

# Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2008)

<b>Project Ref. No.</b>	15/012
<b>Project Title</b>	Protecting Key South African Biodiversity Sites through Community-based Conservation
<b>Country(ies)</b>	South Africa
<b>UK Organisation</b>	The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
<b>Collaborator(s)</b>	BirdLife South Africa
<b>Project Leader</b>	Paul Buckley
<b>Report date</b>	October 2008
<b>Report No.</b>	HYR 3
<b>Project website</b>	<a href="http://www.blsacommunityconservation.org.za">http://www.blsacommunityconservation.org.za</a>

## **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 1<sup>st</sup> to September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008, 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)***

- All site managers are continually engaging their stakeholders to cement strong networks and working relationships.
- The awareness raising among local community groups has been seen as successful by the facts that voluntary eco-clubs have been established at each of the first three sites, people are generally more aware and vocal about key species and habitat importance. The Wakkerstroom traditional authority (Chief) has changed the logo of his traditional authority to a black eagle so his people know that he supports conservation.

### **• *Socio-economic assessments completed at three sites. (By October 2008)***

- Paul Morling (RSPB) completed his socio-economic assessment at all three sites in July 2007 (see previous annual report).
- The site managers and their respective assistants completed socio-economic data gathering in September 2008. The interviewees were project recipients and the objective is to monitor changes in socio-economic status of the project beneficiaries. This data will be gathered annually at each site.

### **• *Training in awareness raising completed and programme underway at three sites (By July 2008)***

- All three site managers have received training in awareness raising from Joe Peu (BirdLife SA Environmental Education manager). All three sites have an awareness raising programme developed which are being implemented, for example through Environmental day celebrations as well as Eco-schools work at 11 schools ((6 in Wakkerstroom, 3 in Soweto and 2 in Cata.

- **Programme established at forth site**
  - The first three sites have been challenging and have engaged the majority of the project's resources. We have prioritised securing legacy at these sites and as a result the forth project site at Ongoye Forest is still in the developmental phase, although an access road has been completed, two bird guides are in post and more tourists are visiting. Our priorities now will be to build community structures, seek to ease tensions between communities and government and thence develop additional income generating actions.
- **Sharing of Project Experiences (By Sept 2008)**
  - Daniel Marnewick attended and presented a paper at the CBD conference of parties in May 2008.
  - Daniel Marnewick attended the BirdLife International World Conference in Argentina (22-28<sup>th</sup> September 2008), fully funded by the BirdLife Africa secretariat. Daniel was given the opportunity to present a poster on the Community Based Conservation Division's work and chair a workshop on 'Biodiversity Conservation and Development'. Daniel was also able to do important networking within and outside of the BirdLife network – including members from over 100 countries.
- **Complete bird guide training programme for 10 persons and craft and other income generating programmes (By October 2008).**
  - To date, 11 bird guides have been trained in total, of which 5 were trained in this reporting period.
    - Wakkerstroom – 3
    - Cata – 3
    - Soweto – 3
    - Ongoye - 2
- **Other Income generating Activities:**
  - Wakkerstroom

Name of I.G.A	No. Members	Business plan	Constitution	Bank account	Products	How much they have earned to date?
1. Igugulethu Community Vegetable Garden Project	15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Produce vegetables e.g. carrots, beetroot, spinach, onions etc	+/-R5,000
2. Ubunye Beadwork Project	04	Yes	Yes	Yes	Produce beads products e.g. Birds, Key holders, earrings etc.	+/-R2,000
3. Ubuntu Cultural Dance Group	20	No	Yes	Yes	Offer cultural Zulu dance to the tourists and perform to the locals.	+/-R10,000
4. Ukukhanya Poultry Project	06	No	No	NO	Raise and sell chickens to locals	+/-R5,000
5. Eyethu Grass Project	04	Yes	Yes	Yes	Produce cultural products from different types of grass species and construct reed fences.	+/-R25,000
6. Bird Nests and Carving Project	01	No	No	No	Carved crane decoys.	+/-R3,500

- Cata

Name of I.G.A	No.	Business	Constitution	Bank	Products	How much
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	Members	plan		account		they have earned to date?
1. Hat Makers	2	No	No	No	Grass hats & baskets	R1,100 (May-Octo08)
2. Broom Makers	3	No	No	No	Grass brooms	+/-R800 (May-Octo08)
3. Walking Sticks	1	No	No	No	Wooden walking sticks.	+/-R550 (May-Octo08)
4. Thatching grass	10	No	No	No	Sell thatching grass for thatching	+/-R1,850 (May-Octo08)
5. Bee Keeping	10	No	No	No	Produce honey	+/-R0 (new)
6. Indigenous tree nursery & pecan nut trees	3	Yes	No	No	Indigenous trees Cape Parrot Friendly Pecan Nuts	+/-R0 (new)

▪ Soweto

Name of I.G.A	No. Members	Business plan	Constitution	Bank account	Products	How much they have earned to date?
1. Masithandane (UTHANDO) Women Project – Beadwork project	10	Yes	No	Yes	Bead work (birds)	R2,000 (Aug-Sept08)
2. Kgothlang Community Food Gardens	12	Yes	No	No	Vegetables	R0 (new)

- **Training in delivery of advocacy as part of developing sustainable conservation programmes and gaining government support. (By December 2008)**
  - Sizwe Jobe (assistant Policy and Advocacy) has delivered a workshop to 30 community members in Wakkerstroom. The workshop focused on environmental rights and lobbying. This site has been the attention of Sizwe until now due to the prominent threat of mining.
- **Community based fora in place and functioning and regular programme of activities at all four sites.(By March 2009)**
  - Each of the three sites have community fora in place, functioning at different levels, e.g. resource use groups, management committees, IGA associations.
  - Wakkerstroom:
    - Cattle Owners Association (resource user group)
    - Grass & Reed Cutters Association (resource user group & IGA)
    - Vegetable Growers Association (IGA)
    - Poultry Project (IGA)
    - Beadwork Project (IGA)
    - Wakkerstroom Wetland Management Committee (resource use and conservation monitoring management committee)
  - Cata:
    - Pecan Nut growers project (IGA)
    - Indigenous Tree Planting Project (IGA)
    - Beadwork Project (IGA)
    - Honey Project (IGA)
    - Home Vegetable Growers project (IGA)
  - Soweto:
    - Cattle Owners Association (resource user group)
    - Medicinal Plant User group (resource user group)
    - Beadwork project (IGA)
    - Vegetable growers association (IGA)
- **Business plans completed at all sites.(By March 2009)**

- The site managers have completed or are busy completing business plans with each of the IGA's.
- Wakkerstroom:
- Cata:
- Soweto:

- **Management Plans completed at all three sites (By December 2008)**

- Geoff Welch (RSPB expert on conservation management planning) will be visiting the three sites from 29<sup>th</sup> September to 10<sup>th</sup> October 2008. Geoff will give a workshop to stakeholders and management committees at Wakkerstroom and Cata, and will give a similar workshop open to all BLSA staff and partners, incl. the Soweto site, at the BLSA head quarters. The sites will begin developing their management plan with the first draft complete for comment in December 2008, and the final management plan complete and implementation started by June 2009.

**Additional Actions planned for next period:**

- Complete outstanding education materials and ongoing programme
- Train project staff and key partners further in fundraising and project development
- Experience sharing among project staff and stakeholders
- Training in advocacy for project staff and key stakeholders
- Complete management plans
- Further develop local user group governance structures and operations
- Further establish structures and programme at Ongoye Forest
- Establish site monitoring baselines
- Fundraising for outstanding work to ensure sustainability of site projects.

**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.**

Wakkerstroom: Pixley ka Seme local municipality has again been a major stumbling block for project implementation. In June 2008 key municipal officials and managers were under investigation for fraud. In September and October 2008 the people of Wakkerstroom and Volksrust began to riot in protest of bad government service delivery. These riots resulted in violence and clashes with police. Both these incidents have delayed project activities that rely on local government sanction or action, such as partnering on certain income generating activities, or building a market place for selling IGA products. There has also been poor municipal attendance at key community and management meetings. Although the Wakkerstroom site has nonetheless made good progress, it is felt that much more would have been achieved if a functional local municipality were in place. The site manager is now bypassing the local municipality and liaising directly with the Gert Sibande District Municipality.

Cata: In September 2008, the site manager for Cata had a car accident in the project vehicle. The car has been written off; luckily the site manager was unhurt. However he has consequently had little transport to the project site and key meetings, slowing down his progress. A new car shall be purchased by the end of October 2008 with the insurance money and remaining funds from the BirdLife Netherlands funding.

Soweto: BirdLife SA handed a full business proposal to Johannesburg City Parks (JCP) outlining the project's objectives in Soweto and proposed synergy with JCP. However no official response has been given by JCP. The project has decided therefore to continue with its work in the community around the development of the Soweto Heritage-Birding trail.

There has also been some infighting among the beadwork project members. They did not agree on what products to produce and where critical of members they identified as 'hangers on'. These issues have now been mediated by the site manager.

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**

Please send your **completed form email** to Eilidh Young, Darwin Initiative M&E Programme at [Darwin-Projects@ectf-ed.org.uk](mailto: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**