Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

Project Ref. No.	13 – 034
Project Title	Wildlife health monitoring and capacity-building for leopard conservation in Russia
Country(ies)	Russia, United Kingdom
UK Organisation	Zoological Society of London
Collaborator(s)	Primorskaya Sate Agricultural Academy, Moscow and Novosibirsk Zoo, WCS, European Zoos, Lazovsky State Nature Reserve, Russian Institute of Biology and Soils
Report date	April – September 2006
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR 1
Project website	www.amur-leopard.org http://www.zsl.org/field-conservation/carnivores-and-people/amur- leopard-conservation-in-russia,468,AR.html

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).

See page 4 + 5

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.

I. During the first few months of the project it became clear that a fruitful and sensible collaboration with the Krai Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory would not be possible. This mainly seems to be due to a number of political reasons that we are neither privy to, nor can influence or mitigate. The Amur Leopard Wildlife Health Project (ALWHP) has therefore decided to restore the currently unused laboratory of the Veterinary Faculty at the Primorskaya State Agricultural Academy in Ussuriysk to become the project's Wildlife Health Monitoring Unit (WHMU) (Annex II).

This change has now a number of impacts on the project:

1. The restoration of the veterinary laboratory requires additional funds, most of which are not covered by the Darwin Initiative grant and have to be sought from additional donors. Due to delays in the administrative process of issuing the respective permits to the Russian Institute of Biology and Soils and WCS Russia though, the leopard captures envisaged for spring 2006 could not take place. We therefore re-allocated funds of £ 8 000.00 earmarked for WCS and their capture work in the remaining FY 2005 to the restoration of the laboratory, instead. This was discussed with the Darwin Secretariat beforehand.

The unavailability of a diagnostic laboratory furthermore delayed the onset of the sampling process, which had to be postponed to early 2007.

II. A change has been made to the onset of sampling activities (see box 1). The reasons for this are threefold and as follows:

- 1. The unavailability of a functioning diagnostic laboratory (see I).
- 2. The unavailability of independent transport, i.e. a project vehicle, until August 2006, due to unforeseen logistical changes (see III).
- 3. The necessity to establish a sound and sensible sampling strategy in view of a rather restricted budget: Primorski Krai covers a large area and the limited resources for our sampling work do therefore not allow for the establishment of a completely random sampling strategy throughout the whole region and encompassing all relevant livestock and wildlife species. To still establish a sound and scientifically viable sampling strategy it was therefore necessary to first familiarise myself with the logistical and political situation on the ground. Sampling is furthermore restricted by climatic conditions: Due to temperatures down to -30°C no sampling, i.e. chemically or physically restraining animals for a prolonged period of time, can take place from late November to early March each year. Furthermore temperatures in July and August raise to +30°C, which results in the same constraints for captures and sampling. A detailed and revised sampling strategy is outlined in Annex III. This strategy is being jointly developed with the Faculty of Veterinary Science and National Centre for Zoonosis Research at the University of Liverpool, U.K.

III. Due to unforeseen logistical changes the purchase of a project vehicle had to be postponed until the middle of August 2006:

- 1. The prices for cars available on the second hand Japanese car markets exceed the budget allocated for the purchase of a car in our DI budget for at least US \$ 2 000.00. This is partly due to the delays between submission in 2003 and getting started in 2006; firstly at the Darwin Initiative end and then due to the illness of our first Project Manager
- 2. After my arrival in the Russian Far East in February 2006 it took awhile to become comfortable with the Russian language and subsequently to identify reliable sources for the purchase of a project vehicle. We eventually purchased a second hand Isuzu Bighorn which also fitted our limited budget line, in mid-August 2006. The registration of the car took another month and in September 2006 we could eventually take the new project vehicle onto the road.

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

The restoration of the veterinary laboratory has been discussed with the DI Secretariat as well as the subsequent re-allocation of \pounds 8 000.00 as a first contribution to the repair work.

The change of the onset of sampling activities was discussed with Ms Sarah Moon during the visit of the Darwin Initiative at ZSL in July 2006.

Discussed with the DI Secretariat:	yes, in 07 / 2006
Changes to the project schedule/workplan:	yes, in 07 / 2006

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

We would like to assign an amount of \pounds 600.00 / month to office running costs, especially due to the additional costs for the security system that could not bee foreseen during the writing of the

original proposal, as well as for the running costs for the DSL-Internet connection as lifeline for the project. Furthermore, an additional budget line for "Rent" should be established to accordingly assign the Rub 4 500.00 / month (app. \pounds 90.00 / month) used for office rent.

Furthermore, costs for car maintenance, repair and insurance might exceed the \pounds 1 000.00 / year assigned for this budget line. Since the car has just been purchased no detailed prediction with regards to the actual costs per year can yet bee made at this moment.

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>

Answers to Box 1

Baseline project progress for April – September 2006	Actual project progress for April – September 2006	Comments
Russian vet counterpart to work with Claudia Schoene identified and engaged.	Professor Lada Vladimirowna Julikova, Head of the Department of Epizootology at the Primorskaya State Agricultural Academy, has been identified as the vet counterpart for Claudia Schoene (see picture in Annex II).	The existing Russian labour laws require a lengthy process before a contract can be signed between a Russian citizen and a foreign employer. The Academy is currently investigating all details required for the successful completion of such contract.
	A Contract of Cooperation has been agreed upon between the Primorskaya State Agricultural Academy and the Conservation Programme of the Zoological Society of London. This CoC is due to be signed in early October 2006 (NB completed at time of writing).	
Krai Veterinary Diagnostic Lab capable of conducting analyses of biological samples from leopards, prey species and domestic cats and dogs.	The restoration of the former veterinary laboratory of the Academy has been envisaged instead. The first reconstruction works are due to start in October 2006. (NB started as planned at time of writing)	The reasons for this decision are outlined in box 2 I.
1-2 students to take DVM identified.	Two final year veterinary students from the Primorskaya State Agricultural Academy have been identified to apply for the MSc in Wild Animal Health offered by the Zoological Society of London / the Royal Veterinary College. This activity is therefore additional to the Darwin- funded activities of the ALWHP.	The students will apply to participate in the course of 2007/8. They will furthermore apply for funding for this course to the Darwin Fellowship programme 2007. The students will return to Russia in June and July 2008 to undertake their field study under the guidance of the Academy before returning to London to finalise their course work until September 2008.
Arrangements for sampling from deer farms, hunting organisations and villages finalised.	Preliminary talks have been taking place with WCS Russia and the Russian NGO Phoenix to establish contact with relevant hunting organisations and deer farms in early 2007.	Final arrangements will be made as soon as the sampling strategy has been finalised. Deer farms can only be sampled in June and July of each year when de-antlering takes place. The hunting season is restricted to November and

		December of each year (for further details see Annex III). District veterinarians will be contacted with the help of the Primorskaya State Agricultural Academy to organise sampling in the relevant villages identified. Depending on the weather sampling will begin in late February / early March 2007.
Sampling and associated student training carried out on Amur leopards held in former Soviet bloc zoos	WCS Russia had already arranged to run our joint "Veterinarian Training in Wildlife Health and Tiger-Human Conflict Resolution Training: Second Workshop" in April 2006, the dates originally intended for the zoo sampling. We have therefore rescheduled the sampling of Amur leopards held in former Soviet bloc zoos to Spring 2007.	A detailed report of the workshop is attached in Annex I.
	A strong collaboration is being developed between Lazovsky State Nature Reserve and the ALWHP. The Reserve is situated in south- east Primorski Krai and has been chosen as one of the possible future release sites for a second Amur leopard population.	One or two students of the 2006/7 MSc in Wild Animal Health in London hope to undertake their field studies at the Reserve. They will investigate the disease status of a selected group of racoon dogs and a relevant control group. The results of this survey will also become part of the overall survey on animal diseases in Primorski Krai by the ALWHP. Existing reserve staff will also contribute to the sampling, whether or not the students are successful in finding funding to assist.
	A poster introducing the ALWHP was produced in September for presentation at selected international conferences and meetings.	A pdf.file of the poster is attached in Annex IV.