

Project Update: March 2005

The radio tracking research began the 3rd May by setting up the soft catch traps. An effort of 1291 traps/night was complete and nine marine otters were trap. From which 6 complete a successful radio tracking period of more than three month. The number of radio fixes will allow us to analyse the data separating those months with human presence from those without human presence. The data from the radio tracking is currently under analysis by the students (4) that participate in the research.

Furthermore, the capture and implantation of radio transmitters inside the otter abdominal cavity give the opportunity to support a fifth student (Cludio Soto) for his degree thesis to obtain the title of Veterinary Surgeon. The thesis was title “ Anaesthesia and chemical immobilization protocol evaluation using ketamine and metomidine in marine otters *Lontra felina* (Molina 1782) and southern river otters *Lontra provocax* (Thomas 1908) and its reversal by atipamezole” Initial effect time, latency time and recovery time were recorded. Aesthetic parameters and physiologic parameters were monitored at 5-min intervals for 30 min. Aesthetic induction was rapid and smooth with a successful antagonism by atipamezole. Decrease of the temperature reached 36.6°C (DS+1.4). Relative oxihemoglobin saturation was about 89% (DS+ 9), developing a mid hypertensive state, with a mean arterial blood pressure value of 111 mm/Hg (DS+30).

The aesthetic quality was classified as excellent, based on the aesthetic parameters. Currently a manuscript for an International Veterinary Journal is being prepared. Claudio Soto received the maximum score for his thesis and dissertation. The other four students are now in the stage of analysis their results and writing their thesis. A sixth student take over the research this year with the objective of extrapolate the radio tracking results to assess the reasons of the patchy distribution of marine otter populations along the region.