

## Project Update: September 2017

July 2017

As soon as we were notified about the Rufford grant, we started with logistics on July 13th and arranged a meeting to participate in the local radio programme "Conciencia" where the main participants are children, the intention of this participation, was to make the project known to the community, children and the general public; in this programme we talked about turtle conservation, the situation of the turtles in Baja California Sur, our project and how Rufford is supporting us to carry it out.



Left Local radio program. Right: In the field, we build our nets to start working.



Subsequently, we met with some local authorities to present the project and coordinate efforts to carry out the fieldwork.

The week of July 17th-22nd, we had our first field trip where we captured five *Chelonia mydas*, this turtles were assessed for health status and we collected the samples; during the next week, we started the analysis of the samples in the laboratory.



*Caretta caretta*

During our second fieldwork the week of August 1st to 5th, we captured 10 loggerhead turtles (*Caretta caretta*) that were evaluated for health status and collected samples for laboratory analysis; later in the third field trip, the week of 13th to 18th August we captured 10 *Chelonia mydas*, that were evaluated for health and samples were collected. During this month, we obtained our first remarkable result finding a lesion that when evaluated by histopathology in the laboratory, showed characteristics of a disease caused by viral particles; therefore, we moved to the city of Mexicali to the Veterinary Science Research Institute of the Autonomous University of Baja California (UABC) to analyse the sample through molecular biology. Through this analysis we confirmed the presence of a virus that is normally associated with the presence of tumours in sea turtles.



*Chelonia mydas*



Left: Instituto de Investigacion en Ciencias Veterinarias UABC. Middle: Equipment for molecular biology. Right: Virus positive sample by molecular biology.

September 2017

This month we are completing the laboratory analysis of the positive sample to the virus and the other samples collected.

We are planning our next field trip for the week of September 18th to 22nd and after that, we have arranged our first talk with the school "El colibrí" on Friday September 29th. Also, we are preparing two presentations to participate in the 4th meeting of specialists of sea turtles of Mexico that will be held in the city of Morelia Mexico from October 11th to 14th. The first presentation is to make known at a national level the project "Health assessments in sea turtles from Baja California Sur" funded by Rufford and the second presentation is the case of tumour associated to viral particles that we confirmed last August.



Mydas turtles captured and evaluated in July.