

# Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

## Half Year Report Form 2001/02

<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Huemul Ecology Research for conservation planning in southern Chile</b>
<b>Country</b>	<b>Chile</b>
<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Raleigh International</b>
<b>Project Ref. No.</b>	<b>162/09/014</b>
<b>Report date</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> April – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2001</b>

### 1. Outline progress over the last 6 months against the agreed baseline timetable for the project.

The main project activities undertaken during this 6-month period are set out below according to general headings, with information on the progress realised set against that planned in the first year annual report.

#### - PROJECT PLANNING & PARTNERSHIP

**Planned:** Production of partners agreements and development of participatory strategies for Chilean researchers and park rangers; planning of technical work programme by steering group; assess progress September 2001.

**Realised:** Cristián Saucedo (CS) visited the UK in June/July and participated in a 2-day steering group meeting with all partners to discuss progress to date and issues to be resolved, and their relationship to the development of a technical plan. This plan defines the explicit links between project objectives, expected results and the methodologies employed, including huemul capture and radio-tracking as well as other complementary research methods. Partner agreements were progressed in draft form, and include a RI-CONAF protocol currently awaiting signature. Furthermore, the involvement of other Chilean researchers in the project was discussed and a procedure agreed for their participation. An additional assessment of project progress was made through the production of the technical plan and its associated work programme during September.

#### - FIELDWORK PLANNING

**Planned:** Visit Candonga in April/May to plan further work and assess capture feasibility; planning of forthcoming austral summer fieldwork.

**Realised:** Robin Gill (RG) and CS visited Candonga in April/May to assess the suitability of the site for further fieldwork; planning of Expedition 01I fieldwork was undertaken principally during September. An additional reconnaissance visit to Traiguanca was made, furthermore, by CS and a Conaf park ranger to evaluate huemul presence during the winter season.

#### - DEER CAPTURE & ANAESTHESIA

**Planned:** April/May 2001 - Meeting and final agreement about the captures with Servicio Agrícola y Ganadero (SAG); final review of the scientific literature and continue consultation on animal anaesthesia; decide on suitable drug and dose levels. Continue captures in Tamango.

**Realised:** A meeting was held in Santiago with SAG in early April, and an agreement reached to capture three further animals (2 males & 1 female) in Tamango, that were tranquilised using Imobilon and Xylazine and collared in April/May with mixed results. SAG were unwilling to approve winter captures and insisted upon the recapture of these three animals using another drug combination (Medetomidine and Ketamine) which was successfully carried out in August/September and thereafter approved by SAG. Eleven captures have been made in total using various anaesthetic drug combinations, with valuable information generated on huemul response to capture and sedation for the wider scientific and conservation community.

#### - FIELD RESEARCH

**Planned:** Evaluation and attempts to capture animals during winter in La Baguala and (if feasible) Candonga (provisional target of 10 animals in each site). Radio-telemetry of collared animals will continue in Tamango.

**Realised:** No winter captures were carried out, and Tamango was the sole focus of continuing capture and drug trials due to the previous permit restrictions detailed above. Radio telemetry work continued during the austral autumn/winter at Tamango, however, through CS, the Welcome Trust researcher Eleny Montero (EM) and three Conaf park rangers.

#### **- RESULTS ANALYSIS & PUBLICATION**

**Planned:** Enter data into the computer and preliminary data analysis and checking of the data collected; planning for writing peer and non-peer reviewed publications.

**Realised:** Current data obtained and results to date were discussed with RG by CS during his July visit to the UK, to feed into the development of a technical plan and provisional fieldwork programme for the project. Multiple authorship for publications was agreed as the appropriate model by the steering group, and one article was submitted to the Chilean journal Tecnovet for publication.

#### **- TRAINING**

**Planned:** April/May 2001 - Consolidate training on the use of dart-guns, drugs, monitoring anaesthesia and radio-telemetry.

**Realised:** Training provided by RG on field techniques to CS, EM, a Pontificia Universidad Católica (PUC) student and three Tamango rangers in April.

#### **- PROJECT DISSEMINATION**

**Planned:** During June-August undertake talks and show a video about huemul in local schools.

**Realised:** Talks, slide shows and video-viewings were run over 10 days in June for Cochrane schools, involving 600 children from 4 to 17 years of age. Additional public dissemination has included displaying interpretation material and field equipment to the local community during the June "Environment Week" of Cochran, as well as a talk and poster display at the Book Fair in Coyhaique during August/September and a presentation given to 50 undergraduate students at PUC in Santiago. Lastly, general project publicity was obtained through a local radio programme and two regional press articles, whilst technical exchange is facilitated by participation in the Interactive Journal for the Huemul and Conservation in the Southern Andes <http://www.huemul.net>

### **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 effect the budget and timetable of project activities. Have any of these issues been discussed with the Department and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?**

The main difficulty encountered has been the absence of deer captures during the austral winter due to permit and weather restrictions, which presents an additional challenge to capturing the numbers of individual deer originally envisaged. However, this restriction is to be re-evaluated in future and, following the capture and drug trials at Tamango, a revised capture programme can be progressed during the austral summer in suitable study areas in combination with other research methodologies. Significant changes to the project timetable and budget are not presently envisaged, although the situation will be closely monitored.

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

An additional (sixth) project objective was agreed during the July steering group meeting, concerning promotion of environmental education and public dissemination focused upon local communities in the project area. The project has been successful furthermore in securing additional funding from FCO for the construction of a huemul visitor centre during this year at RN Tamango furthermore.

Lastly, slight revisions to the employment costs and duration of project personnel are to be presented to the Darwin Initiative for approval in due course as detailed in recent email communication.