

# Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

## Half Year Report Form

<b>Project Title</b>	Cross-border conservation strategies in the Altai Mountains Endemics (Russia, Mongolia, Kazakhstan)
<b>Country</b>	UK, Russia, Mongolia, Kazakhstan
<b>Organisation</b>	University of Sheffield in collaboration with Tomsk State University, Hovd branch of Mongolia State University and Altai Botanical Garden (Leninogorsk)
<b>Project Ref. No.</b>	162 / 11 / 025
<b>Report date</b>	31 October 2003

### 1. Outline progress over the last 6 months against the agreed baseline timetable for the project.

#### **Key milestones for first 6-months of Year 2 (April 2003– Sept. 2004):**

*June Collation of information; setting up and population of databases with information gathered in the first year completed.*

- a) The preliminary list of endemic species was updated – this now stands at 106 species and 3 sub-species. The recorded localities within the three countries of about half of the species have now been identified from herbarium specimens, field expeditions and other information.
- b) A complete inventory of herbarium samples of Altai endemic species in the Herbarium of the Central Siberian Botanical Gardens (Novosibirsk) and most of the collection of the Tuva–Mongolia Department in the Herbarium of Tomsk State University has been carried out. During this work all available samples of endemic species were examined, their correct taxonomic position specified, and herbarium labels for their entry into the database have been written out. The examination of herbarium specimens held at Hovd University has also been completed.
- c) The population of the computer database (using MS Excel) has been continued.
- d) Collection of information about protected areas in the Altai region (Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia) has been continued.
- e) Work has started on preparation of electronic maps showing distribution of endemic species and locations of currently-protected areas.
- f) Work has started on collection of information for the Russian Altai regarding population distribution and density, and distribution and intensity of different kinds of human activities (e.g. hunting, tourism, agriculture, forestry, recreation).

*August 2 months field work, including student training completed, with UK scientist present for 2/3 weeks.*

- a) Expedition to East Kazakhstan in May, 2003 (15 days); Participants: A.Pyak, A.Ebel, Yu.Kotukhov (Leninogorsk), postgraduate and undergraduate students;
- b) Expedition to Western Altai in May/June, 2003 (20 days); Participants: A.Pyak, A.Zverev, A.Ebel, postgraduate and undergraduate students;
- c) Expedition to Western Altai in August, 2003 (15 days); Participants: A.Pyak, A.Ebel, A.Kupriyanov (Kemerovo), postgraduate students;
- d) Some 50 undergraduate students (biologists and geographers) from Tomsk State University (2 groups) undertook training (2 weeks) at the Tomsk State University Altai Mountain Research Station in July, 2003 (supervised by Dr. Pavel S.Borodavko from TSU and Dr. Natalia M.Semenova from TSU);
- e) A total of three postgraduate students (two botanists and one geographer) and eight undergraduate students involved in the project from host countries received long-term field

experience and training during the project field surveys.

f) Note that the proposed visit from the UK has been postponed until March 2004.

**Project outputs for first 6-months of Year 2 (April 2003– Sept. 2004):**

July / August 2003. Training in the field of c. 50 undergraduates from host countries, and visit by UK staff. **See milestones**

**Additional activities**

**A. Dissemination of information**

No specific dissemination activities were planned for Year 2, but the following have been achieved:

1. Information about the project was presented at the conference devoted to the 70th anniversary of the Department of Biology and Soil Sciences of Tomsk State University (April 23–14, 2003) and during official celebrations of the 125-year anniversary of the foundation of Tomsk State University (September 11–12, 2003).
2. Development of the official project WEB-site (<http://www.ecos.tsu.ru/altai>) continued (but had to be temporarily suspended due to problems with the server – see below).
3. A report on the theme of the project was given by A.I. Pyak at the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference "Problems of Botany of Southern Siberia and Mongolia" held in Barnaul, Russia, August, 21–22, 2003. The conference materials are currently in print.
4. XI congress of the Russian Botanical Society (August 18–22, 2003, Novosibirsk – Barnaul, Russia). Participants: Pyak A.I., Ebel A.L., Lapshina E.D.
  - Ebel A.L. About some taxonomy problems of the South-Siberian representatives of the genus *Draba* (Brassicaceae) // Botanical researches in Asian Russia: Materials of the XI congress of the Russian Botanical Society (August 18–22, 2003, Novosibirsk – Barnaul). Volume 1. Barnaul: "Azbuka", 2003. pp.301–302.
5. VI International Scientific Conference "*Natural conditions, history and culture of Western Mongolia and contiguous regions*" was held in Hovd (Western Mongolia) on September 18–22, 2003. Participants: Pyak A.I., Ebel A.L., Zverev A.A., Oyunchimeg D. 4 oral and 1 poster reports were submitted and published (in Russian):
  - Ebel A.L. On the distribution of *Draba mongolica* Turcz. (Brassicaceae) in Southern Siberia and Mongolia // Natural conditions, history and culture of Western Mongolia and contiguous regions: Reports of the VI International scientific conference (September 18–22, 2003, Hovd, Mongolia). Tomsk: TSU, 2003. pp. 122–123.
  - Pyak A.I. On the protection of endemic plants of the Altai // Natural conditions, history and culture of Western Mongolia and contiguous regions: Reports of the VI International scientific conference (September 18–22, 2003, Hovd, Mongolia). Tomsk: TSU, 2003. p 278.
  - Zverev A.A. Use of Internet opportunities for realisation of a cross-border strategy for preservation of the biodiversity of the Altai Mountains // Natural conditions, history and culture of Western Mongolia and contiguous regions: Reports of the VI International scientific conference (September 18–22, 2003, Hovd, Mongolia). Tomsk: TSU, 2003. pp. 273–274.
  - Schegoleva N.V. The study of *Ranunculus* L. in the Altai-Sayan mountain region // Natural conditions, history and culture of Western Mongolia and contiguous regions: Reports of the VI International scientific conference (September 18–22, 2003, Hovd, Mongolia). Tomsk: TSU, 2003. pp. 120–121.
  - Oyunchimeg D. & Miagmarjav U. Flora of Hovd aimak (district) and its quantitative composition // Natural conditions, history and culture of Western Mongolia and contiguous regions: Reports of the VI International scientific conference (September 18–22, 2003, Hovd, Mongolia). Tomsk: TSU, 2003. pp. 101–102.
6. Project staff participated in a field expedition to the Altai Mountains in August 2003 by 18 geography students plus staff from University of Bochum (Germany). The opportunity was taken to present information about the project, and contribute to botanical training and discussions of general

conservation issues of the area, including raising awareness of the threats and problems faced by the endemic species of the Altai.

### **B. Liaison with local authorities and Regional Ecological Committees.**

Building on Year 1 key milestones, participating scientists have held discussions with representatives from the following local, regional and national authorities:

- a) Great Hural (National Mongolian Parliament, Ulaan-Bator), Dr. Nyamdavaa – member of the Hural and President of Hovd State University (Hovd, Mongolia);
- b) El-Kurultai (Regional Parliament) and Committee on Science and Education of the Altai Republic (Chairman of Committee – Vasili A. Tyudenev), Gorno-Altai, Altai Republic, Russia, continued;
- c) Administration of the Kosh-Agach Region of the Altai Republic (Head of Administration Aulkhan Djatkambaev), continued;
- d) Contacts and cooperation have continued with the work group and coordinator of the international WWF project "Maintenance of long-term preservation of biodiversity of the Altai-Sayan ecological region"; Andrei N. Kupriyanov (director of the Kuzbass Branch of Central Siberian Botanical Gardens of Russian Academy of Science (Kemerovo, Russia)).

### **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. Have any of these issues been discussed with the Department and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?**

1. The world epidemic of SARS resulted in the unexpected temporary restrictions on road border-crossings between Russia and Mongolia in summer 2003. It was therefore necessary to cancel the previously planned 1-month field survey in Mongolia and substitute with expeditions to other parts of the study area. This was discussed with the Department, and we asked for permission to move the Mongolian survey to next year and extend the total project life for 6 months. We are still in the process of agreeing the revised timetable and budgets with colleagues in Tomsk, and will be in touch with the Department when this has been completed.

2. Force majeure weather problems (lightning strike) in May 2003 resulted in the malfunction of the general Tomsk University computer network and local network in particular. This problem has still not been fixed. E-mail communication between partners of the project has therefore been severely hampered over the last 6 months, with Tomsk colleagues having to use "hotmail" accounts from various different places. This, coupled with the fieldwork activities of different people at different times over the summer, has made it very difficult to maintain any continuity of correspondence, although contact has been maintained to the extent possible within these constraints. We hope that the situation will improve in the near future.

3. For the reasons outlined in (2), WEB-site development and access have also been restricted.

4. Partly due to uncertainties over the plans for fieldwork in the summer and partly due to a change in UK participants (both notified to the Department), a UK scientist did not visit Russia during the summer. As noted above, we are currently working on a revised project timetable, and hope that a visit will take place in March 2004.

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

Please send your **completed form by 31 October each year per email** to Stefanie Halfmann, Darwin Initiative M&E Project Manager, Email: [stefanie.halfmann@ed.ac.uk](mailto:stefanie.halfmann@ed.ac.uk)