

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.	15-032
Project Title	Conserving a flagship steppe species: the critically endangered Sociable Lapwing
Country(ies)	Kazakhstan, Russia, India & Turkey
UK Organisation	The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Collaborator(s)	ACBK, RBCU, BNHS, DD, AEW A & Birdlife International
Report date	31 st October 2006
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR 1
Project website	Under development

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 steering group was formed in April 2006, and has liaised with the key project staff on a regular basis through email correspondence and face-to-face contact.

Fieldwork commenced in April and was hugely successful. 167 nests were found and monitored, 375 birds were fitted with colour rings and a number of new breeding colonies were discovered. Following a training workshop for a number of students in March, two local students were recruited to the project and received high quality formal and experiential training in a variety of field techniques. One of the students was subsequently recruited to take part in an international expedition to south-west Russia to survey staging areas of Sociable Lapwing. Both students have been invited to return to the project in April 2007. Data entry and analysis is ongoing with good progress being made. Data suggest that the cause of population decline may be associated with problems away from the breeding grounds, which may lead to an increase in survey work in countries on migration routes and on wintering grounds. We plan to work with the recently appointed AEW A co-ordinator to facilitate working across the species' range and further the projects aim of capacity building in a number of countries.

We have also funded and collaborated with Russian ornithologists undertaking fieldwork on the breeding grounds in Russia. This collaboration has developed well and will continue at an increased level in 2007.

Surveys have been undertaken in south-west Russia and are due to be undertaken in Azerbaijan and Syria in the coming months

Three members of The Sociable Lapwing research team, including Maxim Koshkin of ACBK, recently attended the International Wader Study Group Conference in Sweden and presented one talk and three posters of our work:-

- Talk presented by Maxim Koshkin – “Breeding biology of the Sociable Lapwing *Vanellus gregarius* in central Kazakhstan and implications for conservation management.”
- Two posters presented by Rob Sheldon – “Revising the breeding population estimate

and distribution of the Critically Endangered Sociable Lapwing *Vanellus gregarius* & "Preliminary surveys of Chagraiskoje Reservoir, south-west Russia, for Sociable Lapwing *Vanellus gregarius*."

- A third poster presented by Johannes Kamp – "Population numbers and habitat use of the Black-winged Pratincole *Glareola nordmanni* in Central Kazakhstan."

Good progress is currently being made on the development of a project web-site.

The Sociable Lapwing project was officially launched as part of the Queen's birthday celebrations at an event organised by the British Embassy in Astana, Kazakhstan. The event was attended by Maxim Koshkin and Dr Rob Sheldon. At the event the British Ambassador, Paul Brummell, supported the project by taking part in an official press release. The Ambassador also visited project staff in June to see how the project was progressing.

Dr Rob Sheldon and Maxim Koshkin presented a series of lectures to a number of relevant Kazak government departments and agencies in September. These were generally well received and helped raise the profile of both the project, and ACBK in Kazakhstan.

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.

No major problems or unexpected developments were encountered in the last 6 months.

Have any of these issues been discussed with the Darwin Secretariat and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

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?

The Darwin project continues to develop as planned and exceeds all expectations.

We are currently in the process of changing the Project Leader from Dr Paul Donald to Dr Rob Sheldon (email sent on 27th Oct).

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.**