

Project Update: May 2014

Observations

We have made observations on the Amazon River close to the city of Iquitos with eight outings in May 2014 (3rd, 4th, 10th, 11th, 17th, 18th, 24th and 28th); a total of 85 river dolphins were counted, 39 pink dolphins *Inia geoffrensis* and 46 grey dolphins *Sotalia fluviatilis*. A total of 18 different volunteers have participated with an average of five per outing. The water level of the Amazon River is now decreasing and we should see more pink river dolphins as they will leave the forest to feed in the rivers. The Amazon is a very dynamic river – up to October the level can decrease 13 m!

On 5th May 2014 Solinia denounced the use of dynamite by fishermen on the Nanay River close to the city of Iquitos. An article was published in the regional daily press and an official letter was sent to the competent authority. Regular outings are made by the environment police to avoid this illegal and dangerous practice of fishing.

Education

A very good month! We have organised 13 presentations in three primary schools (Metodo Peruano, Divino Maestro and Francisco Bolognesi), with levels 4, 5 and 6 but also a collaboration with the CREA (Amazon Rescue Centre) in their centre with observation of the rescued manatees. A total of 387 children received a diploma in May 2014. The children have always a lot of questions about river dolphins, especially about the threats. We are now also using the giant puzzle (with both species of river dolphins) and it's a great success, we would like to make two more in the future to make a kind of competition between groups of children, taking the time to resolve it. On 14th June 2014, on the initiative of Solinia and in collaboration with the CREA, we will organise an event with children in a local clinic "Hogar Clinica San Juan de Dios".

Meetings

During the first meeting of the month (5th) and taking into account availability of all active volunteers, we decided to organise weekly meetings every Thursday (15th and 22nd). Due to intensive activities in the last week we have organised anyway the meeting on 26th May. An average of 12 volunteers have participated to the meetings. We had additional meetings to prepare the ExpoLORETO (see further).

Conferences

On 26th April 2014, Javier Velasquez Varela, (Peru), Director of the CREA Amazon Rescue Centre, presented "Rescate, rehabilitación y liberación de mamíferos acuáticos en la Región Loreto", with a total of 24 participants, mainly volunteers of Solinia and CREA. Javier has received a t-shirt and we organised a nice after-event with free alcohol drinks and snacks. No idea yet for the next conference.

T-shirts

The manufacturer has corrected the defects and MDC is now correctly WDC. But it's not perfect as there are still problems with the pink colour when washing and four t-shirts were lost. It's the last time we will use this provider.

Others

Solinia has actively participated to the ExpoLORETO, a 4-day trade fair in Iquitos from 29th May to 1st June 2014. With the volunteers we have organised an expo of photos with river dolphins, threats and Solinia activities. Also we have prepared a model (maquette) to explain how we are doing the observations. With volunteers we have distributed more than 700 folders (trptychs) and the visitors were especially impressed by two photos: river dolphins used as bait by the fishermen and a beach full of garbage (plastics, etc.) near Iquitos. We have organised activities with the children (origami,

giant puzzle, drawings). The entry fee was S/. 400 (+/- £ 86) and we have tried to sell t-shirts to cover the cost but only one was sold (S/. 30). The last day we have bought a birthday cake that we have eaten with the volunteers and children for the 2 years of Solinia!

Volunteers

Recently three volunteers have "resigned" to join a temporary mission (wildlife monitoring) in other parts of Peru with a big company paying big salaries. It's of course good for their experience but not as good for Solinia as they were the most active volunteers, including my only assistant Gissela. Also I know that some others have applied for a job in different companies and they will have less time to help. Even if they are motivated by the causes around the river dolphins, they have to win money and I understand them! Last week I have made alone an interactive conference to 30 children during 2 hours in a primary school and it's really not easy. Of course I can try to find new volunteers but the education program needs people with practical experience and changing regularly is not a good option. This problem is not easy to deal with.





