

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

Project Ref. No.	13-032
Project Title	Addressing a threat to Caribbean amphibians: capacity building in Dominica
Country(ies)	Commonwealth of Dominica
UK Organisation	Institute of Zoology, Zoological Society of London
Collaborator(s)	Veterinary Services Division, Government of Dominica (VSD) Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division, Government of Dominica (FWD) Flora and Fauna International (FFI) London Zoo, Zoological Society of London Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust (DWCT) North of England Zoological Society (Chester Zoo)
Report date	October 2006 (submitted December 2006)
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR 2
Project website	www.mountainchicken.org

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).

A draft management plan on the control of chytridiomycosis was drawn up following the very successful international workshop held in Dominica in March (see first annual report). This plan has not yet been published, as had been timetabled, as it has not yet been agreed by all parties. It is anticipated that this will happen soon and that the management plan will be published in March 2007.

During July and August 2006, an MSc student in Wild Animal Biology carried out a research project to investigate if the amphibian chytrid fungus could be detected in the environment in different habitat types within Dominica. The results of this project, which showed that there appear to be low levels of environmental contamination, will be used to inform the chytridiomycosis management plan.

The captive breeding centre was timetabled to be completed by July 2006, but this part of the project has met with a series of delays. Initially, there was a delay while the most suitable site was found that also met with Government requirements and did not impinge on current or likely future Government department projects. Once the site was agreed, further delays occurred due to the slow nature of the Government tendering process for the construction contractor. The contractor has now been appointed and construction work is due to start early in 2007. The delay to building the centre has had knock-on effects to the rest of the project; therefore there currently are no mountain chicken frogs in captivity either in Dominica or in London or Chester Zoos.

The delays, however, have not been met with silence. During this period, improvements have been made to the culturing of native Dominican crickets in an effort to develop a sustainable food supply for the frogs once they are in captivity. Also, research has been initiated at Jersey Zoo to find out if the mountain chicken frogs (from Montserrat) held there can be trained to take dead food. If this species can be trained to take dead food, it will improve the chances of success for the captive breeding programme in Dominica.

