



Darwin Initiative Main/Post/D+ Project Half Year Report (due 31 October 2016)

Project Ref No	20-022
Project Title	Enhancing habitat connectivity through sustainable development around the Gola Rainforest
Country(ies)/Territory(ies)	Sierra Leone
Lead Organisation	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
Partner(s)	Gola Rainforest National Park (GRNP), Welt Hunger Hilfe (WHH), Conservation Society of Sierra Leone (CSSL), Forestry Division, Cambridge University Department of Land Economy and Rainforest Alliance.
Project Leader	<i>Nicolas Tubbs</i>
Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)	<i>October 2016, HYR4</i>
Project website/ Twitter/ Blog/ Instagram etc	www.golarainforest.org
Funder (DFID/Defra)	<i>DFID</i>

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 to end September).

The last six months were characterised by the rainy season in Sierra Leone and hence most progress here was driven by desk-based activities.

Additional bird counts from the last field season were completed and incorporated to the dataset to improve habitat sample sizes. This included 19 in upland farm, 5 in community forest, 16 in farm bush, 3 in active cocoa and 5 in abandoned cocoa plantations.

We sought support in analysing the crop raiding data collected for the 2015 cocoa harvest season. This was done by an MSc student from the University of East Anglia. The analysis is ongoing and will be completed before the next report is due. It will determine the cocoa losses to mammal species in a selection of previously mapped active cocoa patches in the leakage belt in Nomo and Malema chiefdoms. They each vary in size and distance to the National Park. Furthermore, a paper is in preparation focusing on the crop raiding review which was completed (see AR3). Anticipation is for it to be submitted to Oryx before the end of November. This draft is currently undergoing comments.

Based on this review and further understanding of existing practices to prevent and mitigate crop raiding, a crop raiding mitigation method is now being trialed and tested. The methods selected rely on the use of acoustic deterrents and chilli oil. A plantation reported to have high damage from chimpanzees has been selected to trial the acoustic deterrents. This will be rolled out very shortly, whilst the focus is right now on chilli oil which is directly applied to pods. This method is targeting three plantations in Gaura Chiefdom. The cocoa harvest season is late this year, partly due to the late arrival of the rainy season. This however has provided the opportunity to actively engage our partner Rainforest Alliance who is expected to be present whilst these trials take place and will be providing dedicated on the job training and supervision of this work. This will also help ensure that trialed methodologies will be in line with rainforest-

friendly certification schemes.

The project was well profiled at the Pan-African Ornithological Congress which took place in Senegal (October). An extensive presentation of this project was given then and was particularly well received, especially as it demonstrated the connectivity with the Gola REDD Project and illustrated how the approach being promoted here demonstrates how development and conservation initiatives can go hand in hand for the benefit of local communities as well as critical biodiversity.

A series of workshops through Farmer Field schools were also given focusing on the harvesting, fermentation and drying processes. We are now monitoring the impact this will have on the good quality cocoa being produced by forest edge communities during the 2016 cocoa harvest season. This will go hand in hand with the Comic-Relief funded project which we previously mentioned (because this project leveraged the Comic Relief one) which anticipates exporting the very first container of Gola Cocoa beans by the end of the calendar year.

2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt 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.

The sheer nature of this project relies on a high level of resilience and adaptability to the agricultural seasons which we have managed to integrate and capture thus far.

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 currently expect to have any significant (e.g., more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?

Yes No Estimated underspend: £

3b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully. Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.

If you anticipate a significant underspend because of justifiable changes within the project please submit a rebudget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a rebudget so please ensure you have enough time to make appropriate changes if necessary.

n/a

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

n/a

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 can be discussed in this report but **should also be 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 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message e.g., Subject: 22-035 Darwin Half Year Report**