

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

Project Ref. No.	EIDPO15
Project Title	Galapagos project
Country(ies)	Ecuador
UK Organisation	University of Leeds; Institute of Zoology, Zoological Society of London
Collaborator(s)	Dept Biology, University of St. Louis, Missouri USA
Report date	31.10.2007
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR2
Project website	www.galapagoslab.org

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).

Essentially all project activities are progressing according to the baseline time table for the project. Notable achievements include the following:

1. The new laboratory extension was completed April 2007 and is now operational.
2. The integration of the laboratory programme in the National Park strategy and establishment of the disease surveillance network is progressing well. So far 53 senior Park guards have received training and equipment for field sampling of potential wildlife disease cases which allows coverage of most of the archipelago.
3. On the basis of previous successful work, the senior project staff (SG, AC, VC, MC) were contracted by the UNDP Global Environment Facility project in Galapagos to produce emergency response plans and simulation exercises for West Nile Virus and Avian Influenza introduction to Galapagos. These were evaluated as being highly successful by GEF, and are now the accepted policy for response to these diseases (plans are lodged at <http://www.bibliogalapagos.org/>).
3. We obtained an additional US\$10,000 for participation the Global Avian Influenza Network Surveillance (GAINS) from the World Conservation Society and US-AID, for avian influenza surveillance in the Galapagos, and completed the surveillance activities for 2007.
4. We obtained, in conjunction with collaborators from the University of Yale USA, US\$15,000 from the American Genetics Association for a workshop on conservation genetics for Ecuadorian students to be run at the Galapagos laboratory in December 2007.
5. A new UK PhD student funded by the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) has joined the project to work on ecology of WNV invasion into Galapagos.
6. A new risk assessment for the use of animal disease vaccines in the archipelago has been initiated. Currently all animal vaccines are banned officially, but there is widespread illegal importation. Some vaccines have the potential to cause disease if used inappropriately so this initiative is designed to generate and informed policy for controlled vaccine use in domestic, agricultural and wild animals.
7. The policy impact of our risk assessment for the introduction of WNV into Galapagos (Kilpatrick et al.

2006, Conservation Biology 20:1224-1231) continues. Full insecticide treatment of all aircraft flying to Galapagos to prevent transport of mosquitoes was implemented by the Ecuadorian government/airlines in September 2007.

8. Tortoise health programme: A new *acheoleplasma* strain was isolated from a giant tortoise with signs of respiratory disease, and further investigations are being carried out. The captive breeding facilities are now running a new record keeping and data collection programme devised by the Galapagos lab Ecuadorian staff, and there is regular health monitoring of the tortoises in the facilities.

9. Two Ecuadorian undergraduate students from Galapagos have begun 1 year research project/training positions in the laboratory.

10. Following the UNESCO decision to place the Galapagos on the at risk list of World Heritage sites, Dr Virna Cedeño, the Ecuadorian project leader, met with the Ecuadorian Minister of Environment to discuss the role of the laboratory in managing risks to biodiversity in Galapagos.

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.

One Ecuadorian member of the laboratory staff, Leandro Patiño left in September 2007 after 3 years with the project to take up a position elsewhere. While it is sad to lose a valuable member of the team, Leandro continues to maintain links with the project and is playing an active role in the training of replacement staff (who are already in place). At this point we do not believe that this will compromise the project in the long term.

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

Issues in section 2 were not deemed significant enough to warrant discussion with the Darwin Secretariat.

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? No

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 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**