

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

Project Ref. No.	14-005
Project Title	Conservation of Pakistan's Marine Cetacean Biodiversity and Pelagic Environment
Country(ies)	UK & Pakistan
UK Organisation	University Marine Biological Station Millport (University of London)
Collaborator(s)	Dr. Pirzada Jamal Siddiqui, Dr. Ejaz Ahmad
Report date	04/10/2006
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	2
Project website	http://www.gla.ac.uk/Acad/Marine/

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).

As planned, two of the Cetacean Conservation Pakistan (CCP) team attended the Marine Mammal Course at the UMBSM in Millport (Scotland). In addition, two senior Pakistani participants in the project (the principal investigator and deputy principal investigator at Karachi University) also visited Millport during this period, as did Commander Liaquat, environmental liaison officer of the Pakistan Navy, who has been instrumental in making available Pakistan Navy accommodation and transport to project personnel during fieldwork in Balochistan. These visitors were able to take advantage of the facilities at UMBSM as well as contribute to in-depth discussions about the further work of the project.

The CCP team members participating in the UMBSM Marine Mammal Course attended over 20 lectures and in addition participated in fieldwork training both in the Firth of Clyde and around Mull on the Scottish west coast, reinforcing the training already received in the field in Pakistan. However the Oman Whale & Dolphin Research Group were not able to accommodate these team members for training in Oman *en route* back to Pakistan as planned in July, as this conservation group is undergoing changes in membership and leadership, leaving no one available to host a visit at that time.

The Marine Mammal Course gave the CCP team members experience of

- Meeting other participants and sharing knowledge
- Teaching by experienced marine mammals researchers
- Practical work in the laboratory and classroom
- Independent study in UMBSM's excellent marine biology library
- Identifying cetaceans & practicing quantitative survey techniques
- The operation of cetacean tourism in Scotland
- Studying seal and cetacean behaviour & ecology
- Identifying and recording indicator species including pelagic fish and seabirds

Meanwhile in Pakistan, despite the monsoon season, Pakistani CCP team members have continued work, albeit less intensively than during the principal autumn and spring fieldwork campaigns. Data from previous fieldwork has been stored and analysed by the CCP team, a large area of the south-eastern coast has been surveyed inshore for cetaceans, and fisher communities visited as a first step to involving them in the cetacean conservation programme, bringing to a close our first field season. More specifically this work has included:

- Fisher liaisons: socio-economic survey of the fisher community at Banbhore
- Beach surveys: public feedback resulted in the team being alerted to two dead beached cetaceans, which were identified with samples taken.
- Surveys at sea: during this monsoon season, surveys focused on the Keti Bandar region in south-east Sindh, where humpback dolphins were found to be moderately common in the extensive creek system at the mouth of the Indus.
- Samples curated: meetings were held with partner organisations to locate space for storage of bulky samples (e.g. whale skeletons), and measurements taken off skeletons already held in the University of Karachi.
- Databank: the database has been updated to include the most recent work and copies given to the partners for safekeeping.

Most recently, during the month of Ramadan, Pakistani staff have taken annual leave, which will continue until the end of the Eid festivities. Work on the annual report and educational packages had reached an advanced stage prior to this, with a draft annual report circulated for comment between the principle partners, but it will not be possible to finalise and publish this material until my own return to Pakistan scheduled for early next month. Press releases and publicity have been generated on an *ad hoc* basis, but regular release of media information have not been established prior to my visit.

The placing of observers on deep sea fishing vessels has been discussed with Mr. Moazzam Khan of the Marine Fisheries Research Centre, and it has been agreed that it would be most effective to provide a workshop to educate existing fisheries observers who are located on each vessel, rather make use of CCP team members in this way. It has been agreed that such a training workshop should be held in November 2006 and the venue has been offered by Mr. Khan.

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.

Over the first six months of the project, the achievements surpassed our expectations and the assessment of the independent Darwin referee was very positive. During the second six months, progress has been slower. This is the period when UK staff (who work only part-time on this project) have been UK based, and during which communication with colleagues in Pakistan has been more difficult than hitherto, partly due to a few long periods when the critical e-mail link to University of Karachi was non-operational. As a result liaison between the collaborating organisations has proved less smooth than when I was present in Pakistan.

In addition unexpected technical difficulties were experienced in transferring funds from the University of London to Pakistan, and this has delayed some activities. It is believed that these problems have now been resolved.

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

It was important to spend the time in working with my colleagues to provide solutions to the issues, even if it meant some delays in the schedule.

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.**