

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

Project Ref. No.	15/005
Project Title	Conservation of the Mangrove Finch <i>Cactospiza heliobates</i>
Country(ies)	Ecuador
UK Organisation	Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust
Collaborator(s)	Charles Darwin Foundation (CDF), Galápagos National Park
Report date	30 th September 2006
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR 1
Project website	<i>Not yet available</i>

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 project started in June 2006 with a one-day planning meeting at Durrell Wildlife in Jersey attended by staff of Durrell including the Project Leader, Dr. Glyn Young and Dr. Alan Tye (CDF) and Dr. Hernan Vargas (Scientific Advisor). This meeting established project limits and developed workplans, programmes for students, reporting protocols and finance lines. A job description and requirements for a Field Manager to undertake the project were written and the position was advertised in the Galápagos and then internationally in English and in Spanish.

Following the Jersey meeting Dr. Young travelled to Galápagos to attend further planning meetings in late June-early July. These meetings established contact with host co-ordinator, Dr. Bryan Milstead, cemented agreement between Durrell Wildlife and project partners (CDF and GNP) and further developed lines of reporting, workplans and operational requirements. Sources of transportation to field sites, equipment, potential food for captive birds and veterinary services were identified.

During the Galápagos meetings project members, Dr. Young and Dr. Gustavo Jimenez (CDF), met with local stakeholders, Dr. Juan Chavez (GNP) and Sandra Landazuri (CDF) in Puerto Villamil, Isabela to establish project links on the finch's home island. Areas of mangrove around Puerto Villamil and the Tortoise Breeding Center were visited to investigate possible sites for captive-breeding and release facilities.

The position of Field Manager received 17 applicants and interviews were held by conference call in mid July. The position was subsequently filled by Dr Birgit Fessl, a recognised authority on the interactions between the parasitic fly *Philornis* and Darwin's finches and who has worked for several seasons in Galápagos. Dr. Fessl moved with her family from France to Galápagos at the end of September.

In August and September protocols and workplans were further developed and collaborators for genetic analysis contacted. A larger cadre of advisors including Drs. Peter and Rosemary Grant, Dr. Sonia Kleindorfer and Dr. Sabine Tebbich was established by direct communication. Dr. Young and Dr. Vargas met Drs. Grant in the UK to discuss management of the finch.

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 delayed employment of the Field Manager set the beginning of fieldwork back temporarily; however, this disappointment was offset by the quality of the appointee.	
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?
None

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.**