

# 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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| <b>Project Ref. No.</b>         | 14-008:  |
| <b>Project Title</b>            | <b>The Darwin Initiative Centre for Bat Conservation in Southern China</b> |
| <b>Country(ies)</b>             | China  |
| <b>UK Organisation</b>          | University of Bristol  |
| <b>Collaborator(s)</b>          | Professor Shuyi Zhang, Chinese Academy of Sciences                         |
| <b>Report date</b>              | 26 October 2005  |
| <b>Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)</b> | 1  |
| <b>Project website</b>          |  |

**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 began on 1 July 2005. I visited Guangzhou in Guangdong Province to meet Professor Shuyi Zhang (Chinese partner) between 2-18 July. Professor Zhang originally suggested establishing the centre at the Guangzhou Panyu Xiangjiang Safari Park. We met with Dong Guixin, Standing Deputy General Manager, at the Park on 4 July. The site has a large throughput of people, including many schoolchildren, so should have high impact. Although the Park were initially very positive about hosting the Centre, their position has changed recently, apparently in response to the finding that bats are important reservoirs of SARS-like coronaviruses in China (see suggested solution below).

On 3 July I met with Nigel Birch, Consul, Science and Innovation, and Ade Zai (Science and Innovation Officer) British Consulate-General Guangzhou. With my help, Nigel drafted a press release to publicise the Darwin centre.

On 18 July I met with Gary Ades, Kadoorie Farm, Hong Kong, and Chung-Tong Shek, Conservation Officer of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department. Gary is developing a bat education centre at Kadoorie, using rehabilitated animals. He will also develop education material, which could be adapted for use in the Darwin Centre. We agreed to liaise about our projects in future, and share material and experiences where appropriate.

Professor Zhang and I agreed to take on Li Gang and Jinshuo Zhang as PhD students on the project. Li Gang will concentrate on the molecular phylogeny of Chinese bats, Jinshuo on morphological aspects of taxonomy. These students will therefore resolve many of the taxonomic uncertainties regarding Chinese bats at present, and will assist in the production of online and paper identification guides to Chinese bats. Jinshuo Zhang must also compile population estimates for at least 50 sites. Both students will visit Bristol early in 2006.

While in China Li Gang and Jinshuo Zhang accompanied Professor Zhang and me to survey bats in Sichuan Province, so we had good opportunities to discuss their involvement in the project. This survey was funded by the National Geographic Society, and also involved Dr Stephen Rossiter (Queen Mary University of London), Dr Stuart Parsons (University of Auckland) and Professor Walter Metzner (UCLA). We captured 85 bats of 15 species. In total, we now have photographs and tissue samples from 41 species in China, a good basis for the PhD projects and for our keys.

We are involved in writing two scientific manuscripts, which are at an advanced stage of preparation:

1. Echolocation calls, wingshape, diet and phylogenetic diagnosis of the endemic Chinese bat *Myotis pequinus*; Gareth Jones, Stuart Parsons, Shuyi Zhang, Petr Benda, Benoit Stadelmann & Manuel Ruedi.
2. Systematics of horseshoe bats species *Rhinolophus cornutus*, *R. monoceros*, *R. pumilus* and *R. pusillus* (Chiroptera: Rhinolophidae) based on mitochondrial cytochrome *b* and control region sequence variation; Gang Li, Gareth Jones, Stephen J. Rossiter, Shiang-Fan Chen, Stuart Parsons, Kuniko Kawai, & Shuyi Zhang.

**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.**

Our **immediate priority is to resolve issues regarding a site for building the Centre.** Relations between Professor Zhang and the Guangzhou Panyu Xiangjiang Safari Park have broken down, largely because of the recent findings regarding bats as reservoirs of SARS virus in southern China (covered in high profile papers in *Science* and *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*). The safari park has informed Professor Zhang that now they do not want to house any bats, and they have also lost interest in hosting a conservation centre there, because of the recent SARS studies.

Professor Zhang has therefore suggested that we base the centre alongside a building that he has established for bat research near Beijing. Professor Zhang has proposed building a museum and education centre at the site, covering aspects of the conservation of bats, including the roles of bats in culture and history. The centre would still function as an education centre in the ways proposed. Professor Zhang is working closely with the local government in the area, which is also a tourist region. Professor Zhang believes that 10,000-50,000 people could visit the centre each year, and that he would be able to oversee the development of the site easily from the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing. Although this would mean that the centre is based in northern, rather than southern China, I see it as the best way forward in this situation. The Centre would still be the only building devoted to bat conservation in China, and the same problems of habitat destruction and killing of bats for food apply in Beijing Province as in Guangdong. There may therefore be a slight delay in building the Centre.

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

I have therefore asked permission for the building of the Darwin Centre for Bat Conservation to be moved from Guangdong Province to Beijing Province, and am awaiting a reply from the Darwin Initiative Secretariat before proceeding with planning the development of the Centre (email sent to Margaret Okot, 17 October).

**Discussed with the DI Secretariat:                                      yes, in...October 2005..... (month/yr)**

**Changes to the project schedule/workplan:    under review.....(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? No**

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](mailto: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.**