

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

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| Project Ref. No. | 162/13/030 |
| Project Title | Gurney's Pitta Research and Conservation in Thailand and Myanmar |
| Country(ies) | Thailand, Myanmar |
| UK Organisation | RSPB |
| Collaborator(s) | BCST, BANCA, FORRU |
| Report date | 30/10/06 |
| Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4) | HYR2 |
| Project website | <i>In prep.</i> |

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).

In Thailand, the project continues to exceed expectations. Further training for local forestry staff at the remaining site has continued. Permission was received to start the planting of the experimental reforestation plots and these have now been established. Local leaders attended the opening of these plots and lectured local people on the importance of protecting the environment and the bird. Local forest officials and representatives of the local community have completed visits to Chiang Mai to visit the Forest Restoration Research Unit, view their methods and attend a training workshop. Further botanical surveys have also been undertaken. The ornithological research is also going well, and the new project partner from the Department of National Parks, who is supported by the Darwin project, has proved extremely capable and is working well with the BCST researcher. New nests have been found, at least one of which successfully produced chicks. The new head of the Wildlife Sanctuary has proved to be extremely supportive of the project, far more so than his predecessor, making it much easier to obtain all the necessary permissions. All research outputs continue to be supplied to the forest patrols, making it easier for them to protect key areas. As a result, the amount of forest lost in the last six months has been negligible.

In Myanmar, the progress of the project is less easy to determine. While we understand that the researcher who started fieldwork in April has successfully collected data from over 300 sites, despite the extremely difficult physical and political environment in the south of that country, we have been unable to obtain the data from him (see below). An interesting finding is that birds were recorded at up to 300m altitude, much higher than formerly recorded, meaning that the species may be more numerous in Myanmar than expected.

The project manager visited both countries in September 2006 and met with project partners.

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.

The main problem has been with the researcher employed to undertake surveys in Myanmar. While we

