# DARWIN NEWS

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Special Issue –
"A Year of Achievement"

Promoting biodiversity conservation and the sustainable use of resources

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WELCOME to the latest, special edition of DARWIN NEWS. In this issue, we present a selection of the short articles supplied by projects in the last round of annual reports, in the optional section 12 - *Outstanding Achievements*. It provides an inspiring survey of the range of work being carried out by Darwin Projects around the world.


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## Big cat conservation and sustainable management in Southern Africa *[9-015]*

In October 2004 the Kenyan delegation to the CITES conference in Bangkok put forward a proposal that lions be upgraded to CITES Appendix 1, thereby restricting trade in this species. While this proposal did not find favour and was withdrawn, it placed the conservation of the species under scrutiny. As we have been working on the sustainable utilisation of lions this issue is extremely topical. Data we have collected and continue to collect is important in informing this debate. We have been invited to present our results at two workshops dealing with the issue of sport-hunting lions, stemming from the CITES conference, and we believe that our findings are influential in informing policy on the conservation of this species.

## Tree diversity and agroforestry development in Peruvian Amazon *[9-017]*

An outstanding achievement relating to the prior project was the rapid uptake and high demand for the user friendly identification and silviculture manual (509 pp.) to tree species from the Peruvian Amazon with economic potential (Árboles útiles de la Amazonía peruana y sus usos). 500 copies were printed, and all were distributed by October 2004.

As an illustration of the demand in Peru, the Peruvian Government Environment Department (Instituto Nacional de Recursos Naturales; INRENA) requested an additional 20 copies of the manual for their officials in the field, in addition to the 30 copies that they were given. Other organisations requesting additional copies were Conservation International (Peru) and PRONATURALEZA (Peru).

A generous donation of $2500US from the World Agroforestry Centre (a partner in the prior project) has enabled us to print 400 more copies of the book. We hope that the demand for the partner field guide to economically useful Andean trees that is the principal output of this project will be equally strong.

An exciting achievement in relation to the post-project funded work is the construction of a second teaching herbarium in the Chanchamayo region of Andean Peru. This has been made possible by the Universidad Nacional Agraria La Molina (the home of our project partner, MOL) providing free labour for construction of another teaching herbarium facility at their La Genova field station. This first teaching herbarium is a key element of this project, and the second facility at the University's Satipo field station will enhance the project's legacy because both will be regularly used by undergraduate students for field courses.

## Action plans for conservation of globally threatened birds in Africa *[10-019]*

Enabling implementation of threatened bird Species Action Plans in Africa is a follow-up project to a successful Darwin programme which was managed by the RSPB and the BirdLife International Africa Partnership between 2001 and 2004. The original project developed an African format and process for producing Species Action Plans (SAPs) and produced 7 International and 15 National SAPs for 7 priority globally threatened bird species.

The follow-up project moves from the stage of producing SAPs to their implementation, and building the capacity of and enabling Species Interest Groups to drive the SAP implementation process is a major component of the project.

In the first year of the programme the two major activities have been training and project development. Training modules in project planning, fundraising, and project management were delivered in the first training workshop that was held in South Africa in February 2005. The workshop was facilitated by three RSPB experts and the Project adviser and attended by 14 species coordinators from 13 African partner countries. The incoming Project Coordinator was in attendance then as an SIG representative. The participants were able to identify further training needs, and the next training workshop will cover these, focusing on research and monitoring and advocacy and communications.

Several organisations have made good progress with securing resources for and/or implementing species action plans. For example Blue Swallow conservation work has begun or continued in Kenya, South Africa, Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe and Uganda. Work on White necked Picathartes has increased substantially in Ghana (research) and Sierra Leone (site conservation). Grauers Rush Warbler projects are underway in Rwanda and Uganda. Work on Spotted Ground Thrush continues in Kenya and on Houbara Bustard in Tunisia

## Kenyan Important Biodiversity Areas: Improving monitoring, management and conservation action *[11-003]*

This project has now completed its third year of operation. The project is managed by the RSPB and implemented by a partnership of Kenyan Government and Agencies and NGOs, led by NatureKenya. It has established an effective, sustainable monitoring system at 60 Important Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) throughout Kenya, tracked the status of the IBA network and will in future feed back directly into improved site management, conservation action and national reporting.

An IBA Status and Trends report issued in August 2004 has been widely applauded. A successful launch was held hosted by the Director General of the National Environment Management Authority. As a result NatureKenya were heavily involved in the development of the second national report to the CBD and the data were used extensively in compiling the report. A 2005 report will be produced shortly.

The basic monitoring process became further institutionalised during the year with wider ownership among the key agencies.

Although community based management planning has been slow, we are very encouraged by progress made in discussion with Forest Department and especially Kenya Wildlife Service. As a result agreement has been reached on how monitoring information will be fed into management plan reviews.

The project has been quite successfully disseminated during the past year. At least one paper is in press and information has been used in a number of papers and posters at international conferences. Press coverage has improved.

The project has received a Darwin follow up grant for a further two years. Four Kenyan members of the project Advisory Group were able to visit the UK in April 2005 and, during their visit, attended a national Seminar organised by the Darwin Initiative.

## Plant Endemism of the Central Andean Valleys, Bolivia *[11-010]*

The six project posters are of exceptional quality and have received universal praise. Nothing similar has ever been produced for the plants of Bolivia. They are likely to contribute significantly to the conservation of Bolivian plants and endemic species, in particular, by raising public awareness of their value and beauty. A programme of workshops for teachers will reinforce their impact on schools and in the community. They may play an important role in a programme to protect endangered species planned by the D.G.B. with possible support by Conservation International.

Scientific publication of new endemic plant species discovered during the project in international botanical journals by young Bolivian botanists is an outstanding achievement. This will leave a legacy of renewed botanical inspiration and bolstered confidence that is needed if the rich endemic flora of Bolivia is to be safeguarded for the future.

## Flamingo Conservation and Ramsar Site Management at Lake Bogoria, Kenya *[12-003]*

The project has now succeeded in bringing a mobile laboratory to the Rift Valley lakes which, as an unexpected benefit from its delay in shipping from Europe, was filled with glassware and other equipment, surplus to the over-technology-equipped laboratories of Europe. These items will now equip three soda lake laboratories to a much higher level of efficiency than before – Nakuru (NAWASCO), Bogoria (WWF) and Elmenteita (Jersey Hall), and will further serve as a "mother lab" for the smaller mobile lab

based on a Toyota Land Cruiser of the Earthwatch Lakes of the Rift Valley project.

The project has achieved its capacity building in the partner organisations well, with Laban Njoroge (NMK, Entomology) half way through an M.Sc. in Medical Entomology and Nico Nalyianya (NMK Ornithology) half way through a Diploma in Wildlife Management. Laban was also awarded an Earthwatch African fellowship for invertebrate project in South Africa (to follow the one awarded last year to the LBNR warden).

The UofL Distance Learning certificate Global Ecology & Wildlife Management (equivalent to 1 year full time undergraduate level study) is proving ideal for those practical field workers who may not have the ability for formal full-time study and do not wish/cannot afford to leave their jobs. The certificate assignments are being integrated with their existing practical responsibilities and outputs from their attendance on the Darwin Workshops.

At the beginning of this new reporting year (April 2005) we successfully combined the Earthwatch research team concept with this project's Darwin workshop concept. Twelve African fellows (four Darwin-funded Kenyans) worked and discussed for 16 days, building a scientific case for nominating Elmenteita as a Ramsar site to senior KWS staff. It will be fully reported next year.

This project's successful combination of rigorous scientific research with capacity building from postgraduate to primary school level is invigorating many local people in the Lake Bogoria region and breaking new ground in cross-discipline collaboration. The two major challenges in Post Project follow-up – to use all the outputs in the practical implementation of a usable management plan, and to take this model of success down the Rift Valley to other lakes in Kenya through to Tanzania – will be developed further in this final year.

## DNA banking phylogeny and conservation of the South African flora *[12-008]*

In the last year we have been able to compile the first comprehensive manual on DNA banking for use by biodiversity and conservation scientists. We hope that this manual will represent an important contribution to the field, particularly in the new era of DNA bar-coding and the applied use of DNA technologies in conservation science and wildlife forensics.

Our DNA banking efforts have also received significant endorsement through the Sloane and Moore Foundation's interest in plant DNA banking, and bar-coding for species identification. As such RBG Kew (along with partners from this Darwin Initiative project) have applied for funding to take the plant DNA bar-coding initiative forward.

During the last year we have been able to bring together evolutionary biologists and conservation planners and scientists to explore the existing, or potential contribution, of phylogenetic diversity measures in the conservation decision-making process. This has generated much excitement within the applied and basic scientific community in South Africa and we hope to capitalise on this momentum in the coming year.

Finally, we have been able to disseminate our project activities to a wide audience in the last year, including the general public via radio, and government officials via the Environmental Affairs and Tourism Portfolio Committee, as well as via a letter in the prestigious journal 'Science'. This has engendered widespread interest in the project and highlighted the pressing need to implement DNA banking strategies in bio-diverse rich-countries such as South Africa.

## Biodiversity and functional value of Amazonian primary, secondary and plantation forests *[12-014]*

One of the most outstanding achievements of this project is the sheer scale of the amount of fieldwork being conducted in Jari. As far as we know, this is the biggest and most complete biodiversity survey taking place in tropical forests today, which will result in the Jari fauna becoming one the of best known in Amazonia.

Even at this early stage our research has led to numerous range expansions, new records for Brazil and the Amazon basin, and identifications of previously undescribed species which will be monographed. A project of this size would clearly be impossible without the enthusiasm of all participating and collaborating Brazilian project members, and we have been exceptionally successful in achieving and maintaining strong working relationships with some of the leading Brazilian ecologists and taxonomists working in Brazilian Amazonia today.

The hard work contributed by all project members means this has all taken place within a very tight operating budget. Many visiting researchers have compared the scale and size of our project to the BDFFP project in Manaus, which at any one time hosts a similar number of researchers as us, but which has a large annual budget from the Smithsonian Institute and hires 5 full time staff to run logistics.

While the Darwin grant has been able to cover the core biodiversity element, we have also been successful at introducing additional components, such as the sustainable livelihood analysis, through ongoing fundraising efforts and collaboration with Jari Celulose/Orsa Florestal.

## Climate change and conservation of Galapagos endemic bird species *[12-018]*

One of our most outstanding achievements this year has been the collection of large volumes of data through the application of logger technology, deployed both at sea and directly on birds.

The sea temperature data recorded by the 20 temperature loggers, deployed at 10 and 20m depths, will help us to understand local changes in oceanographic conditions in relation to global climate change. High sea temperatures (relating to El Niño) ultimately mean that less food is available for penguins and cormorants, no reproduction will occur, and a proportion of their populations will die. On the other hand, low temperatures (relating to La Niña) signify that food is plentiful and that the birds have sufficient resources for successful breeding and survival.

The loggers applied directly to birds are providing data that until now have not been available. The devices are making measurements in two dimensions: horizontally and vertically. The GPS units (deployed on birds) track their movements when they are away from their colonies, while Preci-TD loggers take readings of temperature and diving depths. Bird foraging data (GPS fixes and diving depths) will be overlaid onto geographical layers of fishing data. Bird data gathered using the loggers should allow us to determine whether the current "no take fishing zones" in the GMR are large enough to guarantee full protection of penguin and cormorant feeding areas.

## Sustainable Management of the Rupununi, Guyana *[12-019]*

The project partners, led by the Open University, have secured £45,000 for a one-year pilot project from the ESRC E-Science fund.

One of the main problems identified within the Darwin project has been that project partners and other organisations are widely dispersed (particularly between Guyana and UK), have differing skills and competencies, and varying inputs to the management of natural resources. Described as 'innovative' and 'ground-breaking' by the assessors, the aim of the ESRC project is to establish the long-term engagement of stakeholders with varying expertise in natural resource management within a distributed environment.

Beginning in June 2005, we will be developing an on-line spatial decision-support tool, which combines GIS and computer assisted argumentation. Simultaneously, we will be using data and information collected from the Darwin project to develop an OU short course which will 'test' the on-line tool. The objective of the course will be to make recommendations for a particular biodiversity conservation management 'problem'. This course will be taken by stakeholders in Guyana and the UK, and the success and feedback from the course will be used to evaluate and modify the software tools and interactive process.

We hope that the tools and methodologies being developed in the ESRC project will help the long-term sustainability of the Darwin project aims, in particular capacity building and the adaptive management of the Rupununi. We hope to disseminate the tool together with the final Darwin outputs, and use the interest generated as a means to secure further funding for biodiversity conservation in the Rupununi

## Building Nicaraguan and Costa Rican capacity in biodiversity conservation *[12-020]*

CENTRAL America is renowned as a biodiversity hotspot with high species richness and endemism. In recognition of this, regional governments have designated the "Mesoamerican biological corridor", considered to be the world's most ambitious conservation initiative, as the major focus in their implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The Rio San Juan border region between Costa Rica and Nicaragua is a key section of this corridor (comprising the largest rain forest area in the Americas north of the Amazon) but has received little conservation attention. This project is focusing on this critical "frontier forest" section of the corridor, and is therefore addressing a major international conservation priority.

In an innovative bi-national programme, the project has trained Nicaraguan and Costa Rican NGO and government staff, who currently work in the conservation of biodiversity in the Rio San Juan area, in plant and insect identification, and the evaluation and monitoring of biodiversity.

The project has had a very successful second year, carrying out two training courses to build capacity in biodiversity conservation in the trans-boundary area of the Rio San Juan, a critical section of the Mesoamerican biological corridor. We have also completed a rapid biodiversity assessment of plants and insects, and established eight permanent sample plots for long term monitoring of biodiversity and forest dynamics in the San Carlos area of Costa Rica, the area proposed for the new Maquenque National Park.

During project fieldwork we have discovered two new plant species (*Symplocos striata* and *Lonchocarpus* sp.). During the training course held in the Refugio Bartola, Rio San Juan, Nicaragua, we found 12 species of plants which were new records for Nicaragua.

## Marine biodiversity assessment and development in Perlas Archipelago, Panama *[12-021]*

APART from the research and training components of the project, the main achievement considered to be important in Year 2 has been the ability of STRI and the host-country co-ordinator, Dr Guzman, to play a central role in formulating and influencing the process leading up to the imminent designation of the Las Perlas marine protected areas.

This has required a huge amount of work to meet set government deadlines and also to ensure that biodiversity conservation aspects are fully integrated and not overlooked or watered-down by administrators. This also included Dr Guzman giving a total of 15 private and public talks to promote the creation of the "Zona Especial de Manejo".

Another achievement has been the active involvement of other groups in the developing Darwin Network component of this project's objectives. In addition to involvement of Ecuadorian and Costa Rican taxonomists described elsewhere, a Spanish postgraduate student at the University of Wales, Bangor, carried out a MSc dissertation with guidance from Dr Guzman, and he is keen to continue this research to PhD level.

## Darwin Biodiversity Action Plan for Anegada, British Virgin Islands *[12-023]*

TAKING Jim White, Anegadian fisherman and local environmentalist, to his first international conference.

Within 18 months setting the baseline for one of the most extensive marine turtle capture-mark-recapture studies of 2 sympatric marine turtle foraging populations.

Locations of endemic plants geo-referenced and first island of the BVI to have vegetation mapped.

Silver Lindley Medal award for "Treasured Islands" display at Chelsea Flower Show.

Special Darwin Seminar and presentation to HRH Princess Anne at JR O'Neal Botanic Garden, Tortola, BVI.

First national bird banding scheme for the BVI launched.

Additional funding from NERC, OTEP and private business has been secured for work in summer 2005.

## Prediction and management of declines in Gyps species vultures (Jordan, Iran, India, Yemen, Kazakhstan, Caucasus) *[12-027]*

THE catastrophic decline of Asian vulture populations has driven concerted research efforts by several international groups over the previous five years. The identification by the Peregrine Fund of the veterinary drug diclofenac in Pakistan, and the confirmation by the RSPB and Bombay Natural History Society of the role of diclofenac in India and Nepal, were major steps forward in identifying the cause of the Asian vulture declines.

Further work by this project has shown that only a very small proportion (<1%) of livestock carcasses need to contain lethal diclofenac residues to have driven vulture declines at the observed rate. Preliminary results from sampling carcasses across India indicate that there is more than enough diclofenac in the environment, and confirm that diclofenac is the main, if not the only, cause of the vulture population declines.

International workshops for the conservation of vultures have recommended a ban on the veterinary use of diclofenac and the urgent establishment of captive breeding facilities for all three critically endangered species. A completed breeding centre with capacity for more than 100 pairs is now established in Haryana State in India, and work is underway on a new centre in West Bengal State in northeast India.

Following extensive discussions and a report prepared by the RSPB and colleagues for a meeting of the Indian Wildlife Board Meeting, the Indian Prime Minister announced on the 15th March 2005 that diclofenac will be phased out within six months. This announcement is a tremendous step forward for the conservation of vultures in India and the surrounding region. The RSPB is now working in collaboration with veterinarians and scientists in India and South Africa, to provide a vulture safe alternative to diclofenac, to ensure that this drug can be replaced at the earliest possible opportunity.

## Using saiga antelope conservation to improve rural livelihoods, Kazakhstan *[12-028]*

OUR main concrete conservation achievement this year is to have contributed to the continued stability of the Kalmykian saiga population, through our ongoing support of the Chernye Zemli Biosphere Reserve and the extension of our support to the neighbouring Stepnoi Sanctuary. These areas host 90% of Kalmykia's saigas at key times of the year, and around 30% at other times.

Thanks to the hard work of the rangers, there were no observed poaching incidents within either reserve this year. Two groups of poachers were apprehended in other parts of the Republic, sending a strong law enforcement message.

Our monitoring shows that saigas have been breeding well over the last 2 years, in contrast to the alarming situation in 2000/1 when reproductive collapse due to lack of males was observed in Kalmykia. Although the proportion of males in the population and the total number of individuals are still very low, the stability achieved in Kalmykia is in stark contrast to the critical status of the saiga throughout the rest of its range.

We have achieved a very high profile for the project's work in Kalmykia, with team members regularly appearing in the local press, giving talks about saiga conservation and distributing posters, calendars and leaflets throughout the Republic. This raised awareness, and the widely expressed willingness of local people to help personally in saiga conservation, will be a firm foundation for next year's activities linking rural livelihoods more concretely with saiga conservation.

We have also contributed to the saiga antelope being placed high on the agenda in international conservation circles. Our team's work in providing information, advice and lobbying contributed to the passing of motions urging action on saiga conservation at the two highest profile main conservation events of the year, the 13th Conference of the Parties to CITES and the World Conservation Congress.

Our work has been reported upon in the popular press around the world, including Europe, the USA and China, and was the subject of an acclaimed wildlife documentary. The challenge for next year is to build on this recognition of the saiga's plight to leverage significant action from the international community.

## Supporting the Development of Nature Conservation Education in Bulgaria *[12-032]*

GETTING both the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Environment committed to the process of Nature Conservation Education, and the fact that both have been closely involved in the process of NCE Policy development, is hugely significant. The acceptance and launch of the Policy in May will be an important event.

Through the development of the Policy both Ministries have involved Time closely in the development of National Biodiversity Action Plan for Bulgaria. It is encouraging that the recommendations made by Time through the participation of Nadya Boneva on the Working Group were accepted into the NBAP and that the Darwin Project is mentioned as a specific example of good practice

## DarwinNet - the Peru-Ecuador Dry Forest Clearing-house Mechanism *[13-006]*

THREE-PARTY agreement signed between BirdLife International, Ecuadorian Ministry of Environment and the Peruvian National Environment Council to support project. Agreement was signed during official launch events in Lima and Quito, with the Minister of Environment of Ecuador, Sr. Fabian Valdivieso, the President of Peruvian National Environment Council, Sr. Carlos Loret de Mola, and Dr. Ian Davidson representing BirdLife.

Poster given at 10th CBD-SBSTTA meeting in Bangkok during February 2005 with good feedback from the Darwin Initiative (Sarah Moon) and CBD-CHM representative (Marcos Silva). Text version of poster to be included in CBD Technical Series.

Based on SBSTTA poster the project was invited to the Second Meeting on Latin American CHMs in Brasilia in March 2005, organized by the CBD secretariat. Again with good feedback from representatives from other countries, the CBD-CHM representative (Marcos Silva) and GBIF representative (Beatriz Torres). Textual evidence of participation included in official CBD report of meeting.

Note on project included under the ´What's New´ section of the CBD webpage [1] during April of 2005.

[1] http://www.biodiv.org/default.shtml

## Ethnobiology of proposed traditional use zones of Crocker Range Park *[13-009]*

WE are particularly pleased with the successful negotiation of the community research agreement. The agreement, the product of discussions and meetings with Dusun leaders and residents of Buayan and its hamlets from October 2004 to March 2005, was signed by authorised community and institutional representatives in a ceremony at the Innobong Substation of Crocker Range Park on 18 April 2005.

This is, to our knowledge, the first agreement between an indigenous community and outside researchers in Sabah that sets out terms for access to traditional knowledge and genetic resources. As such, it fulfils the requirement to obtain prior informed consent from communities before documenting their traditional ecological knowledge. This requirement is strongly implied as best practice in Article 8(j) and other sections of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and is further elaborated in the Bonn Guidelines on Access to Genetic Resources and Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising out of their Utilisation.

The agreement opens the door to documenting the use and management of biological resources while making voucher collections of animals and plants for scientific, non-commercial use in collaboration with community members. Although the agreement covers only the members of the GDF research team, it lays the foundation for constructive collaboration by other researchers and students in our project.

An innovative aspect of the agreement is that it clearly embraces the right of local people to withhold information that they consider culturally sensitive or secretive. In addition, there is a clause on returning results of the project to the community in an appropriate local language.

There is a mechanism to review the agreement on a yearly basis. After assessing how well it has worked over the first year, we intend to invite critiques from local and international specialists in biodiversity law to expand its terms and conditions in April 2006. We hope that it will evolve into a model community research agreement that will become a standard that other Darwin Initiative projects and other researchers around the world will seek to emulate.

The agreement is further strengthened by a Memorandum of Understanding between GDF and Sabah Parks, the state agency responsible for the park management. Approved by the Attorney General of Sabah, the MOU was signed by the Director of GDF on 29 April 2005 and is awaiting the signature of the Director of Sabah Parks.

Additional detail on the content of the agreement and the process of obtaining prior, free informed consent at both community and government levels will be included in the "Best Practice in Assessing Traditional Use Zones" manual produced at the end of the project.

## Sustaining livelihoods and protecting biodiversity through development of pez blanco aquaculture *[13-011]*

FIRST, and historic, reintroduction of juveniles to Lake Patzcuaro. These animals were produced independently of the wild population using lab-reared broodstock in which the reproductive cycle has been closed for the first time in captivity. Photographs of this major event can be seen at [1].

There has been rapid exploration of options by target groups. A pleasing number of target groups have come forward seeking involvement with the project. The publicity gained from the above event was a big factor in this, as well as the increasing reputation of the project group in the region. This has enabled us to identify a larger number of early adopters than originally anticipated at this stage, mostly involving larger community groups. The range of early contacts can be seen on our website at [2].

Completion of a large-scale hatchery facility. This has the capacity to produce 1 million juveniles per year and has been based upon complimentary funding obtained from Mexican sources (CONACyT-Fondos Mixtos). Grant approval was levered by the existence of Darwin Initiative support, and other, funding [3].

[1] http://www.aquaculture.ac.uk/gisap/Darwin/Outreach.htm
[2] http://www.aquaculture.stir.ac.uk/gisap/Darwin/Outreach.htm
[3] http://www.aquaculture.stir.ac.uk/gisap/Darwin/Hatchery.htm

## The Atelopus Initiative: conserving endangered Tropical Andean amphibians *[13-017]*

THE extinction crisis facing the world's amphibians is at its most severe in the Andean region. This is the region with the greatest diversity, highest endemism and most precipitous declines. Hundreds of species are threatened; some are already presumed extinct.

The Atelopus Initiative, named after the most threatened group of frogs, is mobilizing the region's research and conservation community to confront the crisis. With the support of the Darwin Initiative, it is effectively working to integrate researchers and conservationists, both within Tropical Andean countries and between them. The network of regional amphibian specialists is established and growing, with members from all over the region and beyond.

Particularly encouraging is the fact that amphibians are now firmly "on the map" in national agendas, from governmental offices to academic departments and institutes and independent NGOs, and most importantly, in the mind of the general public. Evidence for this is the success of a recent exhibition about amphibians by the Catholic University of Quito, which attracted tens of thousands of visitors and was extended by popular demand.

The Atelopus Initiative, led by Conservation International, has a key role in building regional capacity to assess the status of the amphibians, study the causes of their decline, and take remedial action. We are training and motivating young scientists and we are developing important research tools, such as the field protocol manual on amphibian inventory and monitoring techniques and the

Atelopus mini field guide, both of which will be freely available to all interested parties in the region.

With governments and research institutions, we are actively promoting the cause of amphibian research and conservation at all levels in all five Tropical Andean countries: Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia and Venezuela.

The Atelopus Initiative is still in its early stages, but is already having a conspicuous impact and establishing the basis for a major regional campaign to save the most diverse array of frogs in the world.

## Strenghtening Capacity for Biodiversity Conservation in West Africa *[13-021]*

THE globally endangered bird species Ibadan Malimbe (*Malimbus ibadanensis*) has been reported in Kakum National Park in Ghana. The occurrence of the species in Ghana is a matter of some controversy. Although there are some earlier reports from Ghana of this species, which is otherwise only known to occur in a very small area of SW Nigeria, these have not been accepted by the wider ornithological community, as they have not been properly documented.

More recently however, the species was reported from Kakum National Park in September 2004 by David Daramani of the Ghana Wildlife Society, with a group of bird watchers from the United Kingdom. In February 2005, the species was again reported on two different occasions at two different locations. The first sighting was made at the Antwikwaa Camp area at the South-Western end of the Park on 7 February 2005, and the second on February 10, 2005, this time along the road leading Aboabo Camp at the Northern end of the Park. David Daramani again sighted the species, this time with Augustus Asamoah (also of GWS) and a team of five trainees during the field identification-training course of this project.

If confirmed, these records are of considerable significance to the conservation of this species, as they represent a large extension of range of this highly threatened, localised endemic.

Kakum National Park is one of the preferred bird watching destinations for forest birds in Ghana. It is also very popular for tourism because of its impressive canopy walk.

## Establishment & Management of Nantu National Park, Gorontalo Province, Sulawesi *[13-028]*

KEY achievements in the first four months of this project have been the provision of local livelihood assistance (16,500 cocoa trees) as a buffer zone crop for communities living around the Nantu Forest Reserve.

Weekly provision of environmental education and English language teaching (through drama, songs and classes) at Pangahu village primary school, a remote school accessible only by longboat, has also had a considerable effect in uniting community support for the reserve.

An innovative forest law enforcement unit comprising local police, project assistants and local community members has also been established which is protecting this reserve from illegal logging and slash-and-burn clearance, hence assisting Indonesia to implement its CBD and FLEG commitments

## Pioneering an innovative conservation approach in Sierra Leone's Gola Forest *[13-031]*

THIS project is located in the 75,000-ha Gola Forest Reserves in Sierra Leone. It aims to address the growing threats to these reserves by establishing an innovative, participatory management programme using a conservation concession strategy. It is being run by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the Conservation Society of Sierra Leone, and the Forestry Division of the Sierra Leone Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security.

It may be too early to talk of achievements after only 6 months of work (only 3 months with most of the project team). However there are some positive developments. The historical relations between the partners have allowed a project team integrating all three partners to be assembled and to work smoothly. There is very strong political support in the government, an opportunity that should not be squandered. There are signs that community support and buy-in, which was tentative during the planning stages, is strengthening now that development activities have been initiated.