

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2008)

Project Ref. No.	14-028
Project Title	<i>Conservation of Puna's Andean cats across national borders</i>
Country(ies)	<i>Argentina, Bolivia and Chile</i>
UK Organisation	<i>Wildlife Conservation Research Unit (WildCRU), Oxford University</i>
Collaborator(s)	<i>Andean Cat Alliance (AGA); Mammal Behavioural Ecology Group, Universidad Nacional del Sur (GECM, Argentina); Museo de Ciencias Naturales de Salta, Universidad Nacional de Salta (Argentina); Colección Boliviana de Fauna (CBF, Bolivia); Fundación Biodiversitas (FB, Chile)</i>
Project Leader	<i>Claudio Sillero</i>
Report date	<i>31 October 2008</i>
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	<i>HYR 3</i>
Project website	www.wildcru.org/andeanecat

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – September) 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).

Overall the project's research, educational and networking activities have progressed according to the timetable. The timescale slipped, however, for certain outputs and we have been granted an extension for project completion until April 2009.

The collection of ecological data is completed, with the exception of the final field campaign in Argentina that culminates in December. The common database now includes data from a total 241 standard transects and over 100 genetically identified carnivore faecal samples, including the first records of Andean cats for Eduardo Avaroa Reserve in Bolivia. The combined analysis of this dataset is in progress, and the visit by Magdalena Bennett (GIS analyst from Chile) to Oxford in October, contributed to the substantial progress made on habitat suitability models for carnivores and prey in the tri-national area. The student projects are either finalized (1 graduation thesis from Bolivia) or near completion (2 from Chile, 1 from Bolivia, and part of a PhD thesis from Argentina). Camera trapping results from Argentina are providing the first estimate of population density for small cats in High Andean regions, and these will soon be applied to calibrating the standard transect method for that study area.

Benefiting from their participations in this project, two members of the team qualified for scholarships this year. Juan Reppucci received field training in Mongolia by the Snow Leopard Trust, and theoretical training at the US Geological Service research centre of Patuxent in USA; Magdalena Bennett is starting a Masters in Biodiversity, Conservation and Evolution in the Complutense University of Madrid, Spain.

The project continues to stimulate networking within AGA, leading to new projects in the areas of population genetics of Pampas and Andean cats; temporal segregation between the niches of High Andes carnivores; and the mitigation of 'off-road' tourism in the tri-national area. Related publications include a paper in press in *Mastozoología Neotropical* (abundance estimates of Andean cat's main prey) and four other submitted manuscripts.

Awareness and educational campaigns continued in all countries. In Argentina these are now mainly conducted by people from the local communities, benefited from the previous training programmes for rural school teachers and Local Community Officers. Project staff continues

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

If you were asked to provide a response to this year's annual report review with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document.

Not required at this stage.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan or budget should not be discussed in this report but raised with the Darwin Secretariat directly.

Please send your **completed form email** to Eilidh Young, Darwin Initiative M&E Programme at Darwin-Projects@ectf-ed.org.uk . The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message eg Subject: 14-075 Darwin Half Year Report**