

Project Update: February 2009

During the course of this year most of the field work planned was done. We sampled the non-breeding population at Mar Chiquita coastal lagoon (Argentina) between mid March-mid April, by means of nocturnal mist-net captures. These samples are being analyzed together with samples obtained on previous years. Given that the trapping system was not as successful as expected from previous experience a new method will be tried during the next season. As well, skimmer colonies along the Uruguay River (Argentinean side) were visited during December and January. The sampling was performed on January once the chicks were hatched. Several university students, doctoral students from national and foreign universities and local people collaborated through all the field work. Particularly, Brazilian colleague Patricia Faria provided us with samples from breeding locations in Brazil. Data on abundance, arrival and departure dates were recorded during the visits to the selected breeding and non-breeding grounds in Argentina and will be analysed together with data from previous years. We plan to keep on with the censuses at least for two more years.

Currently, samples from the different locations are being analyzed with microsatellite markers. Moreover, feathers sampled at non-breeding grounds were prepared for the analysis of hydrogen stable isotopes and are about to be sent for analysis.



Left: Skimmer chicks. © Germán O. García. Right: Working at breeding sites. ©Carlos García Mata.