

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

Project Ref. No.	162/12/018
Project Title	Climate Change and Conservation of Galapagos Bird Species
Country(ies)	Ecuador
UK Organisation	University of Oxford
Collaborator(s)	Galapagos National Park Service (GNPS), Charles Darwin Foundation (CDF)
Report date	30 October 2004
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR2
Project website	http://www.wildcru.org/research/es/galapagosbirds.htm and see also http://www.wildcru.org/research/darwininitiative.htm .

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). Despite notable problems (both political and with the theft of crucial equipment), major efforts invested by the Darwin team have largely mitigated potentially negative impacts on the project and minimised any associated effects. Although most of the project activities have continued as planned, some were carried out later (e.g monitoring of Black rats) or were partially implemented (e.g collection of data on the foraging behaviour of cormorants and penguins, and production of manual for surveying penguins and cormorants).

Achievements have been:

1. Reaching the target of marking one third of the penguin and the cormorant populations.
2. Organising and continuing to update the databases on climatic and bird variables.
3. Initiating the GIS work required in order to produce the multi-layered database; GIS data are currently being prepared to produce the layers.
4. Initiating the analysis of cormorant diving data and of the relationship between sea surface temperature and penguin population dynamics.
5. Producing an advanced draft of the manual on surveying penguins and cormorants; this was used (and tested) during the penguin and cormorant surveys conducted between late August and early September 2004.
6. Raising the project's profile. This took place largely in the Galapagos and on mainland Ecuador, through newspaper articles, radio and television interviews, and conferences (on the effect of El Niño on biodiversity and the current status of penguins and cormorants). Excerpts from these outputs are available on request. The project is also described on the WildCRU website (addresses given above).

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.

Notable problems have been:

1. Institutional instability within the Galapagos National Park Service (GNPS). The GNPS has had three directors in the reporting period (May-October 2004), and eight directors in the last 18 months. This high turnover in the GNPS directorship has meant that DI project leaders needed to invest much more effort in implementing those project activities that were carried out with Park Service personnel (e.g. surveying birds and Black rats, project dissemination etc.). The Park Officers also conducted a three-week strike in September and, as a consequence, one important field trip (financed by the Park as matched funding and usually conducted in late September) had to be postponed until the end of October. The team is at this

moment in the field.

2. Illegal fishing in key penguin and cormorant areas. Instability in the directorship of the GNPS caused Park Officers to strike between 10 and 29 September 2004. During the strike, a new Director was appointed, and he was considered to sympathise with the fishermen, and therefore likely to reduce fishing restrictions in the Galapagos Marine Reserve. This situation caused clashes between the conservationists and fishermen. While this was happening in Puerto Ayora, the main town on Santa Cruz Island, the fishermen took advantage of the situation and began to fish in protected areas (where fishing is prohibited) within the marine reserve. The Darwin team actually witnessed fishing on the Canal Bolivar (on the coasts of Fernandina and Isabela), a very important area for penguins and cormorants, where it is illegal to fish. Fishermen also camped illegally on Fernandina, increasing the risk of introducing exotic Black rats (this island is currently believed to be free of such rats). As a consequence of these illegal actions, the Darwin team suggested that the Park Service should increase their vigilance activities in the western Galapagos, and particularly at selected sites on western Isabela, where penguins are known to nest (e.g. Caleta Iguana, where fishermen were seen with domestic dogs). The conflicts between fishermen and conservationists also presented difficulties in achieving one of the project goals of fostering participatory management among users of the Galapagos Marine Reserve.

3. Another setback for the project was the theft, in July 2004, of important devices (and their accessories) used for studying the foraging behaviour of cormorants and penguins. In the light of rumours that fishermen were likely to strike (thereby blocking the entrance to the GNPS-CDF headquarters where the devices are usually kept), it was decided that it would be safer to keep them at a home in the Village of Puerto Ayora. Unfortunately, the house was burgled and the devices stolen; these have not yet been recovered.

4. Prolonged time in clearing customs in Ecuador. We purchased replacements for the stolen devices in Germany and imported them to Ecuador. Customs levied import tax charges of \$2,000 (approx. £1,110), which the project budget cannot afford to pay. Therefore we decided to make use of an agreement that exists between the Ecuadorian Government and the Charles Darwin Foundation, and which allows scientists to import scientific equipment tax-free. However, clearance is known to take a long time by this route and, although the devices were purchased in August, at the time of writing the devices remain with customs. The theft of the devices and subsequent difficulties in dealing with customs have meant that the GPS component of the work on foraging behaviour in cormorants and penguins has not yet been carried out for the current field season (August- October 2004).

Have any of these issues been discussed with the Darwin Secretariat and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?
Discussed with the DI Secretariat: Yes, problems 1 and 2 were discussed in June and problem 3 in October 2004.
Changes to the project schedule/workplan: No.

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

We would request that the DI consider the possibility of asking the British Embassy in Ecuador to provide assistance with importing the replacement field equipment from overseas.

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