

# Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

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

<b>Project Ref. No.</b>	162/13/013
<b>Project Title</b>	Establishing biodiversity monitoring networks to inform Estonian coastal wetland management
<b>Country(ies)</b>	Estonia
<b>UK Organisation</b>	Earthwatch Institute (Europe) and Brighton University
<b>Collaborator(s)</b>	NGO Läänerannik, Silma and Matsalu Nature Reserves, West Estonia
<b>Report date</b>	31 <sup>st</sup> October 2004
<b>Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)</b>	HYR 1
<b>Project website</b>	In preparation

### **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).**

Following preparatory work in England and Estonia, the first meeting of all the partners (ie Earthwatch Institute, University of Brighton and Läänerannik) was held on Vormsi island, Estonia in July 2004. This meeting addressed the project aims, terms of reference, financial management, and appointment processes for the Estonian Darwin Fellow and other project staff.

There have been two project appointments following formal recruitment processes: 1. Silvia Lotman was appointed as the Darwin Fellow (full-time Outreach and Development Officer) in early September. Silvia graduated from Tartu University, Estonia, and is a member of the board of the Society of Protection of Semi-natural Communities. Other successful interviewees will be involved in the project through part-time/short-term appointments which will be confirmed during Summer 2005. 2. Maureen Berg was appointed as a research support staff member for the project to be based at University of Brighton with effect from 1/10/04. Maureen has a Masters qualification from the Université de Pau, France, and has begun to review project equipment needs and will also be entering monitoring data, meeting partners in Estonia (in November 2004) and reviewing literature on wetland monitoring and Estonian wetlands between now and the April workshop.

In June to August 2004, 3 teams of Earthwatch volunteers were involved in all aspects of the field research, including equipment installation, pilot studies, data collection and quality control, and as such they are fundamental to the project. Teams of volunteers (with Brighton University staff supervision) completed the following activities:

- Over 150ha of wetland habitat mapping at three sites (Diby, Kudani, Matsalu)
- Breeding bird surveys involving 36 transects carried out at Vormsi island and Silma.
- A substantial new bird survey of 73 point counts at 10 unmanaged/managed wetland sites.
- All plants sampled in 64 permanent quadrats at Hosby, Vormsi island and Tahu, Silma.
- Cutting 32 vegetation plots by hand to replicate grazing management.
- Installation of three water level monitors.
- Repair and new fencing at two experimental enclosures.

Collection of background and baseline data and information has been started in Estonia (including past inventory data, management histories, monitoring methods, related projects).

The collated information will now be systematically reviewed and analysed by Silvia Lotman and colleagues in Estonia with methods for analysis discussed at the workshop. Project website design is in progress – a draft is due in December with upload planned for January 2005. The site will be in Estonian and English.

The development of the stakeholder network is in progress with the first meeting of key members to be held in Estonia in January. The aim of the meeting will be to identify the most urgent wetland monitoring issues as a focus for topics for a 3-4 day Darwin project workshop to be held in Matsalu in April 2005. This workshop will involve representatives of key stakeholders in Estonian nature conservation and management from NGO's (eg Estonian Fund for Nature, Society for the Protection of Semi-natural Communities) and Government. (e.g. Ministry of the Environment). The aims of the workshop will be to: (a) encourage dialogue between stakeholders to identify issues, problems and potential solutions in relation to the monitoring and sustainable management of Estonian wetlands; (b) identify gaps in data availability, research and stakeholder coverage; and (c) introduce examples of good practice. This workshop will therefore contribute to refining the priorities for the Darwin project.

**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.**

The start of the project was delayed due to late confirmation of the grant by the Darwin Initiative, although the project is now progressing well, helped by key appointments being made in September/October. The Estonian team plan to make appointments as and when needed throughout the project (mostly during the summer 2005), in line with the proposal.

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

In June, Project Leader, Roger Mitchell spoke to Carrie Haloun about the delayed start to the project, and subsequent lack of progress against the timetable of project activities. It was agreed that the claim for Year 1, quarter 1 (1/4/04 – 30/6/04) should be combined with Year 1, quarter 2.

Now that key appointments have been made the project is following the agreed timetable of project activities.

**Discussed with the DI Secretariat:** Yes, in June 2004

**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? None**

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](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.**