

Project Update: February 2019

Fieldwork started later than expected, due to the extension of the winter climate in south-central Chile. To evaluate the protection function of the Nahuelbuta National Park, 20 plots were established within the protected area, located in different plant associations in which *Araucaria araucana* lives. We have found interesting results, with a great diversity in the composition of the forests and the cattle pressure. The park rangers of the national park have been of great support in the selection of places to establish the plots. The method was modified moderately, increasing the size of the plots (500 m² to 2000 m²) to better cover the aspects that influence the state of conservation of *Araucaria* forests. This has caused an extension in the time in the field.

With respect to the small owners, we have found a different reality than we expected. After the exploratory visit to the buffer zone of the park, looking for owners of *Araucaria* forests, we did not find indigenous owners, only descendants of settlers and people who had acquired land a few years ago. Of these, not all were locatable (many now live in the city) and we could only communicate with 10. The 10 owners with whom we have had contact and an open conversation, are willing to cooperate in this project, facilitating their forests for the installation of plots and have an in-depth interview.



a) Establishing a plot b) On the way to field work c) Measuring DBH of a tree



d) Cow inside a small owner's land e) Cows inside Nahuelbuta National Park



e) Cow dung on regeneration of araucaria in Nahuelbuta National Park. Right: detail

Note: On December 20, 2018, the Official Newspaper of the Republic of Chile, through a Supreme Decree declared the populations of Nahuelbuta of the species *Araucaria araucana* "Endangered in Extinction". This reinforces the urgency of this work, as a first step to assess the conservation status of these forests within the only protected area that protects this species in the Coastal Range. And at the same time, to know who are the owners of the araucaria forests around this protected area and what is their direct relationship with them.

