

# Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2010)

<b>Project Ref No</b>	EIDPO038
<b>Project Title</b>	High Andes Conservation Without Borders
<b>Countries</b>	Argentina, Bolivia and Chile
<b>UK Organisation</b>	Wildlife Conservation Research Unit (WildCRU)
<b>Collaborator(s)</b>	Fundación YUCHAN, High Andes Flamingo Conservation Group (GCFA), Andean Cat Alliance AGA.
<b>Project Leader</b>	Prof. Claudio Sillero-Zubiri
<b>Report date</b>	31 October 2010
<b>Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)</b>	HYR1
<b>Project website</b>	URL= <a href="http://www.wildcru.org/research/research-detail/?theme=&amp;project_id=43">http://www.wildcru.org/research/research-detail/?theme=&amp;project_id=43</a> [to be updated soon]

**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).**

**Project announcement and reassessment of stakeholders and conservation priorities.**

To announce the project extension and its objectives we produced a summary document of the project in Spanish and the first electronic bulletin. These were circulated widely among stakeholders in the triple frontier between Argentina, Bolivia and Chile. We produced project personal cards and a PowerPoint presentation describing the project.

On this phase we focused on strengthening liaisons with the signatories of the Tilcara Agreement for international collaboration (a major product of the original project) and other relevant stakeholders, including new regional authorities after significant changes in all three countries, and local associations where formal conservation is lacking –i.e. Vilama in Argentina.

Main stakeholders:

- Government institutions: at national level Secretaría de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sustentable Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Culto en Argentina; Viceministerio de Medio Ambiente y Dirección General de Biodiversidad y Áreas Protegidas in Bolivia and national protected areas services CONAF in Chile, SERNAP in Bolivia and APN in Argentina; regional governments of Jujuy Province, Argentina.
- Users of natural resources: livestock farmers, 'Warmi' indigenous association of Andean women, mining companies, tour operators, urban populations
- NGOs: project partners: AGA (Andean Cat Alliance); GCFA (Group for the Conservation of Andean Flamingos); collaborators BIOTA (Bolivia)

We held meetings and workshops with most relevant stakeholders in order to re-assess and identify urgent conservation issues and opportunities for research and conservation: two inception workshops with government officers in San Pedro de Atacama (Chile) and La Paz (Bolivia) in June 2010; four meetings between May and July 2010 with national and regional authorities in Argentina; a meeting with the *Warmi* association of local women in July 2010, followed by two participatory meetings with *Warmi* members directly involved with tourism in September (in Cusi Cusi and Lagunillas del Farallón, Argentina).

The most urgent environmental issue faced is the imminent development of a geothermic operation in Laguna Colorada, at the heart of Avaroa National Reserve (REA), combined with various conflicts between local communities, tour operators and the National Park management

in this protected area. The project participated in consultations with various players about the social and biological impacts of the geothermal development; representing AGA we contributed information about carnivores and their prey in REA, and more specifically about Andean cats, and as GCFA about the strategic importance of the area for flamingos. In Argentina the political will to implement a formal protected area in Vilama has petered out. We identified local communities as the major conservation players to interact with. A project to develop tourism in the Vilama Ramsar Site (with support from BID = Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo) has caused some concern, but is also an opportunity for community-based conservation in this area. In Los Flamencos Reserve (LF) in Chile we envisage a smooth continuity of the project; tourism and mining are the major threats to High Andean conservation in this region.

**Implementation of the Tilcara Agreement** The workshops and meetings led to initial agreements for trans-boundary activities:

1. Exchange of experiences on tourism and community-based conservation initiatives between local communities at each side of the frontier (First action: a workshop organized in November 2010 in Chile when Atacama people will share experiences with *Warmi* members).
2. Training of local community members on field techniques for census of flamingos and surveys of wetlands via international exchanges.
3. International workshop to develop a common approach to regulate tourism.

**Mapping of wetlands, water bodies and associated vegetation formations from remote sensing.** Established a collaboration with Dr Mark New of the Environmental Change Institute at the University of Oxford to design a spatial study of wetlands that incorporates weather, hydrology, topographic and predicted changes in climate, into our mapping exercise. Field trips in December-January to collect ground data. Hydrological and meteorological data already collated from various sources for the triple frontier.

**Research on the impact of water extraction on wetlands (Chile)** In October Magdalena Bennett, a Chilean national (and a Darwin Fellow) started her doctoral studies at Oxford under Prof Claudio Sillero's supervision. Her study will concentrate on the major threat imposed by use of water for mining and in human settlements in the Chilean side of the triple frontier. We contacted La Escondida, the main mining company in Chile, to develop collaboration that would allow us the use of their water extraction data and meteorological and hydrological information. Data were collated from available governmental reports from agriculture and mining companies in the region. We established contact was established with a Millennium Ecosystems Services GIF project in San Pedro Atacama to ensure that reports and digital data will be shared.

**Research on the impact of livestock grazing on wetlands (Bolivia)** Sol Aguilar, a student in Bolivia started her master study on people's livelihood in and near REA (see below) and in particular on how these activities, mainly grazing, affect the wetlands used at varying intensities for llama herders to graze their animals.

**Socio economic surveys (Bolivia and Argentina)** The Bolivian student and Amelia Clark, a postgraduate student from Argentina started studies aimed at identifying people's livelihoods and changes in human demography as a result of mining and tourism development. Amelia Clark has a background on Analysis, Management and Resolution of Social-Environmental Conflicts, which she will put to use in the implementation of community-based tourism in the Vilama region as a case study.

**Other:** Our paper "Marino et al. Bioclimatic constraints to Andean cat distribution: A modelling application for rare species" will be published soon in *Diversity and Distributions*; the work summarizes current knowledge on the status and distribution of Andean cats in order to predict their bioclimatic niche and biogeographical limitations; the triple frontier region emerged as one of the most important areas globally; the results further research on the potential impacts of climate change upon Andean cats.

**Tourism and off-road disturbances** Mapping of disturbances has been extended to

Pozuelos National Monument (Argentina). The Single Road information campaign was reinforced with a second set of information material, printed and distributed in REA and LF. We gained institutional support to implement ethical signalling in Salar de Tara, LF. In Chile we supported CONAF tourism courses for travel agencies with material from the Single Road project in May 2010.

**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.**

Argentina: Limited interest by the Government of Jujuy Province in implementing the Vilama Ramsar Site or in establishing a new protected area in the Triple Frontier.

Bolivia: Conflicts between local communities and the protected area authority (SERNAP) with regard to management practices (i.e. high-Andean flamingo egg collection in REA) and on administrative issues (entrance fees sharing, REA administrative offices location).

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

No

Discussed with LTS: No

Formal change request submitted: No

Received confirmation of change acceptance

**3. Do you expect to have any significant (eg more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?**

Yes  No

If yes, and you wish to request a carryforward of funds, this should be done as soon as possible. It would help Defra manage Darwin funds more efficiently if you could give an indication of how much you expect this request might be for.

Estimated carryforward request: £

**4. 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 LTS International directly.

Please send your **completed form by email** to Eilidh Young at [Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk](mailto:Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.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: 17-075 Darwin Half Year Report**