

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2008)

Project Ref. No.	15/025
Project Title	Capacity building for biodiversity studies of freshwater insects, Argentina
Country(ies)	Argentina
UK Organisation	Natural History Museum, London (NHM)
Collaborator(s)	Museo de Ciencias Naturales de La Plata (UNLP) Instituto de Limnologia de La Plata (ILPLA) Centro Regional Universitario Bariloche (CRUB/UNC) Administracion Parques Nacionales (APN) Universidad de la Patagonia, Esquel, Chubut (UNP)
Project Leader	Stephen J. Brooks
Report date	26 October 2008
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR 3
Project website	Under development

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).

Visits to NHM: Argentinean scientists, from UNLP (Spinelli) and from ILPLA (Muzon), for two weeks during July to study NHM collections and collaborate on taxonomic research of Patagonian biting midges and dragonflies (with Brooks). Darwin-funded Argentinean project manager (Massaferro) visited for three weeks during April to discuss future project strategy (with Brooks) and received further GIS training (from Penn). Darwin-funded Argentinean field assistant (Montes de Oca) visited for 10 days in September to receive training in collections management and blackfly taxonomy (from Hernandez) prior to submission of thesis and formulation of project proposal for PhD.

Visits to Argentina: GIS specialist from NHM (Penn) visited Argentina to ground truth vegetation classification derived from satellite images in May. Unfortunately, the field work was cancelled because Bariloche was not accessible by air due to a volcanic eruption. The fieldwork has been rescheduled for January 2009.

Collections: Planning completed for forthcoming fieldwork season (Nov 2008 – March 2009) in south of Nahel Huapi National Park (NHNP). In addition to usual sampling protocols, some material will be collected specifically for DNA studies, which requires preservation in 100% ethanol and storage in freezers.

All material collected during 2007-2008 field season is now labelled and sorted into main taxonomic groups and sent to specialists for identification. Much of this material has now been identified, data-based and stored in the central collection at UNLP. Species lists have been updated and sent for GIS analysis.

Meetings: Eleven contributions submitted by project partners for the VII Argentinean Congress of Entomology, 21-24 Oct 2008. One day of this meeting will be devoted to our project, providing background and results from each project participant. The papers will be published in

a special issue of *Revista de la Sociedad Entomologica Argentina*.

Resources from our project have been used to part-fund a conference on *Biodiversity and Conservation in Patagonia* held in Esquel 23-25 October 2008.

Courses: Preparations have been made for a course on chironomid midges to be held at the University of Buenos Aires (27-28 October 2008).

Publications: Four scientific papers have been published or submitted during the report period.

The project contributed to a leaflet produced by APN on arthropods found in NHNP to be distributed to visitors to the national park. The Darwin Initiative logo appears on leaflet. Preparations are in hand for the production by APN of a 2009 calendar featuring images and text about our project.

The project has featured in three press articles and two TV interviews.

Draft chapters are in an advanced stage of completion for the field guide to aquatic insects and negotiations for publication by CONICET.

Web page: Work on this has been delayed due to other priorities. However the pages have now been prepared, a link is available and we expect the site to go live in November 2008.

Equipment and laboratories: All the capital equipment is now installed and operational. Using resources from the Darwin Initiative we now have one field station at Puerto Blest, a Biodiversity Laboratory at Bariloche (BLB), collections storage facility at UNLP and a digital imaging facility at ILPLA. Training has been provided for use of this equipment. Two new malaise traps were purchased to replace traps damaged during last collecting season

Legacy. A proposal has been submitted to CONICET to sign a management agreement with APN and CRUB for the BLB, the first time that CONICET will be formally linked with APN.

Education: Plans for school visits and non-specialist courses are in preparation.

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.

Malcolm Penn (NHM GIS specialist) was unable to complete scheduled field work in May 2008 due to inaccessibility of NHNP following a volcanic eruption. Field work is rescheduled for January 2009. We do not expect this delay to have any serious impact on the project timetable. An extra international flight will be paid for out of the travel budget and savings will be made because Brooks no longer needs to travel to Argentina during the coming year.

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

Not discussed with Darwin Secretariat because will not significantly impact the success of the project and no changes to the project work plan are required.

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**