

# Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

## Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

<b>Project Ref. No.</b>	162/09/015 PPF (NB this is original project code, we don't appear to have one for the follow-up project)
<b>Project Title</b>	The Role of Tourism in Sustainable use of Big Cats
<b>Country(ies)</b>	Zimbabwe & southern Africa
<b>UK Organisation</b>	Prof. D.W. Macdonald, WildCRU, Oxford University
<b>Collaborator(s)</b>	Parks and Wildlife Authority, Zimbabwe
<b>Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)</b>	HYR 1
<b>Project website</b>	<a href="http://www.wildcru.org">www.wildcru.org</a>

### **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).**

#### **Fieldwork and Monitoring**

The project has continued to intensively monitor the lion population in Hwange National Park over the past six months. Routine data collection on radio-collared lions and demography of prides in the study area continued as per project timetable. The project currently has 26 lions with radio-collars in the study, all of which are routinely monitored over an area of 7000km<sup>2</sup>. We have 3-4 field staff in place, as well as a volunteer pilot and local staff. Maintenance of collars (replacement of worn collars, replacement of battery packs on collars) has been undertaken by the field team over the last six months in addition to routine monitoring. Data collection on the value of tourism to the National Park has been completed (500 tourist interviews) and early analysis has been undertaken.

The most outstanding success for the project, to date, is the agreement by the Parks Authority to implement a temporary moratorium on hunting of lions in the Hwange area for a period of at least two years, based on results presented by the project. This is a major breakthrough for management of this species. The agreement to suspend hunting means that both the Parks Authority and Hunting operators will potentially lose revenue. Notwithstanding this stakeholders have decided that the most responsible management option for lions is to suspend hunting until the population has recovered. All parties have agreed to be guided by ongoing monitoring by the project. Sustainable utilisation of hunted species relies on accurate population estimates and responsible quota setting. Voluntary suspension of hunting is a huge step in the right direction and gives us enormous optimism for the future management of this species. Our work over the next few years will entail monitoring the effects of the moratorium and documentation of recovery within the lion population.

#### **Training**

Another major success for the project was the successful application by two of our field-assistants for permanent posts within the Parks and Wildlife Authority. Nkululeku Hlongwane and Pilani Dladla have both received extensive training in field research from the project. This experience has enabled them to apply for posts as Research Scouts at Hwange Main Camp. The assistance and training that the project has given these two local people has given them the training, experience and confidence to compete for highly desirable jobs with the Parks Authority. In addition training we have provided improves capacity within the Parks Authority to undertake ecological research effectively. In addition Mr Zeke Davidson has worked and gained

training and experience on the project for the last two years. He has recently been accepted by Oxford University to read for a D.Phil degree.

### **Dissemination of results**

In early October Dr Loveridge presented the results and recommendations of the project to the Parks Authority Headquarters staff in Harare, Zimbabwe. The 60minute presentation was received with a great deal of interest. In addition The Director General of the Parks Authority congratulated the project on its success and the contribution it has made to management of Zimbabwe's lion population. The Warden of Scientific Services, Parks Authority provided written support of the collaboration between WildCRU and the Authority. In addition to the Harare seminar, a workshop was held at Main Camp, Hwange National Park. This meeting was well attended by local Parks Authority staff, Safari operators, Hunters and local landowners. Once again results and activities of the project were received with a great deal of interest. Workshops of this nature work towards continuing to nurture good relationships we have forged with local stakeholders by the project. Dr A. Loveridge and Mr Z. Davidson presented a research paper at the Southern African Wildlife Management Association Conference held in Kathu, South Africa from 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> October. The presentation was judged in the top five of all the presentations at the conference and once again the work undertaken by the project and results to date received a great deal of attention.

### **Conservation education**

The conservation education initiative (in the form of a local theatre group called the Ingonyama Players) run and supported by the project continues to be active in the local area. The Ingonyama Players perform conservation plays in the local areas, travelling to many of the schools around the park. Although increased transportation costs have become an issue when visits to schools beyond the local area are required, the group has managed to run at least one drama workshop at a school each month. These workshops entail teaching school children to act out the plays in the theatre group's repertoire. Active participation in conservation plays greatly enhances the enjoyment and impact of the experience. In addition the theatre group has professionally recorded a tape cassette of their repertoire of traditional songs.

**Report Author: Dr A. J. Loveridge, October 2004**

**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.**

We have not encountered any major problems during the last six month period, however, Zimbabwe continues to be a logistically and economically challenging environment in which to work. Notwithstanding this we continue to make excellent progress with project work in the field.

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

**No**

**Discussed with the DI Secretariat:      No                      no/yes, in..... (month/yr)**

**Changes to the project schedule/workplan:      No      no/yes, in.....(month/yr)**

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