

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

Project Ref. No.	13-003
Project Title	Taxonomic capacity building in support of biodiversity conservation in Thailand
Country(ies)	Thailand
UK Organisation	Natural History Museum, London
Collaborator(s)	Queen Sirikit Botanical Garden, Chiang Mai. Coordinator Prof. Visut Baimai
Report date	31 October 2006
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	3
Project website	http://www.nhm.ac.uk/biodiversity-conservation-thailand/ [available soon]

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – September) 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).

This report refers to the period indicated above, which runs from the second year annual report for the period from 1 June 2005 to 31 March 2006. The third year of the project actually started on 1 June 2006 and will end on 31 May 2007.

During May and June 2006 (last two months of the project's second year) identification and curation of the Culicidae and Simuliidae were due to be completed. However, there was a one-month overrun into the third year because of the late arrival of insect cabinets, drawers and unit trays. Identification and curation of these two families are now complete.

From June 2006 the project has moved on to the collection of all orders of insects that occur in the Queen Sirikit Botanical Garden (QSBG). Thai participants were trained during the first three months in the trapping, identification and curation of insects in general, with an emphasis on the orders Coleoptera, Diptera, Hymenoptera and Lepidoptera. Collaboration began with four students from Chiang Mai University studying insect taxonomy of four different orders. A web page for the Darwin project has been developed and is awaiting installation on the site indicated above. The web page and associated database for the insect collection (accessed through the Darwin web page) will also be installed on the QSBG server once some technical problems are resolved. The database, which is temporarily located at <http://www.chiangmai-news.com/qsbg-database>, is now being populated. A small collection of reference books on insect taxonomy and relevant specialist papers was developed. The infrastructure for the national insect collection at QSBG is now fully functional and will be used by the TIGER project (insect reference collection from 30 Thai national parks) that was started in June 2006 by the University of Kentucky.

Ralph Harbach and Tony Shelley of the Natural History Museum, London (NHM) visited QSBG in August/September 2006 to coordinate the change in emphasis of the project in its last year. Howard Mendel (Head of Curation, Entomology Department, NHM) assessed the curation part of the infrastructure during an NHM funded collecting trip that he was leading in northern Thailand. Martin Brendell, retired Head of Coleoptera collections in the NHM, then visited for one month to supervise the work of expanding the collection to include other insect orders and follow up on Howard Mendel's recommendations. Specialists at Chiang Mai University are being recruited as required to assist in specialist identifications. Tony Shelley attended a reception at the British Embassy in Bangkok for the new Defra minister, Mr Barry Gardiner, and explained the progress of the project. The field biologist, Mr Mark Isenstadt, resigned in August to take up another position in Thailand and was replaced by Dr

Chaweewan Hutacharen (a specialist in Hymenoptera) on her retirement from the Research Directorship at the Department of National Parks (DNP) in the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment. Dr Hutacharen had previously served as the honorary consultant to the QSBG for the Darwin project. Her new role in the project is to act as liaison between the DNP, QSBG senior management and the TIGER project, for which she is national coordinator, so that there will be a smooth transition to QSBG management when the Darwin project ends. Mr Wichai Seisukkar completed his MSc thesis at Chiang Mai University with Darwin support and has now been recruited to the Darwin project to work on Hymenoptera.

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.

No insurmountable problems have been encountered. To date, the recent military coup in Thailand has had no effect on the running of the project.

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

No

Discussed with the DI Secretariat: No

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: No

3. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures? No

If you were asked to provide a response to this year's annual report review with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan or budget should not be discussed in this report but raised with the Darwin Secretariat directly.

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 . The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message.**