Darwin Initiative

Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

PLEASE NOTE: Due to the increased number of reports expected in 2005, we <u>will not be able to</u> <u>confirm receipt of reports</u> but will contact you individually should any questions arise

Project Ref. No.	162/13/030
Project Title	Gurney's Pitta Research and Conservation in Thailand and Myanmar
Country(ies)	Thailand, Myanmar
UK Organisation	RSPB
Collaborator(s)	BCST, BANCA, FORRU
Report date	30/10/06
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR2
Project website	In prep.

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).

In Thailand, the project continues to exceed expectations. Further training for local forestry staff at the remaining site has continued. Permission was received to start the planting of the experimental reforestation plots and these have now been established. Local leaders attended the opening of these plots and lectured local people on the importance of protecting the environment and the bird. Local forest officials and representatives of the local community have completed visits to Chiang Mai to visit the Forest Restoration Research Unit, view their methods and attend a training workshop. Further botanical surveys have also been undertaken. The ornithological research is also going well, and the new project partner from the Department of National Parks, who is supported by the Darwin project, has proved extremely capable and is working well with the BCST researcher. New nests have been found, at least one of which successfully produced chicks. The new head of the Wildlife Sanctuary has proved to be extremely supportive of the project, far more so than his predecessor, making it much easier to obtain all the necessary permissions. All research outputs continue to be supplied to the forest patrols, making it easier for them to protect key areas. As a result, the amount of forest lost in the last six months has been negligible.

In Myanmar, the progress of the project is less easy to determine. While we understand that the researcher who started fieldwork in April has successfully collected data from over 300 sites, despite the extremely difficult physical and political environment in the south of that country, we have been unable to obtain the data from him (see below). An interesting finding is that birds were recorded at up to 300m altitude, much higher than formerly recorded, meaning that the species may be more numerous in Myanmar than expected.

The project manager visited both countries in September 2006 and met will project partners.

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 main problem has been with the researcher employed to undertake surveys in Myanmar. While we

understand that he collected data in the agreed way at 300 sites, it has proved extremely difficult to obtain the data from him. Following a dispute with the key partner in Myanmar, the researcher has resigned and we are in the process of negotiating with him the return of the equipment given to him and the data. We believe the problem to lie entirely with the researcher, who we now suspect to be mentally ill . Despite meeting him in Myanmar in September and agreeing a date to hand over data and equipment, this has yet to happen, although the project vehicle has been returned. We are still working to get back the assets and data, and to identify and recruit a new researcher. The loss of a year's data, if such occurs, represents a serious blow to the work in Myanmar, which we will work to minimise.

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

No, as the problem has only recently emerged and is still being addressed. When the situation has been clarified, we will revise the project and recalculate the budget accordingly.

Discussed with the DI Secretariat:	no/yes, in (month/yr)

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: no/yes, in.....(month/yr)

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

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 <u>planned</u> modifications to your project schedule/workplan or budget should <u>not</u> 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, <u>stefanie.halfmann@ed.ac.uk</u>. The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. <u>Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message.</u>