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Quarterly newsletter for the BP Conservation Programme—a partnership between BirdLife International, BP, Conservation International, Fauna and Flora International and the Wildlife Conservation Society. Please contact Robyn Dalzen, dalzr1@bp.com, with comments and queries or visit our website at http://conservation.bp.com.

Message From the Programme Manager

After a busy field season, many of our award winners have much to report in this edition of our newsletter, so it's chock-a-block with updates from all over the world – the CROC project received the prestigious Castillo Cup for their outstanding contribution to crocodile conservation; hunters in Georgia are committed to conservation of the Caucasian Tur; and thanks to the ongoing efforts of the Araripe Manakin team in Brazil, in celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Araripe National Forest, a nationwide commemorative stamp with a picture of the Manakin has been produced. Read on to find out more.

Upcoming Deadline

The deadline for our Future Conservationist, Follow-up and Leadership Awards is fast approaching on **24th November 2006**, and we are looking forward to assisting teams with their applications. If you have any questions or need advice on this, please see our website http://conservation.bp.com/applications/default.asp and feel free to e-mail us at: bp-conservation-programme@birdlife.org. We'll be happy to assist where we can.

SCB Meeting

The Society for Conservation Biology meeting held in San Jose, California at the end of June was a big success. Participants had the opportunity to learn about one another's work, make professional contacts, receive feedback on their projects and get to know other members of the BPCP network. One award winner said, "Sharing experiences with other awardees made me feel I'm not just alone in this work. It was so encouraging to hear everyone's successes, failures, lesson's learned and thoughts before and during the conference." Another said, "The experience, contacts, friendships and fun were unsurpassed. More importantly, I am more motivated than ever to get going again!" We are looking forward to next years meeting in Port Elizabeth, South Africa: One world, one conservation, one partnership from 1 – 5 July 2007. For more information see http://www.nmmu.ac.za/scb/ .

Diary Dates

15 Oct 2006 Call for Project Concepts, Seed Funding Facility, Wetlands International

30 Oct – 4 Nov 2006 Coral Reef Ecosystem Biodiversity Forum, New Caledonia

31 Oct 2006 Whitley Award Deadline, Whitley Fund for Nature

6 – 17 Nov 2006 UN Climate Change Conference, Nairobi, Kenya

24 Nov 2006 BP Conservation Programme Award Deadline

8 Jan 2007 Deadline for oral and poster presentations for SCB Annual Meeting.

27 – 29 March 2007 Student Conference on Conservation Science, Cambridge, UK

17 – 21 June 2007 V Brazilian Congress on Protected Areas, Paraná, Brazil

The BPCP winners group on a day trip to Muir Woods before the start of the conference.

BPCP Team Complete!

In our last newsletter, we welcomed Lynn Duda to the team and she is now settling in at WCS. I'm delighted to say we look forward to welcoming yet another new member to complete the team! **Paul Herbertson** will join us at the end of September as Programme Officer working on the BPCP and capacity building issues within FFI. He comes to us from the South Downs National Park Authority with an MSc in Environmental Monitoring, Modeling and Management, a BSc in Zoology, and a keen interest in international conservation. Experience in setting up projects in Indonesia and Ecuador coupled with his time spent at the BPCP training in 2004 has given him a good understanding of the needs of young people when setting up international conservation projects and the importance of capacity building in conservation. He has been through the process of applying for funding, setting up a small project, carrying out fieldwork and working to build capacity within international groups. His work in Ecuador with Global Vision International in particular has given him hands-on experience developing and delivering training to international groups of volunteers and local people.

On team retreat in Maine. From left to right: Marianne Carter, Lynn Duda, Paul Herbertson and Robyn Dalzen.

Marianne Carter, Executive Manager, BPCP

Latest News

New Bird Discovered on Unexplored Colombian Mountain by BP Conservation Programme Project

A new bird to science has been discovered on an unexplored mountain range in northern Colombia by a team supported by the BP Conservation Programme. It has been named "Yariguies Brush-Finch," with the scientific name *Atlapetes latinuchus yariguierum*. The new brush-finch was described by an Anglo-Colombian team of biologists including Thomas Donegan (Fundación ProAves) and Blanca Huertas (Natural History Museum and University College London), following their leadership of the first biological exploration of the Yariguíes mountains. The description was published in the June issue of the prestigious scientific journal *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists Club* (Vol. 126: June 2006).

The new bird is named for the Yariguies indigenous people who formerly inhabited the mountain range where the bird was found. The new bird is a large and colorful finch with black, yellow and red plumage. It differs from its closest relatives in having a black back and no white markings in its wings. It is also found in other nearby mountains in Colombia's Eastern Andean range. Genetic, morphological and vocal studies have confirmed its identity as a new taxon.

In order to survey the highest parts of the Yariguíes Mountains, where the Yariguies Brush-Finch was found, the researchers and their equipment were dropped by helicopter onto an isolated peak at approximately 3000m (over 10,000 ft.) above sea level. This comprised the first human access to the highest elevations of this 100 km long mountain range.

This description is noteworthy in that one of the two birds caught by the team and used in the description as a type specimen was released unharmed, a DNA sample and photographs having been taken. This is the first time that a live specimen has been used for the description of a new bird following the approval by the International Commission of Zoological Nomenclature of such techniques last year.

Donegan commented, "Before we began this study, no one knew what species lived in the Yariguíes Mountains and whether they needed protecting. Now, we are beginning to describe new taxa and a National Park has been established in the region. It is surprising that this new brush-finch and the forests of the Yariguíes Mountains could remain unstudied, undescribed and unprotected for so long."

Huertas added, "The description of a new bird is a rare event in modern times. However, this is just the first of several new species that we will be describing from the Yariguíes Mountains. In my own specialist group, butterflies, we have found several new taxa that will be described soon."

With biological justification resulting from this research and following other initiatives, Serranía de los Yariguíes was declared a National Park last year by the Colombian government and a large forest nature reserve was recently established in the region by Fundación ProAves, Colombia's bird conservation NGO.

News From the Field

AFRICA

Chameleons for Conservation: Surveys and Monitoring in the Menabe Region, Madagascar (2006)
The proposed chameleon conservation project was presented at the annual meeting of the Menabe Research Group (GRM) in March 2006. This group is comprised of conservation institutions and national or international researchers working in the Menabe Region. Project leader Christian Randrianatoandro presented the rationale, methods, objectives and background of the project. After the presentation, participants were able to ask questions about the methods, habitat study (variables identification) and chameleon indicator species, and offered input that has contributed to the project design. The project officially begins in December 2006, and the project leader plans to organize a meeting with Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, an international collaborator, in September.

Ecology and Conservation of *Aberdare cisticola* in the Mau Narok-Molo Grasslands, Kenya (2006)
The *Aberdare cisticola* is a globally endangered bird species that inhabits moist highland grasses above 3,000m on either side of the Rift Valley at Molo, Mau Narok and the Aberdare mountains in Central Kenya. The species is threatened as a result of habitat loss and fragmentation due to rapidly expanding agricultural practices. The team set out in July to survey the status of the *Aberdare cisticola* in the Mau Narok/Molo grasslands. Results of the survey showed that good numbers of species exist in the remnant grasslands of this Important Bird Area (IBA).

The IBA is important to a variety of grassland bird species based on the abundance and diversity of species recorded during this survey, such as the common occurrence of Jackson's Widowbird (NT), Sharpe's Longclaw and other grassland specialists, e.g. Wing-snapping cisticola, Hunter's cisticola, Laveillants cisticola, Red-capped Lark and Grassland Pipit. Other non-grassland bird species recorded were the great Crested Grebe and Maccoa Duck among others. *Aberdare cisticola* was recorded in grassland patches surrounded by cultivated land and is greatly isolated from other grasslands.

Three nests were also recorded in the Molo grasslands. One of the nests had two juveniles that had just hatched when the team arrived at the site. The birds were encountered in pairs on several occasions and some pairs were encountered with juveniles, which were successfully mist-netted and ringed. The birds were actively calling and displaying and they recorded the calls for future surveys. The IBA programme in Kenya needs to increase efforts to monitor, raise awareness and form Site Support Groups. It is important to recognise that this survey has identified areas that need more focus. Survey work will continue for the next few months and the team will work toward implementing recommendations based on the data collected.

Operation Moheli, Comoros (2006)
Operation Mohéli was launched in May to link conservation of marine flagship species with sustainable development. The team visited the islets of Nioumachoua, during which they assessed current levels of turtle poaching. The team also visited two important nesting sites for green turtles on the island – Itsamia and Hoani. Itsamia has a well-developed surveillance and monitoring programme, but the village is reluctant to share its skills and ideas with the rest of the island. A challenge of this project will be to successfully integrate Itsamia into the Marine Park's management programme. Hoani has an active village association and is keen to work closely with C3-Comores on this project.

The team is currently visiting all villages within the Mohéli Marine Park, presenting the objectives of the project, assessing opportunities for ecotourism and perceptions of the marine park, and distributing dugong sighting cards. The results from these sighting cards will prove essential in the formulation of the Dugong Conservation Action Plan for the Comores and in identifying key sites for seagrass mapping. A Methods Manual for the project has been compiled, detailing turtle, dugong and seagrass survey methods. The manual will be updated throughout the project and will serve as an invaluable reference for the continuation of work initiated by this project.

The Mohéli Marine Park eco-guards have been a great source of information and assistance since the project started, and all are keen to participate in the project and ensure its success. They have helped with a sea turtle drawing competition, village tour and a number of other eco-guards have expressed a strong interest in participating in forthcoming interviews focusing on dugongs. A number of local volunteers, most in their early 20's, from Nioumachoua have eagerly assisted with Operation Mohéli since its inception. C3-Comores has also started a 'Junior Eco-guard' programme with a group of 15 local teenagers. Thus far Operation Mohéli has been a phenomenal success and the response of local communities has been overwhelming.

Ecology, Distribution, Status and Protection of Three Congolese Fruit Bats, DRC (2005)
In September and October of last year the team conducted research aimed at finding three species of fruit bat (Megachiroptera) in the southwest of the Democratic Republic of Congo and of the Republic of Congo: *Epomophorus grandis*, *Micropteropus intermedius* and *Epomophorus cf. labiatus*. The first two species are Data Deficient in IUCN's Red List of threatened species; the third has not been assessed. After intensive fieldwork, neither species has been found. But, the results of the project indicate that the diversity of Megachiroptera in the two regions may still be relatively rich.

Two species were captured that are new for the province of Bas-Congo in the Democratic Republic of Congo, *Myonycteris torquata* and *Scotonycteris zenkeri*, and one species was captured that is new for the region of Pointe Noire in the Republic of Congo: *Eidolon helvum*. In one village, indiscriminate hunting of fruit bats was observed. We recommend continued searches for the three species over a longer period of time, the inclusion of Megachiroptera in national considerations and plans for biodiversity conservation, promoting environmental awareness and education for local populations, and the establishment of a national Species Survival Committee in both countries.

Project Yabelo: Status of the Ethiopia Bush Crow and White-tailed Swallow, Ethiopia (2005)
From the data collected by the Bushcrow project in Ethiopia, it is hard to give precise trends of either the Ethiopian Bushcrow *Zavattariornis stresemanni* or White Tailed Swallow *Hirundo megaensis* populations. However, both were seen on a regular basis – the Bushcrow daily and in relatively large numbers. The bushcrow was observed in many villages on degraded land, showing its ability to use such habitat. Both species were also observed frequently in Acacia and Commiphora habitats. Our general bird surveys identified over 260 species of bird, highlighting the general importance of the sanctuary. Interviews with village elders revealed a consensus that grazing land was decreasing and cultivation increasing; therefore further habitat degradation is likely. There is a clear need to monitor the avifauna of the Yabelo sanctuary in the face of its increasingly shifting environment.

Rainforest Reserves for Critically Endangered Comorian Fruit Bats (2005)
The Fruit Bat team has been hard at work entering and analyzing data, compiling results and developing a draft plan for establishing small community-managed forest reserves in the Comoros. Results are proving quite interesting – based on social surveys in villages and ecological surveys in forests, they have been able to evaluate potential reserve sites based upon conservation value, threats from human encroachment, and the feasibility of establishing reserve sites. This has enabled them to identify priority interventions and tailor recommendations specifically to each locality, taking into account village perspectives and ecological data.

The draft plan is nearly complete, and the next step will be to return to the villages on the islands of Anjouan and Mohéli where data was collected during the project. They will also be presenting the plan to Comorian government officials and to non-governmental organizations. Their goals during this phase will be to share findings and results, request feedback on recommendations, clearly identify the most pressing and feasible priorities for improving conservation and rural livelihoods, and build support for the conservation of Livingstone's flying fox and the Comorian rainforest.

The team looks forward to this follow-up village tour, and to completing the Forest Reserve plan. The feedback they receive will enable them to finalize specific sustainable plans for reserves that will be beneficial to bat and forest conservation, and have broad local and governmental support.

Threats to Nesting Leatherback Turtles in Pongara National Park, Gabon (2005)
Pongara National Park, located in northern Gabon, hosts a globally important population of leatherback sea turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*). Although this species is classified as critically endangered by the IUCN Red List and is suffering from an alarming decline in the Pacific, the Gabonese nesting population appears to be among the two or three largest in the world. One of the major threats to nesting sea turtles, particularly in northern Gabon, is timber littering the beaches. Timber companies often float logs down the rivers. During these operations, they occasionally escape and are swept to sea. Subsequently, many logs wash up on shore, littering beaches and creating a serious threat for nesting sea turtles and emerging hatchlings.

The aim of this study was to determine the impact of logs on nesting sea turtles in Pongara National Park, one of the most important nesting beaches in Gabon, as well as a seriously affected nesting site. The team evaluated the abundance, position and volume of all logs encountered on a 4.2 km stretch of beach, where more than 1100 nesting females have been observed during a six month period. For turtles to nest successfully, they must be able to nest above the high-tide line. Nesting is extremely arduous; sea turtles are slow, clumsy and vulnerable on land, and nesting females are highly stressed. If the beach is strewn with logs, it impacts the chances for successful nesting. They may abort nesting, nest below the high-tide line, and turtles can become trapped or lost inland.

The team hand-measured all logs blocking the 4.2 km beach. Only logs >20 cm diameter and >3.5 m length with blockages parallel to the beach were considered; small (<2 m wide) gaps were considered impassable; The team recorded 64 blockages, with lengths ranging from 3.5 to 290 m, and based on these measurements, it was determined that 30.5% of the beach was blocked. Further research is needed in Gabon to quantify the impacts of logs on turtle populations.

Tulbagh Renosterveld Project, South Africa (2005)
The team is currently putting the final touches on their final report and it has undoubtedly been a successful and worthwhile project. The data collected and priority maps produced have been useful for other projects. South Africa is in the process of reviewing its EIA regulations and the provincial government has been developing ecosystem sensitivity maps to guide environmental consultants and decision-making authorities. The team was invited to attend a workshop and present our project and the maps that they had produced. These maps are now included in the provincial spatial layer highlighting the sensitive and threatened habitats in the Tulbagh Valley. Additionally, they created a map using a threatened species distribution layer to

identify areas in the Tulbagh Valley where development proposals will have to go through a full EIA process. This has been an amazing achievement – they are using their data to directly inform land-use decision makers.

In August 2006 the CFR conservation community came together to participate in the Fynbos Forum – an annual conference where researchers, conservationists and communities present the work they doing, network and share lessons learned. This year the Forum was held in the Western Cape Province and the team was asked by conference organisers to lead a field trip in Tulbagh. They decided to take the 75 participants to a farm that has been identified as a top priority for conservation in the Tulbagh Valley. The group was very impressed by the sheer diversity of plants and the amazing blanket display of the ruby red *Babiana villosa* and *Geissorhiza inflexa*. The landowner was really proud of the fact that so many people were interested in his property and the amazing flowers on his farm. One of our volunteers visited the farm two weeks later and found a new population of the critically endangered *Ixia vinacea*. This species is now known from three localities and the total population number is now about 600 plants.

Bat Conservation, Madagascar (2004)
Madagasikara Voakajy, a Malagasy conservation organisation, created with support from the BP Conservation Programme, conducts a variety of research and education projects to protect the island's bat fauna. The team continues their radio tracking projects on the Madagascar flying fox *Pteropus rufus* and trident nosed bats *Triaenops rufus* and *T. furculus*. These field studies are aimed at describing the landscape ecology of the bats and will help increase understanding of the relationship between foraging and roosting sites. Additionally, they have held three teacher training workshops with representatives from the Ministry of Education as part of a project to produce materials for rural primary schools about bat conservation. The first comprehensive survey of an important cave complex in western Madagascar was carried out and the team recorded two new species for the site. Amyot Kofoky, acoustic specialist, left the organisation and the team and the BPCP would like to take this opportunity to thank him for all his hard work. As an organisation that is staffed by nine Malagasy biologists, the group is now looking to the future as the Consolidation Award enters its final quarter. Additional funding is required to maintain the team and allow them to survive, and hopefully thrive, in a very competitive arena.

Mpingo Conservation Project, Tanzania (2004)
Mpingo**,** the East African Blackwood tree, is used to make clarinets and oboes, and is the medium of choice for local wood carvers.The Mpingo Conservation Project aims to conserve the over-exploited mpingo forests in Tanzania by promoting sustainable and socially equitable harvesting of the Mpingo and other valuable timber stocks. In July, the first village forest management plan was approved by the district council, meaning that Kikole villagers can now start to manage their own forest area. The Mpingo Conservation Project is hoping to facilitate an early harvest of a small amount of timber to demonstrate practically the real significant financial rewards that villagers can expect to gain as a result. They are also exploring the possibility with them of setting aside a much larger area of forest the other side of the Matandu River, and which has much greater stocks of timber.

Earlier this year the first full draft of the district wide stocks assessment was completed, which is the major piece of research undertaken with BPCP funding. The team used innovative techniques in order to cover as much as possible of the 13,000 square kilometer district in less than 100 man-days of field-work, and then related transect observations to GIS land cover data in order to extrapolate stocks for 7 selected timber species in the district. The new method of rapid transects was found to be over 5 times more efficient than a comparable survey based on sample plots. The full report is downloadable from their website at www.mpingoconservation.org/reports.html.

The project deepened and expanded their village education programme by taking it to outlying sub-villages and hamlets that are often neglected by other development programmes. Inhabitants of these smaller settlements are often the more serious farmers and hunters, so taking the message direct to them should ensure a much higher level of community support. Certainly the recipients were very happy to see a project making an effort to come all the way out to visit them deep in the bush.

Finally, they have begun working with WWF to develop FSC certification in Kilwa District, primarily focused on Mpingo. It is likely to be a long process, and initial harvests may well not be certified, but in the end it should lock-in a significant price premium for community forests, which otherwise would have to compete with a local market awash with cheap, illegal timber.

Yala Management Team, Kenya (2003)
The Yala Swamp Management Team, a group of young conservationist and scientists that won a BP Conservation award in 2003, continues to work hard for the conservation and sustainable utilization of the Yala swamp. Under a government registered Natural Resources Management Group (NARE-SK), the team is collaborating with other partners in campaigning for better utilization of the wetland for sustainable development and biodiversity conservation.

Through a partnership with other groups under the umbrella of "Friends of Yala," they have been very active. In June they hosted a second meeting with the Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources and participated in a community call-in show on a local radio station tackling land, health and environment issues. They have been actively campaigning on wetland issues, educating communities and prompting the Kenyan Environment and Natural Resource Ministry's Permanent Secretary to clarify development issues that could take place in the wetland. The group plans to host a one-day seminar in the next month at the National Museum of Kenya in Nairobi to discuss the wetland.

The team is in consultation with other partners on how to aid the local community through a number of community-based organizations (9 have already shown interest) to engage in sustainable resource utilization that will ensure poverty reduction and biodiversity conservation in the non-cleared parts of Yala Swamp. Some of the recommendations in the groups final report "Options in the Yala Wetland: Management for Sustainable Development and Biodiversity Conservation" are being targeted and the team's report is being distributed to conservation organizations in Kenya.

Studying the Impacts of Plant Exploitation on Habitat and Gorilla Populations, DRC (2001)
The project received an award in 2001, but due to extenuating circumstances, the team was unable to receive funds until now. The aim of the project is to protect the Itombwe Forest Ecosystem and its biodiversity. The Itombwe forest, located in the South Kivu Province, Eastern DR Congo in the Albertine Rift, is recognised by BirdLife International as a priority area for conservation considering its rich biodiversity and endemism.

Gorillas and their habitat are under threat due to poaching, deforestation, mine extraction, logging, human settlement and agricultural extension. Many plant species are exploited by local communities for house construction and furniture making, including: *Ekebergia capensis, Strombosia grandifolia, Podocarpus milanjianus, Beilschmiedia oblingifolia, Lebrunia bushaie, Ficalhoa laurifolia* and *Podocarpus usambarensis*. The current research will provide useful information that will be used to recommend appropriate conservation measures in this forest.

Prior to initiating the project, the team met with local stakeholders, including community representatives, customary chiefs, landowners, teachers, park wardens and CBO representatives, and provided training on methods used for plant surveying and gorilla censuses. So far, forest inventories, including gorilla feeding, ranging and behaviour, have been conducted at 5 sites: Nzombe, Mwana, Maano, Misebu and Kibumbu, and Kalundu. The team recorded 39 gorilla individuals including silver

backs (5), adult females (18), babies (4) and juveniles (12). Food remains were identified to determine diet composition, and more than 10 identified plant species were seen eaten by gorillas. We noted that gorillas consume stem barks, leaves and fruits. A census of the entire Itombwe forest (about 65.000ha) is planned for 2007 to determine the actual gorilla populations present, as well as education activities.

ASIA / PACIFIC

Bat Count Philippines (2006)
In June, Bat Count Philippines participated in the 10th Mudpack Festival of Mambukal in collaboration with the local government unit of Minoyan, Murcia, Negros Occidental and FFI - Philippine Biodiversity Conservation Programmes and its Mobile Education Unit. The week long activity commemorates the on-going festival tradition in the area. Activities during the festival included guided tours to the bat roost and exploration to the tree tops (canopy walk), mud body painting contest (which is the main highlight of the festival), tree planting, a beauty pageant, musical bands and parties.

The team has produced education materials explaining the importance of conservation for bats and other species in Mambukal and t-shirts sold by the People's Organization of Mambukal. A sign was also posted near the roosting site to teach tourists and visitors about the ecological importance of bats. Guided tours and interpretation around the bat roosting site were given to the local children and adult tourists visiting the resort during the festival. A lecture was also held for more than 56 children at the visitor's center, which extended environmental awareness to many visitors at the resort. In addition to the series of lectures on biodiversity and wildlife conservation, a film called "Aswang sa Dilim" (Vampires in the Dark) was shown depicting the conservation of bats in the Philippines.

Conservation Status of the Montaine Slender Loris, Horton Plains National Park, Sri Lanka (2006)
The principle objective of this project is to provide baseline data to initiate an effective long-term conservation program for the Montaine Slender Loris, a small nocturnal prosimian primate endemic to Sri Lanka and South India. The team is evaluating the current conservation status of this species, assessing habitat use and preference, educating and raising awareness in the local community.

The forests of Sri Lanka are home to two species of Slender Loris – *Loris tardigradus* (Endangered) and *L. lydekkerianus*, with four currently recognised subspecies (*L. t. tardigradus, L. t. nycticeboides*, *L. l. nordicus,* and *L. l. grandis*). To date, no long-term studies have been carried out on any of the Sri Lankan Slender Lorises, with the exception of a study currently being done on *L. t. tardigradus* by one of the team members. Based on threats faced by the Horton Plains National Park, an IUCN CAMP meeting in Coimbatore, India, declared *L. t. nycticeboides* Critically Endangered.

In order to save this species, it is vital that we carry out population surveys and collect baseline data, which will allow us to evaluate the conservation and species status of this subspecies. In addition, awareness for the Horton Plains Slender Loris at the local, national and international level must be raised. It is only with such data and efforts at raising awareness that an effective and sustainable long-term conservation program can be initiated.

Javan Slow Loris Project, Gunung Gede Pangrango National Park, Indonesia (2006)
The Javan Slow Loris (*Nycticebus javanicus*) is the only nocturnal prosimian endemic to Java. Despite it being severely threatened by hunting, deforestation and the pet trade, the lack of information about its demography and ecology prohibit the development of strategies to conserve and protect it. This project is a first step to initiate a long-term and comprehensive conservation program for the Javan Slow Loris.

The first activity of the project was a survey of the Javan Slow Loris population, distribution and habitat in Gunung Gede Pangrango National Park (GGPNP). In July and August the team conducted 39 night surveys from 12 repeated transects in Bodogol forest. They have recorded 22 encounters with the Loris and 32 individuals in total. The Loris was

encountered mostly in secondary forest and at the edges. They found the Loris deep in the primary forest only on three occasions. Following the fieldwork, the team presented a public awareness program, training, and education program to encourage conservation of the Loris.

In August the team offered a seminar and workshop at the Bodogol Research Station for GGPNP officers, local guides from the Bodogol Conservation & Education Center (BCEC), university students, youth from a local green club and local stakeholders in order to design a specific primate conservation programme and discuss the project aims. They also trained rangers on data collection, observation and monitoring techniques. BCEC and the research station have the potential to support conservation programs for a number of species, habitats and ecosystems in the area, and we will continue to work with them.

Small Carnivore Conservation in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam (2006)

In August, the team conducted a field skills training course on Small carnivores in Cat Tien National Park and plans to select two students to join the team as they conduct field surveys in the Uminh area/Mekong Delta. This successful training course had 14 participants – 5 rangers and 2 research officers from Catien, U Minh Thuong and U Minh Ha National Parks, as well as 7 students HCM City Forestry University, Can Tho University and the University of Sciences and Nature of HCM. Participants learned basic aspects of small carnivore field surveying, species ecology, scientific methods, surveying skills, transect use, interviewing techniques, navigation, as well as live, camera and radio trapping. Survey work will begin in December and will continue through March of next year.

CROC Project, Philippines (2005)

In June 2006, crocodile conservationists from around the world gathered in France for the IUCN Crocodile Specialist Group Meeting. Three CROC project team members, Dominic, Jan and Merlijn, attended the meeting to present the progress made with the conservation of *Crocodylus mindorensis* in North Luzon. They were submerged for a week in the strange world of crocodile conservationists. And they can assure us that everything you ever thought about these croc people is probably true: something happens with people if they spend too long searching for crocodiles in remote swamps!!

Dominic presented the results of the on-going ecological study on the Philippine crocodile. Very little is known about this freshwater species endemic to the Philippines. Over the past years, Dutch and Filipino students have studied the behavior of the Philippine crocodile in the wild, and followed the movements of three radio tagged individuals. This has led to new insights in the ecology of the Philippine crocodile – information that is vital for the effective protection of this critically endangered species.

Jan and Merlijn presented an update about the CROC project: from a narrow focus on gathering scientific information about the species, the project has changed over the past three years in a more comprehensive approach focusing on the sustainable management of wetlands. Involving communities in the conservation of the Philippine crocodile has become one of the most important objectives of the project. They organized a workshop during the IUCN meeting to discuss how other projects in other countries mobilize local support for conservation. Many people attended the workshop and shared their experiences, and seeing how other people solve similar problems in very different circumstances is very valuable for a small conservation project like the CROC project.

Every two years the IUCN Crocodile Specialist Group gives an award to people who have made an outstanding contribution to crocodile conservation: the Castillo Cup. During the farewell dinner, the team was caught completely by surprise when the chair of the specialist group, Dr. Graham Webb, called them on stage. The IUCN Crocodile Specialists Group awarded the 2006 Castillo Cup to the CROC project! They felt a bit small amidst these outstanding scientists and conservationists who have worked their entire lives on crocodile conservation. They were very honored that their efforts in Luzon have not gone unnoticed.

Attending the IUCN crocodile specialist group meeting and receiving the Castillo Cup has been a great motivation for the project. Sometimes when it's raining and cold during night surveys and no crocodiles can be found they wonder why they are doing this all… but attending this meeting proved to them how important the CROC project is – not only for the team but for the world. They are saving the Philippine crocodile from extinction!

Extending Chelonian Research, Education and Conservation, Cambodia (2005)
The Cambodian Turtle project is conducting research on endangered turtles in unstudied areas, educating local children and adults in important conservation areas, and training government rangers to enforce wildlife laws and release confiscated turtles in suitable sites and habitats. They also run a turtle network to share turtle data and share their conservation work with partners.

In August 2006, the team conducted a training course in Tmar Don Pov commune in the Central Cardamom Protected Forest (CCPF). The course focused on environmental education and turtle conservation and was presented to the commune chief, village chief, local conservation officer, two local policemen, 38 local villagers, and 33 young students for a total of 76 trainees. This village is in close proximity to an area where they found many rare turtle and tortoise species during their 2004 project, including one endangered and four vulnerable species, such as the impressed tortoise *Manouria impressa*, giant Asian pond turtle *Heosemys granidis*, black marsh turtle *siebenrockiella crassicollis*, Asiatic softshell turtle *Amyda cartilaginea*, elongated tortoise *Indotestudo elongata*, and Asian leaf turtle *Cyclemys atripons*. The training was well received, and the team will continue working with this community and monitor turtle populations to see how well they are being conserved.

As part of our education and awareness raising work for turtle conservation, the team produced 500 turtle t-shirts in collaboration with Conservation International, the Department of Fisheries, the Forestry Administration and the Royal University of Phnom Penh. Shirts will be distributed to local communities and government rangers in important areas for turtle conservation in the forthcoming weeks. They are also preparing a poster that highlights the turtle conservation message and expect that these activities will help support conservation of Cambodian turtle species in the wild.

Calayan Rail: Conservation of an Island Endemic, Philippines (2005)
The Calayan Rail Project was conducted by Isla Biodiversity Conservation Inc. (ISLA), an environmental organization established by members of the team who discovered the Calayan Rail *Gallirallus calayanensis* in 2004. The aim of the project was to initiate a long-term program for conservation of the Calayan Rail and other wildlife and natural habitats of Calayan Island, and numerous activities have taken place to bring the group closer to that goal, including field surveys, teacher training workshops, community consultations and outreach activities.

The team carried out surveys to gather data on the abundance and distribution of the rails on Calayan Island in April, May, October and December of 2005 and in January and February of 2006. A total of 471 survey stations along or near trails throughout Calayan Island were covered. In each station, the number of rails responding to playback of the "chorus call" was recorded. The total number of rails detected was 202, plus an additional 13 off-census rail detections. Out of seven barangays in the island, rails were encountered at five, indicating a wide distribution of the species.

A workshop themed "Conservation of the Calayan Islands' Natural Heritage" was held in October 2005 to identify key communication and education activities needed to raise local conservation awareness and cooperation. Thirty-eight local leaders and government officials participated in the workshop and contributed ideas. Based on the outputs of the workshop, a training program for educators from Calayan Island was held in May 2006. The activity was jointly sponsored by the Center for Environmental Awareness and Education, ISLA, and World-wide Fund for Nature–Philippines. A total of 19 high school teachers, 33 elementary school teachers, 6 local government unit staff, 8 ISLA volunteers and 1 WWF staff member participated.

Consultation with local stakeholders has resulted in a conservation action plan specifying measures to control slash-and-burn farming, provide livelihood assistance, increase education campaigns, establish a protected area and strengthen enforcement of environmental laws. On 30 May 2006, a consolidation and action-planning workshop was held at the Calayan Municipal Hall to culminate the consultative process. Participants included representatives from different barangays, the Municipal Environment and Natural Resource Office, Agriculture Office, Planning and Development Coordinator's Office, Legislative Council, the Philippine National Police and ISLA. The Calayan municipal council passed Municipal Ordinance No. 84 prohibiting the capture, sale, possession and collection of Calayan Rail and imposes fines or imprisonment for offenders. The Calayan provincial government has subsequently approved the ordinance.

Behavioural Ecology and Conservation of Grey-Shanked Douc Langur, Vietnam (2004)
After completing the BP project on the grey-shanked douc langur in December 2004, project leader Ha Thang Long enrolled in a PhD program at Cambridge University and has continued research on the grey-shanked douc monkey in Kon Ka Kinh National Park and Kon Cha Rang Nature Reserve in Vietnam. Fieldwork began December 2005 and concludes December 2007. The research will look at the behavioural ecology of two groups of grey-shanked douc langurs in different habitats to assess the conservation status of the species in each study site.

Prior to initiating the project, team members (3 assistants, 2 local guides and 1 staff member from Kon Ka Kinh National Park) received training at the Endangered Primate Rescue Center (EPRC) in Cuc Phuong National Park. They learned surveying and data collection techniques and gained knowledge on primates in Vietnam. In February and April, field surveys were conducted in the Kon Ka Kinh National Park in 14 locations in 5 villages around the Park. Five groups of grey-shanked douc monkeys with about 60 individuals were observed. Among these groups, two were chosen to study the habituation process and for long term research, with 16 and 11 individuals respectively. The two groups are being followed 10-15 days every month to understand the habituation process.

As the result of these surveys, two important distribution zones of the langur in Kon Ka Kinh National Park were found – the Ha Ngoi stream area and Ngut Mountain area. After discussions with the Park Manager, strict controls have been put in place on the number of people entering these locations and hundreds of traps used for illegal hunting were destroyed or confiscated by park rangers.

There is little awareness and understanding of conservation issues amongst local people in the study area. In an effort to bring about greater awareness, the project contacted the Education for Nature of Vietnam (ENV) organization and convinced them to set up an education project in the region, which will take place next year. The program will involve the national park, local primary schools and the project team to increase understanding of the grey-shanked douc langur and related conservation issues.

Action Tayam Peh, Nicobar Islands, India (2004)
This industrious team has achieved all the necessary data collection on the Nicobar Flying Fox and is now back from the field to carry out data analysis and report preparation work. Though the team is now all in their respective home towns or in universities, their heart and soul is still with the people of the Nicobar Islands, with whom they all feel they share a special bond. After informal discussions with authorities, the team feels strongly that a formal and extensive conservation education program needs to be implemented in the islands in order to conservation the remaining resources. The introduction of animals from mainland India is posing a great risk to the already threatened ecosystem in the Central Nicobars, for example, recently a few horses for luggage carting have been introduced in the islands without thought to the implications of such an action. Awareness of these threats is of highest priority amongst all conservationists in the Nicobar Islands.

Population Status and Behaviour of Tonkin Snub-nosed Monkey, Vietnam (2004)
The Tonkin snub-nosed monkey (*Rhinopithecus avunculus*) is a slender-bodied, critically endangered primate endemic to northern Vietnam and one of the top 25 critically endangered primates of the world. After completing the initial BP funded project, team leader Thanh Hai Dong has continued his research on the ecology and behaviour of *Rhinopithecus avunculus* at Khau Ca Tonkin Snub-nosed Monkey Conservation Area (TCA) for the past year.

In a 1993 study, 72 animals were observed and an estimated 80 individuals in the Tat Ke Sector. In contrast, with the current study an estimated 22 animals and only 17 individuals were confirmed in the same area. Group sizes in Tat Ke varied from an average of 14.4 individuals in 1993 for both one-male and all-male units, to 5.6 individuals for one-male units in the current study. This was very likely due to intense hunting pressure. In the Khau Ca Tonkin Snub-nosed Monkey Conservation Area (TCA), so far a population of 81 individuals is confirmed.

The data for both Tat Ke and Khau Ca TCA supports the 1993 study notion that the basic social unit of the Tonkin snub-nosed monkey is a one-male unit, comprising one adult male, a number of adult females and their offspring. Band sizes at Khau Ca have been observed to range from 22 to 81 individuals. *R. avunculus* does not appear to have marked breeding season since infants were observed throughout the study. However, more infants were recorded during September and October 2005, and again in March and April 2006, coinciding with the time when fruits and flowers are abundant. Rest-huddling, terrestrial and infant caring behaviours were documented for the first time in *R. avunculus*.

During the course of the study, the research team faced numerous difficulties. The population size of *R. avunculus* in the Tat Ke Sector has proven to be smaller than originally expected. Secondly, low population densities have resulted in a low probability of encountering the monkeys. Other obstacles included the extremely difficult terrain (steep, slippery, loose rock), dense foliage, water source scarcity, heavy fog and rain, and severe hunting pressures at Tat Ke Sector, Na Hang Nature Reserve. All these factors impacted the team's daily activities and have resulted in a small sampling data set.

Nepenthes, Indonesia (2001)
Bad news for this project! In mid-June, while monitoring Nepenthes sites in West Sumatra, the project team was surprised to find one of their sites severely degraded. After receiving promises from local people to protect the site from habitat degradation, they learned that an investor came to the remote village and cleared all the vegetation from the hills that formerly had a very abundant Nepenthes population, in order to build a road. The team was very upset and tried to find the village head to get the exact explanation, but they were unsuccessful. To make matters worse, the road construction project was postponed, leaving Nepenthes a victim of poorly planned development. The team estimates that a minimum of ten years will be required to recover this site, assuming that mature plants remain. Due to changing conditions it will be difficult for the site to return to its former vegetation condition.

EURASIA

Sustainable Bat Conservation in the Caucasus Mountains (2006)
The Caucasus region holds extremely variable landscapes which provide a myriad of habitats for bats. The overall goal of this project is to maintain the actual population level of cave dwelling bats across the study region. In June, the team began their summer fieldwork in Georgia and Armenia. After arranging visas, permits and equipment, the Polish-Romanian team started their journey through Bulgaria and Turkey to Tbilisi. A bat detector training workshop was held in Borjomi Kharagauli National Park, organized by the Georgian team leader, Lloseb Natradze, and his colleagues. Fourteen participants from 6 countries took part in the workshop, including past BPCP winner Lena Godlewska (Bat Census in Crimean Caves, 2004).

Following the bat detector workshop, team members spent 10 days visiting 4 regions in Central and South Georgia, and 14 days visiting important biogeographical areas in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. Team members and volunteers shared their knowledge with one another on field methods, from mist netting, bat handling, counting of colonies and taking standard measurements. All together they visited 37 underground grottos, caves, mine galleries and ruins, and identified 20 bat species (1 data deficient and 5 vulnerable species according to IUCN).

Some of the highlights of the summer fieldwork include the first summer records of *Myotis sevanicus* (DD) and the first proof of its breeding in Armenia. *Rhinolophus blasii* (LR:nt), the most rare and vulnerable horseshoe bat in Europe, was found in Georgia – a new species for the country. They caught 7 male individuals in two different caves in central and western Georgia. These records extend the distribution area of this species to the north and confirm its occurrence in the southern slopes of the High Caucasus Mountains. Finally, *Eptesicus nilsonii* (LR:lc), a new bat species for Georgia, was recorded. It was previously considered extinct as the only record is 80 years old.

The local people we encountered were very hospitable and curious, which made awareness-raising with both children and adults much simpler. Public awareness activities are ongoing in both countries (via leaflets and public presentations). The team is currently developing the schedule for winter fieldwork and additional laboratory analyses will take place in the near future with samples (skin and sound) collected during the fieldwork to establish the presence of possible new or rare species in the Caucasus bat fauna.

Supporting Conservation of the West Caucasian Tur (*Capra caucasica*), Georgia (2006)
The West Caucasian Tur is one of the most endangered and highly endemic species in the Caucasus. A lack of up-to-date data about the population status of this species has made it impossible to carry out conservation activities in the study area. This team hopes to resolve this problem! Two months have past since the project began and they are well underway. After completing a literature survey, they prepared an educational leaflet on the West Caucasian Tur, which includes a physical description of tur, behavioral aspects, food habits, threats, conservational status, hunting traditions and underlines the uniqueness and significance of the West Caucasian tur for tourism development in Svaneti. They had several meetings with advisor, Dr. Zurab Gurielidze, who helped them design an open-ended questionnaire about local attitudes toward the species, poaching, habitat destruction and other significant issues.

The project implementation phase began with the team's first expedition to Svaneti (June 24 through July 8). The aim of this trip was to meet local communities, distribute educational leaflets and to interview mainly well-known hunters using the questionnaires. The team wanted to cover the district of Mestia, the administrative centre of Svaneti province, and its villages. They were pleasantly surprised by the frankness and eagerness of the 15 hunters interviewed to provide them with information. Most of them also mentioned that they understand the need to create a protected area and are willing to do what they can to influence decision makers, because they too want the tur to reach its old status "when it was even necessary to control their number by hunting."

The team hopes that the information gathered will be enough to identify *Capra caucasica* "hotspots" or areas where they are found and hunted. They are in the process of analyzing data and already planning the next expedition to Svaneti. They are also working on a field form to record current threats and to carry out a threats and habitat assessment for *Capra caucasica* "hotspots" using habitat suitability analysis. The form will incorporate the major threat types outlined in 2000 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. They are going to use several surveys to assess the approximate number of tur populations in Georgia.

Developing Conservation Measures for Darevsky's Viper, Armenia (2005)
In spring 2006, the team continued their field research on the critically endangered Darevsky's Viper on the northwestern slopes of the Javakheti Ridge of Armenia. Team members were accompanied by several herpetologists from the US and Canada, a scientific researcher from the Zoological Institute in Russia, and a specialist from Tula zooekzotarium, K.Shiryaev. They were delighted to be able to discover a new site for Darevsky's Viper. The new habitat is located on the border with Georgia in the Ashotsk region of Saragyux village, approximately 12km from the site where this species was first found. They counted up to 7-8 individuals per 0.5 hectare, which is quite high. In total, they captured, marked and released 19 individuals of Viper from this site.

Increasing people's knowledge about Darevsky's Viper is one of the important things to do to make the conservation of this species more successful. With this in mind, the team organised a meeting with local people and heads of village communities, where they explained the work they are doing to conserve this species and their hope to create a new protected area. They provided posters, booklets and calendars about the viper.

Conservation of Globally Threatened Bird Species, Azerbaijan (2004)
After finalizing the 2004 project conserving globally threatened bird species in Azerbaijan, project leader Shahin Isayev secured a position with the Azerbaijan Ornithological Society as the IBA National Network Development Coordinator. He is currently working on establishing a network in Azerbaijan; the first stage of which was to select the 15 top priority IBAs. The project will conclude in 2008 and they have already identified managers for those sites and have held several trainings, developed publications and participated in conferences. In June, the Society held a very successful four-day training (2 in the classroom and 2 in the field) for young conservationists in Azerbaijan, thanks to support from a BPCP Alumni grant. The training covered topics from general conservation, to bird surveying, field techniques and creating a network of birdwatchers. There were 52 participants, including students from 3 different universities.

LATIN AMERICA / CARIBBEAN

An Ecological Study of the Bloody Bay Poison Frog, Trinidad & Tobago (2006)
Mannophryne olmonae is a poorly studied frog species endemic to Tobago, listed as Critically Endangered by IUCN. This team is working to collect further data on this species and raise awareness to conserve frogs and their habitats in the region. Presence and density surveys on all six study rivers are well underway, and currently assessments on three rivers are complete, and the presence of *Mannophryne olmonae* has been confirmed at five of the six rivers. A number of smaller rivers along northern Tobago not previously outlined in the project proposal were also surveyed for *M. olmonae*. The chytrid survey also continues successfully; we have 100 swabs representing the entire study area. In addition to this, field observations continue on the adult and tadpole populations, habitat requirements, potential threats and general health.

In order to assist with the volume and intensity of the fieldwork, coupled with training sessions and a community conservation outreach programme, a volunteer programme was instituted in June and has been invaluable to the team's progress to date. Since then they have had 16 volunteers, many of whom have returned or continue to show interest in returning to work with them. Volunteers have included teachers and students, including one past BPCP award winner!

Public workshops for children and teenagers have begun and have been greeted with enthusiasm. During August, the team was invited to participate in two of Environment Tobago's summer camps. With the beginning of the new school semester, we hope to continue with these workshops for children and teenagers and conduct an awareness and involvement campaign with older members of the community.

It is hoped that the field-work aspect of this study will be completed by the end of September, although follow up studies are being considered. Workshops and meetings and other educational aspects of the project will be organised and presented over the next month. While the project has been time-consuming, stressful and tiring, it has also been encouraging, satisfying and worthwhile to all members.

Conservation Status of Newly Rediscovered Southern Horned Curassow, Peru (2006)
The team set out to conduct field studies to locate and estimate the size of the surviving Peruvian Southern Horned Curassow population and determine its conservation requirements and vulnerability to human encroachment. Part of the project includes an assessment of the Sira Mountains of central Peru to gather data on other threatened bird, mammal and plant species and complete the first botanical description of the

curassow's habitat. The team is working with El Sira Communal Reserve and INRENA (the protected areas authority) to investigate the feasibility of creating a private reserve to protect curassow habitat, which is outside the area protected by the main reserve.

The Sira Mountains, located in central Peru, are isolated from the Andes and hold many endemic plant, animal and insect species. This area is an Endemic Bird Area, and therefore has a high global conservation priority. It belongs to the Communal Reserve of Sira but lacks protection due to insufficient enforcement, and there are no laws that protect all flora and fauna in the area.

Fieldwork was conducted in July and August. The team visited two sites in the Sira Mountains – the first site located near the indigenous community Golondrina and the second located near the indigenous community Quimpichari. Systematic inventories of birds present at each site were conducted using visual and audio identification. They registered a total of 154 species of birds between altitudes of 700 and 1500 at the two sites, of which 25 are new records for Sira Mountains.

Mammal surveys focused on collecting audio and visual data as the team walked all trails. This technique was used to confirm mammal species present in the area, a particularly useful way to detect arboreal species, whose ecology means that finding tracks is unlikely. They observed a large number of mammals during fieldwork, including 19 terrestrial and arboreal mammals, 12 at Golondrina and 14 at Quimpichari. Four transects were set up between altitudes of 900 to 1200m at Golondrina and between 900 to 1500m at Quimpichari for botanical surveys. They focused on places where the curassow has been seen and selected locations with different altitudes to gather variations in vegetation. A total of 260 plant samples were collected at Golondrina and 389 at Quimpichari, including herbaceous plants, bushes, epiphytes, ferns, lianas and flowering or fruiting tree species.

Assessment of Seabird Bycatch in Peruvian Artisanal Fisheries, Peru (2005)

In July, Pro Delphinus submitted a final report for their project "Assessment of seabird bycatch in Peruvian artisanal fisheries." This research provides the first onboard observer based estimate of seabird bycatch in Peruvian artisanal fisheries. Results make clear that bycatch of seabirds occurs in both the longline and gillnet fleets. Onboard observers were placed on fishing vessels in 3 ports and monitored the take of seabirds and other protected marine fauna. From May 2005 to April 2006 the team surveyed a total of 72 artisanal fishing trips. Seabird bycatch reported on these trips included black-browed albatrosses, guanay cormorants, Humboldt penguins, sooty shearwaters and unidentified petrels. They also documented the targeted take of waved albatrosses for the purpose of human consumption. The capture of all these species is of concern because they are listed as having threatened or depleted populations.

Another objective of the project was to increase seabird conservation awareness in fishing communities through lectures and workshops and to encourage local researchers, through training and support, to develop conservation studies of endangered marine fauna. To this end, a total of 21 workshops were held during the study period. This included the attendance of approximately 195 university students and local officials and 210 fishermen. Education and outreach efforts were a core part of this project and are vital to the success and longevity of this program and of future conservation efforts in Peru. Workshops with students, local officials and fishermen proved an effective means of raising awareness, distributing educational materials, and developing relationships with port communities throughout the country.

To continue advancing seabird conservation in Peru the team recommends continuing and expanding onboard observer and seabird conservation workshops throughout the country. These efforts, along with the implementation of a National Plan of Action for Seabirds would go

a long way toward understanding seabird-fishery interactions and promoting the conservation of these species. The team also wants to take this opportunity to thank BP and their partner NGOs and staff for their generous support. While this particular project may have ended, Pro Delphinus hopes and intends to continue working vigorously to promote seabird conservation in Peru. For more information on this and other Pro Delphinus projects please visit their website at www.prodelphinus.org.

Conservation of the Araripe Manakin, Brazil (2004)
The team has concluded one important step toward the long-term conservation of this critically endangered bird from north-east Brazil with the publication of the "Conservation Plan for the Araripe Manakin." After four years of systematic research to determine the Manakin's population status, remaining habitat, and important new findings related to its reproductive biology and main threats, the results were finally presented to protected area managers and stakeholders to produce a strategic plan to avoid the extinction of the Araripe Manakin.

The final version of the conservation plan was completed in August and the team is now in the process of disseminating the information amongst local communities and federal environmental authorities. The team has participated in a radio interview in the city of Crato, and managed to release a full page story in the largest newspaper in the State of Ceará. A television interview is scheduled for late September, to be aired statewide, to present the Conservation Plan and its implications for the Araripe region.

As part of a long-term campaign to inform local communities and involve them in the conservation of resources in the Araripe region, the team has been promoting the Araripe Manakin as a symbol for the conservation of biodiversity and water resources. Several media outlets have helped to spread this message, for example, through photographic exhibitions of local biodiversity, booklets about water issues and the relationship with conservation of moist forests, participation in festivals and cultural fairs, a documentary about the research being conducted and the expected outcomes, and a DVD with sounds and images of Araripe birds.

In May 2006, the Araripe National Forest, one of the protected areas in the region that has great influence in the maintenance of Manakin habitat, celebrated 60 years. As part of the ceremony, the managers (also our partners in the building of the Conservation Plan) decided to adopt the Araripe Manakin as its main symbol, producing a new logo that includes the Manakin and launching, together with the postal services, a nationwide commemorative stamp with a picture of the Manakin. For this event, the team also launched a DVD about bird diversity in the Araripe, with the presence of the Minister of the Environment, the director of the Brazilian federal environmental agency IBAMA and several other local authorities and stakeholders.

Threatened Birds of Bolivia / Proyecto Aves Amenazadas de Bolivia (2004)
The last year has been a busy and successful one for the conservation of Bolivia's threatened bird species. It started with a conservation funding workshop for young Bolivian biologists that aimed to provide training in how to successfully apply for international funds to start or develop conservation projects. The course attracted more than five times as many applicants than was hoped for and after a quick search for a much larger venue, the team were able to provide training for 55 biologists and conservationists from all over Bolivia and even some from beyond.

Since the course, several delegates have had notable success in gaining funding to start their own conservation projects, including a successful application to the BP Conservation Programme. The other training and capacity building work of the project is also producing notable successes. The National Bird Conservation Centre built at the start of the project with BPCP funding now provides support facilities for 15 Bolivian and 1 Peruvian bird conservation project. The Conservation Training Initiative is also running well with 15 biologists having gained practical field experience while helping 5 Armonia (the BirdLife partner in Bolivia) bird conservation projects.

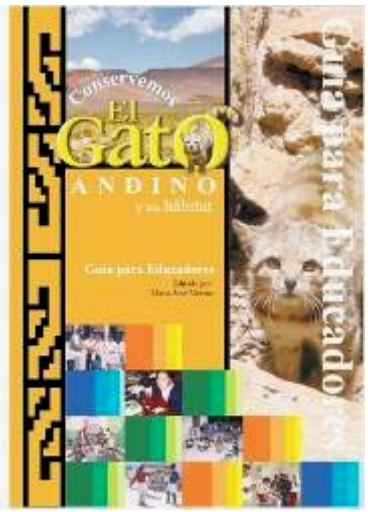
The threatened bird conservation sub-projects also continue strongly. Rodrigo Soria has finished his part of the project on the Endangered Southern Horned Curassow *Pauxi unicornis*, increasing the number of known sites for the species by more than 100%, organising a successful environmental education programme and setting up a monitoring system for the species with two national parks. Rodrigo has now started a PhD in Germany using Armonia´s bird sightings database to investigate the distribution of Bolivia's bird diversity.

The Important Bird Area inventory programme, designed to carryout biodiversity inventories in existing and potential IBA sites throughout the country, has also been successfully completed. Ross MacLeod, Aidan Maccormick, Rodrio, Victor Garcia & Ebert Roja inventoried a total of 61 sites for 2 years recording more than 900 bird species, including many of Bolivia's endemic and threatened birds. The surveys included inventories of 5 areas in Beni Department within the presumed range of the Critically Endangered Blue-throated Macaw *Ara glaucogularis,* but unfortunately the species only survives at one site.

The Royal Cinclodes & Polylepis Forest Conservation part of the project run by Isabel Gómez continues to go from strength to strength. This sub-project works in Bolivia's High Andes Endemic Bird Area which is the country's most threatened ecosystem with a critical conservation priority and is home to the critically endangered Royal Cinclodes, *Cinclodes aricomae*, the endangered Ash-breasted Tit-Tyrant, *Anairetes alpinus,* plus a distinctive avifauna which includes eight other restricted-range species. Currently Isabel´s team are working on an in-depth study of the ecological and conservation requirements of the Royal Cinclodes and Ash-breasted Tit-Tyrant and on surveying potential new sights for these species in the Cordillera Tres Cruces. In tandem the team is investigating the feasibility of cultivating endemic *Polylepis* tree species with the aim of establishing a long term *Polylepis* reforestation program.

Community Participation for Long-term Conservation of the Andean Cat, Argentina (2003)

Though their participation in conservation plans is vital, local communities are ill-equiped with the necessary knowledge to face the challenge of conserving one of the world's most endangered felids. This project launched the *EduGat Program* to involve local communities in the conservation of the Andean cat in Argentina through a change in attitudes, an increase in ecological understanding and a search for sustainable, conservation-friendly uses of local resources.



EduGat recently organized a workshop to develop a global education strategy for the conservation of the Andean cat and its habitat with educators from all range countries of this felid. The strategy is based on a Guide for Educators that, after being tested on local students and evaluated by their teachers, is about to be printed. In a second workshop in Argentina, *EduGat* has created a network of motivated local teachers who will act as multipliers of our activities, covering a total of 10 schools and 320 school kids. *EduGat* is now involved in a complete evaluation process to provide feedback to improve the next project phase.

Incidental Capture of Seabirds, Argentina (2003)

In the past nine months, the team completed 11 fishing days with 26 hauls recorded. The observations were made on board in vessels at Puerto Quequén, Buenos Aires Province. Relative abundance of seabirds associated with fishing operations and events of incidental capture were recorded. Since the beginning of the project the team has identified 18 species of seabirds, 10 of them belonging to Procellariiformes order, 7 to Charadriiformes and 1 to Sphenisciformes. They recorded the incidental capture of two species, the Great Shearwater *Puffinus gravis* and the Magellanic Penguin *Spheniscus magellanicus*. The entanglements of Great Shearwater occur during net extraction as the shearwaters are diving, while the captures of Magellanic Penguin occur during trawling.

The team has also been conducting fieldwork to estimate the number of live shorebirds and seabirds along 5 kilometres of coast line near Puerto Quequén. Dead shorebirds, seabirds and marine mammals have also been recorded. This work is conducted every 15 days, and at least 24 transects will be taken over the

course of one year. More than 15 species of shorebirds and seabirds have been recorded, as well as several dead species on the beach.

At the 20th Annual SCB Meeting in July, the team presented a poster with their latest results on seabird interactions with coastal fishing vessels in Puerto Quequén. They also organized an education course in May, the third of its kind, describing the methodology, ecology and historical aspects of this project, including topics such as over-fishing, kinds of gear used, composition of captures, incidental capture of seabirds, sea turtles and marine mammals, the regulatory framework and characteristics of fishing families. It was directed toward teachers of all areas, museum guides, park rangers and public in general. The course was supported by the Municipality of Necochea with 30 participants.

A Unique Bird Habitat, Southeastern Cuba (2005)
The main goals of this project are to rediscover the Cuban kite and the Cuban parauque; to estimate the population size and distribution of the Cuban sparrow, Gundlach's hawk, the bee hummingbird, and the Cuban gnatcatcher in southeastern Cuba; and to improve the protected areas network. The team's first expedition took place in July at Baitiquiri, in the southern Guantanamo province of Cuba. Five team members participated and focused their studies on three endemic species, all common to xerophytic vegetation. An inventory was conducted in the early mornings with 25 transects each 2 km long. Mist nets were used to gather information on morphology and weight, and the team used tape recorders to capture bird calls. Observation points were selected to watch raptors, and they will record their presence with a GPS to accurately map the distribution of the rarest birds in Cuba.

In the localities of Tortuguillas Sierra de Baitiquiri and Bate-Bate, the team was able to record the Cuban Gnatcatcher, Cuban Grassquit and Cuban Sparrow. In addition to these, 9 other bird species were found at Tortuguillas, 12 other species at Sierra de Baitiquiri, and 8 other species at Bate-Bate. 20 species of birds in total were detected during the counts. A description of the plumage pattern and weight was taken on 37 individuals of four species. The only nocturnal bird detected was the Antillean Nighthawk, with a total of 32 recorded.

Alumni: Where Are They Now?

Sharing a Recipe for Success in Southern Chile with Francisco Viddi

Wearing his tie-dyed shirt stenciled with marine mammals, Francisco "Chico" Viddi was easy to spot in a crowd at the Society for Conservation Biology meeting in San Jose, California. Prepared with a talk and a poster on the conservation of dolphins in Chile, Chico demonstrates that he is on his way to becoming a leader in the field of conservation. The 2002 BPCP team, for which Chico was the project leader, perfected the recipe for an award-winning project by combining high-priority conservation research with raising awareness in government and local industries, and adding a dash of community environmental education to aid efforts for marine mammal conservation in southern Chile.

During the course of their research, the team was successful in identifying and studying two dolphin species in the area: the Chilean dolphin and Peale's dolphin. The Chilean dolphin is endemic to the coast of Chile, while Peale's dolphin is only found in Argentinean and Chilean waters. Both are coastal species, inhabiting sheltered bays, channels and fjords. The team's research has shown the importance of certain habitat features for these species and identified critical areas for mother-calf pairs. As a result, the team has proposed a marine protected area, which they outlined in a book co-authored by Chico. Published earlier this

year, Conservación Marina en el Sur de Chile (Marine Conservation in Southern Chile) includes data that Chico and his team collected in 2002. "All of these data and the information from the BP project are included where we mention the importance of the area for conservation of not only just marine mammals but other flora and fauna, and the importance of the park for the local communities for ecotourism."

Because there has been a recent interest in establishing marine protected areas in Chile, a national newspaper contacted Chico's team asking about the species found in the fjords in southern Chile. When asked how the newspaper knew about his project, Chico replied, "They saw the webpage of the NGO we set up." Yet another accomplishment of the team, The Centro Ballena Azul (The Blue Whale Centre) was granted non-profit status and was officially established as an NGO in 2002 (http://www.ballenazul.org/).

The team also increased community awareness by focusing on schoolchildren in rural isolated fishing villages. "The fishermen were difficult to approach because they were always working and because we were seen as outsiders, coming from the university in the city." But by giving talks on general marine ecology, workshops on marine mammals and then taking the children out to see dolphins and sea lions, the team indirectly educated the fishermen. "It was really cool to teach the children and then they would go home and tell their parents about what they learned at school. Then the parents would approach us and say thank you for what you taught our kids, come on and have a mate, which is a national Argentinean drink."

They were then able to talk to the parents, showing them not only how to distinguish dolphins from fish, but also the differences between species of dolphin. Chico admits that the team was probably learning more from the fishermen than the other way around because the fishermen could then give them information on locations, which contributed greatly to the creation of distribution maps. "We would show them a picture and they would tell us they saw that species of dolphin two years ago in huge groups."

But the data that Chico and his colleagues have collected are not only contributing to the baseline knowledge of marine species. The research is helping to redefine the environmental policies surrounding salmon farming, which is quickly spreading into bays and fjords in southern Chile. Aquaculture - salmon farming in particular - has become the second most important industry in Chile, and studies have shown that it is detrimental not only to marine mammals, but the entire marine environment. "Chilean salmon is cheaper than that of countries such as the US or Norway because in Chile there is poor environmental policy. The environmental cost is very cheap because the industries don't invest that much money to avoid pollution." But after an article appeared in a local newspaper about the potential impacts of salmon farming on small cetaceans using the fjords, the industry became concerned. "The huge association of salmon farming called us to the university to ask about the impacts. They are getting interested in this because they don't want to have a bad image next to their competition."

But despite the successes of writing a book on marine conservation, proposing a marine protected area to the Chilean government, establishing an NGO for marine science and conservation, educating local fishermen, and positively affecting the environmental policies of salmon farming in Chile, he bluntly states, "There is still so much to do." Fortunately for the future of marine mammal conservation, Chico is currently enrolled in a Ph.D. program at the University of Macquarie, Australia to continue studying the ecology of small cetaceans in southern Chile. We wish Chico the best of luck in his studies and are proud to claim him as an alumnus of the BP Conservation Programme.

Final Reports Received

For a copy of the full report of this recently concluded project, send an email request to bp-conservation-programme@birdlife.org or telephone +44 (0) 1223.277.318.

- Assessment of Seabird Bycatch in Peruvian Artisanal Fisheries, Peru (2005)
- Ecology, Distribution, Status and Protection of Three Congolese Fruit Bats, DRC (2005)
- Evaluation of Present Distribution and Condition of Manatee in the Cuanza River, Angola (2005)

Project Websites

Check out project websites for updated news and images from award winning teams in the field:

- Bat Census in Crimean Caves, Ukraine (*2004*)
- Conservation Comoros, Comoros Islands (*2005*)
- CROC Project, Philippines (2002)
- Dolphin Conservation, Chile *(2002)*
- Giant Otter Conservation, Bolivia (*2003*)
- Iranian Cheetah, Iran (*2006*)
- Katala Quest, Philippines (*2003*)
- Mpingo Conservation Project, Tanzania *(2004)*
- Project Hapalopsittaca, Colombia *(2002)*
- Project Karumbé, Uruguay *(2001)*
- Project Knuckles, Sri Lanka (2005)
- Sea Turtle Research and Conservation, Venezuela (*1999*)
- Assessment of Seabird Bycatch, Peru, (*2003*)
- Tandroy Conservation Trust, Madagascar *(2003)*