

DARWIN NEWS



<http://www.darwin.gov.uk>

The Darwin Initiative draws on the wealth of biodiversity expertise in the UK to work with local partners in host countries to protect and enhance their biodiversity.

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Welcome to the first issue of *Darwin News*. It contains news and highlights from the Darwin Initiative, its projects and their monitoring and evaluation. This twice yearly newsletter will be available on our website and each issue will be announced via email. The Project Manager, Stefanie Halfmann, would be pleased to receive feedback on this first edition and receive suggestions for items or themes for the future.

*This issue focuses on the theme of **Protected Areas for Biodiversity Conservation**, reflecting global debates on the occasion of the 5th World Parks Congress and in the lead up to the 7th Conference of Parties of the CBD. It constitutes an opportunity to highlight experiences, lessons learnt and best practice from several Darwin Projects.*

Announcing the "Darwin Workshop"

**22 October 2003, Quality Hotel,
Westminster, London**

The first of several planned "Darwin Workshops", this day event will provide a forum for the exchange of information, experiences and best practices between the Darwin Secretariat, the Edinburgh Centre for Tropical Forests (ECTF), Project Leaders, and the wider Darwin Community. Topics for the first workshop include: updates from the Darwin Secretariat; Protected Areas and Biodiversity Conservation – best practices and lessons learned; and an information session on best practices for monitoring and evaluation. We welcome suggestions for future seminars and workshops to stefanie.halfmann@ed.ac.uk.

The Darwin Secretariat

The Darwin Secretariat at Defra anticipates an exciting and challenging year for the Darwin Initiative. With implementation of Phase II we will see the start of the first projects to be funded under the new funding schemes (Pre-project and post-project funding, and Darwin Scholarships). It is hoped the Darwin Initiative will contribute to the target of reducing the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010, agreed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in November 2002, in addition to upholding its high reputation for funding projects which have a real impact and legacy in assisting developing countries to meet their commitments under the CBD.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Most of you will be aware that ECTF is at the start of their second three-year contract to Monitor and Evaluate the Darwin Initiative and its projects. We will continue to draw on the wide pool of expertise within ECTF to review progress and achievements of Darwin projects.

Darwin Applications

ECTF will now be handling the applications process for all Darwin projects.

The main round of funding for this year was announced in August and the deadline for Stage 1 applications was 15 October 2003. Invitations for specific current projects to apply for Post-Project Funding will be issued in December 2003, and information on Pre-Project Funding and Scholarships will be available in January 2004. Please see <http://www.darwin.gov.uk/applications.htm> for details or contact darwin-applications@ectf-ed.org.uk, tel. +44 (0)131 440 5181.



Darwin Networks

ECTF will be taking steps to improve dissemination amongst people involved in projects and the wider group of interested parties. We will be producing this twice yearly newsletter, running discussion forums and developing a contact list of Darwin Friends. Please help us to develop this network by submitting contact details of interested colleagues or partners to Darwin-Applications@ectf-ed.org.uk (unless you have replied to Stefanie Halfmann's email of 18 August 2003 asking for partners and collaborators contact details).

Online Discussion: Protected Areas for Biodiversity Conservation

The Darwin Initiative intends to launch an online discussion forum in November 2003. This will provide an opportunity for Darwin project leaders and host country partners to exchange lessons learned and best practices related to making protected areas effective means for achieving conservation, ecological, economic and social benefits. A separate announcement will be made soon.

News from the CBD <http://www.biodiv.org>

The **Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety** entered into force on the 11th September 2003 following ratification by the 50th Party. It is the first legally binding international agreement governing the movement of living modified organisms across national borders.

<http://www.biodiv.org/biosafety/ratification.asp>

The **Millennium Ecosystem Assessment**, the most extensive study ever of the linkages between the world's ecosystems and human well-being, is due to begin publishing its results this September. <http://www.millenniumassessment.org>

The CBD website now contains an '**Interactive Infobulletin on Financing for Biological Diversity**' designed to provide a centralized venue for funding practitioners to exchange biodiversity-related funding information, including experience, views and best practice. <http://www.biodiv.org/financial/forums.aspx>

Darwin Project News

The CBD for Botanists, project 6/060

The CBD for Botanists is a presentation pack designed to introduce people working with botanical collections to the CBD. The pack aims to raise awareness and provide basic information on the most relevant parts of the CBD for botanical institutions, and places particular focus on the CBD's provisions on 'access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing'. It includes slides and suggested speaker's notes, detailed information sections, links and suggestions for further reading. For copies please contact the RBG Kew CBD Unit cbdunit@kew.org

Bats and Tsingys, Madagascar, project 10/024

Madagascar has an impressive network of Protected Areas primarily designed to conserve forest-dependent endemic vertebrates (e.g. lemurs) and the island's remaining natural vegetation. The bats of Madagascar possess a different challenge to conservationists since, whilst some are forest specialists, other species rely on the more open and degraded habitats outside intact forest. In summer 2003, a Darwin Initiative funded team of Malagasy Darwin Trainees visited Tsingy Bemaraha National Park to investigate the habitat use of different bat species. 'Tsingy' is the local name for the sharp, needle-like rock formations that make Bemaraha so distinctive and popular with tourists. The team compared three habitat types: agricultural-forest edge, protected forest and 'tsingy' clearings. Preliminary assessment of results shows interesting differences between the three types: The most species (7) were found in the disturbed forest outside of the park. The highest number of captures was recorded in the forest (276 bats in total). Lowest abundance and species richness was found in the tsingy clearings, but *Chaerephon leucogaster* was only caught in this habitat. Five of the species found were new for the park, taking the total to 15 Chiroptera, two more species than the lemurs! Following the visit to Bemaraha, park managers added a bat monitoring protocol to their monthly ecological surveys and invited the team to visit the northern part of the park next year.

Darwin Project News continued

Huemul – judicial case in Chile, project 9/014

The “Huemul ecology research for conservation planning” project involves CONAF (Corporación Nacional Forestal), Raleigh International, the Forest Research Agency, Macaulay Land Use Research Institute, and Pontificia Universidad Católica. The project has gathered ecological information on this little-known and endangered species of deer, from the southern Andean mountains of Chile in Patagonia, using radio collars and pellet plot surveys. As a result of the research developed by the project, a judicial case regarding the protection of wildlife species and particularly the huemul deer is currently underway in Chile. The case began when project personnel followed a radio signal to a farmhouse. They discovered a deceased female, who had been collared during the Darwin Initiative funded project. The deer had allegedly been killed for dog food. The case was widely covered by the media and the judge’s decision is pending. The case is being promoted as a symbol of the potential to change human attitudes to wildlife, at both regional and national levels through the establishment of environmental educational initiatives.

The project is currently organising its final conference, to be held in October 2003 in Cochrane (XI Region), to disseminate the experiences, results and conclusions of the last three years. If you are interested in more information on the huemul please visit: <http://www.iibce.edu.uy/citogenetica/deer>.

Post Darwin activities, Vietnam, project 10/029

The two year Darwin project “Training of Vietnamese scientists in tree seed science and technology”, awarded to the University of Reading’s Seed Science Laboratory and the University of Agriculture and Forestry (UAF), Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, ended on 31 March 2003, but the project’s legacy is already building on the success of the original collaboration. In May 2003, Vietnam’s Ministry of Education and Training awarded a two year research project to Ms Truong Mai Hong. Mai-Hong is Head of the Department of Afforestation and Urban Re-Greening, UAF, and was a Darwin trainee

at the University of Reading in 2001. This award will enable UAF to investigate tree seed physiology in many important endemic species of South Vietnam. The project is being carried out in collaboration with Saigon Botanic Garden (Mr Nguyen Thanh Son, another Darwin trainee) with technical advice from Dr Tran Dang Hong at Reading. Furthermore, Dr Le Quang Hung, Darwin Project Coordinator in Vietnam, organised Vietnam’s first two one-week-training courses in Seed Science and Plant Genetic Resources Conservation. A total of 110 provincial agriculturists, foresters and conservationists attended the courses in June and July 2003. Finally, the new HE curriculum created by the Darwin project has become very popular: For academic year 2003-04, 185 undergraduate students have registered to study Seed Science and Technology at UAF.

Who’s Who in Biodiversity, project 8/011

A CD-ROM, supported by Darwin, INTAS and the GEF Programme “Biodiversity conservation in Russia”, is the first electronic directory in the English language to provide concise up-to-date information about people working with biodiversity in countries of the former Soviet Union. About 10,000 experts are listed, representing an enormous range of skills from marine and freshwater biology to nature conservation, and from disease epidemiology to palaeontology. For more information and a copy of the CD please contact david.minter@cabi.org

Many thanks to the projects that provided pictures on page 1:

- Project 9/015 (Lion - Southern Africa)
- Project 12/028 (Saiga Antelope - Russia)
- Project 11/004 (Golden rumped elephant shrew - Kenya)
- Project 8/214 (Land Snail - Sri Lanka)



Protected Areas (PA) for Biodiversity Conservation

Protected areas are increasingly challenged to demonstrate ecological, economic and social benefits at local, national and global levels. Many of these issues were debated at the recently concluded Fifth World Parks Congress in Durban, South Africa, and its recommendations will inform the Convention on Biodiversity's SBSTTA (November 2003) and COP (February 2004) discussions.

The recommendations include a proposal to strengthen, expand and consolidate a global system of PA's in order to effectively conserve globally threatened species *in-situ* and viable representations of every terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystem within protected areas, and to protect ecological processes that generate and maintain biodiversity and ecosystem services for the benefit of people. Recognition is made for the application of the ecosystem approach to planning and management of all PA's and adjacent areas within the context of the broader landscape. By emphasising this approach, the recommendations underscore the need for "indigenous and mobile people and local communities to fully participate in the establishment and management of Protected Areas and that mechanisms are put in place to guarantee that they share in the benefits arising from these areas".

A number of Darwin projects work with host country institutions engaged in PA management, and piloting innovative approaches. A few examples include:

A DICE – University of Kent supported project in Kenya, which aims to develop and implement a community-driven conservation, conflict resolution and ecotourism programme that protects endangered wildlife and alleviates human-wildlife conflict in buffer zones of the Masai Mara protected area network. Whilst

strengthening the Mara people's community-based capacity to organise themselves into an association assuming wildlife management and monitoring responsibilities, the project is supporting the association to establish equitable partnerships with ecotourism operators.

A Frontier supported project assists the Bai Tu Long Bay National Park authority in Vietnam and the District Department for Education and Teaching to develop training tailored to NP staff and conduct awareness raising within the wider community through the District education system.

A Natural History Museum supported project aims to facilitate conservation and sustainable use driven by the Huarorani people within and adjacent to the Yasuni National Park and Huarorani Ethic Reserve in Ecuador's Amazonian region. This involves the development of biodiversity training tools in Huao-tededo and Spanish and practical training to enable the Huarorani people to be effective partners and beneficiaries from the management of the protected areas.

There are many more Darwin Projects engaged directly or indirectly in biodiversity conservation in protected areas establishment and management, for example in: assessment and monitoring of endangered/vulnerable species in critical ecosystems; training of protected area staff and involved civil society groups; and, supporting the elaboration of management plans.

On-going and future Darwin projects are increasingly developing lessons learned and best practices. The challenge remains for the Darwin Initiative and its projects to communicate these experiences and further inform implementation of the CBD and its implementation of the Congress recommendations.

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