

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2007)

Project Ref. No.	15-038
Project Title	Restoring island biodiversity: The reintroduction of endemic Mauritian reptile communities
Country(ies)	United Kingdom and Mauritius
UK Organisation	Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust
Collaborator(s)	Mauritian Wildlife Foundation and National Parks and Conservation Service
Project Leader	Dr Carl Jones
Report date	30 th October 2007
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR 2
Project website	http://www.mauritian-wildlife.org

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 first year progress report was completed in May 2007 at the end of the project year and distributed to all stakeholders. The first year progress report will be included in an Annex of the second annual report to the Darwin Initiative in 2008, as requested in the review of report 15-038 AR1.

In accordance to the agreed baseline timetable, the past six months have mostly been devoted to monitoring. Each of the translocated reptile populations on Gunners Quoin, Ile aux Aigrettes, Ile aux Fouquets and Ilot Chat have been monitored by the Mauritian project staff led by Dr Cole. Data have therefore been obtained on the health, survival, dispersal, recruitment and niche utilisation of each translocated population and their impact upon the resident terrestrial vertebrate and invertebrate communities. Comparative data have also been collected from the donor populations on Ilot Vacoas and Round Island. From these recent trips we can demonstrate that the translocated populations are fit and healthy. We have evidence of further recruitment and co-existence within the night gecko populations, recruitment within the Bojer's skink population and early reproductive attempts within the Telfair's skink populations. The impacts of the translocations to date are positive, with marked population declines in some of the more persistent exotic species where they occur on Ile aux Aigrettes. Additionally, Telfair's skinks are proving to be excellent seed dispersers and are in part demonstrating their role in restoring island ecosystems.

Monitoring trips to the larger more accessible islands are not exclusive to those assigned to the project, such that non-project staff from the host organisations get the opportunity to be involved. Under the guidance and encouragement of Dr Cole, the project staff members are now demonstrating what they have learnt to their own colleagues when accompanied in the field.

Integration of the project into the current ecotourism and education programme on Ile aux Aigrettes has progressed over the past six months. In addition to the current monitoring by the project staff, the tour guides on Ile aux Aigrettes now record skink sightings along the tour route. These observations will allow us to follow basic population trends over time, thus proving to be an additional and inexpensive way to monitor the translocated skink population. Moreover, it permits the guides to become involved with the research aspect of Ile aux Aigrettes for the first time, which they have undertaken with great enthusiasm. Given the

success of this activity, a notice displaying the Darwin logo has been placed in the Visitor's Centre encouraging tour groups to assist their guide with the observations and thus to be part of conservation research.

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.

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?

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 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**