

# Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

## Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

Project Ref. No.	162/11/008
Project Title	Elephants of Mikumi National Park, Tanzania: Conservation, Education & Research
Country(ies)	Tanzania
UK Organisation	Department of Life Sciences Anglia Polytechnic University (APU) Cambridge – Animal Behaviour Research Unit (ABRU), Mikumi National Park, Tanzania
Collaborator(s)	Tanzania National Parks, Mikumi National Park, Tanzania Wildlife Research Institute
Report date	<i>31 October 2004</i>
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	3
Project website	<i>WWW.Mikumi.org</i>

### 1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – September) against the agreed baseline timetable for the project.

**PARK ECOLOGISTS MPhil:** Fredrick Mofulu travelled to UK as scheduled. He is now in Cambridge analyzing the data and preparing his MPhil thesis. His progress has been swift and exemplary. Advisors and colleagues at APU are impressed by his dedication, hard work and progress to date. Most of the data are now in an SPSS database and his literature review has greatly enhanced resources for the project. In addition to work on his thesis, Mofulu is collaborating with other Darwin Project UK staff to prepare information from the broader project for reports and publication in line with the projected outputs. Collateral information such as poaching records are being tabulated by Mofulu and others for the broader project goals.

**PROJECT DATA COLLECTION:** Monitoring of elephant along established transects throughout Mikumi National Parks continues. Foot surveys by rangers on patrol continue and have been supplemented in the report period by ranger vehicle patrol surveys which cover a wider area of the park more rapidly. The addition of ranger surveys by vehicle led to a revision of protocols to accommodate this alternative. Vegetation and elephant habitat use continues to be monitored on permanent plots quarterly. Additional representative plots are monitored monthly. Further vegetation and habitat information is collected along permanent elephant monitoring transects. Three aerial surveys have been conducted during the report period and a survey results protocol has been established which disseminates the information obtained quickly and widely.

**RANGER AND STAFF TRAINING:** Regular consultations with and feedback sessions for rangers and wardens involved in the monitoring programme continues. Additional training sessions have been held in the context of the October workshop (see below) to extend the type and quality of information rangers are able to collect and use. Increased emphasis will need to be placed on training at the management level to enable staff to fully appreciate and effectively use the information being collected. Two new ABRU staff are now trained and involved in the protocols logistics and data collection of the Darwin project.

**OTHER TRAINING:** As reported previously the training aspect of this project was expanded to include 2 additional masters students funded and supported by collaborating organisations especially APU and Mikumi National Park as well as Sokoine University in Morogoro. One of these students William Mmari has completed field work on elephant use of baobabs and is now writing up with practical support from the project. Jody Gunn completed a phase of literature review and project refinement in Cambridge during this report period and is now completing the field segments of her project on seasonality, habitat selection and crop raiding by elephant.

**WORKSHOP:** A workshop was held on 21 & 22 October with additional field sessions on 23-25 October. The participants included stakeholders including all ABRU staff plus Tanzania National Parks, wardens and the Mikumi National Park rangers participating in and being trained by the Darwin Initiative Project. The workshop was led by Dr. Phyllis Lee of Cambridge University and the long-term Amboseli National Park Elephant Project in Kenya. Dr. Lee led discussions of progress to date, long-term outcomes and goals and a series of special training sessions on how to obtain and assess the most effective information from the elephant population. Protocol refinement with a long-term focus was addressed along with specific training on the identification and aging of elephants. Dr. Lee's consultation with the Darwin project continued in Mikumi until the end of October. During this time, discussions and comparisons on different elephant populations and environments lead to fresh ideas and insights. Particularly notable was the confirmation that elephant in the Mikumi population tend to be small in size as has been suspected for some time. This is consistent with the possibility that some early population assessments may overestimated young and underestimated older adult numbers in the population.

**LOCAL POPULATION ASSESSMENT:** The interaction between local populations and the elephant population in Mikumi is now being assessed. Villages on or near the boundaries of the park have been contacted in collaboration with the Community Conservation Department in Mikumi. The pattern of crop planting and an initial assessment of vulnerability of these crops to wild animal encroachment from the park has been made. Now that these parameters have been established select villages are being monitored with the collaboration of village members to assess patterns of variability and seasonality of elephant use of village crops and habitats along park boundaries.

2. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments 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.

Problems and issues arising have been outlined in the Annual Reports. Most changes have been minor logistical or protocol adjustments having little impact on the overall objectives and outputs of the project. The most major effects have been on timetabling rather than on projected outputs. These effects are counter balanced by opportunities that have arisen and been realised to expand and/or refine aspects of the project such as the inclusion of two additional masters students.

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

Issues that have arisen are not unique to the reporting period and have been addressed in detail in Annual Reports.

Discussed with the DI Secretariat:                      no

Changes to the project schedule/workplan:      Slight delay to Mofulu's arrival in UK and consequent extension of time for some outputs related to his UK work. Discussed in previous reports.

3. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

Participation in the UK based Darwin workshops and meetings and the newsletters is often difficult due to the demands of the project and other work. However, we welcome the opportunities being offered even though we can not always avail ourselves of them.

Please send your completed form by 31 October each year per email to Stefanie Halfmann, Darwin Initiative M&E Programme, [stefanie.halfmann@ed.ac.uk](mailto:stefanie.halfmann@ed.ac.uk) . The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message.