

Project Update: December 2021

In the context of the Rufford Project 34575 entitled “**Cats at the end of the world: enhancing the knowledge of the smallest felid of America, the enigmatic kodkod in Los Alerces National Park**”, we present the first report with the obtained results, to date.

Given the restrictions due to COVID-19 lockdown, we were not able to use the funds until September 2021. However, we begin our work with a small set of personally owned camera traps and developed several interviews to scout the knowledge of people about kodkod. Following next, a detail of each activity developed.

1. Camera traps in Río Frey. On February 27th 2021, we set five camera traps along the Río Frey, which communicate Lago Futalaufquen with Amutui Quimei reservoir. Near these points, a kodkod have been previously found dead on 2019 (see Guerisoli et al., 2020). Traps were baited with commercial tuna and left to work for 2 months. One of the cameras malfunctioned and was not subsequently used. Although we did not find kodkod on the pictures, we present other carnivores captured (Figures. 1 and 2).



Figure 1. *Puma concolor* in Río Frey, Los Alerces National Park, taken on April 23 of 2021.



Figure 2. Andean fox *Lycalopex culpaeus*, in Río Frey, Los Alerces National Park, taken March 31 of 2021.

2. Camera traps in Lago Krugger trail. On July 5th 2021 we set four camera traps along a trail nearside lago Futalaufquen and left them to work for 2 months. This trail has severe modified vegetation, following a wildfire in 2015 (Figure. 3). Instead of the typical tall forest-cover of Andean Forest, there are many dead trees still standing, and low understory. We did not capture kodkod here, but we present pictures from other carnivores, including the lesser grison *Galictis cuja* (hardly captured in Los Alerces National Park, Figure. 4), and an example of interactions between the Andean fox *Lycalopex culpaeus* and the introduced wild boar *Sus scrofa* (Figure. 5).
3. We released an online interview to scout for knowledge on fauna from northwestern Chubut. We ask the people to answer about different species present in the area and ask them particularly if they know the kodkod. We expect to complete this process by end of 2021 and present the results in the next project update.



Figure 3. Modified vegetation following 2015 wildfire in Lago Krugger trail, Los Alerces National Park. On the picture, a burned-out tree was used to support the camera trap. Figure 4. Specimens of lesser grison *Galictis cuja* on Lago Krugger trail, Los Alerces National Park, taken August 29th 2021.



Figure. 5. Andean fox *Lycalopex culpaeus* eating wild boar *Sus scrofa*, on Lago Krugger trail, Los Alerces National Park, taken July 7th 2021.

4. By October 2021 we were able to buy 15 new camera traps using Rufford funds. We set these devices on Lago Menéndez (Figure. 6), a restricted area of Los Alerces National Park, where kodkod has been previously recorded (Guerisoli et al., 2020). We also bought rechargeable batteries to diminish environmental impact.



Figure 6. Setting camera traps on lago Menéndez, restricted area of Los Alerces National Park. As shown in the picture, access to the forest sometimes can be challenging.