

**Darwin Initiation meeting
Baku 14th September 2006**

Summary of proposed research and education activities

Turkmenistan

Charting of all haul-out sites and identification of sites for

- (1) live seal distribution (according to agreed protocol)
- (2) mortality monitoring
 - standard measurements of dead seals (as per protocol)
 - skin samples for genetics (frozen and/or in alcohol)
 - canine tooth (lower)
- (3) Ogurchinsky monitoring during (1) breeding and (2) moulting seasons. (x3-5 days for each)
- (4) Diet study from faecal samples (as per protocol)

Training in all these activities runs alongside the research

Kazakhstan

Charting of all haul-out sites and identification of sites for

- (1) live seal distribution (according to agreed protocol)
- (2) mortality monitoring
 - standard measurements of dead seals (as per protocol)
 - skin samples for genetics (frozen and/or in alcohol)
 - canine tooth (lower)

(Special attention to be paid to SW Island, where anecdotal reports (AK) of decline to zero of live seals and just few dead seals found)

- (5) Collection of samples for pathology; range of analyses in Inst Virology, Almaty (virology analysis to be discussed); mode of payment to be discussed.
- (4) Diet study from faecal samples (as per protocol)

Training in all these activities runs alongside the research

- (5) Logistical assistance and participation in ice surveys, and training to achieve competence for independent surveys in 3 years

Astrakhan

- (1) Logistical assistance and participation in ice surveys, and training to achieve competence for independent surveys in 3 years

- (2) Facilitating contacts with other Russian institutions to support projects where applicable.

- (3) Students or other trainees attending other workshops

Azerbaijan

Charting of all haul-out sites and identification of sites for

- (1) live seal distribution (according to agreed protocol)
- (2) mortality monitoring
 - standard measurements of dead seals (as per protocol)
 - skin samples for genetics (frozen and/or in alcohol)
 - canine tooth (lower)
- (3) Collection of samples for pathology; analyses to be discussed
- (4) Diet study from faecal samples (as per protocol)
- (5) Live sampling as per protocol

Training in all these activities runs alongside the research

Iran

- (1) Has the start of a physical seal centre; building near coast in Geelan (NW Iran), including building, boat, vehicle and will have access to students and volunteers.
- (2) Working with fishing communities to quantify and reduce fishing bycatch
- (3) Live sampling from animals caught in pareh nets or stranding on beach
- (4) Mortality monitoring and ID fisheries bycatch vs natural mortality
 - standard measurements of dead seals (as per protocol)
 - skin samples for genetics (frozen and/or in alcohol)
 - canine tooth (lower)
- (3) Collection of samples for pathology; analyses to be discussed

Questions to be sorted:

Establish emergency response plan for mass mortality events.

Standardised protocols for monitoring etc to agreed during workshop

Pathology analyses centralized in Almaty or done in each country?

Each country to supply list of capability and requirements including freezer capacity

Otolith guide needed. Discuss further in workshop. Nominate a student to go to Sweden?

(Russian student?)

Genetics – need to agree for it to be done in Leeds. Student to study technique

Pathology training (analysis & interpretation) – possible training period in UK?? (extra funding and special arrangements would be needed).

Hunting history in Azerbaijan

Outcome of mortality in Kz at end of April 2006, ca. 330 seals and 7,000 sturgeon

Education

Consider establishing a working group to determine what material should be produced
Some material would be common to all countries; some would be individual to particular countries (eg seal-fisheries in Iran)

IOI – would be happy to take lead on PA material

Try to make some material self-financing, eg calendars, books

May be possible to use museum in Baku as centre for public awareness in Azerbaijan

Engage other media such as TV & Radio (Hormoz & Tariel have good media contacts)

Childrens' materials, including books, T-shirts etc should be emphasised

Website should have childrens' page

Website should use workshop materials – ppt presentations and also film

Workshop material should be converted into undergraduate teaching materials

Freezer storage

-20C freezer being purchased in Az.

2 deep chill boxes purchased for shipping at temps down to -80 with dry ice (or blue ice packs frozen to -80 freezer)

Tariel queried obtaining dry shipper & liquid N dewar for longer term storage (-80)

Institutional capacity & expertise

Mirgaly emphasized lack of specialist expertise in Kz, similarly in Tk.

WWF

WWF Caucasus (Elshad Asgarov egasgarov@wwfcaucasus.az) offered possibility of co-funding of Darwin projects in Az and Ru. SW discussed some details w/respect to Az monitoring programme; EA requested proposal submission for amount up to \$20K for Az (for 1 year?) before December. Possible projects also discussed with professor Zaitsev.