

DARWIN

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Promoting biodiversity conservation
and the sustainable use of resources



Lagopsis darwiniana, a new species named after the Darwin Initiative (Photo: A.I. Pyak)
(see article "New endemic species of deadnettle and buttercup found in Mongolia")

NEWS

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You can find out more about any of these projects from the Darwin Initiative website, in the *Projects* section.

<http://www.darwin.gov.uk>

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/darwin>

Marine reserves declared in Rodrigues and local NGO Shoals Rodrigues wins two awards

Dr Alasdair Edwards, University of Newcastle upon Tyne
Project ref.: 162/13/027

ON 9 April 2007, after two years work by the Newcastle University led Darwin Initiative project Developing Marine Reserves for Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Fisheries in Rodrigues, four marine reserves were finally gazetted in Rodrigues to help protect fish stocks and marine habitats harbouring endemic species in the 240 km² lagoon. In the National Environmental Action Plan for the period to 2010, the Government of Mauritius identified the deterioration of marine systems and the degradation of the coastal zone as major national environmental problems, and advocated the establishment of protected areas as a mitigation measure. The local NGO Shoals Rodrigues has been working closely with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly since 2002 to implement these recommendations. This good news came shortly before a major regional workshop was hosted (the first for Rodrigues!) by Shoals Rodrigues as part of the Darwin project. The workshop, entitled “A Regional Perspective on MPAs in the Western Indian Ocean”, was opened by Rodrigues’ Chief Commissioner, Mr Johnson Roussety, and brought together 75 delegates from 12 countries at the Escale Vacances Hotel in Port Mathurin on 9-14 May to discuss the issues of unsustainable marine resource use and how MPAs can be used as effective management tools.



Alasdair Edwards, PI on the Darwin Initiative project, with Chief Commissioner, Mr Johnson Roussety, Commissioner Franceau Grandcourt, and Shoals Rodrigues Director, Eric Blais at the workshop opening ceremony.

Originally planned as a modest meeting with 25 delegates, the scope of the meeting was widened in discussion with Dr Rémi Ratsimbazafy (WWF Madagascar), M. Denis Etienne (Indian Ocean Commission, Mauritius), and Dr Julius Francis (Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association – WIOMSA) to include a two-day session to initiate the Western Indian Ocean Marine Ecoregion (WIOMER) MPA Managers’ Forum, in addition to the three-day formal meeting with sessions on: a) Community participation and education, b) Monitoring and managing MPAs – community issues, c) Funding and income generation, d) Monitoring and managing MPAs – case studies and research findings, and e) Impediments and solutions in MPA management. The Darwin funding provided a catalyst which attracted twice as much again from Fonds Français pour l’Environnement Mondial, WWF, the European Union’s Regional Programme for Coastal Zone Management of the West Indian Ocean Countries (ReCoMaP), WIOMSA, and the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs, to support the much larger meeting.

Island and coastal states across the Western Indian Ocean region are all faced with similar problems of how to protect their unique and fragile marine ecosystems while still maintaining the livelihoods of artisanal fishers and others for whom the sea is a vital part of their culture and daily life. The workshop was a great opportunity for Rodrigues delegates to learn lessons from MPA managers throughout the region and further afield (e.g.

Senegal, India, St Lucia), and for regional delegates to share information, experience and ideas. Highlights of the workshop included a visit to the Rivière Banane marine reserve, which will be the first to be demarcated, and a stakeholder meeting by Creole speaking delegates (Seychelles, Mauritius, Madagascar, Comores) with local Rodriguais fishermen affected by the new reserves.



A majority of the Darwin supported participants at the Rodrigues MPA workshop.

The WIOMER MPA Managers’ Forum, part of a project managed by the Indian Ocean Commission and WWF to bring regional coherence to MPA development, was successfully established and now networks MPA managers from Mauritius, Rodrigues, Seychelles, Comoros, Madagascar and Réunion.



Rodrigues MPA workshop participants.



Deputy Chief Commissioner Gaetan Jabeemissar launched the second Darwin Initiative funded fisheries education poster. Here, Eric Blais, Director of Shoals Rodrigues, presents Mr Jabeemissar with a copy of the poster.

In recognition of their environmental and education work, Shoals Rodrigues, was recently awarded the Médaille de la Reconnaissance Rodriguaise. The medal was presented to Shoals’ Director, Eric Blais by the Commissioner for Health during an awards ceremony held in Port Mathurin to celebrate the 4th anniversary of Rodrigues’ accession to autonomy. This

award comes on top of their recent winning entry for the 2006 Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND) prize. Shoals' "Discovering the Ocean World" primary school teachers' pack topped the category for projects implemented by NGOs providing education services, having been nominated for the prize by Mrs Pamela Bapoo-Dundoo (National Coordinator in Mauritius for the United Nations Development Programme managed Global Environment Facility, Small Grants Programme). ■



Eric Blais, Director of Shoals Rodrigues, receives the Médaille de la Reconnaissance Rodriguaise. from the Commissioner for Health.

Salmon farming in troubled waters: coming to terms with exotic aquaculture in Chile

Dr. Carlos Garcia de Leaniz, University of Wales Swansea
Project ref.: 162/15/020

SALMON farming is one of the most buoyant and lucrative businesses in Chile, capitalizing on a highly valuable export commodity that generates significant revenue. Chile is set to become the world's top salmon producer, and the industry is considered a successful example of the country's commitment to free market, world trade and economic growth. The problem is that there are no naturally occurring salmonids in the Southern Hemisphere.



Atlantic salmon farm in freshwater, Lake Llanquihue (X Region Chile)

All salmonids found in Chile (and there are many) are fish that are being farmed, fish that have escaped from fish farms, or fish that have been purposely stocked for sea ranching, or more often for sport fishing. Salmonids in Chile are therefore non-native (or alien) species: widely distributed, self-sustained, and locally abundant, but non-native. But then, so are grapes (wine being another of Chile's icons of economic growth), eucalyptus trees, or most agricultural crops.



Rainbow trout farm in seawater, Caleta Martin (X Region Chile)

Under such a scenario, the Darwin Initiative project "Reducing the impact of exotic aquaculture on native aquatic biodiversity" is drawing attention to the potential impacts of salmon farming on Chile's unique aquatic ecosystems, with a view to making the industry more sustainable. Not an easy task. To begin with, how to get the industry and other stakeholders fully convinced of the importance of the project? A workshop organized in Puerto Montt on January 2007, provided the right opportunity to get all stakeholders together, inform them about the project, and most importantly, give them the chance to air their views and articulate their worries.



Participants in the First International Darwin Workshop "Reducing the Impact of Exotic Aquaculture on Native Aquatic Biodiversity", held at Puerto Montt, Chile (17-18 January 2007)

The workshop included a two-day public conference opened by the Rector of the University of Los Lagos (Dr. Raul Aguilar) and led by Professor Ian Fleming (Canada), who provided an incisive insight into cultural invasions and the implications of fish escapes from aquaculture. The conference provided students and stakeholders with an opportunity to listen to 22 national and international speakers, and to find out more about the impact of salmonid escapes in other countries. The overall impression was that the workshop was a success, and the group discussions ended with a joint statement endorsed by all stakeholders⁸. The conference presentations were attended by an active and participative audience of about 50 people, including

⁸ Joint statement and conference abstracts available at <http://www.biodiversity.cl/>