Darwin Initiative Annual Report

Important note:

To be completed with reference to the Reporting Guidance Notes for Project Leaders: it is expected that this report will be about 10 pages in length, excluding annexes

Submission Deadline: 30 April 2013

1. Darwin Project Information

Project Reference	19-012
Project Title	Saving the critically endangered spoon-billed sandpiper from global extinction
Host Country/ies	Russia and Myanmar (and various countries across the East Asian-Australasian Flyway)
UK contract holder institution	RSPB
Host country partner institutions	WWT, BirdLife International, Birds Russia, Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Association (BANCA), Moscow Zoo and the Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force (through the EAAFP & BirdLife International).
Other partner institutions	
Darwin Grant Value	£XXX
Start/end dates of project	1st April 2012 – 31st March 2015
Reporting period (eg Apr 2012 – Mar 2013) and number (eg Annual Report 1, 2, 3)	Annual Report 1 – 2012/2013
Project Leader name	Dr Rob Sheldon, RSPB
Project website	www.saving-spoon-billed-sandpiper.com
Report authors, main contributors and date	Rob Sheldon, Baz Hughes, Becky Rush, Nicola Crockford, Maung Maung Pyone, Phyolay

2. Project Background

With a population that is thought to number approximately 100 pairs and has declined at approximately 25% per year in recent years, the Critically Endangered Spoon-billed Sandpiper *Eurynorhynchus pygmeus* appears to be heading towards extinction faster than any other bird species. Without emergency action, it will probably be gone within 10 to 20 years, and is likely to be beyond saving well before then. The loss of the Spoon-billed Sandpiper (SBS) would be particularly disastrous because it is evolutionarily distinct, and because it is a flagship species for the East Asian–Australasian Flyway (EAAF).

The SBS nests on tundra shorelines in far eastern Russia, and migrates south along the western Pacific seaboard to winter in intertidal areas in South Asia. The most acute current cause of decline is believed to be trapping and hunting, primarily on the wintering grounds, and above all in the Gulf of Martaban in Myanmar, where more than half of the global population appears to winter. In Martaban, poorer members of fishing communities capture waders as a source of protein and income.

In addition, the species' long-term future is likely to be jeopardised by rapid infrastructure development along the EAAF. This problem affects not just SBS, but also many other birds and millions of people who depend on the region's natural resources. The precipitous decline of waterbirds along the EAAF is one of the gravest bird extinction crises on Earth. As well as SBS, at least 24 other globally threatened or near-threatened waterbirds depend on intertidal areas in the flyway, together with a further nine that maybe red-listed soon.

3. Project Partnerships

The project partnership remains strong with regular meetings of the key partners and sub-sets of the partners. The UK and Russian partners have had several face-to-face meetings during the course of the last 12 months. Rob Sheldon (RSPB), Debbie Pain, Baz Hughes (WWT) and Evgeny Syroechkovskiy (Birds Russia) had brief project discussions during a visit to Slimbridge (primarily to show the captive SBS to a potential future major donor). Specific project discussions were held at Slimbridge in December 2012, including Mike Crosby, Becky Rush (BirdLife International), Nigel Clark (BTO) and Christoph Zöckler (ArcCona Consulting). Further opportunities for project updates and planning were taken at the International Wader Study Group Conference in France in September 2012. Additional side-meetings were held at the UK Birdfair in August 2012 as well as specific project meetings at the RSPB headquarters. Staff from Moscow Zoo also visited the Birdfair, the RSPB HQ and spent time at WWT Slimbridge.

In June 2012, the project leader and Norbert Schaffer (RSPB) visited Birds Russia in Moscow to discuss future project planning and financial management

The project leader attended the BirdLife International Asia partners meeting in Singapore in May 2012 and had the opportunity to give a presentation on the SBS project to all the Asia BirdLife partners. Specific project meetings were held with Tony Htin Hla of BANCA and Mike Crosby and Simba Chan of BirdLife Asia.

Baz Hughes, Rebecca Lee (WWT), Rob Sheldon and Sue Samuel (RSPB) have met on 4 occasions throughout the year to ensure effective budget management of the project. The financial management of this project needs to be integrated with an SOS –funded project awarded to WWT. These regular co-ordination meetings have been extremely valuable in ensuring effective financial management.

A particular challenge has been working in Myanmar. The project partner is in a state of flux with the organisation being re-structured significantly. Relationships remain very strong and the project leader has visited the BANCA office in November 2012. The work remains on track and the partnership is going from strength to strength. The capacity for RSPB to deliver more work in Myanmar has been significantly increased during 2013 with the establishment of formal Country Programme to support the capacity building of the BirdLife partner. This will enhance the delivery of the Darwin project.

Cristi Nozawa (Regional Director of BirdLife International – Asia Division), Becky Rush, Simba Chan, Mike Crosby (BirdLife Asia) and Rob Sheldon had several meetings in December 2012 and March 2013, including discussions about SBS conservation as part of the Darwin project, but also in other focal countries such as China and Bangladesh.

Two issues of the SBS Task Force newsletter were produced by Christoph Zöckler in his role as the Task Force co-ordinator. These were disseminated to all project partners and a wide-range of stakeholders in the region. They are available on the EAAFP web-site: http://www.eaaflyway.net/spoon-billed-sandpiper.php

As well as specific meetings outlined above, there is regular email, phone and skype communication between all of the partners.

Other Collaboration:

An invaluable partnership has been established with IUCN, extending the reach of the project partners to governments and other experts along the EAAF (see section 4.1). The approach developed during this project is now being used by IUCN on other projects.

Strong links have been developed between RSPB and the SBS project in Bangladesh, primarily due to the SOS project with WWT. Much of the work will focus on the protection of the key wintering site at Sonadia Island. Sayam Chowdhury has visited the UK for project discussions and Rob Sheldon has visited Bangladesh twice to develop plans for awareness raising and future casework. There are significant areas of overlap between the Darwin-funded project work in Myanmar and the SOS-funded work in Bangladesh, and we are looking at ways of exchanging best practice and experiences between the key partners involved.

4. Project Progress

4.1 Progress in carrying out project activities

Output 1: Mortality due to trapping in the Gulf of Martaban (now known as Mottama) is further reduced, and this reduction is secured for the long term through the creation of local plans and institutions to promote sustainable and equitable use of the gulf's natural resources

The local partner, BANCA, have continued to strengthen their relationships with the local communities in the Gulf of Mottama. Regular visits to the local communities were undertaken and there was no record of hunting activities. In October 2012 training for BANCA staff was conducted on Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) by a specialist consultant, Georgina Houghton, during a one week field visit to the Gulf of Mottama. Training included facilitating village meetings, identifying alternative livelihoods and natural resources, village mapping, using transect walks as a technique and wealth ranking. During the first week of January 2013, Most Significant Change data were collected by BANCA staff in two villages through individual interviews. These captured historical and current information to enable trends on livelihoods and natural resources to be assessed. The accounts will also provide personal stories from villages (and villagers) to use in future work. Prior to the interview visits, Georgina Houghton provided training on interview techniques and methods. Interviews were recorded with a voice recorder and have so far been typed up in Burmese only. These will be translated into English during the next Darwin reporting period.

In November 2012 Rob Sheldon, facilitated a workshop with BANCA staff to develop a national Species Action Plan for the SBS in Myanmar. The National Government have agreed to adopt the SAP.

Progress towards indicators: the focus on training and capacity building of BANCA will act as an excellent springboard to achieve all the indicators outlined in the project local framework during 2013 – 2015.

Output 2: Proposal developed for a Protected Area within the Gulf of Mottama, together with a Zonation Plan for critical parts of the Burmese coastline specifying which areas can be developed and which should be protected

Significant progress has been made on getting the Gulf of Mottama designated a Ramsar site. Further discussions were held between BANCA, RSPB, Ramsar and the Myanmar Government in January 2013. Identifying the boundary of the Ramsar site is underway with fieldwork largely complete. Consultations with local communities have been undertaken by BANCA. It is envisaged that by the end of the 2nd year of the Darwin project that the Ramsar designation will be completed. As well as getting the Gulf of Mottama designated a Ramsar site, work has been initiated to include the site on the IBA inventory, along with Nan Thar (another key wintering site for SBS).

Progress towards indicators: we will achieve the Protected Area status of the Gulf of Mottama ahead of schedule and before the end of the project. The focus for the next two years is on areas in other parts of the Myanmar coast.

Output 3: Knowledge of the distribution of SBS outside the breeding season enhanced, together with knowledge of the use made of key sites by local communities

Significant progress has been made in gathering information on the current distribution of SBS at sites across Asia. BirdLife Asia has been working to collate information from the BirdLife Partnership and beyond on all recent (last five years) sightings of SBS. This data has been input into a spread sheet, along with information on all the sites, covering such details as stakeholders (government, business, NGO, communities etc), threats to the site, opportunities for conservation interventions, information on local communities, and conservation actions currently underway. Information has been gathered from sites in 7 countries and territories so far, namely China, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Taiwan, Russia, Hong Kong, and South Korea. Thailand, Myanmar and Japan are still in progress. The plan is to use this information to compile an assessment of opportunities for SBS conservation at all sites across the SBS range, and to identify those sites where action can most easily be undertaken.

The BirdLife China Programme has supported the China Coastal Waterbird Census, which conducts monthly monitoring of waterbirds at 13 coastal wetlands including at least two of which support important populations of Spoon-billed Sandpiper. The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society (BirdLife Partner) and several mainland Chinese bird watching societies conducted a Spoon-billed Sandpiper survey during winter 2012/13 which recorded the species at several sites and indicated that in southern China is a more important wintering area for Spoon-billed Sandpiper than was previously known. These surveys also found evidence that hunting using mistnets is a significant threat to Spoon-billed Sandpiper and other shorebirds (www.birdlife.org/community/2013/01/shorebird-trapping-threatens-new-spoon-billed-sandpiper-wintering-site-in-china/).

An information booklet, "*Recording information on Spoon-billed Sandpipers to aid their conservation*", guiding birdwatchers in how they can report SBS sightings, including critical information such as moulting stage, location and leg-flags, have been developed by BTO and BirdLife International and distributed through networks and the EAAFP (see Annex 3.1). Discussions are underway as to how this information can best be communicated to the public.

A manuscript is currently at first draft stage that details the potential winter and passage distribution of the SBS. The paper by Zöckler, Bunting, Beresford, Engler, Faulkmann and Buchanan will be submitted to a high impact peer-reviewed scientific journal by the end of 2013. The focus of the paper was to compare different modelling methods to identify candidate sites. No new major sites were identified, but highlighted China as a key passage country for the species. The paper reinforces what we know about key sites that are currently the focus of this and other major SBS projects.

Progress towards indicators: good progress has been made on the survey work component of the indicator, and the foundations have been laid for gathering information on local community activities along the flyway. We expect the indicators to be more then met in full by end of project.

Output 4: Awareness raised among decision-makers and the public in relevant countries of the importance of intertidal habitats along the East Asian–Australasian flyway for ecosystem services (e.g. flood protection), local livelihoods (e.g. through the support of vital shellfisheries) and biodiversity, and of the urgent need for key threats to these habitats to be tackled

Following a request to IUCN from some of the project partners, and support provided by the RSPB, IUCN published an influential independent report (see Annex 3.2), the first ever consensus review on the state of the intertidal habitats in the Asian section of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, *IUCN situation analysis on East and Southeast Asian intertidal habitats, with particular reference to the Yellow Sea (including the Bohai Sea)*, resulting from months of consultations with relevant governments and experts. A preliminary draft of this was discussed at side event at the Ramsar Convention Conference of the Parties in Bucharest in July 2013, organised by RSPB/BirdLife and hosted by the EAAFP with involvement of the Governments of Cambodia, China and Myanmar. It was then formally launched at a side event at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in South Korea in September 2012.

The report paved the way for the adoption at the IUCN Congress of *Resolution 28 on the Conservation of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway and its threatened waterbirds, with particular reference to the Yellow Sea*. RSPB led on the development of this, which was co-sponsored by 26 IUCN member organizations and adopted with 100% support (126 yes votes) from the government house and >99% (469 yes votes and one no) from the NGO house.

The report and resolution were then presented at a side event at the CBD COP in Hyderabad in October 2012 that was well attended by the relevant governments, including China and South Korea, and at the EAAFP MOP in Alaska in June 2013.

For each of the three major conferences in 2012, a tailored version of a leaflet *East Asian Flyway coastal wetlands face an ecological crisis* was produced by the RSPB and other NGO Partners summarising the IUCN report and the resolution. A banner was also produced to display at these and other events, as were stickers to promote the website where the documents could be downloaded.

Together, the IUCN report and Resolution offer an unprecedented springboard for concerted action to conserve Asian tidal habitats essential to migratory waterbirds and coastal communities, especially in the Yellow Sea of China and South Korea. Plans are now underway for many follow up actions including national meetings in China and South Korea to, in effect, discuss implementation of Resolution 28.

Planning and preparation is underway for a region-wide 'Welcome to the Birds' awareness-raising festival for launch across the whole of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway in October 2013. A logo has been developed, along with some communications materials, with more currently in progress. A significant number of BirdLife International Partners have agreed to host 'Welcome to the Birds' activities and educational programs. In conjunction with planning the awareness raising activities, BirdLife Asia have been organising a communications and advocacy training workshop to be held in Malaysia (July 29 to August 2) in order to raise the capacity of the BirdLife International Partnership in these fields. 'Welcome to the Birds' will be used as a working example during this training, in order to encourage more Partners to undertake educational and communications activities during this festival.

Planning is underway for a workshop to be held in early 2014 in Singapore on the importance of the conservation of intertidal habitats, particularly in relation to climate change. Target attendees will be government representatives from across South East Asia, and academics working in the field.

Progress towards indicators: Significant progress has been made and we will exceed the indicators by the end of project.

Output 5: Robust captive population established to act as a source of birds for augmentation of the wild population, to prevent it falling below a critical level from which recovery is impossible (or for rapid reintroduction, if the worst happens and the wild population goes extinct) – and Russian capacity in this field significantly enhanced

The expedition to the main breeding grounds of Meinypil'gyno was undertaken by a large multi-national team of professional staff and volunteers. The international field team was led by Christoph Zöckler, and the 16 members represented 6 countries. Three vastly experienced WWT staff were part of the team to ensure a high standard of avicultural practice was attained. This team was supplemented by Liz Brown of the New Zealand Department of Conservation, an expert in the breeding of waders. As well as the successful egg collection, all the necessary monitoring was completed. Between 9-10 breeding pairs were located in the main monitoring area, down from 11-12 pairs in 2011. This decrease reflects the annual 26% decline estimated from statistical modelling. Outside the main monitoring area a minimum of 7 additional pairs were recorded.

A total of 20 eggs were collected for the conservation breeding programme. These were shipped to WWT Slimbridge between 25 June and 5 July – 19 hatched and 17 were reared to fledging (see Annex 3.3). These are all still alive at the time of writing.

In addition to the collection of eggs for the conservation breeding programme, we also trialled an innovative technique known as 'headstarting', where eggs are placed in incubators, the chicks hatched and reared in temporary holding pens in the tundra before being released alongside wild bred birds. This increases breeding productivity 5-fold, and should lead to a stabilisation of the wild population, in conjunction with other conservation measures such as hunting mitigation. Statistical modelling shows that the population should increase if all measures are implemented successfully. This acts as a further safety net for this fragile population, and should also maintain genetic diversity within the population. The headstarting programme was overseen by WWT's Roland Digby and Juriy Bragin of Moscow Zoo. Nine SBS were released back into the wild and were seen joining a flock of other SBS before heading south on migration. This method will be rolled out in future years.

Staff from Moscow Zoo and Birds Russia visited the UK in August 2012 and spent several days at the conservation breeding facility at WWT Slimbridge discussing avicultural techniques and witnessing the practicalities of captive breeding programmes.

Twenty-eight birds now form the conservation breeding programme at WWT Slimbridge. Eleven from 2011 and seventeen from 2012. Of these, 15 are male, 10 female, and 3 have yet to be sexed.

Progress towards indicators: all indicators have been achieved. The one exception is the breeding of captive birds in 2013. This was not achieved although the birds did show signs of breeding behaviour. It is thought that the stress of moving birds as chicks between Anadyr, Moscow and the UK has resulted in slower development and adaptation to captive conditions of this 1st cohort. We are confident that the birds from this cohort will breed in 2014 and possibly also some of the birds transferred to the UK in 2012.

All of the project activities were undertaken on time and to a very high standard.

4.2 Progress towards project outputs

Overall project progress has been very good, and we are on track to achieve most, if not all, of the stated outputs. The package of work across the breeding grounds, the flyway and the wintering grounds is setting an excellent foundation to secure the future conservation status of the Critically Endangered SBS. The project is adapting well to the rapidly changing political situation in Myanmar, and we are in a strong position through BANCA, to support and influence the National Government's future conservation priorities.

4.3 Standard Measures

Further consultation is required with project partners to accurately report the Project Standard Output Measures – the completed table will be included in the next half year report.

Table 1 Project Standard Output Measures (not completed)

Code No.	Description	Year 1 Total	Total to date	Number planned for reporting period	Total planned during the project
4A	Number of undergraduate students to receive training				20
4B	Number of training weeks to be provided				18
4C	Number of postgraduate students to receive training				10
4D	Number of training weeks to be provided				18
6A	Number of people to receive other forms of education/training (which does not fall into categories 1-5 above)				10
6B	Number of training weeks to be provided				20
7	Number of (ie different types - not volume - of material produced) training materials to be produced for use by host country				2
8	Number of weeks to be spent by UK project staff on project work in the host country				22
9	Number of species/habitat management plans (or action plans) to be produced for Governments, public authorities, or other implementing agencies in the host country				3
11B	Number of papers to be submitted to peer reviewed journals				5
14A	Number of conferences/seminars/ workshops to be **organised** to present/disseminate findings				1
14B	Number of conferences/seminars/ workshops **attended** at which findings from Darwin project work will be presented/ disseminated.				4
15A	Number of national press releases in host country(ies)				8

15B	Number of local press releases in host country(ies)				
15C	Number of national press releases in UK				4
15D	Number of local press releases in UK				
16A	Number of newsletters to be produced				6
16B	Estimated circulation of each newsletter in the host country(ies)				500
16C	Estimated circulation of each newsletter in the UK				500
20	Estimated value (£'s) of physical assets to be handed over to host country(ies)	£10,000			
23	Value of resources raised from other sources (ie in addition to Darwin funding) for project work	£201,707			

Table 2 Publications

Type (eg journals, manual, CDs)	Detail (title, author, year)	Publishers (name, city)	Available from (eg contact address, website)	Cost £
Information booklet	*Recording information on Spoon-billed Sandpipers to aid their conservation*, 2013		http://www.eaaflyway.net/documents/Final%20SBS%20records%20factsheet_online_english.pdf	Free to download
Technical report	*IUCN situation analysis on East and Southeast Asian intertidal habitats, with particular reference to the Yellow Sea (including the Bohai Sea)*. 2012	IUCN, Switzerland, UK	Available in English, Korean, Chinese (and soon Russian) at http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/species/our_work/regional_initiatives/asian_coastal_wetlands/	Free to download
Leaflet	*East Asian Flyway coastal wetlands face an ecological crisis*, 2012	BirdLife International, Cambridge	http://www.birdlife.org/community/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Asian-Coastal-Wetlands-leaflet-v3-.pdf	Free to download
Resolution	*WCC-2012-Res-028-EN Conservation of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway and its threatened waterbirds, with particular reference to the Yellow Sea*	IUCN, Switzerland	http://portals.iucn.org/docs/iucnpolicy/2012-resolutions/en/WCC-2012-Res-028-EN%20Conservation%20of%20the%20East%20Asian-Australasian%20Flyway%20and%20its%20threatened%20waterbirds.pdf	Free to download

4.4 Progress towards the project purpose and outcomes

Project purpose: To implement the highest-priority actions needed to ensure the continued existence of SBS in the wild over the next 10 years and secure the longer-term future of this species' migratory flyway, taking full account of the need to integrate these conservation goals with the development needs of the people living along the flyway. Actions to include vital livelihood-related activities in the Gulf of Martaban in Myanmar, building on previous activities to reduce hunting pressure at this key site.

All work is on track to achieve the project purpose, outputs and key activities. The work during the first year of the Darwin project has been to a very high standard. The foundations laid during year 1 should enable the project to go from strength to strength.

4.5 Progress towards impact on biodiversity, sustainable use or equitable sharing of biodiversity benefits

We remain confident that the conservation prospects for the Critically Endangered SBS will be enhanced once the Darwin project is completed in March 2015. The conservation status of the species will not be changed but its imminent extinction will have been averted. This will be a significant conservation achievement for a species that utilises one of the most threatened migratory flyways on the planet. There is much work to be done to ensure the sustainable development of this flyway, and this project is making a significant contribution.

5. Monitoring, evaluation and lessons

Progress is monitored through a combination of regular 1:1 updates between key partners, broader meetings, and email correspondence. Contracts are drawn up between RSPB (as host partner) and project partners that have objectives and work plans which reflect the Darwin log-frame and activities. End of contract reports are then provided to the Project Leader to check on progress. This combination of approaches has worked well during the first 12 months.

6. Actions taken in response to previous reviews (if applicable)

Not applicable

7. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere

The design of the Darwin project remains as outlined in the original application, although the links with many other projects and stakeholders has been greater than originally expected. The utilisation of the international conventions, notably IUCN, has added real value to the project (see section 4.1), and we envisage the implementation of the IUCN Resolution across the flyway will make a significant difference to inter-tidal habitat conservation across the flyway. We could not have predicted the success of this approach whilst preparing the original application.

The development of the 'headstarting' technique to complement the captive breeding programme is also a significant step to boost the declining population. Whilst not part of the Darwin project, we will include the progress of this work in future reports as the technique emerged from our work on the conservation breeding programme.

Although we haven't experienced any major difficulties that are severely limiting our ability to deliver the Darwin project, we should mention that BANCA, our project partner in Myanmar, have undergone rapid change in their organisational development, following the departure of their long-standing Chairman. Problems were encountered with the transfer of money to Myanmar, but these have, been resolved. RSPB have established a full country programme in Myanmar to aid the development of BANCA. During these changes BANCA have continued to deliver their project requirements and remain committed to the Darwin project

8. Sustainability

The profile of the project within the main breeding grounds of Meinypil'gyno is high with local people benefitting from the project through the provision of goods and services to the expedition teams, and direct employment of a number of individuals. This high profile is due to the excellent work of Evgeny Syroechkovskiy and his Birds Russia colleagues.

The SBS project has high profile within the two UK institutions, RSPB and WWT, and is used within a wide-range of communications (see Annexes 3.4 – 3.6). Furthermore, SBS is a high profile species for the East Asian-Australasian Flyway and is seen by many organisations and individuals as an excellent flagship species for influencing changes in wider land-use planning to slow the rate of inter-tidal habitat loss (see IUCN report, Section 4). Several BirdLife International partners along the flyway are actively working for the conservation of Spoon-billed Sandpiper, in particular Hong Kong Bird Watching Society (and BirdLife's China Programme), Bird Conservation Society of Thailand and BANCA. They have projects for the conservation of key sites, conduct surveys and monitoring, and use Spoon-billed Sandpiper as a flagship species for education and wider advocacy programmes. The SBS work was given high profile at the recent BirdLife World Congress in Ottawa.

9. Dissemination

Both RSPB and WWT use SBS in a wide-range of communications to their membership and beyond, RSPB has included SBS work in 'Birds' magazine which is sent to RSPB members and is read by 576,000 people. Articles have appeared in RSPBs magazines for its younger members (see annex 3.4). The RSPB Annual Report including a feature on the SBS work (see annex 3.5). Similarly WWT have had several feature articles in 'WaterLife' which has a readership of approximately 94,300 individuals (see annex 3.6).

We provide regular project updates via www.saving-spoon-billed-sandpiper.com through blogposts and news items. The site is maintained by WWT, and is widely read. Between 1 October 2012 and 31 March 2013 the site was viewed on 15,548 occasions by 4,231 unique visitors. Most visits were from the UK and USA, but it was encouraging to see visitors from across Asia and Australasia, including current and former flyway countries such as Russia (116), Japan (108), India (92), Thailand (42), South Korea (41), Bangladesh (27), Myanmar (26), Malaysia (23), Philippines (17), Taiwan (15), Indonesia (13) and Vietnam (8).

A comprehensive list of articles and news features is maintained by WWT, and a summary is provided in Annex 3.7

10. Project Expenditure

Changes to the budget were identified and communicated to Darwin Finance on 1st February 2013. These were approved by Darwin on 05 February and the new budget was adopted thereafter – please see the following table for details.

Table 3. Revised budget for 2012/13

Category	Current 12/13 Grant Profile	Requested 12/13 Grant Profile	Differences
Staff costs	XXX	XXX	XXX
Consultancy costs	XXX	XXX	XXX
Overhead costs	XXX	XXX	XXX
Travel and subsistence	XXX	XXX	XXX
Operating costs	XXX	XXX	XXX
Capital items	XXX	XXX	XXX
Other Costs	XXX	XXX	XXX
TOTAL	XXX	XXX	XXX

Table 4. Actual project expenditure during the reporting period (1 April 2012 – 31 March 2013)

Item	Revised budget (please see above)	Expenditure	Variance/ Comments
Staff costs specified by individual	XXX	XXX	0.00
Overhead costs	XXX	XXX	0.00
Travel and subsistence	XXX	XXX	0.00
Operating costs	XXX	XXX	0.00
Capital items/equipment (please see table 5 below)	XXX	XXX	0.00
Others: Consultancy	XXX	XXX	0.00
Others (please see table below)	XXX	XXX	0.00
TOTAL	XXX	XXX	0.00

Table 5. Capital Items – explanation of cost

Description	Location	Cost (£)
Boat	Martaban, Myanmar	XXX
Uniform & kit for local conservation groups	Martaban, Myanmar	XXX
Computer	Singapore	XXX
Boat	Russia	XXX
Water Heater	Russia	XXX
Boat motor	Russia	XXX
Computer	Russia	XXX
Telescope x2	Russia	XXX
Thermal Imager	Russia	XXX
TOTAL		XXX

Table 6. Others – Explanation of Cost

Description	Cost (£)
Supplies for Flyways Officer, Singapore	XXX
Office Supplies, Russia	XXX
Office Rent, Russia	XXX
Equipment Storage, Russia	XXX
Permits & permissions, Russia	XXX
Equipment Shipping, Russia	XXX
Accountant/book-keeper, Russia	XXX
TOTAL	XXX

11. OPTIONAL: Outstanding achievements of your project during the reporting period (300-400 words maximum). This section may be used for publicity purposes

I agree for LTS and the Darwin Secretariat to publish the content of this section (please leave this line in to indicate your agreement to use any material you provide here)

This year has seen significant progress in the battle to save the Critically Endangered Spoon-billed Sandpiper from global extinction. On the breeding grounds 20 eggs were collected for the conservation breeding programme, and transferred to the purpose built facilities at WWT Slimbridge in the UK. The logistical challenge was huge and thanks to the amazing efforts of Birds Russia and WWT staff, the process went as well as could have been hoped for. A total of 28 birds now form the conservation breeding programme, and we are looking forward to 2014 when the birds should breed. In addition, the innovative technique known as 'headstarting,' where eggs are placed in incubators, the chicks hatched and reared in temporary holding pens before being released alongside wild birds, has been trialled successfully.

Away from the breeding grounds, high profile international collaboration through IUCN has led to positive discussions with many governments along the flyway. Building on these will be crucial if we are to reduce the speed and extent of inter-tidal habitat loss that the Spoon-billed Sandpiper requires. The Darwin project has complemented this work through progressing information gathering at the site-level by BirdLife International. It is clear that protecting the flyway is a huge challenge but the foundations are being put in place to give us the best chance of success.

Reducing mortality on the key wintering grounds in Myanmar and Bangladesh is continuing to be successful, and strong links are being made across the wintering grounds between partners involved in this Darwin project and one funded by SOS. Excellent progress is being made with protecting key sites, with the Gulf of Mottama in the final stages of Ramsar designation, and Sonadia Island in Bangladesh recently declared an Important Bird Area (IBA).

There is still a long way to go in the race to save the Spoon-billed Sandpiper, but the partnership between RSPB, WWT, BTO, Birds Russia, ArcCona, Moscow Zoo, the Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force, BirdLife International and many others, is making solid progress. For updates, visit www.saving-spoon-billed-sandpiper.com

Annex 1: Report of progress and achievements against Logical Framework for Financial Year 2012-2013

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2012 - March 2013	Actions required/planned for next period
Goal: *To draw on expertise relevant to biodiversity from within the United Kingdom to work with local partners in countries rich in biodiversity but constrained in resources to achieve* ⇒ The conservation of biological diversity, ⇒ The sustainable use of its components, and ⇒ The fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources			
Purpose To implement the highest-priority actions needed to ensure the continued existence of SBS in the wild over the next 10 years and secure the longer-term future of this species' migratory flyway, taking full account of the need to integrate these conservation goals with the development needs of the people living along the flyway. Actions to include vital livelihood-related activities in the Gulf of Martaban in Burma, building on previous activities to reduce hunting pressure at this key site.	SBS still extant in the wild at end of project (EOP) • Key breeding, passage and wintering sites still in useable condition by EOP • Understanding of how to integrate the conservation of SBS and other birds using the East Asian–Australasian Flyway (EAAF) with the development needs of local people significantly enhanced • Approximately 3,500 people living around the Gulf of Martaban given access to safe water through the construction of tube-wells	Progress has been very good to achieving the overall purpose. The main interventions on the breeding grounds have been successful and the new technique of 'headstarting' is looking very promising. Work in the Gulf of Mottama is progressing and BANCA are well-positioned to implement all activities and strengthen the local community activities. The preparatory work undertaken by the BirdLife Flyway Officer will enable the project to implement conservation and community work across the wider migratory flyway.	Key actions required include further work with local communities in the Gulf of Mottama, particularly the establishment of further Local Conservation Groups. The final completion of the RAMSAR designation with local stakeholders and the National Government is key. Implementation of the findings from the scoping work being undertaken by the BirdLife Flyway Officer will begin. Consolidating the conservation breeding at WWT Slimbridge
Output 1. Mortality due to trapping in the Gulf of Martaban is further reduced, and this reduction is secured for the long term through the creation of local plans and institutions to promote sustainable and equitable use of the gulf's natural resources	Sustainable Resource Use and Development Plans (SRUDPs) prepared for ten key villages around the gulf, housing approximately 25,000 people in total • Local Conservation and Development Groups (LCDGs) established in these villages to lead implementation of the SRUDPs, monitor birds and threats, raise awareness of relevant laws, and support & monitor families that have previously received microgrants to	Overall, steady progress. Training has been given to BANCA staff. Strong, positive links with the local communities have been maintained and further enhanced by the BANCA team No reports of wader hunting have been received during the project period to date.	

	ensure that the alternative livelihood activities made possible by these grants are sustained • Community Livelihood Improvement Grants given to seven of the ten focal villages, housing approximately 17,500 people in total • These grants used to improve access to safe water through the construction of one tube-well per village, serving an average of 100 households (500 people) in each village, or approximately 3,500 people in total • Incomes of the 30 ex-bird-hunting families who have previously received microgrants, comprising approximately 200 people in total, remain equal to or greater than their pre-grant incomes throughout the project period (with the increase in income ranging from 0% to 100% and averaging 50%) • Number of waders sold in local markets further reduced, so at least 75% below 2010 levels by EOP • Number of community members involved in trapping further reduced, so close to zero by EOP	
Activity 1.1 In collaboration with community members and the relevant Township Authorities, create and implement Sustainable Resource Use and Development Plans for ten key villages around the Gulf of Martaban		In progress following training of BANCA staff
Activity 1.2, Create Local Conservation and Development Groups in these villages and provide them with the financial and technical support they need to become fully established		In progress, foundations have been laid, and progress will continue in the next project period
Activity 1.3 Give Community Livelihood Improvement Grants to seven of the ten focal villages, and provide support as necessary to ensure that these grants are used effectively		No progress, but not planned until next project period
Activity 1.4. Monitor household incomes of ex-hunters who have previously received microgrants, and the utilisation and impact of the Community Grants		Monitoring undertaken informally and no reports of hunting received.

Activity 1.5. Visit local markets on a regular basis to monitor the numbers of waders for sale		Undertaken and no incidents reported
Output 2. Proposal developed for a Protected Area within the Gulf of Martaban, together with a Zonation Plan for critical parts of the Burmese coastline specifying which areas can be developed and which should be protected	Protected Area proposal and Zonation Plan created through a fully participatory process, including implementation of a robust social survey to assess potential positive and negative impacts on local communities • Proposal and plan submitted to relevant authorities by EOP	Excellent progress with the establishment of the Ramsar site at the Gulf of Mottama, with both local stakeholder and National Government support
Activity 2.1. Based on existing data and, if needed, additional fieldwork, determine where the boundaries of the proposed Protected Area should be ensuring that any negative impacts to locally resident communities are minimised and benefits maximised		Boundaries identified and mapped, and consultations undertaken with local communities.
Activity 2.2. In consultation with UK and local experts and local communities, identify the best management regime for this area		To be undertaken in future project period once final designation is achieved
Activity 2.3. Prepare a detailed proposal explaining why a Protected Area is needed, where it should be, how it should be managed and how it will deliver tangible livelihood benefits to local residents		In progress and on target for completion with the National Government during the next project period
Activity 2.4. Submit this proposal to the Burmese authorities		In progress and on target for completion with the National Government during the next project period
Activity 2.5. Prepare a Zonation Plan for critical parts of the Burmese coastline, based on a pre-existing analysis of which areas can be developed without causing undue damage to biodiversity, ecosystem services and local community livelihoods, and which should be protected		No progress, but not planned until the next project period
Activity 2.6. Submit this plan to the Burmese authorities		No progress, but not planned until the final project period
Output 3. Knowledge of the distribution of SBS outside the breeding season enhanced, together with knowledge of the use made of key sites by local communities	At least five potential stop-over and wintering sites surveyed for SBS by teams from local birding/ conservation groups, based on information obtained through analysis of remotely sensed data • Data on the use of these sites by	Surveys undertaken in Bangladesh, Thailand and various sites along the Chinese coast. More planned for the future project periods. Research paper in final preparation.

	local people gathered by these same teams, to inform future discussions about how these sites can best be protected	
Activity 3.1. Identify the bird clubs or other groups that are best placed to survey potential unrecorded stop-over and wintering sites, taking full account of existing relationships and initiatives (e.g. the China Coastal Waterbird Census, which has been underway since 2005 and with which additional SBS survey work will be fully integrated)		Undertaken, and plans being developed for surveys in future project periods. Significant work undertaken in Bangladesh through SOS-funded project. Monitoring of several known Spoon-billed Sandpiper sites by China Coastal Waterbird Census Surveys in southern China located small numbers at several sites, indicating this is a more important wintering area for Spoon-billed Sandpiper than was previously known
Activity 3.2. Provide these groups with the training and support they need to survey these sites for birds and assess use by local communities, and to manage and analyse the resulting data		
Activity 3.3. Collate the findings and disseminate them to all relevant stakeholders, for example through papers in scientific journals		Underway and ongoing. Also see Annex 3.1.
Output 4. Awareness raised among decision-makers and the public in relevant countries of the importance of intertidal habitats along the East Asian–Australasian flyway for ecosystem services (e.g. flood protection), local livelihoods (e.g. through the support of vital shellfisheries) and biodiversity, and of the urgent need for key threats to these habitats to be tackled	Desk-based studies carried out to identify and monitor the drivers of habitat destruction along the flyway and the threats to key sites • Awareness-raising and advocacy work carried out in Russia, Korea, China, Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand, Burma and Bangladesh, informed by this research and using all relevant socio-economic, ecological and legal arguments	All desk-based work underway and at final draft stages. See section 4.1 for further details on work through IUCN – excellent progress and added value.
Activity 4.1 Undertake research into and documentation of drivers of habitat loss and threats to key sites along the flyway, in collaboration with national and local colleagues		Underway and due for completion in the next reporting period
Activity 4.2 Develop compelling messages, informed by this research, about the importance of intertidal habitats along the flyway for ecosystem services, local livelihoods and biodiversity		Underway and due for completion in the next reporting period

Activity 4.3 Communicate these messages proactively and effectively to all relevant policy- and decision-makers in the region		Underway and due for completion in the next reporting period
Output 5. Robust captive population established to act as a source of birds for augmentation of the wild population, to prevent it falling below a critical level from which recovery is impossible (or for rapid reintroduction, if the worst happens and the wild population goes extinct) – and Russian capacity in this field significantly enhanced	Expedition to the breeding grounds in summer 2012 successfully collects at least five clutches of eggs, supplementing an initial expedition in 2011* • At least 10 sub-adult or adult SBS healthy in captivity by end 2012 • At least one pair of SBS attempts to breed in captivity in 2013 • Russian colleagues involved in all avicultural tasks (e.g. incubation, chick rearing, transport)	Undertaken successfully. 28 birds are at WWT Slimbridge, including 11 from 2011 and 17 from 2012. Russian colleagues are directly involved in work on the breeding grounds and have visited the conservation breeding programme at WWT Slimbridge
Activity 5.1. Travel to the breeding grounds in Chukotka in spring 2012 and establish expedition base, building on a successful first expedition carried out in 2011 (activity led by Bird Russia)		Expedition undertaken to a high standard. Excellent co-ordination and delivery by Birds Russia, WWT and SBS Task Force members.
Activity 5.2. Survey and carefully monitor each breeding territory to identify the optimal timing for egg collection, taking account of the desirability of permitting re-laying, and collect eggs accordingly		Completed. Detailed project report submitted by Birds Russia.
Activity 5.3. Incubate the eggs collected, and (once they are old enough to move) transport the resulting chicks back to a purpose-built facility at Slimbridge via Anadyr (the nearest large town to the breeding grounds) and Moscow Zoo		Completed. Change of approach, with eggs being transferred directly to WWT Slimbridge. The condition and survival of the resulting chicks is enhanced due to reduced stress.
Activity 5.4. Care for these birds at Slimbridge, together with those obtained through the 2011 expedition, with the aim of encouraging breeding and thus generating additional birds for supplementation of the wild population		Ongoing. Excellent facilities provided by WWT and high standard of care from aviculturalists. Captive birds are developing well and breeding behaviours have been exhibited by individuals from the first cohort. No breeding in 2013, but this is expected in 2014.

Annex 2 Project's full current logframe

The log-frame went through several iterations following discussions between RSPB and Darwin secretariart. The final version differs between what was submitted and the key alterations are highlighted in green below.

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
Goal: Effective contribution in support of the implementation of the objectives of the CBD, CITES, and the CMS, as well as related targets set by countries rich in biodiversity but constrained in resources.			
Sub-Goal: To improve the conservation status of the Critically Endangered spoon-billed sandpiper *Eurynorhynchus pygmeus* (SBS) so that it is no longer threatened with imminent extinction	• Wild population stable in 2020 and believed to be in excess of 100 adult birds • SBS increasing in the wild by 2025	• Species monitoring data for 2015 to 2020 • Species monitoring data for 2020 to 2025	
Purpose To implement the highest-priority actions needed to ensure the continued existence of SBS in the wild over the next 10 years and secure the longer-term future of this species' migratory flyway, taking full account of the need to integrate these conservation goals with the development needs of the people living along the flyway. Actions to include vital livelihood-related activities in the Gulf of Martaban in Burma, building on previous activities to reduce hunting pressure at this key site.	• SBS still extant in the wild at end of project (EOP) • Key breeding, passage and wintering sites still in useable condition by EOP • Understanding of how to integrate the conservation of SBS and other birds using the East Asian–Australasian Flyway (EAAF) with the development needs of local people significantly enhanced • Approximately 3,500 people living around the Gulf of Martaban given access to safe water through the construction of tube-wells	• Species monitoring data for 2015 • Site monitoring data for 2015 • Local and regional plans created under Outputs 1 and 2, reports produced under Output 3, reports and materials under Output 4 • Reports from assessments of well usage, project reports, project evaluation reports	The diagnosis that mortality due to trapping in Martaban, which is a key focus for the project, is the most acute current threat to SBS is correct (as strongly indicated by recent scientific papers and fieldwork in Martaban) Integration of conservation and development needs proves to be achievable

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
Outputs			
1. Mortality due to trapping in the Gulf of Martaban is further reduced, and this reduction is secured for the long term through the creation of local plans and institutions to promote sustainable and equitable use of the gulf's natural resources	• Sustainable Resource Use and Development Plans (SRUDPs) prepared for ten key villages around the gulf, housing approximately 25,000 people in total	• Plan documents, project reports, project evaluation reports	Local communities continue to be happy to be involved in conservation and development activities, as has been the case to date
	• Local Conservation and Development Groups (LCDGs) established in these villages to lead implementation of the SRUDPs, monitor birds and threats, raise awareness of relevant laws, and support & monitor families that have previously received microgrants to ensure that the alternative livelihood activities made possible by these grants are sustained	• Documents recording LCDG establishment and activities, project reports, project evaluation reports	
	• Community Livelihood Improvement Grants given to seven of the ten focal villages, housing approximately 17,500 people in total	• LCDG technical and financial reports, project reports, project evaluation reports	
	• These grants used to improve access to safe water through the construction of one tube-well per village, serving an average of 100 households (500 people) in each village, or approximately 3,500 people in total	• Well construction records, reports from assessments of the numbers of people using the wells, LCDG reports, project reports, project evaluation reports	
	• Incomes of the 30 ex-bird-hunting families who have previously received microgrants,		

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
	comprising approximately 200 people in total, remain equal to or greater than their pre-grant incomes throughout the project period (with the increase in income ranging from 0% to 100% and averaging 50%) • Number of waders sold in local markets further reduced, so at least 75% below 2010 levels by EOP • Number of community members involved in trapping further reduced, so close to zero by EOP	• Results from before-and-after income surveys • Market monitoring data • Reports from LCDGs	
2. Proposal developed for a Protected Area within the Gulf of Martaban, together with a Zonation Plan for critical parts of the Burmese coastline specifying which areas can be developed and which should be protected	• Protected Area proposal and Zonation Plan created through a fully participatory process including implementation of a robust social survey to assess potential positive and negative impacts on local communities • Proposal and plan submitted to relevant authorities by EOP	• Proposal and plan documents, plus survey results and other outputs from the development process • Submission records (e.g. dated cover letters to authorities)	It proves possible to reach consensus with local communities on both the Protected Area proposal and the Zonation Plan
3. Knowledge of the distribution of SBS outside the breeding season enhanced, together with knowledge of the use made of key sites by local communities	• At least five potential stop-over and wintering sites surveyed for SBS by teams from local birding/ conservation groups, based on information obtained through analysis of remotely sensed data • Data on the use of these sites by local people gathered by these same teams, to inform future discussions about how	• Reports from survey visits • Reports on site usage	No major assumptions: there are no external factors that are likely to stop us achieving this objective

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
	these sites can best be protected		
4. Awareness raised among decision-makers and the public in relevant countries of the importance of intertidal habitats along the East Asian–Australasian flyway for ecosystem services (e.g. flood protection), local livelihoods (e.g. through the support of vital shellfisheries) and biodiversity, and of the urgent need for key threats to these habitats to be tackled	• Desk-based studies carried out to identify and monitor the drivers of habitat destruction along the flyway and the threats to key sites • Awareness-raising and advocacy work carried out in Russia, Korea, China, Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand, Burma and Bangladesh, informed by this research and using all relevant socio-economic, ecological and legal arguments	• Research reports • Awareness-raising and advocacy materials and reports	Target audiences are receptive to our awareness-raising efforts
5. Robust captive population established to act as a source of birds for augmentation of the wild population, to prevent it falling below a critical level from which recovery is impossible (or for rapid reintroduction, if the worst happens and the wild population goes extinct) – and Russian capacity in this field significantly enhanced	• Expedition to the breeding grounds in summer 2012 successfully collects at least five clutches of eggs, supplementing an initial expedition in 2011* • At least 10 sub-adult or adult SBS healthy in captivity by end 2012 • At least one pair of SBS attempts to breed in captivity in 2013 • Russian colleagues involved in all avicultural tasks (e.g. incubation, chick rearing, transport)	• Expedition report, project reports • Reports from breeding facility at Slimbridge • Reports from breeding facility at Slimbridge • Project reports	• SBS proves to be amenable to captive breeding (as expected on the basis of extensive research and consultation and trials on other small waders at Slimbridge) • Sufficient wild birds left in 2012 to allow collection of enough eggs (as expected from analysis of recent population trend) • Russian authorities give permission for 2012 expedition (as they have for the 2011 expedition, due partly to Birds Russia's excellent links)
* **Important note:** Detailed modelling work has shown that egg collection will have a negligible impact on the wild population. This is partly because clutches are taken early to permit re-laying, and partly because year 1 survival rate in the wild is currently close to zero – meaning that eggs counter-intuitively have minimal demographic value.			