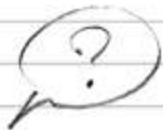


The stream was not wide: about six feet across at the pool where we did most of our collecting, and it was fed by a creek perhaps two feet across. It was full of guppies, though. I helped collect the fish, and then assisted Bonnie as she packaged the fish in individual clear plastic bags.

The boys came by and asked what we were doing. They made it harder for us to do our work, so I tried to distract them by talking to them.

 "So I see you are wearing a Brett Favre jersey. Are you a fan of his?"

I was greeted with dull stares.



"He is a very famous American football player. Do you enjoy American football?"

More dull stares.



"Do you know what American football is?"

At this point, the lab tech, Raj, interrupted to explain to me that when I talk about football, they were thinking about soccer. The fact that I described it as "American football" did not make it any clearer to them. One of the boys then became very talkative, telling us all kinds of things that I could not understand at all. Raj seemed to understand him in spite of the boy's accent. He made the two boys very happy by giving them a ride in the back of his truck.