

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2011)

Project Ref No	18-009
Project Title	Saving the Madagascar Pochard: the world's most endangered duck
Country(ies)	Madagascar
UK Organisation	Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust
Collaborator(s)	Durrell – Madagascar, The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, The Peregrine Fund, Asity Madagascar and Le Ministère de L'Environnement et Forêts (Government of Madagascar).
Project Leader	H Glyn Young
Report date	31 st October 2011
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR2
Project website	In preparation – predicted November 2011

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 has progressed in line with predictions as all aspects of the programme have become well established. The captive population remains at 21 adults and excitingly the first eggs were laid in July in captivity at the pochards' temporary home at Ampijorao (Ankarafantsika National Park). In the meantime, the dedicated facilities at Antsohihy (incubation and rearing) and at Anjingo (breeding and holding) progressed through lengthy bureaucratic and logistical lead-ins. Land was rented/agreed at both sites and the Antsohihy facilities converted in full in August with the construction two large enclosures with eight ponds and incubation and indoor rearing facilities built with funds secured from extra donors. Significant materials and specialised equipment were sent out from UK and building was overseen by a local site manager and a UK team (from WWT). All pochards and eggs laid at Ampijorao were transferred to the new facilities on 1st September. The first captive-bred bird from this project (and the first anywhere since the 1930's) hatched on 2nd September and was named Voalohany (*The First*) with a second duckling hatching on 26th September. The site at Anjingo has been marked out and work will begin here towards the end of 2011. Floriot Randrianarimangason has moved to the Antsohihy facility and is joined by Ratsimalandy Mahazaka as assistant aviculturalist. Technical support through UK-based aviculturalists seconded from Durrell and WWT and through printed manuals etc has continued throughout.

Research work secured by extra funding (BBC Wildlife Fund) with the remaining wild population began in earnest in July with the appointment of Andy Bamford (WWT) who is based in Madagascar and joins the Project's Felix Razafindrajao. The research team have been present at the Bemanevika lakes during one breeding season and observed 52 ducklings hatching from 10 nests. By the end of September all ducklings had disappeared, the oldest had survived nearly 40 days. Exact causes for such poor survival among wild ducklings are not yet known but availability of food may be a major problem. Rabenosy Médé joined the research team in August.

Jacques Live Rajaonarison (Asity Madagascar) has been based at Bealanana since May and has developed a programme within village communities and schools around Bealanana and Bemanevika lakes. In August the Project was represented by a stall at a large local festival (Lampono) in Antsohihy so that the Project awareness programme has been working in regions of captive and wild populations.

The Peregrine Fund retain their camp at the Bemanevika lakes and the New Protected Area

(Nouvelles Aires Protégés) continues to be supported.

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.

After lengthy delays through bureaucratic and logistical constraints during the lead up to building incubation and rearing facilities at Antsohihy and breeding/holding facilities at Anjingo, the wild pochards went through a (very unsuccessful – 52 hatched, none fledged) breeding season. As the Project was unable to fulfil local expectations by returning the captive birds to Sofia until September we once again did not apply for permission to extract further eggs from wild pairs necessary to enhance genetic representation in the captive population. Facilities are, however, now in a position to receive eggs and rear ducklings and so local opinion will be sought before applications are made to extract further eggs in 2012. Money from Y1 (£39,264) was transferred to Y2 for egg extraction and a further request will be made to transfer this money to Y3.

Local coverage of the Madagascar Pochard has been deliberately muted while the captive birds were not in Sofia. Now that the birds have been transferred there will be an official launch to the Antsohihy facilities later in 2011. International coverage remains high.

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

Yes and application for transfer of funds from Y2 to Y3 submitted on 31st October 2011.

Discussed with LTS: no/yes, in.....(month/yr)

Formal change request submitted: Yes, in October 2011

Received confirmation of change acceptance no/yes in.....(month/yr)

3. Do you expect to have any significant (eg more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?

Yes No

If yes, and you wish to request a carryforward of funds, this should be done as soon as possible. It would help Defra manage Darwin funds more efficiently if you could give an indication of how much you expect this request might be for.

Estimated carryforward request: £39,264

4. 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 LTS International directly.

Please send your **completed form by email** to Eilidh Young at Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.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: 17-075 Darwin Half Year Report**