

The heat augments sensibly in the Llanos during the rainy season, particularly in the month of July, when the sky is cloudy, and reflects the radiant heat toward the earth. During this season the breeze entirely ceases; and, according to good thermometrical observations made by M. Pozo, the thermometer rises in the shade to 39° and 39.5° , though kept at the distance of more than fifteen feet from the ground. As we approached the banks of the Portuguesa, the Apure, and the Apurito, the air became cooler from the evaporation of so considerable a mass of water. This effect is more especially perceptible at sunset. During the day the shores of the rivers, covered with white sand, reflect the heat in an insupportable degree, even more than the yellowish brown clayey grounds of Calabozo and Tisnao.

On the 28th of March I was on the shore at sunrise to measure the breadth of the Apure, which is two hundred and six toises. The thunder rolled in all directions around. It was the first storm and the first rain of the season. The river was swelled by the easterly wind; but it soon became calm, and then some great cetacea, much resembling the porpoises of our seas, began to play in long files on the surface of the water. The slow and indolent crocodiles seem to dread the neighbourhood of these animals, so noisy and impetuous in their evolutions, for we saw them dive whenever they approached. It is a very extraordinary phenomenon to find cetacea at such a distance from the coast. The Spaniards of the Missions designate them, as they do the porpoises of the ocean, by the name of *toninas*. The Tamanacs call them *orinucna*. They are three or four feet long; and bending their back, and pressing with their tail on the inferior strata of the water, they expose to view a part of the back and of the dorsal fin. I did not succeed in obtaining any, though I often engaged Indians to shoot at them with their arrows. Father Gili asserts that the Gumanos eat their flesh. Are these cetacea peculiar to the great rivers of South America, like the manati, which, according to Cuvier, is also a fresh water cetaceous animal? or must we admit that they go up from the sea against the current, as the beluga sometimes does in the rivers of Asia? What would lead me to doubt this last supposition is, that we saw *toninas* above the great cataracts