

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2013)

Project Ref No	19-002
Project Title	A cutting-EDGE approach to saving Seychelles evolutionarily distinct biodiversity.
Country(ies)	Seychelles
Lead Organisation	Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology, University of Kent.
Collaborator(s)	Government of Seychelles Ministry of Environment and Energy; Seychelles National Parks Authority; Seychelles Islands Foundation; Natural History Museum of Seychelles; Wildlife Clubs of Seychelles; Nature Protection Trust of Seychelles; Island Conservation Society.
Project Leader	Dr. Jim Groombridge
Report date and number (eg HYR3)	29/10/2013 HYR1
Project website	http://www.kent.ac.uk/sac/research/projects/jg_biodiversity.html also find us on Facebook Edge Seychelles

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) 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 to schedule over the past 6 months.

Training: Training programmes are being implemented for all project fellows.

Fellows attended a specially designed workshop in June on how to develop an effective education and awareness campaign for their EDGE species. The workshop was facilitated by Dr Michele Martin and Terence Vel local Education and Awareness campaign experts.

Fellows and their mentors have finalised plans for project fellows' overseas training trips which they will undertake October-December. Our project Black Parrot fellow Terance Payet is currently in Mauritius receiving practical field training from Mauritius Wildlife Foundation experts in methods of monitoring, managing and researching critically endangered parrots. MWF has successfully rescued the Mauritius echo-parakeet from less than 20 individuals in the 1990's to around 500 individuals. Our Sheath-tailed bat and Sooglossid frog fellows Diana Renaud and James Mougale are going to Kenya in November to undertake the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) edge of existence programme 4 week Conservation Tools training course. Our caecilian project fellows Charles Morel and Berthilde Belle are going to UK in November and will be based at the Natural History Museum – London for a 3 week training programme mentored by project caecilian experts Dave Gower and Mark Wilkinson. In addition to training from NHM staff they have organised visits to ZSL edge of existence programme and caecilian captive management facility and a visit to the project leader at DICE where they will receive expert input into social survey design from DICE staff.

Research, monitoring and management activities: Research, monitoring and management activities are underway for all our EDGE species.

Methods for sooglossid distribution surveys and ecological research designed and tested and distribution surveys are underway. Caecilian survey methods developed and tested and caecilian surveys underway. Research into black parrot breeding ecology including limiting factors is on-going. Molecular genetic studies to confirm species status of black parrot is almost completed. Samples collected for PBF disease screening in black parrots. Regular roost emergence counts to monitor Sheath-tailed bat numbers at known roosts is ongoing. Surveys

to locate new areas of bat activity (in preparation for back-tracking in an attempt to locate further roosts) is underway. Rat control in the vicinity of active roosts is on-going and regular malaise trapping to monitor invertebrate food abundance near all known roosts is underway. Monitoring of barn owls at and around roosts is on-going and any barn owls located at roosts will be removed (none observed so far). EDGE coral network in place; work programme of priority actions developed and distribution and abundance surveys of EDGE corals within and outside marine protected areas is underway.

Education and awareness activities: Education and awareness activities are progressing to schedule.

Two large portable displays about this project and Seychelles EDGE species produced and displayed at National day expo in June, at the Natural history museum and at the EDGE corals carton competition exhibition on Mahé, Praslin and La Digue. When they are not being used by project partners they are on display at the Natural History Museum. Two leaflets about EDGE corals produced and disseminated in September. One national newspaper article about Seychelles caecilians was run in the Seychelles Nation in September. We have designed a project logo and have printed 50 Ti-shirts with our project logo, the Darwin Initiative logo and a strap-line on them. We have a project Facebook page where fellows upload short news and images about project activities.

2a. 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.

None

2b. Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Discussed with LTS: Yes/No

Formal change request submitted: Yes/No

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes/No

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

No

3b. If yes, and you wish to request a carryforward of funds, this should be done as soon as possible through the formal Change Request process. However, it would help Defra manage Darwin funds more efficiently if you could give an indication now of how much you expect this request might be for.

Estimated carryforward request: £

4. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

Yes-response to annual report review- find attached.

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 through a Change Request.

Please send your **completed report 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**