

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2007)

Project Ref. No.	15/012
Project Title	Protecting Key South African Biodiversity Sites through Community-based Conservation
Country(ies)	South Africa
UK Organisation	The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
Collaborator(s)	BirdLife South Africa
Project Leader	Paul Buckley
Report date	October 2007
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR 2
Project website	http://www.birdlife.co.za/index.php?p[I]Gcms_nodes][I]Gcms_nodesUID]=ccb18029b28e2f6bc62d6c4b3cec84d0

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).

For the period of April 1st to September 30th, 2007, our progress against the agreed baseline timetable for the project (indicated in italics) is as follows:

- *Local stakeholder meetings and awareness raising activities continue (By May 2007)*

Soweto: Vision - Develop a local birding and environmental consciousness among the youth of Kliptown in Soweto. Where possible, develop institutional capacity within local community organisations so they may better represent wetland conservation issues better during their negotiations with government.

- The site coordinator has spent January-September actively engaging stakeholders in the Soweto area, including community based organisations, Non-Government Organisations, and local government departments. These various interest groups have their own agendas and projects on the ground, yet these are mostly fragmented and don't strive for a common objective. Due to the scale and complexity of the site, aligning with the correct stakeholders has taken longer than at the other two sites. Nonetheless, the site coordinator has done a good job in creating awareness about the project and wetland and bird conservation.

Wakkerstroom: Vision - To integrate the objectives of all racial and cultural sectors of the community so as to achieve a common goal towards enhancing and equalling benefiting from tourism and wetland conservation. Build knowledge among previously disadvantaged people about the benefits and science of conserving the wetland.

- The site coordinator has now met with all the stakeholders in the area and developed strategic partnerships with each group. These groups include:
 - Working for Wetlands (National Government Programme)
 - Ekangala Grassland Project (South African National Biodiversity

Institute)

- Pixley ka Seme Municipality (Local Government)
- Beehive Project (Community Based Organisation-CBO)
- Department of Agriculture and Land Administration (Provincial Government)
- Department of Labour (National Government Department)
- Wakkerstroom Natural Heritage Association (CBO)
- Wakkerstroom Tourism Association (CBO)
- Wakkerstroom Wetland Management Committee (CBO/Local Government)
- Local Farm owners and labourers, and three local schools.
- Endangered Wildlife Trust's Crane Working Group (National NGO)

Cata: Vision - Build the institutional capacity and skills of the Cata community to enhance benefits from and management of the cultural and forest resources owned by the community. Build knowledge among the Cata people about the benefits and science of conserving the indigenous forest.

- The site coordinator was only employed in August 2007. He spent August and September meeting community members, the Border Rural Committee (BRC is the local NGO partner), and is currently meeting the local government department Amathole District Municipality and the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF). Prior to the appointment of the site coordinator, the programme manager established links with the BRC, DWAF and commercial logging companies. The programme manager also ran one community meeting introducing the project and jointly discussing its objectives with the community representatives, and ran one workshop to discuss avitourism and the associated benefits as a possible driver for local economic growth. The site coordinator will follow up with a second workshop to discuss specific options suitable for the community.
- ***Socio-economic assessments completed at three sites. (By June 2007)***
 - Paul Morling and Andrea Lockwood of RSPB visited the three Darwin sites in SA from the 10th to 20th April 2007. The team spent three to four days at each site meeting key stakeholders and gathering relevant socio-economic data (to compliment data sourced and sent to Paul beforehand). A document outlining current data and economic opportunities at each of the three sites was completed and will be used in conjunction with the site specific resource use assessments and socio-economic data gathered by the site coordinators in the coming months.
- **Resource Use Assessment (not specified in project objectives). Outside Consultant-Rhodes University**
 - A Resource Use Assessment was conducted in the Cata Community (Eastern Cape) by Rhodes University. The main objective was to establish the current relationship between the community, i.e. the types, amounts and locality of forest resources used by community members. The present interaction between the community and the forest is largely not detrimental and rather provides numerous opportunities for creating positive interactions striving for economic and conservation benefits.
 - Upon completion of training in Participatory Rural Appraisals (by end November 2007), the site coordinators and community representatives will also complete a Resource Use Assessment at the other two sites, along with a Poverty Assessment at all three sites.
- ***Training in awareness raising completed (By August 2007)***
 - Due to strikes by government teachers, no workshops with teachers have been allowed by the national Department of Education until schools have caught up with school syllabus. Therefore it has been decided that Joe Peu (BLSA Environmental Education Division Manager) will first hold a three day workshop with the site coordinators (linked to the planned Participatory Poverty Assessment and Training for Trainers workshop) in November 2007. A teacher's workshop will then be planned for each site during February and March 2008.

- **Training in conservation monitoring. (By November 2007)**
 - This workshop was conducted in September 2007 by Neil Smith with the three site coordinators. The workshop also included an information sharing exercise between the three site coordinators, an exercise to evaluate and align the teams perceptions about community based conservation, and a workshop on project management, budget exercises, and site reporting. Once the site coordinators have received the Training for Trainers workshop, they will train the community representatives in conservation monitoring, planned for January 2008

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 only problem has been with the Soweto site. The underestimation of the scale and complexity of the site has caused several delays in planning and implementing tangible projects on the ground. The total success of the project really rests with the type of partnership that can be established with the Johannesburg City Parks (JCP), the metropolitan division implementing the Mayor's 2010 legacy project "Greening of Soweto". BLSA will shortly be submitting a proposal to the JCP describing BLSA's contribution to this Mayoral project. Ultimately, all social and environmental projects in such large, urban settings hinge on local government buy-in and cooperation, often processes littered with bureaucracy.

The final decision on the third project site, Cata Community (Eastern Cape) was only made in February 2007. A partnership was established with a local NGO (Border Rural Committee), a resource use assessment was completed in July 2007 and a site coordinator was employed in August 2007. This however does not imply that no work has taken place at the site as the programme manager and conservation manager have been standing in and have run community meetings and workshop at the site, and started developing site projects such as the "Cape Parrot Friendly Pecan Nut" project currently negotiating a partnership with Woolworths SA (accepted in principle).

The Programme Manager's focus over August to December 2007 is to secure additional funding for the existing three sites for the period post 2008 to ensure sustainability. Focus on selecting and developing a programme for this site will take place before March 2008.

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: n/a

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: n/a

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. Responses will be made in the next annual report as requested.

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**