

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2009)

Project Ref. No.	EIDPO027
Project Title	Reducing the impact of feral livestock in and around the Centre Hills
Country(ies)	Montserrat, UK
UK Organisation	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Collaborator(s)	Food and Environment Research Agency, Montserrat Department of Environment, Montserrat Department of Agriculture
Project Leader	<i>Sarah Sanders</i>
Report date	<i>1st April – 31st October 2009</i>
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	<i>Half Yearly Report 1</i>
Project website	<i>Montserrat Department of Environment Website under construction</i>

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).

0. Project management arrangements in place and operational

- Memorandum of Collaboration signed by project partners in August 2009
- Project co-ordinator recruited and started on Montserrat at beginning of September 2009
- FERA and RSPB visited in July, FERA visited again in September
- Regular teleconferences between partners to discuss project progress (15th April, 27th May, 1st July, 29th September, 30th October 2009)
- 30 participants attended stakeholder workshop on Montserrat (22nd July 2009) to agree project workplan
- 1st project steering committee meeting took place on Montserrat attended by all project partners (30th July 2009)

1. Knowledge of existing feral livestock in and around the Centre Hills is increased

- 8 Boar Operated Systems (BOS) built on Montserrat
- 30 remote monitoring cameras purchased, 23 deployed into the field (19th July – 17th September)
- BOS monitoring tested on Montserrat (19th – 31st July) in 3 areas, 4 more deployed 2nd-11th September
- Mapping of agricultural and livestock plots discussed with DOA. Completed for Duck Pond
- Survey of public attitudes to pig consumption under preparation with statistics department
- Livestock data from DOA collated on local production of meats between 2001-2008 and the number of loose livestock impounded 2007 onwards. Further to this data on imported meats, a livestock owner survey and reported damages to crops will be added
- Camera trap pictures (19th July – 25th September): 397 of pigs, 4 of goats, 497 of cattle, 311 other animals
- Montserrat Water Authority are recording sign of feral livestock activity around springs
- Proposal for livestock backyard project in development for submission to OTEP
- Trials on seed dispersal by feral pigs initiated

2. Technical expertise is enhanced and new skills are developed in the monitoring and control of feral livestock

- Training materials completed for BOS monitoring, data collection, cameras and pig identification
- 13 persons attended training (19th – 31st July 2009)
- Water authority personnel instructed on recording sign of feral livestock (8th October 2009)

3. Options to control feral livestock in and around the Centre Hills are assessed

- No activities planned for this reporting period

4. Actions to control feral livestock in and around the Centre Hills are improved

- 4 rapid assessments of tethered livestock undertaken (goats, sheep, cattle)

5. Policies on livestock management are strengthened

- No activities undertaken this reporting period

6. Awareness is raised on Montserrat and in the Caribbean about the impacts of feral livestock on biodiversity and livelihoods

- RSPB and DOE presented poster at SCSCB conference Antigua (13th – 19th July 2009)
- FERA presented project at RSPB (30th October)
- 2 press releases on Montserrat
- 3 radio interviews on Montserrat
- 1 update on Government of Montserrat website
- Interest in the project from the Forestry Department, St Lucia as they also have problems with feral pigs

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.

Most activities are progressing according to the project schedule. Although not planned in the original project application, with RSPB support, the DOE have contracted a project co-ordinator to manage the project on Montserrat full-time until September 2010.

This is the first time the Boar Operated System (BOS) has been used in the tropics and monitoring has experienced problems with low pig visitation. In response, we have delayed intensive BOS monitoring and weekly monitoring will continue into the beginning of November. The bait has been changed and we will begin to use both natural and commercial attractants to overcome this problem. The activity of the Soufriere volcano has increased in recent days which will limit our access to the exclusion zone and may hinder BOS monitoring and partly camera monitoring. 5 cameras have failed but this has not impacted on data due to contingency cameras. We are seeking to have these cameras repaired/replaced at no cost.

The project leader has moved to a new position at the RSPB so will handover responsibility for the project to James Millett (UKOT Caribbean International Officer) at the beginning of December 2009 on Montserrat.

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

We have not yet informed the Darwin Secretariat of the project management changes at RSPB. As there will be no changes to the budget and project timetable, we hope this is acceptable.

Discussed with the DI Secretariat: No

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: No

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

No