



*Strengthening the Indian Bird Conservation Network to
Safeguard Key Sites*

First Annual Report

submitted by

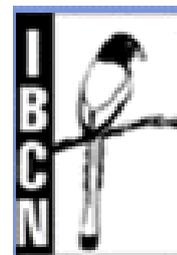


*The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL, UK*

in partnership with



Bombay Natural History Society



Indian Bird Conservation Network

April 2005 – March 2006

Darwin Initiative

Annual Report

1. Darwin Project Information

Project Ref. Number	14-041
Project Title	<i>Strengthening the Indian Bird Conservation Network to safeguard key sites</i>
Country(ies)	<i>India</i>
UK Contractor	<i>RSPB</i>
Partner Organisation(s)	<i>Bombay Natural History Society and the Indian Bird Conservation Network</i>
Darwin Grant Value	<i>£95,085</i>
Start/End dates	<i>1 April 2005 to 31 March 2008</i>
Reporting period (and annual report number (1,2,3.))	<i>1 Apr 2005 to 31 Mar 2006 Annual Report number 1</i>
Project website	<i>www.ibcnetwork.org</i>
Author(s), date	<i>Ian Barber, 30 April 2006</i>

2. Project Background

The Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) is one of the largest membership-based conservation NGOs in India and has a long-standing partnership with the RSPB. The Indian Bird Conservation Network (IBCN), established in 1998, is a network of NGOs and individuals coordinated by BNHS. It is formally constituted and a Project Manager and Assistant, employed by BNHS with funding from the RSPB, coordinate its activities via a network of volunteer State Coordinators.

The network exists principally to monitor and safeguard Important Bird Areas (IBAs) and provided local knowledge for the publication in 2004 of the "Important Bird Areas in Indian – Priority Sites for Conservation". BNHS led the development and publication of the IBA directory which highlights the severity of threats faced by the 466 IBAs across India. The Directory was launched by the Indian Union Minister of Environment and Forests in Delhi in November 2004.

There are many *ad hoc* site and species conservation initiatives across India but nothing of this scale that seeks to use a network approach to site conservation. Therefore, this project will create a unique grassroots mechanism for applying a common approach to site condition monitoring and undertaking sound conservation action across this vast country.

The Director and other senior staff of BNHS have been fully involved throughout the project and will play the central role in implementing the project in India. Its IBCN Secretariat will be enlarged and provided with training, and will then take lead responsibility for growing and strengthening the IBCN, training and supporting IBCN members, and fundraising to secure the future of the network.

This project aims to provide the members of the IBCN with the knowledge and skills to address the issues and further the conservation of their local IBAs. During the

implementation of the project, IBCN members will receive training in a wide range of relevant skills, and will then begin to apply these skills to further the conservation of their local IBAs. They will be supported in all these tasks by the IBCN Secretariat at BNHS and by the network of IBCN State Coordinators, who will play a vital role in developing and supporting site-based initiatives in their states and in driving advocacy initiatives at state level.

3. Project Purpose and Outputs

The purpose of this project is: To enhance the capacity of the IBCN to safeguard IBAs throughout mainland India in the long term.

The project outputs are:

1. Capacity of IBCN secretariat at BNHS Increased
2. IBCN size and cohesiveness increased
3. Biodiversity monitoring, site management and advocacy skills of IBCN members enhanced
4. Fundraising capacity of IBCN enhanced to ensure long-term sustainability

The project logframe is attached at Annex 1.

The outputs and operational plan have not been modified during the first year of the project.

4. Progress

Progress over the whole year has generally been satisfactory, after a slow start some ground has been made up over the final few months. However, some activities planned for year 1 will now take place in year 2.

Progress at the start of the project was relatively slow due to unforeseen staff changes. The RSPB Project leader, Steve Parr left RSPB in March 2006 and his replacement, Ian Barber was not in post until the end of June 2006. This resulted in initial preparations starting late which had a consequent knock-on effect over the year.

The new Project Leader made an initial visit to India in July, part of which was to discuss a timetable for this project. Job descriptions and advertisements were also developed for the two new staff to be recruited and interviews were held in India during a second visit in October.

Unfortunately, due to the poor quality of applicants, no one was appointed and the posts were re-advertised. This failure to recruit staff inevitably delayed progress although the Project Co-ordinator in India was able to progress the project and produce some of the project outputs most notably "Mistnet" the IBCN quarterly newsletter.

Two people were finally appointed in November and spent three months familiarising themselves with BNHS, the IBA programme and the Darwin project. The team came

to the UK for their training programme in February 2006, approximately three months late.

The training programme organised by the RSPB in the UK lasted for the whole of February and focused on three main areas:

- Sustaining an NGO
- IBA Monitoring and Management Planning
- Communicating Conservation – Public Relations and Advocacy

The training for trainers course was designed to enable the participants to more confidently deliver training in the above areas (and other relevant subjects) to both to members of the IBCN, which contains both large and small NGOs and Government officials with a wide range of knowledge and experiences.

Initial discussions were held with the team to scope out the format of the training and the final outputs so that they could input their knowledge and the learning culture and styles from India. The training elements and timetable were agreed and a half-day meeting held to introduce the team to the RSPB staff trainers. At the meeting the team presented the case studies from India they had prepared to facilitate the training. The RSPB staff explained their areas of expertise and how they could best contribute to the training process.

The team were expected to approach each trainer for individual meetings to garner knowledge and discuss relevant issues. Site visits were organised to a variety of nature reserves to expose the team to how similar issues present in the UK are approached and dealt with. The team also closely interacted with the BirdLife International Secretariat staff in Cambridge and they have incorporated ideas about IBA monitoring from their Global framework.

The team spent two days at our Regional Office in central England where they visited one of our Inner city Environmental Education Reserves and had an introduction to the media. The team were able to filter the knowledge gained throughout the training course, translate it into an Indian context, and develop ideas for the training programme for the IBCN later in the project.

Because of the difficulties in recruitment and delays in the UK training element, the delivery of the initial pilot training programme to the State Coordinators has been put back two months to May 2006. At the same time the strategic planning meeting will be held and the project steering committee formed.

The design of the programme has not been significantly altered and the project logframe remains accurate. The timetable has changed to accommodate unforeseen problems which revolve around staff changes and recruitment difficulties. However, it is anticipated that lost ground will be made up over the next year to bring the project back onto schedule.

Workplan 2006/07	2006									2007		
Item	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Preparations for State coordinators meeting	X											
IBCN/State Coordinators strategic planning meeting		X						X				
Pilot training with State Coordinators		X										
Project Steering Group meeting		X						X				
Develop draft strategic plan			X	X	X	X						
Develop Marketing and Fundraising Strategy			X	X	X	X						
Develop training course resources and place on web			X	X	X	X						
Hold 2 IBCN training programmes in NW India						X						
Hold 1 IBCN training programme in Central India								X				
Hold 2 IBCN training programmes in NE India										X		
Sign-up long-term sponsor for IBCN			X	X	X	X	X					
Develop indicators of IBCN effectiveness								X	X	X	X	X
Place case studies of good practice on web									X	X	X	X
Place Fundraising resources on web									X	X	X	X

5. Actions taken in response to previous reviews (if applicable)

6. Partnerships

The partnership between the RSPB and BNHS has been a productive one over many years and this project has enhanced the good relationship between us. The IBA/IBCN programme, part funded by the RSPB, began in 1998 and this Darwin project provides support for the continuation for much of that work.

This project has helped foster relationships with the BirdLife International Secretariat and although no formal collaboration has yet been established with other BirdLife Partners in the region, there is a great deal of interest within the BirdLife Partnership to learn from this programme. Several other BirdLife Partners in the region eg Thailand and Nepal have expressed an interest in attending a training workshop in India.

Staff from Birdlife International Secretariat participated in the UK training programme.

7. Impact and Sustainability

The project has been publicised nationally within the IBCN through the publication of the quarterly newsletter "Mistnet", the quality of which has been improved with project funding. Funding has been used to produce a new leaflet to attract new members and the first event held at an Sewri IBA near Mumbai highlighted the plight of flamingos faced with development pressure. The project has made steady progress but it is too early to judge the overall impact on biodiversity the project will have.

The plan for the exit strategy is unchanged since the beginning of the project. RSPB are committed to continuing our support to BNHS and the IBCN in the long term and fundraising skills were included in the training of trainers provided in the UK. Initial talks have begun with a potential long-term sponsor and this will be followed up over the coming months.

8. Outputs, Outcomes and Dissemination

The delays encountered with recruiting staff in India had an impact on several outputs. In particular, outputs relating to the training programme under achieved including the training manual, the State Coordinators conference, national meetings attended and press releases.

A successful event was held at the Sewri IBA near Mumbai to highlight the potential impacts of a new causeway on the internationally important flamingo population. This attracted significant media interest and was attended by Govt officials. Members of the general public were invited to sign the petition opposing the development.

The savings on salaries did enable an additional member of the IBCN team to attend part of the training programme in the UK.

Table 1. Project Outputs (According to Standard Output Measures)

Code No.	Description	Year 1 Total	TOTAL
6A & 6B	3 members of the IBCN team from India received 4 week training in UK on: Sustaining an NGO, IBA Monitoring and Management Planning, Communicating Conservation – Public Relations and Advocacy	3	3
	1 member of the IBCN team from India received 2 week training in UK on: Sustaining an NGO, IBA Monitoring and Management Planning, Communicating Conservation – Public Relations and Advocacy	1	1
7	Training material to be reviewed after State Coordinators training workshop in May 2006.	0	0
14A	State Coordinators conference planned for May 2006	0	0
14B	National/Regional meetings attended	0	0
15A	Press release for Flamingo Watch event held in Jan 2006 to highlight development threat to IBA near Mumbai generated significant media coverage.	1	1

15B	Press release for Flamingo Watch event held in Jan 2006 to highlight development threat to IBA near Mumbai generated significant media coverage.	1	1
15C	Only local press interest generated during UK training programme	0	0
16A	3 quarterly Mistnet newsletter produced part funded by Darwin project	3	3
16B	Mistnet newsletter produced and distributed in India	300	300
16C	Mistnet newsletter distributed in UK	20	20
18A	Flamingo Watch event held in Jan 2006 to highlight development threat to IBA near Mumbai generated significant media coverage.	4	4
19A	Flamingo Watch event held in Jan 2006 to highlight development threat to IBA near Mumbai generated significant media coverage	2	2
19C	Flamingo Watch event held in Jan 2006 to highlight development threat to IBA near Mumbai generated significant media coverage	3	3
20	Computer equipment and GIS software purchased	£5,493	£5,493
23	Co-funding from RSPB and BNHS as per project document except funding for the State Coordinators conference which will now take place in May 2006	£24,758	£24,758

Table 2: Publications

Type * (e.g. journals, manual, CDs)	Detail (title, author, year)	Publishers (name, city)	Available from (e.g. contact address, website)	Cost £
Quarterly Journal July-Sept 05 Oct –Dec 05 Jan – Mar 06	Mistnet, (Ed),	IBCN/BNHS	IBCN/BNHS, Hornbill House, SB Singh Road, Mumbai 400 023, India www.ibcnetwork.org	Small fee to cover P & P
Membership leaflet	Zafar-ul Islam <i>et al</i>	IBCN/BNHS	IBCN/BNHS, Hornbill House, SB Singh Road, Mumbai 400 023, India www.ibcnetwork.org	Free
Advocacy Leaflet for	Zafar-ul Islam <i>et al</i>	IBCN/BNHS	IBCN/BNHS, Hornbill House, SB Singh	Free

Flamingos
Watch at
Sewri IBA

Road, Mumbai 400
023, India

www.ibcnetwork.org

9. Project Expenditure

**Table 3: Project expenditure during the reporting period (Defra Financial Year
01 April to 31 March)**

10. Monitoring, Evaluation and Lessons

The main method of project monitoring has been the regular contact between the project leaders in both countries. This has included three visits by the RSPB project leader to India and the month-long training course in the UK throughout February. The project steering group will be established during the State Coordinators meeting in May 2006.

The achievement of the project purpose is dependent upon the development of a trained and motivated network of NGOs and people based at the local level. The project is in the early stages having just completed the training of the IBCN staff so it is too early to judge long term success. The indicators of success will be measured according to the indicators and means of verification in the project logframe although we will continue to monitor the relevance and reliability of these.

The main lesson identified has been the time needed to plan and execute a successful training workshop. This is particularly relevant when the events are held in relatively remote areas where transportation presents challenging logistical issues and the IBCN team will take this into account when planning the events this coming year.

11. OPTIONAL: Outstanding achievements of your project during the reporting period (300-400 words maximum)

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Annex 1 Report of progress and achievements against Logical Framework for Financial Year: 2005/2006

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2005-Mar 2006	Actions required/planned for next period
<p>Goal: To draw on expertise relevant to biodiversity from within the United Kingdom to work with local partners in countries rich in biodiversity but poor in resources to achieve the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources</p>			
<p>Purpose: To enhance the capacity of the IBCN to safeguard IBAs throughout mainland India in the long-term</p>	<p>IBCN actively working to safeguard $\geq 50\%$ of Indian IBAs</p>	<p>IBCN staff trained in UK and one event held at IBA in Mumbai</p>	<p>Training programme for State Coordinators and IBCN members planned</p>
<p>Outputs</p>			
<p>Capacity of IBCN secretariat at BNHS increased</p>	<p>2 additional staff recruited Training delivered to 3 staff</p>	<p>2 new staff members recruited with Darwin funds and an Advocacy Officer recruited with additional RSPB funds. UK training delivered to 3 IBCN staff with an new Advocacy Officer participating in half of the training</p>	<p>General IBA/IBCN training will continue for all secretariat staff IBCN secretariat staff deliver training to State Coordinators and IBCN members</p>
<p>IBCN size and cohesiveness increased</p>	<p>IBCN membership increased to ≥ 100 NGOs and $\geq 1,500$ individuals Strategic plan for IBCN agreed</p>	<p>Membership at present is stable at about 80 NGOs and 900 individuals. Not yet implemented</p>	<p>Marketing of IBCN to potential new members through promotion and distribution of new membership leaflet. Hold consultation meeting on future strategy of IBCN in May 2006,</p>

	National meeting held successfully	Preparations for meeting in hand	produce and distribute documents Hold meeting in May 2006 and produce report.
Biodiversity monitoring, site management and advocacy skills of IBCN members enhanced	Biodiversity monitoring underway at $\geq 25\%$ of IBAs All IBA management plans have input from IBCN Advocacy and lobbying underway to protect $\geq 30\%$ of IBAs	Not implemented yet Not implemented yet Advocacy Officer recently appointed	Monitoring to begin after delivery of training programmes Internal mechanisms to ensure data and knowledge feed into action Advocacy officer to continue training and coordinate action
Fundraising capacity of IBCN enhanced to ensure long-term sustainability	$\geq \pounds 10,000$ raised during project and $\geq \pounds 20,000$ per year from end of project	Discussions in progress with possible long-term supporter	Foster links and develop proposal for sponsorship

Note: Please do NOT expand rows to include activities since their completion and outcomes should be reported under the column on progress and achievements at output and purpose levels.