Project Update: August 2012

Note: This report comprise the first six months of my project.

Until now, we have made three training workshops, Ecological Reserve Varahicacos Natural Reserve, Matanzas province (23-28 February; Fig.1), Siboney-Juticí Natural Reserve, Santiago de Cuba province (March 27 to 6 April, Fig. 2) and Sierra del Rosario Biosphere Reserve, Pinar del Rio province (12 -17 May, Fig. 3). A workshop was suspended because of flooding and bad conditions of climate during June in the Natural Reserve Caguanes (Santi Spiritus province); this activity will be realized in September. Although activities in Varahicacos and Sierra del Rosario were not scheduled in our project, these were included due to representing important area for the Cuban bats and the low costs of these actions. In Varahicacos we realized a training to local speleologists and begun a monitoring of bats populations (Fig. 4) that inhabit Cueva Ambrosio. This cave has extensive use by tourists and our main objective is to evaluate this impact on their bats populations. In these three workshops 102 peoples have participated, including: foresters, teachers of local schools, students, speleologists, conservation workers, biologists and stakeholders. At these workshops were delivered didactic materials and all-comers learned many aspect of the natural history of bats, to identify bat species, and capture and monitoring techniques. The results of Siboney's workshop were published in the Bulletin of the Latin American Network for Bat Conservation, Vol 3(1): 15-17, 2012 (www.relcomlatinoamerica.net).

During this period, we have carried out 25 days of field work (March, May and June) at Sierra del Rosario Biosphere Reserve. We are monitoring the bat populations in secondary growth forests and a relatively primary evergreen forest. We are capturing bats with mist nets set from the ground to a height of 2.5 m and with double-frame harp traps, and making acoustic surveys using a remote monitory station composed of one Anabat II detector and a zero crossing analysis interface module. So far we have captured and marked 89 individuals of eight species. Fecal samples have been collected for identification of seeds that should be used in future experiments of germination. Four biology students have participated in these fieldworks. During this period we have take photos (e.g. Fig. 5) in several localities of Cuba that could be used in the educational talks and the illustrated field guide of Cuban bats.

Fig. 1. During the training at Varahicacos Reserve. © Raimundo López.

Fig. 2. During the training workshop at Siboney Reserve. © Eduardo Reyes.

Fig. 2. During the workshop at Sierra del Rosario Reserve. © Gustavo Blanco.

Fig. 4. Two marked Jamaican Fruit bats (*Artibeus jamaicensis*) from Cueva Ambrosio. February 26, 2012. © Carlos A. Mancina.

Fig. 5. Leach`s single leaf bats (*Monophyllus redmani*) feeding on flowers at the Siboney Reserve. March 30, 2012. © Carlos A. Mancina.