

Project Update: December 2009

In the first stage of our Continuation project we worked intensely in the four cross-cutting strategies we proposed: research, education, policy making, and synergistic work.

We have provided three coastal schools (School of El Riacho, N°16 of Camarones and N° 42 of Puerto Madryn) with books on marine biology, ecology and conservation. The library of the school of Camarones is the only one in this small village, so this donation was very important for local people.

In July 2009, we offered a course addressed to marine observers on-board for seismic explorations for petroleum at San Jorge Gulf. Observers were trained to recognize cetaceans during operations, in order to stop shuts when detected. The course was required by Pan American Energy through Fundación Patagonia Natural.

In August 2009, we gave talks on marine mammals and seabirds to children from 4° degree, and we gave them our posters and leaflets on Patagonian marine mammals.

On November 13 2009, nearly 100 students and their teachers from 3° and 4° degree of the primary school of Camarones were taken to an educational trip to Cabo Dos Bahías Protected Area. Most children (aged between



8 and 10 years old) have never been in the area, distant only 28 km from the town, and they were fascinated learning about the penguins breeding there, and other coastal species.

On 20th November 2009, adolescents from the school 528 (Puerto Madryn) were taken to the Península Valdés Protected Area. They visited the rural school of El Riacho, and learned about the marine wildlife in the area, appreciating its fragility.

In an alliance built with researchers of CENPAT (Puerto Madryn) and Fundación Vida Silvestre Argentina, we are producing posters on marine invertebrates to create awareness on the conservation of those scarcely known species. In addition, in association with Fundación Patagonia Natural we are producing a chart on the main cetacean's species in the Patagonian coast.

Finally, we started the opinion poll to produce the first awareness baseline for the Patagonian coastal zone, including Camarones, Comodoro Rivadavia, and Puerto Madryn

We feel that the first months of our project were really very productive, and we are anxious about the results of our field work activities, which started recently and are going on very well, despite this very windy spring.