



## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER MAY 2009

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We are again ready to go over the activities of the previous month at the Charles Darwin Foundation (CDF).



CDF was honored with a visit from **President of Ecuador Rafael Correa** and his company, including **his children Sofía and Miguel**, who were escorted by our **Executive Director Dr. J. Gabriel López** on a tour to learn about the various aspects of **CDF scientific work and advisory support** for proper care of the Galapagos Islands.

During the stay, Executive Director López took the opportunity to explain to the president **the holistic approach of the different projects** our organization conducts. Both men agreed upon the need to **maintain a sustainable development model** in the archipelago.



The first stop on the two-and-a-half-hour visit was the Foundation's auditorium, where **a puppet show** was presented about the importance of **preventing invasive species from arriving in the islands** and the **measures taken by the government** to accomplish this aim.



President Correa also visited **the CDF entomology collection**, one of the most important in the country and certainly **the largest and most complete of Galapagos species**. During this visit, Mr. Correa reaffirmed that his administration is committed to **Galapagos preservation and sustainability** and that **the work performed by CDF in association with the GNPS** and other Ecuadorian government agencies **is crucial to this mission**.

In other news, it is our pleasure to inform you that the CDF Botany Team **presented its book *Plant Me in Your Garden*** to the Santa Cruz community. The work is **the most extensive compilation of information on native plants** that may be used in Galapagos gardens.



During the event, the group in charge of this project, **Rachel Atkinson, Patricia Jaramillo, and Anne Guezou**, spoke on **the importance of using native plants**, as well as on CDF efforts in conjunction with various institutions, schools, businesses, and the community at large to prevent the use of introduced plants in the islands, in view of their pernicious effects on the archipelago's fragile ecosystem.





In a parallel event, **Juan Carlos Guzmán, CDF Coordinator on San Cristobal**, launched the book with the participation of that island's local authorities, teachers, and community members.

The Botany Team made a **helicopter reconnaissance of Floreana** to monitor areas affected by **blackberry (*Rubus niveus*) plants**, one of the **worst weeds affecting the Galapagos ecosystem**. This inspection managed to identify a new clump in an area with difficult access. The Floreana field-assistance team is now preparing a manual eradication plan that will be carried out in a few days.

We shift our attention to San Cristobal, where **CDF research teammate Gustavo Jiménez gave a training workshop-seminar with the GNP on identifying Galapagos land and sea birds**. The seminar was for the island's park rangers as a preliminary stage to a **bird road-kill monitoring project and bird census** on San Cristobal. This seminar included a pilot monitoring exercise and ended with a field visit for identification purposes at petrel nesting sites.

On another topic, Santa Cruz, Isabela and San Cristobal were the venues for a **photography workshop offered by the CDF Education for Sustainability Team** and themed "The Galapagos Where I Live." The sessions were conducted by photographers **Sebastián Cruz and Jacintha van Beveren**, who were assisted by **CDF volunteer Pablo Acosta**.

The workshop was attended by **community students and young people**, who had the opportunity to get firsthand practice in **basic techniques of digital photography, lighting, composition, and the use of light and shadow**, among other things. As a final workshop project, the participants created a photographic chronicle, composed of up to 5 photos on Galapagos, to portray "the true significance of living in a place that is unique in all the world." These final works will be exhibited in July and August on the three islands.



We wish to thank the generous donors who have funded the projects mentioned in this month's newsletter:

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