

# Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2007)

<b>Project Ref. No.</b>	EIDPO21
<b>Project Title</b>	Implementing an otter action plan for marine environments of Tierra del Fuego, Patagonia
<b>Country(ies)</b>	Argentina
<b>UK Organisation</b>	University of Oxford
<b>Collaborator(s)</b>	PROFAUNA Organisation
<b>Project Leader</b>	David W. Macdonald
<b>Report date</b>	31 <sup>st</sup> October 2007
<b>Report No.</b>	<b><i>HYR1</i></b>
<b>Project website</b>	<a href="http://www.wildcru.org/research/darwininitiative.htm">www.wildcru.org/research/darwininitiative.htm</a> <a href="http://www.profauna.org.ar/nuevo_proyecto.HTM">www.profauna.org.ar/nuevo_proyecto.HTM</a>

## 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).

In the baseline timetable presented in Section 23 of the original project, we defined the following key milestones from the beginning of the project (June 2007) until September 2007: 'Project planning, project announcement, selection of three students, two guards and two managers, preliminary training'. We have successfully achieved these key milestones and have further developed additional objectives that have expanded the project to include a neighbouring country - Chile - without increasing financial costs.

Details of each of the key milestones are covered below:

### Project planning

I) Members of the team travelled to the town of Ushuaia on two occasions for in-situ planning of the project. We met with and discussed the project with several stakeholders, organised collaborations and coordinated work with:

1. Lic. Laura Malmierca, head of the local National Parks agency and the person responsible for coordinating work with the Tierra del Fuego National Park;
2. Lic. Nora Lokemeyer, head of the Provincial agency dedicated to Protected areas;
3. Lic. María Regina Silva, head of the Provincial agency dedicated to Wildlife conservation;
4. Dr Adrian Schiavini, head of the Research Centre of Austral Patagonia (CADIC) dependent on the Argentinean Research Council; and
5. Mrs Natalie Goodall, an internationally known naturalist and owner of a large coastal farm.

These individual meetings were very useful because we received the support of all these institutions for the project. Some particularly noteworthy outcomes from these meetings are that:

1. Mrs Goodall agreed to allow us to use her strategically located farm as baseline for field work;
2. Dr Schiavini agreed to an organised Conference Meeting at the CADIC for the 14th November;
3. Lic. Malmierca, provided us with the results obtained by her team during last summer on otter distribution within the National Park, and agreed to continue with the already established collaboration and the training of two members of her team; and
4. Lic. Lokemeyer and Lic. Silva agreed to allow two members of their agencies to join our team that will be conducting fieldwork in 2008, and have provided us with a conference room for our stakeholder meeting.

II) We also organised aspects of the logistics, including boat and van rentals, booking of hotels and

meeting rooms, booking of tickets for workshop participants, and the purchasing of minor project equipment.

III) Dr Cassini (general local coordinator) and Dr Centrón (coordinator of genetic work) travelled to the UK and:

1. visited the Wildlife Conservation Research Unit (University of Oxford) to meet with Prof. Macdonald (General Coordinator) and other members of Wildlife Conservation Research Unit staff;
2. discussed molecular techniques with experts of the Institute of Zoology of London; and
3. and, made a presentation at the Annual Meeting of the British Ecological Society, held in Glasgow, Scotland.

IV) We contacted Chilean researchers with the aim of organising a bi-national workshop and proposed collaborations. These conversations were extremely useful and we were able to establish the following collaborations:

1. Dr Rodrigo Vasquez from the University of Chile, Santiago de Chile, and Dr Cassini will supervise a Chilean undergraduate student to conduct a survey of the Beagle Channel on the Chilean side, that is the coasts of Navarino Island, close to Tierra del Fuego;
2. Lic. Walter Sielfeld will provide our project with otter skin samples collected in the Chilean channels of the very south of this country, which will allow us to conduct research on the genetic flow between Argentinean and Chilean otter populations; and
3. Dr. Cristian Bonacic agreed to discuss a coordinated work programme on the impact of mink on local wildlife, probably on Navarino.

Due to the success of these initial contacts, we have instigated organisation of the bi-national workshop with the key players from both countries. The focus will be to coordinate researchers to organise the data collection on the Chilean otter populations within the planned timetable of this two-year post-project. We have also arranged for some members of this meeting to continue to join the presentations at the the CADIC institute. These steps are all essential to ensure that the local stakeholders are fully integrated in the project.

V) The November meeting has been organised for the 13-15 November, with the following activities planned:

- Day 1: Workshop with local stakeholders: From 1000h to 1700h at the Centre of Pisciculture, meeting with members of the three local institutions for final coordination of future work and discussion on the implementation of a exit strategy for wildlife conservation of the Beagle channel coast.
- Day 2: Conference meeting at the CADIC institute: From 1000 to 1700 h, four plenary presentations by Prof. Macdonald, Lic. Sielfeld, Dr Bonacic, and Lic. L. Fasola.
- Day 3: Workshop with Chilean researchers, and visit to sites of otter's habitat

### **Project announcement**

The project was announced using three means:

1. direct contact with stakeholders and potential collaborators, as described in the previous section;
2. the spress releases to local newspapers.an announcement on the web page of PROFAUNA organisation

### **Selection of three students, two guards and two managers and preliminary training**

The following people were involved in the project and training:

1. Maximiliano Nardelli (student). He will conduct an undergraduate thesis in molecular ecology and received training on molecular techniques.
2. María Cecilia Gozzi (student). She has already worked with our team and willsoon defend her undergraduate thesis on diet, and has been trained in computer software, mainly the use of arcview and Microsoft Access and Statistica.
3. We are still in the process of selecting a Chilean student, as was described previously
4. Emilce Gallo (National Park employee). She has already joined our collaboration and received training in field work and project organisation.
5. Mariano Calvi (guard from Tierra del Fuego National Park). He has already joined our collaborationj and is conducting fieldwork within the National Park).
6. Diego Valenzuela (member of the Local Wildlife Agency) will be joining our planning meeting in

November..

7. Member of the Local Protected Area Agency. This person is still to be identified, but plans are in place for training in field work and project organisation.

**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

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

Not applicable – we are happy with progress

<b>Discussed with the DI Secretariat:</b>	<b>no/yes, in..... (month/yr)</b>
<b>Changes to the project schedule/workplan:</b>	<b>no/yes, in.....(month/yr)</b>

**3. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin’s management, monitoring, or financial procedures?** No. We believe we are on course, but the workshop in November (imminent) will be the occasion for a complete refresh of the project.

**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](mailto: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**