

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

Project Ref. No.	15-013
Project Title	Biodiversity and sustainable development of butterfly production (Lepidoptera) in Guyana
Country(ies)	UK and Guyana
UK Organisation	University of Warwick
Collaborator(s)	Iwokrama International Centre for Rain Forest Conservation and Development , Natural History Museum, Kew Gardens, Matthews Payne & Bond LLP, The University of Guyana
Report date	<i>October 31st 2006</i>
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	<i>2006/1</i>
Project website	<i>www.guyanabutterflies.com</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 UK partners (University of Warwick (Dr Doreen Winstanley and Neil Naish) and Matthews and Payne LLP (Dr Katharine Payne) visited Guyana from July 17th - 28th 2006, shortly after signing the research contract. We visited all the in-country partners and stake holders involved in the project to: 1. formalise each of the relationships; 2. initiate the process of appointing two MSc students, two community members and two rangers and 3. Agree the work plan with Dr Raquel Thomas from the Iwokrama International Centre.

We visited the Environmental Protection Agency, the Iwokrama International Centre for Rain Forest Conservation and Development Reserve, the University of Guyana and the Centre for the study of Biological Diversity at the University, and the Wildlife Division in Georgetown, as well as the Iwokrama field station and Bina Hill (where NRDDDB are based) in the rainforest. We met some of the newly appointed representatives of the North Rupununi District Development Board (NRDDDB), including the new vice-Chairman Norbet Salty, who was extremely enthusiastic and advertised the community positions on the local radio. NRDDDB is a community-based organisation and is composed of village leaders and other community representatives. As a result of recent elections the new board now consists of a higher proportion of younger members and some appointees were not familiar with the proposed project. We made contact with several NRDDDB members at a pre-arranged meeting held at Rockview in Annai on July 21st. Later, Hemchandranauth Sambhu (H Sambhu) from the Iwokrama International centre presented a power point presentation about the project to the NRDDDB council meeting on August 11th 2006, on our behalf. In addition, a poster was displayed and presented by H. Sambhu, in the large newly constructed community round house at Annai, for Amerindian Heritage Month. It was displayed in a "Darwin Booth" along side the Darwin funded Wetland project. As the majority of the 5,000 Amerindians within the region attended the heritage celebrations the display provided maximum exposure for the project. It is our intention to work closely with the extended Darwin Wetland project to maximise knowledge gained in their previous three year project. A website is also being developed.

We visited 7 out of the 16 communities in the North Rupununi and Iwokrama forest areas and we were able to present the project to the village councils or larger groups. Most of the communities reacted positively to our presentations and our interaction was enhanced by H. Sambhu, a former member of the Darwin Wetlands project and Dr Katharine Payne from Matthews & Payne LLP who had spent one year on a VSO project in this area five years previously. It was obvious that some community members had

extensive knowledge of the habitats of specific butterflies. They certainly didn't appreciate the potential commercial value of the butterflies outside Guyana and some communities were amused by this fact. There had been some previous exploitation of the butterflies and moths by individual foreign collectors who have used the local Amerindians to guide them to areas where rare species occur. Some of the communities that we visited were very interested in becoming involved in the project. Since only two community members were required the village councils wanted to recommend only applicants with a previous history of community involvement. The two community members were recently selected by NRDDDB. They will start on November 1st 2006, when the new rangers have completed their formal training at the Iwokrama International Centre and Forest Centre.

Positions for two MSc students were also advertised and two students were selected by the University of Guyana. However, it was suggested by the University of Guyana that the students register at the University of Warwick, since they did not have supervisors in that subject area. Recently, the successful MSc applicants have also been accepted for MSc studentships by research at the University of Warwick, subject to favourable referee's comments. The department of Warwick HRI at the University has generously offered bursaries to both students to cover the difference in the cost of registration between the University of Guyana and at Warwick.

At the request of the EPA an application for a specimen collection licence was submitted to the National Biodiversity Advisory Committee. This has been approved and will be signed on our next visit. During our visit in July 2006 many species of abundant and potentially valuable butterflies were observed in the different areas we visited. Data and collections from previous amateur and local biodiversity research assessments also revealed that there were at least five *Morpho* species present within the locality. At least one of these, *Morpho meneleus* was observed at first hand on a couple of occasions during this initial visit and all recorded species are currently not displayed or available to butterfly houses in the USA or Europe. In addition, representatives from the *Papilionidae*, *Heliconiidae* and *Pieridae* were observed and will offer great potential for the future.

Butterfly host plants were also seen in many locations in and around the Iwokrama field station and their propagation and development into an organised production system should be relatively straightforward. We identified Fairview as the ideal village to develop the first community butterfly propagation trials, since it: 1. is close to the Iwokrama field station; 2. has some knowledge of butterflies and 3. will have a new landing strip for aircraft in the very near future and could prove to be important in the exportation of butterflies.

The timing of the training programme originally planned for July 2006 was very optimistic, since it was not possible to start the appointment process for the in-country students, community members and rangers until after the Darwin contract had been signed. However, rapid progress has been made in this direction during the first few months. As a result the process of advertising, selecting and appointing has been achieved in this first three month period. All six new project members will be in place for our second visit in November. In addition, two newly appointed rangers for the butterfly project will have completed their formal training by November 1st.

During our next visit in November the six newly appointed members will be undergo the training specific to this project. Dr Raquel Thomas and H. Sambhu from the Iwokrama International Centre have a good understanding of the project and together will be of considerable help in driving this project when the UK partners are not in country. "Sambhu" is respected by the communities in the area as a result of his close interaction in the Darwin Wetland project.

To summarise:

Excellent progress has been made in the first three months of the project and we have everything in place to make rapid progress on the project.

We have:

1. Enthusiastic community members and project staff
2. The support of the Iwokrama International Centre, the University of Guyana, the Centre of Biodiversity and EPA
3. Approval of NBAC to collect specimens from the rainforest (subject to signature by project leader)
4. A positive response from the Wildlife Division in regard to the potential future export of live pupae
5. Disseminated information about the project to all communities of the North Rupununi and Iwokrama Forest districts
6. Appointed all the new staff for the project
7. Conducted preliminary surveys of butterflies and their host plants

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 training course for the new staff will take place in November 2006, since the selection and appointment process could not progress until after the Darwin contract was signed. However, two rangers will complete their training for the project by November 1st and we have conducted an initial survey of butterflies and host plants. We have achieved a lot in the area of awareness raising to the Amerindian communities and a permit has been approved by NBAC to collect specimens. There should be no delay on the overall timetable of the project outputs and there will be no impact on the overall budget.

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,

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: see report

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.

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.**