

# Darwin Initiative

## Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

**PLEASE NOTE: Due to the increased number of reports expected in 2005, we will not be able to confirm receipt of reports but will contact you individually should any questions arise**

<b>Project Ref. No.</b>	14-044
<b>Project Title</b>	Building a bird conservation and environmental network in China
<b>Country(ies)</b>	China
<b>UK Organisation</b>	BirdLife International
<b>Collaborator(s)</b>	Hong Kong Bird Watching Society
<b>Report date</b>	31 October 2005
<b>Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)</b>	HYR 1
<b>Project website</b>	-

### **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).**

The progress of the project over the last 6 months is summarised below against the Project implementation timetable. Despite the fact that the China Programme Officer was recruited later than originally planned, considerable progress was made during the second quarter and the project activities are now broadly on the schedule set in the Project implementation timetable.

#### Recruitment of China Programme officer (April 2005)

Carrie K. W. Ma (whose CV was submitted with our application to the Darwin Initiative) joined the project as China Programme Officer in mid-July. She established a small China Programme office in a commercial centre in Hong Kong during August.

#### Project management and administrative procedures established (April-May 2005)

A project steering committee has been established, comprising C. Y. Lam (President, HKBWS), Ho-Fai Cheung (Chairman, HKBWS), Simba Chan (Senior Conservation Officer, BirdLife Asia Division) and Mike Crosby (Research & Data Manager, BirdLife Asia Division). Richard Grimmett (Head of BirdLife Asia Division) will attend some steering committee meetings as an observer and provides overall supervision of project implementation. Two steering committee meetings have been held, on 15 June and 8-9 October, both in Hong Kong.

A draft Memorandum of Understanding between BirdLife International and HKBWS concerning the development of the China network (with the support of the Darwin Initiative project) has been discussed by the steering committee, and is close to being finalised.

The steering committee has delegated responsibility for management of the Darwin project budget to Mike Crosby and Carrie Ma (under the supervision of Ho-Fai Cheung). Financial reporting procedures have been agreed with the Finance & Administration Department at the BirdLife International Secretariat office in Cambridge.

#### Visit by representative of Beijing Birdwatching Society to Hong Kong (June 2005)

At its first meeting in June 2005, the steering committee decided that a visit by representatives of Beijing Birdwatching Society to HKBWS was not necessary in June 2005, as representatives of that society had made several visits to HKBWS in the recent past. The steering committee felt that a better way to inform Beijing and the other birdwatching societies about the conservation work and organisational management of HKBWS would be through presentations made by the China Programme Officer (who worked for HKBWS from 2000-2005) during her visits to these societies.

#### Visit to UK by representatives of Beijing Birdwatching Society and HKBWS (August 2005)

The proposed visit to the UK by representatives of Beijing Birdwatching Society and HKBWS in August 2005 was postponed because the Beijing Birdwatching Society representative (Zhong Jie) was not able to travel at that time. The steering committee will consider whether and when this proposed visit should be rescheduled.

#### Production and distribution of quarterly China Birdwatching and Conservation Network newsletter (September 2005 onwards)

The original aim of the project had been to initiate a quarterly newsletter for the China Birdwatching and Conservation Network in September 2005. However, a magazine called *China Bird Watch* already exists, and the project steering committee has decided to support the publication of this magazine so that it can become the newsletter for the China network. Negotiations are being conducted with the editors of *China Bird Watch*, who are based in Beijing and Zhejiang, and we plan to jointly sponsor the magazine with a funding agency called the Global Greengrants Fund. Six issues of *China Bird Watch* are published each year, and with our support the newsletter will be able to become larger and more professionally-produced, and fulfil all of the aims that we had for the China Birdwatching and Conservation Network newsletter. Our aim is to start to support *China Bird Watch* from February 2006 onwards.

#### Assessment of China Birdwatching organisations, and preparation of a plan for the structure and operation of the China Birdwatching and Conservation Network (April-October 2005)

Since mid-July, the China Programme Officer has completed assessments of eight birdwatching societies in mainland China, and detailed reports have been prepared on these assessments. The only other major birdwatching society, Fujian Birdwatching Society, was assessed during October. We are aware of several smaller birdwatching societies or groups, but the project steering committee has decided that it is not necessary for the China Programme Officer to visit these groups as part of the initial network assessment.

The plan for the structure and operation of the China Birdwatching and Conservation Network was discussed at the project steering committee meetings in June and October. The first of these meetings drew up a proposal for a vision and strategy. At the second meeting, it was proposed that a loose network would be the best model. This is because it is clear from the network assessment that the birdwatching societies want to keep their individual identities, and the development of a more structured federation might cause us problems with the government. The role of the China Programme will be to facilitate communication and interconnection between the birdwatching societies and to promote common projects in support of the conservation of threatened species and priority sites.

## **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.**

#### Taiwan issue

BirdLife International has a Partner organisation in Taiwan, the Wild Bird Federation Taiwan. In the logical framework of our Darwin application form, we included as an important assumption that "The Taiwan issue will not interfere in a significant way with HKBWS and BirdLife's work in China". Unfortunately, it is clear that BirdLife's link to Taiwan, in particular the name of our Partner organisation has started to cause some difficulties in the relationship with the birdwatching societies.

Several actions are being taken to address this issue, including a visit to Taiwan by senior BirdLife staff in November for discussions with the board of the Partner organisation. This issue will also be discussed with the Chinese Government and at a meeting of the birdwatching societies which is planned to be held at the Dongting Bird Race in December.

Security of China Programme Officer

When she was returning from one of her visits to the birdwatching societies, the China Programme Officer was robbed in Shenzhen city, close to the border with Hong Kong. Fortunately, she was unhurt, but she lost a mobile phone, and some money and documents. The project steering committee has advised her to (as far as possible) avoid travelling alone in mainland China, to take particular care in Shenzhen city and to purchase comprehensive travel insurance.

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

BirdLife will be exploring further the difficulties raised by having a Partner organisation in Taiwan. At this stage, it is unclear whether this issue might have implications for project activities and scheduling. We will discuss this with the Darwin Secretariat once we have more information.

**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](mailto: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.**