

Press Release

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Artisanal fishing as a cultural experience, a novel alternative

The Charles Darwin Foundation is supporting the promotion of a new activity for artisanal fishers in Galapagos. This idea was presented by representatives of the artisanal fishers as an alternative source of income for the sector. In meetings of the Galapagos Marine Reserve's Participatory Management Board (PMB) during July 2005, a consensus was reached to develop this activity and local users also agreed on a set of provisional regulations to manage the activity. The Galapagos artisanal fishing sector hopes that in August the National Park authorities will present the proposal to the Inter-Institutional Management Authority (IMA) for approval and implementation.

This new activity which links local fishers to tourism is important as a learning process through which fishers will provide services to tourists without the fishermen losing their rights to fish in the GMR. The primary objective of this activity is to showcase fishing culture, including the way fishers work, the resources they use to do their work, their family life, and to help visitors understand the fishing community in Galapagos. The activity will also reduce fishing pressures because the numbers of fish harvested during these trips will be limited and the fishermen will generate revenue from the visitor rather than from fishing.

The proposal also includes the need, for fishers who want to be involved in this new venture, to adapt their vessels and for them to be trained to work with visitors who will be contracting this service. Also, over the course of the first year the activity and the effectiveness of the provisional regulations will be evaluated; this evaluation will be used to revise the regulations after the first year.

“Alternative means of employment through sustainable businesses for fishers such as this activity will only be successful if they are developed in conjunction with fishers and managed by them. The role of other government, NGOs and the private sector will be to support sustainable activities, helping responsible implementation in accordance with the GMR's management and conservation principles”, remarked Graham Watkins, Executive Director of the CDF.

The Charles Darwin Foundation is a nongovernmental organization that was founded in 1959. Its mission is to provide the knowledge and support necessary to ensure the conservation of the environment and biodiversity of the Galapagos Islands through scientific research and other actions to complement that research.

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