

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

Project Ref. No.	14-003
Project Title	Sustainable insect collecting and farming in Papua New Guinea
Country(ies)	Papua New Guinea
UK Organisation	University of Cambridge
Collaborator(s)	(1) Department of Biology, University of Papua New Guinea, (2) Department of Environment and Conservation, PNG Government, (3) Insect Farming and Trading Agency, Bulolo, (4) Wau Ecology Institute, Wau
Report date	24 October 2006
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR 2
Project website	http://www.geog.cam.ac.uk/research/projects/insectfarming

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).

AGREED BASELINE TIMETABLE	PROGRESS IN MEETING TARGET
3/06 to 5/06 Preliminary data analysis	Rob Small has continued to work through IFTA and WEI records, with assistance from Tim Bayliss-Smith in 09/06 and Elliot Tovaboda (UPNG Hons. student, gaining training in Excel spreadsheets in the process. However, village fieldwork with insect farmers has been delayed by wet weather, landslides blocking roads in the Bulolo valley, and by the late start to the project in 2005.
3/06 to 5/06 Report writing . .	A revised version of the paper presenting preliminary results is under review by editor of the journal <u>Oryx</u> , having been resubmitted 10/06.
6/06 Contingencies and local leave	Rob Small returned to UK slightly early at end of 04/06 to recover from illness. He attended Cambridge research training events and also a Crocodile Sustainable Use conference in France in 06/06, returning to PNG in 07/06. Tim Bayliss-Smith made a two-week visit to Port Moresby, Lae, Wau, Madang and again Port Moresby in 08-09/06.
7/06 Revision of IFTA Training Manual . .	Completed by Rob Small 08-09/06, with colour photos of insects scanned with help of WEI and pidgin text translated by IFTA.
8/06 Consultation about training	Completed 09/06.
8/06 Production of training manual	Now under way, 10/06

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.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES. These aims, which should culminate in reports for local readers, papers in academic journals, and Rob Small's Ph.D thesis, remain broadly on track. Delays experienced in 2005 have not proved fatal to the research work of the project, although the work of interviewing insect farmers/collectors and ex-farmers/collectors in villages has been put back to a later date. The threatened non-cooperation of our NGO partners has not yet materialised, and indeed at staff level relations are good, and archival records have been made freely available to us. Relations with the Dept. of Environment & Conservation (DEC) remain unsatisfactory, but from the point of view of data sources, DEC's records on insect exports and permits are not reliable and anyway are duplicated by CITES.

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES. Cooperation with UPNG Dept. of Biology has been good, facilitated by Prof. Lance Hill but overseen on a day-to-day basis by Dr Jane Mogina. Both of the Honours students selected, funded and supervised by the project are on track to complete their studies. Elliot Tovaboda has been working towards his thesis on butterfly habitats in the Bulolo valley studied through G.I.S., and although he was not always prompt with essay assignments while working at UPNG, he has worked much better in the field. In 9/06 he visited Wau for ground truthing his G.I.S. and was assisted by WEI staff when conducting his field surveys. More recently he has been helping in Madang on data entry for Rob Small. Florence Jicki was a more conscientious student in Port Moresby, and according to Dr Mogina she also had a successful field visit to Oro Province, in pursuit of data for her thesis on the ecology of butterfly food plants in relation to local land use practices. Thesis deadlines are 12/06 but some overrun is permissible according to UPNG rules, and more time may be needed in the case of Elliot.

CAPACITY BUILDING OBJECTIVES. (1) IFTA. The Insect Farming and Trading Agency, a long established NGO, is in long-term decline, a process not arrested by the appointment of Dr Harry Sakulas as joint Director of IFTA and Rainforest Habitat in 2005. Rainforest Habitat is a loss-making, redundant zoo on the campus of UNITECH, which 'owns' both it and IFTA. The idea was that IFTA profits would subsidise RH losses, but both organisations are now in deficit. IFTA has not been successfully managed since the departure of its previous V.S.O. manager, which took place in between our Pre-Project visit and the start of the Darwin project. IFTA's poor reputation for slow customer services and low quality insects is fully demonstrated by blogs posted by frustrated collectors on the Insect Net website. At a meeting in 08/06 Tim Bayliss-Smith discussed the problem with UNITECH accountant Mr Jeffrey Juju, whose investigations had revealed the scale of the financial problem, and who also had information of serious pilfering by two members of IFTA staff. It was explained that the Darwin project did not have the resources to achieve more than minor 'capacity building' and certainly could not rescue IFTA from bankruptcy. Mr Juju seemed to fully appreciate what needed to be done, and talked of sacking corrupt staff and improving management. Hopefully a step in the same direction was the training course in I.T. and customer services organised by Rob Small in 09/06, which appears to have been a success. Whether this and other interventions by the project can rescue the situation remains to be seen.

CAPACITY BUILDING. (2) WEI. Wau Ecology Institute has been in decline since the 1980s, a process overseen in the 1990s by Dr Harry Sakulas who was then Director. Today it has a lodge for occasional visitors, a coffee plantation for income generation, and a rather thriving insect business masterminded by Mr Michael Hudson, an ex-Peace Corps volunteer entomologist and for the last 14 years a PNG resident. Its research and educational programmes are largely defunct (Mike Hudson's work on new insect species excepted). Hudson is now de facto Director of WEI, and he sells dead insects of high quality to a select group of international collectors, thus funding the entire Insect Ranch part of WEI and thereby supporting most of its staff, as well as providing incomes for local people in an area of poverty and high unemployment. It is run as a hobby as much as a business, and it pays its way without being particularly profitable. Its future, and thus WEI's future, is jeopardised by Hudson's lowering

tolerance for Wau as a place to live. Wau, an ex-gold rush town, is at the end of a crumbling road and is often cut off by landslides or broken bridges. The town's law and order situation is poor, armed robberies of gold-buyers are not unusual, and even murders are sometimes ignored by a largely absent police force. Electricity and postal services can be erratic. If Hudson were to leave Wau in 2007, the Darwin project would like to consider helping him to relocate his Insect Ranch to a safer part of PNG, with perhaps a teaching link re-established to UPNG Dept. of Biology. So far our efforts at capacity building have been restricted to some I.T. work with WEI staff by Rob Small (08/06). Meanwhile discussions about the future are under way, but no decisions have been reached. If both IFTA and WEI were to collapse, the legitimate insect trade in PNG would receive a severe blow.

CAPACITY BUILDING (3). DEC. The PNG Government's Dept. of Environment & Conservation has been a reluctant partner of the Darwin project. However there were signs of an improving position in 09/06, when we organised a meeting attended by middle-level DEC staff but not unfortunately by Mr Guy Gowae, the new Deputy Secretary for Conservation, who had left at short notice for an overseas meeting. Mr Gowae has previously expressed his support for a DEC website (part of the capacity we undertook to build), which would enable the wider world to know more about PNG laws relating to sustainable use of wildlife and legal exports, not least the trading in butterflies and other insects. These more cooperative attitudes are a welcome change after the lack of progress that we experienced when liaising with Mr Gowae's predecessor, Mr Barnabas Wilmot.

WORKSHOP PLANNING. The planned Workshop has been widened to include other wildlife than insects, and is scheduled to take place on 19-21 February 2007 at Jais Aben lodge outside Madang, to be attended by Tim Bayliss-Smith, Rob Small, representatives of all partner organisations (UPNG, IFTA, WEI and DEC), and by other conservation NGOs and sustainable use practitioners (e.g. crocodile farming). This is a key occasion for the project, and will be a test of how far objectives for sustainable use and export trading can be agreed, and furthermore whether agreement in principle can be translated into better working practices.

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/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? 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.**