

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2012)

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 2012
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR3
Project website	In preparation

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).

There has been little activity at the Antsohihy captive-rearing facility during this period as the birds have been separated into single-sex groups to prevent, temporarily, any further breeding. This was to be expected as it coincides with the driest part of the year and the non-breeding period for the remnant wild population. All 18 birds bred 2011-2012 (11 males and 7 females) have fledged and are thriving. Materials used to construct the aviaries in 2011 have been reviewed and replaced where necessary. A further aviary block was built at the facility. All husbandry protocols have been reviewed and improved as the facility becomes established. Pest-control programmes have been developed as vermin (notably rats) have begun to establish. This was to be expected.

Andy Bamford, Felix Razafindrajaon and their team have continued to closely monitor the wild population at Bemanevika and have begun to collect data on potential sites for re-introduction of captive-bred pochards. This process has included visits to each potential site in Sofia and further south in Madagascar to Antananarivo and Lake Itasy. Experts from WWT will visit those sites considered most suitable in November with the team ahead of a three-day planning workshop (with Project and other local NGOs) in Antananarivo.

Jacques Live Rajaonarison (Asity Madagascar) has continued to be based at Bealanana and has worked within village communities and schools around Bealanana and Bemanevika lakes. 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.

In order to best support the Antsohihy facility during critical periods (mostly during the breeding season) external avicultural support was reduced following the separation of the pochards into non-breeding groups. In-country personnel would continue to maintain the facility with remote support (through Skype, phonecalls and by internet) and with full in-country support such as the Durrell staff in Antananarivo and full-time veterinary cover (Tsanta Fiderana Rakotonanahary). Unfortunately this temporary change in policy was disturbed in April when facility manager

Floriot Randrianarimangason broke a leg in a motor-cycle accident and was side-lined for three months. The Project was able to send two external technicians at short notice (both had spent several periods at the facility before) for brief periods to help cover the staff shortage. Gardien Rabenanimanana Samuelson (Samuel), who had increasingly become involved in the daily husbandry was moved to become a full-time aviculturalist. Mahazaka Ratsimalandy and Samuel proved very competent and Floriot returned to work at the facility in mid-July. The temporary absence of Floriot undoubtedly slowed the work to establish the breeding centre at Anjingo as communications from Antananarivo (or from outside Madagascar) to the relevant authorities and construction companies in Sofia were difficult. Disappointingly, extraction of further eggs from the wild population will not be possible in 2012 and will be held over until 2013.

Genetic analysis of the founder birds in the captive population has not yet been possible through unexpected damage to two sets of samples exported to the UK. A third set will be collected shortly and stored with a different medium before export. This has not affected the breeding programme as the studbook can be used for most suitable pairings.

A request will be made to transfer money held over from earlier in the project (£39,264) into a Y4 for egg extraction at Bemanevika.

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

Application for transfer of funds from Y3 to a Y4 submitted on 31st October 2012

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

Formal change request submitted: Yes, in October 2012

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: Any outstanding funds and the £39,264 carried forward from Y4

4. 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 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**