

Project Update: March 2017

Our project is moving forward and we have news from the field!

Last December we made a field trip to Aceguá (Cerro Largo), our working area in north-eastern Uruguay. This field trip consisted of a week of fieldwork with the aquatic communities that inhabit the local ponds and water reservoirs. There, we evaluated the local biodiversity and the distribution of the invasive bullfrog (*Lithobates catesbeianus*). In this instance we were able to visit the local primary school and high school. Although the scholar year had culminated, we were able to meet and coordinate with the teachers, and directors of these educational centres on the activities to be carried out in 2017. In addition we met with the members of the culture committee of Aceguá, who organise most of the local social and cultural activities. Finally, we were on community radio, presenting the ideas of our project to the radio-spectators. These meetings were very productive, the local actors showed great interest and willingness to participate in our project. In this context, an interesting activity that we could do was the organization of a bullfrog tasting event, organised by the local community radio communicator, Ariel Landaburu (this can be seen on his Facebook).

Upon returning to Montevideo, we process many laboratory samples, including those of stable isotopes, which can reveal the livelihoods of the bullfrog in the local trophic network. Then, in March 2017, we meet and began discussions with the national authorities of the Ministry of Environment, showing them the current state of the problem and the need to implement control plans.

As a communication component, we developed a webpage (juianfibios.wordpress.com), a Facebook page (@juianfibios) and an exclusive Facebook group for local residents of Aceguá (facebook.com/groups/1196327427070986) and a poster that we placed on the main social centres of the town.

In short, we were able to assess local biodiversity and promote the importance of managing the bullfrog threat, both at the level of the local population and national authorities. While this is only the beginning of our project, the prospects are very good! We look forward to returning soon to Aceguá!



