

## **Interim Technical Report to the UICN - Sir Peter Scott Fund**

(May – October 2008)

In May 2008 the Sir Peter Scott Fund (SPSF) for Conservation Action through the SSC Small Grants Programme awarded a grant to the “Domestic Animal Management and Wildlife Health in the Takana Indigenous Communal Land and Apolobamba National Integral Management Natural Area” project in Bolivia. The main objectives of this project aim to 1. Build local capacity for improved health and husbandry of domestic animals as a tool for conservation; 2. Build local capacity to prevent infectious disease transmission amongst domestic animals, wildlife and humans; 3. Establish systems for wildlife disease monitoring (including emerging, zoonotic and exotic diseases) and; 4. Reduce hunting pressure by improving domestic animal rearing practices and improving community livelihoods.

In the six first months of the grant, several activities were developed by the veterinary team of the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) in Bolivia in order to reach those objectives.

At the end of June, a veterinarian was recruited to assist the Animal Management and Health Program at the Takana communities. Veterinarian Oscar Uría was hired with funds from the SPSF to be part of the CIPTA (Consejo Indígena del Pueblo Takana or Takana Peoples Indigenous Council) technical branch. In order to get fast and easy access to the participating communities, Oscar Uría was based in the Takana locality of Tumupasa where the Takana People’s Indigenous Council’s has his main office.

One of the main tasks of the CIPTA veterinarian was to monitor the established epidemiological animal surveillance network at the eleven takana communities where animal health promoters (AHP) had previously been trained. Health monitoring was planned to be achieved through visits to the communities and periodical radial communications. Unfortunately, many community radios are not working properly, limiting periodical monitoring activities through the radio. Nevertheless, veterinarian visits to the communities from June to September and the reports from the AHPs visiting the CIPTA office at Tumupasa made possible at least one monthly communal monitoring report of diseases occurring at each of the eleven Takana communities participating in the surveillance network. The presence of the CIPTA veterinarian in Tumupasa also made possible the immediate attention of several clinical cases (an average of 22 cases per month) and helped the management of the small veterinary drug store existing at the CIPTA office. Unfortunately, the CIPTA veterinarian, Oscar Uria, retired in September due to personal reasons, however, a new recruitment process is currently underway.

In July the SPSF supported a fieldtrip to the Buena Vista, Tumupasa, San Silvestre, Macahua, Carmen Pecha and Santa Rosa de Maravilla communities, where communal veterinary kits were presented to the animal health promoters who had been trained during the period 2007 – 2008. The kits were bought with funds from USAID and aim to provide the necessary tools to the trained AHPs

to apply the acquired knowledge on prevention and attention of animal health problems for the benefit of their communities. From July to October the use of veterinary kits was monitored by veterinarians Erika Alandia and Oscar Uría, observing until now a good economical management of the products (users have to pay a minimal cost in order to replace the used products). The presence of those kits at the communities has motivated many comunards to apply treatments to their sick animals, most of them with good results. Indeed, some communal authorities and animal owners have even started to promote deworming campaigns in pigs and dogs to reduce risks of diseases transmission to humans. This was the case of the Macahua community where the animal health promoter in charge of the veterinary kit conducted a deworming campaign in August. Similarly, in the Buena Vista community where a communal authority and the trained animal health promoters conducted a deworming campaign in pigs and dogs in October while visiting the houses for the health sampling activities.

Between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of August, WCS veterinarians Erika Alandia and Glenda Ayala, the CIPTA veterinarian Oscar Uría, two students from the veterinary Faculty of the El Alto Public University - Wilma Condori and José Luis Mollericona-, the coordinator of natural resource management from CIPTA, Mr. Aizar Terrazas and 50% of the previously communal animal health promoters took part in the animal health sampling program for 2008. The campaign was realized at the Macahua, San Pedro, Carmen Pecha, Santa Rosa de Maravillas, Tumupasha, San Silvestre, Capaina, Carmen del Emero, Tequeje, Cachichira and Esperanza del Enapurera communities. Due to climatic conditions, we couldn't complete the sampling at the Buena Vista community, and therefore in October veterinarian Erika Alandia supported by veterinary students Wilma Condori and José Luis Mollericona and three of the communal AHPs from this community completed the health sampling in chickens, ducks and pigs at this community. Both animal health sampling campaigns were covered with funds from the SPSF.

The objective of the animal health sampling activities was to obtain a base line of the diseases affecting domestic animals raised in the Takana communities. At the same time, the sampling campaign gave us the opportunity to improve the skills of the communal AHPs trained by the veterinary program.

In total 627 biological samples (serum, tracheal swabs, faeces and blood extensions) were obtained from five domestic species as well as from some wild birds kept as pets in some communities. All fecal samples (109 in total) were analyzed by WCS veterinarian Glenda Ayala at the parasitological laboratory located at the WCS office in La Paz. Blood and serum from poultry and mammals were sent to the LIDIVECO Laboratory in Cochabamba and the LIDIVET Laboratory in Santa Cruz for analysis with costs covered with funds from the international FVP program.

We recently received the LIDIVECO and LIDIVET laboratory results. A data base is being prepared and results are being analyzed in order to prepare a complete monitoring report which will be shared with the Takana People's Indigenous Council (CIPTA), the takana communities, the communal animal

health promoters as well as with the Animal Health National Service (SENASAG).

The results obtained during the present campaign are of greatest importance due to the large number of participating communities (this is the first year we reached this number of communities), the large participation of people which facilitated an important number of samples from the different domestic animal species raised. The laboratory analyses from this campaign also showed the presence of diseases such as Aujeszky and Parvovirus in domestic pigs in the area (constituting the first documented report of those diseases in the area) as well as the presence of diseases of zoonotical importance such as cysticercosis in pigs from some of the communities.

Besides the animal health sampling activities, the visit to the 12 Takana communities allowed us to distribute the animal health calendars and posters elaborated by veterinarian Glenda Ayala with funds from the BP Conservation Leadership Program. Each animal health promoter got a calendar and 4 posters with information on the main diseases from pigs, horses, cattle and chickens. A complete set of this material was also given to the communal authorities, the CIPTA office, and several additional community members who requested them. We hope that this material will help the animal health promoters in the identification of diseases, as well as motivate animal owners on improving management and sanitary practices for their animals.

The inclusion on the sampling team of a veterinary student from the El Alto Public University, who was ending his internship with the veterinary team of WCS, was very productive, not only for the good performance of the student José Luis Mollericona and the support he gave to the team, but also for the interest he showed in working with participatory approaches with indigenous communities. As result of his good performance and interest, José Luis was selected to carry out research on ethnoveterinary deworming treatments in domestic pigs from the Takana communities of Tumupasa and San Silvestre. In October the research idea was presented at Tumupasa to the CIPTA directory and a formal research proposal is being prepared by José Luis. The study will be the thesis topic of José Luis to get his Veterinary diploma and will be part of the Animal Management and Health Program at the Takana communities supported by WCS. With this study we expect to test two deworming treatments using medicinal plants known by the Takana for their deworming properties in humans. If the tested treatments prove to be efficient we expect to spread the results of the study through the rest of the Takana communities with the aim of giving economical, efficient and accessible alternatives to animal owners to improve the health situation and productive performance of their animals, and at the same time give more value to their ancestral knowledge and their rich natural resources. The costs of this study will be covered with funds from the SPSF in the coming months.

This year the Capaina Takana community got funds from WCS to start a small communal enterprise where four families will produce "criollo" eggs to sell them at the Rurrenabaque and San Buenaventura localities. The funds obtained from the SPSF allowed veterinarians Erika Alandia and Oscar Uría to visit

periodically the Capaina community in order to support the members of this communal enterprise called "Waripa" (meaning "hen" in Takana language) on the implementation of their project with technical and organizational advice. From July on, four visits and two disease monitoring samples among the poultry population raised at the community were completed. By supporting this project we expect help to reduce hunting pressure in this community and increase incomes of the members of "Waripa" while motivating them to use their natural resources in a sustainable manner.

During the first six months of the grant the activities funded by SPSF were concentrated in the Takana lowland Amazonia communities. Activities in Apolobamba, such as monitoring of cattle losses caused by predation and promotion of animal husbandry recommendations to reduce the impact of predators on cattle, were developed by technician Herminio Ticona with funds from the international FVP program. From November on, part of the SPSF funds will help to continue with the planned activities in the Apolobamba Andean communities.

Funding in the six first months of the grant were used as shown in the economical report and they were very helpful for the continuation of the activities of the Animal Management and Health Program at the Takana communities. Although there were some difficulties regarding the normal establishment of the epidemiological surveillance network and the permanent presence of a veterinarian at the working area, we hope to solve them in the near future.