

# Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

<b>Project Ref. No.</b>	18-008
<b>Project Title</b>	Trans-boundary solutions to the Asian vulture crisis
<b>Country(ies)</b>	India and Nepal
<b>UK Organisation</b>	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
<b>Collaborator(s)</b>	Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), Bird Conservation Nepal (BCN), The National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC), Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC), Zoological Society of London (ZSL), International Centre for Birds of Prey (ICBP)
<b>Project Leader</b>	Dr Richard Cuthbert (RSPB) & Dr Juliet Vickery
<b>Report date</b>	31 October 2010
<b>Report No.</b>	Half year report number 1
<b>Project website</b>	<a href="http://www.vulturerescue.org">www.vulturerescue.org</a>

## **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).**

### **1.1 Sites & partners identified for expansion of Vulture Safe Zones in Nepal and India**

Following visits by RSPB and BNHS staff in April a new site was identified in Uttarakhand state in northern India, adjoining Corbett National Park, where small populations of vultures remain. An MOU is now in place between the main project partner in India (BNHS) and a local NGO (The Mahseer Conservancy) in order to start advocacy and education programmes with local farmers, veterinarians and park officials to establish this Vulture Safe Zone. RSPB and BNHS staff visited Uttar Pradesh in June to meet with local partners from the India Bird Conservation Network. Sites adjoining the Nepalese border were visited and small populations of vultures seen, however active local partner organisations undertaking work on the ground have not yet been identified.

### **2.1 Suitable control site found for monitoring effectiveness of VSZ in India**

Suitable control sites for monitoring have not yet been identified. Site visits are planned in December/January in order to establish further areas for monitoring.

### **2.2 Vulture, NSAID & carcass monitoring underway in Nepal & India at VSZ at control areas**

Monitoring of vulture populations and NSAID availability are underway at a range of sites in Nepal and India. Carcass sampling in India has been undertaken in 10 states with over 1500 samples collected in the last six months. These will be analysed at the Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI) in Uttar Pradesh as well as in Spain. A visit to IVRI is being made in October by RSPB researcher Mark Taggart to work on the analysis of these samples and bring extracted samples back to Spain.

### **3.1 Support from national and state partners for expanding breeding centres**

Meetings within Nepal between RSPB and all three main Nepalese project partners (BCN, NTNC and DNPWC) took place in June to discuss the expansion of the breeding centre as well as the management structure for the project. Further meetings between the Nepalese partners have ensured ongoing support for this activity.

### **3.2 Design and budget for aviaries and visitor facilities agreed with partners**

The design for the colony aviary at the Nepal centre has been agreed, following very similar design and construction methods as used for the first colony aviary at this site. A contract for

this construction has now been signed and funds transferred to BCN. Meetings with all three main Nepalese project partners and the RSPB have discussed options for the visitor facilities, although the final design still needs to be agreed.

**4.1 Recruitment and contracts for staff in Nepal and West Bengal**

An MOU has been agreed between the RSPB and BCN for the staff wages and recruitment for the project. Existing funding from the RSPB is currently employing staff at the West Bengal centre, and a MOU is being drafted to takeover these staff costs.

**5.2 Training workshops planned, staff and dates fixed, training materials produced**

A workshop was planned in June between the RSPB and BNHS in order to deliver statistical training to BNHS vulture programme staff. However, due to the very heavy workload on the breeding centre staff at this period, this workshop had to be postponed and is now planned for December.

**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 issues have arisen in the first 6 months of this Darwin Project, other than delays in the first planned training workshop and in identification of a control site for monitoring. We envisage both of these will be progressed in the very near future. Otherwise, the project is proceeding on schedule and to the scheduled plan.

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

Not applicable.

**Discussed with the DI Secretariat:**    No            no/yes, in..... (month/yr)

**Changes to the project schedule/workplan:**    No            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?**

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](mailto: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**