



Darwin Scholarship - Interim Report

(Submit within one month after 3 or 6 month period, max 3 pages.)

Darwin Project Ref No.	EIDPS10
Darwin Project Title	Completion of Darwin Initiative Scholarship: Mike Anthony Kiragu Mwangi
Name of Darwin Scholar	Mike Anthony Kiragu Mwangi
UK Organisation	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and University of East Anglia
Your Organisation(s)	Nature Kenya – the East Africa Natural History Society
Your role within your Organisation	Conservation Programme Officer
Start/end date of Scholarship	1 st September 2005 – 30 th September 2006
Location	University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK plus field locations
Darwin scholarship funding (£)	£14,400
Type of work (e.g. research, training, other, please specify)	Research and training
Main contact in UK Organisation	Paul Buckley, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Author(s), date	Mike Mwangi, Paul Buckley 26 th April 2006

Background

- Briefly describe your involvement in the Darwin project before the start of your scholarship. The scholar was involved in the project titled Kenyan Important Bird Areas: improving monitoring, management and conservation action and working for Nature Kenya the Birdlife Partner in Kenya as a Conservation Programme Officer. Main roles in the project were:
 - Provide supervision and technical support, as requested by the Conservation Programme Manager, to other conservation programme staff and volunteers involved in the project
 - Assist to develop, source funds for and co-ordinate fieldwork for surveys at little-known IBAs.
 - Help to develop and implement the monitoring programme for IBAs in Kenya.
 - Assist, through technical support and co-ordination, with work to broaden the taxonomic scope of Nature Kenya's priority-setting. Help to develop and deliver site-focused conservation education programmes.

- Help to organise, and provide technical input to, short training courses for volunteers, site-support groups and Government-representatives.
 - Support the operations of Nature Kenya's Policy and Legislation Working Group, and help to develop Nature Kenya's position and relevant policy issues, especially in accordance with articles of the CBD
 - Assist to establish, maintain, enhance and involve an active network of Nature Kenya members, conservation groups, Government and non-Government institutions including District Development Committees and local authorities) at around IBAs-
 - Assist in producing material for the media to publicise Nature Kenya's Conservation Programmes;- represent Nature Kenya when required at national and international meetings and conservation forums, and advocate Nature Kenya's conservation concerns
 - Support the Executive Director and Conservation Programme Manager to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of Nature Kenya's projects and programmes, and ensure donor requirements for reporting and accounting are met.
- Describe aim and objectives of the Scholarship, and programme of work
The aim of the scholarship was to improve the scholar's ability to implement conservation programmes of Nature Kenya the BirdLife partner in Kenya
The following objectives were envisioned:
 - improving the links between science and application, especially in relation to the sound science basis of management plans and ensuring their more effective integration
 - improving information management, making it more accessible and understandable
 - improving the ability to analyse data and turn into usable information
 - inputting to the sound ecological management of NatureKenya's first ever nature reserve on the Kinangop Grasslands
 - Briefly describe the roles of the UK and Scholar's institutions
The RSPB has and will continue to provide logistical support and mentoring throughout the Scholar's time in the UK. The RSPB is jointly supervising and co-funding the Research project. The University of East Anglia is providing hosting for the MSc and associated tutorials, mentoring and research supervision. The Scholar has stayed in close contact with Nature Kenya over the period of the Scholarship and provided each other with useful information and logistical assistance.

Progress

- Provide a brief account of your work since the start of your scholarship, showing progress against the programme of work.
 - September to Feb based at University of East Anglia, Norwich participating in the taught courses on the Masters of Applied Ecology and Conservation. The M.Sc. course requires students to take up degree course that total 180 credits with 100 credits from taught courses while the remaining 80 credits from a research project.
 - The eight taught courses are delivered by the Schools of Biological Sciences, Environmental Sciences and Development Studies.
 - Participating in a field course to Ireland
 - Met with the Darwin Initiative staff twice for formal introductions and updates and later on the workshop held on the 22nd of Feb. A third meeting is scheduled for 30th May 2006.
 - Attended the 2006 Cambridge University organised Students conference on conservation biology.
 - Developed a project proposal to study a rare bird species in the United Kingdom (Golden Oriole), work that will be co-supervised by UEA and RSPB staff.
 - Contact with BirdLife International and UNEP WCMC
 - Other visits, training, field experience as time and opportunity permits
- Provide an account of any problems encountered and how you have or are planning to overcome them.
Opening a bank account in the United Kingdom took longer than expected and could have been a major issue were it not for the intervention of the RSPB staff that organised for advance cash to

cover living expenses in the first four weeks. Scholars would benefit from knowing the banking procedures to allow for forward planning and avoid inconveniences.

- Any issues you would like to raise?
None at the moment other than that the Scholarship has provided the scholar with enormous opportunities for professional development for which he is most grateful and which will stand him in good stead on his return to Kenya.

Achievements and Outcomes

- What have been the main achievements and outcomes to date, and how do they relate towards the overall aim and objectives of the Scholarship.
 - Successfully completing the 8 taught courses by end of February
 - Fundraising for the additional dissertation expenses from the RSPB (£1,545) - see attached
 - Publication of an article in *Oryx* Volume 40 (1): 6, *Conservation opportunities and problems from the tsunami* (available on request)
 - Contribution a Kenyan case study (number 244) on Amboseli National Park (IBA number 42) to www.conservationevidence.com
 - Contacts with a network of personalities working in conservation organisations during the Darwin workshop and the Cambridge students conservation conference

The Scholar is so far very satisfied with the learning experience and his tutors are also pleased. He has maintained close contact with NatureKenya and is confident of his ability to apply his new found skills and experience on his return home. He has made many new contacts and acquired new and better sources which will also prove valuable.

Next Steps

- Briefly describe forthcoming activities, events, milestones
 - Working on the dissertation project from April to June 2006 titled: Survey of the Golden Oriole (*Oriolus oriolus*) to determine conservation status and assessment of Poplar Woods habitat quality in Fenlands of Suffolk and Norfolk, UK.
 - Scheduled to attend a Darwin Initiative talk by Professor Wangari Mathaai the Peace Nobel Laureate winner 2005