

Google Earth view of Paraguay, south of the middle of South America, bordered on the east by Brazil, the northwest by Bolivia, and the southwest by Argentina. A north-south line can cut Paraguay into two halves. Most of the northwestern half of Paraguay is called the Chaco, a low elevation flat area. The middle (light green) of Chaco is being deforested for fields.

Chaco - Paraguay. An Internet page indicates that the Chaco region consists of more than 60% of the country's land area but less than 3% of its population. In previous centuries Anabaptist Mennonite groups had been given Ukraine land in Russia, but their pacifist teachings caused them to leave, with some settling in Canada's Manitoba and Saskatchewan provinces. Canada brought further pressure on them in years around World War I. In 1921 the Paraguay government invited them to the undeveloped and unsurveyed Chaco region, and in 1926 the first group of settlers arrived there. Conditions were initially difficult but the Mennonite area expanded with increasing amounts of the Chaco being farmed.



Museum map of Mennonite migrations



Partly cleared land. Rhea, bird at right. Shallow pond, two Black-necked Stilts Clay soil and grazing land

The Chaco apparently was a large flat basin covered by ocean water that received fine clay sediments from erosion of the Andes mountains to the west. As the land was slowly elevated, the surface salt water drained away. Vegetation covered the area and generated soil above the clay. However, below the surface layers salt remained in the clays, unable to escape. Therefore wells drilled for water found salt water, not fresh water that could be used for irrigation and domestic use. The settlers had to create ways to preserve fresh precipitation water. The clay soil proved useful for capping the salty water beneath the surface layers. It was also useful for being shaped into many basins for saving collected fresh water.



To the left is a satellite view northeast of our host city of Loma Plata. There is a large meat packing factory at the center right that exports to the world. The tan areas are barren fields sculptured with parallel grooves to drain rain water to collection points. The water is then pumped to the set of ponds to the lower left of center. The photos below are of the large middle pond with the black fabric rim. The water is later cleaned and used in the factory.



Sculptured field for collecting rainwater

We visited the Trebol factory in Loma Plata for making and packaging several milk products that are used throughout Paraguay and other countries.



Lined water collection pond



Trebol factory for milk products



Sign: packaging of Trebol milk products



Tower to pressurize, make powder milk



We gave gifts of supplies to a boarding school in Choferes, the clinic location.



Girls receiving toothbrush gifts at a large boarding school for girls.



All of the girls at this boarding school

At our clinic there was a medical doctor who operated a large boarding school for girls. We donated supplies to that school as we left Loma Plata for the capitol Asuncion.



The new water treatment plant at school



One of the school's water storage ponds

For our relaxation day our team went to the Pinamar park east of Asuncion. The stream there had rapids.



Our departure cake



Dr. Ed Holroyd  
written 12 October 2023



Chalk-browed Mockingbird



Chestnut-bellied Seed-Finch



Female Cone-billed Tanager (rare)



Cattle Tyrant



Buff-necked Ibis



Crested Caracara



Crested Hornero



Red-crested Cardinal



Jabiru



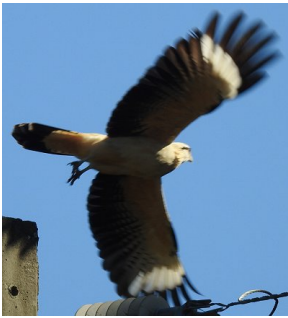
Bluish-gray Saltator



Sayaca Tanager



White-tipped Dove



Yellow-headed Caracara



White Monjita



Yellow-faced Parrot



Great Kiskadee



Whistling Heron



Southern Lapwing



Picui Ground Dove



Lesser Yellowlegs



Pale-breasted Thrush



Picazuro Pigeon



Black-necked Stilt



Black Vulture



Eared Dove



Buff-necked Ibis and moon