

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2009)

Project Ref. No.	17028
Project Title	Conserving the Ruipa Corridor: facilitating cohesive management between diverse stakeholders.
Country(ies)	Tanzania
UK Organisation	Society for Environmental Exploration/Frontier
Collaborator(s)	University of Dar es Salaam, Kilombero Valley Teak Company, Wild Footprints Ltd, Min of Natural Resources & Tourism, Tanzania, Belgian Technical Cooperation, Museo Tridentino di Scienze Naturali, WCS - Tanzania
Project Leader	Mark Steer
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Project website	www.frontier.ac.uk

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 Darwin Program was initiated in July, as agreed with DEFRA. Planned activities for this phase were:

1. Ground surveys to demonstrate large mammal movement through the corridor.
2. Initiation of training of stakeholder representatives in biodiversity monitoring.
3. Gathering biological and socio-economic data to inform the development of management plans.

In all, the project has started positively. There have been some logistical problems to overcome, but work is proceeding at the expected pace. The base for the project has been chosen as a camp located within the southern section of the Ruipa Corridor (8° 23' 5.62" S 36° 44' 46.10" E). During the set-up period of the project we have concentrated fieldwork efforts in this area, between the Selous Game Reserve and Kilombero Valley floodplain.

Twenty four large mammal transects have been completed. We are using a system of permanent transects established by a previous project to provide comparative data on mammal abundance and movements. Transects, 500 metres in length, are sited approximately one kilometre apart with half running north to south and half running east to west. All large mammal tracks and signs (tracks, dung, paths, diggings, burrows and feeding sites) within one meter either side of the line are recorded. Each 100 metre transect line is divided into 20 metre sections; within each of these sections signs of each species present are only recorded once. Experienced local game guards are always present to provide a second opinion, confirming all track identifications. Where tracks can't be reliably identified to species level they are grouped at higher taxonomic levels (i.e. Herpestidae, *Genetta* spp., Cephalophini, *Redunca* spp.)

Vegetation characteristics are recorded every twenty meters along the transect using a 5 metre by 5 metre quadrat. The following information is recorded: % canopy cover; canopy height; % grass; % shrubs <1m; % shrubs 1<3m; % bare ground; % dead wood; % leaf litter and % burnt ground.

To monitor human disturbance along each transect, the ratio of cut trees to live trees is recorded. Within each twenty-metre section, the number of live, naturally dead, old cut and new cut poles (diameter 5 -15 cm) and timbers (diameter >15 cm) is recorded, five metres either side of the transect line.

Initial analyses of the results indicate that large mammal abundance is increasing within the corridor. Our working hypothesis is that increasing human encroachment along the borders of the corridor is concentrating populations within a diminishing area. Further socio-economic surveys are planned over the next six months to gather data on local human population dynamics.

In addition to baseline surveys of large mammal abundance and movement, additional projects have been instigated by unpaid assistant research officers. These are designed to investigate the effects of human encroachment on carnivore abundance and how burning regimes affect herpetile fauna. These studies are intended to help address point three of this phase's aims. Burning, whilst part of the natural disturbance regime in the Kilombero Valley, is often anthropogenically initiated. It is important to understand how this is affecting not only the large mammals, but the entire community that might be using the corridor. The carnivore study includes both survey of populations using sampling stations and a questionnaire study of local communities to determine frequency of sightings and human-wildlife conflicts. These questionnaire surveys are also being used as a chance to introduce the project to local communities and build ties prior to their greater involvement in future phases.

We have yet to initiate stakeholder training due to the logistics of candidate selection, transport to base camp and finding free time. However, progress is being made and we intend to commence training the first stakeholders early in 2010.

We have held meetings with representatives of many of the collaborating organisations and institutions, including University of Dar es Salaam, Kilombero Valley Teak Company and Museo Tridentino di Scienze Naturali.

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 last year has seen intense immigration into the northern section of the Ruipa Corridor, between the Kilombero floodplain and the Udzungwa Mountains. There has been a significant increase in housing, roads and other infrastructure. It is vital that we carry out surveys in this area to determine the current extent of human encroachment and habitat degradation.

We had originally intended to base one camp in this area. However, due to significant health and safety concerns we will not be moving significant resources into this area. Instead we are intending to survey the area from a series of satellite camps.

These problems have not changed our overall plans, and we will still be involving the stakeholders within this area in management plans and attempting to develop mitigation measures. We currently expect there to be little change to the budget because of this development.

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

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: no

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 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**