

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Half Year Report Form

Project Title	Xaté palms (<i>Chamaedorea</i> spp.) in Belize: conservation and sustainable management
Country	Belize
Organisation	The Natural History Museum
Project Ref. No.	162/12/012
Report date	31 October 2003

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months against the agreed baseline timetable for the project (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up).

The major scheduled activity in this period was the Planning Workshop, which was held in 20 May 2003 at Las Cuevas Research Station, Belize. At the request of Mr. Alan Usher, Ministry of Home Affairs, we also gave a presentation on the project to selected members of the Government of Belize on 25 June 2003. Dr. N. Garwood lead both events, giving all project partners an opportunity to present.

Belize Botanic Gardens (BBG) has initiated seed collection and seed germination trials, and is shipping seed to RBGK's Millennium Seed Bank at Wakehurst Place for testing long-term storage potential (a new partnership). BBG staff have visited Lancetilla Garden, Honduras, and are making further contacts within Belize to promote xaté cultivation, local processing and marketing. BBG and San Antonio village met with members of the government of Belize on 16 October to discuss sustainable management of xaté in Elijo Panti National Park (which is managed by San Antonio).

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?

There were two unexpected developments: neither will effect the budget or timetable of project activities. a) Mr. Minty, research station manager (RSM) for Las Cuevas Research Station (LCRS) and one of the UK project team members at NHM, stepped down from his position 30 September 2003. We plan to have a new RSM in place by January 2004: ability to carry forward the Darwin xaté project will be a key selection criterion. b) The NHM has decided to withdraw from managing LCRS at the end of October 2004. The RSM and Operations Manager will be employed for a further year, and necessary equipment retained, primarily to carry out project activities within Belize. As planned, resource assessment of xaté in the Chiquibul forest will be carried out in the first year from a base at LCRS, and assessment in other areas of Belize will be conducted during the second year, which does not need a base at LCRS.

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

No.

Please send your **completed form by 31 October each year per email** to Stefanie Halfmann, Darwin Initiative M&E Project Manager, Email: stefanie.halfmann@ed.ac.uk