

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2010)

Project Ref No	EIDPO024
Project Title	Securing the future for Gurney's Pitta and its forest habitat
Country(ies)	Thailand and Myanmar
UK Organisation	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Collaborator(s)	Bird Conservation Society Thailand (BCST), Forest Restoration Research Unit (FORRU), Chiang Mai University, Thailand, Biodiversity And Nature Conservation Association (BANCA), Myanmar
Project Leader	Ian Barber (RSPB)
Report date	31 October 2010
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR 2
Project website	http://www.forru.org/FORRUEng_Website/Pages/enggurneyspitta.htm http://www.bcst.or.th/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=19&Itemid=89&lang=en http://www.rspb.org.uk/ourwork/projects/place.asp?focus=International&place=Thailand

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).

Planning

Contact has been maintained with the partner project leaders through e-mail and a project planning meeting was held in April in Bangkok involving the Thai partners (BCST and FORRU) and RSPB.

Staff

Staffing levels at the FORRU-Krabi tree nursery facility have remained the same with regular supervisory visits being made by Dr. Stephen Elliott (FORRU). Unfortunately, Kritsana Kaewplang (Director BCST) left BCST in May 2010 and a replacement was not found until August. This left the BCST employee at the site under supervised for this period.

Nursery

The nursery facility continued excellent progress and the target of producing 20,000 trees pa has been achieved. The reference collection of young seedlings collected from the nursery will be properly housed in FORRU at Chiang Mai University to support surveys of natural forest regeneration in the future.

Planting and monitoring

Identifying areas for replanting has been easier this year with less bureaucracy encountered from the local Government officials. Three sites were planted, two inside and one outside of the KNC Wildlife Sanctuary. The first site was identified from the workshop with local communities and Govt Conservation staff in October 2009. This site, an area of approximately 10 rai (1.6ha), is outside the Sanctuary and was planted in May with 4,200 trees of 18 different species. A second site of 16 rai (2.6ha) inside the Sanctuary was planted in early June with 5,600 trees of 16 species. Finally, the nursery provided a further 2,800 trees of 12 species to match the 3,000 trees from the Wildlife Sanctuary's own nurseries, for planting an area of approximately 20 rai (3.2ha) inside the Sanctuary. The total area planted this year using the FORRU nursery trees equates to 36rai (5.7ha). The total for both years is 46rai (7.3ha), which comfortably exceeds

the target of at least 6ha.

In addition, over 2,500 trees of about 10 species were taken by individuals, schools and communities for their own private planting.

Over 15,000 trees have been planted out this year and there are a further 19,700 trees left in the nursery for planting next year.

Monitoring of last years plot has continued and areas within the sites planted this year have been established and monitored. A final round of monitoring of all plots will be undertaken in December and the data analysed before the completion of the project.

Community Activities

The range of community activities has continued although work with school children has shifted from the Treasure Tree programme of collecting and growing seeds and more towards practical planting on site. Two school groups helped with the planting of the FORRU areas while several schools attended the much bigger planting organised by the Wildlife Sanctuary. In addition, the FORRU staff assisted one school that used our nursery trees to plant a village community area.

Developing the formal education materials has been slow to progress but school visits have continued. The Interpretation Centre is finally functioning and efforts are under way to produce displays and exhibition materials.

Research

The Wildlife Research Division in Thailand again undertook a survey of selected sites in southern Thailand. They covered four protected areas outside of the KNC Wildlife Sanctuary but did not encounter any birds. At KNC, they located 13 individuals in 7 different areas. A meeting is planned for December to discuss the results and to plan future survey work.

The survey work in Myanmar was completed with 37 sites being covered. Sites were selected to clarify the species' altitudinal and latitudinal limits and the results supported our predictive model of where the birds are likely to be found. The survey team in Myanmar did a very efficient job although the ongoing political situation prevented them from going to some areas. As a result, there is some money left in their budget to undertake further survey work in the 2011 season. The results of the two survey years will then be analysed and used to assess the conservation status of Gurney's pitta. This will mean a slight delay in writing the final scientific papers that will now happen after the end of the project.

Future plans

Discussions about future sustainability and an exit strategy have taken place and two approaches will be taken over the final quarter of the project. One aspect is to secure the future of the tree nursery, which is producing 20,000 trees of 30+ species a year, far bigger than any other in the area. We will be having discussions with the local community and Government Officials to try to integrate the nursery into the existing Regional Community Forest programme. This will mean the local community being assisted to run the nursery that will then provide trees for planting their own community forests. A precondition will be that some replanted sites will be in key areas for Gurney's pitta. The other aspect is to identify areas for replanting and we will continue with the streamside corridor approach both inside and outside the Wildlife Sanctuary.

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.

The main issue over the past 6 months was the departure of the Director of BCST and project partner. The result has been a slowing down of the education activities and material development but it is hoped that lost time can be made up over the final quarter.

A minor issue was the realisation that there has been an oversight in the original logframe. One of the Measurable Indicator states: "Tree production increases to at least 40,000 trees per year by t2". The total capacity of the nursery is 20,000 trees pa and so it should read "20,000 trees per year by t2".

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

Yes – the logframe oversight was discussed with Eilidh Young at LTSI and agreed that it was a minor point and can best be corrected by a footnote to the logframe in any future reports.

Discussed with LTS: Yes , in Sept 2010... (month/yr)

Formal change request submitted: No , in.....(month/yr)

Received confirmation of change acceptance no/yes in.....(month/yr)

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

Yes No

NB: because of the underspend on the Myanmar survey it is proposed that there is a repeat survey between Feb–May 2011. Although the survey work will finish just beyond the end of the Darwin project, we envisage the money being spent within the project period and the survey results should be incorporated into the projects final report in June 2011.

If yes, and you wish to request a carryforward of funds, this should be done as soon as possible. It would help Defra manage Darwin funds more efficiently if you could give an indication 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?

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 directly.

Please send your **completed form 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**