

Project Update: April 2014

Observations

We have made observations on the Amazon River close to the city of Iquitos with seven outings in April 2014 (4th, 11th, 12th, 19th, 20th, 26th, and 27th) - a total of only 57 river dolphins were counted, 29 pink dolphins *Inia geoffrensis* and 28 grey dolphins *Sotalia fluviatilis*. On 5th April we had to cancel at last minute due to a big storm in the Region. A total of 14 different volunteers have participated with an average of five per outing. During our weekly meetings we have decided to make outings on Saturday and Sunday (instead of Friday) as it's easier for the volunteers who are mainly students. We do not understand yet why there is such a difference in numbers with last months but the analysis part is for later when we will have more data.



Education

We have organised eight presentations in three primary schools (Jerusalem, Betania and Remanente de Dios), with levels 4, 5 and 6. A total of 127 children have received a diploma in April 2014. On suggestion of a volunteer we have introduced during the first presentation a period for the children to ask topics about river dolphins and we receive a lot of questions, from the anatomy to the protection aspect or the legends and local stories and it really proves that these species are unknown and needs more communication efforts. All questions are noted and kept in a file for future use. We have also included photos of dead dolphins used as bait in Brazil (from and with authorisation of Verónica Iriarte) and the impact is obvious on the young mentality! Also our volunteers have created a giant puzzle with both species of river dolphins that we will use in May during the education programme.

Meetings

Weekly meetings are ongoing every Monday (7th, 14th and 28th April 2014) but the one on 21st April had to be postponed to Wednesday 23rd because of a big storm in the Region. An average of 10 volunteers have participated. On 28th April the meeting was shorter in order to meet Fernando Trujillo (Omacha Foundation, Colombia) and Enzo Aliaga-Rossel (Bolivia) who were in town.

Conferences

On Saturday 26th April 2014 at 7:30pm, Daniel Dietz (Spain), Mountain Guide "La Antártida, naturaleza salvaje del septimo continente - ¿Tan diferente de nuestra cuenca amazónica?" With a total of 23 participants due to a power cut at the time



of the conference. These bad events are regular in Iquitos but, after discussion with Daniel, we have decided that postponing the presentation was not a good solution so we have made the presentation on the screen of the laptop. Daniel has received a t-shirt as the small plates were not really a success and we have transferred the small budget for the present to the drinks and snacks after event.

Next conference planned end of May 2014 with Javier Velasquez (Peru) to talk about the Manatees Rescue Center (close to Iquitos) where also river dolphins are sometimes rescued and liberated. Cédric was invited to the liberation of four manatees in a local Reserve on 22nd April 2014.

T-shirts

We have our new t-shirts - we had a very good price and had the opportunity to make more than budgeted but unfortunately the quality is not so good, the Solinia logo (pink part) is running in the wash. The manufacturer is looking for a solution but we are afraid there is no possibility to correct this default. It's not the first time we have such problem in Iquitos and it's very difficult to manage. Anyway ironing before washing gives a better result. Also the WDC logo (also current sponsor like Rufford and CSI) became MDC - what a shame!



Others

Solinia has actively participated to the seminar related to the finalisation of the Action Plan for the conservation and protection of river dolphins and manatees in Peru (28th -30th April 2014). This was an organisation of the regional and national government and Solinia was invited as collaborator to actively participate to the different activities. Our logo was included in the poster. The first day Cédric has made a 30 minute presentation about the conservation work of Solinia. Also two Solinia volunteers were part of the seminar and very active during the second day, presenting results of their respective working groups. Rufford Foundation had always a good place as we have used the newly made t-shirts with the Rufford logo, also during the field trip the third day with observation of river dolphins in their habitat at the confluence of the Marañon and Ucayali Rivers, origin of the Amazon River. Fundamazonia, a local association leaded by an Englishman Dr Richard Bodmer with



whom we have already collaborated, has invited some volunteers to be part of a 6-week expedition in the Pacaya-Samiria Reserve in June/July 2014, we will discuss the details next Monday during our weekly meeting.

Fernando and Enzo

Fernando Trujillo (Omacha Foundation, Colombia) and Enzo Aliaga-Rossel (Bolivia) were two important actors during the

seminar and we had time to meet, to brainstorm and to exchange ideas. They have accepted to meet the Solinia volunteers on 28th April 2014 and during more than one hour they have answered to the various questions with patience and kindness, at the end they have received a new t-shirt as well as Eliana the press attaché of the Omacha Foundation. We will develop collaborations in the near future, Fernando is really motivated to organise monitoring expeditions in Peru (estimation of the population of river dolphins) and other activities (training of volunteers, etc.), and for sure Solinia will be included in the organisation. With Enzo we have talked about a possibility to make a common booklet for children which is missing for our respective projects. This is a new network which is starting and Solinia is proud and happy to be part of it.

Press

Solinia was twice in the press with a regional newspaper (*La Region*). Also an interview of Cédric and the volunteer Gissela was made by a local television. A national newspaper (*La Republica*) has contacted Cédric from Lima to make an article about our work.