

## **Project Update: December 2020**

In February 2020, I was able to meet with the director of the National Andean Fauna Reserve Eduardo Avaroa, Mr. Wilber Maygua, and all his staff. In the meeting the director and staff agreed to support our project, as well as to help us coordinate the field trips and meetings with the communities that live in the reserve.

We also purchased the equipment to perform telemetry with the chinchillas (four transmitters, one antenna, one receiver) from the company TELONICS, INC.

We have also started to raise awareness about the short-tailed chinchilla through a free-to-air TV channel (Red Uno). The channel made a segment focused on the situation of threatened species in Bolivia. In the segment, I was able to mention information about the new populations and the threats the short-tailed chinchillas are facing. I also mentioned the importance of the project for its conservation. This segment video was also shared in Red Uno social media and in the Facebook page of the Alcide d'Orbigny Natural History Museum.

As you may know, the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) affected everyone, including Bolivia. Due to this situation, Bolivia was declared in total quarantine. Bolivia's protected areas were closed, allowing entry only to personnel from public institutions. In addition, the borders were closed, so the telemetry equipment could not be sent to Bolivia from the United States. There were only humanitarian flights entering Bolivia from other countries.

In addition to COVID-19, the political situation in Bolivia is affecting the country, with the discontent of the new presidential elections causing protests and roadblocks.

For these reasons we have not advanced in the project. Currently, we are already in the post-confinement stage and some protected areas are beginning to allow entry. The borders are already open, and we expect to receive the telemetry equipment by mid-December 2020.

New elections were also held and we have a new President and new government authorities.

Now that we have new public authorities, I will make a field trip to meet with the new director of the reserve, to coordinate again the field trips and meetings with the communities. I will do this at the end of December 2020. Based on this meeting we will schedule the field trip once we have the telemetry equipment.

Hopefully, the situation will improve and we will begin work in January 2021.



National Reserve of Andean fauna "Eduardo Avaroa" in the southern department of Potosí, Bolivia; Photography: ©Eliseo Delgado.



The project site "Laguna Colorada" is located in the National Reserve of Andean fauna "Eduardo Avaroa" in the southern department of Potosí, Bolivia, this region borders the Atacama Desert (Chile); Photography: ©Eliseo Delgado.



The Short-tailed chinchilla (*Chinchilla chinchilla*) in the National Reserve of Andean fauna "Eduardo Avaroa" in the southern department of Potosí, Bolivia; Photography: ©Eliseo Delgado.



The Short-tailed chinchilla (*Chinchilla chinchilla*) in the National Reserve of Andean fauna "Eduardo Avaroa" in the southern department of Potosí, Bolivia; Photography: ©Eliseo Delgado.



The Short-tailed chinchilla (*Chinchilla chinchilla*) in the National Reserve of Andean fauna "Eduardo Avaroa" in the southern department of Potosí, Bolivia; Photography: ©Eliseo Delgado.