

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

Project Ref. No.	14-004
Project Title	A Biodiversity Monitoring System for Trinidad and Tobago
Country(ies)	Trinidad and Tobago
UK Organisation	Oxford University
Collaborator(s)	National Herbarium, University of West Indies, Forestry Division, Asa Wright Nature Centre
Report date	31 st October 2006
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR 1
Project website	http://herbaria.plants.ox.ac.uk/bol/?Caribbean

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).

1. Two undergraduates were employed over the Summer Vacation 2006 to complete the data basing of all Caribbean specimens in the Oxford University Herbaria and to check the quality of the incorporated data. This was done very successfully. The database comprises 5874 specimens from 2824 taxa. All specimens have high resolution images associated with them and these are currently being incorporated into a BRAHMS online Website for Caribbean material.
2. Our principal Trinidadian collaborator, Yasmin Baksh-Comeau visited the UK in July. She worked in Oxford and the Natural History Museum herbaria resolving a number of complex synonymy issues. She delivered a manuscript Flora for the whole of Trinidad and Tobago prepared by her and her long-time collaborator, Denis Adams. Two undergraduates were employed to convert this Flora, in flat text files, to a format suitable for the database BRAHMS by marking up text for each of 27 fields in over 1000 records. This has now been incorporated into the Caribbean database. These data will form the basis of a new Checklist of Trinidad and Tobago. This database is now the primary identification resource to be used by the field teams in the RBS component of the project.
3. A team of eight Forestry Division staff were seconded to the project for one year and have received detailed training in field survey methods. All are to be awarded certificates recognizing this training once they have received further formal training in plant identification techniques in the Herbarium.
4. The refurbishment of the National Herbarium has been completed. Forty, new air-tight steel cabinets have been installed. The Herbarium is now air conditioned and floors and walls have been tiled. The collection has been replaced in the new cabinets. The specialized collection of plant identification guides have been re-housed in a dedicated library. The Herbarium now has a large prep room where plant samples can be dried, examined, mounted and identified. A Herbarium technician has been appointed to assist with plant identification, specimen preparation and data basing.
5. The first phase of survey work has now been completed. Voucher specimens were collected of every plant, in the field and Dr William Hawthorne is presently in Trinidad working with the National Herbarium team in identifying the collected material.
6. Rapid Botanical Surveys were augmented by surveys of canopy epiphytes carried out in three

forests by the Oxford University Canopy Biodiversity Expedition 2006 (<http://www.trinidad2006.co.uk/>). All funds for this work (totalling in excess of £22,000) were raised by expedition members from a number of sources including the Royal Geographical Society and the Gatsby Charitable Trust. Darwin Project research assistant, Ms Shobha Maharaj travelled to the UK in July 2006 to receive further training in advanced canopy access techniques from the Global Canopy Project in Wytham Woods, Oxford. The GCP provided a dedicated advanced training week for the expedition members focussing on botanical collection methods. Nick Brown travelled to Trinidad with four Oxford and one Manchester University students to carry out the collection work. A Forestry Division team was trained as a ground support crew. Forty five trees were climbed at nine sites and 96 different epiphyte taxa were collected in total.

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 refurbishment of the Herbarium took longer than had been anticipated. During this time we had no access to the collection. This has delayed specimen identification, but due to the hard work of the Herbarium team most lost time has now been caught up. There should be no significant impacts on the schedule or budget.

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?

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.**