

TRIP REPORT

Project Management and Technical Mission

Minas Gerais, Brazil
January 24 – February 8, 2004

Brian Harvey
World Fisheries Trust

Trip Report – Brian Harvey

Brazil, January 24-February 8, 2005

January 24 – Sao Paulo

Met with Bernardo Sardão, project aquaculture intern in BC, to review his progress following return to Brazil in November 2004. Bernardo is presently seeking employment in Florianopolis after completing his B.Sc. He intends to pursue further graduate education in Canada in sustainable aquaculture and is entering a TOEFL class. I reminded him to submit his report on his Canada trip, which is apparently complete.

January 25-27 – Joao Pessoa

Attended the XVI Congress of the Brazilian Society for Ichthyology and represented WFT and the project at the special session on radiotelemetry organized by project trainee Lisiane Hahn of Nupelia. There is an increasing concern about invasive species and an excellent half-day session on the effects of aquaculture on biodiversity in Brazil. Collected abstracts were obtained and contain contacts for future events on this subject. This is an interesting contrast to the generally “hard sell” approach to implanting tilapia culture that is followed by SEAP and showing fairly strong (and uncritical) uptake in the SF basin. A special session on marine protected areas in Brazil was also excellent.

The radiotelemetry special session featured four excellent Brazilian presentations on pilot radiotelemetry studies in the Sao Francisco, Parana and Uruguai basins. This technology is clearly well implanted in Brazil through the project’s efforts (see, for example, reference to input from such studies in any future stock assessment program, below). Presentations and exchanges by LGL representatives would have benefited from better translation as these people do not speak Portuguese.

January 28-30 – Paraiba interior

I traveled by rented car west into the interior of Paraiba state in order to gain first-hand observation of water storage, treatment and distribution in this part of the Northeast. The purpose of the visit relates to the exceptionally high profile of the proposed Sao Francisco Transposition project, which proposes tapping water from the SF basin to alleviate drought conditions in the arid Northeast. I made extensive notes on water management practices and interviewed local people as far as possible on these practices and their opinions concerning the transposition project. I also collected information on the spread and acceptability of tilapia in small reservoirs.

February 1-2 – Belo Horizonte

I met with stock assessment meeting co-planner Hugo Godinho and discussed arrangements for the upcoming workshop in Três Marias (see below). Visiting Canadian expert Neil Schubert arrived in BH and we traveled together to Três Marias where we spent a half-day familiarizing Neil with local species, people and issues with the help of Alison Macnaughton. This process included a visit to the local fish market and a trip onto the river to observe the spilling of water

from the dam (due to very high recent rainfall); sewage input from the town of Três Marias; and the location and potential effects of the CMM refinery. Neil had an opportunity to ask many questions of S. Norberto and received an excellent grounding in the local situation in preparation for the workshop. Yogi Carolsfeld arrived with the remaining attendees from BH that evening.

February 3-4 – Stock Assessment workshop, Três Marias

This two-day meeting brought together most stakeholder groups in the SF basin to discuss for the first time the role of stock assessment in participatory fisheries management in the area. The meeting is summarized separately (see Carolsfeld trip report). It was highly successful in allowing artisanal fishermen an opportunity to voice their concerns and support for stock assessment in the presence of technical experts (from Canada and the Amazon and Parana basins) and representatives of SEAP. SEAP committed further funding for a follow-up meeting that will have a more technical focus, a development the project supports. The main achievement of the meeting was to build the necessary trust between fishermen, scientists and government in this critical but as yet relatively ignored area.

February 5 – Três Marias

I had follow-up meetings with Yogi Carolsfeld and Barbara Johnsen regarding project management and public awareness component of the project. We decided that I will concentrate on gathering material on the transposition project in preparation for a book on the SF basin. I will also collect feedback on the BBC-produced film recently produced.

February 6-8

Traveled to Pirapora and Ibiai. In Ibiai I met with local fishermen and attempted to meet with Josemar (head of Colony) but without success. Returned to Belo Horizonte and departed for Canada February 8.