

Project Update: March 2011

The Global Penguin Society: penguin advocacy for the ocean

With my Continuation Grant I am consolidating an international coalition for penguin conservation, called the Global Penguin Society (GPS). For the first 6 months of our project we had the following objectives and accomplishments.

- ***Build an international science-based conservation coalition, engaging partners interested in penguin-related marine conservation globally through strategic alliances.***

I have met people and organisations engaged in penguin conservation and research. For example I have visited penguin colonies and participated in the Oamaru symposium dealing with New Zealand penguins and I have also been invited to the workshop to design the Management Plan for the endangered African penguin.

Through key activities we engaged penguin research and conservation groups from 12 countries. For example, we organized a World Penguin Conservation Status Symposium in Boston, as part of the VII International penguin Conference where I was part of the Steering Committee. We also involved 53 researchers in the edition of the Book: "Biology and conservation of the world's penguins".

- ***Assess the feasibility to create the IUCN Penguin Specialist Group.***

We met the General Director and major authorities of IUCN in Switzerland, last year we talked with Birdlife International in Canada about the need to create such a group and in late 2010 we met in Cambridge authorities of the Species Survival Commission to get started in the process of creating this group.

- ***Assess the status and conservation priorities for all penguin species.***

We are accomplishing this goal by editing the Book: "Biology and Conservation of the World's penguins", that will be printed by University of Washington Press and will be available in English, Spanish and Japanese. It will have 250 full colour pages divided in 18 chapters. Main section include diagnostic characteristics, distribution, population size and trends, threats, research gaps and needs, current conservation efforts and conservation priorities.

- ***Collaborate and formulate advice for governments based on scientific, technical and empirical evidence, aiming at influencing decisions and policies. The coalition will formally offer assistance to governments.***

Punta Tombo Advisory Management Commission. I foster the creation and coordination of the Commission meetings by the Provincial Government. Highlighting the need to create a multidisciplinary body to manage this colony I interested the Governor to create a multisectorial entity to run the Protected Area,

El Pedral Colony. During my research with penguins (with this project) I discovered a new Magellanic penguin colony. However, the site selected by this first 13 penguins pairs was far from pristine. Unregulated recreational activities took place there, with fishermen and visitors leaving garbage all around and setting on fire bushes, where penguins nest, to make barbecues. I coordinated a multisectorial management Plan for the area and submitted the application for its designation as Provincial Wildlife Refuge, which was recently approved. Now penguins are protected and we designed a very restricted touristic operation that will allow to enforce rules.

We were invited by the Government of South Africa to participate in the design of the Management Plan of the African penguin.

I also interacted with the Department of Conservation of New Zealand in the workshop about the Fiordland penguin.

- ***Design effective communication strategies to reach specific audiences with clear messages.***

GPS launched its website: www.globalpenguinsociety.org, which contains information on what we do, who we are, goals, activities, updated information on all species of penguins in the world, and news. It has already received visits from 46 countries.

GPS was the scientific advisor for the complete exhibits of the new Interpretation Center for Magellanic Penguins in the Province of Chubut, Argentina.

- ***Campaigning through the media in association with other worldwide conservation initiatives, highlighting the power of individual responsibility to make a change for ocean conservation through the penguins.***

GPS activities (including television documentary films) were covered by the media in Argentina and several countries: Boston Globe, Washington Post, New York Times, The Telegraph, Frankfurter Allgemeine, Clarín, Perfil, TN Ecología. Stories were in the media in Argentina, Brazil, Germany, France, England, the Netherlands and the United States, among others.

- ***Objective 10. Promote and help consolidate marine conservation initiatives, such as the designation of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) or other more appropriate marine conservation tools in the Southern Oceans.***

I participated in the annual meeting of a forum of environmental NGOs related with the SW Atlantic.

To promote the designation of new marine protected areas we obtained critical information about penguin colonies along Patagonia. We obtained information about foraging areas (satellited tracks) and estimated abundance.

We coordinated activities to survey and census penguin colonies (Magellanic, Macarroni, and Rockhopper) in unexplored areas of Southern Chile. This information would justify the creation of future protected areas in this unexplored region.

IN BRIEF:

The three components of the coalition created by my project are: Science, management and education. In the previous items I explained this activities in detail. We work to protect penguins and through them to conserve marine wildlife and environments. We helped to make progress toward the goal of conserving marine resources mainly by:

Science:

- Consolidation of the coalition : GPS.
- Meetings to create IUCN Penguin Specialist Group.
- Penguin Book preparation is helping to generate many discussions in all penguin distribution areas. It will be useful for education of people, academics and decision makers.
- Production and publication of scientific knowledge to guide management actions.

- Organisation and presentations at the International Penguin Conference in Boston and the World Seabird Conference in Canada.
- Keynote speakers at the New Zealand Penguin conservation Symposium.
- Management:
 - Advising on management of established and new penguin colonies.
 - Participation in workshops (Argentina, New Zealand, Africa, U.S.A.).
 - Creating and participating in a new governments for the largest Magellanic Penguin colony: Punta Tombo.
 - Designation of a protection regime for a new penguin colony in Argentina.
 - Promotion of MPAs creation and management improvement.
 - Recommendations to governments to improve management of marine environments and species.
 - Participation in a Pew Environmental group initiative to prepare statement to improve the MSC certification process for forage fisheries and use of the produced document for the certification process of anchovies (*engraulis anchoita*) in Argentina.

Transference:

- Creation of the Global penguin Society website.
- Reach a very powerful and wide audience with a compelling speech on marine conservation.
- Preparation or participation in newspaper articles, magazines, documentary films, TV programs, radio interviews, symposium organisation, lectures at schools, trips of schools kids to visit neaby penguin colonies unknown to them.



