

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Half Year Report Form

Project Title	Painted Hunting Dog Conservation Through Education & Development
Country	Zimbabwe
Organisation	TUSK TRUST in association with SIREN Conservation Education
Project Ref. No.	162/ 11 /009
Report date	31 st October 2003

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months against the agreed baseline timetable for the project.

Considerable progress has been made this year with the Children's Bush camp / Education Programme and the Community focused income generating projects.

The CCEC's Children's Bush Camp is nearing completion, it is anticipated that the first group of grade six students from a local primary school will come in towards the end of February, 2004. Site inspections by the local chief, the DA, the Governor, representatives of the Rural District Council, local teachers and members of the local chapter of Wildlife Environment Zimbabwe have all been extremely positive. The bush camp has been named the Iganyana Bush Camp, after the name for the painted dog in Isindebele, the dominant local language.

The bush camp educational programme has been designed to emphasize student-centred, hands-on activities that allow students to discover nature and conservation concepts. The "student logbook" of camp activity worksheets, which will form the teachers support material as per the "outputs", has been produced with particular attention being paid too cultural and grade level appropriateness. The final draft will be completed this week and will be taken to local printers for a cost estimate. Lesson plans for use by camp guides are being written presently.

The camp guide training course is now scheduled for 26 January, this to co-inside as previously stipulated with the opening of the Bush Camp. Fliers have been distributed. Interested persons are being sent an application form designed to help choose the most appropriate applicants. These forms are due by 15 November and will be processed thereafter by a committee, which includes Bruce Lombardo and our two educators Vusumusa Sibanda and John Nylika. The most suitable candidates will be employed at the Bush Camp as the educators / guides.

A shift in WEZ policy has required us to advertise for a bush camp director (EEO) position. This was to be filled by WEZ themselves however that will no longer be possible due to their funding difficulties. Applicants must be Zimbabweans with credentials and experience in primary education, possess Learner Guide Certification, and be fluent in English and all local languages. Deadline for applications is 15 November. Several applications have been received. The bush camp director will be trained by Bruce Lombardo, our Educator Trainer, to take over the bush camp operation by 1 June 2004.

For the Painted Dog Interpretive Centre in the CCEC, the first draft of the interpretive centre layout, including the storyboard for the series of seven paintings that will illustrate the life of one painted dog, has been completed and is being reviewed by dog, media and education experts. In addition to the main focus of painted dog biology and conservation, the centre has been designed to interpret the Hwange National Park ecosystem as well. A wildlife artist search has commenced with fliers being distributed and advertisements placed in local papers. Portfolio samples are due by 24 November. Submissions will be judged by a committee that includes the Art Department Head of a school in Harare. The paintings are to be completed by October of 2004.

The Community Development / Income generation projects implemented this year have been hugely successful. A series of "Cottage Industry" schemes have been launched and continue today. These include the production of art work / environmentally conscious curios such as producing greeting cards from elephant dung paper, sculptures from snare wire and sun hats from hand made fabrics. The work was promoted widely at a recent workshop held at Hwange main Camp and attended by individuals from across the country. It is anticipated that an exhibition / auction of the snare wire sculptures will take place in the UK early next year.

Schemes aimed at providing alternative protein sources are being investigated as are the possibility of permaculture programmes based at the local schools. Such schemes will help to alleviate the extreme poaching pressures still prevalent.

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 effect the budget and timetable of project activities. Have any of these issues been discussed with the Department and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Gregory Rasmussen was critically injured in an airplane crash in July, suffering multiple leg fractures. This has obviously affected his involvement in all of the projects day-to-day activities. Dr Sasha Norris is currently on "maternity leave" following the birth of her first child.

The socio economic situation in Zimbabwe has certainly not improved during the last six months and so the same logistical problems concerning the acquisition of materials prevail. Though the originally planned time frame for activities has been altered significantly because of this, such as the educator-training programme, these outputs are now being completed.

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

No