

Project Update: March 2015

During this period we continued collecting, taking photos, identifying, and monitoring endemic terrestrial molluscs. New data for the malacofauna of Isla de la Juventud (IJ) were obtained recently. *Pineria beathiana* Poey, 1854 (Gastropoda: Urocoptidae) is an endemic species collected in Sierra de Caballos by Guillermo Beath and Gundlach. The team found a new locality for *Pineria beathiana* at Sierra de las Casas and Sierra Colombo, on January 2015. We also detected that the populations of *Pineria terebra* and *Pineria beathiana* are vulnerable, owing to the continued and intentional forest fires in the area.

Punta del Este, in the southern part of IJ, is a protected area (Reserva ecológica). In the literature this area is considered very important for the terrestrial malacofauna, with more than 10 species. This place was most affected after Hurricanes Gustav and Ike in 2008. In 2015 the scarcity of land snails is very notable and worrying. We will continue monitoring the population in another season and will report to the National System of Protected Areas in Cuba (SNAP).

We started the evaluation of park personnel and technicians as regards their knowledge on terrestrial molluscs. Based on these results we delivered a practical training on the natural history of terrestrial snails, at "Valle del Hondón" in Sierra de las Casas, with a total of 21 attendants.

Another important activity was carried out in February 2015 in the Museum of Natural History "Dr. Antonio Núñez Jiménez" of Gerona. We identified and catalogued the malacological collection of this institution. The collection contains 729 specimens encompassing eight families and 52 species. We are now working on the manuscript about this work for a future publication.

Additionally, we held three environmental activities (talks) about the value of the "Sierra de Caballos" Protected area, the importance of its biodiversity, and the diversity of terrestrial molluscs in the IJ and their conservation. A total of 126 children and 22 teachers received this information in the Camp of explorer pioneers of "Sierra de las Casas".

