

Project Update: December 2013

Progress of main objectives:

1. Promote Tandilean Red-belly Toad as flagship species of highland grasslands. Encourage the conservation of Tandilean Red-belly Toads in private remnants of highland grasslands.

Since starting this new conservation project we have continued the workshops in the gardens and schools of Tandil city to make known the Tandilean red-belly toad (Fig. 1). We have also made rubbings and brochures, and continue disseminating information on our facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/PastizalesSerranos>

In relation to private fields, we are defining the grassland relict from satellite images and searching information on the owners of the fields to start with this goal.



Figure 1: Origami of “Sapito de las Sierras” by children from different schools. Figure 2: Brochure to paint the toad

2. Produce a non-invasive marking tool from individual's spot pattern. This tool will help us to conduct population studies.

We continue to take photos in the field to adjust the toad software that will allow us to recognise individuals for population studios.

3. Delimit the distribution range and estimate the population size. Define the main variables affecting Tandilean red-belly toad's occupancy.

We kept doing different sampling and measuring new variables in ponds of grassland relicts that allow us to explain the occupation of the toad (e.g. water temperature, Fig. 3).

4. Monitor the presence of *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* (Bd).

We take new samples to determine if the Bd fungus occurs in highland grassland.

5. Solve the taxonomic conflict of the Tandilean red-belly toad using DNA sequence analysis.

We have concretised a job interview with geneticist amphibian Dr Diego Baldo to define new targets after completing genetic analysis that will allow us to assess the genetic variability of the species.



Figure 3: Tandilean Red-belly Toad. Figure 4: Temperature measurement in a pond.