

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Half Year Report Form

Project Title	Big cat conservation and sustainable management in southern Africa
Country	Zimbabwe
Organisation	Wildlife Conservation Research Unit, Oxford
Project Ref. No.	162/09/015
Report date	23/10/02

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months against the agreed baseline timetable for the project.

- i) Our conservation education group is now trained and functional in the local area. Ten local youths have been trained by a professional group of players, to perform conservation plays. They are performing plays and enhancing conservation awareness in the local area, at venues such as schools. They are also able to perform at tourist venues and thereby supplement their incomes. We anticipate that this group will have an ongoing role in conservation in the area. We are also planning to take groups of local school children on trips into the National Park, accompanied by members of our drama group as a further outreach activity.
- ii) We have now deployed four GPS collars on lions and have been collecting data on the movements of these animals for 2- 5 months. In addition we are collecting data from a further 19 VHF radio collars deployed on lions in Hwange National Park. The GPS technology has been a great success and it has been decided to deploy more collars as funding becomes available. We have committed to continuing with the fieldwork side of this project for a further three years and are currently seeking funding to achieve this.
- iii) Our third regional workshop was held this month (October) in the Matopos, Zimbabwe. It was attended by researchers and conservationists from Zimbabwe, Botswana, South Africa and Kenya, as well as expert advisors from the UK and USA. The publication stemming from our previous meeting (*Lion Workshop II: Modelling Conflict* by Loveridge, A. J., Lynam, T. and Macdonald, D. W.) was presented and 150 copies were distributed. These are expected to be available to a wide cross section of the southern African conservation community and beyond. A further publication was planned, based on the outputs and discussion from this years meeting. In addition, because of the popularity and success of the yearly meetings the core group of delegates has committed to a further meeting in October 2003. Members of the Department of National Parks and the local safari community also attended the meeting.
- iv) We continue to train National Parks staff. In particular we give on-the-job training to two National Parks staff. These staff members are also involved in our conservation outreach programme.

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 effect the budget and timetable of project activities. Have any of these issues been discussed with the Department and if so, have changes

been made to the original agreement?

Zimbabwe's political situation, while occasionally affecting the smooth running of the project (e.g. occasional shortages of fuel) has not affected the impact that the project is able to make. Indeed it is ever more crucial that projects such as this one continue to function.

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

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