

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Half Year Report Form

Project Title	Sustainable management of the black land crab, <i>Gecarcinus ruricola</i> , Colombia”
Country	Colombia
Organisation	Heriot-Watt University
Project Ref. No.	162/11/015
Report date	14 October 2003

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months against the agreed baseline timetable for the project.

The project team have made contact with other organisations in the Caribbean to inform them of the project's aims and to enlist their support and assess the possibility of future research collaboration. The educational component of the project has proved successful with the development of many talks, workshops and events aimed mainly at schoolchildren, using a variety of media including puppet theatre. A booklet on crab lore is currently in the final stages of being produced and printed. Crab catchers are willingly involved in the collation of data sheets on their catch and effort. Some preliminary experiments are about to start on crab terraculture (late October) at the Christian University. Ecological surveys continue to be performed. With DI approved diversion of funds, an agreement is in place for the creation of a 15 minute documentary on the black land crab in San Andres. A databank of images has been compiled and a timetable is being developed for the conduct of interviews, editing and provision of a soundtrack/commentary. Arne Britton of CORALINA has begun an MSc in Marine Resource Management at Heriot-Watt University in Scotland.

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?

A number of agreements have been reached between the project team and the DI as to the transfer of funds between categories. This includes the transfer of labour funds from year 1 to year 2, and the use of excess funds to strengthen the creation of a documentary. Problems still continue to exist in Colombia with respect to the impact of new legislation on contracted employees in government institutions. The inability to supply advance funds to CORALINA to cover long periods of employment means that many researchers are only working on short term contracts of 1-3 months at a time. Heriot-watt University is advancing money at the beginning of each quarter in an attempt to alleviate the problem. Dr Mark Baine, project manager with Heriot-Watt University, has taken up a new position as Director of the Motupore Island Research Station in Papua New Guinea, but will continue to manage the project, subcontracted by Heriot-Watt University. This has been agreed with the DI. No detrimental impact on the conduct of the project is envisaged.

3. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures.

No