

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Half Year Report Form

Project Title	An integrated conservation programme for threatened endemic forest species in Chile
Country	Chile
Organisation	RBGE/UACH
Project Ref. No.	162/11/012
Report date	April 2003- October 2003

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months against the agreed baseline timetable for the project (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up).

In July, the second Darwin scholar (Sr Darian Schilling Stark) completed his 6 month training in molecular techniques for conservation. His work focussed on the conservation genetics of *Pitavia punctata*, a species that was targeted during field work in the first year. Results from his research are being prepared for publication and are also being used to inform conservation strategies in Chile. Darian returned to Chile for a short visit in October. During his visit, he gave a presentation at the UACH on his work, which had a great impact among the researchers and students.

Training and publicity outputs (e.g. 4 day workshop on plant collections, database management and conservation) that were deferred from the first year have been completed and will be fully reported in the next annual report.

The Chilean project leaders have met with key officials involved with CBD implementation in Santiago. Chilean members of the project have continued and expanded their liaison and protection work with landowners. Representatives from two of the major forestry companies of Chile, an officer from the National Forest Service and a representative from a private park held a collaborating meeting with the project leaders in Concepcion. All these institutions have a clear interest in carrying out a conservation program with the support of DI project to conserve the threatened species occurring in their lands. An agreement has been signed between Forestal Mininco and UACH to develop a long-term programme of conservation of different endemic species including *Pitavia punctata*. Darian's work has been a relevant study to promote the development of conservation action within Forestal Mininco.

A field visit was conducted to Hualpen Park (Concepcion, VIII region) by the project researchers to assess the status of conservation of the endemic species that occur in the park. Some conservation guidelines were given to the Park' staff to help them to develop an effective conservation programme. Agreements of collaboration between project researchers and the Park will be signed in the next months.

An agreement is also due to be signed between a private small owner and the Chilean project leader to conserve in-situ what may be the last remaining population of *Prumnopitys andina* in the Coastal Range in the IX region. Training for the landowner on conservation and restoration will be given during the project.

Officials from CONAMA in charge of the CBD implementation in the VII region met project researchers to visit some sites that need urgent conservation actions. During this visit, a clear need for training in propagation techniques was observed among local people. Collaborative

work and training will form part of the work programme over the next 6 months.

At the Arboretum, project researchers have continued with the propagation of endemic threatened species collected from sites where restoration actions will be carried out over the next 2 years. To support this activity, a new nursery is being built at the arboretum. Educational interpretation programmes are also being undertaken at the Arboretum.

Planning for the next training/fieldwork visit by UK project staff is well underway.

A meeting involving the UK project leader and the UK embassy has been arranged for December this year to discuss CBD related issues. In the UK, negotiations with horticultural industry representatives are continuing. Further information about this aspect of the project as well as developments in collaboration are included in the response to the reviewer's comments on the first year report (below) and will also be more extensively reported in the next annual report.

2. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments that the project has encountered over the last 6 months. Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will effect the budget and timetable of project activities. Have any of these issues been discussed with the Department and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Darian Stark, the second year Darwin Scholar, has been accepted onto the MSc course in Biodiversity and Taxonomy run jointly by Edinburgh University and the RBGE. Financial support has been secured from within the RBGE and from private sources. The thesis that forms part of the requirements for the MSc will provide an opportunity for Darian to extend his knowledge of molecular work.

In August, the Chilean coordinator (Paulina Hechenleitner) undertook a two day training event attended by more than 100 *Guardabosques*, forestry supervisors and managers employed by Forestal Mininco, a private forestry company who control significant areas of remnant native forest. Training in the identification of threatened plants was given, a handbook distributed and a lecture about the Darwin project delivered. This has proved to be an extremely worthwhile undertaking that has generated a considerable amount of new information about the distribution of threatened plants and raised the profile of the project within a group of people whose work is critical to the longer term conservation of native forests.

Cristian Echeverria, joint project leader, has successfully completed his MPhil. at Cambridge University – his thesis was 'Deforestation and Forest Fragmentation of Temperate Forests in Chile'. This will provide additional knowledge that will be useful for the design of conservation strategies within the project. In August, Antonio Lara, joint project leader in Chile, began a 12 month sabbatical at Harvard in the USA. He is still actively involved in the project via email and tele-networking

Over the last 3 years, UK and Chilean project members have been involved in the establishment of the Nasampulli private nature reserve near Lago Caburgua in the Andes. This reserve has been established to help protect important stands of the *Araucaria araucana*, a threatened conifer which is presently the focus of much concern due to habitat loss from wild fires. In the past 12 months, an opportunity to purchase more land has arisen and Rainforest Concern, a British charity dedicated to in-situ conservation, have become involved. They have taken a keen interest in the Darwin work and there is a possibility that they will become directly involved in the work within the Darwin project's targeted areas.