

**Biodiversity Challenge Funds Projects
Darwin Initiative, Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund, and Darwin Plus**

Half Year Report

Project reference	IWT103
Project title	Reducing Poverty and Illegal Trade Utilizing Bolivia's Charismatic Red-fronted Macaw
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Bolivia
Lead Organisation	Asociación Armonía
Partner(s)	Toro Toro Municipality SERNAP: Toro Toro National Park Government of Cochabamba
Project leader	Bennett Hennessey
Report date and number	01 April 2024 – 30 September 2024 – HYR3
Project website/blog/social media	https://armoniabolivia.org/ https://twitter.com/armoniabolivia?lang=en https://www.facebook.com/armoniabolivia/

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – September) against the agreed project implementation timetable (if your project started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to end of September).

1. Project Summary

We successfully completed the project. The project closing report is currently in preparation. All activities planned for the extension period (CR23-074) were fully implemented. No trafficking of Red-fronted Macaws from the Caine region was detected during the project period, either anecdotally or through systematic data from our anonymous reporting app launched in 2024. Our collaboration with the Forestry and Environmental Protection Police (POFOMA) has expanded to include Santa Cruz and Sucre, strengthening monitoring efforts for Red-fronted Macaw trafficking beyond the immediate project area. We provided 600 anti-trafficking posters to POFOMA and placed 200 posters at strategic locations in the Caine region, including toll booths on the Cochabamba-Torotoro highway. The birdwatching trails in Julo Grande and Matanseria are now fully operational, having welcomed their first tourists this year. Our eco-agriculture and beekeeping programs are fully implemented, complete with a market strategy and production monitoring systems. We established the first honey foundation in the department of Potosí to facilitate sales of ecologically produced honey. An end-of-project socio-economic study was conducted across the 13 communities involved, revealing a 12.62% overall economic improvement—excluding honey production (yields expected post-project) and the full potential of tourism from the recently opened trails. Our online monitoring system now delivers automated Red-fronted Macaw data, resulting in new nest site discoveries and macaw sightings in Torotoro National Park and other protected areas.

2. Project Partnerships

All partnerships established through this project remain solid and fully active. Last year, we developed a new relationship with the Forestry and Environmental Protection Police (POFOMA) in Cochabamba. This year, we expanded this POFOMA relationship to departments in Santa Cruz and Sucre, aiming to improve monitoring of Red-fronted Macaw trafficking across its entire distribution range. We provided training for POFOMA staff in both regions on identifying threatened bird species, understanding their conservation status, and recognizing key threats.

3. Project Progress

○ **Education**

In the past six months, we have maintained close collaboration with Torotoro National Park to install 200 anti-trafficking posters across the Caine Region (**Annex 1 - fig. 1**). During training sessions with POFOMA staff, we also provided additional anti-trafficking posters. These posters have been strategically placed at key locations, such as toll booths along the Cochabamba-Torotoro highway—the primary route into the Caine region—and remain intact after six months (**Annex 1 - fig. 2**).

The following # of antitrafficking posters were delivered:

- 200 posters delivered to Torotoro National Park staff and installed in the Cain region.
- 200 posters delivered to POFOMA staff in Cochabamba.
- 200 posters to be delivered to POFOMA staff in Santa Cruz.
- 200 posters to be delivered to POFOMA staff in Sucre.

- **Tourism**

With the completion of all tourism development efforts, the two birdwatching trails for observing Red-fronted Macaws in Julo Grande and Matanseria (also known as Jala Jala) became fully operational in 2024. Preliminary data from the Matanseria community indicate that 20 tourists (3 international and 17 local) visited the remote Jala Jala Red-fronted Macaw breeding cliff. Additionally, a film crew unrelated to the project visited Jala Jala to document the Red-fronted Macaw (**Annex 1 - fig. 3**)

- **Beekeeping and Eco-friendly Agriculture**

The eco-friendly agriculture (macaw-friendly food production) and beekeeping program has been fully completed. As part of this effort, our experts developed a comprehensive market strategy for the products generated by eco-farms and beekeeping for all 131 beneficiary families (see **Annex 2 & 3**). These families received either beekeeping equipment or plants and trees for their agroforestry plots during the project period. The strategy includes a thorough analysis of the products' profitability, as well as strategic marketing recommendations for the families involved. In addition, we created a system to monitor the productivity performance of both eco-friendly farms and honey producers (see **Annex 2 & 4**). This system incorporates data collection tools, factors that affect performance, and methods for addressing performance challenges.

We are also pleased to announce the creation of the first honey foundation in the department of Potosí, uniting all beekeeping beneficiaries and indigenous communities engaged in beekeeping in the municipality of Torotoro. This achievement has been warmly welcomed by the Governor of Potosí, and the certification of the foundation will be formally presented at a special event celebrating Torotoro's anniversary on November 21 (see **Annex 5**).

The end-of-project socio-economic study to evaluate the project's impact has been completed. Our experts developed a comprehensive survey (see **Annex 6**) incorporating data generated throughout the project, as well as information from the Municipality of Torotoro and Torotoro National Park. Semi-structured interviews and surveys were conducted in all 13 project communities. The study reveals a 12.62% overall economic increase, which does not yet include future honey production expected after the project period or income from tourism, as the birdwatching trails only recently opened.

The following results were generated:

- Market strategy for by eco-farms and beekeeping developed
- End-of-project socio-economic study to evaluate project success completed.
- Beekeeping and eco-friendly agriculture productivity system created.
- Honey foundation including beneficiary communities created.

- **Improved protection**

The anonymous illegal wildlife trade monitoring program is now fully operational, and new partnerships with POFOMA in Cochabamba, Sucre, and Santa Cruz will further strengthen this anti-trafficking model. Our recently implemented monitoring system has detected no cases of trafficking in the Caine region, nor is there any anecdotal information suggesting trafficking there. However, recent reports indicate multiple cases of Red-fronted Macaw trafficking in the Mizque

region. Additionally, we now have results from the online Red-fronted Macaw monitoring system established last year using the KoboToolBox application. This report includes valuable data on natural nests and new sightings of Red-fronted Macaws in Torotoro National Park and other protected areas. (**Annex 1 – fig 4 & Annex 7**).

2. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt that the project has encountered over the last 6 months. Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.

This year, Bolivia faces its most extensive natural habitat loss due to illegal wildfires, which have already burned over 11 million hectares. Wildfires have also been reported in the Torotoro region, and smoke from these fires has reached the project area. These wildfires are expected to have severe consequences, including prolonged drought and reduced rainfall, which may threaten the achievements of this project. Political tensions, a shortage of U.S. dollars, and potential increases in fuel prices raise concerns about a new economic crisis in Bolivia. Such conditions could increase illegal activities, including wildlife trafficking, as people seek ways to mitigate economic losses. We remain committed to our conservation efforts in the region and plan to expand our initiatives across the Red-fronted Macaw's distribution range. As the project is completed, this will not affect our activities.

3. Have any of these issues been discussed with NIRAS and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Discussed with NIRAS:	N/A
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Formal Change Request submitted:	N/A
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Received confirmation of change acceptance:	N/A
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Change Request reference if known: N/A

4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2024 – 30 September 2024)

Actual spend: £ ██████████

4b. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g. more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this financial year (ending 31 March 2025)?

Yes No Estimated underspend: £ ██████████

4c. If you expect and underspend, then you should consider your project budget needs carefully.

N/A

5. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to BCF management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

No

6. Please use this section to respond to any feedback provided when your project was confirmed, or from your most recent annual report.

N/A