

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Half Year Report Form 2002

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| Project Title | Huemul Ecology Research for conservation planning in southern Chile |
| Country | Chile |
| Organisation | Raleigh International |
| Project Ref. No. | 162/09/014 |
| Report date | 1 st April – 30 th September 2002 |

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 originally planned and contained within the second year annual report.

- PROJECT PLANNING & PARTNERSHIP

Planned: Planning fieldwork for forthcoming austral spring and summer season.

Realised: A steering group meeting was held at CONAF Coyhaique (XI Region) with the project partners. The main subjects were:

- To discuss updates to the technical plan.
- To discuss the reviewers comments forwarded by ECTF.
- To review data obtained from fieldwork since the start of the project and techniques for analysis (including GIS).
- To discuss dissemination of the results (scientific & public level) and the final conference.
- To plan field work and activities for the remainder of the project.
- Other project aspects (to develop a strategy for environmental education, captures, and the use of data collected in previous projects by CONAF).
- To consider options for the continuity of research on huemul.

One partnership developed included support for a national cycle ride in Chile that was an initiative intended to raise public awareness of the current plight of the Huemul, threats to their survival and the urgency of taking measures for its conservation.

Project staff participated in discussions between CONAF, a private company and the Forestry Institute of Aysen to define the components and terms of reference for a large forestry management study on wildlife focused on the huemul.

- DEER CAPTURE

Planned: May/September 2002 – Capture work at Candonga (C) & La Baguala (LB). Field trips to capture huemul during winter time in C & LB. Evaluation of capture progress.

Realised: After the first 3 successful huemul captures in C during the austral autumn (March), capture efforts continued in C but without success. Weather conditions and deep snow limited access and low temperatures presented a hazard for the deer during tranquillisation. For these reasons captures were postponed until better conditions return, hopefully between October and December/02. Permission to continue captures until December 2002 has been granted by the Ministry of Agriculture (SAG).

Reports about huemul captures and information were sent to SAG in April.

- FIELD RESEARCH

Planned: Radio-tracking.

Realised: Radio telemetry of collared huemul deer continued according to plan in Tamango (T) and LB. In addition it was possible to carry out a limited amount of radio tracking on the 3 collared deer in C when conditions allowed.

- RESULTS ANALYSIS & PUBLICATION

Planned: June/ September enter field data into the computer and analysis.

Realised: Field data was entered into the project data base, and reviewed by Dr. Robin Gill during his visit to the XI Region. Based on the data available 2 publications were initially agreed; one on capture methods for huemul (anaesthesia, drugs, and response) and a second on the sanitary aspects of the species. It was also agreed that further

publications will be possible (based on telemetry, pellet counts and old CONAF data) but a decision on the content of these should be made after fieldwork is complete.

- TRAINING

Planned: None.

Realised: Training provided on field methods and radio telemetry techniques by personal staff for 3 undergraduate biology students (2 Chilean from Catholic University of Chile; and 1 North American from University of California) interested on wildlife and mammal research.

The 2 vets and a park ranger involved in the Darwin project attended the Binational Meeting for Huemul Deer Conservation in Chillán (VIII Region). This provided a useful opportunity to share experiences on huemul research.

- PROJECT DISSEMINATION

Planned: Talks about huemul conservation in local community (schools).

Realised: Talks on huemul deer conservation and research were done in April & September in Cochrane schools by project staff/CONAF rangers. Also local radios were asked to broadcast information about species status and applied research on huemul deer for people from the city, farmers (adjacent to protected areas and study sites) and “puesteros” (workers at the farms).

Contact was made between project staff and the local forestry company (currently exploiting C) to discuss the subject of dogs in forestry camps. It was agreed a meeting should be held between CONAF, the forestry company and local authorities (possibly in October). Also, more contact with local people (farmers) was established in areas close to C, T and LB. Further methods to make the public more aware of huemul conservation issues were discussed during the steering meeting.

Three scientific talks were presented at the Binational meeting in Chillan: a)The Huemul – Darwin Project, b)Huemul Deer Management and Capture and finally c)CONAF experiences on Huemul Conservation and Protection in two protected areas. A summary of the talks was sent to be included in a book of the proceedings of the huemul meeting.

Information on the project’s advances and status was sent to Vida Silvestre (Argentinean NGO) web page as well as some deer pictures. Lastly, technical interchange was facilitated by participation with the Interactive Journal for the Huemul and Conservation in the Southern Andes.

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?

One difficulty encountered has been the lack of deer captures during wintertime due to harsh weather and associated access problems. This prevented us from fitting the GPS collars to deer before the winter period set in. It was agreed to continue capture effort between October and December to try and fit these collars.

Some changes to the project timetable and budget were considered necessary. Firstly, some materials will be needed to support the education activities (cost details will be presented to the Department); and secondly a short extension to the project has been approved to be able to host a meeting to disseminate the project achievements and scientific results in Region XI Chile.

One huemul disappeared from C and the collar was subsequently radiotracked from a nearby farmhouse, prompting strong suspicions of poaching. The matter was reported to SAG. The total number of radio-collared animals killed is now three. (One other was killed by a puma in LB and a third attacked by dogs and then killed by puma in T).

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

A request will be submitted to use some budget of the travel and subsistence budget to produce some printed material (poster, calendar, and “mates” drink?). A formal proposal and details will be submitted to Darwin for authorisation.

A short extension of the project was submitted and details are still in discussion.

Completed forms to: Rose Clarkson, Darwin Initiative M&E Project Manager, John Muir Building, Kings Buildings, University of Edinburgh, Mayfield Rd., Edinburgh EH9 3JK, Scotland.
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Cristián Saucedo, CONAF

10th October 2002