

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

Project Ref. No.	15/017
Project Title	Implementing a Recovery Plan for the Critically Endangered Pygmy Hog in Assam.
Country(ies)	United Kingdom and India
UK Organisation	Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust
Collaborator(s)	Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of Assam The Forest Department of Assam The Pygmy Hog Conservation Programme Research and Breeding Centre
Report date	31/10/06
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 formally started in July 2006, with a workshop held in Jersey. All main project personnel attended (Dr. John E. Fa, Dr. Raj Amin, Mr. William Oliver and Dr. Goutam Narayan). We also co-opted Dr. Stephan Funk to advice on issues of genetic sampling of the pig populations in Manas National Park as an addition to the current Darwin project. Already with Dr. Funk, and in conjunction with Indian scientists, we have been able to complete DNA analyses of the species, with very exciting results. The pygmy hog appears to be genetically distinct from other pigs, and this makes the conservation of the species of even greater priority. A paper reporting these results will appear in the journal *Molecular Phylogeny and Evolution*.

The aim of the July workshop was to review all activities to be undertaken in the project in financial year 2006-2007. We reviewed 1) the role of the actual and potential stakeholders in the project, 2) baseline information available on pygmy hog populations and their habitats and to gather, 3) plans for training, capacity-building and monitoring, 4) socioenomic surveys, 5) grassland surveys of Manas NP and potential release sites in Nameri NP and Sonai Rupa WS; 6) radio collaring of some pygmy hogs in Manas NP; 7) plans for the expansion of the population into Nameri NP and Sonai Rupa WS, and 8) field research. A new revised work plan for the project was developed, which will be sent to Darwin offices for information.

Between August and November, the Darwin project team has been active preparing baseline vegetation maps for the study area, both for the Manas National Park as well for the potential release sites (Nameri and Sonai Rupai). Satellite imagery and GIS has been employed. The work has been commissioned to Dr. Mark Mulligan of Ambiotek and King's College, London, but Dr. Raj Amin has also collaborated extensively in the production of these maps. Large scale Normalised Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) maps based on Aster (resolution of 15m) and Landstat (resolution of 30m) satellite data have been derived, which will be ground truthed in India in late 2006. Additionally, a 90m resolution Digital Elevation Model for the study areas, in ARCASCII format (Geographic Coordinate System) has been created. All maps, in both hard copies as well as in digital format, will also be donated to the Indian counterpart institutions.

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.**

REVISED WORKPLAN July 2006 –March 2007

July 2006

Planning meeting in Jersey

Oct 2006

Initial vegetation map of MTR and SRWS/NNP produced from remote sensing images;
Available environment information on MTR and SRWS/NNP compiled:

Nov 2006

Project Leaders to travel to Assam. Meet and greet. Following tasks achieved:

- ToR for the education and community officer completed and discussed with Aaranyak. Person selected.
- ToR for grassland ecologist distributed and person in post by Dec. 2006.
- Workshops involving Manas staff, Forestry Department, Aaranyak, Guwahati University.
- Steering committee established:
- Equipment and software including GIS installed at MTR (Oct 2006);
- MSc student project topics assigned following discussions with Guwahati University
- Preparations for pygmy hog field work;
- Field work started by grassland ecologist with support from park staff
- Local education and community liaison officer appointed and additional training provided in environment education.

Dec 2006

Development of Grassland Mammal Information Management System (GMIMS) with user manual completed;

Training materials (manuals, posters etc) for instructors and park staff in monitoring and census techniques developed;

Formal theoretical examinations and practical tests for accreditation of instructors and monitoring staff produced;

Initial set of education teaching and awareness material developed.

Jan – Feb 07

Intensive on-site training of MTR park monitoring staff by local instructors and Darwin fellows completed; Field tools including GMIMS and procedures implemented in MTR; Hands-on training of 4 MTR park officers in GIS, data entry and management, data quality control, and basic data processing using a customised Grassland Mammal Information Management System and field protocols completed.

First training workshop completed – Training of 10 MTR and SRWS/NNP park staff as instructors in monitoring and census techniques; Field standardised data collection forms and data quality control procedures and protocols produced.

Feb 2006

Radio collars fitted on selected pygmy hogs for radio-tracking studies; Training in the use of radio tracking equipment undertaken; Radio-tracking of collared hogs started; 2 MTR park officers enrolled on MSc course at Guwahati University; Students field data collection started.

Mar 2007

Report on Social, cultural and economic assessment completed; Meeting held with park director, deputy director, education and community liaison officer, relevant local government organizations, NGOs and community leaders to discuss the findings; 1 scientific paper prepared from data (Jun 07).

Mar 2007

Training of at least 20 community school teachers and relevant park staff and members of local groups and NGOs in environment education completed by education and community liaison officer with support from DWCT and ZSL education officers.

Apr 2007

Outreach programme initiated. Outreach activities include seminars, community forums, cultural programme such as street theatre and games on market days and during local festivals when people naturally gather and have time away from their daily routine work; Development of suitable community livelihood initiatives started with park authorities, local government organizations and NGOs, and community leaders. This includes support in planning, proposal writing and implementation.

Mar 2007

Initial vegetation analyses and impact of burning, livestock grazing and harvesting completed in MTR and SRWS/NNP; Initial report on the habitat status including recommendations on burning regimes produced; Suitable pygmy hog release sites in SRWS/NNP identified; Report submitted to MTR authorities and Ministry, following assessment of training, data quality, entry and reporting procedures; Annual status report template produced; Second training workshop completed - at least 8 park staff trained in data analysis and the production of annual status reports, annual park status report produced, meeting held with park staff and managers to discuss findings and recommendation.