

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2008)

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| Project Ref. No. | 162/14/029 |
| Project Title | Monitoring and simulating threats to aquatic biodiversity in the Okavango Delta |
| Country(ies) | Botswana |
| UK Organisation | UCL |
| Collaborator(s) | Harry Oppenheimer Okavango Research Centre (HOORC), University Botswana |
| Project Leader | M. Todd & AW Mackay |
| Report date | 31 st October 2008 |
| Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4) | 4 |
| Project website | www.geog.ucl.ac.uk/~mtodd/accord |

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 Mswana Master's student will receive their degree based on Darwin work: Richard Mazebedi is currently registered for an MPhil, and he is on track for its completion by the end of our Darwin project. However, he will also submit an upgrade report for a PhD (in Nov 2008), and if successful he will complete his PhD by then end of 2009. The possible transition from MPhil to PhD was previously agreed with Darwin on 23-Sep-08.

Final year undergraduates from University Botswana received training at HOORC during June/July 2008 (as part of the winter school)

Training of HOORC technical staff: - as per previous reports, this is an ongoing activity. For example, a training course on macroinvertebrate sampling and identification was held between 21-25 April 2008 (see timetable on website).

Training course in climate modelling: this will be held at end of January 2009, and full details will be given in the Final Report. Rather than give a second training course in multivariate techniques at HOORC, the MPhil student Richard Mazebedi visited UCL for 2 weeks and received intensive supervision in multivariate techniques. He has since been helping other, more senior researchers at HOORC and winter school students with multivariate analyses on their own data.

UCL staff have spent a collective total of 2 weeks in the host country. UCL staff actually spent a total of 4 weeks in the host country, mainly in the field. Mackay also spent c. 4 days assisting Mazebedi and others at HOORC in advanced statistical techniques.

Analyses of our datasets are coming to an end, and *draft publications will be written once analyses are complete.*

An enhanced database of hydrological conditions (flood extent and duration) has been derived from hydrological models: <http://www.orc.ub.bw/datacat/darwin.php>

Ecological databases: databases already held at HOORC have been enhanced through the submission of all the collected macroinvertebrate data from this project (from 230 sites). Diatom data will be provided at the end of the project, once taxonomic identification issues have been resolved.

Presentation of results at international meetings: So far we have presented our data at three international meetings: (i) *Ecohydrological Processes and Sustainable Floodplain Management : Opportunities and*

Concepts for Water Hazard Mitigation, and Ecological and Socioeconomic Sustainability, held in Lodz, Poland in May 2008; (ii) 8th *INTECOL International Wetlands Conference* held in Cuiaba, Brazil in July 2008; (iii) *International Diatom Symposium*, Dubrovnik, Croatia in September 2008. A presentation was also made to the *British Diatom Meeting* held at Juniper Hall 25-26th Oct 2008. PDF handouts of these presentations are available on our website.

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 last 6 months, there have been a couple of developments.

Firstly, on 3rd July I made a request to Darwin about extending our final project deadline to the end of March 2009, instead of end of December, 2008. There is a relevant conference in Denmark in March 2009 for which I will submit an abstract on our Darwin work. This extension is at no extra cost to Darwin, and was agreed on 4th July 2008.

Secondly, Richard Mazebedi will submit the work he has done so far as an upgrade report to the University of Botswana. If this is accepted, he will be upgraded from an MPhil student to a PhD student. We have already agreed this with Darwin, and if the upgrade is accepted Richard will receive this higher degree after the end of our project. If the upgrade is not successful, then he will still be on course to complete his MPhil by the end of project, March 2009.

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

Yes – see above

Discussed with the DI Secretariat: **yes, in July 2008**

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: **yes – project will now end in March 2009**

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.

There were a couple of queries on the annual report regarding: (i) flooding preventing sampling in one region of the Delta; (ii) use of final models to develop management decisions; (iii) expectation that the Biodiversity Management Plan will be updated. As requested in the comments, we will expand on each of these in the final report.

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 email** to Eilidh Young, Darwin Initiative M&E Programme at Darwin-Projects@ectf-ed.org.uk. The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message eg Subject: 14-075 Darwin Half Year Report**