

# **Reintroduction of the Floreana Mockingbird *Mimus trifasciatus***

**Principal Investigator: Luis Ortiz-Catedral**  
**Reporting Period: 1-31 May and 1-30 June 2012**



**Floreana Mockingbird on Gardner Islet. Photo: L. Ortiz-Catedral**



**Objective 1. Conduct first post-breeding season census on Champion Islet and continue post-breeding season ringing of fledglings and juveniles on Gardner Islet.**

A team of four visited Champion and Gardner Islets including myself and Francesca Cunningham (CDF, Durrell) and Joanne Peace and Erwin Pier (CDF). After two day-trips to Champion, 49 ringed mockingbirds were sighted and photographed along with many unringed juveniles (maximum of 16 sightings). On Gardner, 24 unringed juveniles were caught, measured and ringed. Further, eight ringed birds with missing plastic rings were captured and their rings replaced by metal coloured rings. No evidence of nesting was observed; however, a maximum of 32 juveniles being fed by adults were recorded. The youngest juvenile captured had short tail feathers and is likely to have fledged a week prior, indicating that the breeding season spanned from December 2011 to early June 2012. A total of 142 Floreana mockingbirds were confirmed alive; 54 on Champion (42 photographed) and 88 on Gardner (67 photographed). There are still various individuals on Gardner Islet with missing bands and it is anticipated that over the next two months, the last plastic ring replacements will take place. This will lead to a more accurate estimate of survival on Gardner as the identity of each ringed individual will be possible. Next month, the first post-breeding season estimate of numbers on Gardner Islet will be completed.



**From left, Erwin Pier, Francesca Cunningham, Luis Ortiz-Catedral and Joanne Peace (all CDF) on Gardner Islet. Photos: L. Ortiz-Catedral**

## **Objective 2. Completion of database of mockingbird records from June 2006 to June 2012.**

Since January 2012 and after 610 hours of computer work and cross-matching with fieldnotes and a large collection of photographs (6,000+), six years of mockingbird sightings, recaptures and resightings have been updated to June 2012. Currently there are 497 entries, representing 73 ringed individuals from Champion and 142 from Gardner with complete colour and numbered ring combinations. A digital backup of **2,869** photographs that clearly show the identity of the various individuals has also been completed. This database has allowed us to determine retrospectively the minimum number of ringed mockingbirds confirmed alive per month since November 2010. The table below summarises the number of individuals confirmed alive both on Champion and Gardner islets over a period of 14 months of field visits. It is important to notice that such numbers of ringed individuals confirmed alive changes regularly as new individuals with missing colour rings are captured and re-ringed.

2010	November	86
2011	January	61
	March	153
	August	87
2012	January	131
	March	153
	May	125



**Table showing the minimum number of ringed individuals alive on Champion and Gardner and a recently ringed individual showing metal coloured rings on Gardner Islet.**



**An un-ringed juvenile from Champion inspecting a field assistant's shoes.**  
**Photo: J. Peace**

**Objective 3. Coordinate with the Galápagos National Park staff on Floreana Island to visit Punta Cormorant as part of the establishment of a predator control perimeter.**

Two brief meetings have been held outlining the plan to establish a rat and cat control perimeter on Punta Cormorant as a first step towards proving a safe habitat for Floreana mockingbirds. Punta Cormorant is a 51ha peninsula with lowland vegetation on the east side of Floreana Island. At the base of the peninsula, there is a 550m long track regularly visited by tourist groups, providing an opportunity for explaining the importance of predator control to a wide audience. A visit to Punta Cormorant is scheduled for the first quarter of July with staff from the National Park and CDF, including Jo Peace, whose volunteer internship focuses on assessing options for predator control as well as design and implementation. Over the next three months, regular visits to this site will be necessary to install control stations as well as tracking tunnels for rodents.



**Base of Punta Cormorant. One of the visitor trails can be seen leading towards the lagoon on the left. Photo: L. Ortiz-Catedral**



**A recently ringed juvenile Floreana mockingbird on Gardner.  
Photo: L. Ortiz-Catedral**



**A juvenile Floreana Mockingbird refreshing on rainwater, Gardner.**  
**Photo: L. Ortiz-Catedral**

**Reintroduction of the Floreana Mockingbird *Mimus trifasciatus* is funded by:**



Verein Freunde der Galapagos Inseln Schweiz  
Association Suisse des amis des îles Galapagos  
Swiss Association of friends of the Galapagos Islands



Professor Richard Dawkins and Lalla Ward