

Carrying coffee beans. Credit: M Tromp

# January 2015 Newsletter



The Darwin Initiative supports developing countries to conserve biodiversity and reduce poverty. The Darwin Initiative (funded by DEFRA, DFID and FCO), provides grants for projects working in developing countries and UK Overseas Territories (OTs).

**Projects support:**

- the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS)
- the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA)
- the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES)

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## Newsletter contacts

### **The Darwin Initiative Secretariat (Defra)**

The Darwin Secretariat is based in Defra and includes Clare Hamilton, Sally Cunningham and Huw Joynson.

If you have any general queries about how the Darwin Initiative operates please e-mail us at

[darwin@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:darwin@defra.gsi.gov.uk)

For any queries on project applications or existing projects please contact our Darwin Administrators (LTS International) at

[darwin-applications@ltsi.co.uk](mailto:darwin-applications@ltsi.co.uk) or [darwin-projects@ltsi.co.uk](mailto:darwin-projects@ltsi.co.uk)

This newsletter is produced quarterly. To include an article on your project please contact us

[darwin-newsletter@ltsi.co.uk](mailto:darwin-newsletter@ltsi.co.uk)

## A Word from Darwin

Happy New Year and welcome to latest edition of the Darwin Newsletter. We would like to congratulate Shayla Ellick on receiving the David Macdonald Fellowship for her research into one of the first offsetting schemes in the UK Overseas Territories (UKOT's). This coincides with the announcement of the [11 successful Darwin Plus projects](#), so we expect to hear a lot more from our UKOT projects in due course. We would like to wish you all the best for 2015, and look forward to hearing from our projects throughout the year.

For more information on the Darwin Initiative please visit:

[www.gov.uk/government/groups/the-darwininitiative](http://www.gov.uk/government/groups/the-darwininitiative)

For further details about current and completed Darwin Initiative projects, including those featured in this newsletter, please visit:

[www.darwininitiative.org.uk](http://www.darwininitiative.org.uk)

### **Publicity and referencing Darwin Initiative**

**We remind projects leaders that if they are publicising their work then it is important that they make every effort to mention Darwin funding. This is important as it helps us to ensure the Darwin Initiative retains a high profile and helps us to secure continued Government funding.**



## Stage 2 Applicants workshop – ‘Implementable Applications’

The Darwin Initiative held a workshop for stage 2 applicants to the Darwin Initiative in November. The theme of this workshop was ‘Implementable Applications’.

A workshop for stage 2 applicants was first held in 2013 in response to requests from applicants for more information on how to meet the new DFID funding criteria.

We proposed the theme ‘Implementable applications’ in 2014 because our concern is not just that projects can meet the essential funding criteria and be funded, but that the eventual projects are in good shape and capable of presenting evidence of the effect they are having on biodiversity and, for DFID funded projects, poverty alleviation.

We’re seeing applicants present ever more complex applications which include extensive logframes. We are concerned that some of these applicants are being overambitious with their plans for M&E in an attempt to meet what they consider to be DFID funding criteria.

Part of the objective of the day, therefore, was to work with applicants to better understand the difference between what is possible to measure through your project

vs. what is necessary to measure. This is to ensure all projects funded by Darwin are fully implementable from day one and have minimal issues with implementing their projects.

Here is a list of common mistakes applicants are making when applying for Darwin funding:

- Ensure your application fully details how your project will contribute to the Conventions supported by the Darwin Initiative. Sometimes applicants appear to pay lip service to the Conventions which reduce its value in terms of the Darwin Initiative’s overarching objective which is to support developing countries meet their commitments under the Conventions.
- It is essential that you are able to define who the beneficiaries are of your project – in the short-term and (particularly for policy orientated DFID funded projects), the long-term beneficiaries. It is also essential for DFID applicants to define what will change for these beneficiaries. It is not sufficient to define the number of communities who will benefit. We need to understand how many households or individuals will benefit from this work.



Girls and Nets  
Credit Net-Works

- Please consider the wider poverty benefits your work may have. Income is a commonly used indicator yet it is difficult to demonstrate a difference in income within the 3 years of Darwin funding. You may wish to consider widening your view on what aspects of poverty you will affect. The [recent learning note on poverty and biodiversity](#) may be of interest
- For projects that are identifying alternative livelihoods as a means of reducing impacts on biodiversity please ensure that you have identified what the current markets are for these products (i.e numbers of tourists to an area for ecotourism project), what your route to market is and that you have the relevant expertise on your project for doing so.
- If you are applying for DFID funding please ensure you present outcome indicators for both biodiversity AND poverty. For Defra funding please ensure you at least present a biodiversity indicator.
- Please ensure you have identified HOW you might measure the indicators presented. For example what methodology might you use to demonstrate a change in capability as a result of your project?
- Try to disaggregate your data by gender whenever it is appropriate.
- Ensure you are measure the resultant change rather than the inputs/activities you have put into a system.
- Monitor your assumptions and regularly revisit them. Failure to identify what are critical assumptions or detail how you might mitigate them is common and yet could be a fatal error to your project.
- Please do not set a target for your indicators unless you either have a baseline or have good evidence of the success of this approach elsewhere. If your project is a pilot project that intends to set its baseline in the first year we really would not recommend setting ambitious targets of the effect you might have on poverty status of beneficiaries.
- Make sure you present all the CV's of the team members who are critical to the delivery of the project.

If you'd like to read more about the workshop and even complete some of the helpful exercises we undertook during the day please check out the [workshop proceedings here](#).

A close-up photograph of several golden wheat stalks, showing the intricate details of the grain heads. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting a field of wheat. The lighting is natural, highlighting the texture and color of the wheat.

***Updates  
from  
Projects***



Family collecting wild coffee. Credit M Tromp

## Protecting the home of wild coffee whilst improving local livelihoods: Participatory Forest Management for coffee forest conservation in Ethiopia

*Coffea arabica* evolved as an understory shrub in the Afromontane forests of south-west Ethiopia. Despite being a global commodity and Ethiopia's dominant export, conservation of the birthplace of coffee has been poor. While the importance of conserving the coffee forests is now recognised, conservation policies have been unsuccessful because they have alienated local communities.

This project uses a Participatory Forest Management (PFM) methodology tested and implemented successfully over a period of 10+ years in nearby districts which links forest maintenance and livelihood development.

Developing a revenue stream from the forest to help reduce poverty, improve local livelihoods and motivate sustainable forest use is crucial. Two enterprises are now operating with a focus on non-timber forest products which don't impact negatively on the forest. The quality of the coffee from the 'coffee forest' and that from the wild plants in the 'natural' forest has been

assessed by a number of UK based coffee buying organisations. The 'natural' forest coffee has been identified as potentially particularly suited for niche marketing. A carbon assessment has also been completed, providing the basis for generating income from carbon trading.

The project is also exploring ideas of international relevance, especially the way in which PFM can be an appropriate approach to *in situ* conservation. In this way forest maintenance is owned by communities and is sustainable without external support as there are economic motivations from forest-based incomes. The project is generating lessons that may be suited to areas where more traditional approaches, such as biosphere reserves, have faced problems.

For more information [click here](#). To access to a short film [click here](#). Contact Fiona Hesselden: [F.Hesselden@hud.ac.uk](mailto:F.Hesselden@hud.ac.uk)

Team tagging lobster around Tristan Island. Credit: N. Glass



## Ensuring the sustainable management of marine resources in Tristan da Cunha, South Atlantic

For Tristan da Cunha, the world's most remote inhabited island, the marine environment plays an integral role in the self-sufficiency of the 270 strong resident community. In particular, the Tristan rock lobster (*Jasus tristani*) fishery accounts for 80-90% of the island's income.

This project aims to provide vital information that will support the Government of Tristan da Cunha in managing its fisheries and contribute to the development of a comprehensive marine management plan. The project has made good progress providing baseline ecological data for the shallow water habitats of Gough Island and the Tristan da Cunha archipelago.

Capacity-building within local communities is crucial for ensuring sustainable development and project legacy. Another major component of the project on Tristan da Cunha is the training of Fisheries and Conservation personnel in species identification and in practical laboratory and field survey

techniques, including SCUBA diving.

The development of Standard Operating Procedures for all aspects of work undertaken during the project, based on simple and repeatable techniques, is at the heart of the continued monitoring programme. This training is central to the establishment of a long-term monitoring programme, which will provide valuable data that can be used to inform the management of the lobster fishery and to assess how the unique marine ecosystems around Tristan respond to environmental change.

The formulation of a new marine management plan is expected to get underway during the final year of this project which will focus on conservation and sustainable use of Tristan da Cunha's marine resources.

*For more information [click here](#) or contact, Claire Stringer: [clare.stringer@rspb.org.uk](mailto:clare.stringer@rspb.org.uk)*

Aweer community women representatives prioritizing livelihood options. Credit: N Orwa



## WWF Kenya contributes to community based conservation in Boni-Dodori Area

The community based conservation and livelihoods development project in Boni-Dodori works with two forest communities: Aweer and Somalia/Ljara. These communities traditionally depend on the forests for their livelihoods.

The Aweer, in the past, were hunter gatherers but currently practice subsistence farming as a result of a total ban on hunting by the Kenyan government. Shifting cultivation is a common practice among the community. The Ljara community on the other hand are nomadic pastoralists who rely heavily on the Boni-Dodori ecosystem to graze and water their large herds of cattle.

WWF through the support of Darwin Initiative is working with the community to promote sustainable use of natural resources using various approaches ranging from Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC) mitigation, capacity building on conservation based livelihoods, mobilization of service providers, awareness creation on environmental related policies,

among others.

As a result, more farmers are eager to construct moats in their farms to reduce HWC, after learning from their fellow farmers. This move is expected not only to greatly contribute to household food security, but also to biodiversity conservation as less forest areas will be converted to farmlands. The Ministry of Agriculture have been providing capacity building services to farmers on sustainable agriculture and provision of quality seed and fertilizers, reducing the practice of shifting cultivation and increasing farm yields. Additionally, more community based livelihoods are being implemented such as the community conservancy to promote conservation and tourism among other alternative livelihoods.

*For more information [click here](#) or contact, Kiunga Kareko: [Kkareko@wwfesarpo.org](mailto:Kkareko@wwfesarpo.org)*

Community researcher coordinator Fadma Ait Ilich examines an almond sapling with community researcher Hassan Ait Ba, who tends one of the plant nurseries established through the Darwin Initiative project. Credit: ITekguc

## Medicinal plant conservation and livelihoods in Morocco

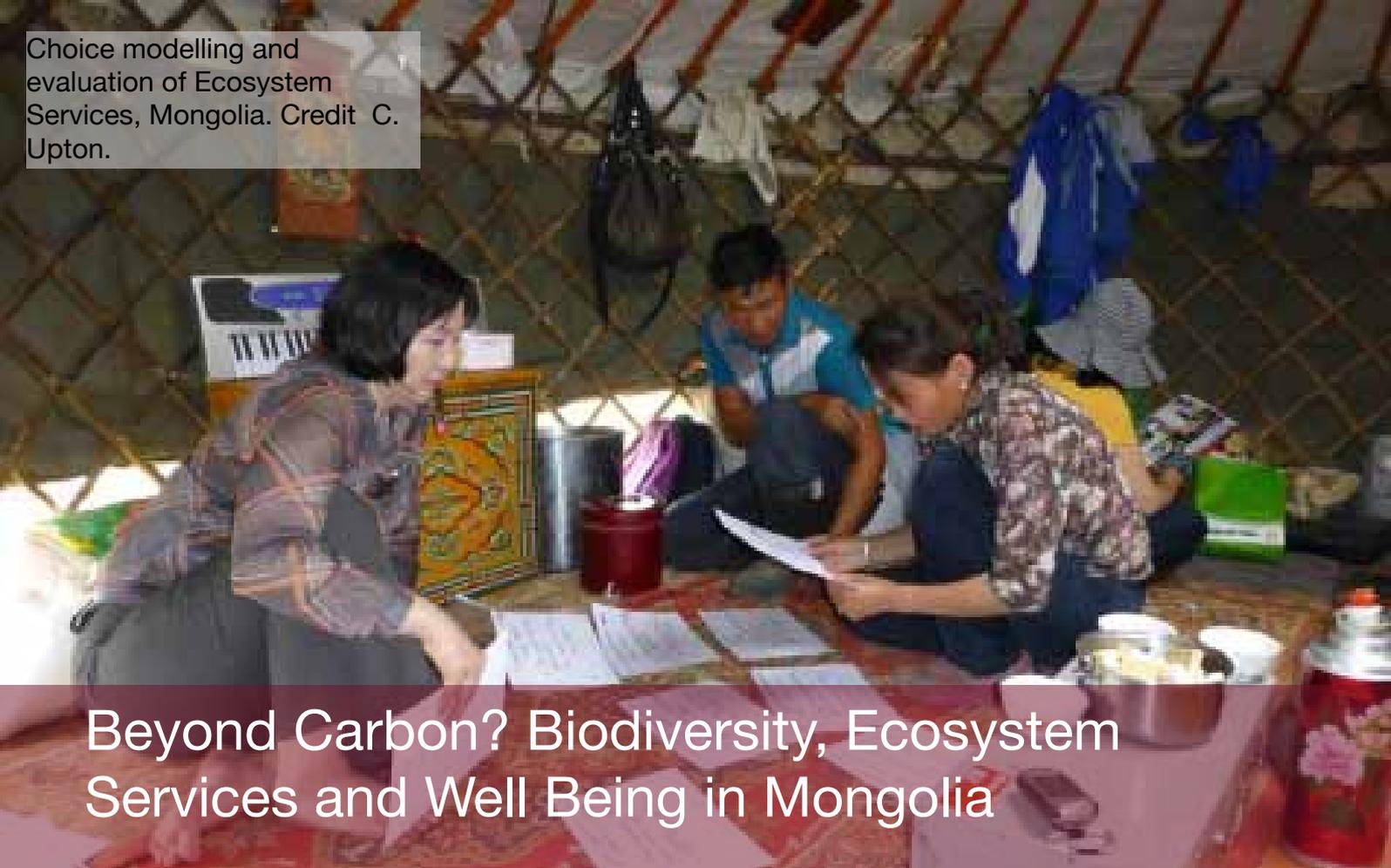
This project addresses threats to the sustainable harvest of vulnerable plant resources in the unique and biodiverse montane ecosystem of the High Atlas. Sustainable harvest is essential to maintaining the ecological integrity of Important Plants Areas (IPAs), ensuring the subsistence of millions of herbal remedy users, and sustaining commercial trade that contributes to the livelihoods of thousands of collectors, vendors and traditional practitioners.

The project focuses on capacity-building of Amazigh villagers to carry out community-based applied research, particularly on the impacts of the project on plant and ecosystem biodiversity. The project is working with communities and community researchers to enhance traditional community-based management practices and conservation areas whilst also developing new adaptive management approaches targeted at

vulnerable species. By supporting these community-led processes and directly addressing people's needs, the project emphasises local rights and ownership of sustainable development initiatives, to improve environmental and social justice.

The core objective of the project is to ensure the sustainable use of vulnerable plant species, particularly medicinal roots, which are threatened by an ever-increasing and unchecked international trade. The project aims to relieve pressure on wild populations of medicinal roots, enhance biodiversity and the ecosystem functioning of partner communities' territories. The longer-term goal is to foster the scaling up of such initiatives to support the sustainable use of plant biodiversity throughout Morocco.

For more information [click here](#) or contact Gary Martin: [gmartingdf@gmail.com](mailto:gmartingdf@gmail.com)



## Beyond Carbon? Biodiversity, Ecosystem Services and Well Being in Mongolia

The Project team for 'Values and Valuation: New Approaches to Conservation in Mongolia' have been working with herding communities at four locations across Mongolia since 2012 to identify and map key ecosystem services (ES) and to use diverse, locally honed approaches to elicit and explore ES values. To date the project has employed deliberate approaches, mapping and ranking and choice modelling to examine group and individual values and trade-offs between ES for 12 selected herder groups and more than 300 households across 4 ecologically contrasting areas.

The Darwin project team is led by the University of Leicester, UK and including the Mongolian Society for Range Management (MSRM), the Mongolian Academy of Agricultural Sciences, the Mongolian Nature Protection Civil Movement Coalition and the Zoological Society of London. The project seeks to integrate contemporary concerns

through finding new ways to support biodiversity conservation in conjunction with recognition of local values around diverse ES.

Drawing on the projects ES valuation work, the project is working with local herder groups to produce and market 'carbon +' certificates under the Plan Vivo standard. These explicitly incorporate herder-identified actions for biodiversity and ES conservation, and enhanced livelihoods/ wellbeing, as well as carbon sequestration through improved rangeland management.

The project enjoys support from local groups as well as national policy makers. It seeks to ensure long term sustainability through helping local herder groups link their sites to Mongolia's expanding Local Protected Area network.

*For more information [click here](#) or contact, Caroline Upton: [cu5@le.ac.uk](mailto:cu5@le.ac.uk).*

Community meeting with women, Mahate

Credit: MICAIA Foundation



## Working for local prosperity in a sustainable world in Mozambique

This new Darwin Initiative project is implemented by MICAIA Foundation with scientific support from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and Mozambique's National Agricultural Research Institute (IIAM). By working on a local level, the project hopes to contribute towards a sustainable balance between biodiversity conservation and poverty alleviation in the Chimanimani Forest belt in central Mozambique.

The development of alternative livelihood options is a central and essential component of the project. The population of the Chimanimani forest belt is generally very poor, with limited access to services, extremely low agricultural productivity, and limited economic opportunities.

Improving farm incomes through sustainable 'conservation agriculture' practices and improved access to local markets will

also help to meet the target of increasing household incomes to an average of \$1.50/day by the end of the project.

Alongside the poverty alleviation activities, MICAIA will work with local communities to improve traditional institutions and management systems, strengthen social capital and increase their effectiveness in managing and utilising natural resources. This will enable individuals and communities to identify mechanisms and spaces to express their 'voice', and influence decision-making and resource allocation processes.

It is early days, but it is hoped that the project will achieve greater well-being for current residents and help secure the forests for future generations.

For more information [click here](#) on contact, Kate Gold: [k.gold@kew.org](mailto:k.gold@kew.org)



Otto Pérez, President of Guatemala and Benedicto Lucas from CONAP, signing the Conservation Agreement  
Credit: CONAP

## Evaluating community-based conservation agreements in Guatemala's Maya Biosphere Reserve

Through this project, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) has been working in association with Guatemala's National Protected Areas Council (CONAP), to protect forests in the Maya Biosphere Reserve (MBR) through an innovative incentives system.

Uaxactún, a village with 1,600 residents located in the MBR, is one of the villages that has benefited as part of this project. Currently, Uaxactún residents co-manage the largest community forest concession of its kind in Central America, an area covering 208,059 acres (83,558 hectares). Through the innovative incentive-based approach implemented in this area, Uaxactún signed its first Conservation Agreement in Guatemala in June 2009 and a second in 2011.

These agreements help finance key conservation actions to mitigate threats, including forest fires, illegal extraction of natural resources and overharvest of xate (ornamental palm), while also investing in social development priorities identified by

local community members and leaders, such as education. All agreements are voted upon by village assemblies prior to implementation, to ensure Free, Prior and Informed Consent of the beneficiaries. The third phase of this project builds on previous support from Conservation International and the Foundation for Maya Cultural and Natural Patrimony (PACUNAM), was recently signed and will remain in effect through to 2016.

Uaxactún was recognized by Guatemala's President Otto Peres Molina for its successful sustainable management of natural resources, including wood, gum and xate. Uaxactún's success highlights community management of natural resources as a powerful and effective tool to better livelihoods and conserve tropical forests.

*For more information [click here](#) or contact, Roan McNab: [rmacnab@wcs.org](mailto:rmacnab@wcs.org)*

*Pteris wallichiana* Credit: R Hyam

## Darwin Fellow Dr. Sangeeta Rajbhandary: A photographic field guide to Nepalese Ferns

Nepal faces enormous challenges to biodiversity conservation. As there is very little information on pteridophyte biodiversity, this group is greatly underappreciated and so badly in need of research to inform conservation action. Despite their prominence, knowledge of Nepalese ferns is very poor - there is no comprehensive documentation of the 534 species currently thought to occur in Nepal. Few people can identify them and there are no publications which help non-experts name them. A consequence of this is that only three tree ferns have legal protection and ferns rarely feature in conservation initiatives.

As part of her Darwin Fellowship Dr Rajbhandary has worked at Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh to revise the fern checklist for Nepal, and develop a photographic field guide to provide base-line data and identification tools to aid identification. She says: *“These are desperately needed by conservation bodies in Nepal to engage*

*in effective conservation action and instigate sustainable use programmes for pteridophytes. A major focus of my work has been on a photographic field guide for ferns of central Nepal which will include general introduction on ferns, collection techniques, illustrated glossary of terms, keys to genera and families, types of leaf, venation, sori, etc. However, the key to genera will include all genera known from Nepal and so will be useful throughout the country. This will raise awareness of the value of ferns, build in-country capacity for fern research and conservation, and enable environmentalists to include ferns in their studies”.* This has enhanced her knowledge and understanding the fern flora of Nepal as well as from the adjoining countries China and India.

For more information [click here](#) or contact Dr. Sangeeta Rajbhandary: [imagine3@gmail.com](mailto:imagine3@gmail.com)

Wedge-tailed Shearwater chick on North Brother Island. There are historical records of large numbers of Shearwaters breeding on Ile Vache Marine. Credit: P Carr



## Island Restoration on Ile Vache Marine, British Indian Ocean Territory

As far from continental land mass as possible in the Indian Ocean, endangered sea-turtles and birds rely on the islands in the Chagos Archipelago. Due to the remoteness of the British Indian Ocean Territory it is no surprise that 10 internationally recognized Important Bird Areas are located there. However, many of the 55 islands in the Marine Protected Area are infested with rats that eat turtle and bird eggs, hatchlings, nestlings, and adult animals, suppressing population levels.

In August this year, work was undertaken to restore the ecosystems of one of these islands, Ile Vache Marine, with an attempt to eradicate the invasive black rat. This was led by the Chagos Conservation Trust, funded by the Darwin Initiative, and in consultation with some of the leading expertise in the field. Official confirmation that the eradication has been successful will not be possible for two years.

Ile Vache Marine is a tiny island (approximately 1.5 km<sup>2</sup>) in one of the most ecologically important terrestrial parts of the Chagos Marine Protected Area. Despite being surrounded by islands with numerous bird populations, only four species of breeding bird have been recorded on the island since 1996. The project will allow for the re-colonisation of seabirds from the surrounding Important Bird Areas and improve the breeding conditions for Critically Endangered Hawksbill and Endangered Green sea-turtles.

For more information [click here](#) or contact Charley Cranmer [charley.cranmer@chagos-trust.org](mailto:charley.cranmer@chagos-trust.org)

# Coralpedia: a million page views and rising

Charles Sheppard (Warwick University) tells us how the 'coralpedia', a photographic guide to the corals, soft corals and sponges of Caribbean reefs continues to develop.

The intention was to compile a photographic and authoritative guide to these three major groups. At the time, there were a large number of projects either underway or just starting up, and these looked like increasing in number as the condition of Caribbean reefs declined as their over-exploitation increased. In too many of these ongoing projects it was obvious that many species, even sometimes the common ones, were being misnamed.

*"I compiled a few hundred photos, taken during many projects over several years into a CD featuring the commonest couple of hundred corals, soft corals and sponges of the Caribbean, and called Coralpedia. Three years ago I decided to, firstly, update the taxonomy in several areas, and also to revise and improve the software which would make*

*its use easier. This was funded by the Darwin Initiative. The software revision was done by a PhD student, Dr Elizabeth Widman. She also continued embedding information with Google Analytics too.*

*Today, the software tells us the programme has exceed a million page views, and that there are dozens more each day.*

*The point of all this of course was to improve consistency of all the various Caribbean reef conservation projects, and ease of doing them. The overall aim is to help ensure reef survey work is up to date and consistent between countries".*

It is to be found at <http://coralpedia.bio.warwick.ac.uk>. All feedback on names is welcome.

For more information [click here](#) or conatct, Charles Sheppard: [Charles.Sheppard@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:Charles.Sheppard@warwick.ac.uk)