Darwin Initiative

Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

PLEASE NOTE: Due to the increased number of reports expected in 2005, we <u>will not be able to confirm receipt of reports</u> but will contact you individually should any questions arise

Project Ref. No. EIDPo6/11-018

Project Title Flying the flagship: delivering the axolotl action plan at Xochimilco, Mexico

Country(ies) Mexico, UK

UK Organisation Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology

Collaborator(s)

Universidad Autonoma Metropolitana, Unidad Xochimilco (UAM), Mexico.
Centro de Investigaciones Biologicas y Acuicolas de Cuemanco (CIBAC)

Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), Instituto de Biologia

Comision Nacional para el Conocimiento y Uso de la Biodiversidad (CONABIO - the National Commission for the Knowledge and use of

Biodiversity), Mexico.

Report date 15/11/05

Report No. (HYR

1/2/3/4)

HYR 2

Project website http://www.kent.ac.uk/anthropology/dice/research/axolotl.html

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).

The primary timetable element for the first six months of the second year was 'Workshop 3: training transferred' (9 days – Mexican project team only). However, as noted in the yearly report, because the previously scheduled Workshop 2 "Trainers in action" had to be postponed until June, Workshop 3, originally scheduled for May 2006, was postponed until September 2006. We therefore report here on both workshops.

The June guide-training workshop (5th-15th June) was a resounding success, graduating 21 remeros with the guide-training package, and training 7 remeros as workshop facilitators. The workshop was rather large because representatives from a newly opened nearby visitor centre (5), the Xochimilco Tourism Directorate (3) and the Director of the Xochimilco Archaeological Museum, all participated as observers (they did not receive the full workshop package, only the information folder). However, levels of participant satisfaction expressed in the anonymous feedback forms remained very high, with an overall score of 162 out of a possible 180, the expert presentations being awarded 148/175, and the workshop activities 160/180. The Mexican team reported to us that the September workshop (4th-14th Sept.) was also a very successful event, with the remero facilitators taking the lead in nearly all the workshop activities and its organisation, and with the workshop itself graduating 13 remeros with the guide-training package (a deliberately low number designed to ease remero facilitation). These 13 remeros gave the workshop an overall score of 56/65, the expert presentations 60/65, and the workshop activities 57/65. There will be meeting with the remero facilitators and the Director of Tourism, Xochimilco on our next visit (January 2007) to discuss ways of taking the workshop training package forward.

During the June workshop visiting UK team members took the opportunity to meet with GIA-X researchers and have a GIA-X review meeting. We were pleased to see that the body of axolotl-related research carried out under the co-ordinating umbrella of GIA-X has continued to grow and is producing some very useful and interesting data. GIA-X members conducted a short (3hr) workshop for participants to explore existing research and identify key areas for future axolotl-related research.

A major project-related development has been the IUCN Red List re-listing of A. mexicanum from

'vulnerable' to 'critically endangered". Data emerging from the project have been instrumental in informing this decision and the change in status will be very significant in facilitating future axolotl-related activities, both in Xochimilco and elsewhere.

Arrangements are currently underway for the final UK team visit to Mexico in January 2007 to participate in a GIA-X symposium at which completed and on-going research will be reported and future needs and directions identified. CONABIO (The Comisión Nacional para el Conocimiento y Uso de la Biodiversidad) the Mexican State organisation that participates in the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity have agreed to host this final project event. The Axolotl Species/Habitat Action Plan (S/HAP) Framework developed in the previous project ("Aztecs and Axolotls") will inform the structure of the 2-day event, which will involve presentations of axolotl and project-related research and activities followed by workshop exercises designed to identify and address actions needed to take the implementation of the axolotl S/HAP forward beyond the end of the Darwin Initiative participation.

The request by the recently reopened Museum of Xochimilco for help from the project to set up a permanent axolotl display with interpretative boards, has been followed up and we are happy to report that some of the matched funding support from Chester Zoo has enabled an axolotl aquarium display to be created at the Museum. Collaboration is now underway with the Museum concerning the production of interpretation boards to accompany the exhibit.

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 affect the budget and timetable of project activities.

None – except some difficulties in making money transfers to the UNAM and UAM-X accounts, which now appear to have been overcome.

Have any of these issues been discussed with the Darwin Secretariat and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

N/A

Discussed with the DI Secretariat: no/yes, in...... (month/yr)

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: no/yes, in.....(month/yr)

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.

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

Please send your **completed form by 31 October each year per email** to Stefanie Halfmann, Darwin Initiative M&E Programme, <u>stefanie.halfmann@ed.ac.uk</u>. The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. <u>Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message.</u>