



## SWISS ASSOCIATION OF THE FRIENDS OF THE GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS

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### Annual Report 2006

Our first event this year was our 12th General Assembly at Zoo Zürich on January 26th. Afterwards, Dr. Peter Kramer, President of the Charles Darwin Foundation presented - in an impressive lecture - CDF's future strategy. The consolidation of the work in Galapagos is progressing in an environment of constant change. Tourism, for instance, has grown dramatically this year. Consequently, pressure on the fragile ecosystem grows as well. For years the way in which the National Park Service has managed tourism has made Galapagos a world-wide example of best practise. But faced with such disproportionate growth the Park together with the other local authorities will need to invest heavily in new strategies - what worked well for 50,000 visitors will not work for three times that number.

The most important and also very delightful news of Galapagos came on March 31st: The successful completion of Project Isabela. Introduced goats, pigs and donkeys, which have done considerable damage on Isabela and Santiago for decades, are now history. They have been hunted very successfully from the air with helicopters and from the ground with dogs. Intense monitoring will continue the next two years, with the remaining Judas Goats playing a key role.

Much less delightful is the news that the population of the Galapagos Albatross is declining at a rate of about 3% annually. This decline is caused by the fishermen around the Peruvian coast - not only do they catch many Albatrosses, accidentally, during long-line fishing, there is evidence that at least some of them hunt the birds for their meat. Pesticides might also be affecting the birds. Thanks to the support our Association has provided, the scientists working with Dave Anderson have been able to do this important research work. As a direct consequence of the data they produced, the World Conservation Union - or IUCN - has categorised the Galapagos Albatross now as 'Threatened with extinction'. This should help raise awareness to produce successful protection measures.

Our Association participated also in a measurable way in the success of Project Isabela. Thanks to your long-term support, we have made a great step forward towards the conservation of the unique biodiversity of the Archipelago.

On June 30th, together with the Balzan Foundation and the Zürich University we were able to invite our members and supporters to an interesting and impressive lecture given by Peter and Rosemary Grant on the results of more than 30 years of their research. These scientists had been honoured the year before with the famous Balzan prize.

During this successful year, we have invested more than SFr 100,000 in the following projects:

- Conservation of the Galapagos giant tortoises in Southern Isabela: 27'000.-
- Project Isabela: Dog Boots and veterinary supplies: 24'000.-
- Running Costs of the Charles Darwin Research Station: 20'000.-
- Support of the conservation of the endangered mangrove finch: 19'000.-
- Support of the National Park: Lawyers cost in the insurance case of „Jessica“: 15'000.-
- Galápagos Endowment Fund Luxemburg: 3'000.-

In 2006, we welcomed 81 new members. This means that a total of 1421 members now support our work. This success is once more due to good cooperation between the Friends of the Galapagos organisations and the National Park Service.

In our last mailing, there was no Galapagos Intern. After 23 issues, we will be updating the layout and the printing will now be done at the Museum of Natural History here in Geneva. We would like to take this opportunity to thank SIKA AG, Baar, which has, since the start, covered all the paper and printing costs of Galapagos Intern. I would also like to thank cordially Dr. Hans Peter Ming for all the support he has provided our Association, latterly as auditor.

On behalf of the Board, I would also like to thank all our members and donors for your continuous support. Thanks to your fidelity and help, we will be able to continue our care of Galapagos in 2007!

January 20th, 2007

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