

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

Project Ref. No.	162/13/004
Project Title	Developing a model for the conservation of Croatia's grassland biodiversity
Country(ies)	Croatia
UK Organisation	Fauna & Flora International (FFI)
Collaborator(s)	Žumberak-Samoborsko Gorje Nature Park (ŽSGNP) and the Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research (IGER)
Report date	31 October 2006
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR -3
Project website	www.ppzsg.org/darwin

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).

The project started its third year providing additional management planning training to Učka Nature Park through a 5 day facilitated workshop. Significant progress on the Park's management plan was made. Upon a special request the project also visited Biokovo Nature Park in Dalmatia to provide guidance on stakeholder analysis and participation in management planning.

The last six months have largely been spent providing further training (three separate workshops) to the Žumberak- Samoborsko gorje Nature Park (ŽSGNP) in grassland management and monitoring. This has resulted in the finalisation of the Park's Grassland Action Plan, the production of a draft grassland monitoring plan, the development of Tractor Mowing Guidelines and a management regime for the Park's demonstration plots. All this training has been particularly timely as the Park has been successful in its application to the Environment and Energy fund to purchase a tractor and other grassland management equipment (circa £30,000). Through the training received in plant community surveying last year the Darwin scholar successfully completed the botanical surveying of over 30 sites in the Park. The data from this research will be analysed at IGER in December and January.

In June the project extended its training in grassland management to other protected areas in Croatia by holding a four day workshop in the ŽSGNP. The workshop was attended by over 25 representatives from protected areas, county conservation authorities and agencies, and was extremely well received.

The grassland monitoring workshop for other protected areas had to be unfortunately cancelled, primarily due to the lack of capacity of the ŽSGNP. In addition, the manuals on grassland management and monitoring are behind schedule. For further details see section 2 below.

The next issue of the project's newsletter, *Kosilica* (Croatia) was produced and circulated in September.

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.

As reported in the last annual report there have been significant changes in the Žumberak-Samoborsko gorje Nature Park's personnel during the last year. This has been further exasperated by the continued lack of a conservation manager for the past nine months and, most pertinently the resignation of the Darwin scholar in July. This was due to irreconcilable differences between her and the new Park management and has been a huge blow to the project.

Although the Park finally recruited a new conservation manager in September and the Darwin project a new Darwin scholar in August the Park has not been at its full capacity for almost a year and has struggled to deliver on its commitments to the project. In order to ensure project continuity and the delivery of outputs the UK project partners have had to provide additional support and training to the new Darwin Scholar and conservation manager. This additional support, particularly to the new Darwin scholar, has proved to be very effective with the new Darwin scholar fully integrated into the project team and already proving a huge asset in country.

Due to the aforementioned reasons the project has had to cancel the planned grassland monitoring workshop for other protected areas and there are delays in the production of the training manuals in grassland management and monitoring. The bi-lingual manuals should now be produced by March 2007. The change in the project output and timetable should not have an impact on the project's budget.

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

No, these issues haven't been discussed with the Darwin Secretariat but will be in due course.

Discussed with the DI Secretariat: **no, 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.**