

Darwin Initiative

Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

PLEASE NOTE: Due to the increased number of reports expected in 2005, we will not be able to confirm receipt of reports but will contact you individually should any questions arise

Project Ref. No.	162/12/005
Project Title	Rediscovering the neglected insects of Mauritius
Country(ies)	Mauritius
UK Organisation	University of Plymouth
Collaborator(s)	Mauritian Wildlife Foundation, Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute, University of Mauritius, Mauritius Institute, The Natural History Museum
Report date	31 Oct 2005
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	3
Project website	n/a

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).

All of the seven sites proposed in the sampling protocol have been sampled using pitfall traps (method 1) and Winkler bags (method 2). A trial for the flight-intercept trap (method 3) was run for a period of two weeks and was found to perform badly in the selected sites for beetle recovery. A modification was made using sticky traps which significantly improved the catch of beetles. Mist-blowing (method 4) was tried but did not yield any beetle species. Mist-blowing has been used mostly qualitatively rather than quantitatively. The fieldwork component is now essentially complete, except for a couple of modified flight intercept traps, which had to be delayed until after the hunting season.

Sorting of the material is ongoing. Initially, beetles are being sorted from all other specimens with the aid of the microscope. The task is, of necessity slow and labour-intensive, due to the small size of the majority of beetles (range of 2 mm and below). A preliminary sorting of the specimens from the pitfall traps from four locations (Brise Fer, Vallee de l'Est, Ile aux Aigrettes and Magenta) have already yielded 23 morphospecies. Preliminary samples collected at the start of the project have been identified as far as possible at The Natural History Museum, and are being sent over to Saoud Motala to provide a reference collection against which to compare his samples.

Although we were unsuccessful in our bid for funding for the PhD (invertebrates and the Mauritan cuckoo shrike), we did obtain funding from Plymouth University to send out an entomologist – Clive Turner – to train in specialist sampling of aquatic beetles and general beetle identification. This trip will be in December 2005.

One of the key factors in limiting the success of conservation projects in Mauritius is the lack of awareness in Mauritians in the ecological problems they are facing. Saoud Motala has been actively promoting the project to help overcome this deficit. He has given two interviews to local radio stations: Radio 1 and the Mauritius College of the Air. Radio 1 is a private station with a national audience whilst the Mauritius College of the Air is aimed at the student audience in secondary schools. The first interview has already aired and the second interview will be aired during mid-November. In both programmes, the project aims and importance as well as Darwin Initiative have been explicitly mentioned.

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.

There have been no notable problems or developments in the last six months.

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

Discussed with the DI Secretariat: no/yes, in..... (month/yr)

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: no/yes, in.....(month/yr)

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

If you were asked to provide a response to this year's annual report review with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan or budget should not be discussed in this report but raised with the Darwin Secretariat directly.

Please send your **completed form by 31 October each year per email** to Stefanie Halfmann, Darwin Initiative M&E Programme, stefanie.halfmann@ed.ac.uk . The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message.**